Approaching Branded Spaces

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Why is it worth studying branded spaces now? First of all, as brands and branding are radically transforming, brand owners have begun to perceive the relevance and booster qualities of space for branding brands. In a global and fast changing world, branded spaces are becoming icons, cornerstones or lighthouses for brands, for their image and for their relationship to their agents. Space "increasingly becomes (de facto if not de jure) the brand" (Sherry 1998: 112). Even more, as Arvidsson (2005: 236) argues, we are on a way to "end up living in a well nigh all-encompassing brand-space". Brands are enacted and entangled in space more regularly and must be considered with space in mind to be convincing and successful. Branded spaces emplace agents to have an experience that is in multisensual and multisensory association with a brand. Therefore, brand and marketing research has begun to shift its perspective to spatial dimensions (e.g. Hollenbeck et al. 2008, Kozinets et al. 2002, Ponsonby-McCabe and Boyle 2006, Sherry 1998) and scientists who focus on space have gained interest in relating brands and space (e.g. Kirby and Kent 2010, Klingmann 2007, Moor 2003, Pike 2011).

In this context space has become increasingly important for many people, brand owners and scientists alike, because there is a warranted need to conquer space for brand staging. While it is clear that people are interested in the topic of branded spaces, we are interested in not only how but also to what extent branded spaces are approached in a critical way and to what degree branded space affords success. Hence, in a story-like framework we wonder if people are approaching branded spaces as lovers, friends, mutual acquaintances or even enemies and if there are embraces, open arms, a handshake, the cold shoulder or the knife in the back. We believe that branded spaces can be applied to good uses and bad ones as well as take on the characteristics of being progressive and regressive.

Although theoretical preconditions are given, they are not yet to our knowledge combined in a synergetic way in the literature. Inspired by Soja (1989), space has been studied with renewed interest across social sciences since the 1990s which helps to approach, theoretically, branded spaces from the spatial perspective. On the other hand, brand theory has approached branded spaces through the brand perspective but without sufficient implementation of spatial

science. Up until now, there has been no known attempt to close this gap in order to better understand and apply branded spaces.

We believe that nowadays space and brand are in a productive interdependency which leads to new forms of interaction between brands and people in spatial settings. Consequently, this concept is one of the main theses of this book. It is also worth exploration because a multidisciplinary (additive) approach with a theoretical basis is still in the beginning phase and lags behind the practical, concrete developments although it is quite necessary. One may think of examples, mentioned in this volume, like Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Burj Khalifa in Dubai, Eiffel Tower in Paris or Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg (a branded space still under construction). Additionally, neither brand nor space literature has taken the relationship between brand and space into account through a fundamental much less a higher level transdisciplinary (holistic) approach. If we are allowed creative licence, a love story that needs to be told is definitely emerging here with a relationship between theoretical approach and practical application. Hence, this book will begin with a multidisciplinary approach and leave a transdisciplinary approach as a possible sequel.

By now, the reader might be puzzled as we use the term 'branded spaces' as pre-existing and en passant. As far as we know, Elizabeth Moor (2003) uses the term for the first time but not as a spatial manifestation of a brand. She constitutes a branded space as the consumer-body and its everyday movements. Before we continue with our approach to branded spaces, we would like to introduce this term as our identifier and label for the unfolding of brands in space. We have not chosen this term by accident. We purposefully use this term knowing that it is tautological as a space itself is by definition already branded. Without branding in the sense of a marking or localisation, there is no space at all. Branding determines space. Each spatial entity needs to be branded to become and to be observed as a spatial entity. However, to be a branded space the 'basic' branding is not enough. There has to be more. We believe that meaning is necessary as an addition to the basic sense of observing or sensing so that a space becomes a branded space. To speak in metaphor, without meaning a space is nothing more than a container, a meaningless vessel of stone and glass.

Furthermore, there are branded spaces, which can be labeled as branded spaces without any kind of managed brand being involved. One may think of public spaces like streets or squares which gain political importance in times of revolutions like the Tahrir Square during the Arab Spring or city squares on Monday evenings in East Germany in 1989 and 1990 where a series of peaceful political protests against the government of the German Democratic Republic took place. Such spaces are politically branded at least for a specific period of

time. This is the reason why we avoid the term 'brand space' or 'brand land' (Mikunda 2004), 'brandscape' (Sherry 1998), 'brand store' (Kozinets et al. 2002) and 'brand place' (Ponsonby-McCabe and Boyle 2006). The decision would have been problematic as these terms connote a reduction to consumer brands and, hence, lead to equalization with 'spaces for consumption' (Miles 2010). Brand space implicates the misleading assumption that every kind of branded space can be managed. Branded spaces can emerge spontaneously and develop in an uncontrolled manner as well as are owned by no one or the mass.

