



Press release

MAKE CITY – For three weeks Berlin will become the international centre for making city differently / An engaged and civic discourse / 11 – 28 June 2015 / www.makecity.berlin

On 11 June a citywide conversation begins in Berlin; one that seeks to open the eyes of a broad audience to new architecture and urban alternatives. Over 120 international partners have built this first festival of its kind up together with the founder and curator in chief, Francesca Ferguson. „Berlin as a city is still exceptional, with exceptional free spaces and opportunities. Here, one can think and make city differently,“ states Ferguson at today’s press conference at the Czech cultural Centre in Berlin. Also present were **Monika Štěpánová**, Director of the Czech Centre, **Aldo Venturelli**, Director, Istituto Italiano di Cultura in Berlin, **Sabine Drewes**, representative for urban planning, Heinrich-Böll-Foundation, **Christine Edmaier**, Präsident of the Berlin Chamber of Architects, **Wolfram Putz**, Graft Architects and **Erik Spiekermann**, renowned typographer.

Berlin, 09.06.2015. Making city differently – the festival partners are convinced „that our cities should be determined by those that live in them, and that profit motives should be secondary to solutions that create positive effects for urban communities,“ declares the curator and author of Selfmade City, and founder of AA Projects **Kristien Ring (US)**. **Indy Johar (UK)**, architect and institutional innovator, sees the city as an ‚Empathy engine‘ that needs to be unleashed. **Adam Greenfield (US)**, writer and founder of Urban Scale in New York, whose goal it is to develop design with a human perspective, is resolutely opposed to the smart city: “I am far more interested in creating circumstances in which ordinary city dwellers are able to acquire understanding of their participation in civic life.”

The first Festival for architecture and urban alternatives has been founded upon three key themes – within the inaugural concept “Re_Sourcing the Urban”: **Urban Commons** will comprise all events and talks that examine the civic appropriation and renegotiation of public spaces and shared resources. The act of *commoning* is seen here as a collective imperative; one that redefines spaces and public property beyond the profit motive and beyond the developers’ logic. Projects range from talking tours from Tegel to Tempelhof, panels at the festival centre on designing commons to a students’ initiative to build a garden for refugees. The second key theme is **Urban Open Source**. Make City asks how the growing culture of civic participation can be transformed into innovative, sustainable architecture and urban planning agendas. Will urban development remain in the hands of singular winning bidders for real estate and public lands? Or will a new concept-based planning agenda – ‘Konzeptverfahren’ make way for a Berlin Model for new collaborative practice? The southern Friedrichstadt – one of the biggest areas under renewal in Berlin, with the newly inaugurated ‘Bauhütte’ as a social project, is the result of intense negotiations between commercial clients, architects-as-investors, residents, and local government. One of Make City’s founding partners **Christian Schönigh (DE)** from the ‘Zusammenarbeiter’ proposes the new urban imperative: “all these ‘alternative developments’, as they are called, are accepted as genuine alternatives for urban planning”.

The third key theme of MAKE CITY is **Urban Living/Working**. The festival features new flexible workspaces, affordable residential housing and factory halls in the middle of the city. Cluster-living and co-housing projects question modes of living together. Time-shifting floor plans blur the boundaries between the private and the public, and consider the patchwork family as a vital entity in cities. Minimal and flexible living is as much a theme here as the notion of existing resources: former industrial sites transformed to cultural



centres. Everything is reusable. And 'radical minimal' – the reduction of living space is featured as is 'Radically Modern' – an exhibition at the Berlinische Galerie that re-evaluates the precious resource of 1960's architecture in Berlin.

Conquering Austerity with Audacity

„Rurbanization“ as a concept, with its focus on urban resilience, social sustainability and the recycling of resources, plays a decisive role within the MAKE CITY discourse. Urban communities can emancipate themselves from dependencies as public resources are cut back, and in the process the role of the architect and planner is rapidly changing. “The traditional boundaries of the profession need to be continually questioned,” according to **Wolfram Putz (DE)** of Graft Architects. The Spanish critic and curator **Ethel Baraona Pohl (ES)** sees „The role of the dissident architect not as a figure of resistance but as an opportunist who understands his/her context and decides to react and adapt in a Darwinian sense, where not the strongest but the most flexible species succeed.”

Making; thinking city differently is that which unites all projects and events in the MAKE CITY program. Entrance is free, and because space for the Studio Talks and Make City Open Tours is limited, one needs to register. From the first Berliner Maker Library (British Council) to the Volkspark 2.0 boat tour, for 3 weeks Berliners and international visitors can revisit the ground floor space and rethink the back courtyard, climb on roofs and get on board. One can even build a garden, listen to facades, hack solutions for climate change in cities, or play at participation. At the end of the festival, visitors become 'Actors of Urban Change' that follow the many calls for action: 'Do It Together!', 'Participate!' 'Beware of Smart People!'. “Our goal is that this is a meeting of experts, but one that is no longer possible without the citizen,” declares **Ferguson**. The process itself breaks down the barriers for this.

The Czech Centre in the Wilhelmstrasse, Berlin Mitte, will be the place where the international discourse and exchange comes together. Experts and interested city makers are called upon to join the conversation. A festival newspaper is available at key locations in Berlin. More under: **www.makecity.berlin**

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MAKE CITY is realised and produced by Make_Shift gGmbH, a non-profit Ltd. **Founding director:** Francesca Ferguson (Curator and critic). **Advisory Board:** Dr. Thomas Herr (CEO, Valteq GmbH), Matthias Mai (CEO Mai PR), Martin Heller (Lawyer, Consulting), Andreas Krüger (CEO Belius GmbH), Kristin Feireiss (Aedes ANCB), Gabriele Horn (Director, KW Berlin), Christine Edmaier (Präsident, Berlin Chamber of Architects), Prof. Rainer W. Ernst (Architect, BDA), Jürgen Mayer H (Architect).

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