



neuland. One century after the publication of *Altneuland*, the utopian novel in which Theodor Herzl laid out his prophecy for the Jewish State, Israel finds itself a society conceived out of a utopian spirit of freedom, progress and meaning, now in a disintegrating turbulence of violence and aggression, which casts doubt on its basic moral existence.

The story of Israel can be seen as the ultimate laboratory for Grand Visions, built with absurd precision, at an unprecedented pace, using the master plan as their major operative device. It is alongside the breakdown of the Grand Zionist Vision that the tools of its professional builders have also disintegrated. Deprived of tools, devoid of prescriptions and embarrassingly impotent, the planners face a living and teasing urban organism that refuses to be mastered by master plans.

Espresso bars, kindergartens, fighter jets, hay fields, unemployed, targeted killings, soft cheese, teachers' strikes, settlements, security guards, orange crates, suicide bombings, ecstasy, news on the hour, humus festivals, school holidays, military zones, start ups, national poets, Burger King, market shares, single parents, belly dancers, a biblical zoo, Mercedes jeeps, daily curfews and many watermelons have become the unpredictable components of an intensive existence in a landscape which, only 50 years ago, was inhabited mainly by farmers, shepherds, merchants and olive trees. A landscape which embodies the costly friction between a grand utopia and its painful implementation.

Living this inherent paradox, we got weary of failed dreams, fed up with bloody utopias, and can no longer serve as the operating arm of one great vision or another. We created *neuland* as the ultimate site of our yearnings, an unoccupied territory, a site for reflections, dreams and speculations, which harm no one.

Resisting the arrival of yet another Grand Vision which hovers above Tel Aviv, such as the construction of a network of artificial islands opposite its coast, *neuland* is hereby offered as a site for speculations, based on reflection. In an act of irony, the Neuland curators created a mirror image of Tel Aviv, an island which is placed opposite the real city as a provocative or inspiring alternative. Situated in an unoccupied land, which is neither sacred nor disputed, Neuland takes a break from reality, yet uses its actuality as the source material and objective. Neuland was created as a critique of the Israeli agenda and a pause that generates a platform for self reflection.

Six teams of young architects, together with the article *Tel Aviv Lands*, are using the cloned mirror image of Tel Aviv as as a site for dreams and critical observations, an opportunity to juggle with the notion of utopia, rethink urbanism and speculate on new tools of planning. Neuland provides a breeding ground for new viewpoints, a place for irresponsible urbanism, alternative histories, seeds of hope, catastrophic scenarios, ironic oppositions, hallucinated operations, active interventions, wild speculations.

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