# **Evaluation Criteria of Parasitic Architecture\***



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Abstract: It has been observed in the literature that examples of installations, sculptures or building elements and their annexes are stated as parasitic architectural products. These misinformation also indicate that parasite architecture features are issues that need to be studied and discussed. Research problem is "can the determined features, land use, relocation, originality, flexibility, compatibility with human scale, ease of assembly, sustainability, be used in the questioning of parasitism of a building?" In the study, symbiosis, parasite and parasitic architecture were questioned in the literature. As a result of the concept and case analysis, the properties that will enable the structures to be characterized as parasites have been determined. Within the scope of the research, the parasitism of one hundred structures, which were obtained through literature research and considered as examples of parasitic architecture, were evaluated. Generalizations have been made by trying whether these determined features can be used in the questioning. There are a few main features that distinguish parasitic architecture from other architectural approaches. These features, which were determined as a result of the researches made on the literature and internet resources; are independence from space, relocation, flexibility, size, assembly, sustainability and originality. The most important thing to note here is that all these features follow each other. Each feature allows another feature to exist. In order to talk about the parasitism of a structure, the parasite must provide all these features. The aim of this study is to add descriptive new criterias as well as bringing together the existing ones, in a certain framework in order to define the concept of parasitic architecture by examining a limited number of sources related to parasitism. For this purpose, a significant number of samples found were examined according to the determined parameters by listing their tags and parasitism characteristics separately. As a result, it is determined that there are many installation and infill examples defined as parasites in the literature, although they are not parasites. It is considered that these false acceptances will decrease as number of studies explaining the concept and its examples increase. Keywords: Symbiosis, symbiotic relationship, parasite, parasitic architecture, evaluation criteria.

#### Parazit Mimarinin Değerlendirme Kriterleri

Özet: Literatürde enstalasyon örneklerinin, heykellerin ya da yapı elemanlarının ve eklerinin parazit mimari ürünleri olarak belirtildiği gözlemlenmektedir. Bu yanlıs bilgilendirmeler parazit mimari ve özelliklerinin çalışılması ve tartışılması gereken konular olduğunun göstergeleridir. Araştırma problemi; belirlenen arazi kullanımı, yer değişimi, özgünlük, esneklik, insan ölçeğine uygunluk, montaj kolaylığı, sürdürülebilir olması özelliklerinin parazitlik sorgulamasında kullanılıp kullanılamayacağıdır. Çalışmada literatürde simbiyoz, parazit ve parazit mimari sorgulanmıştır. Kavram ve örnek analizleri sonucunda yapıların parazit olarak nitelendirilmelerini sağlayacak özellikleri belirlenmiştir. Araştırma kapsamında literatür araştırması ile elde edilen ve parazit mimari örneği sayılan yüz adet yapının parazitlikleri değerlendirilmiş, bu belirlenen özelliklerin sorgulamada kullanılıp kullanılamayacağı denenerek çıkarımlara varılmıştır. Parazit mimariyi diğer mimari yaklaşımlardan ayıran birkaç temel özellik vardır. Literatür ve internet kaynakları üzerinde yapılan araştırmalar sonucunda belirlenen bu özellikler; mekandan bağımsızlık, yer değiştirme, esneklik, boyut, montaj, sürdürülebilirlik ve orijinalliktir. Burada dikkat edilmesi gereken en önemli husus tüm bu özelliklerin birbirini takip etmesidir. Her özellik başka bir özelliğin var olmasına izin verir ve sebep olur. Bir yapının parazitliğinden söz edilebilmesi için parazitin tüm bu özellikleri sağlaması gerekir.Bu çalışmada amaç, parazit mimari ile ilgili sınırlı sayıdaki kaynağı inceleyerek bir yapıyı parazit olarak tanımlayabilmek üzere, hali hazırda var olan kriterleri bir araya getirmek ve tanımlayıcı yenilerini ekleyerek belirsizlikleri bulunan parazitlik kavramını belirli bir çerçevede tanımlamaktır. Bu amaçla bulunabilen önemli sayıda örnek, künyeleri ve parazitlik özellikleri ayrı ayrı listelenerek belirlenen parametrelere göre incelenmiştir. Sonuçta parazit olmadığı halde literatürde parazit olarak tanımlanan birçok enstalasyon ve infill örneği bulunduğu tespit edilmektedir. Kavramı ve örneklerini açıklayıcı çalışmalar arttıkça bu yanlışların azalacağı değerlendirilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Simbiyoz, simbiyotik ilişki, parazit, parazit mimari, değerlendirme kriterleri.

