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Place-making strategies of culturepreneurs. The case of Frankfurt/M., Germany

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**Title: Place-making strategies of *Culturepreneurs*.
The case of Frankfurt/M., Germany**

Theme (Sectoral Changes and New Markets)

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0. Abstract

The paper refers to a new sociological type – the *Culturepreneur* – who develops heterogeneous place-making strategies in urban space. By *Culturepreneur* I understand an increasing number of people who (have to) convert their artistic-creative talents into economic revalorization. Thus, they do not primarily pursue an economic-entrepreneurial objective but above all place making in societal and urban space. "Be cool!" This could be the motto of the urban entrepreneurial type: Be young, break with social-liberal traditions of safety-oriented status thinking, try out new life prospectuses, feel the freedom of the individual and celebrate life (in the city). Transferred to the situation in cities there are new special scene shops, galleries, record label shops and further consumer offers. Those are often flexible, multi-functional places for different lifestyle groups.

In addition, the achievement of a *Culturepreneur* is also to gather urban groups and functional areas at such places by providing variant readings of urbanity. Places are to *Culturepreneurs* a central component of their societal positioning work in order to create a context for their professional activity, rub against it, deceive others and play with it. The playful and trance-like dealing with city as a permanent adventure playground is not least accompanied by flexibility patterns and social disintegration processes. Individualised entrepreneurial existence strategies veil over and wrap up both independence claimed by politics and a gradual exclusion from social security systems. What can be found under the buzzword of a new entrepreneurship among *Culturepreneurs* are individualised marketing strategies, social hardships but also skilled interchange between social welfare office and employment relationships.

1. Introduction

In the wake of the political formation of a *neue Mitte*, a "New Centre", in 1998, it is now, by a process of diagnosis, possible to establish first connections between political strategies, and socio-cultural urban development processes. With the paradigm change of 1998 individualistic, entrepreneurial qualities which interact in a new way with the urban came to be expressed. One potential champion of these developments is a type which has yet been to be defined in greater detail, the *Culturepreneur*. *Culturepreneurs* describes an urban protagonist who possesses the ability to mediate and interpret between the areas of culture and of service provision, and who may be characterised, first and foremost, as a creative entrepreneur, people who run clubs, record shops, fashion shops and other outlets, who close gaps in the urban with new social and spatial practices.

With the help of empirical case studies, it is possible to show that, for the city of Frankfurt/M. (Germany), which has long since been an advertisement for the geography of centrality, the *Culturepreneurs'* individual emplacement strategies are not only to be read as the product of neo-liberal policies and processes of attaining autonomy forced upon them by a need to secure a livelihood. It is much more important to investigate at which locations and with which spatial materials this type is responsible for the reconstitution and reformation of scenes in the age of an increasingly individualised and fragmented society. The spatial practices of these pioneers not only provide insights into the new urban ways of behaving helpful to analyses of municipal culture. They also allow for the observation of the playful (self) production and performance tactics of these individuals on the urban stage, which reveal consciously constructed identificatory opportunities for adoption and adaptation, deliberately littered with contradictions for the purpose of fine distinction.

The paper asks at the same time about the interpretations which this type contributes to urban conditions, and also addresses the cultural-economic modernisation status of the financial metropolis. Caught up in the demands of the New Centre to trade sceptical attitudes for implementation-orientated attitudes and to support a new individualised entrepreneurial scene, the *Culturepreneurs* embodies a highly ambivalent relationship: the catchword "new entrepreneurship" alludes to individualised marketing strategies and social hardships, but also to skilful alternation between employment office, employment and self-employment structures. (cf. Mc Robbie 1999, p. 14) It is unclear which abilities are attributed to the *Culturepreneurs*, what kind of agencies they require - or create for themselves - to build up networks, to arrange meetings, to share experience. Which urban locations do they need, or will they create their own locations in the absence of suitable locations in order to communicate, form and present themselves away from traditional settings such as such as employment agencies, trade fairs and corporate associations.

To put it in more abstract terms: If the integrative machine "the city" no longer functions comprehensively, which visible and invisible social micro-formations will appear in an urban society and take the place of the traditional, formal and, concomitantly, democratically- checkable forms of work and engines of integration? What consequences arise for the (forever) youthful protagonists? The question must also be raised what importance the products of the new creativity can have in an age of commercialised culture production, and what space is there left for critical and socially integrative projects? A prerequisite for such a discussion is that the categories of space which have in the past been regarded as being on the margins should now be brought to centre stage. Here space is to be understood as the result of an act of synthesis based on the specific strategies and tactics of protagonists. The term "spacing" describes the active process in which an individual relationally orders social goods and bodies. On the basis of this, space constitutes itself as a process through the synthesis, by the means of perception, memory and feeling, of these social goods and bodies. (cf. Löw 2001) In the post-industrial city, individual differentiation strategies are symbolically formulated. The socio-spatial structure expresses itself increasingly strongly in local politics through

which the individuals not only create symbolic difference but also attempt to arouse attention through positioning tactics anchored in the location.

The next section will start with explanations of the term *Culturepreneur* (2.), and the term culture (3.). It is followed by a presentation of approaches to social and spatial establishment of new urban communalisation (4.). An exemplary implementation of this diagnosis with empiric interview material will be used to further explore the initial question, so as to present first findings relating to possible tactics (de Certeau 1988) developed with content-analytical evaluation methods by using the Rhein-Main metropolis region of Frankfurt am Main (5./6./7.). A first conclusion will sum up the social and spatial practices of the entrepreneurial actors examined in the ongoing research process (8.).¹

2. Culturepreneurs

The following contribution focuses on the observation of other than the dominant place-making strategies of the finance and services complex in Frankfurt/M. (*Mainhattan Model*), adopted by actors from the culture industry sphere. Those actors represent a type, as yet undefined in a scientific context, which is characterised here by the term *Culturepreneur*. The term *Culturepreneur* is a compound of *cultural* and *entrepreneur* and was first suggested by Davies/Ford (1999) following Bourdieu. Both authors characterised a type who, in structural terms, is a communicative provider of transfer services between the sub-systems “business-related services” and “creative scene” and in doing so seems to satisfy a necessary demand. Such knowledge- and information-based intermediaries increasingly emerged in the gallery, art and multimedia scene in London in recent years (cf. also Grabher 1998, 2001). In my analyses, I extend this type diagnosed by Davies/Ford (op. cit.) and query how those intermediaries can possibly also be regarded as *space pioneers*. Examined is the extent to which its appearance in urbanity can be specifically explained by involving geographic space. Hence, the following is a broad-based analysis of the general conditions that may grant this type a decisive role in a potential formation of new approaches to and methods of dealing with urban, economic and cultural modernisation processes.

