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Aristide Antonas · åyr · Abla elBahrawy · Benjamin H. Bratton · Alexey Buldakov / Urban Fauna Lab · Lluís Alexandre Casanovas Blanco · Nerea Calvillo · Dogma · Dick van Gameren · Vere van Gool · Vinay Gupta · Andrés Jaque / Office for Political Innovation · Martti Kalliala · Lydia Kallipoliti · Ryan John King · Sean Lally · Léopold Lambert · Jon Lopez · Hikaru Nissanke · Sean Monahan · Jack Self · Space Caviar · James Taylor-Foster · Ben Vickers



## Andrés Jaque Office for Political Innovation

The notion 'floating population' is normally related to China's economic upsurge, not often connected to realities in Europe. But as Andrés Jaque and the Office for Political Innovation shows, substantial numbers are doing just that: they settle for short periods and move on. It's not just refugees and migrants, but our entire society starts rolling. Yet in spite of all the external forces and conditions that keep everything unsettled and in constant motion, we are still human; we still locate and ground our desire in the spaces we inhabit. So, how to reckon with and reconcile these contradictions? Can a Rolling Architecture be a way to go?

In the European Union alone, more than eighty million people dwell in houses that are shared with nonrelatives.<sup>1</sup> These spaces tend to be residential units originally constructed according to stereotyped familyoriented design standards, yet are no longer used towards those ends. Instead, what we find are, for example, people without papers in an apartment managed by migrant peers, newcomers in need of a scene, or people moving away from undesired situations. Single-family residences that are occupied by aggregates of unfamiliar individuals have become the demarcation of a society shaped by transience: a Rolling Society defined by its move. With an average permanence of eighteen months,<sup>2</sup> a Rolling Society of provisional dwellers both reflects and facilitates the production of structural transformations already taking place thanks to corporate consolidations, increasingly precarious job markets and the acceleration of geographical migration due to economical, political and environmental instability. Temporary jobs demand employees to move and political exclusion forces individuals to resettle in new locations. The Rolling Society is not solely vulnerable to weather, personal integrity or property maintenance, but also to social exclusion, disconnection and operational outdating. Within the Rolling Society, shelter means the rapid obtainment of relational capital. Shelter here is not the familiar interior protecting dwellers from the outside, but rather the place where one encounters otherness and builds up association within it. Shelter is here provided by a specific architecture meant to facilitate a transition from the protective and familiar to the rearticulative and associative; an architecture made of plastic blinds, light

## A POST-TYPOLOGICAL URBANISM OF NON-FAMILIAR SHARED HOMES

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aluminum windows, aluminum frame awnings, posters, piling, wired appliances and the like that results in iterative and uncoordinated actions.

In 1945 the Dutch company Hunter Douglas commercialized the first massively produced aluminum blind. With more than 17,000 employees in one hundred countries, their aluminum blinds have become a highly available technology, with a design and marketing strategy developed from its headquarters in Lokerem in Belgium. Its production is distributed around the world in ninety-five factories owned by Hunter Douglas itself as well as seventy-five associated manufacturing facilities.<sup>3</sup> The aluminum blind is a centralized design object; it is produced in a distributed network capable of commercializing and delivering them through a small catalogue of inexpensive and generic products. Rolling Architecture is based on the transformation of familiar apartment settings into unfamiliar ones by way of their generic components; an architectural assemblage that embodies specificity.

In 1952, the Kawneer Company in Michigan patented the "lateral arm assembly for aluminum awnings",<sup>4</sup> which made possible the development of roller-based retractable awnings. Its success was based on the fact that the foldable arms would make it possible to avoid fixed lateral ones, which made awnings suitable to an almost universal range of window settings. Additionally, retractable frames made it possible to take the awnings up when no longer needed and also adapt their angle to weather conditions. Both the capacity to adapt to changing conditions and the lack of constraints in their application led to awnings becoming a massively prevalent technology in domestic settings since the 1960s.

With twenty-year patent terms in both the US and Europe, the 1970s was when most post-war technological patents ended. Thus it is at this time that centralized multinational commercial organizations evolved into networks of independent producers, devoted to delivering redundant architectural products of domestic signification. This occurred in the midst of a wider demographic transformation that took place from 1945 to 1980 in which over 50% of the rural population of Western European countries moved to cities.<sup>5</sup> This new urban population would mainly be families and situated in residential architectures to accommodate them that were often rapidly constructed. These architectural environments today constitute the residential infrastructures that the Rolling Society takes and defamiliarizes; where enduring residential infrastructures that have lost their social form encounter technologies that have lost their corporative regime of exclusivity. A material pair decoupled from its origin; post-identitarian, gaining new relevance by the assemblages in which they respond to contingency.

