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## Chora-Manifesto

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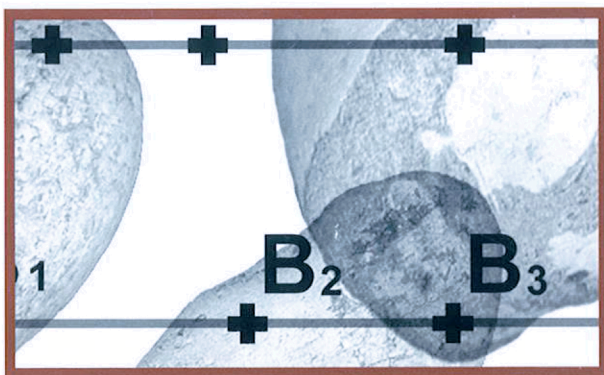


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# DAIDALOS

## Architecture · Art · Culture

### Urban Strategies



Strategic Planning Enters Urbanism  
Good-bye to the Masterplan  
Weak Urbanism. Weakness as  
Strength  
Grafting, Cloning  
Planning in Homeopathical Doses  
Multiple Programming  
From Plan to Script  
The Power of Orgware

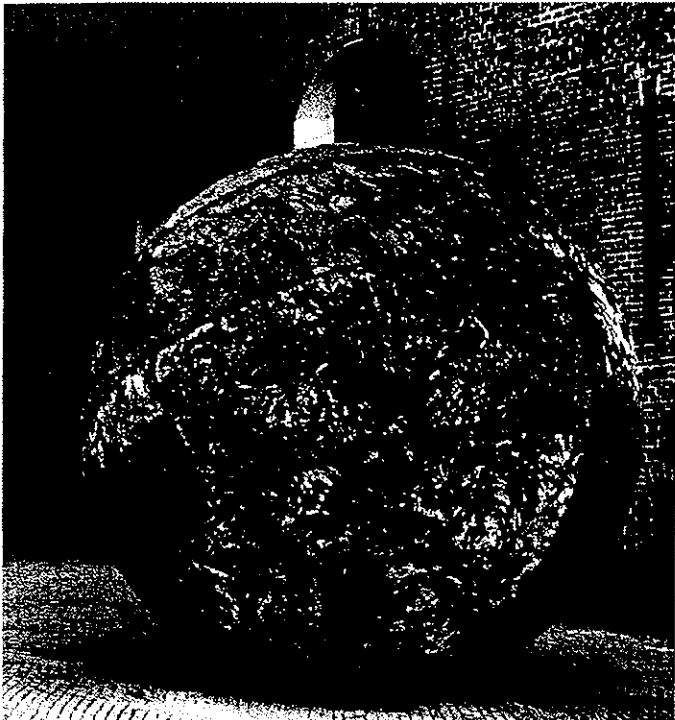
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## CHORA Manifesto

CHORA

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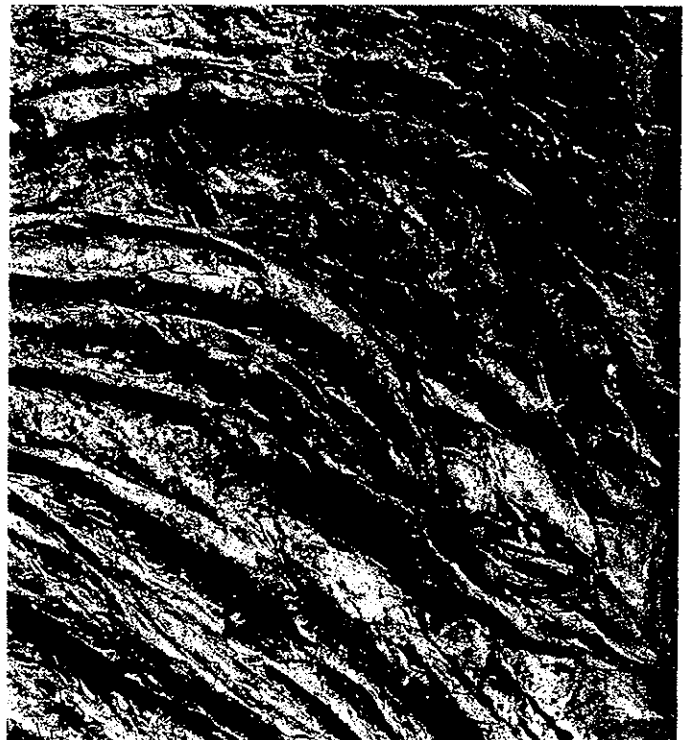
Takuro Hoshino

