let me entertain you

an exploration of urban life and cinematic space

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Abstract

Gothenburg is currently being promoted as Sweden's Event City, with high ambitions to create activities for both visitors and inhabitants. The poster child for this tendency, which holds the major part of the attraction, is the "Event district". An area just outside of the inner city center that contains a few large-scale entertainment venues, which has the ability to accommodate thousands of people. The area has been the focus of many critical discussions regarding the branding and future development of the city.

The debate raises the issue of what is the identity of Gothenburg today and in the future. Critical voices to the official proposal to the event district bring forward propositions for an "enabling city," a city of everyday life events and local urban life.

The point of departure for this thesis is to explore through the film medium the city, as means to capture urban life and come closer to the debate concerning the present and future identity of Gothenburg.

The outcome of this thesis has been a series of films, analysis of the film media, amalgamated in the end of the process to one film that illustrates the development and possibilities of the site. Through interviews and visual narratives, the film aims to map the current discussions and opinions around the event district, and concludes with describing and looking at various other places and activities in Gothenburg. In an attempt to describe the city of everyday life events, and understand how these places could give us a framework to develop programmatic and spatial elements for a city of everyday life – an enabling city.

Keywords: Urbanity, Film, Cinematic space, Narrative structures, Enabling City
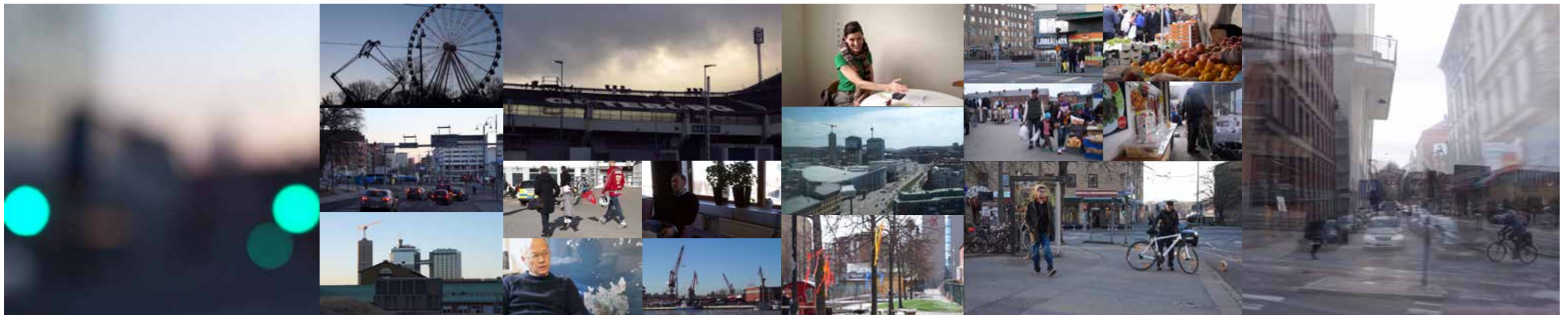
Urban phenomena

The word urban comes from the Latin words urbs or urbanus, meaning city or related to the city. It refers to human interaction in the public space of built structure. It is the opposite of rural; the geographical areas not considered to be cities. There is also the gray zone between the urban and the rural; suburbs, literally meaning "under city."

From this origin we have *urbanism* and *urbanity*. Urbanism refers to a character of life in urban areas and the physical urban planning. According to the Oxford Dictionary, urbanity refers to having a "courteousness and refinement of manner," while urbanism is described as "the study of the physical needs of urban societies."[1] It is also said, in the words of sociologist Louis Wirth to be "a mode of life."[2]

In a general manner, it can be said that urbanism refers to the studies of life in cities and actual city planning (for example the New urbanism movement), whereas urbanity deals with a way of life, a more psychological or philosophical way of interpreting life in the built environment.

Of course this discussion is as complex and layered as the functions it describes and numerous of architects, philosophers and generally clever people have shared their point of view in the matter; how does a city work, and if it doesn't, how can we make it work? Following are five different descriptions of urban phenomena, or tendencies, that displays a range of manners to approach and define our urban lives.

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[1] Oxford Dictionaries (2013)
[2] Wirth, L. (1938)

Shaping elements

In *The Image of the City* (1960) Kevin Lynch states five types of elements used to study the city:

Paths – Edges – Districts – Nodes – Landmarks[3]

Though the perception of these elements often are very individual, for example which street does or doesn't belong to a district, they are useful tools both for actual work with urban design and for reading the city, as an inhabitant or tourist. It might seem a bit simple to divide something as complex as a city in these rather general categories, but keep in mind that there are many different ways to interpret these elements, probably as many as citizens in the city.

These elements describe different modes of the city; roads, buildings and traffic. What makes it interesting is the human input; what is planned to be a landmark and what is actually used as a landmark, for example. Also, what functions are placed in a district or along a path determines the use of them. A node can be perfectly planned according to traffic safety, location and functionality, but if it doesn't provide the service desired, for example the bus line most people in the area uses, the node is not working as a node.

The conclusion here is that Lynch's types of elements are easy-to-use methods of looking at and shaping a city, but the human factor must not be forgotten. No matter how well something is planned and executed, it has to be desirable and provide the right functions to be used and appreciated by the public.

Expansion

In *The Growth of the city* (1925) Ernest W. Burgess describes the growth and uprising of American cities. He (somewhat complacently) says that: "All the manifestations of modern life which are peculiarly urban - the skyscraper, the subway, the department store, the daily newspaper, and social work - are characteristically American." Along with social issues "such as divorce, delinquency, and social unrest, are to be found in their most acute forms in our largest American cities."

Considering what Burgess describes as modern in 1925 (the skyscraper, the subway and the department store) it is the large scale building, a transportation system and commerce that defines urbanism. This is still valid for the modern cities of today. The elaboration of large buildings (and the means to pay for them), the complexity and quality of the public transportation system, and the location and quantity of commercial venues are three very important factors in the degree of urbanity a city possesses. The quality of these factors (or the lack of it) are great issues for urban design and something that effects every citizen. Furthermore, he states that:

> *... The process of expansion, and especially the rate of expansion, must be studied not only in the physical growth and business development, but also in the consequent changes in the social organization and in personality types.*[4]

With this in mind it can be stated that it is not only the physical growth, more and higher buildings, but people with different needs that makes a city expand. City life is nothing without citizens.

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[3] Lynch, K. (1960)
[4] Burgess, E. W. (1925)

Shopping/Entertainment

Architect Richard Rees states in his essay *The brand new authentic retail experience* (2006), about the commercialism of urban design that we need to accept retail and shopping as something essential to urbanity. We can't ignore it or frown upon in for the lack of taste and quality in design. We need to embrace it and turn the fake backdrop of the shopping mall into the authentic city.

> *Because the influence of commercial retail has so permeated the idea if the city that it is impossible to separate the notion of urbanity from shopping, the issue of resisting shopping's spectacular lure has become irrelevant.*[5]

In the integrated/mix-use/inclusive urban utopia there would be no large shopping malls, every function of retail would be placed along streets together with everything else one might need in their life in terms of services and food. But a shopping mall can be viewed in the same way as an entertainment arena or amusement park. A place many people go to in order to satisfy a need or to be entertained. Embrace shopping and entertainment as the measures of urbanity they actually are. Instead of just frowning at the spectacle that has invaded the precious idea of good taste, make them an authentic part of the city.

Coffee culture

Jan Gehl states in his text *Life, Spaces, Buildings - and in that order please* (2006) the very simple, but important, fact that: "Cappuccino, fresh air and contact with others represent a combination that is hard to beat."[6] The simple social acts in the urban context must not be forgotten. Things does not have to be complicated all the time. We need to sit down every once in a while, and doing so in a pleasurable way, enjoying the bustle of the life in the city surrounding us is not trivial, it is in the core of urbanity.

On the other hand, a city needs to provide something for every citizen, not just the coffee-drinking people. Having the opportunity to sit down for a longer time and enjoy (often quite expensive) hot beverages, is not for everyone.