The core of this contribution, which comprises theoretical guiding principles for branded spaces, is presented in four sections. First, we introduce our understanding of 'brands' to make a connection to space possible. Second, we unfold approaches to space in due consideration to the spatial turn. Third and based on the conflation of brand and space, we develop our concept of branded spaces which is a springboard for the contributions in this book that are then introduced. As already mentioned, we would like to emphasize that branded spaces in this volume is considered from different perspectives with an eye towards cultural, social, philosophical, architectural and managerial perspectives to branded spaces with knowledge being drawn from different disciplines although the disciplines stay within their own boundaries for the most part. We regard this as an essential and open-minded multidisciplinary discourse as this book enters unknown territory.

Brand

The phenomenon 'brand' has developed into a global key issue as it is nowadays difficult to imagine social, cultural and consumer life without brands. On the one side, brands are cornerstones which provide faith and orientation in the daily jungle of information overload. On the other, almost everything today can be branded like products, services, organizations, people, events, buildings, streets, cities, regions or nations (Coomber 2002). Hence, brands are engraved in our everyday and it is not clear any longer who 'owns' the brands.

Brands are omnipresent and made to be interesting. Therefore, it seems logical that more disciplines than just marketing as the original one deal with brands and branding with social sciences and cultural studies leading the way (e.g. Escalas 2004, Hellmann 2003, Holt 2002, 2004, Liebl 2006, Woodside et al. 2008). It is also important to note that the understanding of brands as a trademark has changed over the last decades whereby the following concepts can be observed as influential. Focusing on a managerial and making aspect, brands are regarded as techniques (Domizlaff 1992), personalities (Aaker 1997), or

identities (Elliott and Wattanasuwan 1998). Focusing on an emergent aspect, brands are regarded as symbols (Liebl 2006), archetypes (Holt 2004), social creations (O'Guinn and Muniz 2010), performances (Singh and Sonnenburg 2012) or cultural resources (Arvidsson 2005). From our perspective, brands have a story to tell.

Parallel to the above mentioned developments, it can be additionally observed that there is a shift from the owner's perspective, which means that he/she manages the brand, to the agent's perspective, which means that the agents 'make' the brand. In this regard, we quote Liebl who differentiates between owner and possessor of a brand:

> "Brands may legally 'belong' to companies and be 'managed' based on decisions taken by management, yet they are 'in the possession' of consumers, because the latter exploit and experience brands, interpret them in their own way, compare them with other brands, and share their experiences and fantasies with other consumers. And the way a brand is perceived often has little to do with the ideal image of the brand's essence in the heads of the marketing managers." (Liebl 2006: 29)

Before the advent of new media, brands were solely created by the brand owner and mass advertising used to profile a brand image in the agent's head. Brand communication was considered a monologue and people were trapped as a passive recipient of the content. The development of new media has begun to dissipate the boundary between brand owner and brand agents, hence, influencing all kinds of communication from face-to-face to digital. In the course of their increased communicative power, brand agents become an active part in the brand communication. Therefore, brands "are created by interactions of multiple parties, institutions, publics, and social forces" (O'Guinn and Muniz 2010: 133, Ind et al. 2012), which we term 'co-creative'. Consequently, brand owners lose their claim to leadership and are in a 'dilemma' as the brand image dilutes and the brand takes on more a life of its own in the imaginations and in the behaviors of the agents.

It can be stated that new media democratizes brand communication. Particularly, the brand monologue progresses to a brand 'polylogue' (Sonnenburg 2009) or a "process of interagency" (Kozinets et al. 2004: 658) between brand owner and agents. The active role can be described accordingly: Brand agents can be regarded as 'prosumers' (Toffler 1980), 'produsers' (Bruns 2008) or 'bricoleurs' (Holt 2002). In the polylogue, they create and swap brand content in conformist and even nonconformist ways. Agents "tend to be tricky wild things who find their own uses for marketed things and brands to be more interesting than those intended by marketers" (Sherry et al. 2006: 18). They are

motivated to engage themselves as brand content carries meaning and gives meaning to their lives and (inter)actions:

