

# **IABR-2018+2020- THE MISSING LINK**

**CURATOR STATEMENT  
RESEARCH AGENDA  
CALL FOR PRACTICES**

**Adapting our way of life and consumption and production patterns to the finite capacity of our planet requires a fundamental socioeconomic transition that cannot ‘take place’ if we do not first and quite literally ‘make place’ for it. There can be no transition to renewable energy, no resilient ecosystem and no caring and solidary living environment without the actual transformation of our urban landscapes.**

**The necessary fundamental changes require of major political and social choices. But they come with a design challenge: to facilitate behavioral change we have to be able to couple social, spatial, and ecological problems at the scale levels of the building, the neighborhood, the city, and the entire planet. Creating space means sharing space!**

The International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam (IABR) devotes the biennale editions of 2018 and 2020 entirely to the challenge brought to the table of the world community in 2015 by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN and the Paris Climate Agreement (COP21).

The board of the IABR therefore decided in the spring of 2017 to appoint one curator team for two consecutive biennales, with the objective of mobilizing global thinking and the power to activate and design for an in-depth research by design process that focuses on spatial transformations that facilitate the realization of the SDGs. Because the urgency and the objectives are clear and the question is no longer whether we need to, but *how* we are going to adjust. Nobody really knows, and exactly this is *The Missing Link*. How can we get from agendas, knowledge, and plans to truly effective spatial transformation? What is the new metanarrative that can bring us, as a society – that is: truly together – to the future? How can we organize that transition as a spatial, but at the same time social project that both takes our resistance to change into account and mobilizes our longing for it? How do we realize change fast enough, in enough places at a time, both affordably and socially inclusive way? And what does the new design practice we need to meet that objective look like?

As always, the IABR adapts its methods to its goals and that is why we are organizing the next two editions as a single continuous cycle: two biennales, one program. During the 2018 ‘work biennale’, to begin with, we will translate existing knowledge, design power, and initiatives into new hypotheses, approaches, and partnerships for spatial transformation.

The period between the 2018 and 2020 editions is bridged by research by design on matters ranging from going from agenda setting to the evidence-based, from research to result, from plan to implementation. The focus gradually shifts to (ways to achieve) concrete implementation: at specific locations, in policy, and in funding models, as well as in urban development and design practices. In 2020, finally, the results of this cumulative work process will be shared with the world: a prospect for action and the practice related to it.

With this program, the IABR remains totally committed to the use of free cultural space, with its own specific methodology, to help achieve the ambitious goals we have set ourselves as an international community.

We cordially invite everybody to read the Curator Statement, the Research Agenda and the Call for Practices. And we ask those who want to participate proactively in this biennale diptych to carefully read the selection criteria and guidelines and subsequently complete the application form available on the IABR website.

We very much look forward to each and every submission.

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# **IABR-2018+2020- THE MISSING LINK**

**CURATOR STATEMENT**

The enormous growth of the world population and the way that population behaves and largely organizes itself in cities increasingly test the capacity of our planet. Economic growth is unilaterally based on the cheap depletion of finite resources, covering our biotope with emissions and waste, excessive use of space, and accepting rapidly growing inequality. In the near future, the associated climate change may well lead to a cocktail of ecological disasters, instability, regional conflicts, and migration. No matter how unimaginable it is: if this planet is to remain fit for human habitation, people will have to adapt their way of life.

This insight requires us to make all of the dimensions of our lives more sustainable and adaptable at a fundamental level. With the signing of the Paris Climate Agreement the deceleration of climate change has been ratified as a global priority. But it is

renewable production of energy. The creation of a future tailored to the capacity of the earth is pre-eminently a collective task. In the past decades, individualization and economic freedom of choice were prioritized – *'there is no such thing as society,'* as Margaret Thatcher would have it. But we now know that we can no longer ignore the fact that individual and collective interests are closely intertwined. Not yet a self-evident starting point, but a promising one nonetheless.

The necessary fundamental changes require the making of major political and social choices. But they come with a design challenge: to facilitate behavioral change we have to be able to couple social, spatial, and ecological problems at the scale levels of the dwelling, the neighborhood, the city, and the entire planet. Creating space means sharing space.

## THE USE OF TECHNOLOGICAL BREAKTHROUGHS AND MASSIVE INVESTMENTS IN INFRASTRUCTURE ALONE WILL NOT STOP GLOBAL WARMING.

important to stay aware of the fact that combating symptoms will not suffice. The use of technological breakthroughs and massive investments in infrastructure alone will not stop global warming. Technology will not save us.

The actual problem surpasses this and is also much more challenging: we need to give up our addictions, our slash-and-burn consumerism, and our blind faith in growth, our mortgage on the future. We need a radically different interpretation of 'value,' 'prosperity,' and 'future.' The actual problem affects the roots of our existence. Can we, collectively, deal with this?

### CREATE SPACE, SHARE SPACE

To transform the current system into a truly circular system, we need to radically rethink the use and organization of space. We have to make room, for example, for synergies with natural ecosystems, for new biodiversity, for water, and for the

### LONGING AND DESIGNING FOR THE FUTURE

All around the world, scientists are investigating the causes of climate change and ways to influence this process. Worldwide, citizens, companies, and governments are being persuaded of the need to act. This awareness is promising, but does not guarantee actual change. The many experiments and initiatives do not yet add up to a fundamental turn. They are the exceptions, rather than the rule. And so, at least for now, more ambitious goals in terms of climate, energy, circular economy, and social equality remain out of reach.

Developing and designing an approach to upscale and accelerate the transformation to a truly resilient system is an equally challenging and urgent task. In addition, we cannot ignore the fact that the necessary adjustments will also have a significant impact on our daily lives.