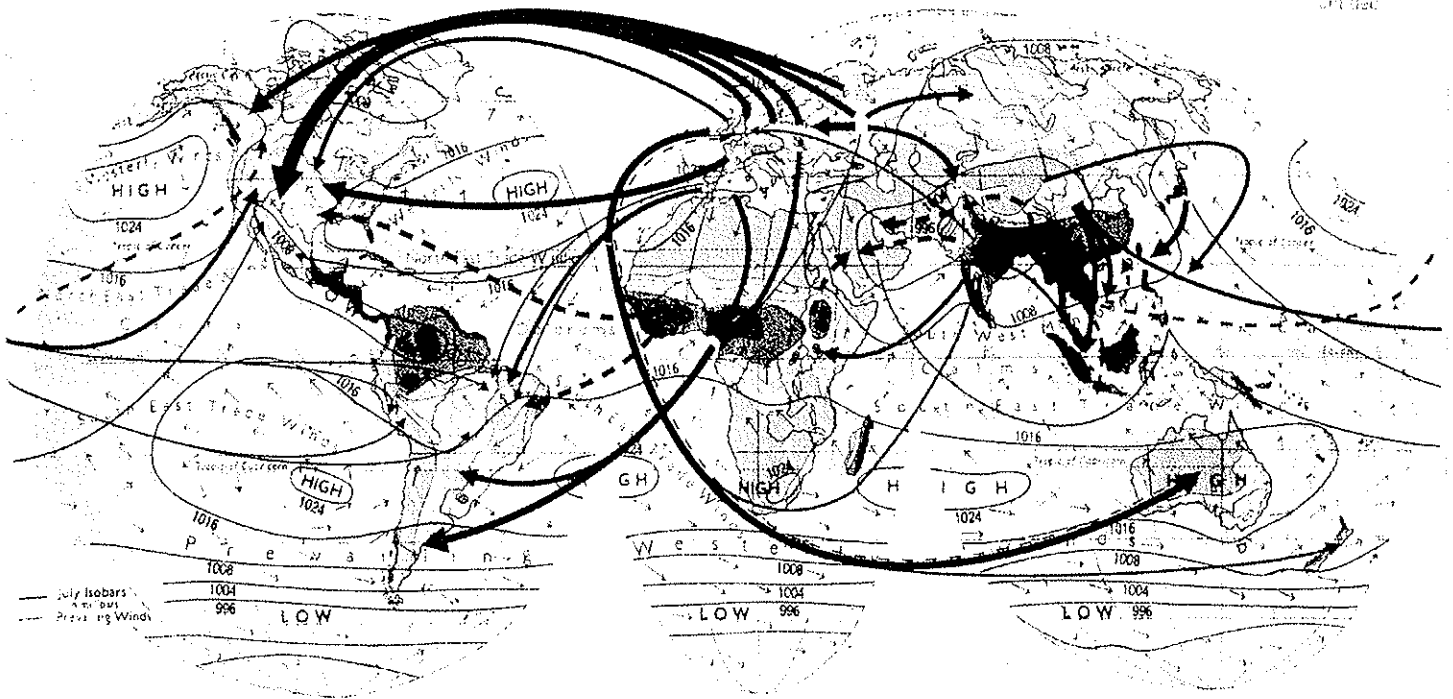
Petra Marguc

and others

0. The skin of the earth wraps the earth.
1. Cities form the second skin.
2. The dynamics of the skin of the earth affect the second skin.
3. The increasing complexity of the second skin calls for the definition of a new practice—and with it a new tool box—for the construction and management of cities.
4. Like the earth's skin, cities are plastic environments that undergo constant change. Geological forces cause changes in the skin of the earth. What forces cause changes in the second skin?
5. A city is a life form. It has emotions.
6. To understand the second skin as a dynamic environment requires an awareness of its emotions. The emotions of the city are called proto-urban conditions.

photos. Helene Binet





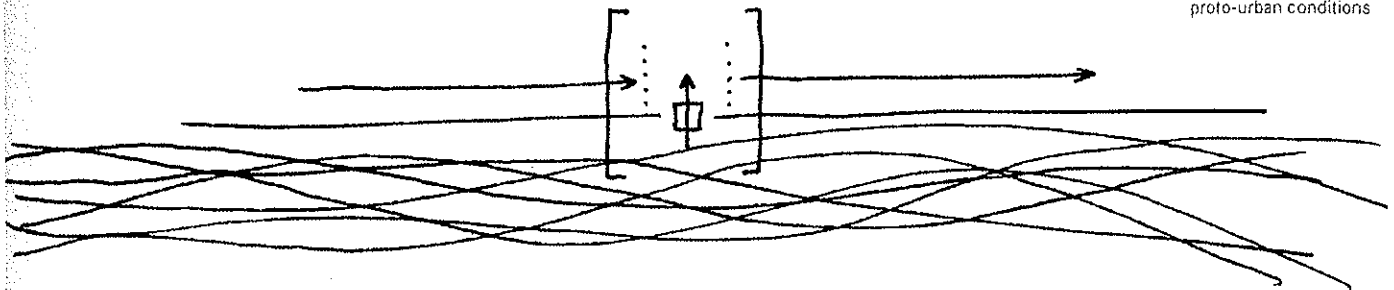
7. Proto-urban conditions agitate the second skin.
8. Proto-urban conditions cause change in the incessant flux of the second skin, to bring about new phenomena that seem to follow lines drawn upon an invisible map—a map that prescribes the behavior of cities.
9. The city as a life form has to be maintained—its evolution sustained. To do so, proto-urban conditions must be known, their manifestations recognized:

