



Dolph Cantijn / HH



Bruno Bachelet / Paris Match / Scoop / Transworld

National Assembly, Paris

**REAL LOYALTY:
TO SHARE THE IMPORTANT
MOMENTS IN LIFE, TO
INSTILL FAMILY VALUES,
BUILDING TRANS-
GENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY**

Ole Bouman

DESIGNING TO SOCIALIZE

The reluctant return to ‘us’

**REAL LOYALTY: TO DEBATE
RESPECTFULLY THE FUTURE
OF SOCIETY, TO NEGOTIATE
POWER AND MAKE
FUNDAMENTAL DECISIONS
ABOUT PEOPLE'S LIFE**

It has become almost cliché, the attempts to paint this era as one of individualism, narcissism, ego trips, privatization and other forms of personal self-fulfillment. We talk about the reduction of big government, the market economy, about the responsibility of the individual, accountability, the calculating citizen – in short all ideas and concepts stemming from a neo-liberal philosophy that has been around for the past 25 years, turning cultures and societies upside down, and making the universe nothing more than a conglomeration of sayings and meaningless solo-acts inside the ideology of individual freedom of choice. There is a large literature dedicated to this development. Rarely is it neutral in tone. More often, the authors are deeply concerned, or have turned to cynicism: we are living in a ‘Liquid Modernity’ (Zygmunt Bauman), are confronted with an ‘Erosion of Character’ (Richard Senett) or face the loss of ‘Social Cohesion’ (Robert Putnam) – a time of ever growing loneliness, alienation, atomization, and other kinds of social malfunctioning. And all these theories tend to regard this development as (pathologic) fact. There are also writers, such as Michel Houellebecq, who use these developments as a starting point for visions in which only science can bring people together again.

This trend toward the unraveling of social cohesion and the rise of the calculating world citizen is forceful. It is bolstered not only by the major minds of liberal ideology, but also by new technologies and new forms of organization that make the further isolation of the individual almost inevitable. There is a brilliant advertisement from Philips that was made in the 1950s, in which the producer of light bulbs posits that they have con-



Katsumi Kasahara / AP

North Korean military



Enrico Oliverio / AP

Sophia Loren

**REAL LOYALTY:
CHOREOGRAPHING THE
FIGHT, RALLYING BEHIND
SYMBOLS, SHARING THE
UNIFORM**

tributed to the personal happiness of the individual by providing everyone with their own source of light. Now that we no longer have to share light, but can create our own personal universe with our own lamp, our own heating, and even our own radios and televisions, we no longer have to bother with each other. Philips helped us to do our own thing. But this shift was only the beginning. The digital revolution followed the electronic revolution and made it possible to acquire information based solely on our own agenda – to find each other via search terms rather than difficult conversations, and to communicate a-synchronously with one another. After the escape from each other, it became simple to avoid human engagement: email, pay per view, interactive films, chatting with nicknames, internet research, dating services through key words, online shopping, narrow casting, etcetera – all forms of a mounting individualization. Mounting to a degree that one could ask oneself if the individual is still actually an individual. That is to say, a responsible, self-reflective, integrated, autonomous, and independent person for whom the term was once invented.

At first glance, it all seems to be a matter of defining your own life story, without much interference from others. But perhaps what is more important is this life's undercurrent – the lack of time spent with one another. Simply spending time with someone humbles, teaches, relativizes, enthuses, brings one to dialogue. You met the other, coincidentally, in the train, the store, the stadium, the library, or, less coincidentally, in the army, the factory, the neighborhood party, or the sports team. If you run down the list of traditional ways of meeting one another, it is remarkable how many of those avenues have become either avoidable, or have simply ceased to exist. You can now, if you live in the West or are able to have a Western lifestyle, live à la carte. In architecture – the art that always took for granted that it was the theatre of man's encounters – there has been very little grappling with these consequences, yet in the meantime, these consequences radically influence architectural practice. More about this later.

**REAL/VIRTUAL LOYALTY:
PAPARAZZI AND THEIR
PREY, CELEBRITY AND ITS
INTERFACE, JOURNALISM
AND ITS HUNGER, FAME
AND ITS SOLDIERS**

But now there is a fresh breeze wafting through that same West, not so very harsh, but unmistakable: the return to valuing the collective. The consequences of the relentless pursuit of individualization, even for individual well-being, have become so obvious that people are now craving the return of a sense of community. Bookstores are full of stories about how to re-establish contact, varying in format from highbrow literature to self-help lecture. On television, there is a whole new genre of shows detailing dramatic family reunions, romantic wedding scenes, and the adventures of groups of friends. Gastronomic and lifestyle magazines are full of the social meanings of sharing a meal.

