MEDIATIONS

International Conference

Art & Design Agency and
Participation in Public Space

Conference Proceedings

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

MEDIATIONS
Art & Design Agency and Participation in Public Space
Royal College of Art, London,
United Kingdom,
21-22 November 2016

EDITOR
Saba Golchehr

CO-EDITORS
Rosa Ainley
Adrian Friend
Cathy Johns
Karolina Raczynska

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Karimah Hassan
www.karimahhassan.com

Royal College of Art
Postgraduate Art & Design

LUCA
SCHOOL
OF
ARTS

HOSTED BY

TRADERS - short for 'Training Art and Design Researchers for Participation in Public Space' - is an EU FP7 Marie Curie Multi-ITN funded project that focuses on developing and testing a methodological framework on which art and design researchers can rely when working on public space projects in participatory ways - www.tr-aders.eu

MEDIATIONS

**Art & Design Agency and
Participation in Public Space**

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

TRADERS

Dr. Henric Benesch	*University of Gothenburg*
Prof. Catharina Dyrssen	*Chalmers University of Technology*
Adrian Friend	*Royal College of Art*
Prof. Susannah Hagan	*Royal College of Art*
Dr. David Hamers	*Design Academy Eindhoven*
Prof. Hilde Heynen	*KU Leuven*
Dr. Liesbeth Huybrechts	*University Hasselt*
Prof. Frank Moulaert	*KU Leuven*
Jessica Schoffelen	*LUCA School of Arts, KU Leuven*
Dr. Veerle Van der Sluys	*LUCA School of Arts, KU Leuven*

EXTERNAL

Dr. Pablo Abend	*University of Cologne*
Dr. Erling Bjorgvinsson	*University of Gothenburg*
Dr. Andrea Botero	*Aalto University Finland*
Prof. David Chandler	*University of Westminster*
Prof. Maria Hellström Reimer	*Malmö University*
Dr. Sophia Krzys Acord	*University of Florida*
Dr. Sybille Lammes	*University of Warwick*
Dr. Lieselotte van Leeuwen	*University of Gothenburg*
Dr. Diana Tanase	*Royal College of Art*
Joaquim Tarrasó	*Chalmers University of Technology*

INDEX

INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade the notion of citizen participation has (re)gained momentum, both in the realm of national and local politics – partly driven by advances in digital technologies, such as civic platforms – as well as outside the institutional domain. Several art and design practitioners have embraced this participatory turn, aiming to empower citizens to reclaim agency in the public realm. At the same time, various (conceptual) models of participatory democracy have been explored through numerous political theories.[1] There are, however, very few theories that mediate between such conceptual models and actual participatory art and/or design practices in a meaningful and rigorous way [i].

The TRADERS[2] project, and the MEDIATIONS conference as an extension of it, aims to operate within this ambiguous territory. TRADERS focuses on enabling an exchange of experiences and knowledge in the field of participation in art and design. Working collectively and individually through workshops, performances, exhibitions and publications, six early-career researchers have explored different approaches including intervention, mapping, data mining, play, dialogue and curating. While these six research projects vary in their thematic approach and deploy different art and design-based research methods, they all contribute to a collective deconstruction and problematisation of the notion of citizen participation in art and design, particularly within the context of public space.

Operating within this context means dealing with discrepancies between a multiplicity of forces *(political, economical, environmental, legal, etc.)*, concerns *(social justice, privatisation, digitalisation, etc.)* and actors *(citizens, policy makers, urban planners, etc.)*. Artists and designers who aim to empower citizens in often 'agonistic' spaces [ii] need to mediate between various aspirations in order to help bring about desired social and/or political change. Such mediation can take shape in many ways: through mediating between different stakeholders, between the client and the public, between different publics, between top-down and bottom-up, between theory and practice, between ideas and action, between imaginaries and reality, and so on.

1 Some examples include *deliberative democracy, associative democracy* and *agonistic pluralism* (resp. Habermas, J., 1996. *Between Facts and Norms.* Cambridge: Polity Press; Hirst, P., 1994. *Associative Democracy: New Forms of Economic and Social Governance.* Cambridge: Polity Press; Mouffe, C., 2000. 'For an Agonistic Model of Democracy' in (ed) Martin, J., 2013. *Hegemony, Radical Democracy and the Political*, Oxon: Routledge)

2 TRADERS - short for *'Training Art and Design Researchers for Participation in Public Space'* - is an EU FP7 Marie Curie Multi-ITN funded project (tr-aders.eu)

In this conference we explore six possible approaches to mediation for artists and designers that aim for civic empowerment:

- Data Mining **–** data-driven methods to mediate between the top-down and bottom-up to promote citizen empowerment in the 'Data City';
- Intervention **–** a method to mediate between ephemeral actions and long-term effects on civic participation in public space;
- Play **–** mediating between realities and imaginaries of children and adults in their experience of, and participation in, public space;
- Modelling in Dialogue **–** mediating between different actors and voices by modelling multivocality within participatory processes;
- Multiple Performative Mapping **–** performative and participatory mapping as a method to mediate power configurations in the digital-physical urban landscape;
- Curating - exploring if and how the curatorial negotiates and mediates between knowledge boundaries in art and design.

During this conference we interrogate the means, modes and/or practices artists and designers can employ to mediate between multiple actors with diverse agencies. How can they use their own agency to empower citizens to bring about desired social or political change? And how can artists and designers 'make a difference' [iii] within existing/established distributions of power? These questions, and more, are explored through different paper, exhibition, keynote and reflection sessions, examining 'matters of concern' [iv] in art and design practices by analysing material, e.g. artefacts, as well as immaterial components, e.g. relationality, positionality, etc., of real-life participatory projects. We aim to scrutinise the ethical implications – such as artists' and designers' accountability – that are inherent to participatory processes, yet often remain underexplored by researchers and practitioners when working with, or in the service of, the public. The conference therefore explores how artists and designers can become critically aware of their agency in the pursuit of empowering publics in decision-making for, and co-creation of, public space(s).

[i] Krivý, M. and Kaminer, M., 2013. *The Participatory Turn in Urbanism.* Footprint, Issue 13, Vol. 7(2). Autumn 2013. pp.1-6.
[ii] Mouffe, C., 2000. *Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism.* Political Science Series 72, C. Neuhold (Ed.). Vienna: Department of Political Science, Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS).
[iii] Giddens, A., 1984. *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration.* Berkeley, California: University of California Press. P.14.
[iv] Latour, B., 2004. *Why has critique run out of steam?* Critical Inquiry, 30, Winter 2004.

WHO SHOULD BE IN CONTROL OF THE DATA CITY?

Chairs: Adrian Friend & Saba Golchehr (School of Architecture, Royal College of Art)

In this session we aim to explore notions of design and agency in the data city and question current decision-making processes in data aggregation and analysis in so-called 'smart cities'. What is the alternative to algorithmic governance aimed at efficiency and resilience? And how can socially engaged designers embrace this data deluge and redirect it to empower citizens and help enable social innovation?

Smart cities are increasingly under scrutiny for their top-down digital control and monitoring mechanisms. This is a consequence of 'smart' systems using algorithms to help inform decision-making aimed at increasing the efficiency of urban processes. However, Big Data analytics such as pattern-recognition are also instrumentalised to predict or uncover unusual events or behaviours in the city, resulting in a call for action to prevent certain undesirable activities from happening. In today's smart cities, the world illustrated in the film Minority Report is closer to fact than fiction, where we are all watched by 'Big Brother' and where data privacy seems like a notion of the past.

At the same time, due to the diminishing role of the state (e.g. the 'Big Society' in the UK or the 'Participation Society' in the Netherlands), city governments are welcoming technological solutions to promote civic participation through various software applications. These civic apps aim to encourage users to participate in the development of public services, and with that enhance civic engagement to ultimately increase citizens' social capital. Opening up their governmental data sets has been the first step in providing opportunities for tech-savvy entrepreneurs working for the government to develop data-driven ways of making government's communication and services more accessible to citizens. Outside business and government, digital movements that are closely related to daily urban life are emerging. Activists, technologists and citizens concerned with everyday problems in the city often lead these bottom-up technological developments. This has taken shape for instance through hackathons, in which socially engaged software developers tackle urban problems with technological solutions, or through non-profit organisations that develop virtual platforms to improve citizens' access to public goods. Some examples include apps for addressing issues in citizens' local built environments, for supporting entrepreneurship or for protecting nature in local public spaces.

In this session we question whether these two seemingly opposing positions of top-down control through monitoring and surveillance, and bottom-up civic engagement in urban decision-making, can be reconciled as part of the same 'smart' city?

THE DESIGN OF DIGITAL SHADOWS
Co-Speculating Presents That Might Already Have Come True

S. Rosenbak and H. Feckenstedt

ABSTRACT

As a response to the recent surveillance disclosures made by Edward Snowden and other whistleblowers, this paper presents and discusses a key experiment from Meta(data)morphosis, a design research project aimed at heightening public metadata awareness in a low-key, local setting. The paper begins by unpacking metadata and exploring the qualities of 'the digital shadow', and then goes on to describe the experiment. Based on the design ethnographic extraction of personal metadata from several members of the public, each metadata set is transformed into a short film script template through speculative design. In a concluding workshop, each participant co-speculates on top of someone else's script template, producing a narrative of an alternative present which is finally read back to the participant whose metadata the template was based upon. This is the uncanny moment when participants face their digital shadows: plausible, perhaps more tedious, perhaps more disturbing, versions of themselves. Based on this experiment, the particular methodological bridging between the traditions of speculative and participatory design is traced. As part of the discussion of the workshop results, the paper concludes by outlining the characteristics of the agonistic space that was opened up in the process of co-designing and mediating the digital shadows. Building on the insights gathered through the experiment, the Design Theatre of the Absurd is finally imagined as a future venue for further explorations.

1. BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

1.1 THE STUFF OF DIGITAL SHADOWS AND WHY IT MATTERS

Meta(data)morphosis, the central project outlined and discussed in this paper, revolves around the figure of the digital shadow. Before we begin to unpack what we mean by digital shadows, I would like to take a step back and first describe what they consist of (they are inherently plural, as we'll discover later on). This question is by no means trivial. In order to start understanding how digital shadows are brought into existence, how they operate, let alone how they can be designed and mediated, let's first turn to the stuff of digital shadows, the material that constitutes them: data and, in this particular project, metadata specifically.

Data is being collected on an unprecedented scale in history – notably by governments and corporations but also by NGOs, data brokers, hackers, artists, designers, and so on. Big data has immense value, both as a financial asset and as tool of governance, intelligence: in short, power. All this is thoroughly uncontroversial in 2016. The surveillance disclosures by Snowden, and the whistleblowers before and after him, continue to provide insights into how exactly data is being collected and how it is being used. While intelligence agencies such as NSA, GCHQ,[1] etc., can access most kinds of data, metadata ('the fact that a communication occurred' (VICE on HBO, 2016), for instance timestamps of when you called a friend, your physical location in that moment, how long you spoke on the phone etc.) continues to be of special importance.

First of all, from an economic perspective, metadata is much cheaper to collect in bulk through algorithms, rather than employing costly in-person/selector-based surveillance for extraction of data (as well as metadata). In fact, this is one of the key arguments for the wide uptake of encryption measures, as

1 Respectively, the USA's National Security Agency and the UK's Government Communications Headquarters

this would simply render bulk collection of data economically unfeasible (Appelbaum, 2016; Schneier, 2015). In terms of the information/intelligence, metadata has a further edge. Composed of call logs, social media interaction, GPS locations, etc., metadata weave an increasingly fine-grained net of interconnected profiling of citizens, providing a detailed portrait of each person along with the relations between them. This social, collective aspect is important. From becoming complicit in our own surveillance through voluntarily handing over our data to social media such as Google and Facebook, in exchange for optimised services (Frank, 2015), we also entangle our social network within this process. Encryption measures too have this collective aspect, as they can perform as an act of solidarity: if dissidents, critical journalists, whistleblowers, etc., are the only individuals employing encryption, they become easy, very visible targets in the matrix of mass surveillance. As cryptographer and security specialist Bruce Schneier puts it, in his call for ubiquitous encryption: 'Every time you use encryption, you're protecting someone who needs to use it to stay alive' (Schneier, 2015:3).

Understood as a rich frame surrounding the data itself, not unlike a portrait frame, one of the key qualities of metadata is its speculative nature. Not only is it possible, and indeed preferable (Poitras and Risen, 2013), to draw an accurate current portrait from the frame (Cole, 2014), it is also possible to extrapolate this portrait into the future by leveraging the past, for example, by asking a question such as: How likely is this person to become a terrorist? As NSA General Counsel Stewart Baker has explained, 'metadata absolutely tells you everything about somebody's life. If you have enough metadata, you don't really need content …[It's] sort of embarrassing how predictable we are as human beings' (Rusbridger, 2013). When Law Professor David Cole brought this quote with him to a debate at the Johns Hopkins University on 1 April 2014, his opponent, former director of the NSA and the CIA, General Michael Hayden added: 'We kill people based on metadata'

(Cole, 2014). Of course, 'terror' is but one filter – the same metadata and algorithms can be tweaked and used for a range of different purposes and ends, such as a dating service (how likely are these two people to fall in love?) or for assessing prospective students (how likely is this student to graduate?).

In terms of surveillance, we have seen a profound shift from in-person surveillance such as wiretapping, to the current, normative state of bulk collection of data such as PRISM[2] through intercepting satellites, fibre cables, etc. Through this vast, dizzying structure of analogue and digital infrastructure,[3] metadata becomes a highly valuable, intangible resource. In the project Meta(data)morphosis, I was interested in making metadata more graspable, essentially thinking about the metadata as a material, not unlike clay or wood. If you put a ball of clay on a table in front of people, everyone would be able to tell you approximately how heavy it is, how it feels slightly wet and cold, what it might be used for, etc. I was fascinated with considering metadata in this sense: what is on the table before us? It has an inherent intangibility that, consequently, leads to our inability to describe what it is, let alone its properties, possible uses or consequences. Thus, one goal of the project was to somehow bring metadata closer to this state of being a familiar material, and by doing so freeing it from its purely digital, technological (and, for most people, entirely obscure) existence. This becomes an educational question of heightening public metadata awareness, a question that exists in a larger context of programming/computer literacy. As Douglas Rushkoff, Codevangelist

at Codecadamy, puts it '[becoming code fluent] is a way to become familiar with the operating system on which the human drama is playing itself out' (Rushkoff, 2013). This connection between human drama and code (in this project metadata specifically) is one of the key concerns that I hoped to explore through the lens of the digital shadow. Before describing this central figure in greater detail, let's quickly turn towards the design space in which Meta(data)morphosis (from here on referred to as 'M(D)M') operates.

While platforms like the Intercept[4] and Wikileaks[5] (and the array of global news outlets and social media that channel their content) continue to drive the larger critical discourse on surveillance in a global context, I am struck by the lack of more low-key, local engagements running in parallel. This is not to say that this space is uninhabited. Cryptoparty, 'a decentralized, global initiative to introduce basic tools for protecting privacy, anonymity and overall security on the Internet to the general public'[6] is an excellent example of an initiative that very much operates in this space. However, considering the scale of mass surveillance and the societal ramifications of the metadata power hegemony, both for the individual and for various collectives, I believe we need to see a much stronger, diverse and critical response from the design discipline in this space.

1.2 DIGITAL SHADOWS

At this point let's return to the central figure of the digital shadow. The vast majority of people leave an extensive trail of digital traces behind, such as when we visit a website, call a friend or simply change our geographical location. One way to talk about this is a digital footprint. Much like how we can talk of a CO_2 footprint, this term builds on the idea of leaving a trace behind. However, perhaps

2 PRISM was one of the very first, then secret, NSA surveillance programs to be undisclosed publicly (7 June 2013 in *The Guardian*), following Snowden's release of surveillance documents. The program allows NSA to directly target and collect material including search history, the content of emails, file transfers and live chats from a range of service providers without having to make any requests to said service providers and without having to obtain individual court orders (Greenwald and MacAskill, 2013).

3 See Paglen, 2016 for an indepth account of planetary scale surveillance.

4 https://theintercept.com/

5 https://wikileaks.org/

6 https://www.cryptoparty.in

due to the abstract nature of the topic and the way it operates across societal domains and disciplinary domains, we find a host of alternative terms in use, such as digital shadow,[7] digital ghost,[8] data double or data doppelgänger (Appelbaum, 2016), phantom bodies (Crawford, 2016), and more. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to uncover and discuss the differences between all these various terms in great detail (through etymology or disciplinary discourses, for example), I want to briefly traverse some of the key terms in use and argue for the use of *digital shadow* in this context. In this process I will begin unravelling and discussing some of the key qualities of this central figure.

While the data double clearly establishes a singular relationship between the subject and the double (similar to the stand-in or the doppelgänger), a shadow might equally be one of many (as when we cast several shadows due to a myriad of light sources and their possible reflections). Hence, rather than one evil digital twin or a ghost, we can think of a multitude of shadows across the server farms of intelligence agencies, corporations, data brokers, etc. In other words, the version of you that Facebook operates with in order to render your newsfeed and provide you with optimal targetted ads, is most likely significantly different from the version that GCHQ uses for determining the potential threat you pose to the national security level in the UK. Both these digital shadows are intensely real, in the sense that they bring about ripples of real-life consequences for you and your surroundings. Also, both are in a perpetual state of flux, as you click and move and interact throughout the world.

Another point lies in affect and irrationality – while the relationship between the subject and her digital shadow(s) might of course be ignored, passively accepted or even cherished, the recent sweep of surveillance disclosures by Edward Snowden has brought a somewhat sobering wave of well-grounded public paranoia, uproar and anger over the non-transparency in this unfolding dynamic (as beautifully captured in Laura Poitras and Kate Crawford's call for divorcing your metadata (2015). Importantly, with this new knowledge we also got a host of new opportunities, such as a heightened ability to engage in counter surveillance or playful subversion. While the power relationship between the individual citizen (or even a collective) versus an adversary like NSA or Google is intensely asymmetrical, citizens (and designers) do have some level of agency and possibilities at hand, also with regards to our digital shadows.[9] Thus, if anything, at this point we might say that the relationships to our digital shadow(s) are complicated. Here, each digital shadow is not simply a static accumulation of digital traces left behind (like a trail of footprints), but rather an ever-shifting character, whose very raison d'être is inseparably tied to its speculative and thus highly dynamic nature. The dialectics between subject and digital shadow(s) further unfolds across past, present and future, in ways that defy the linear notion so deeply embedded in the concept of leaving footprints behind (by walking onwards): 'Your voice is unique. Your typing is unique. The websites you visit and the systems you use to interface with the world are unique. The pattern of travel you take through the city, the consumption of electrical power tied to your daily routines: those paying attention to you as an element of a larger picture and to you specifically will try to predict everything from the patterns of data you leave behind' (Appelbaum, 2016).

From here on, we can continue along the gaze of what Pasquinelli has named the blind eye of the algorithm (2015), starting to understand how the various human biases and irrationalities that inevitably go into the design, use, misuse, etc. of any algorithm start forming an entirely ungraspable system of '… algorithms in conflict, algorithms locked

---

7 https://myshadow.org

8 http://streetghosts.net/

9 For example, framed through the lens of obfuscation tactics in Brunton and Nissenbaum, 2015.

in loops with each other, without any human oversight …' (Slavin, 2011). This raises important questions, not only concerning surveillance, but also, for example, in relation to financial algorithmic trading (famously causing the 2010 flash crash at the New York Stock Exchange, which saw $1 trillion momentarily evaporate) and predictive policing (using algorithms to predict crime). As another example of human irrationality, in this case love, we can consider the famous case of NSA officers caught spying on love interests (Peterson, 2013). How do events such as these affect our digital shadows?

If we buy into Rushkoff's notion of code as the operating system on which the human drama is playing itself out (2013), then it's worth also pausing briefly at the dramatic element in this statement. Senior Editor at Triple Canopy, Sam Frank argues: 'When government agencies and private companies access and synthesize our data, they take on the power to novelize our lives. Their *profiles of our behavior* are semi-fictional stories, pieced together from the digital traces we leave as we go about our days. No matter how many articles we read about this process, grasping its significance is no easy thing. It turns out that to understand the weird experience of being the target of all this surveillance — how we are *characters in semi-true narratives constructed by algorithms and data analysts* — an actual novel can be the best medium' (Frank, 2015; emphasis added). In this quote, Frank not only frames a large part of the motivation for M(D)M, but also provides some useful clues regarding the fictional construct of the digital shadow. While agreeing with the premise laid out, as well as the value of novels in understanding the massively complex issues of mass surveillance, I would argue that design offers a radically different mode of engagement. The following sections describe this designerly path in greater detail through the case of a key experiment within M(D)M.

2. EXPERIMENT FRAMEWORK

M(D)M is a larger project within my PhD studies, and thus consists of several different experiments. The experiment I will focus on in this paper ran as part of the annual event of JVEA,[10] a platform for theory, art and design in Berlin. The key event in the experiment was a design workshop that took place in Or Gallery, Berlin, July 31 2015, and was facilitated by Søren Rosenbak, Henrike Feckenstedt and Régis Frias (with Régis also acting as a participant). The event was free of charge and open to anyone who wanted to join. We announced the call for participation in advance, as part of the JVEA annual event program, and further pitched the workshop at another open JVEA event prior to the workshop. We also put up a poster out in front of the gallery, to allow for curious passers-by to walk in and join. The workshop itself ended up having four participants (including Régis) and lasted throughout the afternoon, around 2.5–3 hours. Finally, the gallery space in which the workshop took place was also hosting a specially curated M(D)M exhibition, with five invited artists exhibiting artworks that somehow related to the themes of the larger project.

Having provided some background and motivation behind the project as well as outlined the practical setup, I will now describe the larger framework for the M(D)M experiment, structured into three stages: extraction, transformation and co-speculation (chronologically as a beginning, middle and end). Here I will break down the cycle of participation, staying true to the chronological order. This breakdown will form the basis for the following discussion around methodology, and (A), (B) and (C) will from hereon after refer back to the various stages.

(A) First we extract a snippet of metadata (for this experiment we used 'yesterday from when you woke up till when you went to bed') from a participant's life. This is done in a

---

10 http://www.jvea.org/2015-2/

EXT.PUSCHKIN ALLE 22

It is yet another summer day in Berlin. MATT, a
24-year-old student of philsophy, is biking from his
temporary home at Puschkin Alle 22 towards the art space
Vierte Welt in Kreuzberg. He receives an email from
JAMES, 26 a work friend at 09.17. They are frequently in
contact on several different media. He opens the email
later during the JVEA event at Vierte Welt. Matt was
presenting in this space on Wednesday.

                    JAMES (EMAIL)

EXT. FRAULEIN WILD, DRESDERNERSTRASSE

After the JVEA session, MATT finds a café nearby,
Fraulein Wild in Dresdernerstrasse. Matt's phone is not
online and his sim card is locked, so he goes to the café
to use wi-fi. At 15.03, Matt tries to get hold of James,
26 on Google Hangout video chat. It fails. At 15.05 he
tries again. It works.

                    MATT (GOOGLE HANGOUT VIDEO CHAT)

                    JAMES

                    MATT

                    JAMES (LAUGHING)

                    MATT

                    JAMES

Figure 1 Excerpt from script template (B), first step in designing a digital shadow

transparent, participatory manner through a mix of qualitative interview (involving questions such as: when did that happen, where were you, with whom) and technological extraction aids, such as Immersion from MIT Media Lab,[11] which maps your social networks, connections, etc.

(B) Now we transform the metadata into a standardised short film script format. Metadata such as GPS locations in this way become locations in the script, friends you have been contacting on social media become characters, and so on. Importantly, no content is reproduced. Thus, at this point a series of script templates are designed with large parts of text missing: dialogues, descriptions, etc. (what we could call 'drama' in the Ancient Greek sense, recalling Rushkoff's quote from earlier). It is important to note that this is a design process requiring a great deal of precision both in terms of curation and fictionalisation. As the template is put together, the participant quite literally gets framed, in both senses of the word. Many concerns need balancing at this point: the potential in recognisability for the participant whose life the template is based on and thus reflects (it should provide enough recognition), the potential for co-participants to speculate freely on top of the template (it should provide enough creative freedom), and so on (see Figure 1). As a conclusion to this step, the script templates are printed and distributed.

(C) Finally participants fill out each other's templates, making sense of the many blank spots by writing out the missing dialogue, descriptions, etc. This is the co-speculative part of the project where participants get to exploit the speculative qualities of metadata by means of interpretation and sensemaking. After the participants have finished filling out the missing parts, the now finished scripts are read back (performed back) to the participants whose metadata the scripts are based on, not unlike when actors do the first read-through of a script together. In this way participants

end up dynamically drifting across the roles of object (the surveilled) and subject (the surveyor) as the reading session unfolds. This is the point where participants are confronted with a parallel, perhaps much more plausible, perhaps tedious, perhaps disturbing, version of themselves acting out a tiny part of their everyday life back to them. In this potentially uncanny moment they face one particular digital shadow, one of the infinite possible versions of themselves that reside in distant server farms around the world.

3. METHODOLOGY

At its very base, M(D)M is a critical, exploratory and experimental design project in the tradition of research through design. Like the preceding section on the experimental framework, it is worth clarifying that the following discussion on methodology too will focus on the M(D)M workshop in question, and not the entire research project.

One entry point for digging deeper could be a closer examination of the spectrum between speculation and participation, with the extraction (A) being highly participatory (as such it can be viewed as a quick-and-dirty design ethnographic prelude to the workshop), the transformation (B) being highly speculative (I would argue that the script templates produced are speculative design artifacts) and the final co-speculation (C) employing a mix of the two.

When discussing (C) in particular, it is of course crucial to acknowledge that participatory and speculative design each have their distinct traditions, methodological foundations, communities and discourses. While the space in-between these two trajectories is not uninhabited, there is a challenge in precisely articulating what goes on in this gap. As an example, Carl DiSalvo, in unpacking *speculative interventions*, an exploratory future-oriented practice at the overlap of design and anthropology, identifies a resulting 'methodological mess that is not yet defined, which calls for our imagination

and reflection to make sense of it' (DiSalvo, 2016:140). While I won't be able to give any exhaustive account of this methodological mess in relation to M(D)M here, I will use the hinge of 'what-if' between the respective traditions, to attempt to shed light on some of the key methodological insights produced in this project.

Both speculative design and participatory design put emphasis on the propositional and imaginative what-if. Within speculative design, this is the central question from which weak signals of the here and now are extrapolated and designed into profound futures (or alternative presents and pasts), only to boomerang back into our lives, at best facing us with important questions such as how we best navigate the possible roads ahead. In discussing speculative design as a methodology, James Auger points to the delicate nature of this undertaking by describing 'the perceptual bridge' as 'a bridge to exist between the audience's perception of their world and the fictional element of the concept' (2013:2). Going deeper into the nature of this bridging, he goes on to discuss the role of the uncanny (subtitled 'desirable discomfort'), pointing to the risk of, on one hand, too much familiarity in the speculative design solution resulting in an unnoticed assimilation, and on the other, too much provocation resulting in an outright shock. Auger concludes by stating that '[t]he design solution is complex and contradictory: provocative whilst at the same time familiar' (2013:4).

These concerns were highly present in (B), where a complex set of metadata was designed into a narrative skeleton. In the design process, the speculative component presented itself two-fold, both in the curation/fictionalisation of the metadata from (A) into a standardised short film script format (B), and also in the anticipation of the content produced through co-speculation by other participants in (C). Drawing on previous experiments with prototyping the script templates, a range of parameters was considered in this process, for example, the use of white space to nudge content (as when one character has consistently more white space than the other in a dialogue – how come?) and the strategic utilisation of plausible background information such as how two characters started to increasingly share the same location at some given point in time (see Figure 1). Interestingly, this process is more than anything a matter of leaving out (the right!) information from the extraction (A), a critical filtering of sorts. What is left (through the design work in (B) is a plausible, confined, and yet *open enough* frame for creative exploration in (C). Put differently, we can think of this design process as building the foundations for the perceptual bridges, which the participants finish in (C). The balance of familiarity (secured through the narrative skeleton) and provocation (explored through the imaginative co-speculation) is key to establish the uncanny effect of facing your digital shadow.

Within the Scandinavian participatory design tradition, notably working towards the heightened involvement of the user in the design practice, the role of drama, theatre and performance has come to play a significant role (see, for example, Ehn's discussion of Bertold Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt* in Ehn, 1988; Brandt and Grunnet, 2000; Halse and Clark, 2008; Buur and Larsen, 2010; Halse, 2010). In the context of using drama and props to engage users in the design process, Eva Brandt and Camilla Grunnet quote Soviet-Russian actor-director-teacher Konstantin Stanislavski's 'the magic if' as an inspiration in their design work. Through understanding 'the magic if' as that '[which] brings us out of reality into a world of art which is full of questions' (Brandt and Grunnet, 2000:12), they highlight the close affinity between the questions posed in theatre (an actress contemplating: 'what if my character won the lottery, what would she do?'), empathic design ('what if the user was in this situation – how would she solve the problem …') and metaphorical design ('[w]hat if the library was a warehouse, a store or a meeting place, etc.'; 2000:12; Kensing and Madsen, 1991 via ibid:12). Binder and Foverskov (2010) elaborate further: 'To see design as performance is precisely to connect

the multi-faceted role-playing of the everyday with the playful exploration of the 'what-if' of the theatre.'

Joachim Halse and Brendon Clark make a distinction between theatrical performance theory and the post-structuralist understanding of performance as an ontological condition precisely through the subjunctive: the famous 'what if' (2008:135), focusing their main argument around the latter. Positioning themselves in-between ethnography and design, and drawing significantly on Victor Turner, Richard Schechner and Erving Goffman, they argue for the design workshop as a performative event with the stated goal of 'creating a design space that is at once open for exploring the everyday practice of a given setting or group of people, and at the same time to bring about a lively sense of what it might become in light of the given resources' (2008:135).

Read in the context of the participatory design tradition, it is clear that M(D)M includes a degree of ethnographic fieldwork (A) and further involves the participants in the design process through co-speculation (C). Other more specific considerations stand out, for example Brandt and Grunnet's discussion of the role of creative constraint from Keith Johnstone's improvisation techniques (Johnstone, 1993), in which they emphasise that 'restrictions or guidelines give the users or designers something to hold on to from which they have to design' (2000:12). This echoes some of the major concerns discussed earlier in relation to (C).

As a way to start bridging the two strands, let's turn our attention towards (B). Viewed from a participatory design perspective, we can look at (B) as the fine-tuning of the right amount of creative constraint in the co-design of the digital shadows. This is a notoriously non-participatory design phase, where design decisions are driven by a critical analysis of the metadata set, carefully considering the craft of storytelling while maintaining a sense of plausibility from what we now know about global mass surveillance, thanks to

Snowden and others. Finally, (C) presents us with a somewhat different notion of theatre, drama and performance than we find in much participatory design literature, for example, Halse and Clark (2008) and Halse (2010). Rather than a rehearsal of the future, the M(D)M experiment is a read-through session, a speculative rehearsal of alternative everyday presents that might already have come true.

Let's unpack this a bit further. Contrary to Halse and Clark's workshop 'explicitly [being] about driving design processes forward by generating new ideas and producing useful concepts for new artifacts', no useful concepts for new artifacts are being produced in M(D)M. To stress this point, let's momentarily imagine that this was indeed the case. We could then picture outcomes such as the Cryptoparty workshop format, Julian Oliver's Transparency Grenade[12] or the TOR browser[13] surfacing from the workshop in embryonic states. However, while all these projects are completely valid, in fact excellent, responses to the massive issues and threats from global mass surveillance, the stated goal of M(D)M – heightening public metadata awareness – exists at a much more basic level by comparison. Within a discourse of critical design practice, M(D)M rather finds its call for action in one of the basic tenets of critical theory: namely, the exposure of hidden forces within society that condition and determine our lives (Bardzell and Bardzell, 2013:5). Indeed, faced with an (until very recently) semi-hidden force like global mass surveillance, pretty much unparalleled in complexity, power and reach, it seems that the task of basic exposure is equally massive, especially when we consider the non-tech savvy part of the public.[14] Indeed, rather than attempting to solve any problems, M(D)M can be said to 'critically rethink the parameters of the problem itself' (Mazé and Redström,

12 http://transparencygrenade.com/

13 https://www.torproject.org/projects/torbrowser.html.en

14 A survey done as part of another M(D)M experiment suggests that metadata is highly obscure, even to tech-savvy groups like design students.

2011:11).[15]

4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The experiment was successful in co-designing and instantiating a series of different digital shadows on top of each script template. The limited number of participants allowed us to have three different scripts/digital shadows produced/performed from each participant/template. This turned out to be a great advantage, as the highly divergent narratives on top of each metadata set greatly enriched discussions concerning the nature of metadata and the behaviour of digital shadows. During the experiment, a full loop was carried out with all participants, from extraction (A) to transformation (B) to co-speculation (C). The extraction (A) was carried out across various venues, with a member of the research team and the individual meeting up in private. The research team members carried out the transformation (B) over the course of a couple of days, and the co-speculation (C) took place one afternoon in Or Gallery with all participants and team members present.

Physically, the final read-through was organised in a setup centred in the gallery space consisting of two chairs where two participants would sit facing each other, a golden portrait frame suspended in air between them, to literally and metaphorically frame the session, as well as set the stage (see Figure 2).

Structurally, the final read-through was an open session where participants were encouraged to self-organise and take the stage, either in the role of the embodied digital shadow or the subject of speculation, the reader or the listener, the surveyor or the

surveyed. Various different constellations would organically form as a result, with one participant wanting to experience all her three digital shadows one after the other, and two participants staying on the stage in two consecutive sessions, swapping roles between them. This shifting dynamic not only served to harmonise the relationships between the participants, but also brought a critical awareness to the fact that each participant simultaneously inhabited the double-role of surveyor and surveilled, building empathy for both extreme ends of this spectrum.[16] Another point lies in the stark contrast between the momentary performative agency held by participants during the workshop, as contrasted by the notorious lack of agency in the mass surveillance society (and thus also in this workshop).

The setup (constituted by a conceptual and physical space) could be characterised by a strong sense of agonism (Mouffe, 2013), as a range of more or less conflicting digital shadows (and thus alternative presents) would come to life during the unfolding read-through. The plurality of equally valid, yet profoundly different (we might consider going as far as saying conflicting or even mutually exclusive) digital shadows enacted and performed in a cascading disarray, highlights the absence of any definitive answers or any kind of truth. Rather than any solid content ('who does Facebook really think I am?'), participants are left with a frame that seems comfortably, and eerily, able to hold close to anything. In this sense the digital shadow presents itself as a faux entity, a proxy digital identity.

The session concluded with a shared reflection session where the research team received valuable, positive feedback. Participants characterised the experience of having their digital shadow read out/performed as 'strange' (recalling the role of the uncanny in speculative design), highlighting the fact

15 In this way we could go a step further and characterise the project as a somewhat 'idiotic encounter', following Mike Michael's notion of 'the idiot' (drawing on Isabelle Stenger's figure of 'the idiot', which again is derived from Deleuze and Dostoevsky) as a lens through which to reframe the public engagement in Science and Technology Studies (STS) through a speculative design perspective (2012). While this is a promising tangent, it is too extensive to develop in this paper.

16 Compare with the fundamentally asymmetric and static power relationship that is the basis of Sophie Calle's *The Address Book* (2012), a project that in many other ways can be read as an analogue analogy to the present experiment.

2

3

Figure 2 Read-through (C) in Or Galler

Figure 3 The mediation of digital shadows

that the constant stream of authentic, plausible metadata throughout the read-through would keep you firmly in the flow of the unfolding narrative, even if the storyline diverted along some highly imaginative, absurd tangents at times (in other words maintaining 'the perceptual bridge' (Auger, 2013:2). This was particularly true for one script template, in which Henrike had prototyped an anomaly, by including an authentic tweet sent by the respective participant/protagonist at the very end of the script. This exception to the rule of only using metadata (and not the data, or in other words, content) in the design of the script templates, worked incredibly well in producing a strong uncanny pay-off for this particular storyline.

Based on their introduction of drama into design, Brandt and Grunnet argue for the importance of users improvising scenarios in their own settings, as it enables designers and users to meet on more equal terms (2000:19). As a response to this, one could ask what the settings of digital shadows are? While the technically accurate answer would of course be a hidden server farm like the one in St Ghislain in Belgium (Veermäe, 2014), I would argue that one of the main results of the M(D)M experiment precisely is the opening of such a space for citizens to make sense through design. As a local pop-up stage for citizens to materially engage, perform and negotiate with each other over issues of privacy, surveillance and the intangible nature of their digital shadows, I think of the set-up in Or Gallery in ways analogous to the table with a ball of metadata clay. In this sense it presents a possible way of mediating between the deliberately intangible/speculative and the all-too material/real.

Of course this mediation could have happened in many other places, as the natural ground for making sense of digital shadows can essentially be considered a non-place of sorts (Augé, 1995). Thus, while the event, like the other JVEA events taking place, was open to the public, it is definitely possible to argue for a less art-centric, less 'festivalesque' and more widely accessible mainstream public space for

future iterations of the project.

As as a low-key, local engagement designed to supplement the parallel high-level societal discourse on surveillance by addressing the fundamental issue of obscurity (what is metadata/digital shadows and why should I care?), there is a further question of how the participant's design and encounters with the digital shadows loop back into their everyday lives, let alone the larger, dire reality of global mass surveillance, as outlined in the introduction.

In addition to the issue of obscurity, I would argue the M(D)M workshop also pointed towards an important possible reframing of the issue of apathy ('resistance is futile') into a playground of performing and thus embracing the absurdity ('life is futile') that pervades much of the mass surveillance society. In describing the Theatre of the Absurd, Martin Esslin writes: 'The Theatre of the Absurd shows the world as an incomprehensible place. The spectators see the happenings on the stage as entirely from the outside, without ever understanding the full meaning of these strange patterns of events, as newly arrived visitors might watch life in a country of which they have not yet mastered the language (…) For while the happenings on the stage are absurd, they yet remain recognizable as somehow related to real life with its absurdity, so that eventually the spectators are brought face to face with the irrational side of their existence' (Esslin, 1960:5). Can we invite the spectators on to this stage, not only to see the happenings from within, but also to engage more intimately, critically and imaginatively with the absurdity of life through design? How could this Design Theatre of the Absurd play out?

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper has been concerned with the complicated relationship we have to our digital shadows, understood as ever-shifting, intangible figures, that still continue to have profound and yet non-transparent real-life consequences.

By acknowledging the speculative nature of the metadata that largely constitutes the matter of digital shadows, the craft of co-speculation was brought into a design experiment that took participants through a cycle of design ethnographic extraction of personal metadata, critical transformation of this metadata into short film script templates, and finally co-speculation and performance on top of these templates. Thus, the experiment utilised a mix of speculative and participatory design methodology, exploring the methodological mess in the space between the two by using the hinge of *what if*.

Concluding with a final read-through session, in which the designed digital shadows were performed, mediated and thus brought forth on to the collective stage, the experiment too was a way to negotiate between reality and imaginaries, across politics and poetics. Addressing the complexity, obscurity and common absurdity of global mass surveillance, the experiment succeeded in opening up an agonistic space for participants to playfully, yet critically engage in the topic matter, not by attempting to solve any problems or produce any solutions, but by simply starting to grasp and reframe the problem itself.

Building on the insights gathered from the M(D)M experiment, we can imagine The Design Theatre of the Absurd as a venue, not strictly for facing digital shadows, but as a space for a wider exploration of co-creation in speculative design as a method for generating public understanding of present(s).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BIOGRAPHY

Søren Rosenbak is a design researcher currently pursuing a PhD in design as critical practice at Umeå Institute of Design in Sweden. His research explores how pataphysics can infuse and advance a critical design practice.

Henrike Feckenstedt is an interaction designer currently working at R/GA in London. She graduated from Umeå Institute of Design in 2015.

REFERENCES

Appelbaum, J., 2016. 'Letter to a Young Selector', in L. Poitras (ed), in: *Astro Noise*. Whitney Museum of American Art & Yale University Press.

Augé, M., 1995. *Non-lieux*. London: Verso.

Auger, J., 2013. 'Speculative Design: Crafting the Speculation' in: *Digital Creativity*, *24*(1), pp.11–35.

Bardzell, J. and Bardzell, S., 2013. 'What is "Critical" About Critical Design?' in: *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*. CHI '13. ACM, pp.3297–306.

Brandt, E. and Grunnet, C., 2000. 'Evoking the Future: Drama and props in user centered design', in *Proceedings of Participatory Design Conference (PDC 2000)*, pp.11–20.

Binder, T. and Foverskov, M., 2010. 'Design as Everyday Theater. Re-thinking Co-Design as Social Drama', in: Halse, J., (ed), *Rehearsing the future*. Copenhagen:Danish Design School Press.

Brunton, F. and Nissenbaum, H., 2015. *Obfuscation: A User's Guide for Privacy and Protest*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Buur, J. and Larsen, H., 2010. 'The Quality of Conversations in Participatory Innovation' in: *CoDesign*, *6*(3), pp. 121–38. Calle, S., 2012. *The Address Book*. Los Angeles: Siglio.

Cole, D., 2014. 'We kill people based on metadata' in: *The New York Review of Books*. Available at: http://www.nybooks.com/daily/2014/05/10/we-kill-people-based-metadata/.

Crawford, K., 2016. 'Asking the Oracle', in: L. Poitras (ed) in: *Astro Noise*. Whitney Museum of American Art & Yale University Press.

https://www.cryptoparty.in.

DiSalvo, C., 2016. 'The Irony of Drones for Foraging: Exploring the Work of Speculative Interventions' in: R. C. Smith, K. T. Vangkilde, T. Otto, J. Halse, M. G. Kjaersgaard and T. Binder, (eds) *Design Anthropological Futures*, Bloomsbury Publishing.

Ehn, P., 1988. *Work-oriented Design of Computer Artifacts.* PhD thesis. Arbetslivscentrum.

Esslin, M., 1960. 'The Theatre of the Absurd' in: *The Tulane Drama Review*, pp.3–15.

Frank, S., 2015. 'How Novels Tell the Truth of Surveillance' in: *The Intercept*. Available at: https://theintercept.com/2015/06/28/orwells-triumph-novels-tell-truth-surveillance/.

Halse, J., (ed) 2010. *Rehearsing the Future*. Copenhagen: Danish Design School Press.

Halse, J. and Clark, B., 2008. 'Design Rituals and Performative Ethnography' in *Ethnographic Praxis in Industry Conference Proceedings.* 2008(1), pp.128–45.

Greenwald, G. and MacAskill, E., 2013. 'NSA Prism program taps into user data of Apple, Google and others' in: *The Guardian.* Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/06/us-tech-giants-nsa-data.

Johnstone, K., 1993. Impro: improvisation og teater, (in Danish – English title: *Impro: Improvisation and theater*). Hans Reitzels forlag.

http://www.jvea.org/2015-2/.

Kensing , F. and Madsen, K. H., 1991. 'Generating Visions: Future Workshops and Metaphorical Design' in: L. Erlbaum and M. Kyng, *Design At Work – Cooperative design of Computer Systems*. Boca Raton, Florida: CRC Press.

Mazé, R. and Redström, J., 2007. Difficult forms: critical practices of design and research. *IASDR 2007 Proceedings: Emerging Trends in Design Research.* Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

Michael, M., 2012. '"What Are We Busy Doing?" Engaging the idiot' in: *Science, Technology & Human Values*, *37*(5), pp.528–54.

Mouffe, C., 2013. *Agonistics*. London: Verso.
https://myshadow.org.

Paglen, T., 2016. 'Listening to the Moons', in L. Poitras (ed) *Astro Noise.* Whitney Museum of American Art & Yale University Press.

Pasquinelli, M., 2015. 'The Blind Eye of the Algorithm' in: *transmediale/magazine Issue #3. CAPTURE ALL*. transmediale.

Peterson, A., 2013. 'LOVEINT: When NSA officers use their spying power on love interests' in: *The Washington Post.* Available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-switch/wp/2013/08/24/loveint-when-nsa-officers-use-their-spying-power-on-love-interests/.

Poitras, L. and Crawford, K., 2015. 'Divorce Your Metadata: A conversation between Laura Poitras and Kate Crawford' in: *Rhizome*. Available at: http://rhizome.org/editorial/2015/jun/9/divorce-your-metadata/.

Risen, J. and Poitras, L., 2013. 'N.S.A. Gathers Data on Social Connections of U.S. Citizens' in: *New York Times* Available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/29/us/nsa-examines-social-networks-of-us-citizens.html.

Rusbridger, A., 2013. 'The Snowden leaks and the public'. Available at: http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2013/11/21/snowden-leaks-and-public/.

Rushkoff, D., 2013. 'The NSA, Code Literacy, and You' Codecadamy blog post. Available at: https://www.codecademy.com/blog/83.

Schneier, B., 2015. Foreword. Why We Encrypt. In: A. Crowe, S. Lee and M. Verstraete, *Securing Safe Spaces Online: Encryption, online anonymity and human rights*. Privacy International, ARTICLE 19 and The International Human Rights Clinic (IHRC) at Harvard Law School.

Slavin, K., 2011. *How Algorithms Shape our World*. [video] TEDGlobal. TED.

Stanislavskij, K., 1940. *An Actor works on Himself* (Danish version: En skuespillers arbejde med sig selv; Nyt nordisk Forlag Arnold Busck, 1988).

http://streetghosts.net/.

https://www.torproject.org/projects/torbrowser.html.en.

http://transparencygrenade.com/.

Veermäe, I., 2014. *Crystal Computing (Google Inc., St Ghislain)*. Available at: http://www.ivarveermae.com/CRYSTAL-COMPUTING/.

VICE on HBO, 2016. *State of Surveillance*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucRWyGKBVzo.

ART & DESIGN INTERVENTIONISM AND LONG-TERM PARTICIPATION
AN UNEASY RELATION?

Chairs: Liesbeth Huybrechts (University Hasselt) & Pablo Calderón Salazar (LUCA KU Leuven)

This track inquires how interventions can contribute to long-term participatory processes that address public space and public issues. Design and art interventions in public space are often driven by a wish to reclaim the common right to it and regularly use a 'hit-and-run tactic' (Gielen, 2013; Markussen, 2013). Besides art and design, other contexts (such as applied psychology) often use the concept of 'intervention' to refer to processes of acting upon and improving a perceived critical situation. Most definitions of interventions entail a traditional autonomous model, in which one person or a selected group of people decide whether a situation asks for a certain action with which they – unannounced, unadvertised and not commissioned – enter into a context (Markussen, 2013). Other approaches make use of the concept of intravention, with a special focus on the 'intra-' to avoid creating a rupture in the context by initiating the actions from within (Altés & Lieberman, 2013). The nature of interventions, thus seems to be in contrast with the more horizontal approaches of participatory processes. Despite this apparent contradiction, interventions are frequently used by artists and designers in durational practices (O'Neill & Doherty, 2010).

Interventionist approaches in specific (local) settings have the potential to democratize innovation by opening up spaces for inquiry and possibilities, rather than giving answers and solutions (Björgvinsson, Ehn & Hillgren, 2010). We want to explore different ways in which interventions contribute to these processes of democratisation of innovation (in public space) and address issues of public interest.

References

Altés Arlandis, A., & Lieberman, O. (2013). Intravention, durations, effects: notes of expansive sites and relational architectures.

Björgvinsson, E., Ehn, P., & Hillgren, P. A. (2010, November). Participatory design and democratizing innovation. In Proceedings of the 11th Biennial Participatory Design Conference (pp. 41-50). ACM.

Gielen, P. (2013). Artistic Praxis and the Neoliberalization of the Educational Space. The Journal of Aesthetic Education, 47(1), 58-71.

Markussen, T. (2013). The disruptive aesthetics of design activism: enacting design between art and politics. Design Issues, 29(1), 38-50.

O'Neill, P., & Doherty, C. (Eds.) (2011). Locating the Producers: Durational Approaches to Public Art. Antennae Series 4. Amsterdam: Valiz.

PLACE.PEOPLE.PRAXIS
Collective Engagements Towards Mediated Urban Futures

D. Chopra

ABSTRACT

With its overarching focus on issues at the macro-scale, Delhi's urban planning process has remained disengaged with everyday conditions in the city, resulting in visible disparities across social, physical and environmental realms. To connect the existing formal city planning process with multiple actors and their diverse aspirations at local level, a strategy for mediation incorporating alternative art and design practices can be explored through the idea of a creative urban development framework. This paper discusses public art practices that exemplify the purpose of engaging communities with local place specificities, larger environmental concerns and connected citizen aspirations, set within the socio-political backdrop of specific everyday urban spaces in the city,

Situated within two different locations in Delhi that represent varied contestations around the question of environment vs. development, the paper emphasises how public art installations can become a primary tool for collective association, especially within the milieu of multiple claims on urban space. The paper further reveals that contextually responsive, community oriented public art practices could offer valuable contributions to making and/or reconnecting 'places for people'. While highlighting different modes of civic engagement such as mobilisation and awareness, empowerment, engagement and co-development through these art practices, the paper explores the possibility of participative dialogue for decision-making in the re-imagining of urban futures.

THE EXISTING TRAJECTORY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT

'Contemporary urban India exists in a moment that is framed by multiple transformations: liberal market reforms initiated in 1991 that have led to a profound economic and social restructuring; the emerging notion of "world class cities" at a time of increasing global interaction and a media explosion; and a changing aspirational and economic landscape for the non-poor' (Bhan, 2009)

As one surveys the trajectory of Delhi's growth and change, contemporary urban discourse finds this to be city of many cities a palimpsest, wanting to transact its multi-layered hybrid existence with a new singular identity, moving feverishly towards realizing its dream of being a global city. Prevailing development practices, influenced by external forces of globalisation and the internal dynamics of change, are primarily oriented towards the creation of exclusive domains through large-scale urban projects, suggesting an evident shift towards an alignment with private interest, forsaking the public good. There have been clear fallouts from this approach, specifically with respect to the social and environmental health of the city, visible through increasing environmental degradation, physical displacement, spatial polarisation, and the progressive rupturing of social bonds.

While the formal planning process continues to address urban issues at the macro scale, the everyday city at the micro scale is overlooked, resulting in visible disparities between planning objectives and realities on the ground. Against such a disengaged process, civic imaginations could use the everyday nuances of urban spaces as the starting point for a differentiated approach towards the future of the city for a more socially responsive urban condition. The idea that urban spaces form the pivotal arenas of characteristic urban life, with all its complexities, becomes the central position from which the city is encountered, interpreted and discussed. This

method of re-engagement with the city-space presupposes an intimate immersion in varied urban realms in order to enable a grounded, bottom-up perspective of the constituent parts of the city as against a generalised totality.

A perceptible shift within the city-making process that allows for the inclusion of multiple voices in decision-making has become an inescapable necessity. What is of importance is the connection that multiple stakeholders could establish with city spaces, bringing forth into public domain latent aspects of everyday existence. Engaging the community as a collective creative resource in this process of cooperative city-building is required, in which citizens come together to create and build their spaces, not just manage them. Co-design and development initiatives through local 'place-making' would also foster association and attachment to the city while entailing a sense of ownership and belongingness of the community towards their created environment.

This paper examines how art practices positioned within everyday urban space could foster collective engagement and citizen participation as an essential ingredient for decision-making within our city building processes. As Suzanne Lacy says, 'New genre public art – visual art that uses both traditional and non-traditional media to communicate and interact with a broad and diversified audience about issues directly relevant to their lives – is based on engagement' (Lacey, 1994). Using specific cases of artworks from a public art festival held in the city, this paper highlights different modes of civic engagement initiated through public art and its potential contribution to the addressing of the generic concerns of our urban environment, as well as specific issues of identified urban spaces in the city.

'48°C PUBLIC.ECO.ART'[1]: A COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

A few years ago Delhi witnessed a first-of-its-kind public art festival, '48°c Public.Eco.Art', a collaborative project between artists, environmentalists, urban designers, architects and the city authorities. Everyday spaces were infused with public artworks, allowing the possibility of a collective dialogue between citizens about the city's concerns and spaces. Artists India and across the world used the opportunity to initiate a critical conversation around a host of contemporary issues that on one hand encompassed the physical and social dynamics of eight 'popular' locations in the city while alluding to the larger concerns of global environmental challenges on the other. Collectively, the twenty-five artworks across all eight sites provided an eclectic and enriching mix of creative associations generated by the art projects. As one of the artists, Mary Miss says, 'To have this series of 25 projects around the city, it's such an important precedence and I'm really so hopeful that this can be the beginning of something… and specially important is what this community gets out of it or the community adjacent to any of the projects, what they can take away from it.' (*Latent City*, 2009),

Being a capital city, Delhi's public spaces have been vibrant arenas of political drama and continuous dynamism. Ranging from grand spectacles of power and strategic political manoeuvring by vested interests to bitter turf wars, oppression and subjugation, these spaces through history have been witness to all. Positioned within the socio-political contestations and negotiations between the escalating dichotomy of

development trends vs. environmental conditions, the selected 'sites' for the festival represented multiple facets of this tussle that are constantly being enacted within these public realms. The festival sites were thematically categorised as:

- Sites of Ritual, Ceremony and the Everyday
- Sites of Community Aspirations vs. Metropolitan Mega-dreams
- Sites of Interfaces, Encounters and Memories

This paper uses two of the above range of sites to discuss the contextual manifestations of this debate and responses to the same through public art initiatives. While one of the sites, Barakhamba Road, represented the insertion of a mega-infrastructural mobility project for the benefit of citizens at large with a corresponding irreplaceable loss of significant tree cover in that location, the second site, Roshanara Garden, represented a place of physical and social decay, ironically as a result of the decision to shut down polluting industrial units from the inner areas of the city. Though in both cases the intent of larger good of the city determined the choices made, what was sacrificed was the everyday environment, both natural and social, that became affected and eroded. Thus, the thriving community that characterised the everyday city, whether this was the informal vendors and pedestrians of Barakhamba Road or the working population supported by the industries around Roshanara Garden, the loss in the urban quality of life was acute.

Art, when situated in the public domain, especially within complex urban conditions in cities like Delhi, becomes an interactive platform for a range of diverse collective conversations. The contextual characteristics that embody each 'site' for public art comprises existing physical elements and the prevailing socio-cultural milieu, as well as the historical urban processes that have led to its formation. The artwork therefore needs to effectively communicate, as well as engage with, this contextual setting. A framework that

helps in exploring this intended connection between the artwork and its context, to interrogate the constructed relation between the place and its people, is proposed here. The following section analyses three selected art interventions using the above framework. Each of the three cases begins with an extract from the place profile communicated by the curating team to each artist and then discusses the respective artworks through their contextual response, mode of engagement and potential contribution to the development discourse.

SITE 1: BARAKHAMBA ROAD

Barakhamba Road forms one of the most important radial roads connecting the central rings of Connaught Place in Delhi to the rest of the city. Together with the adjoining developments on the other radials, as well as in the two inner and outer 'circles' of CP, this place forms the Central Business District, CBD, of the capital city. Thousands of people converge on this place daily for work, business and entertainment... With the growing 'knowledge economy' of a globalising world, these office zones in all large cities are undergoing rapid change in work scenarios and correspondingly the built environment. The exponential growth of the number of cars and two-wheelers jostling for every inch of available road and parking space becomes one of the strongest indicators of this phenomenon. In an almost inevitable way, this spectacle serves as a tacit reminder of the loss of humanity in such spaces of this city, as may be the case with many other metropolises all across the globe that have fallen prey to, and remain in custody of, the automobile. It is ironical that to pave the way for a far greater degree of accessibility of people to this place by the metro the very essence of a people-centric workplace has had to be sacrificed! For in the ardent need to connect the most important business address with the rest of Delhi, the metro authorities went about mowing down scores of fully grown living trees that have existed since the days of British rule until very recently. The trees provided shade and

sheltered the lively street-based informal life of the vendors and service providers looking after and nurturing the needs of all those who spent their work life here for this city. With the sudden and brutal disappearance of the trees, the life and humanity of the streets also seem to have collapsed. Vendors, drivers, peons, clerks, errand boys, maintenance and service staff all seem to now prefer the more crowded but shaded side roads and rear car parks away from the glare of the corridor, with its lifeless barren urban drama. ('Barakhamba Road', 2008)

The selected artworks positioned within this site as part of the public art festival under discussion bring forth the connection between art and its expressional idiom on one hand and civic engagement on the other, towards generating meaningful conversations and debates. The first installation creates a spectacle of drama opening up a space for reactions and comments while provoking audiences to contemplate the ecological loss resulting from the refurbishment of the physical infrastructure of the city. In contrast, the second case focuses on communication methods that highlight significant concerns of the urban existence, while informing and promoting collective dialogue on city-making processes.

CASE 1: 'CRANE+TREE' BY ARTIST KRISHNARAJ CHONAT[2]

As the existing green cover makes way for ongoing developments like high-end shopping centres, five-star hotels, office complexes, entertainment hubs, metro stations etc. as it does in most cities, one either feels excited about these new additions or aggrieved by the loss of nature. What gets overlooked in

2 Krishnaraj Chonat is a sculptor, installation and performance artist from Bangalore, a city that in the last decade has become synonymous with information technology in India. Notions of technology as progress, questionable methods of disposing hazardous waste, and the destruction of the environment through aggressive new development are some of the recurring issues he responds to. (Krishnaraj Chonat)

Barakhamba Road
Site of Ritual, Ceremony and the Everyday

Roshanara Garden
Site of Community Aspirations vs. Metropolitan Mega-dreams

Artwork: *'Crane+Tree'*
by Krishnaraj Chonat

Artwork: 'Barakhamba 2008'
by Navjot Altaf

Figure 1: Two of the selected 'sites' for the public art festival: 48°c public.eco.art

Figure 2: Art projects on Barakhamba Road

this larger debate between urban expansion and environmental degradation is the vital component of everyday space that supports a multitude of informal activities for the efficient functioning of the city. These spaces allow for varied experiences that act as support organs for the city, a reality which the formal planning process conveniently chooses to ignore.

'An uprooted tree loosely hanging over an abandoned colonial bungalow in the commercial hub of metropolitan Delhi was met with reactions of shock and awe by most street users, '*Crane+Tree*' one of the artworks by artist Krishnaraj Chonat was a surreal take on the ever- present dichotomy between development and environment. This hanging tree signified the fate of numerous other trees that once allowed everyday life to perpetuate below them but were sacrificed for an underground metro line connecting the CBD to other parts of the city. Through this spectacle of drama, the fundamental dilemma on development needs against environmental loss was communicated en masse to the millions of commuters and users engaged with this space'. (Chopra, 2015)

RESPONSE TO THE PHYSICAL SETTING

The site selected for the artwork was the last remaining colonial bungalow with full-grown trees amidst tall office buildings on this stretch. This dilapidated house, with its inconspicuous presence on the road, represented a bygone era that existed before the redefinition of Barakhamba Road as the Central Business District of the city immediately after Independence and before the recent addition of the Delhi metro. In response to this physical setting, the artwork uses the memory of a tree as a physical element that comprised one of the primary identities of this corridor to highlight dramatically the story of its loss. In the transformed setting of multi-storeyd office buildings and a barren urban streetscape this 'audacious' creation immediately became a new landmark for daily passers-by.

RESPONSE TO SOCIAL CONTEXT

In the city's most important business zone, with the main thoroughfare crowded with office-goers, passers-by and visitors throughout the day, this artwork recalls the stark reality of the erosion of civic and social life, along with the larger environmental loss, sharply and effectively. The uprooted tree was representative of a small ecosystem that once existed on Barakhamba Road, providing shade and relief to vendors selling snacks, basic stationery supplies, newspapers, flowers, etc. along this stretch, especially to the non-executive working population. While the addition of a world-class infrastructure facilitated the daily commute of thousands of passengers, what became eroded due to the this loss of tree cover was the everyday cycle of urbanism, defined by multiple transactions and daily associations, that took place along this primary route.

MODE OF ENGAGEMENT

This art installation used sudden impact and bewilderment as the starting point of a lively and necessary process of questioning urban development trajectories. While highlighting the loss of urban ecology as a consequence of urban development needs for better transit facilities and a super-efficient city, this artwork was a brilliant sight that was hard to miss and made almost everyone pause and stare in amazement. As artist Krishnaraj Chonat says, 'I had this idea in mind of using a huge industrial crane, a construction crane, to actually suspend the tree... That tree kind of posed a question mark, over that area, over everything that happened there, its history and what it projects into the future' (Krishnaraj Chonat).

POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION
Mobilisation and awareness through provocation

The artwork engaged with the citizens through a provocative process of igniting collective memory and the everyday experience of city

users affected by the results of development. It became a medium of awareness, raising significant questions about the developmental paradigm that the city had decided to adopt. During the festival period, responses and comments by numerous onlookers of this spectacle and the questions of development decisions that were discussed actively demonstrated a scenario of multiple conversations by citizens in city spaces. Such artworks, through initial provocation and subsequent questioning, indicate the possibility of creating a participative platform of greater awareness and the continued mobilisation of citizens towards the planning of urban actions.

CASE 2: BARAKHAMBA 2008 BY ARTIST NAVJOT ALTAF[3]

Artist Navjot Altaf positioned her artwork within the larger developmental processes of the city, underlining the disengagement by the city planners from the reality on the ground, in terms of both conception and civic participation. While trying to examine this disjunction between planning strategies and everyday existence, her work was positioned within the realm of transactions that need to take place as part of the city's building discourse, bringing forth into public domain the need for collective dialogue on critical issues among diverse/multiple stakeholders occupying shared spaces in the city.

Barakhamba 2008 *was a video installation of previously recorded conversations with various occupants of Barakhamba road and adjoining side roads, city authorities, planners and other experts highlighting various transformations that this space has experienced after the metro. Subsequently a live video stream projected parallel discussions among the audience about the changing nature of this*

space whilst raising pertinent issues of urban development decisions and everyday patterns of space usage. (Chopra, 2015)

RESPONSE TO PHYSICAL SETTING

This artwork was a micro-installation in the everyday space located in two separate places one on the pavement, next to a bus stop on Barakhamba Road – as a stopping point on a busy thoroughfare,and the second within a *paan*[4] shop on one of the adjoining side roads. The realisation of the stark difference between the lifeless stretches of Barakhamba Road and the adjoining radial roads informed the decision to position the video screens as part of the daily thoroughfare of everyday users. Choosing gathering places where people congregate, this artwork allowed for the carving out of new spaces of interaction and exchange within the larger domain of the business district surrounding them.

RESPONSE TO SOCIAL CONTEXT

This art installation questioned how the city, with its generous gesture of delivering modern means of transport, had overlooked the space that provided sustenance to hundreds of migrants that flock to the city for a better standard of living. The artwork used the existing milieu of the everyday users of this space, whether students, visitors, commuters, vendors, or office-goers, each of whom had a stake in this part of the city, and drew attention to the transformation that happened due to wider city-level decisions, making them merely recipients of what the city authorities eventually decide. While acknowledging the need for an efficient transit system, some of the participants of the video were critical of the loss of everyday space, representative of the wide cross-section of inhabitants that occupied this space. Against such unilateral acts of grave consequence,

3 Navjot Altaf began her career in 1970s. Active for over three decades, she has created an oeuvre which constitutes an ever-growing flow of films, sculptures, spatial / site-oriented installations, and photographs that negotiate various disciplinary boundaries traversing art and political activism. (Navoj Altaf, 2015)

4 Paan (from Hindi, from Sanskrit parṇa, "leaf") is a preparation combining betel leaf with areca nut and sometimes also with tobacco. It is chewed for its stimulant and psychoactive effects. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paan)

the artwork attempted to initiate a process of dialogue between diverse sets of individuals and groups involved in the decision-making process, including the affected participants of this space as well as new users.

PROCESS OF ENGAGEMENT

The process of engagement used here ensured a 'real-time' connection of city users with a prevailing dialogue among decision-makers, allowing for the possibility of a dynamic exchange of views and counter-views surrounding the everyday conditions of the urban spaces. At one level, the pre-recorded messages provided an interesting subtext, initiating thought-provoking conversations among audiences during the festival. At another level, the live feed of ongoing interactions between members of the audience brought in an additional layer of communication to the process of multiple and simultaneous expression of views and opinions on city conditions. This dual method of engagement provided a unique way of fostering collective dialogue.

POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION
Empowerment through collective association

The artwork was based on the idea of drawing citizens into a constructive discourse on the decision-making processes of the city. By bringing on board multiple stakeholders from government, planning bodies, urban experts and city residents, the art project used a proactive strategy for multi-level engagement and conversations, thus opening up new 'spaces' and modes of dialogue. A strategy like the one used for this artwork has significant potential to create sustained communication between the city and its users for a more balanced and cooperative way of determining our future living environment. Strengthening civic participation by re-building collective association with city spaces is a way to empower citizens, to take account of and contribute to the development programmes of the city spaces they inhabit.

SITE 2: ROSHANARA GARDEN

The area around Roshanara Garden presents one of the most direct instances of underlying contestations that surround the urban environmental debate in Delhi. In its urge to fulfil the dream of a green, healthy city for its citizens and its own future, using various legal measures of enforcement, the area was cleared of the so-called 'pollutants' that were seemingly behind the cause of the environmental degradation of the city. Thus, during a number of fateful days, the historic Sabzi Mandi (vegetable wholesale market) disappeared. Flourishing textile, oil and flour mills, along with other industries, warehouses and godowns were shut down and sealed up. A transport-based market of automobile spare parts and repairs was shifted out. While the air around this area invariably became cleaner, what was left behind were thousands of inhabitants and their families who had depended on all these workplaces as their primary, and sometimes the only, sources of livelihood. Erstwhile stable residential colonies that had nurtured wholesome communities through interwoven dependent relationships between work, home and recreation were suddenly severed from their basic sustenance and resource for gainful productive living within this city. Ironically, the mega-dream of a healthy happy life for all Delhites turned out to be a nemesis for some. Both the built and social fabric of this area today reveals the decay and desolation of a long-lost part of a historic city whose only vestiges of a glorious past remain as the few surviving beaten-down hovels and bungalows of a bygone era, vacant mill lands with overgrown weeds and impressive brick structures silently complementing the equally neglected Roshanara Garden at the heart of this part of Delhi. Mushrooming slums of laid-off factory workers, broken families, dilapidated houses, empty workshop sheds, a lifeless railway station, closed cinema halls, all add to this story of a city going 'green' (Roshanara Garden, 2008).

Positioned within this contested setting, the following artwork attempted to move beyond the existing condition of distress and indifference by offering a proposition to meaningfully re-connect the disengaged community with its shared assets and resources.

CASE 3: ROSHNARA'S NET BY ARTIST MARY MISS[5]

'Ghantaghar', or the clock tower, at arm's length from Roshanara Bagh, along with abandoned factory buildings, symbolises a thriving industrial era that once existed in this part of the city. The area represents a contested space of capital city aspirations against local issues of survival, with the state at one end of this dichotomy. Standing amidst the old, defunct industrial zone disconnected from the adjoining residential fabric is a memorial garden to the Emperor Shahjahan's daughter Roshanara, today comprising today a park, a derelict pavilion and a prominent cricket club; this became the site for Mary Miss's art project.

Roshanara's Net, *by artist Mary Miss, located in a deserted garden from the Mughal era, tried to reconnect a community with its lost urban space... A broader dream for a 'cleaner' Delhi was actualised at the cost of local livelihoods and primary sources of sustenance. Mary Miss's artwork was based on a strategy to give new hope to this community, by drawing them back to their abandoned park, but with an added purpose*

5 Mary Miss has reshaped the boundaries between sculpture, architecture, landscape design, and installation art by articulating a vision of the public sphere where it is possible for an artist to address the issues of our time. She has developed the 'City as Living Lab', (Marda, 2009), a framework for making issues of sustainability tangible through collaboration and the arts, with Marda Kirn of EcoArts Connections. Trained as a sculptor, her work creates situations emphasising a site's history, its ecology, or aspects of the environment that have gone unnoticed. Recent projects include an installation focused on water resources in China for the Olympic Park in Beijing and a temporary installation at a seventeenth-century park in Delhi, India as part of the exhibition 48°: Public Art and Ecology. (Mary Miss, 2010)

and meaning through the incorporation of an Ayurveda / medicinal garden. (Chopra, 2015)

RESPONSE TO THE PHYSICAL SETTING

Roshanara's Net used the idea of strengthening the connection between surrounding residential neighbourhoods and the Roshanara memorial pavilion inside the park by placing elements of artwork along an abandoned water channel that once formed the ceremonial entry to the monument. In consonance with the Mughal origin of the garden, the ground plane, along with the adjoining fencing, took inspiration from design motifs from a Persian carpet ,extending a new welcome for an existing community to a key amenity. Interspersed within this pattern, and in response to the existing range of vegetation characterising the park, herbal and medicinal plants were planted, each annotated with their names in English and Hindi as well as a small explanation of the benefits they carry.

RESPONSE TO THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

Within a rusted cityscape, due to the complete apathy of the state, this area hosts an embittered, isolated community that was severed from its only source of employment for the cause of the 'wider public good'. In an attempt to make the city more breathable, this place was left to die its own natural death with little support from the state machinery to make up for what the community had lost. This project was an attempt to reconnect adjacent communities, including traditional industrial labouring families, traders and service providers, along with elders, women and children, by rekindling hope through a new imagination of the park as a resource for community health and revitalisation. Through this project a new meaning was added to this space while allowing old associations to be renewed by a different, yet connected layer of purpose in the daily lives of people living around it. The idea of an 'Ayurveda' garden thus connected quite strongly with women and older people as a means of identifying with some of the everyday ingredients they use in

Figure 3: Art project in Roshanara Garden

Artwork: *Roshanara's Net*
by Mary Miss

their cooking while also familiarising them with some new herbs and their medicinal qualities.

PROCESS OF ENGAGEMENT

The artwork 'announced' its presence in the locality through various means. First, the boundaries of the park, visualised as an interface with the area around, were re-painted in bright colours, drawing attention to the spatial 'transformation'. Secondly, local children were mobilised to announce the 'new' garden within the community through mobile handcarts that carried some of these plants into adjoining streets for free distribution to the residents living in that area. The resultant buzz around the neighbourhood subsequently drew curious inhabitants out of their internal private domains to the garden, rejuvenating this dead space after many years. In parallel, talks on medicinal plants by naturopaths, landscape architects and historians were organised, along with discussions with community elders and local leaders on the possibility of a permanent herbal/medicinal garden as part of the reimagined future of the park. The engagement process used here is reflective of deeper connections created within community groups by using an existing natural asset as a catalyst to reunite citizens with urban space.

POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION
Engagementand Co-development

This art project pointed towards the possibilities of 'place-making' by adding new meaning and purpose, while inviting (back) its varied user groups. In this case, the intent of re-connecting a lost space and community amenity with its users and promoting fresh possibilities of collective engagement suggested public art projects' potential contribution towards making 'places for people'. This kind of artwork revolves around the idea of community as an active agent in the process of co-development and the re-generation of their local areas through planning and design initiatives, to promote cooperative ways of urban development.

CONCLUSION

'Through creative and strategic intervention in a given context there is always a possibility to invent new processes, traditions, and ultimately a new urban reality.' (Inam, 2014) The three selected cases are only a representation of numerous ways in which artists participating in this festival promoted dialogue on contemporary urban issues addressed through respective art installations. Apart from their visual and sensory appeal, the artworks stimulated civic engagement through multiple approaches, ranging from creating a spectacle of drama resulting in awe and astonishment, generating mobilisation and awareness and finally promoting empowerment through collective association, with a potential contribution towards building a platform for the co-development of public spaces.

Within the context of Barakhamba Road, Krishnaraj's artwork *Crane+Tree* used the idea of dramatic visual appeal as a tool for instant and provocative impact, while Navjot's art installation *Barakhamba 2008*, positioned cleverly in the foreground of Krishnaraj's suspended tree, fostered multilateral conversations using media tools to spatialise and debate contextual development issues. Then again, the strategy adopted by Mary Miss as part of her artwork *Roshanara's Net* envisaged a participative action programme through 'restored' and 'new' associations as a rallying point for revitalising neglected communities to reconnect with and take account of their common amenities.

All three examples cited above reinforce the idea of public art as an alternative empowering practice. While exemplifying the role of public art as a communicative tool for dialogue contributing to the process of social change, a comprehensive strategy for mediation could be formulated to negotiate differences among multiple actors with diverse agencies using the idea of art based 'place-making'. This approach has the potential to empower publics through renewed engagement towards

the co-creation of public space. 'Effective arts-based place-making projects go well beyond the idea of art for art's sake. The goal of this work is to build strong, healthy, and resilient cities by integrating the arts into broader community revitalization and place-making efforts. It is about leveraging the power of arts and culture to strengthen communities and drive social change'. (Project for Public Spaces, 2015)

The public art projects discussed in this paper bring forth multiple modes of citizen participation located within the realm of urban transformation. While on one hand the festival primarily highlighted issues of contemporary environmental change, on the other the process of civic participation emphasised the potential of public art as a praxis towards contributing to positive social change. The possibilities of incorporating these multiple strategies for fostering collective engagement towards imagining our shared urban futures inspires us to revisit our urban development paradigm. Using public art as a strategy for mediation could be incorporated as part of a '"creative" urban development framework'[6] in the quest for innovative strategies of a collective, citizen-led re-imagination of our everyday lives and sustainable city futures.

6 For a detailed discussion on 'creative' urban development framework, please refer to Chopra (2015)

BIOGRAPHY

Divya is an architect and urban designer presently teaching in the School of Design, Ambedkar University, Delhi (AUD). Her research pursuits revolve around contemporary urban manifestations and critical discourses in the South Asian context. She is currently exploring community-partnered multidisciplinary engagements in public spaces in the emerging scenarios of change in Indian cities.

REFERENCES

48°c Public.Eco.Art. Available at: http://khojworkshop.org/participant/pooja-sood/

Aseem. I., 2014. *Designing Urban Transformation*. New York: Routledge.

'Barakhamba Road: Sites of Ritual, Ceremony and the Everyday, Urban Study Report', 2008. Urban Resource Group: 48°c public.eco.art

Bhan, G., 2009. '"This is no longer the city I once knew": Evictions, the urban poor and the right to the city in millennial Delhi.' *Environment & Urbanization*, 21(1), 127-142

Chopra, D., 2015. 'Collective Imaginations for Everyday Realities'. Paper at 51st ISOCARP Congress, Rotterdam, 19-23 October 2015.

Krishnaraj Chonat. Available at: http://regardingindia.com/portfolio/krishnaraj-chonat/

Lacy, S., 1994. *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*. Seattle, WA: Bay Press.

The Latent City, 2009. dir. K. Bose, Earth Care Films (http://www.earthcarefilms.com.html)

Marda, K., 2009. 'Miss Mary, City as Living Laboratory Lab Book'. Available at: http://www.cityaslivinglab.org

Mary Miss, 2009. Available at: http://www.marymiss.com/index_.html

Navjot Altaf, 2015. Available at: http://www.navjotaltaf.com

Project for Public Spaces, 2015. 'Creative Communities and Arts-Based Placemaking'. 2015. Available at: http://www.pps.org /reference/creative-communities-and-arts-based-placemaking/

'Roshanara Garden, Sites of Community Aspirations vs. Metropolitan Mega-dreams, Urban Study Report', 2008. Urban Resource Group, 48°c public.eco.art

NAUTILUS КОНСТРУКТ
Building an Open Stage for Skopje

D. Kokalevski & E. Filipovska

ABSTRACT

This paper presents a case study for building public infrastructure -- a stage -- as an intervention that creates a critical collaboration between institutional (state) and independent (NGO) cultural actors in the city of Skopje, Macedonia. The stage, titled Nautilus Konstrukt,emerged as a critical action at a time when current spatio-cultural production in Skopje is dominated and hijacked by a state-sponsored, violent, and nationalistic grand projet dubbed Skopje 2014. Therefore, the urgency for interventions such as Nautilus, which creates cross-connections between citizens and institutions and utilises the built interference as a medium to investigate these connections, is increasingly important in the context of Skopje and the wider region. Nautilus arose as an initiative by few architects from City Creative Network Skopje, and within a year had grown into an international project run as a design studio with artists, designers, engineers, architecture students and craftsmen, who participated in the design and building of the stage. Most importantly, Nautilus was realised as an educational event, as a way of learning through the process of designing, building and acting. The interest here is to forge connections between cultural institutions, city authorities and citizens. This paper presents the challenges and lessons learned from this intervention and its wider impact on the relationship between the commonality in public spaces and the insistence on active citizenship.

INTRODUCTION

Nautilus Konstrukt (*City Creative Network)* emerged as a critical intervention for promoting active citizenship and creating a close interaction between the production of public spaces and the citizens of Skopje. It was initiated during a ten-day design festival, 'Skopje Creative Hub 2014: New Content in Public Space' (Kokalevski & Dinevski, 2015), the first design festival of its kind in Skopje, focusing on developing interventions that promote the alternative use of public space. Organised for students and young professionals, it was structured as an event with international lecturers, discussion sessions, workshops and a parallel programme that resulted in a publication and a series of small urban interventions that raised awareness of, and interest in, citizens' active role in the creation of common spaces in the city. During that time it was also realised that Skopje lacks an open-air stage for independent cultural production and has the potential to host one as a larger-scale intervention.

On one hand, Nautilus Konstrukt presents a reaction to the nationalistic and dominant narrative enforced in public space by the government, and on the other it reacts to citizens' passivity in this process. If we look at the context of Skopje in recent years, we can clearly see an enormous change in the city fabric as a result of the colossal government-funded project known as 'Skopje 2014'. The project was announced in 2010 and envisaged the construction of around forty monuments, dozens of sculptures, many new 'baroque' facade retrofits and around twenty new governmental buildings. By the year 2016 the number of buildings and monuments has tripled, changing the character of the city and erasing the previous modern history of the city fabric, with the main intention of redirecting the identity of the whole country and establishing a new reality for its citizens. As a state project, it suppressed the professional and critical debates on the city's new urban development and sidelined all the experts in the fields of architecture and city planning. Its main narrative is to connect the modern Skopje to its 'real' ancient Macedonian roots by

erecting buildings and facades in a prescribed Disneyesque 'baroque' style. Despite the controversial nature of the project, and its staggering price tag, there is a serious lack of constructive action by citizens to challenge this status quo. These recent developments were crucial in raising our concerns about the disenfranchisement of the individual as an agent of change (Hatherley, 2016).

Consequently, our NGO City Creative Network (CCN) devised the idea of building a stage as a reaction to this hijacking of public space by the state. Since we come from diverse creative backgrounds, and we work in both practice and academia in a highly international context (Skopje, Zurich, Ljubljana, Amsterdam, Tokyo), our approach from the outset of the project was based on international collaboration as an event of knowledge exchange between academia, practice, and city officials in Skopje. Knowing our goals, over a period of a year we applied for funds from different institutions and gathered a large number of stakeholders to become involved in the project. Firstly, we approached the Mayor's Office of Skopje and asked for a permit for an installation of a one-year temporary urban infrastructure. At the same time, we were in an ongoing debate with the Youth Cultural Centre (MKC) and invited them to become our main institutional partner in the realisation of the stage, both logistically and conceptually. MKC is one of the few institutions that support alternative culture in the city and from the outset the stage was planned to be built near their premises, so they were of crucial interest for us. In parallel with this we talked to local theatre groups like Theatra and Wonderland, and artists who would become the backbone for the future programme of the stage. Once these series of conversations were set in motion we started fundraising from domestic and international cultural foundations. Among others, we were generally supported by the Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development (Netherlands), The Balkan Arts and Culture Fund, ETH Zürich, the Prof. Philip Ursprung Research Fund and the Macedonian Ministry of Culture. These supporters enabled us to finally set the project in motion. Next we

were kindly supported by the Skopje Fair, by the use of one of their halls as a workshop and fabrication hall for the building of the stage. Finally, together with the departments of architecture of ETH Zurich and UKIM Skopje we included the project in the curriculum as an elective course and gathered around thirty students who designed and built the stage together with us. Over a period of one year the project became a behemoth of collaborations and mediations, which was challenging, to say at the least. Our main partner in the final realisation was the team of TEN Architects from Zurich, who have significant expertise and know-how relating to the of designing and building of pavilions in various academic and private settings. The designing, building and opening of the stage became a medium for collaboration and education between the stakeholders (Martinon, 2013).

PROCESS, COLLABORATION, EDUCATIONAL EVENT

The stage is a reaction to the lack of public space initiatives in Skopje and gives the city a stage where freedom of expression is imperative. After we concluded, together with the local theatre groups and MKC, that Skopje is in dire need of such a performance space, we realised that this project has become ever more relevant for the local context. Even though MKC is the most progressive cultural institution in Skopje, it needs to extend its involvement in independent cultural production. Our goal from the initial idea was to bring these stakeholders closer together and insist on collaboration that will open up new possibilities. Consequently, the stage is built in front of MKC, which, despite its rich infrastructure for cultural events, still lacks an outdoor stage. Although MKC is located right on the riverbank of Vardar it has no connection or relationship to it. MKC and Nautilus are in the centre of Skopje, and is in a still very underdeveloped public area along the riverbank. This area was planned to become a cultural hub in the 1960s but the idea never materialised. In that sense Nautilus builds on that original idea and extends the possibilities of combining the elements of the riverbank,

MKC and the young artists in Skopje. Our notion for Nautilus is not about violent ruptures in public space without ideas for posterity; rather it is about gentle or micro ruptures that open up possibilities for collaborations by enabling unexpected – rhizomatic – lines of flight to materialise (Deleuze et al., 1984).

After the initial phase of developing the idea and fundraising, together with the Architecture Faculty of Skopje and the Department of Architecture at the ETH Zurich a strong group of around thirty students was gathered, that became the crucial part of the realisation of the project. Our architect partners, on the other hand, TEN from Zurich, who are experts in building pavilions, and our NGO took on the role of design critics, working intensively on the design and building of the stage with the students through July and August 2015 in Skopje. The students from Skopje and Zurich had a chance to expand their knowledge and test their skills-set on a real project and at the same time it enabled them to understand the project as a medium for social change. This turned out to be a very positive experience in creating an educational model that brings together students from different educational backgrounds, and it managed to create a long-lasting connection between all the group members that still operates today.

FROM DESIGN TO PRODUCTION

Nautilus Konstrukt is situated on the riverfront of Vardar, the main river that flows through the centre of Skopje, in front of the MKC and very close to the Academy of Arts and Sciences (MANU). Buildings such as the Macedonian National Library, University of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, the main judicial buildings and the National Television and Radio building are in the wider surroundings, and represent the administrative, cultural and educational centre of Skopje. Nautilus was strategically placed in this urban setting, which is close to the city centre square and far enough from the residential areas to avoid noise disturbance from the events taking place on the stage. It is also tactically positioned in front of MKC,
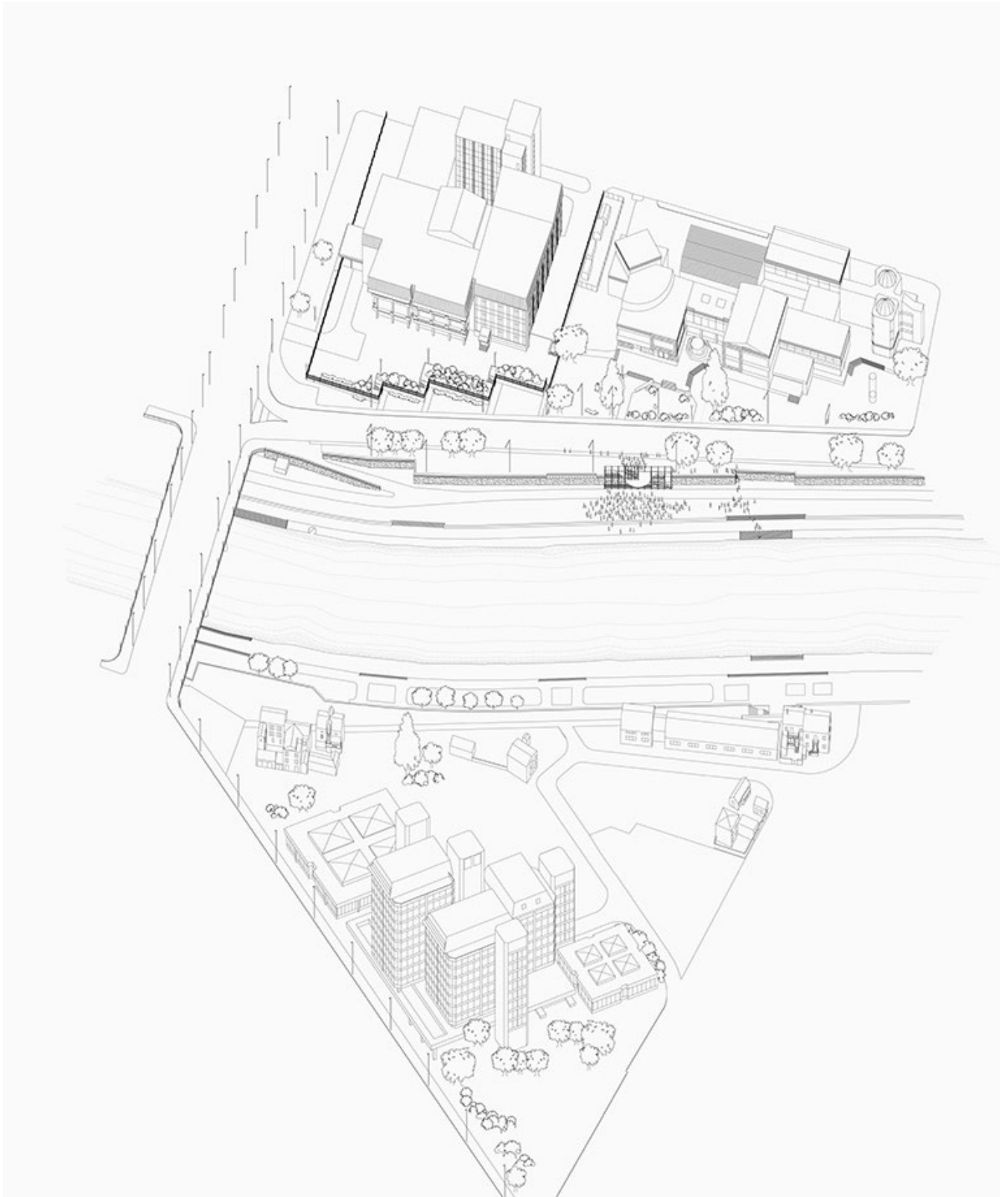
Figure 1. The strategic position of Nautilus Konstrukt in front of the Youth
Cultural Center (MKC)

as a continuation of the institution's premises towards the riverfront during the summer (Figure 1). On the other hand, it is also intended as a piece of urban infrastructure that allows a much-needed pedestrian connection from the higher street level to the water's edge, bridging the wall between the river and road.

Several months before the construction of Nautilus, the design process took a number of parallel ways of progressing. On the one hand, the design studio TEN designed a draft version, with the idea of building a light structure that would be transparent enough not to invade the surroundings, and to function as a 'staircase', and as a stage for different types of uses at the same time (Figure 2). Simultaneously, our collaborators in Skopje worked closely with the institutions for all the necessary legal documentation, which resulted to be the most demanding part of the process. The City of Skopje's Spatial Planning and Organization Department, despite its primary occupation being to issue legal permits for construction, was not particularly open to collaboration initially. Our main concern was to present the project in a way that clarifies our means of finding alternative ways of using common spaces through citizen initiatives, but also to propose the project as a much-needed and useful infrastructure in that particular part of the city. After several meetings and discussions, a legal permit for construction was issued for Nautilus as temporary urban installation for a period of one year. The negotiations thus continued with MKC, who appreciated our idea and offered technical support in the building process, but after only two days of assembling they cancelled the essential electrical energy supply at the site and reneged on our agreed project. Nevertheless, we still managed to organise the entire necessary infrastructure for the construction.

Meanwhile, the preliminary design project was adapted to the strict seismic design principles that apply in Skopje, as well as to the specifics of the site. This lower level of the riverside presents a strategic flood safety zone where drilling and changing the soil is restricted, so

the foundations were put on top of the ground. On the other hand, some of the metal elements could not be produced as designed, and alternative structural choices were considered. Finally, the first week of the workshop was intended for the last design decision-making processes, where the students were involved in the site evaluation and analysis and the specific position of the structure, as well as creating their own woven and painted textiles and placing them on the structure for different uses. The sense of mutual striving towards change was prevalent among the group. Once Nautilus was completed, even the more sceptical students were completely convinced of the success of the project. The process of realisation for us was about developing ideas about knowing how to look and act in the city as designers and architects, but above all as citizens (Easterling, 2005).

Because of the very high temperatures in Skopje during the months of July and August, our plan was to produce all necessary elements at the Skopje Fair. Over a period of two months we turned the empty halls into a vital site of exchange where most of the analysis, design and discussion sessions, as well as the fabrication of the concrete foundations for the whole construction, were produced (Figure 3). After two weeks, the work was relocated to the construction site, together with the prefabricated metal parts, where the students and all the collaborators started the Nautilus assembly process (Figure 4, 5). The weather made the construction even harder, and we worked early in the mornings and during the night in order to avoid the hotter periods of the day.

Structured as a narrow timber staircase, the structure bridges the stone embankment wall, generating a connection between the cultural buildings in the area and the riverside, that is used only as a recreational bicycle path. It is constructed from eleven rigid steel frames, all with different specifications according to the ground levels and connected with horizontal reinforcements, wooden staircases and stages, as well as woven and painted textiles developed especially for the project. Even
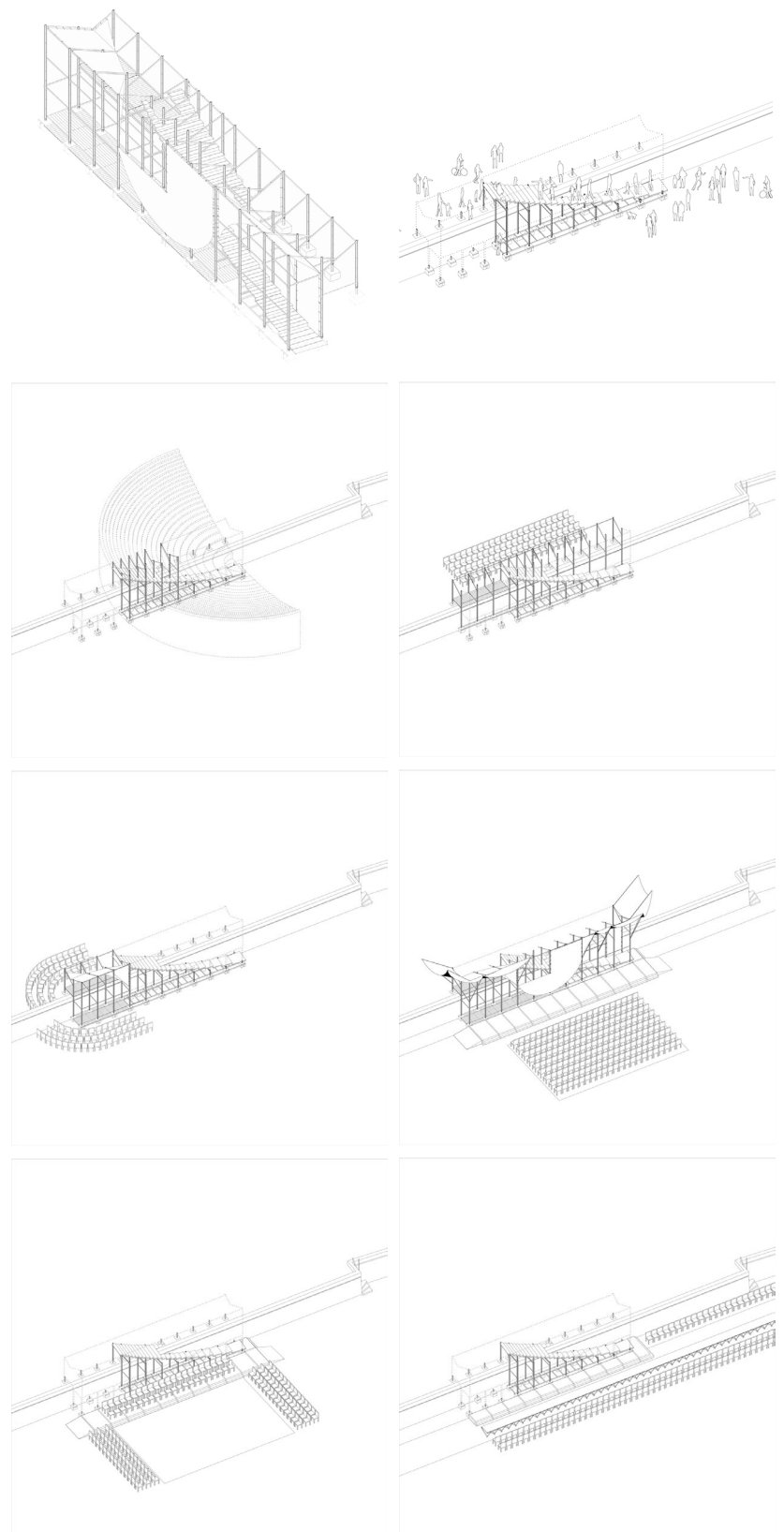
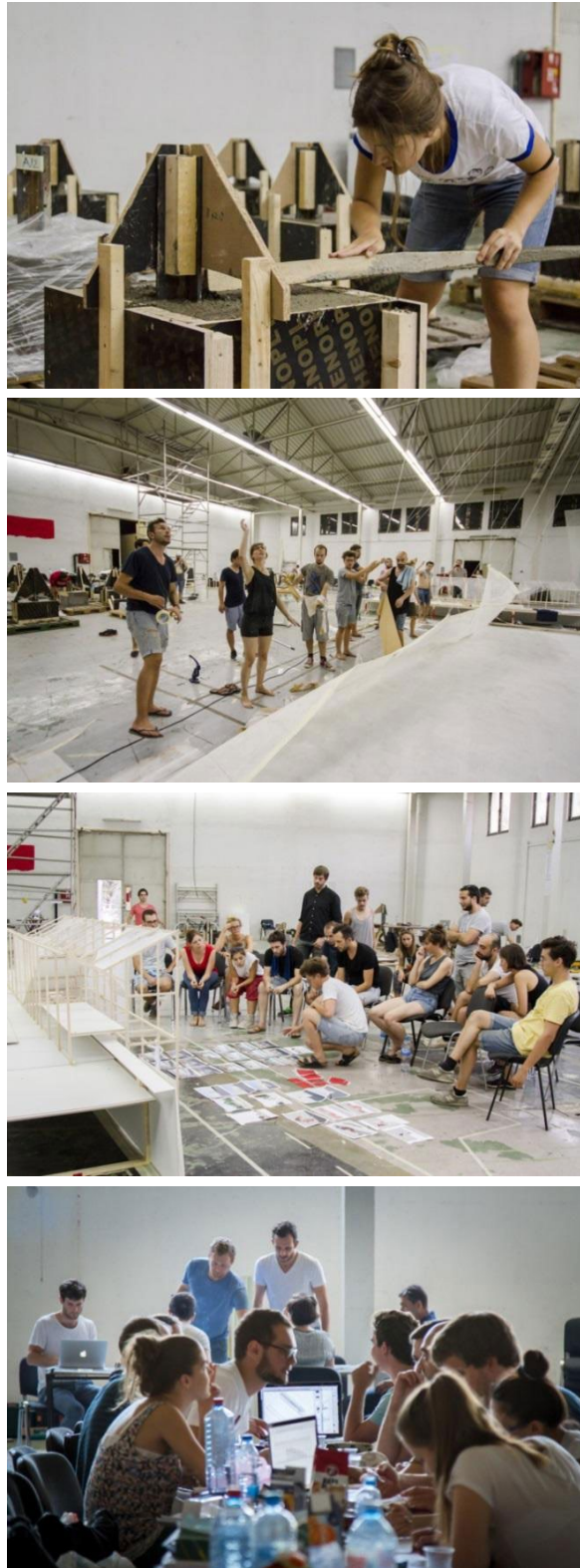Figure 2. Possible transformation of the stage depending on different events

Figure 3. Analysis, design and fabrication processes

though it stretches along twenty metres of the stone wall, the structure remains modest and unimposing and offers a series of spatial experiences, presenting framed views of the river and protecting visitors from sun in the heat of the day. The stairway passage can act as an interior, yet in fact there is never a clear division between the inside and the outside. Moreover, it offers different ways of exploration, from small talks and events to screenings and performances and bigger events such as concerts and public gatherings.

Nevertheless, Nautilus presents more than just a structure for the area. It is a demonstration of the collaborative work of group of people and institutions, involving the students in the process of building a much-needed area for community engagement and participation. Throughout the three-week period of building and assembling on site, the citizens of Skopje were witnesses to this public initiative and were gathered around the area wanting to help in the process of creating a new infrastructure in the city. In this sense, unlike all the other structures in the city, Nautilus does not transmit a concrete message; it opens a question, a dialogue between the city's corruptive usurpation of common spaces and the citizens as agents of public space initiatives in Skopje. This physical intervention, which started as an idea, was developed as a project in different parts of Europe, suggesting a multidisciplinary, critical and innovative approach to urbanisation, constructed as an educational platform promoting creative solutions for engaging citizens in the process of interacting with their city.

 After the successful building of the stage, we organized a three-day opening with various international cultural activities that included book launches, movie screenings, dance performances, art exhibitions and concerts. It was a moment to celebrate and test the stage in full operation. Although small in scale, the opening was a statement on its own. It created links between the artists and created a strong community with mutual goals. Independent cultural production exists in Skopje, and needs

a place to be seen and heard. For this brief moment Nautilus became that meeting place of art, activism and independent, uncensored culture. It remains to be seen whether Nautilus will manage to sustain and manage a connection with MKC, the City of Skopje, and the local independent cultural actors (Figure 6).

BUILDING CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE: TOWARDS ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Skopje's current state-controlled spatial and cultural production is an example of the recent wave of rising nationalism in the wider region and Europe. Skopje 2014 aims at the same time to connect the city to its ancient roots and to its future as a tourist destination with a predominantly European identity. In this nightmare scenario of daily aggressive propaganda in all the state-owned mass media, how can we even begin to open up small fissures that allow an alternative view to emerge? How can we think of the citizen as the main agent for social change by acting in public space?
Thinking about these questions challenges the trope of continuity as the key narrative and rationale for the Skopje 2014 project. A small intervention such as Nautilus can open such spaces of thinking where continuity is challenged and actors are inverted.
The introduction of alternative cultural infrastructure and content put the stage under great pressure and the possibility of failure. Nautilus is becoming a problem, since it is currently in a state of limbo between negligence and the inability to operate fully as a cultural infrastructure. The first challenge came from MKC and their concern that the stage will only present problems for them as institution, and they will be unable to service and maintain it. Although we tried to develop a model that could work, ultimately they decided to abandon the project in the final stage of realisation. In this context we have to stress that the Mayor's Office of the City of Skopje is still supporting the project and has issued a permit for urban infrastructure for one year. Although this deadline has passed already, the stage remains on the site.

4

5

Figure 4. Construction process at the site

Figure 5. Successful realisation of Nautilus Konstrukt

Figure 6. Opening of Nautilus Konstrukt:
artists' performances

Nevertheless, we organized a round-table discussion with the most successful NGOs in Skopje, dealing with independent cultural production as a way to connect and talk about the possible future of Nautilus. The opening created links between the artists and succeeded in creating a strong community with a mutual goal. Thus the main questions were raised concerning the future development of the stage and the possibility of its use as an independent and sustainable cultural practice in Skopje. A discussion was started and some very good ideas were offered by the participants in relation to this problem. Even though our goal was not the management of the stage in the future, the participants suggested advertising Nautilus Konstrukt more widely, using social media and presenting it to all the independent non-governmental institutions and organisations for arts and culture. A good way to do that would be to prepare a presentation with technical information about the stage concerning its dimensions and possible ways of exploiting it. Some of the participants thought that interventions could be carried out to expand the stage -- mobile platforms, for instance -- in order to expand the possibilities of its use. They also argued that electricity is needed on the site as a technical necessity, but also as a way to advertise the stage by lighting up the structure at night and making it more visible for all citizens. During the conversations a point was made that stage becomes a stage only if there is an annual or seasonal programme offered to the public. For this concern serious coordination and organisation is needed, and can be achieved by sending out a public call for participation, for which interested performers, artists and citizens in general could apply. That way, this group of people, who clearly need a space to express their work, could be the creators of all the activities at Nautilus Konstrukt.

Finally, we see Nautilus Konstrukt as an effective initiative for including citizens as agents of creating their own common spaces, a fruitful way of initiating a collaboration between young artists, professionals and the institutions and as an unconventional and creative educational model. During the period of designing and constructing, the students had the opportunity to work in an international and multidisciplinary environment, developing strong contacts and interaction with the public space through lectures, discussions, designing and finally building an urban intervention. On the other hand, the question still remains: what can we do to make Nautilus sustainable and enduring? We started looking for the answers by talking to different NGOs who have more experience than us: we successfully created a network of young creative people and artists during the opening of Nautilus Konstrukt and we consider making a platform for the autonomous organisation of the stage to be the future development of our project.

CONCLUSION

Despite the current challenges of Nautilus and its uncertain future, it is inevitably a success story that addresses many interrelated issues. Academia and practice are intertwined, and disciplinary boundaries traversed. Activism is put into practice both as a short-term action and as a long-term structural change. In this sense Nautilus doesn't fit neatly into established patterns of activist projects, nor in institutional projects. It occupies an in-between space that invites institutions and individuals to have a constructive dialogue and insists on change through situated spatial practices. With the collapse of Yugoslavia and the highly corrupt process of transition which followed, the citizens are left without structures or tools for social action. It is the notion of the citizen as active agent for change and the main ingredient in the process of democratisation which should be put under scrutiny in these post-socialist societies. New political and cultural structures that enable participation by citizens have to be invented, and spatial production has to manifest these democratic processes. This paper presents Nautilus as one *small fissure in the endless everyday* that stands for democratisation and ponders the radical rethinking of social action within the city.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

BIOGRAPHY

Damjan Kokalevski (CCN Skopje)

Damjan is an architect, holder of BArch degree from TU Vienna and MArch degree from the Tokyo Institute of Technology. He is a PhD candidate at the chair of Prof. Philip Ursprung, Institute for the History and theory of Architecture gta/ETH Zurich and guest researcher at the Curatorial/Knowledge program of Goldsmiths University London. His dissertation investigates the rise of a new professional figure: the international planning expert, during the rebuilding of Skopje after the devastating earthquake in 1963, characterized by a comprehensive United Nations expert mission. He is co-founder of City Creative Network (CCN) and works on various initiatives, projects and research that connect urban planning, activism and city authorities. He is a contributor to the exhibition: Metabolism: The City of the Future at Mori Art Museum in Tokyo and curator of the exhibition titled Performative Archive: Skopje at gta Exhibitions, Zurich.

Erina Filipovska (CCN Skopje)

Erina is an architect and researcher interested in computational design, digital fabrication and responsive environments. She holds a Master's degree from the Institute for Advanced Architecture of Catalonia, Barcelona, Spain and currently works as an Expert of practice at the Faculty of Architecture, University "St. Cyril and Methodius", Skopje. Her research and practice design explores new and complex architectural constructions, digital processes and information environments, as well as different scales of territorial analysis and urban developments. Her work includes organizing international workshops in Skopje, promoting parametric design and digital fabrication through the processes of making 1:1 scale pavilions. She has been collaborating with City Creative Network (CCN) since July 2015, working in different project for raising awareness about citizen's participation in public spaces.

REFERENCES

City Creative Network. 'NAUTILUS
CONSTRUCT: Building an Open Stage
in Skopje'. Accessed 3 May 2016. http://
www.citycreative.net/project/3033.

Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F., 1987.
A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism
and Schizophrenia. Minneapolis, MN:
University of Minnesota Press.

Easterling, K., 2005. Enduring Innocence :
Global Architecture and Its Political
Masquerades. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
Hatherley, O., 2016.'Story of Cities #31:
Skopje Plans for the Future by Fixating on
Its Ancient Past'. Guardian, 27 April http://
www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/apr/27/
story-cities-skopje-plans-future-ancient-
past.

Kokalevski, D., and Dinevski, M. (Eds.),
2015. Skopje Creative HUB 2014 : New
Content in Public Space. Skopje: CCN -
City Creative Network

Martinon, J-P. (Ed.), 2013. The Curatorial :
A Philosophy of Curating. London:
Bloomsbury Academic.

THE INTERMEDIAL SCENOGRAPHIC SCREEN
PERFORMING 'LOVENESS'

D. Hannah

Performance Design, Intermediality, Screen Space, Scenography, Empathic Vision

ABSTRACT

In our socially networked age, where fact and fiction enfold and entangle, the prevailing opinion is that theatrical encounter, human interaction and empathic exchange – predicated on 'liveness' – are harder and harder to achieve. This is perhaps most profoundly illustrated in the 'Sderot Cinema' of July 2014, in which an Israeli hillside became a makeshift amphitheatre facing Gaza, rendering the border a screen upon which live military attacks were played out as spectacle, and even entertainment. Through such a highly mediated and deeply problematic event we are confronted with a blurring of the boundaries between performance and everyday life as well as the complex multiplicity of space in an ever-extending field around the visual and performing arts. However, by adopting a scenographic lens this paper observes and comments on the potential for intermedial event-space emerging from contemporary performance design practice. The performative screen is proposed as a spatial, social and politicised stage element that allows practising artists to remediate the pervasive geo-cultural, geo-mythical and geo-political issues of our time by implicating spectators as complicit participants within the live event. The projects of performance and art ensembles – specifically Toneelgroep Amsterdam, Rimini Protokoll and Artists Without Walls – range from loosening the theatre's disciplinary auditorium to digitally undermining implacable borders. These scenographic interventions utilise the screen as a reflexive and performative means of contacting the pity and terror previously withheld by old and new media, returning liveness to a mediated-saturated world through what performance theorist, Jon McKenzie, names 'loveness'.[1]

---

1 This paper adapts a longer book chapter to be published in Scenography Expanded: An Introduction to Contemporary Performance Design, edited by Joslin McKinney and Scott Palmer (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).

INTRODUCTION

In 1987 French philosopher and playwright Hélène Cixous wrote: 'In truth we go as little to the theatre as to our heart and what we feel the lack of is going to the heart, our own and that of things' (1995:341). Taken from her essay 'The Place of Crime, the Place of Pardon', this statement affirms theatre as the site where we, as a collective gathering, can become more human in order to confront the quotidian nightmares of mediatised reality and the powerlessness we experience in the face of its horror. She continues:

We live outside ourselves in a world whose walls are replaced by television screens, a world that has lost its thickness, its depths, its treasures, and we mistake newspaper columns for our thoughts. We are imprinted daily. We lack even walls, true walls upon which divine messages are written. We lack earth and flesh. (1995:341)

Cixous maintains that our increasingly mediated existence is diminishing lived space to a point where we lack the material communality critical for actively addressing conflicting and simultaneous experiences of terror and pity. For her, theatre provides a place of remedy via the substance of earth (stage), flesh (bodies) and true walls (architecture) wherein we can gather and, through storytelling, mutually contact the compassion required to acknowledge, forgive and actively move forward. Three decades on, newspaper columns have been replaced by the increasingly perfected thinness of glowing screens – in our hands, on our desks and in the built environment – and theatre has generally left the building; not only challenging screen space but reconfiguring performance space itself as a dispersed multiplicity. [2]

This presentation reflects on how the performative screen operates as a spatial, social and politicised mediator for practising artists, designers and performance-makers to critique and engage with the pervasive geo-cultural, geo-mythical and geo-political issues of our time. No longer the planar surface upon which light and still and moving images are 'thrown', the screen has become an extension of the body and lived space, as well as a contemporary site for reiterating and/ or challenging worldviews.

Like the word 'design', 'screen' is both verb and noun: action and object. Linked to Elin Diamond's definition of *performance* as "a risky and dangerous negotiation between a doing […] and a thing done" (1996:5), the *screen* – a fixed or movable plane that simultaneously divides and connects, reveals and conceals, upon which images and data are displayed and filtered – presents a powerful concept for scenographic performativity, especially in our highly mediated world of streaming information 24/7 via smartphones, tablets, televisions, computer monitors, slideshow presentations and architectural facades; but also where bodies themselves (both visceral and virtual) are screened to vet who's in and who's out. Such scrutinisation is generally taken for granted in a post-Snowden world where a seemingly unending 'war on terror' sanctions the invasion of personal space via surveillance, to which an entire generation has generally submitted.[3] However, while the daily lives of socially networked citizens are transmitted, intercepted and controlled, there are those trying to cross borders and escape hardship for whom such monitoring is much more problematic. Exceeding cinema and television, screen space has also transcended the physical object and occupies our posthuman

---

2 Such a theatrical diaspora can be seen in the rise of site-specific and immersive theatre, as well as performance installations and events in public space, both on and offline.

3 Such covert scrutiny refers to Edward Snowden, former CIA employee and US government contractor who publicly disclosed numerous global surveillance programmes, facilitated by communication companies working with various governments. With the proliferation of surveillance technology we have generally acquiesced to pervasive scrutiny in the name of security.

consciousness.[4] What does this mean for the design – as a collaborative, spatiotemporal orchestration[5] – of live events?

This research was provoked by images of a hillside in Israel that, in July 2014, was arranged with moulded-plastic chairs, ubiquitous global objects, establishing an improvised amphitheatre that faced the walled-in Gaza Strip upon which bombs were falling and lighting up a sky shared by both sides of the divide. This event, which lasted some days, was first reported on July 9 by Danish journalist Allan Sørensen, who, while CNN reporters present trained their cameras towards Gaza, tweeted an image from his smartphone of the gathering crowd with the accompanying text: 'Sderot cinema. Israelis bringing chairs 2 hilltop in sderot 2 watch latest from Gaza. Clapping when blasts are heard' (sic) (9 July 2014). Nikolaj Krak, Sørensen's colleague from Denmark's *Kristeligt Dagblad* newspaper, later reported that the event, which attracted 'more than 50 people… turned the hill into something that resembles the front row of a reality war theatre' (11 July 2014). Such blurring of the boundaries between reality and spectacle is reinforced in a later tweet that evening by Sørensen who wrote '[s]ome described it as a best reality show in town. Others said it is better than the world cup' (sic) (11 July 2014). Meanwhile, on the other side of the divide, the missiles lighting the night sky killed nine young men on a Gaza beach who happened to be watching the World Cup on a television powered by a generator in a makeshift café, leaving twisted wreckage that included the mangled remains of the same moulded-plastic seats found gathering on the Sderot hillside.

Referred to as the 'Sderot Cinema', this makeshift auditorium, which later augmented the plastic chairs with couches, cars, crates and coffee machines, co-opted the site it faced as a screen upon which live military attacks were played out as a macabre performance.[6] The border, only a kilometre away, was virtually transformed into an epic vertical surface that rendered the real-time bombardment as projected moving images with accompanying sound effects, which was then globally transmitted to other screens. Through such a highly mediated and deeply problematic event we are confronted with the blurring of boundaries between performance and everyday life, as well as the complex multiplicity of space in an ever-extending field around the performing arts.

Manifestations such as the Sderot Cinema, in which catastrophic events are aestheticised through improvised gatherings, cause one to wonder at a world that, as theorist Jon McKenzie states, 'has become a designed environment in which an array of global performances unfold' (2008:128). In his essay 'Global Feeling', McKenzie suggests that the complexity of our contemporary condition, folding grand narratives, theatricality and the everyday into each other, can be understood through the discursive tool of 'performance design' (2008:176). Like the 'theatre of cruelty' proposed by Antonin Artaud as a vehicle for facing and addressing life's brutal reality, *performance design* – an expanded notion of scenography – is here posited as a discursive undertaking capable of exposing, critiquing and reimagining the designed performances

4 Just as the posthuman body – extended and augmented by technology – is rendered a cyborgian hybrid, so the screen as object-event becomes what Donna Haraway calls 'a condensed image of both imagination and material reality' (1991:50).

5 Here performance design extends beyond scenography (sets, lighting and costumes) to encompass an assemblage of elements – incorporating environment, atmosphere, gestures and objects – in which authorship is shared by the creative ensemble.

6 Allan Sørensen first reported this in the Danish newspaper Kristeligt Dagblad, maintaining that the gathering, involving more than fifty people, transformed the hill into something 'most closely resembling the front row of a reality war theatre'. Cited in the Independent, 13 July, 2014: 'Israel-Gaza conflict: "Sderot cinema" image shows Israelis with popcorn and chairs "cheering as missiles strike Palestinian targets".' http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israelgaza-conflict-sderot-cinema-image-shows-israelis-with-popcorn-and-chairs-cheering-as-missiles-strike-palestinian-targets-9602704.html: this page is no longer accessible or "could have gone missing". Images and videos on the web suggest that the gathering occurred over several days.

that proliferate locally and globally. Phenomena like the Sderot Cinema, which fall outside the performing arts while referring to its practices, illustrate how screen space is no longer limited to the surfaces receiving and streaming analogue and digital imagery.

What therefore follows is a discussion of how performance design provides a critical tool, employed to creatively harness and remediate the dynamic forces in our mediated reality via the orchestrated 'event'. Prompted by Cixous, it entails 'going to the heart' through a gesture towards the other: where the creative act necessarily integrates desire and empathy without sentimentality; as a form of political love, which McKenzie advocates, within a context of 'liveness', to be 'loveness' (McKenzie, 2008:141).[7] Those whose work I particularly focus on are Toneelgroep Amsterdam (*Roman Tragedies,* premiere 2007), Rimini Protokoll (*Situation Rooms,* première 2013) and Artists Without Walls (*The Transparent Wall*, 2004): all employ screens and render the use of chairs contingent or redundant. Moving from two most recent productions still on a touring circuit of festivals to a more minimal intervention in public space created a decade ago, these works are discussed in relation to several themes, including intermediality as a development of multimediality; 'double-looking' and therefore 'double-shooting' by way of Rabih Mroue's 'pixelated revolution' and empathic engagement through the screen's inherent materiality and spatial multiplicity – all determining a mobile, sovereign spectator, no longer bound to the fixed chair in a darkened auditorium, who is both a *part of and apart from* the performance.

PERFORMANCE DESIGN AS INTERMEDIAL MODEL

Live performance (within and without theatre) has become more and more an intermedial

practice in which, as Robin Nelson maintains, viewers no longer gaze at but engage with varying media, both 'present within' and 'aware of' their role and impact (2006:139). This cognisance of an interplay is in line with Chiel Kattenbelt's reference to the 'correlational' nature of intermediality (2008), which is 'more closely connected to the idea of diversity, discrepancy and hypermediacy' than 'unity, harmony and transparency' (Ibid: 21).[8] The 1960s neo-avant-garde signalled mediation as an inherent quality embedded within the spectacle of our quotidian existence, notably described by Guy Debord as 'not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images' (1983:2). Hans-Thies Lehmann describes this as the 'caesura of the media society' (2006:22), encouraging artists and designers to question what Slavoj Žižek calls the 'virtualization of our daily lives, the experience that we are living more and more in an artificially constructed universe' (2002:19).

The reality of our highly mediatised and performative existence is reinforced by Jon McKenzie's claim, in *Perform or Else,* that 'performance' has become our era's 'onto-historical foundation of power and knowledge' (2001:18). No longer referring to aesthetically rehearsed productions, performance includes the cultural, operational and technological expectations of human actions, objects and environments that are manageable, measurable and appraisable. By performing (or else), our identities are formed and reinforced through iterative socialised behaviour with reality generally constructed and received via the complex orchestration of globally communicated socio-political events.

The messy interface between mass media as channels of global communication and the attendant irreality of the catastrophes they convey – witnessed through events such as

7 Cixous has written that 'the most dangerous cause there is: to love the other, even before being loved' (1998 134).

8 As Kattenbelt maintains a more correlational intermediality undermined Wagner's multimedial Gesamtkunstwerk (total work of art) in favour of the dynamic interplay expounded by the previous century's historical avant-garde, particularly the Constructivists, with their fragmented compositions and irruptive interchange (pp.24-6).

the Sderot Cinema – is something many artists are currently engaging with through their transversal practices that harness the arts to critique contemporary politics and show that although technology may have advanced – allowing us to destroy more in less time and from greater distances – the human animal has continually manipulated power and desire to destroy societal and biological ecologies while waging perpetual war. William Shakespeare's 500-year-old political dramaturgy on wars past and present remains valid today and, since 2007, Dutch theatre company Toneelgroep Amsterdam has mobilised over fifty cast and crew to stage three history plays within one event, played at international festivals in conventional proscenium venues. *Roman Tragedies*, a technologically and visually complex six-hour-long production, is dominated by a media storm which includes war reports, scrolling information, close-ups, live-streaming, screenshots, social commentary, rules of engagement, countdowns to events and security warnings: mediated action that is bracketed by an introductory invitation to leave your phones on and the final list of questions, projected above the stage as credits, asking a departing audience about freedom, principles, reason, power and honour.

ROMAN TRAGEDIES

Shakespeare's *Coriolanus, Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* were adapted and amalgamated into *Roman Tragedies* under the successful partnership of director Ivo Van Hove and his long-term collaborator, Jan Versweyveld, whose innovative design is predicated on the lack of necessity to remain in our seats over the six-hour duration. Instead, the audience in the auditorium is invited to occupy the stage where video monitors, distributed amidst bland corporate furniture, show live action subtitled in the language of each hosting country. Technicians hover and camera operators move discreetly about, following the action of performers embedded within the on-stage spectators who eat, drink and use their phones to record the show or

communicate through social media (some of their texts returning as streaming data on the *news ticker* above). While a series of clocks show the current time in various world centres, cameras and microphones are constantly mobilised to record the highs and lows of politics, power and desire being played out by the leaders, officials and lovers whose actions are as relevant today as they were in ancient Rome or Elizabethan London. Pre-recorded footage and streaming LED texts intermix with live dramatic action while real-time world events enter the auditorium. The mediated stage briefly spills out onto the street when Caesar is chased from the theatre pursued by his rivals and cameramen, exposing an unsuspecting public to violent action, which, difficult to differentiate as real or staged, is projected back onto the multiple on-stage monitors and the large proscenium screen that faces the auditorium. Reviewing the *Roman Tragedies* 2009 iteration in London, Lyn Gardner, *Guardian* critic, wrote:

We the audience are part of this performance. We both watch the play and we are in the play, invited on to the stage to loll on the sofas, check our email on the computers or buy a drink from the on-stage bar. We are the nameless citizens of Rome; we are implicated in the action. (21 November 2009).

Roman Tragedies' fragmented, multimodal production refers directly to ubiquitous news networks – such as BBC, CNN and Al Jazeera – that beam political conventions, press conferences, global politics, neoliberal agendas and celebrity affairs into our homes, hotel rooms, airport waiting rooms and urban sites. Here design 'acts out' on an ever-shifting trajectory between conventionally staged scenography and the provocative actuality of events in public space. This intermediality necessarily includes the live actors making war and love amidst the on-stage audience, their viscerality forming a counterpoint to an excess of the virtual and thereby grounding theatrical narrative with human experience.

As a 'living organism' (Versweyveld, 2014), the streaming text from world news and social

media is absolutely specific to the time and place of each performance. Interweaving the play's events with current affairs and audience responses, the harsh reality of continual conflict and political struggles is brought directly into the theatre. Throughout the decade that *Roman Tragedies* has been touring, geopolitical clashes have come and gone in the world while some are still being played out on the global stage in the never-ending theatre of war. The spectators who restlessly move between stage and auditorium are as at home as one would be in the anonymous space of a hotel conference centre: in transit they become part of the performance and therefore complicit as history's bystanders whilst mindful they are experiencing performance as artifice. The audience itself initiated the inclusion of social media commentary during the London iteration (2009), becoming an incorporated feature in the highly mediated performance landscape of many intersecting texts (visual, aural, written and spoken), emphasising Shakespeare's proposition that the most critical and complex stage is the global one we occupy here and now.

SCREEN AS BODY EXTENSION IN THE *PIXELATED REVOLUTION*

Roman Tragedies employed screens at varying scales, with live projections onto large panels in the auditorium and foyer; a scattering of television monitors on the stage and smaller devices in the hands of the spectators who are encouraged to contribute to the production through social media. While the use of phone cameras is a common feature in events such as rock concerts – held high and radiating light like votive candles – their infiltration into conventional theatre is relatively recent. Although experimental companies have explored the connectivity and inherent use of mobile phones in performance for many years, miniature displays glowing in the dark still tend to signal a refusal or inability to 'power down'.

Our current tendency to simultaneously watch, record and share unfolding moments through an intervening screen sets us both within, and at a distance from, the 'scene'. Protocols originally established to deal with mobile phones in public space are diminishing as the device is increasingly taken for granted as a supplemental body part through which we are able to see twofold. Lebanese visual and theatre artist Rabih Mroué advances such 'double looking' as a 'double-shooting' in his notable 'non-academic lecture' 'The Pixelated Revolution' (2011 ongoing), which presents the visual onslaught of media through still and moving images culled from the Internet. Assembling material created and utilized by Syrians to document the revolution in its early stages, Mroué compares their revolutionary tactics with the strict cinematic rules adopted by the Danish film movement Dogme 95, in the pursuit of authentic representation. However, unlike the fictional films of Lars Von Trier and his contemporaries, these images of war in a war of images can end up with the amateur cinematographers, 'armed' with mobile phones, recording themselves being fired on and even killed by snipers: hence the double-shooting. Rather than immersing or enchanting the viewer, Mroué scrutinises the use of digital tools to document events, in the absence of foreign journalists with their 'proper' media. Pointing out a conflation between shooting images and shooting bodies, the lecturer asks, 'how many mobile phones have been lost? How many digital eyes have been extinguished?' (Mroué, 2014). Berlin-based theatre collective Rimini Protokoll has incorporated such digital eyes in *Situation Rooms,* a 'multiplayer video piece' that questions and presents the globalised arms trade and those it affects.

SITUATION ROOMS

Situation Rooms was provoked by one of the most haunting media images this century, Pete Souza's photograph of the United States' top military and civilian leaders, including President Barack Obama, gathered in the White House 'Situation Room', receiving

updates on the tracking and killing of Osama bin Laden. The screen they are watching is out of frame and assumed to be streaming live video feed from drones hovering above bin Laden's compound in Pakistan. Rimini Protokoll's response to this image was to create an inter-medial installation virtually inhabited by twenty people they interviewed from varying continents who are implicated in, and affected by, the international arms trade. In Dominic Huber's set, constructed like a cinematic sound stage, twenty spectators, each clutching a handle attached to a digital tablet and wearing headphones, follow on-screen instructions, respond to visual prompts and navigate allocated trails within the labyrinth of *Situation Rooms*, all the time matching the point of view on their iPad with the scene before them. Each spectator cycles through ten of the possible twenty characters, donning costumes, assuming physical positions, engaging with objects and undertaking covert actions that bring them closer to the stories of the real protagonists. The stories become interlaced through momentary interactions with other participants: 'The audience does not sit opposite the piece to watch and judge it from the outside; instead, the spectators ensnare themselves in a network of incidents, slipping into the perspectives of the protagonists, whose traces are followed by other spectators' (2014a). By having spectators interact with each other through encounters with virtual characters – who, although not physically present, are very real indeed – entangles them in the virtual and material spatiality of the scenic labyrinth. Echoing Mroué, Rimini Protokoll aim for each individual to become 'part of the re-enactment of a complicatedly elaborated multi-perspective "shooting"' (2014b).

Žižek discusses mediatised images as dissociative phenomena in which 'the distance that separates Us from Them, from their reality, is maintained: the real horror happens there, not here' (2002:13). Working with double-viewing, both *Roman Tragedies* and *Situation Rooms* provide theatre-based strategies to come to know the other in ways that mainstream media tends to withhold:

Toneelgroep brings political figures into focus as vulnerable bodies of flesh and desire, while Rimini Protokoll's strategy is to humanise and make present those obscured by politics, lack of visibility, or a paradoxical unresponsiveness produced through media saturation. This brief co-opting of technology to bridge the distance and bring *there and then* into the *here and now* was most profoundly played out by Artists Without Walls in 2004.

THE TRANSPARENT WALL: OPENING A WINDOW

We return to the troubled region where this paper began; this time at the contentious and constructed border of the West Bank Wall, an object both mobile and immovable, representing what Mike Davis calls 'the interlocking system of fortification, surveillance, armed patrol and incarceration' that 'girds half the earth' (2005:88). Although an emphatically fixed concrete object, with its eight-metre-high interlocking panels originally following the abstract boundary demarcated by Moshe Dayan as the 'Green Line' after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, this shifting barrier, that constantly reconfigures ownership and public access, is also a technological object, incorporating electric fences, trenches, cameras, sensors, and military patrols.

Artists without Walls are an interdisciplinary group of Arab and Israeli artists and architects who meet in Ramallah and East Jerusalem to devise alternative means to what they see as the repeatedly failed protest strategies against the separation wall, described by them as 'a monument to failure and a testament to pessimism' (Artists Without Walls, 2004). In 2004 they selected Abu Dis as a site for creative rebellion: a Palestinian village suddenly and violently split by the wall, making it impossible to access services in Jerusalem without a permit or a time-consuming, convoluted and demeaning journey. They intended to highlight the fact that, although the wall aspired to construct a sense of security for Israelis by separating them from Palestinians, in effect 'the real separation

created is between Palestinians and their families, neighbours and communities as well as jobs, hospitals and schools' (ibid). Setting up video cameras either side of the barrier, they passed the technology through the small holes designed to allow machinery to lift the heavy units into place and then projected the live transmissions from each sector on the opposite side of the wall, momentarily reuniting the village's inhabitants who gestured ecstatically and moved together rhythmically while speaking to each other on mobile phones. In his essay 'Primitive Separations', Dean McCannell described witnessing this event:

When both sets of images were projected simultaneously the effect was a very large virtual hole in the wall. We were able to protest together, singing, dancing and cheering as though the wall was not there. With a prodigious act of the imagination, even this most forbidding wall can be used as a device to bring people together (2005:44).
Made under the watchful and hostile eye of Israeli authorities, *Transparent Wall* enacted subtle manoeuvres with formidable effects. By adapting the wall into a double-sided screen, its existing relationship to technological surveillance was exposed through the artists' covert employment of cameras and projectors, which allowed a small, unwillingly divided community to briefly cohere in a moment of celebration. Speaking to power, the strategy worked with the wall's inherent rigidity and implacability to temporarily undermine the violence of a patrolled borderline. As a radical borderline act, it exposed an inherent vulnerability within the wall itself, as well as the Symbolic order.

Photographic and video documentation of this event show people talking to each other on mobile phones and waving towards the large projections through which they coordinate dancing, clapping and singing. Amidst these celebrating bodies are the moulded plastic chairs previously mentioned in relation to the Sderot Cinema: this time they are spontaneously scattered on both sides of the divide. The performative screen

tends to untether the chair and its occupant from the ordered rows of theatre's darkened environs: no longer an indispensable element designed to immobilise the viewer immersed in a distant image. Instead, through an expanded notion of scenography, the material and proliferating screen facilitates a more embodied engagement with the performance environment, while calling attention to spatial multiplicity in a world of intersecting (ir) realities. Screen space provides the potential to awaken us from a mediated reality into a 'real reality' via media.

CONCLUSION

Since love has traditionally been conceived in terms of immediacy, proximity and presence, one must imagine a global feeling of political love that is also mediated, distant and marked by absence ... Referring back again to Auslander's notion of "liveness",[9] perhaps we need to give some thought to "loveness." (McKenzie, 2008:141).

The scenographic screen is no longer predicated on a fixed on-stage textile, nor even a flat surface for receiving or emitting background images. It is increasingly adapted to any number of environments, seen in the proscenium theatre necessary for Toneelgroep's *Roman Tragedies*; the controlled sound-stage environment required for the construction of Rimini Protokoll's *Situation Rooms* or an overtly contested space upon which the *Transparent Wall* was contingent for the Artists Without Walls – where, in all four projects, a universal language of visuality and embodied experience prevailed. Intermediation becomes, as the editors of *Mapping Intermediality in Performance* write, 'an inexorable refunctioning at work – of the

9 Here McKenzie is referring to Philip Auslander's explication of 'liveness', challenging the ontology of performance as unrepeatable, disappearing acts, recognising the role that repeatable media now plays in live events where the virtual troubles the real through a 'mediatic system' (citing Jameson) that integrates live and mediatised performance (Auslander,1999:5).

spaces, bodies and media of performance, and not least of our own expectations and experiences in the face of such developments' (2010:124). When applied to the political projects discussed here, a designed intermediation becomes a proposal for remediation through empathy.

Activating the scenographic screen is predicated on the assumption that performance is not just limited to the stage or even the human subject, but that *spaces and things perform* with their particular set of unfolding forces. However, at the very heart of my argument is what Jill Bennett calls **'**empathic vision'**:** **'**the artist's capacity to transform images' and **'**specifically, to open up a space for empathic encounter for others to inhabit' (2005:142). This involves a type of bearing witness described by media artist John Di Stefano as 'an embodiment of doubling… through the *performance* of witnessing' (2008:263). Di Stefano maintains that 'witnessing also implies an empathetic stance that somehow "binds" witnesses to what they see unfolding before them, whereas observing lacks that subjective positioning' (ibid:261). Rather than a cruel immersion (expounded on by Artaud) or an alienated observation (encouraged by Brecht), such witnessing requires the viewer to be simultaneously connected to and separated from the event, inhabiting 'a space of *between-ness*' (ibid: 261).

In discussing a performative politics of global feeling and feeling global, McKenzie proposes that 'a resistant performativity cannot do without a global feeling of political love' (2008:119). Referring to Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's demand for 'a more generous and more unrestrained conception of love', operating beyond romantic and familial ties, he suggests being 'a/part' – 'feeling a part of the world and feeling apart from it at the same time' (ibid:129). This (dis)passionate approach equates with Di Stefano's inhabitation of *betweenness* that requires 'the ability to *feel* or empathize as well as the sense of not fully embodying the event' (2008:261). The artists in this paper have – operating a/part –

adopted the proliferating digital screen as a reflexive and performative means of empathic engagement, previously withheld by old and new media. Their short-term aesthetic interventions play out the need for longer-term participation. In working with fleeting acts of *liveness* – both immediate and mediated – perhaps they have come close to McKenzie's conception of *loveness* as something that necessarily persists beyond the transitory event,echoing Cixous' claim that the very heart of the matter lies in our own hearts.

BIOGRAPHY

Dorita Hannah works across the spatial, visual and performing arts with her practice-led research that focuses on live events, installations and exhibitions, as well as theatre architecture. She co-chairs the Performance Design Working Group for Performance Studies International and is completing Event-Space: Theatre Architecture and the Historical Avant-Garde, a book to be published by Routledge in 2017.

REFERENCES

Aronson, A., 2005. *Looking into the Abyss: Essays on Scenography*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Aronson, A., 2008. 'The Power of Space in a Virtual World'. In D. Hannah and O. Harsløf (eds.), *Performance Design.* Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, pp.9-24.

Artists Without Walls., 2004. 'The Divide'. [online] Available at: <http://w3.osaarchivum.org/galeria/the_divide/chapter19.html> [Accessed 20 November, 2015].

Auslander, P., 1999. *Liveness*. London/New York: Routledge Press.

Bay-Cheng, S., C. Kattenbelt,, A. Lavender and R. Nelson., 2010. 'Portal: Digital Culture and Posthumanism'. In S. Bay-Cheng, C. Kattenbelt, A. Lavender and R. Nelson (eds), *Mapping Intermediality in Performance*. Amsterdam: AmsterdamUniversity Press, pp.123-124,

Bennett, J., 2005. *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art.* Redwood, CA: Stanford University Press.

Cixous, H., 1995. 'The Place of Crime, The Place of Pardon'. In R. Drain (ed), *Twentieth-Century Theatre Reader*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 340–44.

Davis, M., 2005. 'The Great Wall of Capital'. In M. Sorkin (ed.), *Against the Wall; Israel's Barrier to Peace*. New York: New Press, pp.88-99.

Debord, G., 1983. *The Society of the Spectacle*. Detroit, MI:Black & Red.

Di Stefano, J., 2008. 'You Are Here: Moving Image + Documentary Paradigm + Performativity', in D. Hannah and O. Harsløf (eds.), *Performance Design.* Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, . pp.253-66.

Diamond, E., 1996. *Performance and Cultural Politics.* London and New York: Routledge.Hannah, D., 2017. 'Scenographic Screen Space: Bearing Witness and Screening Resistance.' In J. McKinney and S. Palmer (eds.), *Scenography Expanded: An Introduction to Contemporary Performance Design.* London: Bloomsbury

Hardt, M. and Negri, A., 2004. *Multitude*: *War and Democracy in the Age of Empire.* New York: Penguin Books.

Haraway, D., 1991, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, New York: Routledge.

Heidegger, M., 1977. *Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays.* Trans. W. Levitt. New York: Harper & Row.

Gardner, L., 2009. *The Roman Tragedies. Guardian*: 21 November 2009. [online] Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2009/nov/21/roman-tragedies-lyn-gardner-review> [Accessed 20 November 2015].

Kattenbelt, C., 2008. 'Intermediality in Theatre and Performance: Definitions, Perceptions and Medial Relationships'. In *Culture, Language and Representation* : *Cultural Studies Journal Of Universitat Jaume I*, VI, pp.19-29.

Krak N., 2014. 'When Bombs Receive Applause', *Kristeligt Dagblad* 11 July, 2014. [online] Available at: <http://www.kristeligt-dagblad.dk/2014-07-11/when-bombs-receive-applause[Accessed 22 November 2015].

Lefebvre, H., 1991. *The Production of Space*. Trans. D. Nicholson-Smith, Oxford: Blackwell.

Lehmann, H-T., 2006. *Postdramatic Theatre*. Trans. K. Jürs-Munby, London; New York: Routledge.

McCannell, D., 2005. 'Primitive Separations'. In M. Sorkin (ed), *Against the Wall: Israel's Barrier to Peace.* New York: New Press, pp.28-47.

McKenzie, J., 2008. 'Global Feeling'. In D. Hannah and O. Harsløf (eds.), *Performance Design.* Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, pp.113-28.

McKenzie, J., 2001. *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance*, London: Routledge.

Mroué, R., 2014. *The Pixelated Revolution* (cited in The Pixelated Revolution : Rabih Mroué on the Syrian Revolution' by Sophie Tarnowska, in *Printemps Numerique*, 13 June 2014 [online] Available at: <http://printempsnumerique.info/en/the-pixelated-revolution/> [Accessed 20 November 2015].

Nelson, R., 2006. 'New Small Screen Spaces: a Performative Phenomenon?' In F. Chapple and K. Kattenbelt (eds), *Intermediality in Theatre and Performance*. Amsterdam; New York: IFTR/FIRT, pp.137-150.

Rimini Protokoll, 2014a. *Situation Rooms – a multiplayer video piece.* [online] Available at: <http://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/project_6009.html> [Accessed 20 November 2015]

Rimini Protokoll, 2014b. *Situation Rooms (Radio).* [online] Available at: <http://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/project_6314.html >[Accessed 20 November 2015]

Allan Sørensen, @allensorensen72: 9 July, 2014. [online] <https://twitter.com/allansorensen72/status/486954506517639170/

photo/1?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw>
[Accessed 22 November 2015].
Allan Sørensen, @
allensorensen72: 11 July, 2014.
[online] Available at: <https://
twitter.com/allansorensen72/
status/486954506517639170/
photo/1?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw>
[Accessed 22 November 2015].

Versweyveld, J., 2014.
[telephone interview] with Dorita
Hannah: 25 March 2014.

Žižek, S., 2002. Welcome to the
Desert of the Real!: Five Essays
on September 11th and Related
Dates. London; New York:
Verso.

URBAN INTERVENTIONS
Reshaping the Public Space in Palestine

M. Sayrafi

ABSTRACT

Architecture and urban design can play an essential role in supporting the needs of the Palestinian people living in contested territories. Urban interventions in public spaces can provide mechanisms and tools that allow Palestinians to adapt to the political and social changes that occur in the region. These tools can become empowerment tools that enable people to cope with unexpected situations, establish creative responses of resilience, adapt to changing environments, and reinvent their relationship with space. This paper focuses on public spaces in Palestine, specifically the city square, and it explores various conceptual tools that can be employed in Palestinian public spaces. These tools were applied in an urban intervention that was implemented in a public square located in Al-Bireh city. The aim of the urban intervention was to bring new meanings to the space and provide opportunities for imagination, spontaneity, and social interactions. The intervention was a product of the urban surfaces, the people, the political situation and the existing environment. It formed a dynamic platform that brought all these elements together to create a rich experience that engaged people with public space.

INTRODUCTION

'Public space is the stage upon which the drama of communal life unfolds. The streets, the squares, and parks of a city give form to the ebb and flow of human exchange. These dynamic spaces are an essential counterpart to the more settled places and routines of work and home life….There are pressing needs that public space can help people to satisfy, significant human rights that it can be shaped to define and protect, and special cultural meanings that it can best convey.' (Carr et al., 1992:3).

Public space is not neutral; it is a dynamic platform that can support public life, cultural expressions and identity. It can also become a place where unexpected interactions occur, and most importantly it can become an arena for imagination, creativity, and improvisation (Sennett, 1970; Graham and Thrift, 2007). Defining public space is a complex process, as public space can take on different scales and dimensions of interactions. Public space can be a street, a square, a plaza, a neighbourhood or a city, and despite its apparent physical boundaries it can extend beyond them and transform into a dynamic space that is continuously being reshaped by the environment and the people. Public spaces in Palestinian cities are constantly being reshaped by the political, social, and cultural forces that affect the region. However, these spaces remain rigid and in many cases unable to adapt to the changing needs of the community. Conventional approaches in urban design tend to impose even more order and control over public spaces making it difficult to create expressive public spaces that can address the social dynamics of the community. Sennett (1992) warned of excessive control and suggested introducing points of disorder in the public domain to create areas of unplanned experiences and activities. These points of disorder become points of creativity, change, and resistance (Amin and Thrift, 2002). If designed carefully, the points of disorder can transform into an intervention in urban spaces and can offer opportunities for the space to be upgraded and modified (Graham and Thrift, 2007).

Urban interventions can infuse new qualities into urban spaces that enrich the spatial experience, invite curiosity, reconfigure urban patterns and provide a symbol for the local identity (Smith and Carney, 2011). Hence there is a need to evaluate existing urban spaces, understand their potential and explore new tools for transforming them into dynamic spaces that support the aspirations of their society. This paper focuses on public spaces in Palestine, specifically the city square, and it explores various conceptual tools that can be employed in Palestinian public spaces. These tools were applied in an urban intervention that was implemented in a public square located in Al-Bireh city. The aim of the urban intervention was to bring new meanings to this public space and provide opportunities for imagination, spontaneity, and social interaction. Another aim was to activate the space and create a dynamic platform that engages the community and offers new possibilities for coping with the shifting environment.

2. THE PRODUCTION OF URBAN PUBLIC SPACE

Urban public space is a complex and paradoxical space that can be predictable and ordered, but at the same time it can also be a surprising space that is constantly shifting and changing. Public life is not fixed, and constructing spaces that adapt and respond to the public requires an approach that not only focuses on the formal aspects of public space but also addresses other dimensions related to the context and human experiences in the space. Urban public spaces are lively spaces that are shaped by various material elements and stimuli from the context and people using the space. The sensory experience of space through patterns, textures, urban infrastructure, spatial configurations, vegetation and other physical elements contribute to the spatial experience (Sendra, 2015). Sendra (2015) describes these elements as urban surfaces that enable people to experience the space from within rather than reading it as an exterior object.

Hence the material elements become a 'patterned ground' that connects people and the urban surface, imagination and reality, and past and present (Amin, 2008). It is essential to understand the active role of urban surfaces and their ability to extend to users and stimulate their senses. Power does not lie in the final configuration of the urban surface, but rather in the process of arrangement and interaction between existing urban elements and new elements to generate an urban surface that allows the emergence of new activities in public space (McFarlane, 2011). The re-arrangement of the existing elements and the addition of new elements attribute new functional capacities to the space and allow new possibilities to take place (Sendra, 2015). Activating the urban surface engages people with the space, and the interaction between urban surfaces and urban life creates complex connections and unpredictable activities that reinvent daily life in public space (Simone, 2011). Sennett (2008) and McFarlane (2011) demonstrate how the 'assemblage' of people and urban surfaces can shape a space that can adapt and meet the needs of the community. Such assemblages are attempts to dissolve the fixed physical boundaries of urban public space and open up a new domain for the imagination of alternative spaces.