\* It is produced from the master thesis named "Feeding from Existing; Parasite Architecture" written under the consultancy of Dr. Selin Arabulan.

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The interest in parasitic architecture has increased with the realization of the possibilities it provides such as offering practical and economical solutions to housing and shortage of space, criticizing existing and misapplied regulations, making unused structures usable, functionalizing and adding value to the blank façades of existing buildings, providing fast and practical construction process. Its examples in the world are increasing day by day.

However, it has been observed in the literature that examples of installations, sculptures or building elements and their annexes are stated as parasitic architectural products. These misinformation also indicate that parasite architecture features are issues that need to be studied and discussed. In the study, symbiotic relationship, symbiosis, parasite and parasitic architecture were questioned in the literature.

In the framework of the study, parasitic structures and the factors determining the parasitism were investigated. Some criteria are required for structures to be defined as parasites. In order to determine these criteria, first of all, a general literature review was made. By investigating the studies, [1]"Mesoparasite: A Symbiotic Affair", [2]"Parasitic Ecologies: Extending Space Through Diffusion Limited Aggregation Models", [3]"Strategic Intervention: Parasitic Architecture", [4]"Re-inhabiting the Void", [5]"Parasites on Architecture: An Assessment of Building Additions in Mahmutpaşa, İstanbul", [6] "Urban Parasites: Re-appropriation of Interstitial Spaces in Architecture Through the Act of Graffiti'', [7]"Parasitic Architecture'', [8] "Emancipating Urban Interventions: Parasitic Spaces, [9]"Traces of The Past Utopias in Contemporary Architecture: Parasitic Architecture", [10]"Parasitic architecture", [11] "Alternative Approaches in Architectural Design Education: 'Parasitic Architecture' as a Space Design Strategy", [12]" İç Mimari Tasarım Eğitiminde İnformel Yaklaşıma Bir Örnek: Parazit Eklemler Çalıştayı" and all parameters they used to define the parasitic architecture, the evaluation tables been created to examine the structures systematically. Than a total of a hundred structures were reached by searches made on search engines with the keywords "parasitic space", "urban parasite", "parasite architecture", "architectural parasite", "parasitic building", "host building", "parasitic structure", "parasitic space".

As a result of the concept and case analysis, the properties that will enable the structures to be characterized as parasites have been determined. Research problem is "can the determined features, land use, relocation, originality, flexibility, compatibility with human scale, ease of assembly, sustainability, be used in the questioning of parasitism of a building?" Within the scope of the research, the parasitism of one hundred structures, which were obtained through literature research and considered as examples of parasitic architecture, were evaluated. Generalizations have been made by trying whether these determined features can be used in the questioning.

#### 2. SYMBIOSIS AND PARASITE

Symbiosis literally means 'common life'. It refers to any kind of relationship between two or more different species. Symbiotic associations are common in nature, from bacteria or fungi that form close alliances with terrestrial plants to those between giant pipeworms and sulfur-oxidizing bacteria that live together in the depths of the ocean (Figure 1). Even humans carry a reminder of an ancient symbiosis (mitochondria and organelles in their cells that were once symbiotic bacteria [13,14]. Organisms in this togetherness are called symbionts, and large organisms that contain organisms smaller than these symbionts and are its food source are called hosts.



Figure 1. Symbiotic relationships between creatures [15].