> "Meaning defines brands, and people make meaning. People make meaning through social means: they make meaning through their interaction, through the institutions they have created and maintained, through accommodation and negotiation with marketers, through rumors, through politics, and often in reaction to a disruption in the social sphere. Brands are meaning." (O'Guinn and Muniz 2010: 133)

The other way around, meaning helps to structure agents' physical and mental worlds and their interactions with brands. The relation between brand and meaning is based on a high incidence in current brand theories plus models (e.g. Arvidsson 2005, Holt 2002, Liebl 2006) and resonates as well in authors' contributions of this volume. O'Guinn and Muniz (2010: 135) put it nicely into a nutshell by using a spatial metaphor which describes a brand as a vessel of meaning. Previously stated in our own words, a brand as a container or vessel carries various content but is only a branded space when meaning is added to the space. Staying with this metaphor, the main 'role' of the brand owner is then to pre-structure or design the initial shape of the vessel and fill it with intended meanings to evoke responses from desired agents.

    Once again, we have to emphasize that a brand owner can only try to evoke a specific meaning from the agents. The brand permeates the 'polylogue' between the brand owner and agent and meaning is created or 'co-created' in our terms between the two even if the brand owner did not intend it. Branded spaces are one manifestation to evoke brand meaning. Before we dive into this topic, we would like to approach 'space' to better understand the concept of branded spaces in this volume.

Space

It is common sense to say that space has become a common place in many social sciences, with geography leading the way, due to the renewed interest and transformation of interpretation of what a space is. Under the umbrella term "spatial turn" (Soja 1989: 39), a new understanding of space has developed which regards space as a social category: "(Social) space is a (social) product." (Lefebvre 1991: 30) Following this thought, space is an everyday life phenomenon.

    Therefore, space is not only a 'real' thing or a container but also, even more, a social construction and an entity for cultural practices and change as well as social relationships. Space emerges and permeates by movement and

perceptions as well as action, interaction and usage of various agents. With regard to cultural practice, Lefebvre (1991: 38-39) formulates a conceptual triad of spatial practice (perceived space), representations of space (conceived space) and representational spaces (lived space) showing the socially constructed multidimensionality of space. However, "if no localization can be determined, the space concept is used only metaphorically" (Löw 2008: 43).

It is, hence, important to mention that we do not want to play physical space against socially constructed space in this book. To the contrary and as a trend for the contributions of this volume, space is neither an absolute given nor a mere construction. Space is an interdependency between the two. This leads to the question how could space be conceptualized to approach branded spaces? The spatial theory of Martina Löw (2008) is a fruitful way as she focuses on the duality of the physical and social dimension treating "spaces as products of action which at the same time have structuring power" (Löw 2008: 33). We briefly introduce her spatial understanding which comprises the two basic and concurrent processes of 'spacing' and 'synthesis' to create a space.

> "*Spacing* means erection, building, or positioning. Examples are the display of wares in a supermarket, the self-positioning of people in relation to other people, the construction of buildings, the surveying of national borders, the networking of computers to form spaces. It is positioning in relation to other positionings. In the case of mobile goods or of people, spacing means both the moment of positioning and movement to the next positioning. Second, the constitution of space also requires *synthesis*, that is to say, goods and people are connected to form spaces through processes of perception, ideation, or recall." (Löw 2008: 35)

The process of spacing is more related to the physical dimension of space whereas synthesis is more connected to the socially constructed dimension of space. It has to be pointed out that Löw narrows the synthesis to single human beings which means that synthesis is a psychological process. We would like to widen this understanding of space to include social processes, and not just a singular psychological process, by drawing from our ideas of brands and applying them to space. First, we do so by asking you to recall the polylogue and co-creation of meaning between the brand owner and the agent in the previous section. Next, we do so by borrowing from Liebl's concept of brand, who differentiates between owner and possessor of a brand because the latter exploits, experiences, interprets, compares and shares fantasies about brands with other agents. Likewise, we now ask you to extend these ideas to agents who could co-creatively synthesize space in their interaction. Specifically, we highlight the fact that interpretation is not stressed by Löw. Only through the social interpretation

of space, can agents construct meaning which is a prerequisite for action or interaction.