What I think is unclear is their role in an urban context in the development of cultural clusters, called *local cultural industries*². Accumulation of cultural facilities and “cultural capital” in one place makes – it is assumed – a positive impact on the siting policy of “placeless” service economies. In particular, the *new creative workers* active in the “business-related services” sector expect and require – as assumed, e.g., by Helbrecht (1998) – such social and creative milieus for their professional activities.

This simultaneity and complexity of the observed processes refers all the more to context-sensitive approaches and a view of the transformation milieus which suggests the conclusion that it is appropriate to also examine the emergence of the new as something novel (cf. Matthiesen 2002).

3. From sub- and high to pop culture

At the latest since Tom Holert's and Mark Terkessidis' pop standard work "Mainstream der Minderheiten", ("Mainstream of the minorities") 1996, the clear distinction between sub- and pop culture has been massively questioned. The authors describes the 1990s as having been marked by fast shifting and recoding processes between mainstream and underground resulting in the formation of a hybrid mainstream consisting of minorities. The class- or stratum-specific model is replaced by the scene model where social networks with their pertaining symbol worlds can be freely chosen. New everyday-sociological categories, such as style, scene, trend and fashions, are gaining relevance as means of distinction. Difference is the mainspring of post-modern consumption. The tactics and practices of demarcation (from official culture) used to be genuinely linked to the underground. However, the culture industry becomes interested, detects even the most subtle refusal and re-evaluation, and takes advantage of such. This happened to the *punk*, *grunge* and partly also to the *rave* and *techno* scenes: Pop is described as an ever-regenerating potential of social and aesthetic attitudes.

The relation between pop and high culture is similar. The elitist marginalisation strategies of bourgeois high culture (to which the subculture elitisms had structurally adjusted) have been undermined: Who wants top appear to be educated today does not only go to theatre or opera but proves his/her cultural competence also in the field of popular culture. Beside Sunday museum visits also the regular consumption of the "Harald-Schmidt-Show"³ is important in order to keep track of the FAZ feuilleton.

Particularly inconsistent with the traditional high culture concept are the new creative scenes of *Culturepreneurs* romping around in electronic media, design, and advertising but also in the music- and clubsapes. Global networking and novel creative methods are their vehicles to overstep the classical "handiwork" concept, redefine the relationship between art and economy, subculture and mainstream, city and city image, and city and individual. Most of the products of those actors meet highest aesthetic demands, which suggests that highly developed techniques were adopted and made into a new independent system of cultural life.

Culturepreneurs are celebrated, on the one hand, as avant-garde of societal political flexibilisation and creative cells, on the other, they are suspiciously watched because of their critical potential and sometimes even fought socio-politically. The latter becomes especially apparent at the urbanity level. Previous analyses of *local cultural industries* reductionistically pointed to the urban-economic value added of cultural facilities.⁴ Those subsume in the widest sense creative (professional) activities into an administrative space unit under the aspect of cultural space but finally hoped for economic prosperity. As a consequence, links are forged with the city marketing function which intends to sell the summarily attained (or expected) economic profit of the culture (management) industry as an image gain for the entire city.

Angela McRobbie analyses the situation of selected *creative industries* protagonists in London boroughs and the observed socially disintegrated and fragile professional and living situations against the background of popular culture (cf. McRobbie 1999, 2002). Artists organise their own exhibitions or open their own shops. Critics assess such activities as commercial strategies – which they doubtlessly are. But they are also opportunities of getting over unemployment and starting an activity that is perceived by the public. Thus, *Culturepreneurs* are positioning themselves both in the do-it-yourself tradition of punk and in the neo-liberal corporate culture.

4. Processes of individualisation and scenes: What happens to (urban) space?

An aesthetic of the urban and an atmosphere of the possible create urgently needed fertile soil for the new, creative entrepreneurs, many of whom have planted in it the seed of their own business or urban dreams. This brings with it a greater emphasis on subjective experience. Although image strategies provide the visual codes and spatial images in relation to which one positions oneself, such images only have a justification for existence when there is correspondence with workable spatial-sensual contexts of experience.

The politics of the New Centre has a visual effect on the development of this new type of cultural entrepreneur. The addressees of the politics (and image politics) mentioned, are representatives of a de-structured urban society whose reality is not only extremely individualised but also equally greatly ambivalent. As a result of numerous unpredictabilities, lost communal reliability, and an alleged multi-optionality with regard to life choices, individuals are required to make a series of new decisions about their behaviour in order to emplace themselves in society. The spatial location of playful experimentation with this demand for individualisation is the city: the city is seen as the laboratory for one's own ideas, irrespective of the fact that the individual protagonists are subject to new patterns of flexibilisation and processes of social disintegration, which, seen from a different point of view, can best be absorbed in the urban. Individualised entrepreneurial existence strategies, however, are socio-politically positively coded, and have been at least since 1998. Here, independence demanded by politics, and the gradual exclusion from the social security system, are gallantly whitewashed by the choice of language.

One positive, yet ironic interpretation, could assign to the new type of entrepreneur a much needed function in the economic sector of the city; as the creator of bridges and systems of communication between the two subsystems of economy and culture. (cf. Bude 2001, p. 9) At these hubs of communication, whose physical equivalents are club events, gallery openings and start-up launch parties, questions concerning the modernisation of the city are addressed anew. It is not the self-presentation of the individual, which should be regarded as the principal significance of these patently performative events. The places of the *Culturepreneurs* are, rather, a platform for social interaction and transfer; platforms on which, using urban materials, new relationships can be tried out. Place matters! The question for the present urban-planning and urban-development making of

places in the city in times of significant and generally accepted transformation processes is inevitably linked with the question for whom such places shall be made or also changed.

