

in the projects, should certainly inspire any cities. I'm thinking of "supporting networking"—connections that leverage innovation and really place human beings at the heart of where companies, technologies, and the society are going. I'm thinking of the diversity of experiences, which is really the key to renewing our daily life, eliminating routine, and achieving short-term and long-term milestones. I'm thinking of the need for escape from a complex, active, dynamic environment such as a city, in order to step back and reflect on what was, what is and what has to be. I'm thinking of the importance of bringing nature to the city and to the work environment as a resource, inspiration, and model. These ideas are present in all of the projects, albeit in different forms and to varying degrees. They are totally adjustable, from the floor plan to the urban plan, from the physical to the virtual. They will inspire a very wide range of players, such as cities, companies and real estate investors. **DL:** Thank you, Catherine and Nicolas.

Conversation III

Conversation between Dietmar Leyk and Dr. Roman Wagner. Dietmar Leyk: The urban projects for the City of Knowledge Research Initiative are large-scale plans, imagined for 2030. Other current projects in Berlin, like the master plans for Heidestrasse (construction starts 2010), Tempelhof Airport or Tegel Airport clearly demonstrate the need for large-scale conceptual thinking in Berlin today. Abandoned infrastructures and industrial wastelands open up new potentials not only in Berlin, but also in other European city centres. How can a city effectively foster the transformation of abandoned areas, and what are entailed in the process? **Roman Wagner:** Abandoned railway or airport areas, often centrally located and with perfect infrastructure and accessibility have great potentials for the cities. The project Europaviertel in Frankfurt stretches over almost 90 hectares; the Europacity in Berlin (better known as Heidestraße) demonstrates with 36 hectares its potential for central urban living and working. A clever mix of retail, office, hotel in combination with housing along water canals guarantees growth for the next 15-20 years. The integration of the neighbourhood and focused marketing from the very beginning of the development are important to commercialise these spaces with success. Anchor tenants must be attracted with real discounts and work as carhorses to slowly fill up the developments. Usually, from the financial perspective, buildings can be built that are around 50% let. Therefore, building sizes have to be carefully matched with the letting market. There are just very few big deals above 10 or 20,000m² per year in every city, and all developers loved to have them in their own buildings. As you can see, the marketing strategy becomes key for such scale projects. **DL:** Because you can work almost everywhere today, one could argue that there is no architectural representation of knowledge work any more. But I think that there is an infinite amount of possible representations today, depending on individuals' and companies' rituals. In this regard we often discuss the importance of social rituals together with a certain image that reflects the trends in corporate life. In your work you frequently have to suggest the re-organisation of the daily workflow of large traditional companies to fit their current corporate rituals. How do you usually start the rethinking of this change? What is the initial point of investigation? **RW:** From the technical point of view, enabling all employees to be mobile and flexible is no rocket science any more. Still, most companies in Germany adhere to the traditional work model and have not recognised the need for mobile work and desk-sharing. On the other hand, it is becoming progressively

important to save workplace costs and reduce space consumption. Not only consultants or marketing-oriented businesses, but blue chips are now initiating pilot projects to look at flexible structures and new ways of working. Therefore, not all work activities will be accommodated in an office. Instead, the office will be a part of a complex network within a city where work gets done. As offices will need to be designed to support emerging work patterns, so will public and inter spaces. As organisations become more distributed and flexible, it will be all them ore important for the office to reinforce community, embody shared values and showcase the brands, inspiring not only visitors but mainly the people working there. In particular, in highly flexible branches, workers might feel isolated from their team while working at home and from different locations. A social connection to their team and the vision of the company seem essential. Architecture and, in particular, the working environment can support and visualise this company vision. To formulate a new workplace strategy, it is imperative important to to understand the company's vision and the current ways of working: individual and team work, hierarchies and informal behaviour, communication patterns, networks, technical infrastructure, etc. Everything should be questioned as we rethink ways of working. Inspection, Interviews, workshops and online questionnaires are tools to identify potentials and are basis for the following planning phase. It's a long way to work out what the ideal office will look like. One seems obvious: The layouts, forms and colours of the new, flexible working environments will be a combination of workplaces, lounges, bars, town halls and meeting facilities of choice. All together we need to make the office a desirable destination again, far beyond the architectural grey which we've seen too often in the last decade. **DL:** During this project we decided to explore the interior situations of different events and effects. We called these situations Mind Spaces, places where knowledge is collected, exchanged and transformed. Fluid situations between working and living, and also between companies, seemed to become very successful models for a new kind of social productivity. Could you comment on this new sort of networking behaviour? **RW:** For my thesis I was dealing with creative processes in companies. What interested me was how ideas are transformed. People change a couple of times the condition between relaxation and tension as well as working alone or in groups before the first idea turns into a viable concept. The more complex the topic is, the more people are necessary to combine all necessary information and knowledge. The intelligence of groups (swarm) is applied for social network technologies that can solve complex problems and generate inventions. As this crowdsourcing is becoming more important, technologies and work environments need to adapt. My research shows that the well-being and productivity can be affected by high quality design and interaction: the better the quality of encounters, the higher the work performance can be. Some might think that such office buildings must be more expensive. However, it mostly involves the adaptation of unused inter spaces. And, even if it were more expensive, the positive influence on productivity would quickly pay for the extra costs. My research outlines that the quality of interaction is highest in offices that are most space-efficient and that some of the money thus saved is often invested in creating an even better working environment. **DL:** Start-up companies in Berlin, not only from the creative industry, love to work in so-called "Gewerbehöfen", industrial spaces often located in courtyards. I believe this is not only because of low rents, but also due to their strong character as urban artefacts, and their quality as a base frame in which the user can express his behaviour. Those buildings express a minimum of articulation. The projects for the site in Berlin point to the same direction. How do you feel about this relation between the occupation of space and the exterior appearance of the architecture? **RW:** The increasing individualisation

throughout our society will lead to more dynamic and complex office spaces. The space of knowledge needs to adapt to individual behaviour and at the same time reflect the requirements of larger groups. As said before, the growing social networks need their places in and around office buildings. Gewerbehöfe often work as house-in-house concepts where start-ups and smaller companies have their dedicated spaces but share common areas. They even occupy inter spaces around the building and interact with the environment. Urban metaphors can be implemented: streets, neighbourhoods, community centre, town hall and espresso bars. In order to understand this urban lesson, we need to consider that they only work with a particular density. They do not let work desks go unused half the time, as in conservative companies. And as mentioned before, it becomes more and more important to express the company's vision, and architecture can play a role. It is more topical than ever to harmonise the appearance of individual architecture, built out of natural materials, with the environment. To design the future office really means to create places where people love to be. **dl: Thank you, Roman.**