

WORKSHOP
1-3 March 2017,
Museum Building, Trinity College Dublin



The New Urban Ruins: Vacancy and the Post-Crisis City

Keynote speakers:

Dr. Christina Lee (Curtin University, Perth Australia), Prof. Karen Till (Maynooth University, Ireland), Dr. Alexander Vasudevan (Oxford, UK)

Film Screening:

“A Place Where Ghosts Dwell” (Dir. Dr. Patrick Baxter)



Funded by the IRC, this workshop proposes will explore how contestations over the reuse of vacant spaces can be used to think about cities and urbanisation in new ways. Topics covered include the central role that vacancy played in recent property crashes, debates about urban shrinkage, the popularity of new approaches to temporary urbanism, and critical discussions of ruins. The central hypothesis is the vacant space will play a key role in determining how cities of the future respond to the both urban problems and wider global challenges.



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**“The New Urban Ruins: Vacancy and the Post-crisis City”
(Dublin, 1-3 March 2017)**

Final Programme

All the sessions will be held at Trinity College Dublin, Museum Building (for a map of the college, see <https://www.tcd.ie/Maps/map.php?b=54&i=b60>)

DAY 1 (March 1st) Location: Haughton Lecture Theatre

h 14 C. O’Callaghan- Welcome & introduction to the workshop

h 14.15-15.55 Session 1- The political economy of abandonment between opportunity and obsolescence

Chair: **Sinéad Kelly (National University of Ireland Maynooth)**

Presenters

N. Gray - Devaluation and revaluation of vacant and derelict spaces in Glasgow East: Urban ruins as an arena of crisis resolution and deferment

L. S. Bródy & A. Coppola - Diversifying property through vacancy? A comparison between Cleveland and Barcelona

S. Bissen, M. Casagrande & S. Serafini - Ultraruins: Newark, Artena, Treasure Hill

B. Tanulku - Different Types of Urban Emptiness and Their Values: Cases of Physical and Symbolic Urban Emptiness from Istanbul

h 15.55-16.15 Coffee break

h 16.15- 17.30 Session 2- Bottom-up responses to abandonment

Chair: **Gerry Kearns (National University of Ireland Maynooth)**

Presenters

L. Wagner - Present absence: Conceptualizing migrant-owned homes and the economics of care in urban vacancy

V. Habermehl - Resisting organised abandonment, everyday socio-spatial practices in Mercado Bonpland, Buenos Aires

P. Cardullo & R. Kitchin - Property vacancy, living labs and gentrification

17.45- 19.15 Screening + presentation by Patrick Baxter “A Place Where Ghosts Dwell”

DAY 2 (March 2nd) Location: Room A

h 9.15- 10.30 Session 3- Regeneration

Chair: Susan Murphy (Trinity College Dublin)

Presenters

N. Gribat - Conflicting rationalities and messy actualities of abandonment in Halle/Saale, East Germany

J. Ahern - Urban Vacancy and the planning system in Ireland

E. Fraser - Reimagining Detroit: From ruin to regeneration, or, the multiple challenges of obsolete architectures

h 10.30-10.45 Coffee break

h. 10.45- 12 Session 4- Re-appropriating vacancy

Chair: Patrick Bresnihan (Trinity College Dublin)

Presenters

C. O'Callaghan & C. Di Felicianantonio - Alternative projects over vacant spaces in the cities of crisis. What makes possible their endurance?

M. Ferreri - Learning from temporary use: translation, value claims and on-demand communities in the 'fringes' of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

M. Caulkins - Spatio-legal imaginaries in conflict: autonomy, engagement, and housing politics. The case of Sao Paulo's squatting movements

h 12- 13 Key-note by Christina Lee (Curtin University) "Building the Modern Ruin: Ghost Cities of China"

h 13- 14 lunch

h 14- 15.15 Session 5- The politics of ruins

Chair: Federico Cugurullo (Trinity College Dublin)

Presenters

J. Sarmiento, E. Brito-Henriques & P. Morgado - Urban ruination: suspended projects in Guimarães, Portugal

P. Arboleda - GRAND TOUR: The Great Beauty of Incompiuto Siciliano

D. Keech & O. Jones - Narratives within urban ruins: World Heritage, World War, Cold War

h. 15.15- 15.30 Coffee break

h 15.30- 16.30 Key-note by Alexander Vasudevan (University of Oxford)- The Fragile City: Towards a Genealogy of Urban Precarity

Chair: Cesare Di Felicianantonio (Trinity College Dublin)

h 16.45- 18 Session 6- Architecture

Chair: **Padraig Carmody (Trinity College Dublin)**

Presenters

P. Jones - Architecture as Spatio-Temporal Fix (Or: Today's Urban Capitalist Development is Tomorrow's Ruin)

D. Martin - Arrested developments and hopeful audacities: on the role of architecture in the assembling of new urban forms

L. Pohl - Anomalies of the Vertical City: Ghostscrapers and the death drive of architecture

h 19.30 Conference dinner at **Yamamori Noodles** (address: 71-72 South Great George's Street Dublin 2. For more info, visit <http://yamamori.ie/yamamori-noodles/>)

DAY 3 (March 3rd) Location: Room A

h 9.10- 10 Session 7- The lived character of vacancy

Chair: Eoin O'Mahony (Trinity College Dublin & University College Dublin)

Presenters

S. F. Trigo - Urban vacant land: a production process in the London context

J. Hudson - Using derelict space: The spatio-temporal qualities of urban vacancy and the production of the informal city

h 10- 11 Key-note by K. Till (National University of Ireland Maynooth)- Urban Remnants, Ruins and Revenants: Moving between pasts and futures through memory-work and place-based engagements