- Based on 'Ways of Living', a research project developed by Andrés Jaque and the Office for Political Innovation as part of the European Union's LIFE program.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Source: Hunter Dougles Group.
- 4 Charles Huizenga, 'Lateral arm assembly for aluminum awnings', Patent US2585319 A, July 6, 1950.
- 5 Eric Hobsbaum, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991.* (London: Vintage Books, 1994).



apartment of the Rolling Society.

Rolling Architecture is framed by nine material features:

> 1. Counter-typological. Rolling Architecture disregards typologies. It challenges spatial divisions with furniture; reconnecting distant rooms or separating neighbors through performance as opposed to walls.

2. Scalability. Constellations of small products can be combined to produce entire transformations of existing architectures. Massively produced technologies can also be downscaled to cater to marginal specialized conditions.

3. Availability. As the quotidian version of Toyota's just-in-time productive methodology, the Rolling Components are not mobilized on the basis of optimum eligibility, but according to their ease of obtainability.

4. Additive. Rolling Architecture is based on its capacity to make iterative action possible, and its components share the prospect of becoming effective when added and having other components added to them.

5. Overlappable. Components are not fit together, but articulated based on overlap methods that do

not require precision. Precision requires coherence in the standards that different components belong to, as well as the capacity to envision results. Heterogeneity among components and technological learnability of doers are constituent factors of a Rolling Architecture.

6. Transportable by humans. All components are movable by humans that are not trained in particular to transport heavy objects.

7. Performative. Rolling Architecture moves, evolves, folds and unfolds. It caters to changing conditions, and it adapts to their evolution.

8. Complementarity. Components work in association with others: a curtain makes up for the obsolescence of outdated windows and improves its thermal capacity, or several tables brought together provide space for piled storage. It is by creating layers, by expanding the action of one object to the others, that the shared agency of Rolling Architecture is achieved.

9. Contingent. Rolling Architecture is the result of added contingency. It cannot be seen as a strategic design, but rather of the accumulation of unorchestrated, sequential, and reactive interventions.



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CASE 06 Built in the 1970s as a two-bedroom family apartment and reconstructed in the 1980s as a NGO and single person dwelling.





CASE 07 Built in the 1970s as a two-bedroom family apartment and reconstructed in the 2000s as a satellite apartment of a single parent sharing the care of a child with neighboring grandparents.

08

rehabilitation single person apartment.

CASE 08 Built in the 1980s as a family. oriented young couple's social housing apartment and reconstructed in the 2000s as post-drug-dependency



CASE 11 Built in the 1950s as a family apartment and reconstructed in the 2000s to be shared by two couples with an individual apartment hosting informal political gathering over the weekends.



future heath-decaying-scenario.

 Aluminum or plastic shading blinds, mass-produced yet customized in their dimension, installed by local workshops.

- Extruded aluminum windows, fabricated and installed by local workshops that consume mass-produced aluminum components.
- 3. Plants, mass-produced in industrial nurseries, that are informally reproduced, distributed and cared for through friendship between neighbors and other networks of cooperation.
- 4. Wood-looking-plastic finishing element.
- Iterative piling of heterogeneous components informally made by dwellers within time.
- 6. Mass-produced awnings of standard dimension.
- 7. Mass-produced fabric that has been tailored by skillful dwellers into curtains.
- 8. Added individual heating or air-conditioning appliances.
- 9. Patterned fabrics that have been mass-produced and commercialized in fragments.
- 10. Locally produced unlicensed posters.

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Rolling Hut for the Rolling Intimacy. A highly-insulated space created by the layering of low-insulation value plastic blinds, PVC membranes and aluminum framed awnings.



Rolling Tub for the Rolling Society. Complementary design to couple human water enjoyment and hygiene with a community of diverse vegetal pets.



Rolling Plastic Nest for the Rolling Dwellers. A greenhouse layered with PVC membranes and aluminum framed hoods, with transportable folding flight-cases in back.

Assemblage drawing of the Rolling Hut for the Rolling Intimacy



- 4. Roll of opaque lacquered aluminum blinds.
- 5. Fixed opaque blinds made out of lacquered aluminum.
- 6. Transparent polycarbonate blinds.
- 7. Photovoltaic awning.
- 8. Domestic greenhouse refrigerator.
- 9. Roll of transparent polycarbonate blinds.
- 10. Metallic profile 40.4.
- 11. Transportable folding flight-case.
- 12. Nylon wheel.