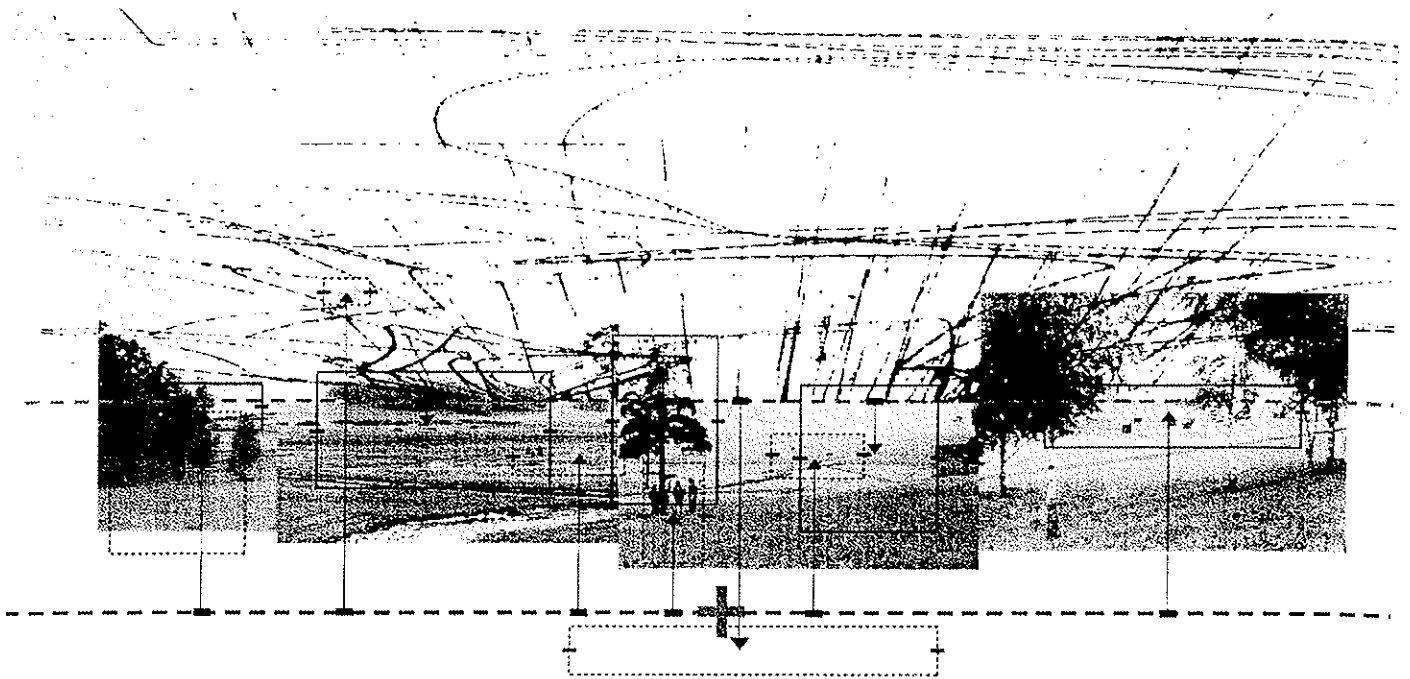
*The drone of the traffic disturbs the quiet; the wind blows through the trees, taking the leaves; lust determines the behavior of the afternoon exchange dealings—the Dow Jones is up; fear and desire permeate the night; alarm systems go off. The chat rooms of the Internet are full of people pretending they are not themselves, other gen-*

*ders. Memory becomes a toponymy: here was once a church; now only a name remains.*

10. How to see? New phenomena need new eyes.
11. Immersion in the city with new eyes means walking through it, entering its flux, encountering emergent phenomena, recognizing them as manifestations of proto-urban conditions, sorting them into boxes.
12. Boxes need labels. New phenomena need caretakers.
13. Manifestations of proto-urban conditions are part of the life form of a city. They are small life forms themselves. They move and grow. They have dynamic properties.

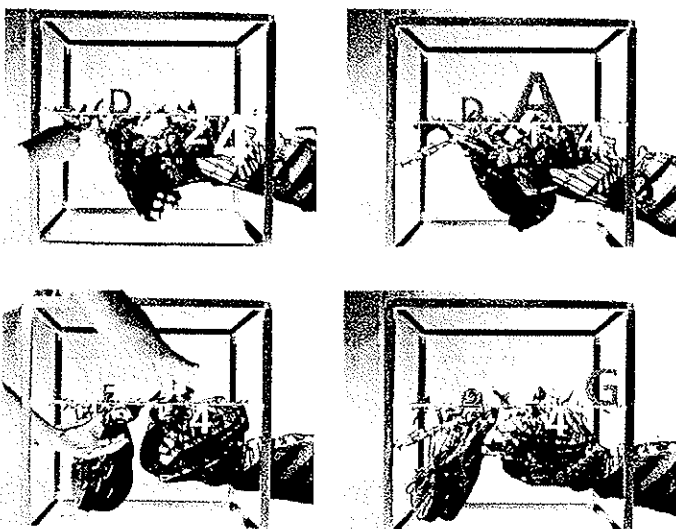
proto-urban conditions





above: "walk towards", fieldwork in Alexandrow, Russia  
 below: dynamic modelling

- 14. A Taschenwelt—or "pocket world"—models the dynamic properties of a life form. It is a small world that you can hold in your hand (or pocket). Removed from context, it enables a more precise view of a more complex reality. A Taschenwelt itself has dynamic properties that reflect those of the manifestations of proto-urban conditions.
- 15. Taschenwelts are dynamic models. The form of a dynamic model reflects its organization relative to time and space. Dynamic models are organizational form.
- 16. A group of common objects suspended in a grid creates the image of a small cut-out of the skin of the earth—both as an undulating carapace and as a plastic mass of fragmentary elements restlessly moving around the grid, driven by the rules of a game. Dynamic models come in different guises and represent different conditions simultaneously. The same model, its parts renamed, becomes a model of the dynamics of the second skin—submerged proto-urban conditions and their visible manifestations emerging above the horizon of the second skin.
- 17. An image model serves as an emblem of organizational form. In Viking images representing the cosmos, knots were used to reflect its dynamic nature. Animals portraying universal forces entangle themselves in knot-like configurations in an eternal fight between good and bad.



