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TRADING PLACES



Practices of Public Participation in Art and Design Research

David Hamers,
Naomi Bueno de Mesquita,
Annelies Vaneycken &
Jessica Schoffelen (Eds.)





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Trading Places rethinks, develops, and tests design-driven practices and methods to engage with participation in public space and public issues. With this book we aim to help art and design researchers, students, practitioners, and the multiple stakeholders they collaborate with, to explore what participatory ways of working in our contemporary urban environment entail. Six approaches are discussed: intervention, performative mapping, play, data mining, modelling in dialogue, and curating. Each approach offers a different kind of logic and produces a different type of knowledge. *Trading Places* invites the reader to discover common ground, explore new territories, and exchange points of view – in short, to trade perspectives on issues of participation.

“Over the last half-century, the frontiers of design have rapidly expanded within civil society. This book is an important contribution to the design field in which practice has arguably outpaced corresponding theoretical development. Contributors elucidate socially-engaged design and design research through multiple themes, lexicons, and examples. Designers, educators, and researchers will learn much from the critical and practical perspectives brought into dialogue within *Trading Places*.”

Ramia Mazé,
Professor of New Frontiers in Design
Aalto University, Helsinki

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PREFACE –

ANNE VAN OPPEN & VEERLE VAN DER SLUYS

There are interesting ways in which art and design researchers can contribute to engaging the participation of citizens, policy makers, private partners, and other actors in public space (and public issues). Methods for doing so are, however, underexplored. For this reason, the FP7 / Marie Curie Multi-ITN project TRADERS (short for ‘Training Art and Design Researchers in Participation for Public Space’) set out to research the ways in which art and design researchers can ‘trade’ or exchange with multiple participants and disciplines in public space projects and — at the same time — trained them in doing so. The project commenced on the 1 September 2013 and at the time this book will be published, will be running to the end of its four-year span, on the 31 August 2017. Five early-stage art and design researchers and one sociological researcher each tested and developed a specific approach on which practitioners and researchers in art and design and related fields can rely when working on public space projects and public issues in a participatory way. These six approaches are intervention, performative mapping, play, data mining, modelling in dialogue, and curating, and will be further introduced in the introduction of this book.

The TRADERS programme was initiated and executed by LUCA School of Arts / Research Group Social Spaces Inter-actions (Belgium), HDK Academy of Design and Crafts / University of Gothenburg (Sweden), Design Academy Eindhoven / Readership Places and Traces (the Netherlands), the Royal College of Art / School of Architecture (United Kingdom), Chalmers University of Technology / Department of Architecture (Sweden), and KU Leuven / Planning and Development and the Architecture and Culture Theory research units (Belgium).

The researchers were offered a training programme, which was regularly open for other (art and design) researchers. This training programme started with a kick-off event for a larger audience on the 25 and 26 February 2014 in Z33, house for contemporary art (Hasselt, Belgium) and MAD Faculty / LUCA School of Arts (Genk, Belgium). This event opened up the debate regarding the role of art and design research in engaging a variety of people (residents, entrepreneurs, visitors, policy makers) to

participate in public space contexts. The training programme consisted of training sessions focusing on generating knowledge and developing and testing methodologies that are needed when working in public space contexts. In order to share, discuss and transfer knowledge and skills, relevant topics were also addressed in the context of two Summer Schools. In these Summer Schools (organised in 2014 and 2015) TRADERS tapped into the full potential of the developments in art and design research in European academia as well as the wide variety of relevant practices in this field across Europe. Taking an interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral perspective, TRADERS also provided a training programme for the researchers in the form of a series of training weeks organised around the different approaches to participation explored in the respective institutions. Finally, TRADERS offered the researchers secondments in art, design, architectural, creative and public organisations / companies: Z33, KOMPAN, STBY, Commonplace Digital Ltd., and the City of Gothenburg.

The TRADERS researchers have investigated how the different approaches and the methods they use fit in a larger methodological framework that can guide artists and designers, as well as researchers and practitioners in other disciplines, to work in participatory and public space contexts. To discuss the various approaches and their interconnectedness with professionals from various fields, on the 21 and 22 November 2016, TRADERS organised the conference 'Mediations: Art & Design Agency and Participation in Public Space' (Royal College of Art, London, United Kingdom). In addition, an Open School was organised from the 21 until the 30 April 2017 (Hasselt, Belgium), bringing together art and design thinkers, practitioners, and various publics in a 10-day academy. The book you are looking at right now 'rounds off' TRADERS's efforts to involve a wider audience in critically engaging with theories and practices of participation in public space and public issues. *Trading Places* gathers many voices that, we hope, will inspire further fruitful 'trading' of insights, approaches, and methods. We invite you to become a 'trader' too.