Chair: Cian O'Callaghan (Trinity College Dublin)

h 11-11.15 Coffee break

h 11.15- 12.40 Session 8- Dublin

Chair: Philip Lawton (National University of Ireland Maynooth)

Presenters

K. Guinan - 'Creative' government approaches to urban vacancy in Dublin: patronage or instrumentalisation?

P. Crowe, K. Foley & A. Corcoran - The Reusing Dublin Experiment: Exploring Geddesian ideas through interactive mapping

R. McArdle - 'Squat City': Squatting as an explicitly political temporary use in post-crisis Dublin

h 12.40- 13 Final remarks by C. O'Callaghan and C. Di Feliciantonio

h 13 Lunch

h 14 Meeting with Irish Housing Network + tour of the Docklands area

List of abstracts

DAY 1 (March 1st)

Session 1: The political economy of abandonment between opportunity and obsolescence

N. Gray “Devaluation and revaluation of vacant and derelict spaces in Glasgow East: Urban ruins as an arena of crisis resolution and deferment”

Urban ruins are typically the result of sustained devaluation over many years. Through the prism of Marxian crisis theory, this paper examines policy-led approaches to long-term vacant and derelict spaces related to the Commonwealth Games 2014 and Clyde Gateway regeneration projects in Glasgow East. The 2014 Games, like the 2002 Manchester Commonwealth Games and the 2012 London Olympics, were situated in old industrial areas long subject to structural devaluation. In Marxian theory, such socially catastrophic devaluation, or creative destruction, is seen – just like recurrent crisis – as necessarily immanent to the perpetuation of capitalist relations (Marx, 1857; Luxemburg, 1913; Harvey, 1982; Holgerson, 2015). Through a study of two sites within the Clyde Gateway regeneration scheme, including the 2014 Games Village, this paper examines the social effects of long-term devaluation as a brutally logical and rational component of urban redevelopment (Smith, 1996; Weber, 2002), and the local state's role in remediating and commodifying its own land via public subsidy in the service of private development (cf. Christophers, 2016). The paper contributes to vacant spaces literature by means of a thorough critique of *large-scale* state-led urban revalorisation processes. It considers vacant space regeneration strategies in Glasgow East as a temporary property-led 'spatial fix' for urban crisis that cannot ultimately defer a longer term underlying crisis of productivity. In doing so, it questions the broader political utility of 'temporary uses' of vacant spaces when considered as discrete, self-sufficient entities, proposing instead a more systematic, immanent dialectical approach to the politics of urban space.

L. S. Bródy & A. Coppola “Diversifying property through vacancy? A comparison between Cleveland and Barcelona”

Urban revitalization through the mobilization and inclusion of temporary uses of vacant spaces is attracting worldwide attention of scholars, policy makers and urban professionals. In the European context, temporary uses are mainly interpreted as low-cost revitalization solutions enacted by formal organizations and/or more informal groups that are temporarily handed vacant publicly owned spaces often free of charge for the performance of some specific activities. Meanwhile, in the US context, – where spreading vacancy was determined by larger structural processes of urban shrinkage and demographic loss – temporary uses have been mobilized across a wider variety of situations, in connection with local greening and food strategies. On the basis of two case studies in Cleveland and Barcelona, the paper aims to unfold the potential of temporary uses of vacant space in departing from entrenched neoliberal understanding of urban property advancing a wider and more pluralistic understanding of legal forms of tenure and to discuss the challenges and limitations of this potential. In both cities, new neighbourhood strategies have been implemented to transform and repurpose vacant land by the inclusion of grassroots community organisations in local governance systems. For a better understanding of these potential and challenges, the paper will analyse three aspects of temporary uses: (1) the actual forms of activation of vacant spaces' reuse through regulations, subsidization and funding (2) the innovative collaborations through the involvement of new stakeholders in temporary uses and (3) the diverse forms of legal tenure that are advanced as outcomes of these larger processes.

S. Bissen, M. Casagrande & S. Serafini “Ultraruin: Newark, Ardena, Treasure Hill”

Our work deals with physical urban ruins and dispossession as a possible transition space towards biourbanism, analyzing three case studies: Newark, NJ (USA), Ardena (Rome, Italy), and Treasure

Island (Taipei, Taiwan). Our hypothesis is that despite the cultural differences of these three places, they share the same exit pattern from capitalistic urbanism, and that this depends upon a basic anthropological reaction to a world-spread process. Since the re-occurrence of capital flight in 2008, Newark, located 20 minutes by train from downtown Manhattan, began showing relevant elements of a rural society in the cracks of a failed capitalistic cycle, especially affecting real-estate value. Similarly, Ardena, 35km south of Italy's capital, suffers an economic decline that becomes strikingly evident in its historical center, an ancient hill town where cars have no access. Treasure Hill, an illegal settlement on the Xindian River shows the antagonistic role with the government against the spontaneous and nature-linked economy of its inhabitants. Those spaces bring a real and non-representational condition where rural forms of social connections happen in parallel with a natural deconstruction of building, zoning, and urban design, usually seen as "decay." We reconsider such a decay as a paradigm for engendering the Third Generation City, where a rural society enters and transverses the capitalistic logic of the industrial and post-industrial city. Nature, abandonment, void, stagnation of formal economy, and squatting are the conditions that allow two processes: 1) Disinterest and distancing of capital; 2) Emergence of a peasant-like informal society and economy.