In addition to urban surfaces, public space is also shaped by invisible forces related to cultural values and historical meanings rooted in the community. These contextual forces facilitate social dialogue as the display of cultural and historical meanings influences the interpretation of the space and projects new meanings related to contemporary urban life (Bakshi, 2014). Public space is shaped by meaningful associations that can enrich lives and shape values and attitudes. Massey (2005:9) describes public space as a space that is 'forever a work in progress continuously being remade'. The concept of perceiving urban public space as a 'product' introduces the physical, social, cultural, and political processes that produce this space (Madanipour, 1996), and these processes are essential for the continuous shaping of urban

public space to meet the changing needs of the community. The urban public space also becomes an active site for identity production, as it brings together cultural, social, and political issues and enables people to make connections and construct their identity in that space. Thomas (1991) demonstrates how shared collective experiences and historical narratives contribute to place-making and thus support the construction of identity in that space. Urban public spaces are confluences of human experiences and memories; they allow people to rediscover the past, engage with the present and imagine the future. Such spaces must have the capacity to retrieve past experiences and provide continuity from the past to the present in order to build a group identity (Mehta, 2013).

The assemblages of urban surfaces, contextual forces and people produce meaningful encounters that shape the public space and engage people. They allow people to re-occupy spaces that are out of reach, reinvent historical meanings, reimagine geographies and reconfigure urban life. Evaluating public space based on composition, form and enclosure can only give us access to the physical appearance and aesthetics of the space, and does not allow us to evaluate the social and cultural dimensions that shape the space. Urban surfaces, human encounters and contextual forces all contribute to the dynamic and paradoxical nature of public space. The urban public space is an active space for creative responses to the existing built environment, cultural views and political events. Hence the design of public urban spaces should not be finished and predetermined, it must have open-ended points which adapt to the different stimuli and forces emerging from the environment and people, and allow additions and change to take place (Sendra, 2015).

3. INTERVENTIONS IN URBAN PUBLIC SPACE

The very dynamic nature of urban public life requires experimentation with creative mechanisms that engage the community and

enrich their experience in urban public space. Many urban designers have discussed the failures of conventional approaches to urban regeneration which has resulted in spaces that do not engage the community and are unable to satisfy their changing needs (McFarlane, 2011; Sendra, 2015). Urban designers are now looking for different approaches to urban regeneration that focus on innovative tools that can reconfigure urban spaces which are usually conceived as finished structures. There are no fixed guidelines and strategies for constructing public space, and to ensure a meaningful engagement with the space one must look for new approaches in an attempt to transform public spaces into lively spaces that are ever changing and offer alternative possibilities and experiences. Massey (2005) describes the urban public space as an event rather than a fixed site: she argues against the conventional elements that define space, such as enclosure and physical appearance, and suggests incorporating concepts of change and openness into urban design. Watson (2006) and Iveson (2007) also criticise the ordered nature of urban public space, and propose introducing irregular and random public spaces that encourage spontaneity and exploration.

The assemblage of urban surfaces, contextual forces and people can form an urban intervention that interrupts the order of the space and opens up new possibilities in the space. Many studies have shown a particular interest in urban interventions as design tools that can activate public space and ensure public engagement with the space. Urban interventions may be described as processes that incorporate the rearrangement of urban elements, proposing new spatial configurations and inducing change in the urban space. Sennett (1990) refers to them as mutations that disrupt the neutral urban space and transform it into an expressive space. The relationship between the space and the public is not a smooth and static relationship; it is rather a changeable and progressive relationship that challenges the viewer and transforms his/her role from a distant observer to an active participant who

reinvents the space. Throughout the twentieth century, artists employed interventions as an approach that appealed to the viewer's senses and intensified their perception of space. Time was a dynamic variable in such interventions, and it intensified the experience in the space by giving it a temporal frame (Purpura, 2016). These short-lived interventions consisted of dynamic variables that would unfold over time with the ability to accommodate and respond to current issues and events.

The ephemeral nature of such interventions shifts the focus from expressing eternal values in public space, focusing instead on the actual experience of, and engagement with, the space. The space itself transcends from a monumental object that expresses fixed content to a transformative object that stimulates and activates the public (Purpura, 2016). The intervention does not have to last forever, 'as texture and context of the public life changes over the years…it must rely on its flexibility, it adaptability to be both responsive and timely, to be both specific and temporarily.' (Phillips, 1989: 836). Even though such interventions are ephemeral, the experiences and encounters they produce leave a lasting effect and memory that connects people with the space in new and unexpected ways.

Time can be a crucial variable in interventions, yet in some cases interventions can include both temporary and permanent elements. The temporary elements would engage the senses, interrupt the order of the space and intervene with its equilibrium for a short period of time. The permanent elements would provide an infrastructure that is unfinished and thus has the ability to reconfigure the space and change over time in order to support the changing needs of the community (Simone, 2011). Several studies have focused on introducing openness and ambiguity in public spaces (Sennett, 1970; Graham and Thrift, 2007; Sendra, 2015) which would leave the public space unfinished and open to endless possibilities. Sennett (1970) suggests the concept of disorder in urban interventions as a means of introducing informalities that aim to

change and activate rigid and predetermined public spaces. Reshaping urban public space through interventions is not a simple process. There are different strategies that can be implemented in order to provide informal activities and points of disorder. One approach is to focus on rearranging existing urban elements in new and unexpected ways. Such rearrangements can generate new spatial configurations and stimulate spontaneity and creativity (Sennett, 1970; Sendra, 2015). Another approach is to create open systems and creative points that would leave the space unfinished and offer new possibilities for that space. Existing urban public spaces are considered rigid and fixed because they are perceived as closed systems, where every point is connected, which creates a static equilibrium between the planned and fixed elements. The rigidity we often find in existing public spaces prevents interactions and leaves no room for creativity and innovation: Sennett (2007) proposes intervening in the space and transforming it into an open system that consists of unbound ends that can be moved, displaced and rearranged. This characteristic offers an opportunity for the public space to be constantly upgraded and also for other interventions to occur. The unfinished design and the unbound points are small increments that generate disconnections in the space, dissolve fixed boundaries, and stimulate unannounced events and activities. These disconnections provide different possibilities for encounters depending on how the urban elements and the people interact in the open system (Sennett, 1970; Sendra, 2015). Creating unbound and disconnected points in urban interventions will result in the space being partially unfinished and provides opportunities for more elements to be added later on to adapt to the changing stimuli in the context. The urban intervention becomes a skeleton that is composed of flexible elements that are continuously modified to meet the needs of the community. It is a continuous adaptation process that engages public participation and addresses the complex paradoxical relationships between the formal and informal, order and disorder, visible and invisible and reality and imagination (Graham and Thrift, 2007).

Interventions offer flexible tools and strategies that can activate the space and bring together different dimensions of human experience. They can provide a platform for urban encounters, allow people to visualise invisible meanings, and also reconfigure the visible elements to generate new interpretations and awareness of the space. Interventions in urban public space not only break the predictable repetition of elements and patterns we tend to see in the urban environment, they also provoke people to take part in the space, question the image of the space, imagine future or past experiences, propose alternative images and participate in the making of the space. Such interventions interrupt the order of the space and open up a creative space that becomes livable rather than lived, as it makes people more engaged and aware of the urban environment. There is a danger if the public space is left unchallenged, and it is essential to keep experimenting with new strategies that focus on the dynamic variables that constitute the public sphere rather than implementing fixed strategies that focus on the eternal values of visual monuments.

4. THE PALESTINIAN CASE: AN URBAN INTERVENTION IN MIDAN FILASTIN, AL BIREH CITY

Public spaces such as city squares are vital components that provide visual messages and images that tie people to the city. In addition to this, public squares function as access points that connect different streets, different groups of people and different activities (Rianne and Lawton, 2011). In Palestine, the city square is referred to as the *midan*, which serves as a focal point in the city that attracts visitors and welcomes people into the city. The *midan* is a highly ordered space that functions as a traffic node, and functions as a local landmark by which people can identify with the city. The *midan* itself is a structure that people have no access to; however, the spaces around the *midan* are social spaces that formulate the city square and bring different groups

together for social interaction and political activities. The political situation in Palestine impacts on the way people use the *midan*, and the surrounding spaces can change significantly in function and form due to the various social and political changes that affect the region and disrupt the normality of urban life. The *midan* is a vital space that is central to the urban life of the city, and it contributes to the process of identity construction and the continuous struggle to reclaim the territory and ownership of the space (Piquard and Swenarton, 2011). Hence the representations and experiences that occur in this space can help define identity and support the social values of the community.

Architecture and urban design can play an essential role in supporting the needs of the Palestinian people living in contested territories. Urban design in public spaces can provide mechanisms and tools that allow Palestinians to adapt to the political and social changes that occur in the region. These tools can become empowerment tools that enable people to cope with unexpected situations, establish creative responses of resilience, adapt to a changing environment and reinvent their relationship with space. As mentioned earlier, urban interventions offer strategies that can transform urban public spaces into active sites that accommodate the public realm (Sennett, 1970, 1990, 2007). However, most interventions that occur in urban public squares in Palestine are artistic interventions, which are temporary and fail to provide a solid infrastructure that can accommodate future alteration and changes in the space. The rationally designed and fixed urban elements that constitute the *midan* provide controlled experiences and fail to adequately accommodate the significant changes that occur in the political and social dimensions.

Midan Filastin is located at the edge of Al-Balou' neighbourhood in Al Bireh city. The location of the Midan is considered a sensitive borderline area, since it is close to an Israeli settlement and violent clashes may occur during political escalations. The Midan consists of plants and vegetation, and

functions as a traffic node for the northern entry point to the city. Despite the clashes that had occurred previously in the region, the municipality was determined to regenerate the neighbourhood and improve the quality of urban life and tourism in that area. The neighbourhood has undergone significant urban development projects which have included improving the infrastructure of the streets, providing pedestrian walkways and seating areas and designing a children's park close to the Midan. In 2011 the municipality commissioned another project to design a structure for the Midan: the structure would serve as an attractive point that marks the northern entrance to the city, and also serves as the tallest flagpole in the city. The design that was implemented was a massive concrete structure located in the centre of the Midan, rising vertically to a height of 25 metres (see Figure 1). The structure, which ends with a 15-metre flagpole, is very minimal and is stripped of any form of imagery or decorative elements. After the structure was completed, the municipality wanted to add images that evoked the identity of the city, and they commissioned several artists to add mosaic images to the concrete structure. However, the proposed designs exceeded the budget limit and did not meet the expectations of the municipality.

The urban intervention in Midan Filastin was a community-oriented design project that I proposed in a studio course for the 5th-year students of the Architecture department at Birzeit University, Palestine. The intervention was funded by the Fulbright community action grant, a financial grant that supports Fulbright alumni in conducting community-based projects in the Middle East region. The concept of implementing an urban intervention in Al-Balou' neighbourhood was inspired from the need to involve students in community-oriented projects, and try to implement their ideas outside the studio environment. As mentioned earlier, the Al-Balou' neighbourhood was undergoing several development projects that focused on supporting the local community, and the municipality was encouraging young

architects and students to volunteer and compete for some of these projects. Initially, we approached the municipality and proposed to hold an urban intervention in the children's park next to the Midan. The aim of the intervention was to develop public spaces in Palestine and reinvent the function of the public space. The intervention was meant to serve as temporary event that would not disrupt the design of the park and would perform a meaningful dialogue between the community and the surrounding context. The municipality was interested in the idea of engaging the public through urban interventions, but wanted a permanent design implementation that would transform the image of the place. Since the municipality had already commissioned the development of the park by the Welfare Association, it proposed the Midan as an alternative site for our intervention. The municipality suggested an intervention that would respond to the challenges and existing problems in the Midan, taking into consideration the community and the surrounding environment. After the municipality commissioned us to carry out the the project, it also provided financial aid and supervision during the different phases of the design and implementation to ensure it meets the specific design standards set by the board of the municipality.

The initial purpose of the intervention was to develop the space by introducing elements with flexible configurations that can change over time in order to accommodate the dynamics of contemporary life. The existing concrete structure in the Midan had a significant impact on the design direction, and most of the students perceived it as a massive structure that forced itself onto the context. Almost all of the initial design proposals focused on interrupting the order and massiveness in the Midan by adding design elements that would draw attention away from the existing structure .After reading several studies that explored the potential of urban interventions (Mitchell, 2006; Sendra, 2011), the students realized that it was essential to focus on the urban design elements and

the new experiences they could generate in the Midan. The final conceptual idea for the intervention was to create a skeletal system that appeared unfinished, with vertical and horizontal steel elements interlocking in a manner similar to timber formwork in construction sites. The intervention was not intended as an extension for the site; instead, it would generate a provocative relationship that would stimulate and engage the viewers. he choice of steel as a material supported this notion, and it created a bold contrast with the existing structure and the surrounding textures and colours of the urban context.

The interlocking steel elements create scattered fields of vision framing glimpses of the city and the surrounding neighbourhood. The concept was about the totality of view, seeing nothing and everything simultaneously (Mitchell, 2006). Each interlocking frame functions as a new vantage point that would prompt one to look at the view through the frame and imagine the invisible. The vagueness and unfinished look of the design elicit imagination, and allow people to project their own interpretation based on their memories of the political events and urban transformations that occurred in this place.

The design proposal (see Figure 2) was presented to the committee members of the municipality. The committee members showed interest in the skeletal structure and the material choice but did not approve the unfinished ends of the structure and suggested a more finished and colourful structure. In response to the committee's feedback, the students reworked the skeletal structure and closed off its ends to create a more finished image. However, as the students were determined to maintain the flexibility of the structure they reorganised the structure of the interlocking frames into independent interlocking units that can be moved and displaced to generate multiple configurations. The students also added colour by inserting transparent coloured acrylic panels at different angles and heights. Despite these modifications, the design remained open and flexible, and the interlocking frames provided

a rich urban surface that was vague and open for interpretation.

After the municipality approved the design, the students started implementing the intervention on the site. The implementation process was disrupted by the sudden violent clashes that occurred in the West Bank after 26 September 2015. The Midan, which was situated in a renovated pedestrian-friendly area, was suddenly filled with thousands of Palestinian protesters facing the Israeli soldiers on the other side. The instability in the environment did not stop the implementation of the intervention; instead it enriched the building process and added new meanings to the work. On 9 November I arranged with the director of the Al-Bireh municipality to submit a request to assemble a portion of the structure during the mornings. The local authorities allowed us to access the site from 7:00 am till 10:00 am (which was considered to be the safest time period in order to avoid the clashes) and during that time we were able to assemble a third of the structure. I also arranged for three more site visits to continue the assembly of the structure during the morning hours. Each morning we added more elements to the structure, and on the same day more protests and clashes would occur. The flexibility of the design allowed us to assemble elements at different locations and without the need to finish the entire structure at once. Our intervention was growing and changing every day: for the first time people had access to this space, and they noticed the presence of the new structure. Protestors were climbing on some of the bars and flags were dangling at some ends of the structure. Even though we did not plan for these activities, the intervention revealed to us how unplanned activities may occur if the space offers flexible elements and room for improvisation. The implementation process itself was adapting to the unstable changes in the site: with each visit we noticed more graffiti letters and more loose stones in certain zones in the Midan. In response to these changes we reconfigured and displaced some of the elements and added more frames in the zones which appeared to have more human encounter.

People became more aware of the space as they saw images of the protests in the media. The intervention made people more engaged with the Midan, and they started projecting their own thoughts about the image of the Midan. Some suggested colouring the steel frames with the Palestinian national colours, while others suggested adding symbolic elements of resistance. On Monday 30 November 2015 we were able to finally complete the assembly of the installation (see Figure 3) on the site, but the ongoing clashes prevented us from installing the acrylic panels. The disruptions that occurred influenced the design outcome, and revealed to us how changes in the physical environment can influence the design process. After the situation settled down, we did not install the acrylic panels, and decided to leave the design 'unfinished'. The municipality approved this decision, but they also showed interest in 'completing' the structure and adding the acrylic panels in the future. At this point it was clear to us that the essence of the intervention became the shifting relationship between the rigid concrete structure and the unfinished steel structure that surrounds it. The intervention was able to provide an active urban surface that people can interact with, physically and visually. The interplay between the new urban surfaces, the people and the existing rigid structure created a rich experience that people can still identify with to this very day.

5. CONCLUSION

The Palestinian community is still in the process of constructing its identity, and this process is influenced by the dynamic political and social forces that continue to shape the built environment and the public spaces in Palestine. The design of public spaces can play an essential role in supporting the needs of the Palestinian people living in contested territories. However, most of the public spaces consist of fixed urban elements that accommodate a limited range of activities and leave no room for alterations and unplanned activities in the space. Urban

2

3

Figure 2 Final Proposal

Figure 3 Urban Intervention, Midan Filastin

interventions in public spaces can provide tools that can reconfigure public space and open up opportunities for personal growth and enriching experiences. These tools can become empowerment tools that enable people to cope with unexpected situations, establish creative responses of resilience, adapt to changing environment, and reinvent their relationship with space. Studies have shown that introducing disorder and ambiguity can activate the space and transform it into an expressive domain that can support unplanned activities (Sennett, 1970; Graham and Thrift, 2007; Sendra,2015). Such interventions can transform the public space into an urban infrastructure that is open to change, and can reconfigure itself according to the contemporary needs of urban life. Moreover, urban interventions allow engagement and connections to occur between the people and urban surfaces. Urban surfaces are essential elements in the urban environment that can provide access to invisible values and meanings that shape a society. These elements are important in the search for identity, and allow continuity from the past to the present. The assemblage of people and urban surfaces establishes creative points of interaction that enable people to reinvent new meanings and images in public space.

Midan Filastin is a good example of a public space that is shaped by the community and context. The urban intervention at Midan Filastin has explored new strategies and approaches for reshaping the urban space. The aim of the intervention was not to reconstruct Midan Filastin, but to provide conditions that allow new forms of urban engagement to occur. The 'unfinished' structure provided creative points that enabled people to imagine the invisible; these points also became points of change that allowed the structure to adapt to the environment and the people. The intervention interrupted the formal structure in the existing space and introduced an open infrastructure that supports new, unplanned activities that did not exist before. Despite the many challenges faced in this intervention, it was a very powerful intervention

in terms of both process and end result. The design process was based on interpreting and evaluating the existing public space, and negotiating fixed urban policies in order to open up new possibilities for upgrading and transforming the urban public space. The continuous alterations and modifications to the design emphasised the importance of the context and the community in the design process. The intervention was a product of the urban surfaces, the people, the political situation and the existing rigid structure. It formed a platform that brought all these elements together to create a rich experience that engaged people with the space. This reveals how urban interventions are vital for urban life and can offer tools and strategies that can activate spaces and provide opportunities for creativity and imagination.

BIOGRAPHY

May Sayrafi is a faculty member at the Department of
Architecture, Birzeit University. She was a Fulbright
scholar at Washington State University, where she
received her MA degree in interior design. Her
research interests include home environments, art
history and community-based projects. She recently
published 'The Modern Palestinian Home' in The
Handbook of Interior Design (Wiley).

REFERENCES

Amin, A., and Thrift, N., 2002. Cities: Reimagining the Urban. Cambridge: Polity Press.
Amin, A., 2008. 'Collective Culture and Urban Public Space'. City, 12 (1), 5–24.

Bakshi, A., 2014. 'Urban Form and Memory Discourses: Spatial Practices in Contested Cities'. Journal of Urban Design, 19 (2), 189-210.

Beyes, T., 2010. 'Uncontained: The Art and Politics of Reconfiguring Urban Space'. Culture and Organization, 16(3), 229-246.

Carr, S., Francis,M., Rivlin, L. G., and Stone, A. M., 1992. Public Space. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Corijn, E., Van Heur, B., and Zawawi, Z.,2013. 'Public Spaces in the Occupied Palestinian Territories'. Geo Journal, 78, 743–758.

Crowhurst-Lennard, S., and Lennard, H., 1995. Livable Cities Observed. Carmel, CA: Gondolier Press.

Gaffikin, F., Mceldowney, M., and Sterrett, K., 2010. 'Creating Shared Public Space in the Contested City: the Role of Urban Design'. Journal of Urban Design, 15(4), 493-513.

Graham, S., & Thrift, N., 2007. 'Out of Order: Understanding Repair and Maintenance'. Theory, Culture & Society, 24 (1), 1–25.
Iveson, K., 2007. Publics and the City. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Madanipour, A., 1996. Design of Urban Space. New York: Wiley.
Massey, D., 2005. For Space. London: Sage.

McFarlane, C., 2011. 'Assemblage and Critical Urbanism'. City, 15 (2), 204–224.

Mehta, V., 2014. 'Evaluating Public Space'. Journal of Urban Design, 19(1), 53-88.

Mitchell, W. J. T., 2006. 'Christo's and Gilo's Wall Gates'.Critical Inquiry, 32 (4), 587-601
Phillips, P., 1989. 'Temporality and Public Art'. Art Journal, 48(4), 331-335.

Piquard, B., 2007. 'The Politics of the West Bank Wall: Symbolic Violence and Spaciocide'. In M. Swenarton, I. Troiani, and H. Webster (Eds.), The Politics of Making. London: Routledge, pp. 25-33.

Piquard, B., & Swenarton, M., 2011. 'Learning from Architecture and Conflict'. The Journal of Architecture, 16(1), 1-13.
Purpura, A., 2016. 'Framing the Ephemeral'. African Arts, 42 (3), 11-15.

Rianne, V. M., & Lawton, P., 2011. 'The Role of Public Space in Urban Renewal Strategies in Rotterdam and Dublin'. Planning Practice & Research, 26(5), 513-530.

Ricoeur, P., 2004. Memory, History, Forgetting. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Sendra, P., 2015. 'Rethinking Urban Public Space'. City, 19(6), 820-836.

Sennett, R., 1970. The Uses of Disorder: Personal Identity and City Life. New York: W. W. Norton.

Sennett, R., 1990. The Conscience of the Eye: the Design and Social Life of Cities. New York: W. W. Norton.

Sennett, R., 2007. 'The Open City'. In R. Burdett and D. Sudjik (Eds.), The Endless City. London: Phaidon Press, pp. 290-297.

Simone, A. M., 2011. 'The Surfacing of Urban Life'. City, 15 (3–4), 355–364.

Smith, B.P. and, Carney, C., 2011. 'Using Art Installations as Action Research to Engage Children and Communities in Evaluating and Redesigning City Centre Spaces'. Educational Action Research, 19(1), 23-39.
Thomas, M., 1991. 'The Demise of Public Space'. In V. Nadin and J. Doak (Eds.), Town Planning Responses to City Change). Avebury: Aldershot, pp. 209–224.

Watson, S., 2006. City Publics: The (Dis) enchantments of Urban Encounters. London; New York: Routledge.

CONTEXTUALISING CITIZENS
Design-Led Approaches To Visualising Community Ecologies,
Building Interventions And Mobilising Citizen Participation

P. Smith and C. Broadley

ABSTRACT

This paper uses three cases of the authors' research working with rural communities in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland to reflect on the methods used to mediate between various groups and community members in citizen-engaged projects. We highlight the effects of making visible, with communities, the assets and relationships that exist in each context. Taking a combined ethnographic and participatory approach, we explain how in each of the cases we worked to contextualise a situation and collaboratively form a detailed picture of these community ecologies. In this we consider the question: by uncovering the context of communities with communities themselves, are designers more able to position themselves in the particular situation and account for their own agency? Through our reflections we discuss how our approach contributed to a deeper understanding of contextual issues including individuals, groups, roles, skills, and relationships. This allows us to propose a speculative frame to support designers to reflexively work with communities to collectively build representations of existing social networks, position themselves as active participants within these community ecologies and provide the foundations for together planning future interventions – approaches and activities that aim to enable positive change.

1. INTRODUCTION

As designers working with communities to identify opportunities for future developments, we aim to understand the environments in which design techniques can give form to intangible ideas, relationships, and aspirations. For the purposes of this research we term the relationships between the people and groups in a community as the *community ecology*. Applying our creative competencies in this domain we conceptualise particular community ecologies as a means of mobilising citizens towards participation. By doing so we are working with communities to illuminate the skills, strengths, resources, and assets that already exist, and the social relationships and influences that can inform successful, sustainable development. As part of these practices designers have a role to play in making visible with communities the ecology in which they are operating. This, in turn, can support them to work efficiently and empathetically, as well as developing productive relationships between designer and community. Ultimately this combination can lead to successful community-led development projects. In this way, designers are applying methods and approaches to help mediate between multiple actors with diverse agencies in particular situations.

In this paper we begin by defining our understanding of participatory design approaches and ethnographic practices. Paying particular attention to their synergies and divergences, we put forward the perspective that a more explicit apprehension of researcher reflexivity in participatory design can offer a means of communicating and understanding contextual issues with communities.

To unpack these notions, we then move on to present three cases from our design research within Leapfrog: transforming public sector engagement by design – a £1.2million Connected Communities project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). The Leapfrog project is working in close collaboration with public sector and community partners to design and evaluate new approaches to consultation (Leapfrog,

2016). Delivered through a partnership between ImaginationLancaster at Lancaster University and the Institute of Design Innovation at The Glasgow School of Art, the project is working initially with communities in Lancashire and the Highlands and Islands of Scotland and then more broadly across the UK to create and evaluate new tools and models of creative engagement.

In the Highlands and Islands communities are geographically dispersed and often located in remote, hard-to-reach areas, and as such are strongly motivated to innovate by the difficulties they face in terms of communications and access. Situating the cases across the Highlands and Islands region, we set out each project's context and aims, describe the design-led activity we developed and carried out, and reflect upon the insights gleaned from these pieces of fieldwork. Through synthesising our experiences of the three cases we go on to discuss the design-led techniques used to uncover the community ecology. Where appropriate we also highlight the ethnographic and participatory design methods and approaches used to help link the tangible activities of the research to the supporting theories.

In this paper we do not interrogate any empirical data, but rather we offer our contextual reflections of three projects from our own positions within these through the case studies. Proposing the development of a frame to support designers when working with communities, future work will present collaborative accounts of the process from multiple perspectives and discuss a wider range of visual and creative tools that contribute to our view of ethnographic approaches in design and the importance of reflexively establishing context together.

2. PARTICIPATORY DESIGN: WHAT IS AND WHAT COULD BE

Emerging during the 1960s, Participatory Design (PD) was born from a desire to address power imbalances and regain

human accountability in light of technological advancements. PD has since been adapted to explore wider social challenges with organisations and communities (DiSalvo et al., 2013). Designers and design researchers working in PD employ creative, generative, visual, and participatory methods including collaging, sketching, 3D modelling tasks, prototypes and design games as ways of engaging with participants and *telling, making, and enacting* to envisage the future (Brandt et al., 2013). Steen (2011) positions PD as a practice in which designers and researchers devise methods to engage with users and stakeholders, understand their experiences and consider how these can be enhanced. Such activities build on primary knowledge and expertise ('what is') to imagine preferable scenarios ('what could be') (Steen, 2011:50). Vaajakallio (2009) has evaluated the generative nature of co-design activities and proposed that this fundamentally social and embodied practice originates from the dialogue that emerges when participants enact and describe their existing experiences through creative, expressive methods. PD practices and activities can be seen to foster a non-hierarchical ethos that empowers citizens and communities to contribute to innovative concept development. The balance of agency between communities and designers in PD is thus an emergent matter of concern.

2.1. POSITIONING PARTICIPATION; POSITIONALITY THROUGH PARTICIPATION

The nature of interaction, the forms of participation, and the mechanisms by which control and power are distributed remain much contested issues in PD (Vines et al., 2013). Steen (2013) notes that the quality of participation 'can vary greatly, ranging from superficial "hand-holding" initiatives to organizing productive dialogue and intimate cooperation' (Steen, 2013: 949). Equally, the ethical dimensions of building positive and productive relationships with organisations and communities underlines the need for designers and researchers to carefully choreograph their integration of contexts, participants and methods (Brandt et al., 2013; Vines et al.,

2013). Misrepresentation, cultural sensitivity and the appropriateness of PD methods are amongst the barriers and hurdles awaiting designers and researchers (Robertson and Wagner, 2013). Exemplifying these challenges through their investigations of indigenous knowledge management systems with rural communities in Namibia, Winschiers-Theophilus, Bidwell and Blake (2012) advise that PD methods be tailored to meet the viewpoints and agendas of all stakeholders involved. They should be designed to accommodate deviation and adaptation in line with participants' experiences, opinions, and ideas.

Initially concerned with understanding the world as it is, participatory design can be thought of as a research-led orientation in which designers and researchers gain an insight into the multifaceted nature of each design context and the areas of opportunity for intervention (Steen, 2011). Following Dorst's *Frame Creation* model (2015), critical engagement with existing situations within the design context can illuminate both "significant influences on their behaviour and what strategies they currently employ", and "practices and scenarios that could become part of the solution" (Dorst, 2015, pp. 76). In developing notions of context-specific PD methods, there is a need for designers and researchers to immerse and embed themselves within the geographical setting in which their projects are situated, allowing them to develop rich and authentic understandings of the social, cultural, and political conditions that characterise each unique design context.

3. ETHNOGRAPHIC PRACTICES AND PERSPECTIVES IN PARTICIPATORY DESIGN

Ethnography, the act of writing about human beings, has long been of interest to PD practices (Hemmings and Crabtree, 2002), and has been applied in many nuanced ways across the wider discipline of design (Hughs et al., 1994). As a professional practice, ethnography arose within the discipline of anthropology (Dourish, 2006). The emergence

of the practice marked a shift from the status quo of anthropological study and gave primacy to a richer description of situations through observed experiences, rather than a documentary of what people do. Yet as observations are inherently imbued with layers of subjective interpretations, the position and actions of the observer are central to much debate within ethnographic discourse (Davies, 2008). As Dourish (2006) considers, ethnographic practices often comprise the work of sociologists, functioning as a tool to drill down into the world in front of us to uncover what is really happening in each individual situation or encounter.

The role of ethnography within design has traditionally supported the definition of new creations suitable to the environment and has been utilised to establish appropriate new products, services, systems and experiences. Within the field of systems design, for example, ethnography has well established applications due to the recognition that any development of technology will be reliant on the understanding of the particular environment into which the new developments will be launched (Hemmings and Crabtree, 2002). Establishing contexts where new objects, in a broad sense, will become realised in use is crucial to successful and sustainable designs. Adopting the fundamentals of ethnographic approaches can be seen as critical to a participatory design practice that is both socially inclusive, and responsive to local skills, strengths, resources, and assets.

3.1. FROM ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS TO ETHNOGRAPHIC MINDSETS

The techniques of ethnography applied to design, especially looking historically in the realm of human computer interaction (HCI) and the development of human work supportive systems, offer a means to capture the real world complexity of situations from the perspectives of end users' lived experiences (Dourish, 2006). Whereas previously ethnography in design was concerned with supporting effective product or systems design, now the design of social practices is

also in receipt of the benefits of understanding contextual factors, for instance when working in particular localities. As Crabtree and Rodden (2002) point out, there is potential for ethnographic practice in product design processes to be extended and developed beyond a technique to inform specification towards opportunities to extract, capture, and communicate rich description and allow for more abstract concepts to emerge. The challenge with ethnography, according to Crabtree and Rodden (2002), is linking detailed observations to the development and implementation of tangible new designs. Going beyond empowering designers to make decisions, the role of ethnographic techniques in PD must therefore support citizens to recognise their abilities to make positive contributions to society.

Halse and Boffi (2014) suggest that where ethnography is appropriated by design disciplines, the 'core ethnographic aspects of empathy, open-endedness, attentiveness to situatedness, have met with designerly competencies' (Halse and Boffi, 2014: 4). Various design toolkits and surrounding literature extensively advocate the use of ethnographic practices to gain an understanding of behaviours and situations. The IDEO Method Cards, for instance, feature 'rapid ethnography' as a tool for designers to engage with users in their natural environments (IDEO, 2002). Evoking concepts of cultural probes, self-documentation is explicated as a generic technique to learn about participants' lives by viewing their photographs, drawings and written notes, and to develop interpretative descriptions of behaviours and needs to inform and inspire design solutions (Gaver et al, 2003; Mattelmäki, 2006). At the same time, established techniques including user personas, scenarios, and stakeholder maps (Hanington, 2003; Hanington and Martin, 2012) aim to create visual and textual representations of the people within the design context; describe their experiences, needs and aspirations; and depict the nature of their interactions within existing and speculative social networks.

Discussing the application of in situ observation and interview in professional design fields, Halse and Boffi maintain that such methods are 'inescapably political, and always also re-creating the realities they set out to describe' (Halse and Boffi, 2014: 4). This critique is in line with Blomberg et al.'s (1993) landmark guiding principles for ethnography in design: the first-hand study of people in everyday settings; understanding behaviours by uncovering a holistic view of the local context; constructing descriptive accounts of observations and presenting accounts in ways that are meaningful for participants (Blomberg et al., 1993:125-126). Concurring with Blomberg and Karasti's (2012) assessments of the intersection of ethnography and PD, we maintain that rather than existing in the form of a concrete tool or replicable technique, ethnographic principles are 'deeply ingrained into the doing of design' (Blomberg and Karasti, 2012: 99), and are characterised by an open, exploratory, critical and reflexive mindset on the part of the designer.

3.2. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND REFLEXIVITY

Whilst participatory methods can elicit information and influence the social nature of design research processes, there is an impetus on designers and researchers to demonstrate a reflexive awareness of their agency and impact in these contexts and articulate methodological and ethical decisions based on their prior knowledge, immersed experiences and participants' perspectives (Bødker, 2006; Steen, 2013). Developing this notion, Vines et al. (2013) raise concerns that the proliferation of PD methods has been accompanied by a lack of explicit acknowledgement of how designers and researchers 'configure multiple forms' of participation with organisations and communities (Vines et al, 2013:236). Foregrounding the ethnographer as an intrinsic and explicit element of the context, Davies (2008) defines reflexivity as expressing a personal 'awareness of their necessary connection to the research situation and hence their effects upon it"'(Davies, 2008:7).

Yet in encouraging designers 'to develop our own voices and learn to speak for ourselves' (Markussen, 1994:65), reflexivity cannot be put forward by "simply recommending people to be reflexive' (Steen, 2013:258), but by exposing and posing pertinent questions, communicating design decisions explicitly, stimulating thought and learning within PD relationships, and examining our own patterns of behavior and the effects of our practices (Broadley, 2013; Blomberg and Karasti, 2013). As we go on to discuss in the presentation of our three case studies, harnessing a reflexive awareness of our own experiences of each context was beneficial as a means of stimulating collective dialogue, mutual understanding, and idea development with our stakeholders.

Through presenting the following case studies, we seek to position ethnography in our design research approach as an influencing ideology. As we have set out, this is based on a contemporary understanding of ethnography in design that is distinct from its roots in anthropology as a descriptive and interpretative practice, towards a socially engaged and reflexively aware approach concerned with mutual learning, discovery, and idea development. Establishing context in our work is, we propose, imperative to designing appropriate interventions. Working with communities to uncover the relationships between groups and individuals, and overlaying these with nuanced, and textured information about their characteristics (histories, skills, motivations, aspirations) is a valuable tool for our practice, and reflects the view that an ethnographer is not 'a walking tape recorder' (Forsyth, 1989:140). Rather than merely recording what we think we see, we use tools and approaches to explore situations, consider why a situation *is what it is*, and identify how people feel about it.

4. CASE STUDIES

The following section summarises three case study examples of the authors' work within three distinct Leapfrog projects, each

working with communities to develop ways to engage citizens in local area development. The projects took place in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, a region consisting of many small remote and rural communities, a great many of which plan, execute, and administer community-led initiatives. The case studies focus primarily on the contextualisation stage in each project. In this, ethnographic study and participation from citizens combine with the input and interpretations of designers to plan the next stage of the project.

4.1 CASE 1: ENGAGING ISLAND COMMUNITIES

The first case deals with an intervention that aimed to work with a range of community-led local development initiatives in island communities in the Western Isles of Scotland. The aim of the intervention was to co-develop innovative methods for engaging with local residents about a range of potential development projects, facilitating their *buy in* and securing support so to help projects become more sustainable. Development projects ranged from a green transportation initiative on the islands to a community-owned land development initiative, a wildlife conservation project and a project to increasing access to affordable housing. Projects are managed and administered by a mix of employed development officers and volunteers with a vested interested in their community's development. As in many of the regions across Scotland, an overarching group of local stakeholders form a community development trust that leads on or is involved in many projects. The trust is a social enterprise that supports itself with a blend of income generated through commercial activities and project specific funding. The success of such projects relies heavily on both the financial capital investments from self and externally generated incomes, and equally on social capital investments from local citizens. Within each region there may be many projects and individual stakeholders, all with various types of relationships that makes for a challenging environment in which to work. Within this first project, our role was

to work with stakeholders to co-design new and creative methods for engaging with local residents through a series of workshops and contextual visits.

The project was characterised by three major stages, each corresponding with distinct objectives. The first of these took the form of an initial scoping stage where we worked with a closed group of stakeholders to map out the current landscape of issues facing the community and opportunities to engage people in local area development. This was followed by a contextualisation stage where we immersed ourselves in the community, speaking with different representatives from community projects and working in collaboration with a broad group of stakeholders to map the community ecology. In this, ethnographic study was positioned as an approach to both inform the designer and citizens about the ecology and to situate the designer in that ecology as an active part of the project. Thirdly, we embarked on a stage of co-design, where we collaborated with stakeholders to develop approaches to engaging with citizens and actively involving them local development plans.

In the initial scoping stage of the project there were two phases: identifying salient issues and setting success criteria. Visually mapping the community ecology in the subsequent contextualisation stage, we worked with stakeholders to unpack perceptions of different kinds of relationships that exist within the local area. These were categorised as individuals and individuals; individuals and groups; groups and groups. The maps were created using a combination of individual and group interviews, and a workshop that used design-led approaches and creative techniques including probes and drawing.

Figure 1 is taken from a workshop in which we used an *Individual Mapping Tool* to explore how community members related to various groups and the nature of the relationships. The aim of our project was to work with stakeholders to design engagement tools that they themselves could go on to use in

future local area development projects. The mapping activity supported us in making visible the components comprising the community ecology and helped develop our understandings of individuals and groups to engage with through these in the future, possible topics or themes for community engagement in relation to local issues, and the kinds of engagements that had happened before. This activity encouraged us to reflect on stakeholders that may be involved in the next stage of the project, and our own roles and agency as designers within the ecology itself and potential future interventions aiming to instigate positive change. In this case, we became aware of many committees, clubs, and individuals with an interest in local area development. Often individuals were part of multiple groups and played many roles in the community. Inspired by this insight, the Individual Mapping Tool allowed us to physically break down the community into discrete parts (individual citizens) and then visualise how the discrete elements connected. Carrying out the activity with a range of individual stakeholders and combining their maps to create a composite picture of the community ecology, the mapping activity helped us to open up a space for interrogating the current situation together, and identify opportunities for transformation.

The final stage of the project was centred around the planning, development, and delivery of a series of co-design sessions. Throughout all the activity we carefully developed and designed tools and approaches to support the objectives of each stage.

4.2 CASE 2: BUILDING COMMUNITY BRIDGES

The second case deals with an intervention involving two rural communities striving to develop shared community-led initiatives covering a major infrastructure project and the development of a community asset into a shared resource. The governance of community-led initiatives across two communities is organised into a shared development trust, two local village hall committees, and a range of community committees for individual clubs, associations, and projects. Our role in this project was to work with representatives from the two communities and the overarching community trust to develop creative ways to connect the many community stakeholders who would be affected by local area development projects.

Mapping the local landscape and scoping future work together, we worked with community members to envisage various social networks. Figure 2 illustrates the *Network Mapping Tool* we used to visualise the different groups that exists in the two areas. In this activity small groups of local stakeholders are asked to use pins to intuitively position local clubs, committees, trusts, and boards, before attaching annotated tags to identify them. The stakeholders were then asked to connect related groups by tagging the connecting threads and annotating these to describe the nature of these relationships, for example, an individual who links two projects. As in the first case, this activity was repeated with different groups, and individual maps were combined and discussed.

We found that certain hierarchies were evident within this community ecology. For the multiple groups responsible for individual clubs, projects and initiatives (base groups), there exists a layer of intermediary groups – village hall committees and shared project committees – that are connected with the base groups but also connected to another group, a layer abstracted from them represented by the community trust and community council. Many groups share individuals and some individuals are part of more than one group, painting a dynamic and complex picture of how degrees of agency are distributed throughout the communities. By establishing the landscape of the different groups and the nature of their relationships, we were able to distinguish the different interactions between them and situate any work at the nexus of these interactions. In establishing the community ecology, the Network Mapping Tool also supported us to
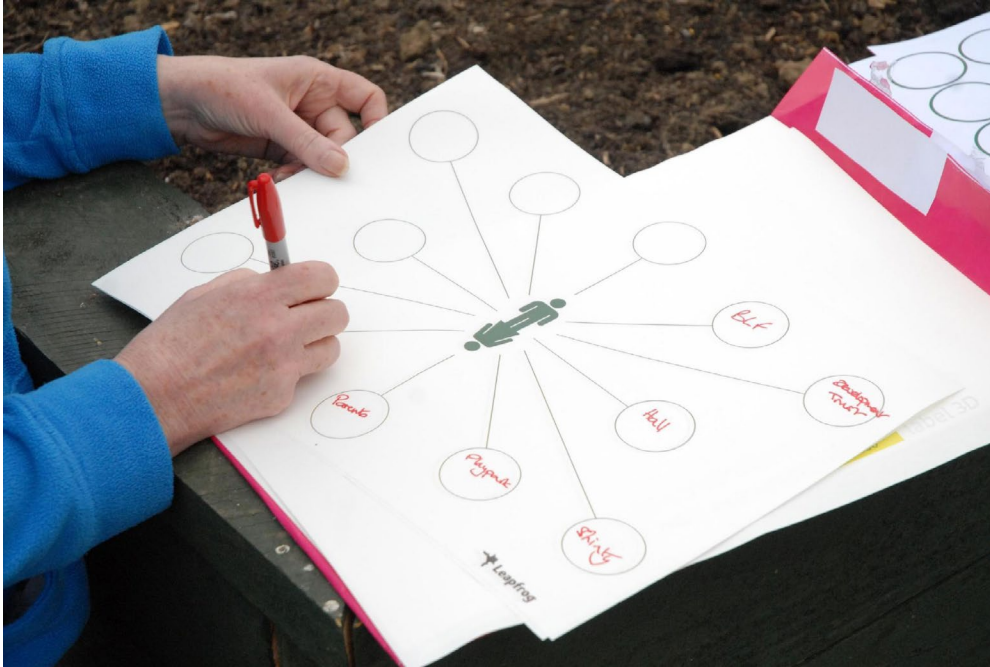
1

2

Figure 1: Individual Mapping Tool: exploring connections between people and communities

Figure 2: Network Mapping Tool: visually mapping community ecology linkages

plan for future interventions by highlighting key individuals, their level of current activity in the community, and their perceived importance.

4.3 CASE 3: BALANCING AND BLENDING PROFESSIONAL AND CITIZEN VOICES

The third case deals with an intervention working with a group of stakeholders aiming to actively involve citizens in the development of a national park development strategy. Specifically, the group sought to engage with young families in the national park about future developments and social programs by synthesising, balancing, and blending the voices of citizens using the park and the voices of experts who advise on its development strategy from a pragmatic and professional perspective. Setting this case apart from the previous two, our objective here was to examine working practices and how they fit into a current working ecology – an ecology that involves a core team, panels of expert stakeholders and citizen participants, all playing a role in area development planning. The project partners recognised that the development plan should respond to the needs of key groups of people living in and visiting the park, whilst aligning with expert recommendations and the needs implementers of the strategy. This would require coordinated participation from multiple stakeholders and thus a very clear focus from the start. In turn, our project's core aim was to co-design a suite of engagement tools that could be used to connect with citizens and provide them with a space for sharing their experiences, insights and ideas for the park's future.

Through our initial scoping stage we spent time as a team visiting and speaking informally with various people responsible for developing and delivering the area plan. Our objective with these visits and interviews was to begin to understand some of the working practices of the core team ultimately responsible for creating and delivering the park strategy. In this, we paid particular attention to their relationships with other stakeholders with an explicit role in developing the plan. Equally important was establishing the relationships with stakeholders who were known or perceived as important but, where not explicitly involved in the plan's development. These people were often termed the *unusual suspects* – individuals and groups that the team aspired to connect with. During this stage of the project we conducted exploratory site visits and semi-structured interviews to form an initial picture of pertinent issues and stakeholders. This was important for us to establish the project's focus, frame the scope of our work in its subsequent stages and anticipate our own roles and agency as designers in planning and delivering interventions.

Through a series of workshops we brought together people with various roles in the area development strategy to explore and articulate the broader landscape of actors involved in the national park plan. As the core contextual stage of the project, here we used visual and participatory design-led techniques to engage stakeholders in mapping activities in which we encouraged them to collectively expose the *status quo* of the situation, and express their opinions of this picture as it emerged. During one of the workshops we used simple sketching techniques to represent the ecology that we would be working in, before layering this with stakeholders' individual perceptions of what we were mapping. This technique served to map out the breadth of the project; uncover the basis for stakeholder's perceptions of the current situation; position the project, and ourselves as designers, within the ecology itself and locate key areas and groups to focus on as we progressed through the project. It created a holistic picture of how development plans are created and opened up dialogue around understanding such procedures and identifying gaps within current approaches. Ultimately it led to identifying a key issue with the current practice and a main focus for the project. As a result of this stage, young families' involvement in the park's future was directly linked to its sustainability, positioning them as a pivotal node within the community ecology, yet past attempts to actively engage with them had proved

challenging.

In creating this *work ecology* we recognised the need to foreground the development plan's professional advisors and citizens with a geographical connection to the park as two sub-groups based on their expert knowledge and experiences of living in and using the park. The core group responsible for delivering the plan operates externally to these groups and interacts with each (and their sub groups) independently. The core does not mediate between the other groups, nor do the other groups have any contact with each other. Crucially for us, by establishing this picture with the stakeholders and in a way that was sympathetic to the potential political nature of the situation, we managed to establish a common ground and shared motivation to collaborate together to extend the reach of the park and engage with a wider range of local communities. Establishing a basic picture of a complex situation and mapping relationships in that picture, the initial stage allowed us to identify the notional focus for the future of our project. It helped us to build relationships of our own between designers and the various stakeholders and began to build a common understanding and a shared direction. By bringing more perspectives into the process through the contextual stage and collectively adding detail to the initial picture we managed to co-develop a shared reality of the situation and a shared focus for the project. Working this way helped to add us to the picture as active participants and not simply observers.

5. REFLECTIONS ON DESIGN-LED APPROACHES TO VISUALISING COMMUNITY ECOLOGIES, BUILDING INTERVENTIONS, AND MOBILISING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Where ethnography's historical role was to learn and impart knowledge, design gave form to ideas (Crabtree and Rodden, 2002). Halse (2008) advances distinctions of collaboration and participation in design by affirming that socially situated, culturally specific design inquiry is embodied by past, present, and future experiences. Through

performing design activities in the liminal spaces between people and artefacts, everyday practices function as a springboard for innovation. Understanding the spaces in which interventions will take place is seen as critical to a successful design-led approach to participatory community development and is a strategy that we have adopted and developed through the cases we have discussed. Working with stakeholders to build up a contextual picture using visual methods in the first case made us aware of a complex web of affinities and divergences amongst the individuals and groups forming the community. Through this we noted that over time many personal social relationships had become professional in nature as individuals coalesced to form groups and manage discrete projects, with these project groups often overlapping.

Enacting a form of participatory stakeholder mapping to visualise these relationships helped to establish an understanding of the context in which we would work, the challenges and opportunities we might face, and develop a level of trust and parity between ourselves as designers and the community. Gradually becoming attuned to these contextual factors and sharing our interpretations openly with the community through visual techniques helped us in the subsequent stage of the project to co-design engagement tools as design interventions that were appropriate, responsive, and applicable to the distributed nature of the Western Isles and addressed the need to connect a broader range of communities that were geographically dispersed across the land and the sea. Concerned with change, design-led interventions can be seen as opportunities for designers to harness the knowledge gleaned from their immersion in the context, analyse stakeholder aims and aspirations, identify patterns and characteristics, and develop and test potential alternative products, services, and systems (Bødker and Iversen, 2002: Crabtree, 1998). As Halse and Boffi (2014) articulate, interventions are research methods deployed 'not to test a prefigured solution to a defined problem, but to enable new forms of experience, dialogue and awareness about

the problematic to emerge' (Halse and Boffi, 2014:2).

Building collective representations of a community's particular ecology at systemic and individual levels can lead to a level of understanding and trust between community members and designers that allows for more productive relationships, and contextually-appropriate design interventions. Drawing from Blomberg et al. (1993), Simonsen and Kensing (1998) discuss how ethnographic principles have proliferated PD to contribute a means of uncovering rich insights surrounding the design context. Harnessing conceptions of contextual design (Simonsen and Kensing, 1997; Beyer and Holzblatt, 1997; Steen, 2011), the use of ethnographic practices seeks to support designers in building reciprocal relationships with stakeholder participants, establishing confidence and credibility in the design approach, and negotiating mutual project goals (Blomberg and Karasti, 2012; Simonsen and Kensing, 1998). Co-creating the Network Mapping Tools in the second case resulted in a collection of artefacts that helped us to unpack differences in individuals' perspectives and the subjective nature of their versions of the reality. This activity was key to building a sense of trust between designer and community, and allowed us to work with the community rather than for them. Crucially, and in terms of accounting for our level of agency in the project, this approach situated us as designers within the collaborative space that we sought to make, and defined a place in the community ecology in which collaborative work would take place. Here we learned about various distinct groups: how their purposes and aims often overlap, how they interface and interact, and the relational factors that would need to be negotiated. Developing this particular contextual picture uncovered the boundaries we would be working across and the people we would most likely interact with. Our approach was again to work with community members to visually map their community and in particular the nature of the linkages between them. It is important to note that the structure we made visible is viewed through the lens of community

development and so a certain bias towards mapping elements relevant to the situation was embedded within it. There were many personal and historic relationships at play in the communities we worked with, and we see this texture of particular community ecologies as an imperative element to acknowledge and unpack when working with communities.

Recalling distinctions of understanding what is in order to speculate what could be (Steen, 2011), Suchmann et al. (1999) maintain that shared insight and awareness of the design context provides the impetus to inspire meaningful change. It can be argued that the amalgamation of designers, researchers, and local stakeholders' concrete experience and abstract knowledge constitutes the route towards design knowledge (Kensing et al, 1998:12; Simonsen and Kensing, 1998: 25). In the third stage of the project detailed in the third case we continued to work with the same group to co-design creative ways of gathering, synthesising and balancing the multiple voices and agencies of the various stakeholders. Drawing from our experience of the previous cases, we applied a range of visual and participatory design-led mapping activities to mobilise various fragments of local knowledge and materialise the linkages between groups and individuals. In particular, we chose to use sketching as an expressive, informal, and interpretative technique to describe and capture our collective descriptions of the situation as it stood. This supported us in building a shared understanding of the points within the network where we would locate our work, to identify the boundaries we would be spanning, and crucially, to suggest opportunities for future interventions. Whilst Dourish (2006:541) points out that 'ethnography is seen as an approach to field investigation that can generate requirements for systems development', Blomberg and Karasti (2012: 96) recognise concerns that such arguably superficial applications limit the potential of ethnography to render deep conceptual and theoretical design knowledge tangible and accessible. Ethnography constitutes an inherently aggregated portrayal of reality constructed from multiple

perspectives: not only is the perspective that of the observer, and determined by their personal experiences and prior knowledge but it is also of the observed. The results of a study – the ethnography itself – are the interpretation by the ethnographer of the experiences of the unit of study (Dourish, 2006: 544). In this way it is a collaborative process of realising *collective realities*.

Opening up spaces for interrogating current situations and broadening the scope for change, "ethnographic techniques are a helpful supplement to the designer's repertoire for action" (Simonsen and Kensing, 1998: 24). The design-led mapping techniques we developed and applied in each case enriched our understandings of community ecologies and supported us to envisage where and how future interventions would take place. We deem mapping community ecologies an important method for managing expectations for all stakeholders involved in collaborative projects by setting the boundaries of interventions and identifying realistic goals for what the work will do. This is crucial in balancing aspirational ideas of what futures might look like and the pragmatic path of realising shared future visions. We believe that adopting an approach that blends an ethnographic ethos with participatory design methods can help to make relationships in communities visible and tangible, set the scene for the collaborative development of strategic approaches for citizen participation, and maximise the potential within community ecologies to enable positive change.

5.1 FUTURE RESEARCH: PROPOSING A FRAME FOR DESIGNING REFLEXIVELY WITH COMMUNITIES

The model followed in the three cases presented follows a structure of engage, participate, synthesise, and design. As designed interventions, collections of locally responsive engagement tools were the primary outcome of applying this model, in so far as the contextual factors uncovered by the ethnographic approach. As an output, the ethnography itself,

which can include written text, drawing, mapping, and other communicative forms, is a symbolic representation of our collective understanding of a situation. Created through a collaborative process, this emphasises a shared perspective and a reality constructed through the mutual interests of designers and communities. The initial approach we present in this paper has been a valuable tool for articulating our insights gleaned from the three case studies, and our reflections on how this has supported our work. Starting with the project's scoping stage, we begin to grasp the foundations of the ecology in which we will be working and crucially begin to immerse and integrate ourselves into the picture. It is not always easy for individuals to visualise the relationships in their ecology, and often more difficult to express the nature of many intertwined relationships from their insider perspectives. Having sight of the picture does not immediately reveal where issues and opportunities lie, but as we have found It is the deeper understanding of why a community ecology is the way it is and how it is perceived by the people within it that paints a more detailed picture and allows designers, citizens, and communities to focus on important opportunities for future interventions.

As a result of this research we propose a speculative frame to support designers to account for their own agency and reflexively work with communities (Broadley, 2013; Blomberg and Karasti, 2013) to develop shared understandings of community assets, social relations, group interactions and the power relationships in existing community ecologies; build trust and share goals, and to inclusively co-design interventions. Extracting these imperatives from our reflections to form its struts, we suggest that such a frame can guide how we define our interactions with communities and ensure that project aims are co-developed in response to local issues. To uncover these factors, we advocate the responsive development and use of design and ethnographic methods (Halse and Boffi, 2014) within the frame. Upon becoming attuned to contextual factors and how these underpin relationships, the frame then

encourages designers and communities to collectively build representations of social networks that exist within a particular setting and position themselves as active participants in these community ecologies. Further work will develop and expand upon the frame, reflecting on its value in phases of co-design and the use of creative tools for community engagement.

6 CONCLUSION

In this paper we have reflected on how gaining a deep understanding of contextual issues in communities, and doing this in collaboration with members of the community, provide the foundations for joint planning of successful future interventions. We have illustrated how blending methods and mindsets from PD and ethnography can offer a means for designers to reflexively interrogate the geographical, environmental, cultural, social and political context of their work and their potential impact upon that setting; engage with networks of individuals in dialogue and collectively unpack and make visible the groups, skills, and relationships that characterise each situation, and underpin an equitable distribution of agency between themselves and the communities they work with. Building productive collaborative relationships and providing the foundations for successfully planning interventions, we propose that such a frame can support designers to establish contextual understandings of the place of communities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BIOGRAPHY

Paul Smith Dr. Paul Smith is a designer and Research Fellow at The Institute of Design Innovation in the Design School of the Glasgow School of Art. His current work focuses on creative engagement of citizens in the design and development of solutions to real world problems and creating a more open, innovative and locally active society.

Cara Broadley Dr. Cara Broadley is a designer and Research Fellow at The Institute of Design Innovation in the Design School of the Glasgow School of Art. Her current work focuses on the role of participatory design approaches, visual methods, and reflexive practice in engaging with organisations and communities.

REFERENCES

Beyer, H., and Holtzblatt, K., 1997. *Contextual Design: Defining Customer-centered Systems*. San Francisco: Morgan Kaufman.

Blomberg, J., Giacomi, J., Mosher, A., and Swenton-Wall, P., 1993. 'Ethnographic field methods and their relation to design'. In: J. Schuler and A. Namioka, eds., *Participatory Design: Principles and Practices*. Hillsdale: Erlbaum, pp.123-155.

Blomberg, J., and Karasti, H., 2012. 'Positioning Ethnography Within Participatory Design'. In: J. Simonsen and T. Robertson, eds., *Routledge International Handbook of Participatory Design*. London: Routledge, p.86.

Bødker, S., and Sejer Iversen, O., 2002. 'Staging a Professional Participatory Design Practice: Moving PD Beyond the Initial Fascination of User Involvement'. In: *Proceedings of the Second Nordic Conference on Human-computer Interaction 2002 October 19 - 23 2002, Centre for Human-Machine Interaction, University of Aarhus, Aarhus, Denmark.* New York: ACM Press.

Bødker, S., 2006. 'When Second Wave HCI Meets Third Wave Challenges'. In: *Proceedings of the 4th Nordic Conference on Computer-Human Interaction*. New York: ACM Press, pp.1–8.

Brandt, E., Binder, T., and Sanders, E. B. N., 2013. 'Ways to Engage, Telling, Making and Enacting'. In: In: J. Simonsen and T. Robertson eds., *Routledge International Handbook of Participatory Design*. Oxford: Routledge, pp.145–181.

Broadley, C., 2013. 'Visualising Human-centred Design Relationships: a Toolkit for Participation'. Unpublished doctoral thesis, The Glasgow School of Art.

Crabtree, A., 1998. 'Ethnography in participatory design'. In: *Proceedings of the 1998 Participatory Design Conference 1998*, November 12 - 14, City University Graduate Centre, Seattle, Washington, USA.

Crabtree, A., and Rodden, T., 2002. 'Ethnography and design?'. *International Workshop on "Interpretive" Approaches to Information Systems and Computing Research 2002, July 2002, Brunel University, London.*

Davies, C. A., 2008. *Reflexive Ethnography: A Guide to Researching Selves and Others*. Oxford: Routledge.

DiSalvo, C., Clement, A., and Pipek, V., 2013. Participatory design for, with, and by communities. In J. Simonsen, and T. Robertson, eds., *Routledge International Handbook of Participatory Design.* Oxford: Routledge, pp.182–209.

Dorst, K., 2015. *Frame Innovation: Create New Thinking by Design*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Dourish, P., 2006. *Implications for Design. Proceedings of CHI '06.* Montréal, Canada. New York: ACM Press.

Hughes, J.A., King, V., Rodden, T., and Andersen, H., 1994. 'Moving out of the control room: ethnography in systems design'. In: *Proceedings of CSCW 94.* Chapel Hill, North Carolina: ACM Press.

Forsythe, D., 1989. 'It's Just a Matter of Common Sense: Ethnography as Invisible Work'. *Computer-Supported Cooperative Work*, 8,127-145.

Gaver, B., Dunne, T., and Pacenti, E., 1999. 'Design: Cultural Probes'. *Interactions*, 6(1) 21–29.

Halse, J., 2008. 'Design Anthropology: Borderland Experiments with Participation, Performance and Situated Intervention'. Manuscript for PhD dissertation, submitted to the IT University of Copenhagen, available from <http://nordicom.statsbiblioteket.dk/ncom/en/publications/> accessed 20.02.16

Halse, J., Boffi, L., 2014. 'Intervention as a Form of Inquiry. Ethnographies of the Possible', Aarhus: Research Network for Design Anthropology.

Hanington, B., 2003. 'Methods in the Making: A Perspective on the State of Human Research in Design'. *Design Issues*, 19(4), 9-18.

Hanington, B., and Martin, B., 2012. *Universal Methods of Design: 100 ways to Research Complex Problems, Develop Innovative Ideas, and Design Effective Solutions*. Beverley, MA: Rockport.

Hemmings, T. and Crabtree, A., 2002. 'Ethnography for Design?', In *Proceedings of the International Workshop on Interpretive Approaches to Information Systems and Computing Research, Brunel University*, London.

IDEO, 2002. IDEO Method Cards, available from <http://www.ideo.com/work/method-cards/> accessed 12/06/11

Kensing, F., Simonsen, J., and Bodker, K., 1998. 'MUST: A Method for Participatory-Design'. *Human-computer Interaction*, 13(2), 1167-198.

Leapfrog, 2016. About, available from http://leapfrog.tools/about/ accessed 10.10.16

Markussen, R., 1994. 'Dilemmas in Cooperative Design'. In: *Proceedings of the Participatory Design Conference (PDC'94),* Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA. November 1994, pp.59–66.

Mattelmäki, T., 2006. 'Design Probes'. Helsinki: University of Art and Design Helsinki, available from <http://www.uiah.fi/publications> accessed 20.08.16

Robertson, T. and Wagner, I., 2013. 'Engagement, Representation and Politics-in-action'. In J. Simonsen and T. Robertson, eds., *Routledge International Handbook of Participatory Design*. Oxford: Routledge, pp.64–85.

Suchman, L., Blomberg, J., Orr, J. E., and Trigg, R., 1999. 'Reconstructing Technologies as Social Practice'. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 43(3), 392-408.

Simonsen, J., and Kensing, F., 1997. 'Using Ethnography in Contextual Design'. *Communications of the ACM*, pp.82-88.

Simonsen, J., and Kensing, F., 1998. 'Make Room for Ethnography in Design!: Overlooked Collaborative and educational prospects'. *Journal of Computer Documentation*, 22(1), 20-30.

Steen, M., 2011. 'Tensions in Human-centred Design'. *CoDesign*, 7(1), 45–60.

Steen, M., 2013. 'Virtues in Participatory Design: Cooperation, Curiosity, Creativity, Empowerment and Reflexivity'. *Science and Engineering Ethics,* 19(3), 945–962.

Vaajakallio, K., 2009. 'Enacting Design: Understanding Co-design as Embodied Practice'. Paper presented at Nordes 2009 – Engaging Artefacts, Oslo, available from <http://www.nordes.org/opj/index.php/n13/issue/view/9> accessed 20.08.16

Vines, J., Clarke, R., Wright, P., McCarthy, J. and Oliver, P. 2013. 'Configuring Participation: On How We Involve People in Design'. In: *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, Paris, France*, pp.429–438.

Winschiers-Theophilus, H., Bidwell, N. J. and Blake, E. 2012. 'Altering participation through interactions and reflections in design'. *CoDesign*, 8(2-3), 163– 182.

PUBLIC PLAY

Chairs: Henric Benesch & Annelies Vaneycken (HDK – Academy of Design and Crafts, University of Gothenburg)

This session aims to explore and problematise play as a methodological framework for involving children and young adults in participatory design projects, opening up new and critical perspectives on contemporary issues in/on public space.

Since the Situationist International, and their practice of "play" as a mode for artistic urban exploration, play and various game forms have become common components in contemporary participative design processes – and not only those involving children and young adults. This "playification" and "game-ification" of urban development processes require critical evaluation. Following Huizinga's description of play as an activity that exists only for its own sake, "no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it" (Huizinga 2014), working with play within the goal-oriented framework of participatory design is a contradiction in terms.

Seeing play as a continuum between rule-bound "ludus" and spontaneous, uncontrolled "paidia" (Caillois 2001) may help us to unpack the ambiguous values of participatory design processes based on the notion of play. How can both tendencies – the structured and the unstructured, the controlling and de-controlling – work together and inform design processes? What are the consequences of participatory design processes that unilaterally control and if so what type of "play" can take place? Who takes part in structuring and controlling the participatory design processes? Are young participants genuinely participating or are they rather lured by playful strategies in undergoing a predefined path that only affirms established values and entrenched power structures? How much de-controlling do we need to disrupt conventions and enable agonistic spaces (Mouffe 2007) which enable multiple, critical and disruptive interpretations and voices? And more specifically, what circumstances empower children and young adults to apply their "expertise" in play to the production and development of public space issues?

References

Caillois, R. (2001). Man, play and games. Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press.

Huizinga, J. (2014[1950]). Homo ludens: a study of the play-element in culture. Mansfield Centre: Martino Fine Books.

Mouffe, C. (2007). Artistic Activism and Agonistic Spaces. Art & Research Vol.1, No.2

PLAY AS A DEMOCRATIC MEANS TO RECONFIGURE THE POLITICS OF SPACE

A. P. Assis

ABSTRACT

This study takes the experience of producing and testing a game in a favela in Belo Horizonte, Brazil in order to discuss participatory planning from the perspective of dissensus. The imaginary of a city mobilised by the game is compared to the structuring interventions carried out in a favela by the state in order to reveal two distinct forms of conceiving and producing space. The first, imposed by technical perspective, takes the formal city as its reference and the second corresponds to the spatial imaginary of a self-produced space of the favela. It is argued that the participatory instances contemplated by the state's urban planning processes are used as instruments to erase the imaginary contained within the favela's spatial mode of production, given the impossibility of translating the everyday practices of the favela into the codes of technical planning. The role of the game is to make visible the spatial imaginary of the favela, and so indicate the need to think of participatory tools that enable the agonistic translation between plural imaginaries. This study proposes a reassessment of urban planning instruments within the form of an open-access game, in which differences are seen as contributing to a transformative process.

1. INTRODUCTION

My first experience with games in a socio-spatial context occurred in early 2013 during an extension-research project in which I acted as advisor to a group of architecture students working with the community of Aglomerado Santa Lucia, a favela complex located in the southern centre of the city of Belo Horizonte. The issues raised by this experience with the game gave rise to a series of reflections on games as a participatory and emancipatory tool, which I am currently working on in my PhD research. Among many activities carried out with the Santa Lucia community, we had the opportunity to develop a game to be played with a group of young residents who were attending a municipal social program for youth in underserved areas, named Projovem.

At that time, a vast programme of structuring interventions was being undertaken by the City Council of Belo Horizonte at the Aglomerado Santa Lucia. Despite the program's high investment in housing, sanitation, roadworks and the construction of parks and public facilities, the process generated a series of conflicts. In addition to the strain on social relations promoted by the imposition of a new spatial order, conflicts emerged especially in relation to the threat of removing residents in order to accommodate the works of the so-called Vila Viva Program.

The idea of developing a game emerged through an invitation to promote a conversation between the architecture students of the extension-research project and the youth group of Projovem program. At that time we knew very little about the way these young residents were dealing with the spatial transformations that were taking place within Santa Lucia through the Vila Viva program. We agreed that this conversation should be an opportunity for the youth group to develop their own perceptions on the subject instead of delegating the role of leading the conversation to the architecture students. Our primary concern was that the presence of the university students could inhibit the participation of the young locals and reduce the possibilities for debate to our external and preconceived vision on the spatial reality of the favela.

Therefore, the idea of the game appeared as a tool to act as a guiding thread for the dialogue, which could enable the Projovem youth group to discuss spatial issues, and encourage critical reflection concerning the changes occurring within the space of the favela. It was hoped that a game could provide an environment in which the young locals might identify themselves as subjects implicated in everyday spatial practice, while at the same time, enabling the construction of a vocabulary that could sustain critical debate on the actions promoted by the Vila Viva Program. For Johan Huizinga (2000), one of the main features of games is that they 'are not everyday life or real life. Rather, they are an escape from real life into a temporary sphere of activity that has its own orientation' (Huizinga, 2000:33). By choosing a game as a manner with which to articulate their ideas we aimed to bring real problems on to a platform free from the anxieties of the immediate.

This paper will present the experience of the game to the young people from the favela, followed by a critical review of the participatory process of the urban planning instrument adopted in the Vila Viva Program, the Specific Global Plan (PGE), which set guidelines for the structuring intervention. Both experiences will be contrasted from the perspective of dissensus, as characterised by Jacques Rancière (1996a; 1996b; 2005), in order to describe the formation of a political community based on the discordant encounter of individual perceptions. The purpose of this comparison is to reveal how social relations of domination are reproduced by public policies for producing space.

Within the context of Aglomerado Santa Lucia, undergoing the structuring interventions by the Vila Viva Program, the 'discordant encounter' we will reflect upon takes the unitary theory of space by Henri Lefebvre (1991) to identify two distinct forms of producing space. One is oriented by the technical perspective of the urban planning instrument adopted by the Vila Viva Program, and the other is characterised by the spatial practice of favelas, marked by

the collaborative relationships regarding the informal production of space.[1] Although the arguments that support this analysis may have been intuitive at the moment of designing the game, this reflection, inspired by its results, was drawn up at a later date. At this point the game was named the Game of Dissensus.

Taking the experience with the Game of Dissensus this study proposes a re-evaluation of participative instruments for urban planning in the form of an open game, such as that characterised by Vilém Flusser. To explain the open-game model, Flusser argues that 'games occur in games' and that 'every game opens a competence for their meta-game' (n.d.:3). To Flusser, an open game is one in which the repertoire may be increased and the structure may be modified. In the open game 'repertoires are increased by processing noise into game elements' (n.d.:3). The dialectics between game and meta-game connect the multiple instances of a process towards its ultimate objective and beyond the instrumentality of the immediate results. According to Flusser, the game is a metaphor that points to a possibility of transformation in structures that can be translated as political and social structures. However, the Game of Dissensus presented in this study is not about a metaphor but rather a game in its literal sense, understood as a non-discursive experience, which will be played in order to sustain a critical reflection on the need for a political reconfiguration of participatory planning practices.

2. THE GAME OF DISSENSUS

The Game of Dissensus is based on the deconstruction of the modernist reference proposed by the Athens Charter (Le Corbusier, 1933), which separated the functions of the city into housing, leisure, work and circulation zones. The game makes an argument for the erasure of the ordered separation, blurring the limits between the functions and making the use of space more flexible. Although the Game of Dissensus is structured around the framework of the Athens Charter, it is not necessary in order to play it to have previous knowledge of the theoretical framework behind the structure, which is irrelevant to its development. However, it should be clarified that adopting the framework of modern urbanism – in order for it to be deconstructed by the game – emerged as a kind of self-criticism of the extent of our constrained thinking, in which the formal imaginary of a city was the first to emerge during the process of conceiving the game. Having recognised our own limitations, we decided to adopt this as a strategy, a constraining structure to be modified by the game since the players would then be free to propose flexible solutions for the space that they imagined. The idea was precisely to problematise the tensions between the logic of the formal city that permeates the interventions of Vila Viva and the informality of the mode of occupying and producing space in the favela.

THE RULES OF THE GAME

In the game, each of the modernist functions (housing, leisure, work, and circulation) was associated with a colour and represented by a team of players. For each of the colours/functions, a group of cards was prepared. Each card indicated an everyday action relating to the function represented by the card colour. The game was played out on top of a large piece of white cardboard that fulfilled the role of a board, where players would represent the city in which they would like to live. In turn the players would pick an action card in a different colour from that represented by its group. Through the use of drawings and collages, groups would represent solutions responding to the combination of the action that had been drawn (on the card) and a place corresponding to the function of their group. Within the structure of the game, the actions available on the cards of the other three colours never coincided with an action that usually occurred in places related

1 Informal production is understood as that which occurs outside the legal, normative frameworks that regulate the formal city.

103

Figure 1 The Game of Dissensus (source: author's archive, 2013)

to functions represented by its group.

