



DEEP DIVE STUDY VISIT BREMEN TEMPORARY USE AS AN ASSET TO REDUCE EXCLUSION



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“Athens is currently experiencing an incredible situation: a deep economic crisis, a large building vacancy and a huge flow of migrants: how can we turn this into something more positive?”

This question of Amalia Zepou, Vice Mayor for Civil Society and Innovation in Athens sums-up the focus of the first REFILL Deep Dive Study Visit. Delegates from the URBACT Local Group of the cities of Ghent and Athens met with their peers in Bremen (Germany) for 2 days of intense field visits and exchanges to better understand the links between temporary use and inclusion of weak populations.



Lessons learned from the REFILL Deep Dive Study Visit in Bremen 16-18 May 2017

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Cover page:

Kukoon standing for KulturKombinatOffeneNeustadt (combined culture in open Neustadt neighbourhood) is an informal lounge bar and restaurant installed in a former bathroom shop. <http://kukoon.de>

Photo Strategic Design Scenarios.

REFILL Deep Dive Study Visit on the roof top of the “Wurst Case” a former office building in the district of Hemelingen open for temporary use by the Zwischen Zeit Zentrale (ZZZ) the temporary use support services in Bremen. The “Wurst Case” hosts multiple cultural and craft initiatives. <http://www.wurstcase-hemelingen.de>

Photo Strategic Design Scenarios.

But what do we mean? Inclusion or integration? Which term should be used to better qualify concerns of keeping the integrity and cultural diversity of these weak populations? In order to escape tricky questions of definition and long discussions on translations traps in particular between German and English that are not in the spirit of a Deep Dive Study Visit the participants agreed on the following short focus: temporary use as an asset to reduce exclusion...

1. TEMPORARY USE AS AN ASSET TO REDUCE EXCLUSION



Urban farming organised with migrants hosted in vacant apartment buildings in Athens. <http://www.crs.org>
Photo CRS Catholic Relief Services.



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Refugee Camp Grünes Dorf Arbergen (Green Village) is a newly built camp in the district of Hemelingen. The camp is based on an architecture of assembled containers and is hosting 240 refugees in transition toward permanent lodging in the city.

Photo Strategic Design Scenarios.

Wilko Aits, one of the project coordinators of the Green Village hosting refugees explains:

“compared to refurbishing an existing place to host refugees, building it with container is quicker and cheaper. Families have their clear private place and containers give a sign of temporality to the neighbourhood”

The place is effectively perfect, clean and organized. If it were not an intention of the architects to signify that the building are made with containers, the place could perfectly appear as a new middle class lodging construction. The intention is then to clearly *distinguish* instead of *integrate*.



Martha Giannakopoulou, from If Untitled Architects presents her experience of using vacant housing in Athens to organize temporary use shelters to host migrants: 15 buildings in 2 months to accommodate 1600 refugees was faced with multiple problems such as convincing owners of empty apartments, complying with the building laws for refurbishing the places, managing the changing status of migrants from relocation to asylum seeker, dealing with very different socio-cultural backgrounds of incoming populations and impact on organizing everyday living, coping with the conflicts of discrimination and integration with the locals, etc.




Vacant apartment building situated in Omonoia Solomou Str. 63, in the 1st district of Athens refurbished by the CRS Catholic Relief Services to host 200 refugees.
Photo CRS Catholic Relief Services.



As Martha concludes:

“migrants, humanitarians and urban designers should sit at the same table and confront their points of view on integration. Bringing refugees and natives together needs innovation”



For Oliver Hasemann from the ZZZ Bremen's now famous temporary use support services, projects like the Green Village are projects from above. Even the garden has been created without the migrants.

“the organisation of the temporary use should start from the demand of the excluded populations”

Anne Angenendt from ZZZ team makes it clearer:

“we should step out of considering categories. In terms of temporary use, refugees are young people and families in needs”

The furniture building project WeserHolz from Paula Eickmann, a member of the Bremen REFILL local support group affirms this non-discriminative posture:

“the production of furniture is mainly for refugees but also for anybody who needs it: the model is inclusive”

REFILL Deep Dive Study Visit hosted at Kukoon, Neustadt neighbourhood, Bremen.
<http://kukoon.de>
Photo Strategic Design Scenarios.