[5] Rees, R. (2006)
[6] Gehl, J. (2006)

City Branding

In the essay *The Necessity of Socio-Cultural Goals* from the book City branding: Image Building & Building Images (2002) Hans Mommaas says that "It is not the city but the image that has to be planned." City branding is about treating the city as a product that is sold on a market. It is being sold to the people that are potential and attractive visitors, looking for a place to spend their money, simply put.[7] But what happens to the urban quality of the city if it is only the brand being planned? What is planned should of course strengthen the image of the city, or give a new image, but the most important outcome of city planning should be that the city in itself is working properly for its inhabitants, and not just look pretty for the post cards. Furthermore, Mommaas states that:

> *Administrators will tend to seek the shortest way to the market, with the more danger that, at the level of the urban population, city brands encourage spatial and socio-cultural inequality and fragmentation rather than feelings of solidarity and community. City brands which reflect only the cleaned up "croissant and cappuccino" urbanity of a rising middle class will not be in unison with the true existing living conditions of larger parts of the urban population.*

Again, the example of the coffee culture expresses how important this function is, both in terms of branding and in the sense that it has been misused. A brand must not just show the successful and desirable urban life, which has an extraordinary allure and is easy to sell but, as mentioned above, also allow for the "real" urbanity of the city, which has nothing to do with drinking coffee or eating pastries.

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[7] Mommaas, H. (2002)

Urbanity and film

The previously mentioned urban phenomena are just a few ways to interpret and understand the concepts of a city. Another way is through looking at actual interpretations of city life; how cities are portrayed in film.

Of course there is a great difference in facts derived from an academic text about the studies of city life and a fictional interpretation of it, but film can capture these notions of how our built environment is perceived (or what it will become in the future) just as well, since the urbanity in a film is as real as the actual sites it is filmed in, though the context might be changed. Just because a city is portrayed in a fictional film doesn't mean that it is less urban.

Film is used more and more as a mode of presenting architectural projects, in combination with drawings. We (architects) can gain a lot from using this media more, for analyzing the world around us, and not just present our ideas in drawings and text. Urbanity is something fleeting that, in a way, is best captured in moving pictures and presented to the viewer who cannot be on site and experience the urban life first hand.

In previous research for this thesis, three fictional films where used to describe the connection of "real" urban life and its "created" counterpart; Playtime (1967)[8], Blade runner (1982)[9] and Aeon Flux (2005)[10]. These films show examples of different types of urbanity and different ways to change the concept of city life, as well as how the use of a camera and all of the inherit systems in film-making creates possibilities in the work with architecture and urban design.

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[8] Tati, J. (1968)
[9] Scott, R. (1982)
[10] Kusama, K. (2005)

Why moving pictures are better than still

If a picture says more than a thousand words, moving pictures says a million more than a still. Film is used more frequently as a mode of presenting architectural projects, in combination with drawings; it is an effective and accessible way to relay information. Of course the drawing is the essential element when it comes to planning and realizing an architectural project. Film has a built-in lure that attracts many when it comes to showing visionary work, and quite crass to sell an idea to a client.

Pragmatically, film can be seen as just a visualization tool and substitute the power-point presentation of rendered pictures that provide a richer experience. This aside, film as a tool holds a lot of potential in not just showing fancy pictures, but also in how the actual language of film can be used in the analysis, reading and perception of architecture and the urban environment.

Urbanity, as mentioned, is a very fleeting notion that can be hard to pinpoint in words and drawings, but its essence can be captured in the form of a sequence.

Imagine trying to describe the busy life of a popular street corner in a larger city. A drawing of the corner does not explain very well how people interact, as well as a picture does not relay the constellations of groups and how they relate to each other. A series of short clips from the corner can immediately give the viewer a feeling of what is happening, what the place looks like what urban condition it has.

Background- Site and point of view

My point of departure, in the analysis of different techniques used in film which I intend to apply in a discussion of urban spaces and programs, is that of an architect with a passion for film, and not of a cineaste educated in the world of film-making. I do not claim to have all the right vocabulary or training in this enormous field of art. What I do discuss and study are my own experiences as a novice film-maker with the perspective of my training as an architect, in how I interpret the combination of these two wonderfully interesting subjects, starting out from the question:

> *What techniques and expressions from the art of film-making can be used in the proposing/designing of urban space?*

To place my exploration in a local and contemporary context I have chosen to focus on an area in Gothenburg known as the "event district." A central part of town that contains a small number of strong programs that has the ability to draw thousands of people. It is also an area that has been the focus of many discussions regarding its design and importance to the city. In its configuration it is quite urban but at the same time considered by many to be a vast and boring stretch that poses a barrier in the city rather than connecting it.

The development of the event district

The area of the present day event district was until the beginning of 1900's a rural area with pastures, allotment gardens, tobacco fields, and summer homes for well-to-do business men of the city. As a result of the Jubilee Exhibition of 1923, to celebrate Gothenburg's 300 year anniversary, the area saw a lot of development, which later came to a halt during the years of the Second World War. The area became more established as a part of the city during the 1950's and kept expanding during the late part of the century, up until today, as the third Gothia Tower is under construction.

Today this area is mainly dominated by large public functions and busy traffic, but is surrounded by residential areas in the north, east and west.
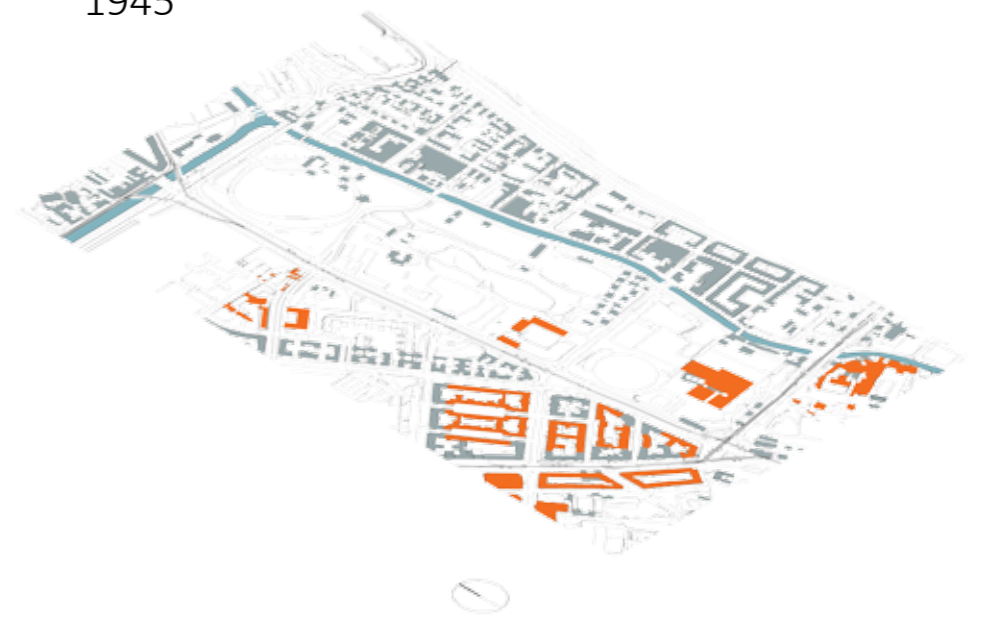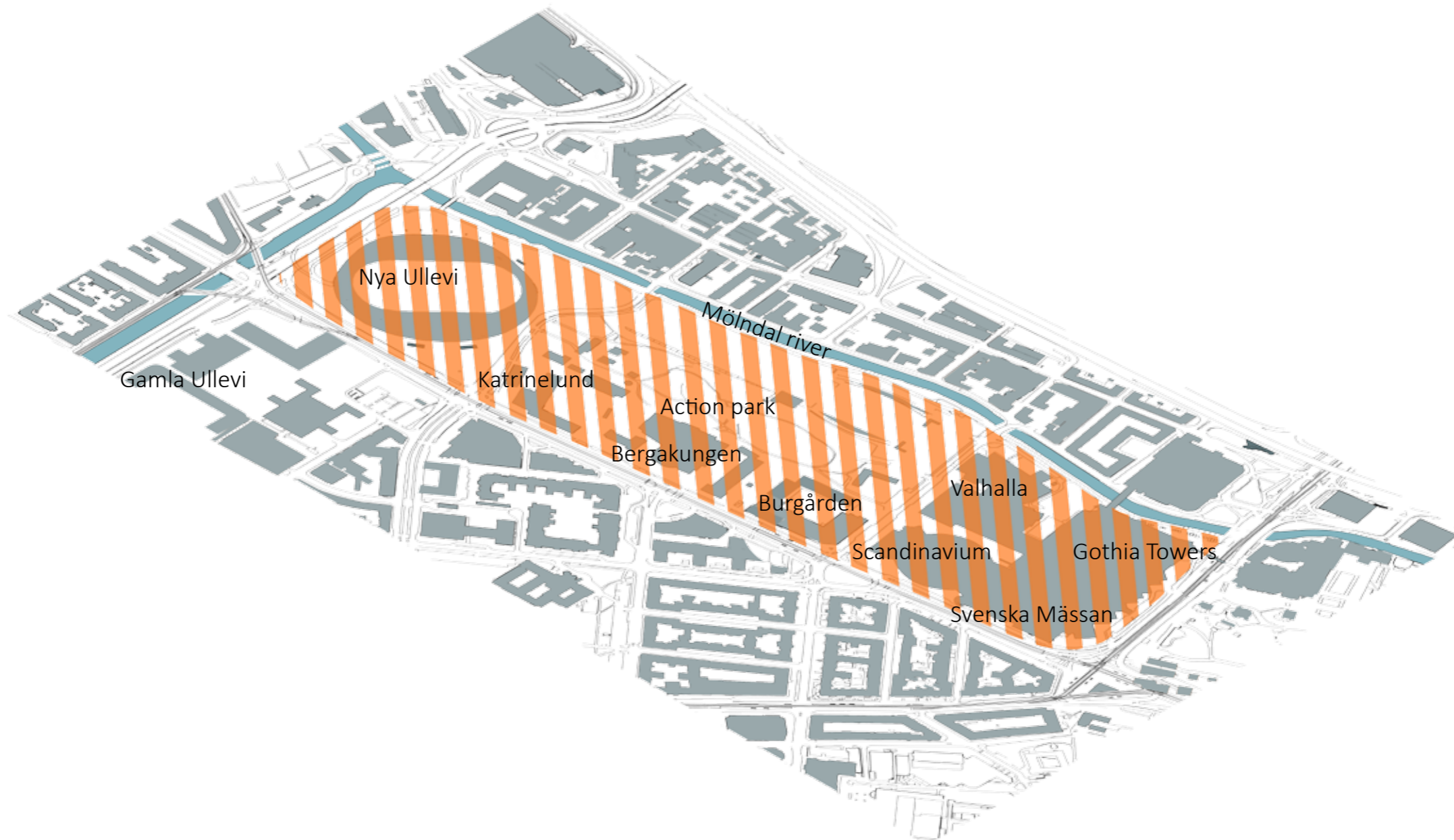
Development