B. Tanulku "Different Types of Urban Emptiness and Their Values: Cases of Physical and Symbolic Urban Emptiness from Istanbul"

Urban emptiness has been subject of debates as a result of the last economic crisis which led to foreclosures, decline and abandonment in cities. In this context, urban emptiness is analysed through a functionalist approach and regarded as negative aspects of cities which should be avoided and fixed. Instead, this paper regards urban emptiness as parts of urban space and life, which emerge as the result of different factors. For this purpose, the paper looks at three case studies in Istanbul, the largest city of Turkey: historic ghostly homes, vacant buildings squatted for various purposes and a cultural centre once used for music and arts performances. The paper uses the data collected from site visits and semi-structured in-depth interviews with residents, activists and local administrators. By doing this, the paper argues that there are two forms of emptiness: physical and symbolic. While "physical emptiness" refers to spaces which are physically empty, "symbolic emptiness" refers to spaces regarded as empty as a result of their cultural and symbolic meaning. The paper also demonstrates that the economic and symbolic values of urban emptiness affects its overall market value as well as by whom, for how long and how it is used.

Session 2: Bottom-up responses to abandonment

L. Wagner "Present absence: Conceptualizing migrant-owned homes and the economics of care in urban vacancy in Morocco"

This chapter explores the economics of care for housing whose vacancy is purposeful and cyclical – namely, second homes. While since the early 2000's Moroccan authorities have offered several versions of incentive programs for ordinary citizens to purchase single family apartments, initial fieldwork around Tangier indicates that many of these sub-developer units have been bought as second residences, vacation properties, or speculative investments. Despite the political intention for these complexes to become inhabited, cared-for, slum-relief housing, a substantial portion are owned but only periodically occupied. The absent owners may be local residents, Moroccans living elsewhere in Morocco or Moroccans living diasporically, each facing different challenges in securing and maintaining their investment. Meanwhile, the families who bought these homes as primary residences find themselves in neighborhoods that are financially 'full' yet subject to periodic and cyclical presence and absence of owners. The proliferation of housing complexes built as communities but sold as investments brings into relief the value of dwelling and care as tangibly economic. With a complex history of property regulation and a strategic geopolitical and touristic position, Tangier provides both a unique and archetypical case for thinking about how property owners from elsewhere manage the care for their property, and by extension contribute to the life of the city and neighborhood – or, conversely, how the neighborhood adjusts when that care is absent.

V. Habermehl “Resisting organised abandonment, everyday socio-spatial practices in Mercado Bonpland, Buenos Aires”

The urban context of organized abandonment (Harvey, 1989) demonstrates the power of capital to reorder space, disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations (Gilmore, 2008). Organized abandonment therefore operates as an attack on the social and spatial capacity to organize everyday life for ordinary citizens. This paper explores a strategic intervention to social and spatial abandonment in Buenos Aires through everyday practices developed in an occupied traditional retail market. After years of organizing, Mercado Bonpland was reclaimed by Palermo Viejo neighborhood assembly as a market space to sell products from networks of self-managed cooperatives. These pre-existing, cooperative networks in Bonpland and across the country created the conditions for the neighborhood assembly's reclamation of the market as an act of resistance, following the multiple, political, social and economic crises of 2001 and neoliberal policies preceding them. I explore how the market operates from within a “gray space” between legally sanctioned and occupied space (Yiftachel, 2009). I argue that an examination of the challenges of resisting socio-spatial abandonment from “gray space” illuminates the potentials for alternatively organizing everyday life.

P. Cardullo & R. Kitchin “Property vacancy, living labs and gentrification”

This paper evaluates smart city initiatives in the context of re-using vacant property. In particular, we focus on living labs (LL), civic hacking (CH), and on tech-sector-led urban regeneration projects, and their potential roles in fostering creative economy fuelled gentrification. LL utilise Lo-Fi technologies to foster local digital innovation and support community-focused civic hacking, running various kinds of workshops and engaging with local citizens to co-create digital interventions and Apps aimed at ‘solving’ local issues. Tech-led regeneration can involve large-scale redevelopment of areas into new digital economy hubs and often include LL and CH initiatives aimed at local communities, as well as start-up incubators and accelerator spaces aimed at supporting new, indigenous companies. LL and CH aim to mitigate local digital divides and increase citizens' participation in the smart city. Five approaches to LL and civic hacking are discussed with respect to vacancy and gentrification: pop-up events, community organised venues/activities, university-led activities, citizen sensing and crowdsourcing, and tech-led regeneration initiatives. Notwithstanding the potential for generating temporary and independent spaces for transferring and fostering digital competences and increasing citizens' participation in the SC, we argue that LL and CH largely foster a model of participation framed within a model of civic stewardship for ‘smart citizens’. While presented as horizontal, open, and participative, LL and CH are often rooted in pragmatic and paternalistic discourses and practices related to the production of a creative economy and smart city. As such, by encouraging a particular kind of re-use of vacant space, LL and CH potentially contributes to gentrification pressures within locales by attracting the creative classes and new investment. We discuss these approaches and issues generally and with respect to Dublin.

Screening + presentation by Patrick Baxter “A Place Where Ghosts Dwell”

How can film and social research be used to artistically interrogate the relationship between a marginalized place and its vacant space? This paper investigates aspects of post-Celtic Tiger Ireland property vacancy through both an essay-film and ethnographic research carried out in a provincial town in 2015. In the wake of the Global Financial Crisis and Ireland's dramatic property collapse in 2008, my hometown and county Longford was one of the places that suffered disproportionately as a site of what became popularly known as ghost estates- unfinished housing estates. However, discourse around the vacant house often obscured what the high levels of vacant commercial property could tell us about uneven economic development during the Celtic Tiger years and its effects on marginalised places like Longford. Therefore, I have expanded on the popular term ‘ghost estate’ to arrive at ‘ghost developments’ as a new conceptualization within ruin studies. This paper proposes the idea that through ghost developments we can begin to think of the categories of urban/rural/suburban not only as spatial delineations but also as sets of social practices that are negotiated differently depending on social setting or location. My ethnographic research focuses on how various social actors in Longford

utilise ghost developments in ways that are often at odds with the normative social aesthetics of 'rural' Ireland, while my film *A Place Where Ghosts Dwell* employs the film-essayist mode to account for the complex changing social dynamics of place in post-Celtic Tiger Ireland.

