



Parallel Session 1: Driving Seats - Community Driven Spaces Venue - San Ġorġ Preca Primary School Hall

Moderator

Jonas Büchel

Rapporteur

Michael Deguara

Speakers

Ishani O'Connor

Margarida Brito Alves & Giulia Lamoni

Tuba Dogu & Sevcan Sönmez

Participants

Josephine Burden

Graziella Cortis

Bahar Dincakman

Joseph Falzon

JD Farrugia

Andrea Gibbons

Rita Grima

Reuben Grima

Petra Jansa

Jason Mangani

John Pillow

Sarah Scheiber

David Schembri

Jo Tabone

Paul Vella

Lorena Vicini

Sarah Lee Zammit



Parallel Session 2: Moving Walls – Community Contested Space Venue - Splendid

Moderator

Giuliana Fenech

Rapporteur

Marcia Grima

Speakers

Katharina Rohde
Panagiotis Voulgaris
Charles Xuereb

Participants

Pamela Bartar
Mark Bonavia
Jonathan Caruana
Ruth Chircop
Rosianne Cutajar

Jolene Mairs Dyer
Michael Fenech Adami
Graziella Galea
Louis Galea
Raphael Gomide

Andrew Jones
Boram Lee
Francois Mifsud
Mitch Miller
Sue Potts

Maren Richter
Karen Steed
Astrid Vella
Antoine Zammit



Parallel Session 3: Creative Revivors – Developing Creative Spaces Venue – Spazju Kreattiv

Moderator

Adrian Debattista

Rapporteur

Roberta Buhagiar

Speakers

Annemarie Mayo & Bethany Shepherd

Boram Lee

Hatto Fischer

Kristina Borg

Participants

George Abdilla

Lisa Gwen Baldacchino

Carmen Borg

Speranza Chircop

Ingrid Eomois

Sevina Floridou

Angele Galea

Maria Hadjisoteriou

Peter Mayo

Nicola Mullenger

Chellcy Mifsud-Reitsma

Sandra Mifsud

Noel Muscat

Maria Tanti

Ian John Tamaris

Natasa Urosevic

Max Zammit



Parallel Session 4: City Starters – City Space as an Empowerment Tool Venue – King’s Own Band Club

Moderator

Natasja van den Berg

Rapporteur

Tanya Alexandra Phillips

Speakers

Marie Briguglio
Guido Robazza
Charles Quick

Participants

Josef Victor Aquilina
Conrad Borg Manche
Jo Butterworth
John Buttigieg
Holger Camilleri

Carmel Cefai
Anthony Chircop
Maryanne Cuomo
Alberto De Nova
Luke Fenech

Anni Ehlers
Marianna Galea Xuereb
Chris Karelse
Silla Marie Mørch Sievers
Shirley Pulis Xerxen

Nicholas Vella
Gerret Zehetbauer
SOS Malta



Parallel Session 5: #Community – Online Community Spaces
Venue – San Ġorġ Preca Primary School Library

Moderator

Caldon Mercieca

Rapporteur

Ann Laenen

Speakers

Elisa Herrera Altamirano

Melike Özmen

William Bondin

Participants

Kit Azzopardi

Joe Bonello

Steve Cassar

Boryana Cheneva

Terrence Ellul

Vince Fabri

Justin Galea

Stefan Kolgen

Alexandra Manche

Alberto Miceli-Farrugia

Wendy Jo Mifsud

Hiroshi Okano

Paul Scales

Liam Sciberras

Fiona Woods

Cities as Community Spaces Conference

Valletta, Malta

Professor Charles Quick In Certain Places, University of Central Lancashire

Open to the public - unlocking the city through public art

I am going to begin by give a brief introduction to the public art and architecture programme In Certain Places, followed by an insight into how over a significant period of time it's work has produced tangible effects within the city, unlocking new ways of thinking. In particular, I will discuss the ways artists working with resident communities, local authorities, businesses and academic institutions can help to transform city centres into vibrant community spaces. This is set within the context of a city that, because of the global economic crisis in 2008, tried but failed to achieve a partnership with a commercial developer. A partnership which, would have transformed a third of its city centre streets into privately managed spaces. So unwittingly avoiding what Anna Minton in Ground Control criticised as 'creating over sterile places which lack connections to the reality and diversity of the local environment'. This supposed failed development has enabled artists to embrace the new economic climate as an opportunity to test alternative approaches to urban development which are predicated upon local knowledge, resourcefulness and collaborative production.