To summarize briefly and concisely, there are the social processes of co-created synthesis and interpretation to be added to Löw's understanding of space which could be seen as second and third processes, respectively. Spacing, synthesis and interpretation are influenced by physical objects perceived by agents such as buildings, goods or people. "In brief, the day-to-day constitution of spaces involves perceptions that are grounded in both the external effect of social goods and other people and in the perceptual activity of the constituting agent." (Löw 2008: 41) This external effect can be described as an 'atmosphere' which is connected to a specific place. Each place has an atmosphere provoking and instantiating perception and, hence, space-building of diverse agents. Atmospheres are common realities between the perceiver and the perceived (Böhme 1993: 122).

In contrast to spaces, places do not disappear. Places are mainly branded by architecture and design. Therefore, they are prepared for perception and space-building. Places emplace spaces. In other words, if the rhyming is somewhat distracting, places put spaces into position. A concrete place can have different spaces with different practices by different agents superimposed upon it, either one after the other or at the same time as well as in relation to each other or not in relation. While seeming incongruous, there is actually, according to Foucault simultaneity of offerings, a 'heterotopia', that is "capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incom-patible" (1986: 25). Equally addressing simultaneity, we will add an exaggerated but plausible element for maintaining interest that a place is a vessel for spaces which are vessels for meanings.

Branded Spaces

We will now approach branded spaces for our readers using, first, a qualitative and then a more equation-like method. The first one has been alluded to already and that is the story-like framework. Stories and storytelling are ubiquitous in our world and branded spaces are dependent upon stories and the situations out of which stories emerge. No matter where they are, branded spaces are created in the mind and in communication just like stories. Additionally, meaning is mixed or co-created among brand owners and/or the social milieu and the agents. The next approach is presented as an equation. While it may appear that two ways have been taken in our approach, we see the two as being interrelated. Especially the concepts of spacing, synthesizing and interpreting in the equation lead to

story creation. However, we are getting ahead of ourselves in this story and we will return to a sequential narration.

A branded space consists of two defining dimensions, place and space, as well as processes which bring them into being. Place is the more physical dimension of a branded space which becomes a branded place through branding and perceiving. Space is the more social dimension of a branded space which emerges through spacing, synthesizing and interpreting. It has to be said that dimensions and processes are not mutually exclusive but rather distinguished by interdependency and co-occurrence as well as by the idea that the "constitution of space … generates places, just as places are prerequisite to the coming into being of space" (Löw 2008: 42). The following semantic equation encapsulates the correlation between dimensions and processes:

Branded Space = Place (Branding, Perceiving) + Space (Spacing, Synthesizing, Interpreting)

Branding a place is a complex task as the history of the brand has to be regarded and different people are involved in the branding process like brand owners, architects or designers but also consumers, journalists or demonstrators who occupy a place. While the brand owner's brand meaning is embodied in the branded place, we can also state that the branded place takes on more a life of its own in the imaginations and in the behaviors of the agents. No one is in total control of a branded space. Although the brand image from the owner could be defined as being diluted, it could also be argued that what the brand owner thinks about its branded place could offer people, first, an experience of pure form. The place of a branded space could be regarded as an "inter-textual commodity" (Arvidsson 2005: 245) that anticipates and pre-structures the agency (at least perceiving) of agents. They are "given contours of and raw material for the exercise of their productive agency" (Arvidsson 2005: 247).

The agents' first exercise is *perceiving* of the place especially the raw material like architecture and design. However as mentioned earlier, it is not the raw material itself but the atmosphere of a brand connected to its place that provokes the perceiving of the agents. "The primary 'object' of perception is atmosphere. What is first and immediately perceived is neither sensations nor shapes or objects or their constellations, as Gestalt psychology thought, but atmosphere …" (Böhme 1993: 125) The fact that branded places pre-structure or manipulates the perception, and hence the emotional and personal reaction, does not automatically imply that branded places discipline the perceiving entirely. They open up atmospheric possibilities without defining how they will be perceived. With an eye towards the equation, perceiving of a branded place is the

initial process which is dependent on the specific situation of the agents. Without perceiving of the branded place, there is no branded space at all.