It is easy to brush aside these observations as superficial trend watching. Deeper, perhaps, are dialogues that are being forced open by populations that until recently co-existed in silence. Now that the global confrontations have become reality and the urgency of a new integration of poor and rich, black and white, Christian and Muslim is obvious, there is a need for a dialogue that addresses deep differences in world views that



Rob Hulbers / HH



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A global positioning system in the car

**VIRTUAL LOYALTY:
ELECTRONIC PURCHASING
AS A GOOD CONSUMER,
SUBMISSIVELY LEAVING
YOUR MARKET PROFILE
TO THE AUTHORITIES,
SHOPPING AS YOUR WAY
TO ENGAGE WITH THE
WORLD**

looms large in the public eye. But the dialogue between different neighborhoods, citizen groups, generations, and educational classes is also growing on the social agenda. While, on the level of implemented power, decisions are still being made that enhance the further splintering of the social individual, such as the privatization of government tasks like healthcare, education, energy, transportation, and even defense, there are all kinds of other indications that the tide is turning.

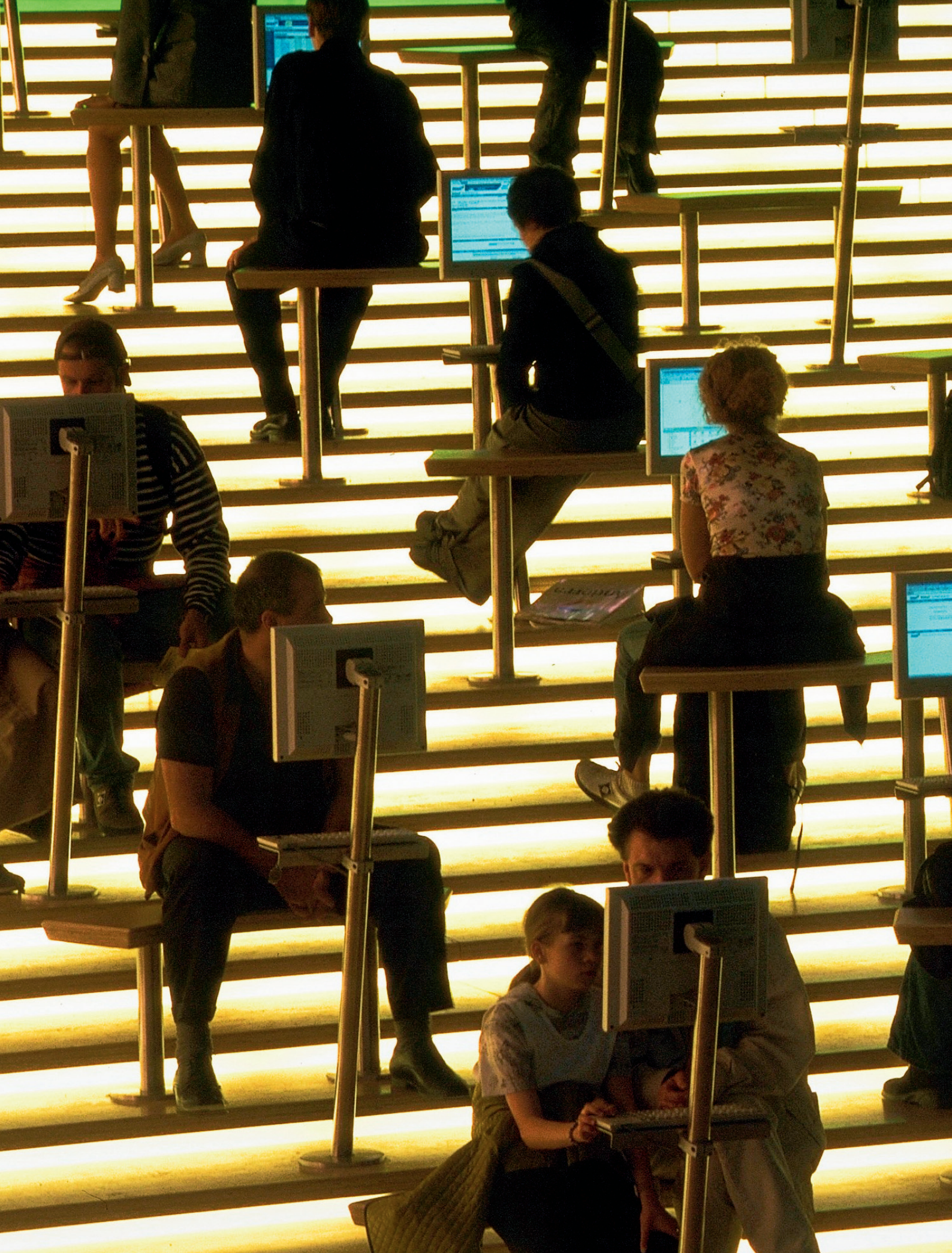
The changes are manifold, and mostly much more practical than the suggested 'dialogic situation', 'heteronomy' or the 'communicative act' about which, not so very long ago there was endless theorization, but little practice. All great philosophers of the last quarter century have, each in their particular way, spurred dialogue with the other: Jean-François Lyotard with his 'little stories', Michel Foucault with his 'heterotopy', Jürgen Habermas with his 'theory of communicative action', Gilles Deleuze with his 'Mille Plateaux', Jacques Derrida with his 'DifferAnce'. While solipsism and egotistical self-aggrandizement grew under their eyes, they maintained a kind of conceptual optimism that in retrospect is even harder to understand now than at the time they expressed it.