However, it is precisely because the necessary changes are big ones, the positive consequences highly abstract, and the period involved too long, that the urgency of action is insufficiently

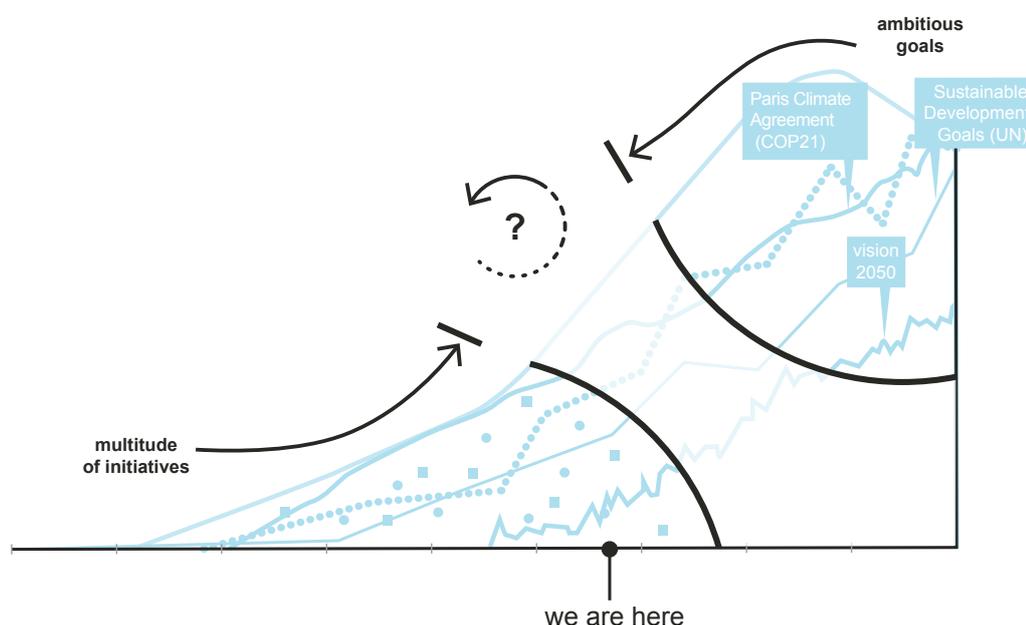
these major revolutions, we can take the opportunity to actively transform the future by designing what we 'can want'. The strength to act exists by the grace of imagination.

## THE MANY EXPERIMENTS AND INITIATIVES DO NOT YET ADD UP TO A FUNDAMENTAL TURN. THEY ARE THE EXCEPTIONS, RATHER THAN THE RULE.

shared. Rethinking our food and energy production, our water and resource management, and the concrete impact of changed perceptions on solidarity exceed everything that we can or even want to imagine today. This, too, requires the strength of imagination and design. Alternative designs have to portray a new reality that is both realistic and concrete; both appealing and convincing. Develop an approach to upscale and accelerate the necessary change and visualize futures that successfully mobilize the longing for change: these are the most relevant tasks we can formulate for our generation. Instead of merely undergoing

### THE MISSING LINK

With *The Missing Link*, the two forthcoming editions of the International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam center on the development of prospects for action at all scale levels. Adjusting our way of life to the planet's capacity is essentially a creative process that involves every one of us. The cultural free space of the biennale offers opportunities to think beyond what is described as realistic today. Designers are challenged to imagine this 'beyond' together with citizens, policymakers, scientists, and companies – in such a manner that their plans could be implemented. This becomes possible



*IABR-2018+2020 offers its cultural space to work on the missing link between the multitude of initiatives and the ambitious goals.*

when we not only describe the future in terms of threatening losses, but also in terms of social and ecological returns and of new qualities. *The Missing Link* paves the way for a wide public debate, for new research by design and for international exchange, and for the further development of knowledge about the link between more sustainability and solidarity, between our current system and the radical change that is necessary, between the multitude of initiatives and the ambitious goals we have set, and between the fear of and the longing for change.

Five complementary trajectories within a single work cycle ending in 2020 focus on making a future that is imaginable, desirable, and possible. They are:

#### 1. LONGING FOR CHANGE

IABR–2018+2020 is not about sending messages to an audience of consumers. Citizens are not seen as commissioners of design processes and visitors are not seen as buyers of tickets. The goal is to involve various actors as participants in a process of overall adaptation. Together with those

the future, and design ateliers around the world. By combining, unlocking, and connecting distributed insights, strategies, and working methods, the IABR explores ways to adjust and contextualize upscaling and acceleration and to realize and facilitate critical mass and breakthroughs.

#### 3. DESIGNING FOR THE FUTURE

Architects are invited to imagine the public spaces, neighborhoods, and urban landscapes the big change may bring. By making the potential qualities of places visible, architecture and spatial design can open the door to subjects we can show and discuss. To a future that we can want.

#### 4. DIALOGUE BETWEEN SPATIAL DESIGN PRACTICES

Complementary to facilitating the public debate, the IABR also provides a platform for debate among often very diverse varieties of design practices. While the bulk of designers' commissions still take place within the frameworks of the prevailing growth model, spatial design is increasingly used to concretize and realize necessary social transitions.

**DEVELOP AN APPROACH TO UPSCALE AND ACCELERATE THE NECESSARY CHANGE AND VISUALIZE FUTURES THAT SUCCESSFULLY MOBILIZE THE LONGING FOR CHANGE: THESE ARE THE MOST RELEVANT TASKS WE CAN FORMULATE FOR OUR GENERATION.**

participants, the biennale works on a supported, widely shared narrative about and for the big change. About the longing for change. From the living room to the House of Chambers.

#### 2. CATALYST FOR CHANGE

IABR–2018+2020 builds on previous editions and the research they involved, and it leans, of course, on pioneering (citizen's) initiatives, policy experiments, investment programs, explorations of

#### 5. LEARNING-BY-DOING

Together with local, national, and international partners, the IABR makes room in its own Ateliers for the imagination and acceleration of big, necessary changes, such as those in renewable energy or shared mobility. The Ateliers not only explore what is possible or desirable, but they also develop strategies and form coalitions to implement concrete transformations with a demonstrative and systemic effect.