The triad of *spacing*, *synthesizing* and *interpreting* finally creates a branded space. Spacing means that an agent or a group of agents position themselves in the branded place so that 'their' branded space can emerge. It is a social act as an agent positions himself always in relation to other positionings like architecture, design, or other agents. To form a branded space, agents have to connect or synthesize the positionings respectively their perceived atmospheres. During the process of synthesizing agents interpret the spatial configuration of the positionings and make meaning or a story out of it. The process triad to create a branded space is a personal, social and situational experience. The objective of the brand owner is to set more or less precise brand coordinates so that the brand is not diluted too much and experienced consistently up to a certain degree. Within those brand coordinates, agents are free to create their (shared) branded spaces. To summarize briefly, brand owners try to influence and orchestrate the agents' perceiving of the branded place. However without spacing, synthesizing and interpreting by agents, a branded space would not come into being. Therefore, branded spaces are co-created between brand owners and different kinds of agents. Our conceptual approaching to branded space offers guidance for the premises that follow and a springboard for the authors' contributions of this volume.

A Sketch of this Volume

Branded spaces is a complex theoretical and practical phenomenon so that a variety or relationship of current concepts, precepts and interpretations of brand and space is reflected in this volume as well as in the diverse practical and disciplinary backgrounds of the authors. Some contributions explicitly clarify what their understanding of this relationship is. Others have an implicit understanding of branded spaces which arises by reading them. Even if the authors do not constitute some homogeneous whole, their perspectives, concepts and contents of branded spaces coalesce in this volume. One idea that emerges quite often, however, is that stories or narratives are inherently in juxtaposition with branded spaces. Subsequently, we not only wonder how people are approaching branded spaces through use of a story-like framework but also corroborate through the authors' contributions that story-telling is embedded in branded spaces. These two former elements, consequently, lead us to the creative attempt to weave a story-like framework in this section. Hence, a multiplicity of story-telling unfolds.

To address the complexity and the multidisciplinary challenge of branded spaces, we approach this topic via different categories. The decision for the specific categories and under which category we place a contribution is not easy and we acknowledge that others could dispute our categorization with their own reasons which we would applaud and actually encourage. These categories are not definitive or mutually exclusive, as there is considerable overlap in the ways that problems and challenges are defined and theorized. However, we believe there is an inner arguable logic which leads to our setting of the following categories:

- Places and possibilities
- Facts and figures
- Senses and sensualities
- Stories and situations
- Critiques and consequences

Places and Possibilities

Shakespeare said the world is a stage and sooner or later a story unfolds on a stage. Since stories are embedded in branded spaces, then why not conjecture that the world is branded spaces. After all this is the section for possibilities and why not draw this inference. Housing, buildings, communities, cities, states and countries, places by any other name, are often seen as branded places, whether by the condition of purposeful architecture and design or even when there is the avoidance or lack of any kind of design. Branded spaces have dual, sometimes paradoxical elements, and are, consequently, real and imagined or real and not real. Albeit with poetic license, we refer to Shakespeare again and soliloquize 'to be or not to be real'. So even though branded spaces have real boundaries, they do not conform to nature but are symbols. How is this possible with a natural place within destinations? The understanding lies in the principle that the branded spaces concept is not related to nature, in the case of some natural destinations, but rather the experience of the destination as a co-construction of meaning between agents. This section will explore branded spaces as related to destinations among other possible relationships that have their ups and downs between brand owners and agents known as viewers or tourists.

Stephens Balakrishnan and *Kerr* identify in their contribution *The 4D Model of Place Brand Management* the branding of places and nation branding in particular as risky business while warning at the same time that lack of a purposeful design is just as uncertain. They use examples of the United Arab

Emirates to propose and support a four phase model for place branding and place brand management which incorporates the fundamental concept that brands communicate. Place brand management must consider finances, politics and culture because, ultimately, brand management is about managing meaning which in turn have impact on a nation financially, politically, and culturally.

Related to symbols, architecture has a role in a destination's image. Furthermore, according to *Specht*'s contribution *Architecture and the Destination Image: Something Familiar, Something New, Something Virtual, Something True*, architecture can be icons as they can connote or give meaning to the environment, thus, making it worth the while of a tourist's visit. The idea of 'can give meaning' is relative. Not all architecture encourages consumption as a tourist destination. The features on the continuum of unusual to usual tap, respectively, into the tourist's emotional need for uniqueness and orientation. Specht emphasizes and differentiates architecture from other destination symbols as real or physically present which is catching the attention of many stakeholders.

In their contribution *Branding Views Marketing: Lessons to Learn for Destination Management*, *Gronau* and *Adjouri* continue the quest to explore the uncertainty about the application of brand principles to places. Among other intentions, they focus upon the questions about branding tourist destinations and the complexity of identifying a symbol for a country. They are adamant about stressing the emotional or unperceivable elements of a destination as opposed to specific products in order to go beyond the dilemma of the life cycle of a specific product. Additionally, they offer a model for branding tourist destinations and discuss its ramifications.