The project, is based in Preston, a mid-size post-industrial city in the north west of England. It has an economic population of 350,000. It grew up as an important market town and later as a manufacturing centre. It has been good at re-inventing itself, while remaining an administrative centre for the region. In Certain Places began in 2003 out of lunch time meetings in the cafes of the city. We are now currently based in the School of Art, Design and Fashion at the University of Central Lancashire. We examine how artists can contribute to the form and functions of a place, by exploring new approaches to art, culture and urban development. We have worked with artists and architects to develop temporary interventions in the city, hosted artists' residencies, and organised talks and debates about art practice and place. Collectively, these activities have generated new understandings of the urban environment, enabled new ideas to be tested in the city's public spaces. You can sum up the main ethos or values of In Certain Places as being, commitment to Preston as the site and subject of our work, and a commitment to the artists with whom we work.

In 2015 we published 'Subplots to the City' as a way to document and evaluate the first ten years of our work. At the launch event, the Chief Executive of Preston City Council, Loraine Norris gave a speech in which she described In Certain Places as 'part of the city's DNA'. For us, this was a very welcome description, because it meant that our work and presence was regarded as an intrinsic part of the city. At the same time, it also mirrored the fact that Preston, as a physical, social and cultural

entity is at the heart of In Certain Places. Our commitment to this particular place, has always been central to what we do. It involves choosing to remain in the city and continuing to play a role within the everyday life of the place, which often extends beyond the parameters of the project. So, as individuals we've set up artist groups, hosted parties and social events, taken part in political protests, and initiated our own, such as the parade, which we helped organise, to save the bus station from demolition. We have over the years become a part of the landscape and dialogue of Preston. By which I mean we are not separate to the city but part of the too and through of it.

From the beginning, we decided that we would attempt to ensure that the commissioning process actively supported artists' practice. So, for example, we don't usually provide artists with commission briefs, but instead present them with a context in which to produce work. We also try to allow adequate time for the development of their ideas and work. When we first began commissioning artists in 2005, we were quite wary of what is often referred to as 'parachuting artists into a place'. Although we think that the external perspective, which artists from other places and cultures can bring, is incredibly valuable, we also want to support the careers of artists in the region. This is Steph Fletcher who lives in Preston and has worked with us since about 2011 To begin with as a student volunteer and later as a curator and commissioned artist. The image shows Steph performing in her film twentyfourzero an intervention and performance amongst office plants in the Union House on the University campus. Each project is connected to the ones before and often involves a network of individuals, organisations, businesses and institutions which contribute to the forming of the work. I attempted to create a diagram, which would explain some of the partnerships, collaborations and relationships. It is somewhat crude and simplistic representation of just one viewpoint of numerous possibilities that I could have presented for the same time frame. The green areas are projects that ICP has lead on and which Steph Flether has contributed to in different ways, other colours relate to particular detours and links, and the arrows, which crisscross the diagram, give some indication of the strength of the relationships.

In September 2013 a group of 80 people – comprising artists, architects, residents, developers, planners, academics and politicians – navigated the streets of Preston moving from one vacant property to another, sometimes entering and listening to speakers, at other times hearing descriptions of why they couldn't gain access. It became evident that this was a different city from the one they had all known in 2008 before the economic crisis. It was just a couple of years after the announcement of the city's abandonment of the £700 million retail, leisure and residential regeneration plan, intended to change a third of the city centre. One of the main advantages of the scheme collapsing has been that the city has retained public ownership of its markets, squares, streets and bus station enabling its communities and artists to continue to activate the spaces through events. The two day event Open City

Preston was developed by a cross city desire to find an alternative to the failed masterplan and the perceived necessity to sell the city to developers. The structure of the tour was devised by the artist Katja van Driel. Artist's architects and economists presented new processes and understandings to a range of local stakeholders. One legacy has been the formation of groups, which strive to set their own agendas and influence the landscape of the city with an 'urban dentistry' approach to development, one that is not about grand masterplans, erasing and replacing, but about small incremental interventions, that maintain and reuse what's already there. Another has been a partnership between local artists, led by Steph Fletcher, and the city council, enabling an empty building in the centre to be used as artists' studios and project space. I think this quote from one of the participants Ann Vanner sums up the mood well.

My perceptions of the issues that Preston faces haven't changed, but they have shifted. From feeling 'unable' as an individual to do much, I feel a greater sense of empowerment due to the collective nature of the event and the understanding that others had similar feelings. The hope came from the fact that Preston City Council was represented, and the empowerment from the range of individuals who are clearly interested in the contemporary urban environment.

