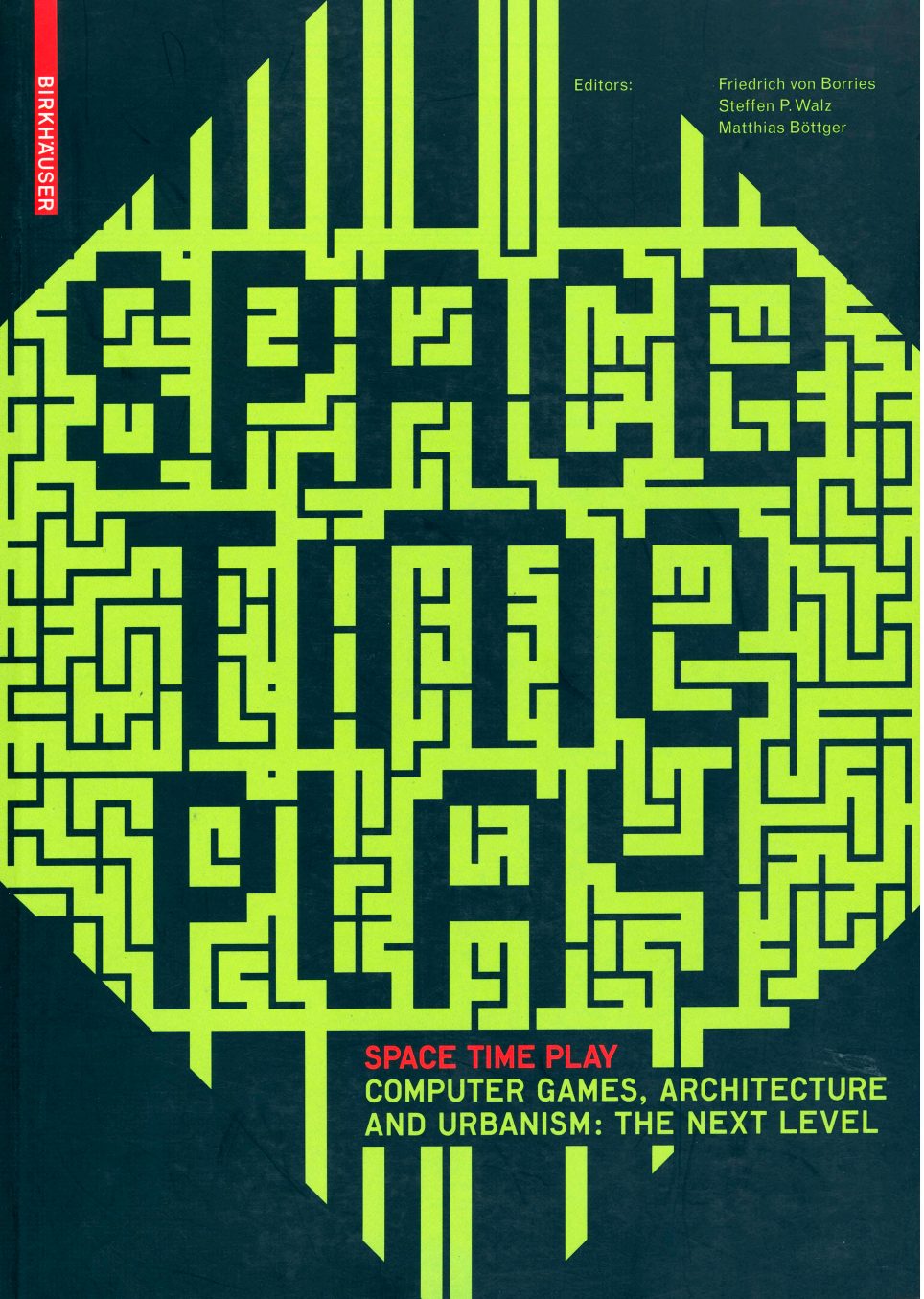
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SPACE TIME PLAY
COMPUTER GAMES, ARCHITECTURE
AND URBANISM: THE NEXT LEVEL

Project Description	Text	Project	Affiliation
	Elizabeth Sikiaridi, Frans Vogelaar	Elizabeth Sikiaridi, Frans Vogelaar with Chloe Varelidi, Nina-Oanna Constantinescu, Katy van Overzee	hybrid space lab, Amsterdam, NL, 2004

SUBCITY

A Big Urban Game for the 2010 European Capital of Culture

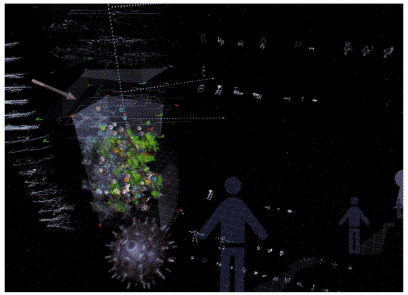
The Ruhr region in Germany has long been defined by its underground, its subcity. In this mining area, the coal seams were the determining factors of historical development. Industrialization – and hence urbanization – were literally based in these subterranean layers. The heterarchical patterns of the above-ground phenomena mirror the submontane beds and follow the course of the mining galleries.

