

Abstract

Documenting their collaboration *Master Plan for Duamdong*, which took place as part of the 2016 Gwangju Biennial, Apolonija Šušteršič and Dari Bae accompany images of the project's urban housing and community centre location with notes on the process they developed of working with inhabitants of an area of Gwangju that is relatively underdeveloped in the context of recent housing and communal facility provision in the city. Šušteršič and Bae's contribution is contextualised by an introduction by Myung-Rae Cho.

Master Plan for Duamdong

DARI BAE

Korean artist Dari Bae graduated with an MA from the University of the Arts, London, and continued at the doctoral programme at the Royal College of Art, London. Bae's interdisciplinary practice is focused on socio-political subjects within urban environments. Her practice is research based – projects are formed through a dialogue and collaboration with participants. One of the current Urban Projects DASSI (founding culture centre for homeless / 2015 / Seoul) was composed of a series of workshops and activities co-operating with writers, architects, artists, social workers, homeless people and local dwellers. She is currently working in Seoul.

MYUNG-RAE CHO

Myung-Rae Cho is Professor of Urban and Regional Planning at the College of Social Science, Dankook University, South Korea. He obtained his DPhil in Urban and Regional Studies from the University of Sussex, England, where he studied spatial political economy. He was Kookmin Bank Professor of Korean Studies, at KIMP, Kazakhstan, and a visiting professor at a number of universities including the University of Lancaster, the University of Carleton and the University of Sussex. He has engaged in advisory work for the public sector in Korea. Recent books include *Reading Society by Space*, *Green Constructionism and Environmental Crisis*, *Beyond Creative Cities*, *Globalization: Looking Back and Forwards*.

APOLONIJA ŠUŠTERŠIČ

Operating across urban planning, environmentalism, activism, and academia, Šušteršič's practice questions the relationship between public space and free-market politics in order to develop a contemporary notion of spatial justice and community. An example is *The Hustadt Project*: from 2008 until 2011, Šušteršič worked (and lived) in Hustadt, a translocal neighbourhood built in the 1960s framing the campus of the Ruhr University, Bochum, Germany. The project became a process that culminated in the building of a Community Pavilion – a never-planned public facility proposed by Aktionsteam, a group of Hustadt activists, relying on cooperation and user participation to create arguments for negotiation with local authorities.

Urban Commoning for the Human Flourishing of a City: an Introduction to *Master Plan for Duamdong*

Myung-Rae Cho

“Commoning” is a word used historically specifically within a Western context, and more recently more generally to connote the action-oriented process of making commons against enclosure. Urban commoning hence means urban dwellers’ organised acts to bring people together and share resources, to re-appropriate the city as a lived space for enhanced communal life. The acts of commoning are deliberately performed to pull together individual and community potential, whether material or immaterial, to overcome social, political and spatial divides that are deeply entrenched in contemporary neo-liberal cities. Through the endeavour of commoning, citizens explore self-organised, social and spatial configurations that may enable individuals and communities to thrive in the niches within market-based economy and state institutions.¹

In East Asia, a large number of urban commoning cases have emerged as reactions to burgeoning economic and spatial enclosures that appear in the form of private public space, gated communities, enclaves of migrant workers and the like. In Seoul, a collection of urban commoning initiatives has been undertaken at a city-wide level. With the election of Mayor Park Won-soon, a long-time human rights lawyer, the Seoul Metropolitan Government launched the aggressive Sharing City initiatives in 2012 to address issues of housing, parking, transportation, and environmental issues through sharing policies.² Car sharing, Shared Housing, Sharing Goods (Barter), Shared Space for Co-Working, etc. turned out to be a great success given the extent of citizens’ voluntary participation. Sharing policies such as Shared House have been introduced to facilitate the co-living in old detached houses of both the elderly as property owners and the young as tenants. The house with low market value is used as means for the commoning of two different generational needs and resources. However, unlike other cities in East Asia, Seoul’s commoning policy is more skewed towards the sharing economy as an alternative to the market economy, within

Type of work:

Project

Exhibition:

Gwangju Biennial 2016

Location:

Nuribom Community Centre, 845-8,
Duam2-dong, Buk-gu, Gwangju

Year:

2016

Curator:

Maria Lind

Production:

Gwangju Biennial 2016

Courtesy:

Nuribom Community Center, the artists

Photographs:

Apolonija Šušteršič, Aeri Jeong, Dari Bae

Participants:

Kim Jung Won, Lee Soo Jung, Son Young Sun, Cho Ki Bum, Zee Yon Soon, Moon Byeoung Kyo, Kim Jae Il, Lee Chil Sung, Jung Moon Hee, Jung Hae Ryang, Yang Gun Joong, Kim Yong Soon, Park Ha Kyung, Jung Eun Ha, Ahn Eun Ha, Lee Young Joo, Kim Joo Hee, Cha Sang Jun, Yang Dong Soon, Ryu Hong Yeol, Kim Jae Chan, Ha Yong Ho, Jang Jong Joo, Jang Ho Soon, Ryu Tae Yim, Chae Soo Gwang, Ahn Pyung Hwan, Lee Young Ran, Jung You Mi, Yun Hye Jung, Jung Moon Hee, Lee Sook Ja, Cho Hyun Sook, Lee Bok Shin, Kang Young Mi...

Technical data:

Video – film 20:44 min, HDV-projection, Duamdong table game; table with benches 2.00 x 2.00 m, birch multiplex, table top printed with the Duamdong site plan, game instructions, plexi-glass box with flags and plexi-glass buttons with symbol of street elements, info display, and program of special events.

which citizens are more engaged in sharing the common good and the building of social relations.


Urban planning at the level of a community like Duamdong should be approached through the concept of the resurrection and nesting of human-scale space within an extra-human scale city. Human scale means a time-space setting that allows people's individual perception and that can be translated into dwellers' corrective actions. Urban commoning is a process-based device to build social and spatial assets for human-scale interaction in the community. This is fostered by the sharing of individual and community resources such as land, facilities, skills and knowledge, which were previously separated. Commoning through sharing is embodied into the commons through

such activities as community gardening, spaces for co-working and co-living, public space, street landscapes, community enterprises, caring services for the socially weak, community governance and the like. Place-bound commons are entrenched in the social relations or networks woven from incessant commoning and work in the form of space in the community. The role of urban designers for place-making based on commoning should be integrated with the role of social designer for community-building through commoning. Duamdong seems to be a spatially and socially appropriate unit for the social and spatial experiment with the notion of urban commoning. At any rate, urban commoning at Duamdong should be conducive to let humans flourish.³

1. Hou, Jeffrey. "Urban Commoning Against City Divided". Unpublished manuscript. 2016. p.2.

2. See Cho, Myung-Rae. "A progressive city in the making?: the Seoul experience". Paper presented at the International Symposium on Progressive City, organised by The Seoul Institute, held in Seoul City Hall, Seoul, 15-16 October 2015.

3. *Ibid.*



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두암동 교실

Learning from Duamdong

아폴로니아
슈시테르쉬치__시각예술가, 건축가
배다리__시각예술가

광주비엔날레
Gwangju Biennale

THE MASTER PLAN FOR DUAMDONG was an art project that ran for about a year, produced by the Gwangju Biennial 2016. The active part of the project started up in spring 2016 and ran until September 2016 in cooperation with the Nuribom Community Centre in Duamdong, on the outskirts of Gwangju. The project was set up through several workshops with local inhabitants, public talks and urban actions. The aim was to create a discursive platform for local inhabitants to raise awareness about the place as it is today, and to work on issues related to the neighbourhood in the near and possible future.

Master Plan for Duamdong was composed as an action research project with several parts:

1. *Learning from Duamdong*: several workshops with residents from Duamdong.
2. *Project Proposal*: a video-film and a table game.
3. *Public Presentation*: meeting between artists, residents, politicians and city officials.
4. *Public Lectures and Discussions* on the subject of gentrification, eco-community and self-organisation.

Duamdong is an interesting neighbourhood, the only one at present in Gwangju without a development plan.⁴ It is situated within the Buk-gu District on the North side of the city, just next to Mudeungsan mountain. Duamdong was built in the 1980s on rice fields. It was built after the Gwangju uprising under the Chun Doo-hwan government as a low-rise housing area with various types of detached houses and family villas.⁵

Duamdong has never been a rich place, but not a very poor one either. We were told that several families had been sharing homes and lived very close to each other. People living in Duamdong are known as good craftsmen and good tradesmen. There is still quite a vivid traditional making of rice-cakes, kimchi and bean paste production, as well as small carpentry and metal workshops. It is a very local place: people still know each other and live as a community. At the same time, Duamdong seems to be a forgotten place within the city of Gwangju: nobody would come to visit the area, as, unless you know somebody who lives there, there is no reason to. However being “forgotten” might just as well be part of the area’s development strategy. As the local MP said to us, “There is nothing going on in Duamdong at the moment. We need to wait until the place gets run down and then people will accept just about anything!”⁶