DAY 2 (March 2nd)

Session 3: Regeneration

N. Gribat "Conflicting rationalities and messy actualities of abandonment in Halle/Saale, East Germany"

Between 1990 and 2010 the city of Halle/Saale has undergone a period of urban decline. Similar to other East German cities, it has lost a large share of jobs and population after German reunification. This paper examines how different rationalities and practices of governing vacant housing have formed in the context of intersecting local, regional and national policies and projects in Halle/Saale. Focusing on two districts, one centrally located with mainly early 20th century buildings and the other one peripherally located with pre-fabricated and standardized GDR housing, this paper draws attention to the conflicting rationalities and messy actualities of abandoning certain types of housing while reclaiming and promoting others. Different constructions of vacancy are explored in depth: while vacancy is mobilized as an opportunity for creative re-use and investment in the central district, it is seen as a sign for a lack of demand and excess in the peripheral district. In the central district most funding from policy programs is used for upgrading old and mostly privately owned buildings in addition to providing some incentives for temporary use. In the peripherally located district funding is mainly used for the demolition of excess housing, most of which is publically owned. Even though the existence of a large share of publicly and municipally owned rent-controlled housing has cushioned processes of social segregation, the social geography of Halle/Saale is changing as a result of the messy actualities of abandonment - mainly along lines of income, age and ethnicity.

J. Ahern "Urban Vacancy and the planning system in Ireland"

Planning received considerable criticism for its role in contributing to the devastation caused by the financial and property crisis experienced by the Republic of Ireland. Unfinished Estates, termed the New Ruins of Ireland by (Kitchen, O'Callaghan, & Gleeson, 2014), were, and in many areas remain, a visible scar and reminder of this period of construction. Less visible in this picture are those properties finished in advance of the crash but which remained vacant, begging the question as to why were the rising levels of Vacant Property not a key concern during the property boom. Vacant property is often seen as a blight upon the urban fabric; it can represent a waste of resources, a sign of the inefficient functioning of the property market and the beginning of a process of dereliction (Bowman & Pagano, 2004; Planning Research, 1995). However, a certain level of Vacancy is essential for the operation of the property market often referred to as the 'natural vacancy rate' or as part of the "vacancy chain". It is clear that Vacant Property is a multifaceted issue. Therefore a full understanding of both the level and the location of Vacant Property in an area can be a useful indication of both the health of the market, and indicate future needs concerning planning for an area in the short and long term (Burkholder, 2012; Nadalin & Iglioni, 2016; Németh & Langhorst, 2014). This chapter examines the interaction of vacancy and the Planning system since the Act of 1963 that led to this mix of Vacant Property and new urban ruins in the Republic of Ireland (Barry, 2000; MacLaran & Kelly, 2014; O'Leary, 2014; Scott, 2006). Based on this analysis it then argues that public policy should have a stronger strategy both to monitor and to address vacant property in the realm of planning, and through international examples evaluates some options what could be adopted by the Irish Planning System.

E. Fraser “Modern Ruins: From rubble to regeneration, or, the multiple challenges of obsolete architectures”

Reflecting on fieldwork in Detroit and Berlin from 2009 to 2015, this chapter critically interrogates the challenges posed by mass urban ruin, through the complex redevelopment and reimagining of Detroit, and specific sites of ruin and renewal. Value-based “demolition for development” (Mah 2012) remediates dereliction and abandonment with large-scale developments that sever historical and community ties, catering instead to incoming populations and official imaginaries that often perceive neighbourhoods as empty or open for business, rather than actively (if sparsely) inhabited. The imaginary of Detroit, long dominated by rust-belt aesthetics, has been reshaped in recent years by a series of developer-led renewal strategies that frame Detroit as a green-growth city. However, as Detroit is reimagined as an urban laboratory, and parts of the city transform, vulnerable residents are subject to what Sara Safransky (2014) calls settler colonialism and green dispossession. Simultaneously, urban decay persists outside the regeneration zones: brownfields, industrial ruins and abandonment are common and, as George Galster (2012) high vacancy is moving outward as the inner city revives. Reimagining is simultaneously not nearly enough, and discursively so aggressive as to threaten the erasure of communities and the (often difficult) histories from the semi-vacant zones selected for renewal. Andreas Huyssen (2003) observed that in post-reunification Berlin, renewal of former ruins indicated that normal life was returning to derelict quarters - but he also noted that illegibilities and erasures arose from this regeneration. This chapter considers similar illegibilities in Detroit’s obsolete architectures through the work of Walter Benjamin and others, to evaluate the complexity of urban memory and the value of modern ruins beyond economic and redevelopment concerns.

Session 4: Re-appropriating vacancy

C. O’Callaghan & C. Di Feliciano “Alternative projects over vacant spaces in the cities of crisis. What makes possible their endurance?”