IMAGINARY ENABLED BY THE GAME OF DISSENSUS

The proposals drawn up by young players during the game session presented creative solutions to overlapping uses demanded by the cards. Some possible combinations were, for example: a space to play in one of the circulation structures (a street to play football or a basketball hoop at the bus stop); mixed spaces of trade and housing (houses were represented with bars and shops on the front, or houses with signs for manicure/pedicure); a space to study in the park or a space to rest on the sidewalk. Spatial solutions devised by the players presented a much greater level of complexity than those introduced by the Vila Viva Program. They were also much more coherent within the modes of using and producing the space of the favela.

In order to compare the proposals devised in the game with some of the Vila Viva interventions, I use the example of housing and streets. The apartments built to house some of the population decanted from their original homes are of minimum space standards. They offer no flexibility of use and this is totally unlike the way that favela dwellers live, since they often double up the living space with some other activity to increase their income, such as local commerce or services. In addition, the housing model in vertical buildings does not allow for other fairly common practices in favelas, such as cultivating vegetable gardens and keeping animals. Another aspect disregarded by Vila Viva concerns the use of the street as a shared space. Focusing on vehicle access in a number of streets does not respond to the reality of overlapping uses and the commonly observed possibility of negotiation between cars and pedestrians in the streets of a favela.

3. THE SPECIFIC GLOBAL PLAN (PGE)

The planning instrument adopted by the Vila Viva Program, previously identified as PGE, is presented as a democratic instrument of planning, intended to oppose the rationalist, hygienist and authoritarian urbanism through a participative/communicative process. However, the contrast between the program's interventions and the spatial imaginary presented by the young locals in the Game of Dissensus leads to an examination of PGE's participatory process in order to understand the distance between these two conceptions of space, formulated by groups of the same community but under different processes. After a brief introduction on the general aspects of PGE, its restrictive aspects will be foregrounded in order to identify it as a unilateral consensus-driven instrument of planning.

The PGE's approach is structured in three areas of action: physical and environmental, juridical and legal and socio-economic. These levels of approach are present at three participative stages: (1) data gathering, (2) diagnostic and (3) proposals, which are analysed in an integrated manner and in which proposals are presented regarding the viability of each field of action (Melo, 2009). After the PGE process has finished, outsourcing companies are selected through public bidding to implement the executive project and execute the works approved in the participatory instances. The construction stage does not involve any community participation. Popular participation therefore only occurs in the three planning stages contemplated by PGE.

In the data-gathering stage, community participation is considered through interviews with residents. In subsequent stages, community meetings are held in order to approve the diagnostics and the proposals. The diagnostics are based on the data-gathering, and the proposals in turn are formulated as an answer to the problems raised in the diagnostics. At the meetings, conflicts and differences that might occur tend to be ignored to serve an agenda for the approval of proposals. However, the conflicts become more acute after concluding the PGE stage. It is only when the implementation

of the proposals starts that the community understands the extent of what has been approved by them in the participatory meetings.

According to Kapp and Baltazar, the origins of the problem are situated within 'the perspective of the planners in translating the favela into the codes of a formal city' (2012:12). This approach begins at the stage of mapping and gathering data: '[T]he sort of information collected in a PGE follows the needs of planners and public administrators, thus, one-sided information, not an exchange or a dialogue' (2012:10–11). This manner of accessing and analysing information emphasises the visibility of issues that are perceived as problems only in the light of formal planning. On the other hand, problematic issues from the viewpoint of favela dwellers become invisible to the technicians.

In the subsequent stages, in which the community assembly approves diagnostics and proposals, it is common for dwellers to be seduced by the imaginary of the formal city presented by technicians, since they associate it with a condition of economic privilege. The ways in which diagnostics and proposals are presented in community assemblies 'reinforce prejudices against the favela, and make it more difficult for the inhabitants to value the qualities of the space they have produced up to that point. It is hard for them to foresee the implications in everyday life of losing such qualities' (Kapp and Baltazar, 2012:12). Given their inability to really understand the issues raised at that stage, the community is eventually persuaded to agree with the decisions that are presented as being the only possibilities, thus eliminating any prospect of spatial inventiveness to which the community could contribute.

Furthermore, limiting the participatory process to only these three stages seems to ignore the spatial mode of production of the favela, marked by the autonomy with which the community usually transforms their immediate environment independent of the economic and normative frameworks. In this regard,

Kapp and Baltazar point out the contradiction between participation and autonomy: autonomy is the ability of individuals and, foremost, collectivities to establish their own means of action and interaction, as long as they do not restrain others. Being autonomous means being ruled by self-defined norms. In contrast, the idea of participation indicates that people are allowed to take part in decision-making without being able to change its norms (Kapp and Baltazar, 2012).

4. ON THE RATIONALITIES IN DISPUTE WHEN PRODUCING SPACE

According to Lefebvre 'the spatial practice of a society is revealed through the deciphering of its space' (Lefebvre, 1991:38). In his unitary theory of space, Lefebvre identifies three dialectic instances operating simultaneously within the space, which are the perceived, the conceived and the lived. Translated into spatial terms those are, respectively, spatial practice, he representations of space and representational space (Lefebvre, 1991). In the favela's representational space (the lived), we can see the predominance of the spatial practice (the perceived) to the extent that this space reflects the everyday reality as an intuitive response to the concrete spatial needs of its residents. It reveals a dynamic spatial practice, open to a process of constant transformation through creative negotiation between individual needs and collective space. To Lefebvre, the lived space cannot be translated into verbal signs. In contrast, the representations of space drawn up by the planning process (the conceived) are intellectually elaborated through verbal codes (1991). In the context of urban planning for favela space, we can observe the discordant encounter of these different modes of understanding and producing space. Each one has its own rationality that signifies that they may only be expressed or interpreted by means of specific codes.

The political thought of Jacques Rancière presents a perspective that is able to embrace the coexistence of these different modes of rationality. Rancière identifies an

aesthetic basis in politics, through which he understands politics as a form of experience (Rancière, 2005). For Rancière, it is within politics that the dispute on what can be seen and said in a common world is established. In the current political environment, he identifies a consensual orientation supported by the presumption of equality behind the notion of democracy. Hence Rancière understands the processes that break with this illusion of equality as dissensus. According to Rancière, dissensus emerges as a rupture to the democratic order, a noise on the supposed equality of speech. 'The one we refuse to consider as belonging to the political community, we first refuse to listen to as a speaking being. We only hear noise in what he says' (Rancière, 1996b:373). As experience, dissensus is also a constituent process of political subjectivities. For Rancière, scenes of dissensus are the moments of emancipation where it becomes possible to transform a social order presented as immutable through consensus.

Taking as a reference the tangent points in the thoughts of Rancière and Lefebvre, it is argued that the PGE process is inadequate to deal with dissensus, represented here by contrasting rationalities regarding the different modes of producing space. The fact that the PGE can only access one mode of rationality – the communicative one – erases the non-verbal references of the lived space as a subject in the participative planning debate. For Lefebvre, 'the speculative primacy of the conceived over the lived causes practice to disappear along with life, and thus does very little justice to the "unconscious" level of the lived experience per se' (Lefebvre, 1991:34).

Communicative rationality as a means to achieve consensus is doubly contradictory to the democratic argument of the participative/communicative planning. Chantal Mouffe suggests that 'a consensus without exclusion' is impossible (2007:4). In line with Rancière, she identifies in consensus the responsibility for obscuring and obliterating the multiplicity of identities that constitute antagonistic relations and dissensus. Antagonism is represented

in PGE by the diversity of stakeholders in the process – technicians, residents, contractors, politicians, etc. Mouffe believes that the erasure of antagonism through a consensus-driven process is a step towards the consolidation of the hegemonic discourse. In her project for a radical and plural democracy, Mouffe proposes to deal with the antagonism through the form of agonism. Her conceptual framework for agonism 'simultaneously recognises the inherent social antagonisms and allows its expression in institutional or other forms of organisation' (Swyngedouw, 2011:5). To Mouffe, the conversion of antagonism into agonism means to cease to consider any contrary position as that of an enemy and as a move towards considering it as an adversary (Mouffe, 2005). The difference is that while antagonism comes from the idea that it is naturally impossible for opposing ideas to co-exist, in agonism co-existence is made possible because in principle it is receptive, although it does not deny political confrontation.

As a non-discursive instance, the game tends to be more open to embedding non-verbal elaborations originated in the practice of lived space. In this regard, the Game of Dissensus is aligned to Mouffe's agonistic approach since it allows the expression of spatial imagination of favela residents as a strategy of resistance to the dominant consensus on the technical perspective. By lending visibility to this other way of producing space, the game opens up a possible competence for urban planning by challenging it to find other ways of dealing with dissensus.

5. FROM PLAY TO PLANNING: CONTRIBUTIONS OF A NON-DISCURSIVE TOOL

Although the Game of Dissensus was not conceived as an urban planning instrument, it can contribute to the debate on participation as a tool to democratise planning. If the act of playing reveals the distance between the proposals devised by the planning instrument and the spatial imagination of young residents of the favela, it is important to identify which

features in the game enabled this other imaginary to emerge.

I would first like to broaden the reflection on self-criticism regarding the prevalence of the apparent rationality evident at the moment that we were given the task of 'conceiving' a game for that context. As well as designing the game, the group of students involved in the university extension project also took part in it as players, alongside the young residents of the favela. What could be observed from this experience was a considerable displacement between the rationality mobilised to conceive the game from that mobilised to play. From the moment the game was conceived we realised the extent to which our thinking (as technicians) was conditioned by the framework (also conceived) of the modernist city. However, during the game session, the influence of the technical training was not recognisable in the proposals made by the students. The imaginary of the formal city that they brought to the game was from the space they live in as residents of the formal city rather than the space conceived at university, as to what a city should be. It is therefore within the displacement provoked by playing that I identify three features that I intend to highlight in the Game of Dissensus. These are: the equal speech condition, the autonomy to interpret the rules, and the denaturalisation of consensus.

The first identifies the possibility of exchange and sharing of ideas in the game environment that we associate with an equality of speech condition – to put it in Rancière's terms. During the occasion, the ease with which architecture students and the young locals organised themselves into four teams was remarkable. Both sides decided that the teams were to be composed of a mix of players from both groups. Clearly this formation makes it difficult to trace what influence the different backgrounds of each group may have had on the draft proposals. However, I assume that the equality of speech condition was more related to the kind of interaction mobilised through the game than necessarily to the background of the players. The Game of

Dissensus does not provide the participants with any previous formulation for their spatial proposals; the challenges posed by the cards enable the desires for the space to be gradually formulated according to the contingency of the situation. Unlike the communicative rationality, which demands a specific skill for the formulation of a speech, the game proposes other paths for elaborating arguments. By the act of drawing, the game allows interaction between the discursive and practical logic in the negotiation between teammates, so that one contributes to enhancing the other. I believe that the interaction between these two logics has also contributed to mitigate the asymmetries that eventually could inhibit the freedom to draw up proposals. Around the board, participants are above all 'players'; there is no differentiation between 'technicians' and 'community'.

The second feature is the possibility of the autonomy identified in the game as 'the ability of individuals to establish their own modes of action and interaction' (Kapp and Baltazar, 2012). Although it may be argued that the Game of Dissensus presents a structure that somehow orients its results, we understand that this does not limit the creativity of the players since it allows a particular interpretation of the rules in order to enable different arrangements. For instance, when a player from the favela was asked to combine circulation and work, she drew a bus in the street that was drawn by another player. She was then confronted by an architecture student, who questioned the redundancy of the theme 'circulation' in the combination bus+street. She replied by writing next to her drawing: '[T]he bus is the driver's work'.

The third recalls the initial purpose of the game, which was to articulate the debate on space with the young residents of Santa Lucia. The game has gone beyond its initial purpose since it also fulfills the reifying role of validating the relevance of the spatial imagination of the favela and thus denaturalises the consensus surrounding the conceived imaginary of the formal city. However, it is important to emphasise that

denaturalising a consensus in this case does not mean promoting a consensus in the opposite direction. Instead, the game points towards an agonistic possibility to deal with dissensus. The proposals drawn on the game board were the result of negotiations between the backgrounds of the architecture students and the young locals. During the process it was common to hear comments regarding experiences from both backgrounds, for example: 'At so-and-so's house it's like this' or 'Like it is on my street'. When the proposal seemed to be unusual to any player, questions like: 'Is there really a square like that?' or 'But who will want to live there?' opened up the possibility for discussion of the references, contaminating each other's imaginary and expanding the repertoire of both groups.

6. CONCLUSION

Although the Game of Dissensus enabled the interaction between groups with different backgrounds, from a critical perspective we must recognise that the conditions in which it was played do not represent a situation of real conflict between stakeholders. On the contrary, from the beginning, the architecture students were aware that the very intention of the game was to give voice to young local people. Despite the many levels of dissensus that can be identified in the wider context of interventions in the favela, the conflictual component is missing within the game. I understand that this difficulty in putting different interests into dialogue is also a recurrent problem in participatory processes. The constructors' profit or real estate interests are hardly laid on the table – instead they are hidden by a hegemonic consensus of what can be the alternatives in the participatory processes.

In this regard, this article does not intend to state the Game of Dissensus as an alternative participatory tool. Rather, its main contribution is to draw attention to the need to include instances of non-discursive participation in the urban planning process, as a strategy to avoid the exclusionary effects of communication-based processes. Despite its limitations, the Game of Dissensus shows its ability to translate different spatial codes, thereby enabling the coexistence of different spatial imaginary.

In fact, a key feature of the Game of Dissensus is to make clear the distinction between game and reality. The game consists of an extreme simplification of reality into a structure designed to activate a reflexive action. From the perspective of the open game, the structure must be understood as a framework on which a new reality can be created, rather than as a reduction of reality. In the context of urban planning, the open-game reference can be seen as a possibility for expanding the repertoire of practices and spatial imaginary by embedding noise into its structure. Coincidentally to Rancière, Flusser (n.d.) refers to noise as a kind of interference of another order, which serves to expand the repertoire of the game. For Rancière (1996b), noises are voices muffled by an exclusionary political framework where dissensus becomes intelligible to institutional practices. A game open to noise is therefore a structure permeable to dissensus, which means a game able to translate noise into coherent discourse.

BIOGRAPHY

Ana Paula Assis is an architect, researcher and educator. She is currently a PHD candidate at Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG). She received a Master's degree in Architecture and Urban Culture from Metropolis/UPC, Barcelona in 2003, and graduated in Architecture and Urbanism from PUC-MG, Belo Horizonte (UniBH) in 1996. She has previously worked as a professor at UniBH and UFMG.

REFERENCES

Flusser, V., n.d. Jogos, unpublished manuscript. Berlin: Vilém Flusser Archiv.

Habermas, J., 2012. Teoria do Agir Comunicativo: Racionalidade da ação e racionalidade social, Vol. I. São Paulo: Martins Fontes.

Huizinga, J., 2000. Homo Luddens: o jogo como elemento da cultura. São Paulo: Perspectiva.

Kapp, S. and Baltazar, A. P., 2002. 'The paradox of participation: a case study on urban planning in favelas and a plea for autonomy', in: Bulletin of Latin American Research, 31 (2).

Laclau, E. and Mouffe, C., 1987. Hegemonía y estrategia socialista: Hacia la radicalización de la democracia. Madrid: Siglo XXI.

Le Corbusier, 1993. Carta de Atenas. São Paulo: Hucitec/ Edusp.
·   Lefebvre, H., 1991. The Production of Space. Oxford: Blackwell.

Melo, I. D. O., 2009. O espaço da política e as políticas do espaco. Unpublished Master's

dissertation, UFMG, Belo Horizonte.

Mouffe, C., 2007. 'Artistic Activism and Agonistic Spaces', in: Art & Research, 1 (2). Available at http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v1n2/pdfs/mouffe.pdf [accessed 5 April 2016]

_____, 2005. The Democratic Paradox. London: Verso.

·   Rancière, J., 2005. A partilha do sensível. Estética e política. São Paulo: Editora 34.

_____, 1996a. O desentendimento. São Paulo: Editora 34.

_____, 1996b. 'O dissenso', in A. Novaes (ed), A crise da razão, São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, pp.367–82.

Souza, M.L., 2013. Mudar a cidade: uma introdução crítica ao planejamento e à gestão urbanos. Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil.

Swyngedouw, E., 2011. 'Interrogating post-democratization: Reclaiming egalitarian political spaces', in: Political Geography, XXX, pp.1–11. Available at http://www.cades.be/ckfinder/userfiles/files/PoliticalGeographyPostDemocracy.pdf [accessed 12 August 2015]

TO PLAY, OR NOT TO PLAY? THAT'S THE QUESTION!
Exploring A Child-Perspective On Play To Negotiate Power Relations In
Participatory Design Processes Involving Children.

S. Schepers, K. Dreessen, and N. Kosten

ABSTRACT

Today, children are more and more involved in Participatory
Design (PD) processes, which entail specific challenges, such
as negotiating power relations and making them explicit. This
paper departs from the premise that 'play' can have a role in
dealing with these power relations and presents some well-known
definitions of play. However, most classifications of activities
of play have been based upon adults' definitions rather than
children's understandings. Therefore, we introduce the case study
'Making Things', in which we collaborated with a local youth work
organisation and children of 6 - 10 years old as a first attempt
to come to a child-perspective on play that can be useful for PD
processes. In this paper, we discuss the first phases of this case
study, consisting of participant observations, 'sensitizing packages'
and a co-design workshop, and elucidate the major insights in a
child-perspective on play that we gained from it and their relation to
negotiating power relations and making them explicit.

1. INTRODUCTION: POWER RELATIONS IN PD PROCESSES INVOLVING CHILDREN

Since the 1990s more attention has been being paid to children as a user group in design processes (Iversen, 2005). Due to – among other things – the traditional power structure of the 'all-knowing' adult and the 'all-learning' child, as well as designers' assumptions about working with children, the child's role in design has historically been minimised (Druin, 2002). However, in the last decades, researchers (e.g. Druin, 1996; Hanna et al., 1997) have advocated a more child-oriented approach to design. Today, the research interest in children as participants in design processes is primarily driven by researchers with a background in Participatory Design (PD) (Read and Bekker, 2011; Scaife et al., 1997). PD is a set of theories and practices related to the concept of involving end-users as participants in the design and research process (Ehn and Badham, 2002; Greenbaum and Kyng, 1991). Different traditions of PD with children evolved along axes that parallel different approaches to PD (e.g. theoretical, political or pragmatic) (Iversen, 2005; Kensing and Blomberg, 1998). For instance, the work on co-design with children by Druin has influenced processes that involve children to make better technology. Second, corresponding to the Scandinavian approach to PD, children are engaged in order to contribute their voices for the sake of empowerment. Often, this engagement implies large numbers of children collaborating in short yet concentrated periods of time (Mazzone et al., 2010; Read et al., 2014).

However, collaboration with children entails specific challenges (Vaajakallio et al., 2009). For instance, as young children develop cognitively, emotionally and socially at a quick rate, the success of applying certain methods for involving children in the process is dependent on their ages. For instance, older children (aged 10 to 13) need more specific guidance in their activities when low-tech prototyping as they tend to lose focus and rather easily get off task while younger children (ages 4 to 6) need more support in collaborating with adults and each other. An issue that is specifically challenging when working with children in PD processes entails power relations.

Power sharing is at the heart of PD: 'users should take part in all types of decisions […] and be given a voice, as well as the power to participate in the decision-making' (Bratteteig and Wagner, 2012:41). However, according to Bratteteig and Wagner (2012), empirical accounts of how power and decision-making has been shared between designers and participants are scarce and many are not concrete when it comes to how power is exercised and shared. This is even more the case when it comes to PD processes involving children. Children's participation through design partnering breaks traditional power hierarchies, which means that design partners must negotiate team decisions. This is not self-evident when children are accustomed to following what adults say, and adults are accustomed to being in charge. Thus, both children and adults need time to negotiate new power structures in which neither adults nor children are in charge. Children need to learn that their ideas are heard by adults, while adults need time to learn that children can contribute equally as design partners (Guha et al., 2013; Druin, 2002).

Practical guidelines for negotiating power structures between adults and children have been created and developed for different phases of the design process. In this way, researchers can reduce their status as 'authority figures' and make it easier for children to feel comfortable with sharing their thoughts (Kuure et al., 2010). These guidelines include using informal language, being on first-name basis, informal fun time together and 'paying' the children (Druin, 2002; Druin, 1999; Hanna et al., 1997). However, Guha et al. (2013) warn that the power pendulum can swing too far, and that if adult design partners are not careful children can end up dictating the sessions. To prevent this, adults need to maintain some typical adult responsibilities: for instance, 'occasionally, an adult will need to step in a caregiver role, for example if a child needs to use the restroom' (Guha et al., 2013:14). It is important that, when fulfilling

these typically adult roles, the adult researcher maintains his/her role as partner and that children at all times are treated with the same respect as adults.

2. 'PLAY' IN PD PROCESSES

This paper starts from the premise that play can have a role in dealing with power relations in PD processes involving children. After all, 'play is not only a quintessential childhood activity but has also been described as the most important 'work' of being a child' (Glenn et al, 2013:186). Play helps children to learn and interact with others in a PD process, which enhances collaboration and teamwork. It can aid in the articulation of perspectives, viewpoints and skills through which the impact of power relationships can be diminished. It facilitates the structuring of design activities as well as the negotiation of design ideas. PD methods that incorporate play contribute to levelling stakeholders with different interests, which leads to a more constructive dialogue.

2.1 DEFINITIONS OF PLAY

Although play has been studied in various fields ranging from biology and psychology to sociology, the literature has mainly focused on the 'productive' value of play, exploring its developmental, cognitive, biological and social functions. Definitions of play vary, often reflecting the discipline from which they originate: 'for example, from an educational perspective play has been defined as a dynamic, active, constructive behaviour [...] whereas from a sociocultural anthropological position play has been described as a disposition rather than an activity or behaviour' (Glenn et al., 2013:186). Generally, these definitions share the idea of play as an important learning tool during childhood (Wood, 2009).

A well-known definition of play, originating from the cultural domain, comes from Huizinga (1949). Contrasting with earlier theories that proposed deterministic and utilitarian definitions of play, Huizinga presented an understanding of play as an activity that exists only for its own sake. He defines play as an experience of fun and enjoyment, without serious goals, characterising play as a free, voluntary act being 'distinct from 'ordinary' life both as to locality and duration' (1949:9). From Huizinga's perspective, play creates order and is not connected to any material interest or profits. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner. In this line of thought, Caillois (1961) distinguishes two types of play that are not contradictory but can be placed on a continuum. *'Ludus'* includes structured activities with explicit rules, while *'paidia'* refers to unstructured, spontaneous activities. Caillois (1961) states that in most human affairs there is a tendency to turn paidia into ludus.

2.2 TOWARDS A CHILD-ORIENTED DEFINITION OF PLAY

As the definitions of Huizinga (1949) and Caillois (1961) show, most classifications of activities of play have been based upon researchers', parents' or practitioners' definitions, representing theoretical or paradigmatic perspectives rather than children's understandings of play. Accordingly, some have argued that play is an adult construction created to make sense out of what children do with their time (Glenn et al., 2013). Although PD methods are increasingly applied in research processes, misrepresentations may arise since researchers and children understand play differently.

Therefore, Glenn et al. (2013) conducted a study with 30 children (aged 7 to 9) to address this existing research gap. It showed that children consider *almost anything* as an opportunity for play. The activities perceived as play were classified into four categories: movement-focused activities (e.g. sports), creative/imaginative activities (e.g. crafts), games and entertainment (e.g. board games) and social-relational activities (e.g. partaking in family activities). The children suggested that almost all activities were or

could be play and indicated that play does not necessarily have to fulfil a purpose or outcome (cf. Huizinga, 1949). Additionally, the children clearly regarded activities such as games and sports -- involving rules, (certain) structures and being primarily goal-oriented -- as play. Moreover, children articulated that fun determined whether certain activities were playful or not: 'as soon as an activity was not fun, it was no longer considered play' (Glenn et al., 2013:190). This corresponds to theoretical understandings of play, such as Huizinga's (1949), that include fun or pleasure as inherent features. Glenn et al. (2013) also showed that children saw opportunities to play *almost anywhere*, generally distinguishing between indoor and outdoor play locations, but that the location influenced the choice of activity. The children indicated they could and would play with *almost anyone*, although the most preferred playmates were friends and siblings. Finally, they identified various factors that influenced their play opportunities or had a restrictive influence on them (e.g. physical and environmental limitations, such as injuries or broken computers, and parents).

3. CASE STUDY: 'MAKING THINGS!'

Building further on the study of Glenn et al. (2013), we discuss the ongoing PD process of 'Making Things!': a long-term collaboration between two design researchers and local youth work organisation 'Gigos'. 'Making Things!' originated from Gigos' need to offer STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) workshops to local, disadvantaged children of between 3 and 16 years old within the context of FabLab Genk (www.fablabgenk.be). As research (NSF, 2010) shows that activities reflecting the daily lives of the children motivates them to bring new ideas to the table, Gigos wanted to enthuse the children through better fitting their personal interests. e are therefore searching for ways to design the STEM workshops in a participatory manner, meaning that via PD methods the children are involved in *designing* the workshops before effectively *participating*

in them[1].

In this paper, we discuss our first explorations in which we engaged a group of 6 to 10 year olds to investigate a child-perspective on play. Through this, we want to gather insights for our exploration of (making explicit) power relations within 'Making Things!'. The insights gained from these explorations will feed the further PD process, for instance through incorporating moments of (free) play in the future design of the abovementioned workshops, to make existing power relations between the child participants visible.

3.1 METHODOLOGY

We first conducted participant observations: on six occasions, we observed 60 children (boys and girls, aged 6 to 10) as they engaged in diverse activities of free and structured play (e.g. partaking in games, free playing or crafting) (see Figure 1). Through this, insights in their life worlds, interests and ideas were gained. The observations showed that, when playing freely, the children did not need a lot of objects to play with (often, a ball was sufficient to keep the activities going), rather naturally changed between different playmates and integrated a form of competition into their activities to keep these interesting. When engaging in activities of structured play (organised by the youth organisation), groups of children alternated through play activities in an orderly manner (e.g. 45 minutes of crafting, then 45 of playing outside). The observations also showed that the children incorporated free play into these activities of structured play, for instance by climbing into the goalposts while playing soccer.

Next, 20 children received a sensitizing package containing assignments in order to express their personal experiences and ideas related to the workshops. Through

1 As 'Making Things!' only started six months ago, this paper results from the explorative phase of its process. Therefore, at this early point in the process we do not yet have a clear vision on how the final workshops will be (co-) designed.

Figure 1. Observed play activities.

2

3

Figure 2. Completed sensitizing assignments.

Figure 3. Two background maps.

drawing, writing or crafting, the children were introduced to the topic and 'warmed up' for the co-design session that followed (Van Mechelen et al., 2013). The children were given an envelope containing two written assignments and blank paper and were asked to: (1) pretend that they were 'the bosses' of Gigos and visualise what they would do if they were in charge for one day and (2) visualise what they would need (e.g. materials, help from adults) for that day to take place successfully. Two weeks before the first co-design session, we picked up the completed assignments (see Figure 2). In total, 20 children completed the first one. The most frequent activities that the children visualised were: visiting an amusement park, playing football, visiting the zoo, playing video games and eating tasty food. The second assignment was completed by 18 children. Mostly, the children indicated that they needed money and transportation to realise their ideas.

Afterwards, a co-design session was organised in which 29 boys and girls (6 to 10 years old) participated. The child participants were asked to visualise their meanings of play by placing stickers on a large paper background map, depicting one blank space for 'play' and one for 'not play'. The stickers represented icons of (1) activities, (2) persons, (3) locations, (4) rules/restrictions, (5) objects and (6) times that were associated with play. Although these stickers were initially based on Glenn et al.'s (2013) categories for children's play, the observations and sensitising packages showed the need to add the categories of play objects and times. For instance, although the observations showed that the children did not need objects to play with, the sensitising packages indicated several activities that *did* incorporate objects (e.g. playing video games on a Playstation). Therefore, in the co-design session we wanted to find out how the children defined their own relations with possible play objects. The category of 'playtimes' was added since we observed that the children's play activities were affected by the time of day (e.g. around 4 pm the children took a short break from the structured activities organised by Gigos, and

activities of free play occurred).

The setup of the co-design session and the icons on the stickers was thus directly inspired by the findings from the observations and packages. Specifically, as the packages showed that the participating children would like to go to an amusement park, an icon of an amusement park was added to the stickers depicting locations associated with play. The co-design session consisted of three successive rounds; in each round, two groups of five children participated in the co-design activities for 45 minutes. After a short introduction, the children, blindfold, had to pick a sticker depicting a play activity from the stack and discuss whether they considered the activity as 'play' or 'not play' (and why), before placing it on the map in the corresponding space. Next, the children rolled a dice to determine from which stack (i.e. stacks with stickers depicting rules/restrictions, persons, locations, objects or times associated with play) they had to pick three stickers. Then, the children discussed in group which of the three stickers corresponded best with the play activity they just placed on the map. These activities were repeated for 40 minutes. For the final five minutes, each child received markers and a blank sticker to visualise the play activity that he/she liked the most. The co-design session resulted in four background maps, visualising meanings of play (see: Figure 3).

For the analysis, notes and video fragments of the observations were transcribed and coded, as well as the sensitizing assignments. The co-design session was analysed through transcribing and coding notes and audio fragments. 'Thick descriptions' were made (Geertz, 1973) of all the data, allowing us to relate our theoretical concepts to what was discussed during the session.

3.2 INSIGHTS GAINED

Next, we will reify our findings from the case study based on the six defining categories of play we distinguished throughout the process:

activities, locations, persons, objects, times and rules. First, our case study affirmed that almost every activity could be considered as play (Glenn et al., 2013), except for the recurring activity of being bored. The children stated that when an activity requires a lot of concentration (e.g. reading), it is not play but rather learning. Similarly, the extent of physical effort determined whether an activity (e.g. gymnastics) was seen as playing or doing sports. This contradicts Glenn et al.'s (2013) finding that children regard activities such as games and sports as play. However, certain physical activities, such as football, - were considered as play at all times. The context in which the activity took place appeared to be important. For instance, when the reading took place at school it was not considered as play, while at home -- in the child's spare time -- some children *did* define the activity as play.

Second, as suggested by Glenn et al. (2013), the findings of 'Making Things!' showed that children saw opportunities to play almost anywhere, including locations that at first sight were not intended for play (e.g. the mosque). All play locations appeared to be context-bound and affected by influences such as playtime, activities, playmates, etc. For instance, some of the children indicated that they preferred to play (e.g. cooking) at the mosque, but not during the service. Whether or not a location was considered as suited for play was further determined by factors such as rules/regulations (e.g. silence during the service), activities (e.g. playing at dressing up was *not* suitable for the mosque) and playmates (e.g. playing with pets was not allowed at the mosque).

Third, 'Making Things!' also showed that children play with almost anyone: particularly with their (grand)parents, siblings, friends, classmates and neighbours. Complementing Glenn et al. (2013), we found that the activity influenced the children's choice of playmates and vice versa. For instance, one of the children indicated that he only played computer games with his grandmother. The observations also showed how during activities of free play, children easily switched between playmates and formed different groups of playmates according to the activities that they were doing. This, again, stresses the importance of context for activities considered as play.

Fourth, children play with almost any object, including crayons, balls and roller shoes. We found that although free play sessions initially lacked the use of objects, the children at some point started searching for objects to play with. For instance, when free playing outside, some of the children started to look for sticks to play with. Although Glenn et al (2013) state that one of the most often cited restrictions in play comes from parents, 'Making Things!' showed that, when it comes to play objects, a whole new set of restrictions comes into play. For instance, some children indicated that they could not play with certain objects (e.g. game consoles) because these belonged to their siblings. They pointed out that they had to ask permission to play with these objects, which, on some occasions, was not granted. Furthermore, the fragility of some play objects (e.g. mobile phones) and the high costs involved in breaking them impeded the children in playing with them.

Fifth, the observations and co-design sessions showed that both adults and children determine/define the times at which play activities take place, often in conjunction with other activities. There was a clear difference between playtimes that were organised according to activities imposed by adults and the ones defined by children. For instance, when playing outside most children indicated that they could do this until dinner (i.e. timing defined by an adult-imposed activity). In contrast, playtimes that are defined by children are less delimited, as the ending of play activities originates more organically for the playing itself. For instance, when playing outside in a small group, one child said that they were going to play something else if a red car would pass by.

Finally, we found that rules, regulations and structure were constant and recurring factors that influenced play at all times. Even play

activities that were started spontaneous and explicitly initiated by the children without any involvement of adults were subject to structure and play rules. For instance, some rules were inherent to play activities that were carried out (e.g. counting to 30 when playing hide-and-seek) while others referred to play locations (e.g. taking off shoes while playing in the ball pit), to the object that was being played with (e.g. washing hands before playing computer games) or the playtimes (e.g. coming home before dark when playing outside). The observations showed that during organised, structured play it was mainly the adults that imposed certain rules and structures onto the play activities (cf. Glenn et al., 2013). In contrast, during free play, play rules and structures emerged more organically from the children themselves.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Through 'Making Things!', we found that the theoretical insights from Huizinga (1949), Caillois (1961) and Glenn et al. (2013) provided a foundation for coming to a child-perspective on play to negotiate power relations. We now elaborate on these insights in three ways.

First, according to Bratteteig and Wagner (2014), 'there are many ways for designers to share power with users' (31). 'Making Things!' showed us that a child-perspective on play, when put into practice in a PD process, can form a way of lowering power barriers between adults and children and making design sessions as equal as possible. However, a particular challenge that remains for designers relates to our insights that children consider an activity as play when it is 'fun' to do (cf. Glenn et al., 2013; Huizinga, 1949). For instance, one child indicated that if she had to help with cleaning, the activity was not fun. However, another child remarked that when he turned on the music and danced while cleaning, the activity became fun to take part in. The challenge for the designer of a PD process thus lies in determining what the child participants consider as 'fun', before he/

she can successfully incorporate play into the process. In the case of 'Making Things', we tried to come to insights of what is 'fun' for the children by letting our design activities be preceded by observations, sensitizing packages and a co-design session. This allows us to incorporate play into the future design activities in such a way that it better suits the wishes, needs and perspectives of the participants. It also forces us, as designers, to incorporate a form of play that we perhaps might not be comfortable with but helps us to 'level' with the participants and – through this – make the design session more equal.

Second, following Caillois' (1961) distinction between structured and free play, 'Making Things!' showed that even free play is subject to a certain structure. For instance, several girls, playing tag while wearing roller shoes, implicitly determined their playmates; only girls who wore these types of shoes could play along. These insights from 'Making Things!' allowed us to understand that power relations do not only exist between the adult researcher and child participant, but also among the children. The observations showed that these power relations become particularly visible in acts of free play, when children formed different groups of playmates according to their activities. These structures that emerge during acts of free play (e.g. determined by the used objects such as roller shoes) can help in elucidating existing power relations between child participants. In PD processes, insights in these structures and power relations can aid the designer, for instance in (better) organising the design activities (e.g. by taking into account certain group dynamics imposed by power relations between the children) and interpreting data (that may be affected by existing power relations).

Third, 'Making Things!' also shows that perspectives on play are individual. For some children an activity such as reading was considered as play when it took place at home, in the child's spare time, while for others reading was defined as learning (when performed at school). For some children

the change of context did not affect their considerations; they still considered reading as a learning activity. For incorporating play in PD processes involving children, this implies that an open, contextual approach is needed in every process. Thus in each PD process, the designer and his/her participants need to come to a child-oriented perspective on play that suits the wishes, needs and perspectives of the participants in question. This also means that no clear-cut definition or formula of how to negotiate power relations through play in PD processes can be formulated. In each PD process, the designer thus needs to find a way of dealing with the open question of making ever-present (Bratteteig and Wagner, 2014; Bratteteig and Wagner, 2012) power relations explicit through play.

In the (near) future, we will put these theoretical reflections into practice in the continuation of 'Making Things!'. Specifically, we will look for ways to incorporate play into the participatory design of the STEM workshops and reflect on how this influences the power relations in the process. To do so, the work plan and methods we initially intended to apply need to be reworked to better correspond to the meanings of play of the participants; we need to rethink not only our views on incorporating play into a PD process but also our ways of negotiating and making explicit power relations. However, this remains an open question to explore and still needs to be further investigated.

BIOGRAPHY

Selina Schepers is a design researcher, PhD student
and teacher. She is part of the Social Spaces
research group and teaches in the Communication
& Media Design programme of LUCA School of
Arts (Genk, BE). Selina started her PhD research
(KU Leuven) on opening up Participatory Design
processes involving children.

Katrien Dreessen is a design researcher at the Social
Spaces research group and teacher at LUCA, School
of Arts (Genk, BE). She is conducting PhD research
on the idea of infrastructuring in FabLabs or how long-
term participation of non-expert users in these open
maker-spaces can be stimulated and achieved.

Niek Kosten is a design researcher, teacher and
graphic designer. He is part of the research group
Social Spaces and is currently working on his PhD on
opening up societal issues with vernacular graphic
design. Niek teaches at the Interaction Design &
Game Design program of LUCA School of Arts (Genk,
BE).

REFERENCES

Caillois, R., 1961. *Man, Play, and Games*. New York: The Free Press of Glencoe.

Bratteteig, T. and Wagner, I., 2012. 'Disentangling Power and Decision-making in Participatory Design'. In: *Proceedings of the 12th Participatory Design Conference: Research Papers-Volume 1*, pp. 41-50.

Bratteteig, T. and Wagner, I., 2014. 'Design Decisions and the Sharing of Power in PD'. In: *Proceedings of the 13th Participatory Design Conference: Short Papers, Industry Cases, Workshop Descriptions, Doctoral Consortium papers, and Keynote abstracts, Volume 2* (pp. 29-32). New York: ACM.

Druin, A., 2002. 'The Role of Children in the Design of New Technology'. *Behaviour and Information Technology (BIT)* 21(1), 1-25.

Druin, A., 1999. 'Cooperative Inquiry: Developing New Technologies for Children with Children'. *CHi'99, Pittsburgh, PA, USA, May 15-20*, pp. 592-599.

Druin, A., 1996. 'A Place Called Childhood'. *Interactions,* 3*,* 17–22.

Ehn, P. and Badham, R., 2002. 'Participatory Design and the Collective Designer'. In: Binder, T., Gregory, J. and Wagner, I. (Eds.) *Proceedings of the Participatory Design Conference, Malmö (Sweden),* Seattle, WA: CPSR, pp. 1-10.

Geertz, C., 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures.* New York: Basic Books.

Glenn, N. M., Knight, C. J., Holt, N. L., and Spence, J. C., 2013. 'Meanings of Play Among Children'. *Childhood,* 20(2), 185-199.

Greenbaum, J. and Kyng, M., (Eds.) 1991. *Design at Work - Cooperative Design of Computer Systems*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Guha, M.L., Druin, A. and Fails, J.A., 2013. 'Cooperative Inquiry revisited: Reflections of the Past and Guidelines for the Future of Intergenerational Co-design'. *International Journal of Child-Computer Interaction* 1, 14-23.

Hanna, L., Risden, K., and Alexander, D., 1997. 'Guidelines for Usability Testing with Children'. *Interactions,* 4(5), 9-14.
Huizinga, J., 1955. *Homo Ludens: a Study of the Play-element in Culture.* Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press.

Iversen, O.S., 2005. 'Participatory Design Beyond Work Practices – Designing with Children'. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Aarhus, Sweden.

Kensing, F. and Blomberg, J., 1998. 'PD meets CSCW - Issues and Concerns'. *Computer Supported Cooperative Work - The Journal of Collaborative Computing,* 7,(3-4)

Kuure, L., Halkola, E., Iivari, N., Kinnula, M., and Molin-Juustila, T., 2010. 'Children Imitate!: Appreciating Recycling in Participatory Design with Children'. In: *Proceedings of the 11th Biennial Participatory Design Conference*, *Sydney, Australia, 29 November - 3 December*, pp. 131-140.

Mazzone, E. et al., 2010. Considering Context, Content, Management, and Engagement in Design Activities With Children. In: *Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Interaction Design & Children. IDC '10*. New York: ACM.

Read, J. and Bekker, M.M., 2011. The Nature of Child Computer Interaction'. In: *Proceedings of the 25th BCS Conference on Human-Computer Interaction, July 4-8, 2011, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK.* Eindhoven: Technische Universiteit Eindhoven.

Read, J. C., Fitton, D., and Horton, M., 2014. 'Giving Ideas an Equal Chance: Inclusion and Representation in Participatory Design with Children'. In: *Proceedings of the 2014 conference on Interaction design and children*, pp. 105-114.

NSF (2010, June 1). 'Out-of-School Time Stem: Building Experience, Building Bridges'. Center for the Advancement of Informal Science Education. [report, online]. Available at: http://www.informalscience.org/out-school-time-stem-building-experience-building-bridges [Accessed May 3 2016].

Scaife, M., Rogers, Y., Aldrich, F., and Davies, M., 1997. 'Designing for or Designing With? Informant Design for Interactive Learning Environments. In: S. Pemberton (Ed.), *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, pp. 343–350.

Vaajakallio, K., Lee, J. J., and Mattelmäki, T., 2009. It Has to be a Group work!: Co-design with children. In *Proceedings of the 8th International Conference on Interaction Design and Children*, pp. 246-249.

Van Mechelen, M., Zaman, B., Vanden Abeele, V., and Laenen, A., 2013. 'Co-design Revisited: Exploring Problematic Co-design Dynamics in Kids'. *Proc. CHI'13. Proceedings of the 2013 CHI conference, Paris (France)*.

Wood, E., 2009. 'Conceptualizing a Pedagogy of Play: International Perspectives from Theory, Policy and Practice. In: Kuschener, D.S. (Ed.). *From Children to Red Hatters: Diverse Images and Issues of Play.* New York: University Press of America, pp. 166-190.

EXPLORING PLAY AS A GENERATIVE AND TRANSFORMATIVE PROCESS

J. Wong and I. Mulder

ABSTRACT

This work addresses the challenge to support and sustain an information exchange concerning the collection of citizen data to help better inform policymakers of the health risks encountered in the city on a daily basis. In this project, we act as a mediator between the environmental agency (DMCR) and the citizens in order to establish a new way of communication between citizens and the policy advisors. After a thorough analysis of the problem and research with citizens from the region, a user-centred game was designed enabling to collect citizen data, and to facilitate communication between citizens and the DCMR as well as with other community members. The co-creation process with DCMR and citizens and the insights that informed the iterative game design are reported. Through a reflection on process and project outcomes we learned that citizens have further developed their own interest and engagement in environment and air quality, enabling them to pioneer new initiatives based on playful curiosity. The effects of the approach and the potential effects of the final design show greater potential in influencing and engaging citizens through a playful and cooperative approach to citizen involvement in urban policymaking.

1. INTRODUCTION

For some years, the Environmental Protection Agency of the greater Rotterdam region (DCMR) has worked hard to lower pollution levels to meet European air quality standards (Smeets & Hammingh, 2013). The DCMR monitors pollution levels around the region in order to maintain livability standards for their citizens. One of their main tasks is to monitor and track the air quality levels of the region in order to prevent the occurrence of high pollution levels within the urban area. With most of the pollution coming from the Port of Rotterdam and emissions from transportation around the port and in the city, these high pollution levels found in the urban areas have been contributing to increased health risks for citizens in the area (Keuken et al., 2011).

Despite the decrease in high levels of pollution in the majority of the region over the years, peak pollution areas still exist throughout the city, and will consistently challenge the DCMR and their efforts to maintain a healthy environment for its citizens. Due to the potentially harmful health effects caused by the pollution levels, the DCMR hopes to stimulate the development of policies that can help lower emission levels from the port and industrial areas. In order to convince policymakers, the DCMR needs to prove that citizens still are at high risk of encountering and being harmed by the numerous peak pollution zones in the urban area, especially during their daily commutes.

In an effort to increase the necessary information flow from the citizens to the DCMR, and vice versa, the DCMR has taken on the challenge to work with citizens in order to support and sustain an information exchange concerning the collection of citizen data to help better inform policymakers of the health risks they encounter in the city on a daily basis. Therefore, the DMCR is interested in how citizens could be motivated to collect GPS data in order to gain insights in citizens' behaviour, consequently enabling policymakers to improve their policies to lower emission levels in the region. The value of keeping citizens informed provides a potential for citizen action against pollution levels to ensure a healthier environment.

In this work, we act as a mediator between the DMCR and the citizens in order to establish a new way of communication between citizens and policy advisors. After a thorough analysis of the problem and research with citizens from the region, we designed a user-centered game that would help to not only collect citizen data, but also facilitate communication between citizens with the DCMR and other community members.

In the following sections, we briefly describe our process of co-creation with the DCMR and citizens in order to develop insight that will lead to the design and iteration of a game to help gather the necessary data, and empower citizens to share and learn more about the environmental quality of their region. Through reflection on the process and outcome of the project we learned that citizens have further developed their own interest and engagement in environment and air quality, enabling them to pioneer new initiatives based on playful curiosity. Reflecting on the effects of the approach and the potential effects of the final design, we see a greater potential in influencing and engaging citizens through a playful and cooperative approach to citizen involvement in urban policymaking.

2. APPROACH

In close collaboration with the DCMR, the initial objective was reframed into two main objectives: 1) to collect data from citizens and 2) to communicate to citizens the importance of contributing to the development of environmental policy related to the air quality and emission levels in their region. Although the initial focus was on simply gathering GPS data from all citizens, the main goal as an environmental agency is to provide a safe and healthy environment for their citizens to live. A corresponding aim is to keep citizens informed of small behaviours that can greatly decrease their risk of exposure to pollutants and other negative environmental factors. Therefore we reformulated the research aim and chose

to focus on the design of a collaborative and motivational platform that would help spread information and knowledge about the environment and air quality while encouraging citizens to start acting for change. Figure 1 illustrates the current approach.

As a first step, we sought contact with community members to participate in a collaborative research to better understand the current situation and their understanding of environment and air quality standards in the region. During the collaborative research phase, we aimed to get a thorough understanding on the full spectrum of citizens based on their interest, knowledge and level of activity concerning environment and air quality within the greater Rotterdam region. From the research we gained a basic understanding of some of the challenges and difficulties citizens face in adopting new behaviours that relate to environment and air quality in their communities. The resulting information was used to determine the target group, who will be included further in the collaborative ideation phase.

In order to sharpen the design direction, two research groups of active and inactive community members were chosen. These groups were asked to participate in a pre-ideation research workshop in order to gain a better understanding of how environment and air quality concerns are seen by the public. The active group consisted of six experts in the area of environmental quality and were all part of communal activist groups working towards better environmental quality in the greater Rotterdam region. This group was asked to identify the difficulties and barriers they found while working within the community to spread awareness and pioneer change.

The workshop started with the users introducing themselves and identifying their level of activity in the community and their desired end goals. The second step was to form groups of three to identify the main barriers that often restricted them from being able to communicate the importance of action to other citizens. The barriers included restrictions by government, personal ability and social barriers. At the end of the session, participants were asked to brainstorm a number of new ideas that would help them engage citizens in activities concerning environment and air quality, based on their previously identified experiences and the barriers.

The inactive group consisted of six young adults who were uninformed and uninvolved community members in relation to environment and air quality. These participants were asked to identify their views on environmental activists and on the topic of environment and air quality in their community. The participants mapped a spectrum of the different activist types based on their acquaintances and assigned characteristics to four different groups: 1) do not know, do not care, 2) could be persuaded, 3) knowledgeable but uninterested, and 4) true activists.

Then participants were asked to map themselves on the spectrum and state the types of barriers they would face when considering behaviour change to support better environment and air quality in their community. The participants identified and discussed the different 'road blocks' for their own involvement in the topic and proceeded to the final task to brainstorm options to overcome the 'road blocks' they have encountered.

The results of these co-research sessions gave insights on the barriers that most active organisations face when trying to communicate information to – less aware – communal city members. The group of active citizens were able to reassess events they have sponsored and determine the most likely problems that have risen in such situations. The participants felt that the information was often too difficult for others to understand, and would often pursue activities and communication methods to stress the importance of their action. Additionally, the complexity of the problem and solution often deterred citizens from making an effort to create change.
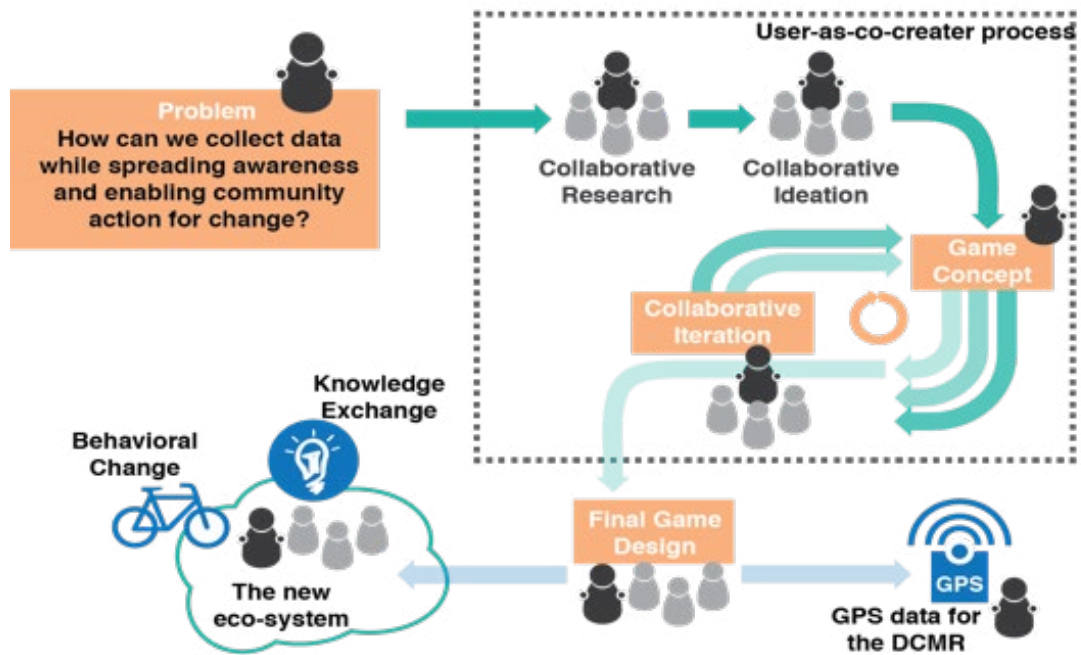
1
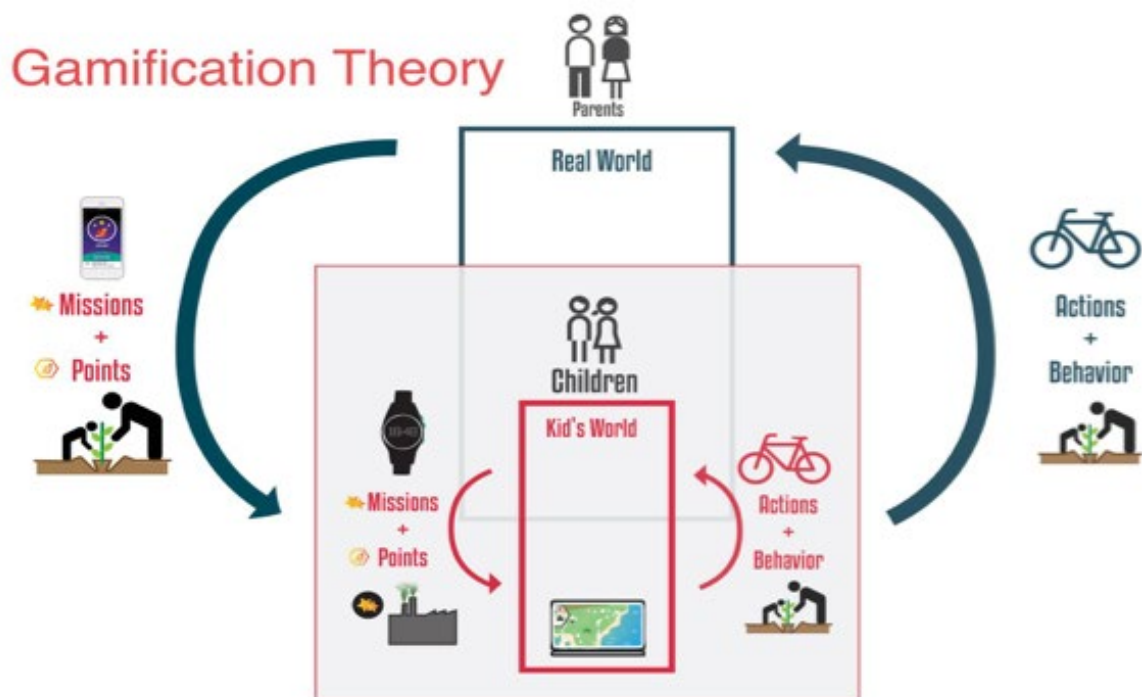
2

Figure 1. The co-creator approach illustrating the process from Problem to Co-Research, Co-Ideation, Co-Iteration and the Final Design

Figure 2. An overview of how the game framework maps to the gamification theory by Visch et al. (2013).

Meanwhile, the group of inactive citizens were able to reflect on their own personal reasons for not taking an interest in the topic of environment and air quality, and give insight on what key factors could change their perception on the topic, such as easier thresholds for participation or social activities that would involve their own social circle. They believed that most citizens lacked the interest and passion to actively get involved, thus identifying the internal barrier as too large to spark an interest in learning more about the topic. During the brainstorm session, the participants suggested using social incentives and social pressure to raise communal interest, but this would probably only work on a superficial level. To be actively engaged in environment and air quality, citizens are likely to need an internal and personal drive to create change.

2.1 CHOOSING A TARGET USER GROUP

The initial research identified a number of factors involved in selecting a user group. Young children were of particular interest because of their increased risk of health effects when exposed to high levels of pollution. The inclusion of familial social interactions can increase the chances of enabling desired behavioural changes among not only the children but also parents through the transfer of knowledge and behaviours from children to parents. Small families living in the greater Rotterdam region were selected as the target group allowing us to further investigate and leverage the interactions between children and parents.

Additionally, younger children can be more receptive to new ideas and behaviours. The explorative, inquisitive and playful nature of children provides a great starting point to understand how co-creation and play can influence their ability to learn and develop new behaviours. The involvement of children in an active and communal play eco-system increased the probability of more information exchange among peers and family members, which is crucial for greater impact on behavioural change in society.

2.2 TOWARDS ACTIVISM

From the above mentioned sessions, we learnt that citizens often perceived activists as too extreme and that the threshold for participation is too high with little to no visible or personal gain. This insight is in keeping with the investigation by Foth et al. (2009), who observed that the act of only communicating information to users without the proper motivation will not change behaviours. With this new insight in mind, we structured the ideation phase to include collaborative iteration to understand how we can use the context of the user group, a familial setting, to create an eco-system for the game to: 1) increase interest levels among citizens by simplifying the information to understandable pieces, 2) create a personal attachment to the topic, and 3) create a social eco-system to keep information flowing from citizen to citizen.

3. GAME DESIGN

During the ideation process, we chose to design a game that would help stimulate and empower small families to learn and act towards better environmental behaviour. The choice to devise a game was not only due to the selection of a target group that often focuses around game activities, it also involved a more interactive element between the users and the information as well as between different users.

The initial design of the game was effected through a series of ideation brainstorm sessions with fellow designers and then further elaborated based on insights from research results with the DCMR and the active and inactive citizens. The approach to reach the final design of the game used an iterative process that involved the design of components of the game and continual validation and testing with the user group. The final game and eco-system designs were iterated through a series of four cycles that involved a number of different users who were all introduced to the game through paper prototypes.

3.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In order to stimulate knowledge transfer and real-life behavioural changes, the persuasive game design model by Visch and colleagues (2013) was used to structure the design of the game concept. Visch's persuasive game design model, built upon Fogg's Behavioral Theory (Fogg, 2009), provides a simple structure that can help children create a link between the game and the real world enabling them to connect their online actions with real-world scenarios. The link is created through the game by mirroring real-world examples in the game world, guiding users towards the desired behaviour. The game world provides users with a safe environment in which to fail and explore different options and opportunities in order to identify the 'correct' behaviour.

3.2 METHOD

Table 1 provides a brief overview of the different iterative cycles that were performed and their outcome.

The above mentioned explorative research and design process was used with the steps described in Table 1, which is in keeping with Björgvinsson and colleagues (2012), who describe the design process with users as a process to develop new eco-systems to help develop more sustainable lifestyles by spreading information and developing better citizen behaviour. By doing so, we are no longer focusing only on the outcome of the design process (the game), but also on the research and design processes as a part of the impact on the social and environmental issues we hope to address with the eventual final design 'final solution'.

3.3 THE FINAL GAME DESIGN

As a result of the co-research, ideation and iteration, a final concept and initial stages of the game were designed together with the citizens of the greater Rotterdam region. The resulting game involved a System of different elements stitched together that connected the children to the online world, their real environments and their normal daily social interactions.

Children were given a GPS watch that would connect their online game where they were able to colonise new plants. The children were given online tasks to gain points to help build their new colony, and they were also given offline tasks that they were asked to perform with their peers, family members or alone in order to gain more points or win specific items. Their offline tasks were tracked through the GPS watch and included everyday tasks such as taking greener routes to school or going outside to explore a new park with their family on the weekends. These actions and behaviours were reinforced in the online game. Children were even able to collect points when their parents also participated in healthier and greener behaviours for travel and everyday tasks. Additionally, a communal eco-system was tested in the final two iteration tests. The eco-system would allow for users, both parents and other children to create new tasks for the other players in the same community to empower users to think about better ways to improve the environment and maintain a healthy standard of living.

4. RESULTS

On reviewing the results of the different iteration verification prototype tests, we noted a consistent increase in the children's interest in the game concept. The more detailed we made the game, working out the details of the online play, offline play and eventually introducing the eco-system, the children's level of activity increased during the prototype testing sessions. The most notable comments from the children included questions on how they could be part of creating the game and building up the eco-system. Knowing that their input and opinion mattered opened up the play world, allowing them to not only explore the game within the constraints defined by the designer, but also to question aspects that were pre-defined. They started to question the different tasks to better understand

Goal	Set up	Findings
Investigate children's daily routine and behaviour, as well as investigate the children's interest in play	A group of 12 children (~8 years old) participated in a series of three activities including: 1) sketching their daily routines, 2) investigating the aspects of their favourite games and activities, and 3) work together to build a new game.	We found that children were more active and curious when placed in an open and explorative scenario. Although they are used to learning and reciting information, they are naturally curious when confronted with new topics. The most interesting aspects of play for the children include: peer and familial social interactions sense of achievement and peer competition.
Validate the game concept	A group of six children were introduced in pairs to the basic concept of the game. They were asked to think aloud while playing out a set of scenarios with the paper game pieces.	The children were interested in the initial design, but it lacked the level of depth necessary to hold their interest for very long.
Test and refine the game eco-system	A group of six children and one of the parents were asked to participate in a paper prototype test of the game. This game asked children to play different scenarios provided for each child to mimic a real-life scenario.	The children were actively exploring by learning, discussing and relating the game to real-world activities. The longer the children were involved in the game play, the more involved they became in learning and contributing to building their world in the game. Additionally, the more involved they became with their siblings and peers in the game play, the more interested they became in their own progress. Finally, the parent was also involved in the tasks with the children and expressed interest in being able to create their own tasks that could be tailored to their family interests and needs.
Test and refine the game eco-system	A small family group of two children and one parent were asked to participate in a paper prototype test of the game. This game asked children to play different scenarios provided for each child to mimic a real-life scenario. An additional ecosystem was included that would allow the children to send tasks to each other and to their friends.	By playing, the children began engaging in deeper conversations concerning environment and air quality by connecting their daily routines with the information they learned in the game. At several points, the children recalled past experiences concerning their view of the environment and information that they had learned during one of the game's activities. In the final session the children were able to start inventing new tasks to give others and engage in the game-making and knowledge-sharing process.

Table 1. An overview of the research and design steps used in the refinement of the end game design and eco-system (Wong, 2014).

the purpose of certain restrictions in order to define their own play style within these constraints.

The most notable interactions during the prototype testing sessions came from the last two sessions that involved children and their parents. Not only were the children excited to explore the game with their friends or siblings, but they actively included their parents in the conversation and activities too. Additionally, parents were excited about the spark of interest shown in their children's fascination with the game and topic of environmental quality. The parents were excited to see their children take interest in outdoor activities with each other and hoped that they would also be able to include activities specific to their family and their interests, such as hiking or going on bike rides from city to city. They wanted to include household chores as tasks that children were asked to do as well, such as walking the dog or taking out the recycling, in order to motivate children to perform these tasks without complaint and provide a type of reward for the children.

The children's curiosity about the limits of the game really contributed to gathering new insights on the different types of tasks that the children would be interested in doing together with friends or with their parents. They actively and openly explored the different tasks that were provided and different game scenarios in order to push the boundaries of what they were able to do. The act of playing triggered the imagination and curiosity of the children and opened up new possibilities for the design of the game. This spark of curiosity in the children gave the design more life by allowing for a number of different possible scenarios within the small community and thus contributing to the community eco-system of the game. Children were able to start connecting what they were learning from that singular day of prototype-playing with events that they had experienced in the past, such as major storms knocking over trash cans or even walking in a parking lot behind a car with its engine running. The children started to make the connections immediately without needing any encouragement from the researchers or designers.

5. DISCUSSION: LEARNINGS FROM THE PROCESS OF PLAY

Interestingly, this design as described above contributed to a growing interest among the citizens who were involved in the exploration and design of the game. To put it another way, play was not only beneficial as a generative process to inform the game design, it also explicitly contributed to awareness of environmental issues, and promises to have a key role in the transformative part of our research.

Looking back on the process, we found that the involvement of users in every step of the process provided valuable feedback and insights on the direction of the design development, and also contributed to a growing interest among the participants, especially among the children. Their playful curiosity was one of the main drivers in the iteration process and helped to fuel the evolution of the design.

Testing the game play with children throughout the iteration process not only verified the design direction, but also triggered an interest in the children, allowing them to connect what they learned in past and current situations. Over the course of each session, it was noticeable that the more the children understood about their role in creating a game, the more interested they became in participating in the development process. The co-iteration sessions stood out as the most impactful because the structure of the game gave children a grounding to start building their own version of it. Once the children understood the game's premise, they soon began relating problems they see on a daily basis with potential solutions and tasks for the game itself. Sessions quickly became self-guided by children and exploded into an incredible exchange of ideas and discussions. Their participation in the game was more than a check on the fit of the game into their routine;

rather, the co-creator process allowed children to take ownership of the game and actively seek knowledge to incorporate their own experiences into the game.

This suggests that play can be a very powerful research and design tool to help connect children and adults too in exploring new topics and concepts related to their everyday lives. The act of exploring, making and creating with the citizens in a playful manner has already showed a dramatic impact on the mentality of the children and parents. Keeping this in mind, we can leverage the use of a co-creator approach to design a system to involve citizens early on in order to empower them to take part in the making and creating of new systems, digital or not. The involvement of the children and parents in the development and iteration of the game was essential in helping us understand the true interest and passion of the children. By sparking their creativity and their natural play instinct, we were able to see the level of impact among the children. Since the design research, ideation and iteration cycles were contained in the greater Rotterdam region, we would need a further exploration and initial working prototype of the game to provide more accurate insights on the resulting impact of this game.

Through their active participation, the children begin to grow an attachment and a feeling of ownership of the game and, in this case, the environment. By fostering this feeling of play and ownership, we can empower children to further apply these techniques to other areas. In this instance, the solution to the problem may be in creating a toolkit and structure that allows children to create their own playful way to investigate their local environment and start creating a local solution. By creating a toolkit, we may be able to further research on the user-as-co-creator approach as a means to engage and empower citizens to exploring, making and creating solutions to problems they find in their neighbourhoods.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The resulting game was able to achieve its purpose of delivering the necessary data on citizen behaviour, and it was able to begin empowering children to start taking action in the community and in spreading knowledge about environment and air quality. Although the end result was positive, based on the feedback from potential users, both children and parents, there remain specific areas of concern about the game, such as future development, growth and maintenance which will need more attention. Further development of the game and the eco-system need to be conducted before any major conclusions can be reached regarding its impact.

For the future, it would be important to begin investigating how play could become a primary research and co-design method for the development and conceptualisation of more urban activities and solutions to help connect citizens with new, healthier and more sustainable solutions. As this research was conducted on such a small scale, further studies will need to be conducted with users of different backgrounds and from different regions in order to further formulate a research and design method utilising play as the key tool to opening up citizens and users to playful curiosity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BIOGRAPHY

Jennifer Wong is a human-centred design researcher focusing on the development of methodologies that can contribute to the design of a human-centred smart cities through participatory design research practices. She is currently a part-time researcher and graduate from Delft University of Technology (MSc in Design for Interaction) with a background in Architectural Studies (BSc, University of Southern California).

Ingrid Mulder is an expert in transformative and social design. She is an Associate Professor of Design Techniques at Delft University of Technology with a background in Policy and Organisation Sciences (MA, University of Tilburg) and Educational Sciences and Technology (PhD, University of Twente).

REFERENCES

Björgvinsson, E., Ehn, P., and Hillgren, P.A., 2012. 'Agonistic participatory design: working with marginalised social movements', in: *Co-Design*, 8:2-3, 127–44.

Fogg, B. J., 2009. 'Behavior Model for Persuasive Design', in: *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Persuasive Technology* (Persuasive '09). ACM, New York, NY, USA.

Foth, M., Paulos, E., Satchell, C., and Dourish, P., 2009. 'Pervasive Computing and Environmental Sustainability: Two Workshops', in: *IEEE Pervasive Computing*, 8(1), 78–81.

2007 *Gemeente Rotterdam. Vision of the City of Rotterdam*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands. Available at http://www.rotterdam.nl/stadsvisie

Keuken, M., Voogt, M., van den Elshout, S., Hoek, G., and Janssen, N., 2011. *Levensverwachting Rotterdamse bevolking met jaar verlengd door verbeterde luchtkwaliteit in 1985–2008*. Report, Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

Smeets, W. and Hammingh, P., 2013. *De kosten en baten voor Nederland van het Commissievoorstel ter vermindering van de nationale emissies van luchtverontreinigende stoffen*. Analysis report for Textcetera, Den Haag.

Visch, V., Vegt, N., Anderiesen, H. and van der Kooij, K., 2013. 'Persuasive Game Design: A model and its definitions'. Paper presented at *Designing Gamification: Creating Gameful and Playful Experiences* Workshop, held in conjunction with CHI 2013, Paris, France, 27 April–2 May.

Wong, J. Y., 2014. *Sensory citizens: Empowering citizens to share their insights on environment & air quality*. Master's thesis, Delft University of Technology.

MULTIVOCALITY, DESIGN AND PUBLIC SPACE

Chairs: Catharina Dyrssen & Jon Geib (Chalmers University of Technology)

New configurations and temporalities of social-spatial relations are intensifying the already pluralistic dynamics of public space, further challenging the traditional notion of the designer's privileged hand in its formation.

Historically, and by habit, designers have been strongly tempted to seek unifying strategies, whether in aiming their assumedly neutral work towards an unspecified public, or, in taking sides and teaming up with specific publics. In either case, many designers' methodologies, even if open and ambiguous initially, eventually filter and steer towards a single consistent outcome—a clarifying resolution. This reflex towards univocality and its implications in terms of urban form, dialogue, participation, the public and democracy can be critically challenged and experimented with through dialogical approaches rooted in the concept of multivocality.

As the design paradigm continues to expand its emphasis on processes and purposes, the multivocal can open up a new role for design in the dynamic formation of public space: designing with and for multivocality.

This call is an invitation to rethink the formation of public space and to reconceptualise design aims and methodologies in terms of multivocality—both figurative and literal. Might design processes, in producing difference and diversity in a dynamic interactivity, become public space? And, might this lead to an expanded notion of participation as a democratic cultural practice?

NARRATIVE-BASED ART AS MEANS OF DIALOGUE AND EMPOWERMENT

S. Miettinen, M. Sarantou, and D. Akimenko

ABSTRACT

Art has the capacity to facilitate empowerment and well-being and serve as means for the transformation of the community. This paper presents three case studies in which art processes enable identity construction while overcoming personal challenges and working through memories. Narratives are used to demonstrate how an artistic process creates a dialogue between individuals and communities. All three case studies happen in the context of socially engaged art and related disciplines. They present different ways of using narrative as a means for facilitating artwork creation and empowerment. At the same time, the artefacts produced through these processes gain narrative power through the symbolism they reveal. Instead of objectifying communities, art has the potential to be a strong tool for communities to create narratives. In all three cases, art empowers local communities and individuals to share their stories. The common themes between the cases were identified using content-driven analysis of the collected materials. In conclusion, the authors present a framework for creating empowering art through narrative processes.

1. INTRODUCTION

Art can facilitate empowerment and well-being in healing processes. It also serves as means for empowerment and transformation of the community (Kay, 2000). This paper presents three case studies in which art processes enable identity expressions in the course of overcoming personal challenges by working through memories. Artistic production is a way to process significant personal histories, experiences and decisions. Art processes facilitate identity construction, permitting the reconciling of multiple identities, fractured selves and personal stories to guide individuals and groups in coping with life's realities. The three case studies demonstrate how narratives can be used as a tool to process and overcome challenges for individuals and communities. Narratives are used in the studies to demonstrate how an artistic process creates a dialogue between individuals and communities.

All three case studies happen in the context of socially engaged art and related disciplines, such as community-based, dialogic, participatory, interventionist, research-based and collaborative art. For all these approaches the aesthetic experience is relative to the collaborative creative action. As noted by Bishop (2012:2), an artist working between these disciplines, aesthetic values become secondary to the experiences of 'the creative rewards of participation' while engaging with broader communities.

One of the case studies discussed in this article, *Wings to Fly*, explores how young people collaboratively work through their personal histories and experiences using artistic tools, namely storytelling. In the second case study, the exhibition *Just* serves as a platform for a group of artists to discuss marginality caused by geographical and political realities. At the same time this platform is used as a therapeutic tool for reflecting on the artists' own marginal positions. In the last case study, the intervention *Shop around the Corner* gives voice to the memories of a small community within a larger urban space. By placing the artwork in the locations where the contributing community can access it, such as

a shop window or a town square, this new kind of spectatorship empowers the audience to challenge traditional power structures through art. Bishop (2012:104) refers to this type of participation as 'discovering the binary of active and passive spectatorship and locating art outside the gallery system'.

