



Michael Schindhelm:
Public Space



Berlin Wall, 1960s

I grew up in East Germany, a country with an awkward relationship to public communication and public spaces.

I was born a year before the Berlin Wall was built, so this form of communication was familiar for me in my childhood.



Berlin, 1960s



Wartburg

I was born in the city near to the castle of Wartburg.

There 500 years earlier, Martin Luther translated the Bible. His idea was to give access to the Bible for people who could not read ancient Greek or Latin. So to a certain extent, this reform was an enlightenment process focusing on literacy and on media and literature as tools for disseminating the doctrine of Christianity.

500 years later, in Cold War East Germany, this doctrine experienced a revival, because in a country where public space was limited and controlled, literature and media became important tools for public communication between both sides of the world.



Portrait of Martin Luther



Later, as a teenager, I moved to Voronezh to study and this experience sharpened my sensibility towards public space.

Communication was the driving force behind the inception of public space.

The Athenian Agora, or Place of Assembly, was first used as an area where local men would gather to exercise their military duty or attend political events, but was then opened up to people from other cities, becoming the meeting point between locals and foreigners.

From the word Agora are derived ancient Greek expressions for, “I speak in public,” and later, “I shop.”



Agora, Athens



Agora, Athens

As a teenager, I moved to Voronezh to study and encountered two radically different relationships between communication and public space.

On one hand, I observed that planned public spaces were used for establishing a formal rapport between the power and its people, limited to specific values and content.



Lenin Square,
Voronezh, 1921



Lenin Square,
Voronezh, 1980s



May Demonstration



October Demonstration on the Red Square, Moscow



Voronezh State University

On the other hand, I found forms of conspiracy, or niche cultures, outside formal public spaces, hidden from official view.

At the University of Voronezh, I had the opportunity to interact with students from 60 countries, including those on the other side of the Iron Curtain. Because our discussions could not take place in the open, they took on a particular urgency. It was in the niches of Voronezh that I had some of my most formative social and cultural exchanges.

Even in a provincial city like Voronezh, I found a lot of high-profile cultural organizations and venues, like the Opera and Ballet Theatre...



Opernyi Teatr, Voronezh

DramTeatr, Voronezh



...or the Drama Theatre...

Filarmonya, Voronezh



...or the Philharmonic. The Soviet government made a huge effort to shape the people's mindset for public culture and arts.

Despite the fact that the Soviet government made a huge effort to shape people's mind set for culture and arts, these spaces exposed me and others in Voronezh to a plurality of artistic experiences. A performance by a world-renowned pianist one week might be followed by a gypsy band the next.

In the same years, in Cold War East Germany, there was not a serious official interest in any form of exchange or communication between locals and foreigners. Therefore public spaces were usually kept completely deserted...



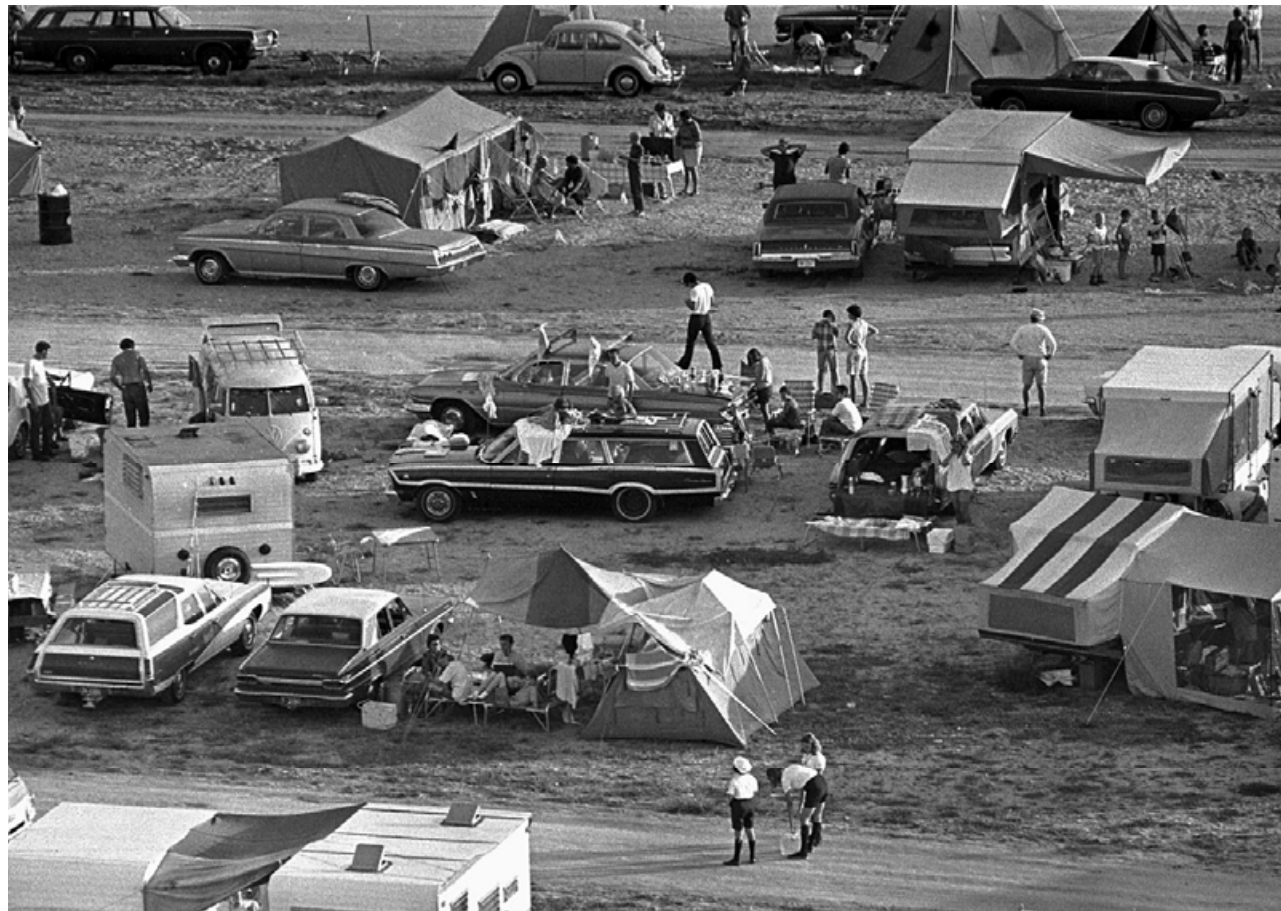
Brandenburg Gate, Berlin, early 1960s,



Military Parade, East Berlin

...unless they were used as a stage for self-representation of the political establishment.