Symbiosis is divided into three sub-titles as mutualism, commensalism or parasitism according to the benefit of the symbionts.

### **3. PARASITIC ARCHITECTURE**

Parasites, one of the important subjects of biology, are defined as an organism that clings to another creature in order to survive and provides its vital needs from this creature called the host. There is an ecological relationship between the parasite and its host, and this relationship is symbiotic, that is, it requires coexistence.

Parasitic architecture is defined as the architecture of adaptive, temporary and exploitative forms that establish strong relationships with the host building and/or buildings and expresses a design approach based on alternative space production in the urban space [16,17]. It can be defined also as symbiotic architecture. Symbiotic architecture is the execution of human needs, the defense of man from outside effects and response to related changes [18, 19]. The lead of the parasitic architecture concept is German architect O. M. Ungers. Ungers defines parasitic architecture as the informal and unplanned use of large structures for personal purposes. A parasite must work with existing infrastructures and use them for its own survival [7].

Parasitic architecture can also be thought as an architectural intervention that embodies and transforms a constructed form. The parasitic building redefines and restructures the host building. The state of being a parasite to the host building is defined as being added to the existing structure of that building and using its energy. The parasitic building has the ability to transfer energy from one system to another [20].

### 4. DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Especially can be argued that the parasitic architecture emerged after World War II as a result of rapid and unhealthy urbanization emerged with the Industrial Revolution that modern architecture criticized these problems and seek solutions to them and also the development of the ideas of the period brought new currents. Because the need for a rapid recovery after these conditions caused an increase in the number of architectural utopia proposals produced in this period. Exploring new possibilities for housing in an unhealthy and disorganized city, while at the same time criticizing the city, by removing the devastating consequences of both wars, has become the main goal of the replanning.

As a result of the literature research, it was seen that the first parasite structure examples emerged in the 1960s. Examples which can be named early parasites include, Pascal Häusermann's Settlement Units (1962), Haus-Rucker-Co's Baloon For 2 Vienna (1967) and Oase No.7 (1972), Jean-Louis Chanèac's 's Parasitic Cells (1968), Marcel Lachat's La Bulle Pirate (1970), and Atelier van Lieshout's Clip-On (1997) (Figure 2). The common point of these examples is to criticize the urban environment that existed at that time.



Figure 2. Respectively; Pascal Häusermann's Settlement Units (1962), Haus-Rucker-Co's Baloon For 2 Vienna (1967) and Oase No.7 (1972), Jean-Louis Chanèac's Parasitic Cells (1968), Marcel Lachat's La Bulle Pirate (1970) and Atelier van Lieshout's Clip-On (1997).

When it comes to the 21st century, it is seen that the parasite samples have more contemporary forms with the unlimited design possibilities developed thanks to scientific developments and technologies, and they touch on more current issues. Inefficient use of lands, which is one of the biggest problems of today, is one of these current issues. In addition, the number of examples criticizing existing zoning regulations and trying to draw attention to problems such as homelessness and poverty is increasing day by day.

#### 5. FEATURES of PARASITIC ARCHITECTURE

There are a few main features that distinguish parasitic architecture from other architectural approaches. These features, which were determined as a result of the research made on the literature and internet resources; are independence from space, relocation, flexibility, size, assembly, sustainability and originality. The most important thing to note here is that all these features follow each other. Each feature allows another feature to exist. In order to talk about the parasitism of a structure, the parasite must provide all these features.

The two most important features of parasitic architecture examples are independence from space and relocation. The first condition for a structure to be a parasite is that it must meet these two properties at the same time. Authenticity is a feature that develops with the desire of the parasitic structure to highlight its own existence and to be the focal point. The parasitic structure provides this with its form, material, size, message or the importance of the structure to which it is articulated. Sustainability, flexibility, small size and ease of assembly are the benefits of relocation (Table I).