On account of numerous socio-structural unpredictabilities, lost common reliabilities and a superficially observed multi-optionality the urban individual finds itself exposed to a large variety of action alternatives and decisions that can facilitate societal place-making for it (cf. above all Beck 2001: 17 ff). *Dis-embedded* from known socio-structural securities, such as church, trade unions and associations and increasingly also family ties, the individual has to decide within a grown time volume for some social contexts that ensure timely flexible social integration opportunities. However, the modes of structuring of “post-traditional communities” noted in this process (Baumann 1995: 19) are very much unclear. Post-traditional communities differ from “settled and established communities” after Hitzler/Pfadenhauer (1998: 78) in that memberships can be revoked at any time and base on a largely free decision. In addition, another difference of those new forms after Baumann (op. cit.) is that they create an “imagined or aesthetic community” which provides the short-term illusion of being coherent in terms of forming opinions as to what is right and relevant. It has authority, as long as it is assigned authority, since it has only little institutional sanction potentials. The power aspect, posited by Bauman and Hitzler/Pfadenhauer, bases on the potential of persuasion, on the per definition voluntary emotional bonds of the actors conceiving themselves as members. However, from an analytical view, there are also obscurities with regard to the protagonists of the “persuasion debate”: Particularly in the question for the *How* and the critical examination of individual contexts: *How* and *where* does the establishing core of the communalisation processes form? Or, more directly put: What happens to (urban) space?

Initially, it appears to be less plausible to identify purely aesthetic and visible surface phenomena (clothing, outfit, etc.) as basis and motor of the desire to participate in scene formation processes. While this may surely be a sub-aspect to be considered, the questions arises for the deep structures and subjective motivations of actors integrated into specific scenes. Our findings suggest that mere participation and assimilation in a collective during one of the much-quoted techno events *cannot* – in analytical terms – already manifest the core of scenification.⁵

More recent approaches, however, explicitly explore the rank of space and show that space-establishing processes are progressing much more complex. Conceptually Löw (2001) pointed out that establishing processes of spaces are “brought about in acting by a structured arrangement of social goods and people in places.” According to Löw (op. cit., 204) “objects and people are arranged synthetically and relationally.” They posit that spaces are not always visible formations but can be materially perceived. Accordingly, spaces are ascribed a potentiality that is characterised by the term “atmosphere” (cf. e.g. Böhme 1995).

The constructivist approach of Löw makes a changed relationship between body and space the centre of attention. The task at hand, further developed from this, is to address the experiences and emotions which are intrinsic in physical bodies and interact with built-up space. After Wigley

(1998: 18), entering a building (and a city) means to experience its atmosphere. Atmospheres are created purposefully and, hence, in a societal manner. After Böhme (op. cit.) they are a reality that is shared by the perceiver and the perceived.

If a potentiality is ascribed to spaces, the latter are bodily and physical actors and, due to their radiation, a variable that is relevant and considerable – which was made only insufficiently in the past – in analysing the establishing processes of new forms of communalisation. The truth is that the distinctive place is less – albeit also – (purely) physical than rather a variable that is deliberately chosen by individuals because it is suitable for compatible staging opportunities for group formation processes. Their functioning can generate affective identification processes only retrospectively. The linguistic analogy of the sociological category “Szene” [scene] and the spatial category “in Szene setzen” [stage] links scenes to the radiation of a physical place. *Club events* e.g., are stagings and temporary place-makings of scenes on the urban stage where the actors use urban fabric – the city or building solid – to create a networked relationship of power and tension. This scene experiences itself in its materiality and corporeality by its emotional presence at and with the places it selects.⁶

Bette (1999) sees the increased presence of skateboarders but also of other phenomena, such as general sports activities, artistic actions, performances in shopping and consumption areas in inner cities as an existential attempt of individuals at attaining a new affective-bodily experienceability and especially an enhancement of the intensity of their sensitivity not in any but deliberately chosen places. He takes up current phenomena and explains that such only come to bear with a constructed atmospheric net, a space image. This net generates and simultaneously radiates meaning but experiences its purposes only when the actors integrate their bodies and their preparedness to experience this situation into the temporary power field.

This cursory and brief overview of works in the field of social analysis shows that after the emergence of new professional and activity fields in cultural production there are only very limited and inadmissibly reduced queries of changes of meaning also in relation to urbanity. Hence, it will be analysed at which negotiating places this type is responsible for the re-establishment and re-formation of scene-like communities in an age of an increasingly individualised and fragmented society (cf. Hitzler/Bucher/Niederbacher 2001).

5. Frankfurt/M., Germany

Little noticed by the municipal powers that the number of private exhibition rooms and clubs in Frankfurt has multiplied, particularly in the latter half of the 90s. This may be seen both as a response to the creation of institutional hierarchies and as a function of the do-it-yourself attitude of producers. The fact that this has its roots in youth culture suggests new authenticity, which is also an indication of self-regulated variety. So far the protagonists of this youth culture have found themselves constantly at loggerheads with the municipal authorities. “The department for culture

has no respect for the youthful, creative potential and the public affairs office hinders it with narrow-minded bureaucratic regulations,” Chris Tedjasukmana reports, the Asta culture expert at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt. (cf. Tedjasukmana 2001, p. 11) This was a topic of discussion in what was certainly a spectacular platform discussion in the Frankfurt club Space Place. The title for the evening was “What you want, what is possible”. Local government politicians – in particular the Frankfurt mayoress, Petra Roth – argued over Frankfurt cultural policy with producers of culture from many different areas. So is everything cool? Or, what is actually possible?