INTRODUCTION – DAVID HAMERS

Socially engaged artists and designers enter the city's public spaces to meet a wide variety of users, and research how, for instance, residents, shopkeepers, visitors, and policy makers help shape these spaces, and if or how they participate in debates about public issues. Art and design researchers looking for ways to involve the community in crafting an installation leave their studios to encounter neighbours, local entrepreneurs, and volunteers that may be interested in joining a collective exploration of how to develop and share new ideas and new skills. In collaboration with multiple stakeholders, including both public and private parties, they try out different ways to communicate and interact, and discover the possibilities and limitations of participation. As professionals working in public space and engaging with public issues, they produce knowledge at a local scale, which then, perhaps, can be transferred to be applied elsewhere by other designers, artists, students, institutes, companies, and collectives working with comparable publics in different domains.

Art and design researchers are well equipped to enter the city's public spaces. They have been trained to capture people's imagination and use different media to bring together, discuss, and disseminate different views. However, like other professionals engaging with public issues, artists and designers struggle with a number of issues that need to be addressed from both a theoretical and practical point of view. For instance, dealing with different interests is one thing, but how should opposing values be handled? How can people's local and individual experiences be translated into more general insights? How can abstract concepts such as agency and empowerment be put into practice? Whose agency and who is to empower whom? Did they ask to be empowered? Questions such as these must be addressed, not only at the start of every project, but also during projects and across projects. Socially engaged art and design researchers have a keen eye for new projects, but when is the right moment to leave a project? Can a professional become too involved? When does a researcher become a social worker? To what extent are participants able to cope (proceed, elaborate) after an artist or designer has left the scene? Does the network that has been developed provide sufficient support for them to take over?

Participation in public space and public issues

If you recognise (some of) the issues introduced here, this book can help you theoretically reflect on them and further develop your skills to deal with them in practice. This volume aims to rethink, develop, and test practices and methods that can help art and design researchers engage with participation in public space and public issues in our contemporary urban environment.

Both the conceptualisation of participation in the fields of art and design and its practical application in a variety of societal domains have a long-standing tradition. One only has to think of the (radical, left-wing) Situationist movement in the arts in the 1960s, the design experiments within the frame of the Scandinavian welfare states from the early 1970s onwards, the recent (neoliberal) call for a 'Big Society' in the United Kingdom, or a 'Participatory Society' in the Netherlands, and the widely felt need for an alternative 'Next Economy' in a post-Fordist age, to be reminded of the richness of the concept of participation. Richness, that is, in both theory and practice, and both in a normative and political sense as well as in very mundane, everyday practices.

Some consider participation to be an end in itself, in the sense of a more democratic, dynamic, playful, interactive, or cosmopolitan society. All of those qualities require participatory capacities that go beyond the narrow understanding of Participatory Design or Community Art. Others consider participation as a means to an end. It serves multiple purposes, which, depending on the context, can be described in terms of empowerment, emancipation, autonomy, giving voice, taking control, self-management, facilitation, enabling, staging, etc, on one hand, and on the other as an uninspired, desperate compromise and instrumentalisation of publics, and an empty search for legitimisation.

Different roles of art and design research in different domains

Before introducing the six participatory research approaches that play a pivotal role in this book, let us briefly reflect on the relevance of participation in today's society in general and in art and design research practices in particular. The contributions to this volume explore aspects of participation that play a vital role in a number of societal domains. We distinguish five domains: the cultural, educational, research, social / civic, and economic domain. In each of these domains art and design research can play a different role. This book aims to investigate these roles and look at how the different domains can benefit from them.

In the cultural field many artists and designers have left their studios. They engage with societal issues by collaborating with multiple partners in real-life practices. In line with this engagement many cultural institutions have opened their doors to a wider audience and organise events 'out there', in the city's public spaces and the public domain. They invite a wide range of interested members of the public to interact and exchange ideas. The art and design researchers contributing to this volume take an active role in the development of the cultural domain. By testing their different approaches in practice they critically question what it means for an audience or a public to participate, and what is asked of a professional to create (design) conditions for participation.

In the field of education, art and design can help bridge the division between different types of knowledge, paying attention not only to cognitive but also experiential (embodied), intuitive and emotional aspects of producing and transferring knowledge. Participation in an educational context requires enabling a variety of actors — be they teachers, pupils, students — to propose specific types of knowledge. The contributors of this book have designed testbeds to introduce, co-develop, exchange, and reflect on these different types of knowledge.

Regarding research, artists and designers can confront and connect theory and practice. Traditionally, art and design research presupposes and proposes an attitude different to most scientific and scholarly research. However, in recent years, research approaches from different fields and disciplines are also seen to converge. In some countries, for instance the Netherlands, policy makers even require the collaboration of art and design schools and universities in order to be eligible for certain types of funding. In practice, the participation of a variety of actors in joint research projects means discovering points of contact, overlaps, frictions, tensions... This book challenges the different actors to test abstract concepts in practice and, vice versa, translate practical experience into knowledge that can be shared and discussed across projects, across borders.