18. A material model makes it possible to define the rules of change. These rules are established when a material is handled, its resistances negotiated, its changes observed and mapped as patterns of organization. These patterns serve as models that enable the recognition of similar patterns in a more complex and less contained environment. Alternatively, these patterns prescribe potential rules of behavior for these other environments.
19. An embedded model exists as an object installed in a specific situation. It orders this situation and simultaneously gives meaning to this order. A threshold, for example, is both a piece of wood embedded in a doorway and an abstract line separating two kinds of spaces.

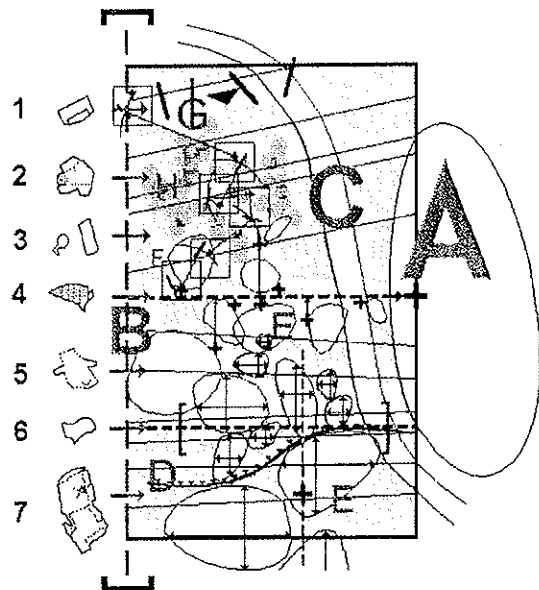


left: viking knot  
right: embedding of the Berlin Wall  
bottom right: untitled

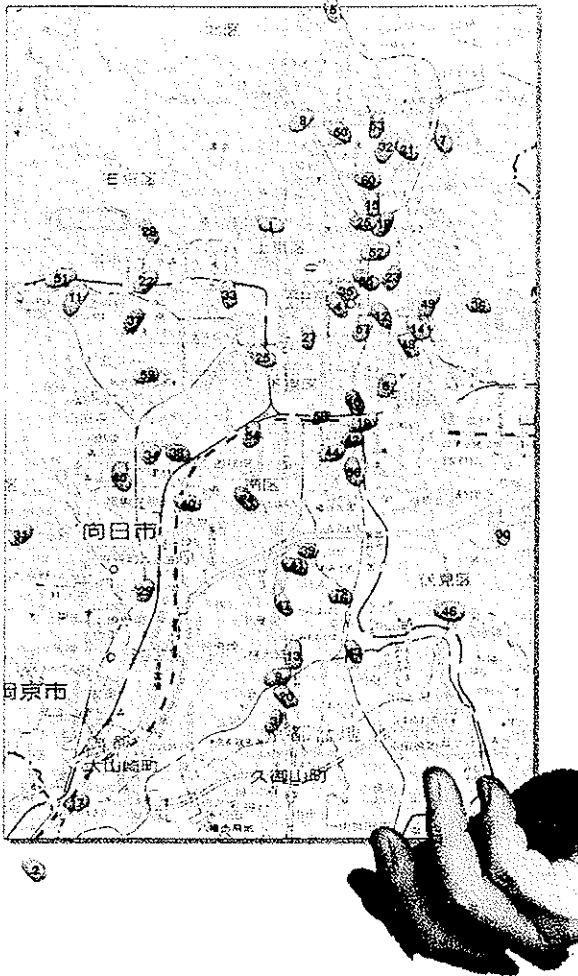
23. Playing involves random choices, findings, discoveries. This randomness generates variety and surprise. Random sampling is the technique of cutting through pre-conceived categories to reveal the ways that proto-urban conditions affect specific environments. A critical mass of random samplings is needed in order to see differences in their manifestations and to establish trends.



20. The organizational form of a dynamic model gestates in a metaspace. Metaspaces are spaces of possibilities, spaces of holding. They act as matrices for dynamic models. To enter a stranger's home requires both an open door and the symbolic act of stepping across the threshold into that home. Here, the threshold, which marks the metaspace of this act, is a space of potential, of change; within it, a relationship is redefined: a stranger becomes a friend. Chora: "...the space of the world is described as requiring artful connection."—Plato
21. "Designing the city is like playing with the objects on your breakfast table."—After Le Corbusier.
22. How to play?  
Children's play, games and toys create metaspaces within which new possibilities can be explored. Play involves an irreverent interaction with the world. Games regulate this interaction. Toys provoke play.  
Children's play enhances their sensitivity to an emergent world. Games simulate the behavior of this world. Toys are instruments for intervention.



left: "beanmap with 60 different samplings", Kyoto, stirring the city  
 bottom: four frames—Topology, Basin, Flow, Incorporation

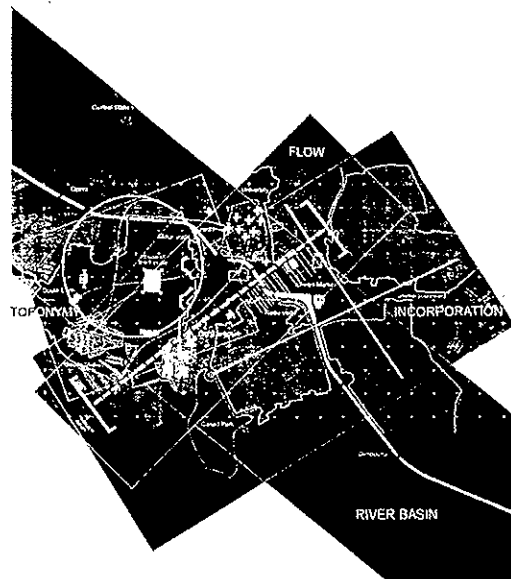


*Migration.* things moving through

This basic set of processes enables the schematic articulation of complex urban dynamics. It is a framing device to filter out emergent phenomena.