While other research speaks of processes of spatial disintegration, for example, of centres of creativity (cf. Mc Robbie 2002), what follows here will show, using the example of Frankfurt, that – outside the dominant and for the most part visible emplacement strategies of the financial and service complexes – new tactics in spatial practice can be observed. The analysis of these can provide information on current social formation structures. The following urban platforms (“in the shadow-economy”, and “light places”) deal with action in the tense relationship between neo-liberal existential basic conditions and the desire for an economic and artistic realisation of one’s own ideas. They also show strategies arising from need and, above all, the seeds of new kinds of urban acting. They also show how globalisation processes affect the politics of place and space with erstwhile unknown formations arising on the micro-level.⁷

6. In the shadows-economy. Between culture and economics

The east of Frankfurt/M. lay for years in the shadow of the up-and-coming service and financial complexes in the west and, as a de-industrialised zone it attracted little attention. Its numerous harbour areas and railway land and buildings became sets for gangster and Mafia films, and they were robbed of their original functions. Decontextualised and integrated into higher overall planning concepts by municipal planners these locations can – given their function as wasteland – be equally well characterised as non-places. These non-places, however are attracting ever-increasing numbers of young artists and entrepreneurs. Hidden away between old railway-track systems, dilapidated industrial plants, factory buildings and warehouses and right beside a mortuary, stands, for example, the home and workplace of morgen [lit. translated: “tomorrow”] the project of Thomas T. (stone mason) and Sabine M. (architect) a married couple. T. /M. perceive the place where they reside, work and live as follows:

“When you walk here from the west, from the former wholesale market hall, then at first there is, well, nothing at all. Only a few people work near us here, and they are all medium-sized companies, and when you walk along the Hagenstrasse it looks like just after the war. Every one minds their own business and is well advised to leave the others in peace. In that sense it’s a bit like living in a village. On the other side over there you have the Frankfurt tramps, they get their food from the charity Caritas. Right opposite that there’s a scrap dealer for Volkswagen Beetles, then a paper wholesaler, all in all it’s a pretty curious neck of the woods. On the way to us here from the supermarket hall

there is also the job market for Russians and East Europeans, if you need workers you just drop by there in the car.” (Interview with Sabine M., April 2001)

The contexts and relationships mentioned in the description of the location of *morgen* are invisible to the observer at first glance. The “Russian job market” is dependent on the health of the economy and on the season of the year, it is extremely flexible and prefers to function in darkness. The mortuary works discreetly and silently, the tramps, the runaways and the needy get their food from Caritas and then afterwards go their own ways. The emphasis on these functions indicates their disparate and marginal character. The relational ties in this place are distinct from discourses on normality and prompt associations in the field of tension between the “village” as familiar homeland and a freak show. At the same time a lightness can be detected in the description and in the choice of this environment: T. /M. are flirting with existence on the periphery of society, and the presence of this periphery is used as the basis for their own demarcation and limitation. Through this instrumentalisation, the work on the social margins brings to mind the traditional Bohemian attitudes of the start of the 20th century. In this symbolic heterogeneity the two creative entrepreneurs seek to anchor their emplacement strategies. They are seeking to formulate a starting point - a genius locus - for their own story. In the interview with Sabine M., she said,

“The Maybachstraße in Frankfurt, where morgen is located, is the place where we work and where our friends live and it is at the same time a challenge [...] It is difficult to arouse people’s enthusiasm and I know what an amazing effort it took at the beginning to make even a couple of people come along. Now the place is often full. To begin with, though, we spent a whole year writing to people in the city. The city of Frankfurt is really quite small, the centre of town has just 250,000 inhabitants.”

According to their own description, Thomas T. and Sabine M. develop and put ideas into practice for the interiors of houses, offices, exhibition rooms and clubs. They build furniture, but do not define themselves furniture producers. They deliver concepts, objects for use in homes, the possession of which is to be understood as a sign of belonging to the informal networks of specific scenes. They describe the building in which they work thus:

“This is the building, from the 50s, in which morgen lives and works. It has three floors – from the cellar up to under the flat roof – which house a gallery, a carpenter’s workshop, an office and a living space. Frankfurt’s eastern docks are not only the location of morgen but also the source of inspiration for its name. Just as the sun rises in the east, so begins a new morning, a new “morgen” and a new day.” (cf. e.g. morgen (ed.) 2000)

The stacking of the functions working, living and pleasure all in one area is a conscious reference to the image of another harmonious “morning”: the desire for the merging of artistic activity, entrepreneurial endeavour and, not least, family life. In this respect a blueprint for life is postulated, contemplated, and put into practice which stands against the ever-increasing fragmentation of urban social life. The *morgen* location is intended – as an island in a curious little corner of Frankfurt – to be the spatial counterpart to the adjacent mortuary and indeed to the rest of Frankfurt. This utopian ideal is, however, simultaneously exposed; the location is being played like a theatre, and the per-

formance offered refers less to the location than to the conditions under which the *Culturepreneurs* resort to these means: In order to be conspicuous and noticed in the dense field of the world of art and culture producers then one requires a “location” which is loaded with tension. Such a location raises questions and arouses curiosity precisely because it cannot be fitted into the usual pattern and discourse and throws up contradictions. This conscious spatial positioning outside the usual pattern of emplacement, however, raises the further question of how the *Culturepreneurs* are to make themselves known in their scene and how they should present themselves.

On 20th July 2001, event organiser and doyen of the scenes Hans Romanov, who commutes between Paris and Berlin, but in between occasionally lives in Frankfurt, threw a spontaneous birthday party for himself in the vaulted cellar at *morgen*. He promoted the party via a variety of Frankfurt’s electronic distribution lists. The location instantly became known to a larger party community. A little later a virtual flyer distributed by *morgen* announced the opening of an exhibition of the work of an artist friend – again in the *morgen* cellar area, which, by now had come to be described as “gallery rooms”.