Table I. Example of Evaluation Chart (Improved authors)
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1 <sup>st</sup> PART: IDENTIFICATION TAG							
	Name of th	Name of the Structure					
	Designer						
	Location						
	Date						
Structure Graphic	Host	Defined	Undefined				
	Application Status	Proposal	Applied				
		Temporary	Permanent				
Reference (URL)							
Purpose of Construction							
2 <sup>nd</sup> PART: PARASITIC PROPERTIES							
1. Is there a land use?	Yes	N	lo				
2. Can it relocate?	Yes	N	lo				
3. Is it an original design?	Yes	N	lo				
4. Does it have a flexible design?	Yes	N	lo				
5. Is it human-sized?	Yes	N	lo				
6. Is assembly quick and easy?	Yes	N	lo				
7. Is it a sustainable building?	Yes	N	lo				

### Land Use

Architectural parasites are defined as structures that penetrate or even attack existing structures. Given their relationship with the host structure, they are adaptable, short-lived, and exploitative [1]. Parasitic structures can be articulated to one or more facades, roofs, installations, inside or below of the building or urban equipment they choose as a host, or they can be articulated between more than one host. Through these features, they do not occupy an area on the ground. At this point, it can be said that the first point where a parasitic structure is "parasited" is the grounds of existing structures. Parasites obtain these space needs indirectly from existing structures (Figure 3).

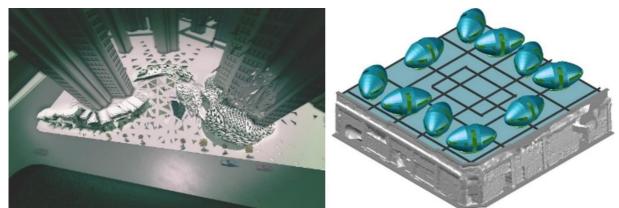


Figure 3. Use of Land -Unuse of Land (Left: Urbarasite Right: A Sneak Peak)

The first feature to be provided within the scope of the study was determined as 'land use'. Buildings that answer "Yes" to the question "Is there any land use?" cannot be considered as parasites. Therefore, samples 7, 9, 11, 12, 21, 48, 71, 72, 80, 82, 84, 87, 90, 98 cannot be considered as parasites due to their land use (Table 2).

#### Relocation

The fact that parasitic architecture examples can be articulated to the facades, roofs, installations of existing structures and between more than one structure allows them to be displaced in some possible cases. This displacement means that they can be re-joined into other structures with physical properties parallel to the structures to which they were previously articulated [21]. The fact that the parasites are in singular forms and small volumes, produced as prefabricated and can be attached and dismounted makes it easier to move (Figure 4).



*Figure 4. Displaceable - Unreplaceable Structures (Left: Oase No.7 Right: The Niemeyer Sphere)* 

'Relocation' is the second feature considered for the buildings that provide land use. As in land use, buildings that do not have this feature are not examples of parasitic architecture. Samples 31, 34, 35, 37, 39, 46, 47, 52, 58, 70, 75, 85, 96, 97 cannot be qualified as parasites because they cannot be displaced.

There are also a few artifacts in the table that are not considered examples of parasitic architecture, although they provide both space utilization and displacement characteristics. 15, 26, 36, 45, 61, 62, 69 and 73 are among these examples (Table 2). Among these examples, the works numbered 15, 36, 45, and 61 are not an architectural work, but a work of sculpture. The work no. 62 is a contemporary addition made within the scope of the restoration of a historical building. The work numbered 73 is not a building, but an architectural element (canopy) and can be considered as a contemporary addition. Artifact 69 is an urban object.

