

# **applied poetics in urban space**

**a series of choreographic interventions in kiev/ukraine**

a project by claudia bosse / in cooperation with urban curators kiev  
a production of theatercombinat

**15th – 20th may 2017**

**each day 2 – 7 pm**

15th may: maidan nezalezhnosti

16th may: moskovska square

17th may: kontraktova square

18th may: teremky

19th may: obolon

20th may: maidan nezalezhnosti



photo: claudia bosse, collage: nastya ponomaryova

## **about the political dimension of interventions in public space**

presentation by claudia bosse + panel discussion with hanna bondar  
(acting director of the department of city construction and architecture of kiev)

**5th may 2017: 6pm**

department of urban planning and architecture  
university kiev, khreshchatyk street 32, 01601 kiev

**applied poetics in urban space** is a series of choreographic interventions in urban space that will explore 5 different areas in kiev (maidan, moskovska square, kontraktova square, teremky and obolon). as a performative process the interventions develop physical investigations in public space and offer choreographic tools for the 25 participants to read and to relate to the urban space, non-spaces, dysfunctional spaces, urban wounds and symbolic spaces. how to relate, to construct, to physically understand space and to activate alternative imaginaries with their bodies? the public space will become an open studio of physical learning: what are the practices and the rhythms inscribed in spaces and in our bodies, the inscribed spatial practice? how can we use our body as a tool to disrupt functionalities and normatives of daily routines? how can we create resistant communities with our bodies? the tactics of this intervention studio practice will be documented and publishes online.

the body is thereby the location and the archive of space experience and at the same time provides the potential for individual and collective practices. in situ choreographies occur as temporal appropriations of the public space. they interrupt the rhythmic composition of the urban. the body thereby becomes public, takes position and appears (as a condition of the political) by learning and widening the inscriptions of urban reality. the workshop is a physical observation, it is an urban experimentation, it is a school of consciousness. it is a language of possibilities and a subversion of normative structures. it is a social sculpture which will permanently shift its contours.

the public space is understood as a place for permanent negotiations, as a copresence of a multitude of networks and narratives, as layers of different usage of places without territorial marks and as a place for permanent activity which makes space liquid and not monumentalized.

the interventions are conceptualized and led by the german artist claudia bosse who is working on the co-authorship of space for artistic practice. she is a choreographer, theatre director and artist, internationally creating performances, multimedia installations and urban interventions.

**applied poetics in urban space** is part of the performative research **urban laboratory IDEAL PARADISE ukraine** in kiev and kharkiv.

## **team**

a project by claudia bosse/ in collaboration with urban curators kiev

**artistic director:** claudia bosse

**documentation:** günther auer

**in collaboration with urban curators kiev:**

**coordination/research:** nastya ponomaryova

**research:** iryna yakovchuk

**production manager kiev/ public relation:** nin khodorivska

**production manager kiev/ participant coordinator:** oksana potapova

**research:** oleksandr vynogradov

**communication theatercombinat:** vicky klug

**production manager theatercombinat:** margot wehinger

a production by theatercombinat, in collaboration with urban curators kiev, supported by wien kultur, austrian cultural forum kiev, change of scene – a program by robert bosch foundation in cooperation with the german centre of the international theatre institute, and by the austrian federal chancellor.

## **press contact**

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## about the process

**applied poetics in urban space** is the 3rd part of the performative research process "urban laboratory IDEAL PARADISE ukraine" in collaboration with urban curators kiev, a collective of architects and urbanists. the first research trip to kiev, lviv and kharkiv took place in september 2016, a next deepening research phase with claudia bosse and media artist g nther auer in kiev took place in december 2016.

the process is focussing on the physical investigation and the legal situation in and in correlation with public space. the projects develops performative interventions and maps the public space in different ways: as an inventory of legal aspects, historical, architectural and political dimensions and as video documentations in form of observations of existing urban structures. the "urban laboratory" aims to transfer and challenge experience made in the performative practice "urban laboratory IDEAL PARADISE" (autumn 2015/ summer 2016) in public space in vienna towards the ukrainian cities kiev and kharkiv.

the conception is based on results of researches about the site-specific contexts of the areas. the challenge of this project lies, among other things, in the question of how public space can be re-appropriated – under consideration of architectural conditions – in the cities of kiev and kharkiv. the history and the techniques of a subversive use of the public space in times of political struggles are one part of the research. how is an accessibility and utilisation of the urban space possible? which alternative utilisation can be developed temporarily? experiences gathered in vienna will be placed in new contexts in the ukraine. a daily documentary will be published via facebook, a detailed documentation will be elaborated out of the collected material.

