

# Future City

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*Stages* is Liverpool Biennial's online journal. Each issue shifts its editorial attention in relation to the concerns of the biennial's programme and its work to embed itself in the urban context of Liverpool.

Issue one of *Stages* presents insights, propositions and interventions produced during a year-long partnership between Liverpool Biennial and Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art. It follows *Future City*, a two-part forum that took place in Liverpool in September 2013 and Doha in December 2013. These forums invited a diverse range of contributors to commentate and speculate on significant changes occurring in urban centres globally.

Doha and Liverpool are complex and contrary cities. Their distinct geographies, histories and politics determine very different narratives of urban regeneration and civic participation. In the context of large-scale urban transformation taking place with projects such as Msheireb in Doha or the upcoming Liverpool Waters development on Merseyside's docklands, *Future City* investigated our individual, institutional and collective stake in the creation of our urban futures.

In their attempts to imagine ways of improving the social, economic and ecological prospects of our cities, the authors of these texts recognise the importance of a critical public sphere that goes beyond the utopian. Saskia Sassen and Irit Rogoff reflect on protest as a way of recovering the process of making citizenship, and on the value of indeterminacy in our global urban future. Architectural historian Nasser Rabbat argues for the need to deconstruct passive, nostalgic or fantastic visions of the future in architecture, in favour of a greater awareness of the civic. Noura Al Sayeh reflects on how we are impacted by our reliance on natural resources, and how this affects our sense of what is possible in the public realm.

Artists, theorists, academics, writers, geographers and architects were invited to select material for *Futurist Library 620BC – 2013*, which includes science fiction, non-fiction, journals, film and other specialist material as a tool kit to help us think about how to work towards a future city.

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