**DOUBLE FEATURE:  
IABR–2018+2020**

From 2017 to 2020, the IABR is fully dedicated to the design and implementation of a fundamental adaptation that is as unimaginable as it is inevitable. This is why the IABR will begin a discussion with professionals as well as the wider public in places where concrete transformations are envisaged and on its biennial international platform.

**IABR–2018–THE MISSING LINK:  
LONGING FOR CHANGE**

The 2018 edition is an intensive work biennale. It introduces the five trajectories and sets the agenda. The central question of this edition is whether and how the many initiatives, insights, and experiments add up to the radical adaptation and behavioral change that is necessary. Linking expertise from all over the world to the work in the IABR–Ateliers and the

imaginative strength of designers, this edition makes room for the discussion of critical follow-up steps and the formulation of an approach for upscaling and acceleration. It will highlight the Curator Statement and the Research Agenda, a process that will subsequently serve as the starting point for the collaborative work process ending in 2020.

**IABR–2020–THE MISSING LINK:  
DESIGNING FOR THE FUTURE**

En route to 2020, the IABR will focus on building up to and encouraging implementation: in locations, in policy, in partnerships, and in funding. The IABR–2020 will present practices from all over the globe and concrete results from its own Ateliers as the building blocks as well as proof: yes, we can accelerate and upscale the necessary transition – we can design the future that we can want.

**BY MAKING THE POTENTIAL QUALITIES OF PLACES VISIBLE, ARCHITECTURE AND SPATIAL DESIGN CAN OPEN THE DOOR TO SUBJECTS WE CAN SHOW AND DISCUSS. TO A FUTURE THAT WE CAN WANT.**

## THE DELTA AND THE WORLD: A SINGLE RESEARCH AGENDA FOR A COLLECTIVE CHALLENGE

IABR-2018+2020 chooses the North-Western European Rhine-Meuse-Scheldt delta as its operating base. With a Belgian-Dutch curator team and through intensive collaboration with public and cultural actors from the Netherlands, Flanders, and Brussels, the partners transform this Euro Delta into the primary arena of international knowledge sharing and cultural exchange. This delta features

it is developing in collaboration with that community, also after 2020, striving for one shared movement and platform, for one biennale in the Netherlands and Belgium.

We face a collective challenge: to adapt our way of life, our use of space, and our spatial organization to the capacity of our planet. And this is a challenge that is faced by the neighborhoods, regions, and landscapes of the Western world, the developing countries, and of all other parts of the world. To learn from each other's

## THE EURO DELTA PRESENTS ITSELF AS A REPRESENTATIVE AND PRODUCTIVE LABORATORY FOR THE WORLD, AND VICE VERSA.

one of the oldest polycentric urbanization patterns in the world that developed in a single coherent physical and hydrological ecosystem and has several ports that together link it to the world and the European hinterland. Despite significant cultural and administrative differences, the administrative parts of this delta have shared capital and also share challenges in the area of fundamental transitions. The Euro Delta presents itself as a representative and productive laboratory for the world, and vice versa.

In doing so, the IABR commits itself to take full advantage of the productivity of the community of practice it will establish in the coming three years, and the approach

insights, breakthroughs, and practices, we do not need to wipe out or ignore the indisputable and marvelous fact that the culture of each global region determines its own history and future. On the contrary.

To organize and structure the sharing of diverse and specific knowledge and approaches, the IABR is launching an open Research Agenda for *The Missing Link*. This Research Agenda proposes a series of transition leaps and levers that are addressed in a location-specific way simultaneously and all over the world. It is thus not only a framework for local research, but at the same time a Call for Practices and the program of editions in 2018 and 2020.

# **IABR-2018+2020- THE MISSING LINK**

**RESEARCH AGENDA**

With design as its premise, the Research Agenda of IABR–2018+2020–THE MISSING LINK focuses on the vital need to scale up and accelerate our transition to a resilient future. We know it is a transition we have to make and we know enough about what needs to be done. The central question now is: *How* are we going to do it? How can we rethink the organization and the use of space – making space – to fundamentally adapt our way of life? And how can we make that transition fast enough?

Following the signing of the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015, Christiana Figueres, the conference chairperson on behalf of the United Nations, was clear: *‘We have to reach global peaking, the height of emissions, over the next five years...’*

If we want to realize the Climate Agreement the current, global trend of increasing emissions has to be deflected downwards by 2020 at the latest. Change has to come, and it has to come fast. But how?

**MAKE SPACE FOR TRANSITION**

Building on strategies and approaches that enable us to close the gap between knowing and doing, the IABR–2018+2020 diptych draws from two decades of design and scientific transition research, social initiatives, and policy experiments. Together with actors and designers and making use of the accumulated insights, knowledge, methodologies, and realized breakthroughs, *The Missing Link* explores how spatial transformations can help to accomplish the necessary ‘transition leap’.

ce with it, we can start exploring ways to accelerate and scale up the transitions.

**FIVE TRACKS**

As citizens, as designers, as architects, and as biennale, the IABR–2018+2020 establishes an international workspace and knowledge platform to think beyond what is considered realistic today. How can we apply ourselves to the future if we know that transitions are necessary but they exceed our imagination? Our answer is: By designing what we can want.

## THE MISSING LINK EXPLORES HOW SPATIAL TRANSFORMATIONS CAN HELP TO ACCOMPLISH THE NECESSARY ‘TRANSITION LEAP’.

This is the central hypothesis of the IABR–2018+2020 and thus of its Research Agenda: spatial design allows us to translate equally fundamental and unimaginable transition challenges into tangible and imaginable adjustments and changes we can make in our immediate living environment today, rather than in some distant future.

