

STILL LIFE: Som[n]a in the City



1. "Statistics are abstracts: when they are plucked out of the completeness of life and converted into plans and the plans into buildings, they will be lifeless. The result will be a three-dimensional diagram in which people are asked to live. In trying to colonize such a wasteland, to translate it from an environment for walking stomachs into a home for human beings, the difficulty lay in finding a point of application [...] The human being is constantly aware of his [sic] position in the environment, that he feels the need for a sense of place and that this sense of identity is coupled with an awareness of elsewhere. Conformity killed, whereas the agreement to differ gave life. In this way the void of statistics, of the diagram city, has been split in two parts". **Gordon Cullen, *Townscape*, 1961, p.14.**



2. St Nicholas Church, Coundon, Coventry (derelict since 2014).

3. "Ordinary life, too, draws its charge from rhythms of flow and arrest. Still lifes punctuate its significance [...] A still life is a static state filled with vibratory motion, or resonance. A quivering in the stability of a category or a trajectory, it gives the ordinary a chance of unfolding. It is the intensity born of a momentary suspension of narrative, or a glitch in the projects we call things like the self, agency, home, a life. Or a simple stopping. When a still life pops up out of the ordinary, it can come as a shock or as some kind of wake-up call. Or it can be a scene of sheer pleasure – an unnamed condensation of thought and feeling. Or an alibi for all the violence, inequality and social insanity folded into the open disguise of ordinary things. Or it can be the flight from numbing routine and all the self-destructive strategies of carrying on. It can turn into a dreaming scene, if only for a minute". **Kathleen Stewart, *Still Life* in *Ordinary Affects*, 2007, p.19.**



1. Walter Ulbricht at a press conference in East Berlin, 15th June 1961: "No-one has any intention of erecting a wall". **Neues Deutschland, 16th June 1961, p.4.**



2. Passport pages belonging to 'Nicholas', born 15 June 1961 (indicating GDR border crossings)

3. Anhalter's demise also correlated exactly with the sudden, brutal imposition of the Wall. The station could have been restored after the War but wasn't because partition between East and West made it unclear how it would function. Its location no longer represented the beating heart of Berlin but anaemic non-land, effectively on the edge – albeit an inside edge – of West Berlin. Trains would have arrived 'no-where', effectively grinding to a halt at the Wall. So, in 1961, the very year the Wall went up, the station finally came down – an event predicted by the architectural historian Hoffmann-Axthelm to 'rest in the memory of this city as one of the great acts of self-mutilation' (cit. Baehr 1984: 107). Only the portal was left in place as a memorial baring all the scars of its amputation. The severance when it occurred really was arbitrary it seems. No neat retention of archways or smoothing of edges, the vernacular yellow brickwork mercilessly hacked at and cracked". **Nicolas Whybrow, *Street Scenes: Brecht, Benjamin and Berlin*, 2005, p.130.**



2. Eastside Gallery and Anhalter Railway Station ruin, Berlin, 2000.

3. "Look to the 'twilight zone of communication'. The signs in the streets, the measures, the markings, the meanings, the movement. [...] Words of despair...or signs of hope? [...] Vandalism...or could it be art? [...] Whose city is this? This place where we know the cost of so much and the value of so little?". **Susan J. Smith, "Graffiti" in *City A-Z*, 2000, pp.86-9.**



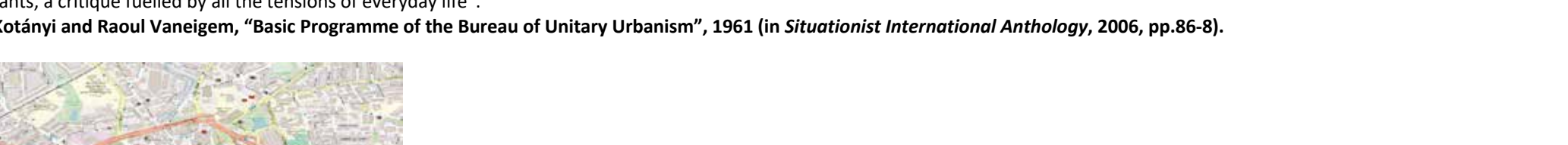
1. "Cities happen to be problems in organised complexity, like the life sciences. They present 'situations in which a half-dozen or even several dozen quantities are all varying simultaneously *and in subtly interconnected ways*'. Cities, again like the life sciences do not exhibit *one* problem in organized complexity, which if understood explains all. They can be analysed into many such problems or segments which, as in the case of the life sciences, are also related with one another. The variables are many, but they are not helter-skelter; they are "interrelated into an organic whole". **Jane Jacobs, *The Life and Death of Great American Cities*, 1961, pp.564-5.**

