

pseudonym - pathway

NEXT HELSINKI PROPOSAL 2015

flexible alternative active urban space **Or**  
**a playground for**



**E V -**

**E R Y -**

**B O D Y**

**by and for  
CITIZENS**

(( back to the cave ))

# proposal for

IMAGINATIVE+PHYSICAL SPACE for everybody

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FLEXIBLE ALTERNATIVE ACTIVE URBAN PUBLIC SPACE  
(f.a.a.u.p.s.)

**In order to increase the presence here and now through activation of mind and body, through changing the viewers role to the actors role from word act in this case.**

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With the development of technologies humans are able to exchange information and quickly interact with one another but spending too much time in virtual reality and/or working on computers we are losing the contact to each other in the physical world - on the streets and at home.

**I see the necessity for alternative active urban public space as a platform for new thinking, social encounters and action possibilities, which can be seen as possibilities for self-evaluation.**

**My aim is to provide citizens a place with the possibility to actually physically affect and interact with their surroundings - space to do and see concrete output of their own activity with all responsibility for it included.**

**Places where the thoughts could be reflected by engaging in the action and the possibility for freeform social encounters.**

In my surroundings I recognize the importance and the pervasive challenge for individuals to find their niche within a collective society where to fulfill the potential of one with the maximum benefit for society. Which in its most effective and fruitful appearance would encourage the interaction between people and support the flow of energies in the world in general.

Dialog and the polarity between individuality and collectivity, the inner and outer, material and immaterial is intriguing as I found it in Nietzsche's text *The Birth of Tragedy*. Nietzsche emphasized the individual will powered by the need to move towards an idea of perfection, leaving the socially recognized conventions aside if they are not supporting the aims of the individual.

The necessity of the existence of both opposite sides as Nietzsche opens relying on and opening up the meaning of the Dionysian( including freedom, physicality, barbarianism, natural enjoyment, ecstasies) and the Apollonian (self acknowledgment, starving, beauty, mimesis, serenity) terms of perception known from Ancient Greece.

Nietzsche offered me a project so to speak - the idea of the necessity for alternative active urban public space as a platform for new thinking, social encounters and action possibilities, which can be seen as possibilities for self-evaluation.

**The possibility to self-evaluation (as an individual and a community) is inspiring and driving me to try out new things** in which I am not an expert. In some cases I see the amateur as a positive factor - a factor preventing me from making the same decision as before.

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The sense of one's own imaginative and physical power is essential for a person in order to realize their potential. The activation of free idea flow is a very necessary, healthy quality that should be practiced in everyday life.

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**Flexible alternative space - a place for self-improvement, rethinking, transformation, updating and questioning one's own and given standards, trying out one's own capacities and interests without pressure, outside of the institutions.**

**It will be a free of charge, always accessible open space where people could meet and practice/ fulfill their ideas and do things by hand.**

**I plan the alternative space as a place outside of hecticness of modern life, as a place without sharp conventions of its own.**

**As a designer I want to live the active role in this project to the citizens and give it to develop according to their needs**

## **-:-THINKING>IDEA>ACTION-:-**

This kind of place has a sense of playfulness in it and could be seen as a **playground for everybody without age limits and without a particular predefined output or result. The main goal is a process in itself.**

**In experimental active public spaces citizens could do things alone or collectively, meet other people and interact with them if they are willing to do so.**

**In the f.a.a.u.p.s. creating the rules should be avoided, or at least minimized. Because the existence of rules is connected to the hierarchies and ownership issues. For instance the rules like “Don’t bring/leave your things here”; “Unauthorized stay is prohibited”; “Fireplace making prohibited” and so on make people feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or even make them feel like criminals or just make them leave too soon.**

**I see the f.a.a.u.p.s. as a process-based, mutable space for citizens, that follows its natural circle of life, taking wind in its sails from different directions according to the needs of users, their own imagination.**

Because only rare things, urban environments or spaces are perfect forever as they are and the constant re-adaptation and re-activation of space by its users is the essential for the sustainable and long life active urban space.

**Space without age limits, so that people from different backgrounds and different age groups could meet, interact and update their own knowledge or learn some old, mostly forgotten hand-crafts and meet points of views that are unusual in their own social circles.**

(Ready-made free-time activities like hand-work- or music instrument- courses are good but quite expensive solutions to be provided for free by the government and too expensive for many people to afford by themselves.