At the same time, Western societies managed to push the boundaries of public space and open up new forms of cultural expression - take Woodstock, for example.



John F. Kennedy visit to Berlin, 1963



However, Western governments would also use the platform of public space to project their own political doctrine.

John F. Kennedy speech in Berlin, 1963



In Berlin, many buildings constructed between 1945 and 1989 express this soft power Cold War. You can see how much power, how much energy, how much capital was invested by both sides to create public spaces in a fight over soft power supremacy. Among these, the Deutsche Oper building in West Berlin, and the Palace of the People, which was opened in the former GDR in 1976.



Deutsche Oper Berlin



Palast Der Republik, ealry 1980s

The collapse of the communist world system in 1989 marked the end of a bipolar political globe, and many conservative thinkers predicted a universal distribution of Western values all over the world and the universalization of the American way of life.

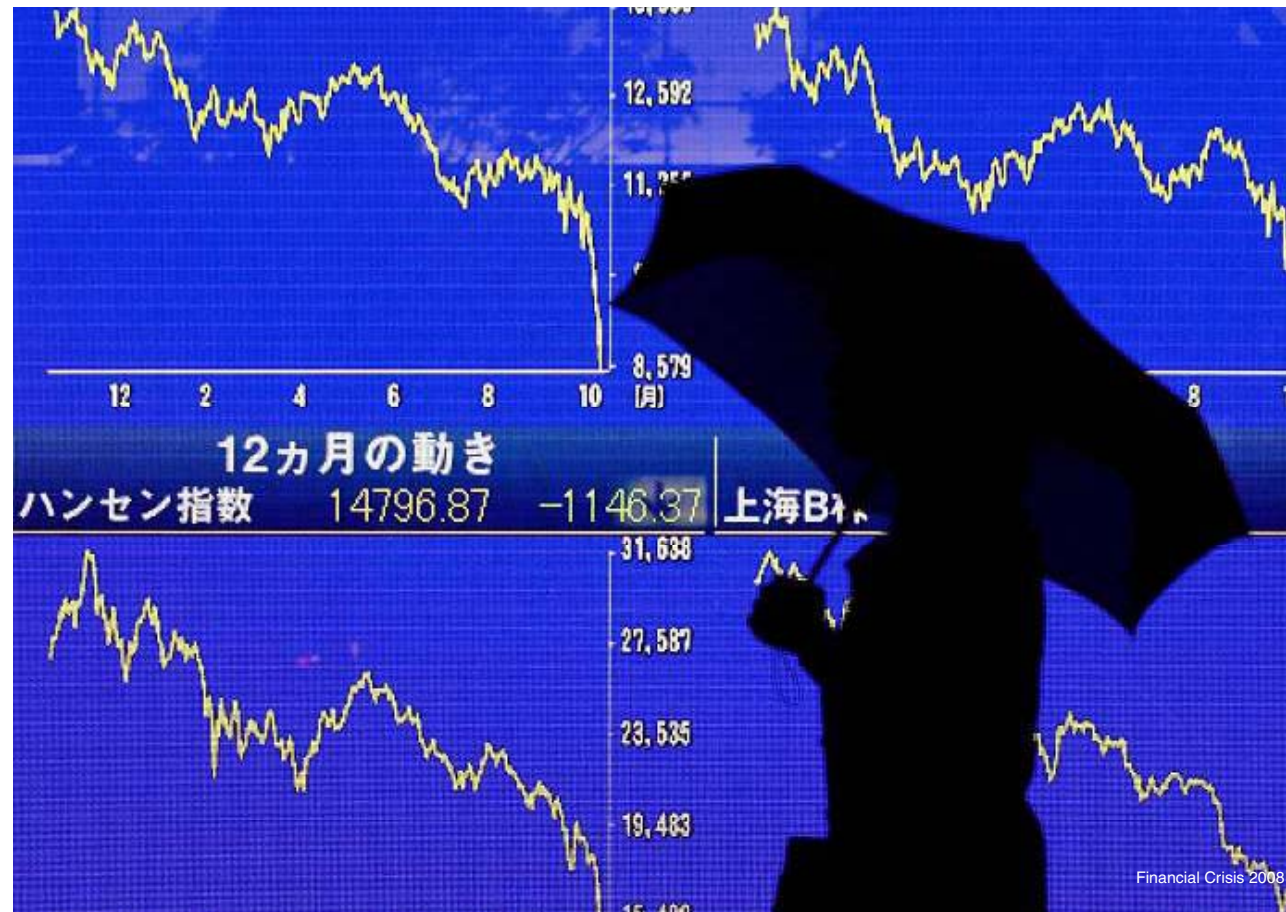


Berlin, November 9, 1989



This hope didn't last for long. Barely 10 years later, we witnessed the attacks on the World Trade Center, making clear that the world is not heading towards political harmonization.

The deep financial and economic crisis that started in 2008 has also dramatically changed the global political situation. Twenty years after the collapse of the communist system, even the capitalist system is starting to reel.





We are now likely transitioning towards a completely new plurality of global powers.