Julia Messerschmidt, geographer doing a work experience at ZZZ expresses it in different words:

“temporary use doesn’t always have to deal with creative ideas necessarily. The goal may be sharing the space together, something simple and basic”

For Jan Casper-Damberg from the economic department of the city of Bremen, there is no standard model to organise a temporary use in order to reduce exclusion but there are preconditions:

“sound and deep analysis of the particular challenge; several groups together to ensure diversity; the right building and space for collective experimentation”

Gathering of refugees in a temporary use apartment building refurbished by the CRS Catholic Relief Services in Athens.
Photo CRS Catholic Relief Services.

Frauen Café und Sozialraum



As Vassilis Stamogiannis from the SynAthena team in Athens says:

“when heading to this field trip I was afraid of differences between Athens and Bremen. Now I see that we face similar situations”

Gathering room for women, refugee Camp Grünes Dorf Arbergen, Hemelingen.
Photo Strategic Design Scenarios.

The comparison between the Green Village in Bremen and the 14 refugees shelters in Athens shows that the constraints in Athens can be turned into an opportunity: the lack of means and of space to build in the inner city of Athens on the one hand and, on the other hand the availability of vacant apartment buildings induce a more inclusive hosting solution for the migrants: diffused shelter in the city, close to the centre, integrated with natives by default.



Family of refugees in a temporary use apartment building refurbished by the CRS Catholic Relief Services in Athens.
Photo CRS Catholic Relief Services.

2. BRIDGING FIGURES

Free Researcher - Creating Technology, Research & Development Service hosted in the "Wurst Case" temporary use in the district of Hemelingen. www.oekermann.com
Photo Strategic Design Scenarios.

Temporary use means first bridging temporary users and owners of the vacant places. As André Sassenroth, a life artist and social worker who organized bay-WATCH, a temporary settlement along the Weser river as an artwork, says the relationships of the temporary users with public authorities and city administration are very often an issue:



“the first thing we did was to contact the local police but regularly policemen change and ask us to follow them in the police station where we have to explain again and again that we are a legal temporary artwork”



bay-WATCH temporary use settlement organized along the Weser river in Bremen by André Sassenroth, a life artist and social worker. www.bay-watch.de
Photo Strategic Design Scenarios.

Beyond fluidifying interactions with the city administration, the relationships of temporary users with their neighbours are also an issue. As Flown Immo, the famous rap singer reports sited in the middle of the open air concert scene built from recuperated material in an unused land along the Weser river:

