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ID 1696 - PROTOTYPES AS OPEN-ENDED ARTEFACTS IN URBAN DESIGN

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1 INTRODUCTION

When dealing with the quality of an urban space the criticism sets, almost without exemption, the end product of the urban design process as the main object of judgment. However, the product of urban design, in contrast to other consumer products, is more than a cohesive product of aesthetics and function. On the contrary, the design of space is a complex system of multiple individual products (open spaces, buildings etc.), each one with its own functions and needs. Moreover, due to the fact that each one of these individual products follows a unique path of development through time, it appears that the orchestration of this multitude of individual activities is difficult to accomplish.

Following the reasoning mentioned above, it becomes clear that the shaping of physical space is rarely under the full control of the designer and that most of the times the formulation of a physical space becomes the design of an overall framework of development. The latter highlights the importance to consider urban design not only as an object of design, but more importantly as a process of design. If we assume that participatory design, self-organizing, user-centered design and open source design are considered to be bottom-up processes, the hypothesis here is that open-ended design is a process that can either be initiated as a top-down or a bottom-up approach, but nevertheless, requires the participation of more than one person, in order to be successful. This implies that a set of rules must be negotiated and tested among all the actors participating in the process for any open-ended project to be implemented.

This research paper aims to present a discourse regarding the notion of open-ended in urban design and builds on the hypothesis that the notion of open-ended cannot be detached from the 'process'. This does not necessarily concern prescribed rules of actions but the act of defining the relations between possible actors as well as that a specific outcome of the design is not the main concern of the design process. According to this argument, design should be considered as an 'infrastructural' rather than a 'projecting' process.

The paper demonstrates that in order for the actors involved in a design process to develop or maintain relations towards an open-ended process, they need mediating devices, which are used both as representations for the evolving object of design and as means for aligning the different resources of a project. The paper focuses on 'prototypes' as important mediating devices and the process of 'prototyping' as an inseparable process for open-ended design approaches. It furthermore demonstrates that the prototypes' open-endedness extends beyond the lab's environment and scientific research, from the everyday inventiveness of people through Lévi-Strauss's bricolage process, to Alexander's 'patterns', to Habraken's concept of 'supports' or even to real life urban projects.

2 FROM PARTICIPATORY DESIGN TO OPEN-ENDED

Participatory design at first emerged as an important social movement around the 1960s and immediately gathered momentum. Participatory design was not merely a reaction to the ill-defined problems of societal nature, but it was essentially linked to the political and moral based issues of society with a primary focus on the empowerment of the people and the democratization of views. Participatory design usually refers to a process by which the communities involved, reach an identified outcome which resulted from the pluralism of the different 'voices' involved. It might as well be that one of the fundamental characteristics of open-ended, which is being discussed in this paper, and compared to participatory design approaches, is that of 'emergent', which is linked to the notions of sustainability and adaptability. The aforementioned notion is crucial for design, especially for urban design and planning practices, where the different phases may be implemented within considerably long periods of time, and where the existing conditions are quite subject to change.

2.1 SUPPORTS

One of the concepts that take into serious consideration time and change is that developed by J. Habraken. Laying emphasis on habitation, the work of the architect and academic Habraken, developed influential theoretical contributions specifically addressing the matters of mass housing and the integration of users and residents in the design process (Teerds & Havik, 2011). Habraken describes the relation between inhabiting and built form as a 'natural relationship', in which the close and continuous interaction of the users with the forms they inhabit defines their built environment. In particular, Habraken mentions that "dwelling is the result of a process…" and that "… dwelling is first and foremost a relationship between people and environment, and because the relationship arises from the most common actions of daily life it is rooted in the foundations of our existence" (1999, p. 18). For Habraken, architecture should concentrate on three significant questions (Habraken, 2006, reprint of the 2003 publication): i) how values are shared in the design of our environment, ii) how change and permanence make the environment alive and iii) how the distribution of design responsibilities can produce a more adaptable environment. Habraken refers to successful urban environments of the recent past and attributes their qualities to the sharing of common assets of the same locality. He also considers the factor of time an important aspect for the shaping of our environment. More specifically, Habraken notes that change and permanence go very much hand in hand, and therefore he lays great emphasis on the different timescales, by which the different elements that constitute our built environment function. The latter, becomes increasingly important concerning the scale of a project. As a reflection to the questions posed, Habraken developed the theory of 'supports', described in his 1961 book 'Supports: an Alternative to Mass Housing' (1999). What he did was to suggest a structure and an infill system by which the structure that is provided by the architect is more permanent and predictable than the short-lived and unexpected infill which is defined by the users. Furthermore, his theory on change and permanence of the elements that constitute the urban environment, regarding the levels of control and the distribution of design responsibilities, is described in detail in his article 'The uses of Levels' (Habraken, 1988). In his theory, the minimum material element of the built environment, for