with "following the trace of water" from may 8th – 12th in kharkiv, a city in eastern ukraine near the russian border, a source with holy water will become the central point of a videomapping, following people carrying water from the public source into their private apartments, creating a network of traces throughout public space.


in autumn 2017 the results of the "urban laboratory IDEAL PARADISE ukraine" and the methods of research will be presented in vienna together with urban curators, unfolding the differences between the peculiarities of the social interactions in the public sphere in ukraine and austria.



15.05  
maidan nezalezhnosti



16.05.  
moskovska square



17.05.  
kontraktova square



18.05.  
yard on Teremky-1



19.05.  
abandoned place  
in Obolon





20.05  
maidan nezalezhnosti

**site-specific context:  
legal aspects as well as historical, architectural  
and political dimensions of the areas**

the interventions will take place along 5 different urban areas along metro line 2. starting from the central point of the city, maidan square, the workshop will explore 2 squares in the centre of kiev with different functions – moskovska and kontraktova – and then reach towards the suburbs with interventions in 2 different living areas: teremky and obolon. the series will close where it began, on maidan square in the centre of kiev.

the following pages give a short overview about legal aspects as well as historical, architectural and political dimensions of each area.

**day 1**  
**15.05.2017**  
**maidan nezalezhnosti**

**day 6**  
**20.05.2017**  
**maidan**



photo: claudia bosse

*"by sacralizing public space as commemorative space, the surviving protesters created a means and a place for grieving. these popular memorials and the rites of mourning performed there not only commemorate death and sacrifice, they also mitigate rage. as such, the memorials evoke deeply felt urban affect in the form of moral, emotional and aesthetic sentiments...(..) "the popular memorial shrines that have been created on the maidan fashion new forms of urban affect that fundamentally shape experience by converting spaces into places where the past is returned to the everyday present."*

(catherine wanner:  
commemoration of death and sacrifice: affect and transforming public space in kyiv. 2016)

most of today's maidan square was a **swampland** and later grasslands for goats until around the 1830s. then they built a **marketplace** here and in 1876 the **city parliament**, making maidan a central square. the building was demolished in 1944 when the whole square was reconstructed according to a stalinist pompous plan – together with khreschatyk street, the main street of kiev stretching through the square. the after-war reconstruction, totalitarian/authoritarian in nature, defined the current shape of maidan and its scope as a vast plaza capable of **accumulating large crowds of people** for the state-sanctioned ceremonies. the next reconstruction in 1976–81 reinforced this status, with the only substantial addition of ultimately dividing the square in two by a traffic artery.

in the late 1980s the square became a kind of kiev's hyde park: regardless of the weather and season, all sorts of political parties and movements gathered here to express their opinions on recent political events and voice their **criticism of the current political situation**.

1990: the revolution on granite took place on maidan on granite slabs under the monument of october revolution. a tent camp was pitched up by the student activists who went on a hunger strike against the union treaty signing and for multiplicity of parties in politics.

2000: protest against the neoliberal populist leonid kuchma, who had been president since 1994. the protests were obstructed by the reconstruction of the square to the point where they could barely use it as a site of protest.

2001: on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of independence of the ukraine, a **victory column** was built on the site of the october revolution monument which had been dismantled in 1991. stylistically the column presents a mix of ukrainian baroque and empire style. the female figure on top of the column is known as berehynia – a rather recent artificially constructed mythical character meaning “hearth mother, protectress of the home”. since ukrainian independence in 1991, she has undergone a fakeloric metamorphosis, and is identified today as a combination of the “hearth-mother” (associated with the guardianship of the nation itself) and the rusalka (mermaid). the berehynia of the independence monument is supposed to protect the ukrainian nation. the same year, **“globus”, an underground shopping mall** carved out of a pedestrian underpass. its mirror glass domes protrude onto the square in several places where fountains and benches once were, turning maidan into merely a mall’s roof.

2004 – 2005: the orange revolution took place.