Additionally, this creative process, we strongly believe, should link spatial transformation to the necessity to promote reciprocity and solidarity among citizens. It needs to strengthen or generate existing and new partnerships between all actors. The future is made by people. We can seize the opportunity the fundamental change that is now drawing near offers us to realize a transition leap in the urban landscape that is our living environment – a shared quality that appeals to our individual desire for change. Neither spatial domains nor practices are likely to impede the transition of our social system, on the contrary: they are unique and crucial levers that can help realize change. Judicious spatial transformations and area development make transitions concrete and imaginable, and therefore possible and achievable. Realizing this and learning to act in accordan-

Making the future recognizable and appealing is a design task. Just like ensuring that numerous small-scale and large-scale transformations add up to a future tailored to the capacity of our planet. It is our goal to couple the individual desire for sustainability to the global scale of our collective transformation challenge – to link the neighborhood to the planet as a whole.

*The Missing Link* wants to make the post-transition world conceivable – to imagine a future that we can want and that is therefore within our reach.

*The Missing Link* develops a strategy to scale up and accelerate the transition to a resilient future.

*The Missing Link* explores ways to actually implement the transformation in different locations.

*The Missing Link* starts from design but connects science to social knowledge and insights to create collective agency.

*The Missing Link* builds on shared narratives and prospects for actions that connect individual and collective interests productively.

These are the five directions in which the IABR-2018+2020 examines and tests what architecture and spatial design can contribute to the realization and acceleration of overall sustainability and resilience in infrastructure, the urban landscape, and the social domain.

The agenda presents transition leaps and transition keys that together define the research and work space of the IABR-2018+2020: six transition keys that will actually enable us to realize major adjustments and six transition leaps that stand for fundamental transformations that

**IT IS AN UNDENIABLE FACT THAT WE CAN ONLY REALIZE THE TRANSITION IF WE CAN TRANSLATE THIS HUGE CHALLENGE INTO BITE-SIZED TASKS AND ASSIGNMENTS AT VARIOUS SCALE LEVELS: CHALLENGES PEOPLE CAN ACTUALLY ADDRESS AT ALL LEVELS, RANGING FROM NEIGHBORHOODS AND DISTRICTS TO URBAN REGIONS, DELTAS, AND THE WORLD.**

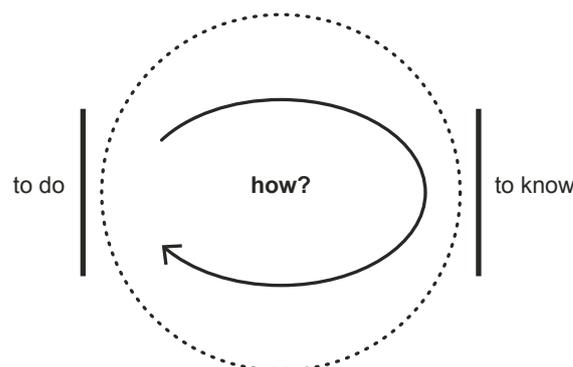
### THE MISSING LINK

The Research Agenda organizes and structures the process of knowledge sharing and development. In line with the ambition of this biennale diptych, the agenda does not put a new, open, and broad theme on the (design) table but presents a series of transformations that we believe to be the preconditions for collective behavioral change. Building on research and insights from previous biennales and on earlier initiatives and research by design of both the curators themselves and of partners, this agenda is first and foremost an invitation as well as a framework for collaboration under the umbrella of *The Missing Link*.

we know for a fact we need to generate, while we have hardly started them. In both spatial and social terms, these transition leaps require major adjustments. Their impact and mutual relationship are often still hard to imagine and that is one reason why it is so difficult to effect the necessary changes. If we couple the transition leaps and keys starting from design, we get a better grip on ways to redesign and reorganize our society, to balance advantages and disadvantages, and to use knowledge and resources to facilitate and even accelerate change.

### TRANSITION LEAPS

In recent years, designers and researchers have already conducted a lot of research into social themes and transformations, either on their own initiative, together with other social actors, or through assignments by national, regional, and local authorities. Pondering the question of how we can best align human behavior with the capacity of the planet, we are not facing a clean slate. It is an undeniable fact that we can only realize the transition if we can translate this huge challenge into bite-sized tasks and assignments at



various scale levels: challenges people can actually address at all levels, ranging from neighborhoods and districts to urban regions, deltas, and the world.

*The Missing Link's* Research Agenda highlights six fundamental spatial transition leaps that together enable us to realize or accelerate change across all of these domains.

### 1. RENEWABLE ENERGY LANDSCAPE

Unlike fossil fuels, renewable energy is produced decentrally and has a bigger and more direct impact on our use of space and on the landscape. Sources of renewable energy not only require different amounts of space, urban morphology also has a greater impact on their energy potential and use. A significant part of generated energy evaporates, for example, due to transport and leakage losses in the existing fragmented housing and mobility grid. Energy efficiency and renewable energy production are therefore not only matters of technological innovation or tax incentives, but they also inevitably involve profound spatial transformations and reorganizations at all scale levels. This, in turn, is a social matter. Indeed, all research shows that across the globe, society's most vulnerable groups pay the highest price for the effects of climate change. How and within what context do we divide the necessary investments between vulnerable and wealthy groups, between city and periphery, between large-scale super grids and individual or collective investments, as we make our way to a renewable energy landscape?

### 2. HEALTHY AGRICULTURE

In recent decades, technological and scientific innovations in combination with expansion have allowed a higher agricultural production. This happened at the expense of the natural system and the quality of surface and ground water and of soil. At the same time, the number of farmers worldwide is rapidly and continuously decreasing under the influence of global market forces, urbanization, and the effects of climate change, and the conditions under which they operate are deteriorating.

