



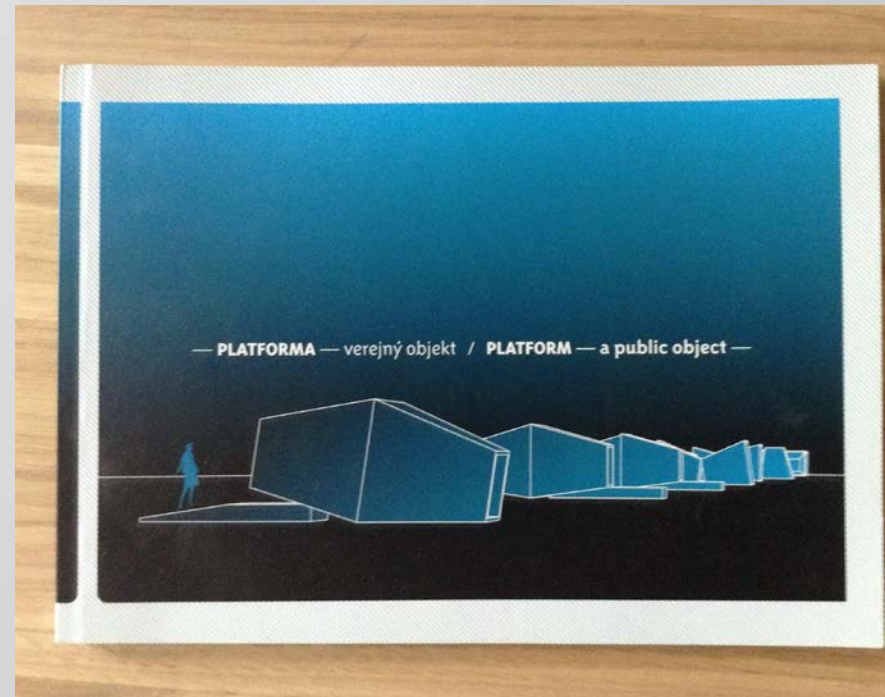
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## *Platform – A Public Object*

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*Book contribution describing a cross-disciplinary, collaborative project in Kosice, Slovakia, resulting in a multi-functional public 'sculpture' destined for the City street.*

Submitted by Justin  
Carter



# OUTPUT

Output Type – Book contribution  
Publisher - British Council and KOD Architects  
(ed. Martin Uhrík)  
Year Publication - 2008  
Pages - pp. 10-25  
Slovak with English translation  
ISBN - 978-80-969966-4-3

Title  
Platform – A Public Object

Submission No.  
3

Authors/Creators  
Justin Carter and Robert Mantho



*Image of back cover of book including rendering of Platform using CAD*

# CONTEXT

The invitation to work on this project followed an International Art & Ecology workshop I led at Gallery KIT in Trondheim in 2005 (funded by the British Council). One of the workshop participants - Martin Uhrík (KOD Architecture) enjoyed the experience of intensive cross-disciplinary collaboration and thought that a similar approach would be useful in the Kosice Context. He invited me to design and lead a 5-day workshop considering the idea of 'Speakers Corner' in Kosice.

I decided to ask GSA MSA colleague Robert Mantho to contribute to this process and together we took on the challenge of generating ideas for a 'Speakers Corner' in Kosice. Concepts and models would be developed through cross-disciplinary workshops comprised of Slovakian students based in Kosice and beyond. Our role in the project was about designing, managing and facilitating an intensive process which could tolerate difference and uncertainty, and at the same time generate and harness a variety of possible outcomes.



*Images of Platform included in book alongside text describing the project*

# CONTEXT

## Site:

“The proposed site is situated on Kosice’s Main Street, which is the historical center of the city. The exact location overlaps with an underground archeological complex that is viewed as one of the important attractions of the city, but this has little impact on its surroundings and offers little visual stimulus. This significant place on the Main Street is currently without an activating programme. However, the space is used by skateboarders and during the summer the entrance to the underground archaeological site is used as a stage for small events. One of the aims of the workshop is to better understand the significance of this site and to speculate on its potential use”.