The *Culturepreneurs*’ locations are part of a highly individual and at the same time playful policy of attention. In order for the locations to come to register in the minds of other people a specific policy of location and scene is necessary, which renegotiates belonging. *Morgen*, for example, is the meeting place for an open, but clearly defined group of friends, colleagues, rivals, the interested and the curious. Access to this location and perception of it, are guided by a policy which display similarities to those of a club. The well known selection mechanism of a club – bouncers turning people away at the door – does, though, take a rather more subtle form in the case of *morgen*. A variety of media, such as word of mouth, mailing lists and flyers, ensure that information on forthcoming events, exhibition openings or even new products, reaches a specific target group. Alongside this information policy, however, efforts are also made to ensure that the location *morgen* occasionally recedes into oblivion. For months on end nothing happens; no events are organised, certainly, also, because there are other matters to be attended to.

In the case of *morgen* we can see that a game is being played, a game which the visitors balance, camouflaging the location and then returning it to public consciousness at a later date. T. /M. work without an annual plan and announce their art exhibitions at short notice by sending invitations via e-mail lists, above all to selected friends and interested members of the Frankfurt art scene. The header on the e-mail indicates (or fails to indicate) membership of what has thus ostensibly become a scene and is the criterion for inclusion or exclusion about which no one bothers to talk openly.

This at first surprising and seemingly contradictory strategy of hiding is behaviour of a kind which evokes memories of the old socialist mentality with regard to the service industry: the customer is not king, and business apparently doesn’t matter. This strategy is also employed outwardly: To the outside world the appearance of the location *morgen* offers no indication of what events take place inside. Only insiders and those with local knowledge perceive it as place where events and

performances take place; only they can read the environment. In positioning itself in urban space by means of this policy of hide and seek *morgen* creates not only social difference but also keeps the broad masses at a distance.

When eager searchers do nonetheless find the location, another subtly created differentiation criterion comes into play. At the parties which take place, for example, after openings, the guests present are offered a variety of identification patterns by means of the art exhibited and the electronic music played. It is the assignment to these – based on the extent to which the performance can be experienced and interpreted – which first makes possible the memorable participation in the event. This is where the subtle exclusion strategy lies: No one is refused entry to the location, indeed it is rather the case that anyone is admitted, but only a few are integrated. And this first integration is also a challenge to secure membership on a permanent basis. For the changeable character of the location guarantees, in the first instance, that no trend is created, that no financial dependencies arise, and that commerce does not hinder the creative enterprise. It is this act of maintaining a balance of permanent change in the differentiation criteria, avoidance of pure commercialisation, and the employment of hiding strategies, which ensures the survival of this location and its protagonists for a time. If they were to position themselves as an open counterpart to existing cultural and social currents (the “underground” model) they would immediately be chewed up culturally by the urban trend machine and financially destroyed, as indeed they would be, too, if they adopted the “mainstream” model (as was the case in Frankfurt at, for example, Hanauer Landstraße 192).

The interest in location, in what location expresses, indicates, for one thing, pleasure in the local coding game. Pleasure, however comes up against the necessity of dressing the location in a specific narrative location-symbolism in order to be perceived at all. In the game with the significant, locations are for this reason the field of battle in the post-industrial city. Subtle tactics of social positioning can be observed at and in dealing with these locations. The non-places of east Frankfurt, for example, display heterotopic characteristics. They can no longer be categorised as underground or mainstream, as would have been perfectly possible a few years ago: those who operate and play at the locations have achieved a degree of reflection which makes it possible for them to employ emplacement tactics which work and play in economic and cultural terms with social Utopias, with alternative blueprints. They make use of traditional standards of Bohemianism but are, by reason of this very act of adaptation and by reason of their understanding of the *Zeitgeist*, pop-revolutionaries and, so, responsible for post-urban transformation processes.

The location *morgen* works well as a result of the parallelism of economic and symbolic-cultural laws. At this location social and entrepreneurial networks intersect and generate essential added value for all protagonists concerned. This is not explicable in economic terms, but rather – to put it positively – in terms of informal and “post-Mafia” interrelations. In the shadow of traditional business processes and off the established organisational paths of the service economies the protagonists pursue new interests. Their entrepreneurial endeavour is bound inextricably with artistic activity

and recoding policies. It also functions simultaneously as an element of social control whose control centre is the location *morgen*.

Locations like *morgen* are, then, systems which do not work against the local logic of utilisation. Because they do not ask anything of their location in financial terms the operators have the opportunity to place economics and cultural symbol practice in a new relationship to one another, a relationship in which, for the moment, they casually ignore the concomitant classic duality (economics vs. culture). The spatial practice of the protagonists T. /M. therefore characterises that critical moment in which it is possible to work creatively for a time with the quality of spaces.

The romantic label of the *Culturepreneurs* is also an honest targeting and marketing strategy: it is possible to see at once and is most obviously expressed in the well-meaning logo and motto *morgen*. Here, the harsh but fine differentiation criteria of the organising and the visiting protagonists are subtly veiled. Their shadowy existence is a strategy: the protagonists pursue a policy of temporary hide and seek and it is only through this that they are perceived at all in the attention-seeking game.

7. Light places

City wasteland spaces evoke diametrical interpretations: while the city's real-estate administrators transform the spaces into columns of figures and disposal units and the community's economic promotion department plans a booming and blooming future for it, its immediate neighbours whine about its neglect and progressive dilapidation. The dilapidation of areas near to the city shakes the faith in homogeneous growth and prosperity as unwelcome peripheralisation takes effect at the very centre. In the contest between the psychologically and also physically absent on the one hand and the (not yet) present on the other, a field of forces develops where, as a result of the dynamics of developments on the flanks in other locations, absence had, for a long time, good chances and opportunities in Frankfurt, too. The power of the inner city void attracted temporary and nomadic utilisations. Locations which have temporarily fallen out of the cycle of economic utilisation of space develop their potential by opening up temporary settlement opportunities for such vagabond uses. In such locations surplus energy is released, and there is temporary cultural recoding and possibly architectonic innovation.

In contrast to the inertia of traditional architecture and the rigidity of its structures, temporary activities are, thanks to their lightness, both flexible and changeable. In these "light locations" it is not only the instability of the city that finds expression; here we also find new modes of urban behaviour. The awareness of the existence of a cultural other alongside one's own self, creates, in the first place an experience-related depth and through that, then, a field of the possible. If those possibilities within this field were to be eradicated from the city and its memory or regulated, then the loss of the other would also have to be expected and accepted, as would the loss of spatial and cultural depth and the possible emergence of the post-urban.