Housing as a concept for city branding with their built in risks is a current topic. *Klein* and *Rumpfhuber* take another step into risk or possibility in their contribution *The Possibility of a Social Imaginary: Public Housing as a Tool for City Branding*, by considering if social housing with their defined mode of sustainability and resilience is a tool for city branding. The focus is upon Vienna and considers the post-war welfare state as well as recent developments that include the current financial crises and cuts in social programs. They explore Vienna's social housing as an integrated part of the rental market which is argued to keep the rent in the free market relatively low and the quality of housing relatively high.

Facts and Figures

In our material world people usually want the 'real' facts and figures to be convinced. We always want to see something in black and white because this is

our collective mind as human beings. Allow us now to be a little overdramatic in the storytelling. While facts and figures are seen as safe, uncertainty lurks. As a matter of fact, no pun intended, facts and figures can be manipulated or just be downright confounding. Consequently, why is this section here? While branded space is not black or white according to theoretical guiding principles but about being more or less branded, we also know branded space is designed space with design solutions with predetermined parameters. Consequently, facts and figures are required for the predetermined parameters. Drama aside, we continue to build our argument for 'facts and figures' by a guiding principle that states branded spaces are 'real' albeit not real at the same time, which allows us to work outside the paradoxical box structure or at least on the peripheral. Aristotle's adage that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts is also applicable to the contributions in the facts and figures section.

As figured out in *Bielzer*'s contribution *Corporate Branded Spaces: A Glance at Today's Diversity and Some Historic Origins*, the experience society clearly plays a critical role in the narration of corporate branded spaces. Specifically, corporate branded spaces are 'built' because they are concisely planned in the corporate marketing for the visitor to contribute to the experience and give meaning to the space by being actively involved in the experience. Social interaction and relations are needed to facilitate success. Likewise, these interpersonal relationships add to the concept that the space is real and not real because it is symbolic space. The types and dimensions of corporate branded spaces are very complex in contrast to usual branding. The customer, financial investments, heterogeneous target groups, multiple stakeholders and professionals working in and visiting the space all add to the complexity of corporate branded spaces.

The value of branding for consumer business, although recognized for centuries, is lacking in real estate business according to *Ankenbrand*, *Mussler* and *Mussler*. Albeit a few studies focusing on corporate brands in real estate, they identify in their contribution *Brand Value in Real Estate: The Financial Contribution of Property Brands* a need to examine brands of single real estate properties specifically related to the financial value. Their contribution is to begin to answer how and to what extent single property brands sustain the creation of real estate value. Additionally, they give facts and figures in the terms of euros and cents about how this value can be determined.

The boom in giving naming rights for football stadiums and large multipurpose areas for branding purposes beyond the typical geographical feature or famous person is investigated by *Bezold*. In his contribution *Naming Rights for Sports Stadiums: Sponsor versus Club – Who Makes the Proper Brand?* a comparison of selected examples from Germany, Europe in general

and the USA is offered. Specifically, he examines the question of how effective this sponsorship tool is and whether a sponsor or the sport's club has more influence on the brand. The classic advertising value analysis is used to unearth interesting facts about the strategic partnerships that are contemporary and possible for the future.

Senses and Sensualities

This is the section where intimacy emerges from the story. Do not expect, however, gratuitous sex related to see it, like it, buy it. This is a story about nurtured affection in a relationship not to mention a scientific story. The senses, in particular the visual and acoustic, have important roles to play as well as sensuality which is connected to how one is inclined to gratify the senses for the sake of aesthetic pleasure. Appeal, however, becomes a question of individuality and interpretation. No matter the intent of branded spaces, they can have different kinds of impact especially in the embodiment of the retina experience.

Front stage are the London flagship stores of Nike and Apple but do not think that stage setting is the same for these two giants reading out in *Palaiologou* and *Penn*'s contribution *The Branded Experience: Decoding the Spatial Configuration of Flagship Stores*. While sight and sensation are engaged in each store to make a transition of the retina experience to one of embodiment that could in principle be recalled at any time, the spatial configuration is sensationally different in regards to orienting or disorienting the customer for their story or brand narration. Why? Each wants to use space to enhance its individual cultural solidarity with its individual marketing profile. The authors use Depthmap for Visibility Graph Analysis to examine if each flagship store creates, in their own words, a configured branded experience and spatially 'tellable' branded story.