While feeding the world's population is becoming an increasingly momentous task, the dominant agricultural model is thus encountering its limits in spatial-ecological, economic, and social terms. In parallel, we are seeing a multitude of new innovative business models that reform the food chain, that want to safeguard soil fertility and use agriculture to strengthen the ecosystem in its entirety. What spatial transformation allows a qualitative, livable and efficient food production, from the smallest to the largest scale, from the most rural to the most urbanized environments? How can we redistribute and configure food production in space to turn it into another lever for ecological, recreational, economic, and social goals and developments – into a new synergy with the soil, the ecosystem, and the surrounding housing grid? Which (urban) landscape suits a healthy agriculture best?

### 3. CARING LIVING ENVIRONMENTS

In the Western world, the silver tsunami is driving up the cost price of (partially) publicly organized or funded care. The standard response to the aging population includes reorganizations and cuts in the care supply. It is becoming increasingly acceptable to explicitly appeal to the long-term self-reliance of vulnerable people and health care users and thus to their social environment and family. Such a reciprocal system is a fact of life rather than a resurfacing problem in other parts of the world. Nevertheless, achieving self-reliance and reciprocity explicitly presumes there is room, both physically and socially, to create solidarity and stronger social networks. How can urban actors and designers create that new space in terms of building typology and area and urban development? This is an urgent question, because it looks like we are moving into the opposite direction: the Western world has abolished many historical social services – supposedly because they are outdated and no longer profitable – and this is having negative social consequences. A society's resilience is measured by the way it treats its most vulnerable members. Can focusing on the creation of a caring living environment bridge the social divide and end the

increasing isolation that undermine society from within? How can we use a broader definition of health – one connected to all aspects of a good life – as a driving force behind the simultaneous renewal of our care system and living environment?

#### 4. SPACE FOR BIODIVERSITY AND WATER

Biodiversity and water are crucial conditions for a good living environment. Like people themselves, they are integrated parts of a cohesive ecosystem that is increasingly under pressure due to the behavior of those very same people and their growing claims on the space. Urbanization, agriculture, mobility, and production have an immense impact on our planet. Because economic considerations are always prioritized, the natural ecosystem often loses to agriculture, whereas both are constantly under pressure of urban growth. This widely used way to colonize nature and space has consequences that are becoming increasingly evident as the climate changes. Nine out of ten natural disasters, for example, are linked to the water issue. The creation of a resilient ecosystem is thus an absolute priority worldwide. And because we are part of that ecosystem, urgent prioritization would help to make our own habitat more resilient as well: through the discharge of peak precipitation and the safeguarding of the water supply in dry periods, for example, and by reducing the heat island effect. The financial and social costs associated with ecological disasters are huge, yet we fail to include the positive contributions a more resilient ecosystem would be able to make to our city landscapes in the spreadsheet of the financial and economic plans we draw up daily in the context of major developments and investments in, for example, infrastructure. Still, that is precisely what has to happen: it is a basic condition for the sustainable future of people on earth. How, for example, can we use the water challenge as a lever for spatial transformations that bridge the divide between challenges, design, feasibility, and funding? How can we ensure that the future resilience of the ecosystem is central to every spatial transformation?

#### 5. A NEW MOBILITY SYSTEM

Technological developments allow the advance of electric cars and self-driving vehicles, of ever-larger container ships and, soon, of electric aircraft. But without a fundamental change in our overall mobility model, with its huge use of space, our individual and social mobility dependence will continue to build up pressure on the space and congestion will continue to increase. To drastically reduce the impact of and the space used by mobility, without sacrificing social connectivity in particular, we have to evolve into another mobility system in which we do not own our means of transportation, for example, but share them; in which the different modes of transportation – from commuter traffic to holidays by air, are integrated within a single coherent system and in which mobility as such is valued and priced differently, that is, on the basis of social and environmental impact and costs. Such a development makes room for new, greener, healthier, and qualitative space in the city and the region. It is a fundamental transformation and it will not come easily; it will require much more than technological evolution alone. Far-reaching political decisions for shared and integrated mobility, but perhaps also for lesser or differently priced mobility, are necessary to make room for new services and organizational models. Can design portray this new organization of quality mobility, integrated in the public space?

#### 6. (RE)PRODUCTIVE CITY

There is a growing awareness of the fact that our current use of resources is finite. That is partly why we see technological developments that change production and logistics processes. Waste, for example, is no longer just a problem now that we perceive it as a resource in itself, and know that sustainable reuse of materials has become economically profitable on a regional scale. Techniques such as laser cutting and 3D printing allow the creation of more flexible, accessible, and localized – more attuned to end-users – forms of manufacturing, recycling, and recovery. The city, with its innovative environment and labor market, is once again recognized as a productive breeding ground for new

industry. This transformation from 'Post-industrial City' to '(Re)productive City' calls for a major change in urban development and planning practices. Space may not be the driving force behind this transition, but the availability of space for and the integration of these new production logics in spatial design are preconditions for

and investments? What keys do we have and what scales do they unlock.

The Research Agenda of *The Missing Link* presents a non-exhaustive list of six political, economic, financial, social, and legal keys that open the door to the necessary social and spatial transformation.

## WE WILL ALSO HAVE TO RETHINK THE EXISTING FRAMEWORKS AND PARADIGMS OF OUR CURRENT SOCIOECONOMIC MODEL.

the accommodation of a varied range of sustainable economic activities. How can we ensure that production and industry's return to the cities generates local added value? How can we as citizens and authorities leave the paradigm of the post-industrial city behind and reintegrate employment, production, and housing? How can we shorten production chains and reduce their environmental impact? How can this affect local employment?