The case studies present different ways of using narrative as means for facilitating artwork creation and empowerment. At the same time, the artefacts produced from these processes gain narrative power through the symbolism they reveal. Instead of objectifying communities, art has the potential to be a powerful tool for communities to create their own narratives (Thomas and Rappaport, 1996). In all three cases art empowers local communities and individuals to tell their stories. Documentation through multiple methods, such as interviews, self-documented stories, photography and video allowed the identification of themes using content-driven analysis of the collected materials. In conclusion, the authors present a framework for creating empowering art through narrative processes.

2. WINGS TO FLY: A COLLABORATIVE PROCESS FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

In April 2016 one of the authors spent a week in Hancock, Michigan, working with students from the International School of Art and Design at Finlandia University. The goal of the design process was to give the participants artistic, visual and verbal tools for processing their life histories and finding empowering elements in their stories. Paulo Freire's (2000) discussion of education as intervention and social action where art functions as a means to strengthen self-expression, creative ability and learning experience was one of the major underpinnings of the project. As Freire (2000) points out, art and artistic process gives means to participate, 'to do with', rather than 'for'. Art enables one to see outside traditional norms, while education facilitates learning and reaching out for important themes in individuals' everyday life.

Secondly, the idea of art as a method for empowerment and well-being was central to the workshop. Jaatinen (2015:6) presented a framework that enables the production of new knowledge using art as a tool for wellbeing and empowerment through 1) studio; 2) facilitation; 3) participation in artistic production; 4) art activity; 5) artistic process and 6) artwork. All these concepts were strongly present in the 'Wings to Fly' workshop.

The researcher worked with the students in a three-day workshop on storytelling and building the *Wings to Fly* textile installation, using mixed media and techniques such as sewing, painting, textiles, paper, wire and acrylic paint. The design and artistic process included the use of a cultural probe before the workshop, followed by collaborative storytelling, which was used as an input into the textile installation. Design probes (Mattelmäki, 2008) or cultural probes (Gaver et al., 1999) is a method used to increase contextual and in-depth understanding of the participants. There were seven participants in the workshop, six of whom returned their storytelling probes before the workshop.

The design process started by sending storytelling probes to the participating young people. The young people self-documented and shared their life histories before the workshop by writing narratives. They were asked the following questions beforehand: 'Who is the storyteller of the family? Think about your memories of the moments when these family histories are shared. What kind of feelings and emotions are related to your family memories? Some of the stories may be happy and some sad, think about the ones that made you feel good and empowered. Write down a short family history and share a story about coping or overcoming difficulties or struggles within your family.' These stories sensitised the young people to the workshop theme and created a connection between the facilitators and the participants prior to the workshop.

The young people shared their fragile and innermost feelings in their stories. One of the

participants writes about her life experiences:

> My dad passed away 2 years ago on the 31st of March. This is by far the hardest thing that I have ever had to endure. This hurt more than my first heartbreak, more than the betrayal by my best friend, more than my stepdad abusing me while growing up, more than my mom staying, more than nearly being raped by my stepgrandfather, more than my car accident almost taking my life, more than anything. My dad, he was a brave man, a strong man, a loving man, and my best friend.

Another participant, sharing a story:

> My name is NN, and ever since I was a kid dreams were just a fantasy land. Where I grew up dreams were just another word for lost hope. You talk about dreams, and people laughed as if you were a joke or high on drugs. I knew I wasn't on any drugs but one thing I did know; my dreams would become reality with hard work. Growing up on the South side of NNN, Michigan in a neighborhood where your own neighbor might be the next one to break into your house. Gunshots ringing in the air, sirens in the distant and long nights god must have been watching over me. With no father figure in my life I never really understood how to be a young man with so much corruption around I felt like I was a victim to my own town."

In their narratives the young people shared stories about abuse, family tragedies and challenges they had to overcome. The empowering elements were connected with family, friends and the support network they provided. The value of friendships was notable, because many of the young people lived away from their families. The storytelling probe proved efficient in creating a connection and getting to know the young people. It also created trust between the group and the researcher.

The workshop started with coming up with and writing down single words on pieces of paper related to eight different themes: family, community, experience, incident, empowerment, challenge, feeling and opportunity. Participants had one minute per theme to write down as many words as they could associate with the theme. After writing down the words for each theme, they selected eight random words. These eight words were used to tell and create a story that was shared, explaining their life histories and enabling the participants to learn about each other.

After sharing the stories, the participants started painting oval-shaped textile and paper cutouts that resembled feathers, using the chosen words as inspiration for their painting. The feather-like cutouts were painted with colours, symbols and ornaments that described the empowering stories the participants shared. The feathers were sewn together to create the shape of a wing. The sewing process was collaborative, as strings of the feather-like cutouts were sewn together in pairs. The strings of feathers were attached on top of chicken wire, row after row. This construction was then set up in a gallery space. Setting up the installation was also collaborative. The *Wings to Fly* installation became the centrepiece of the exhibition at the Reflection gallery at Finlandia University. The young people continued the project with a video workshop and production in two groups around their storytelling workshop experience.

Working with storytelling and making the textile installation provided a forum for the young people to share their stories. Starting off with single words made it easier to share a story about their life. Additionally, the process of making the feathers and sewing a wing provided a collaborative opportunity where everyone's contribution was valued. It exemplifies the capacity of art to enable the coping with and contemplation of life experiences, while sharing them within a community.

When analysing the making of the *Wings to Fly* installation (Figure 1) process through

Jaatinen's (2015) framework, elements of empowerment and well-being become apparent in the installation. The workshop was conducted in an art college studio, a space conducive to the artistic process. Professional artists and designers facilitated the process, enabling the participants to produce an artwork. The process aimed at empowering the participants on two different levels. On the one hand, the participants used narrative and storytelling to process their life stories and recognise their strengths. On the second level, the participants used the artistic process to enable personal well-being and empowerment through a collaborative and physical activity of sharing stories and making the installation.

3. JUST: ENGAGEMENTS WITH MATERIALS AS ACTIVE VOICES IN HEALING

Four Namibian artists, including one of the researchers, explored themes of marginalisation, stratification and narrativity in a group exhibition titled *Just*. The exhibition was hosted from 28 April to 4 June 2016 at the National Art Gallery of Namibia, where audiences interacted with the artists' different interpretations of the theme. *Just* is an exploration of the artists' experiences with marginality through narrative and artistic approaches. The methods used by the artists to communicate with their audiences and initiate participatory processes include the use of the public space, symbolism and narratives expressed in their materials. The artists sensitised Namibian communities by raising awareness of underlying themes connected to marginalisation, such as stratification caused by poverty, race, age, sexual preferences and education.

The exhibition was initiated through email and teleconference discussions between three artists living in Namibia and the artist-researcher in Australia. Although the artists worked in isolation, the common theme, marginalisation, served as a motivator, connector and thread between the artists and their different artistic interpretations. The exhibition theme allowed the artists, who all have different cultural backgrounds

Figure 1. *Wings to Fly* textile installation. Photography by Satu Miettinen.

Figure 2. Artwork *That was That* from *My Margins: to be Black, a Woman and Young* by Sonene. Photograph by Kirsten Wechslberger.

and life histories, to explore the margins and divides between them in spite of their unconnectedness.

The author's approach as a participating artist and researcher was to plan and conceptualise her work in Australia, but during the making of the installation she immersed herself into the Namibian environment. During her four-week artist residency in Namibia she interviewed the artists about their art processes and approaches to materials. She diarised and recorded her own making processes and motivations for implementing the project as a way of working through her feelings of marginalisation resulting from emigrating to Australia, where she now lives remotely on the Far West Coast of South Australia. The researcher did not intrude into or observe the art making of the other three artists at their places of work.

Some of the artists shared photos of their processes and outcomes with the researcher electronically. Another point of connection during the researcher's residency in Namibia was a one-hour group discussion during which the artists explained their concepts and approaches to one another. All interviews and discussions were documented in audio. The analysis of the data included identifying common themes by grouping and coding the interviews, group discussion, exhibition outcomes, artefacts and short artist talks. Data was recorded through digital images, video and audio recording.

This case study focuses on a Namibian artist who participated in the artist collaboration. Sonene is a pseudonym used to protect the artist's identity. She is a fashion and textile designer, but she recently decided to give up her fashion design practices to focus on her textiles.

Sonene finds creating textiles therapeutic, especially 'in the way the process takes over', she explains. During her making she continuously transforms her textiles until she is satisfied with the outcome, which is 'usually a compromise', she says. Over the years her

textile making developed into an intimate relationship between herself, her hands and the material. She is content with her outcomes once the textiles evoke in her feelings of serenity and treasury. At that point it becomes impossible for her to cut up her textiles to make a garment.

Her usual way of work over the years has been to use a textile and transform it with colour, print, embellishment and, perhaps, adding texture. Recently she found herself reflecting deeply on her creations, what she makes with her hands and the value she connects to her work. A frustration she encountered recently is that she feels her audiences do not see or value her textiles when they are used in her fashion. As a result, Sonene questioned perceptions of beauty. She engaged in a slow process of destroying her perceived beauty, deconstructing or taking apart her garments and textiles. She says:

> This process was challenging as I found myself trying to control the destruction. I often felt detached from the textile in my hands. Usually the textures and what I feel excite me as I start working, but in the recent processes of destruction it was as if I did not want to feel. Perhaps, the fear of having nothing left from my textiles and garments scared me, because I didn't want to end up empty-handed.

In Sonene's work for the exhibition *Just*, titled *My Margins: to be Black, a Woman and Young* (Figure 2), she explores, through her textiles, personal experiences with, and feelings about, marginality. She physically attempts to undo and make sense of her margins such as age, race and gender. Her textiles reflect negotiations of her identities associated with dealing with her margins as spaces for resistance and creativity (hooks, 1990). Although Sonene resides in a creative space when she deconstructs her textiles, she is simultaneously in a space of resistance where she does not want to give up, but needs a way to work through her decisions. Sonene actively shapes her identities in these making

processes. Identities are informed by complex dynamics and negotiations of precarious in-between realities within margins and Sonene's unmaking and remaking of her textiles allow to inform her identity processes and express her difficult experiences with peripheries in a physical way.

Sonene touches her audience with her delicate yet strange deconstructions of her previously exhibited catwalk garments. She engaged in a process of healing through her materials. Her processes did not flow easily, because often she found herself feeling 'nothing', she says. 'I somehow disengage from my textiles while I'm remaking or actually destroying them'. Sonene's intentions went beyond the aesthetic. She explored making through sensing and feeling her materials, approaches and techniques. Her aim was to make and remake: to work through a process of continuation and endurance in a limited time frame. Sonene allowed the materials to lead and show her the way in spite of feeling somewhat detached or 'nothing'. Her processes 'opted for sensuality' (Adamson, 2007:51), sensing and exploring materialities without an overemphasis on skill overshadowing her processes (ibid.:39-51). Sonene's identities are expressed through her 'presence' in her work and engagement between maker, artefact and materials (Sennett, 2008:120;119-135).

This approach empowered the artist Sonene, because she used her materials as actors with voices. The symbolisms embedded in her materials shaped the narratives that guided the interaction of audiences with her art. The researcher's diary notes: 'I was moved by the strangeness of her textile installations that were delicately de- and reconstructed'. Sonene's installations, in which the remnants of her previous catwalk garments are re-represented as torn and tortured clusters of layered fibres, symbolise anxieties and traumatic events in her life. 'I realised now that I always did that – I turned to my textiles when I worked through difficult things', says Sonene. Her textiles became her multivocal devices, revealing narratives of working through life's complexities as part of healing processes

in which elements of psychological well-being are detected, including self-realisation, meaning-making, awareness, competence, self-acceptance and effort (Jaatinen, 2015:210-211).

4. SHOP AROUND THE CORNER: INTERVENTION IN PUBLIC SPACE FOR PROMPTING DIALOGUE AND PARTICIPATION

Site-specific storytelling intervention *Shop Around the Corner* was conceived and implemented by one of the researchers during the Quarter Block Party festival in Cork, Ireland. This initiative commemorates North and South Main Street, which form the historical cornerstone of the city. The street is currently left out of the latest city planning endeavours, resulting in the neglect of the multi-generational family-owned businesses of the neighborhood. The local shop owners' stories served as inspiration and data for *Shop Around the Corner*.

The project aimed to create a framework for placing a narrative within specific urban spaces through different methods of storytelling and artistic expression. The objective of such practices is to approach a public space as a platform for dialogue and participation. Intervention itself becomes more than an event, but rather 'a temporal space for interaction and dialogue', as observed by Viña (2013:6). In this case, the dialogue does not happen directly, but is enabled through the previously untold and unheard stories. The stories are interpreted and reintroduced to the environment in the shape of physical artefacts, or artworks, thus adding new meanings to the public space.

The objective of the artistic process was to empower the traders by making their stories heard and known to the neighbourhood, and to create a dialogue about the current state of the street in the scale of the wider context of Cork as a city. The process was designed, facilitated and documented in photographs and video by the author, with the help of local artists. The main phase of the project,

collecting data, processing and transforming it into artistic outcomes and bringing them back to the street, was planned and implemented over five days, with a presentation following on day six. The materials and means were not defined from the start, but were to be determined through engagement with the collected stories and the physical space they referred to.

Preparation for the research stage started two months prior to the researcher's arrival in Cork. Three sources of information proved to be the most helpful in terms of understanding the place from afar: 1) reading historical records that reference the street back to the twelfth century; 2) Google-walking through the street; 3) having an 'agent' on site with an insight into the families and shops of the street. Initially the project was conceived in a workshop format to facilitate engagement of local artists and activists with the 'primary storytellers' -- the traders of the street. However, engagement and participation can take a variety of forms and exhibit a spontaneous nature (Bishop, 2012). *Shop Around the Corner* ended up not having a permanent working group, apart from the researcher herself and a local artist, but instead a larger number of occasional collaborators who would contribute in spontaneous and fitting ways on different stages.

On-site research and initial data collection, spread over three days, consisting of walking and observation, photo- and video-notes of the street, documented and undocumented interviews with the traders. Two activities of this stage deserve a mention due to their particular importance for the outcomes and contribution to the understanding of the process. One of them was a two-hour workshop open to the public. Its objective was to introduce the artistic process, make it open and transparent and engage more participants. Three participants attended: a menswear shop owner and representative of the traders; a member of Cork's artistic community and a concerned citizen and activist of a grassroots place-making group.

During the workshop the participants shared their memories supported by an artefact, an arbitrary object they happened to have on them. They later reflected upon each other's stories and transformed them into provisional 'artworks': a performance, an installation, a drawing and a poem. This process is comparable to the methodology used in the storytelling intervention *Wings to Fly*. During the exercise an important discussion enabled the problematic aspects of the neglected street to be illuminated. The participants all contributed to the final artistic outcomes.

The second important process of initial data collection was video-documentation of a conversation between the aforementioned shop owner and the owner of a local pharmacy. They both grew up on the street and happen to be brilliant storytellers. The narrative created during their conversation served as a basis for a documentary film, one of the outcomes of the project.

When the collection of images, videos, stories and material artefacts had been collected the researcher was joined by two local artists. The brainstorming phase was brief, as the collected data appeared to be quite straightforward, prompting a rather literal interpretation of the stories. The data revealed sentimental and nostalgic aspects, a common theme connecting most of the stories. Certain artefacts and materials were donated by the primary storytellers and other supporters to contribute to the intervention.
Nine stories were chosen to be recreated in the final intervention. Four of the stories were childhood memories that resulted from spontaneous probing, an email the researcher had received prior to her arrival in Cork from a pharmacist who grew up above the pharmacy she later inherited from her mother. Others were discovered during the first three days of the project. Most of the memories were interpreted through spatial installations integrated into meaningful locations in the street. One of the stories was told through a performance. The individual installations represented the memories of the participants, thus resembling a tour of memories that could

Figure 3. Shop window screening, final artefact of the intervention *Shop around the Corner*. Photograph by Daria Akimenko.

be attended in the street during the final day of the festival. The tenth element of the intervention was a triple video projection in one of the shop windows (Figure 3). The first screen showed photos in a loop taken in the street during the research phase. The second displayed the making process, while the third screened a rough cut of the documentary based on the conversation between the two traders. Some of the stories remained in the street long after the actual tour, without being rejected by the space, community or the authorities.

The tour was attended by a varied audience that included representatives from the local council. Discussions about maintaining North and South Main Street as a meaningful city landmark were enabled as a result of the tour. The most valuable personal response came from the pharmacist whose memories prompted some of the installations. She referred to her experience of discovering the artefacts as inspiring and something that made her feel important.

The contribution of brief individual actions carried out by an outsider has to be regarded critically, as their effects may often end up being short term, if visible at all. The ongoing monitoring of social media shows that the bonds between the traders and local activists formed during the project keep developing, endeavours towards the revitalisation of meaningful locations in the street are being made. The contributors to the project look forward to seeing the final cut of the documentary they took part in. At the very least, *Shop Around the Corner* can be regarded as a link in the chain of interconnected actions for stimulating dialogue and participation in this specific public space of Cork.

5. ARTISTIC AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS

One of the goals of the paper was to explore artist-researchers' endeavours in developing empowering artistic methods and community engagement. This motivation is to seek, through artistic means, the tools that promote well-being or positive change (Jaatinen, 2015). This ethos informs the framework for planning and identifying elements needed for this type of artistic production. This framework is composed of an ethnographic approach, sensitising through narratives and storytelling, probing and triangular research design.

ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH

In the three case studies the sensitising process was an important aspect of the ethnographic approach of participant observation, diarising and interviewing. Typical of ethnography, the researchers aimed to learn from the participants while bringing their own personal cultural background and life experiences to the research activities. Ethnography as method focuses on studying the real-life settings of participants in personalised, inductive, dialogic and holistic ways.
The sensitising of participants to the probes and themes the researchers used gave participants an opportunity for input into the processes. This democratisation of the process empowers participants to share on an equal footing through a bottom-up approach without preconceived procedures and expectations. In the three case studies the researchers participated equally in making and storytelling through textile and media art. Connectedness is encouraged through the equal sharing of life situations and input into the art-making processes.

SENSITISING THROUGH NARRATIVES AND STORYTELLING

Sensitising, a function enabled through narratives, allows for the creation of bonds and familiarisation between participants and facilitators, stimulating collaborative or participatory processes. *Shop Around the Corner* exemplifies participatory art processes, as the artist invited the community to participate and create materials. The process included sensitising, in which the artist used modern digital tools, such as Google Maps,

146

traditional literature sources and the collection of storytelling probes via email to connect with the environment and the community. In the *Wings to Fly* process sensitising came about by sending storytelling probes to the participating young people, while the *Just* exhibition drew on the exhibition design to stimulate participation via emails and Skype. In *Just* the artist has a long personal history that connects her to the Namibian field and community. Sensitising was stimulated through discussion, reflection on memories and experiences from working with the local communities, utilising narratives to stimulate and express artistic processes.

PROBING

Collaborative or participatory processes require probing to stimulate interaction between the facilitator and participants. The core to probing is in creating contextual understanding. The *Shop Around the Corner*'s probing phase included storytelling facilitated through email (Gaver et al., 1999; Mattelmäki, 2008). This method of using a probe is present in the *Wings to Fly* process that was initiated by sending storytelling probes to the participating young people. The *Just* exhibition used a connecting theme throughout the exhibition design process. The use of email and text messages as a probing methodology assisted the artistic group in their planning and contextual understanding.

TRIANGULAR RESEARCH DESIGN

Mixed-method research approaches and cyclical structures of research design (Creswell, 2013) are present in all three cases. Triangulation is achieved through theorisation, the documentation of artistic processes and the qualitative analysis of research materials collected through various methods, such as participant stories, emails, group discussions and interviews. *Wings to Fly* illustrates the triangular structure of research from theorisation, documentation throughout the probing phase, a workshop, the making of the artwork, the setting up of the installation,

and the analysis of collected materials. Similar structures are applied in *Shop Around the Corner* through the documentation of artistic processes, stories of the environment, participants and the construction and exhibition of the artworks that encourages bonding between traders and local activists. Theorisation, interviews, the documentation and production of artwork, the collaborative exhibition design and planning of *Just* are all underpinned by the triangular methodological approach.

6. CONCLUSION

The three cases presented in this paper contribute to the composition of a framework that enables the rethinking of well-being and identity through artistic production. All the case studies form part of an ongoing research project that will continue to test and apply Jaatinen's framework in relation to marginalised groups. This framework, informed by the formations of psychological well-being discussed by Jaatinen (2015:208-219), enables both empowerment and well-being. The *Wings to Fly* case study follows Jaatinen's framework closely, but the artistic and participatory processes of the two remaining cases, aimed at the well-being and empowerment of the participants, required a reinterpretation. The methods in these case studies were tailored to the needs of the communities. *Shop Around the Corner*'s enabling dialogue empowers both the artist and community, while *Wings to Fly*, through storytelling and artistic production, shares and processes the young participants' life histories and marginalised experiences. *Just*'s production of artwork, especially illustrated in Sonene's stories, becomes an act and representation of healing.

REFERENCES

Adamson, G., 2007. *Thinking Through Craft*. Oxford; New York: Berg.

Bishop, C., 2012. *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*. London: Verso.

Creswell, J.W., 2013. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 3rd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Freire, P., Ramos, M.B. and Macedo, D., 2000. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 30th edn. New York: Continuum.

Gaver, B., Dunne, T. and Pacenti, E., 1999. 'Design: Cultural Probes', *interactions*, 6(1), 21–29.

hooks, b., 1990. 'Marginality as Site of Resistance', in Ferguson, R., Gever, M., Minh-ha, T.T., and West, C. (eds.) *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Culture*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 341–343.

Jaatinen, P.-M., 2015. *Rethinking Visual Art Practice in Relation to Well-Being: A Conceptual Analysis*. Jyväskylä: Jyväskylä University Printing House.

Kay, A., 2000. 'Art and Community Development: The Role the Arts have in Regenerating Communities', *Community Development Journal*, 35(4), 414–424.

Mattelmäki, T., 2008. 'Probing for Co-exploring', *CoDesign*, 4(1), 65–78.

Sennett, R, 2007. *The Craftsman.* New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press.

Thomas, R.E. and Rappaport, J.,1996. 'Art as Community Narrative: A Resource for Social Change', in Brinton Lykes, M. (ed.) *Myths about the Powerless: Contesting Social Inequalities.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp. 317–336.

Viña, S, 2013. Micro Scale Neighbourhood Revitalization through Design Interventions. *Proceedings of Include 2013.* London: Royal College of Art.

THE DRAMATURGICAL PATTERN OF PUBLIC SPACE
The use of 'as if' Space in Vali'Asr Mosque

N. Amini

ABSTRACT

The cylindrical modernist City Theatre and the public Park-e Daneshju in Tehran were designed in the 1960s. Over the decades, this public place has encountered drastic urban transformations. In 2007, the municipality commissioned architect Reza Daneshmir to design the mosque behind the City Theatre to reintegrate the surrounding neighbourhood once again. Since, this mosque was expected to reintegrate religious and cultural activities simultaneously, the architect decided to design the mosque's roof as an open-air theatre. The mosque thus holds the 'as if' space. Furthermore, by excluding the mosque from its internal courtyard, the architect transformed the multivocal surrounding public area into the mosque's own courtyard. While in the past small vistas and the square occasionally opened up in front of important buildings, in Islamic cities this kind of large-scale urban area has rarely emerged. This transformation of a multivocal urban area into the mosque's inner courtyard could be considered as an architectural antidote to urban fragmentation.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: THE CITY THEATRE

Some buildings and places continue to play a central role in the history of a city and its social life, even when the original circumstances have changed (Madanipour, 1999). One example in Tehran is of the capital's most important landmark, the City Theatre (1967–1972) (Figure 1), situated at the crossroads of Vali'Asr and Enqelab Avenue, which has remained important since the period of modernisation and the construction of the public space during the 1960s and 1970s. The cylindrical Modernist building and the public Park-e Daneshju (Student Public Park) were designed by the architect Ali Sardaar Afkhami. Both are integrated fully into the urban social life, without recourse to the traditional turret and dome. There were attempts in the city in the late 1960s to derive contemporary designs from old cultural sources, and the City Theatre is an example of this. The round structure is of reinforced concrete instead of brick, but it is the surface which is important: it has completely tiled walls with geometric designs on a pale yellow background. The emphasis on surface and the use of tile are reminiscent of Safavid architecture, as is the surrounding portico of tall, thin columns, of a proportion similar to those of Chehel Stoun in Isfahan. Ali Sardar Afkhami illustrated the combination of modern and traditional architectural approaches by using the ogive arches that surround the City Theatre building. These ogive arches illustrate the modern usage of a traditional structure. The thin columns, which are similar to the (modern) mushroom-shaped columns, recall a traditional Iranian structure. The area, however, underwent drastic urban transformation. A new matrix of space relations was imposed on the site: this resulted in a 'fragmentation of spaces' and destroyed the public space (Deutsche, 1992).

PROBLEMATIC ISSUES

The changes underlying this functional fragmentation and privatisation are multiple. The small Park-e Daneshju, located in front of the cylindrical building of the theatre, had been taken over by transgenders and had become a kind of private territory. In addition, in the 1980s, behind the theatre building, an outdoor congregational prayer place had been installed. Several years later, the area surrounding the City Theatre became taken up by a subway entrance, introducing a specific type of social relations and collective behaviour into the area (Avermaete, Havik, Teerds, and Woltjes, 2009). Finally, as the city suffered from traffic congestion, the whole area of the theatre and Park-e Daneshju was fenced off to force pedestrians to circulate instead of gathering there, and to use underground passages rather than crossing the street and getting in the way of traffic vehicles. The result was that no centre remained, and no visible public life, but instead a secluded space and a kind of 'public sphere' were created, that were just the sum total of many arenas of communication (Madanipour, 2003). The subdivision of the site into functional zones eroded the public space (Madanipour, 2003). The effect of all this was that the area also become overcrowded.

What makes such crowds difficult to bear is not just the number of people involved, but the fact that the built environment has lost its power to gather people or allow them to separate and/or relate to each other. The new public space created by the theatre was taken over by fast-moving cars and replaced a social experience with a new experience of speed and congestion (Madanipour, 2003). Individuals entering the public sphere no longer had in mind one clear pattern of action and expectation -- that of the 'public individual'. The public space fragmented into countless little spheres of individual 'users'. The task for public designers in designing the modern city, however, is to create these intermediate places as neither fully public nor private, which reflects the complex urban tissue (Avermaete et al., 2009) and involves a diverse set of rules and conditions.

RESULTS

This paper enters and questions a particular interdisciplinary space -- a discourse that combines ideas about art, architecture and
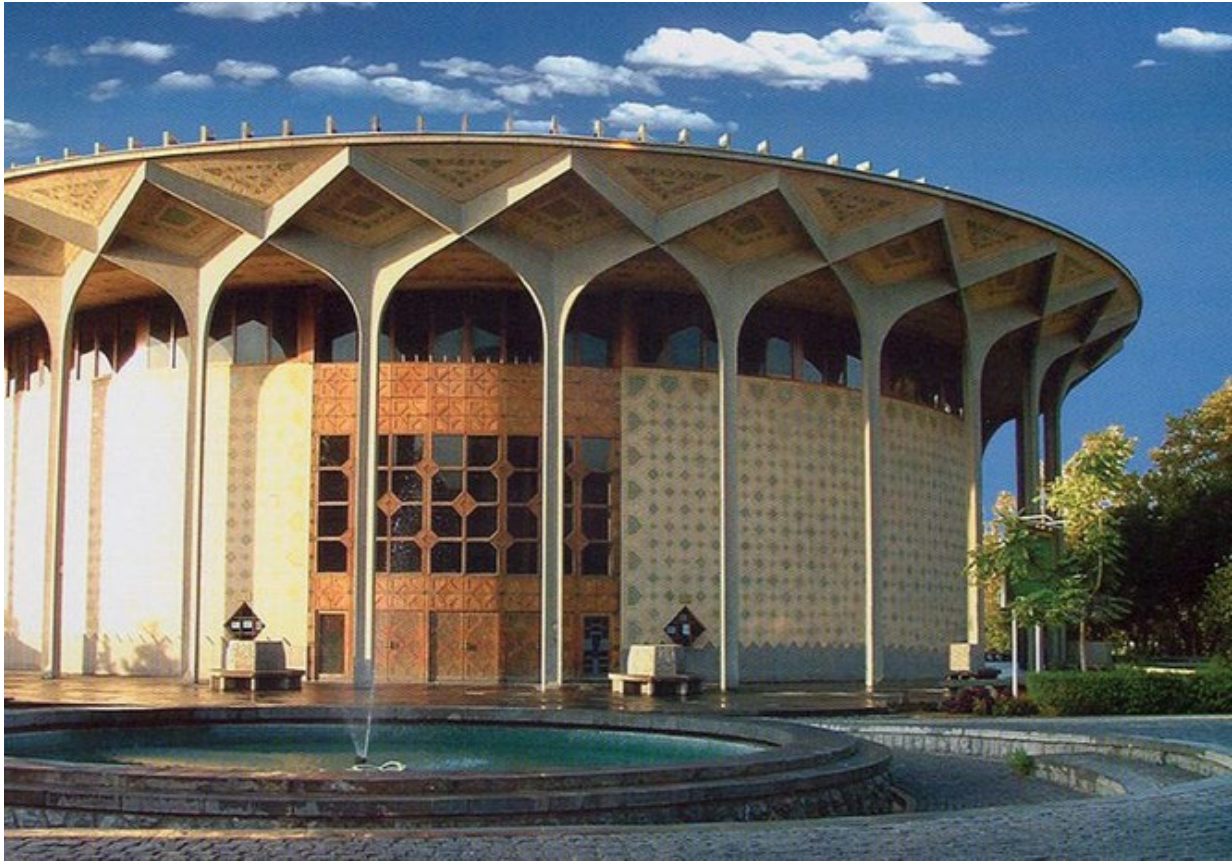
Figure 1. The City Theatre

urban design, on the one hand, with theories of the city, social space and public space on the other. This interdisciplinary field is called the 'urban-aesthetic' or 'spatial-cultural' discourse (Deutsche, 2002). Thus the investigation will focus on how public space, as a space of cultural production, can be organised to facilitate intermingling and minimise isolation or segregation in the urban space, with the aim of lending these public spaces the ethical and aesthetic power that supports the stability of society without destroying the uniqueness of any single group. Instead of relying on community, this paper will focus on a network of relationships based on trust and reciprocity between individuals. Then, instead of concentrating on architecture as an object, it will consider architecture as a *dispositif*. The purpose is to show that architecture, viewed as a *dispositif* and planned as such, can have an effect on building trust-based relationships between individuals and thus can stimulate the appearance of social capital (Dascalu, 2013).

DISPOSITIF AND THE PRODUCTION OF SUBJECTIVITY

The concept of *le dispositif* has a strong philosophical history in the work of post-structuralist philosophers such as Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze and Jean-Francois Lyotard. For them, the effect produced by the *dispositif* on the social body is already inscribed in words, images, bodies, thoughts and affections. A *dispositif* thus appears when the relation between heterogeneous elements produces a subjectivating effect in the social body, whether this is an effect of normalisation or deviation, of territorialisation or de-territorialisation or of appeasement or intensification. This is how Foucault's *dispositifs* of power and knowledge, Deleuze's *dispositif* of the production of subjectivity and Lyotard's impelling *dispositifs* are addressed. According to Foucault, a *dispositif* possesses three different levels or layers. In the first, the *dispositif* is merely a heterogeneous set of discourses, architectonic forms, propositions and strategies of knowledge and power, subjective dispositions and cultural

inclinations. In the second, the nature of the connection that brings these heterogeneous elements together reveals itself. Finally, the third layer contains the discursive formation or 'episteme' resulting from the connections between these elements (Parente and Carvalho, 2008).

In the Islamic city, where the element of the community can be applied simultaneously to its religious, cultural and commercial public spaces, by applying the term 'Islamising' as the basic relationship of 'cultural product' (Kahera, 2007:384-385) and emphasising the *dispositif* in architecture, the question becomes: How can *dispositif* architecture become a tool for creating the uniqueness of different groups? (Dascalu, 2013).

DISPOSITIF: ARCHITECTURE'S TOOL FOR BUILDING TRUST

Reza Daneshmir has written (n.d.):
We are living in a world of forces and waves, the waves that are constantly radiated and influence the environment while being influenced. There is no fixed point in the universe. As Heraclitus puts it, everything is continually changing and moving in every second. This movement and change is perpetually in progress in all inner and outer dimensions. To be sensitive to these waves -- which are being radiated with their specific wavelength and hence their specific effects -- and to demonstrate them requires the invention and utilisation of systems that are capable of upholding them in flexible and cohesive structures without loss of energy, while redirecting them to form more effective currents. Architecture has the potential to detect, direct and record these waves within a specific time-related process and yield a space which articulates the association between large-scale issues of urban space, universe and history in a broader setting. What position can an architect take regarding a public sphere that is marked by this continual change? (Avermaete et al., 2009). In 2007, twenty-six years after the first congregational prayer room was built behind

the site of the City Theatre, the municipality commissioned architects Reza Daneshmir and his wife Catherine Spiridonoff to design the Vali'Asr mosque to reintegrate the surrounding neighbourhood. The very traditional design, in accordance with stereotypical Islamic design and pattern, faced furious opposition from artists and intellectuals, mainly because of its height (Figure 2), which led to the decision to ask Daneshmir and Spiridonoff to redesign the mosque.

Recognising the rich history of Iranian architecture, Daneshmir was particularly interested in maintaining the traditional significance and poetry of a design's geometry. He would not simply copy from the past, but rather would reinterpret traditional elements in order to create something new, that was both Iranian and modern. He was actively searching for new forms in which to house contemporary public life (Avermaete et al., 2009). 'The previous design, compared with the City Theatre's building, was extremely large,' Daneshmir stated (n.d.). 'It wasn't an appropriate design. Then, the landscape design was offered, which works with the public park-e Daneshju.'

Sacred places can take many forms, and are not necessarily limited to their traditional typology (Britton, 2010). The Vali'Asr mosque is remarkable because of the architects' reinterpretation of traditional forms in a contemporary setting (Figure 3), thereby illustrating the possibility of a convergence of viewpoints. First of all there is the fascinating interior, with its innovative interpretation of the traditional *shamseh* (Figure 4), the ornamentation of the dome in Iranian architecture. Equally important is the fact that the mosque is much more than just a religious building; it also is designed as a public building in the city. The project is all about the roof.

The main danger of trust-building through architectural practices is provided by its potential success, which can lead to the privatisation of space. In such situations, the individuals tend to look first and foremost to the interior while isolating themselves from the exterior. At a territorial level, this can lead to spatial and social segregation. Isolation, eliminating the exterior, appears, amongst other reasons, because of routinisation and familiarisation with a certain space, use or process. At this point, appropriation becomes the exclusion of the unknown, of what is different from the usual. Therefore, all trust-building strategies must find a way of breaking the routine, of introducing disequilibrium, which reshuffles the established structure so that contact with the outside and accessibility can be assured (Dascalu, 2013).

In this regard, the social and religious function of the Vali'Asr mosque is not expressed by a monumental traditional form that dominates its environment, but by a monumental roof surface as a way of breaking a routine that functions as an open city square and open-air theatre. The building, therefore, is directed inwards and simultaneously creates a space for social activities on the outside. It combines and integrates religious and cultural functions. The roof is designed as an open-air theatre, connected to the City Theatre, where ceremonies and spectacles can be performed, but it works first as an urban plaza, as an antidote to the specialisation and functionalisation the area had undergone previously, transforming the pedestrians into urban actors and 'public men and women', who meet and are together without necessarily belonging together. It is, indeed, the essence of public life, and a critical ingredient of any successful public-space design, that the role of actor and spectator are interchangeable, that there is free access and also that no one is forced to participate and be exposed (Singerman, 2009:307).

In the other words, architecture built to serve ritual, as sacred architecture nearly always is, needs those individuals and communal rituals to complete them -- they depend on humans to animate their spaces and articulate their meaning. The meaning of the architecture is deepened and broadened through ritual, and the architecture becomes the setting of ritual performance and the re-enactment of
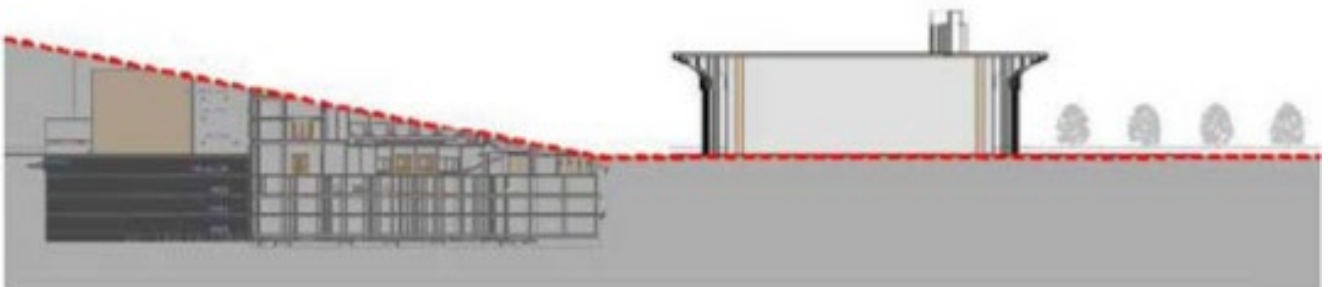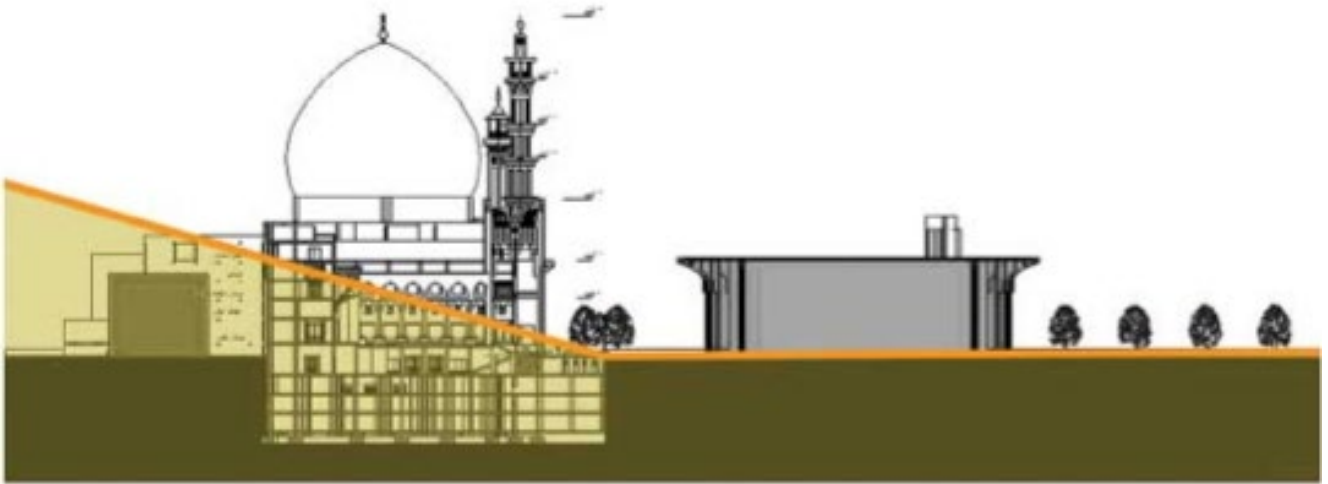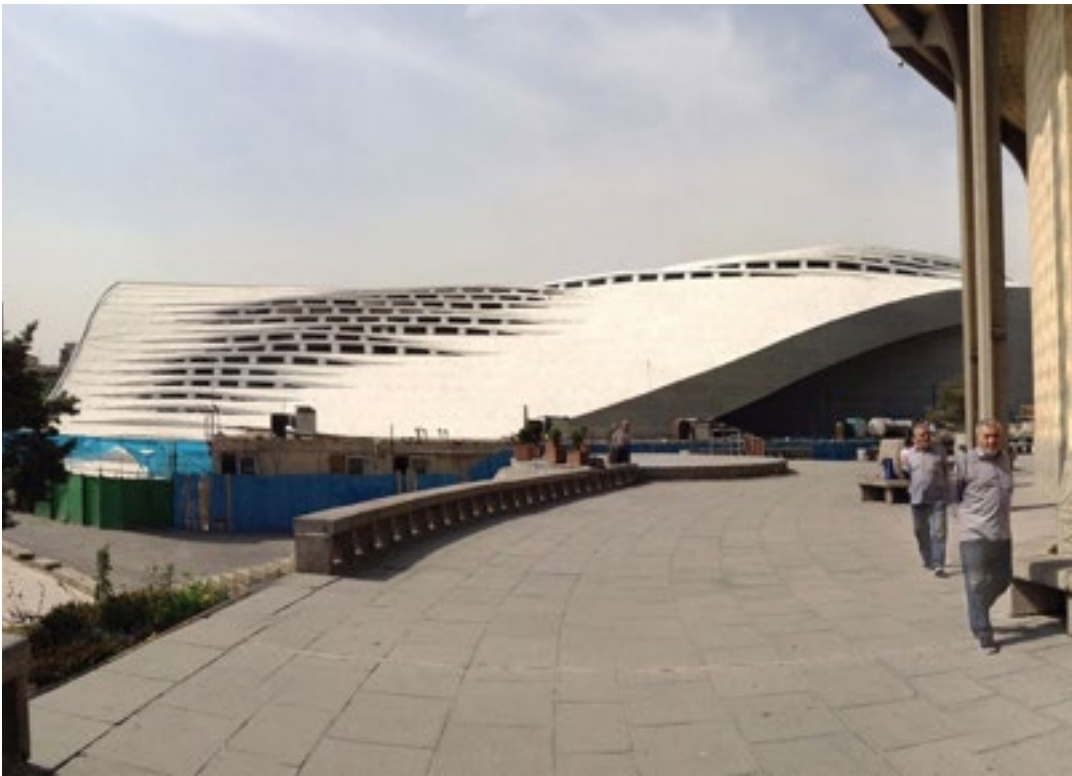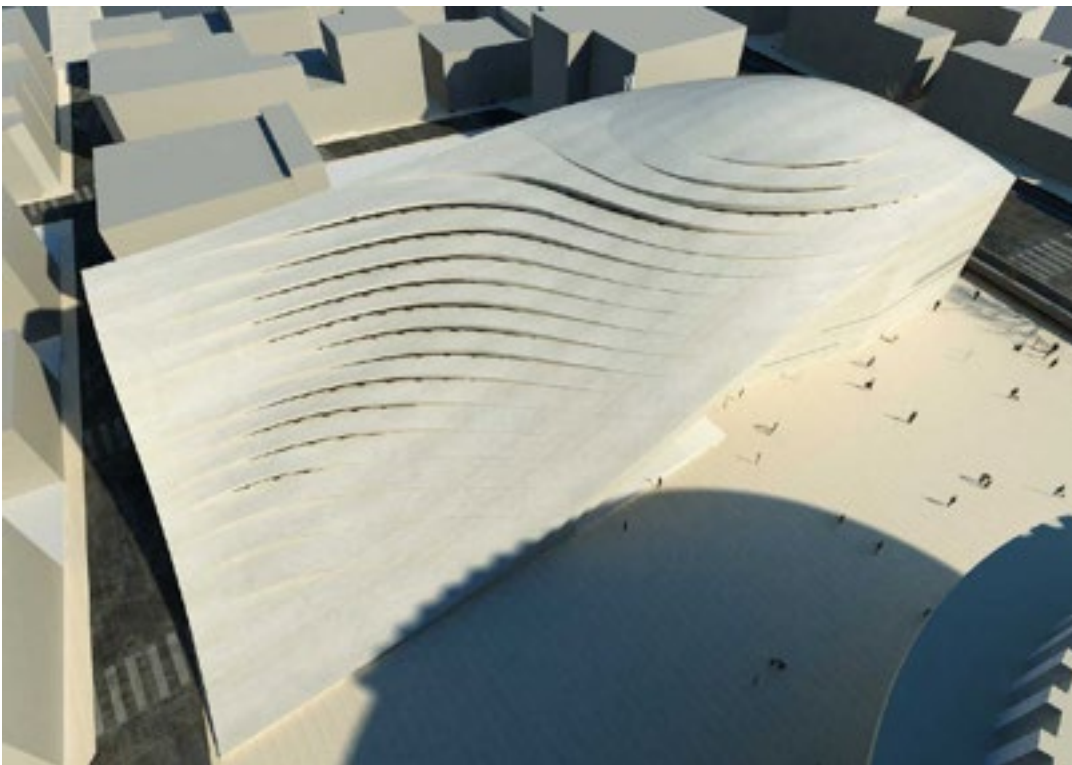
Figure 2. Traditional Mosque which was designed behind the City
Theatre had faced furious opposition

3

4

Figure 3. Vali 'Asr Mosque
Figure 4. Shamseh

mythic themes and stories. Through ritual each participant becomes part of the myth (Barrie, 2010).

If social life is understood and lived as appearing on public and semi-public stages, what can we learn about the architecture of social life from theatre design?

According to Christopher Alexander, "[W]hen you build a thing, you cannot merely build that thing in isolation, but must also repair the world around it, and within it, so that the larger world at that one place becomes more coherent, and more whole, and the thing which you make takes its place in the web of nature, as you make it" (cited in Barrie, 2010:50)

ARCHITECTURE AS AN ANALYTICAL LENS

The concept of dramaturgy relates ideas to structure, and action to architectonics. This section will focus on the conceptualisation and production of space in the 'theatre event'. Architecture is often considered as though we can separate the meaning of buildings from their habitation. This is despite the work of many in the field, often indebted to Lefebvre himself, who have drawn attention to the 'event-space' of architecture and the way that space is produced socially, with buildings merely one component of that production (Turner, 2015).

However, the design of buildings for the performing arts focuses on the relationship between the auditorium and the platform or the stage. In its classical setting, the stage is conceived as a neutral and empty container, open to one side. Modern theatres try to be as flexible as possible to accommodate a variety of relations between actors and the public. The stage becomes a neutral container that can be adapted to a wide variety of performances. This is also what the mosque's rooftop urban plaza tries to achieve, and the way it relates to the surrounding area: a neutral and flexible setting that allows for a multiplicity of social encounters. The undulating roof plaza emerges from the ground next to the

City Theatre without blocking the view of the theatre, and it turns into a dome at the top (Hensel & Gharleghi, 2012). The roof opening allows for natural light penetration into the mosque. Despite their formal differences, the quality of the interior lighting and indirect organisation of the entrance resemble that of the Sheikh Lotf-o Allah Mosque in the Imam square in Isfahan, dating from the Safavid period (1501–1736). The walk towards the mosque is organised by the narrative of light, in which the light is not considered as the visual ambience but as a substance in itself. The divine is evoked primarily by revealing and experiencing the ineffability of nature and not by conventional symbolism. By cutting out the mosque's roof, the light has been separated from sight and creates a sacred space. In this way, via the subtle approach of architectural design and construction, inspired by European examples rather than re-using conventional Islamic design patterns, the Vali'Asr mosque succeeds in responding to changing social needs as well as to rooted cultural traditions (Singerman, 2009).

The mosque reactivates a sense of public space in the area, introduced there first by the theatre, which is well described by Hannah Arendt: 'The public realm, as the common realm, gathers us together and yet prevents us from falling over each other, so to speak' (cited in Madanipour, 2003:168-170). The new mosque is more than just a well-designed and innovative architectural project. Its importance also lies in how it exemplifies one of Putnam's basic assumptions, namely that religious networks play a major role in developing a country's c*ivil* society (Pickel and Sammet, 2012) In addition, in Islamic territories, religious institutions such as the mosque can play a vital role economically, socially and culturally in the improvement and optimisation of urban development in a neighbourhood. They can help identify problems and needs, maintain identity, take care of old buildings and historical spaces, etc. In general, they can help organise the urban space and create a good balance between the old and new urban body (Garsivaz-Gazi, 2012). Throughout the history of the development of Islamic cities,

mosques have functioned as one of the most important public spaces. Because of the lack of public spaces, such as agoras, forums, theatres, stadiums and halls of justice, in an Islamic city, the social role of the mosque is important. This also has had an effect on its architectural morphology.

THE MOSQUE COURTYARD

In Iran, mosque architecture seems to have become standardised some time during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, to incorporate an open courtyard, a large bulbous dome over the prayer chamber and occasionally a minaret or two. Traditionally, an internal courtyard provided an open, breathing space within the mosque. Despite its introverted and closed character, this courtyard also functioned as a centre, a kind of public space where major and minor passages terminate. It became a kind of local city plaza, linked to other public functions in the city, part of an integrated network of public spaces (Makani, 2015). As Rumi, the great classical Persian poet, wrote in the third century, the mosque was built to promote social integration and solidarity: '[T]hat is the secret of why mosques were erected, so that the inhabitants of the parish might gather and greater mercy and profit ensue. Houses are separate for the purpose of dispersion and the concealment of private relations; that is their use. Cathedral mosques were erected so that the whole city might be assembled there.' The public realm that is thus created finds a strong religious and social purpose with the intention of bringing people together. An aspect of the Middle Eastern city that has been criticised is the lack of public urban squares like those of the medieval European cities. However, there is some opposition. For instance, the major Meydan Imam public square in Isfahan should be considered a courtyard of the Sheikh Lotf-o Allah mosque. It is a large open space surrounded by arcades, which, however, give the public space a specific religious rather than secular character. In fact, three mosques in the history of Iran are an exception to the rule. First, there is the Sheikh Lotf-o

Allah mosque, from the Safavid era, situated in Maydan-e-Imam near the Masjid-e-Imam and Ali Qapu, which avoids grandstanding by omitting the minaret and inner courtyard. Second is the Al' Javad mosque (Figure 5) in Tehran, from the Pahlavi period, which is integrated with a large-scale public space on the outside around the monuments. The Al' Javad mosque does not have a dome, minaret, inner courtyard or a surrounding portico. Also, no typical Islamic ornamentation can be found on its exterior. This monumental mosque has a prismatic shape, with twelve faces. It was designed to be independent of the surrounding urban context. Its vertical windows are similar to the Gothic cathedral, indicating it was influenced by the St. Sarkis Cathedral (Figure 6), which is located in the same neighbourhood and was built in 1970, one year before the Al' Javad mosque was constructed (Ghobadian, 2013).

Finally, there is the Vali'Asr mosque. Not only do these three mosques avoid following the traditional typology, they are also integrated with their urban surroundings as extrovert public places.

The Vali'Asr mosque is remarkable since it has no traditional courtyard and has been integrated fully with the City Theatre and its surroundings so that the public Park-e Daneshju becomes its courtyard. The extrovert courtyard of this introvert mosque is the entry to the mosque, but also to the City Theatre building, the subway entrance and the public park: in other words, the city's daily life. This city-scaled courtyard is the architectural solution to giving public space back to the city.

According to Kaesten Harries, myths and architecture share the role of representing the world so that 'it no longer seems indifferent to our needs, arbitrary and contingent, but is experienced as a place we can call home' (Barrie, 2010:61). One could expand this definition to include all the arts. Architecture may be the principal means by which humans articulate places in the world, but its 'existentially mediating task' (Barrie, 2010:61)

157

could logically be applied to two- and three-dimensional art, literature and other expressive and narrative forms. In this manner, we can deepen our discussion of architecture as a communicative medium. Then, turning to the Vali'Asr Mosque, the symbolic and communicative capacity of architecture and its roles emerge as a medium of transformation (Barrie, 2010).

CONCLUSION
"MULTIVOCALITY AND MULTILOCALITY"

Diverse urban audiences have accepted conflict and bitterness as a part of the story necessary to understand their communities. For the artist or designer seeking a broader audience in the urban landscape than a single patron or a gallery or museum can provide, it means being willing to engage with historical material. The kind of public art that truly contributes to a sense of place needs to start with a new kind of relationship to the people whose history is being represented. In fact, it is about giving respect to members of a community, listening to them and talking to them as equals, and earning their trust (Hayden, 1995).

Yet how can we construct our voices so that they can represent the diversity of voices we hear in the field? The problem of voice (speaking for and speaking to) intersects with the problem of place (speaking from and speaking of). It becomes difficult to say who really speaks for whom. The problem of voice is thus a problem of multiplicity as well as a problem of representation (Appadurai, 1988).

How do we deal with the problem of multivocality and with the differential power relations implicit in such cultural constructions of place? We can only understand the world from within our culture by joining multivocality to multilocality.

Multilocality in this sense, then, means looking at places from the viewpoint of others while recognising that there really are no 'others' in a world in which everyone can potentially suffer

from one agent's action. A single physical landscape can be multilocal in the sense that it shapes and expresses polysemic meanings of place for different users. This is more accurately a multivocal dimension of place, but multilocality conveys the idea that a single place may be experienced quite differently. As Fabian argues, 'making the other present rather than making representation [is] predicated on the other's absence' (Rodman, 1992:647).

For the Vali'Asr Mosque, the production of space is integral to the articulation of religious and cultural identity, but the space created in this process remains multivocal and contested, drawing together different groups of people, each of which expresses its own historical interpretation.

As mentioned above, more recent anthropological studies have introduced the concepts of the multivocality and multilocality of space. Space as a social product, then, must reflect the multiple meanings emanating from within a society. Places, as Rodman explains, are politicised, culturally relative, historically specific, local and multiple constructions. Naturally, these multiple constructions of space will not always coexist in harmony. Spaces are often contested: 'geographic location where conflicts in the form of opposition, confrontation, subversion and/or resistance engage actors whose social positions are defined by differential control of resources and access to power' (Vovina, 2006: 256). In fact, where the space for action is usurped -- where action, in the strict sense, is no longer possible -- resistance becomes the primary vehicle of spontaneity and agonistic subjectivity (Villa, 1992). What cities most need today is to protect their public space. But where is it to be found? Not every public space determines the future of urban life. Those of its forms are regarded as most desirable which promote 'both modern ambitions to eradicate differences and postmodern strivings to emphasise such differences by distinguishing and isolating them. This applies to public space which appreciates the creative and life-giving value

of diversity and acknowledges the need for an active dialogue between differences' (Dymnicka, 2009:62). All these theoretical concepts are important for this investigation of the Vali'Asr Mosque, whose cultural and religious revival hinges on its ability to create sacred space infused with its own vision of traditionalism and modernity, on the one hand, and Tehran's recent postmodern public space on the other.

Merely imitating the formal characteristics of successful public spaces, in this case, can be seen as looking for the solution in the wrong place. The relationship between form and meaning is soon watered down by the huge increase in the mobile consumption of places, varied according to lifestyle, which has fundamentally altered the meaning and nature of the public space (Hajer and Reijndorp, 2001). The process of meaning-making of socio-cultural interaction has here converted the mosque's roof and its introverted traditional courtyard into event-spaces, which is the effective answer to the epoch of simultaneous juxtaposition: in other words, the epoch of the multivocality of the postmodern public place. Further research could be done in this field of study.

Muslim communities are fundamentally multivocal, and hold diverse views. In fact, one of the important properties of ritual symbols is their polysemy and multivocality (Turner, 1969). The relationship between a culture and the formal character of architecture is not easy to formulate. Globalisation has made issues of identity and representation in dwelling and settlement very cumbersome. It has challenged the very possibility that a physical form can represent the identity of a people, a nation or a culture. But forms can never be more than the reflection of a transitional stage in the life of a society (Nezar, 1995). However, they are meaningful. In the case of the Vali'Asr mosque, we observe its transformation from a traditional inner courtyard to an open public square: the architects' attention, which traditionally was paid to the inner open space of the mosque courtyard, has now been diverted to the embellishment of an extrovert and multivocal public space (Gurallar, 2009). In this specific cultural context, this is a significant change.

BIOGRAPHY

Niloofar Amini (1986) was trained as an architect
at the Art and Architecture University in Iran. From
October 2014 she was accepted as a PhD. candidate
in Architectural History and Theory at Ghent University
in Belgium. She is currently working on Iranian politics
and architecture in the 1960s and '70s.

REFERENCES

Appadurai, A., 1988. Introduction: Place and voice in anthropological theory. Cultural Anthropology, 3(1), 17.

Avermaete, T., Havik, K., and Teerds, H., 2009. Architectural Positions, Architecture, Modernity and the Public Sphere, ed. Chris Woltjes . Amsterdam: Sun Publishers.

Barrie, T., 2010. The Sacred In-between: the Mediating Role of Architecture. New York: Routledge.

Britton, C. (Ed.)., 2010. Constructing the Ineffable: Contemporary Sacred Architecture. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
Daneshmir, R., n.d. Retrieved from http://www.fma-co.com/

Daneshmir, R., n.d. Retrieved from http://www.mashreghnews.ir/fa/news/397970/

Dascalu, D., 2013. 'Architecture as Tool for Building Social Capital'. Acta Technica Napocensis: Civil Engineering and Architecture, 56 (3), 204-220.

Deutsche, R., 1992. 'Art and Public Space: a Question of Democracy'. Social Text, 33, 34-53.

Deutsche, R., 2002. Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Dymnicka, M., 2009. The Fragmentation of Public Space: an Attempt at Recomposition. Regional and Local Studies, 'Special Issue: Cities and Metropolises', 59-77.

Garsivaz-Gazi, H., 2012. 'The Position of the Mosque in Islamic Cities and its Location. Damascus University Journal, 28 (1).

Ghobadian, V., 2013. Theories and Styles in Contemporary Iranian Architecture. Tehran: Elmememar.

Gurallar, N., 2009. Emergence of Modern Public Space from a Traditional Mosque Courtyard: Early Nineteenth Century Istanbul, Beyazit. Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag.

Hajer, M., and Reijndorp, A., 2001. In Search of New Public Domain: Analysis and Strategy. Rotterdam: NAi Publishers.

Hensel, M., and Gharleghi, M., 2012. Iran: Past, Present and Future. London: John Wiley & Sons.

Hayden, D., 1995. The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Kahera, A. I., 2007. Two Muslim Communities; Two Disparate Ways of Islamizing Public Spaces. Space and Culture, 10 (4), 384-396.

Madanipour, A., 1999. 'Why are the Design and Development of Public Spaces Significant for Cities?' Environment and planning B, Planning and Design, 26, 879-891.

Madanipour, A., 2003. Public and Private Spaces of the City. London: Routledge.

Makani, V., 2015. 'The Central Courtyard in the Traditional Mosque of Iran'. Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 6(6), 356-364.

Nezar, A., 1995. 'From Vernacularism to Globalism: The Temporal Reality of Traditional Settlements'. Traditional Dwellings & Settlements Review, 7(1), 13-25.

Parente, A., and Carvalho, V., 2008. 'Cinema as Dispositif: Between Cinema and Contemporary Art'. Journal of Film Studies, 19(1), 37-55.

Pickel, G., and Sammet, K., 2012. 'Introduction: Transformations of Religiosity in Central and Eastern Europe Twenty Years after the Breakdown of Communism'. In: Pickel, G., and Sammet, K. (Eds.) Transformations of Religiosity. Berlin: Springer Verlag, pp. 7-20.

Rodman, M. C., 1992. 'Empowering Place: Multilocality and Multivocality'. American Anthropologist, New Series, 94(3), 640-656.

Singerman, D., and Amar, P. (Eds.)., 2006. Cairo Cosmopolitan: Politics, Culture and Urban Space in the New Globalized Middle East. New York/Cairo: American University in Cairo Press.

Turner, C., 1969. The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure. Chicago: Aldine.

Turner, C., 2015. Dramaturgy and Architecture: Theatre, Utopia and the Built Environment. Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Villa, D. R., 1992. 'Postmodernism and the Public Sphere'. The American Political Science Review, 86(3), 712-721.

Vovina, O., 2006. 'Islam and the Creation of Sacred Space: The Misher Tatars in Chuvashia'. Religion, State and Society, 34(3), 255-269.

IN PURSUIT OF THE VOICES WITHIN SOCIAL DESIGN DISCOURSE

M. H. Buğali, S. Fairburn, R. Halsall

ABSTRACT

Design has expanded its scope towards social change and innovation – this is observed to a great extent in the UK in parallel with the 'Big Society', but is happening globally as well. The existing literature concentrates on practices, approaches and outcomes, with a desire to understand the implementation and the impact of these social 'design interventions'. Consequently, what is informing or may inform this practice seems less evident.

This paper aims to raise awareness towards the presuppositions in design practice and research, and proposes the application of Foucauldian discourse theory to uncover and challenge any presuppositions for a more legitimate conduct. The underlying research forms part of a doctoral study that seeks to examine the role of design in society and aims to accommodate the ongoing discussions around the agency of design. The work-in-progress involves an investigation of the three parts of 'social design dispositive', based on Jäger and Maier's (2016) framework, not only to open up new debates in academic design research, but also to provide design practitioners a way to reflect on their work, and ultimately to inform their decision-making process by reinforcing their theoretical foundations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Partially overlapping with the scope of this conference, our paper focuses on the emerging practice of social design, and serves as a provocation to encourage a more critical approach in design practice and research. By using the term *social design*, we attempt to embrace all sorts of design practices conducted with an intention to address social problems and/or to create social innovations. Although we keep our scope within the confines of the design field, a similar investigation can be done in the field of art as well. Through the performative works of WochenKlausur, Suzanne Lacy, the Artist Placement Group and many others, Kester (2004) gives an account of artists' explorations of a new role as creative facilitators of dialogue and exchange. Like their counterparts in the design field, these artists challenge two aspects of their practice: they see themselves as more than creators of artefacts and experiment on what might be the outcome of an artistic practice, and they negotiate their role and responsibility within society.

There are several presuppositions in the field of social design:

- Various people, communities, or organisations *desire social* and/or *political change.*
- *Negotiations* for change happen in *public space* through *participation.*
- The involvement of multiple forces, concerns and actors make the public space *agonistic.*
- *Publics* need to be *empowered* to be able to take part in the co-creation of the public space and the decision-making happening in that space.
- Designers assume a *mediation* or *facilitation* role in this *participatory* process.

Following such presuppositions, many investigations focus on the *ways* in which designers can *mediate and empower.* Using *participatory* methods towards *social* issues has almost become a default setting for *good design.* A number of researchers (Agid, 2011, 2012; DiSalvo, 2010, 2012; Fry, 2003, 2011; Keshavarz and Mazé, 2013; Tonkinwise, 2010; Willis, 2013) express their concerns about the political nature of social design; however, these have not yet gained enough traction in practice.

In this paper, we propose to take a step back, and ask *why* designers do *what* they do, before thinking about *how* they do or should do it. The recent enthusiasm for adopting Mouffe's (2013) concept of 'agonistic pluralism' as a theoretical basis has been a hopeful start in social design research to address the gap in the knowledge around *power* and *politics.* However, adopting Mouffe's concept also limits the investigation of design's agency within social and political contexts by dismissing the traditional design approaches aiming at unifying solutions, and poses as prescriptive. A discussion on the tense relationship between design and agonism is out of the scope of this paper. Acknowledging this tension, nonetheless, helps point out one of the reasons that led us to turn to another approach, namely Foucauldian discourse theory, to address the theoretical needs in the social design field.

An exploration into the multivocality that social design aims to support should begin with investigating its own voice - more specifically its discourse, who contributes to its continual production and how -to explore and reveal the situations and boundaries that shape and perhaps even dictate the actions of designers. Underlying this investigation is the recognition that while society is at the core of social design, the politics of social need is the interest of many, and social design almost always takes a side: thus it cannot claim political neutrality (DiSalvo, 2012). This paper offers a foundation in the literature of the political in design and from there it explores the positions of a range of current practitioners and academics. What emerges as an outcome is a proposal for a discursive approach – an approach not only applicable to social design discourse, but as a way for all designers acting and practicing in society to reflect on their work.

2. DEFINITIONAL BOUNDARIES

Based on an analysis of thirty-three definitions found in the literature, Ralph and Wand (2009) propose a formal definition for design that is applicable in different contexts, which combines seven essential elements of the design process: 'a specification of an object, manifested by an agent, intended to accomplish goals, in a particular environment,

using a set of primitive components, satisfying a set of requirements, subject to constraints'. With this definition, Ralph and Wand elaborate on Herbert Simon's (1988:67) concept of *changing existing situations into preferred ones*. However, neither Simon nor Ralph and Wand discuss the legitimacy of the constraints set upon the designer. In this traditional model, designers are bound by the rules of *others*, who hold the power to dictate what is *preferred*. Willis (2013) points out that this shift from the *existing* to the *preferred* is considered as obvious, and clouded with subjective assumptions, which in turn creates an ethical tension in design practice. Recently, design has started to explore 'its potential to instigate meaningful social, cultural and environmental change' (Felton and Zelenko, 2012:3), but to be able to use this potential ethically it needs further reinforcement (Becker, 2012) for its theoretical and political (Tonkinwise, 2010) underpinning.

Chen et al. (2015) report a lack of explicit definitions of the *social* in social design in the papers submitted for the *International Journal of Design*'s special issue on Social Design and Innovation. This is not surprising, as research often takes a responsive position towards an accumulation in practice, especially in an action-driven field such as design. The practice-led nature of design research provides dynamism and diversity, but on the downside it means that research operates on unstable grounds, with no time to develop theoretical insights, and thus cannot support practice as rigorously as it should. In the absence of an agreed-upon definition for the 'social' in a design context, we use The Young Foundation's (2012:18) definition for 'social innovation' because it is a term useful to describe the intentions of social design practices:

> ... new solutions (products, services, models, markets, processes etc.) that simultaneously meet a social need (more effectively than existing solutions) and lead to new or improved capabilities and relationships and better use of assets and resources. In other words, social innovations are both good for society and enhance society's capacity to act.

The Young Foundation suggests that social innovations should target a social need instead of focusing on 'problems', and that using a needs-based approach is more constructive and helps avoid stigmatising. Nevertheless, it is essential to question the context of every social need, as needs are constructed and imposed upon by the dominant culture, and might not in fact be genuine (Fry, 1992). Another one of their assertions is that social innovations develop through the collaborative commitments of several participants, and transforming their outlook permanently during the process (and enhancing their capacity to act) is as important as creating the desired outcomes. Moulaert *et al.* (2005) also emphasise the importance of empowerment through participation in social innovation. They expose the ethical (and unavoidably political) stance of social innovation against the forces of social exclusion. Engaging in social innovation activities, designers indirectly assume this ethical and political stance.

3. PRACTITIONER BOUNDARIES

The roots of social design can be traced back to the 1960s, when the *responsibility* of the designer first became a main discussion point (Garland, 1964; Papanek, 1972) , and the relationship between design and the *social* has been elaborated by many designers and researchers, especially in the last decade (Armstrong et al., 2014; Blyth and Kimbell, 2011; Chick, 2012; DiSalvo et al., 2011; Ehn et al., 2014; Emilson et al., 2011; Jégou and Manzini, 2008; Manzini, 2015; Margolin and Margolin, 2002; Melles et al., 2011; Morelli, 2007; Thorpe and Gamman, 2011; Tromp et al., 2011). There are different views on the definition and the boundaries of this 'rapidly emerging, though not new' (Agid, 2011:1) direction in design. Kimbell and Julier (2012), for instance, are not too concerned about finding a universal name for this direction; they acknowledge the usage of a variety of phrases such as 'service design', 'design for social innovation', and 'human-centred design' to

describe the social design practices[1]. Instead, they place emphasis on the importance of the approach and the methods (Kimbell and Julier, 2012:2):

> [Social design is] … a practical learning journey taken by people including managers and entrepreneurs, to create useful, usable and meaningful ventures, services and products that combine resources efficiently and effectively, to work towards achieving desired outcomes and impacts on society in ways that are open to contestation and dialogue.

Reflecting on his teaching experience in a service design course, Agid (2011, 2012) points out the political aspect of social design. The *social* is not a politically uniform structure with consensually defined needs and desires. Individuals forming a society rarely agree upon what is good for society (Fry, 1992). The ability to detect and challenge existing assumptions is the first step towards social change. Drawing from the difficulties his students experienced during their service design project for former prisoners, Agid (2012:45) asks:

> How, for instance, can the students in my class design ideas that don't take the prison as a starting place when many enter the class presuming, without knowing it, that prisons are one clear and permanent piece of their design world, and that the reasons for their existence are unchallenged?

4. THE 'POLITICAL' IN DESIGN

Mouffe (2013) defines *the political* as 'the ontological dimension of antagonism', and *politics* as 'the ensemble of practices and institutions whose aim is to organise human coexistence'. Building on these definitions, DiSalvo (2010) and Keshavarz and

1 Blyth and Kimbell (2012) chooses the term 'design thinking' to explore design practices in relation to social problems. More recently (Armstrong et al., 2014), "social design" has been used as an umbrella term to cover three distinctive accounts in academic literature, namely "design for social innovation" (Jégou and Manzini, 2008), "socially responsive design" (Thorpe and Gamman, 2011), and "design activism" (Julier, 2013; Markussen 2013).

Mazé (2013) make a distinction between design for politics (improving structures and mechanisms that enable governing) and political design (revealing and confronting power relations and identifying new terms and themes for contestation and new trajectories for action). Fry (2003) approaches the political from a different perspective, and argues '*the politics of design* is how design is employed, by whom, to what ends, while *design and the political*' speaks to 'the agency of how design acts as (one of) the directional forces that shape human conduct and its material consequences.' He then develops this argument further and declares design itself as politics due to its 'world-making'/'future-making' aspect (Fry, 2003). This argument is also central to DiSalvo's (2012) case for the agonistic capabilities of 'adversarial design'; design in all its forms is always already political: that rather than merely passively, or neutrally. conveying messages, it actively intervenes to stimulate and produce new meanings. If the political implications are not deliberated thoroughly, design's world-making attempts may lead to undesirable situations (Fry and Dilnot, 2003).

When designers position themselves as neutral agents of change, the intended neutrality does not grant them relief from serving the existing power structures and creating outcomes contradicting the original aims and intentions (Tonkinwise, 2010). Tonkinwise (*ibid.*) asserts:

> *...,* what happens if design-based social innovation is not just a way of avoiding conventional, explicit politics, but a way of undermining politics altogether? What if scaling up existing innovations with redesign is not just about helping people temporarily frustrated with the inertial cowardice of elected representatives, but a way to make more or less permanently redundant the need for any government to find a way to negotiate political responses to current crises? [...] The point is: this is a very political position.

Uncovering the political paradigm within social design therefore becomes essential. Such examination can help question the power relations between the design practitioners, the funding bodies or commissioners, and the targeted social units, such as minorities, communities, or societies. It can

highlight the issues of legitimacy, and clarify the political language used in social design projects. The next section presents a rationale for applying critical discourse theory as the means to achieve this objective.