4. Gwangju is the sixth largest city in South Korea (1.5 million inhabitants). It is a designated metropolitan city under the direct control of the central government’s Home Minister. The city was also the capital of South Jeolla Province until the provincial office moved to the southern village of Namak in Muan County in 2005. Gwang (광, Chinese letter: 光) means “light” and Ju (주, Chinese letter: 州) means “province”. The city is located in the centre of the agricultural Jeolla region, and it is famous for its rich and diverse cuisine.

5. The Gwangju Uprising, alternatively called May 18 Democratic Uprising by UNESCO, and also known as Gwangju Democratisation Movement, was a popular uprising in the city of Gwangju, that took place between 18 and 27 May

1980. Estimates suggest up to 606 people may have died. During this period, Gwangju citizens took up arms (by robbing local armories and police stations) when local Jeonnam University students – who were demonstrating against the Chun Doo-hwan government – were fired upon, killed, and beaten in an unprecedented attack by government troops. The uprising eventually ended in defeat on 27 May 27 1980. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gwangju_Uprising (Accessed 2017-02-34.)

6. Quote from video film by Apolonija Šušteršič and Dari Bae. *Master Plan for Duamdong*, HD, 20 min., 2016.

During our research we came across the Nuribom Community Centre situated in Duamdong. It is a new organisation – having been open for only one and half years, financed through cooperation between the Buk-gu District Regeneration Office and the YMCA. It is run by Mr. Moon, who is a passionate gardener. He dreams about making the whole neighbourhood into a green garden by developing a green plant station on the terrace of the Community Centre, with the idea of sharing plants with his neighbours. One of the very specific architectural characteristics of Duamdong is that most of the roofs are flat and accessible, and with few adjustments suitable for developing a rooftop garden.

The idea of *Master Plan for Duamdong* was to demonstrate an alternative to the conventional urban development plan, which usually imposes the future

of a place under the premise of the production of economic benefits rather than social relations. *Master Plan for Duamdong* tried to develop ideas for sustainability and resilience that originate in context. One could imagine a very particular kind of development in the Duamdong neighbourhood that is related to the knowledge already situated in the area's inhabitants.⁷

The alternative we presented within *Master Plan for Duamdong* to the public (city officials and biennale public) was a suggestion, not a solution, and possibly a method. The project created a platform for an exchange between people and the place, between the residents, city officials and the biennial public, to question the idea of progress and development under the conditions of present economic realities. We organised several workshops, actions and events where we invited people from the neighbourhood as well as city officials to meet, talk and listen to each other.

In Gwangju, space is given to fast and profitable solutions that are conditioned by the radical change of the urban fabric, particularly with regards to housing, which has shifted from mostly low-rise buildings to extreme high-rise, mainly situated on the edge of the city. High-rise housing is extremely popular in Korea. The economic development that has enchanted the city caused the growth of the population from the 1980s onwards by about 100 per cent. However, at this moment people talk about the stagnation and overflow of available housing, so places like Duamdong might get a chance to survive. (The housing industry has already produced more than the market in Gwangju needs. They will have to stop building housing projects for a while, therefore they don't need to tear down areas like Duamdong to build new housing.)

In contradiction to the capitalism fuelling current urban growth stands the history and spirit of the Gwangju Uprising of 18 May 1980 that is still very present in the city. This history has formed a



Invitation



Rooftop garden

very specific Gwangju character. The memories of the uprising reinforce belief in democracy and the power of people. When we talk about the process of democratisation in South Korea we cannot ignore the Minjung movement – Minjung meaning People.⁸ The Minjung movement has been a very strong force of democratisation since 1980. As part of it, thousands of students left university to work in the factories and mobilise people for change.

As Namhoe Lee states in *Minjung. Democracy and Representation in South Korea*, the movement managed to shape a true “counter-public sphere”.⁹ In 1987, Minjung managed to bring the country to a total standstill with mass demonstrations of such magnitude that even the army did not know where to start breaking up the protests.¹⁰ This kind of democratisation process is very elemental, as Jungwoon Choi would describe: that is mass-

7. Haraway, Donna. “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective”. *Feminist Studies*. Vol. 14. No. 3. Autumn 1988. pp. 575-599.