## Originality

In the examples of parasitic architecture, on the one hand, the structural and programmatic integrity of the existing structure is preserved, on the other hand, it is observed that they cause a transformation in the articulated structure. This transformation can be explained by a new structural situation consisting of the combination of parasite and host structures, in which the boundaries of the existing structure are redrawn [4]. This new structural situation can draw attention by making visible new spatial possibilities that the citizens were not aware of before, small touches can create big spatial-experiential effects [4]. At the root of these effects is the parasite's desire to be a landmark in the city. Even though it moves with the structure it is articulated to, it tries to bring itself to the fore in order to destroy the existing urban identity. This visibility is usually provided by the form of the parasite. The size of the parasite, its material, the message it wants to convey and the importance of the host to which it is articulated to existing structures, giving a message that criticizes the "use of land" and tries to draw attention to this issue. In this context, it would not be wrong to say that all parasite structure samples are original.

### Flexibility

The concept of flexibility means that when the parasitic structure is displaced, it can adapt to the structure it chooses as a new host. This harmony is provided both physically and functionally. In a physical context, flexibility means being able to attach to a new structure, and all parasites have this ability. Functional flexibility is a feature of open-planned parasite that is not designed only for a single purpose. These parasites have a function according to the user's intended use of the structure (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Flexible Structures (Left: Parasitic Cells Right: Rucksack House)

When the structures are evaluated in terms of flexibility, it is seen that all of them provide this premise. It can be said that all parasitic structures are flexible because of the displacement feature.

### Small Size

Parasitic architectural products are designed in minimum volumes according to human dimensions and needs in order to be statically rigid because they do not need land and adapt to existing buildings and use their structures. The most important reason for this is not to damage the load-bearing properties of the buildings to which they are articulated. Because the existence of the parasite depends on the presence of the host structure. At the same time, the limited space in which the samples designed between two or more buildings will be located can be counted among the reasons for this. Another reason is the ability of displacement of parasite. The smaller the size of a structure, the easier it is to relocate. In addition, this supports the sustainability of the parasite. As the size decreases, the energy requirement and carbon footprint of the parasitic structure also decrease (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Dimensions in parasitic architecture [Left; Excrescent Utopia Right: Hong Kong Club Hotel]

When they are evaluated in terms of size; All structures are smaller in size (modular structures by module) as the smaller the parasite, the easier the handling will be.

#### Ease and Speed of Assembly

When evaluated in terms of assembly, which is one of the other benefits of the displacement ability, it is seen that all the remaining 64 structures provide this feature. In order for the parasite to separate from the existing host and articulate to the new host, its assembly must be easy and fast. All parasites therefore provide the premise of 'assembly'.

#### **Sustainability**

Sustainability, on the other hand, must be addressed in several different ways. It is functionally provided when evaluated as a benefit of displacement. The parasite continues its life by changing its function according to the needs of the new host. Buildings 1, 3, 10, 23, 24, 28, 30, 33, 63, 78 and 95 are functionally sustainable buildings. The concept is directly proportional to the dimensions. As the size decreases, the energy requirement and carbon footprint of the parasitic structure also decrease. All buildings (modular structures on module basis) except building 76 are small in size, so they are in this sustainability class.

The fact that they are made from recycled, recyclable, or environmentally friendly materials or use sustainable technologies are also different indicators of the sustainability of the parasite. Buildings 17, 20, 28, 29, 30, 42, 55, 65, 76, 92 and 95 due to sustainable technologies; buildings 8, 18, 20, 22, 24, 29, 57, 68, 99 and 100 made of recycled materials; structures 2, 5, 16, 17, 19, 25, 27, 40, 67, 74 and 86 made of recyclable materials and buildings 14, 32, 33, 44, 49, 50, 51, 53, 56, 59, 60, 64, 66, 89, 91, 93 and 94 made of wood , one of the environmentally friendly materials, can be considered as sustainable buildings (Table II).

