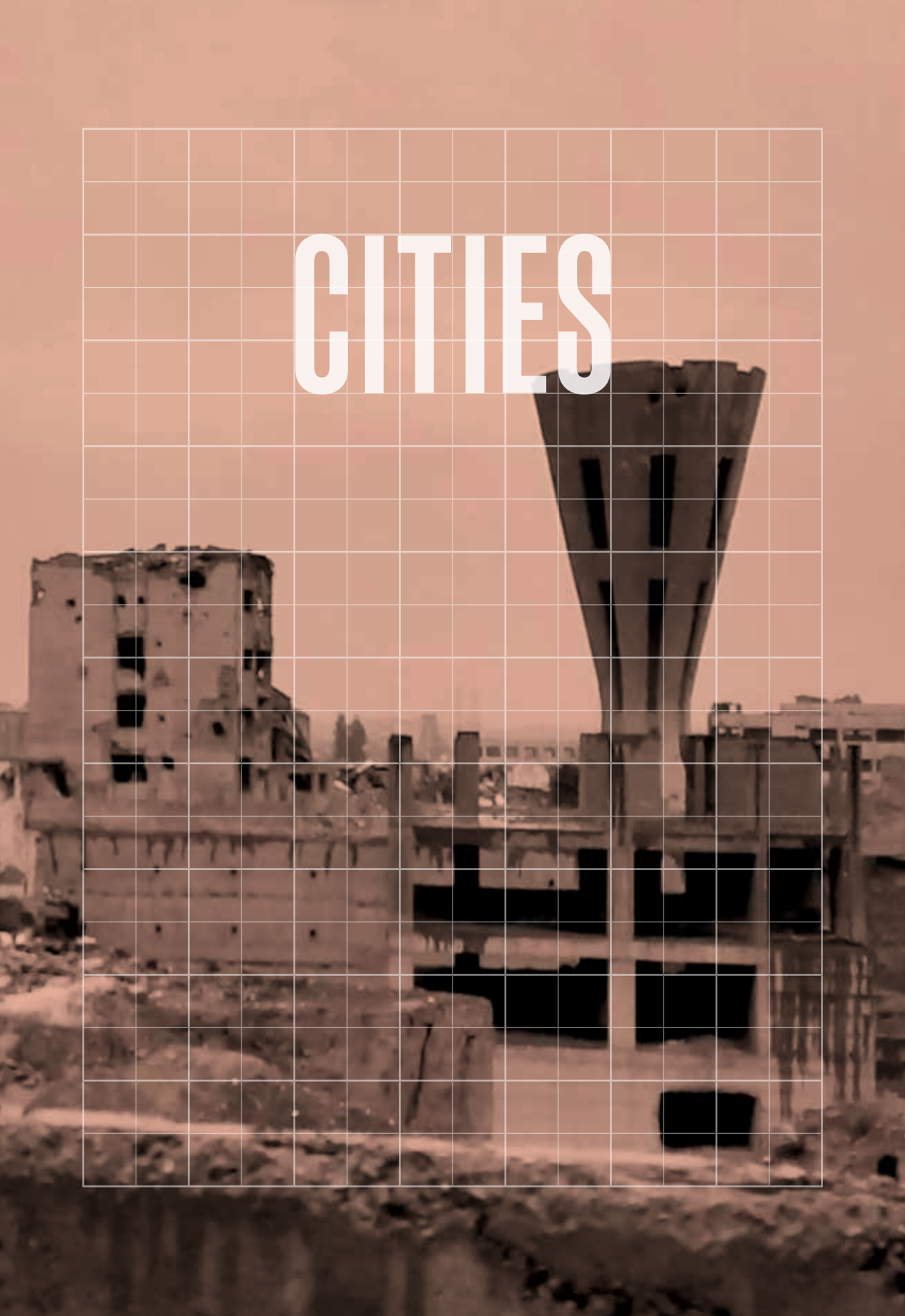


This book is dedicated to
Nohad Haj Salih's
contagious enthusiasm.
May these ideas bring
peace to his home on the
other side of the sea.