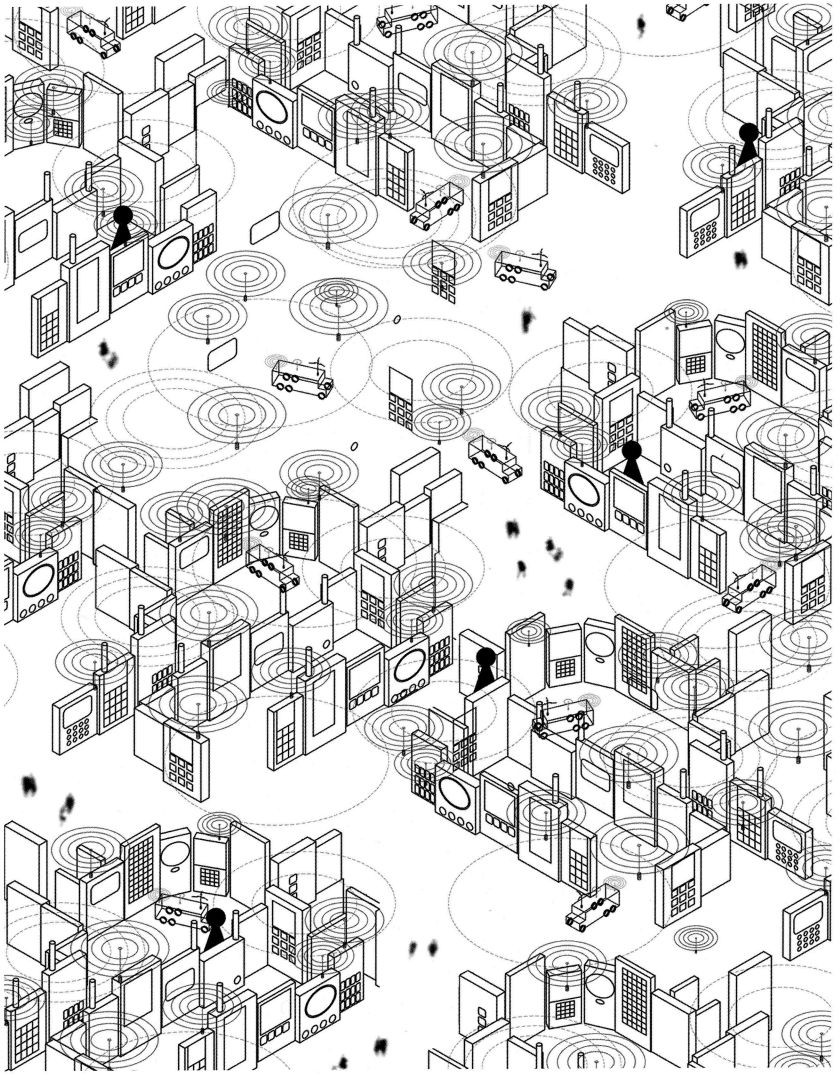
As an ex-mining area, the Ruhr Valley region is conscious that its sublayers represent the foundations of and driving force behind its development. Nevertheless, the way it views and approaches these sub-layers is somewhat ambiguous. The deeper layers are occupied by forgotten mining galleries, inaccessible tunnels and groundwater lakes. These underground areas reverberate with disasters from the past, the peril of the void and the threat of water.

The game *SubCity* focuses on these sublayers of the city. The game, played on mobile devices, reinterprets and recodes the communal urban substratum. In *SubCity*, inhabitants of and visitors to the Ruhr region can simulate and recreate the deep layers of the cityscape. They can dig virtual tunnels and mining galleries, develop and revitalize an urban underground and live there with their avatars and dreams. Together, they can recreate and transform the underground systems, weaving a solid tissue of hope under the city network.

-> roaming the urban network, searching for connections to the *SubCity* -> the keyholes to the *SubCity* are spread throughout the cityscape: you, the player, have to find them -> the moment you pass through a keyhole you become an actor in *SubCity* -> you communicate with your fellow actors and their dreams -> using the *SubCity* tools, you exchange and interact -> while interacting, you create your avatar, the actor of your dreams -> you search for new keyholes -> the moment you repass through a keyhole you become a new actor -> you pass through the next keyhole -> in search of your docking elements -> in search of your home ->

The *SubCity* game can be played in a decentralized manner with mobile devices. It can also be played in groups or even in large communities.



The virtual space of *SubCity* is only accessible in the City of Essen at the colliery of the Zollverein - a landmark of the Ruhr region, a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site and the only working entry to the underground network. There, in a spatial interactive media simulation, you can enter this networked space of urban dreams and interact with the communal substratum of the cityscape.

SubCity is part of Neighbors Network City (NNC), a project proposed in 2004 by hybrid space lab (Amsterdam) for the Ruhr region and The City of Essen, which will be the European Capital of Culture in 2010.