example the house unit, is related and controlled accordingly by the smallest social unit in a society. Indeed, this possibility for individual control regarding the different levels of design provides Habraken's system with the capacity to act as a living cell and adapt dynamically to any changes over time.

2.2 PATTERNS

Alexander, on the other hand suggested a different approach for an open-ended design system; the mathematician, architect and academic, based his theoretical and practical work on his observation that old city centers[1] present a complexity and liveliness, which cannot be found in any of the contemporary new city centers[2] (1965). As with Habraken, he found that these assets cannot be credited to individuals and are basically the result of a collective effort. Alexander tried to understand the principles of vernacular architecture by documenting specific 'rules' that people have been using for thousands of years in design and have resulted from gradual adjustments on peoples' lifestyles over time. Alexander categorized these rules in 253 interrelated patterns that are hierarchically organized by scale, in order to structure 'A pattern Language' (Alexander et al., 1977); a model that would potentially offer a generative grammar for 'The Timeless way of Building' (1979). This pattern language intended to offer everyone the possibility to be practically involved in design. Moreover, what is extremely interesting is that the proposed language was structured with the provision to be modified by its users in order to be adapted to the different cultural aspects of a place and to the changing needs of people over time. Alexander's patterns were based on his assumption that the structure of the built environment is the process of a non-masterplan approach, by which the individual units are subject to local rules according to a timeless way of building. What is indeed suggested by Alexander is that the built environment should relate to a living world, which defines the city as the collective outcome of several interconnected forces. The author finds that Alexander's contribution of a pattern language builds on existing knowledge and uses an open-ended and self-organizing mechanism to collectively extend this knowledge.

2.3 DESIGN AFTER DESIGN

In other disciplines, such as in Information Technology or in Social Sciences, the management of complexity appears likely to be resolved by the users themselves, by embracing several models of collective processes, such as open source, p2p, crowdsourcing, etc., which promote a kind of sharing that is much more direct to the end user. Although the models mentioned above cannot be directly applied in the discipline of architecture and urban design, there are nevertheless some theoretical approaches that take into consideration several principles of the aforementioned models. Towards this direction is Björgvinsson's et al. (2012) research, which indeed gives great emphasis to the end user and their capacity for acting as future designers. Specifically, Björgvinsson, et al., take a step further towards an 'infrastructuring' process and argue about 'design after design' as a contemporary form of collective processes in contrast to 'use before actual use'. They argue that a new challenge is presented in designing "beyond the specific project and toward future stakeholders as designers".

All the aforementioned design approaches, make obvious the fact that despite the perseverance of a design process which is much focused on the end-product of the design, the process of moving from the initial framing of the problem to the final end-product, whether it is the final proposal or even its implementation, is equally important and undoubtedly more challenging to comprehend, criticize, map or reuse as a methodology of a process.

2.4 THE NEED FOR INTERESSEMENTS

Participatory design has basically emerged from the need for the democratization of design, manifested in some cases as a process in which all affected actors should have the right to be involved in the design. Apparently, in such cases controversy is an anticipated outcome of the design process that affects the