The crisis of capitalism in its manifestation in urban space offers the possibility for alternative visions and projects over property (especially vacancies) to gain visibility and consensus. Vacancy becomes visible and politicized in different contexts for different reasons. Nevertheless, commonalities and convergences exist. However some of these visions and alternatives are not able to persist over time, they remain ‘contingent’ and result unable to shape alternative futures, while others are easily subsumed by capitalist rationality. What makes possible for some of these visions and projects to resist over time while others are rapidly incorporated in the urban capitalist machine? Building on our research work on Barcelona, Berlin, Dublin and Rome, in this chapter we argue that three factors play a central role in determining the possibilities for these initiatives to shape alternative futures, resist over time and go beyond the ‘crisis’ contingent phase. The first one is represented by ideology and hegemony in a Gramscian perspective: the lack of an ideological project and the dis-engagement with creating cultural and political hegemony make the initiatives volatile, easily subsumable from capitalist rationality. The second one concerns (immaterial) infrastructures and the political, social and territorial embeddedness of the initiatives: transnational solidarity, involvement of people previously involved in other projects and social struggles, political background of the participants, shared practices. The third one is the *work on the self* needed to shape an alternative subjectivity; following Gibson-Graham (2006), we argue that the work on creating alternative futures cannot be detached from a continuous work on everyday relations and actions. Underpinning the intersection of these three factors is the contingent ways in which “vacancy” is articulated as an urban “problem” in different cities at different times and in response to different relational events. This contextual and conjunctural contingency shapes how these three factors come into being.

M. Ferreri “Learning from temporary use: translation, value claims and on-demand communities in the ‘fringes’ of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park”

The value of using vacant spaces on a temporary basis are multiple and competing. From architects and artists to policy-makers, different groups involved in short-term practices have long argued their intrinsic as well as extrinsic values in relation to wider processes of urban transformation. One such claim is that temporary use facilitates processes of urban learning that can positively inform a more incremental and community-oriented development of vacant land. In this paper I aim to analyse this claim in the specific context of the redevelopment plans for Hackney Wick, a neighbourhood on the ‘fringes’ of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in East London. Drawing on the case study of Hub67, a temporary youth and community centre on vacant land, I examine value claims and their translation by institutional and community actors involved in its commission and delivery. Drawing upon interviews with planners, architects and social workers, the paper unravels competing positions and assesses the power dynamics and temporalities at play, both in their specificity and in relation to the competing agendas of the ‘legacy’ of the London 2012 Olympic Games. This analysis informs the critique of an emerging logic of ‘on-demand communities’ grounded in the normalization of precarious social benefits in contexts of urban regeneration. In concluding, I raise the question of whether ‘learning through temporary use’ constitutes a testing ground for new and problematic forms of urban governance at times of increasing dispossession and precarization.

M. Caulkins "The Spatial Politics of Squatting Movements in São Paulo”

This chapter explores the interplay between agonistic engagement and radical autonomy (Gonik 2015) in the housing politics of the city of São Paulo. The spatial politics (Butler 2013) of squatting movements is producing a differential spatiality while influencing municipal and federal social housing policies. A central element of the dominant spatial project is a narrow definition of private property that leads to ‘land sweating’ and phenomenal rates of vacancy in central areas of São Paulo (Earle 2012). On the other hand, the movements’ spatial ‘counter-project’ justifies squats in vacant buildings to house the urban poor based on the Social Function of Property that was written into the Brazilian Constitution in 1988. The movements’ radical imaginary is operationalised through the use of slogans but limited through an exclusive focus on private property as a solution. Their specific spatial practices are supported by lawyers, architects, judges, and a national coalition of social movements. The physical space of the occupied buildings limits evictions and contributes to the impact on the imaginary of the wider society while the presence of the occupations in the space of the centre leads to a differential implementation of legislative tools regarding urban vacancy. Clearly space and law are key tools in this spatial politics of housing and the vacancy of the centre of São Paulo is itself contributing to the creation of a differential spatiality.

Key-note by Christina Lee (Curtin University) “Building the Modern Ruin: Ghost Cities of China”

China is currently in the throes of urban development and modernisation on an unprecedented scale. A by-product of its feverish future planning, decentralised fiscal policies and speculative property market is the ‘ghost city phenomenon’; newly built cities that are devoid of a thriving population, or any population whatsoever. This presentation explores the ghost city as modern ruin, focusing on Ordos Kangbashi in Inner Mongolia. There is an arresting strangeness about the place that epitomises a case of living with contradiction, that is, living with the old and new (and the newer), ruin and monument, excess and emptiness. While construction continues throughout Ordos, projects abandoned years ago jut out like concrete carcasses from the landscape. And of those structures that are finished, many are in varying states of deterioration resulting from the haste in which they were erected. This deterioration is compounded by their under-utilisation, from barely-used stadiums to unoccupied apartment complexes. Interested in how local histories intersect with the affective, embodied experience of the city, I wish to move beyond a discourse of crisis or fetishised ruins. How can Ordos’ vacant spaces be rethought, activated and (re)used? What modes of engagement are possible between community, policy-makers, urban planners and scholars in enacting desired change? These questions extend beyond the case study at hand, inviting points of commonality and departure

with examples from the West, as well as elucidating the difficulties of conceptualising and researching 'new urban ruins'.