The following example of party politics demonstrates a development which marked a turning point in the debate concerning city locations and which has an indirect connection with the artistic and locational practice of the well-known (Off-) *Galerie Fruchtig*, in Frankfurt. The policy of the *Galerie Fruchtig*, which Annette Gloser operated at various locations for more than a decade, was always to try to find new and artistically exciting locations, and to give these locations another temporary use with her concepts, and so offer a reflection on social changes. While Gloser successfully experimented into the 90s with the inner-city periphery, this model has, in the meantime, devoured itself: the sub-cultural sally into the deindustrialised arena was often a herald of processes of economic upgrading and therefore the interesting locations in Frankfurt are today either being played already or plans have already been made for them.

Ignoring this development, the *Nachttanzdemo* [night time dance demo, NTD] and the spread of temporary party-locations, above all in the second half of the 90s, gave rise to new tactics for the appropriation of space. These tactics – similar to Gloser’s strategy – had a performative character and it was not the quality of the location which was central but the temporary inappropriate use of public spaces for spontaneous celebration. “Illegal parties are simply more fun!” (cf. Tedjasukama 1999). The self-appointed political section of the Frankfurt party scene promoted the *Nachttanzdemo* August 2001 with the slogan “Local Beats against Global Players”. Politics and party should finally come together again in the “street re.public”:

“We don’t just want the city back just for a night’s dancing, what we want is the whole city back for us all... I want my parties, want to dance, want my drugs, want my night, my whole city – for EVERYONE!” (cf. street re.public nachtexpress, 2001, S. 1)

In the form of the *Nachttanzdemo* (NTD) campaign, the Frankfurt fun guerrillas stood up against the privatisation of urban public space and the commercialisation of everyday life. The challenge of repoliticising the annual street party had its origins in late summer 2001 in a dispute which threatened to split the Frankfurt scene. The reason: Lars K., an innovative *Culturepreneur* with his own “Digital Branding” agency founded the association “Nachttanzdemo Frankfurt e. V.” and declared his intention of applying to the patents and trademarks office for copyright of the label “Nachttanzdemo”. This shocked and angered large sections of the Frankfurt scene. Was the future NTD waiting with its merchandising concept, T-shirts, its own range of soft drinks, and advertising banners everywhere?

Would the future *Nachttanzdemo* stand not just for politics and partying but also for brands and money? The opposing faction sought to prevent this “nightmare scenario” by going back to the basic values behind the nocturnal dancing. And so – as a result of the dispute – in late summer of 2001 there were two NTDs, one on August 31st and one on September 1st. The August 31st NTD was considered the “real” one because it was political and supported by the majority of the scene while the one on September 1st was called the “commercial Kerschbaum variation”.

The origins of nocturnal dance protests go back to 1990 and the opening of the club *Romantica* – a project in the quarter around Frankfurt’s main railway station and set up by the darling of the scene, Hans Romanov. The complaints from the scene on that occasion were directed at the rigid closing-time regulations imposed by the public affairs office. Two years later the party fans rose again, this time to protest against the closing of *Romantica*. In 1995 the character of the nocturnal activities changed. At four in the morning the protesters, equipped with drums, gathered outside the house of the then city treasurer Tom Koenig and loudly demanded “Save Our Night!” A year later the public was so great in numbers that ten sound trucks took part in the *Nachttanzdemo* with the help of which the demonstration against the repressive regulations of the city proceeded in a manner which it was difficult to ignore. The dissatisfaction of the participants peaked in their demand for the abolition of the public affairs office.

The party afterwards on the Opernplatz is reputed to have lasted till the small hours of the morning. In 1997 the *NTD* was embedded into a large political setting for the first time. A constellation of DJs, bands, bars, cafés, clubs, political activists, record stores, and artists protested against the “decree to avert danger” which was pushed through by Udo Corts, then Frankfurt’s head custodian of the law, and aimed at ensuring a safe city centre. “*Lärm 97*” [Noise 97] stood up against “privatisation, security paranoia, and exclusion” and had for the first time an explicitly spatial dimension. A few weeks after the unexpectedly harsh police intervention (beatings, arrests, charges of breach of the peace) which even incensed a broad section of the media, the illegal *Lärm 97* gave birth to the legal ‘*Lärmschutz 97*’ [Noise Protection 97]. Officially registered for the first time, the right to demonstrate at night, a novelty in Germany, was thus asserted.

In 1998 there were no more beating-ups but more subtle methods were employed: Many illegal and semi-legal clubs were forced to close and this resulted in “*emissionen 98*” [emissions 98]. With more than ten music trucks this protest was larger and more popular than ever. The demand was, above all, for more tolerance of temporary projects, and it was fulfilled at least in part. Previously illegal parties which, using a kind of guerrilla tactics, had popped up in the most unexpected and widely varying locations and then vanished again, now settled into permanent clubs such as the *Space Place*.

Since the protagonists were evidently too busy with their own clubs there was no *NTD* in 1999. In its place came *STREETLIFE-Tanzparcour*, which was also intended to take place on the proto-political terrain of the city – the streets. The route was made known only via flyers and live via the X-Fade-DJ-Night on the independent local radio station “Radio X”. A participant:

“We met at an underground station and travelled right across the city centre with a mobile sound system and drums. The flyers had told people to bring ghetto-blasters and to tune into Radio X. The underground security guards and ordinary people on their way home from the late shift to watch television looked, a little puzzled, into the overcrowded compartments. At each station our numbers grew. We got out at the Frankfurt exhibition centre. The location was no coincidence. The stylish new quarter made of glass is, after the banking quarter, the pride of politics and capital. After just a few

minutes the first music truck appeared belting out techno beats. As if to order, the crowd screamed and we ran across the platforms, over the walls and streets towards the truck. The party was in full swing. The police were co-operative. We traipsed and danced over the fair's roundabout towards the tunnel to the port, an ideal party venue. And what a million ravers in Berlin's Tiergarten can do, we, too, can do with ease. A fair few people peed against the glass facades and onto the building sites of the exhibition site. A feeling of release in more senses than one." (cf. Tedjasukama 1999).