[1] Alexander named them natural cities
[2] Alexander named them artificial cities

consensual result. Star Leigh & Griesemer (1989) state about what is mentioned above that consensus is not always required in order to successfully complete a cooperative work; thus, they argue that the creation of both new scientific knowledge and of new solutions to the problems faced each time, depends on the communication of the different actors involved and on the understanding of the different problems that emerge from several social situations. Since these potential new findings, whether they are objects or methods have a different meaning for each of the actors involved in the design process, these actors would have to get involved in continuous negotiations, debates, etc. in order for the process to move on. In a similar way and in an attempt to conceptualize participatory design, Ehn (1988) refers to Wittgenstein, an Austrian-British philosopher and to his language-game philosophy. Wittgenstein (1958) suggests that language is inseparable from the everyday actions of life and argues that there are several forms of language (language games), which may be simpler than the entirety of a language itself but are nevertheless interwoven in the everyday activities of life. Ehn argues that while design can be understood as a significant participation "in intertwined language-games of design and use" (Bjögvinsson et al., 2012), for example between professional designers and users, design artefacts such as models, mock-ups, etc., can act as 'boundary objects' that can bind these different language-games together. Boundary objects are "both adaptable to different viewpoints and robust enough to maintain identity across them" (Star Leigh & Griesemer, 1989). The importance of these boundary objects is also considered in Buchanan's (1985) 'Declaration by Design: Rhetoric, Argument, and Demonstration in Design Practice', where the product of design plays a very important role regarding communication as rhetoric and argument regarding the communication between the designer of a product and its user. According to this argument, Buchanan mentions that "the designer, instead of simply making an object or a thing, is actually creating a persuasive argument that comes to life whenever a user considers or uses a product as a means to some end." (pp. 8-9).

In the same manner and adding to this argument, Callon (1986) argues that in order to establish scientific authority, scientists recruit 'allies' both human and non-human, after which they try to understand their allies' needs, and finally they connect these needs with their own goals establishing through the allies a mediating structure, of 'obligatory points of passage', concerning the different interests of the involved actors. The actions and devices incorporated for the success of the goals mentioned above, namely the translation of the non-scientific concerns into scientific, was named 'interessement' (1986). By this, as the etymology of the word 'inter-esse' implies, to be in-between, to be interposed, is achieved by the use of mediating devices. These mediating devices in fact relate to what Bjögvinsson (2012) also calls 'material presenters', that is the representations for the evolving object of design and the means for co-ordinating the different resources associated to the project; Bjögvinsson characteristically mentions: "We might also view these "presenters" as boundary objects in participatory design Things" (p. 106), which exemplifies their role as prototypical mechanisms for both the evolution of the design process and the design product.

By considering a design project not only as a series of consecutive stages of design, but mainly as collectives of human and non-human actors (Latour, 2007), we may also consider and focus on several inquiries concerning their possible relations. In that sense, a design project can be considered as a socio-material Thing (Bjögvinsson et al., 2012), where several boundary objects are necessary in order to align the different resources that relate to it, such as project briefs, sketches, drawings, buildings, project reports, users, engineers, architects, designers, developers, politicians, administration, researchers, and other stakeholders. But when can a project be considered a prototype, capable enough of being applied in different urban situations?

2.5 PROTOTYPES AS INTERESSEMENTS

Prototyping has always been an integral part of human history; nevertheless the recent differentiation of the functional system of science and art in addition to the differentiation of experts and lay people has led to the obscuring of current forms of prototyping (Guggenheim, 2010). The French anthropologist and ethnologist Lévi-Strauss, used the term 'bricolage' and 'bricoleur' to refer respectively to the processes of 'prior' science and to the person who still "works with his hands and uses devious means compared to those of a craftsman" (1966, p. 11). Nevertheless, by referring to the savage mind Lévi-Strauss actually describes not the thought of primitive people but the primitive foundation of thought, the process that explains the transition from nature to civilization (Scalbert, 2011). What is important to note is that the process of bricolage, regardless of it having a 'pre-constrained' set of tools and materials, remains open-

ended due to the fact that what were the ends in previous projects become the means to another end in the next.