8. Part of the democratisation movement in South Korea, as mentioned besides Minjung, is the Tonghak idea and literati movement (Choi, Jungwoon. *The Gwangju Uprising. The Pivotal Democratic Movement That Changed the History of Modern Korea*. Paramus, NJ: Homa & Sekey. 2005) p. 190.

9. According to Lee, Minjung activists “articulated their identities, interests, and the needs not only in opposition to the state but also as an emancipatory project for the whole society”. Lee, Namhoe. *Minjung. Democracy and Representation in South Korea*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University press. 2007. p. 11.

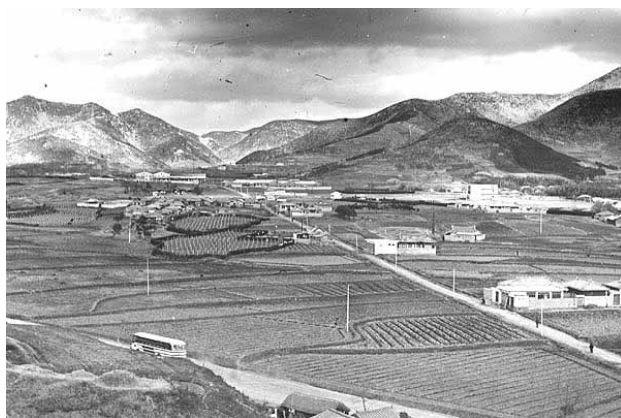
10. Lamont, Christopher K., van der Harst, Jan, Gaenssmantel, Frank (eds.). *Non-Western Encounters with Democratization: Imagining Democracy After the Arab Spring*. London and New York: Routledge. 2016 [2015]. p. 184.

democracy at work during the period of “absolute community”.¹¹ During the halcyon days following the expulsion of government troops on 21 May that year, Gwangju citizens sustained an autonomous, controlled, cooperative community.¹² At present the news coming from South Korea is again of activating the Minjung against the present government, which makes everyone remember the history and the power of people.

We invited Duamdong inhabitants to join our workshops. The invitation was disseminated through flyers and by talking to people in the shops and on the street. Nuribom Community Centre had just started and had not yet attracted many people, however, people who were involved invited their friends and word of mouth spread the invitation further.



Gwangju City, present. Courtesy of Gwangju City Hall.



Gwangju Duamdong, 1971. Courtesy of Gwangju City Hall.

During the workshops, residents talked about the history of Duamdong, which was built under the dictatorial regime of the Chun Doo-hwan government. Their accounts explained the complex composition of inhabitants and gradually growing population coming from various sites in South Korea. Most of the people now living in Duamdong came from rural regions such as Jangsung – from the agricultural areas. After moving to Duamdong, they worked in factories in Gwangju, or later established their own small business in Duamdong.

According to the local fortune teller Mr. Park, the name Duamdong refers to a rock shaped like a cow's head. He thinks of Duamdong as a mother cow, “feeding the progress but getting nothing out of it – being left alone and always there, a starting point for a better life.”¹³

Through our workshops we began to speak about the present and the possible future of Duamdong. None of the issues that participants at the workshops mentioned suggested major change of the place, but mainly shifts that would deal with very regular modes of operation that could be described as improvements.



Gwangju Uprising, 18 May 1980.



Fourth workshop at the Rooftop garden.



Duamdong streets



11. Choi, Jungwoon. *op. cit.*

12. Shin, Gi-Wook, Hwang, Kyung Moon. *Contentious Kwangju: The May 18th Uprising in Korea's Past and Present*. New York, NY and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. 2003.

13. Quote from video film by Apolonija Šušteršić and Dari Bae.

Master Plan for Duamdong – video-film

My position as a non-Korean speaking person and as a complete foreigner to the culture was to observe and participate as an observer. I observed the talks and situations that I was part of at the same time through the lens of the camera. The intention was to create a film that would stimulate awareness through self-reflection as well as confrontation of different points of view for everyone involved reflecting on the same subject. The film presents these other views within dislocated interviews with a local politician, an urban planner and a fortune teller in Duamdong.

Master Plan for Duamdong – table game

We developed *Master Plan for Duamdong* as a process, not as a final product or a fixed document: a process that comprised workshops, discussions and urban actions.

