

Co-producing Alternative Urban Futures through Experimental Urbanism

Symposium Series: Brussels, 15th – 16th January 2026

Event Program Day 1: 15th January 2026

Location VUB-ULB USquare campus, Boulevard Général Jacques 210A, room A.1.23, Brussels (Ixelles)

9:15 – 10:00 Coffee and registration

10:00 – 10:30 Welcome and short event summary: Prof Bas van Heur, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Dr Georgiana Varna, Newcastle University; Dr Michael Crilly, Northumbria University

10:30 – 12:30 Presentation session 1: Concepts, classification and context of experimental urbanism (Moderator: Georgiana Varna, Newcastle University)

10:30 – 10:50 Michael Crilly, Northumbria University, UK; Georgiana Varna, Newcastle University: **An Experimental Owl: The domain of knowledge on experimental urbanism**

10:50 – 11:10 Benedikt Stoll, Urban Practice eV, Guerilla Architects, fiveP consulting cooperative, former Research Associate at Institute for Design and Urban Planning at Leibniz University of Hannover, Germany: **Place-Based Approaches for a Regenerative Economy**

11:10 – 11:30 Despoina Papadopoulou, MAZi Architects, UK; Mathias Kerremans, Bram Iven, SMAK Architects, BE: **Co-Locating Housing and Education as Experimental Urbanism: Governance, Feasibility and the Re-Drawing of Learning Neighbourhoods**

11:30 – 11:50 Heather Kruger, Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation, South Africa: **Setting the Programme for Social Facilities in Low-Income Neighbourhoods in South Africa**

11:50 – 12:10 Shaun Young & Stephen Roberts, Northumbria University, UK: **The Necessity of Non-Linear and Experimental Architectural Practice in the Age of Financial Uncertainty**

12:10 – 12:30 Q&A

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch

13:30 – 15:30 Presentation session 2: Experimental Streets, Spaces and Systems (Moderator: Michael Crilly, Northumbria University)

13:30 – 13:50 Jen Storan, Meanwhile Space CIC, UK; Tom Dobson, Public Works, UK; Rebecca Moroni, Politecnico di Milano, Italy: **An incremental approach to shifting narratives at neighbourhood scale: Insights from Loughborough Junction, South London**

13:50 – 14:10 Silvia Arnold, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Switzerland: **An Urban Experimentation for Sustainability Transitions and the Question of Transferability: An Analysis of Contextualisation Practices across European Innovation Ecosystems**



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14:10 – 14:30 Kobe Tilley, Ghent University, Belgium; Tim Devos, Ghent University, Belgium; Angelos Varvarousis, ICTA-UAB, Barcelona, Spain: **Eighty initiatives later: tracing impact the of the Ghent Temporary Use Fund beyond place**

14:30 – 14:50 Edison França da Silva Filho, Università degli Studi di Firenze, DIDA, Dipartimento di Architettura, Italy: **The End And The Beginning of Experimental Urbanism: Reflections on Ephemerality, Governance, and the Temporal Arc of Urban Transformations**

14:50 – 15:10 Tatiana Bodnar, Swansea University, UK: **RainScape Swansea: Piloting Sustainable Urban Drainage for Future Generations in Wales' Second City**

15:10 – 15:30 Q&A

15:30 – 16:30 Coffee to go and group travel to project site visit: Palais / Marbré initiative in Schaerbeek, Brussels, which is currently managed by the temporary use association Communa. Some info here: <https://communa.be/les-lieux/marbre/>

We will be taking the tram in front of our USquare venue to this initiative. People can either buy individual tickets at the ticket machine or simply scan their bank card in the tram. 30 minutes door-to-door.

16:30 – 18:30 Site visit and guided discussion

18:30 – onwards Socialising over drinks in nearby bars.



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Event Program Day 2: 16th January 2026

Venue: VUB-ULB USquare campus, Boulevard Général Jacques 210A, room A.1.23, Brussels (Ixelles)

9:30 – 10:00 Coffee and registration

10:00 – 12:00 Presentation session 3: Review, reflection and reality of urban experiments
(Moderator: Michael Crilly, Northumbria University)

10:00 – 10:20 Jan Peter Glock, German Environment Agency, Germany: **Assessing the transformative potential of street experiments**

10:20 – 10:40 Agata Pięt, University of Applied Sciences in Nysa, Poland; Stella Schroeder, Universidad del Bío-Bío, Chile; Rita Ochoa, University of Lisbon, Portugal: **Mapping and Identifying the Spatial Strategies in the Sharing City: Urban Installations Related to Exchange**

10:40 – 11:00 Katie Friedman, Kathleen Yang-Clayton, Dhruv Shah, DePaul University, The Center for Equity, Effectiveness, and Efficiency, USA: **Embedding equity in urban experimentation: a meso-level analysis of institutional and organizational dynamics**

11:00 – 11:20 Madeline Mesich, Independent Researcher, formerly affiliated with 4CITIES, France: **"This system was not made for us": Systems Thinking and Tenant Organizing**

11:20 – 11:40 Semire Bayatli, Pratt Institute, New York, USA: **A Thought Experiment in Experimental Urbanism: "Sensory Placemaking" beyond the Visual-Dominant Debate**

11:40 – 12:00 Q&A

12:00 – 13:00 Lunch

13:00 – 15:00 Presentation session 4: Politics, protest and participation in urban experiments
(Moderator: Georgiana Varna, Newcastle University)

13:00 – 13:20 Harry Smith, Heriot-Watt University, UK; Maria Soledad García Ferrari, University of Edinburgh, UK; Carlos Velásquez, Mesa de Vivienda y Hábitat de Comuna 8, Medellín, Colombia; Wilmar Castro Mera, Universidad Nacional de Colombia sede Medellín, Colombia; Ana Miret García, University of Edinburgh / Heriot-Watt University, UK; Róbinson Velásquez, Mesa de Vivienda y Hábitat de Comuna 8, Medellín, Colombia: **Co-produced experiments in integrated disaster risk management, climate change adaptation and urban planning in Comuna 8, Medellín, Colombia**

13:20 – 13:40 Melissa Quetulio-Navarra, Ateneo de Manila University, / Advisor for Joly Homes Foundation (JHF), Philippines: **Street Dialogues as Experimental Urbanism: Co-producing Durable Solutions with the Invisible Population of the Philippine Metropolis**

13:40 – 14:00 Menglei Zhang, Bartlett School of Planning, UCL, UK: **Exploring the role of temporary urbanism in urban regeneration within the context of China's urban transformation: the shift from a focus on quantity to a focus on quality**

14:00 – 14:20 Wattana Songpetchmongkol, Mackintosh School of Architecture, The Glasgow School of Art, UK; Sing Hang Tam, University of Art, London, UK: **The Meaningless-ness of Protest: An Urban Pseudo-Leisure**

14:20 – 14:40 Zeynep Nur Gün & Duygu Cihanger Ribeiro, Middle East Technical University, Turkey: **From Guerrilla to Governance: Experimental Urbanism in the Urban Context of Turkey**

14:40 – 15:00 Q&A

15:00 – 15:30 Coffee

15:30 – 17:00 Collaborative Workshop:

How to enhance the impact of academic research and align it more harmoniously with the policy and planning worlds? (with both academics and policy makers; with particular focus on early career researchers).

17:00 – 17:30 Wrapping up and steps forward for the project and network

17:30 – onwards Socialising over drinks in nearby bars



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