As mentioned beforehand, Alexander believes that dwellers and dwelling should be heavily interdependent, which means that methods of making cannot be disconnected from the act of making. This, which is a significant aspect of a bricoleur, is also evident in the case of Habraken who emphasizes through his theoretical work his position that construction should not be seen as an end by itself but as a means to an end, thus giving prominence specifically to the direct and inseparable relation of the end product to the process. Indeed, what both Habraken and Alexander discuss is the loss of an inherent common understanding among the architects, which previously used to enable them to improve and transform the built environment and sustain environmental consistency. Both Alexander and Habraken refer to the role of the prototype from a 'Straussian' and 'Latourian' (2011) perspective, where prototyping can be perceived as an experimental design means that may lead to the production of knowledge -that is not at our disposal yet, not in the sense of a lab's experimental output but as a process of collective participation. The latter is also evident in the way other disciplines appreciate the role of the prototype; indeed the great importance and prominence that prototypes have gained in our time is mainly attributed to the development of free and open source software, whose release of the work-in-progress versions (beta) is a tactic used by software developers who seek for feedback and possible contributions of others for the improvement of their 'beta'. Consequently, emphasizing the cultural importance and social coherence of prototyping, Jiménez (2013) argues that "whereas the open-endedness and haziness of the experimental is oriented towards the production of epistemic things, the work of prototyping employs such openendedness to deliberate political effect" (p. 7), enabling the prototype to work both as an epistemic object and as a critical tool. Additionally, Jiménez (2013) argues that the prototype reflects possibility and expectation, both expressed at the same time as material and social form.

3 A CASE OF OPEN-ENDED APPROACH

In order to test the relation of the prototype to the open-endedness in urban design approaches, a specific urban site has been selected as a case study. The selected case study is the winning project of Europan 9 competition from a Spanish team for the city of Selb, Germany. The 'Catalogue for Dwelling on the Time' project was selected by the author because it clearly demonstrated a design approach that not only called for collaborative practices but most importantly set those as a prerequisite for the design process and furthermore promoted design concepts that according to the author seek for an open-ended design approach.

3.1 THE URBAN SITUATION

Selb, a small German town[1] in East Germany, took part in Europan 9 session seeking a radical approach to the problems that it was facing, including demographic decline, aging population, and decrease in industrial activities among others. These problems were primarily due to the crisis in industry that the local economy was based on (Fuente Martínez, Gutiérrez Sánchez, Fidalgo, & Ozaeta, 2008).

3.2 THE PROPOSAL'S RESPONSE: THE CONCEPT OF STRIPS AS INTERESSEMENT

Taking into consideration the aforementioned problems of the city, the managing director of the Building Department of the city of Selb which was also the site's representative in the competition, states[2] that in a town that is diminishing, it is the most important thing to pay attention to quality and for him entering in an architectural competition was a means to get the best ideas for implementation. He nevertheless, mentions

[1] Selb is a town in Upper Franconia, in north-east Bavaria, standing on the border with the former East Germany and with the Czech Republic. Selb grew through its single industry structure, of porcelain industry, that made it world-famous and led to the rapid growth of its population. This condition started to decline after the crisis in the porcelain industry in the mid-1990s and as a result many people moved away to find jobs in other cities. Today Selb's remaining residents consist mainly of older people.

[2] In an interview conducted by the author

that Selb's expectations from Europan were limited to a gain of a collection of ideas on their problems but certainly did not expect anything more than that.

Surprisingly for the site's representatives, the incorporation of Selb's participating site under a specific thematic of Europan[1], under which another 10 European cities were also incorporated, and the simultaneous comparative analysis of their problems, aimed at exposing Selb's local problems to a European major matter of concern, that of the cities' need for intensification. Surprise also for the site's representatives was the winning project's concept; according to the designers of the project 'Catalogue for Dwelling on the Time', the user's way of life, dwelling, as well as any everyday mundane situation, can obtain flexibility through small add-ons (programmatic strips) that can reprogram space and add value to what already exists there. Thus, through a typo-programmatical plug in module, they proposed a flexible and feasible means (in terms of scale, budget, etc.) for testing the impact of the addition to the existing situation in the near future. More specifically, the proposal opposed the creation of a definite masterplan to be imposed on the area by suggesting a system of interconnected strips, which can be arranged in different ways and still be part of the larger system (e.g., city). Further to its application regarding flexibility in space and time, this generative system was also meant to become a powerful tool to initiate debates across the different stakeholders since it could easily represent in a tangible way -kind of a 'game'- the different possibilities that can be generated. The latter, in conjunction with the ease of rearranging the set of strips that will be needed for each intervention, preserves the morphological identity of the whole city and at the same time provides users and stakeholders with a design tool that can be flexible in time, supporting 'design after design' as well as other means which can be shaped by collective decisions.