2. "...two of the chromosomes (11 and 14) have broken and then joined up with each other to produce what is called a 'translocation'. This translocation means the cells make too much of a protein (cyclin D1) that helps to control cell growth. Too much cyclin D1 causes uncontrolled growth, so many new cells (lymphocytes) are made and a lymphoma develops. The commonest symptom of lymphoma is one or more swollen lymph nodes". **Lymphoma Association information sheet, 2015, pp.1-2.**

3. "There are resonances to her title, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Psychoanalysis sees those words 'death' and 'life' as more than figures of speech. Freud's writings from the 1920s onwards portray a struggle between the forces of life and death, Eros and Thanatos. In the mythic family of Thanatos, as imagined in classical times, The Keres, who are Thanatos' violent sisters, preside over slaughter and disease. The twin brother Hypnos, the daemon of sleep, bringing release from anxiety and the suspension of waking cares – the god of dreamless sleep. She wanted to rouse the city from this sleep". **Richard Sennett, *Building and Dwelling: Ethics for the City*, 2018, pp.82-3.**

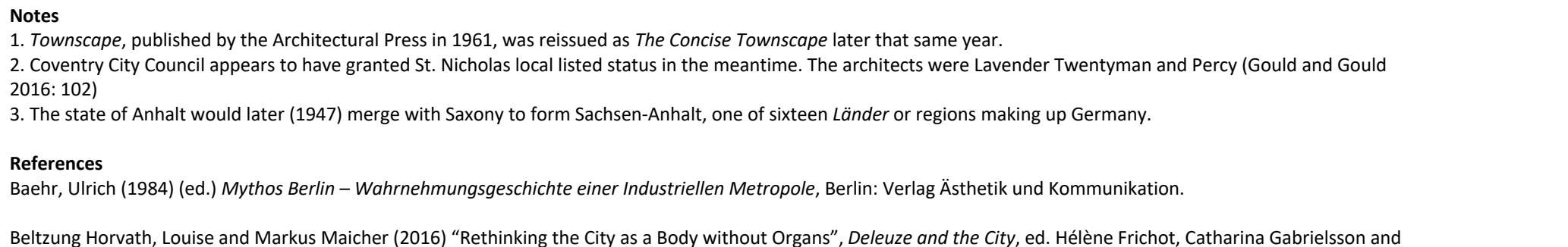


1. "Modern capitalism, which organizes the reduction of all social life to a spectacle, is incapable of presenting any spectacle other than that of our own alienation. Its urbanistic dream is its masterpiece. [It] dissuades people from making any criticism of architecture with the simple argument that they need a roof over their heads [...] They are made to overlook the obvious fact that [...] this kind of dwelling place [is] not made for them, but without them and against them. [...] Traffic circulation is the organization of universal isolation. As such, it constitutes the major problem of modern cities. It is the opposite of encounter: it absorbs the energies that could otherwise be devoted to encounters or to any sort of participation. Spectacles compensate for the participation that is no longer possible. [...] The main achievement of contemporary city planning is to have made people blind to the possibility of what we call unitary urbanism, namely a living critique of this manipulation of cities and their inhabitants, a critique fuelled by all the tensions of everyday life". **Attila Kotányi and Raoul Vaneigem, "Basic Programme of the Bureau of Unitary Urbanism", 1961 (in *Situationist International Anthology*, 2006, pp.86-8).**



2. Coventry city centre map (9 junctions), OpenStreetMap.org.

3. "The BwO ceases to work for a functional structure, as it is a state that allows for new productive connections and desire to flow in new directions. It is a body that enters from an equilibrium state or comfort zone into a state of intensive crisis where new becomings are possible. Every substance, every body and every space is in a state of becoming. However, the actual, extensive state hides the intensive morphogenetic processes that lead to it and which have resulted in an equilibrium state under the guise of functional structures. [...] Within cities, if understood in terms of practice, one of the first exercises with the aim to forge new relations between the self and the organisational structure of the city was carried out by Guy Debord and the 'Situationist International' movement". **Louise Beltzung Horvath and Markus Maicher, "Rethinking the City as a Body without Organs", in *Deleuze and the City*, 2016, p.38.**



1. *Townscape*, published by the Architectural Press in 1961, was reissued as *The Concise Townscape* later that same year. 2. Coventry City Council appears to have granted St. Nicholas local listed status in the meantime. The architects were Lavender Twentyman and Percy (Gould and Gould 2016: 102). 3. The state of Anhalt would later (1947) merge with Saxony to form Sachsen-Anhalt, one of sixteen *Länder* or regions making up Germany.

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