Session 5: The politics of ruins

J. Sarmento, E. Brito-Henriques & P. Morgado "Urban ruination: suspended projects in Guimarães, Portugal"

The experience of contemporary urbanity is inescapably marked by the presence of abandonment, ruination and emptiness. Ruined buildings, abandoned yards and vacant lands are ubiquitous presences in contemporary cities. Lately, the focus has been put in reversing urban ruins and derelicts, and little attention has been devoted to ruination processes and the morphology and abilities of these spaces. This chapter starts by outlining the NoVoid research project: *Ruins and vacant lands in the Portuguese cities: exploring hidden life in urban derelicts and alternative planning proposals for the perforated city* (2016-2019). This is a project which aims at identifying, analysing and proposing usages of ruined and vacant lands in Portugal, by focusing on four specific cities: Lisbon, Barreiro, Guimarães and Vizela. The project works with four broad types/categories of ruined urban spaces: 'ruined buildings', 'ruined backyards', 'suspended/aborted projects', and 'vacant spaces'. It departs from a vertical perspective and a purely morphological perspective, by analyzing aerial maps, and is then complemented by using Google Earth and Google Street View. Field identification is used to validate uncertain situations. The second part of the chapter focuses on a preliminary analysis of 'suspended/aborted projects' in Guimarães. While this seems not to be a major issue in a consolidated city such as Lisbon, it is widespread in a more diffused urban context. Most cases refer to pre 2008 projects, and typically reflect families' demand for detached or semi detached houses. As banks almost stopped lending money, both for building companies and for individuals and families, 8 years of lethargy in the property market followed. 2016 presents a different context as banks are now 'back in business' (Troika's departed in May 2014), property prices are increasing and some of these 'suspended/aborted projects' are being rescued to the orbit of property development and financial speculation. Others remain idle, opening breaches and indeterminacy, allowing for the emergence of socio-natural hybridizations.

P. Arboleda "GRAND TOUR: The Great Beauty of Incompiuto Siciliano"

During the last 50 years, and due to the dilapidation of funds, hundreds of public works have remained unfinished in Italy, and especially in Sicily. In 2007, the group of artists Alterazioni Video declared these ruins as a formal architectural style – the so-called 'Incompiuto Siciliano' – through which they pursue to recover incompleteness back from institutional neglect so buildings could finally be useful for future generations. During one week in September 2015, I accomplished a journey in which I visited a dozen of Incompiuto Siciliano works across all Sicily. This leads me to study my own condition as a researcher/tourist to then investigate the unruly potential of unfinished public works. I argue that, while some buildings may well be reactivated, in a realistic sense, many others will remain uncompleted forever. Far from perceiving this as a tragic fate, my objective is to value unfinished public works in their current ruined condition, placing them as catalysts of aesthetic experiences. Additionally, through the use of my own personal narratives and the elaboration of videos, my aim is to advance in the way we communicate and mediate embodied encounters with modern ruins.

D. Keech & O. Jones "Narratives within urban ruins: World Heritage, World War, Cold War"

Much scholarly and cultural interest in ruins has emerged in recent years. In stimulating both geographical and historical imaginations, we see ruins as temporal-spatial disruptions to the smooth spaces-times of the contemporary. Ruins are portals into, and nodes of, the ecologies of material processes and narratives which make the bodies of space-time (past, present and future). They are the 'bones' left once the 'soft tissue' of some earlier materialised life (mundane or momentous) has past. Differing types of ruins can offer such worm holes to other regions of ecological becoming and

narratives thereof which are known, can be known, or more obscure – depending on the viewer. Focusing on three cities – Bath, London and Tallinn – we examine how different narrative configurations reveal the material, narrative and temporal dynamism of urban ruins and landuse. In Bath, ghosts of a lost horticultural industry survive in street names and archives. Ecocide in the surrounding country spurs local activists to resurrect food growing even while the ‘dolls parlour’ of Georgian facades crowd out other narratives the city conceals. Rose Macauley’s account of bomb-damaged London in *The World My Wilderness* provides refuge for social renegades and vibrant wildlife - to be tidied up. Lastly, the concrete remains of the Olympic sailing park at Tallinn, even as it disintegrates, is becoming a start-up hub for micro-enterprises. We consider: how can incomplete, rhizomic narratives best be heard, and how, given the horrors of Homs, Aleppo, can ruins continue to help us to look forward.

Key-note by Alexander Vasudevan (University of Oxford) “The Fragile City: Towards a Genealogy of Urban Precarity”

In this paper, I seek to develop a critical programme for exploring the relationship between the multiple precarities of contemporary urban life and the material promise of a radical politics of infrastructure. The paper builds on research conducted with squatters, tenant groups and other housing activists across Europe. It examines, in particular, how an increasingly permanent sense of insecurity has become a central feature of the contemporary urban experience for a growing number of Europeans. While recent social scientific scholarship has defined the expansion of labour and life insecurity as a form of “precarity”, public and academic understanding of the geographical dimensions of precarious living and its impact on how we think about, inhabit and re-animate cities remains limited. In response, the paper explores the particular challenges that questions of precarity pose for our conceptualisations of urban form, substance and practice. It focuses, on the one hand, on how cities have become key laboratories for the production of new forms of urban abandonment. But it also draws attention, on the other hand, to the practices of care, endurance and inhabitation and the various attachments and alliances that have emerged in response to the question of precarious urban living. It is in these practices, the paper ultimately argues, that one may detect the *making* of an alternative infrastructure and the possibilities for radical urban change.

Session 6: Architecture

P. Jones “Architecture as Spatio-Temporal Fix (Or: Today’s Urban Capitalist Development is Tomorrow’s Ruin)”

Spatio-temporal fixes (Harvey, 1974), here understood as urban reconfigurations of those capitalist strategies whose profitability has declined, have a distinctly architectural character. Spaces of previous ‘failing’ capitalist strategies become the fertile experimental terrain on which new speculative forms of accumulative practice play out; architecture’s status as fixed capital is crucial to understanding the embedding of such in time and place. Accordingly, strategies of urban entrepreneurialism have an ambiguous relationship with vacancy, itself a manifestation of the highly uneven development of capitalism. Liverpool One, a retail and residential development opened in 2008 and owned and controlled on a 250 year lease, illustrates these contentions aptly. Occupying 500,000 sq metres of central urban space (itself bordering a ‘regenerated’ dockland waterfront site that was crucial to the city’s historic wealth), the work of the twenty-nine architects who designed the Liverpool One site provided the basis for key elements of the developers’ claims concerning time and space - failures of the past as well as hope associated with future accumulative models - to be ‘emplaced’. Drawing from conceptualisation associated with Harvey’s work, Liverpool One’s architectural production is analysed as centrally-implicated to recent accumulation strategies associated with reconfigurations of temporality and urban scale. The overarching suggestion is that, as a speculative, entrepreneurial project in which crisis is offset - albeit for many hundreds of years - Liverpool One can in effect be understood as a future ruin, whose vast, contemporary [new] architectural form owes much to the active construction of past crises.