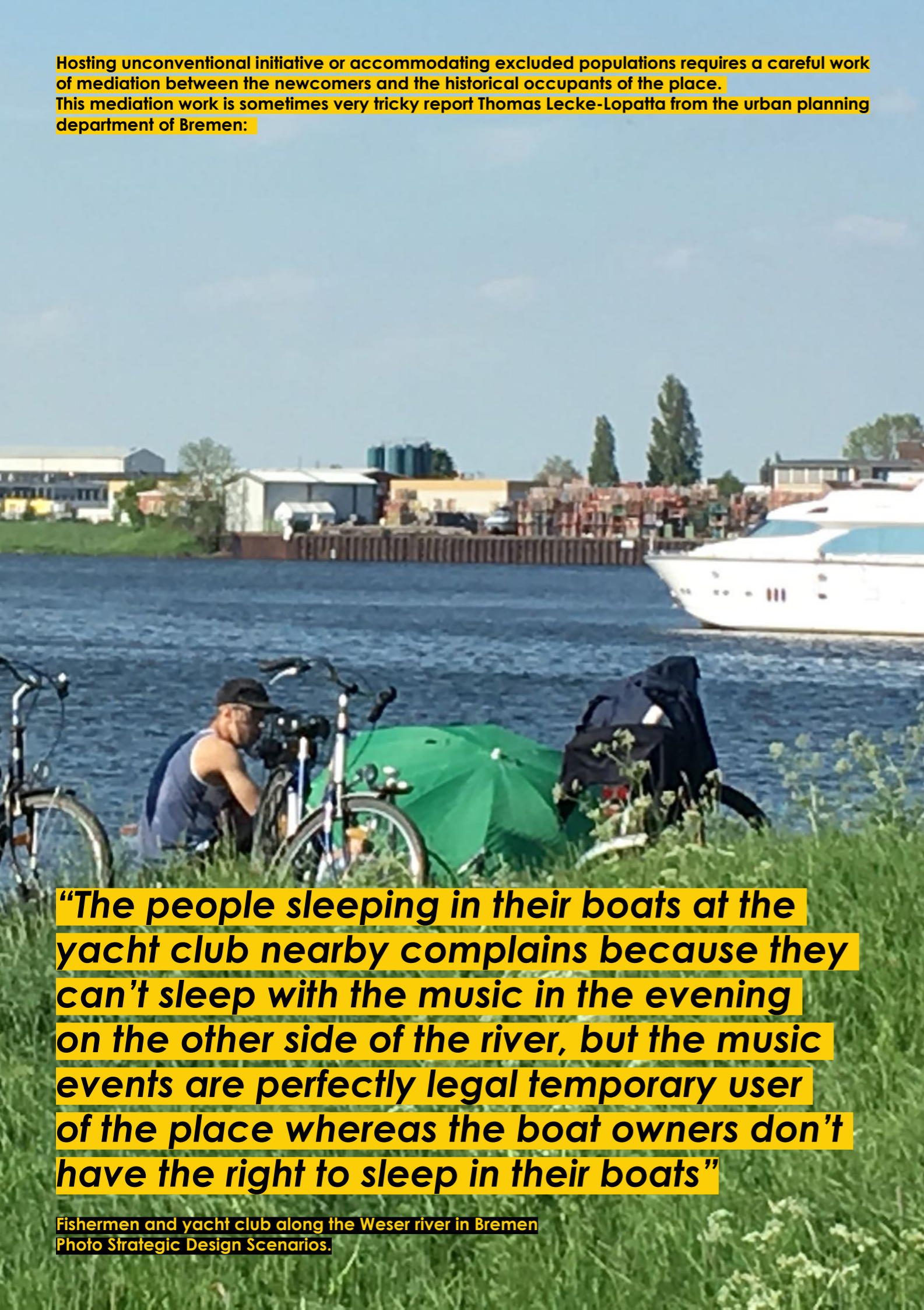
"I have mixed conversations with people walking their dogs here around: some are curious of what we are doing here and others are just shouting at us"



DKP – Die Komplette Palette, event and concert place organized along the Weser river in Bremen by famous rap singer Flown Immo. www.dkp.online
Photo Strategic Design Scenarios.



Hosting unconventional initiative or accommodating excluded populations requires a careful work of mediation between the newcomers and the historical occupants of the place. This mediation work is sometimes very tricky report Thomas Lecke-Lopatta from the urban planning department of Bremen:

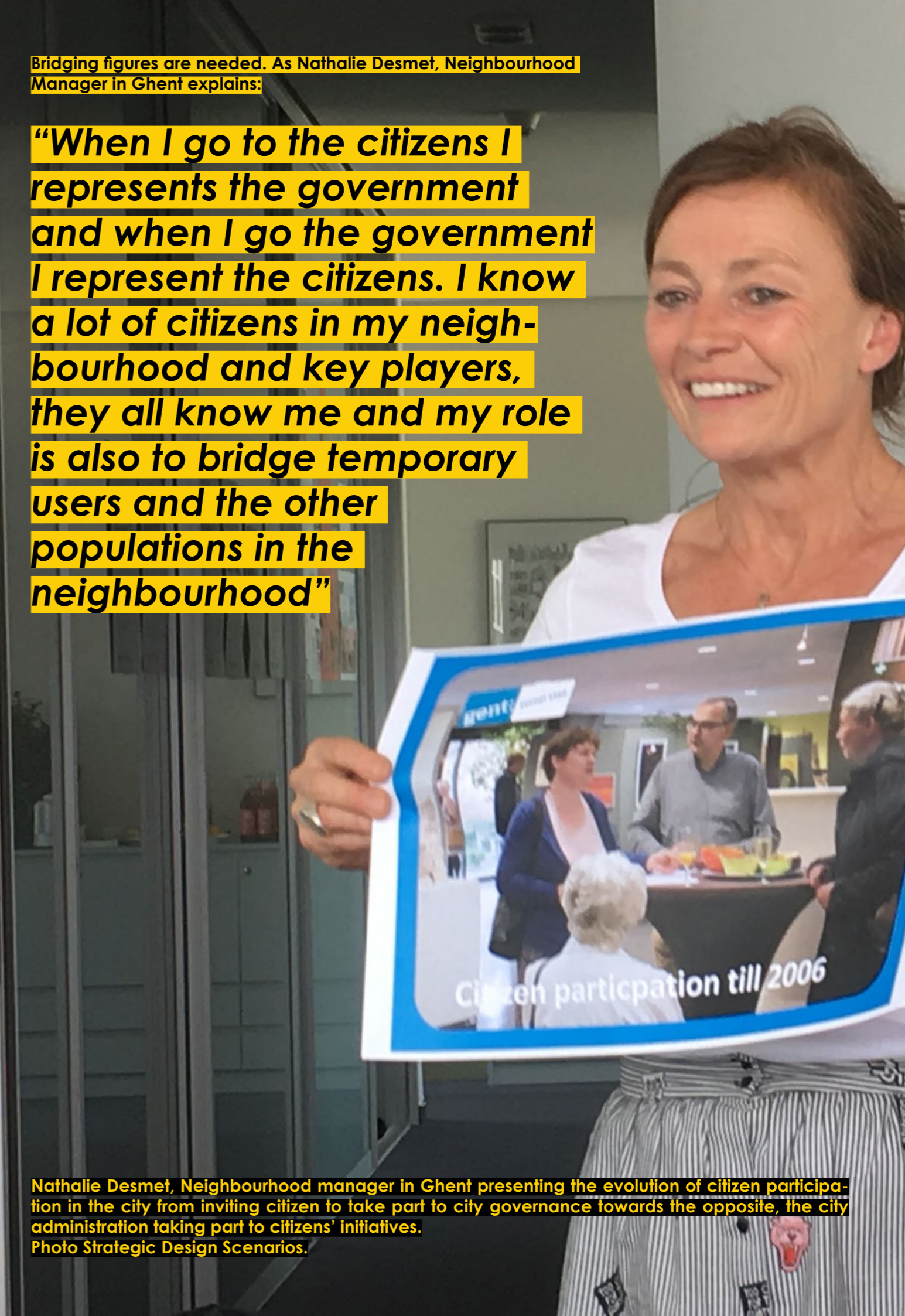


“The people sleeping in their boats at the yacht club nearby complains because they can’t sleep with the music in the evening on the other side of the river, but the music events are perfectly legal temporary user of the place whereas the boat owners don’t have the right to sleep in their boats”

Fishermen and yacht club along the Weser river in Bremen
Photo Strategic Design Scenarios.

Bridging figures are needed. As Nathalie Desmet, Neighbourhood Manager in Ghent explains:

“When I go to the citizens I represents the government and when I go the government I represent the citizens. I know a lot of citizens in my neighbourhood and key players, they all know me and my role is also to bridge temporary users and the other populations in the neighbourhood”



Nathalie Desmet, Neighbourhood manager in Ghent presenting the evolution of citizen participation in the city from inviting citizen to take part to city governance towards the opposite, the city administration taking part to citizens' initiatives.
Photo Strategic Design Scenarios.