2010: workers of the municipal services contributed to dismantle the tent village of the so-called “tax maidan” that stood against the new tax legislation jeopardizing the small businesses. this put an end to a protest that lasted for several weeks and is retrospectively seen as an important predecessor of the euromaidan.

november 30, 2013: euromaidan protesters, mostly students, were stormed by the berkut special forces and chased from the square. the department of public amenities justified the operation by the necessity of cleaning the territory for the christmas celebrations.

2013 – 2014: euromaidan: for several month maidan becomes a camp of revolution: maidan as a rally: november 22 – december 11, 2013 / maidan as a camp: december 12, 2013 – january 22, 2014 / maidan the camp then turned into “maidan the sich” from january 23 – february 22, 2014 (a reference to “sich”, a cossack-era semi-autonomous military polity in the 16th to 18th centuries)

**day 2**  
**16.05.2017**  
**moskovska square**



photo: claudia bosse

the first major reconstruction of the square was held in 1968. that was also when it received its present name — moskovska square. at that time, the construction of the **central bus station** began and the square started to develop rapidly as all important transport routes of city significance converged there.

in 2010 the second reconstruction of the square came to its end. in the same year, demiiivska metro station was opened in the neighbourhood. the main aim of that reconstruction was to increase the traffic capacity of the interchange. as a result a new **6-lane overpass**, accessible turns and exit ramps were built. currently its traffic capacity is 98.5 thousand vehicles per day.

the central bus station of kiev is inside the overpass of moskovska square. it is connecting kiev to many ukrainian cities and some european countries. according to design calculations, 600 buses would depart from here along 50 intercity routes, serving 7.000 passengers. the current load is substantially higher than the designed one. therefore it is considered to move part of the passenger traffic to other bus stations in kiev.

**day 3**  
**16.05.2017**  
**kontraktova square**



photo: nastya ponomaryova

the name "kontraktova" indicates that it was the place where traders signed 'contracts' (bargains) and from the late 18th century it hosted international trade fairs. its current look was mainly formed in the 1980s after a massive reconstruction as part of the general 'rehistorization' of kiev during the celebrations of the city's 1500th anniversary.

the central building, separating the kontraktova square in two, is the merchant court (hostynnyi dvir) built in 1817. after the reconstruction in the 1980s it became multifunctional, hosting the national architecture and construction library, a theatre and several project offices. later, the building's perimeter got occupied by stores and cafes – including "polonaise", a popular meeting place among kyiv mohyla academy's students and professors. 2004 –2005 was the last time sanctioned public and art events took place in the inner court of the building.

on may 26, 2012 activists occupied the **merchant court** and subsequently founded the hostynna respublika (namely, hospitable republic) – an informal collective organizing various cultural events in the inner court of the building, fighting to turn hostynnyi dvir into a public cultural centre instead of a commercial space. in 2013, a large fire happened in the building, forcing the national architecture and construction library to move out. later, the activists were forced out of the building as well and a fence was constructed around it, making hostynnyi dvir unavailable to the public.

surveys show that people are attracted to kontraktova square not because of its "unique urban ensemble", but because of its **multifunctionality**: it hosts many places of work, education, and entertainment. moreover, the square is still considered an informal centre of kiev, being the sole place where almost all historical layers of the city are represented.

the territory adjacent to the metro station, including the public transport stops and kiosks called an "**ugly shanghai**" by most respondents, looks similar to any of the pop-up markets near the terminal metro stations with its trash, stench, marshrutkas, and kiosks.

**different space sections on the square:**

art and musical events take place mostly on the square near the sahadachny monument, the new gathering place for youth. commercial and political campaigns choose the wide parking space next to the "puzata khata" fast food and national bank buildings. money permitting, they usually build up a temporary stage. the area next to the kiev mohyla academy buildings hosts student protests, while the internal courtyard is traditionally a place of artistic events.

day 4  
18.05.2017  
teremky



photo: claudia bosse

*"an **anthill**. the number of people living in the block is tremendous. (...) as a kid, i would think it's cool to say '**i'm from pentagon**', as if i were someone dangerous. (...) what is this place good for? nothing really. if you want to have a walk you go to the forest. if you feel like having a beer, the wood is still better. maybe if there's someone coming on metro to see you for a few minutes, you might have a smoke and chat a little in that courtyard. and there is a playground, so it must be the most suitable place for local children to play, i guess. (...) other than this, you may get a feeling that everything here stuck in the 1990s, except for a few things. as if people from more developed countries traded with the native population, exchanging goods of civilization on necklaces."*