CITIES







UNDER





PRESS URE ●

**CITIES UNDER PRESSURE:
A DESIGN STRATEGY FOR
URBAN RECONSTRUCTION**

Benno Albrecht, Jacopo Galli

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Published by

ArchiTangle GmbH
Meierottostrasse 1
10719 Berlin, Germany
www.architangle.com
ISBN 978-3-96680-023-5

•

Reproductions

Eberl & Koesel Studio, Altusried-Krugzell, Germany

Printed on VIVUS89 – FSC®, EU Ecolabel, CO2-neutral

Printing and binding: Memminger MedienCentrum Druckerei und
Verlags-AG, Memmingen

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Thanks to

Matteo Aimini, Reem Alharfush, Mounir Sabeh Affaki, Marco Ardielli,
Maria-Thala Aswad, Marco Ballarin, Maria Antonia Barucco, Mattia
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THIS VOLUME WAS WRITTEN JOINTLY BY BENNO ALBRECHT AND JACOPO GALLI AND IS THE RESULT OF A
CONTINUOUS PROCESS OF DIALOGUE AND PEER REVIEW. THE INTRODUCTION (PP. 12–15) CAN BE ATTRIBUTED
TO BENNO ALBRECHT AND THE CHAPTERS 1,2,3,4,6 (PP. 16–135, 180–205) TO JACOPO GALLI. TEXTS IN CHAPTER
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This book was made possible thanks to the support of:

Nohad Haj Salih – I.Barbon Shipping and Logistics



A DESIGN STRATEGY FOR URBAN RECONSTRUCTION

CITIES

A DESIGN STRATEGY

UNDER

FOR URBAN

PRESS

RECONSTRUCTION

URE ●

BENNO ALBRECHT / JACOPO GALLI

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INTRODUCTION



CITIES UNDER PRESSURE presents a concrete idea for the sustainable reconstruction of cities and territories involved in extreme traumatic events. It illustrates a necessary paradigm shift from current intervention strategies, presenting a new approach that needs to be tested, scaled, and adapted, but one that can potentially be immediately applied in regions involved in events such as violent conflict, natural disaster, or major social distress. Cities Under Pressure is the result of a series of design and research experiences carried out by Urbicide Task Force, a think tank based at the Università Iuav di Venezia in Venice, Italy, that collaborates actively with major public and private stakeholders. The research and designs produced by the group have been presented at international conferences and workshops, published in peer-reviewed journals, and included in architectural exhibitions. This volume comprises six chapters, thirty-one subchapters,

and one hundred and fifty figures. It lends itself to reading from start to finish or to just glancing at the figures, measuring dimensions with a ruler, or sketching over the pages, focusing solely on a single topic or looking carefully at each bibliographic entry. The text and the matching figures are intended to reflect a global approach that, with the proper adaptation mechanisms, can be applied anywhere. The visual and spatial variability of the presented urban designs demonstrates the open nature of the design approach, which is not a rigid set of rules but rather a system capable of fruitfully controlling a succession of countless decisions producing a multiplicity of variations.

The first chapter, “Global Challenges,” describes how the risk society paradigm influences the built environment and categorizes the different pressures imposed on global cities. The second chapter, “Historical Experiences,”

summarizes and classifies the various mechanisms that have been employed in reconstructions in the past, building a precious toolbox for future interventions. The third chapter, “**Strategy**,” illustrates the overall process that will allow the definition of a reconstructed city with the highest possible qualitative and quantitative features, beauty, and performances. The fourth chapter, “**Sustainable Transition**,” defines an alternative model of city-making based on a different use of available technology for maximizing the quality of life of communities. The fifth chapter, “**Explorations**,” provides a set of examples of site-specific local projects that permit a stress test of the defined approach. The sixth and last chapter, “**Design**,” aims to set in motion a complex mechanism to provide designers with the conceptual and operative tools that will allow us to bravely and successfully face cities under pressure.