The ground work for Open City came from the project 'Open to the Public' this was an action research project by German and Dutch artists Katja van Driel and Wouter Osterholt, which explored the potential of empty buildings to create new types of access to the city. During autumn 2012, the artists spent time mapping over 300 underused and vacant properties in centre of the city. The following January, they invited members of the public to view their findings, which were presented in an empty shop, and to share their own opinions and ideas about the future of the city. The artists also hosted public discussions with community activists on how to create community squats. Local authority officers, including the head of property management, talked about the causes, effects and possible uses of the empty buildings. Those same artists taped up the empty building across the city in a day event. There is a history of mapping, which is about ownership, and land but this initiative allowed the artists and the project to own particular knowledge about the city. Knowledge that we are still being asked to share many years after the project has finished.

We have worked with some spaces in the city over a long time, each intervention in that location moving on the dialogue about what that space could be. One particular space or stage in the city is the Flag Market or Market Square This longitudinal relationship has not transpired as a result of some carefully orchestrated strategic ten year plan, but rather an example of what happens if you become part of a place and hang around long enough. Looking at Preston's Flag Market today it's possible to see and understand all its histories and forms on its journey from a medieval Market Square to that of primary civic space. It began life as a commercial space, in 1250 being the largest market in the North West and later becoming that civic space,

a process that was largely driven by the historic Guilds of the town. A market square can sometimes symbolise the cultural temperature of a city and in 2005, when we invited the Danish artists Jeppe Hien to visit, he noticed how the historic centre had been left behind and was somewhat neglected. Appearing rooms is an interactive sculpture and was installed in the market square for six weeks during the summer of 2006. It radically transformed the nature of the space from a thoroughfare where people did not dwell, to a place where people choose to spend time and interact. It attracted a whole cross section of society, some as performers others as audience. It began a dialogue with the city about its public spaces that moved between the temporary to the permanent and back again over the next ten years. By 2013 after many projects and artist's interventions, that we played a part in, the remodeling and physical renovation of the Flag Market was complete.

Ever since I started working regularly in Preston in 1990's I was perplexed about the lack of steps to the front of the Neo Classical Harris Museum and Art Gallery, designed by the local architect James Hibbert. The local population and visitors to the city have often asked the question - where is the entrance? How can you gain access to this building and are you allowed into this imposing structure? Post the once in every 20 years festival, Preston Guild, there was still a buzz in the city, and the council had definitely become less risk advise. The time seemed right to propose the Harris Flights so we approached the architect Charlie MacKeith, of Research Design, who we had now worked with on a number of occasions and tested our proposal with the main stakeholders in the city. It was like pushing at an open door. It seemed that many people over the years had contemplated a staircase to the front door of the Harris. The project was realised in all its complexity by forming a partnership between the Harris Museum and Art Gallery, the events team and urban design and planning departments, of PCC – artists, other arts organisations in the city, and a large cross-section of departments, services and schools in the university. Our new temporary staircase, invited people to move directly from the space of the square into the heart of the building, through the 'front door' on the first floor, allowing them to experience the Grade I listed building in an entirely new way. It also became a new destination in the city centre: a space to 'hang out' and a cultural hub for performances, contemporary art installations, workshops, demonstrations and talks, by artists, community groups and the university. It was a stage for an audience to watch from the Market Square, and, at other times, a stadium from which to view events below. There was desire to make the access to the podium more democratic. Up to now it had always been a focus for ceremonial occasions, and a vantage point for important visitors, such as kings and queens, prime ministers, football teams and celebrities to address the people below. Harris Flights was designed to extend opportunities for all people to see the city from what has previously been the viewpoint of a privileged few. During the four weeks of its installation, over sixty events were organised on and around the Flights. An audience of 700 people turned up one night to see a free showing of the film Ghost Busters. The Flights increased museum visits by 70% many of them visiting for the first time. Some visitors asked if

the Museum was now open. The Flights had performed a number of functions but in many ways it was like a Trojan horse that rose up from the market square and infiltrated the Museum. It allowed artists performers and the public to breach its walls. In the aftermath it enabled new conversations to begin, such as how do you keep the new increase in audience figures without having a permanent Harris Flights. So Research design and In Certain Places were invited to write a report, making suggestion about the physical ordination, the management and future funding of the building which is now slowly beginning to be implemented. The square continues to be populated every weekend through the warmer months of the year by a programme of events that are mainly generated by the population of Preston and the surrounding region. The events team required some seating now the Flights had gone. We persuaded them to let us design a Preston Bench while collaborating with the local joiner who had worked on the Flights. Six benches, have been built, seating up to ten people each, they provide both movable seating for events and a resting spot for those who want to spend time in the city square. Two more have been ordered this year and they will probably keep ordering a few each year from their small budget, until they have enough for their needs. They sat out 24/7 in the square and though they move about in the evening, none have moved out of the space.