3.2.1 PROVIDING AN INFRASTRUCTURAL LOGIC

According to the architects of the project, the robustness of their plan allowed for maximum flexibility during the implementation stage. Specifically, whilst the competition proposal was dealing with the negative demographic trends of a shrinking city focusing on elderly people (healing acupuncture therapy), the implemented strategy focused on the lower part of the demographic pyramid namely children and young people (preventing acupuncture therapy). The architects of the project claim that this change was easily adapted in their proposal which exhibits the flexibility of the architects' design approach to switch from a reactive to a proactive strategy by integrating the emergent. Furthermore, the architects add that even though their tool of strips was originally destined for a residential addition, it was easily adapted to the emergent needs of a new program focused on youth (youth hostel and kindergarten). A member of the competition's jury (Metz) argues that the project acted as an intelligent mechanism that proposed a process instead of an object that could be easily applied and adapted, with slight adjustments, to other similar situations.

3.2.2 ESTABLISHING A COMMON LANGUAGE AMONG DIFFERENT ACTORS

Additionally, their system of strips not only could adapt to different architectural programs, but it could also be flexible enough to integrate several actors in the design process. The architects of 'Catalogue for Dwelling on the Time' argue, what is also confirmed by other actors involved in the implementation stage, that their idea of the strip system, turned into a really powerful tool in terms of communication among different cultures or languages because it served as a technical, structural and even topological language among people. The concept was flexible enough to also involve users in the design process; the city Architect of Selb clarifies that user participation would not be possible in earlier stages of the project (e.g., brief), giving emphasis to the role of the submitted project as argument in a negotiating process. Indeed, the concept of strips, which acted as an ally for the development of the project, has been the most important asset of the 'Catalogue for Dwelling on the Time' project; the fact that this system was clear and simple to follow and construct had a major effect on the project's appropriation and implementation.

[1] 'Local Mutations – Intensifying'

3.2.3 PROPOSING LEVELS OF RESPONSIBILITY & APPLICABILITY

The flexibility of the project 'Catalogue for Dwelling on the Time' that was organized on the idea of the strips, was also based very much on the ability of the project's parametricism; the strips were codified in accordance to parameters such as space, section, use, colors, materials etc. Specifically, the architects stress that the significance of their project was that they developed a parametric system that could work on a very small scale as an acupunctural tactic (e.g. additional private space, shared spaces & facilities etc.), as well as on a larger scale of a master planning (e.g., connections between public & privates spaces, continuous facades on the public street etc.) without making any compromise on its initial concept. The latter reveals that even though the concept of the strips focuses primarily on the local problems of the city and particularly on the small scale of the city's block, the project did not only suggest a specific solution applicable to the given problems of Selb. In fact, the project can adapt to several levels of intervention and assign different responsibilities to the actors involved in urban design.

3.3 THE HUMAN INTERESSEMENTS

The 'Catalogue for Dwelling on the Time' uses the concept of strips as an interessement to connect the different actors involved in the project. Nevertheless, it is also a project that owes its realization to the actions of specific human actors as well.

i. the local administration body & the political decision makers - More specifically, a jury member (Metz) states[1] that for the city of Selb one of the main factors of success was the involvement of the city Architect in the project and the fact that 'SelbWERK' the local housing company carried out the work of a planning office. The architects also highlight the catalytic role of the city Architect for the implementation of their project. Indeed, the city Architect of Selb (Resch) was so much convinced about the potentials of the project's concept that became himself an interessement between the winning project and the political decision makers. He (Resch) points out an important matter that is the political interests often create an unstable environment for the projects' development and therefore it is sometimes necessary to convince more than one government for the merits of a project. Specifically, he refers to the way of communicating the project's financial matters to the stakeholders who are active in the political arena or have a strong connection with political decisions. Indeed, the city Architect's (Resch) tactic to use the article in the Spanish journal AV Architectura as a non-human 'ally' helped him to initiate the implementation process; not only did the journal act as an ally for the implementation of the project but also all later publications acted in the same manner. In fact, more than 34 national and international publications in books, journals and architectural magazines and more than 18 articles in local press, mentioning the 'Catalogue for Dwelling on the Time' project, were retrieved for the scope of this study.