1900

1921

1945

1972

1998

2013

The district

Nya Ullevi

Mölndal river

Gamla Ullevi

Katrinelund

Action park

Bergakungen

Burgården

Valhalla

Scandinavium

Gothia Towers

Svenska Mässan

The current debate

For many years there has been a discussion of the need for a new, large-scale multi arena in the event district. The municipal board has commissioned a consequence report for several different possible locations, none of them free from problems. The option that would be the least bad, is to tear down Valhalla swimming hall and build the new arena there. The decision for this motion was to be settled in April 30, 2013.[11]

This pending decision caused a lot of people to react and protest against both the possible destruction of the well-used and appreciated swimming hall and the fact that political forces are optioning for a new arena in the area, which many claim is already at maximum capacity when it comes to large venues for entertainment.[12]

The debate became very heated and it was decides to postpone the decision for where and when this new arena, called Framtidens Arena (The Future Arena) is to be built. The arguments for an arena in this location if the possibility to attract major events and investments, and to be able to walk from your hotel right over to the arena without needing to put your jacket on. On the other hand, arguing for the keeping of Valhalla swimming hall is the existence of a democratic and well-visited meeting place that is highly representing the city's wishes to work for social sustainability.[13]

The enabling city and the everyday life

*I really believe that the people who live here has the capacity to build a sustainable future -
to be 'the enabling city'.[14]*

An enabling city should provide opportunities for every of its citizens to reach and use their full potential, and by allowing not just the large scale, profitable and exclusive attractions of the city but to enrich it by promoting the everyday culture that actually exists. According to a study by the Göteborg City Museum, Göteborg University and Mistra Urban Futures "urban cultures are drivers of complex processes of layering of values over time."[15] These values are products of the everyday life of people living in the city and the activities they conduct on a regular basis, over a longer period of time.

These notions, that it is the everyday business, the sometimes mundane and the regularity, that create a sustainable city are important counterparts to the idea that growth, economical profit and the number of visitors are the only thing that counts when it comes to the planning of the city.

My intention is to portray and propose, through the result of my research, events and activities that can be placed in the event district in order to work for a more enabling city that is inclusive, democratic and promotes the events of the everyday life.

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[11] Grahn-Hinnfors, G. (2013)
[12] Aleby, J. et al. (2013)
[13] Grahn-Hinnfors, G. (2013)
[14] Ylva Berglund, interview 2013-04-09
[15] Gillberg, D. et al. (2012)

Examples of spacial and programmatic elements for a city of everyday life

How can we structure the city for an everyday life?

There are plenty of spaces around the city that provide a reasonable scale, places that encourage meeting other people and a variety in expression. I have found these elements to be missing in the site of the event district, but at the same time found that it holds potential to add these elements, in order to integrate it more in the everyday urban life.

Stigbergstorget

Streets in a human scale that promotes movement and meetings in a casual and relaxed manner.

Kviberg's Market

A democratic meeting place that promotes a more sustainable culture and strengthens the community between people.

Linnégatan

A district with a multitude and variety in programs, that include its visitors at all times, letting the culture leave their mark over time.
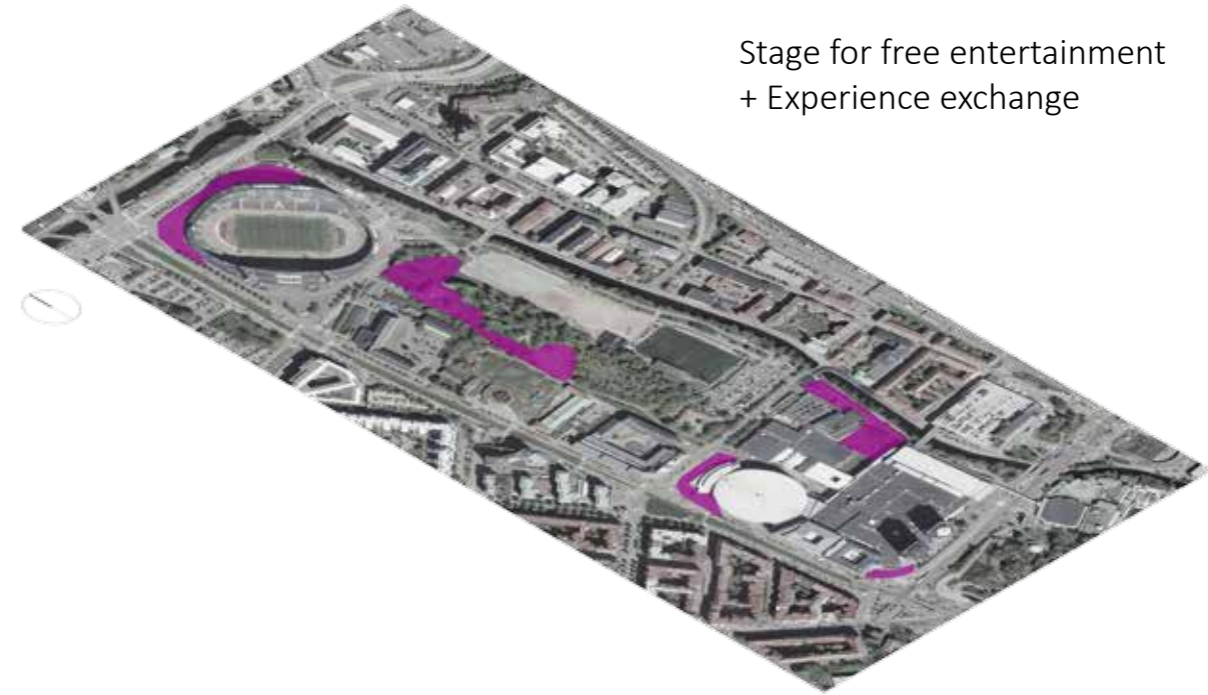

Skånegatan

Scale

Skånegatan

Meeting place

Skånegatan

Multitude and variety

Which alternative social and cultural programs could contribute to creating a more inclusive and enabling city, setting the scene for everyday life?