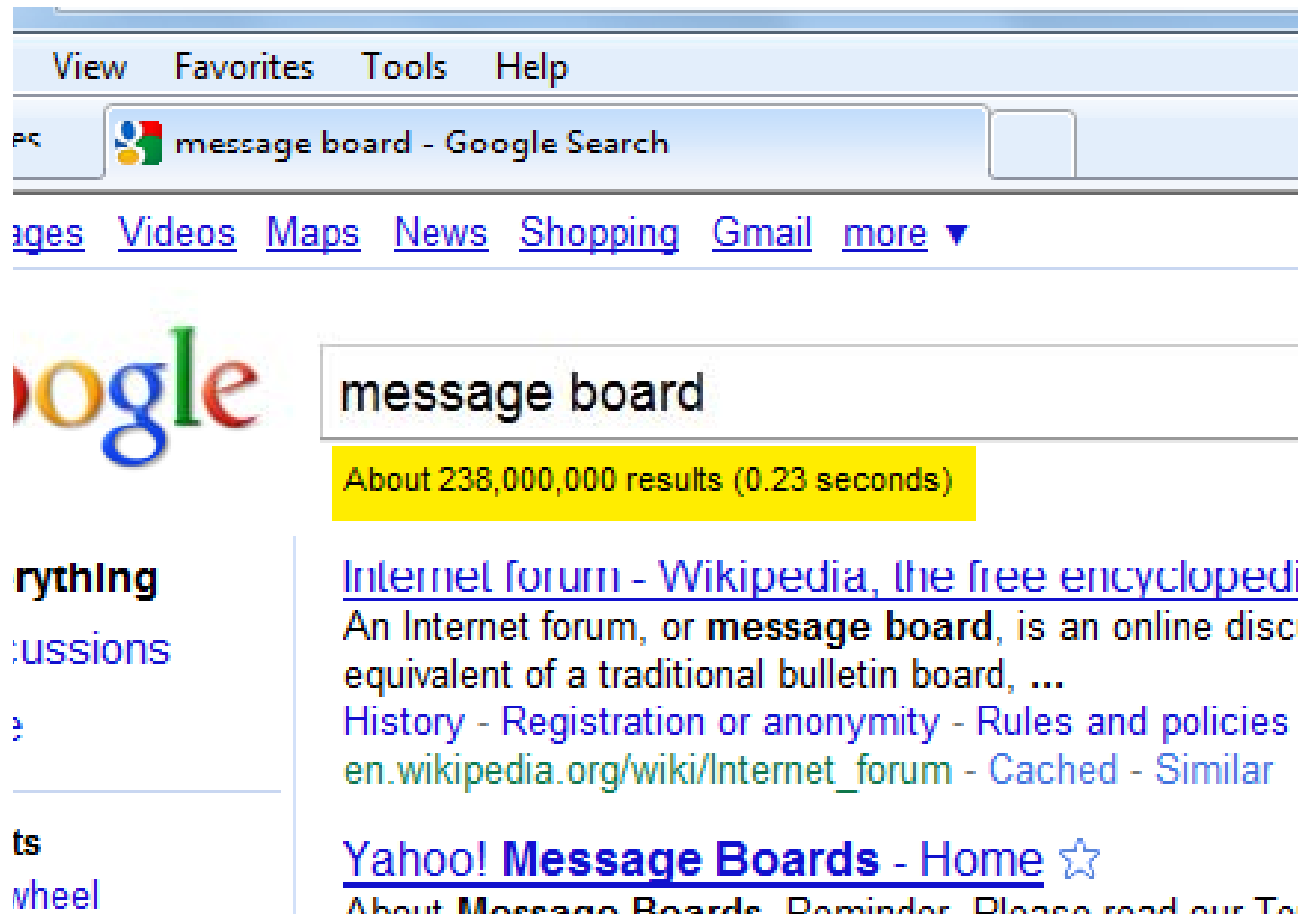
This plurality is reflected in new forms of public space. During the last 20 years, completely new types of cultural expression have been developing in an accelerated way all over the world.



Palast der Republik, Berlin, 2006



The Internet has introduced many new forms of public space and cultural expressions.



The image is a screenshot of a web browser window showing a Google search for "message board". The browser's address bar contains "message board - Google Search". Below the browser window, the Google search results are displayed. On the left, the Google logo is partially visible, and a sidebar lists categories like "Everything", "Discussions", "e", "ts", and "wheel". The main search results area shows "message board" with approximately 238,000,000 results found in 0.23 seconds. The first result is "Internet forum - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia", which includes a brief definition of an Internet forum or message board as an online discussion equivalent to a bulletin board, followed by links to history, registration rules, and a cached version. The second result is "Yahoo! Message Boards - Home", which includes a star icon and a link to "About Message Boards".

View Favorites Tools Help

message board - Google Search

[Images](#) [Videos](#) [Maps](#) [News](#) [Shopping](#) [Gmail](#) [more](#) ▼

oogle

message board

About 238,000,000 results (0.23 seconds)