Imagine a management strategy to increase sales by trying not to sell anything! Right, it is an unusual idea but one that *Liu* introduces, substantiates and then implements as a case study in her contribution *Applying Theory of Branding Synergy on Consumer Experience and Spatial Design: A Case Study*. Since the cycle of 'see it, like it, buy it' is no longer singularly vital for retail and the importance of how the customer relates to the brand has surfaced, Liu explores how customers can interact with a brand in an intimate way through physical setting. Specifically, two brands are combined and a synergy is created as an event through spatial design. The brands are able to explore new markets by the management process of having the brands be consistent and innovative at the same time by using experience and space. Paradox!? Maybe, maybe not. It is

certain, however, that the consumer has been encouraged to participate in the story by telling their own stories with space.

In her contribution *The Conceptual Design of Branded Spaces by Means of Sonic Branding Kastner* leads us into the acoustic arena in the story-like framework of branded spaces and focuses our attention on the impact of sonic branding. Just as there can be processing of the optic nerve experience into one of embodiment, so does the auditory nerve experience lead to a physiological, emotional and cognitive incorporation which we could describe as sensual. Kastner is not a proponent of a noisy stage setting, which would include muzak and jingles, because auditory perception is delicate. In an attempt to give a specific character to space that does not produce negative reactions, acoustic orientation should target feelings of completeness, stability and trust. Consequently, brand managers are strongly encouraged to consult with a sound designer.

Stories and Situations

Owners of a branded place tell stories in order to involve people to co-create a story through their synthesis and interpretation of the perceived information about the place and the way in which it is branded. A story is multidimensional. Secondly, a story is situational. A story can also be fictional or non-fictional. The authors in this book understand these ideas and the contributors in this section actually go one step further in this section to tell the story of branded spaces by, actually, telling us stories. In essence we have stories within the story. Although it is necessary for them to begin with 'once upon a time' and turn on the valve of our empathy, it is not necessary to have an ending. You will begin to create branded spaces connected to a branded place. Enjoy.

Emotion over reason is touted as the undisputable influence to purchase a product. Although there is a consumer need, it is, essentially, to achieve a feeling of a certain standard of being loyal to one's values. Therefore, brands generate trust. *Engl* addresses in his contribution *South Tyrol: Destinations Can Be Brands Too* the question if it is possible for South Tyrol as a tourist destination to establish itself as a brand using the same principles as mentioned before. To gain market shares for the region, he explores South Tyrol as 'synergy rich in contrast' while moving beyond concepts of price war competition and the one dimensional story of one of the most beautiful recreational landscapes in the world. The end of the story is still unknown.

Branded spaces are stories and a brand's story is essential according to *Vihinen* and his contribution *A Guggenheim in Every City*. Managing a branded

place is story telling business and Vihinen is a story teller who has experience, battle scars and suggestions for a happy ending. The building boom of cultural projects in Northern Europe has been woven into a patchwork story in which everyone wants a Guggenheim in their city for destination branding. The plot always thickens when the construction experts enter with the shocking news of the usual overspending of the budget to the tune of 100 million euros. White swans become black swans. In actuality there are no villains or heroes but the moral of the story is that professional culture managers should manage these projects with input from construction experts and not the artists or politicians as the primary sources.

The simplicity of 'once upon a time' that ends with 'and they all lived happily after' is not a target in *Dauscher*, *Dietrich* and *Schmidt-Bleeker*'s contribution *AAALBANIA: Possibilities and Limitations of Nation Branding Using the Example of Albania* because this represents undesired, complexity reduction. Rather, the approach to branded spaces and Albania in particular is translating complex strategic considerations into a simple story but not a simplistic one. While the story can be simple, diversity and otherness as well as conflict and various values build up the complexity. Hence, an exciting and successful branded space can emerge through a narrative brief that deals with the plurality of life. Interest, sympathy, excitement, joy as well as empathy and perhaps even shock are diverse elements that could emerge and reach a diverse audience instead of a limited target audience. Fasten your seatbelt for some twists and turns.