Second hand market
+ Community around food

Stage for free entertainment
+ Experience exchange

Pop-up installations/exhibitions
+ Collaborative art projects

Possible sites for alternative activities
+ everyday entertainment
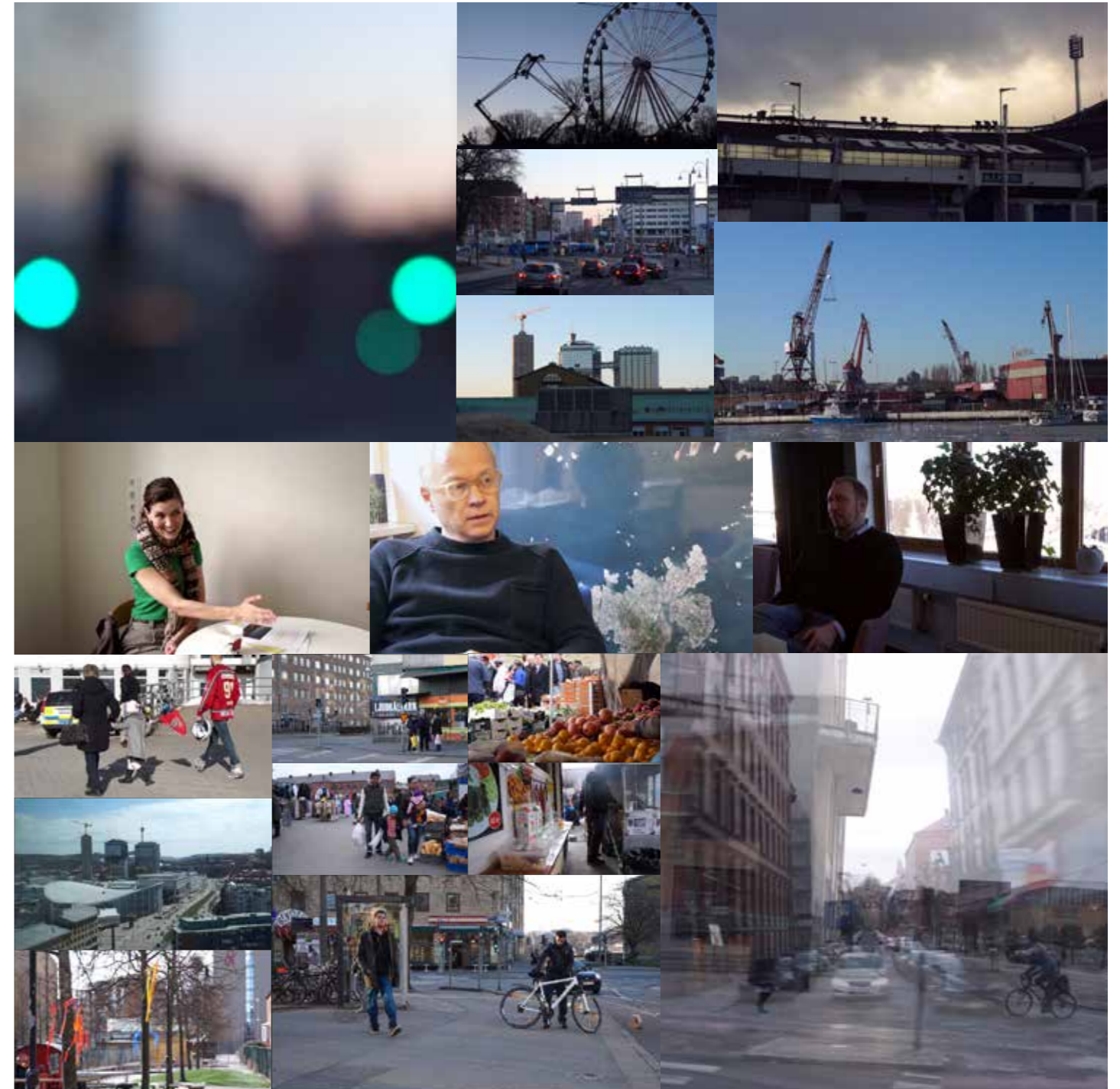
Let me entertain you - The film

The title of the film refers to the song "Let me entertain you" by Robbie Williams. His sold-out concert, with an audience of 57 245 people, in July 2006 is an example of the use of this site, how it can attract so many people at the same time.

The intention for this area, the event district, is to entertain and to make people come here and feel good. But as shown in the film, there are many different types of things to do for entertainment and it doesn't have to be Robbie Williams; it can also be to paint something on a wall or to learn how to fix your toaster over a cup of coffee.

Plot

The film starts with scenes from the area of Skånegatan and continues on describing how the district has developed. This sequence is then followed by a mix of three interviews with Ylva Berglund, Curator and coordinator at Göteborg City Museum, Max Markusson, Director of events at Göteborg & Co and Björn Siesjö, Head architect at the Gothenburg city planning office.

The last and concluding part of the film shows three examples of spacial elements that I find missing in the event district, as well as where these elements can be identified. This sequence concludes with examples of programs that describe alternative activities in the city, shown on a map where in the district they could be applied.
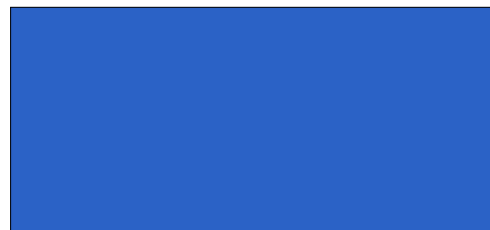
Film timeline | Based on Premiere Pro work area

Fade from black	
Fade from white	
Crossfade	
Animation	
Audio	
Camera hand-held	
Camera on tripod	
Still photo	
Drawing	
Black screen	
Title- text	
Subtitle- narrative	

00:00:00   00:00:30   00:01:00   00:01:30

Video

Audio

Ylva Berglund speaking

Sound of birdsong

Narrator speaking

Narrator speaking

Titles
Subtitles

let me entertain you

"When I think about Gothenburg's soul, I think about the people who live here and what they generate. You create a city where you make people feel good, that's very attractive. To come to a place that is simply human."

"Robbie Williams sang 'let me entertain you' during his performance at Ullevi in July 2006. A concert seen by 57 245 people with a turnover of 220 million SEK. Thousands of people had gathered for a single event. A couple of hours that will be remembered during a life time. All the planning, all the excitement and happenings around a major event like this, it all boils down to a few moments, intense and loaded. But what happens when the crowd has left? What happens to the stage when the show is over?"

"Gothenburg is currently being promoted as Sweden's Event City, with high ambitions to create activities for both visitors and inhabitants. And the poster child for this tendency, which holds the major part of the attraction, is the event district. An area just outside of the inner city center that contains two football stadia, an indoor arena, a cinema, conference venues, hotels and exhibition space."

00:02:00   00:02:30   00:03:00   00:03:30

Narrator speaking

Max Markusson speaking

Ylva Berglund speaking

Björn Siesjö speaking

Max Markusson
Director of events
Göteborg & Co

Ylva Berglund
Curator / Coordinator
Göteborg City Museum

"The area of the present day event district was until the beginning of 1900's a rural area with pastures, allotment gardens, tobacco fields, and summer homes for well-to-do business men of the city. As a result of the Jubilee Exhibition of 1923, to celebrate Gothenburg's 300 year anniversary, the area saw a lot of development, which came to a halt during the years of the Second World War. The area became more established as a part of the city during the 1950's and kept expanding during the late part of the century, up until today, as the third Gothia tower is under construction."

