

Osservatorio Urbano

In 2005 the project space *Lungomare*, based in Bolzano, founded the platform and the network for urban strategies – *Osservatorio Urbano*. It initiates projects in order to debate interpretations and descriptions of the contemporary city by means of an interdisciplinary approach. In its projects, Lungomare explores and tests out the network of connections between design, architecture, urban planning, art and theory: the forms of presentation and communication are adapted to the questions raised, and vary from discussions, symposia, publications, exhibitions, down to interventions in the public space.

The city of Bolzano is defined again and again as a research field and starting point for the *Osservatorio Urbano*. The physical and social fabric of the city is observed and analysed, and compared with problems arising from the development of other European cities. Bolzano owes its peculiar and unusual character to the fact that since the 1920s, two population groups, German-speaking and Italian-speaking, have lived together here, and quite deliberately and individually stake out and define the urban space, identifying themselves through this process. The city does not appear to have any room for idle land or building ruins, or for open urban spaces and spontaneity. Every plot of land is used intensively for building or for agriculture. Bolzano is the state capital of one of the richest provinces in northern Italy; the willingness to be involved actively in the design of the urban space and to search for a common vision thus becomes a considerably more complex task.

The *Osservatorio Urbano* would like to stimulate the residents of the city into reflecting on and sharing their everyday environment – their individual, non-technical and cross-disciplinary knowledge. The intention is to raise awareness of emotionality, the linking of space and time, and the tolerance for imperfection, complexity and inconsistency. The people should become aware of their active and creative role, and participate as urban “experts” in the transformations of the city. The urban space becomes a product of society, and at the same time a place of production and reproduction of this society.

Osservatorio Urbano (Angelika Burtscher, Roberto Gigliotti, Daniele Lupo, Bolzano, Italy) is structured as an open laboratory that enables face to face encounters with the images and impressions the inhabitants have of their city. Through interventions focused on aspects such as spontaneity, emotions and unpredictability in the urban context, the project has developed in the last years in a broader and more long-term direction. *Osservatorio Urbano* engages in the creative development of strategies for reading the city with the intention of encouraging an intuitive and interdisciplinary perception of urban space. Realized interventions include "Agency for Urban Exploration Bolzano" (2005-2010), "Sette per Sette" and "Statt der Engel" (2010); in 2008 the *Osservatorio Urbano* published the book "Traum Stadt Wir – Möglichkeiten urbaner Wahrnehmung" (Studienverlag Innsbruck-Wien-Bozen).