That's why the contemporary reality check almost comes as a relief. What we witness now are the powerful signs of a turn-around. Society is stretching the tight borders of individualization, fed up with hooliganism in public space, neglect of social welfare, and the profound lack of effective effort in solving social problems. These phenomena of social disintegration have become increasingly difficult to accept. (Difficult to accept, except for those who escape their tensions by emigrating, receding into gated communities, or indulging in extreme hedonism or heavy security measures – anything to avoid having to confront the disintegrating collective.)

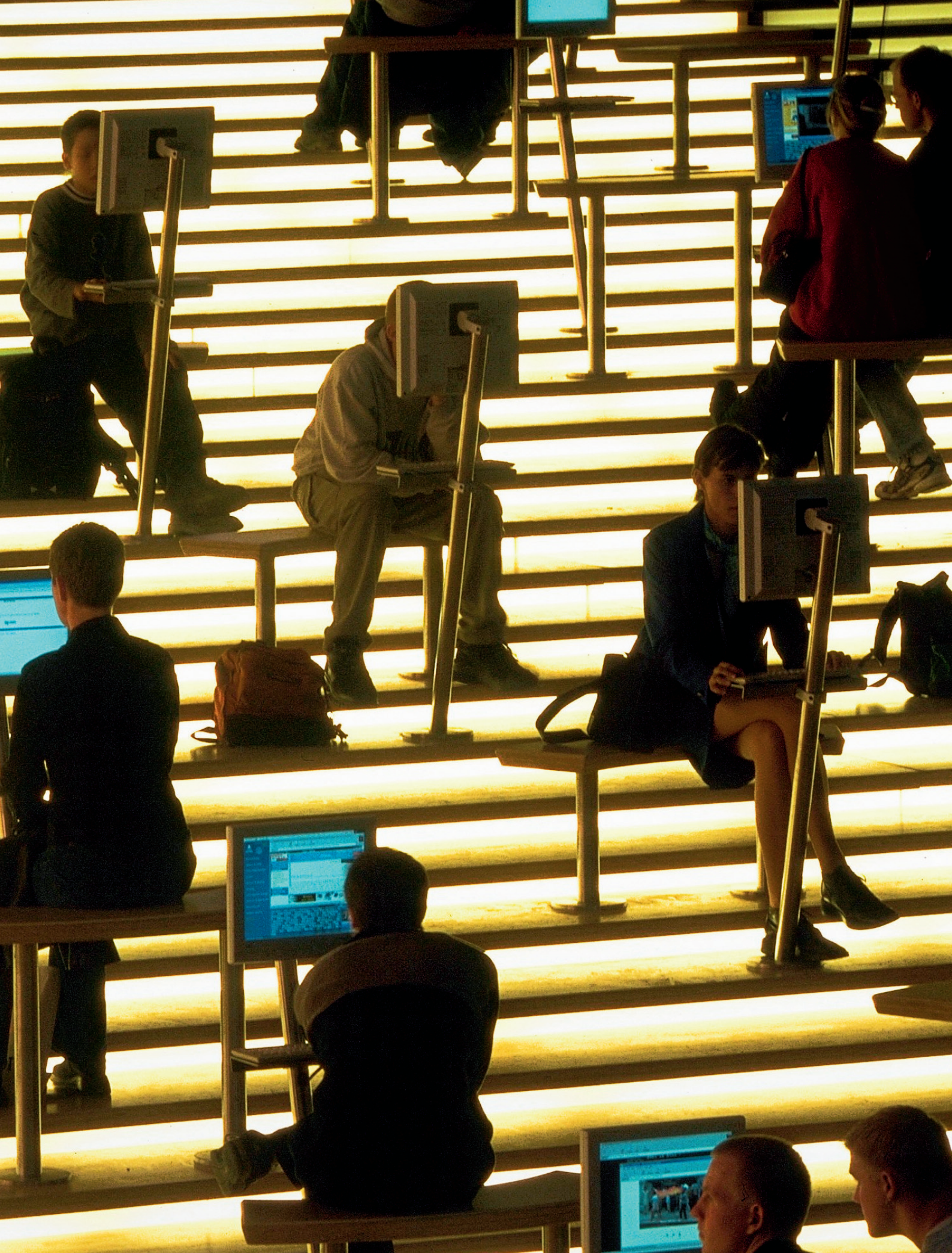
**VIRTUAL LOYALTY:
BEING CONNECTED,
ALWAYS AVAILABLE, IN
TOUCH WITH THE WORLD,
UNIVERSAL ACCESS BY
UBIQUITOUS COMPUTING**

