



March 12, 2019

## In Brussels, ephemeral urbanism has a bright future!

Le Début des Haricots, Terre-en-vue, Kanal Brut, Atelier Pirate, Volta, Boys with Toys, Doubtful Practices, Ugly Masks, Kinograph, The Spanish Inn, LabNorth, Studio Citygate, Usquare, See U... there's no end of projects and/or events that promote ephemeral urbanism through international exhibitions of contemporary art, urban agriculture, carpentry, music, artists' studios, ephemeral cinema, commercial incubators, urban co-construction, but also contemporary dance, coworking, fablabs, etc.

### An ever-changing urban landscape

All of this is happening in Brussels as part of several very large-scale urban projects all over the city. In just a few years, the Brussels-Capital Region has become a hotbed of ephemeral urban planning and all the social innovations that come from it. The people of Brussels craved it, so the regional authorities and the private sector did it. Initiatives are flourishing everywhere. The phenomenon has become so widespread that it has led to the publication of a regional practical [guide \(www.occupationtemporaire.brussels\)](http://www.occupationtemporaire.brussels) and will be one of the central themes of the Brussels-Capital Region's presence at MIPIM 2019 in Cannes.



So why are we seeing this growth? Mainly because there is a need to occupy the time... and space. There can sometimes be several years between the purchase of a parcel of land, with or without buildings on it, and the inauguration of the urban programme that justified its purchase. This is why developers, whether public or private, take care to make the best use of these temporary land or real estate resources to promote a transition, position a site and ensure maintenance or security. But above all, the projects must meet the needs of innovative project leaders seeking low-cost spaces and of residents who are in favour of these initiatives that they use regularly.

"The notion of "third-place" is present nowadays in most reflections on territorial development. It is the territory of a free and voluntary pooling (of tools, skills...), conducive to experimentation and the development of social and sustainable innovation. These spaces are successfully multiplying all over the world. These pooling efforts are leading to the creation of a new page of history, in their



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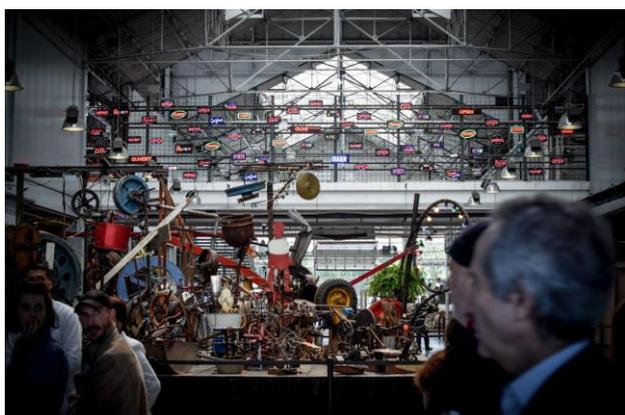
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unpredictable and creative way" explains Rudi Vervoort, minister-president of the Brussels-Capital Region.

In its general policy declaration, the Brussels Regional Government also affirmed its willingness to make sites temporarily available for use as public spaces or green spaces and to promote cultural expression.

So much so that Brussels today is constantly changing! To take advantage of this, it is necessary to visit the neighbourhoods concerned, because these projects, by definition, do not last. On the other hand, they contribute to lasting changes of the environment and attitudes.

### An international cultural project at the heart of temporary urban planning in Brussels: Kanal Brut



The most spectacular illustration of this current is undoubtedly "Kanal Brut", which has had an international impact. A year of successive exhibitions will draw to a close in May. It was intended as a prelude to the future Kanal-Centre Pompidou centre for modern and contemporary art, which will be located in the former Citroën-Yser car garage.

The building was originally built in 1933 and contains 48,000m<sup>2</sup> of floor space, which made it the largest garage in Europe. It was acquired in 2015 by the Brussels-Capital Region's Urban

Development Corporation (SAU-MSI). In 2017, the Brussels-Capital Region entrusted the conversion and operation of the site to the Kanal Foundation, as part of a partnership with the Centre Pompidou in Paris.

An architectural competition saw the selection of projects from NoA, EM2N and Sergison Bates, which beat 92 bids from all over the world. During the finalisation of the project and the procedures prior to obtaining permits, the Kanal Foundation organised a series of exhibitions and events, planned on a seasonal basis from May 2018 to May 2019. They have been a huge popular success, with no less than 150,000 visitors in 2018.

### Temporary urban planning in Brussels... a profusion of projects

Innovation linked to the ephemeral urban landscape of Brussels can also have other aspects:

- In terms of urbanism and citizenship: citydev.brussels has devoted 20,000m<sup>2</sup> to a temporary occupation called Studio Citygate as part of the rehabilitation of a former pharmaceutical factory. The Urban Development Corporation (sau-msi.brussels) has organised the hosting of several dozen projects over 25,000m<sup>2</sup>, under the name See U, as part of the conversion of a former police station (Usquare.brussels).

- Concerning real estate and commercial: The Up4North association of real estate developers manages the Lab North urban laboratory. hub.brussels, after having tested pop-up stores for three years, is working on a real commercial incubation network, combining temporary occupation and support for economic dynamics.

- Last but not least, social: as part of the BridgeCity project - which will ultimately see the installation of a



business centre in a former industrial building - citydev.brussels has temporarily granted spaces to the member associations of the 400Toits project to install their prototypes of modular housing for the homeless for three months. This represents a first step before the installation of several pavilions just a stone's throw away, this time for a period of two years.

During the upcoming edition of MIPIM in Cannes, France from 12 to 15 March, the Brussels-Capital Region will present completed private and public projects and ephemeral urban planning projects at a conference hosted by the Minister-President of the Brussels-Capital Region, Rudi VERVOORT, and the Secretary of State for Foreign Trade of the Brussels-Capital Region, Cécile JODOGNE.

**09:45 - THE AGILE REGION: THE TEMPORARY OCCUPATION IN BRUSSELS:**

Following "Breakfast in Brussels", several regional public bodies and a private real estate operator will explain how the Brussels-Capital Region is firmly in line with the current trend of transitional urban planning and present some key achievements.

More information here:

<https://www.surrealestate.be/brussels-conference-2019/>

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