### TRANSITION KEYS

If we really want to make these transition leaps, we will need more than design, imagination, and collaboration: we will also have to rethink the existing frameworks and paradigms of our current socioeconomic model. After all, many spatial explorations and local initiatives and transformations illustrate that the fundamental adaptation of our use and design of the space has to be coupled with new rules and regulations, alternative financing methods, differently organized access to knowledge and resources, and new partnerships and value chains. To accelerate the transition to a resilient and solidary living environment, we not only need to know which existing structures and mechanisms we can use to that end, but also how to adapt and renew them. Which levers do we pull to facilitate changes and new practices? What are the new roles of governments, citizens, businesses, banks, financiers, and major corporations? And what can we learn from the many new forms of reciprocity, from partnerships and from experiments in regulation, right of use,

### A: THE MANAGEMENT OF INFRA-STRUCTURE, GROUND, AND LAND

The management and maintenance of the ground as a natural resource and of that which has been built on it in the past, claims an important part of our means and efforts. To what extent can investments that are necessary anyway and the optimization of (above- or underground) infrastructure, ground, and land management simultaneously help to achieve or guide the intended transition, spatial or otherwise?

### B: RULES AND REGULATIONS

Rules and regulations develop over time on the basis of things we understand, know, and agree on, with the intention of controlling and monitoring those things, but they are usually not the best possible instrument for building the future. Can we think of any rules and regulations that not only control but also stimulate and make room for the future? Does the solution solely lie in the limitation of that which is unacceptable, or should we legally facilitate frameworks that allow spatial change?

### C: FUNDING STRATEGIES

In the context of ongoing urbanization and climate change, many billions are spent on infrastructure. But how can we ensure that these investments are more cleverly linked to international ambitions and climate agreement goals as well as to systematic and effective implementation? How can we rethink the relationship between decision-making processes involving flows of

money and the best possible use of that money – where, why, and how? How can we couple existing means to projects that can really make a difference in the most efficient and direct way? How can we develop spatial plans that are excellent as well as innovatively bankable?

us through a transition process that is exacting to citizens? What new political or administrative settings or arrangements are conceivable that give us, as a society, a better chance to facilitate and guide the transition? And how can spatial designers contribute to the rethinking of governance?

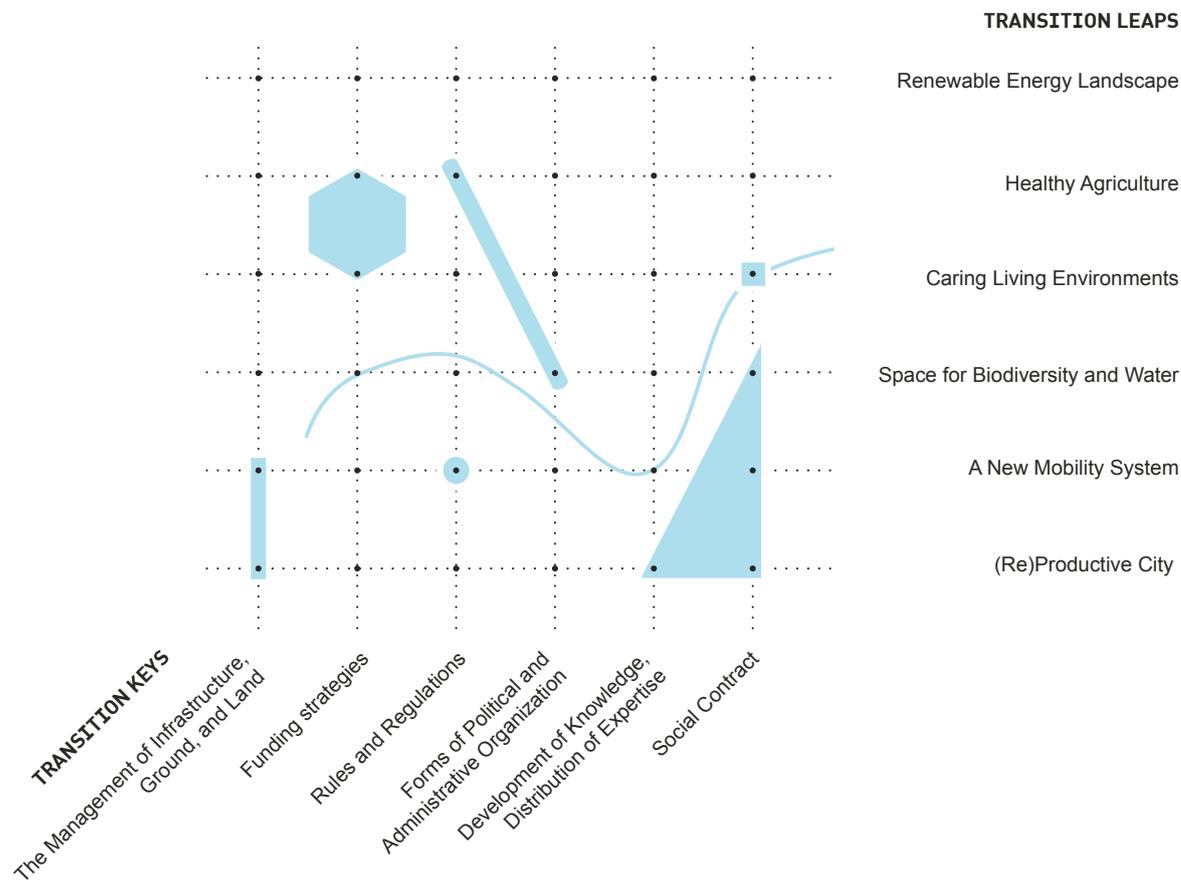
## WHICH LEVERS DO WE PULL TO FACILITATE CHANGES AND NEW PRACTICES?

### D: FORMS OF POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

The consequences of the transition leaps we have to make are far-reaching indeed. And the inevitable question is, therefore, whether our current political decision-making processes can take us to a future in which humankind and the planet are better balanced. Are representative democracies actually capable of carrying

### E: DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE, DISTRIBUTION OF EXPERTISE

Knowledge and expertise are no longer developed in small, dedicated settings to subsequently find their place in the world one step at the time. Digital media and forums distribute new knowledge and insights very rapidly and thus develop a new public space, which in turn changes the way in which new knowledge is developed.