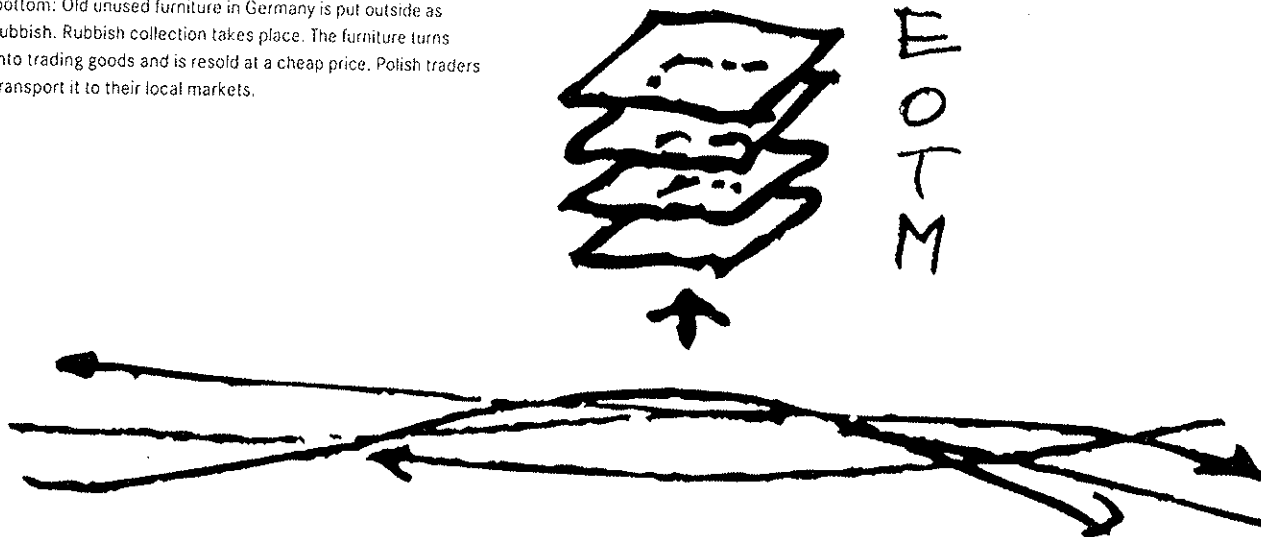
- 29. The basic set of four processes can be applied in any situation, at any moment in time and at any point in space.
- 30. A didactic exercise: twelve people create winds of change in a field of objects; they are a city in motion. What do you see?
- 31. Look at this city in motion and describe a sample of it through the process of erasure.  
 Look at this city in motion and describe a sample of it through the process of origination.  
 Look at this city in motion and describe a sample of it through the process of transformation.  
 Look at this city in motion and describe a sample of it through the process of migration.  
 The twelve people simulate an environment undergoing change; they create a dynamic model. They sample the model and use four basic processes and one another to create a range of schematic, accumulative and varying descriptions of the model.
- 32. A miniscenario is a schematic description of a sample of dynamic conditions taken at one point in time and in space. It

- 24. To see something is to exclude most other things. To frame is to focus on a particular thing, to articulate a singular condition.
- 25. Frames are observational and operational devices.
- 26. Take a small sample of a city; cut a small section out of its flux. Watch the processes that create the flux. Their product is the horizon of the second skin as we see it.
- 27. Processes are the substance of the second skin's flux; they create its form in time and space.
- 28. A basic set of four processes:  
*Erasure.* the removal of things  
*Origination.* change initiated at a single point in time or space  
*Transformation.* continuous change from A to B



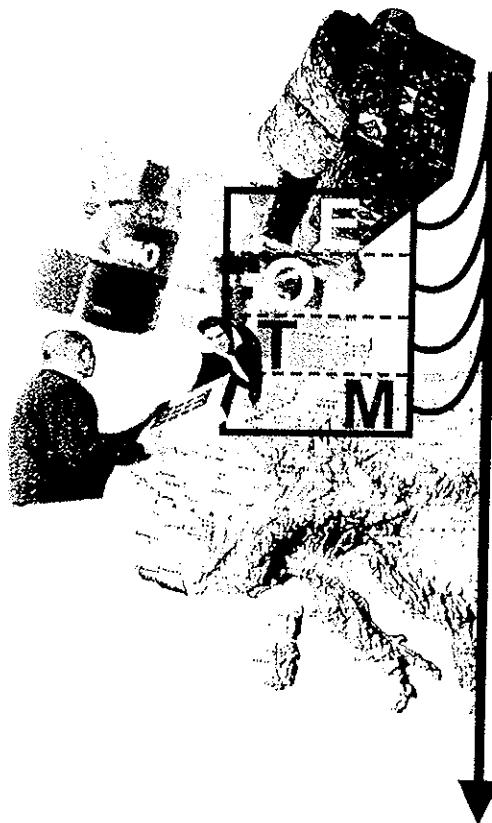
right: "Metaspaces" - erasure, origination, transformation, migration

bottom: Old unused furniture in Germany is put outside as rubbish. Rubbish collection takes place. The furniture turns into trading goods and is resold at a cheap price. Polish traders transport it to their local markets.