(a 31 year old male inhabitant, who lived nearly all his life in teremky)

*"teremky was considered an '**exemplary residential district**', or to be more precise, it was intended to become one. it is hard to find a literal translation of the soviet term "образцово-перспективный", but it means something like "exemplary and future-oriented" or "model and having a big potential".*

(article from the encyclopedia of kiev about the city's future developments in 1983-1990, published 1982)

the local soils are the best in the whole kiev region. for centuries, this domain belonged to kiev metropolitans. the lands were used to cultivate cannabis and produce cannabis oil. the current residential area was built between 1975 and 1990. as such it has virtually no history, except an imaginary one: **the history of a dream neighbourhood in the making.**



*"at every house entrance there will be an intercom system. in the spacious vestibules there will be storage spaces for prams, bicycles, and sledges. on exiting the elevator, the light turns on automatically on the floor. the apartments are furnished with spacious storerooms, ceiling cabinets, wall closets. (...) 5-room apartments are usually lodged on two floors, connected by an inner staircase. the system of services of the teremky residential district will reduce the low-efficiency housework. ground floors of the buildings will be occupied by complex stations of universal services. here, the residents will have access to dry-cleaner's and laundry and will be able to enrol their children into music lessons or language courses, call a piano tuner, or buy tickets to a new play. the new houses provide special facilities for exercise therapy enthusiasts and makers, banquet halls, rooms where parents will be able to leave their children for a few hours while going to a cinema or to see friends, and a sauna. the houses are planned to be equipped with a system of vacuum refuse disposal. the pneumatic pipeline will carry the waste directly to the recycling station. the entrances will have special elevators to deliver mail to all floors."*

(teremky, still a project at the time, described in promising terms in the soviet encyclopaedia)

**day 5**  
**19.05.2017**  
**obolon**



photo: claudia bosse

*"the place hasn't changed much in the past 15 years. the earliest thing i remember is when these buildings around were all new and the paint on them looked fresher. the construction of the cathedral only started back then. but i don't recollect much change ever since. (...) the construction of the church takes ages. at some point, the construction crane was decorated with light bulbs and illuminated everything around instead of the cross. the church builds and rebuilds something all the time. it is a huge cognitive dissonance: architecturally, the church crowns the square, yet at the same time it separates itself from it with a thick fence. (...) afisha' journal once called this place **kiev's brooklyn**. there is something in these white buildings... not brooklyn-like for sure, but something **mediterranean**. when the sun sets in the summer, it's a sun festival here – very beautiful."*

obolon used to occupy a vast territory on the right side of the dnipro river, by the former river of pochayna, reaching as far south as the built quarters of the podil district, as indicated by the name of the old obolonska street.

in the late 1960s preparations of land began, and by 1974, around 50 million cubic meters of sand have been unloaded on the territory of 1356 hectares, raising the soil level by 6-9 meters. the scale of **artificial illuviation** was unprecedented for the time even in the world practice. most of the district was built between 1974 and 1980; obolon was the biggest '**bedroom zone**' (cybriwsky 2014) in ukraine at the time.

in early 1980s it was decided to add final touches to obolon in order to make it a 'complete complex of urban planning' (a.c.c. 2003). although most of the housing was already built by that time, the estimate 'finalisation' cost (including social and cultural services and a public centre at the minska metro station) amounted to 200 million roubles, which the government never gave. only in late 1990s the plan was resumed, but initiated this time by private investors and developers, with a different perspective. nevertheless, the project of the new obolon received a **state architecture prize** in 2003 for "**carrying out a complex programme of humanisation of the urban environment in obolon residential district**".

what local residents of obolon love their neighbourhood for:

16.1%: it's cosy, quiet, comfortable for living

13.8%: availability of dnipro, the riverside, lakes, nature.

kinds of activism local residents are most interested in:

38.7%: improvements of territories, 'tolokas' (voluntary works)

32.1%: creating and arranging public spaces

26.3%: reviving buildings and infrastructural objects and returning them to the local residents

sources of information about the life of the neighbourhood:

60%: talks, rumours

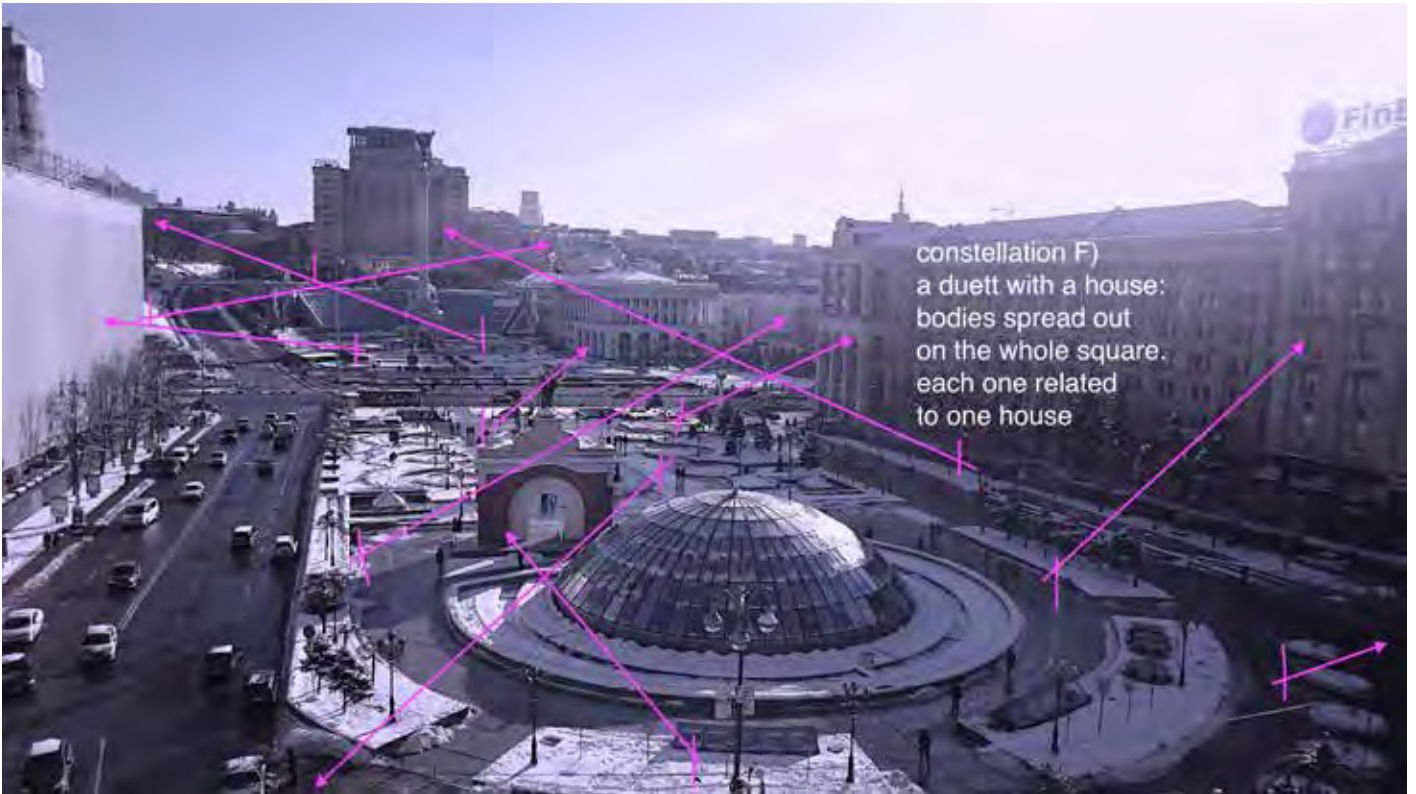
48%: relatives, acquaintances, colleagues

36.1%: central ukrainian tv channels

29.9%: social networks.

(data by by cedos)

**sketches of the interventions  
(examples)**  
conceptualized by claudia bosse



maidan. photo and sketch: claudia bosse



trace the possible passages in space with permanent movement. try to find connections for an endless movement.