The Research Agenda defines a frame in which, together with several practices, a research and work trajectory is developed. This framework allows us to create links and transcend thematic boundaries.

How can we maximize this potential for the distribution, upscaling, and proliferation of the spatial transformations and behavioral adjustments we need to realize in the physical world? How can we, as designers working on the transformation as a collective project, organize optimum synergy between the physical and the digital public space?

**F: SOCIAL CONTRACT**

The share of income from labor continues to decline while that from capital continues to grow. Further technological advance reinforces this trend, which is not only jeopardizing the welfare model the West developed after the Second World War, but also and increasingly the consumption logic that has now taken control of the whole world. We have to rethink the contract between labor and capital to

create a new solidary and resilient welfare model. Can new partnerships or alliances and can the sharing or commoning of services and products reload concepts such as ownership, right of use, and utility value? Can we get from the spectacular accumulation of profit to the sustainable production of prosperity? And what is the role of shared and public space and of the city itself once social sustainability and networking replace individual consumption as the leitmotiv of urban development?

The Research Agenda of *The Missing Link* is a guiding and provocative framework for our own research and for the programs of the two biennale editions in 2018 and 2020. But it is also an invitation to the design world: to talk and think about the next steps and work on them together in the coming three years.

# **IABR-2018+2020- THE MISSING LINK**

**CALL FOR PRACTICES**

As curators of IABR–2018+2020, we call on innovative practices from around the world to participate in *The Missing Link*: a three-year (from early 2018 to summer 2020) program of knowledge sharing, peer supervision, and joint research by design including presentations and debates at the biennales of 2018 and 2020. This experimental program aims to see practices from various domains and continents and with different backgrounds share insights, breakthroughs, and innovative methods, and to subsequently together explore and, where possible, test how innovative, purposeful practices can help make the transition leap to a more resilient future, to an alternative living environment that is in balance with the capacity of the planet.

With the Curator Statement and the Research Agenda as its context and starting point, the program is organized in three consecutive steps. We use the immediate run-up to as well as the start of the 2018 biennale to draw up a joint work agenda. The 2018 biennale shows work-in-progress on the transition challenges and maximizes its public moment to develop and communicate the range of the narrative. From 2018 to 2020 we will focus fully on the development and testing of methods and spatial transformations, to collect proof that we will present to society and politics at the 2020 biennale.

This Call for Practices focuses on practices that actually close the gap between good plans and ambitious goals on the one hand, and their concrete implementation on the other. Building bridges, everywhere and at all levels, is a creative process that requires complementary capabilities, insights, and expertise. That is why we invite both designers and other social actors, every party that wants to commit and can contribute to a profound sociospatial transformation to a resilient future: truly innovative practices that are active in architecture, urban and neighborhood development, and spatial and environmental planning as well as in policy development, knowledge sharing and development, climate change, the energy transition, water management, food production, creative activity and industry, impact investment, and social enterprise.

We invite those who want to answer our call and actually join us in materializing *The Missing Link* to closely read the documents including all selection criteria and guidelines and subsequently complete the application form available on the IABR website.

We look forward to every submission and especially to a productive collaboration on research into *The Missing Link*.

FLORIS ALKEMADE   LEO VAN BROECK   JOACHIM DECLERCK

**INNOVATIVE PRACTICES**

The IABR–2018+2020 calls on innovative practices from around the globe to actively integrate their realized projects, their knowledge and approaches, and their expertise and experiences in a work and exchange process with the IABR and with other practices during a cycle that will take place from 2018 to 2020 and includes two biennale editions. On the basis of their specific knowledge and ability, the practices that are selected will contribute to the formulating and testing of prospects for action on behalf of profound sociospatial transformation towards a resilient future. This work process also builds on a productive international environment for knowledge sharing and development within which each practice can present, inform, and further develop itself.

With this Call, we invite participants to submit new insights, expertise, and approaches within the chalk marks of the Research Agenda. It is also worth pointing out that it is our explicit objective to go beyond the mapping of the impact on our urbanization pattern of the six transition leaps we have formulated in the Research Agenda. Our focus is on exploring, supporting, and portraying the quality that our living environment can achieve through and thanks to a major transition. Only when we can identify and envision this quality will the transition change from abstract to imaginable – to something we can want. At the same time, the Research Agenda also provides – across all challenges – the context for the quest for ways to accelerate and multiply those changes, especially in relation to the described transition keys.

## WITH THIS CALL, WE INVITE PARTICIPANTS TO SUBMIT NEW INSIGHTS, EXPERTISE, AND APPROACHES WITHIN THE CHALK MARKS OF THE RESEARCH AGENDA.

With this Call, the IABR again and emphatically ignores the global economy's spectacular, iconic projects and hotspots and focuses on the in-between and the beyond at the scale of urban regions, continents, and the world. If we want to achieve global development and climate goals, we have to work on the functioning, livability, and quality of our daily habitat and living environment, not only in the world's cities, but also in parts of the world that find it hard or impossible to keep up with globalization. Through this Call for Practices the IABR–2018+2020 thus explicitly focuses on the transformation of the generic, on building blocks for a solidary future project, and on prospects for action that work in both the centers and the peripheries of our urbanized and globalized world.

By helping to design an action perspective for the transformation to a resilient future, *The Missing Link* wants to contribute to a broader transition and be a forum for social debate about that future with both professionals and the general public.

**COLLABORATIVE TRAJECTORY UNTIL 2020****RUNNING UP TO 2018: COMBINING INSIGHTS AND METHODS**

In preparation of the 2018 work biennale, we will couple selected practices from the Call for Practices with our own IABR Ateliers. We will confront existing views with complementary expertise and possible solutions. The Research Agenda carries the load: standing on the shoulders of previous editions and existing studies and knowledge, specific

topics and statements are put on the table to provoke and, as always, as topics for debate and discussion. The combinations are further accentuated and developed into a collective agenda during the work conference in the opening weekend of the IABR–2018.