Everything

Discussions

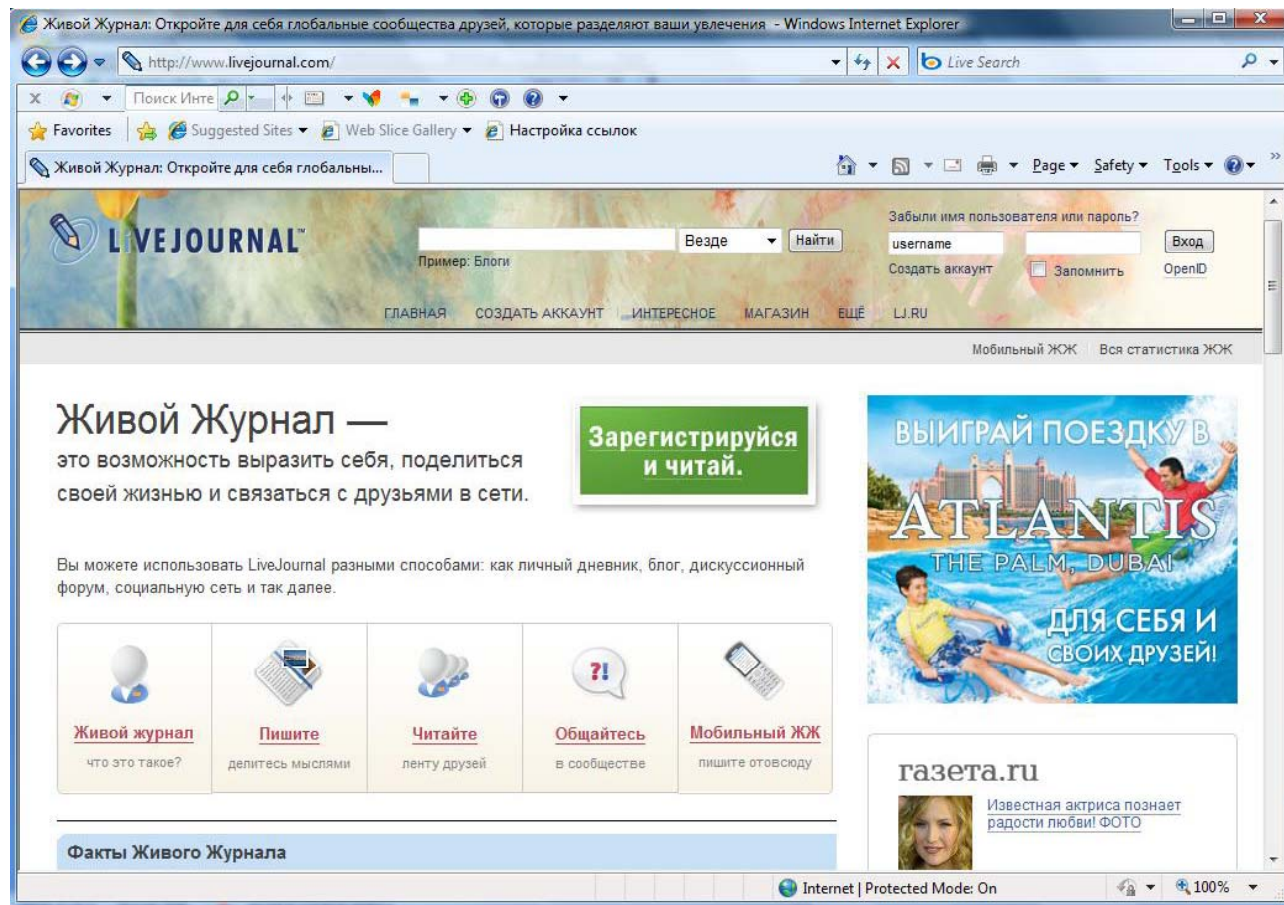
e

ts

wheel

[Internet forum - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)
An Internet forum, or **message board**, is an online discussion equivalent of a traditional bulletin board, ...
[History](#) - [Registration or anonymity](#) - [Rules and policies](#)
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_forum - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

[Yahoo! Message Boards - Home](#) ☆
[About Message Boards](#) [Reminder](#) [Please read our Terms](#)



For us – people living in Europe and in Western countries – this is the image of the world. But we have to understand that with the shift of economic and political power from the west to the east happening today a different perspective on the globe becomes equally relevant and important.





[a new perspective representing the shift eastward]

After almost twenty years working as an opera and theatre director, filmmaker and writer, I embarked on something completely different. In late 2006, I was invited by the Dubai government to help set up a governmental body for culture and arts. As you know, there is also a lot of critique around this city and the way it developed. I don't want to belittle all these critiques – I feel it is a very, very substantial issue the city has to sort out. However, I think we should also look into the geopolitical environment and context of Dubai, with Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen as neighbours. The fact that the city tries to open up an open-minded and multicultural society in an environment of political instability and religious fundamentalism deserves some respect.

Geography



Located on the Southern shore of the Persian Gulf

Second largest of the seven Emirates of the United Arab Emirates

2.5 hours from Mumbai

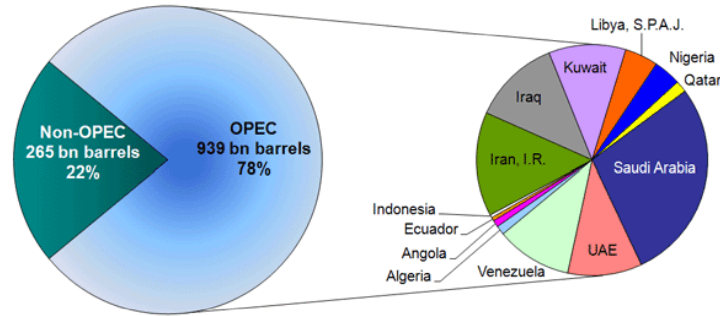
4.5 hours from Moscow

6 hours from Paris

7 hours from London

7.5 hours from Beijing

Crude Oil Reserves in the Region (2007)



Saudi Arabia	264.21 bn barrels
Iran	136.15 bn barrels
Iraq	115.00 bn barrels
Kuwait	101.50 bn barrels
UAE	97.80 bn barrels
Quatar	15.21 bn barrels

Production capacities

Abu Dhabi	3 Mio. barrels/day
Dubai	80 K barrels/day

The area is known for its richness in natural resources, but if you look into the details, you will find that Dubai is actually the poor cousin among the seven Emirates, the richest being Abu Dhabi. Dubai owns almost no oil anymore, but 40 years ago, the government anticipated this and decided to follow an accelerated path towards a highly diversified economy.