Cities Under Pressure defines a strategy that hopefully will find multiple on-site applications, but it is first and foremost an attempt to trace the unstable borders of a design approach capable of facing the necessary paradigm shift imposed by the current global condition. The ambitious goal is to provide architects, urban planners, and design experts with a new perspective on the shaping of cities and territories, one that is capable of concretely representing the urgency of a transition toward a development model able to preserve the Earth and its current and future inhabitants. It is an intergenerational message sent into a foggy but foreseeable future with the strong belief that “in the end we will conserve only what we love; we will love only what we understand; and we will understand only what we are taught” (DIOUM 1968).

A MIDJOURNEY IN CITIES UNDER PRESSURE



Bits of images from the incessant media stream allow us to see glimpses of the cities under pressure paradigm: situations that highlight the contradictions and dystopias of current urban environments and anticipate upcoming scenarios. The images on the following pages were generated by the **artificial intelligence program Midjourney** starting from a selection of headlines from major media outlets. The results are situations that are, at the very same time, real and surreal, inspiring and frightening, surprising and plausible.

→. Yoga instructor Maksym Burlaka celebrates International Yoga Day in Kharkiv by doing a handstand next to an unexploded bomb. [Ukraine.ua, June 21, 2022.](https://www.ukraine.ua/news/article/yoga-instructor-celebrates-international-yoga-day-in-kharkiv-2022-06-21/)





↑ A hungry polar bear arrives in industrial Norilsk after walking 1,500 kilometers inland in search of food. *The Siberian Times*, June 17, 2019.



← . Flying cattle class: Qatar to airlift 4,000 cows to break Saudi Arabia-led blockade. [Middle East Eye, June 13, 2017.](#)



← . Influencer is facing a barrage of criticism for publishing before her 700,000 followers an image that turns the riots in Barcelona into a fashion editorial. [El Pais, October 17, 2019.](#)

→ . China tears down tower blocks an effort to boost the stalling economy. Beijing has adopted a “build, pause, demolish, repeat” strategy. [The Telegraph, August 23, 2022.](#)



→ . Ukrainian brewery ditches beer to make Russian-fighting Molotov cocktails instead.

The Washington Post,
February 25, 2022.



← . Newly wed Syrian couple have their wedding pictures taken in front of a heavily damaged building.

The Guardian, February 5,
2016.



→ . Chanel's spring fashion show takes place in a field of wind turbines. Eco-chic has definitely arrived. Will it do anything to change the world?

Grist, October 8, 2012.



↑ . Humiliated Venice:
November 12, the apocalypse
of the submerged city.
Il Gazzettino, November 12,
2019.



← . Amazon will open a \$21 million state-of-the-art warehouse in Tijuana, Mexico, that abuts a housing settlement made of cardboard, tarp, and wood scraps. *Vice News*, September 7, 2021.



← . Hundreds of migrants, mostly Afghans, were brutally expelled from Place de la République in Paris. *Le Monde*, November 24, 2020.



← . Las Vegas places homeless people in a parking lot, 6 feet apart, while casinos are deserted and thousands of hotel rooms are empty. *The New York Times*, March 31, 2020.



← . Heatherwick's Vessel closes again after fourth suicide.
Deezen, August 2, 2021.



← . Homeless Pacoima man creates a decorative encampment.
San Fernando Valley Sun / El Sol, June 23, 2021.



← . Dozens of protesters jump in the swimming pool of the Presidential Palace in Baghdad to face Iraq's hot weather.
Iraqi News, August 29, 2022.

↓ . 22-year-old engineering student Alaa Salah chanting in front of a crowd of protesters in Sudan.
Al Jazeera, May 4, 2019.