I suggest that it would be cheaper and more effective to provide more alternative social activity-oriented spaces in the city, where citizens would keep each other active and happy (almost) autonomously.

For example retired people could become more involved in spending time with children in pre-schools. That way both age groups could exchange their ways of doing things and learn something new. Also it could be a good way to keep some particular handcrafts alive that are rarely used nowadays and mostly forgotten by the generation of young parents (the age group between children and the elderly). In their turn children could teach or help retired people to use new technology, which is a natural environment for many children but a strange and difficult area for older age groups.)

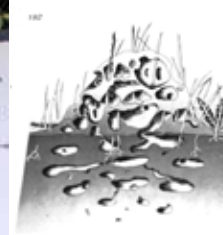
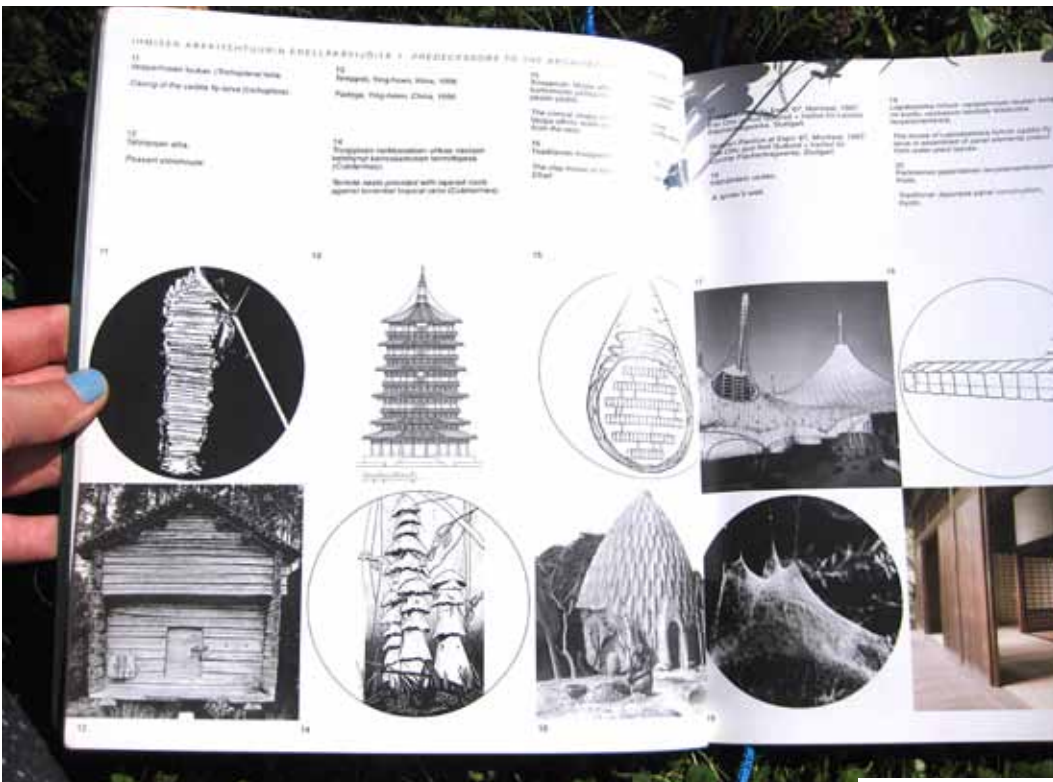
This solution resembles an old way of doing things and brings people closer to each other on a personal relationship level.

# Children

I see children as a very important part of the f.a.a.u.p.s. as they are the future adults and have fresh potential in them. They have potential to become more loyal, peaceful and conscious beings than their parents generation for example and from this point of view they should be provided with all possible activities supporting their development.

The **development towards a better man** introduced by Friedrich Nietzsche in the book Thus spoke Zarathustra(1883) is one of the background reasons for my enthusiasm and interest in providing a flexible alternative active urban public space also leaning on the Carl Theodor Sorensen 's model of **adventure playgrounds** for children with their strong reality feeling - the real action in them. (Junk playgrounds )

Through the example of **vernacular and animal architecture** (see pictures) I want to underline that the skills required to make simple constructions and to use basic materials found on the surface of our Planet are almost instinctive, because they've been practiced for thousands of years by previous generations.