"I would describe Gothenburg as a big small-town. There is a whole lot of creative people here and I think that shows in the nightlife, in businesses, in the events. There is a strong creative base in Gothenburg."

"It is a place that is changing from being economically dependent on a type of industry, to becoming something else, and there are different thoughts on what it should be. For example the creative industry and the focus on attracting people who counts as creative and interesting to come to Gothenburg."
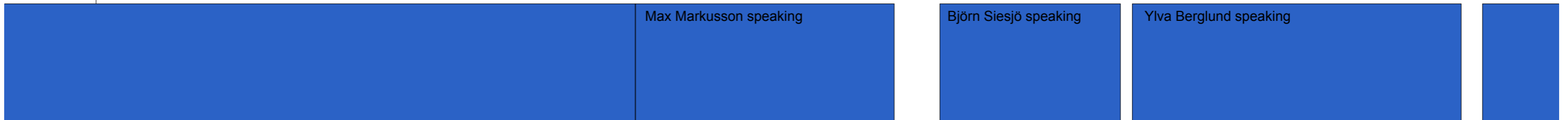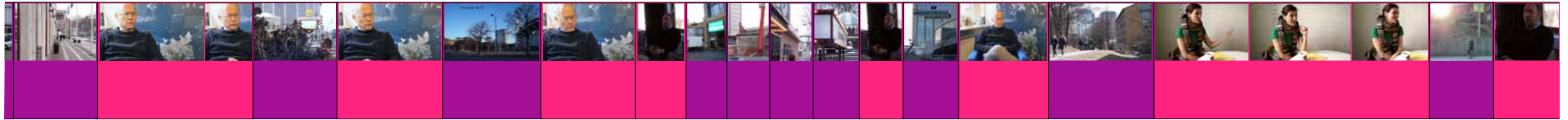
Max Markusson speaking

Björn Siesjö speaking

Ylva Berglund speaking

Björn Siesjö
Head Architect
Gothenburg city planning office

"The worlds most boring street, Skånegatan, might be this 'event-path'. People don't walk there voluntarily because it's built in a way that makes it horrible. I would say that we have an 'event-cluster' in Gothenburg, which is necessary for competitive reasons, to host large events where the open spaces can be shared. We have that possibility here, and that's great. At the same time, we have to recognize the danger of creating a one-sided cluster in the city. What is now around Mässan and Scandinavium, and the proposed new arena, can turn into an area that feels unsafe and unattractive during most part of the day when there's no event going on. There has to be a mix in the city, even where things are concentrated like this. And that has been forgotten. So we have to start thinking about that now."

"I am fully convinced that we are Sweden's leading event-city, not that we have the most 'Ladies Night,' but that we have a high quality of events in all different segments. Events are very subjective, but we have a broad foundation and above all a high quality of the events we arrange."

"It's also important to see that a city can't only be an event city. Gothenburg has been associated with that a lot, and that might have caused us to forget the everyday city, for the people who live here."

"I think we have to go back to the roots and see what's growing there. Go back to a bottom-up perspective, instead of thinking we have to get the biggest show on earth. Like Lady Gaga have to come here, otherwise this is not a cool place, and I feel like, eh... And maybe that's not the soul of Gothenburg."

00:06:00   00:06:30   00:07:00   00:07:30

Max Markusson speaking

Ylva Berglund speaking

"It looks very industrial, large and white. This is not my favorite part of Gothenburg."

"Gothenburg really is an event-city, it's a small Mecca for events."

"What we have here now is hard to copy. The uniqueness needs to be enhanced instead of building on to something that's not real and genuine. Then it's like plastic, and that shows. I don't believe in that. I believe in city branding in the sense of identifying what is different. The city branding process in Gothenburg has been going on for a very long time, and that we are Sweden's leading event city, that's one type of branding, but that needs to evolve, it needs to contain more values."

"Some of these branding ideas are now put to shame, how good was this really? It worked well for some cities maybe, but seen in a bigger perspective, it causes more 'whiteness' and segregation. Gothenburg's biggest problem right now is segregation, and it makes you wonder how much should we focus on attracting a financially strong and creative group of people? I'm not saying that we should not do that, but not put focus on that. I think it was Harvey who said: 'Who the hell wants to act a backdrop for the creative class?' I really believe that the people who are here has the capacity to build a sustainable future. And for that you have to use an expression we are working a lot with, to be 'the enabling city', and see how can we support and construct strategies for the people who actually are here can reach their own potential."

(Sound of people walking and talking softly)

Björn Siesjö speaking

Ylva Berglund speaking

"It's very busy here when there's an exhibition."

"It doesn't feel like this area is planned for inhabitants, more for visitors."

"If you look on how Skånegatan and Örgrytevägen looks like today, they are optimized for cars and trams, they are not streets of the city. If we can remake them into something that looks like city, I believe we can create an attractiveness and add active street levels, that doesn't exist there at all now. This, along with a condensation of the city, can create city life around the event-cluster. I think this is necessary in the long run, to gain the attractivity that is needed."

"This is something that's called 'Framtidens arena' (The Future arena), made by Sport and Culture Real Estate Scandinavium Inc. and it's about how they want to develop things. In this document is says for example: 'The purpose of Gothenburg as an event-city and the strategic aim of the event district ought to be clarified.' That is, there is no strategy, it's not well thought-out what this implies and what consequences it will have. And if you're going to make this large investment, it's pretty good to have a clue about what the consequenses might be. Event areas, rather than giving something, takes something and becomes parasitic. This makes you think, what is the actual cost for this? The homogeneity that is created when all these giant structures are packed together gives a massive impact of this type of activity in such a small area. I believe in the everyday life, more regular daily life needs to be in this context of giants."

00:10:00   00:10:30   00:11:00   00:11:30
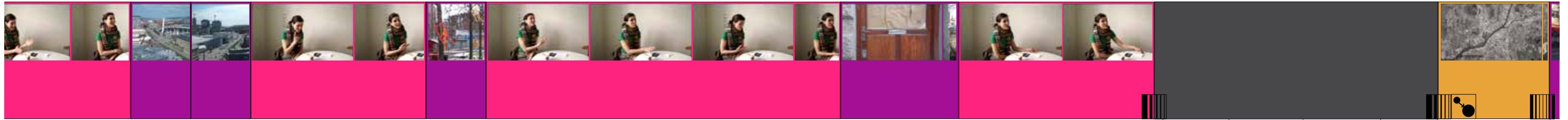
"That's where the magic happens. Of course it can be absolutely amazing when someone sings or kicks a ball, but I believe in the effect of the everyday life and that it matters in a different way. If that can be fitted into this area I believe there will be a better balance and something that can be beneficial for more people. The biggest problem for Gothenburg is segregation. When we build the city, as we want to do in different ways, I think this needs to be a part of it: how do we reduce the segregation by doing this? Having low thresholds and that people can feel: 'I'm allowed to be here too.'"

"A city can't only be an event city. Gothenburg has been associated with that a lot, and that might have caused us to forget the everyday city, for the people who live here."

"You create a city where you make people feel good, that's very attractive. To come to a place that is simply human."

"That's where the magic happens."

Examples of spatial and programmatic elements for a city of everyday life
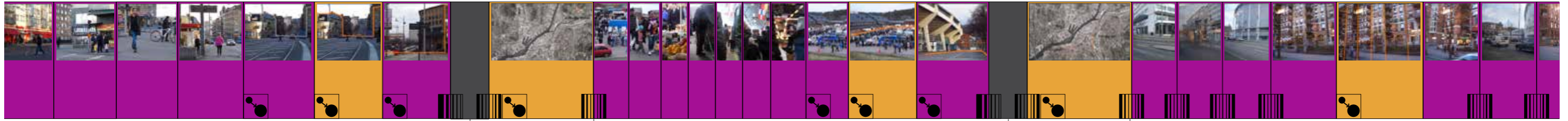
How can we structure the city for an everyday life?