#### **IABR–2018**

This work conference sets the tone: the 2018 edition is an intensive work biennale. Once up and running, the exhibition will use the presence of visitors, media, experts, designers, policymakers, and administrators to address, test, and broaden new perspectives. The central question is whether and especially how the many initiatives, insights, and experiments can add up to the necessary radical adaptation and behavioral change. The process focuses on the work in progress of the transition and on showing and assessing the interim results to further improve work methods. The 2018 biennale will not just present a series of good projects or best solutions: informed by the first meeting and the joint scientific, strategic, and design-oriented substantiation, the curators will propose a number of reading and working

#### **BETWEEN BIENNALES**

Using the insights from 2018, we will accelerate towards the future by testing what works and what does not. There is no use in lingering over what we could have or should have done. Learning by doing allows us to gradually find new levers and to expose pitfalls. The biennale diptych requires a longer and above all implementation-oriented commitment. By developing new working methods and tools, the IABR–2018+2020 seizes opportunities to accelerate and multiply the leap from hypothesis to realization. The ambition for 2020 is to set up a continuous work cycle and to substantiate it with concrete projects. By investing in long-term collaborations until 2020, setting up a functional platform for exchange, creating a work tradition that builds on knowledge already acquired, and looking beyond a single IABR edition, we want to help develop a new *modus operandi*, a new organization model that accumulates insights and boosts a multiplication process. Through a succession of work sessions, conferences and debates that link existing cycles, we formulate one necessary step after the other and initiate new research projects and Ateliers.

## THE BIENNALE ACCOMMODATES DIALOGUE, THE EXPLORATION OF NEW COALITIONS, AND THE CONCEPTION OF INTEGRATED FUTURE SCENARIOS.

directions in a work exhibition. This (re) presents the opportunity for and setting of a series of work sessions, lectures, and public debates that explore how we can shift into a higher gear on the basis of the information that has been gathered. The biennale accommodates dialogue, the exploration of new coalitions, and the conception of integrated future scenarios. But it also shows a glimpse of what the future can be: we use our imagination to portray the quality we can achieve through the transition leap, both in the exhibition and on location.

#### **IABR–2020**

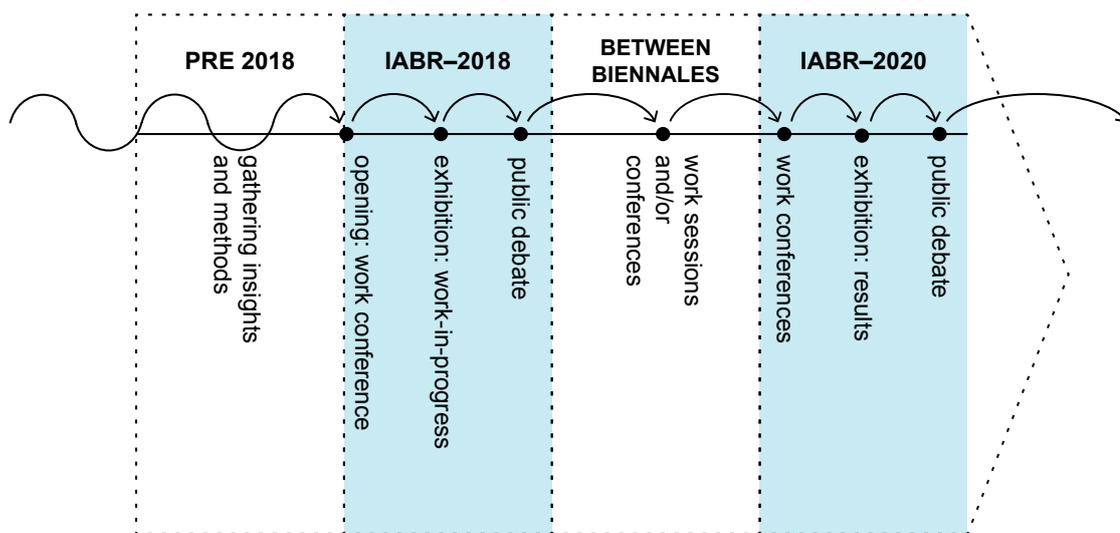
The 2020 exhibition will present the results of the three-year work cycle: actual transformations in the field that demonstrate prospects for action on behalf of the multiplication and acceleration of the transformation into a resilient future. Practices and realizations shown are no longer isolated, like exceptional realizations: they are part of a global community of practice with a shared ambitious transformative approach. By showing and drawing lessons from these results and practices, we continue to

build on the coalitions in 2020 through the dialogue with design practice, politics, and society and further focus on implementation on the basis of the developed prospects for action. That is the contribution that design and the international biennale can make to the realization of its ambitious goals.

IABR-2018+2020 hopes to kick off a cycle of incremental knowledge development

and exchange that will continue beyond the summer of 2020. This cycle can give rise to insights, opportunities, and new coalitions; it is a platform for new implementation mechanisms and new commissionerhip. In this way, we want to contribute to the realization of our ambitious goals, the development of prospects for action on behalf of the fundamental spatial transformation towards a resilient future.

**THIS CYCLE CAN GIVE RISE TO INSIGHTS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND NEW COALITIONS; IT IS A PLATFORM FOR NEW IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS AND NEW COMMISSIONERSHIP.**



*IABR-2018+2020 builds on previous editions and attempts to establish a trajectory of incremental knowledge development and sharing that will persist after the summer of 2020.*

**Would you like to participate in IABR-2018+2020-THE MISSING LINK? Please carefully read the selection criteria and guidelines and subsequently complete the application form available on the IABR website.**

# IABR—

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