



THE MONOCLE COMPANION

WAYS · RECOMMENDATIONS · OPINIONS

IMPROVEMENTS · NUDDGES · OPPORTUNITIES

Fifty essays for a
BRIGHTER FUTURE

A MONOCLE BOOKS EDITION

31. The Meanwhile City By Petra Marko

Preface

Cities are often defined by ambitious development projects but what happens between the ground being broken and the big opening? Welcome to the “Meanwhile City”.

The idea of the *Meanwhile City* book emerged in a conversation between me and Martin Jenca, the co-founder of Bratislava-based design studio Milk. We wanted to look at how you could activate and populate previously ignored parts of cities and talked a lot about how temporary interventions, such as pools, pop-ups, parklets and play areas, can have lasting effects on people’s perceptions and behaviour. The message of *Meanwhile City* is that these temporary – or “meanwhile” – moments aren’t just an add-on or a marketing exercise but rather they can make cities more resilient, helping to shape identity by engaging the communities around them.

The combination of the pandemic and the awareness of the climate crisis has been a wake-up call for cities too. It is becoming impossible for architects to avoid confronting the long-term effects of large development projects. The pandemic allowed people to be a little more experimental with space, from restaurants on street corners to markets in unlikely spaces and pop-up businesses in newly pedestrianised areas. In London, 100km of temporary cycle paths were established to respond to social distancing guidelines and the new ways in which people were navigating the city.

There is also an interesting programme in Vienna called Grätzloase. It was launched in 2015 by the

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it could be. Big plans are

About the writer

Marko is a Bratislava-born
*Meanwhile City: How Tempor
Places with a Strong Identity*, M
is taken from an interview on
a programme dedicated to the