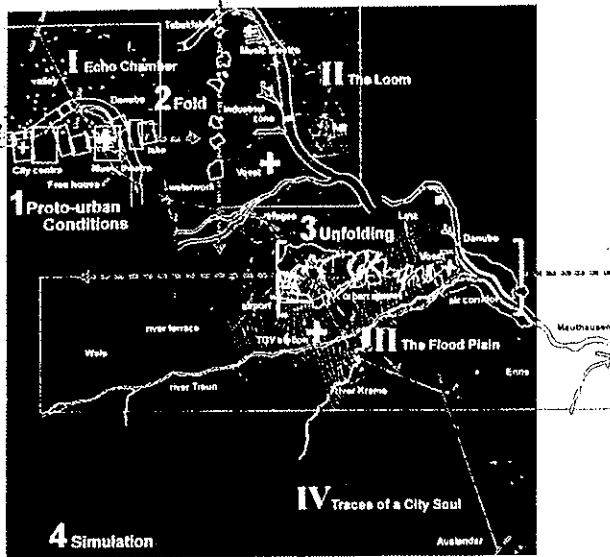


uses the four basic processes as steps in its description. It is a small narrative taxonomy.

33. We are sitting in a Japanese restaurant somewhere in Oslo. We are eating fish (erasure) and enjoying it. However delicious, we cannot finish all the fish. After a while the waiter comes along and asks: "are you finished?" "Yes, thank you (origination). It was very good," we reply. He then takes the plate away. Back in the kitchen, he throws the fish in a bucket, the bucket where all leftover food is thrown (transformation). At the end of the day, the bucket is brought outside the restaurant with the other garbage. It is taken away by the sanitation department (migration).
34. Mini-scenarios are written on the page of everyday life. The schematic structure of a mini-scenario links processes to operational fields. In the story of the fish we move from user to service to kitchen management to city management in a few lines. Each is an operator in an operational field. Each is an instigator of processes.
35. Like emotions, proto-urban conditions contain action-tendencies. These action-tendencies appear in mini-scenarios as conflicts, or simple changes in a common practice, or in the use of a common object or space. These tendencies cause ripples in the surrounding environment. Operational fields contain the actors and agents that within their roles articulate the action-tendencies of proto-urban conditions and give them the potential to unfold. Mini-scenarios are like seeds, or



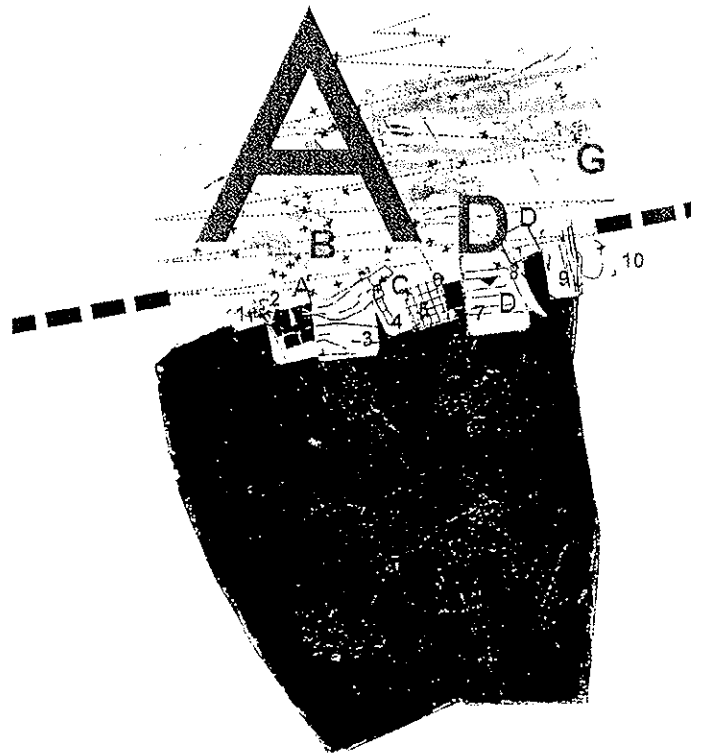




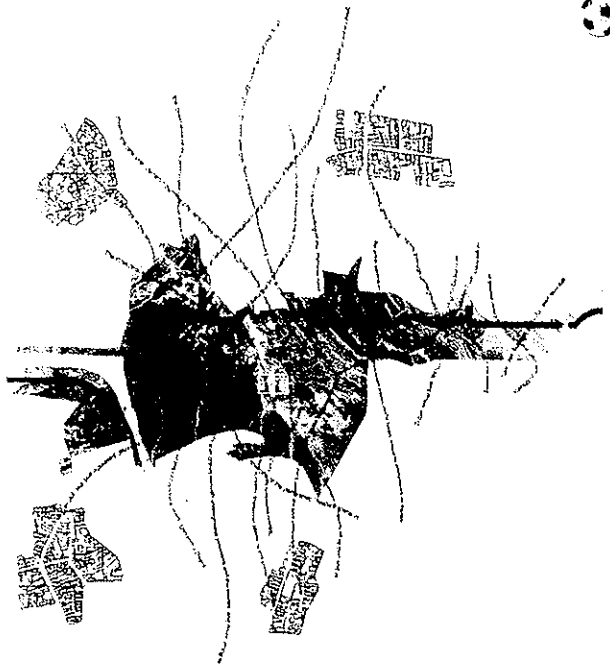
- 39. To unfold is to open into a larger whole.
- 40. Mini-scenarios are keys to the creation of organizational form for dynamic models. Like successive configurations in a game, this organizational form has the capacity to unfold into scenarios.
- 41. Diagrammatics is the language for the notation of scenarios. Diagrammatics prescribes the organizational form of the dynamic structure of a scenario.
- 42. Connectivity in scenarios is described and prescribed through diagrammatics in metaspaces, using their three-dimensional properties. Metaspaces are devices that make possible the visualization of connectivity in and between scenarios and between scenarios and the second skin. Metaspaces allow formal relationships between independently developing scenarios to become clear. The symbolic language of the organizational forms of complex urban dynamics is expressed in metaspaces. Metaspaces are architecture in time.
- 43. Metaspaces can become embedded into the substance of the second skin. Space and matter become diagrams for the

narrative seedlings, for scenarios. The operational fields nurture their growth. As seedlings grow, they exfoliate.