Dubai's economy grew extremely fast, sometimes achieving 50% annual growth. It also had extraordinary results in diversifying its industry – today, oil and gas is only 5% of its gross domestic product. At the same time, the extreme acceleration of its real estate development lead Dubai into a trap.

Economy 2001-2007



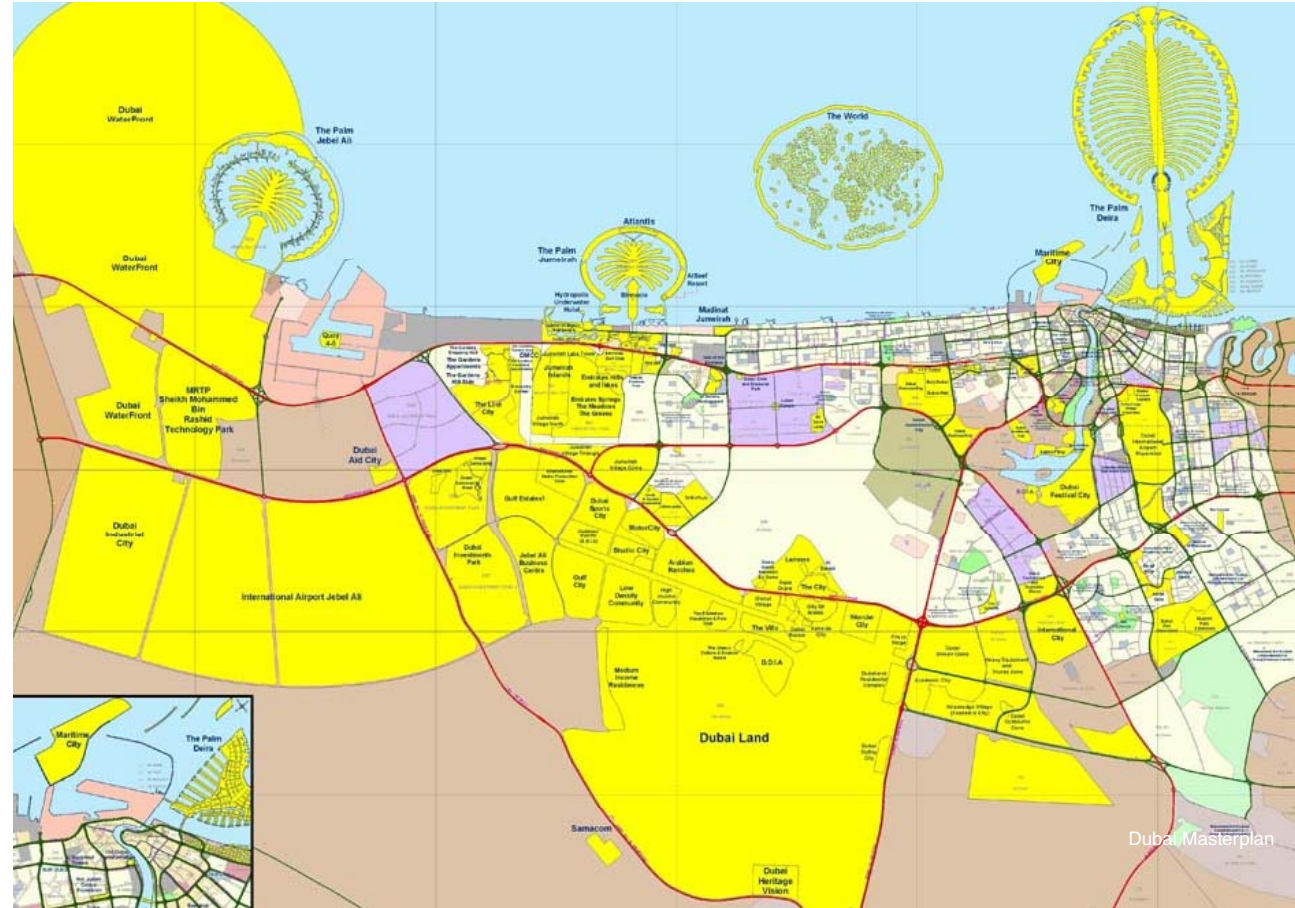
GDP (2007)	\$ 73 bn
Average Annual Growth (2001-2005)	13.4 %

GDP by Sector	
Services (trade, construction, transport, storage & communication, real estate & business, restaurants & hotels, social & personal services, domestic services)	73.6 %
Manufacturing	13.1 %
Oil & Gas	5.1 %
Other	8.2 %

2,369 buildings completed in 2007

World's largest building to be completed in 2009

This is the masterplan of Dubai. All that is yellow is still under construction or in planning. There was a time, before the crisis started, when a third of all construction cranes in the world were operating in the city. There is still a huge ambition to expand the development of the city, and all of this happens at an extremely rapid pace.





Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, 1990

Twenty years ago, there was not much happening on Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai's main thoroughfare, an equivalent of Champs Elysees in the Middle East.

But fifteen years later, the same vantage point reveals an extremely dynamic place.



Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, 2005



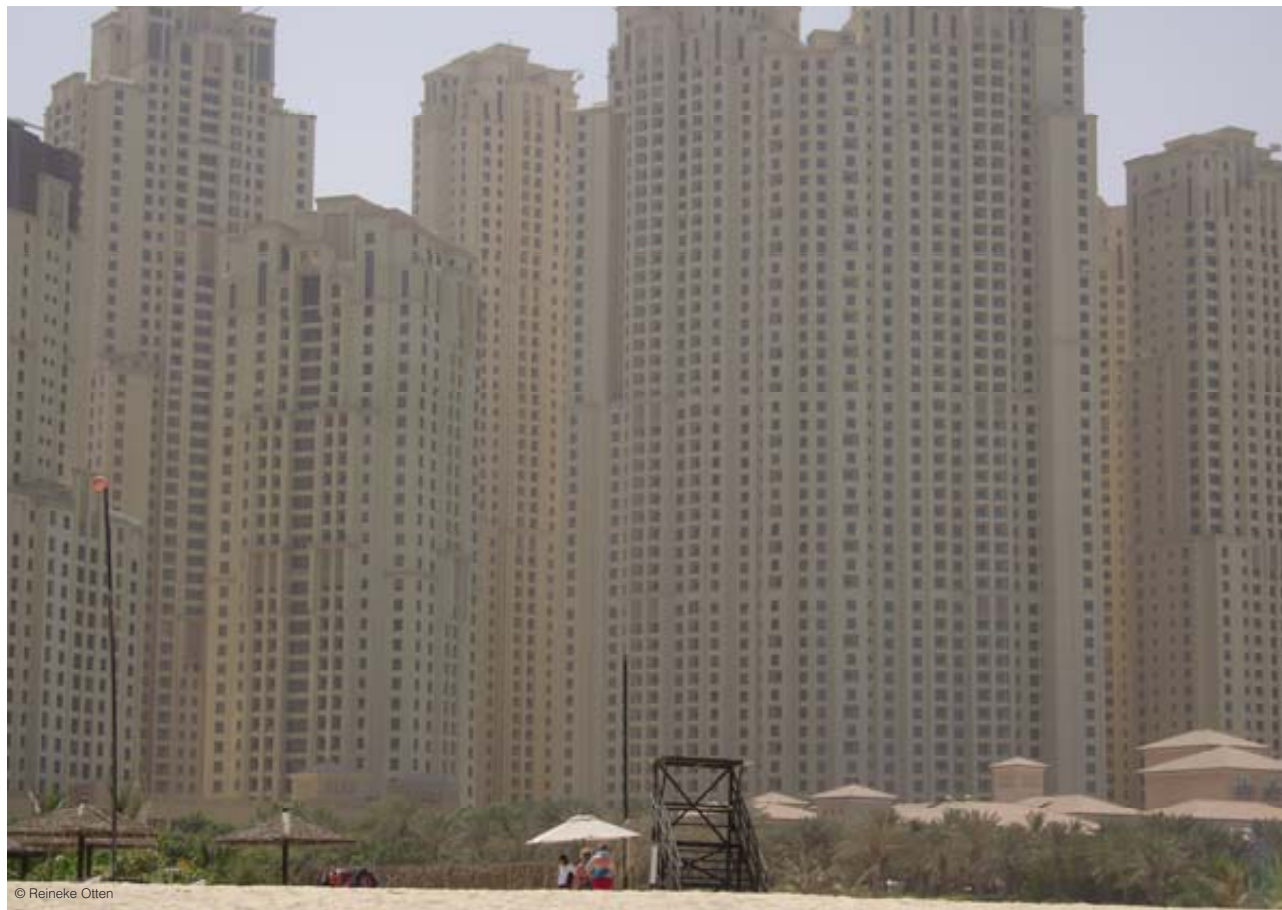
Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, 2005



Burj Khalifa, 2010

People born in Dubai more than forty years ago grew up in this environment...





© Reineke Otten

...and many of them have ended up renting and owning apartments in this kind of environment 20-30 years later.

They or their fathers probably still did business this way...





© Reineke Otten

...and today this is the way business goes in Dubai.

The city developed extremely different forms of urbanization, almost parallel worlds of cultural expression, of different people coming from different continents and different cultural backgrounds. The question is of course how to create something like an identity amidst the high-paced development. How to create something like a soul, a center for culture?





all images on this page: © Reineke Otten

124

Contents : Admin Boundary, Major Project
Road Center Line
with Road Names

Legend :

	ACRIM (ACQUINITY)	أحد أCRIM
	BOARD CERTIFIED LINE	مطابقة معيار الجودة
	COMMUNITY NUMBER	رقم المجتمع
	COMMUNITY NAME	اسم المجتمع
	FOUNDER NAME	اسم المؤسس

Scale

860 430 0 860 Motors

٥٤٣٩٠
٢٠١٧

Please contact us in case of any questions/suggestions:
GIS Center Ph: 04-2064503 or
email: gisupport@dm.gov.tw, Fax: 04-2064046

Disclaimer : This Map belongs to Dubai Municipality
GIS DEPARTMENT Copying, distributing or providing the
map contents to a third party in whole or in parts without
the prior permission of Dubai Municipality is strictly
prohibited. Copyright © 2006, DUBAI GIS DEPARTMENT.
All rights reserved.

بلدية دبي
DUBAI MUNICIPALITY



1950



2008

Khor Dubai (Dubai Creek)

The “Khor Dubai” cultural project stretching over 20 kilometers, will commence at Shindagha, Dubai’s oldest neighborhood at the mouth of Dubai Creek, and stretching to Business Bay, Dubai’s newest commercial district.

