This collective volume is the outcome of a research exploration by the African Centre for Cities (ACC) at the University of Cape Town. It arises from the need to push forward a debate on how one can think and theorise the specificity of African cities. Through a series of textual and photographic essays, the publication seeks multiple alternatives in approaching and understanding the African city without suggesting that a comprehensive grasp is possible. Contributions: Grasping the unknowable: coming to grips with African urbanisms (Edgar Pieterse); Place resists: grounding African urban order in an age of global change (Matthew Barac); Igniting SPARCK (Dominique Malaquais & Kadiatou Diallo); Reconceptualising urbanism, ecology and networked infrastructure (Mark Swilling); Bylex's tourist city: a reflection on Utopia in the post-political city (Koen van Synghel & Filip de Boeck); Photo-essay: after the revolution (Mário Micalau); Perspectives on the architecture of Africa's underprivileged urban dwellers (Nnamdi Elleh); Les jeunes, la violence et la rue à Kinshasa; entendre, comprendre, décrire (Tshikala K. Biaya); Palimpsest African urbanity: connecting pre-colonial and post-apartheid urban narratives in Durban (Orli Bass); Photo-essay: pararell worlds, buffer and twilight zones (Rana El Nemr); Anticipating Nollywood: Lagos circa 1996 (Akin Adesokan); Classification, constitution and experience of urban space in Angola (Sandra Roque: Cidade and Bairro); Deals with imaginaries and perspectives: reworking urban economies in Kinshasa (AbdouMaliq Simone); On the rogue practices of West African musical entrepreneurs (Jenny F. Mbaye); Market logics: how locality and mobility make artistic livelihoods in Dakar (Joanna Grabski); Photo-essay: boom times (Lard Buurman); Seeking logic in the chaos precinct: the spatial and property dynamics of trading space in Jeppe (Tanya Zack); Eblouissements urbains: images de sapeurs, d'ordures et de Brazza à Brazzaville (Joseph Tonda); Jeunesse, culture urbaine, et citoyenneté en Mauritanie (Mamadou Abdoul Diop); The city from its margins: rethinking urban governance through the everyday lives of migrant women in Johannesburg (Caroline Wanjiku Kihato); Outcharming crime in (D)urban space (Christine Hentschel); Photo-essay: paradox (Akintunde Akinleye); Public-private partnerships and urban renewal in metropolitan Lagos: the 'good', the 'bad' and the 'ugly' (Olawale Ismail); What makes a place a city? Untimely contemporary artists and the African city (Elvira Dyangani Ose); Abidjan ville Africaine! Hiatus entre culture locale et modernité dans la métropole Ivoirienne (Ousmane Dembele); Abracadabra (Kim Gurney); Photo-essay: reflections from a rusty jewel (Kutlwano Moagi); Shifting spaces, tilting time (Jay Pather); Thoughts on architecture, design & the emergent African city (Mokena Makeka); Designing against the grain: confronting the political economy of knowledge production (Tau Tavengwa & Edgar Pieterse); Between dystopia and hope (Pep Subirós) [ASC Leiden abstract]