Jörn Hermening, Head of the district of Hemelingen give a concrete example:

“We involved the neighbourhood to visit the refugees camp: the Green Village is an open place like any village”

For Martha Giannakopoulou, these mediators are key usual suspects in the neighbourhood:

“Like in Sade’s song, they work as smooth operators between the stakeholders in the neighbourhood”

REFILL Deep Dive Study Visit discussing with Jörn Hermening, Head of the district of Hemelingen at Zwischen Zeit Zentrale (ZZZ) offices in the “Wurst Case” temporary use in Hemelingen. <http://www.wurstcase-hemelingen.de>
Photo Strategic Design Scenarios.

REFILL Deep Dive Study Visit diner at Lankenauer Höft a former fish restaurant in neighbourhood of Rablinghausen in Bremen. Its recent closure disappointed the local population that urged the City of Bremen to find a solution to keep this Rablinghausen institution alive. It's now a challenge for Zucker Collective, a collective organizing events and concerts and Zucker Werk an open workshop developing projects to develop their own project there and at the same time respond to the expectations of the local population.
Photo Strategic Design Scenarios.



The good integration of the temporary users is also a matter of attitude as noted by Kristel Danel from the city of Ghent:

“Temporary users such as Zucker Collective are generally open to liaise with the populations living around but before they arrive

they have already established a project for the temporary use where they will settle. Instead they should co-create this project with the neighbourhood if they really want to bridge with them”



3. TEMPORARY USE DJ



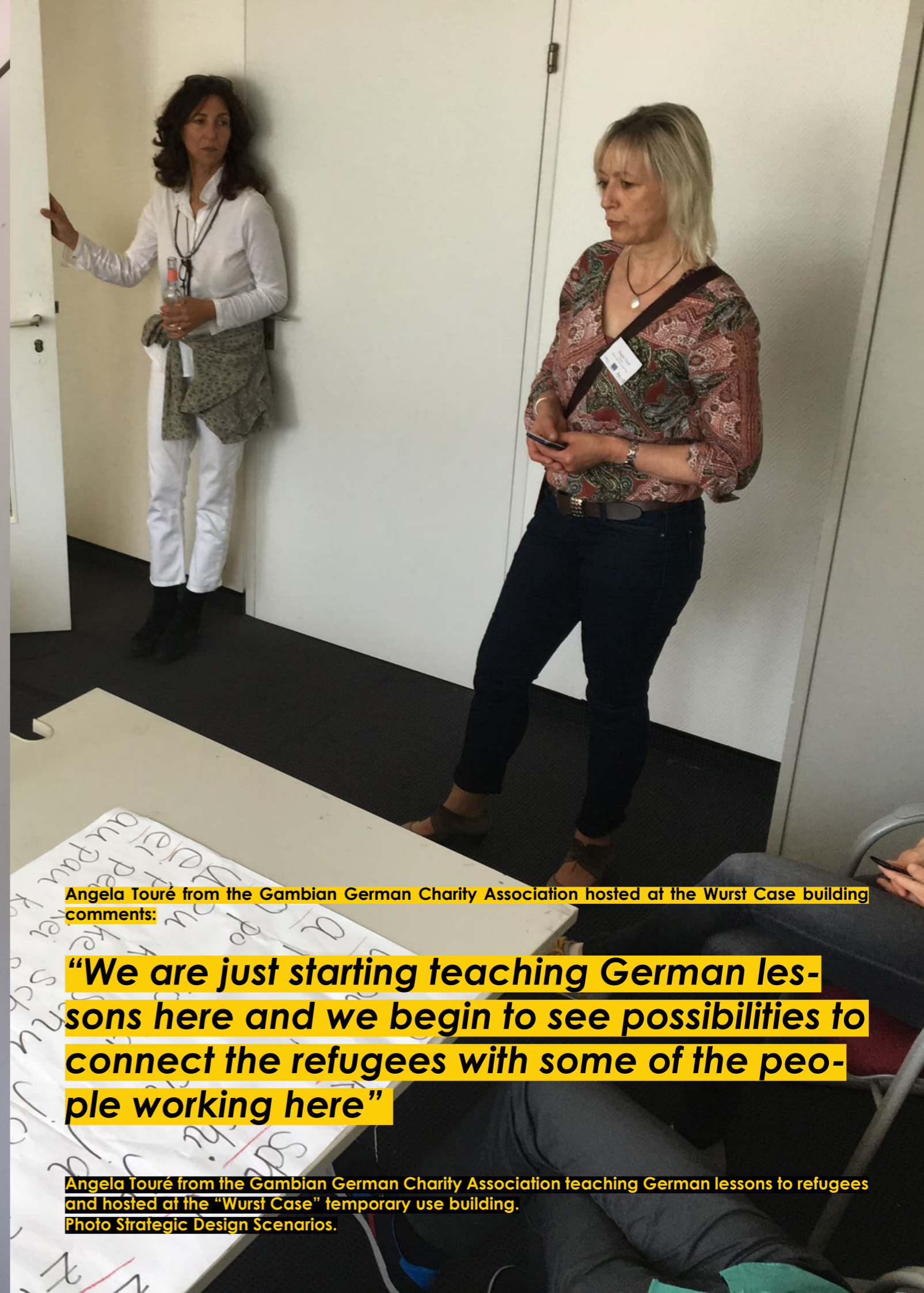
**"Wurst Case" a former office building in the district of Hemelingen open for temporary use by the Zwischen Zeit Zentrale (ZZZ) the temporary use support services in Bremen. www.zzz-bremen.de
Photo Julia Messerschmidt and Strategic Design Scenarios.**