In the 1960s, parasitic architecture emerged as a reaction to the existing city skyline and land use. Therefore, the parasite of a structure also means that it is independent of a land on the ground. Compared with the data obtained from the table, it is seen that the question "Is there a land use?" is a qualified question that can be used in determining the parasitism of a building. However, it is known from the researchers that this problem is not sufficient on its own and that a parasitic structure should have the ability to displace as well as being independent from the land. For this reason, the question 'Can it relocate?' asked to the structure described as a parasite should be evaluated together with the

question 'Is there any land use?'. The use of the concepts of flexibility, size, ease of assembly and sustainability, which are other benefits of relocation, and the questions related to these concepts, in the determination of parasitism in the absence of relocation can lead to misleading results. Although the concept of originality is one of the most basic features that comes with the approach of parasitism to the city skyline, it seems to be ineffective when used in determining parasitism. As a matter of fact, it is seen from the table that some buildings that use land and cannot be moved are original. In this regard, when the concept of 'authenticity' is examined in more detail (for example, as the message given by the parasite, not as form or material), it is predicted that righter results can be obtained.

### 6. DISCUSSION

These examples, which stand out as a dominant form in the urban texture, survive by being articulated with the existing structures with an approach that criticizes the existing urban silhouette and order. It is foreseen that it will take a long time for these examples, which show a different way of existence from the conventional architectural approaches, to be accepted by the residents of the city, local governments, and many countries. For these reasons, it is thought that many of the parasitic architecture examples remain only as suggestions. Some of the applied examples were implemented illegally because they did not comply with local regulations. This illegal situation can raise the stagnant silhouette of the city, which is criticized by parasitic architecture, to a chaotic level. In order to prevent this process from occurring, it is important to determine the characteristics, purpose and boundaries of the parasitic architecture. In order to prevent this, parasitic architecture should be fully accepted by the architectural culture, and some limitations should be imposed on these practices within the framework of international, national and local regulations. By understanding the parasitic architecture over time, this chaotic situation can be prevented, and the message intended to be given by the parasite architecture can be better understood.

The need for living, working, resting and entertainment areas will increase rapidly due to the increase in the population in the future and the prediction that this population will predominantly prefer urban life. Economic trends, sustainability culture and protectionist approaches emphasize that it is the most appropriate practice to update the existing one and to continue its use with small interventions, instead of building new ones. It is an undeniable fact that parasitic production will be one of the solutions to the architectural problems of the future when we look at the area and building potentials in cities. When the examples of parasitic architecture are examined, they provide change and adaptation in the existing urban area, lifestyle and structure. In doing so, they can be demountable, and they can grow and shrink. In summary, PARASITE architecture promises EASY ADAPTATION to new living conditions.

### 7. RESULTS

64 structures that met all the criteria are accepted as parasites out of 100 buildings evaluated as examples of parasitic architecture in the literature. Based on the data in the table, it can be said that the relationship between the parasite and the host structure was established entirely for the benefit of the parasite. The important thing in this relationship is the survival of the parasite and the host structure has no decision in this relationship. It is the parasitic structure that determines which host it will establish a structural relationship with. In terms of spatial relationship, supporting the host structure as a usage area or as a function is again only determined by the parasite structure. While it may not establish a spatial relationship with the host, the parasite may also undertake a complementary function to the host structure. This is entirely at the discretion of the parasite (designer) and is temporary. In possible cases, the parasite can leave the host and find another host.

When evaluated in terms of form and material, the parasite is generally incompatible with the host. The reason for this is that the structure that should be emphasized and visible and symbolic in this relationship is the parasitic structure. The parasite is usually smaller in size than the host. The reason for this is that relocation can be carried out easily and quickly. Another reason is not to damage the statics of the host structure. Access to the parasitic structure varies according to the relationship

between the parasite and the host and the state of articulation. In summary, the relationship between the host and the parasite is completely under the control of the parasite. It is the parasite that takes almost all the benefits out of this relationship.