- 36. How to tell?  
Scenarios are narrations of urban possibilities, alternative realities, alternative practices.
- 37. Scenarios need authors, actors, agents and angels.  
Authors create plots for scenarios. Plots express their dreams, desires. Different authors write different scenarios; sometimes, these different versions clash. Authors react; they strategize; they adapt their scenarios.  
Actors play characters with desires within scenarios.  
Agents set rules that affect scenarios and the desires played out by the actors.  
Angels are symbolic heroes and messengers capable of moving through different layers of space. They pass from the realm of proto-urban conditions to the domain of the second skin.
- 38. A taxonomy is a list of items, classified for practical use. Each item on this list refers to a larger group. Taxonomies articulate differences. They allude to absences—open spaces that can stir the imagination. Scenarios build upon the differences created by taxonomies and enter the open spaces they offer.



above: taxonomy · 1. Echo-Chamber, 2. The Loom, 3. Agora, 4. Free House (Linzer Entfaltungen), right: the Fold, Linzer Entfaltungen



left: football—a liminal body, Bucharest Stepping Stones, stage 2  
below right: untitled

organizational structure of a scenario. Mini-scenarios form the initial raw material for scenarios. But when developing within the second skin, scenarios need mechanisms to provoke interaction between actors and agents from the operational fields and to connect scenarios to one another. For this, mechanisms are needed—mechanisms that intensify the dynamic potential of the initial mini-scenario and of the subsequent scenario.

44. Three mechanisms:

*Icon-formation.* The formation of a sign with a symbolic substance representing a larger whole; the use of a part of a network to represent the whole network.

*Echo-resonance.* The connection between two parts that do not share the same substratum; a correlation between two independent systems or networks.

*Micro-model.* A model made of the same substance it represents, causing a part of a whole work as a model of the whole.

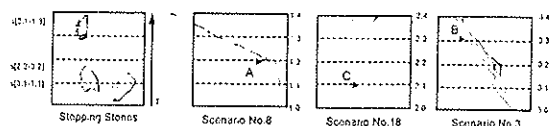
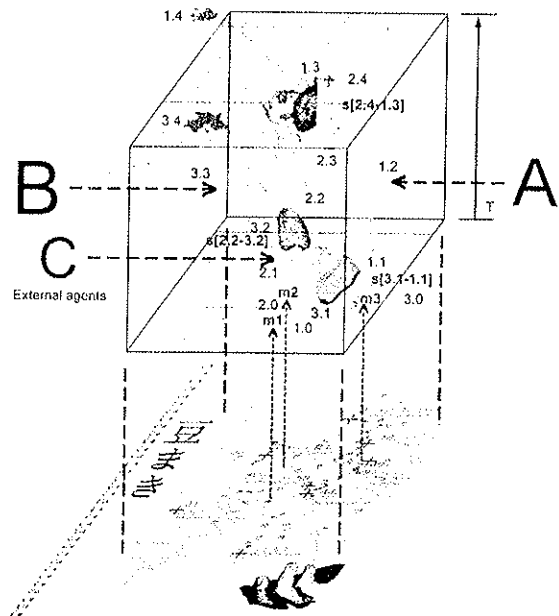
45. An epic geography is a metaspace embedded in the second skin of the earth—a virtual mantle forming a narrative unfolding that simulates the skin. Motion through the texture of the mantle unfolds the narrative. When a scenario is formed within the second skin using its resources, an epic geography is formed.

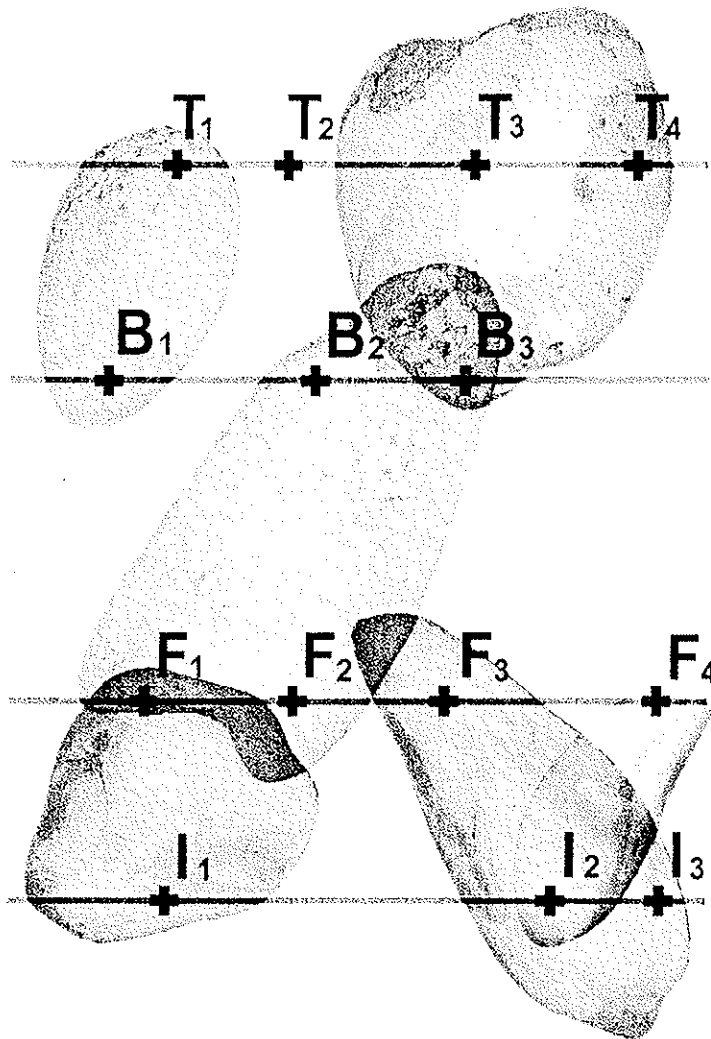
46. An epic geography is like stepping into the flows of the second skin. This requires stepping-stones. Stepping stones link, but also split, divert, reorganize the flows and trends of the second skin.