5. A DISCURSIVE APPROACH FOR DESIGN

Discourse, defined as the flow of knowledge, determines individual and collective doing and formative action, shapes society, thus exercises power (Jäger and Maier, 2016). Discourses determine how individual and collective thoughts about the world are formulated and acted upon (Rose, 2012), which in turn shapes society, thus exercising power (Jäger and Maier, 2016). Foucault argues that, if unquestioned, discourses creep into our consciousness as absolute, objective truths, and become norms for society, when in fact they are mere interpretations of the world. In line with social constructivist ontology, Foucauldian discourse theory proposes that there can be various versions of the world depending on personal constructs and discourses, and some of these are accepted as more legitimate due to the support they receive from institutions of power. The reign of a discourse does not last forever, though; discourses are exposed to constant flux. They simultaneously reinforce or erode each other (Wodak and Meyer, 2016).

It is also necessary to understand the meaning of power in this context. Foucault (1996:394) describes power as 'a whole series of particular mechanisms, definable and defined, that seem capable of inducing behaviours or discourses'. Power is the capacity to act in favour of an individual or an institution, even though this act puts others at a disadvantage and receives resistance. For Foucault, power is productive; through discourse it produces our truths, norms, rights, even our identities. Discourses transmit and reinforce power, as much as they undermine and expose it (Foucault, 1978b).

Compared to other types of discourse studies, Foucauldian (critical) discourse analysis offers a unique approach due to its problem-oriented nature and its interest in social inequality. It aims to deconstruct the structures of power, ideology, dominance, discrimination and legitimisation hidden in discourses, and to make the researcher's own

position and interests explicit through a reflective process (Wodak and Meyer, 2016). In the next section, we present a particular framework from critical discourse studies, namely dispositive analysis, to apply the critical discursive approach within the design field.

6. DISPOSITIVE OF SOCIAL DESIGN

According to Foucault (1978a), discourses are comprised of textual and non-textual elements (i.e. language vs. object). Jäger and Maier (2016:113) develop this conception further into a three-part structure, a 'dispositive':

> A constantly evolving synthesis or interaction between linguistically performed practices (or discursive behaviour, i.e. thinking, speaking, writing based upon a shared knowledge pool), non-linguistically performed practices (or non-discursive behaviour, i.e. doing things based upon knowledge) and materialisations (manifestations of knowledge, i.e. natural and produced things).

Dispositive analysis is particularly suitable for the design field, as it incorporates the material characteristics of design into a theoretical examination. Here we explain how it is applied in the doctoral study that informed this paper to investigate the 'social design dispositive' through three sets of *texts*.

First, we have selected five seminal books from the design literature as examples of linguistically performed practices. The origins of social design discourse are traced in these books, each from a different country. The historical, political and cultural contexts in which these books are situated play a significant role in the development of the discourse in question. The texts cover a period between early 1970s and today and are selected according to their influence on the discourse, which was observed through a preliminary review of the literature. The selected texts are:

- Victor Papanek, 1972 (2nd ed.: 1985). USA. *Design for the Real World*.

- Pelle Ehn, 1988. Sweden. *Work-oriented Design of Computer Artifacts.*
- Nigel Whiteley, 1993. UK. *Design For Society.*
- Tony Fry, 2011. Australia. *Design as Politics.*
- Ezio Manzini, 2015. Italy. *Design, When Everybody Designs.*

Secondly, we have collected accounts by social design practitioners of their non-linguistically performed practices. The echoes of the social design discourse are reviewed through the interviews with the practitioners, who consume and interpret the existing discourse, and contribute back to its continuous development. Twenty practitioners have been chosen for the research according to the location of their practices (UK-based), prior experience in social design projects and career directions (with an emphasis on social motivation).

For the last part of the analysis we have gathered visual, textual and material outputs from social design projects. This *multimodal* analysis looks at the material language of social design projects, and how design practitioners communicate the discourse with the wider society. To be able to analyse the relationship between non-linguistically performed practices and their materialisations, we asked the interviewees what they would consider as typical outputs of their projects - thus far, these have included posters, leaflets, websites, workshops, products, service blueprints, project reports and exhibitions. Having the two parts of the analysis situated around the same individuals gives a better opportunity to examine how discourse is constantly evolving through the interaction between design practice and its outputs.

7. ORIGINS OF AND ATTITUDES IN SOCIAL DESIGN

In this section, we present preliminary findings from the first two parts of the analysis, which focuses on four main aspects of the texts:

- Context (cultural scene, background of the author, genre of the text)
- Form (structure, style, vocabulary, rhetorical means)
- Content (themes/concepts, discursive constructions, latent elements)
- Ideology

The books selected for the first part reflect the negotiation between the need for change in and the limits of the (social, political and economic) system they are situated in. Papanek pioneers the sustainability discourse in the design field by drawing from the ecological movement that emerged in the 1960s. He points out the environmental and social impacts of design and uses apocalyptic and moralistic language to create a sense of guilt and responsibility. Relying on rhetorical elements, he does not abstain from demeaning anyone who follows the consumerist system. Ehn, on the other hand, presents a case for participation in the Scandinavian context. He provides insights into how and why participatory methods were originally developed and exemplifies the application of these methods. Participation in this context is strongly linked to ideals of 'social democracy'. Instead of regarding the users as 'moral weaklings ready to accept whatever specious values' are imposed by consumerism (Papanek, 1985:20), Ehn argues that their input in the design process should be considered as legitimate, even indispensable.

Whiteley shares similar themes with Papanek, but he uses a more cautious language, void of provocations and strong rhetorical means. His critique revolves around environmental issues, the responsibility/ethics of design and feminism. He openly expresses his 'secular liberal pluralist' position and that he does not share 'old-fashioned Left-Wing authoritarian views' (Whiteley, 1993:167). He aims to demonstrate the necessity of a 'political initiative', but like Papanek he does not explain what designers' role would be in that political initiative. Fry is the most courageous of all; he dares to take a step further by developing a framework for change, after presenting a critique of the dire environmental and political situation. He dismisses democracy and liberalism, and proposes an authoritarian system for a fully sustainable society. In a way, he focuses on designing politics instead of politicising design. His boldness in expressing political views differentiates him from other authors, but also makes him most vulnerable to criticism.

Lastly, Manzini establishes a case for the social aspect of sustainability. Although he acknowledges the existence of the economic, political and cultural forces in play, he refrains from making political statements. For him, an analysis of the 'enemy forces' lies beyond the role of a 'reflective designer' (Manzini, 2015:27). Rather than proposing a radical road map like Fry does, he opts for a safer option and uses the 'island-archipelago' metaphor to convey his belief in small changes that would eventually lead to a major transformation. We argue that this belief resembles the self-regulation logic behind the free-market system and supports the current conditions, where the concept of participation is removed from its original social democratic context and used as a means for legitimising neoliberal agendas.

The design practitioners reflected on some of the contradictions and unresolved issues in these texts during the interviews:

- Designer identity: difficulty in defining their professional practice and identity. For them, there is a glaring difference between having a 'purpose or meaning' in their practice and working solely to make money. They position themselves away from profit-oriented projects, and look for ways to sustain themselves by using their skills for social change. Some of them consider this as an 'instinct'.
- Ideals vs. reality: the designers reflect on the dilemma between their 'instincts' and the market conditions. They follow the evolving discourses in the design literature, and try to shape their practices accordingly, insofar as the market permits. This is an ongoing struggle.
- Design practice: the majority of the interviewees acknowledge the disappearing boundaries between design sub-disciplines such as product, graphic, fashion or service design. When asked, they find it difficult to explain 'what' they do professionally.

8. CONCLUSIONS

Foucault (1972:49) describes discourses as 'composed of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or representations); but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is more that renders them irreducible to the language and to speech. It is this "more" that we must reveal and describe.' It is this *more* that scholars like Fry and Tonkinwise point out as a missing piece in design research; this *more* is what could help design research investigate and differentiate between social design and *neocolonialism* (Janzer and Weinstein, 2014). In this paper, we present a methodological proposal to achieve this aim.

The present focus of the design field on the methods of social design projects bypasses an initial discussion on the 'source of power' behind the decision about what is desired or not. Additionally, a comprehensive review of the current literature on social design projects reveals a gap in the knowledge concerning the political agency of design and a lack of a theory for *change* (Agid, 2011; Björgvinsson et al., 2012; Blyth and Kimbell, 2011; DiSalvo, 2010, 2012; Fry, 2003, 2011; Keshavarz and Mazé, 2013; Tonkinwise, 2010; Willis, 2013). By applying Foucauldian discourse theory and a framework based on Jäger and Maier's (2016) dispositive analysis, this ongoing research endeavours to address this gap.

We should conclude by highlighting one limitation of the discursive approach. Foucault acknowledges that his position is not outside the ideas and practices he is analysing. 'He is not claiming to speak from a position of 'truth' – he is aware of the fact that he himself as a subject can only speak within the limits imposed upon him by the discursive frameworks circulating at the time' (Mills, 1997:33). In this sense, critical discourse analysis does not help us establish truths, but rather enables us to discover and push the limits of our knowledge.

BIOGRAPHY

Hilal Buğalı is a PhD candidate at Gray's School of Art, RGU. Her research focuses on the genealogy of socially motivated design and its influence on current design practice. Other research interests include design theory, critical discourse studies and sustainability.

Sue Fairburn is a Design Lecturer and Researcher at Gray's School of Art, RGU. She works between the boundaries of the body and the environment. Her research focuses on design in social contexts and design for extremes. She is deeply curious about design, and works and publishes across disciplines.

Robert Halsall is a former Reader and Senior Lecturer at Aberdeen Business School, RGU. His research interests encompass critical management and organisational studies, critical and cultural theory, particularly in the German tradition, and latterly the work of Peter Sloterdijk. Recent publications include articles on corporate cosmopolitanism, nation branding and cultural models in the financial crisis.

REFERENCES

Agid, S., 2011. 'How Can We Design Something to Transition People from a System That Doesn't Want to Let Them Go?' *Design Philosophy Papers*, 3, 1-11.

Agid, S., 2012. 'Worldmaking: Working Through Theory/Practice in Design'. *Design and Culture*, 4(1), 27-54.

Armstrong, L., Bailey, J., Julier, G., and Kimbell, L., 2014. *Social Design Futures: HEI Research and the AHRC*. [online]. London: University of Brighton and V&A Museum. Available at: <http://mappingsocialdesign.org/2014/10/09/social-design-futures-report/> [Accessed 12 June 2016]

Becker, L., 2012. 'Design, Ethics and Group Myopia'. In: E. Felton, S. Vaughan, and O. Zelenko, eds. *Design and Ethics: Reflection on Practice*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 20 - 32.

Björgvinsson, E., Ehn, P., and Hillgren, P. A., 2012. 'Agonistic Participatory Design: Working with Marginalised Social Movements'. *CoDesign*, 8(2-3), 127-144.

Blyth, S., and Kimbell, L., 2011. *Design Thinking and the Big Society: From Solving Personal Troubles to Designing Social Problems*. London: Actant and Taylor Haig.

Chen, D. S., Cheng, L. L., Hummels, C., and Koskinen, I., 2015. 'Social Design: An Introduction'. *International Journal of Design*, 10(1), 1-5.

Chick, A. 2012. 'Design for Social Innovation: Emerging Principles and Approaches'. *Iridescent ICOGRADA*, 2(1), 52-64.

DiSalvo, C., 2010. 'Design, Democracy and Agonistic Pluralism'. In: D. Durling, ed. *Design and Complexity. Proceedings of the Design Research Society Conference*. 7-9 July 2010. Montreal (Quebec), Canada: Université de Montréal.

DiSalvo, C., 2012. *Adversarial Design*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Ehn, P., Nilsson, E., and Topgaard, R., eds., 2014. *Making Futures: Marginal Notes on Innovation, Design and Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Emilson, A., Seravalli, A., and Hillgren, P., 2011. 'Dealing with Dilemmas: Participatory Approaches in Design for Social Innovation'. *Swedish Design Research Journal*, 1(11), 23-29.

Felton, E. and Zelenko, O., 2012. Framing Design and Ethics. In: E. Felton, S. Vaughan, and O. Zelenko, eds. *Design and Ethics: Reflection on Practice*. London: Routledge. pp. 3-9.

Foucault, M., 1972. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. London: Tavistock Publications.

Foucault, M., 1978a. *Dispositive der Macht: über Sexualität, Wissen und Wahrheit*. Berlin: Merve-Verlag.
Foucault, M., 1978b. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Vol. I*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Foucault, M., 1996. 'What is critique?' In: J. Schmidt (ed.), *What is Enlightenment? Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. pp. 382-398.

Fry, T., 1992. 'Against an Essential Theory of 'Need': Some Considerations for Design Theory'. *Design Issues*, 8(2), 41-53.

Fry, T., 2003. 'Design and the Political: Hot Debate'. *Design Philosophy Papers*, 1(6), 361-362.

Fry, T., 2011. *Design as Politics*. Oxford: Berg.

Fry, T. and Dilnot, C., 2003. 'Manifesto for Redirective Design (Replay): Hot Debate'. *Design Philosophy Papers*, 1(3),141-149.

Garland, K., 1964. *First Things First - A Manifesto*. London: Goodwin Press.

Jäger, S., 2015. *Kritische Diskursanalyse: Eine Einführung*. Münster: UNRAST-Verlag.

Jäger, S. and Maier, F., 2016. 'Analysing Discourses and Dispositives: A Foucauldian Approach to Theory and Methodology'. In: R. WODAK and M. MEYER (eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Studies* (3rd ed.). London: Sage Publications. 109-136.

Janzer, C. L., and Weinstein, L. S., 2014. 'Social Design and Neocolonialism'. *Design and Culture*, 6(3), 327-344.

Jégou, F. and Manzini, E., eds., 2008. *Collaborative Services: Social Innovation and Design for Sustainability*. Milan: Edizioni POLI.design.

Julier, G., 2013. 'From Design Culture to Design Activism'. *Design and Culture*, 5(2), 215-236.

Keshavarz, M., and Mazé, R., 2013. 'Design and Dissensus: Framing and Staging Participation in Design Research'. *Design Philosophy Papers*, 11(1),7-29.

Kester, G. H., 2004. *Conversation Pieces: Community + Communication in Modern Art.* Berkeley, CA; London: University of California Press.

Kimbell, L., and Julier, J., 2012. 'The Social Design Methods Menu' - *Perpetual Beta*. [online] Available at: <http://www.lucykimbell.com/stuff/Fieldstudio_SocialDesignMethodsMenu.pdf> [Accessed 12 June 2016]

Krippendorff, K., 2005. *The Semantic Turn: A New Foundation for Design.* CRC Press.

Manzini, E., 2015. *Design, When Everybody Designs: An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation.* Translated from Italian by R. Coad. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Margolin, V., and Margolin, S., 2002. 'A "Social Model" of Design: Issues of Practice and Research'. *Design Issues*, 18(4), pp. 24-30.

Markussen, T., 2013. 'The Disruptive Aesthetics of Design Activism: Enacting Design Between Art and Politics'. *Design Issues*, 29(1), 38-50.

Melles, G., de Vere, I., and Misic, V., 2011. 'Socially Responsible Design: Thinking Beyond the Triple Bottom Line to Socially Responsive and Sustainable Product Design'. *CoDesign*, 7(3-4), 143-154.

Mills, S., 1997. *Discourse.* London: Routledge.
Morelli, N., 2007. 'Social Innovation and New Industrial Contexts: Can Designers 'Industrialize' Socially Responsible Solutions?' *Design Issues*, 23(4), 3-21.

Mouffe, C., 2013. *Agonistics - Thinking World Politically.* London: Verso.

Moulaert, F., Martinelli, F., Swyngedouw, E., and Gonzalez, S., 2005. 'Towards Alternative Model(s) of Local Innovation' *Urban Studies*, 42(11), 1969-1990.

Papanek, V., 1985. *Design for the Real World, 2nd ed.* London: Thames and Hudson.

Ralph, P. and Wand, Y., 2009. 'A Proposal for a Formal Definition of the Design Concept'. In: K. Lyytinen, P. Loucopoulos, J. Mylopoulos, and W. Robinson, eds. *Design Requirements Engineering: A Ten-Year Perspective, Design Requirements Workshop, Cleveland, OH, USA, June 3-6, 2007: Revised and Invited Papers. Vol. 14.* Berlin: Springer-Verlag, pp. 103-136.

Rose, G., 2012. *Visual methodologies: An introduction to researching with visual material.* London: Sage Publications.

Simon, H., 1988. 'The Science of Design: Creating the Artificial'. *Design Issues*, 4(1&2), 67-82.

The Young Foundation, 2012. Social Innovation Overview: A Deliverable of the Project: TEPSIE. [online]. Available at: <http://www.tepsie.eu/images/documents/TEPSIE.D1.1.Report.DefiningSocialInnovation. Part%201%20-%20defining%20social%20innovation.pdf> [Accessed 12 June 2016]

Thorpe, A., and Gamman, L., 2011. 'Design with Society: Why Socially Responsive Design is Good Enough'. *CoDesign*, 7(3-4), 217-230.

Tonkinwise, C., 2010. *Politics Please, We're Social Designers.* [online]. Available at: <http://www.core77.com/posts/17284/politics-please-were-social-designers-by-cameron-tonkinwise-17284> [Accessed 12 June 2016]

Tromp, N., Hekkert, P., and Verbeek, P. P., 2011. 'Design for Socially Responsible Behaviour: A Classification of Influence Based on Intended User Experience'. *Design Issues*, 27(3), 3-19.

Willis, A. M., 2013. 'Design, Politics and Change'. *Design Philosophy Papers*, 11(1), 1-6.

Wodak, R., and Meyer, M. (eds.), 2016. *Methods of Critical Discourse Studies*, 3rd ed. London: Sage Publications.

Yee, J., Jefferies, E., and Tan, L., 2013. *Design Transitions.* Amsterdam: BIS Publishers.

BUILDING SPATIAL CAPACITIES TO RETROFIT THE DISPERSED CITY
Exploring The Role Of Design

O. Devisch and L. Huybrechts

ABSTRACT

Flanders is spatially dispersed. This mode of urbanisation comes with a high social cost. The current planning paradigm, strategic spatial planning, argues that the retrofitting of dispersed urbanisation requires a continuous public debate, and that such a debate depends on both a process of civic participation and a process of spatial capacity building. This paper researches how spatial designers can support this process of capacity building. It does this by discussing two explorative case studies.

1. FLANDERS AS A DISPERSED 'CITY'

The dominant housing preference in Flanders is for a detached single-family house. 38 per cent of the population lives in this preferred option (Winters et al., 2015). In the Netherlands, only around 16.4 per cent of the population does. Moreover, people prefer to live in a green, peaceful environment. In Flanders this implies residential subdivision. Since the introduction of the first legislation on spatial planning in Flanders, enacted in 1962, 577,714 areas have been approved as residential subdivisions, scattered over the entire territory (Ruimte Vlaanderen, 2016). As a result, there are hardly any green and quiet places left, because there are detached single family houses everywhere. In Flanders, around 26 per cent of the total land surface is built on. In Belgium as a whole this figure is between 10 and 13 per cent. The Netherlands has the highest percentage of built-on land in Europe, namely 13 to 15 per cent. In Europe as a whole the figure is only 4 per cent (Eurostat). This dispersed mode of urbanisation has given Flanders the nickname of 'nebulous city' (De Meulder et al., 1999). Scholars, practitioners and policy-makers have time and again pointed out the increasing social costs of spatial dispersion. For an overview, see Verbeek et al. (2014). However, to date no attempts have been made to significantly address this situation (Voets et al., 2010).

The main ambition of the active spatial planning policy document, the 'Spatial Structure Plan for Flanders' (1997), is to retrofit the nebulous city to sustainable proportions 'that leaves qualitative space for the coming generations, without compromising the claims of the current generation'. The plan stresses the importance of civic support, on the one hand for pragmatic reasons: the challenges are so vast that authorities depend on private initiatives to implement their ambitions; on the other hand, for the sake of ideology: the plan is built on the conviction that spatial quality is not so much about the intrinsic features of a place, but more about the value that people attach to it. Given that people differ and may change their opinions over time, sustainable retrofitting requires a continuous public debate over what is valuable at that moment. One of the aims of

the policy document is therefore to initiate and sustain such a debate. Since the introduction of the Spatial Structure Plan, civic participation has indeed become a compulsory part of most planning procedures. Despite of the repeated involvement of citizens in planning procedures, this has not led to an increase in civic support (De Bie et al., 2012).

This paper therefore reflects on how to build civic support for the retrofitting of the Flemish 'nebula'. We refer to this process as 'spatial capacity building', and are specifically interested in the role that design can play in this process. We will explore this role by analysing two case studies, both situated in villages dominated by residential subdivisions, with residents mainly valuing the green space and the tranquillity.

In what follows, we first introduce the current planning approach, namely strategic spatial planning, in order to position capacity building. Secondly, we present a theoretical framework on spatial capacity building. Thirdly, we introduce the two case studies. Fourthly, we explore the role of design by deconstructing the two cases into the theoretical framework.

2. PLANNERS IN SEARCH OF CIVIC SUPPORT

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, spatial planners in Belgium have been aware of the challenges of spatial dispersion. Nonetheless, it took until 1962 to actually introduce a spatial planning policy (Janssens, 2012). This policy followed the dominant international planning paradigm of the time, namely land-use planning. Plans define the land use of every parcel of land in Belgium. This approach to planning quickly proved too static, unable to deal with the dynamic and unpredictable nature of socio-spatial processes. Spatial planners have thus adopted a new paradigm, that of strategic spatial planning. This paradigm forms the basis for the Spatial Structure Plan for Flanders, which was approved in 1997 and which frames the current spatial planning

policy in the country. Albrechts (2004:747) defines strategic planning as 'a public-sector-led socio-spatial process through which a vision, actions, and means for implementation are produced that shape and frame what a place is and may become.' It departs from the idea that not everything can be planned, so that one has to focus on strategic locations, with strategic issues, supported by strategic players. It also proposes that planners should be prepared to reconsider decisions, as conditions may change and new challenges may emerge. This prompts Albrechts to conclude that 'much of the (planning) process lies in making the tough decisions about what is most important for the purpose of producing fair, structural responses to problems, challenges, aspirations, and diversity' (2004:751). This implies that strategic planning is not neutral and cannot be left to planners alone. The making of tough decisions requires civic support and the involvement of as many socio-cultural groups as possible.

For this reason, since 2005 civic participation has been made a compulsory part of nearly all procedures, in nearly all policy domains. This has led to the professionalisation of participatory practices, with an increasing focus on methods (De Bie et al., 2012). On the one hand this has generated a discourse and practice around participation, but on the other it has reduced participation to standard procedures with delineated techniques, instruments, good practices, participation professionals and manuals. These define the steps, shape and output of the process in advance, so that civic participation loses much of its potential to re-calibrate the common good, and turns into a formality that is de-politicised and thus irrelevant.

Albrechts (2004:753) points out the importance not only of civic participation, but also of inclusive and more permanent empowerment processes in which citizens 'learn about one another and about different points of view, and they come to reflect on their own points of view'. Albrechts sees these processes as 'places for continuous learning' that engage (disempowered) citizens

in a long-term dialogue, instead of isolated, project-driven discussions. This dialogue should help these citizens to learn to argue or reason, to talk and think spatially and to present and defend outcomes in the face of formal policy settings. In this way, a resource of mutual understanding can be built up, a `social and intellectual capital'. In this paper, we will refer to these learning processes as spatial capacity building.

3. SPATIAL CAPACITY BUILDING

In the literature on developing countries, spatial planning is nearly synonymous with capacity building. The point of departure is that a (development) project can only be durable if it is accompanied by a process of community capacity building (Verity, 2007). In this literature capacity is defined as the ability of a community to carry out a set of stated objectives. Capacity building then refers to the process of improving the ability of a person, group, organisation or institute to meet these objectives (Brown et al., 2001).

Like the field of participation in developed countries, the field of capacity building in developing countries has witnessed an increasing professionalisation, with each NGO developing its own method and manual. And just as with participation, this professionalisation is one of the reasons that capacity building initiatives often fail (Otoo et al., 2009). The remainder of this section takes one capacity building framework, not as a manual but as a perspective to reflect on the role of design in processes that are initiated to support, in the words of Albrechts (2004), 'inclusive and more permanent empowerment processes', in the Flemish context of dispersed urbanisation. We select a framework by Baser & Morgan (2008). To underline this we explore this framework to research the role of design, redefining its components as 'conditions for durable spatial capacity building'.

The first condition is that capacity building is not an isolated activity, but part of a bigger system, and thus depends on a socio-political

context, external stakeholders, resources and external interventions. Baser and Morgan (2008:86) stress that 'capacity is a potential state. It is elusive and transient. It is about latent as opposed to kinetic energy'. For capacity building to have a durable impact, this potential state needs to result in observable changes in behaviour, that in turn need to result in changes in the system.

The second condition is that capacity building requires both the building of individual competences and of collective capabilities. Baser and Morgan (2008:34) define capacities as 'that emergent combination of individual competencies and collective capabilities that enables a human system to create (public) value'.

The third condition is that capacity building requires working on five so-called 'core collective capabilities' (Baser & Morgan 2008:33): the core capability (1) to commit and engage; (2) to carry out technical, service delivery and logistical tasks; (3) to relate and to attract resources and support; (4) to adapt and self-renew, and (5) to balance diversity and coherence.

The next section will introduce the two case studies. Section 5 will then deconstruct the underlying capacity building processes by screening them against these three conditions.

4. TWO EXPLORATORY CASE STUDIES

The case studies are both located in villages composed of residential subdivisions. The objective is to explore how spatial designers can give form to a spatial capacity building process together with residents, local authorities and NGOs. Or, to quote Albrechts (2004), to make all the involved actors 'learn about one another and about their different points of view, and to reflect on their own points of view'. The field of participatory design (PD) has a long tradition of supporting such processes of collective-reflection-in-action (Robertson & Simonsen, 2013). PD has developed a wide range of methods to

facilitate these processes. In the two case studies, we relied on the work of Brandt et al. (2013) who distinguish three clusters of methods, namely methods that support telling, making or enacting. All three depart from a (partly) fictive universe within which existing rules and power relations do not count. The participants are asked to collectively explore this universe while they tell stories, make objects or enact scenarios. Going through this process may make them realise that the step from fiction to reality is not necessarily that big. The two case studies each depart from one of these clusters of methods. The first, located in Beerse, adopts the enacting approach; the second, located in Hoepertingen, adopts the making approach.

The first case study, in the municipality of Beerse, focuses on two dispersion challenges. The first is the oversupply of land suitable for development. Beerse has more than 1,500 empty plots on which to build detached single-family houses. The expectation is that the population will grow by 500 families by 2024. This is three times lower than the (theoretically) available building plots. The second challenge is the mismatch between offer and demand. The offer consists mainly of detached single-family houses in a residential subdivision. The expected population growth is primarily a consequence of ageing and single parenting. These groups are not looking for single family houses.

Both challenges suggest that Beerse is heading towards a residential property crisis. Residents of Beerse are aware of this. In 2013 an owner of a large plot of developable land asked a local architectural organisation to organise a series of excursions, workshops and lectures in search of alternative modes of subdividing land. The process ended with the formulation of 'four principles for a new housing concept': affordability, diversity, collectivity and minimal consumption of space (AR-TUR, 2014). From now on, these principles should guide the design of new subdivisions. But the principles have turned out to be too abstract to inspire, and nothing has changed. The collective contacted us and together we

decided to explore the method of enacting. First, we selected an empty plot in Beerse, and develop five subdividing scenarios: business as usual, a tower block, a garden city, an urban villa and a beguinage[1]. These form the basis of an 'urban game' (Venhuizen et al., 2010) that is played by local representatives. The idea of the game is that each group of players has to 'sell' one of the scenarios. The rules force the players to translate the 'four principles' into tangible economic and social gains. A week later, the winning scenario is built, to the actual size, on location, with bamboo and elastic bands (see Figure 1). The same representatives are invited to each design to furnish a housing unit and to discuss together the use of the collective greenhouse. After two hours of building, residents of the surrounding neighborhood are invited to visit the new neighborhood for an open day. The process of enacting is intended to help the participants to experience the advantages and the problems of a more collective mode of living and to reflect on the two challenges that triggered the exploration, namely too much buildable land and the mismatch between offer and demand.

The second case study, in the municipality of Hoepertingen, also focuses on two challenges. The first is that of social segregation. In recent years, the social diversity in the village has increased, resulting in a mix of locals and newcomers: Sikhs working in the fruit industry, tourists visiting for a retreat in the village castle and mentally disabled people living in the local healthcare centre. These groups rarely meet one another. The second challenge is the area's increasing privatisation. Nearly all new buildings are detached houses surrounded by a hedge or fence. The church square is used as parking. And parts of the former railway line have been appropriated by a construction company, a farmer and individual residents. In search of new meeting places, we organised a series of public walks. In

2014, we invited residents, NGOs and local authorities to join us and imagine alternative scenarios for underused spaces, such as an old playground, an orchard and the former railway line. In this case, too, the scenarios formed the basis of an urban game (Venhuizen et al., 2010). The game was developed to help the participants to define criteria for good meeting places. It turned out that trails, alleys and passages play a crucial role in all the scenarios. An analysis of these trails makes clear that some have disappeared, or are privatised. This led to the ambition to re-connect trails and turn the resulting network into a meeting place.

As a first step towards this ambition, we proposed to explore the method of making. Together with two local players, the village castle and the healthcare centre, we translated the winning scenarios of the urban game into three project briefs: a shelter to be built on the graveyard, a platform to be built on the the construction company's land and a path connecting both constructions. These briefs were given to a group of seventeen architecture students, who lived for two weeks in Hoepertingen. The students divided themselves into groups and started building. The available construction materials were bricks, cobblestones and granite. The students had to find or borrow all the other materials, and the tools to process them. Computers and drawing boards were not allowed. Most of the students had no experience of building. Also, in this situation, they had to ask for help. Every other day there was a meeting with residents to discuss the constructions. All these 'rules' turned the making process into a trigger for conversations, with passers-by, with neighbours to borrow tools, with residents coming to the discussions, etc. (see Figure 2), about the value of the trail-network. In this way, people who normally never take part in participatory initiatives can be involved. At the end of the two weeks, we organised another public walk, along the new path, with residents, local policy makers and two donkeys, to hand over the constructions. Today, the local council takes care of the shelter on the graveyard, and the construction

1 A beguinage is a historic settlement type, referring to a compact housing complex, usually around a garden, to house beguines: lay religious women living as a community.

Figure 1. Designing and furnishing the new neighbourhood for an open day

Figure 2. Constructing as a trigger for conversations

company opened a new public trail on its property, maintained by a nature organisation.

5. THE ROLE OF SPATIAL DESIGN

In order to explore the ways in which spatial designers can help build spatial capacities, we now apply the three conditions, introduced earlier, to the two case studies. The first condition states that the durable character of capacity building depends on external factors such as supra-local stakeholders and the socio-political context. In both cases these stakeholders are regional NGOs, active in areas such as nature preservation, agriculture, tourism and healthcare. The socio-political context is the increasing awareness of the social costs of dispersed urbanisation. The first condition also stresses that capacity building needs to result in observable changes in behaviour, in turn leading to changes in the system. In the second case study, actors did start to change behaviour in that new coalitions emerged, between researchers and residents, between students and residents, between residents and local public and private organisations, among others, to maintain the constructed artefacts and to manage the new trail. In these coalitions, actors take up new roles with new responsibilities. In the first case study, the process of enacting was too short to have an observable impact on the behaviour of the participants.

The second condition states that capacity building requires the building of both individual competences and collective capabilities. The point of departure is that retrofitting the nebulous city requires a change in culture. 'Change the dream and you change the city' (Reinhold et al., 2011). So the challenge is not so much to work on individual competences, but rather to create shared ambitions and dreams, among residents, NGOs and local authorities, about their own residential subdivisions, and this requires a focus on collective capabilities.

The two case studies point to three difficulties. Firstly, residents of the dispersed city are living their housing dream: a detached house in a green, tranquil environment. No wonder that every retrofitting proposal is seen as a threat, and thus swiftly rejected. Both cases try to circumvent this by letting participants collectively experience and discuss the values of alternative modes of living, either by enacting or by making. Secondly, a residential subdivision consists primarily of small property owners, with limited expertise in collaborating, negotiating, and investing. An interesting concept in this regard is that of 'clumsy citizenship' (author's translation), referring to the inherent social ineptness of people. Hurenkamp et al. (2012) therefore suggest approaching citizenship as craft that takes time and persistence to develop. Thirdly, there is no clear (building) project, but only the (external) ambition to start a process of collective-reflection-in-action. This is not exactly engaging. The methods of enacting and making help to overcome this difficulty by focusing the discussion on tangible issues.

The third condition stresses the need to develop five core (collective) capabilities. In what follows, these capabilities are translated as 'core challenges' that collectives have to overcome in order to be durable. To commit and engage then becomes: 'How do we withstand resistance and critique?' To carry out technical, service delivery and logistical tasks becomes: 'How do we understand new legislation, technology, etc.?' To relate and to attract resources and support becomes: 'How do we sustain the project over time?' To adapt and self-renew becomes: 'How do we deal with external change?' And to balance diversity and coherence becomes: 'How do we cope with internal change?' The underlying hypothesis is that each time a collective overcomes a core challenge, it improves a core capability. Capacity building then comes down to managing this process, either by deliberately confronting the collective with challenges or by providing them with the tools to fight a particular challenge.

In what follows, the two case studies are deconstructed and re-interpreted as a succession of core challenges that the groups

of actors involved have to overcome. We will focus particularly on the role of design: sometimes the challenges are design issues, and sometimes the actors use design to overcome a challenge.

Let us begin with the enacting case study. A first challenge was to make the 'four principles for a new housing concept' more concrete. Their high level of abstraction led to different interpretations, resulting in misunderstandings and participation fatigue. This challenge matches the fifth core capability: namely, how to cope with internal change. The introduction of the urban game, being a design intervention, forced the participants to discuss the values of each housing concept in detail and helped them to come to a shared interpretation of the abstract principles.

Another challenge was the lack of technical knowledge on issues such as privacy, collectivity and walkability. This matches the second core capability: namely, how to understand new legislation, technology, etc. The furnishing of the bamboo structure prompted participants to use their own body as a reference, in order to decide upon the size of a living room, the placing of a window, or the acceptable walking distance to the entrance to the underground parking (see Figure 1).

A third challenge was how to involve passers-by. This matches the first core capability: namely, how do we withstand resistance and critique? The principle of enacting made the participants pretend that they were actually a family living in the bamboo neighbourhood. They took visiting residents on a walk through their house, using artefacts to support their arguments. 'The terrace starts behind this line. As you can see, this wall separates the terrace from the greenhouse. So no one can see you when you are sunbathing'.

And now the making case study. One of the first challenges was how to deal with the lack of technical knowledge among the students about materials and construction. This matches the second core capability: namely,

how to understand new legislation, technology, etc. The students countered this challenge by making mock-ups with any object they could find: during dinner, for instance, with spoons and forks. With the bricklaying, they just got started on it (see Figure 3): until a passer-by offered to help them.

A second challenge was how to engage outsiders in the collective-reflection-in-action. This matches the fourth core capability: namely, how to deal with external change. A first design intervention was the making-process itself. The constructing made people stop (see Figure 3). Why are these youngsters digging a hole in the graveyard? Why are they cutting trees on the old railway line? Discussions typically started with the constructions and ended with a reflection on the importance of the trail network for the village. A second design intervention was the publishing of a 'newspaper from the future'. Each day an article reported on an event that had taken place in one of the three interventions, ten years into the future. This allowed to visualisation of the potential of the interventions.

A third challenge was how to deal with new players who joined the process along the way, such as a nature organisation, a contractor or a counsellor. All came with their own agenda. This matches the fifth core capability: namely, how do we cope with internal change? For this challenge, the pre-trajectory is important. The walks and the urban game generated a clear and simple ambition, namely to strengthen the existing trail-network. Every new player is taken on a walk to one of the constructions. Along the way, the value of the ambition becomes tangible, and agendas become synchronised.

A fourth challenge was how to hand over the constructions to the group of residents, local NGOs and authorities. Who will maintain them? Who will take up the responsibility if something goes wrong? This matches the third core capability: namely, how do we sustain the project over time? One strategy was to turn the trail-network into a brand, with its own

Figure 3. Making mock-ups as a prompt for conversations

logo and a hiking map. At the end of the two weeks, the students painted the logo on the trails and made the map physical. A second strategy was to organise a public event to open the interventions and to let a number of city officials give a speech to appropriate the project. A final strategy was to work with contracts that formalise this appropriation. At this moment, contracts are being signed with the municipality and with the construction company.

6. REFLECTION

This paper departs from the claim of strategic planning that durable spatial transitions require a public debate. And that such a debate both depends on a process of civic participation, and on a process of spatial capacity building. The aim of this paper is to explore the role of spatial designers in supporting this process of capacity building. What follows are speculative reflections and themes for further study, based on the two case studies that focus on the retrofitting of dispersed urbanisation.

A first reflection is that the capacity building framework of Baser and Morgan (2008) does provide arguments to claim that spatial design can support the development of collective capabilities. There is an observable change in behaviour in the two cases: namely, a change in the way that participants look at the residential subdivision in the Beerse case, and the formation of new coalitions and roles in the Hoepertingen case. These changes are either generated by introducing design challenges or by providing design tools that the collective had to use to tackle a challenge. In both cases they created a place for (collective) learning. A first question is how durable this behavioral change is, given the general hypothesis that capacity building is a long-term and iterative process (Baser & Morgan 2008). This would imply that there is a continued need for design interventions. A second question is how to value the impact of the design interventions. Did behaviour really change? And what is the contribution of the interventions to this change?

A second reflection is that the framework not only provides arguments to employ design in spatial capacity building processes, but can also be used to fine-tune the process of capacity building: for instance, in order to speed up the learning process or to move it in a particular direction (such as the retrofitting of dispersed urbanisation). In this paper, the three conditions and the five challenges are only used to conduct a retrospective analysis of two case studies. But, what if we were to use the framework to manage the capacity building process so that it deliberately aims for the five core capabilities, or for one capability in particular. This would imply that we employ spatial planning as a process of collective learning. This point has been made in the literature (Kuhk et al., 2015), but there are hardly any frameworks that help to specifically 'design' spatial planning processes to support collective learning. The three conditions and the five challenges could function as a first attempt to fill this gap. Further research could then specify whether there is a logical sequence in building the five collective capabilities, or in which conditions is it best use telling, making or enacting?

The final reflection is how to prevent spatial capacity building from also becoming a closed procedure, in the same way that the increased demand for civic support has turned participatory projects into formalities. This requires that each capacity building process begins with the definition of clear ambitions and process criteria, which can then be used as benchmarks to regularly self-audit the process.

BIOGRAPHY

Oswald Devisch is Associate Professor of Urban Design at the Faculty of Architecture & Arts at Hasselt University. He is coordinator of the research cluster 'Spatial Capacity Building', exploring themes such as civic learning, casual participation, collective image building, spontaneous transformation processes and low-dynamic regions.

Liesbeth Huybrechts is a postdoctoral researcher in the research cluster Spatial Capacity Building. She is coordinator of the Living Lab 'The Other Market' and is part of the FP7 research project TRADERS. Together with Thomas Laureyssens she designed the participatory mapping tool MAP-it. She co-founded the research group Social Spaces.

REFERENCES

Albrechts, L., 2004. 'Strategic (spatial) Planning Re-examined'. *Environment and Planning B*, 31, 743-758.

AR-TUR, 2014. Cahier #2 *Wonen.* Verslaglegging van de activiteiten in het inspiratietraject wonen. Brave New Books.

Baser, H. & Morgan, P., 2008. *Capacity Change and Performance*. Maastricht: The European Centre for Development Policy Management.

Brandt, E., Binder, T., Sanders, E.B.-N., 2013. 'Tools and Techniques: Ways to Engage Telling, Making and Enacting, in: *Routledge International Handbook of Participatory Design*. Oxford: Routledge. pp.145-181.

Brown L., LaFond A., Macintyre K., 2001. *Measuring Capacity Building. MEASURE Evaluation Report*, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina.

De Bie, M., Oosterlynck, S. & De Blust, S., 2012. *Participatie, ontwerp en toe-eigening in een democratische stadsvernieuwing. In: Stadsvernieuwingsprojecten in Vlaanderen (2002-2011) : een eigenzinnige praktijk in Europees perspectief*. Brussel: ASP nv.

De Meulder, B., Schreurs, J., Cock, A. & Notteboom, B., 1999. 'Patching up the Belgian Urban Landscape'. *Oase*, 52, 78-113.

Hurenkamp, M., Tonkens, E. & Duyvendak, J., 2012. *Crafting Citizenship: Negotiating Tensions in Modern Society*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Janssens, P., 2012. 'De lange aanloop naar de wet'. *Ruimte*, 13, 12-17.

Kuhk, A., Schreurs, J. & Dehaene, M., 2015. 'Collective Learning Experiences in Planning: the Potential of Experimental Living Labs'. Paper presented at the 29th Annual AESOP Congress, July 13–16, Prague, Czech Republic.

Otoo, S., Agapitova, N. & Behrens, J., 2009. *The Capacity Development Results Framework A Strategic and Results-oriented Approach to Learning for Capacity Developmen*t. The World Bank Institute.

Reinhold, M., Meisterlin, L. & Kenoff, A., 2011. *The Buell Hypothesis: Rehousing the American Dream*. New York: Columbia University.

Robertson, T., Simonsen, J., 2013. 'Participatory Design: An Introduction', in: *Routledge International Handbook of Participatory Design*. Oxford: Routledge, 1-19.

Ruimte Vlaanderen, 1997. 'Ruimtelijk Structuurplan Vlaanderen'. Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap.

Ruimte Vlaanderen, 2016. Succes verkavelingen neemt af, steeds meer renovatie en appartementen. https://www.ruimtelijkeordening.be/NL/Diensten/Onderzoek/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/8945/Succes-verkavelingen-neemt-af-steeds-meer-renovatie-en-appartementen

Venhuizen, H., Landry, C. & van Westrenen, F., 2010. *Game Urbanism: Manual for Cultural Spatial Plannin*g. Amsterdam: Valiz.

Verbeek, T., Boussauw, K., & Pisman, A., 2014. 'Presence and Trends of Linear Sprawl: Explaining Ribbon Development in the North of Belgium'. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 128, 48–59.

Verity, F., 2007. *Community Capacity Building: A Review of the Literature*. Adelaide: Government of South Australia.

Voets, J. & De Peuter, B. i.s.m. SumResearch, Hogeschool voor Wetenschap en Kunst & Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, 2010. 'Evaluerend onderzoek naar de effectiviteit van de uitvoering van het ruimtelijk beleid in Vlaanderen. Voorbereidend onderzoek voor het Beleidsplan Ruimte'.

Winters, S., Ceulemans, W., Heylen, K., Pannecoucke, I., Vanderstraeten, L., Van den Broeck, K., De Decker, P., Ryckewaert, M. & Verbeeck, G., 2015. *Wonen In Vlaanderen* Anno 2013. Leuven: Steunpunt Wonen, HIVA.

DESIGN PROCESS AS POLITICAL POSSIBILITY

C. Mancke

ABSTRACT

What possibilities might collaborative design techniques taken
from architecture bring to informal political processes? This paper
speculates on the potential of a component of the architectural
design process, the project team design meeting, to function
as a model for developing political conversation in public or the
material performance of aspects of deliberative democracy. It looks
particularly at the ways that a ubiquitous prop of such meetings, the
table, might participate in such a model.

Spinning out from Marx's brief reference to table-turning, the paper
draws on Hannah Arendt, Bruno Latour and Jacques Rancière
to reflect on John R. Parkinson's argument that deliberative
democracy requires physical stages to function.
It considers projects by artists Barbara Holub and Suzanne Lacy
that have convened groups and/or used tables as stages for
political conversation or role-play. This paper forms part of ongoing
research into the capacity of artistic practices operating in and
about the public realm to generate alternative ways to think through
and produce structures that frame everyday life.

INTRODUCTION

How can we break through habitual patterns of thought and ways of engaging with each other that restrict our capacity to address the complex problems we face together? This paper is part of a broader project that considers how public space has been and/ or might be mobilised to generate alternative ways to think about and produce the built environment. Here, I speculate on the potential of a component of the architectural design process, the *project team design meeting*, to serve as a model for the enactment of informal aspects of deliberative democracy.

But why take something from the architectural design process? Architectural education is remarkable in that it encompasses graphic, spatial, verbal, numerical, sociological and psychological thinking: it takes in all aspects of everyday life and requires practitioners to represent the resulting ideas in a variety of media using different levels of precision, scale and temporality. Architects must consider law, policy, materials, environmental phenomena, social relations, power structures, history, aesthetics and politics. They must learn to think both strategically and tactically, to communicate with different kinds of people and to work collaboratively. Despite this remarkable training, architects rarely apply these skills outside the discipline. What would happen if people trained in this way were to engage more directly with political processes? What might their skills and techniques bring to a political table?

Project team design meetings are settings where hands-on social, spatial and material interactions produce opportunities for collective or collaborative thinking. Could this form also be applied to generate opportunities for collective thinking on matters of concern to a community if deployed in situations that are more public? What components of the form become important for a displacement into the public realm to be productive? In this paper, I place particular focus on one component which is a ubiquitous participant in such meetings, the table.

In the first chapter of *Capital*, Marx conjures up the image of the spiritualist's 'turning table' to illustrate his view of what happens when something is transformed into a commodity (1887:47). Spiritualists believed that a group gathered around a table could summon the spirit of the dead to commit acts in the realm of the living. An alternative reading might be that believers, gathered around a table and joining their thoughts and desires together, perform a form of collective thinking that might generate a force that could move the table. Throughout history, collective thinking has resulted in stories and abstractions that have become autonomously powerful forces in the world. Capitalism, operating through social exchange but seemingly without our conscious knowing or acting, is certainly among these. Bringing the image of the table as a material embodiment of capital to mind reminds us how capital underlies our endeavours and may prompt us to consider how some of the things we do, even those which are undoubtedly in the service of capital, such as architectural design, may hone skills that can be applied productively elsewhere.

BACKGROUND

This speculation proposes dis-placing the *project team design meeting* from of the world of design into the realm of deliberative democracy. What might this dis-placement of a model from one discipline into another produce? Could it result, as Hito Steyerl has written about montage:

> in something different between and outside these […], which would not represent a compromise, but would instead belong to a different order - roughly the way someone might tenaciously pound two dull stones together to create a spark in the darkness? (2002:5)

If we see public space as something that sits between the environment experienced by the individual and that considered by the planner

or designer: that is, seen both through phenomenological subjectivity and technological objectivity, then what spark might be produced if we were to pound the images of dancing tables, design meetings and public space together? Could the model of the *project team design meeting* be applied to the task of developing and enriching political conversation in public? Could it contribute to bringing politics into relief in public space?

The word 'politics' is slippery. We usually think first of electoral politics, governance or administration. For the purposes of this speculation, however, I use the simplest definition of politics found in the *American Heritage Dictionary*: **'**the often internally conflicting interrelationships among people in a society' (2016, online)**.**

Design processes rely on a belief in the possibility of technical solutions. Their application presupposes the possibility of reaching an ideal, or at least some kind of, solution, within a fixed period. Politics, on the other hand, is never 'solved' -- 'internally conflicting relations' can only be negotiated. Attempts to 'resolve' political conflict through technocratic governance and administration can be misplaced and even damaging. Is the same true for politics at the smaller scale, the politics of the everyday? This politics is located between the intimate and the public; between the family and the political party, demonstration or election. It lives in the place where 'interrelationships among people in a society' are actually negotiated. This intermediate zone is also where, I think, art operates or can have agency. A territory that is arguably undernourished in neo-liberal

societies,[1] it is a ground upon which our thought experiment might be meaningfully considered.

2. DEFINITION: PROJECT TEAM DESIGN MEETING

But what exactly do I mean by a *project team design meeting*, and what, in turn, are its characteristics that might inform our model? This is a meeting where an extended project team gathers in order to grapple with an aspect of a design project that needs working out. Such a meeting is part of an iterative process and is held a number of times during the development of a design. The focus may be extremely broad and conceptual or very narrow and detailed. The issue under discussion could be anything from a technical problem to a budget issue or a political strategy.

The team is usually comprised of a number of contractually linked consulting entities (companies or individuals) and the client body. A *project team design meeting* is a gathering of representatives of the relevant entities who each have a particular expertise about and responsibility for part of a project. Each attendee brings a specific perspective developed through their hands-on involvement. The meetings are best when informal and non-hierarchical, allowing attendees to pitch in when their knowledge is relevant.

Participants do not arrive empty handed. Arguably, the most important thing they bring is a commitment and readiness to think collaboratively. Each representative also

1 In Margaret Thatcher's famous words: 'There are individual men and women and there are families and no government can do anything except through people and people look to themselves first… There is no such thing as society. There is living tapestry of men and women and people and the beauty of that tapestry and the quality of our lives will depend upon how much each of us is prepared to take responsibility for ourselves and each of us prepared to turn round and help by our own efforts those who are unfortunate' (Internet, Coffee House: Margaret Thatcher in Quotes).

brings representations of the issue under discussion developed from their particular perspective. The things they bring will be in a variety of forms and may be laid out on a table and/or pinned up on surrounding walls. Ideally, all the work that has been done relating to the issue at hand is made visible in the space of the meeting.

Also in attendance are a great number of material participants, including the table, of course, the walls, the room, the prints, the push pins and tape, the models, sketches, notebooks, computers, lights, etc.: in other words, all the *things* that allow the meeting to take place and/or that function as extensions of the assembled thinking brains.

The *project team design meeting* has the following characteristics:

1. Individual participants are not necessarily experts *a priori* but rather because they are responsible for an aspect of the issue at hand.
2. The material placed on the table includes representations in a variety of media and physical and timescales. It is speculative rather than evidentiary: that is, made for the purpose of discovering issues and problems rather than proving anything.
3. The issues under discussion are made visible and public, allowing conflicts, gaps or incongruities to become apparent and noted, if not resolved.
4. The issue under discussion is seen simultaneously from different perspectives.
5. Participants engage in thinking collaboratively in real time. The goal is not consensus, but rather a fluid thinking together.
6. Because the various representations are distributed in space, thinking is spatialised and carried out performatively – moving around the space facilitates the development of shared understanding.
7. Ideally, such a meeting is non-hierarchical.
8. Individual meetings, and iterations of such meetings, over time can generate

a collective feeling -- a sense of being partners in a shared enterprise -- that serves to motivate participants to collaborate and becomes its own intrinsic reward for working together well.[2]

3.THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Hannah Arendt: the appearance of worldly reality and the vita activa

In *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt discerns three 'fundamental human activities: labo[u]r, work and action' (1998:7). *Labour* is what we do in order to survive. The result of bodily activity, it is transient, unceasing and leaves no product. Done with our hands, *work* on the other hand, transforms things into artefacts: trees and earth into tables, walls, buildings, cities, parks and technologies, etc. We build the world with our *work*, Arendt writes: 'fabricat[ing] the sheer unending variety of things whose sum total constitutes the human artifice' (1998:136). In her view, because they endure, the products of *work* serve to stabilise our life and in so doing allow us to participate in *action*, the third activity, which establishes the foundation of all political life (1998:7).

Arendt writes of our 'common world'; meaning not the natural world, but rather the world made up of the things we have made through our work and the 'affairs' of us who 'inhabit the man-made world together.' She sees this common world as both gathering us together and keeping us from falling over each other. Living together in the world 'means that a world of things is between those who have it in common, as a table is located between those who sit around it; the world, like every in-between, relates and separates men at the same time' (1998:52)**.** But Arendt believes that the common world only becomes a reality when all of the ways that it 'presents itself' are present at the same time.

---

2 This collective feeling, although it may not make tables turn, does sometimes quite literally, contribute to the moving of mountains.

Only where things can be seen by many in a variety of aspects without changing their identity, so that those who are gathered around them know they see sameness in utter diversity, can worldly reality truly and reliably appear (1998:57).

Arendt uses the image of a table with people seated around it to illustrate that the whole of human artifice – our 'common world' (represented by the table) – both holds us together and keeps us apart. If we take her image further and imagine the table as round and see ourselves seated around it, then we understand how we would each see things placed upon the table from a different perspective. Our table might therefore become a setting where Arendt's 'worldly reality' could appear, thus fulfilling the conditions for the emergence of *action* and of political life.

Jacques Rancière: dissensus and the (re-) distribution of the sensible

At the risk of greatly oversimplifying his critique of Arendt, I introduce Jacques Rancière's idea of a disagreement or 'dissensus' that divides the political sphere.

> […D]issensus is a conflict over the common itself […] not a quarrel over which solutions to apply to a situation but a dispute over the situation itself […] over which visible elements belong to what is common […]. Political dissensus is the division of perceptible givens themselves.' (Rancière, 2004:6).

Acknowledging dissensus compels us to think carefully about what is visible and what is concealed or obscured in the common world, and who has a share in it and who does not. 'Politics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time' (Rancière, quoted in Birrell, 2008). For

Rancière, paying attention to this 'partitioning'[3] of what can be perceived reveals the aesthetics at the heart of politics.

Artists, through their work, 'weave together a new sensory fabric by wresting percepts and affects from the perceptions and affections that make up the fabric of ordinary experience' (Rancière, 2011:55-56).

> Aesthetic experience has a political effect […]. What it produces is not rhetorical persuasion […nor] the framing of a collective body. It is a multiplication of connections and disconnections that reframe the relation between bodies, the world they live in and the way in which they are "equipped" to adapt to it. It is a multiplicity of folds and gaps in the fabric of common experience that change the cartography of the perceptible, the thinkable and the feasible. […I]t allows for new modes of political construction of common objects and new possibilities of collective enunciation.' (Rancière, 2011:72).

This resonates with my own experiences in some *project team design meetings*. Although less grand or more prosaic in impact, *project team design meetings* do sometimes generate connections and disconnections that change relations between all the actors in the space of the meeting and in that part of the world that they are convened to transform.

Although it is unclear whether Rancière sees the same capacity to re-distribute the sensible in the products of architecture or engineering as he does in artwork, the dis-placement of the *project team design meeting* and its table into the realm of political discussion, begs us to consider how these other ways of making things also participate in adjusting what is visible and concealed. It is important to reiterate, however, that design processes

3 *le partage du sensible*: although *partage* is usually translated as 'division' or 'sharing', the phrase is usually rendered in English as *the distribution of the sensible.*

aim for solutions - for resolving conflicting demands - something that is closer to consensus than dissensus. In Rancière's view, consensus erases the 'contestatory nature' of common life. In contrast, political action demands that we embrace disagreement, refute the givens of any situation and introduce subjects and objects that have been previously 'uncounted' (Rancière, 2004:7).

Bruno Latour: politics of things and assemblage and non-human actants

Bruno Latour argues that we need to pay attention to how objects participate in social networks. His actor-network theory prompts us to consider the ways in which objects and other non-human things act within assemblages that include us. Objects can make people do things, of course, but Latour argues that we must understand them as fully-fledged actors. A person may sit if there is a chair at a table, perhaps. And if she sits, she may relax, and if she relaxes, her mind may make an important connection that she may communicate to others at the table. Although it is easy to see that the table and chair play a role in this simple scenario, Latour's concept of the non-human actant also further and radically challenges the way we generally look at social interaction. With this perspective, it is possible to see, as Latour writes, that 'any course of action will rarely consist of human-to-human connections […] or object-object connections, but will probably zigzag form one to the other' (Latour, 2005:75). Latour's concept of the non-human actant begins to create a productive separation between 'human intentionality' and 'the idea of action' (Bennett, 2010:103).

Drawing on Arendt and Rancière, Latour also posits that anything that we fundamentally agree about, or that can be dealt with using existing rules and procedures, is private. Something becomes public only when it is contested, and this in turn generates the demand for politics. The need for politics thus emerges only when we don't know how to deal with something: that is, when our rules and protocols are inadequate.

In Latour's view, *things* divide us and become matters of concern. These constantly appear, gather publics around them and provoke politics to deal with them. This messy and disruptive process is one that politicians prefer to avoid, opting, instead of groping for new protocols, to focus on improving administration and governance. Latour sees a role for the arts in an alternative politics of *things*. Because 'reformatting occurs' in the arts, Latour argues that it is essential for the central role of the arts in democratic political processes to be recognised and supported. For Latour, matters of concern only become fully visible when scientific, political and artistic representations are deployed. Art, therefore, can help to bring representations of matters of concern to the table, to make them visible or audible and to contribute to the 'reformatting' required to find appropriate protocols for dealing with new situations (Cvejic, et.al., 2012:77).

John R Parkinson: democracy is performed

John R. Parkinson began the research for *Democracy and Public Space* when he found that democracy scholars generally did not include implications of physical space and the built environment in their research (Parkinson, 2012:viii). Deeply sceptical of arguments that in the digital age physical public spaces were no longer important for the functioning of democracy, Parkinson studied relations between democratic processes and physical space in thirteen cities around the world. He found politics to be a 'physical pursuit', something that is performed rather than 'built.' Democracy, he argues, requires *physical* stages, including public space, in order to function. He lists four roles that democracy requires its citizens to play: 'articulating interests, opinions, and experiences; making public claims […]; deciding what [… or what not] to do, to address public claims; and scrutinizing and giving account for public action and inaction' (Parkinson, 2012:36).

The first of these is important here. It takes place before any formal decision-making can occur. Parkinson writes that it involves 'narrating political issues with each other […

and] distributing opinions and story lines' (2012:39). He chooses his words carefully; *narration* not discussion, *distribution* not expression. He sees these activities as 'the very stuff of public discourse' (2012:29). This kind of thing already takes place informally wherever people meet, whether physically or virtually (2012:39), but capturing the variety of positions (2012:31), which in his view is essential, does not always happen organically. It may need to be helped along.

Where we talk about these things is also culturally determined, with important consequences. Parkinson draws on research by Cas Sunstein on group polarization,[4] to note that a taboo against talking about politics in many settings that is common in English-speaking countries, combined with an emphasis on the individual and the family, means that political subjects are usually only discussed among friends who share opinions. Fully free informal debate happens only when we are with 'the like-minded […] in isolated 'deliberative enclaves' rather than as fellow members of a single demos.' Parkinson points out that although this can be good for marginalized groups, research has shown that it tends to push views in each enclave to be more extreme because of the lack of the 'moderating influence' of alternative perspectives (2012:40).[5]

Therefore, we need settings where conflict can arise safely and narrations can be elicited from all parts of a society. Perhaps our model of the *project team design meeting* can be applied between private and public, as a technique for bringing isolated 'deliberative enclaves' together to enact or perform Parkinson's first role of deliberative democracy as a public activity. This is not to suggest that this would be a simple thing to do. The design process is a technical one where contractual

arrangements bring a team together, and where participants are legally bound to work together. Bringing together disparate groups and individuals to a table for collective thinking is a very different matter.

I turn now to two examples of the use of tables in contemporary art practices that have arguably involved enactments the first of Parkinson's roles.

4. EXAMPLES IN PRACTICE

The Missing Things (2014) transpara*diso*

The principals of transpara*diso*, Barbara Holub, an artist, and Paul Rajakovics, an architect and urbanist, practise what they call 'direct urbanism.' In Holub's words: '*direct urbanism* references direct action […] and means the incorporation of artistic strategies and art projects into socially and societally inclusive, long-term urban planning processes' (2015:21). transpara*diso*, responding to a call by the European Union National Institutes for Culture with the Bromo Arts and Entertainment District in Baltimore, Maryland, developed the idea of The First World Congress of the Missing Things which they held in June 2014.[6]

The project took place in the Lexington Market area of downtown Baltimore, a rundown area slated for redevelopment and therefore, in transpara*diso*'s words, 'loaded with expectations' for rising property values. The goal of the Congress was to return the public voice to the people inhabiting the inner city who, because of poverty, were often considered a problem by the local authority. The Congress would offer open access and take place in public space. transpara*diso* designed a system of modular tables[7] that

---

4 Sunstein, C., 2002. The law of group polarization. In Journal of Political Philosophy 10 (2):175–95.

5 Some worrying consequences of this became painfully apparent in both the 2016 US presidential and UK Brexit referendum campaigns.

6 See http://www.missingthings.org

7 transparadiso has used 'soothing tables' in their earlier work: 'The growing structures and adaptable dimensions of the soothing table occupy territory on a temporary base and enable non-hierarchical communication. The soothing table challenges profit driven regeneration processes, confronts situations of conflict and accompanies urban interventions by offering unexpected pleasure and new visions' (transparadiso, 2008).

Missing Things

walking around for candies	1	# 48	unmediated experience
time keeping	2	# 49	generosity and simplicity
redistribution of wealth	3	# 50	help as a disabled citizen in America
peace is a need	4	# 51	a good Tex Mex restaurant
good taste	5	# 52	benefits made available for the displaced / missing people
(un)balance	6	# 53	a not over-regulated public space
spaces free of fear	7	# 54	La Vida (life)
children playing on their own	8	# 55	replace prevalent surveillance practices with affirmative, dialogic communicative practices
legalize access to vacant space	9	#	
tax breaks for local and small businesses	10	# 56	free access to the high quality education
allow DIY venues to continue DIY	11	# 57	tutors for children
Americans daring to be political	12	# 58	wind and solar energy for our house
swimmable Inner Harbor	13	# 59	more God
jobs for adolescents to prevent them from creating violence	14	# 60	honest politicians
affordable housing and living wages	15	#	
„site"-lines to history (sightlines)	16	#	
vibrant public life	17	#	
non-athletic public venue for aggression, unrelated to productivity	18	#	
celebrating in public space	19	#	
appreciation of manual work	20	#	
empathy, compassion, friendliness	21	#	
transparency in government	22	#	
homes for the homeless, food for the hungry	23	#	
a state's attorney who will prosecute killer cops	24	#	
recreation centers for the youth	25	#	
equal opportunity	26	#	
a government that's not for sale	27	#	
the 28th Amendment	28	#	
a subway that goes somewhere	29	#	
unbiased journalism	30	#	
green spaces, solar energy, good tasting city water	31	#	
tourist attractions that average people can afford to go to	32	#	
an overall plan	33	#	
olfactory perception	34	#	
functioning, contemporary & user-friendly infrastructure	35	#	
move jobs for ex-offenders	36	#	
programs for the ex-convicts and housing	37	#	
housing for the homeless	38	#	
fixing of the housing neighborhood	39	#	
better lighting on the streets of Baltimore	40	#	
safety awareness for the public	41	#	
honesty	42	#	
food system that links people to local, seasonal produce	43	#	
stop police brutality	44	#	
functioning, contemporary & user-friendly infrastructure	45	#	
prescription drugs	46	#	
respect for the merchants	47	#	

Figure 1. 'Rhizomatic' tables: First World Congress of the Missing Things (online).

could be arranged in what they called a 'rhizome' setting which they believed would foster 'non-hierarchical dialogue'.

The tables were long thin rectangles, some with one or both ends angled in such a way that they could be arranged into a series of long snaking tables or three-pronged stars. This combined array allowed the tables to be laid out in counterpoint to a line of columns. Three folding chairs were arranged along the sides of each tables, allowing at least six people at any one. The tabletops were a thick board finished in white and supported by lightweight metal diagonal frames. The tables were not standard or familiar, but were apparently made for this particular event. Their design and materialisation communicated provisionality and mobility. The tables and their particular arrangement invited temporary participation, which, because of their relative narrowness, necessitated engagement and conversation with the organisers and any other people sitting there.

Local inhabitants were invited to submit their issues as 'missing things' through a call-out:

> The First World Congress of the Missing Things' asks the public – YOU – to submit whatever you consider "missing" in your daily private or public life. Your submissions will become topics for discussion […] at this unconventional congress directed by you— the people of Baltimore. […] the Congress emphasizes the democratic right of participating in public decision-making and in shaping our society. 'missing things' are up to your interpretation – no matter how personal or public, poetic, desperate or utopian they might be (Holub and Rajakovic, online).

Over sixty missing things were submitted and transpara*diso* highlighted creative responses to each through activities incorporated into the congress programme. A 'charter of the missing things' was handed over to the mayor at the closing ceremony. The Congress created a stage for the enactment of informal activities

of deliberative democracy that precede formal politics, corresponding to Parkinson's first role. Parkinson argues that whilst in the early stages of deliberative democracy when narratives 'about experiences of conflict over collective resources, the impacts of public decisions, normative claims about what should be done to whom' etc. are generated, opportunities for wild, loose, informal discourse are important. However, it is also key, he argues, that 'formal agenda-setting processes that capture the variety of narratives' be in place such that the narratives can be fed into formal political processes. (Parkinson, 2012:29).

This last point is one of the issues raised by the Congress. What happens next? transpara*diso*'s project began to act in the gap between the individual and formal political processes and, interestingly for us, incorporated some of the characteristics of a *project team design meeting*. Specifically, the individual participants were experts because of their experience; the issues were made public; the issues were narrated from different perspectives; the event encouraged thinking collaboratively in real time through conversation, narration and dialogue; thinking was spatialised and carried out collectively and performatively; the Congress was non-hierarchical; the goal was not consensus, but rather collective thinking and finally, the event seems to have engendered a shared or collective feeling.

Storying Rape (2012), Suzanne Lacy

I encountered Suzanne Lacy's film *Storying Rape* (made with Corey Madden) at the 2012 Liverpool Biennial. Originally commissioned by Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, the film documents a 'performative conversation' that took place at Los Angeles City Hall in January 2012. As well as screening the film at the biennial, Lacy and Madden coordinated a series of conversations among young people, politicians, and community leaders on the topics of rape and domestic violence in different locations around the city of Liverpool, and published a two-page newspaper insert advocating policy changes (Lacy, online).

Figure 2. Table reflecting light: *Storying Rape* (Lacy, online)

Figure 3. Table denotes meeting: SFO project team design
meeting (video still)

The performed conversation explored a variety of 'narratives on rape in an effort to abate the crime' and was accompanied by a social media campaign (Lacy, online). Lacy has produced a number of projects about rape. During the first, *Three Weeks in May* (1977), Lacy and her collaborators collected daily reports of rape from the LA Police and recorded them on a large map of the city set up in a shopping centre. They also held over thirty other events as part of the project. *Storying Rape* was part of a re-enactment of the 1977 project titled *Three Weeks in January* (2012). Also taking place in Los Angeles, the 2012 event focused on the anti-rape movement, included fifty events and incorporated a social media campaign. Again, a map, this time installed outside the police department, was marked with the daily rape reports (Lacy, online).

The conversation performed for *Storying Rape* takes place among seven women and two men seated around a white table. It is filmed primarily from standing eye-level as an overview with occasional close-ups of participants when they are speaking. Each participant has their own microphone and their names printed on pieces of paper folded to be visible to each other. One of the men is a uniformed police officer, but the viewer does not know who the others are until they speak. They are victims, activists, journalists, politicians and scholars. A passive audience sits in chairs arranged around the table in the dark fringes of the space.

Lacy has often used tables and groups of tables combined in tableaus as formal components in her work.[8] The table used in *Staging Rape* is simple, square, white and a little bit small so that the nine participants feel tightly grouped together. Its surface supports nine microphones in stands, water bottles, folded name cards and the participants' notes on sheets of white and yellow paper. A round hole in the centre allows the wires to

make an aesthetically pleasing wiggly star as they disappear. The surface is lit, creating a 'circle' of light that illuminates the faces of the participants.

As a performance that has been staged for recording, <u>*Storying Rape*</u> does not appear to have much in common with a *project team design meeting*. As a method of informal politics, however, it resonates with our model in a number of ways. First, it very deliberately presents nine different points of view. Second, it brings together people who have become experts through their work. And third, it seeks to gather a public in order to bring an issue to more formal political venues. Additionally, in theory at least, its social media component projects the performative conversation outward to trigger informal and organic narrations in other public and private settings. The work raises many questions. Perhaps the most relevant here is: does the work's presentation at an art festival help it to achieve its inherent political ambitions? Does it matter?[9]

5. CONCLUSIONS

Storying Rape and The Missing Things are very different, but they share an intention to mobilise conversation in the service of bringing attention to issues of concern. Both transpara*diso* and Lacy understand themselves to be operating within the context of collaborative art practice. In each project, tables act as props to create settings for the performance of conversation and narration. Both projects assembled a group of 'experts' tasked with giving voice to different points of view around a matter of concern in public, to call for politics to emerge and to participate in the staging of informal deliberative democracy in a public space. Both projects also deploy strategies that are found in *project team design meetings*.

8 Perhaps most notably in <u>The Crystal Quilt</u> (1985-87) and <u>Silver Action</u> (2013).

9 As part of her introductory words at a master class I attended in San Francisco in May 2016, Suzanne Lacy stated that she understood her audience to be her collaborators and the art world.

In each of these situations, the tables are active participants. In the case of *The Missing Things* the tables stake out a space, create the image, call attention to the event, present an invitation for participation and create eddies of attraction and activity that spread outward in the space. In *Storying Rape*, the table draws the action in, organising wires, microphones, papers, chairs and light, as well as bodies and words. It cements the scene and establishes the lasting image.

There is not space here to fully consider these two examples in relation to the many other representatives of socio-spatial art practices that have used tables either to bring everyday relational activities into galleries or to create explicitly political spaces in other settings.[10] Although far from exhaustive, this speculation reveals interesting possibilities, new questions and potential methodological pitfalls. It identifies the potential centrality of the table, through its ability to both relate and separate, to the discourse around the 'internally conflicting relations' that politics deals with. It also highlights the richness of allusion and metaphor that a table can bring to performative settings. The question remains, however, that even in suggesting potential strategies for performative, practice-based research around the material staging of democracy, how powerfully can the table create opportunities to bring informal political conversation into stronger relief in public space?

10 Such as work by Rirkit Tiravanija and Lucy Orta and others that invoke hospitality and conviviality, sharing meals and/or prompting conversation. Art practices that create explicitly political spaces using constructions and tables such as Thomas Hirshhorn's monument series and more overtly, Jonas Staal's New World Summit among others.

BIOGRAPHY

An artist, architect and educator with over thirty years'
professional experience, Carol Mancke practises
at the intersection of art and cities by intervening in
situations of everyday life. She is the founding director
of Machina Loci, and a PhD candidate in Fine Art at
the Royal College of Art.

REFERENCES

Arendt, H., 1998. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bennett, J., 2010. *Vibrant Matter A Political Ecology of Things.* Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press.

Berrebi, S., Wright, S., Dronsfield, J. and Rancière, J., 2008. An Exchange with Jacques Rancière. *Art & Research*, 2(1).

Birrell, R., 2008. Jacques Rancière and The (Re)Distribution of the Sensible: Five Lessons in Artistic Research, *Art & Research.* 2(1).

Cvejic, B., Popivoda, M., and Vujanovic, A., 2012. 'A Conversation with Bruno Latour', TkH 20: ART AND THE PUBLIC GOOD, *TkH Journal for Performing Arts Theory,* 20, June.