ii. the Govermental bodies - Another significant actor was the governmental agents that played an important role by offering essential support to the project. Usually, these kinds of agents are responsible for providing subsidies that may prove crucial for the implementation of the project. However, in Selb's case it appears that the governmental bodies did not only offer financial support but were also actively involved from the beginning in the project's process. Indeed, the governmental representatives participated in Europan forums, juries and other Europan session processes. The architects not only confirm the presence of the governmental bodies during the competition's processes but also highlight that they worked together with them as a team.

iii. iii. the architects - Finally, an important catalyst responsible for the implementation of the project was the architects themselves. One of the winning project's architects (Fidalgo) states[2] their team's role as mediators of the negotiation process for their open-ended project in Selb. Another one of the architects (De la Fuente) also argues that the team was able to create a hybrid situation between the eagerness to implement their 'not yet tested' ideas and the experience of their local partners. Moreover, both architects comment on their success in blending the more improvised approach of a southern culture (Spain) and the more standardized approach of a northern culture (Germany). Specifically, the workshop which is organized by the cities after the announcement of the competition's results acted as an interessement for the architects, since it

[1] In an interview conducted by the author
[2] In an interview conducted by the author

support them in a negotiated process among themselves, the city and even the users of the place.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Returning to the processual property of open-ended approaches, a first important finding that comes out of this paper is that in order for the actors involved in a design process to develop or maintain relations towards an open-ended process, they need mediating devices, which are used both as representations for the evolving object of design and as means for aligning the different resources of a project; these mediating devices are defined as 'interessements' (Callon, 1986), 'boundary objects' (Star Leigh & Griesemer, 1989), or 'material presenters' (Bjögvinsson et al., 2012). Indeed, the project 'Catalogue for Dwelling on the Time' provided a tool that both in a processual manner and in terms of its representational techniques leaves space for personal interpretations in a way that could easily be adopted and appropriated by different stakeholders that do not necessarily come from the architectural and construction domain. An interrelated second finding is that a mediating device that supports open-ended processes can be considered as 'prototype' and can consequently support the process of 'prototyping'. Actually, the project 'Catalogue for Dwelling on the Time' can be considered as prototype because it succeeded in producing knowledge that was not yet at our disposal and managed to work both as an epistemic object, on which knowledge collectively and methodically builds and as a critical tool, by which innovation occurs in the design process. In fact, the project managed to constitute a prototype for a number of different reasons; firstly it succeeded in gaining the trust of the city of Selb and in convincing the involved stakeholders that it was worth their support, regardless of the many difficulties[1]. Secondly, for its applicability on a wide range of urban situations, different programmatic needs or scales and this can be seen on several instances in the city (e.g., kindergarten, youth hostel). Thirdly, for its cognitive outcomes by opening up the established way of planning the city and furthermore for educating the inhabitants on the built environment, as the specific project proposes a design process as well as a way of life that are quite different from what the large developments and the market currently offer. Finally, it became an important case model for the Europan competition whose successful implementation and 'good practice' has been presented through several international publications and awards. On these grounds, it is revealed that the concept of the strips' system entails a prototype for an open-ended design approach, flexible enough to adopt or integrate the idea of the emergent as a creative element of the design approach.

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ID 1721 | GLOBAL SOUTH PLANNING: FROM WAR TO WARS

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1 INTRODUCTION

Not because of the various number of armed conflicts that are happening in Brazil related to landdistribution, indigenous rights, social justice or many others issues, nor because European refugees, financialand democratic crisis nor because USA intervention on Middle East and north american racial struggles thatcreated the Black Lives Matters Movement nor because another similar issues in countries around the world,nor even because protests in city streets in Cairo, Athens, Madrid, etc since 2008 financial crisis; war is thepolitics that became the paradigm of internal and external relations by nation states around the globe becausewar is a modus operandi that always has been used as a politic since the beginning of the foundations of thesevery own nations and states. Disguised and/or underestimated by media and even theorical and politicalthought as just “conflicts”, what is visible is that a war keeps continuing as the exercise of politics. And whenthis concept of war and politics is thought in an urban planning context, it serves to maintain the politicaldimension of everyday life impenetrable to disruptive and constitutional forces.

But if war is thought not as a colonization force as it is considered in history produced insideEurope and from Europe to the rest the world, the perspective changes and the ideia of war and how it canbe a disruptive force to the creation of life arises. In a Global South context characterized by the emergenceof others forms of experience the world, narrate the world and produce even new worlds like