The *STREETLIFE-Tanzparcour* most clearly shows the tactics of temporary events. This party was incomprehensible to outsiders: with the arrival of the underground train at a station the dancing community would pop up to the surface briefly and take possession of the urban location, thus leveraging it out of its usual order. Roundabouts, streets, the banking districts were turned into spontaneous platforms for fun. And as quickly as it literally "emerged" the party suddenly disappeared again and became submerged in the invisible network of the underground railway, only to pop back to the surface somewhere else a short time later.

Through their actions the Rave-O-luzzer construct their own urban space, the creation of which Martina Löw analytically divides into two stages. The formation / ordering of the performative spaces, which are distributed like islands throughout the whole city, can be described as spacing. The synthesis achievement based upon this, that is, the active connection of the locations to make an ephemeral (experience -) space is created through the whole context of perception (atmosphere, music, participants) and underlying meaning and purpose of the nocturnal action. The concept of radical fun is combined here with a political statement which is articulated by performance rather than in words. The recoding of urban locations, even when it is only temporary and symbolic, refers beyond itself and questions ideas of registered property and ownership which have been materialised through the built-up space, and it also questions the cultural grammar of possible uses. At the same time the nocturnal parties reject forms of political protest such as the classic demonstration with banners and slogans ("yawn, boring"). Hedonism as a political strategy stands a lot previous ideas on their heads.

The attractiveness and the fun factor of such party concepts is not lost on the "style police" of a "digital branding" agency like that of Lars K. He set out to form a company on the basis the 'sub-cultural' capital which he had acquired in the scene: on his website it says "The successful wooing of a young target group requires knowledge of their identity. Trends, music, fashion, speech patterns, colours etc. must be recognised and used [...] We can [...] guarantee "credibility", that is, the early recognition and uptake of existing and – above all –future 'styles'." (cf. http://www.loft5.de/f09_stylepolice.htm) This claim to authenticity which Kerschbaum derives from membership of a subcultural scene becomes, through the formation of the company, a business strategy. But in that case what is still subculture? Is subculture, as is so often said, about to be sold out?

It is principally those who still identify with the label "subculture" who create frontiers between subculture and mainstream: "It is easier to understand the difference between us, the underground,

and whatever else if it is understood that a fundamental difference between underground and overground is that the one is a “spectacle” and a “simulation” of the other. The other is the underground.” (cf. street re.public nachtexpress 2001, p. 1) In other words: underground = real, and mainstream = fake. The example of the club *Space Place* shows that this differentiation is formulated too simply. In July 1997, in the figure of the club’s operator Matthias M., who comes from the “real” scene, which is “real” because it came out of Frankfurt’s political scene, the location was declared the “most ‘in’ club in Frankfurt” by the city magazine *Prinz*. The downmarket chic of the former illegal club situated in the Gutleut quarter became hip and so ran the danger of losing its underground status. “Credibility” and acceptance by the scene is essential to the survival of the concept of the *Space Place*. Perhaps club operator Matthias M. became involved the repoliticisation of the *Nachttanzdemo* in order to work on his image as “an authentic representative of the scene”. Looked at critically, this could be interpreted as a business strategy.

8. Culturepreneurs? Spatial competenc

The examples described characteristics and ways of perceiving through which the *Culturepreneurs* make themselves known as a new type on the urban stage: They form a new relationship between their work practice, the entrepreneurial turnover and their own social and creative development. This set of activities must – according to our observations - be framed by and tied into a tension-filled, ambivalent self-made ensemble of spatial image and code, which is difficult to interpret from outside but is, and this is crucial, interpretable for insiders. The required symbolic differentiation processes run, and here Ronald Hitzler’s sociological interpretations are blind to space (cf. R. Hitzler 2001) – on the one hand on the basis of readability of the physical environment without which inclusion and exclusion on the social-symbolic level would not be possible. On the other hand, the statements made by these *Culturepreneurs* indicate a playful attitude towards these very codes which are sometimes connected associatively and sometimes ironically instrumentalised in order to express their own placing strategies. The fields of culture and economics are “sampled” reflectively for the individuals own emplacement strategy and thus interrelate in a new way.

Culturepreneurs stand for the spread of a model where the biography of work is derived from the kinds of lives led by the classic artists. The job market for artists has long been one of the most dynamic and flexible part-time job markets which has ever existed. Discontinuous careers are the rule here; frequent changes between employment and non-employment, and between a variety of forms of work is the order of the day. *Culturepreneurs* adopt this model with all its contrasting facets. Their masterly marketing of their own labour is set against an existential insecurity which is hidden by a playfully Bohemian attitude.

The expert productions within the economy of attention hide a struggle to maintain one’s own position in society. As creative labour entrepreneurs *Culturepreneurs* (are forced to) take on the role of forerunners for the flexibilisation of the job market, a flexibilisation which will, in all probability, grow to encompass other sections of the economy. (cf. Wiedemeyer 2000, p. 167 ff)

This interface function of the *Culturepreneurs* is also clear at the dissolving borders between mainstream and subculture. Once, youth practices and subcultural practices served as a means to distinguish their practitioners from those in mainstream formations, but now maintaining this form of demarcation is becoming ever more difficult. The old dichotomy has been replaced by new social formations which no longer display a rigid contrast between mainstream and subculture, and which through the constant and simultaneous processes of reshuffling and recoding mediate between different social groupings. Those on the left complain about the much-cited “sell out of the underground” but, against this, it is also true that no clear mainstream can be recognised either. Difference rather than adaptation is the main drive behind post-modern consumption and this has led to a hybridisation of the mainstream and to a multiplicity of heterogeneous styles and groups. Ronald Hitzler and Michaela Pfadenhauer speak of “post-traditional forms of community formation” in which post-modern concepts such as individuality and community combine to produce a loose temporary structure which is binding only for the moment.

