

# **(So) What?**

Navigating Between Continuity, Erasure, and the Antiquarian Freeze

Diploma program BAS - 2024

Ole Sund

APP: Hedvig Skjerdingsstad

DAV: Vibeke Jensen

# Content

Introduction	p.03
Purpose and Importance	p.04
Methodology	p.07
Film: "The City as a Suitcase"	p.8
Reference List	p.11

## Introduction

In the city, where streets intersect like entangled timelines, where every corner and every turn might reveal stories untold, hints from the past and dreams that are in want to unfold. A ceaseless dialogue with everything that once was, all that is, and what might become. Here, where new meets old, where history is patched together, layer upon layer – stories, secrets, details, memories, and places tangle together. Openings that invite us to wander through time, as if it itself were a fabric we could shape.

The city, in its vast complexity and dynamic, where we are continually facing new challenges, choices, dilemmas, and dreams. This ongoing adaptation, pressure, stream of choices, shape the city, as we are continuously morphing and adapting it to accommodate our currents needs and opportunities. An ever-evolving narrative, where we have to ask ourselves what does this narrative hold? what do we leave in? what do we take out?, what do we add?, who read and who write?

Amidst its ever-evolving landscape, The city challenges us to see it not merely as a backdrop to human activity but as an active participant in the lives of its inhabitants. In this project I delve into the complex layers of collective memory, and urban transformation, by examining two specific sites in Stavanger: Verksgata and Paradis. Both rich in memories and on the cusp of significant change. Stavanger currently stands on the edge of an urban dilemma. With rapid population growth and the pressing need for housing. Large developments emerging within the city center, where old industrial sites and buildings becomes focal points, primarily driven by real estate companies with profit motives. Spaces 'rustling' with activity of those who inhabit and interact with them. Places that hold seeds of potential meaning. This project does not seek to halt the wheels of urban development but rather to question and reframe the narratives that guide such change.

Additionally, the project incorporates a third site, the cathedral space at BAS, where i have been working throughout the semester as a reflective workspace and with its nuances and layers of use, offers a distinctive setting that resonates deeply with my project's focus on memories.

## Purpose and Importance

The transformation of industrial areas into new entities often reflects broader economic and political trends, where luxury residences rise along the waterfront, tilting towards a market-driven model that risk sidelining considerations of what Henri Lefevre describes as “the urban.”

*“Lefebvre speaks about the struggle between exchange value and use value, between the city as site of accumulation and the city as inhabited. The industrial capitalist city that we experience every day, he believes, is given over to exchange value. What he calls “the urban,” on the other hand, nurtures use value and the needs of inhabitants (1996, pp. 67-68). It is a space for encounter, connection, play, learning, difference, surprise, and novelty.” (Purcell, 2014, pp. 149)*

This project seeks to engage these sites not just as locations of change but as space where past and potential future converge in the present, and how this can be seen as fertile grounds where new meanings can spontaneously surface. The primary purpose is to foster a new mode of engagement with these places, seeking to make existing elements, details, moments and memories more available. By documenting and collecting stories embedded within these environments my work is an attempt to reveal and invite new perspectives and how legibility can inform and expand to include more diverse voices and perspectives, advocating for a shift towards a city that values encounters, awakenings and the experience of a more shared form of the urban. This investigation is particularly relevant in today’s urban planning discourse, where the rapid pace of development often overlooks the subtle, yet potent layers of places. Aspects of urban life that hold untapped meaning and potential. Where do the details that do not directly serve the city planning primary objectives have a place? Details that might fall through the cracks of the master plan, but which contribute to the city’s lived experience and sense of place.



## **You**

Archive, workstation,  
drawer cabinet, index,  
trolley, suitcase or “you”.

A compound from different places.  
Little by little, you collected yourself,  
or I did.  
like a creature, Frankenstein himself would not  
recognize.  
Wheels from an abandoned children’s bike,  
transplanted and become a part of you.

## **The project begins to roll**

we begin to roll. through time, through space.  
Am I following you?  
or are you leading the way?  
Our paths intertwine,  
leadership, companionship, enmity blend together  
in a sentence that has neither a beginning nor an  
end.  
You are to me a living being,  
an entity in constant change and motion.