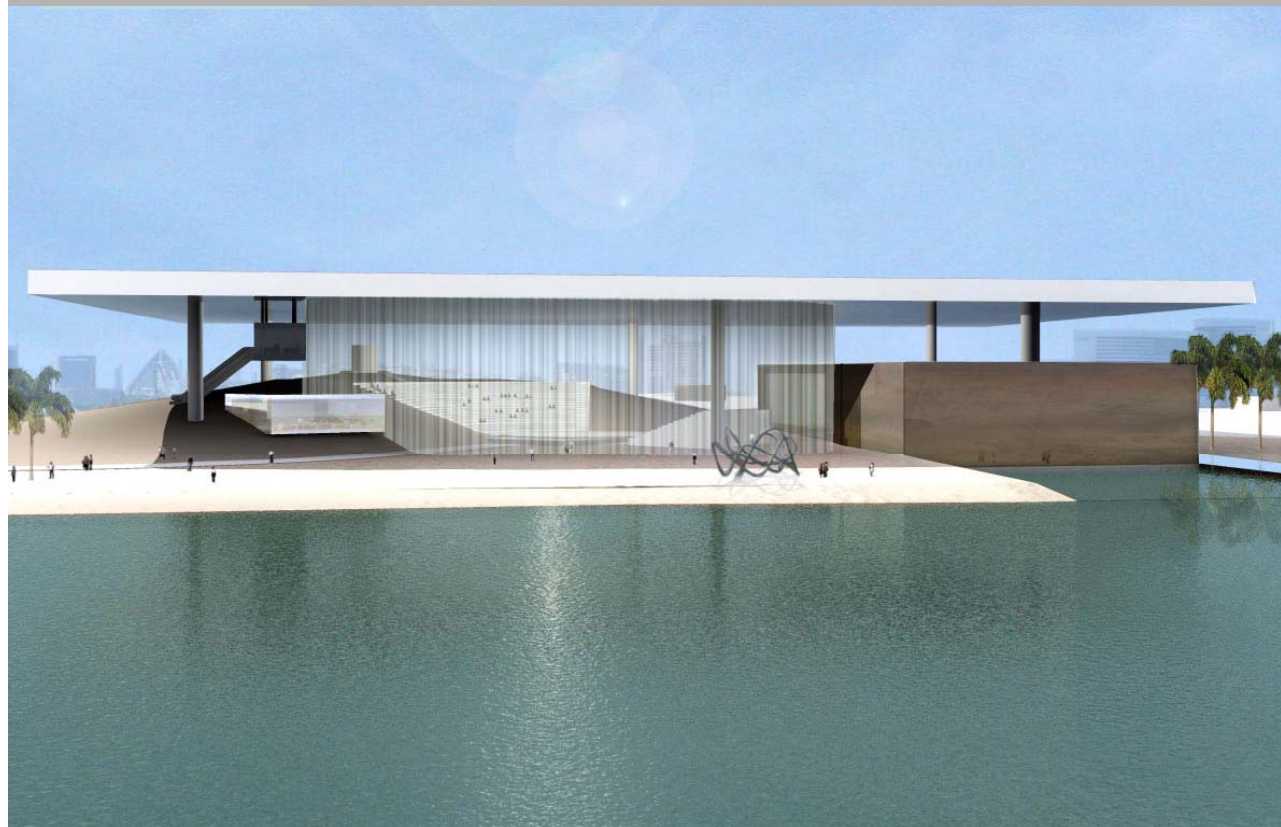
Dubai Creek will be the vibrant destination for culture, arts and heritage in the city.

One way would be to come up with easy-to-build, fast-to-build pavilion-like venues for hosting concerts, theater performances and other forms of art because in a city of 1.7 million people we could expect there would already be a lot of interest in culture and the arts, and also forms of existing creativity we had not found yet.

We invited Rem Koolhaas and OMA to design one of these centres, and they proposed a simple box for exhibitions, which would float on the creek and could even be sent like a container to other cities.