Critiques and Consequences

Following the story-like framework we know that every literary piece, not to mention scientific work, has critics and critiques. This also holds true for our contributing authors on branded spaces because they are quite vocal, so to speak, in their critiques of how to approach branded spaces. Concurrently, we see that they go even one step further with their critical thinking and point out consequences according to choices taken in branded spaces. Each reader must also become a critic himself and decide if there is agreement or not with the premises stated. The content of the readers' critiques as well as the critical reflections of the authors are neither right nor wrong but necessary, in our eyes, in order to approach branded space. Needless to say that complexity arises as necessary ingredient in the story just to add one more 'C' to the section. On second thought, we will warn you about the 'cannibals'.

Miles expresses serious concern about contemporary cities as spaces for consumption in his contribution *Branded Space; Branded Consumers: Spaces for Consumption and the Uncomfortable Consequences of Complicit Communality.* He critiques consumer consumption that draws attention to dissimilarities between social groups that indicate one is flawed or a loser. He argues that some residents' relationship with the city implicates a compromise of a moral nature. Limitless choice as well as 'bottomless pit' consumption is questioned in the branding of space and particularly in galleries and museums. In these branded spaces created by star architects on high-end real estate, 'real' is presented as themes and interactive experiences that are neither real nor in-depth. Nonetheless, people choose to take advantage of the consumer lifestyle offered so there is complicit communality. While branded space has power, there appears to be lack of social responsibility.

The contribution *Cannibal Architecture Hates BANANAs: Post-Communist Rebranding of Historical Sites* focuses attention on the dilemma of branding spaces in urban spaces with historical sites, particularly, in the case of Budapest. Conflicts in the relationship between those who want transformation and those in favor of conservation are examined. *Mureşanu* and *Mureşanu* critique the ideas of the transformationists known as the cannibals and the conservationists referred to as the bananas as well as the consequences that are obtained. The cannibals and the bananas are neither inherently good nor bad characters in this framework but their compromises lead to dissatisfaction and disappointment with the results, ultimately, that they vilify each other.

Leontiadis adds a strong transdisciplinary approach to the narration of branded spaces in her contribution *Syntax of Intervention in Historically Significant Public Open Urban Spaces.* Psychology, anthropology, philosophy and spirituality are woven into a tapestry to harmoniously fit new architectural elements inside public spaces with historical significance. Before taking pen to paper for a plan, one must consider the evolutionary moments of man with his levels of artistic and literary brilliance that are expressed by the historical space. Any architectural outcome ought to be branded rhythms and patterns germane with the heritage space. Leontiadis draws attention to the idea of historical layering that could even bring in the culinary discipline with the idea of layered cakes or strudel although one should be aware of the complexity in this approach. A unified conceptual whole is never simple but always a space to make inhabitants feel at home.

The contribution *Branding as Enabling Knowledge Creation: The Role of Space and Cognition in Branding Processes* takes the reader into the perspectives of cognitive science which are then transposed to ideas that constitute branded spaces. Specifically, branding involves generating some kind

of new knowledge in the perceiver. *Peschl* and *Fundneider* go beyond the usual critique that branding is or could be manipulation because the environment controls or determines the mental state, into the constructivist concept that the environment modulates internal knowledge. They explore the question of how branded spaces could trigger the creation of new knowledge regarding a brand. While it may not initially be appealing for the business environment that wishes to manage and calculate, a joint journey of the perceiver, the brand designer, the brand and networks is predicted to be more effective. The key is to enable.

We believe we have successfully entered with this book the unknown territory of branded spaces. It is interesting to note that very few contributors have used the terminology branded spaces but have danced around it with various terms and definitions while staying within the conceptual boundaries of branded spaces. In the introduction we stated our use of a story-like framework and wondered if people would approach branded spaces as lovers, friends, mutual acquaintances or even enemies and if there would be embraces, open arms, a handshake, the cold shoulder or the knife in the back. As is true with all complex relationships, it usually takes time to make a commitment even if the relationship is solid. We believe we have seen this story-like framework of relationships and commitment with the phenomena of terminology usage. Staying within it, the contributors have taken various approaches to branded spaces in their 'storytelling'. Nonetheless, the authors have implicitly or explicitly focused on different aspects of our semantic equation consisting of two dimensions, place and space, and the processes of branding, perceiving as well as spacing, synthesizing, and interpreting in approaching branded spaces. Collectively they explain or tell the complex story of branded spaces. Thanks to all the authors for their contributions and commitment to this volume. We hope that we motivate readers to accompany us in exploring this territory in the future. Indeed, the topic of branded spaces is an inspiring 'playspace' for practice and theory to create a transdisciplinary approach to branded spaces.

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