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# f.a.a.u.p.s practically

I gathered here some practical criteria supporting the idea of f.a.a.u.p.s. development:

a. The suitable area for the f.a.a.u.p.s. should be an outside area situated somewhere in the central area of Helsinki City. The Southern Port and areas between Töölönlahti bay and the Kiasma Museum or the area in Merihaka close to the “mattolaituri” - a place to clean the carpets in old Finnish style would be highly suitable. ( see pictures 5-7)

**These areas should not be cross-passing, have natural water basins close to them, can't be covered by asphalt and should have some natural elements like grass or sand around them.**

b. The size of the f.a.a.u.p.s. area should be around 50-400m<sup>2</sup>.

The area should be available for the time of at least five years in order to see the process of changes happening there within a **longer period of time**.

c. The f.a.a.u.p.s. should be founded **site-specifically** - taking the existing physical characteristics and shapes of the space as they are and adding things on top without eliminating the existing characteristics of the area as a starting point.

d. The f.a.a.u.p.s. should be provided with some **basic materials and elements that exist on Planet Earth like sand, stones, water, a hill, possibility for making a bonfire, piles of recycled wood, solar panels with accumulating system and a moat.**

The order of elements should be quite random, so that no one would be afraid to change or break the “order” by starting to do something in the f.a.a.u.p.s.

It would also be good if f.a.a.u.p.s could be provided by the leftover city heat in a controlled way as an alternative and free of charge energy source. Other alternative energy sources like sun energy panels could be useful too and make the f.a.a.u.p.s. even more self-sufficient and sustainable units in case electricity would be needed for some activities.

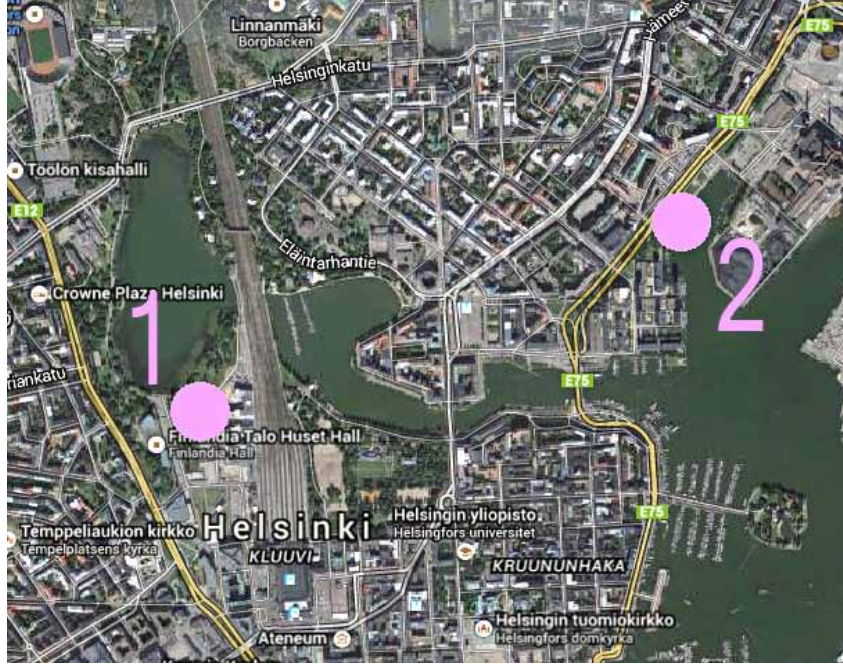
In the beginning there should not be anything ready in the f.a.a.u.p.s., so that anything could appear if the will for action supported by ideas would take place.  
Anything or nothing - as it is an experimental space.

## **Big advanced sandbox - a squeezed Planet Earth**

**A changeable landscape with organic shapes and dimensions differing from daily urban surroundings, exposed to the weather and time conditions - the erosion and the corrosion, with a spatial situation similar to the situation on a constructing sites (but smaller and safer) looks to me like an easily approachable and inviting place for creative thinking and activity in all its unreadiness and visibility of time.**