For the final presentation we designed a table game for everyone to play.¹⁴ The game attempted to stimulate thinking and discussion about the place and propose ideas for improvements.

The table-top has a printed site plan of Duamdong and a box with game tools (flags and buttons marked with signs for rubbish, parking places, flowers, benches, street lights etc.). We placed flags on specific known orientation points, since the loose elements (buttons) should be placed on the plan during the discussion, designating the place for the collection of rubbish, paper, parking places, green spaces and community gardens as well as marking the possible sites of the roof top gardens. The idea of playing the game is not only to agree about the place for the rubbish collection and parking places but also discuss them.

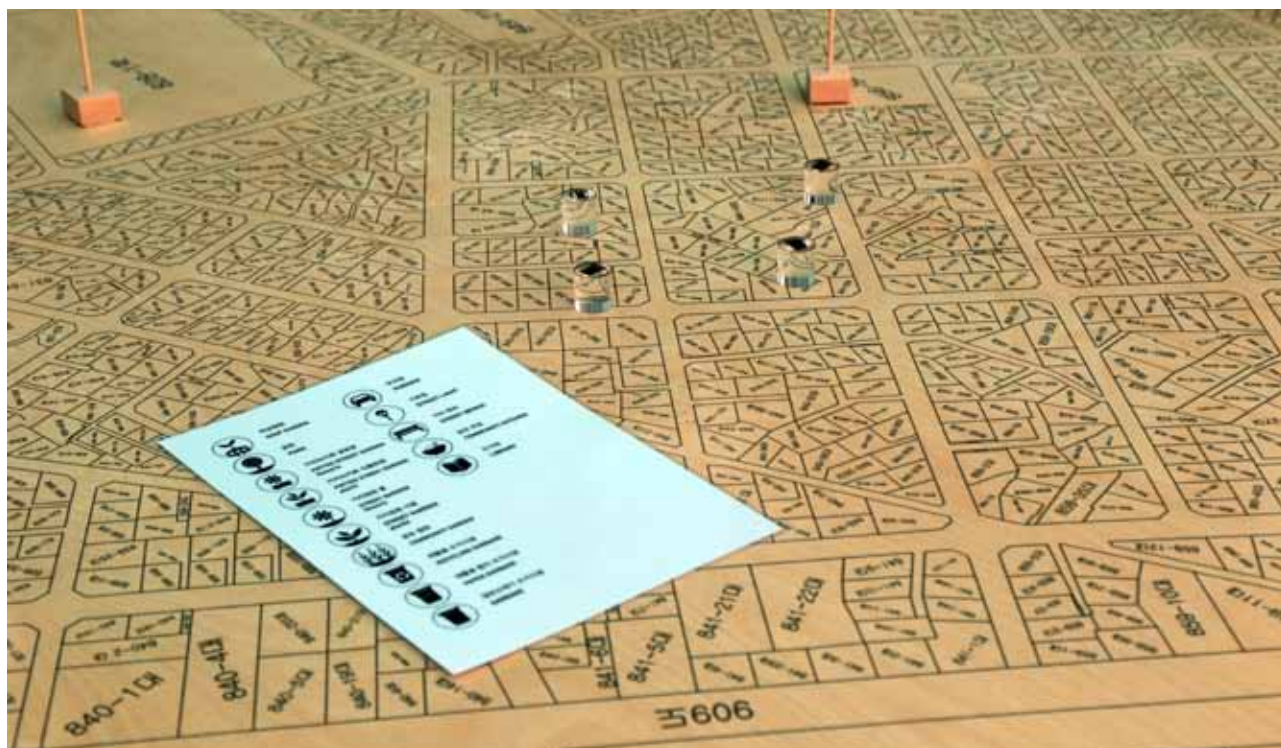
14. Table games have a tradition in Korean culture: Baduk (Go) and Changgi' or Janggi' are traditional Korean games played nowadays everywhere even on TV channel 24 hours per day.



Discussions during the third workshop.



Duamdong Table Game



Duamdong Table Game, detail.