## **We are still getting to know each other**

It’s as if we are moving on a slope  
that goes both up  
and down.  
Sometimes you resist, other times you roll so fast  
that I can’t keep up.  
We move forward, backward, and  
sideways.  
diving down beneath—up and over the layers.  
layer upon layer

## **Methodology**

My approach involves a combination of a documenting process and a reflective process, using various mediums such as film, drawings, models, writing and 1:1 performances. Central to my work is the direct engagement with the spaces and people I meet in Stavanger. Through these meetings, I seek to gather voices that can be both informative and evocative. This is not just to document stories, but a strive to grasp the minutiae—details, moments, and the subtle elements stories and memories that might not immediately be visible or acknowledged amidst Stavanger’s ongoing development. In order to facilitate interactions with people that inhabit these places, I explore how architectural tools can enable invitations, methods and actions that can open up dialogues and encouraging people to share their memories feelings and experiences theaderd to these places.

In my exploration I have built a set of objects designed to organize and categorize as I navigate these places. This system is an initial attempt to bring order to the inherent chaos that characterizes ever changing city and the fluctuating tides of memory. Even the very tools I use—chalk on blackboards and a modular archive on wheels—highlight the perpetual challenge of such an endeavor.

## **Living archive**

Central to my exploration is the use of a modular, archive/workstation on wheels - a furniture composed of various segments that serve as a repository of memories, experiences, and investigations. The archive is a physical manifestation of the project’s core themes, not merely a container for artifacts, documents, or materials gathered during my exploration, but represents the fluidity and complexity of memories itself. It becomes a tool for an attempt in navigating, hold on to and connecting fragmented narratives. the furniture is built and adapts and reconfigures thoughe out the semester, symbolizeing the ever unfolding motion of memory—how it shifts, evolves, and resists static encapsulation.

## **The blackboards**

I have chosen to draw each of the sites using chalk and maskingtape. This choice of medium highlights the impermanence of urban spaces and the narratives they hold, similar to the archive on wheels the blackboards see the sites as a living, moving process and suggesting that memories, much like chalk on a blackboard, can be easily modified, erased, redrawn, with the sweep of an hand, mirroring the process of remembering and forgetting.

## **Writing**

throughout this project I use writing as an active tool to process and reflect upon my encounters. My aim is to articulate thoughts, but also to foster an inclusive dialogue, welcoming those beyond the realms of architecture and urban planning, by writing texts that atempt to create spaces in themselves, and provide room for readers to navigate and explore these metaphysical spaces on their own terms, like moving through the city. I use writing in various forms: some function as prose, others are more like poetry, and some serve primarily as documentation.

## Film

Please click on the link below to watch a film called “the city as a suitcase” that I have made from my time one site in Stavanger. It offers a direct look at the themes and environments this project is exploring and is a significant part of my work. Your views would be greatly appreciated:

Link: <https://vimeo.com/956681814?share=copy>



As Benjamin wrote in "Berlin Chronicle," in *Reflections* (1986) "He who had once begun to open the fan of memory, never comes to the end of its segments. No image satisfies him, for he has seen that it can be unfolded, and only in its folds does the truth reside." (as cited in Boym, 2001, p. 28).

## Reference list

Mark Purcell's interpretation of Henri Lefebvre's Right to the City: Purcell, M. (2014). *Possible Worlds: Henri Lefebvre and the Right to the City*. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 36(1), 141-154. DOI: 10.1111/juaf.12034

Roland Barthes's concepts of 'The Reality Effect': Barthes, R. (1989). *The Rustle of Language*. (pp. 141-148). University of California Press.

Richard Shiff interpretation of Roland Barthes's concept of 'The Reality Effect': Shiff, R. (2019). *REALITY BY CHANCE*. *The Brooklyn Rail*. Retrieved from <https://brooklynrail.org/2019/10/editorsmessage/REALITY-BY-CHANCE>

T.S. Eliot's views on time as a continuum: Eliot, T.S. (1943). *Four Quartets*. Harcourt, Brace and Company.

Maria Stepanova's exploration of personal and cultural memory: Stepanova, M. (2021). *In Memory of Memory*. *New Directions Publishing*.

Svetlana Boym on nostalgia: Boym, S. (2001). *The Future of Nostalgia*. Basic Books.

Edward S. Casey on participation and commemoration: Casey, E. S. (2011). "Participation and Commemoration." In *The Collective Memory Reader* (pp. 184-186). Oxford University Press.

Friedrich Nietzsche on the importance of forgetting: Nietzsche, F. (2011). "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life." In *The Collective Memory Reader* (pp. 73-79). Oxford University Press.

Maurice Halbwachs on collective memory: Halbwachs, M. (1980). *Space and the Collective Memory*. In *The Collective Memory* (Chapter 4). Harper & Row.