00:12:00   00:12:30   00:13:00   00:13:30

Sound of slow traffic, people walking and talking

Sound of people talking in the market

Sound of a tram in motion, people talking on the tram

Streets in a human scale that promotes movement and meetings in a casual and relaxed manner.

A democratic meeting place that promotes a more sustainable culture and strengthens the community between people.

A district with a multitude and variety in programs, that include its visitors at all times and let all types of culture leave their mark over time.

What kind of space do we need for an enabling city?

What kind of event district can we have when the show is over and the everyday life resumes?

Sound of a tram in motion, people talking on the tram

Sound of people walking and talking softly

Sound of people walking on a street, faint sound of cars and voices

Sound of people walking on a street, turns into birdsong

"The process of segregation can cease by creating and keeping meeting places."

"Pop-up places where you can fix broken stuff that would otherwise be waste, and transform urban spaces into functional social gathering places."

"A mobile mini-architecture designed for roaming the public sphere. An urban toy to engage with users a of a particular public realm."

"When Stockholm is being privatized we need to train on joint practices. We need to create rooms that never are for sale."

"A portable street park that temporarily takes traffic away from the streets and create instant recreational facilities."

Which alternative social and cultural programs could contribute to creating a more inclusive and enabling city, setting the scene for everyday life?
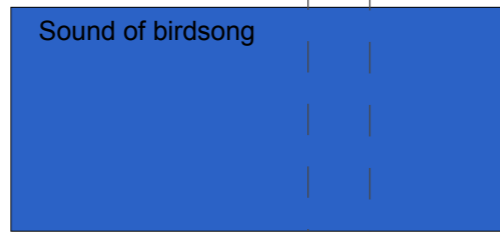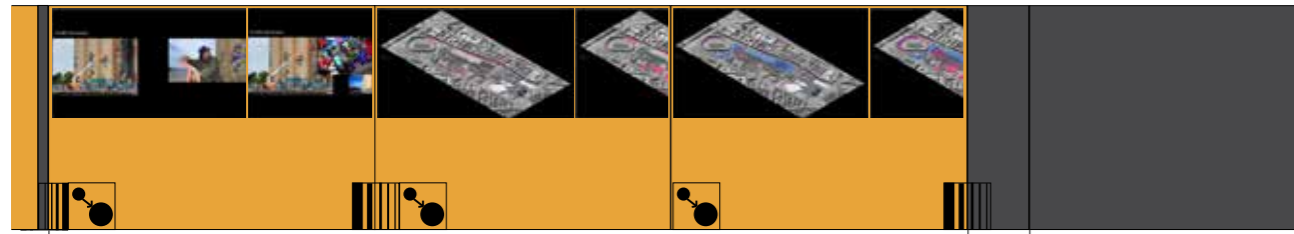
Second hand market + Community around food

Stage for free entertainment + Experience exchange

Pop-up installations/exhibitions + Collaborative art projects

00:16:30   00:16:56

Sound of birdsong

"It's not about graffiti in Mariestad, it's about renewal and change. Our work is a part of a bigger whole."

"I really believe that the people who live here has the capacity to build a sustainable future - to be 'the enabling city'."

let me entertain you
a film by Tove Magnusson
Master's Thesis in Architecture, Chalmers 2013

Fade from black

Fade from white

Crossfade

Animation

Audio

Camera hand-held

Camera on tripod

Still photo

Drawing

Black screen

Title- text

Subtitle- narrative

Proposal

Second hand market + Community around food

> Kviberg's Market

> *The future Gothenburg should be a melting pot of
> different people and activities. The process of segregation
> can cease by creating and keeping meeting places.
> Kviberg's market is such a place.*

- Mats Anmar, local government commissioner of Gothenburg[16]

> Repair Café

> *Repair Cafés are pop-up gathering places where you
> can bring your broken stuff - electronics, clothing, tools -
> to be repaired by a team of volunteer repair specialists.
> Tools and materials are made available to repair all sorts
> of goods that could otherwise be thrown away. Without
> fixed locations, Repair Cafés temporarily transform urban
> spaces into functional social gathering places, where the
> project's social benefits are as appealing as its ecological
> mission. At the Repair Cafe, you can drink a coffee and get
> to know your neighbors as you wait your turn to consult
> with a repair-volunteer.*

- Created by Martine Postma, environmentalist, The Netherlands[17]

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[16] Anmar, M. (2011)
[17] Postma, M. (2013)

Stage for free entertainment + Experience exchange

> Mobile porch

The Mobile Porch is a mobile mini-architecture designed for roaming the public sphere. It is an urban toy to engage on a one to one level with users and governing bodies of a particular public realm.

- public works, London[18]

> Cyklopen – culture center

Cyklopen was a cultural center for artists, musicians and political groups against racism. It burned down in 2008, but is currently being rebuilt by the group Kulturkampanjen (The culture campaign).

When Stockholm is being privatized we need to experiment and train on joint practices. When everything is sold out, we need to create rooms that never are for sale.

- Kulturkampanjen, Stockholm[19]

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[18] Böhm, K. et al. (2013)
[19] Cyklopen (2013)

Pop-up installations/exhibitions + Collaborative art projects

>Plaza Móvil

Industrial designer Manual Rapoport came up with Plaza Móvil, a portable street park that temporarily takes traffic away from the streets in Buenos Aires and changes them into mobile parks. With recycled materials like car tires and supermarket carts, Rapoport makes mobile street furniture as well as play and game equipment for kids that pops up on streets at hours with low traffic. All elements of Plaza Móvil are easily transportable to other parts of the city. With his project, Rapoport aims to bring instant recreational facilities to the people that don't live close to parks and playgrounds.

- Created by Manual Rapoport, industrial designer, Buenos Aires[20]

> Graffiti Mariestad

Carolina Falkholt: 'It's not about graffiti in Mariestad, it's about renewal and change. Our work is a part of a bigger whole. What I think our art project can, among other things, contribute with, is that we together create a cultural sculpture of world class in Mariestad'.

The project Graffiti Mariestad was officially finished in September 5, 2010. Nevertheless does the positive effects linger and will most certainly do so for a long time ahead. One of the effects will be seen in a near future, as Graffiti Mariestad has taken the city into the planning of a new exciting project.

- Initiated by artist Carolina Falkholt, Mariestad[21]

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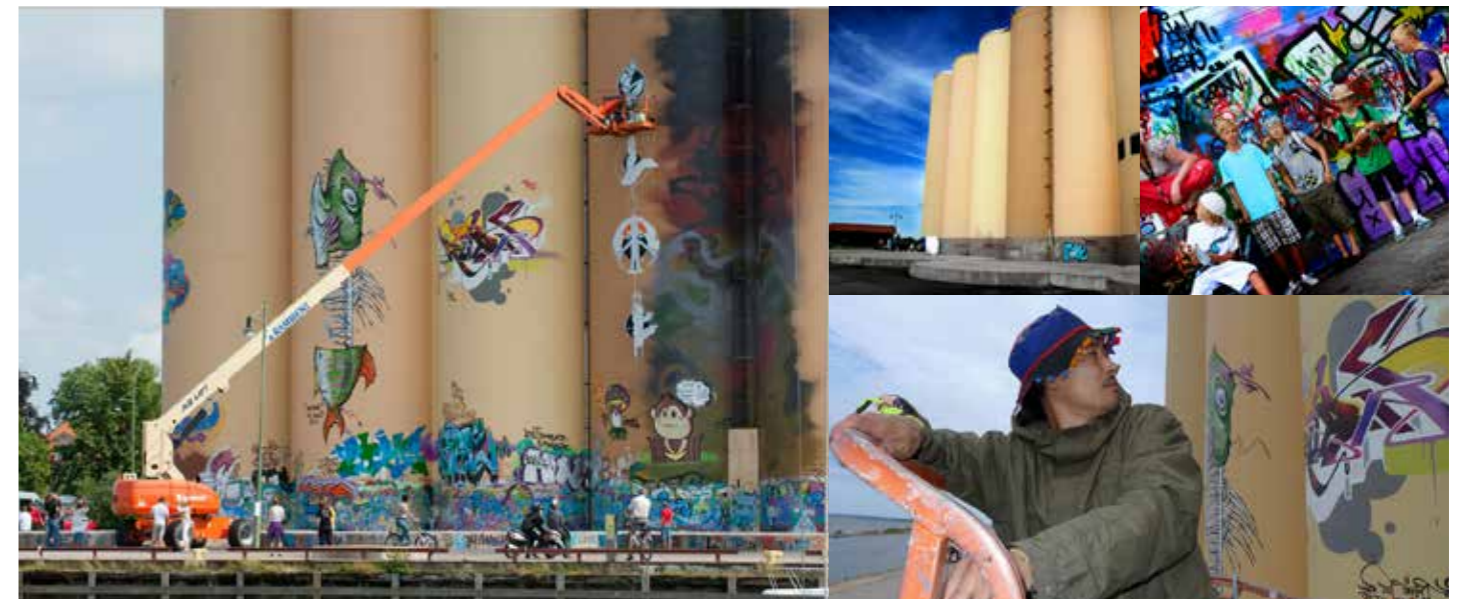
[20] De Boer, J. (2012)
[21] Larsson, M. (2010)