D. Martin “Arrested developments and hopeful audacities: on the role of architecture in the assembling of new urban forms”

In this chapter I draw on the proposals of the architect Cedric Price, especially his ‘Magnet’ project of short life structures in central London, in order to interrogate the logics of contemporary discourses on temporary cities, vacant spaces and new urban ruins. As a practitioner who understood architecture not so much as artefacts in space but rather events in time, revisiting Price’s ideas now offers us a sense of the possible role of architects in the refashioning of post-crisis cities in more imaginative, generous and just ways. Price offers a model of architecture as a form of spatial agency (Awan, Schneider and Till 2011), with his provocations for the re-appropriation of urban space a challenge to traditional modes of planning and professional expertise. Drawing on his Magnet plans prompts us to consider whether drives to recycle vacant spaces into processes of urban development are too accelerated and path dependent in their thinking. Rather, what may be better is to arrest the pace of reclaiming city sites for profit (as conventionally understood), and to think through the temporal dynamics and potentialities of urban spaces as incubators of more hopeful and durable futures. To do would be to utilise the interstitial spaces of the city to craft an urbanism of ‘ordinary audacities’ (Tonkiss 2013: 323), and advocate for a minor practice of architecture (Stoner 2012).

L. Pohl “Anomalies of the Vertical City: Ghostscrapers and the death drive of architecture”

In his book *Vertical*, Stephen Graham illustrates the political relevance of skyscrapers in terms of their creation and destruction. While they are vertical symbols of capitalist urbanization on the one hand, skyscrapers become targets for fictitious and terrorist attacks on the other. Therefore, creation and destruction are the two political options for skyscrapers to affect the vertical development of capitalist cities. What is missing in such an approach is the possibility of a skyscraper to become both, created and destroyed at the same time. This is what I refer to as a *ghostscraper*. Following Slavoj Žižek, I seek to propose a philosophically as well as psychoanalytically inspired framework to analyze the political relevance of vertical ruination. Ghostscrapers therefore uncover a key feature of capitalism, the permanent production of useless piles of waste. Thus, they materialize what I call the death drive of architecture, the inherent excess of capitalism to produce a surplus which serves no purpose. Empirically, the paper focuses on Detroit which is not only a role model of post-crises urban development, but also hosts the most iconic ruin of the United States – the Michigan Central Station. By drawing on the contradictory perceptions of the once tallest train station in the world, I seek to encourage an understanding of ruination as symptomatic for vertical cities. Ghostscrapers are therefore neither accidental nor exceptional, but have to be taken for granted as long as cities are built toward the sky.

DAY 3 (March 3rd)

Session 7: The lived character of vacancy

S. F. Trigo “Urban vacant land: a production process in the London context”

Urban vacant land is a phenomenon that has been studied worldwide. All the studies share the belief that urban land is a scarce resource and therefore, its best use is of great importance to society. However, the studies show little consensus as to why some sites remain vacant for a long time despite all the efforts to bring them back to ‘optimal’ uses. The literature review has highlighted two issues that might be underpinning the problem of urban vacant land. 1) An epistemological issue: the definition of vacant land in itself – in England alone, it has changed 8 times in the past 40 years; 2) An ontological issue: the transformation process of vacant land has been portrayed as a closed system despite its dynamic/dialectical nature. Drawing on Lefebvre’s and Massey’s work, this research suggests that we look at the problem from a social construct perspective. The focus should be on people’s multiple perceptions and understandings of vacant land and its transformation process, the narratives that come out of that, and their interaction. The research looks at two case studies in London: Silvertown Quays and Battersea Power Station. They reveal a ‘filtering process’ of the

narratives around vacant land, which creates a single narrative that places the future of vacant land on a dominant position over its past and its present. The research suggests that understanding vacant land as the outcome of a land production process, shaped through the filtering of social and temporal relations, could shed some new light on the problem.

J. Hudson “Using derelict space: The spatio-temporal qualities of urban vacancy and the production of the informal city”

Cities evolve constantly as a consequence of cycles of accumulation and dissolution. The spatial manifestation of these factors is made visible as cities’ constituent parts outgrow the boundaries imposed by spatial planning, or conversely shrink back from these (Oswalt, 2005; Berger, 2006; Gribat and Huxley, 2015). These processes are distinguished by plural temporalities; accordingly, “instead of being a solid thing, the city is a becoming” (Crang, 2001: 187). This chapter draws attention to the multiple temporalities associated with the production, reproduction and use of urban space, particularly highlighting the contingent ‘reuses’ and alternative practices that rhythms associated with ‘stagnation’ produce. By focusing on a site in Manchester, UK – a ‘new ruin’ (DeSilvey and Edensor, 2013) produced by the 2008 financial crisis and resulting austerity – I highlight how the unintended temporal gaps that appear between institutionally imposed modes of ‘stoppage’ and the planned ‘resumption’ of ‘top-down’ planning strategies create vacancy, but also allow other informal, ‘improvised’ (Till and McArdle, 2015) practices to unfold. Such everyday interventions occur outside of officially regarded ‘temporary use’ projects, (linked with both processes of ‘precarity’ and gentrification and creative re-inhabitations of “wasted space times” (Rall and Haase, 2011; Tonkiss, 2013; Ferreri, 2015 and Harris, 2015: 594; O’Callaghan and Lawton, 2015). I argue that these practices and the complex temporal processes that create and sustain them, can serve to focus attention on policies about urban vacancy, and extend understanding about use value and temporal urban processes. Accordingly, this critique reasserts the role of the temporal with regard to the (re)production of urban space.