Finally The Harris Flights demonstrated that they was an appetite for a festival that could take place in the years in between the Preston Guilds, We have become part of the discussions about a festival, which will take place every 2 years leading up to the next Guild in 2032. Last year it was decided to test this idea with the first Lancashire Encounter festival in 2015.

We invited James Shein of the Peoples Architecture Office based in Beijing to create a mobile architectural structure designed specifically for the city of Preston on the theme of meeting place. He visited the city for a month in September 2014 mapping and conducting workshops in order to gain an understanding of the place. A year later all the components arrived in 2 x 40 ft containers having been manufactured in China. A team of people from the region worked with the architect to fabricate the ten units. Two weeks later they were ready to be moved. Their first destination was the UCLan Campus from where they were cycled into the city centre by over 50 volunteers from the university and accompanied by a procession of cyclists from all over Preston, The aim of the project was to develop a bespoke, temporary architectural intervention for Preston that would create new, visible connections between the university and the city centre, as well as celebrate UCLan's international links particularly with China. During the three days of the Lancashire Encounter the Peoples Canopy was host and home to a wide spectrum of social, educational and creative activity. It provided a social space in where communities from both the university and the wider city could share ideas, culture and traditions. Following the success of the People's Canopy in Preston, the invitation was extended by the curatorial team at the Biennale of Urbanism/Architecture to present the Canopy in Shenzhen, China in December 2015. And recently six were commissioned by

YOUtopia for a festival in the market square of Leuven In Belgium, taking place last month. This coincided with the first full scale Lancashire Encounter festival in Preston with the canopies making another appearance.

I would like to end by reading a sort extract from an interview with Nigel Roberts who is now the Principal Urban Designer for the City Council having worked in the Preston over the time of the project.

There's been a journey that's got us to where we are now, where something like the Harris Flights doesn't frighten people as much as it would have done five or six years ago. By making somewhere interesting, lots of other good things will happen. I think that's part of the advantage of these In Certain Places events. It's about allowing some of that debate to happen.