As Jan Casper-Damberg states it:

“Support to excluded people should not disable them”

Buildings as the one hosting the Wurst Case temporary use project have been designed for companies, which is to say hierarchical institutions organized in silos. The spaces organized in small offices and long corridors are therefore not facilitating the socialisation between the temporary users.

“Wurst Case” temporary use in the former office building of the Könecke meat factory left empty when the factory moved production outside Bremen in 2013.
Photo Strategic Design Scenarios.



Angela Touré from the Gambian German Charity Association hosted at the Wurst Case building comments:

“We are just starting teaching German lessons here and we begin to see possibilities to connect the refugees with some of the people working here”

Angela Touré from the Gambian German Charity Association teaching German lessons to refugees and hosted at the “Wurst Case” temporary use building.
Photo Strategic Design Scenarios.

Hosting excluded population means then to carefully choose the building that will facilitate socialisation and integration. For Oliver Hasemann responsible for the Wurst Case temporary use:

“We as ZZZ organizing the different temporary users hosted in the Wurst Case building should do more to facilitate the connections between them”

For Jan Casper-Damberg, a single actor as the ZZZ only cannot manage so in-depth all the temporary use places they are in charge of in Bremen and the money is not enough to multiply this type of temporary use mediation services.

“It’s more a question of delegation, of enabling the people hosted in the temporary use to take action”