Key-note by K. Till (National University of Ireland Maynooth) “Urban Remnants, Ruins and Revenants: Moving between pasts and futures through memory-work and place-based engagements”

As Andreas Huyssen (2003: 6) suggests, ‘in a media and consumer society that increasingly voids temporality and collapses space’, the obsession with memory is a symptom of a fundamental crisis in urban imaginaries. However the work of memory also remains critical ‘to regain a strong temporal and spatial grounding of life and the imagination’ (ibid). In this talk I highlight such ‘groundings’ by providing examples of activists’, residents’ and artists’ engagement with urban remnants, ruins and revenants in different ‘wounded cities’. Not only do these individuals and groups work with material and symbolic relics, their memory work and place-based practices provide insights into the complex and contingent ways that the spatial and temporal are always interwoven, thus providing a rich ground for alternative urban imaginaries. The talk complements recent work by O’Callaghan, Di Felicianantonio and Byrne who consider how activists, marginalised communities and alternative social projects use the urban remainders produced by neo/late liberal cities as resources, providing possible models for urban commons and even spaces of survival.

Session 8: Dublin

.K. Guinan “‘Creative’ government approaches to urban vacancy in Dublin: patronage or instrumentalisation?”

In the years following the 2008 financial crisis artists played a prominent role in the reuse of vacant space in Dublin. Independent art organisations such as Block T, the Art Tunnel, Basic Space and Mabos took advantage of plummeting rental rates and established galleries, studios and performance venues across the city. Dublin City Council accredited these organisations and supported them with schemes

such as the Vacant Spaces Initiative (2014) and projects such as the Art Tunnel (2010) and Granby Park (2013). Having previously relied on incentivised private development to solve urban vacancy rates, these innovations are telling of a new imperative within D.C.C. to 'creatively' tackle the issue. The council nevertheless repeatedly referred to these creative organisations as 'interim' uses and, true to the term, most were pressured into closure once market conditions became favourable again post-2012. This chapter therefore considers the political substance of D.C.C.'s creative approach to urban vacancy; asking whether it represented a support for art in its own right or the instrumentalisation of art for regenerative purposes. It takes as its starting point the thesis that culture-led development in Dublin has historically been a product of neoliberal urban planning, which seeks to establish the city as an innovative competitor on an increasingly international financial stage.

P. Crowe, K. Foley & A. Corcoran "The Reusing Dublin Experiment: Exploring Geddesian ideas through interactive mapping"

This paper reports on the findings of an experiment in mapping underused spaces, www.reusingdublin.ie, carried out as part of the transdisciplinary EU FP7 TURAS project (www.turas-cities.eu), led by UCD, in 2015-16. Reusing Dublin was a response to the observation that space is not used efficiently in urban areas, and that this has numerous systemic and negative consequences, for example related to urban sprawl, resource depletion, negative visual and social impacts, and a false impression of scarcity. Reusing Dublin is an online mapping platform that engages citizens with the underuse of space, and generates spatially distributed data through crowd-sourcing that would not otherwise exist. Results relating to civic engagement and mapping data are presented, and implications for public policy discussed. The map of underused spaces is put forward as a spatial template for change in the city, and an example of urban resilience (as the application of social ecological systems thinking to the city) in practice. The paper will demonstrate how Reusing Dublin uses ICT to realize ideas relating to the Civic Survey and rehabilitation of derelict sites into Garden Playgrounds of Patrick Geddes (1854-1932) in Dublin and Edinburgh. The paper will conclude by reporting on progress of the project including the hosting of the platform by the Peter McVerry Trust to identify vacant property in private ownership, and a consequent experiment that uses smart city tools in Aarhus, Denmark (developed as part of the Horizon 2020 www.organicity.eu project) to map underused spaces, and initiates a co-creation processes in those spaces with citizens and relevant stakeholders.

R. McArdle "'Squat City': Squatting as an explicitly political temporary use in post-crisis Dublin"

Temporary land uses have been criticised as reifying a neoliberal agenda, by providing a short-term solution to vacancy in a time of economic downsizing while failing to engage with the urban processes and policies which have resulted in the current levels of vacancy which we see in cities. Using an analysis of temporary use as obtained through qualitative data (interviews, ethnographic notes) and media analysis this paper envisions new ways of looking at temporary uses of vacant spaces as explicitly political movements while remaining short-term and impermanent. While some scholars have looked at neoliberalism in reference to squatting (Chatterton, 2002, Di Feliciano, 2016, Hodkinson and Chatterton, 2006), few have looked at the inter-related triad of squatting, temporary use and vacancy, in an Irish context. This article proposes to do this, in an Irish context, by analysing the Grangegorman Squat, a squat which was open intermittently from 2013 to 2016 in the Smithfield area of North Dublin. As a semi tolerated squat for 3 years, it closed in August 2016, when the site was sold as part of the 'apparent' uptake of the property market in Ireland. Thus, this squat is exemplary of the boom and bust cycles of urban development as its closure and redevelopment as student accommodation speaks to the future of the Smithfield area. Using an analysis of the squats temporary use as obtained through qualitative data (interviews, ethnographic notes) and media analysis this paper envisions new ways of looking at temporary uses of vacant spaces as explicitly political movements while remaining short-term and impermanent.