The concerns and responses to this disintegration are now no longer purely theoretical. Many possible directions are imaginable. They may center upon the re-establishment of trust and rapprochement with the social contract. They may focus on repairing social loyalties in order to further social cohesion. They may foster the development of sympathy, necessary for re-establishing psychological recognition. Efforts can also be made to establish strong practical collaborations in order to push stagnating processes and situations back on course.

In art and many other cultural territories, this turn-around is becoming visible, yet it is particularly evident in architecture. Even though architecture is often understood as a discipline that concentrates on building, she remains for the majority of humanity, the discipline that separates people through walls, or brings them together through openings in those walls. Architecture, in the first and last interpretation, helps people share time and space, or frustrates exactly those ambitions. With this, architecture becomes something very different from the constructive discipline where she is so often led. Architecture organizes the lives of people, and sometimes you need buildings for this,



VIRTUAL LOYALTY:
FEELING AT EASE IN THE RHYTHM OF COUNTLESS TERMINALS, DOING THE
SAME THING ALL APART, SHARING THE SAME BACKGROUND OF SMOOTH DESIGN



Participants at Cebit Conference for digital media, Hanover, Germany

REA / Reporters

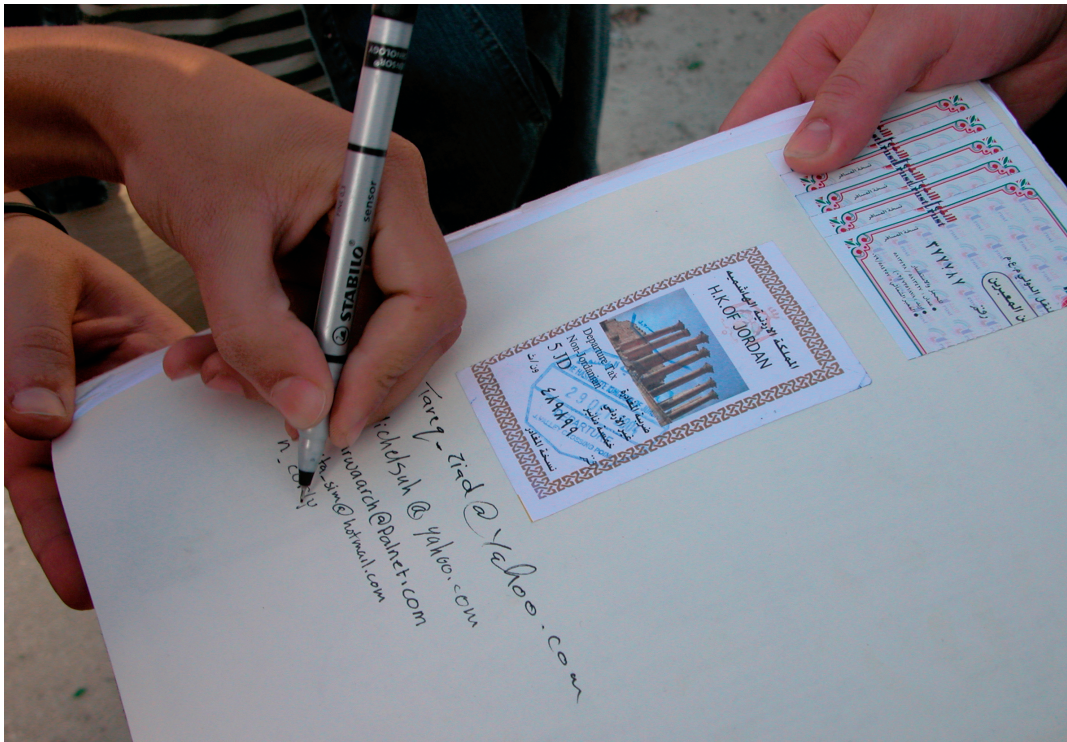


Anti-globalization protesters at the World Economic Forum in New York

Teun Voeten / Hollandse Hoogte



Utopian town Auroville, South India



Palestinians at an Archis RSVP Event exchanging addresses

**ACTUAL LOYALTY:
GETTING TOGETHER TO
EXPRESS BEING AGAINST,
NEGATIVE INTEGRATION BY
DEFINING THE COMMON
ENEMY, SHARING THE
ICONOGRAPHY OF PROTEST**

and sometimes you don't. This distinction is certainly not only to be made from a theoretical understanding about the substance and essence of architecture. It also touches on the self-image architects share about their own discipline.

**ACTUAL LOYALTY:
RE-INVENTION OF THE
COMMUNITY SPIRIT,
EXPRESSING HARMONY
BY CONCENTRIC
ARCHITECTURE,
PROPAGATING HUMAN
UNITY**

In this respect we can distinguish two kinds of architects. The first enters a building and immediately starts to investigate how things are materialized. The other, a much rarer kind, enters a place and wants to understand how people's lives are organized within it. This is the divide that tears architecture