Open to the Public

unlocking the city through art

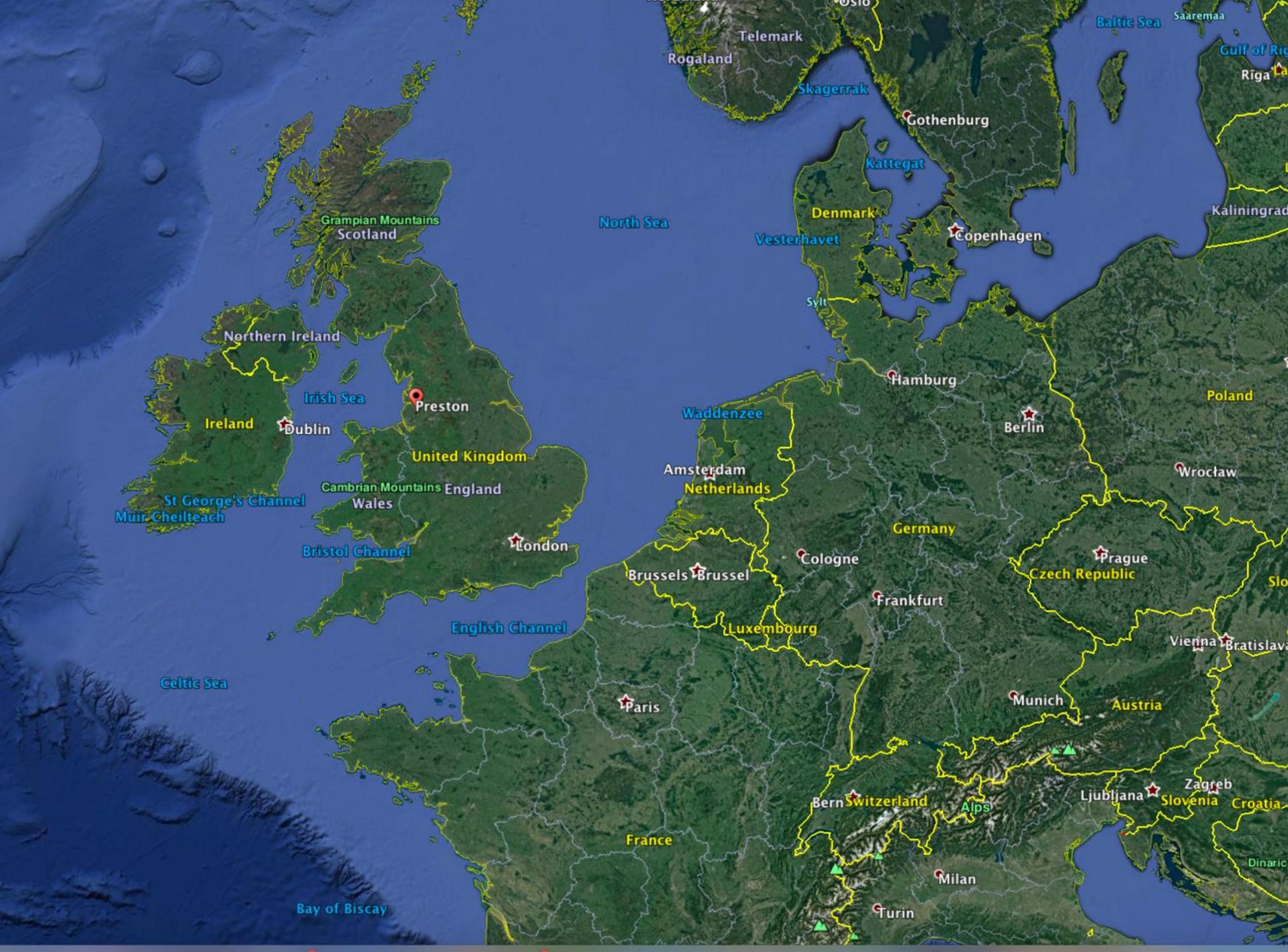
Charles Quick

In Certain Places

University of Central Lancashire

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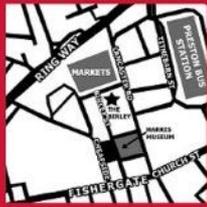




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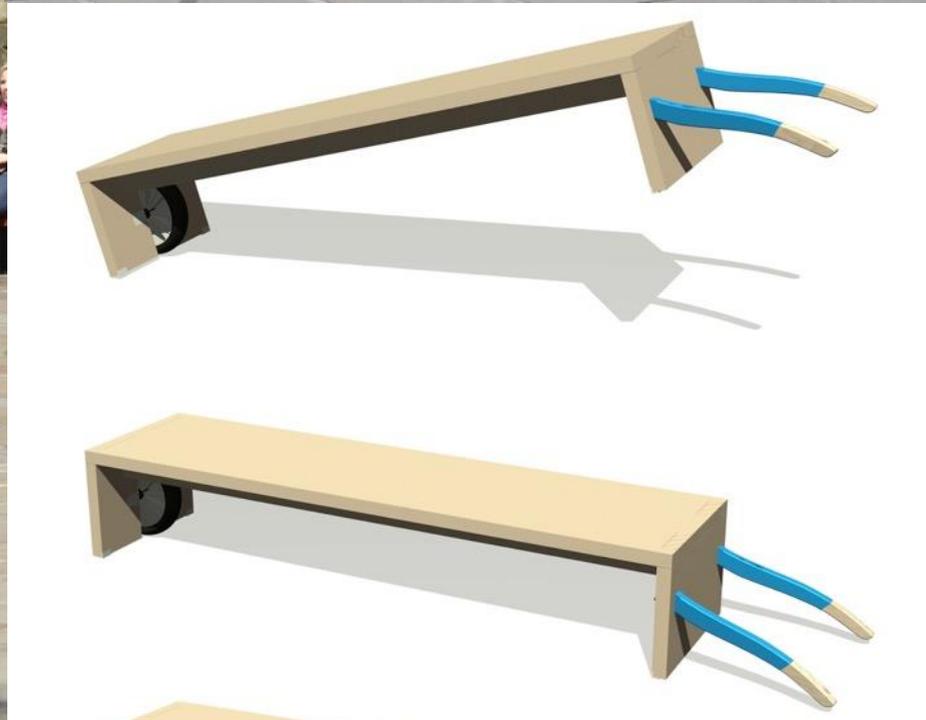
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