Methods for a cinematic space

Inspired by the art of film-making I have identified three methods of how to use film, which can be applied into working with the representation and interpretation of the city life in Gothenburg.
These methods are foremost techniques in how actually record and edit film, but on a conceptual place, they can also be used in the editing of architectural space. For example, when proposing a new district of a city, or the reshaping of an old one, the method of montaging can be used in the process of designing, to create a flow and intrigue in the spaces.

1. Mise-en-Scène

The questions of what to shoot and how to shoot it is described as mise-en-scène, "to place on the stage."[22] The term is holds many different definitions and dimensions; what is placed in scenes is what makes the film, obviously. The basic starting point though to what is placed in the scene is the frame of the camera, the space that will inhibit the image.

In most scenes there is a notable foreground and background in the image; some things are in focus and some are blurred. When creating a scene and choosing what is foreground and background, and also what is in and out of focus, the director decides the order in which things in the scene are noticed becomes forced, that is, the order is predetermined. The scene is framed through the camera, and this frame can basically be described as closed or open; it can be a limit that holds objects in place or it can let things come and go through it and makes us aware of the world outside of the frame.[23]

The idea of creating an urban frame or focal points is nothing new, but what can be learnt from the structure of film is how to use the framing element, and how to use the focus. The object you see first is usually easy to define and single out, but what is second, third and fourth noticed is usually harder to determine.

In a film, the focus can be directed, very straight forward in a way, as the focal point changes between different objects, making all the other parts of a scene blurry. But also in how they move, what lines are created, and what colors they are.[24] By placing objects in a different order of appearance the scene possesses several layers of depth and becomes varied and provides something new every time you see it.

Putting this example in an urban context, the different focal elements create a new scene every time you pass a place. You will notice things in different order and from different angles. It can also be compared to seeing a movie several times, you always find yourself noticing new items in the story, when you put different focus what you are looking at; you already know what the character in the foreground is going to do, so you study the character's surrounding instead. Using the elements of the frame and foreground/background composing is not only valid when working with film, but also when planning urban structure e.g. a street.

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[22] Monaco, J. (2009)
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.

2. Juxtaposition

As versatile as every individual scene is composed, the order of the scenes are also an important composition that is essential in film-making. This can almost seem too obvious to point out, but done in an improper way, the story can become unintelligible, boring, or does not convey any type of message at all. The positioning of the different scenes in relation to each other is what creates the tension and the line of the story. (This can be compared to live theatre, where there is impossible to cut from one scene to another and back again in the way a film does, even though the scenes can be changed, the experience is completely different.) The very essence of film-making is that a multitude of scenes are combined to relay a story.

Juxtaposing scenes of different content is vital to the telling of the story, as well as in real life the contrast between outside and inside, turning a street corner, walking through an arcade, creates different scenes for the city and its inhabitants. Juxtaposition is not a foreign term when discussing architecture, as well as in film-making, which makes it an interesting tool, both for designing urban situations and the storyline of a film. Compared to working with objects in foreground/background, juxtaposing objects/scenes create a tension between them and the order of notice is not relevant, what is noticed is the combination, the edge or the immediate change between one situation and another.

3. Montage

There are many different types of montages and theories about how these types are used and how they define the character of the film.[25] For this example on how to imply the practice of montaging into a design methodology, the meaning of it is "the process in which a number of short shots are woven together to communicate a great deal of information in a short time."[26] The use of the montage is very effective as a transition between different parts of a film. In comparison with the juxtaposing of scenes, where it is the flip, or the edge between the scenes that creates a change, the montage is more linear and based on the notion of passing time. It can also be seen as the opposite of the hidden element, where in a montage the "gaps" are often filled in to bridge one set of events with another. Compared to mise-en-scène, which some consider as static, the montage can be seen as more dynamic.

Taking the use of a montage into the physical, urban realm, it can be used as a tool to create a bridge between two different types of areas, evolving the notion of one place into another, making a transition. Comparing this to the more static frame-thinking, the montage has a longer time span and can cover a longer distance. Where placing objects according to the order they will be noticed is more suitable for e.g. a square or plaza, montaging elements can be stretched out along a street or park in order to connect two different parts of a city.

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[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.

Time

An overall, general summary of what actually constitutes a film, is that it is a sequence of events that are portrayed during a set amount of time. The key words here are sequence and time. The amount of time it takes to go through an entire story, beginning to end, is irrelevant. Either if it is two hours or two minutes, there is always the given start and end.

How the time between starting point and end point is configured into scenes, and what the plot of the story told is about, is all part of the art of film-making. The given time, or duration, is the framework for what the film contains. The real time of actual film watching is not usually the same experience as the time that passes through the film, since it usually not is, made in real-time. Film has the ability of making the viewer experience a longer flow of actions and events than would be possible to experience in real life.

Taking this experience up one level from the meta-experience of events to the physical world of events, the planning of time spent in a place becomes more difficult to define and accommodate for. Difficult but necessary, as we obviously are moving entities through time whether we want to or not. In the perspective of urban planning, the element of time spent going from point A to B can be seen in for example the length of facades or the curving of streets. What can be learnt from the art of film is to take into account the time it actually takes to pass through a space. Not just putting "interesting" objects in a row to make it seem like a "nicer" street, but to consider how long time will be spent watching a "scene" which can be anything from a courtyard to an overpass. With the aspect of time passing considered, the other tools that are mentioned above can be used in the planning stage. They are all based on different duration of time in a space.

Narrative structures

Watching a film, we experience a trajectory through a series of events that form a plot. In the course of a narrative the author or director relates events to other events. This resembles the creative act of designing architecture; the intentional act of relating parts to other parts or concepts to other concepts. These types of 'figuration' deliberately place spatial or narrative elements in specific order.[27]

Architecture is designed in the same way as a story is created in a film; with regard to there being a sequence, the time perception of moving through a room and the various parts that are fitted together to form the "right" sequence. Walking through a building and experience its parts in correlation to each other can be compared to watching a film where a narrative and sequences carry the plot forward.

Firstly, the PREFIGURED – the term refers to the familiar or everyday world – it's 'grounded in a pre-understanding of the world of action' and in all its meaningful structures. Without the prefigured, literature would be unintelligible. Secondly the CONFIGURED – configuration refers to the action of the author. The author pieces together heterogeneous elements of events to structure a story, thus giving meaning to the narrative. This provides form or shape to a story. Thirdly, the REFIGURED – refiguration relies on the reader of the text. By taking on the work of the author, a reader engages in an interpretive act; interpretation refigures the reader's own familiar world in relation to the configured work of the author to reveal other worlds that might be inhabited. The PREFIGURED and CONFIGURED are REFIGURED by the reader.[28]

Paul Ricoeur's theory of emplotment (constructions of narratives) describes in a threefold model how the creation of narratives relies heavily on both the author and the reader.