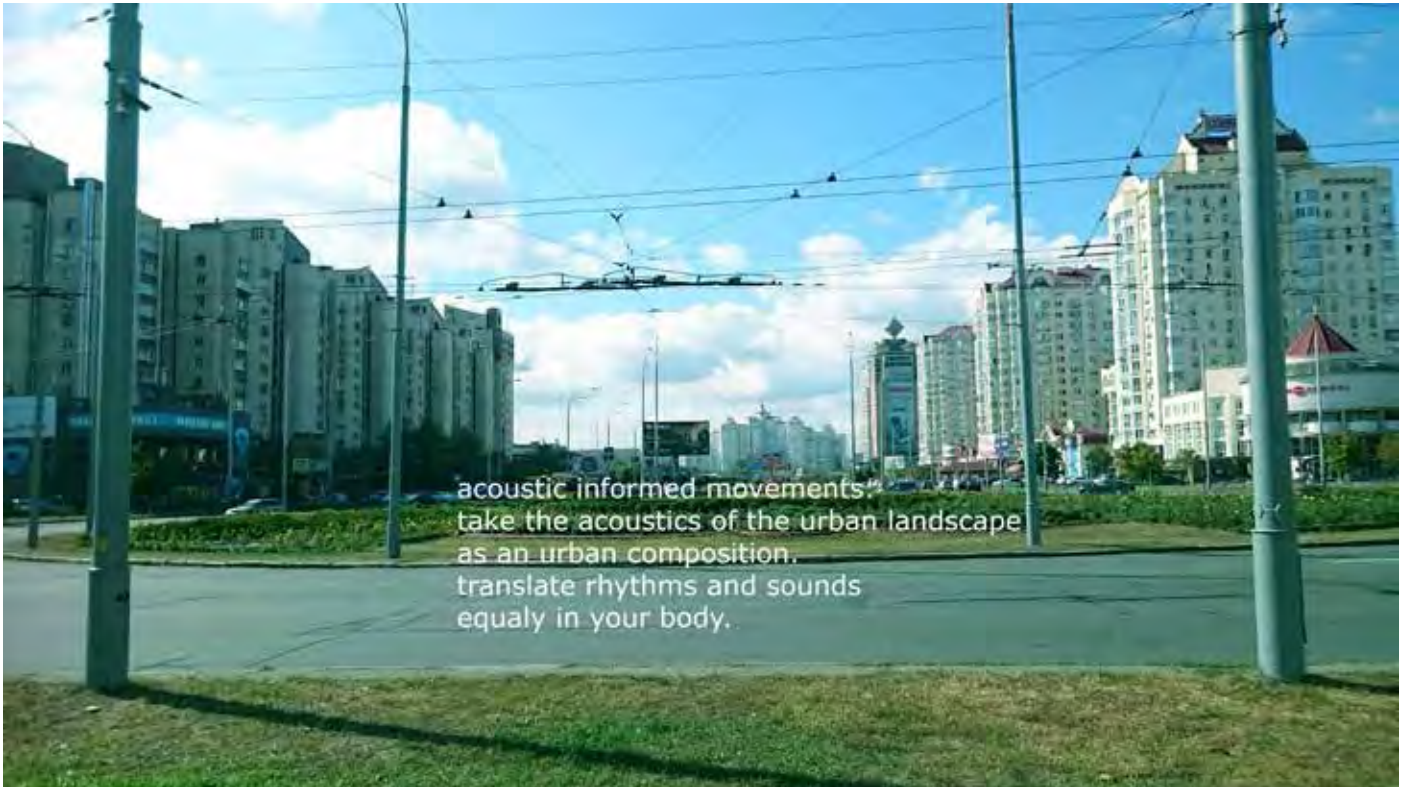
moskovska. photo and sketch: claudia bosse



kontraktova. photo: nastya ponomaryova, sketch: claudia bosse



teremky. photo and sketch: claudia bosse



acoustic informed movements,  
take the acoustics of the urban landscape  
as an urban composition,  
translate rhythms and sounds  
equally in your body.

obolon. photo and sketch: claudia bosse





constellation H)  
search for instabile bricks  
on the square. move on them,  
move them, create sound  
and be aware what kind of movement  
is produced by the Instability

photo and sketch: claudia bosse

**kharkiv:  
following the trace of water  
in sarzhyn yar (sarzhyn ravine)**



photo: claudia bosse

in kharkiv, the second-largest ukrainian city situated 450 km east of kiev with a population of about 1.5 million, the research consists of a video documentation as an urban mapping: people carrying water from a water source into their private homes will be followed, creating a network of traces throughout public space. people who use the water from a healing spring will become urban actors and guides through the city. in this way the path of the water will be recorded as an urban exploration of kharkiv. the paths from the public source into their private apartments will be videographed.