47. The cooling-off of the second skin.

Not long ago, when financial markets around the world were verging on a meltdown, the New York stock exchange managers halted trade for a few minutes. They called a timeout, creating a liminal period, a secluded space in which turbulence could calm, global flows could cool down. A small, institutionalized body made a regulatory gesture, touching a large dynamic structure, affecting its behavior.

The victory of the French soccer team in the 1998 World Cup created waves of emotional energy. Shortly after, one of its members—a son of former immigrants, now a hero—visited his old club in the outskirts of Marseilles, the banlieux, one of Europe's "in-betweens"—a melting pot. But the club thrives. Kids dream. Maybe, one day, they too. Things can change.





48. Conflicts are stepping stones in the unfolding of scenarios—tools triggering interaction between actors and agents that otherwise would not meet. Stepping stones are instruments for managing urban change.
49. The management of urban change thrives on the cycle of conflict, negotiation, (non-)settlement.
50. When stepping stones are placed in the flux of the second skin, they must become prototypes. A stepping stone as prototype creates the potential for a scenario to develop. Prototypes adapt to a given situation and cause it to adapt. Prototypes can generate conflicts as part of their program to manage urban change.
51. Stirring the city.  
 "...be allowed to appear as a surface woven by the activity of its inhabitants: the sequential building of sanctuaries over a period of time, which at times stretched over decades and the subsequent ritual processions from center to urban limit to territorial limit and back again, in what can be seen as a kind of Ariadne's dance magnified to cover a territory that was not called choras but chora."—de Polignac
52. At lunchtime in Kyoto, the Locker Girls go to the station, change from their school uniforms into more sophisticated clothes, rent lockers for the uniforms and walk out of the station as young women playing the city. After an hour, they change back, return to school and later take the train home. Men travelling in Kyoto sometimes receive handkerchiefs with telephone numbers: meet a Locker Girl, buy her fancy clothing, take her out for lunch, have sex. The Locker Girls participate in global flows and trends: fashion; information; moral attitudes; general mobility; AIDS; economic, political and education upheavals. Emergent phenomena touch them personally.

53. How to act?

Locally, the Locker Girls stage conflicts: dominating the lockers, dressing and undressing in public, offending morale. They create events, small public spaces, services.

But can they self-organize? Can they change the city and their place within it—become a negotiating partner, an urban authority, a Liminal Body?

When scenarios unfold, they create potential for urban prototypes to be tested. Simultaneously, scenarios need prototypes to unfold in a particular way. Liminal Bodies make or organize the prototypes in scenarios.

54. Liminal Bodies are more than instruments of change; they are also users of the opportunities that an evolving environment gives. They are levers that regulate the force and energy of proto-urban conditions; they create new life forms, empower emergent ones. Liminal Bodies mutate from existing operational systems, or are created by actors and agents joined through conflict and negotiation.

55. When a part of a city is designated a metaspace, it becomes an Urban Gallery—a fluid form of public space that evolves in time, generating different definitions of public space and different ways of participating in it. These definitions yield “floors” in the spatial structure of the urban gallery. Metaspaces make it possible to bring the dynamic structure of scenarios into the flows of the second skin. A metaspace in the second skin is a public space, a public matrix.

56. Urban Curation is the practice of maintaining Urban Galleries, the metaspaces of the second skin. Urban Curators are the practitioners that manage the contents of these metaspaces. They oversee the production of scenarios and prototypes. They organize tables of negotiation, support the initiation and work of Liminal Bodies.

57. The practices of urban planning and architecture are evolving in the context of an ever-more complex second skin. In collaboration with other practices, inhabitants, users, clients, decision-makers, producers and investors, these practitioners help to invent new urban forms and define the shifts in practice that are required for the management of these new

forms. Urban Curators orchestrate this shift in practice, detect emergent phenomena, designate cities as metaspaces, form galleries and curate their contents.

New urban phenomena; metaspaces as new public spaces; a new practice.

This text is part of the book “Urban Flotsam” to be published by Uitgeverij 010 (Rotterdam) in September 1999.

Chora institute of architecture and urbanism was founded by Raoul Bunschoter in 1993 and is based in London. It’s organizational form is both an academic research institute and an urban planning and city policy think tank. Chora members include architects, artists and academics coming from a variety of backgrounds, of different disciplines and nationalities.



above: “Locker girls,” photo: Héène Binet  
below: negotiation