This is a way to interpret how a narrative works. This method can be applied to both film and architecture, in regard that they both are set in reality. The reality in film is only as real as that of its locations though. The streets of a city can often be visited in real life. The urbanity of a film is as valid as it is in real life, only the story is predestined. When watching a film the viewer refigures it; let the own values and mentality color the story. Seeing a place in a film, with a given context and narrative will give the viewer a subjective reading of the scene. It the place seen in the film is somewhere the viewer physically visits, the refigured ides will still be present; the superimposed reading of the site will stay in the viewer mind. The narrative of a fictional film can change the way a "real", physical place is read and perceived, which is what I am exploring in my film about the event district of Gothenburg. Using film and its narrative to change the reading of architecture. This method can be used when working with architecture, as a means to analyze sites and see the potential concepts.

To cast an architectural lens on a work of cinema corresponds with this philosophy; comprehension of the film through the language of architecture provides insight into a spatial reading of the film and its complexities.

Reading a film through architecture, using the same terms to describe them; site, program, structure, context, content and concepts. Both film and architecture provides an experience (though architecture is experienced involuntary, we are most of the time in some form of building). Both art forms deal with the telling of a story, the reading of a situation and the construction of a narrative.

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[27] Yee, A. (2007)
[28] Ibid.

If both filmmakers and architects are inventors of habitable realms, then the two practices find themselves on common ground – that is, both film-making and architecture are means by which we construct space.[29]

We use the same methods for creating space, when we imagine how a room will look in a certain light or how it feels like to walk through a house. As an architect it can be a very useful tool to imagine a story being played out in the designed structure, so called 'storytelling'. Taking storytelling to the next step and not just imagine a family that could inhabit a house, but to draw and sketch in the format of a storyboard, to relate events to each other and create a sequence. And as well as deconstructing architecture into a work of film, film can be seen as a work of architecture, due to its order of construction and configuration.

The camera as a tool

An interesting aspect to the use of the camera as a tool for analyzing and defining architecture is how film can be non-site specific. It becomes specific for the site it shows, of course, but the tool, in its own fleeting and temporary quality is not bound by anything else than the person holding the camera. It becomes universal in the sense that it can be used in any manner conceivable, it is only the actual technique that sets the limits of what can be imagined or proposed. But in the same time as the tool is generic, it is also per definition a subjective tool. Again, it comes down to the person holding the camera and what that person, voluntary or not, chooses to show in every scene. Looking at a larger perspective, the idea of objectivity might not even exist, but that is an entire different discussion. Film is, in a contradictory and very fascinating way, both a universal, generic and pragmatic medium and an instrument for creativity, and at the same time a tool to express a person's own visions and ideas in a subjective, selected order.
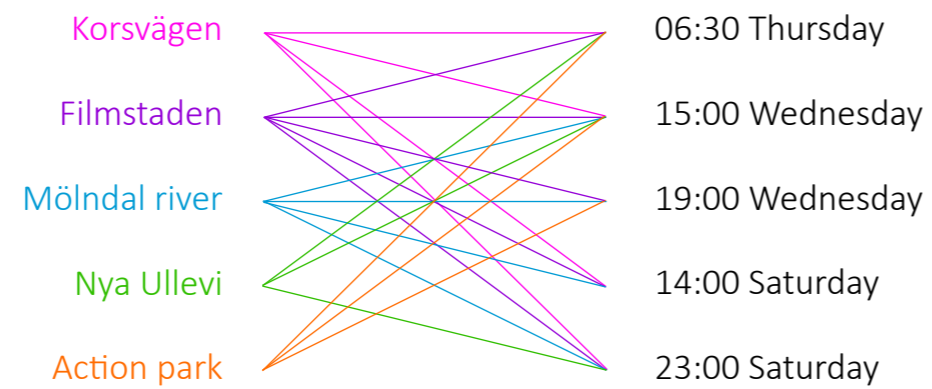
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[29] Ibid.

Process

During the course of the thesis I have gathered information and ideas both concerning the city life of Gothenburg and the debate around the event district, as well as how to use and communicate through the medium of film and what I can learn from this tool.

Using the camera

To be able to understand and use the camera as a creative tool for the work on this thesis, I decided to try a method, or guide lines, of how to conduct the actual filming. To gather sufficient material for analyzing the site I choose five "scenes" that I would visit and film for 1 minute during different times and different days. This led me to decide five different times to visit the scenes. Some of the scenes are not filmed five times, due to the similarity of the actions on the place, regardless to time. The following figure shows when and where the series of shots were taken.

Korsvägen — 06:30 Thursday

Filmstaden — 15:00 Wednesday

Mölndal river — 19:00 Wednesday

Nya Ullevi — 14:00 Saturday

Action park — 23:00 Saturday

Korsvägen

Filmstaden

Mölndal river

Nya Ullevi

Action park

This diagram shows how many people there were present in every scene at the time. It is not statistics on how many people usually frequent the sites. However, it is still a useful indication in the regard of locating which places has the most human traffic, or in some cases no traffic at all.

It can be seen both as a method and the result of using the method. Regarding this thesis, the information from the experiment is not really relevant. This experiment or investigation was made to explore how the camera can be used as a tool in a practical way. In this case, for collecting data. Of course, the diagram alone can give sufficient information, if you want to find facts about what is happening on the site.

It could stand alone as it is. But seeing the empty column of "Nya Ullevi" does not convey the actual emptiness of the site. Seeing the sequence in whole, and the contrast of the changing time, and still there is no one there gives, the reader of the information another dimension to the straight up facts. It is not necessary to film every site that is to be investigated, but it does give something more, something alive, to a dull sheet of numbers. William Whyte did extensive investigations of public spaces in New York in the late 1980's, by filming people and then drawing conclusions of what he saw.[30] This lead to a very useful, understandable and appreciated report on the state of the public spaces of New York; why some places where more popular than others and how unused space could be turned into popular space.

	Korsvägen	Filmstaden	Mölndal river	Nya Ullevi	Action park
06:30 Thursday	🚶🚶🚶🚶	🚶🚶	X	🚶	
15:00 Wednesday	🚶🚶🚶	🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶	🚶🚶	🚶🚶	🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶
19:00 Wednesday	X	🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶	🚶	X	🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶
14:00 Saturday	🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶	🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶	🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶	X	X
23:00 Saturday	🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶	🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶🚶			X

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[30] Whyte, W. (1980)

Interviews

To be able to fully understand the development and current debate of the present and future identity of Gothenburg as an event city I decided to conduct interviews with people of different positions and backgrounds who are engaged in these questions. After numerous phone calls and email conversations I had three names to the list, willing to participate in the work of this thesis (meaning they agreed to be interviewed and filmed at the same time).

Ylva Berglund works for the Göteborg City Museum as a curator and coordinator of the Cultural environment unit. The unit works with investigations of different cultural situations, answering submissions for comments from other instances and arrange lectures and seminars on different topics that involves culture in the urban context.[31]

Max Markusson is director of events for Göteborg & Co, which is owned by the city, the west Swedish chamber of commerce and by a number of companies related to tourism and entertainment. Their main goal is to market Gothenburg as a tourist, meeting and event destination.[32]

Björn Siesjö works as head architect at the Gothenburg city planning office, a position that up until a year ago has been vacant for a long time. He does not have any decisional power in that position, but has a very strong roll as adviser and create debates on how the city should be built.[33]

[31] Göteborg City Museum (2013)
[32] Göteborg & Co (2013)
[33] Björn Siesjö, interview 2013-03-22

Precedents

As a part of the research for my own film I was inspired by three different films, in terms of style, technique and composition.

> London (1994)

- Director: Patrick Keiller
- Documentary with fictional story
- Still camera
- Narrated story, without characters
- Long scenes
- 85 minutes

> Sao Paulo Citytellers (2006)

- Director: Francesco Jodice
- Documentary with interviews
- Still camera/walking
- Interviews
- Mixing fast and slow cuts
- 48 minutes

> Imagine a house (2007)

- Director: Joanna Zawieja
- Artistic film with narrative
- Still camera/traveling
- Narrative story and facts
- Animations
- 14 minutes

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[31] Keiller, P. (1994)
[32] Jodice, F. (2006)
[33] Zawieja, J. (2007)

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See the film on YouTube.com

Thank you

My amazing collegues in the U+A/DL studio

My supportive and fantastic parents

Sandra, for all the food

let me entertain you