## team - biographies

### **günther auer (AT)**

born in 1965, media artist, studied composition and electro-acoustic composition at the vienna university for music and performative arts, where he subsequently worked as a lecturer in the field of music and computer. he worked in different contexts with different artists on numerous projects. since 2009 he is collaborating above all with claudia bosse ("the last IDEAL PARADIISE", "IDEAL PARADISE shifting space", "IDEAL PARADISE", "IDEAL PARADISE clash", "a third step to IDEAL PARADISE", "a second step to IDEAL PARADISE", "a first step to IDEAL PARADISE", "catastrophic paradise", "what about catastrophes?", "designed desires", "dominant powers. was also tun?", "vampires of the 21st century", "dominant powers – landschaften des unbehagens", "je veux un mot vide que je puisse remplir", "2481 desaster zone", "rehe und raketen"). 2012/2013 he was a senior artist at the academy of applied arts in vienna.

### **claudia bosse (D/AT)**

is an artist, choreographer and theatre director developing space specific works for festivals, theatres, museums or city spaces in zagreb, prague, geneva, berlin, new york, tunis, cairo, athens, beirut, podgorica as well as in vienna, graz, hamburg, frankfurt, ddseldorf etc. claudia is a graduate of germany's ernst busch school of dramatic arts for theatre directing and has diversified approaches to performance and theatre, including spatial choreographies, hybrid theatre works in open-plan spaces, choral speech choreographies, theatre projects involving various segments of the public, as well as installations, urban interventions and discourse of practice. she is the co-founder and artistic director of theatercombinat, a transdisciplinary company founded in berlin and based in vienna. As editor or author she was involved in various publications, she is giving lectures, initiates or participates at artistic researches and is collaborating regularly with theorists and artists of different fields. claudia is regularly teaching at art academies, universities, theatre schools or festivals. with the project series "what has to be done then?", "(katastrophen 11/15) ideal paradise" and "some democratic fictions" for example, she is working via different artistic formats on research into political hybrids, combining documents, texts and spaces as a new dramaturgy unfolded into space.  
<http://claudiabosse.blogspot.com>

### **vicky klug (D/AT)**

born 1985. after completing her studies in cultural sciences in leipzig and lyon she currently studies fine arts in vienna. she has worked in the field of art education, festival organisation and production for various institutions. after being part of the IDEAL PARADISE choir and working as an assistant director for claudia bosse, she is currently responsible for theatercombinat's communication.

### **anastasiya ponomaryova (UA)**

architect, urbanist, researcher, co-founder of NGO "urban curators" interested revitalization of post-industrial areas, the cultural aspect of urban-experience and enabling citizens to re-gain and shape the public space they wish to have.

### **margot wehinger (AT)**

born 1983. studied theatre, film and media studies at the university of vienna. in 2012 she started working for theatercombinat in the production DESIGNED DESIRES/ vienna. since october 2013 she has been working as production manager for theatercombinat. she also worked for filmarchiv austria in the department of digitalization of analog home movies.

### **iryna yakovchuk (UA)**

is a manager, urbanist, researcher, co-founder and director of NGO "urban curators". interested in a social and economical context of city transformations, also - in a public activities at the crossroads of urbanism, culture and social action.

**theatercombinat**

represents a highly experienced production company for independent art and theatre work. founded in 1996 in berlin and based in vienna, austria, since 1999, the artistic formation led by director and artist claudia bosse assembles actors, performers and dancers as well as theorists, sound and media artists, architects, visual artists and technicians in order to engage in research into theatrical concepts, pushing theatre beyond its limits in search of new, collective and adventurous ways to communicate with the spectators, the space and the organisation of the public. the productions create new, experimental spaces for action and perception between theatre, installation, choreography, performance and discourse. the site specific works are developed within time frames of one week up to four years in cities like zagreb, tunis, berlin, dusseldorf, new york, vienna, hamburg, podgorica, prague, brunswick or geneva and contain urban interventions, space choreographies, hybrid theatre works, choral speech choreographies, theatrical concepts for different concepts of the public as well as discourse about theories of practice.

**urban curators**

is an independent agency of interdisciplinary team that works in the field of architecture, urbanism and cultural management. their mission is to create and revitalize urban space for public benefit, with involvement of all stakeholders participation; balancing their interests and creating a common vision for the project.

their values are: creating a high quality urban space. they are confident that such space is a result of joint interdisciplinary effort. they believe in public potential and support their right for the city. they choose meaningful work and value freedom, creativity and honesty in work. they support innovators in their field (NGOs, municipalities and commercial enterprises who share their values).

**theatercombinat**

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