The *Culturepreneurs* studied take a central role in the constitution of scenes, in particular through helping to develop new urban coding formations. The synthetic (pioneering) achievement of the *Culturepreneurs* lies in the fact that they stage new tension-loaded and ambivalent location images and motifs even in places which have fallen out the traditional logic of urban use. The existing urban material is brought into relationship with their own entrepreneurial artistic activity and contributes in combination with what is physically present to an ambivalent visibility of the location. This (locational) policy of temporary hiding and disappearance must be interpreted in the context of the development of heterogeneous scene practices. While Hitzler (2001) identifies these practices for the most part a-physically and in unclear relation to built space and not just to social space, the story of the *Culturepreneurs* presented here using the example of Frankfurt/M., demonstrates that, they use their respective localities, especially for entrepreneurial activities, first of all to build up, that tension-loaded relationship which guarantees them artistic and entrepreneurial attention in the Frankfurt scenes.

The fact that greatly distorted, sometimes romantic, often very imaginative spatial images are designed, all of which flirt with the socio-political realities, cannot be attributed either to a hedonistic outflow from the fun society, nor to the spatial blindness of the *Culturepreneurs*. It is rather the case that these *Culturepreneurs* prove themselves to be the architects of spatial scavenging and recycling. The spatial pioneers position themselves in the perforated places in the city, the places which through deindustrialisation and reorganisation of the infrastructure have fallen out of the cycle of economic use and out of the everyday awareness of the urban society. Forgotten places have come to exist here, apparently functionless spaces, useless, neglected, left-over; in short, inner city peripheries. In an age of ever more closely controlled, staged shopping paradises and Disneyfied city areas, the *Culturepreneurs* once again conjure up memories of the instabilities of the face of the city in the 19th Century by means of temporary use, locational politics of hiding, and spatial visions.

Culturepreneurs are the future social switchpoints in an individualised society at which new formations will be tested, scenes formed and opened. Their entrepreneurial activity is characterised by a fast moving fluctuation in spatial location. The motors which drive this rapid change may be sought, on the one hand, among the bourgeois administrative and suppression practices of the city of Frankfurt and also, on the other hand, among the *Culturepreneurs* themselves, as they express their social integration in the game with the powers that be. In the course of this - mediated by their institutional function as bridgeheads in establishing specific scenes – they develop spatial placing practices and movement patterns which stand in ambivalent relationship to specific Frankfurt space strategies: the observed geographies of the ephemeral, of the temporary and the selective compete with the spatial practice of a geography of centrality, which particularly in Frankfurt, is, for the most part, visible. It is of course also (a little) cool to be against the dominant strategy and just as ‘in’ – by means of a tactically clever, oppositional concept – to profit from this financially. The extent to which the attempt at demarcation can be observed through the individual’s own playing of the rediscovered distinctive location is also the extent to which the element of flirting in the game with the significance of the location and the spatial relationships comes to the fore.

Ultimately the question remains of the extent to which Frankfurt faces up to and copes with its present tasks of modernisation: Cool Frankfurt? In cities such as London, Manchester, Vienna and Rotterdam, *Culturepreneurs* are, on the one hand, celebrated as the *avant garde* of politically and economically desirable flexibilisation, as cells of creativity, while they are, on the other hand, regarded with suspicion because of their often critical potential. In Frankfurt, the latter is the position adopted exclusively. This is astonishing, as Frankfurt has indeed for many years been a financial metropolis displaying the typical structural characteristics of a global city: social as well as spatial segregation, with the top managers here and the outclassed there; on the one side the geography of power, on the other side the gathering place for the marginalised. The “city” as the machine of integration no longer functions as it once did, it has developed new forms of community formation, social and spatial practices to which little attention has been paid so far in Frankfurt.

Frankfurt is showing itself to be downright resistant to modernisation. People here still believe that an intact city *gestalt* can be planned and realised. In order to make “Bankfurt” into a city fit to compete on the global stage the emphasis has recently come to be placed on “improving the quality of life” through the *Metropolitana*. (cf. Schultheis 2001, p. 34) In this model quality of life is defined as consisting of the quality of nature, leisure opportunities and – believe it if you will – abundant opportunities for different lifestyles. Ensuring opportunities for consumption and culture for a broad middle class to guarantee the quality of the location – it sounded something like that in the 80s, too. Only the circumstances have changed.

9. References

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Notes

¹ Cf. www.new-entrepreneurs.net (as at 15.04.2002) for further details.

² This term reflects the importance of knowledge- and information-based service provides within an urban post-Fordist service economy which has increased over the past ten years (Zukin 1998). It is from those innovative and flexible economies that cities are drawing their hope for economic growth and symbolic image gains. In this context the so-called *local cultural industries* – expressions of an ever-growing urban cultural sector – are more and more becoming the focus of attention (cf. European Institute for Urban Affairs 2000, Bassett/Griffiths/Smith 2002, Pratt 1997).

³ Popular german late night show, comparable to US Lettermann

⁴ cf. Mommass 2000 or also the 4. Kulturwirtschaftsbericht des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen 2002

⁵ It shall suffice to refer here to Funke/ Schroer (1998: 219 ff.) who do not assess Hitzler's dictum of a necessary integration into new forms of communalisation to be optional and conditioned purely emotional or aesthetical. Both authors opine that "sovereignty in issues of lifestyle is not superfluous luxury but competence of import for survival" (op. cit., 225). Hence, the socially differentiating criterion is less an apparently freely selectable subjective stylisation but an ambivalent "non-compulsory constraint towards necessary stylisation" of the self (op. cit. 227).

⁶ Bette (1999: 101 ff.) shows this, e.g., by the example of skateboarders who create a temporary arena in urban space where they (entertainingly) display their bodies – via acrobatic jumps – to the urban community.

⁷ The empirical basis for the following analysis was interviews with twenty people chosen by virtue of their entrepreneurial and artistic activities, conducted in summer 2001 in Frankfurt, Germany, by sociologist S. Steets and B. Lange.

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