Holub, B. and Hohenbücher, C., eds., 2015. *Planning Unplanned: Towards a New Function in Society.* Vienna: VfmK Verlag fur modern Kunst.

Holub, B. and Rajakovic, *P. Portfolio* [Online], Available at: <www. transparadiso.com/cms/uploads/media/ Portfolio_Barbara_Holub_w.pdf > [Accessed February 2016].

Lacy, S., Recent works [Online], Available at <http://www.suzannelacy.com/recent-works/#/storying-rape/> [Accessed March 2016].

Latour, B., 2005. *Reassembling the Social An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. *Margaret Thatcher in Quotes* [Online], Available at <http://blogs.spectator. co.uk/2013/04/margaret-thatcher-in-quotes/> [Accessed April 2016].

Marx, K., 1887. 'Book One: The Process of Production of Capital', in Engels, F. ed., *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy.* Moscow: Progress Publishers. Parkinson, J.R., 2012. *Democracy and Public Space: The Physical Sites of Democratic Performance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rancière, J., 2004. 'Introducing Disagreement', *Angelaki Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, 9(3), 3-8.

Rancière, J., 2011. *The Emancipated Spectator.* London, New York: Verso.

Steyerl, H., 2002. *The Articulation of Protest* [Online]. Available at <http:// republicart.net/disc/mundial/steyerl02_ en.htm> [Accessed March 2016] *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 2016 [Online]. Available at <https://www. ahdictionary.com/> [Accessed March 2016].

Transparadiso, 2008. *Initiative and Institution* [Online]. Available at <http:// www.initiativeandinstitution.net/index. html@p=68.html> [Accessed March 2016]. *1st Congress of the Missing Things* [Online]. Available at <http://www. missingthings.org> {Accessed March 2016].

VISUALISING MULTIVOCALITY THROUGH PARTICIPATORY PAINTING

A. Mlicka

ABSTRACT

How can the visualisation of spatial ideas incorporate various perspectives as a way of bringing multivocality into the design thinking process? The problem of pseudo-participation arises when citizens are presented with ready-made images produced by spatial experts. Instead, this paper suggests that participatory painting can facilitate sense-making processes by engaging experts and non-experts in a verbal–visual dialogue to share ideas, negotiate and imagine alternative possibilities together. Rather than producing artworks, this art-based approach aims to create an accessible and democratic visual platform for interaction. The method has been explored through a practice-led research project consisting of 26 workshops with a diversity of actors (spatial experts and non-experts, yet stakeholders in space), and groups of architecture students. Based on feedback and critical reflection on the iterative process, five criteria emerged to explain how and why the participatory painting method enhances multivocality: unfamiliarity, diversity, context, ambiguity and low technology. Based on these criteria, it is suggested that the plasticity of the method is key to bringing multiple views into the design process. The relevance of the participatory painting method is, however, dependent on the skills and intent of the visual facilitator who has to be responsive to the given context and the needs of the participants.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of multivocality in the field of spatial production concerns the inclusion of diverse voices in the various stages of the co-creation process. How does such multivocality translate into the visualisation process? Images are key in the communication of spatial plans and ideas. Yet, whereas participation is about dialogue and discourse, their visualisation remains in the hands of spatial experts (such as architects, urban planners and designers) because they are skilled in image production. This situation can lead to pseudo-participation when, for example, the public is merely asked to discuss or vote on a readily presented visualisation rather than contributing to envisioning the future together (Till, 2005:23). The question addressed in this paper is how multiple perspectives can directly influence such image production, as a process of imagining alternative possibilities together.

The research project presented here investigated participatory painting as a discursive method, taking place in parallel to dialogue, through workshops with participants. This idea that participatory painting could enhance multivocality emerged in the second iteration of the research. It resulted from critical reflection on the first iteration, in which I explored how a painting, through its aesthetics and display, could reflect the diverging perspectives of various stakeholders in urban redevelopment. Traditionally, the visualisation of space (whether a painting or an architectural drawing) is understood as the vision of a sole artist or architect. Yet it has been argued that the contingent nature of architecture – its dependence on people, use and time – cannot be summoned up in a single system of representation, it can only be inscribed in the communicative stages of architectural production (Till, 2009). Painters have nevertheless attempted to reflect spatial production through painting, in some cases rejecting the vertical plane in favour of other painterly approaches. In such practices 'painting no longer exists as a strictly circumscribed mode of expression; rather, it is a zone of contagion, constantly branching out and widening its scope' (Birnbaum, 2002:157–

58). Anne Ring Petersen observed that this has shifted the attention 'from the limitations of painting to its possibilities when people recognised that painting can function as a flexible medium in keeping with the times and on a par with the new media' (2012:70). As a result, she notes, painters are increasingly engaged in creating spatial works with distinct painterly properties. The third iteration of the research project built upon such new accounts of contemporary painting by expanding it further into the field of spatial co-design and participatory practice. This paper shows the insights from this final stage, explaining why participatory painting facilitates bringing a diversity of perspectives into the picture.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The notion of multivocality is embedded in the principles of participation. This is a question of participation's effectiveness – how it is achieved, and what it achieves – which is called by some the negotiation of hope and by others a nightmare (respectively, Till, 2005; Miessen, 2010). Yet both sides of the debate agree that proactive participation can become meaningful by paying attention to attitude, relevance and responsibility. It is in particular the notion of relevance that is important in the light of multivocality. Jeremy Till suggests that a project's relevance stems from the engagement of multiple voices of insiders, those who are involved in the making, occupation and reception of the spatial environment (2011:165, 168). If the participant's voice is neglected, he notes, participation is simply an individual's obsession and often results in pseudo-participation. His perspective is informed by Carole Pateman's writing on the role of participation in democratic theory. Pateman (1970) offers a critique of the contemporary view of democracy, defined as representative democracy, in which (ideally minimal) participation (by the educated elite) to choose representatives is a means of protecting the democratic system. She sides with the earlier notions of participatory democracy (defined by Rousseau, John Stuart Mill and G. D. H. Cole)

which aim to educate all citizens to participate in democratic structures, ideally present in all possible spheres of life.

Such ideological notions of participation raise the crucial question of which methods and approaches can achieve this in practice. Till argues that '[i]n order to achieve transformative participation, it is … necessary to look for a new model of communication', such as storytelling, as a way of being based in reality while looking for imaginative possibilities (2005:37). Yet mere conversation is not enough for multivocality to thrive, as verbal communication has many obstacles to full inclusion and real engagement. It depends on the attitude of the experts, who 'initiate the communication on their own terms, circumscribing the process through professionally coded drawings and language' (Till 2005:28). Aside from rhetoric and jargon, which can also be present in image production and perpetuate unequal power relationships, the question is whether experts act upon what they hear. Purely verbal communication can be forgotten and ignored, if it is not recorded and responded to. Methods for co-creation, on the other hand, enable all stakeholders to visualise, materialise or enact ideas, thereby making them more solid and present so that experts can act upon them.

The field of co-design offers a discussion of such alternative methods of participation. Within this debate, most prolifically led by Eva Brandt, Thomas Binder and Elizabeth B.-N. Sanders, there is a productive synergy between the questions of what to achieve and how to achieve it. They argue that 'participatory tools and techniques can be seen as the scaffolding for the temporary community of practice in the making' (Brandt et al., 2012:148), but they have to be focused on the problems at hand so that their employment within the participatory process can lead to engagement, a shared aim and a sense of ownership over the outcome. It similarly reflects the notion of relevance as the key to participation. They suggest that, in order to make the tools and techniques relevant for participatory action, one has

to be sensitive to the coherence of telling, making and enacting. These are the three distinct approaches, identified by Brandt et al., through which emerging communities gain presence in the world: the telling of stories, the making of things and the enactment of possible futures. Yet as practice proves, it is not always clear at the outset which approach is most relevant for a given situation. In fact, the most productive approach emerges from the interaction itself. Hence a method has to be flexible enough to allow for switching between the three modes of engagement, to meet the needs of the participants.

To develop painting as a flexible method, which could be employed in the negotiation of space by diverse actors, requires a shift in how painting is evaluated. In this research, painting is understood as a collaborative process rather than the production of an artwork. The outcome is not necessarily the image itself, but the insights that emerged out of the act of painting and the social relationships that developed through working together. The method is therefore aligned with dialogic art practice that aims to challenge preconceptions through dialogue, which leads to empathy and solidarity (Kester, 2004). Dialogic art enables us to see the world anew 'through a cumulative process of exchange and dialogue rather than a single instantaneous shock of insights precipitated by an object' (Kester 2005:80). Art practices that prioritise dialogue and human relationships require different criteria for evaluation than conventional aesthetics, criteria which are concerned with ethics (Bishop, 2006). The question of relevance of an art practice (to those participating in it) is one such ethical concern. To ask such new questions of painting means understanding painting as a critical and engaged project (Schwabsky, 2010), requiring a radical shift away from the conventional view of painting as a commodity.

3. METHODOLOGY

The practice-led research project consisted of 26 workshops (each of around two hours), which were realised in two phases. In the first phase, sessions took place one-to-one and the topic of the conversation was set by the participants (see Table 1). Six out of 15 sessions addressed public space, whereas the other sessions concerned the design of actual or imagined private space. The participants came from diverse professional backgrounds and their interest in public/private space ranged from expert knowledge to personal concern, with each individual offering a different perspective on how space is produced. It proved too simplistic to distinguish between experts and non-experts – each being a spatial stakeholder in their own right. Instead I observed that there are varying levels of agency.

The second phase of 11 sessions took place with small groups of architecture students, and one workshop was organised as part of a conference on public space (see Table 2). The discussions with students concerned their course design projects, primarily about the development of public spaces for Florence, London and New York. The conference workshop had five participants with both academic and non-academic interest in the creation of public space. As the second phase involved engaging multiple perspectives and was directly related to public space, it is brought to the foreground in this paper. The first phase still provided necessary insights into how actors with no experience of visualisation can nevertheless contribute to thinking visually about spatial development.

The research methodology is based on symbolic constructivism as defined by David Barry (1996). He explains symbolic constructivism as 'a qualitative research approach which uses artlike, non-routine portrayal (e.g., sculpture, photographs, drawing, dramatization, etc.) to elicit, challenge, and shift existing sensemaking frameworks' (1996:411). Aside from the use of symbols that act as gateways to

other understandings, Barry notes that '[m]etaphoric portrayal and discussion can allow otherwise hard-to-discuss subjects to be broached as well as being powerful devices for facilitating transformation' (1996:417). Facilitating transformation entails a multifaceted, if not ambiguous, role of the researcher: 'The researcher may end up acting as interviewer, interviewee, theorist, creative director, materials expert, aesthete, hand-holding confidence booster, empathetic listener, and occasionally therapist …' (1996:413). As artist–researcher, my role in the sessions was primarily as facilitator with three objectives: to give participants time and space to exchange stories and knowledge; to reveal contradictions and mediate between the differing positions; and to facilitate better collaboration through the visualisation as well as through active listening and questioning (sometimes involving role playing). Just like the other participants, however, I was an active participant in the conversation, contributing my own situated, expert and embodied knowledge depending on the given context. The trajectory of the discussion indicated the particular role I had to play in order to bring the session to the next level. In doing so, I adopted the view that

> [a]gents act with intent but that intent is necessarily shaped and reshaped by the context within which the agent is working. An agent's action is guided by an initial transformative intent, but because of the dynamics of the structural context, that intent has to be responsive and flexible. (Awan et al., 2011:31)

As argued by Jeremy Till, 'relevance … goes hand in hand with intent', which ultimately is the responsibility towards the other (2011:166). In the case of the sessions, the transformative intent is to bring all participants, through the verbal and visual interaction, to a higher level of understanding – instigating a process of 'transformative learning' (Graham Cagney, 2014). As observed in the practice, the three stages that a session can go through are sense-making, confrontation

Table 1 First phase, sessions 1–15

	Participants	**Discussion**
1	Caroline (engineer and artist)	The design of a thinking space for her creative practice
2	Sophie (academic)	The architectural style and location of her future house
3	Peter (councillor)	The effectiveness of public space and infrastructure
4	Jane (painter)	Living in different cities and vernacular architecture
5	Helen (architect and academic)	The discipline of architecture and her housing situation
6	Rose (artist)	Working as artist/architect and urban interventions
7	Jack (property developer)	The relationship between developers and architects
8	Elizabeth (psychologist)	The renovation of her house
9	Arianna (psychologist), Lorenzo (handyman)	The design of their garden in the countryside
10	Andrew (architect)	The concepts underlying the design of his house
11	John (architect), Monica (hospital manager)	The design of an imaginary future house
12	William (solicitor)	The conservation of his ancestral home in a ruined village
13	Matthew (architect)	His design of a church that has been realised and is used by the congregation and larger community
14	Terence (pastor)	His experience of the church designed by Matthew (13)
15	Gilbert (academic)	The move to a new city and the change of lifestyle

Table 2 Second phase, sessions 16–26

	Participants	**Discussion**
16	Benedetta, Tomas (students)	The development of a natural site outside Florence
17	Paola, Maria (students)	The development of a natural site outside Florence
18	Emanuele, Giovanni (students)	The design of a museum for Roosevelt Island in Manhattan, New York
19	Anna, Caterina, Ilaria (students)	The design of a building and redevelopment of a neighbourhood in east London
20	Giada, Mark (students)	The design of a building and redevelopment of a neighbourhood in east London
21	Ylenia, Mario (students)	The design of a building and redevelopment of a neighbourhood in east London
22	Edoardo, Marcus (students)	The development of the Olympic legacy in East London, in particular the development of Fish Island
23	Emanuele, Giovanni, Micol (students)	The design of a museum for Roosevelt Island in Manhattan, New York
24	Edoardo, Marcus, Valerio (students)	The development of the Olympic legacy in East London, in particular the development of Fish Island
25	Giulia, Sara, Alessandro, Marco, Grace, Luisa (four students from different design groups, one teacher)	The repurposing of the Sant' Orsola complex, a large building in the centre of Florence
26	Luigi, Federico, Tommaso, Letizia, Antonio (attendees of the Public Space conference: three academics and two community representatives)	The development of a successful public space. We discussed, in particular, the significance of 'our street, our choice', which is the slogan of the Social Street movement in Bologna.

and negotiation, and finally collaboration (reflecting the previously stated objectives). All stages benefit from proactive involvement of all participants, as multiple voices invoke a dynamic interaction and stimulate the discussion. The main goal of the sessions is then to create the best possible framework for participation.

Symbolic constructivism is based on an intersubjective approach instead of the more common standard interpretation on the researcher's part (Barry 1996:412). Hence, analysis of the practice is based on an intersubjective reflection, taking into consideration participant feedback and critical reflection on action (Schön, 1983; Cowan, 2006). Participants were asked for feedback through an online questionnaire, and in several cases we reflected together on the collaborative process immediately after the meeting. A video of each session was used as an aide-memoire to retrace and analyse how the conversation and painting developed.

4. INSIGHTS

From the analysis of the sessions, and in relation to the concept of relevance, the notion of plasticity emerged as a way to explain how and why collaborative painting enhances multivocality. The term plasticity is not just suitable because of the plastic nature of the medium, but also to indicate the painting method's overall flexibility to address diversity. Based on the analysis, I have identified five criteria that underpin the plasticity of the method. These criteria are: unfamiliarity, diversity, context, ambiguity and low technology. What follows is a brief explanation of each category through references to observations of the sessions and feedback from participants.

4.1 UNFAMILIARITY

The relative unfamiliarity of painting enables the development of a shared language between participants. By offering a technique of visualisation that is less familiar to both

spatial experts and non-experts, there is scope to bring about a more equal platform for interaction. This was most clearly discernible in session 11 with John and Monica, respectively an architect and a hospital manager, who chose to imagine their future house in this session (Figure 1). I observed how the use of painting combined with my approach to facilitating the conversation created a platform where Monica could contribute her tacit knowledge, as opposed to the expert knowledge of her husband. The method empowered her to co-design their future house, whereas she would have been excluded from the process if we had used (architectural) drawing. This initial assumption was confirmed when, after the session, the architect explained that he would have approached this task with a sharp pencil and a small sheet of paper. In situations where architects work with future users who have no knowledge of 'visual jargon', painting might offer a more inclusive approach to imagining new spaces. This example shows, furthermore, how the role of the facilitator might become that of mediator when conflicting views arise during the discussion. It requires specific skills from the facilitator to create an atmosphere where all participants can express their hopes and concerns.

The feedback from the architecture students shows further evidence that painting enabled them to collaborate better and to clarify their positions. Painting offered students a large-scale platform where they could visualise simultaneously and without spatial limitations. Several students (e.g. session 22) noted that working on a large sheet was very useful for collaboration, as the small (and more personal) notebooks or A4 paper did not allow them to create together. Facilitating the meeting involves asking each participant to contribute visually, to address imbalances in groups where some students are better at visualising and, as a result, might dominate the decision-making process. Such a problem revealed itself in session 24, and was an obstacle to the collaboration between the students. By addressing this within the session, and by offering an innovative visual approach to

bringing all three design ideas together, the students were able to communicate better and create a much more original design. In reflection on this session, one student wrote:

> Both sessions have been very useful in regards to the negotiation within the group. Before the session I did not understand many of the ideas of the other guys, luckily the sessions helped me to realise that I had imposed a lot of things that not everyone liked. I think that after the painting we got to a point where the final design appealed and had a bit of each member of the group. (session 24)

The unfamiliarity with the tools and techniques appeared problematic to participants at first, and some suggested having a short introduction to the tools and techniques at the beginning. While such a brief explanation is helpful to disperse initial uncertainties, participants noted that the sessions were easy-going and enjoyable. This aspect of enjoyment in participatory practice should not be underestimated, because it opens up a social space for a dynamic interaction where all participants feel invited to bring in their voice and views.

4.2 DIVERSITY

There are several features inherent in painting that make it possible to translate diversity into a polyphonic outcome. In contrast to other participatory methods, such as the use of boundary objects, painting does not consist of prefabricated elements, which means that various forms of expression become possible. Participants can create their own visual expression and there is scope to use additional materials. In session 1, 2 and 12, the use of additional materials – attaching a string, transparent film or a used palette to the canvas – enabled participants to find creative solutions and shortcuts to expressing complex ideas. The second phase did not take place in my studio where additional materials could be found, so there was less opportunity for

experimentation. Nevertheless, the spontaneity of some participants resulted in other playful approaches such as painting with the hands (session 23). Arguably, the introduction of new materials raises the question of painting's boundaries – is it still painting? This ontological question has, however, situated painting practice within the autonomous grasp of the fine art paradigm. It is counterproductive in a practice where the ultimate goal is to facilitate participation. The priority is, therefore, to offer a way of working that is flexible in order to accommodate various points of view and diverse modes of expression.

At play are also certain associations that participants have with painting as a means of self-expression without words. It is based on painting's longstanding history of styles and movements, through which both society and also the inner world of the artist were explored. I observed in the sessions how some students tried various styles to find the best way of visualising something that was not easily captured in words. Emanuele, in session 18, preferred to paint without joining the conversation. His expressive painting revealed his attitude to architecture, as became apparent later on in our discussion, where the architect is an artist creating his masterwork. The act of visualisation reveals people's attitudes quickly, whereas verbal communication can obscure one's intent when adapting to conventions through, for example, formulaic expressions. In group work, diverse attitudes can become points for discussion when they are envisaged. The associations with painting are, furthermore, positive for many students as they reach back to childhood memories – painting is experienced as liberating, stimulating and fun to experiment with. The following statement reflects feedback from several students: 'I have not done it for some time. It was like turning into a child again. Initially I was not very comfortable, then I got [a] taste for it and I enjoyed expressing myself with ease' (session 23).

There are also medium-specific qualities of painting that enable participants to express out-of-the-box ideas. One of these qualities

Figure 1 Video still from recording of session 11

2

3

Figure 2 Video still from recording of session 26

Figure 3 Video still from recording of session 25

is the availability of colour, which gives expression to, for example, emotions and concept-coding. One student noted that '[d]rawing with pencil is useful, but it is mono-colour and monotone. The colours form the real expression of what happens in a creative mind' (session 23). The other student from this session stated that '[i]t allows you to become more intelligent and to make decisions more intelligently, using both the right and the left hemisphere, being able to converse with our emotions and at the same time to analytically find new and fresh solutions that are aligned with the concept of the initial project.' The possibility of layering adds another way of building upon previous ideas: 'Another very positive point was the fact that the painting could have diverse layers, namely, to paint over things already painted, to change' (session 24). Whereas traditionally these medium-specific qualities would be brought into a discussion of aesthetics, here they serve as valuable 'plastic' features to express diverse approaches and perspectives.

4.3 CONTEXT

In the sessions, painting is about discussing the larger context of spatial production, beyond physical appearances and architectural form. The painting functions as a kind of diagram (merging various styles of visualisation such as mapping, symbolic representation and visual brainstorming) in order to address and visualise the social, economic and political context of a spatial project. Whereas students are taught to separate spatial information, most often using transparent sheets, the painting brings these contexts together and into relationship with one another. A student wrote that '[m]aybe this method makes you think about the whole context and the various connections and think outside the box' (session 19). In terms of the students' future work as architects, finding ways of analysing the context is necessary to develop empathetic identification with (future) users and local citizens. This was reflected in the comment: 'The session opened our eyes on a number of matters which hadn't crossed

our mind prior to our meeting. Instead of only thinking from an architect's point of view, the session challenged us to think of how people in the area would actually respond to certain strategies and design choices' (session 20).

In terms of multivocality, collaborative painting offers a space for separate positions to collide, which is inevitable when diverse actors have to work together. This was the case in session 26, where three academics (from different fields) and two community representatives attempted to discuss how public space functions (Figure 2). Their manner of speech (monologues without active listening) did not bring about full interaction, but the painting forced the participants to find connections between their disparate observations. Although it was a challenging session, some form of dialogue came about and the painting attests to the conflicting, yet coexisting notions of public space. It exemplifies well how public space, for it to become a space of encounter, can benefit from having the means to develop a shared language. Seeking a shared language does not mean that consensus is sought. Rather, it means that participants show an inclination to make sense of their differing perspectives by verbally and visually responding to each other. This is about confronting differences and negotiating points of conflict, out of which new or alternative approaches can emerge for further collaboration.

4.4 AMBIGUITY

Ambiguity shifts the emphasis away from fixed solutions to speculative, imaginative opportunities. The visual communication adds another level to the verbal communication, which is primarily concerned with rational thought. The irrational and unspoken can, however, offer unexpected insights and new ideas. The sessions give this opportunity to explore the ambiguity of the brush stroke, as opposed to the intentional line of writing and drawing in an architect's practice. It requires explaining to students that mark-making can be vague, and it encourages them in

watching others paint, asking questions and listening actively to engage with others. This sets in motion a negotiation of positions, in the process achieving a deeper understanding of one's own direction. As one student put it: 'It was a democratic element to respect the different positions and to find together a common path to a higher level of awareness' (session 23).

There were a couple of sessions, however, in which the ambiguity was not anticipated by the participants and therefore not appreciated. Sophie (session 2) preferred to discuss architectural space by drawing the floor plan of her imaginary future home. In her feedback, she stated that the painting had little artistic merit and that the session lacked focus because we discussed adjacencies. In the session with the property developer (session 7), this had the effect that, rather than discussing his favourite architectural styles by painting buildings, we moved deeper into the working relationships he has with other spatial stakeholders through an abstract rendering. We both gained new insights from this unexpected trajectory. I would suggest, then, that the ambiguity of painting can stimulate the development of multiple perspectives within an individual, if the participant is open to exploring these.

4.5 LOW TECHNOLOGY

The simple and informal nature of the painting method has been commented upon by several students: 'With a few strokes you build an idea of the place on which you can work' (session 23); 'Very free expression using a simple but effective level of communication' (session 19). Students enjoyed the clarity of the visual communication. One student explained this as follows:

> Perhaps I would use this method if I found myself in need to explain a completed work to someone that doesn't have specific skills in architecture. The most interesting angle of this method is that it makes easy to follow the thinking behind architectural choices. (session 22)

Yet the low-tech nature of the method is not just about enabling unskilled participants to contribute to the design process. It also refers to the uncontrived approach of collaborative painting as opposed to, for instance, design games that become a design focus in themselves. Painting leaves the trajectory open to be influenced by the participants (on the condition that the facilitator intends this to happen). Furthermore, a low-tech approach signifies a slow process in which there is time to listen to one another. This was discernible in session 25 where students from different design groups came together to share their knowledge of the discussed site (Figure 3). The students were encouraged to do a visual brainstorm as a way of finding links between their disparate observations. Watching others paint turned out to be the equivalent of listening to people's stories, taking the time to develop understanding and empathy. Whereas mere dialogue offers a stage for extroverts, painting can offer a platform for introverts and other minds that find expression easier through visual or manual work. This emphasises that multi*vocality* should also encompass multiple *viewpoints*.

5. CONCLUSION

The potential of addressing multivocality through the participatory painting method is expressed vividly by this student:

> I was impressed by this [the extent to which we considered other people's views], I who complained about the fact that our university does not pay attention to the people when designing a project, I realised that also I was not reaching that goal because I was too busy solving technical and functional problems. This methodology enables you to keep everything together and to deal with the human theme and include it on the table with the other categories that make up an architecture. (session 23)

This comment exemplifies the realisation that most students gained of the benefits of good collaboration, based on bringing together multiple perspectives. At the same time, 210

this comment exposes the limitations of this study which has not (as yet) systematically brought together those who act as agents and those who are actors in space. This would be a trajectory worth exploring in a further iteration, since a majority of the participating students expressed an interest in using collaborative painting as a way of involving clients and communities in the decision-making process. This means that the workshops showed the prospective architects that bringing multivocality into the design process can be mutually beneficial. As I set out at the beginning, there is a diversity of tools and techniques in the field of participatory design to engage non-experts in the thinking process. These methods are increasingly being employed in the design of (public) space. Participatory painting might offer here an approach that is not too far removed from the conventional visualisation of space, yet innovative enough to stimulate participation and encourage multivocality. As a 'plastic' method, it can incorporate additional mediums and materials to make more modes of expression possible, for a more democratic and accessible platform. Finally, and above all, it requires a participatory mindset on the facilitator's part, as well as that of all participants. Following a Chinese saying, if the wrong man uses the right means, the right means work in the wrong way. The potential of participatory painting depends ultimately on the intent and attitude with which it is used.

BIOGRAPHY

Agnieszka Mlicka is a Copenhagen-based artist, researcher and visual facilitator. Her research at Central Saint Martins developed into visualagency. org, a creative startup that aims to stimulate curiosity, creativity and collaboration through participatory visualising workshops. She has an MA from Wimbledon College of Art, University of the Arts London, and a BFA from the Ruskin School of Art, University of Oxford.

REFERENCES

Awan, N., Schneider, T. and Till, J., 2011. *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture*. London: Routledge

Barry, D., 1996. 'Artful Inquiry: a Symbolic Constructivist Approach to Social Science Research', in: *Qualitative Inquiry*, 2(4), pp.411–38

Birnbaum, D., 2002. 'Where is Painting Now?', in T. Myers (ed), *Painting (Documents of Contemporary Art)*. London: Whitechapel Gallery, pp.157–60

Bishop, C., 2006. 'The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents', in: *Artforum*, 44(6), pp.178–83

Brandt, E., Binder, T. and B.-N. Sanders, E., 2012. 'Tools and techniques: ways to engage telling, making and enacting' in J. Simonsen and T. Robertson (eds), *Routledge International Handbook of Participatory Design*. London: Routledge

Cowan, J., 2006. *On Becoming an Innovative University Teacher: Reflection in Action,* first ed. 1998. Maidenhead: Open University Press

Graham Cagney, A., 2014. 'Transformative Learning', in D. Coghlan and M. Brydon-Miller (eds), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Action Research*, pp.788–94

Kester, G., 2005. 'The Role of Dialogue in Socially-Engaged Art', in *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 76–88

———, 2004, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*. Berkeley CA: University of California Press

Miessen, M., 2010. *The Nightmare of Participation (Crossbench Praxis as a Mode of Criticality)*. Berlin: Sternberg Press

Pateman, C., 1970. *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Petersen, A. R., 2012. 'Expanded Painting: Discursive Battlefield and Intermedial Laboratory', in *Painting in the Postmedial Age*, 1(1), pp.66–83

Schön, D., 1983. *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. New York: Basic Books

Schwabsky, B., 2010. 'Object or Project? A Critic's Reflections on the Ontology of Painting', in *Contemporary Painting in Context*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, University of Copenhagen, pp.69–80

Till, J., 2011. 'The King Is Dead! Long Live the Queen!', in *Waking Up from the Nightmare of Participation*. Utrecht: Expodium, pp.163–67

———, 2009. *Architecture Depends*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press

———, 2005. 'The Negotiation of Hope', in P. Blundell-Jones, D. Petrescu, J. Till (eds) *Architecture and Participation*, New York: Routledge, pp.25–44

LISTENING TO THE UNSAID IN PUBLIC SPACES

Politics of Fear Collective (POF)

RUTH MATEUS-BERR, LA SCHANDRÉ COETZEE, MARTIN FÄRBER, BRIGITTE FELDERER, MICHEL GÖLZ, SEBASTIAN KRANER, VIRGINIA LUI, PÉTER OROSZLÁNY, KAROLÍNA PLÁŠKOVÁ, MILLY REID, CHRISTINA SCHRAML, ALESSIA SCUDERI, ENRICO TOMASSINI, HERWIG TURK, JULIA WOHLFAHRT, JANA ALARAJ

ABSTRACT

'Fear entrepreneurs' (politicians, media, businesses, environmental organisations, public health officials and advocacy groups) have capitalised on irrational fear in the face of the biggest refugee crisis in post-war Europe. In the last two years, the European Union has reached the highest number of asylum-seeker applications since the Balkan wars in 1992. New constellations of fear have been spawned amongst people who find themselves surrounded by political instability and failed attempts by the EU and regional governments to answer the urgent call for respect for basic human rights, international humanitarian laws and the ideals of equality and consideration. Austria is an example of this, where right-wing populists have taken the current climate as an opportunity to enforce fears about the 'foreign'. Participatory art and design strategies in public space take the role of a mediator and collect, listen, visualise, discuss and negotiate people's fears. Art and design methods can be used to interpret the personal experiences of the public. Members of the research group focus on active listening and collecting fears rather than convincing people through argument. Fears should be respected as sincere emotions, and not be manipulated into irrational fictions that interface with reality, in order to repair the social bond.

1. INTRODUCTION

The idea for the project was born in autumn 2015, after listening to a lecture, 'Women in public space' by the architect Hilde Heynen during a programme organised by the research group TRADERS (2015). She described how the modernist city – and its public spaces – has fostered a kind of gender discrimination. As a result of public space gaining prominence in public debate after the events of New Year's Eve 2016 in Cologne and the media's reactions to it, the so-called refugee crisis, the 'fear entrepreneurs' (Furedi, 2016), and the connected rise of right-wing parties in Europe, we were inspired by the book by Austrian sociolinguist Ruth Wodak, *The Politics of Fear* (2015). In this book she analyses the strategies employed by right-wing populist parties and shows how they seek to foment fear through the deliberate use of disinformation, falsehoods and fantasised threats. While different right-wing populist parties differ depending on their historical and sociopolitical contexts, there is a recognisable pattern in the propaganda methods used.

The project 'Listening to the Unsaid in Public Spaces' aims to explore the notion of fear by facilitating a public discussion by means of art and design interventions in public space. The objective is to research the media's role in the construction of fear and to negotiate and visualise the fears and hopes of people through artistic means in order to challenge right-wing supremacy and its tactical manipulation of people's hopes and fears.

FEAR AND POLICY COHERENCE

Decades ago, Sam Keen, American philosopher and author of *Faces of the Enemy: Reflections of the Hostile Imagination* (1986a) describes how apparitions of the hostile imagination is constructed: A *homo hostilis*, or fear entrepreneur (Furedi, 2016), is someone who invents fear. Keen addresses the psychological roots of enmity and hatred, which is coherent with fear. Keen´s book demonstrates a huge range of images, used as propaganda in media, that reflect the impact of fear on society.

Populists and politicians make use of the construction of 'them' (minorities, political and ethnic groups) to blame and legitimise their exclusionary policies. Under the guise of 'democratic media' populist parties make use of scandal, false accusations, victim-perpetrator reversal, conspiracy theories or scapegoating to perpetuate the dividing notion of 'them'. They also use the discursive strategy of 'calculated ambivalence', whereby they address multiple audiences with double messages to open the door for the politics of denial.

As we live in an increasingly monological social culture (compare 'us' vs. 'them'), it appears crucial to react with dialogue and participatory approaches. The experience of real life seems to be possible only by relativising everything that divides humankind, where life is just possible within a dialogue in which the individual opens up 'in liberty' (Mateus-Berr, 2007: 25–27; Bachtin, 1996: 32, 35, 80, 139); to reference Claire Bishop's words: 'There must be an art of action, interfacing with reality, taking steps – however small – to repair the social bond.' (Bishop 2012: 11). With reference to existing research, it can be explained how 'othering' can provoke fearful reactions to people with a 'foreign appearance'. It is argued that by means of the reception in the mass media, and the utilisation of fear in public space by far-right parties for their own political advantage, there is a danger of irrational fear being produced.

The concept of fear is undoubtedly broad, and therefore this paper will address specifically the characteristics of individual and collective concerns, as well as attempts to make a distinction between rationally and irrationally constructed fear. Misinformation, i.e. the representation of false facts (being presented by the media and deliberately utilised by right-wing politicians), and playing with irrational fears (e.g. using the rhetoric of young male refugees posing a security threat in public space, or refugees posing a threat to local labour markets) have led to an overtly suspicious social climate, which is characterised by mutual mistrust and fear

and concerns for the future. In 2012, the cultural theorist, urbanist and 'philosopher of speed' Paul Virilio, in an interview titled 'The Administration of Fear', argued that 'the "informational bomb" plays a prominent role in establishing fear as a global environment, because it allows the synchronisation of emotion on a global scale ... The same feeling of terror can be felt in all corners of the world at the same time. It is not a localised bomb: it explodes each second, with the news of an attack, a natural disaster, a malicious rumour'. This phenomenon, according to Virilio, has led our society to create a 'community of emotions', instead of the 'community of interests' shared by different social classes (Virilio, 2012: 30).

As Sigmund Freud pointed out, fear is a universal feeling, i.e. a feeling we all share. (Freud, 1920). However, even though all human beings have experienced this feeling, the concept of fear can at the same time be regarded as vague and ambiguous. According to Freud, fear, as opposed to anxiety, is directed towards an object. Fear can serve as an emotion that guides us in a sensible direction and was responsible for our survival in the past.

Contemporary circumstances show that in many cases fear has lost its relationship to experience, and therefore fear can disorient and distract us from our actual lived experiences. In this scenario, fear has thus become an emotion of irrational fiction. The sociologist Frank Furedi (2006: viii), makes it clear that 'the artistic celebration of the theme of fear indicates that it has become a cultural metaphor for interpreting and representing the world around us': this is represented in a recent Lyon Biennale (2005) and the exhibition 'The Perils of Modern Living' (Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2005).

The public space, it is argued, ought to have the function of an arena where fears can be negotiated and contested. The project 'Listening to the Unsaid in Public Spaces' is an attempt to confer a mediatised discourse through the methods of Listening

as Arts-based Research (LAR). The design approaches are further elaborated below.

ART AND DESIGN RESEARCHERS AND THEIR ROLE IN THE POWER INTERPLAYS OF 'FEAR ENTREPRENEURS'

The PoF Collective (Politics of Fear Collective) considers the exploration of approaches that can lead to the redistribution of power in social structures becoming an important aim of art and design research. It can and should be the aim of our work as social designers to not only question but also to intervene in existing power structures and empower people affected by disparity.

While fear entrepreneurs (like the ones mentioned) are using insecurity and fear as an exploitable base for the reinforcement of their own power, the project aims to create a communicative platform to empower people by regaining an awareness about their fears and possible exploitations. Thus it bases itself on the assumption that (self-) awareness facilitates (self-) control, and (self-) control facilitates power.

1.1. THE AUSTRIAN AGENDA

Though racism is a global issue and not a specific Austrian agenda, Austria was the focus of the National Socialist movement of the 1930s and 1940s, a period which resulted in the most significant genocide ever. This evidence indicates the Austrian population's particular propensity for believing of the fear entrepreneurs (Furedi, 2016), who exemplify the *Homo hostilis* or 'enemy maker' (Keen, 1986). The central database for Holocaust victims documents up to three million victims (Yad Vashem, 2004). Additionally, there are 1.5 million 'missing names' or unidentified victims, and research and investigation remains ongoing. The notion of the enemy 'Jew' or 'them' (for other reasons) was created by the National Socialist party, and given strength through their use of media propagation.
In 2000, the artist Christoph Schlingensief broached the issue of the xenophobic climate

in Austria and staged the action 'Foreigners Out' in the centre of Vienna. Asylum seekers put in a container could be voted out by the public – 'out' meaning out of the country. This action provoked both left and right-wing groups to take to the streets. It stirred up a burning societal debate and sharply exposed media mechanisms.

In 2009, Amnesty International presented their report on Austria (AI, 2009), with the title 'Victim or Suspect: a Question of Skin Colour' (Case Study 12: 65), reflecting the discriminatory manner in which the local police treat foreigners in Austria. Police discrimination was further highlighted that year when local police mistook Vienna International School teacher Michael Brennan for a suspected African drug dealer and aggressively restrained him almost to the point of occupational disability (compare The Associated Press, 2009; Gärtner, 2009).

The reactions of the media to the incidents on New Year's Eve 2016 in Cologne proved how explosive the topic of security in public space is. Refugees were portrayed as the main perpetrators, and created an atmosphere of distrust towards them. Two German journalists analysed hundreds of media reports and spoke to victims, experts on security and asylum seekers amongst others (Brenner, 2016). According to their investigations, it is likely that the offenders were a few dozen men of North African origin, rather than 1,000 newly arrived refugees, as was suggested by numerous newspapers immediately after the incidents. Their report featured two interviews, one by a refugee stating that he does not feel comfortable walking the streets of Cologne anymore because he feels he is suspected as an offender. One of the women who was harassed stated that, even though she knows better now, a feeling of fear arises every time she sees a person she conceives of as a refugee.

In an Austrian context, this extreme media framing of 'the other' can be seen on the cover of the magazine *Falter* (*Falter*, 2016, cover). A black-and-white image shows a mass of black-haired and dark-eyed men attacking and stripping crying white women, and even a policeman. Radical covers like these were quite unusual, especially for *Falter*. *Falter* was rebuked by the Austrian Press Council.

Figure 1. Falter's cover

In the winter term of 2015/16, students from the Department of Social Design: Arts as Urban Innovation at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna were invited to participate and develop the project 'Listening to the Unsaid in Public Space', in collaboration with refugees from the MORE initiative by Austrian universities which opened up lectures at various universities for refugees. The objectives of the project are to negotiate fear in public spaces through artistic methods, and use participatory research as practice.

'Listening to the Unsaid in Public Spaces' became a project in which people are invited to participate in artistic interventions organised in various public locations in the city in cooperation with relevant authorities. The goal of the project is to carry out a survey and collaboratively create a public visualisation of fear. It is designed to encourage public debate on the subject of (constructed) fear and (feelings of) uncertainty in public space in order to expose and deconstruct the mechanisms by which fear is generated, by listening.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. WORKING METHODS AND DECISION PROCESS

POF (Politics of Fear Collective)
Since March 2016 students from the Department of Social Design: Arts as Urban Innovation Studio at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna, have been meeting at their studio every week. As the project was announced through the MORE initiative, some refugee students joined the course straight away. Three staff members of the University were involved and about fifteen students joined in.

The weekly meetings concentrated on content and organisation, as well as participative decision-making, with everyone involved. An interdisciplinary team of artists, theoreticians and designers from various fields collaborated in order to find a translation between disciplines through communication for this case. It was decided to use participatory design methods with the student group and refugee students. This means involving all stakeholders (student, staff and refugees) in decision-making, and co-design methods as research, which contributes to supporting participants in communicating with the research team. The interventions are planned as co-designing activities in public space. June 2016 the Collective POF (Politics of Fear) was founded. Members act as ambassadors who mediate and intervene in different cities and present interim results and exhibitions at a range of conferences.

SOCIAL DESIGN

The point of departure for the project is a series of participatory interventions in public space, in which a variety of materials is being used and employed as non-verbal vehicles of communication. Passers-by are encouraged to overcome their inhibitions and express themselves on sensitive issues. In order to visualise and demonstrate personal emotions, people are invited to write down, discuss, distribute, pile up or lay out the materials used in order to create a space dedicated to people's concerns and to a public exhibition that fosters exchange. How can feelings of fear be expressed with the materials provided? How much space should they be given? Where should they be placed, and why?

Simultaneously, a database as a thought and image collection is created to visualise and demonstrate the situation as revealed in the project. People will be invited to collaborate in distributing the materials in selected locations in order to continue the discussion.

Hypotheses such as '[r]esearch begins with a question or an ill-defined inkling that there is something potentially interesting or troublesome in a certain domain' (Kozel, 2012: 209) are to be tested. The thought that fears held that lead to a degrading or harmful attitude towards others go along with a moral obligation to come to grips with them is motivating the collective to develop designs. Perceptions of public space informed the basis of the initiation of the project, as explained above, as well as the arena of its realisation. The team members give input, but the space is shaped by the participants. It is developed from the notion that '[d]esign and emotion have to be ruptured from products and bonded to redirect actions towards sustainment' (Fry, 2011:134).

The knowledge gained from the interventions will contribute to a wider discourse on design strategies. Cross (1971) has always argued strongly for new approaches in design 'that could contribute to the inclusion and participation of citizens at large in design and societal planning' (Brandt et al., 2013: 147). The collected data and visualisations will also feed into the knowledge of citizens' needs and feelings in public space. Urban planning and design have undergone a so-called 'cultural turn', meaning there have been attempts to translate observations of spatial practice in public space into institutionalised planning resulting from an awareness of the associated issues (Tornaghi & Knierbein, 2014).

Conversation is a central element of the methodology. The impressions and feelings gained spontaneously, on the spot, are constitutive of the perception of public space, in addition to its architecture and pre-formed opinions received from other people, or newspapers or magazines, for example (Lefebvre, 1991). Participants are engaged in dialogue and invited to reflect on the conversations in public space, where the possibilities of negotiating perceptions are best placed, according to this theory.

Besides addressing broader questions, such as:

- What are people afraid of in public places, and why?
- What is the contribution of current migratory movements and their related media coverage, and what are the resulting fears of residents and refugees?
- Are the prevailing fears recognised and taken seriously?
- What are the effects of the main 'fear spaces' on people's – and especially women's – behaviour and participation in public space?
- What are the causes of these fears, and how are fears strengthened? (the role of the media, prejudices, etc.)
- What can help to resolve fears?

The project also aims to specifically address questions such as:

- (How) can art and design carry out research and the resulting dialogue of the project help to regain authority over (exploitable) fears?
- Can the developments of the polarisation of public discussions be counteracted by opening up spaces for an exchange of personal fears and reflections upon them?
- What roles and specific possibilities do we as social designers have to change power structures in existing imbalances of power distribution?

The design contributes to finding ways of exchanging views and opinions in public space to create a public discourse. This project aims to create scenarios of social interaction between 'strangers', holders of various opinions, with which ways of communication can be experimented. Design can help to develop what Richard Sennett makes an urgent claim for in his book *The Fall of Public Man* (Sennett, 1992), namely, rituals and norms that can structure the communication between strangers. Plurality is a basic precondition of our capacity for speech and action (Arendt, 1958: 176).

The on-site project started with an intervention probe at a public space in front of TBA21 (Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary) in Vienna. TBA21 is currently engaged in 'Atopia – Migration, Heritage and Placelessness' and educational programmes in cooperation with refugees and the Social Design: Arts as Urban Innovation Studio. The day of the investigation was the Sunday of the election of the Austrian Federal President. Students had discussed and designed several scenarios, researched public spaces in Vienna for interventions and voted for the first dramaturgy to be used. They decided on the 'fence scenario' (explanation follows) and a picnic. A further intervention was performed in Linz (Austria) in the autumn of 2016, and other actions are planned in different cities, both in Europe and throughout the world.

2.2. VIENNA: PUBLIC SPACE AS ARENA AND LISTENING AS METHOD (LAR - LISTENING AS ARTS BASED RESEARCH)

Before the elections in Austria (and maybe around the world) in 2016, discussions about the politics of refugees, even between friends, often appeared impossible. Fear was dividing humankind. Our hypothesis is that (social) media provoked fear and empowered right-wing parties. Our strategy is *listening*, which has become a rare commodity in contemporary society. In previous 'group listening' approaches there was the hope that 'listening in groups would stimulate the capacity to listen to other people's ideas even when they are unpalatable, and then to follow up by discussion and calm analysis' (Lacey 2013: 140). The idea of POF is to encourage listening to overcome prejudice and form a democratic atmosphere. Whereas in the 1930s it was BBC Radio's strategy to form tolerant (group) listening, this might today take the form of a more tactile and face-to-face discussion, making direct contact rather than trusting social media. In the case of LISTENING TO THE UNSAID IN PUBLIC SPACES the artists are listeners who create spaces for so far publicly unexpressed emotions.

Researchers from the fields of geography such as Macpherson & Fox (2016) have worked on *listening spaces* as 'being-with', but this can be exemplified particularly by the work of inclusive artists (the contemporary arts group The Rockets, who have learning disabilities, for instance). They use art as a method of participant self-representation for marginalised groups (White, 2009). Artists apply visual and performative methods in which the voice is not important and listening and interaction is paramount. Visual sociology has developed new approaches, as the British sociologist and media theorist Gauntlett (2006:2) argues. He believes that art materials and creative methods are advantageous in social research because they allow time for a more considered answer to a question than a verbal question and answer format. Integrating art into sociological approaches empowers a 'reflective process, taking time, so the data you end up with is the result of thoughtful reflection' (Gauntlett, 2006: 2).

Lacey (2013) claims in her book *Listening Publics: The Politics and Experience of Listening in the Media Age* that listening as public action has been neglected for a long time. As speech is sounded out, it demands and needs a listener. Listening involves an openness towards others and is believed to be a political action: 'fundamentally ethical', it recommends paying attention and taking a critical role. Warner (2002:50) describes 'the public' as a space of a discourse organised by nothing other than discourse itself", and being actively involved in public consists for him of 'speaking, writing and thinking'.

This approach has worked well for the first POF intervention in Vienna and the material worked with. POF worked with the *fence* as a symbol, *listening and gathering* the fears and hopes of passers-by on sheets of paper, experimenting with fear by touching *starch*, exchanging *thoughts* for *fruits*.

Art and design researchers challenge contemporary discussions, emotions and expressions which are absorbed by the mass media, and transform them back to public tactile space. Trust is being built by face-to-face discussions, facilitated by related or even provocative art objects. Research artists and designers are listeners and trust-builders. Throughout history artists have been provokers. Maybe in times of irritation the artist´s role becomes the role of a critical mediator.

THE FENCE AS A SYMBOL

Historically the fence was 'invented' during periods of human settlement for defining property and providing protection against enemies. Today a fence serves as a symbol of social exclusion and a metaphor for refugees' political strategies. In June 2015, the Hungarian government gave orders to construct a 4-metre-high and 175-kilometre-long fence along its border with Serbia. Tamás Ibolya, a Copenhagen-based independent political analyst and former Hungarian diplomat, suggests that this was done in order to keep away the mounting influx of asylum-seekers, collectively labelled 'livelihood immigrants'. He criticises this fence because Hungary experienced an exodus of some 200,000 Hungarian refugees in the wake of the revolution of 1956, and they were welcome and embraced in all parts of the world (Tamás, 2015). The rhetoric of 'the politics of fear' is building up imaginary walls between 'us', the 'natives', and 'them'. At the same time very real walls are also constructed on borders both inside and outside Europe.

POF set up a 6-metre-long barbed wire fence to make a clear reference to the newly built physical borders inside and outside Europe, and used it as a display for the collected fears and hopes for Europe. The walls were brought to the capital and made visible to the people of the city. The image of the fence was disrupted by tables and benches that connected both sides through cut-out holes. The installation provoked reactions and reflections on both the visibility of the symbolic fence and the break with its traditional imagery. A transformation of the appearance of the fence occurred as

Figure 2 PoF Logo
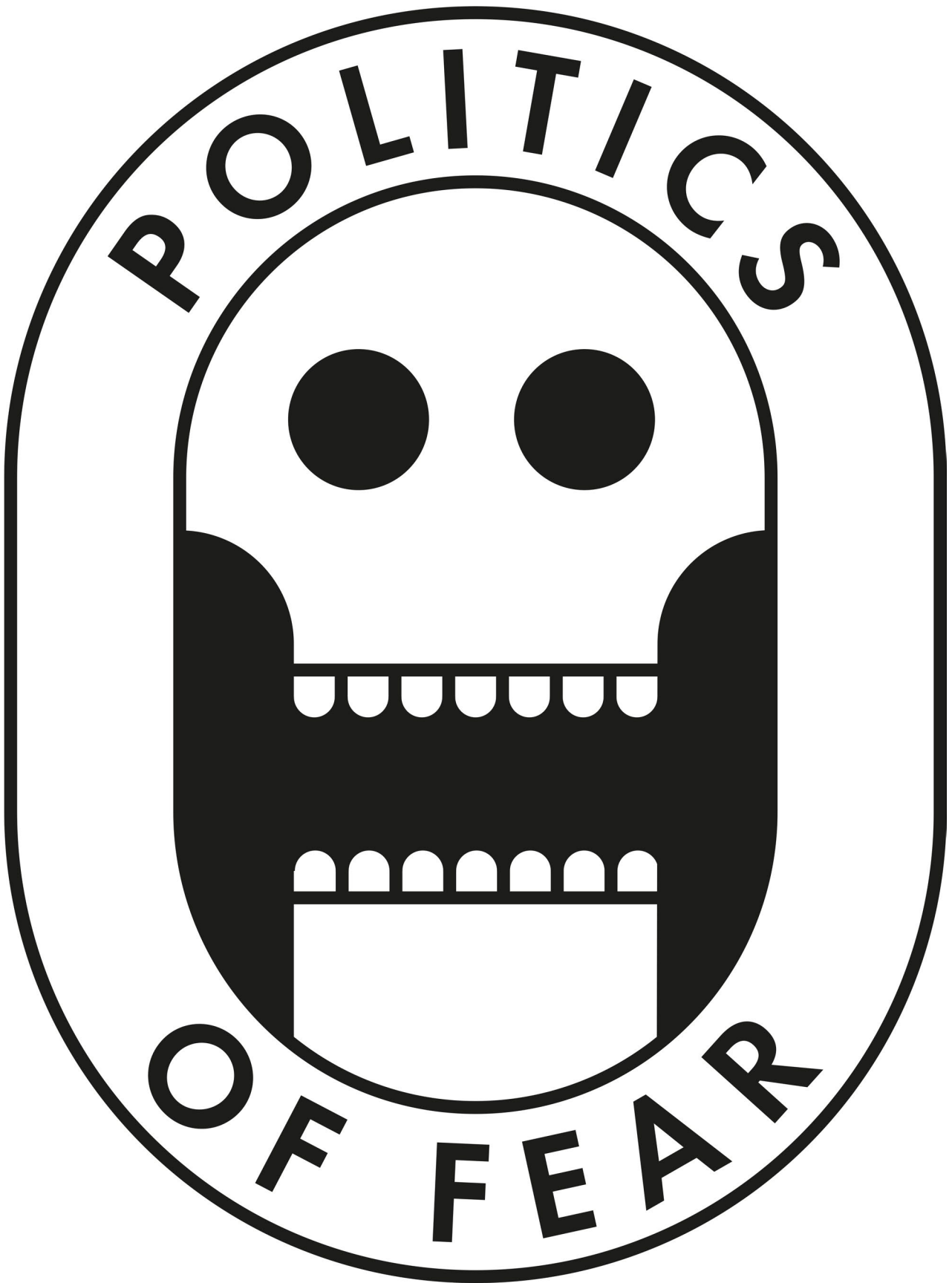
the participants placed their input on it. The number of papers stuck to the fence increased over the duration of the intervention. With the emergence of the growing 'exhibition', another layer of meaning was added to the installation and the fence became alienated as a discursive object.

2.3. FEAR AS A LOGO

For the events, a logo was designed by one of the POF collective. It plays with our fears, and aims to overcome fear by using metaphors such as 'grinding your teeth' by eating a banana. As Elias Canetti (1988:228) noted: '*Das auffälligste Instrument der Macht, das der Mensch und auch sehr viele Tiere an sich tragen, sind die Zähne.*' [The most conspicuous instrument of power, which human beings as well as some of the animals inherit, are teeth.] (translation by the authors). In this sense, the logo can be read as playful or humorous, but at the same time demonstrates a provocative approach which is intended to cause a response in the viewer.

2.4. EXPERIMENTATION WITH FEARS

Throughout the intervention passers-by were invited to exchange 'a thought for a fruit'. The fruits were placed on tables, which broke through the fence (see above). People could sit down on both sides of the fence and share their thoughts about fears and hopes with the research team (see Figure 3). In another part of the intervention passers-by were invited to touch a mixed liquid which was meant to symbolise fear. The substance consists of cornstarch and water. It is a non-Newtonian substance, i.e. if it is pressed, the molecules line up and the substance gets more solid. If it is released, the pressed forms dissolve and it is less awkward. The container, which was filled with the liquid, was entirely covered with a card reading 'This substance is fear'. That is to say, it was impossible for people to see what was inside; however, people could put their hands through a little hole to touch the liquid. When asked about the experience, some people explained that this was a

stimulating exercise which helped them to define a specific aspect of fear that could later be written down and attached to the fence. Some explanations for how effectively 'This substance is fear' worked remained indefinite and open. One of the participants said that "*Angst darf nicht Stärke sein*" [Fear may not be strength/starch].

Fears, when not outspoken, cannot be negotiated or requested. Important thoughts regarding fears were written on sheets of paper and mounted onto the fence to be readable by others and collected at the same time. A crucial aspect of the intervention was that the research group was listening to the passers-by. Listening is also considered as a research method in interview-based disciplines such as anthropology, journalism and sociology and music, and more recently artistic research. That is to say, the intervention was both playful and at the same time thought provoking, creating a low-threshold way for people to think about their fears and discuss them with other participants.

Figure 3. Politics of Fear Picnic, Negotiating Fear at TBA21,
Photo © Ruth Mateus-Berr
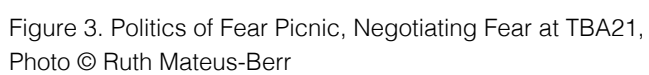
2.5. FEARS & HOPES COLLECTION

The results were not placed in order, or classified. The expressions of fear are merely listed.

Polarisation of the discussion	Uncertainty	Right-wing shift
Fear of having lost a child's vision of the world	Wage dumping (as a result of immigration)	Ignorance from all sides (integration)
Fear of being misunderstood	Right-wing Party	Snakes
Ignorance by people – especially by those who do not have real problems themselves	Fall of the left because they are not courageous enough to talk about problems	'Orbanisation' (increasing political power of the politician Viktor Orbán)
Decay of my mental health	Racism	Political agitation
Helplessness	Future (2×)	Family
Fences	Having no pension one day	War
Having to suffer before death	Decline in security, especially for women	Racist idiots
At the moment there is still fruit salad; however, fences turn us into pure bananas	Fear that one day, German might not be the official language anymore	Problems of the EU, especially those of the young people, who lack a future
Machines on a Segway	Un-reflected behavior	Irrelevance
Result of the election (Austrian Federal Presidential election)	Norbert Hofer (the right-wing politician who stood as a candidate for the election of Austria's Federal President in 2016)	Destruction of nature because of greed for profit
Repeating the history of human beings' stupidity	Taking decisions for other people	Thieves
Impact of the American wars	Being emotionless	Panic making by media/politics
Humankind and egoism	Short-sightedness	Male refugees
Isolation	Fear of myself (my aggressions)	Bombs
Bomb (Death)	Fear of you	Single nation states in Europe
Repeating mistakes of the past	Need to close myself in a small ball	

Table 1. Examples of Fear expressed by passers-by © Martin Färber

Love (2×)	Autonomy	Finishing my studies
Travelling	Friendship	Good projects
Happiness	Good future	Equal rights for everyone
Satisfaction	Positive asylum application	Transparency
Stability	To play football	Freedom
Security	Healing medicine	More space for art
Peace in the Middle East	More tolerance	More integration
Thanks Austria, for electing Vdb as the new president (Vdb stands for Alexander Van der Bellen – Austria's new Federal President in 2016)	I trust in divine predestination and that everything will turn out alright	A good education for children / young people
Reflection	Openness	E-Mobility (cars)
Autonomy in my job	Good ideas by good people	To listen to others
Peaceful co-existence	Better integration	Innovation and progress
To be allowed to watch more TV	I hope that not too many things are changing	Co-existence of societies and more tolerance
Individualisation of social issues	Being able to help old people	

Table 2. Examples of Hope expressed by passers-by © Martin Färber

3.   REFLECTIONS ON CASE SITUATIONS

Through the work of the large team of Politics of Fear Collective members and the chosen design of the intervention, including the picnic and fence installation, and by experimenting with materials such as the liquid starch, it was possible to create a comfortable atmosphere in which to engage with the people passing by personally in one-one conversations. With the delicate and personal topic of fear it was particularly important to remain objective and non-judgmental.

The fence was recognised as a metaphor for the refugee crises and a taboo word in Austria, but one person was afraid that it is a statement referencing the 759-kilometre West Bank barrier (Israeli interpretation) / apartheid wall (Palestinian interpretation) built by Israel to West Jordan. This was maybe because the intervention happened in the Second district of Vienna, which is where some of the persecuted Jews who had survived from World War II returned to. The breaks in the fence were understood as an invitation to sit down, or provoked curiosity. Most passers-by associated the fence with the Austrian discussion about building up fences against refugees. The main objective, to research the media's role in the construction of fear and to negotiate and visualise the fears and hopes of people through artistic means (in order to challenge right-wing supremacy and its tactical manipulation of people's hopes and fears) can only be partly evaluated, and doesn't have to be qualified within arts-based research theory as it works as grounded theory. In summary, the negotiation and visualisation of the fears and hopes of people through artistic means by putting them as words on paper onto the fence worked out well. If the interventions have any impact on, or challenge to, right-wing supremacy and its tactical manipulation of people's hopes and fears this could only be assessed through long-term studies, and is not goal of an arts-based project.

Detailed interrogations regarding the intervention:

What are people afraid of in public places, and why? POF did not pose this question directly. Answers relating to fear were merely posed in a more general attitude (compare Table 1).

What is the contribution of current migratory movements and related media coverage, and what are the resulting fears of residents and refugees? (*What are the causes of these fears, and how are fears fomented? (The role of the media, prejudices, etc.)* Answers were directly or indirectly intertwined: Polarisation of the discussion; right-wing shift; Norbert Hofer (x3); Fall of the left; 'Orbanisation' Racism (x2); Political agitation; Having no pension one day; Decline in security, especially for women; Fear that one day German might not be the official language any more; Problems of the EU, especially those of the young people, who lack a future; Thieves; Impact of the American wars; Panic-making by media, politics; Male refugees; bombs (x2), Fence. Many of these answers can clearly be related to the influence of the media. To research the prevalence of fear in all kinds of media, including social media, the Google search engine was used and keywords were given in German, such as: 'Refugees are terrorists': 608,000 results, 'Refugees are thieves': Google suggests 498,000 results. 'Refugees and retirement': 713,000 results. 'Refugees and rapist': 468,000 results.

Are the prevailing fears recognized and taken seriously? POF did not pose this question directly and is rethinking the objective of this question. It can be confirmed that POF took the fears of passers-by seriously.

What are the effects of the main 'fear spaces' on people's – and especially women's – behaviour and participation in the public space? POF did not pose this question directly.

What can help to resolve fears? POF did not pose this question directly. It is evident that the main part of the descriptions of fear were related to the media's construction of fear.

Reflecting on the first intervention, it became clear that the collective missed some objectives due to lack of time and time to re-think. Thoughts about improvements in communication in further interventions were discussed. Based on the exploratory approach a range of angles have already been identified which provide a basis for further enquiry. In order to 'tell' – 'make' – 'enact' in iterative turns (compare Brandt et al., 2011: 150) the research group needs to discuss the findings of examples of fear and hope and further develop the interaction design for forthcoming spaces in the public sphere.

It is planned to experiment further with sensual experiences to offer alternative ways to address the topic of fear. The format of the cornstarch enabled us, as well as the people, to start a conversation about their fears which was not guided by forced constraints of language and polarised discourse. By creating a haptic experience, the theme became an abstract, sensual experience. The aim of the experiment was to convey that fear is somehow graspable and has its own mechanisms, which can be a subject for discussion. The statement 'If you do not recoil, fear is not uncomfortable' (a response by one of the participants) could be interpreted in the sense that: if fear is treated consciously and if one chooses to engage with it, its daunting components can be removed and fear does not then lead to aggression. Strategies that open questions for the participants, rather than asking for pre-formed opinions, are looked for continually, with the ultimate aim of empowering people by helping them to regain an awareness of their fears.

During the time-span of the intervention, the descriptions increasingly formed another layer of meaning to the installation. They framed the discourse that the installation addressed. To be able to reach out of this discourse it was important to reflect on this in conversation. The

collected statements will be used for future interventions to continue the discussion.

As locations for following interventions, POF is interested in neighbourhoods with a wide social and political diversity, especially districts with a big proportion of right-wing voters. The collective actually feared a disturbance by right-wing groups such as the Identitarian Movement who had previously violently interrupted theatre performances and events in public spaces that involved refugees. A planned intervention at the Floridsdorfer Spitz had to be cancelled for this reason. Table 1 and 2 show a wide range of responses relating to fears and hopes. It indicates that the fence installation that was part of the design did trigger the association between the issue of concern about security in public space and migration in some of the respondents very consciously. 'Consciousness is the passage, or rather the awareness of the passage from these less potent totalities to the more potent ones, and vice versa' (Deleuze, 1988:21). For other respondents, the relation of fences and borders with fears might trigger a more conscious examination later on, and hopefully interferes with the undertakings of the fear entrepreneurs. Also, the description of hopes sometimes expressed fears, such as f.e.: 'I hope that not too many things are changing'.

4. CONCLUSIONS

So far, the questions posed have only been partly answered, since the repercussions of the intervention couldn't be sufficiently measured. As we found out, the act of listening opened up a significant space for personal emotions that had seemed of no interest for the public discourse previously.

One of the participants, for example, at first claimed there was no point in taking part in a discussion, since the (political) discourse to her seems to be closed to the public, and there is no space for individual expression of concern. When she realised the installation was a safe space for exchange, she opened

up and contributed three well-nuanced thoughts that led to a broader discussion with other participants and the collective.

Further than that, the exhibitionary nature of the project created a base for a silent long-term dialogue. The manifested thoughts, written down and exposed, provoked reactions and enabled an exchange of opinions that in other circumstances would seem unlikely. In this way, new points of contact could be established, but the question about the importance of direct exchange also arose. Should a further stage of the project also create personal contact? Does the project need an ongoing platform to create a forum for exchange?

BIOGRAPHY

The PoF collective, founded in 2015 in Vienna, hold various degrees in art, architecture, social and natural sciences and design – to mention a few – and currently work at the department of Social Design: Arts as Urban Innovation at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna. Affected by current migration movements and associated polarising discussions around constructed fears, it initiated the project 'The Politics of Fear' in early 2016.

REFERENCES

Amnesty International. 'Bericht Österreich'. [online] Available at: <https://www.amnesty.at/de/rassismus-bericht/>

Arendt, H., 1958. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bachmann-Medick, D., 2009. *Cultural Turns. Neuorientierungen in den Kulturwissenschaften*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt.

Bakhtin, M. M., 1996. *Literatur und Karneval. Zur Romantheorie der Lachkultur*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.

Bishop, C., 2012. *Artificial Hells*. London; New York: Verso.

Brandt, E., Binder, T., Sanders, E. B.-N., 2013. 'Tools and Techniques. Ways to Engage Telling, Making and Enacting, in: J. Simonsen, T. Robertson eds., *Routledge International Handbook of Participatory Design.* London; New York: Routledge, pp. 145–181.

Brenner, Y., 2016. 'Time for the Facts. What do we Know about Cologne Four Months Later?' *The Correspondent*. [online] Available at: https://decorrespondent.nl/4401/Time-for-the-facts-What-do-we-know-about-Cologne-four-months-later-/1073698080444-e20ada1b

Canetti, E., 1988. *Masse und Macht*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag.
Cross, N., ed., 1971. 'Design Participation' in: *Proceedings of the Design Research Society Conference*. London: Academy Editions.

Deleuze, G., 1988. *Spinoza. Praktische Philosophie*. Berlin: Merve Verlag.

Freud, S., 1920. *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*. New York: Boni and Liveright.

Falter, 1–2, 2016. [online] Available at: https://www.falter.at/falter/e-paper/lesen/393/falter-1-2-16

Furedi, F., 2006. *Culture of Fear Revisited: Risk-taking and the Morality of Low Expectation.* London: Continuum.
Furedi, F., 2016. 'Why are angry ranchers being called terrorists?' [online] Available at: http://www.frankfuredi.com/article/why_are_angry_ranchers_being_called_terrorists

Furedi, F., 2005. 'The Market in Fear'. [online] Available at: http://www.frankfuredi.com/article/the_market_in_fear

Fry, T., 2011. *Design as Politics*. Oxford; New York: Berg.

Gauntlett, D., 2006. 'Creative and Visual Methods for Exploring Identities: a Conversation between David Gauntlett and Peter Holzwarth'. *Visual Studies* 21.(1), 82-91.

Keen, S., 1986. *Gesichter des Bösen. Über die Entstehung unserer Feindbilder. Aus dem Amerikanischen Rüdiger Runge*. München: Heyne Verlag.

Keen, S., 1986. *Study Guide to Faces of the Enemy. Reflections of the hostile Imagination.*Catticus Corporation. [online] Available at: http://www.zengermedia.com/pdf/CAT100_Guide.pdf

Kozel, S., 2011. 'The Virtual and the Physical: A Phenomenological Approach to Performance Research', in: M. Biggs, H. Karlsson, eds. *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts*. London, New York: Routledge, pp. 204–222.

Lacey, K., 2013. *Listening Publics: The Politics and Experience of Listening in the Media Age*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Lehnert, G., 2011. *Raum und Gefühl: The Spatial Turn und die Neue Emotionsforschung*. Bielefeld: Transcript.

Lefebvre, H., 1991. *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Macpherson, H., Fox, A., 2016. 'Listening space: Lessons from Artists With and Without Learning Disabilities. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space,* 34 (2), 371-389 [online] Available at: http://eprints.brighton.ac.uk/15510/1/final%20Listening_July%2015.pdf

Mateus-Berr, R., Wagner, M. (eds.), 2007. *Fasching und Faschismus*. Vienna: Praesens Verlag.

N.N. 2016. 'Rechtsextreme stürmen Jelinek-Aufführung in Wien'. *Die Zeit*, .15 April 2016. 'Mit Kunstblut und Flugblättern bewaffnet haben etwa 30 Identitäre eine Theateraufführung an der Uni Wien gestürmt. Auf der Bühne standen auch Flüchtlinge'. [online] Available at: http://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2016-04/identitaere-bewegung-wien-theater-elfriede-jelinek-die-schutzbefohlenen

OIF

Rigoli, F., Ewbank, M., Dalgleish, T. and Calder, A., 2016. 'Threat Visibility Modulates the Defensive Brain Circuit Underlying Fear and Anxiety. *Neuroscience Letters* 612 (2016) 7–13. [online] Available at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26655466> PMID: 26655466.

Sennett, R., 1977. *The Fall of Public Man.* New York: Knopf.

Tamás, I., 2015. 'Hungary's Refugee Policy: Fencing off the Country'. [online] Available at: https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/tam%C3%A1s-ibolya/hungary%E2%80%99s-refugee-policy-fencing-off-country>

Associated Press. 2009. 'Attack on U.S. Man in Austria Brings up Racism', NBC News, 21 June. Available at: http://www.nbcnews.com/id/31475522/ns/world_news-europe/t/attack-us-man-austria-brings-racism/#.V8csr44-f-A

Tornaghi, C., and Knierbein, S. (eds.), 2014. *Public Space and Relational Perspectives: New Challenges for Architecture and Planning.* London; New York: Routledge.

TRADERS. 2015. 2nd TRADERS International Autumn School, 9-13 November 2015, Genk, Belgium [online] Available at: http://tr-aders.eu/page/2/

Virilio, P., and Bertrand R., 2012. *The Administration of Fear.* Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e).

Warner, M., 2002. 'Publics and Counterpublics'. *Quarterly Journal of Speech,* 88 (4) November, 413-425. Available at: http://knowledgepublic.pbworks.com/f/warnerPubCounterP.pdf

Yad Vashem, 2004. 'Internationale Holocaust Gedenkstätte'. [online] Available at: http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/de/about/hall_of_names/about_central_database.asp

White, M., 2009. *Arts Development in Community Health: a Social Tonic.* Oxford: Radcliffe Publishing.

MULTIPLE PERFORMATIVE MAPPING
A Way to Challenge Spatial Configurations

Chairs: David Hamers & Naomi Bueno de Mesquita (Design Academy Eindhoven & KU Leuven)

With the widespread adoption of mobile phones it is increasingly more common for people to alternate between the physical and the virtual, being 'here' and 'there' at the same time. Coupled with map apps – in which the map is continuously updated in correspondence to one's movement, search history and preferences – new forms of encounters and co-presence in public spaces have emerged. It is unclear how the use of such apps – accompanied with an increasing amount of people withdrawing themselves to a so-called media-cocoon [i] – affects the public realm. What are the (social) implications of the blue dot and its undercurrent algorithm, on the collective experience of the city and collaborative practices in it?

The digitisation of maps and map apps have, on the one hand, enabled citizens to alter power relations through prosumer mapping [ii]. On the other hand, with the prefix 'geo' that is attached to nearly every media-related subject (with which people are traced, tracked and tagged) we are seeing the rise of corporate and political use of mapping through geo-googlisation and geo-exclusion; a location based awareness that is dictated and conditioned by algorithms. Thus, our surfing on the Web – based on the algorithmic undercurrent of Google– becomes authoritative for the way in which we navigate through space [iii]. In academia, the prefix 'geo' didn't go unnoticed either. Where social sciences, media and cultural studies have undergone a spatial turn (locative media) geography has witnessed a media turn(mediated localities) (Thielmann, 2010:1).