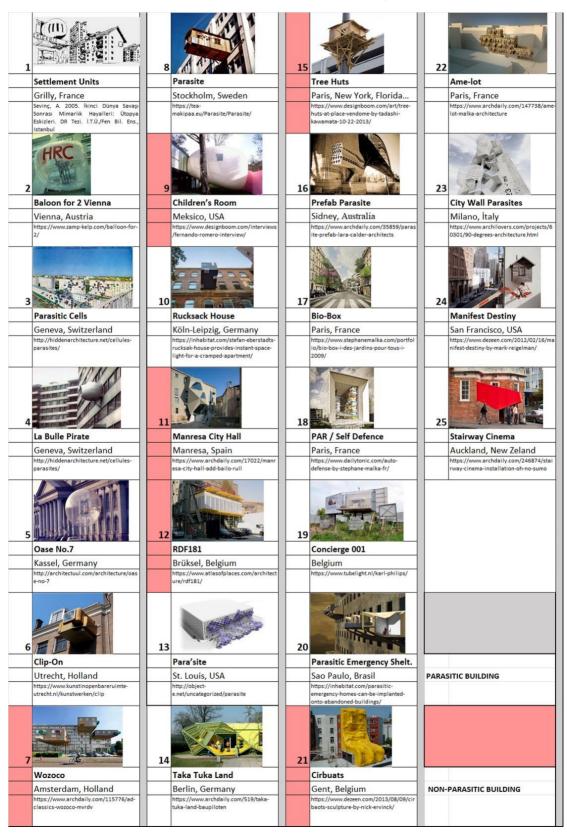


Table II. Parasite Architecture Evaluation Chart (Improved by authors)

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27	A-Kamp 47	34	Didden Village	41	The 9 April Garden	48 Støperiet
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28	Homed	35	Growing House	42	The Cube	49 Detached (Cabin)
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	Sleeping Pods		House Attack		Your Rainbow Panorama	Port9 New Bridge
2.	London, England https://www.archdaily.com/770386/thes e-detachable:pods-aim-to-provide- shelter-for-britains-homeless		Vienna, Austria Buenos Aires, Argentina https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wi ki/House_Attack		Aarhus, Denmark https://www.archdaily.com/469611/your- rainbow-panorama-olafur-eliasson	Paris, France https://inhabitat.com/pont9-proposes-a- parasitic-takeover-of-a-paris-bridgeto- create-a-voluntary-ghetto/pont-9- stephane-maika-8/
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31	Rooftop Office	38	Hotel Everland	45	Fallen Star	
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	Haven		Hofstraat		Slow Up-Rising		Sliver House
	Gard, France		Gent, Belgium		Kalabriya, Italy		London, England
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	Buenos Aires, Argentina		London, England		Valencia, Spain		Perugia, İtaly
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53	Workshop in the City	60	Casa Parasito	67	Light House	74	Parasite Office
2 (j		-		-			
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54		61	FARCO	68		75	
	A Sneak Peak		Redball Project		Tube Innsbruck		House Extension for a Cellis
	Perth, Australia		Various Cities		Inssbruck, Austuria		Chaville, France
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	Dachkiez		Bunker Gallery		Bridge of Aspiration		
	Berlin, Germany		Paris, France		London, England	PARA	SITIC BUILDING
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57		64		71			
S	Antepavilion	<u> </u>	De Nieuwe Kerk Enst.		Legal/Illegal		
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76 Hong	Kong Club Hotel	Walk On (Balcony)	Bow-House	97 The Niemeyer Sphere
Hong	Kong, China	Gliwice, Polonya	Herleen, Netherlands	Leipzig, Germany
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77	84 bre Suspendue	Opod Tube House	Lamp Parasite	98 Urbarasite
	lly, France	Hong Kong, Japan	Moskova, Russia	Seul, South Korea
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80 Great	James Street 87	Eco-Pods	Parasitic CN Tower	
Londo	on, England	Boston, USA	Toronto, Canada	
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82	89	96	Respective and the second second second second second second second second second second second second second s	
	e Seydoux-Pathé V.	Excrescent Utopia	Hutong Bubble 218	
	France ww.dezeen.com/2014/06/04/re	London, England https://www.designboom.com/readers/e	Beijing, China https://www.dezeen.com/2019/11/25/hu	NON-PARASITIC BUILDING
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