(Extract from project brief)

A key contemporary reference was Mark Wallinger’s installation at Tate Britain ‘State Britain’ in which he replicated the anti-war protest site of Brian Haw opposite the Houses of Parliament. Another important reference was the invisible monuments of Jochen and Esther Shavez-Gerz.



# METHODOLOGY

What role and form could 'Speakers Corner' take in a post-communist, East European city? A nontraditional architectonic solution aimed to encourage communication between city inhabitants and institutions, and to create an unconventional space for presenting art in the heart of the city. This book documents the process of the design, including our design for the workshop - which was a catalyst for the architectural/sculptural output.

"It was important to find partners with experience in this sphere. Collaboration with British instructors, who have ample experience in similar projects, proved most beneficial. They played a substantial role in forming the central theme of the project in the subject area of architecture and socially committed art. They also assured top-class tutoring for the workshops,"

(Martin Uhrík, Partner from KOD architects)



*Image of the workshop space and two participants in discussion*

# METHODOLOGY

“The design process for Platform came out of an intensive 5-day workshop involving students of Architecture, Design and Fine Art, facilitated by Justin Carter and Robert Mantho (Glasgow School of Art). The results of this collaborative, cross-disciplinary workshop were incorporated into a physical design for ‘Platform’, by KOD architects. Two variable tapers and a movable stage became a part of Hlavná ulica in Košice”.  
(Extract from book)

**Vital Questions in relation to the prospect of a ‘Speakers Corner’ for Kosice:** Is there a need? A problem? What is the need? How can it be addressed (audience/participation) Who is it for? Platform, monument, memorial? How can we avoid making a memorial? Space for action or space for reflection/thinking? Promoting social networks not expression most effective form democracy? Why Speakers Corner? Why not listeners Corner? Action Corner etc... And Why Corner? Why not Centre? Can it solve the problem? How do we spatialise social interaction?



*Key pages from the book reflecting on the project outcomes and method.*

# DISSEMINATION

## Conference Paper

*"Site of Autonomous Connection"* presented at  
*Design Connexity Conference* (2009) by  
Mantho, R. and Carter, J

The 8th European Academy Of Design  
Conference (EAD) - 1st, 2nd & 3rd April 2009,  
The Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen,  
Scotland.

ISBN 978-1-901085-97-6

(ed. Julian Malins)

Official URL: <http://www.ead09.org.uk/>

The physical object *Platform* has been used in a  
number of different ways since its completion,  
including a role as a stage for performances  
and for hosting temporary exhibitions in the  
run up to Kosices successful bid for Capital of  
Culture status, 2013.

<http://www.kosice2013.sk/en/platform-will-bring-art-and-inhabitants-of-kosice-closer>



*Image of project participants outside IC Culture  
Train, Kosice.*

# DISSEMINATION

The book contains a partial programme of events (up until May 2008) developed by IC Culture Train, using the *Platform* structure in one way or other to engage the public. (pp.66-73) This programme of use is ongoing.



*Image of presentations being shared at IC Culture Train, Kosice, Slovakia.*



## Acknowledgements

Thanks to the British Council for funding the project, IC Culture Train for hosting and supporting the project and to KOD Architects for inviting us to contribute to the process in such an important way. Thanks to Robert Mantho for sharing his architectural expertise with all of us and for co-authoring the workshop and book contribution.

Special thanks to workshop participants:

Daniela Ambrozy, Kristina Balazova, Maros Batora, Lukas Cesnak, Brano Contos, Lucia Dudrova, Jana Fazekasova, Michal Hladky, Katarina Hladekova, Rasto Junas, Richard Kitta, Anna Kovacova, Ladislav Kubo, Katarina Martinkova, Stanislav Matusek, Juraj Novotny, Martina Paulinkova, Katka Panikova, Peter Radkoff, Jana Riecanska, Barbora Solarova, Jozef Spacil, Zsuzsana Szenczi Nemeth, Oliver Tomas, Alena Vachnova, Laura Vrskova, Peto Juricek and Brano Skopek.