Public Presentation – a public meeting between artists, residents, politicians and representatives from Buk-gu Council Regeneration Office

We invited people to this public event who had already participated in the workshops as well as the local MP and representatives from Buk-gu Council Regeneration Office. We demonstrated the use of the game and encouraged the local inhabitants to play the game together with the city officials and incidental visitors in order to find a solution to the issues presented in the workshops. The idea of the table game is that they would continue meeting

DUAMDONG TABLE GAME _USER MANUAL:

Feel free to think about few modifications made during development of Duamdong by playing this table game. The modifications that has been proposed by the Duamdong inhabitants are represented by several very simple elements in use as part of the game:

- Garbage collection points
- Paper collection points
- Parking lots
- Street greenery
- Streetlights
- Roof gardens
- Benches

GAME RULES:

Game should be played in cooperation with the locals who know the place well. If you are not local talk to the locals, ask questions, they might show you the place, take you around, and tell you about the history and what they would like to improve in the future. However you can also walk around yourself and try to use your imagination developing ideas for the near future of this neighborhood.

You can start playing the game by following the steps:

STEP 1

Talk to a local person about the place.
If you don't find anyone local to talk to, take a walk around, observe and listen.

STEP 2

Choose which urban element you would like to work with.

STEP 3

Place the element on the map where you want it to be. You may work with multiple elements at the same time.

STEP 4

Think, write or draw on a piece of A4 paper your ideas about garbage collection problem, parking problem or any other issue that Duamdong residents are trying to deal with at the moment.

STEP 5

Your ideas [in text and /or drawing] will be collected, documented and revisioned by Duamdong residents. Your idea might influence the development of this place in the future.
Looking forward to your cooperation!

Duamdong Table Game Rules



Duamdong Table Game, action.

and discussing around the table at the Nuribom Community Centre, also beyond the Gwangju Biennial.

Why Master Plan for Duamdong? We think that a master plan is a document in trouble. Nowadays governments, especially in countries that have developed free-market economies, have a problem with it. Cities are facing rapid growth that is conditioned by the turnover of capital without having time to discuss, think and rethink. A master plan therefore seems to be a document in the making, a never-finished process that has a utopian ambition to predict the future of our living environments. However it is shaped and re-shaped by different policies under



Public event, "Hands on Urbanism" with Elke Krasny's text, 3 September 2016.



Public event, "Urban Communing" by Professor Myung Rae Cho, 9 September 2016.

different governments, developers and investors – it is always in flux, catching up with the future.

The origin of *master plan* is described as a process that determines community goals and aspirations in terms of community development. In many ways that seems to be forgotten, not only in Gwangju but in general, within the everyday practice of urban planning. Therefore *Master Plan for Duamdong* aimed to rethink and remind urban policymakers, and especially politicians who are nowadays designing our future (as we learned from the Duamdong fortune teller), that people living in the place have something to say too.

There is much discussion about public participation in urban planning today, but do we really do it? And if so, how is it done? Is there really time and space for discussion, listening, learning, and changing the minds of urban planners and politicians? Is there any exchange on a human level between planners and citizens? Is the public interested in participating or is everyone too busy trying to survive, to pay the rent, to keep their job? Public participation is not just a given: it needs to be organised, and maintained. People in Gwangju remember past events well and the feeling of people's power is still alive, however, at the same time that is in total contradiction with the hard-core development of the city in the spirit of the free-market economy. The money that is available for investment in urban development has no time to wait – to wait for the discussion, listening, and changing minds.

Meanwhile community leaders have no time to get involved in projects with their communities. Talking to Mr. Moon, one gets the feeling that he is more and more involved in the bureaucratic processes of running the community centre instead of working with the community. He has no time to get engaged in projects and to share his ideas and plants with his neighbours, to develop his dream of roof-top garden plantations.



Public event, "Discussion for Gentrification" by Blaz Kriznik, Alban Mannisi and Taehee Lee, 17 September 2016.



Filming *Masterplan for Duamdong*.

Through our workshops with local inhabitants we learned that the future doesn't have to be grand – a total turnover; it doesn't have to change the life of people living in this neighbourhood completely.¹⁵ It can just as well continue to grow and change organically – slowly adjusting to contemporary needs, finding small and smart solutions that serve

everyday life in the neighbourhood. Instead of making another heavy document as a Master Plan we demonstrated an alternative – an open process, a suggestion for the community that they can pick up and develop, without any obligation to follow it up.

15. *Learning from Duamdong* references *Learning from Las Vegas* by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott-Brown and Steven Izenour, which created a healthy controversy on its appearance in 1972, calling for architects to be more receptive to the tastes and values of “common” people and less immodest in their erections of “heroic”, self-aggrandising monuments.





Public event, Street Party, 27 August 2016.