The Jammin’ Kiosk
Sladki Prikazki

By: Constructlab
Context: One Architecture Week, Plovdiv, Bulgaria
Date: September 23rd - October 7th, 2016

CONTEXT
The project took place during One Architecture Week festival 2016, in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. Curated by studioBasar, the year’s focus was set on citizen participation in the creation of urban environment. More specifically in the context of Trakiya, a socialist collective housing neighbourhood and in the implication of the neighbours in its public spaces.

Under the motto ACTION! Towards a neighbourhood practice, three architecture collectives were invited to do different interventions in an underused public space located between the three initial residential blocks.

CONSTRUCTLAB’S INTERVENTION
By playing with the word (jam)ming we created the Jammin’ Kiosk; a performative approach to a design intervention in the neighbourhood. To generate a dynamic situation between the local inhabitants we proposed a place related to the local skills and knowledge. Undertaking an action-research based methodology the kiosk became a place to learn by making. The Jammin’ kiosk provided a shared space to make confiture, to gather, to improvise and to converse, similarly to what happens during musical jamming sessions. Through activities set as a series of “jamming sessions”, the initial kiosk was transformed whilst giving place for narratives around the common use of the space by different groups of neighbours to be shared.

Before our arrival, the team (In)Formal undertook preliminary research on site to obtain contextual information from the residents. The team mediated a conversation between the invited groups of architects and the neighbourhood, facilitating the development of a proposal that corresponded to the needs and ideals of the inhabitants of Trakiya.

We chose to focus our work on the neighbourhood’s bedsika (kiosk). Built in the 80’s by a group of neighbours and eventually runned down by time and use, the original kiosk had become a debate between different groups in the area creating tension amongst them.

Interventions by other teams

SITE

Residential area of Trakiya neighbourhood
Plovdiv, Bulgaria
Image by: One Architecture Week

The intervention has the following main purposes:

`to be a permanent structure that stays functional for a couple of years after the festival (i.e. its functionality and material use must be very adequate to the local context);
`to serve as an example of a process of civic engagement in the design, creation and maintenance of a public space (i.e. citizens need to be involved at all stages).

The chosen location is an open-air green area between blocks (buildings) 1, 2 and 3, visible on Google maps. This is one of the oldest areas of Trakiya (hence the building numbers). The location was chosen for a number of reasons:

`on its territory are combined elements, typical for many such areas;
`it is just across the road from the main location of the festival;
`it seems to be a place, where some inhabitants have already been active for the improvement of the environment;
`there are places of small-scale commerce;
`there are front and back facades facing the area;
`there is a power switch station (transformator) at the location (a repetitive element in the panelki areas);
`there are remains of the original landscape design;
`there are enough space and elements to work with;
`there are urban gardens to the north-west of the area.

The green area is flanked by 6-8 story high blocks (buildings), all of them residential. Block 1 has all its entrances turned towards the space. Block 2 has its back (no entrances, but balconies) turned to the space. Block 3 relates only partially to the space. There are three ways of accessing the space. Besides an area in front of block 1, the rest of the space is free of cars.

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