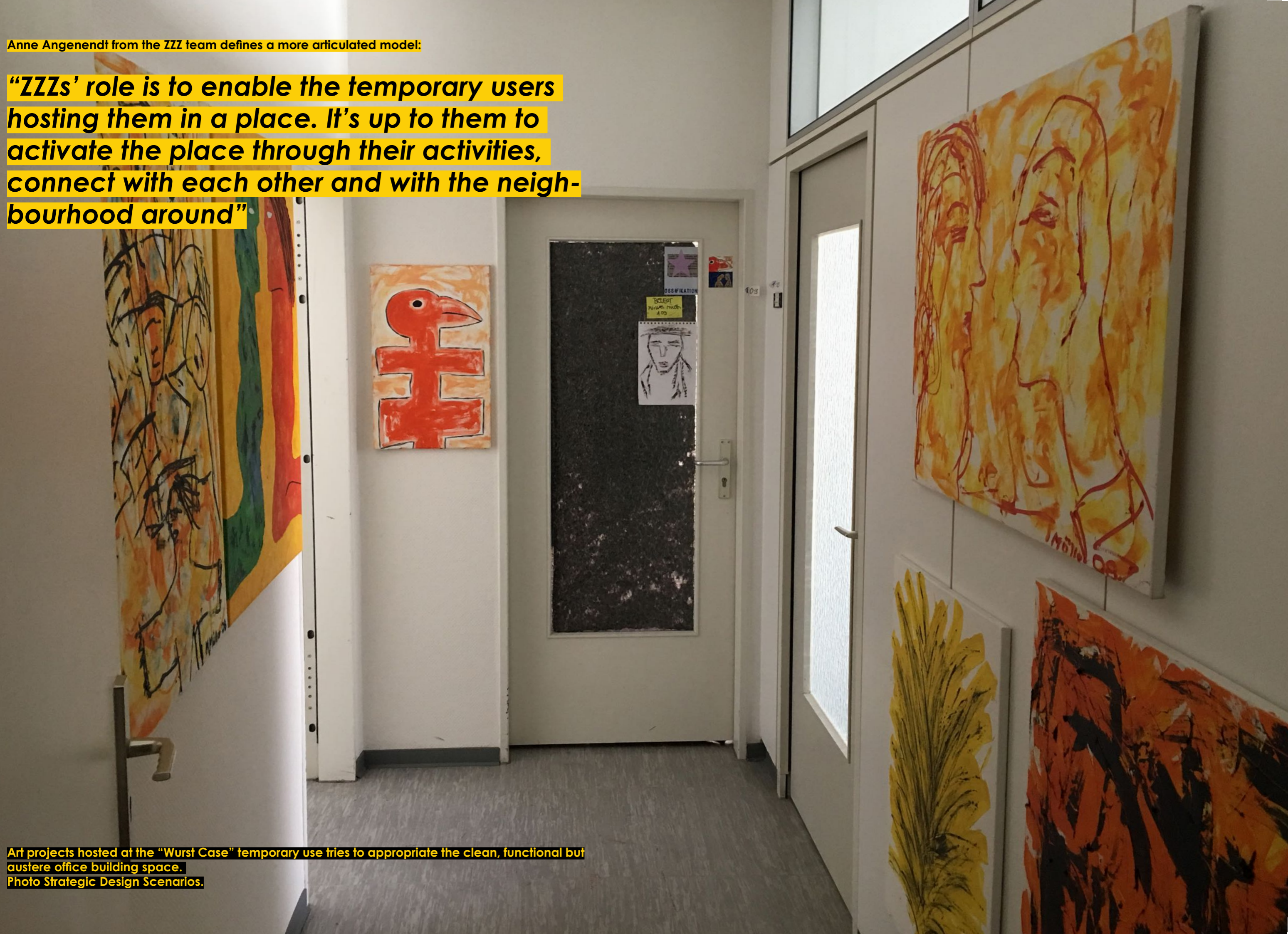


“Wurst Case” name is a play on words because the building was the former Könecke meat factory (Sausage Case) . It’s also the “worst” kind of building for temporary use: 5 floors of small office rooms with no large place for gathering and socialisation of the temporary users.
Photo Strategic Design Scenarios.

Anne Angenendt from the ZZZ team defines a more articulated model:

“ZZZs’ role is to enable the temporary users hosting them in a place. It’s up to them to activate the place through their activities, connect with each other and with the neighbourhood around”

Art projects hosted at the “Wurst Case” temporary use tries to appropriate the clean, functional but austere office building space.
Photo Strategic Design Scenarios.



In synthesis, we could maybe say that the role of a temporary use organizer is similar to the role of a DJ with the choice of the music during an event. What we could call a "Temporary Use DJ" should feel the atmosphere of the place, the genius loci of the vacant building and the way it could resonate in the neighbourhood where it is situated. Then as a DJ would do selecting different music and mixing them together, our Temporary Use DJ should try to compose the right mix of social, cultural, business, educational, environmental, etc. initiatives so that when hosted in the same temporary use building they naturally tend to interact between each other, liaise with the populations around and produce the expected effect on the neighbourhood.



REFILL Deep Dive Study Visit discussing at Zwischen Zeit Zentrale (ZZZ) offices in the "Wurst Case" temporary use in Hemelingen. <http://www.wurstcase-hemelingen.de>
Photo Strategic Design Scenarios.

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