There is, however, a critical and conceptual difference between the noun 'map' and the verb 'mapping'. Where maps (the ones we generally use in our daily lives) tend to measure, notate and coordinate the world around us, mapping (the iterative process of making and remaking maps) opens the process up to participation. The question we'd like to address in this session is in what ways digital mapping – a spatial practice that has the potential to challenge or alter existing configurations of space – enables participation in public space.

References

[i]   De Cauter, L. (2004). The capsular civilization: on the city in the age of fear. Rotterdam: NAi Publishers.

[i]   See for example OpenStreetMaps. Retrieved from: http://www.openstreetmap.org/Last accessed: 14 March 2016.

[iii] Thielmann, T. (2010). Locative media and mediated localities. Aether: the journal of media geography, 5(1), 1-17.

HACKING BUIKSLOTERHAM
How Self-Builders Are Making Their City

M. Lange and M. Waal

ABSTRACT

The aim of the research-by-design project The Hackable City is to develop a research agenda and toolkit that explores the role of digital media technologies for new directions for urban planning and city-making. How can citizens, design professionals, local government institutions and others creatively use digital technologies in collaborative processes of urban planning and management? The project seeks to connect developments of, on the one hand, city municipalities that develop smart-city policies and testing these in 'urban living labs' and, on the other hand, networked smart-citizen initiatives of people innovating and shaping their own living environments. In this contribution we look at how self-builders in urban lab Buiksloterham in Amsterdam have become 'hackers' of their own city, cleverly shaping the future development of a brownfield neighbourhood in Amsterdam's northern quarter.

1. INTRODUCTION
HACKABLE CITY-MAKING

The Hackable City is a long-running research-by-design project that focuses on how citizens, design professionals, local government institutions and others creatively use digital technologies in collaborative processes of urban planning and management. The project is a collaboration between academics, urban designers and various organisations in the domains of policy, urban services and the cultural field. One of the main concerns of the project is about the phenomenon of self-building, which involves individuals or groups who (co-)design and build their own homes on plots of acquired land.

The term *hackable city* productively connects parallel yet often separate developments. City municipalities worldwide embark on *smart city* policies with tech businesses and knowledge institutions. They deploy digital technologies and big data to optimise services like traffic, energy, environment, governance and health. At the same time, bottom-up smart-citizen initiatives blossom in many cities. They consist of networked groups who engage in issues like neighbourhood livability, building communities, taking care of their own energy provisioning, sharing tools, cars and other resources, and measuring and generating environmental data. Often these people employ sensor technologies, use open data or utilise digital media to organise themselves around a shared issue. As an attempt to connect these worlds, an increasing number of cities have assigned specific areas as urban laboratories, or 'living labs', for studying and experimenting with new ways of city-making. However, a comprehensive vision that is both critical and affirmative about these developments is lacking.

The notion of *the hackable city* is an attempt to do just that (Ampatzidou et al., 2015). The term functions as a heuristic lens to investigate how new media technologies enable people to become active shapers of their urban environment, and how urban institutions and infrastructures can be opened up to systemic change by other stakeholders. The notion of 'hackable city-making' is urgent

and relevant from an academic point of view and from a societal perspective. First, a hotly debated topic in academia is how digital media technologies become increasingly important shapers of urban life and culture. Most notably, *smart cities* have attracted huge attention from the academic community. Second, researchers have observed a crisis in the 'natural' legitimacy of expert knowledge, such as urban design, and investigated how this shapes the work of professionals and the role of institutions. Third, governments across the world are adopting 'participatory society' policy agendas in an attempt to harness the ethics of do-it-yourself for reducing costs and legitimising policy. Fourth, a variety of factors – rapid urbanisation, an increase in natural disasters, the 2008 monetary crisis – have exposed the need to build resilient cities.

The term hacking as we use it refers to playful cleverness in problem-solving with the aid of computer technologies, and associated practices stemming from digital media culture. We observe striking parallels between the original hackers – computer hobbyists who write their own software for existing machines and share that among themselves and with the world – and current city-makers, who similarly contribute innovations for their city with limited means. Like hackers, today's city-makers use digital media to bend around or begin various urban infrastructures, systems and services. Those parallels exist on at least these three levels:

Figure 1 Hackable city model

1) an individual *hacker attitude* fuelled by do-it-yourself ethics and professional-amateurism (doing something very well 'for the love of it', being intrinsically motivated);
2) a collective set of *hacking practices*, including open innovation, collaboration and sharing knowledge and resources;

234

3) *hackability* of institutions; that is, the structural affordances at the level of organisations and public governance to be open to systemic change from within or outside.

This model is neither purely descriptive nor purely prescriptive. It should be considered as a heuristics that allows us to ask the question: how can the city be made 'hackable', that is, opened up to other people to shape their living conditions?

2. A STORY ABOUT HACKABLE SELF-BUILDING

When it comes to city-making, this challenge is particularly daunting in Buiksloterham, a brownfield area in Amsterdam North that is assigned as an urban lab destined to grow from 200 to over 10,000 inhabitants. The area was opened to self-builders: private individuals or households who want to build their own home, and collectives of about 15 to 50 people who want to build a shared apartment together. Self-building epitomises principles and practices of hackable city-making: non-experts doing it themselves, participating and engaging with their city differently. The research is based on ethnographic research carried out in the area. It provides a theoretical foundation for understanding the connection between bottom-up city-making processes and institutionalisation, and provides a compelling narrative for a research-and-design agenda about people-centric hackable smart cities.

Many shades of grey exist in terms of the financial and organisational constructions under which collective self-building happens. Some people are at the wheel themselves, hiring architects, constructors, consultants, and so on, to help realise their shared dreams. A fair number of projects are actually initiated by architects themselves, and allow for varying degrees of consultation and customisation. The increasing number of people who are building their own homes seems to be indicative of a trend of non-experts doing it themselves, participating and engaging with

their city differently. Self-building to us seems to epitomise the principles and practices of hackable city-making.

The stories of individual self-builders at times sound like adventure quests. Self-builders, like hackers, are invariably driven by strong motivation. As many recount, thanks to their own cleverness, stamina, and the sharing of resources, they are able to overcome the many obstacles they face in the complex and unknown urban landscape. At the collective level, doing things together is crucial. According to many of the people we spoke to, new collective practices of city-making are all about identity: identity of the neighbourhood and identity of the people living there. How do groups get a feeling of togetherness? Who are these people and what makes them a recognisable group that allows investors and other parties to become interested in doing business with them? The question of collective identity also plays a role at the level of new services. Do you arrange services like water and energy provision individually, collectively or publicly? And how do groups manage trust and risks among themselves? An interesting find was that initiatives often start small and in a bottom-up fashion but people are more likely to be successful when they quickly get in touch with institutions and have the capacity to mobilise them for their ends. Obstacles and opponents come from all directions. Sometimes it is the big vested parties who, after the financial crisis, aim to continue in their old ways by developing the city at a grand scale. Sometimes it is the municipality that does not give self-builders enough freedom or gives too little guidance and support or superimposes rules and procedures perceived as unnecessary. Nonetheless, by engaging 'adversaries' in the right way, they can become allies. In the end such parties may become partners for scaling up and institutionalising this new way of city-making.

One challenge is the exchange of knowledge. Self-builders all face steep learning curves. To some degree they must all reinvent the wheel. Currently, self-builders are sharing information and knowledge via platforms like Facebook,

Whatsapp, various websites, face-to-face conversations and public or closed meetings. This makes it difficult for other people to find existing information and build upon this knowledge. Moreover, similar to open software development, individual experiments and innovations are often not properly documented and non-transferrable. We found that several knowledge gaps exist. One is between advanced and beginning self-builders. Another is between self-builders and (semi-) professionals who have the vocabulary and understand the processes but who have rarely actually built a home from scratch themselves. A third gap exists between self-builders who engage in experiments and institutions who also experiment, like municipal 'team self-building' or public service companies.

Returning to the model described above, we consider a city hackable when there are dynamic and resilient relationships between the three levels. Self-building in Buiksloterham combines these levels. The individual level is made up of self-builders who each acquire their own piece of land, and start 'hacking' on their own home. The collective level consists of those activities and events at the group level that transcend the individual plot. Connections between the individual level and the collective level are forged when people start sharing resources like generic information and specific knowledge about, for instance, dealing with infrastructure companies, to collaboratively start working on public green spaces. When enough people keep sharing, benefits can be reaped individually while still strengthening the commons. The institutional level is composed of the various parties who are responsible for setting the conditions for self-building and providing the infrastructures. Relationships between the collective and institutional levels are based on a reciprocal exchange between providing credible indicators and stories about self-building as a viable alternative to traditional building practises, which in turn may lead to new affordances, frameworks and opportunities for self-builders to go from innovative experiments to upscaling.

3. CONCLUSION AND REFLECTION: HACKABLE CITY MAKING AS AN ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVE FOR URBAN DESIGN

Existing urban systems and infrastructures like water supply, energy provisioning or housing are often characterised by a static division between supplier and buyer. In the hackable city these relationships are rearranged and become more dynamic. The collective level is a crucial hinge in getting the system to move. Digital media technologies help to do so, as tools at the individual level, as new sets of practices at the collective level, and as institutional arrangements.

Hackers are characters who speak to the imagination. The hackable city provides a storyline about urbanites who use digital media technologies to – sometimes against the odds – make their own city. As we have outlined elsewhere (Ampatzidou et al., 2015), the notion bears the suggestion of provocation and friction. Some people will associate hacking with disruptive or even illegal activities. Others will think of a libertarian Silicon Valley ethics of self-governance, own responsibility and technological solutionism. However, many authors have pointed out that hackers often like to work in groups and share their efforts, thus contributing to the common good. The notion of hacking employed here is one that deliberately uses these tensions to hone the discussions about the future of our cities. Who has the right to make the city?

Instead of being a hermetic narrative that offers a singular solution to complex challenges, the story itself is open enough to be 'hacked'. It ties together multiple levels of individual hacker attitude, collective hacker practices, and institutional hackability. It addresses economic challenges (how do we build resilient cities after the financial crisis, what new business models are there), spatial and social questions (how do we deal with cooperative area planning, demographic shifts, new types of communities), cultural

changes (how do we leverage contemporary do-it-yourself culture, the reshuffling of roles between professionals and amateurs) and governance issues (how can we shape the participatory society, what roles are there for institutions). In the hackable city urban designers, institutions and citizens work together to build the city of the future in participatory, innovative and sustainable ways.

BIOGRAPHY

Michiel de Lange (1976) is an Assistant Professor in New Media Studies, Department of Media and Culture Studies, Utrecht University; and co-founder of The Mobile City, a platform for the study of new media and urbanism. He also works as a researcher in the field of (mobile) media, urban culture, identity and play.

Martijn de Waal is a senior researcher at the Lectorate of Play and Civic Media at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences. His research focuses on the role of digital media in the urban public sphere. He is the author of The City as Interface, and a co-founder of The Mobile City. He is also the project leader for The Hackable City, a research project funded by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research.

REFERENCES

Ampatzidou, C., Bouw, M., van de Klundert, F., de Lange, M. and de Waal, M., 2015. The Hackable City: A Research Manifesto and Design Toolkit. Amsterdam: Amsterdam Creative Industries Publishing.

Bouw, M., van de Klundert, F., de Lange, M. and de Waal, M., 2013. Eindhoven Hackable World City. Amsterdam.

de Lange, M., de Waal, M., Verhoeff, N., Foth, M. and Brynskov, M., 2015. Digital Cities 9 workshop proposal 'Hackable Cities: From Subversive City Making to Systemic Change' in: 7th International Conference on Communities and Technologies (C&T 2015), 27–30 June 2015. Limerick, Ireland: ACM.

THE CURATORIAL
Navigating Knowledge Boundaries

Chairs: Frank Moulaert, Hilde Heynen & Michael Kaethler (KU Leuven)

Despite the surge of interest in knowledge production in art and design, there remains insubstantial consideration as to the curatorial's role in the production of knowledge (O'Neill 2008)—particularly how it navigates the boundaries that exist between different knowledge communities, such as cultural producers and audiences. Maria Lind (2010) provides a particularly active description of the curatorial, as "a way of thinking in terms of interconnections: linking objects, images, processes, people, locations, histories, and discourses in physical space like an active catalyst generating twists, turns, and tensions." This highlights the curatorial qualities of 'being in-between' as a mediator of actants purposefully involved in the shaping and forming of knowledge through forging connections, translating messages and staging exchanges of signification.

Knowledge boundaries arise, according to Carlile (2002), from syntactic (language), semantic (interpretation of meaning) or pragmatic (values) differences. To transcend these boundaries demands forms of translation, mediation or transformation. This can be found across curatorial practices, for example, establishing a meaningful interaction between the cultural artefact that arose from one knowledge community and the knowledge communities of an audience. Mediating knowledge communities involves negotiating considerable epistemic differences, facilitating conduits for understanding and encouraging the emergence of new knowledge.

Operating across a discursive constellation with an array of constituent parts and sticky—hard-to-articulate-knowledge–how does the curatorial navigate knowledge boundaries? What relevant approaches, methods, or techniques can be drawn out of curatorial practices? As contemporary art and design seek new relationships to their publics, what does this entail for the curator-as-mediator?

We are interested in hosting discussions on the mediatory nature of the curatorial and the theories, approaches, tools, and methods that facilitate the negotiation and navigation of knowledge boundaries in art and/or design within a context of participation, social engagement or public space production.

References

Acord, S. K. (2010). Beyond the head: The practical work of curating contemporary art. Qualitative Sociology, 33(4), 447-467.

Carlile, P. R. (2002). A pragmatic view of knowledge and boundaries: Boundary objects in new product development. Organization science, 13(4), 442-455.

Lind, M. (2010). The curatorial. Selected Maria Lind Writing, 63.

O'Neill, P. (2012). The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture (s). MIT Press.

ORCHESTRATED PUBLIC SPACE
The Curatorial Dimensions Of The Transformation Of London's Southbank Centre

A. Jones

ABSTRACT

Since 1999, London's Southbank Centre, an assemblage of arts venues and constituent public spaces in central London, has been undergoing a gradual 'transformation' that continues to this day (Southbank Centre, 2016). In addition to works to refurbish the arts venues, this transformation has involved the renewal of the public realm between, around and (most infamously) beneath those venues. Using ethnographic data I seek to unpack the curatorial dimensions of the redesign and reappropriation of public space at this site.

1. INTRODUCTION

A curious tension characterises contemporary writing about urban public space. On the one hand, a number of commentators and practitioners, in design fields in particular, have proclaimed a public realm renaissance. In the UK context, this was signalled by the publication of the Urban Task Force (1999) report *Towards an Urban Renaissance* with the Chair of this task force, Richard Rogers, pronouncing that 'we are on the way to giving London the best public spaces of any city' (in Barker, 2007:53). And yet, while the landscaping of areas of public realm that were until recently treated as merely 'spaces between buildings' (Gehl, 1996) gains increasing attention, many scholars lament the end of public space (especially Sorkin, 1992).

There appears to be a fundamental misalignment then, between the sorts of public spaces that many urban theorists fear are disappearing and the sorts of public spaces that are presently being produced in city centres. As Amin and Thrift (2002:135) observe:

> The erosion of public spaces is seen to threaten the public sphere. And so urban leaders are pressed to rehabilitate derelict spaces, reintroduce cafes, fairs and bazaars in public places, pedestrianise streets, plan multifunctional spaces …. The aesthetic desire cannot be faulted, but are the above necessarily civic spaces?

While there is a renewed emphasis on the production of urban public realm, this does not necessarily translate into the manifestation of characteristically 'civic' urban public space; of space that affords 'mutual engagement, and so mutual obligation and loyalty' (Sennett, 1999:24). Notably, many of the claims about the revitalisation of public space and counter-claims about its decline have been made in abstract, decontextualised accounts. City authorities on the one hand emphasise the centrality of revitalised urban public spaces to their visions, while critics lament the loss of seemingly idealised forms of public space and constituent civic-ness.

This paper adds to a sparse but growing corpus of studies of how urban public space (and the production of that space) is experienced (Low, 2000; Degen, 2008). The paper speaks to a set of interrelated literatures. Theoretically, the paper takes Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad – spatial practice, representations of space and spaces of representation – as a basis for moving beyond a focus on architectural objects to the production of space; as a means to understand how urban space is constituted dialectically at the interface of physical form and social relations. In addition, the paper is situated substantively in relation to two parallel, but rather disconnected, urban studies literatures – the first pertaining to the commodification of 'disneyfication' of the urban public realm (e.g. Sorkin, 1992) and the second to the emergence of 'creative city' approaches to urban governance (e.g. Mould, 2015). Finally, a separate literature on the increasing prevalence of curatorial practices in contemporary social life (O'Neill, 2012; Balzer, 2015), including in urban planning and governance (Wong, 2011), underpins this work. Specifically, the paper takes this literature as a starting point for thinking about the sociological implications of a curatorial approach to place-making – whereby 'curatorship' is understood as 'a potentially independent, critically engaged and experimental form of exhibition-making practice' (O'Neill, 2012:2) – on London's South Bank.

The data analysed for this paper were collected intensively over a four-year period (2003–7) and supplemented through a number of follow-up visits to the Southbank Centre. The fieldwork was conducted during the ongoing transformation of the Centre and sought to explore how visitors used the public spaces available to them, how professionals charged with redesigning and managing its spaces accounted for the transformation of these spaces and how the proposed changes were represented in formal designs for, and accounts of, the transformation. This multi-facetted approach afforded a more holistic understanding of the spatial production

processes constitutive of Lefebvre's spatial triad, by amassing data on how the spaces are architecturally and managerially produced, how they are used and how they are represented.

In particular, through a thematic analysis of accounts of the experience, use and production of public space at the Southbank Centre, this paper elucidates one reason why we might be experiencing the concomitant production and decline of public space. This argument draws on Kevin Lynch's (1965) notion of the 'openness of open space.' At the Southbank Centre the transformation (and importantly *realisation*) of public space appears to threaten to 'enclose' that space (to extend Lynch's conceptual terminology). Moreover, this threat to the openness of space experienced around the Southbank Centre is not only material (in terms of how the local morphology is physically configured) but also symbolic (in terms of how the 'use value' (Lefebvre 1991) of public space is arguably increasingly prescribed by the Southbank Centre). That is, in accounts of those responsible for transforming the Southbank Centre there is an evident will not only to physically reshape the Centre's urban realm but also to *curate the content of that realm*.

2. THE SOUTHBANK CENTRE

The South Bank, the riverside district on the south embankment of the Thames in which the Southbank Centre is located, has a long history as a site of leisure. This dates back to the opening of Cuper's Gardens, one of London's main pleasure gardens, in the area in the 1630s. Leisure gave way to more industrial and transport-infrastructural uses in the 19th century and right up to the Second World War. During the war extensive bomb damage left much of the area gutted and seemingly abandoned (Mullins, 2007:26) and as a result by the early postwar period '[t]he South Bank had become "a term of despair and reproach"' (Ackroyd, 2007:212).

It was at this point that aspects of a proposal to regenerate the South Bank as a cultural district (as part of the 1943 County of London Plan) were revived. Specifically, Clement Attlee's Labour Government (1945–51) chose a 29-acre parcel of land on the South Bank for the centrepiece of the 'Festival of Britain.' This 'South Bank Exhibition' – comprising a concert hall (the Royal Festival Hall (RFH), arts festival and temporary industrial design installations – attracted 8.5 million people over its five-month (May–September 1951) run.

While the subsequently elected Conservative Government decided to raze the entire exhibition site, except the RFH, to the ground, a new and continuing era of cultural activities in the area had been initiated. Thus a series of additional arts venues (the National Film Theatre, the Queen Elizabeth Hall and the Hayward Gallery) were built in the environs of the RFH between 1958 and 1967. Their delivery was presided over by the London County Council (LCC) and its successor the Greater London Council (GLC). Notably, these additions were the product of post-war LCC/GLC commitment to civic, rather than 'narrowly cultural,' policy (after Matarasso, 2001:24). When the GLC was abolished in 1986, responsibility for the-then 'South Bank Centre' (comprising all of the institutions listed above except the Royal National Theatre) was handed to the Arts Council and an independent South Bank Board set up in 1987. The influence of the Arts Council, a much more arts-focused organisation than the GLC, signalled a refashioning of the purpose of the Centre towards much more artistic (and access-to-the-arts) ends.

Given this diverse history, the 'design and content' of the Southbank Centre has been described as being an 'agglomeration of layers and meanings rather than a coherent whole' (Matarasso, 2001:24). With a view to addressing this perceived incoherence the Centre has been the subject of numerous redevelopment proposals, none of which got off the drawing board until Mather's

'masterplan' was adopted in 1999. In the context of this disjointed physical form, 'lost cultural vision' (Kettle, 2002) and 'paralysing inertia' (Sudjic, 2002), the Centre's public realm became ripe for appropriation – from the emergence of bookstalls under Waterloo Bridge, to the occupation of the Waterloo roundabout underpasses by homeless people, to the use of the Queen Elizabeth Hall undercroft by skateboarders. It is against this backdrop that work to deliver the Mather masterplan (by Rick Mather Architects) for the Centre began in 1999.

3. METHODOLOGY

The argument that follows is based primarily on the analysis of two sets of interview data:

- Semi-structured 'street-intercept interviews' with passers-by at the Southbank Centre (n=46). Respondents were purposively sampled according to observable demographic characteristics (age, gender, ethnicity) as well as activity and whether they were alone or in a group;
- Semi-structured 'expert interviews' (n=18) with senior staff at the Southbank Centre (as well as others involved or invested in the development and management of the local area);

In addition, fieldnotes and documentary data collected over the course of fieldwork inform the analysis that follows.

Through the interviews described above I sought to understand not only how the Centre was being used and transformed, but also how users and shapers of the Southbank Centre accounted for their practice. Data were coded and analysed thematically with a view to distilling salient themes in the transcripts.

4. FINDINGS

In this section I first consider the ways that visitors to the Southbank Centre experienced the public realm available there. Street-

intercept interviews were conducted at a relatively early stage in the transformation of the Centre and so these capture accounts of how public spaces were experienced as the site was starting to be transformed. At the start of the fieldwork the Royal Festival Hall (and the public realm skirting it) was being refurbished, but other parts of the Centre's estate remained largely untouched. However, as the fieldwork proceeded an increasing number of public art (and other) interventions took place across the estate and these interventions, as well as the broader set of discourses guiding the Centre's transformation, form the backdrop to the analysis that follows.

3.1 Openness at the Southbank Centre
When questioned about what they valued about the Southbank Centre as a place to visit and to 'be', interviewees consistently articulated the importance of the 'openness' of the area to them. Notably, the perceived openness of space articulated in and around the Centre was multi-dimensional. At one level, then, interviewees referred to the (relative) sense of topographic openness experienced at the Southbank Centre (Figure 1) and recorded in field observations.

The public spaces around the Southbank Centre were, for instance, contrasted with 'everywhere' else that is getting 'built up' by one interviewee, while another described how 'it is good walking space … because it's very open, and there's no cars, and there's interesting things to look at.' Another likened their experience of the South Bank to a 'stroll along the banks of the Seine,' noting how the north embankment of the Thames was not so conducive to walking because of the presence of a main road.

As well as being 'one of the places [in London] where you get … a little bit of a distant view' (as another interviewee put it), the area was also experienced as 'open' in the sense of being edge-less. Thus, for users of the South Bank, as well as those involved in its production and management, there was a sense of ambiguity about where the Southbank Centre started and finished. Thus,

Figure 1 The expansive (relative to other central London walkways)
Queen's Walk fronting the Southbank Centre (source: author's collection)

an employee for a local employers' umbrella organisation stated that 'there's something about the way that it's a kind of *seamless* … space' [emphasis in speech]. Likewise, a passer-by described how the area was distinctive because it was characterised by 'totally big spaces, central places for people to come to rather than some localised regions with some *edge* around it' [emphasis in speech].

Deriving from this spatial experience of openness, one interviewee reported how 'the fact it's so open here *is* conducive … to a fairly relaxed atmosphere' [emphasis in speech]. This relaxed ambience reverberated through the accounts given by others. Thus, for another interviewee, visiting the South Bank was distinctive because any perceived mandates on behaviour in other parts of the city (e.g. malls being for shopping, restaurants for eating, offices for working, etc.) were absent:

> [P]eople come here to … *unwind and do what they like. It's* **spacious,** *and, it's … quite relaxed, here … and you can find something to your tastes, you can … do what you like here* [emphasis in speech]

This capacity to act freely around the Southbank Centre is perhaps most vividly demonstrated by the use, since the 1970s, of the Queen Elizabeth Hall undercroft by skateboarders.

3.2 Openness at risk

These interrelated characteristics of the Southbank Centre – a relatively open, unbounded topography and an ambience perceived as relaxed – are constituent parts of Kevin Lynch's conceptualisation of 'open space.' Not only did Lynch (1965:396) conceive of open space in material terms, therefore, but he also advocated a 'behavioural definition':

> We proceed directly from the meaning of 'open:' to be free to be entered or used, unobstructed, unrestricted,

accessible, available, exposed, extended, candid, undetermined, loose, disengaged, responsive, ready to hear or see as in open heart, open eyes, open hand, open mind, open house, open city. Open spaces in this sense are all those regions in the environment which are open to the freely chosen and spontaneous actions of people: […] a space is open if it allows people to act freely [emphasis added].

In this reading, the degree to which a (public) space can be understood as 'open' is a function of the extent to which uses of that space, and meanings ascribed to it, can be self-determined. For a space to be more 'open,' Lynch (1965:397) argues that it should have 'a lower intensity of human use, and appear … less structured to the human eye.' Open space characterised in this way can then be experienced as:

> [A] space of relaxation, of stimulus release in contrast to the intense and meaning-loaded communications encountered in the remainder of the city (Lynch, 1965:397).

Relatively devoid of 'meaning-loaded' institutional and architectural ascriptions of function and use then, the open space around the Southbank Centre during the period of planning inertia (1970s–1990s) became home to a distinctive public life; this space was *produced*, in a Lefebvrian sense, as civic space. However, as the transformation of the Centre proceeded during my fieldwork, a number of forces potentially inimical to the prevailing 'open' qualities of space could gradually be discerned. Intriguingly, these stemmed not so much from an institutional will to erase public realm around the Southbank Centre but precisely from a desire (discussed at the start of this paper) *to produce and enhance* this public realm. As the Southbank Centre webpages of the Rick Mather Architects website state:

> The masterplan *provides a* framework for the improvement and extension of

existing cultural facilities and public realm at this important central London site (Rick Mather Architects, 2016).

My analysis suggested four interrelated functions of the Centre's transformation that potentially pose a risk to the openness of local public space. Three of these are more evident in planning documents that constitute the Mather masterplan and in other materials produced by planners, architects and urban designers responsible for the various projects commissioned under the rubric of this masterplan. They can be summarised as:

- *The realisation of public space.* According to expert interviewees, the urban realm available to the public at the Centre was being fully recognised for the first time;
- *The demarcation of public space.* A number of planning interventions involved demarcating edges around and within the Southbank Centre estate in order to create a more readily identifiable cultural district;
- *The animation and orchestration of public space.* An explicit will to exploit public realm for consumer ends – to assert the 'exchange value' (Lefebvre, 1991) of that space – was evident.

The fourth process, and the focus of this paper, can be traced not so much to the (master)planning proposals for the site as to the ways that the Southbank Centre management planned to *curate* the function of public realm.

3.3 The curation of public space
The 'transformation' of the Southbank Centre can be seen to involve conventional urban planning and design components (led by the overarching Rick Mather masterplan for the site) alongside a restructuring of the Centre's organisational 'vision'. As the-then chairperson of the Southbank Centre (Michael Lynch) put it in 2006, when he joined the Centre (in 2002) one of his core objectives was to formulate 'a

creative vision for the site'.[1]

In other words, the transformation encompasses reshaping of the material urban form as well as the *function* of the Southbank Centre. Importantly for the present paper these two dimensions of the transformation are very much interrelated, insofar as the 'creative vision' for how the Southbank Centre operates (and delivers its arts mandate) has implications for the public realm available in and around the Centre's constituent venues.

Central to the 'creative vision' developed is the recognition of the extent of the public space comprised in the Centre's 21-acre estate and a desire to 'celebrate' this space (as a senior architect in the renovation of the Royal Festival Hall put it). This aspiration is reflected in a published interview with the Southbank Centre's Artistic Director, Jude Kelly, in which she states that post-transformation 'arts won't simply happen inside The Hayward [Gallery] but across the 21-acre site' (quoted in Thompson, 2007:13).

While concerns about the changing nature of urban public space tend to focus on its commercial privatisation (e.g. Sorkin, 1992; Low and Smith, 2005; Langegger, 2016), at the Southbank Centre such processes are secondary to a wider arts-based regeneration strategy (e.g. Lim, 1993; Cameron and Coaffee, 2005). The heavily arts-inflected nature of the ongoing transformation of the Southbank Centre must be seen in context. First, owing to a complex ownership arrangement (see Jones, 2014:7), the Southbank Centre itself manages the 21-acre site in which its constituent venues are located and so has significant, albeit not complete (e.g. Ong, 2016) control over how that estate is used. Unlike other instances of 'urban curation' (e.g. Mar and Anderson, 2012) where arts organisations are invited to participate as outsiders to a civic or corporate planning

---

1 Quoted in the London SE1 community website online article 'Southbank Centre announces a new vision'. Available at http://www.london-se1.co.uk/news/view/2233 [accessed on 14 June 2016].

process, at the Southbank Centre the planning process for the 'transformation' is arts-led.

Importantly, the 'South Bank Exhibition' heritage described earlier is central to the ongoing transformation of the Southbank Centre and very much guides the 'creative vision' being pursued. Thus a senior Centre executive reported how:

> [T]he most profound influence on me about the site was its original purpose …, this phrase, that they used, landscape of the imagination it seems to me to be a unique heritage.

Taking this influence of the 'landscape of the imagination' idea from the South Bank Exhibition further, this interviewee expanded on how they envisioned public space at the Centre:

> [M]y sense of what the public space ought to feel like, is … it should not feel like a space for tourism plus arts spaces where you buy tickets. … [I]t should feel like a unique cultural space. And by that, … you would expect to see … on a continual basis … a deliberate curation of the outdoor spaces, through installations, through exhibitions, through gardening projects, through fountains, through live encounters with performance [emphasis added].

In turn, a curator at one of the Centre's arts venues reported how in her view the Southbank Centre leadership wanted 'creative staff to be thinking about programming not just for their building or for their stage, but for the whole site.' By invoking the South Bank Exhibition in the Centre's 'creative vision' then, an intention to reinterpret the hitherto residual public space of the Southbank Centre as space for curation was evident. The goal of this new approach was, as a senior executive at the Southbank Centre put it, to reach the point 'where you'd be amazed if nothing was on outside' the Centre venues.

Indeed, over the course of the fieldwork for this study an increasing use of external space by the Southbank Centre was recorded. This included conventional, albeit temporary, public art installations (such as a regular commission for an artist to design a flag for a flagpole at the site) alongside more interactive installations (e.g. a boating lake, see Figure 2).

Additionally, site-wide festivals (such as the 'Festival of Neighbourhood with MasterCard') have increasingly been put on, for which virtually the entire Southbank Centre estate is appropriated and curated as festival space (see Figure 3).

In these instances an almost complete shift from open space to curated space can be observed across external spaces of the Southbank Centre. This is to such an extent that the area is – albeit without the toll booths of the original 'South Bank Exhibition' – arguably once again produced as 'exhibition', as 'a temporary space for public presentation within which an overarching curatorial framework is provided' as O'Neill (2012:131) defines it.

5. CONCLUSION
'PRIVATISATION' AND THE END OF OPEN SPACE ON SOUTH BANK?

> The privatisation of space occurs by making it monofunctional. …[T]he more that play between the disorder of public spaces and conventional behaviour can be exploited and encouraged, the more public life is enhanced. (Sennett, 2000:385)

A number of scholars explore the relationship between the design of public space and public life (especially Carr et al., 2010; Madanipour, 2010). Likewise, there is a growing ethnographic literature exploring how urban public spaces are used (e.g. Low, 2000; Makagon, 2004; Degen, 2008). Less empirical attention, however, has been paid to what has been referred to as the 'management dimension' of public space (Carmona et al., 2008).
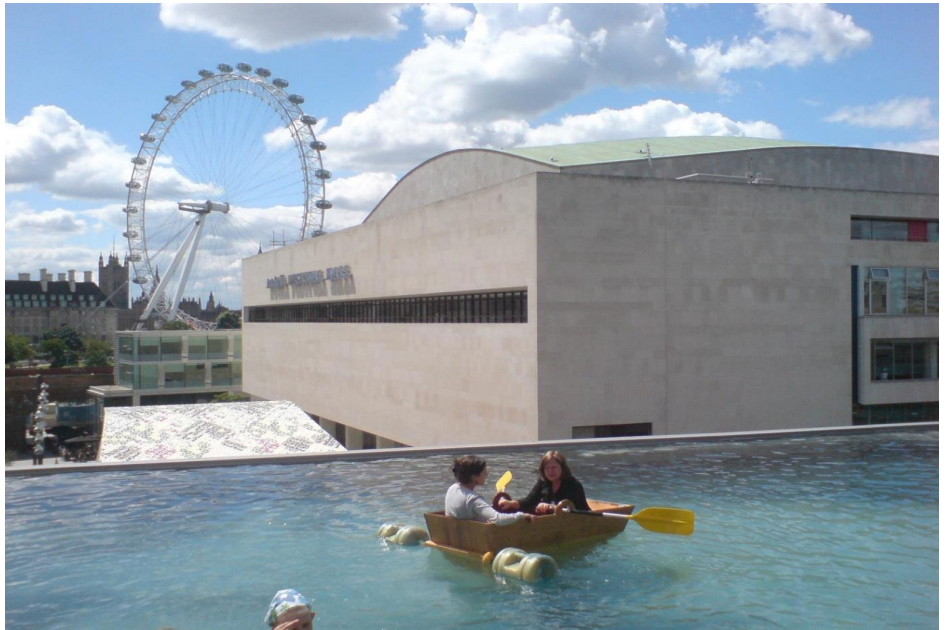
2

3

Figure 2 Austrian art collective Gelitin's boating
lake 'Normally, Proceeding and Unrestricted With
Without Title' (2008). This was installed as part of the
Hayward Gallery's *PsychoBuildings – Artists Take on
Architecture* exhibition. (source: author's collection)

Figure 3 Pervasive curation of public realm on
the Southbank Centre during the 'Festival of
Neighbourhood with MasterCard' (May-September
2013). (source: author's collection)

Situating itself in relation to a central paradox that characterises contemporary discussions of urban public space – whereby at one and the same time the production and demise of public space is reported – the present paper has sought to use ethnographic data to explore the management of public space in and around London's Southbank Centre. In particular, the paper has drawn out the curatorial dimensions of the management and provision of public space at the Centre as its transformation and 'creative vision' are realised.

These curatorial aspects of the ongoing redevelopment of the Southbank Centre have resulted in a site-wide realisation of public realm there as arts or festival space, in a way that can be seen as part of a broader trend whereby 'nascent internationalist cultural institutions in the post-war period … produced a new set of presuppositions about the festival's regenerative capacity' (Jamieson, 2014:294). In turn, expanses of public space around the Centre that had until recently been treated (or more precisely ignored) as residual spaces between buildings, and so experienced as 'open' space by users, have been animated on a periodic basis by an increasing number of public art (and other) installations.

Notably, the curation of the public spaces of the Southbank Centre in this way was identified by a senior Southbank Centre executive as a means to reveal what they identified as the 'playful' 'vibe' and 'personality' of the site. In this reading, the installations and interventions do not so much displace or undermine the ludic ways that the public spaces were previously used or experienced (Jones, 2013) as amplify and celebrate these existing uses and appropriations. Moreover, unlike more commercially oriented appropriations, for instance, the artistic curation of public space at the Southbank Centre is first of all underpinned by a push to encourage 'public access and participation' (Jude Kelly, quoted in Thompson, 2007:13) and, secondly, designed to actively include voices that precisely provoke users to think

about issues pertaining to the use and management of public space.[2]

However, despite these laudable motivations, there is a clear risk at the Southbank Centre that organisational curation of public space serves not to reinforce existing uses but rather to dominate the ways that the site is experienced. There is a danger, in particular, that public space is privatised not in the sense of being overrun by commercial interests, but through the 'monofunctional' (to borrow from Richard Sennett) use of these spaces as exhibition space. The external spaces of the Southbank Centre can in this respect be seen as part of a wider trend towards 'curationism' and the curation of diverse aspects of contemporary life (after Balzer, 2015). Even when oriented towards the playful, such singular and dominant productions of the urban realm run counter to definitively *uncommitted* qualities of 'open' space – qualities that arguably foster playful interpretations of public space and allow users to participate in the everyday production of space.

As Low and Smith (2005:1) put it, cities are witnessing 'multiple closures, erasures, inundations and transfigurations of public space at the behest of state and corporate strategies.' Although follow-up fieldwork at the Centre is needed, my analysis indicates that arts-led regeneration and 'Creative City' policies (Mould, 2015) can likewise 'inundate' public space – and the ways that this space is experienced and attributed meaning – to the detriment of qualities of 'openness' that characterise more residual forms.

The 'curation' of public space at the Southbank Centre arguably falls foul of Lefebvre's (1996:173) cautioning that '[t]o

put art at the service of the urban does not
mean to prettify urban space with works of art.'
For Lefebvre, we should instead aspire to a
situation where 'time-spaces become works
of art and … former art reconsiders itself as
source and model of appropriation of space
and time' (1996:173; emphasis in original).
This is not to say that curation of public realm
should be discounted, but rather to encourage
a rethinking of what constitutes 'putting art at
the service of the urban' in the public realm.
At the Southbank Centre this would imply
being attentive to existing time-spaces – such
as the Queen Elizabeth Hall undercroft – and
practices therein, alongside commissioning
extrinsic arts-led curatorial interventions.

BIOGRAPHY

Alasdair Jones is an interdisciplinary urbanist and an Assistant Professor in Qualitative Research Methodology at the LSE. He is interested in the relationship between built form in cities and social practices, and his research has centred on public space, public transport and the ways that citizenship is experienced in urban settings.

REFERENCES

Ackroyd, P., 2007. *Thames: Sacred River*. London: Chatto and Windus.

Amin, A. and Thrift, N., 2002. *Cities: Reimagining the Urban*. Cambridge: Polity.

Balzer, D., 2015. *Curationism: How Curating Took Over the Art World and Everything Else*. London: Pluto Press.

Barker, A., 2007. 'Where the Design Gurus Eat,' in: *The Observer Food Monthly*, September 2007, number 78: pp.50–63.

Cameron, S. and Coaffee, J., 2005. 'Art, Gentrification and Regeneration – From Artist as Pioneer to Public Arts,' in: *International Journal of Housing Policy* (51): pp.39–58.

Carmona, M., de Magalhães, C. and Hammond, L. (eds.), 2008. *Public Space: The Management Dimension*. London: Routledge.

Carr, S., Francis, M., Rivlin, L. G. and Stone, A. M., 1992. *Public Space*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Degen, M., 2008. *Sensing Cities: Regenerating Public Life in Barcelona and Manchester*. London: Routledge.

Gehl, J., 1996. *Life Between Buildings: using public space* [3rd edition]. Translated by J. Koch. Copenhagen: Arkitektens Forlag.

Jamieson, K., 2014 'Tracing festival imaginaries: Between affective urban idioms and administrative assemblages', in: *International Journal of Cultural Studies,* 17(3): 293–303.

Jones, A. J. H., 2014. *On South Bank: the production of public space*. Routledge, London.

———, 2013. 'A tripartite conceptualisation of urban public space as a site for play: Evidence from South Bank, London,' in: *Urban Geography* 34(8): 1144–70.

Kettle, M., 2002. 'Welcome – to perpetual crisis,' *The Guardian*. Available at www.guardian.co.uk/saturday_review/story/0,,721458,00.html [accessed 31 August 2016].

Langegger, S., 2016. 'Right-of-way Gentrification: Conflict, commodification and cosmopolitanism', in: *Urban Studies* 53(9): 1803–21

Lefebvre, H., 1996. *Writings on Cities*. Translated and edited by E. Kofman and E. Lebas. Oxford: Blackwell.

———, 1991. *The Production of Space*. Translated by Nicholson-Smith, D. Oxford: Blackwell

Leventhal, F. M., 1995. '"A Tonic to the Nation": The Festival of Britain, 1951,' in: *Albion* 27(3): 445–53.

Lim, H., 1993. 'Cultural Strategies for Revitalizing the City: a review and evaluation,' in: *Regional Studies* 27(6): 589–94.

Low, S., 2000. *On the Plaza: The Politics of Public Space and Culture*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Low, S. and Smith, N., (eds), 2005. *The Politics of Public Space.* London: Routledge.

Lynch, K., 1965. 'The Openness of Open Space,' in T. Banerjee and M. Southworth (eds), *City Sense and City Design: Writings and Projects of Kevin Lynch*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, pp.396-412.

Madanipour, A., (ed.) 2010. *Whose Public Space? International case studies in urban design and development*. Routledge, London.

Makagon, D., 2004. *Where the Ball Drops: Days and Nights in Times Square*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Mar, P. and Anderson, A., 2012. 'Urban Curating: The "Interspaces" of Art Collaboration in Western Sydney', in: *Space and Culture* 15(4): 330–43.

Matarasso, F., 2001. *London's Forum: Social Inclusion and the South Bank Centre.* London: Locum Destination.

Mould, O., 2015. *Urban Subversion and the Creative City.* London: Routledge.

Mullins, C., 2007. *A Festival on the River: the story of the Southbank Centre.* London: Penguin.

Ong, A., 2016. 'The Path is Place: skateboarding, graffiti and performances of place,' in: *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* 29(2): 229–41.

O'Neill, P., 2012. *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s).* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Rick Mather Architects, 2016. *Southbank Centre Masterplan.* Available at http://www.rickmather.com/project/southbank_centre_masterplan [accessed 10 June 2016]

Sennett, R., 2000. 'Reflections on the Public Realm,' in G. Bridge and S. Watson (eds). *A Companion to the City.* Oxford: Blackwell, pp.380–87.

———, 1999. 'Growth and Failure: the new political economy and its culture,' in M. Featherstone and S. Lash (eds), *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World.* London: Sage, pp.14–26.

Sorkin, M., (ed.) 1992. *Variations on a Theme Park: the new American city and the end of public space.* New York: Hill & Wang.

Southbank Centre, 2016. *Southbank Centre: Transforming Southbank Centre – Preparing to let the light in.* Available at http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/about-us/transforming-southbank-centre [accessed 9 June 2016]

Sudjic, D., 2002. 'Who will save the South Bank?,' in: *The Observer.* Available at https://www.theguardian.com/education/2002/jan/20/arts.highereducation1 [accessed 31 August 2016]

Thompson, J. C. (ed.) 2007. *Time Out London: Southbank Centre Summer Special* supplement, 31 May 2007. London: Time Out Magazines Ltd.

Urban Task Force, 1999. *Towards an Urban Renaissance.* Final Report of the Urban Task Force chaired by Lord Rogers of Riverside. London: HMSO.

Wong, T., 2011. *The City as a Curated Space* (PhD thesis). Available at http://researchbank.rmit.edu.au/eserv/rmit:160179/Wong_Hulbert.pdf [accessed 2 September 2016]

HOW TO PLAY THE ENVIRONMENT GAME

J. Kei

ABSTRACT

This paper looks at a 1973 exhibition, How to Play the Environment Game, as a rare collaboration between the Arts Council, the architectural profession and community groups. Curated by the architect Theo Crosby, the exhibition capitalised on the contemporaneous debates on preservation and the ecological crisis, in order to launch fervent attacks on large-scale speculative real-estate development. This paper will examine how the curator negotiated with the interests of the various parties involved in the exhibition and created a temporary space for an antagonistic co-operation. Looking at a moment when the concern for architectural preservation and environmentalism overcame political divides, this paper will investigate the problem of consensus in the production of architectural discourse.

1. INTRODUCTION

To set the scene a little … Imagine an architectural exhibition that is entirely topical in London today: one that investigates inner-city housing affordability issues; demonstrates the impact of gentrification and asks questions about the Anthropocene. Polemical best-selling books of the past few years are thumbed through and turned into digestible summations – quoting Thomas Piketty on income equality, Elizabeth Kolbert on mass extinction and Michael Kaku on the new findings on the human mind – and envisaging their application to architecture and planning. The curator will evoke the challenges of immigration in a lecture to students. And of course, there will be an app in which everyone can make podcasts to voice their opinions about the built environment. The exhibition will be held at the Hayward Gallery, anticipating visitors of all ages and all backgrounds.

Only through such imagination can one understand the disorienting amusement experienced by visitors to the 1973 exhibition How to Play the Environment Game. Curated by the architect Theo Crosby, the Arts Council-funded exhibition grappled with the questions of 'who is responsible' for the environment and why, 'when social knowledge and technological skills might seem to place Utopia within our reach, are the results almost always bad?' (Crosby, 1973). In the mission statement, the curator announced that the exhibition would point fingers directly at organisations and individuals that he and his contributors thought should be held responsible for the degradation of the environment. By revealing the forces at play in the production of architecture, Crosby claimed that the exhibition would enable ordinary British citizens to take active roles in the 'environment game'.

2. CONTEXT

The exhibition was held at the Hayward Gallery from April to July 1973 and travelled to various British cities until July of the following year. It was staged during a turbulent eight months for the country: GDP (Gross Domestic Product)

growth had turned negative, and the stock market had dwindled. Full employment, a condition that had been taken for granted by British people since the end of the Second World War, began to dissolve in those months too. By the time the exhibition was touring between Sheffield, Liverpool and Bristol in the winter of 1973/74, travelling might not have been easy: the OAPEC oil embargo led to a 400 per cent rise in oil prices (Borasi & Zardini, 2007). For some, the everyday environment was equally depressing. By the mid-70s, public distaste for modernist architecture and planning had grown and was manifested in popular culture of the time. From J. G. Ballard's Crash (1973), James Herbert's The Rats (1974) to Stanley Kubrick's adaptation of A Clockwork Orange (1973), planned modernist cities became backdrops for dystopian fictions. Vandalism, crime and health issues in local council tower blocks were made visible and their 'inevitability' was backed up by (pseudo) scientific studies, such as Oscar Newman's Defensible Space (1972). Criticism towards top-down planning, the associated social issues manifest within the blocks, and the Welfare State project was often blended and flattened into an over-arching anti-modern sentiment.

This distrust towards the widespread adaptation of modernist architecture was the driving force behind the creation of How to Play the Environment Game; the exhibition was initiated at an Arts Council meeting in 1972. The term 'Modern' was a conspicuous target: for those who lamented the dominance of American culture over traditional English values; for skeptics of so-called consumer culture; and for others who disliked the proliferation of the minimalistic and mechanic aesthetic in the arts and architecture (Pick, 1980:138). The initiative to mount a topical exhibition also resonated with the internal politics of the Arts Council at the time. The calls for 'democratisation of British arts' since the 1960s had forced Council members to re-evaluate their emphasis on the promotion of and education in fine arts that were deemed patronising and elitist (Hewison, 2015). One of the most visible and influential attempts

Figure 1 Poster for **How to Play the Environment Game,** Hayward Gallery

Figure 2 Installation view of **How to Play the Environment Game**

made by the Council was the broadening of their sponsorship to amateur arts and community performances. The Arts Council also made substantial efforts to collaborate with the wider arts and design industry to bring in new synergies. Such examples included supporting the development of art criticism and theory, and the fostering of a closer working relationship between artists and architects to strengthen the presence of arts in the everyday environment (Pick, 1980). This 'democratising' agenda of the Arts Council set the populist tone of the How to Play the Environment Game exhibition.

3. PAPERBACK EXHIBITION

The task of curating such an ambitious exhibition was given to the British-South African architect Theo Crosby, a member of the Arts Council and a vocal critic of modernist architecture. He was also a reputable curator who had been responsible for several provocative exhibitions in the previous decades: the landmark 1956 This is Tomorrow exhibition; the highly politicised Union of International Architects (UIA) Conference in 1961; and the 1971 Kinetics exhibition at the Hayward Gallery (Grieve, 1994; Pentagram, 1978; Scott, 2016). In all of these exhibitions, Crosby succeeded in creating unusual collaborations between avant-garde artists and the authorities.[1] For example, in 1961, Crosby brought the members of the Independent Group to contribute to the UIA Congress that was serving as a vehicle of Cold War soft-power conciliation between the West and the Soviet bloc (Glendinings, 2009). In How to Play the Environment Game, Crosby once again mobilised his connections

with the avant-garde such as Archigram's Ron Herron and the Italian group Archizoom, juxtaposing their works with the contributions from the Establishment like the historian Joseph Rykwert and the environmental minister Lord Kennet. With hindsight, the differences between the intellectual output of these two groups seems to be irreconcilable. In fact, during the exhibition, there was no lack of critical reviews written by the exhibition contributors, such as Robbie Middleton, criticising the intellectual blunders of the exhibition (1973:19). For Crosby, these internal conflicts were productive in that they manifested the widespread resonance, from Cambridge historian to the Italian radical movement, of his anti-modernist stance.

Garnering support from some of the most prolific British architectural writers of the period, and an influential editor himself, Crosby created an exhibition that was not unlike a printed publication.[2] The exhibition was divided into 23 sections and comprised of more than 1000 images and texts, explaining how the transformation of the built environment was imbricated with changes in architectural history, finance, building regulations, technology, the real estate market and consumerism. The catchy titles, the terse and sharp commentaries and the black and white images of the exhibits were all formatted into a Penguin paperback that was sold as the exhibition catalogue. The adaptation of the exhibition into a pocket-size paperback underscored the Crosby's populist intention (Williams, 2012:8). The affordable, easy to carry Penguin paperback was well known for its role in the intellectual awakening of British architects of the post-war generation (Banham, 2000:21). The Penguin paperback

1 The term avant-garde used here is in debt to Claire Zimmerman and Mark Crinson's summation in their Neo-Avant-Garde and Postmodern (2010), in which Crosby's generation and those immediately following were described as having 'revolutionary adherents who were shooting at the same targets, defined as inherited, reductive, and obsolescent modernist procedures.' My use of 'avant-garde' in thinking about Crosby's works here is also coming from my PhD research where his later works are categorised by Jurgen Habermas's 'avant-garde from the reverse front' (1981:3).

2 Crosby was the technical editor of the influential *Architectural Design* magazine from 1955 to 1963. It was during his tenure that the magazine transitioned from a trade journal to an outlet for post-war architects like the Smithsons, Colin St John Wilson and their fellows from the Independent Group. Crosby, by the 1970s, had already published two other publications on British urbanism: *Architecture City Sense* and *The Necessary Monument.* He had also edited two other magazines: *Uppercase* and *The Living Arts.*

demonstrated Crosby's belief that it was the task of professionals and intellectuals to make knowledge about the built environment and architectural design available and accessible to the general public.

Not unlike the Penguin paperback, the exhibition design utilised bold colours and a portable format. The exhibition displays were made of foldable panels that could fit into two suitcases and toured to various British cities. The idea of a 'mobile' exhibition featured significantly in How to Play the Environment Game. Crosby collaborated with the community artists' group Inter-Action, led by the American social activist Ed Berman, to create a 'Media Van' that travelled across the country and invited residents to voice their concerns about their living conditions (Crosby, 1973:116, 117, 258–61). The Media Van was equipped with Xerox machines, video and audio recorders and a large radio phone to allow ordinary citizens to create media contents that demonstrate their discontent (Berman, 1973). Crosby and Berman believed that only by allowing the public to create their own media content could the British gaze be directed away from the spectacle of the television screen and returned to the physical environment. Developed from the critique that Guy Debord formulated in the Spectacle Society (1967), Crosby and Berman tried to battle people's latency and inertness induced by the media spectacle through incorporating media technology in their campaign. To fully capitalise on media technologies Crosby and Berman even created a plan to transmit the interviews back to the Hayward Gallery for live broadcast. The idea of creating a feedback mechanism on the built environment was eventually cancelled due to technical difficulties.

The Inter-Action collaboration linked How to Play the Environment Game with a larger movement in British architecture of the early 1970s. In the same issue of Architectural Design (AD) magazine that published reviews of the exhibition, in April 1973, another mobile architectural classroom featured: Polyark's bus tour. The project was initiated

by Berman's collaboration with the architect Cedric Price, who later brought in members of the Architectural Association and AD's Peter Murray. The bus toured around the country, aiming to strengthen connections among architectural schools, and to challenge the traditional architectural curriculum. Not unlike How to Play the Environment Game's Media Van, the Polyark bus tour emphasised that architects should pay attention to two themes that were overlooked by the professionals: ecology and community action (AD, 1973:201). In the first few months of 1973, these two mobile exhibitions and classrooms roamed across the country, trying to make visible the socio-political agency of architecture in Britain. In recent years, the Polyark effort has been revisited by historians as one of the key examples of radical pedagogy (Doucet, 2015) and was re-enacted (Canadian Center for Architecture, 2015).

4. ANTAGONISTIC COLLABORATION

The media experience continued inside the Hayward Gallery: the double-height space of the gallery was turned into a projection room for videos produced by activist groups from Britain and abroad, discussing issues ranging from gentrification and urban farming to children's playgrounds. The most memorable images probably came from a film made by the young filmmakers Mick Csaky and Mike Gold that documented the grassroots resistance to urban renewal and speculative developments in London. Scenes of mass demonstration and squatting in dilapidated terrace houses were captured in the 30-minute documentary titled Playing the Environment Game (Csaky, 1973). SAVE Piccadilly, the Tolmers Square squatters, and the Covent Garden Community Group were among the few well-known housing activist groups that were featured in the film. The film interlaced stories of how developers and borough councils evicted residents by force, with scenes of inner-city housing left vacant and decaying. To cast a starker contrast, the camera was directed on how squatters in Tolmers Square in Camden renovated

the desolated houses, opened community kitchens and bookstores, and hosted carnivals to bring life back to the area. For the first time, since the Hayward Gallery's opening in 1968, terms like 'participation', 'community action' and 'guerilla warfare' were represented and amplified in the Gallery, pointing directly at the British environment. What the film revealed was not only the antagonism against land banking and speculative development in London, but also an often-overlooked alliance between the Arts Council, the Greater London Council, community artists groups and radical political movements. What drew these unlikely bedfellows together were pressing concerns about the disappearance of historic districts like Covent Garden, the area near the Old Vic Theatre and the Southbank, where community life, cultural activities and artists spaces were threatened by the grip of developers and the incompetence of local councils.

In How to Play the Environment Game, the role of the curator extended beyond the exhibition space to become a mediator between the authorities, the architecture and planning professions and the general public. The exhibition could be identified as a rare moment when forceful critiques on the built environment were consolidated and disseminated in an institutional space. This consensual preference for the 'old' over the 'new' found in the exhibition rhetoric also contributed to the formation of a new orthodoxy that would reshape the cityscape of London in the following decades: the 'preservation movement'. In other words, in campaigning for 'neighbourhood preservation', efforts from people of all different stripes converged at some of the traditionally working-class areas like Covent Garden, Camden, and Notting Hill Gate. Such prejudice became a recurring theme in the exhibition and more problematically, undermined more vigorous interrogation in housing affordability and community sustainability issues. Not unlike the modernist avant-garde that they criticised, Crosby and his collaborators rationalised and justified their preference for historical buildings with social, economic and ecological arguments, leaving little room for alternative

urban visions (Crosby, 1973:96). Participation by squatters and activists in the exhibition about environment did not help formulate new housing strategies that functioned beyond the binary real estate structure of owners and renters.

Despite the filtration of contemporary radical politics through capturing the squatting movement and massive demonstrations, the exhibition revealed a 'polite' turn in the public discourse of the period. The exhibition started with a forceful call encouraging all visitors to position themselves as 'players' in the 'environment game' and fight for their 'stakes' (Crosby, 1973). After thousands of images and texts demonstrating the bleakness of British urbanscapes, How to Play the Environment Game did not produce any suggestions of how to make changes. In the last pages of the highly provocative book, Crosby laid out the eventual goal of the exhibition, to encourage the public to be obstructive. He wrote, '[P]ure opposition to change is beneficial. It slows down the rate of change and provides the time to analyse the situation … If in doubt be obstructive' (1973:262). The visitors, after being encouraged to be more vocal and participatory in their engagement with the environment, were told the best way to cast their influence was to join the Victorian Society (1973:264). In short, what was revealed at the end of the exhibition was Crosby's deep-rooted pessimism about the potential for positive environmental changes under the existing social, economic and political conditions.

5. THE GAMES

The paradoxical nature of How to Play the Environment Game went beyond this heavily mediated call for public participation and action. For visitors to the exhibition, the call for preservation was lost among the media walls, the bold colour panels, and the multi-screen projections. The visual language of How to Play the Environment Game failed to induce the same kind of nostalgia that was so successfully evoked in the 1974 V&A exhibition

The Destruction of the Country House, which was now recognised as the benchmark of the British conservation movement. In Crosby's exhibition, technology played a significant role: it was a synthetic element for his vision of urban preservation. One of the few clear proposals made in the exhibition was a computational method devised by a group of University of London researchers for calculating the 'visual complexity' of buildings (AR, 1973:251) By quantifying the buildings and streets elevation as 'Bits', the research group argued that the mathematical formula would enable architects, planners, and officials to preserve, demolish and alter buildings in a scientific way. Such emphasis on the 'scientific' and 'technological' nature of preservation not only shocked the audience that was increasingly inclined towards a nostalgic heritage industry (Hawkison, 1987), but also seemed at odds with the anti-modern sentiment that was integral to the exhibition. The 'visual complexity' formula epitomised the paradoxical nature of Crosby's critique of the environment: while he disliked the dominance of industrialisation of architectural production, he was optimistic about the changes that were being brought about by advanced media technology.

To look more closely at the implementation and impact of this seemingly paradoxical anti-modern sentiment bundled with technological optimism in How to Play the Environment Game, I would like to draw a comparison with another contemporaneous environmental campaign – Buckminster Fuller's ambitious World Game of 1969. Fuller envisaged a data inventory where all the world's economy, resources, demographics, politics and military information would be gathered together – which he argued could be made possible based on the US and the Soviet Union's technology (Wasiuta, 2009). The existing problem of scarcity of resources, overcrowding, diseases and poverty, according to Fuller, could be resolved by 'a revolution not by violence but by design' (Scott, 2015:247).

While it was not explicitly stated in the exhibition, How to Play the Environment Game echoed Fuller's ambitious projects beyond its naming, its mobile format and its use of media. Both projects were built upon a critical stance against the Cold War space and military race, and the profound fear about energy and resources scarcity of the era. While Fuller was thinking about a complete reshuffling of the world's resources, the Environment Game adopted a similar narrative to a much smaller, localised context. Crosby argued that in Britain the housing shortage and other environmental issues were due to the irrational and contradictory allocation of public money rooted in an expansionist mindset in both the military and the bureaucracy (Crosby, 1973:96).

In her recent study of the Fuller's World Game, the architectural historian Felicity Scott pointed out that Fuller's 'libertarianism appealed to both political conservatives and the counterculture alike.' Fuller skillfully disseminated to his audience 'a dream of freedom founded on overcoming troublesome legal codes and regulations (while he personally benefitted from patent laws)' (2015:248). The same could be said about Crosby's exhibition, where he called for an evaluation of the history of building regulation and the (recent) relaxation of planning mechanisms (1973:172–3). Both architects envisioned that the loosening of codes and regulations through computational technology would enable the transfer of control of environment and resources from experts and professionals to ordinary citizens.

Influenced by the formulation of game theory in the previous decade, Fuller and Crosby envisaged schemes for how members of the public could trigger changes to the status quo, creating a new equilibrium so that all players, large and small, could have a 'stake'. Both architects envisioned their audience as a new generation of public that would be better informed and have more time and resources at hand to grapple with the problem of the environment. In the World Game Fuller imagined there would be a new

world population of 'no race, no class' who 'would possess enhanced environmental vision and be able to transcend insignificant boundaries and constraints' (Fuller, 1966; Wasiuta, 2009). Crosby designed his exhibition for an audience that was equipped 'with enormous stamina, both physical and intellectual' (Freeman, 1973). The general public, Crosby believed, should not be denied the right to access all information concerning the environment merely because it was deemed too complicated and vast for non-professionals. In both projects the architects claimed that technology – more specifically, computational and media technology – would bridge the gap between the elite and the ordinary citizens, allowing the informed public to become players of the Games.

While these two projects are not unique in their attempt to expand the discussion of the environment from nature to the manufactured milieu and establishing technology as the essential way towards establishing the sustainability of western society, the two distinguished themselves from contemporary exhibitions with their libertarian bent. In Fuller's version the criticism was against the nation-states vying for domination over world resources and, in Crosby's case, sharp condemnation of government collaborating with developers in dictating the rights to precious land resources. In both projects, the optimism placed in technology also implied that the status quo governmental system would be transformed into a more indeterminist and complex network of power, control, and negotiations.

6. CONCLUSION

With the United Nations as his audience and the world as his stage, Fuller emulated a digital environment that stimulated all human activities and interactions. The film reels and foldable panels, for him, were merely temporary tools to make the imaginary virtual environment available to his patrons, students and followers. Fuller's animated speech and eccentric character compensated for the

rather static format of the promotion material of the World Game. Within the concrete shell of the Hayward Gallery, and even in the eye-catching Media Van, Crosby and his collaborators struggled to manifest the potential effect of mass media and public opinion that they envisioned. What was also conspicuously absent in the exhibition was any mechanism to allow the public to record and disseminate their views. The question remained: how could ordinary citizens voice out their dissent when the Media Van and the camera crew left.

Despite their populist language and community-oriented actions, what was revealed in How to Play the Environment Game was the paradoxical condition that Crosby and Berman sought to combat: control of the media would never be in the hands of ordinary citizens. More significantly, Crosby's major curatorial output – the 'antagonistic collaboration' that was fostered among different contributors, was symptomatic of an even bleaker turn of the architectural and planning condition in Britain. While it was to Crosby's credit that the Arts Council was working closely with community groups and activists who laboured to undermine the Establishment (Gibson, 1973), the collaboration did not engender many genuine discussions. What was most unfortunate here was that the Arts Council, the GLC and the community organisations came to an agreement only on what they did not want to happen – the construction of commercial real estates in central London. In the process of harvesting the widest dissent to private development, the production of new visions of London, or Britain, was negated.

The irony here was that while politically and culturally How to Play the Environment Game pointed towards a more harmonious platform where different voices could at least hear each other, it also allowed the different parties to have their backs towards each other while facing a designated common enemy. What one could witness here was what would later be described as the postmodern condition in architecture and planning: 'a distraction

from the distraction of distraction', 'a taste for contradiction as an end in itself' and endless fragmentation and political deadlocks (Scott, 2007:115).
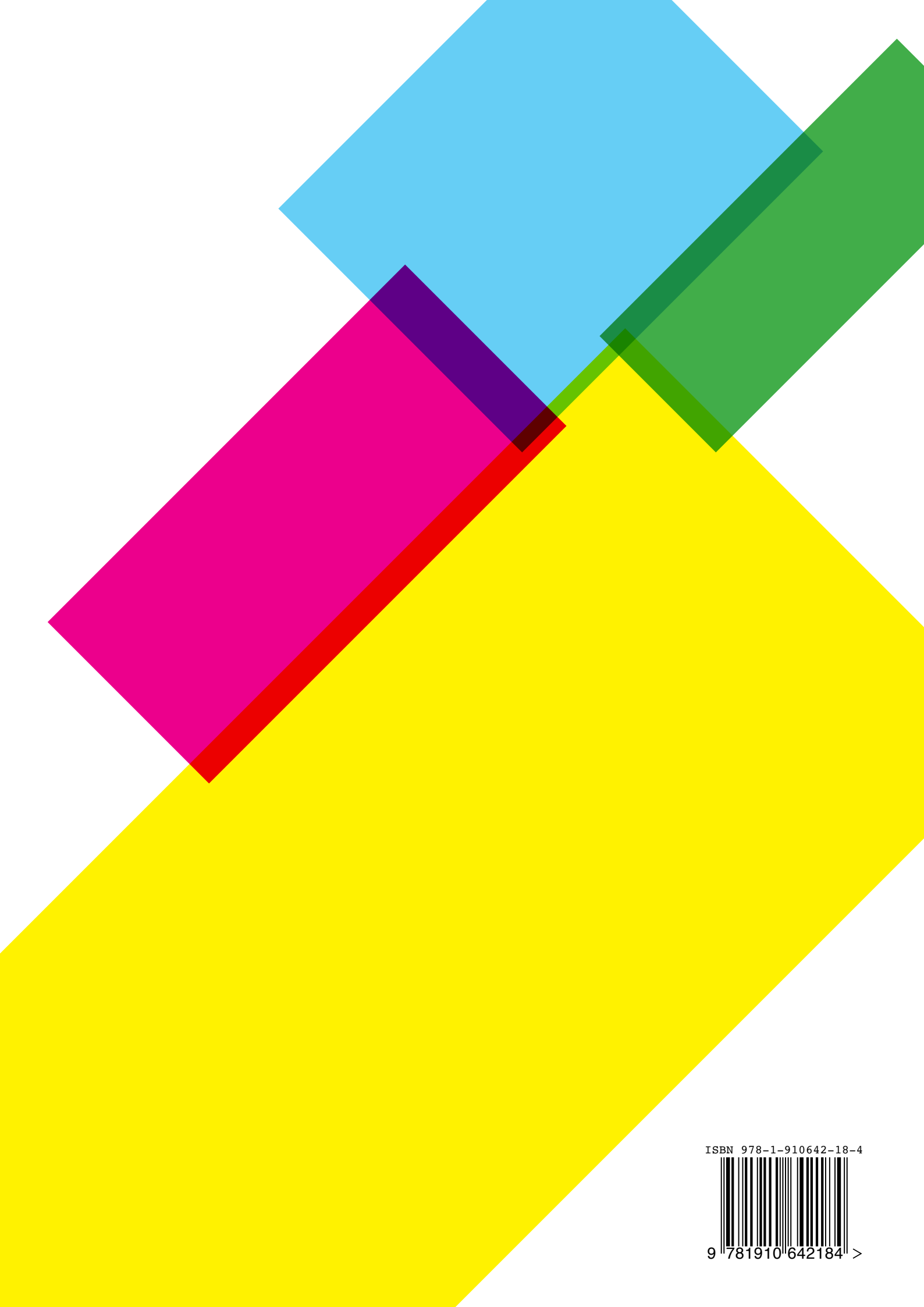
It is beyond the scope of this paper to elaborate on how the exhibition can be read in parallel with other precursors of postmodern debates in architecture. While one cannot ignore the obscurity and ineffectiveness of the exhibition, its convoluted nature was also a manifestation of the difficulty in bringing participatory practices, environment discourses and academic research on to the gallery walls of institutional art spaces. The questions and challenges that Crosby was grappling with in the exhibition are still worth raising again in today's information age: we are now living in the condition that Crosby anticipated more than 40 years ago, where 'words have power …' (Crosby, 1973). Social media has become the site of public debate, and even demonstration. Authorities can hear the individual's voice and, perhaps more significantly, data mining allows private enterprises to detect popular preferences. The instant transmission and feedback that Crosby and Berman hoped to create in the Media Van have become one of our most mundane realities. How to Play the Environment Game's call for architects, historians and planners to engage and confront not only the ethical and political issues in the physical environment but also the media environment is still an unfinished project.

BIOGRAPHY

Juliana Kei is a registered architect and a PhD candidate in History of Design at the Royal College of Art. Her research explores the role of tradition in post-war British architecture. She received her Master's in Architecture from Columbia University and BA in Architecture from University of Hong Kong.

REFERENCES

Alloway, L., 1956. This is Tomorrow. Exhibition Catalogue. missing gallery/ institution/publisher

Banham, R., 2000. Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies. Berkeley and LA: University of California Press.

Berman, Ed., 1973. Press release by Inter-Action. [document] Arts Council, London: Blythe House.

Borasi, G. and Zardini, M., (eds) 2007. Sorry! Out of Gas. Montreal: Canadian Center of Architecture.

Crosby, T., 1973. How to Play the Environment Game. London: Penguin.

Doucet, I., 2015. 'Bus Tour Across Britain: AD/AA/Polyark Bus Tour' in B. Colomina, ed., Radical Pedagogies, Research Seminar, and Exhibitions. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University.

Freeman, G., 1973. Review: 'How to Play the Environment Game' in: Designer, 3 (1973) p.19.

Gibson, P., 1973. Letter to Arts Directors. [document] Arts Council, London: Blythe House.

Glendinning, M., 2013. The Conservation Movement: A History of Architectural Preservation: antiquity to modernity. London, New York: Routledge.

Grieve, A., 1994. 'This is Tomorrow, A Remarkable Exhibition Born from Contention'. Burlington Magazine, (136) pp.381–3.

Hewison, R., 2015. Culture and Consensus: England, Art and Politics since 1940. London, New York: Routledge.

Hobhouse, N., 2013. 'Looking Back for Anger' in: Architectural Review, 12 (226) p.12.

Lees, L, Slater, T & Wryly, E., (eds), 2007. Gentrification. London, New York: Routledge.

Middleton, R., 1973. Review: 'How to Play the Environment Game' in: Designer, 3 (1973) p.19

Murray, P., 1973. 'AD/AA/Polyark Bus Tour' in: Architectural Design, 4. pp.201–02.

———, 1973. Review: 'How to Play the Environment Game' in: Architectural Design, 4(43) p.319.

Pentagram, 1978. Living by Design. London: Pentagram Design.

Pick, J., (ed) 1980. The State and the Arts. Eastbourne: J. Offord.

Csaky, M. and Gold, M. (directors). 1973. Playing the Environment Game. [Film]. London: Arts Council Film.

Proll, A., (ed) 2010. Goodbye to London: Radical Art and Politics in the Seventies. Berlin: Hatje Cantz.

Sandbrook, D., 2010. State of Emergency. London: Penguin.

Scott. F., 2015. Outlaw Territories. New York: Zone Books.

———, 2007. Architecture or Techno-Utopia: Politics After Modernism. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

Wates, N., 2014. The Battle for Tolmers Square. London, New York: Routledge.

Williams, F., 2012. 'The Urban Design Library: Theo Crosby: How to Play the Environment Game' in: Urban Design (124) p.8.

Williams, R., 2004. The Anxious City: English Urbanism in the Late Twentieth Century London, New York: Routledge.

Wright, L., 'How Many Bits' in: Architectural Review, 4 (1973) p.251.

Wright, P., 1985. On Living in an Old Country. London: Verso.