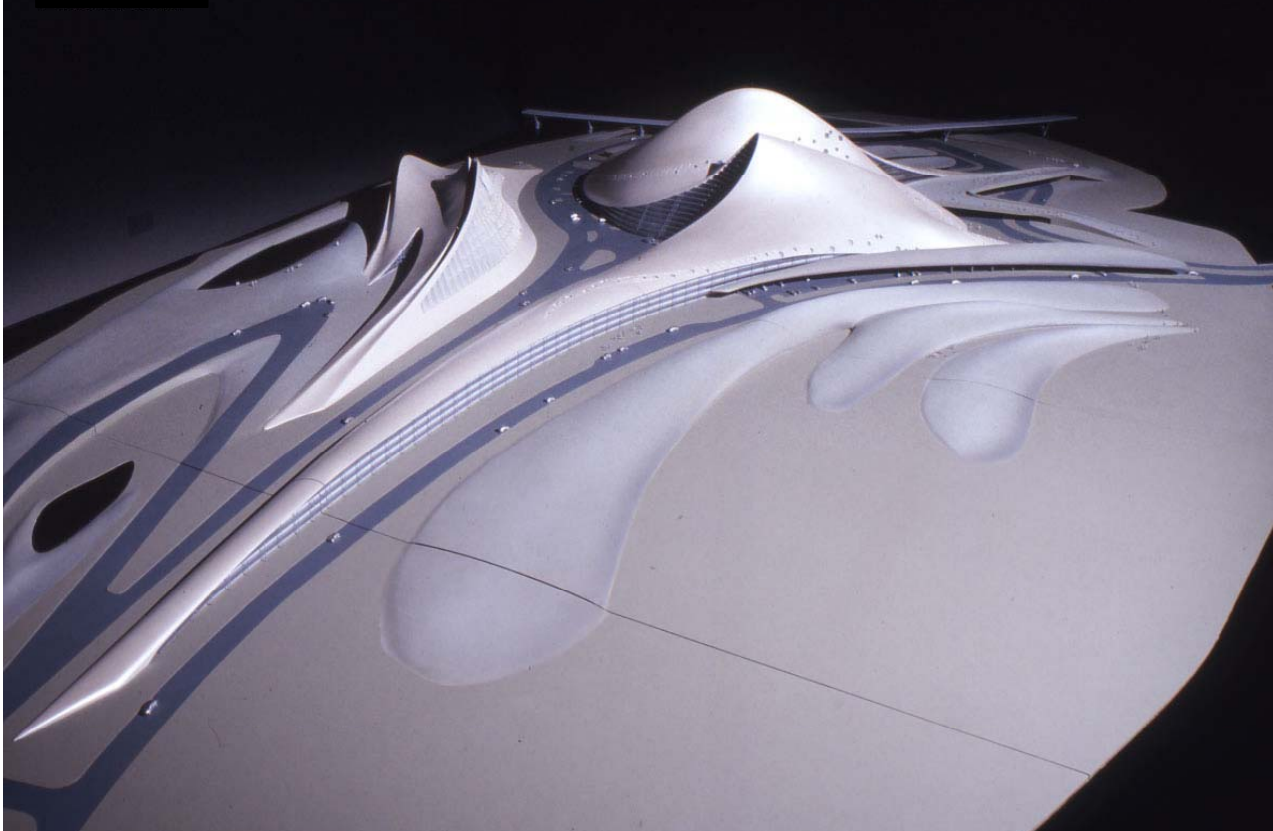
Creek Park Performing Arts Pavilion

OMA / Rem Koolhaas



Dubai Opera House

Zaha Hadid



At the same time, we had to focus on larger, longer-term projects, like the Dubai Opera House, designed by Zaha Hadid. I was never happy with the name, “Opera House,” because although many foreigners undoubtedly enjoy opera, a major performing arts centre in Dubai should reflect the city’s cultural diversity. I thought it should also present different forms of performing arts from India, the Arab world, China and elsewhere.

These projects were suspended because of the financial crisis, so unfortunately they were never realized. However, we did manage to introduce an equally important project, an initiative to make existing galleries sustainable.

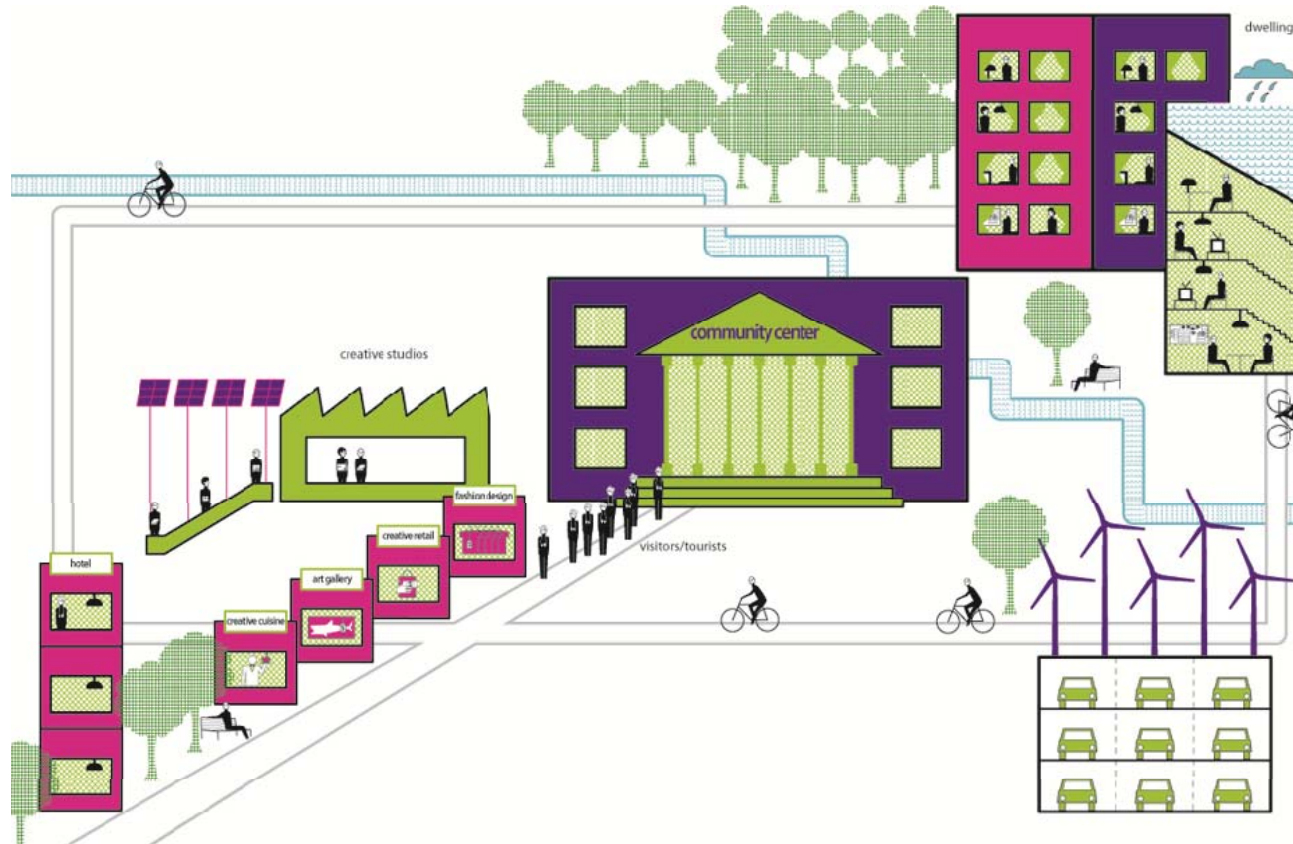




I'm speaking about an area which is not as glitzy as other parts of Dubai. The area is full of generic shed halls and warehouses but at the same time it's also quite a quirky place where a lot of artists live and where most of Dubai's galleries are set up. Unfortunately, most of these galleries are just renting the space and the entire area will be redeveloped within the next year. So the question was how to save this very interesting, quirky and creative environment, how to protect it against purely commercial interests.

We created a concept for a community center hosting those galleries and offering studios to artists.





We started by acquiring land from the land authority with the aim of saving a public space from commercial takeover.

I come to an end because my time is limited.
The itinerary of my speech came along from
Plozschad Lenina in Voronezh to, somehow,
Strelka in Moscow, and it's not only the
itinerary of the speech but somehow also my
personal work biography.



Lenin Square, Voronezh, 1960s



Invisible Concert, Strelka summer program 2010

I personally believe that Strelka has the potential to become an extremely interesting public space.

I want to announce tonight that I will not run this theme of Public Space on my own. I will do it with a colleague from Moscow – Yuri Grigorian – an architect who is based here and who deals a lot with public space.