apart. Both types of architect, to greater and greater degrees, believe the other is doing the wrong job at the wrong place at the wrong time. The materialist finds the socially inclined architect immoral – violating the medium-specific principles of a venerable discipline. The other considers the materialist stagnant and limited by the literal. This is therefore the central issue: for a long time architecture fulfilled two essential roles within one mode by crafting buildings. The first role was to provide shelter. To protect. The second role was to organize people according to their social patterns. A human being – as a biological entity and as a social entity – both needing the shelter of a building. But today these roles are no longer mutually inclusive and this leads to a fundamental confusion about the mandate of architecture and the role of the architect. As an organism people still need shelter and hence: buildings. As a social being, people have adopted completely new forms of organizing behavior, moving beyond the adjacency principle. Call it the globalization of intimacy, the evaporation of presence, the liquification and sublimation of the object, the networking of integrity, and the dissemination of proximity. The ongoing divergence of architecture as a technical discipline versus architecture as an organizational discipline, leads to an enormous tension that can only be alleviated by addressing it explicitly.

**ACTUAL LOYALTY:
ORGANIZING MOMENTS
OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT,
VOWING TO KEEP IN TOUCH,
BUT MOST OF ALL: USING
THE INTENSITY OF THE
LOCATION TO SPUR
EXISTENTIAL DIALOGUE**

This is what we are attempting in this issue. As a creative platform, issue #4 reconsiders the act of getting people together, not through building per se, but through means that can also be completely non-constructivist. In this way architecture is going beyond itself by going back to its primary justification: holding people together or holding them apart. The works in the expo and the catalogue demonstrate the variety of ways in which this is possible. They all convey a provocation and an appeal to communicate, and most of them do this without falling back upon the certainties of a static material discipline or the alibi of a whimsical client.

The Ocean Never Dries

-Markus Miessen in SMS conversation
with Hans Ulrich Obrist-

'The true writer has nothing to say. What
counts is the way he says it.'
-Alain Robbe-Grillet