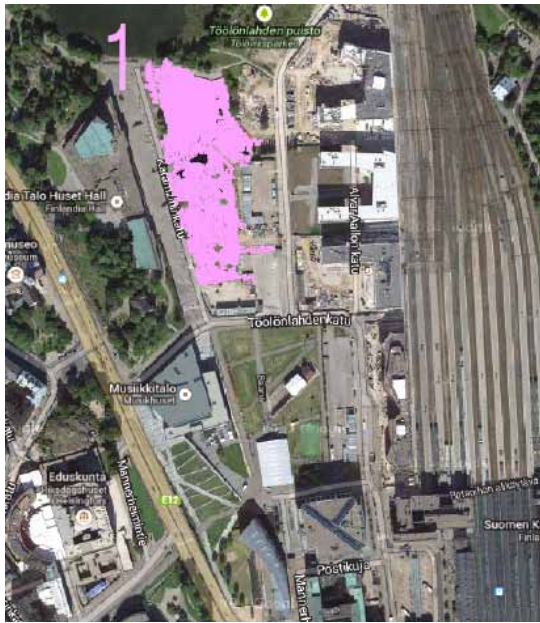
All this nuances and characteristics will provide the space with the most efficient, cheap and flexible elements for a process where all the senses could be used and the sense of presence could be strong and active.



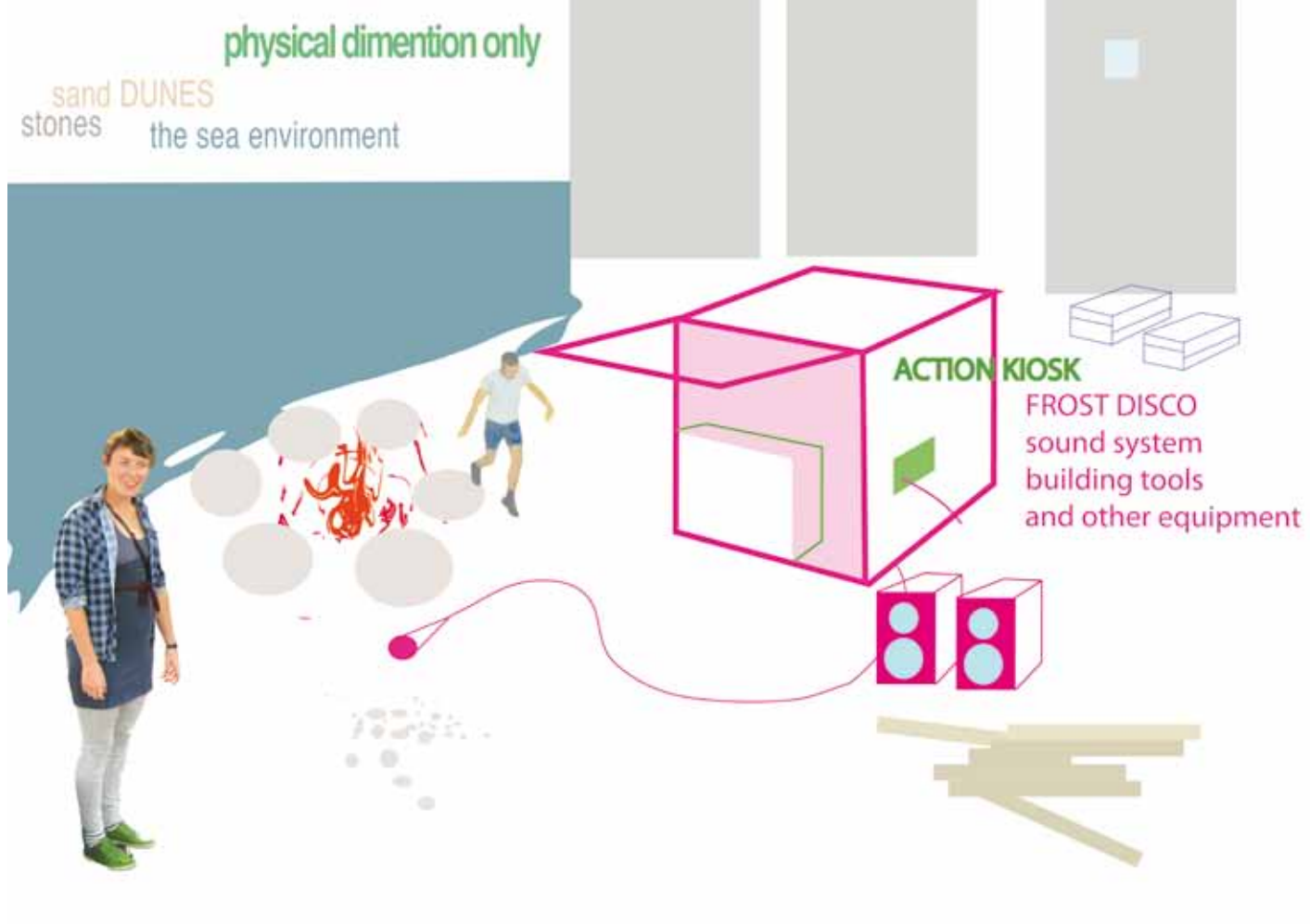


bigger scale map, both areas visible

pictures 5-7







First materials and possibilities in f.a.a.u.p.s.  
Following development of the space is user-centred  
and promoted

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Basic materials and  
elements that exist  
on Planet Earth like  
sand, stones, water,  
a hill, possibility for  
making a bonfire,  
piles of recycled  
wood, solar panels  
with accumulating  
system and a moat

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## Possible documentation

The f.a.a.u.p.s. could be documented by photographing the area from the same spot weekly. Through photographs collected on the spot, the changes happening there will be visible as a continuous process, like in animation.

## introduction of the f.a.a.u.p.s. to the citizens

**It is essential for the existence of the f.a.a.u.p.s. that citizens find it.**

To introduce the f.a.a.u.p.s. to the public there could be arranged monthly a charge free event during the first year from establishing.

For example citizens could be invited to an event of making food on a bonfire together - not everybody has a house or summer cottage with bonfire possibility or a company to do it. The flames of bonfire are magical connected to the very old memory of human. As a basic and necessary vital element in human life it connects people and calms down the restless mind.

Another example - the **Frost DISCO**. While in winter times it is very cold to stay outside and most social encounters besides sport activities happen in inside spaces, where the consumption and usage of alcohol are the leading aspects of presence in the space.

To avoid cold and the consumption - to make the outside more friendly and approachable, the warming up Frost DISCO (possibly around the bonfire) where people can get warmed up by dancing and spend time together could be considerable option and would work well as a high quality social encounter possibility event.

## CHALLENGES OF AN ORGANIZER OR A DESIGNER I SEE

### TOO READY

One of the main challenges I see for a professional designer is not to design/make the f.a.a.u.p.s. too ready and leave the freedom to act and the leading role to its users.

Here I also refer to my experience of designing scenography and costumes for a children's theatre play, to what children believe and the **EXAMPLES OF VERY NICE BUT TOO READY PARKS AND PLAY-GROUNDS**.

### TOO NOT READY

Another challenge and task is **HOW TO INVITE PEOPLE TO CONTINUE UNREADINESS, SOMETHING WHICH IS NOT PERFECT** and how to let them know about the place without using the same tricks as the commercial world does.

I noticed that people are most often used to participate in clearly conceptualized events and actions, to consume only the very readymade products in the context of the city and are not comfortable if introduced to the possibility of entering and participating in the middle of a process.

# conclusions

As I imagine, entering the f.a.a.u.p.s. metaphorically should work as a return to the the cave in the middle of urban surroundings.

Here I return and reflect upon the function of the f.a.a.u.p.s. and referring to Friedrich Nietzsche 's book Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None, where the searcher of a new (socially unspoiled) way of life Zarathustra goes to a cave in order to find himself.

If somebody is lost in the ocean of information and impulses coming from society and media, the return to the primitive, stopping for a moment and thinking is a considerable thing to do and the f.a.a.u.p.s. could be a place for this.

**A place for self-improvement, rethinking, transformation, updating and questioning one's own and given standards, trying out one's own capacities and interests without pressure, outside of the institutions.**

**To improvise with materials through which the immaterial could be approached and same backwards.**

## PICTURES

0 - Alternative Active Urban Space as I see it in the idea level, still saving the openness for the future development

1 - Pallasmaa, Juhani. Animal Architecture.1995. Museo of Finnish Architecture, Helsinki

2 - Turid Hölldobler-Forstyth(from book Pallasmaa, Juhani. Animal Architecture.1995. Museo of Finnish Architecture, Helsinki)

3 - Rudofsky, Bernard. 1965. Architecture without architects. A Short Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture. The Museum of Modern Art, New York

4 -The eviction scene from Erasmus Francisci 's Lustgarten. 1668. North American tree dwellers. (from book Rudofsky, Bernard. 1965. Architecture without architects. A Short Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture. The Museum of Modern Art, New York)

5-7 - aerial pictures - screenshots

8 -9 - visualisation by pathway