In the social / civic domain, national and local governments in several countries have taken a step back and increasingly ask people to take the initiative, to take an active role and self-manage social services, health care arrangements, and the like. However, for so-called self-initiated projects to be successful, civil society has to (re)discover capacities and qualities that it did not know it had, or that have been long lost; think of creativity and a willingness to experiment, adapt, and persist. Artists and designers can offer such things. They look for the novel, can be very determined and yet attentive listeners. This book aims to help actors in a 'participatory society' — individuals,

collectives, companies, government bodies — to explore new roles and responsibilities. However, none of the contributors wish to be the handmaiden of the state, making their policies palatable. With the research presented in this book come challenges to conventional conceptions and established institutions.

In the economic domain, the relationship between public and private is changing. After three decades of stressing the private, the concept of the commons is being rediscovered and given new meaning. Buying becomes sharing (at least for an avant-garde), consumers turn into producers (at least some of them), entrepreneurs need not necessarily be commercial cowboys, and public and private actors team up in newly created alliances. While some thrive in these networks, others find themselves marginalised. Some take centre stage in the creative knowledge economy, while for others precarity has become the new norm. Artists and designers have gained considerable experience in dealing with innovative networks and public-private assemblies as well as engaging with marginal groups and creating space for encountering the proverbial other; they are well equipped in this respect. This volume tests some of art and design's equipment in practice. It asks what it means to participate when boundaries are blurred and new (power)positions, roles, and forms of agency have to be explored.

A set of six art and design research approaches: 6 x 1 and 5 + 1

This book chooses to address issues of participation not in an abstract way, for instance by reflecting on the general issues that were introduced above or by developing some kind of ideal model, but by taking a more hands-on, reflection-in-action approach. The action, in our case, takes place by developing and testing a set of six specific approaches:

- Intervention;
- Performative mapping;
- Play;
- Data mining;
- Modelling in dialogue;
- Curating.

Intervention (researcher: Pablo Calderón Salazar) is an approach in which (unsolicited) short-term actions are understood as part of long-term participatory processes. Instead of focusing on artists or designers using 'hit-and-run' tactics, interventions are

considered as embedded in processes involving multiple actors over an extended period of time. Performed in this way, small-scale actions can affect larger systems.

Performative mapping (researcher: Naomi Bueno de Mesquita) centres around digital mapping as a spatial practice that helps understand existing configurations in our urban environment and enables us to reconfigure them. In particular this approach focuses on how the design of the interface of digital maps influences the capacity of the interface to create and change spatial relations. Mapping in this approach is organised as a collective endeavour, enabling multiple actors to participate in negotiating different perspectives on public space and public issues.

Play (researcher: Annelies Vaneycken) is an activity that generates imaginary worlds that temporarily take us beyond the here-and-now, and enable us to re-enter our daily lives with a new perspective. Considered as a collaborative design process, play — in particular free play involving children — can create new situations in which conventional tasks and predefined roles are challenged, and alternative meanings are explored. In this way, (free) play allows us to question agency, control, and power, and reflect on shifting positions in collaboration processes in design projects.

Data mining (researcher: Saba Golchehr) engages with today's Big Data world, in which large volumes of data are analysed in order to discover patterns and correlations. These correlations, in turn, can be explored in order to gain new insights that can be valuable in the design and development of the built environment, and that can be used to empower citizens in (re)gaining control over their environment.

Modelling in dialogue (researcher: Jon Geib) aims at designing dialogical infrastructures that provide space and possibilities for unplanned, emergent dialogue and participation. Dialogue in this approach is not so much aimed at 'clear' communication, transparency, or consensus, but rather about valuing differences, misalignments, and multivocality.

Curating (researcher: Michael Kaethler), lastly, is presented as an approach aimed at forging passages between different knowledge worlds, for instance the sciences, the humanities, and the arts. This requires communication across boundaries, which involves activities such as translating and mediating. Translation involves, among other things, manipulation and transformation, and mediation implies participation and intervention. Curating in this sense is not merely descriptive; it is active and transformative.

These approaches have been developed over the course of four years as part of the

TRADERS research programme. TRADERS — an EU-funded FP7 / Marie Curie Multi-ITN project — stands for ‘Training Art and Design Researchers in Participation for Public Space’. In this programme, six art and design researchers have explored ways to contribute to engaging the participation of citizens, policy makers, private partners, and other actors to participate in public space (and public issues) (see Preface). Using and testing different methods, exploring different kinds of logic, each of the researchers has produced a different type of knowledge. Following their own pathways, however, crossroads and parallel tracks led them to numerous encounters; they frequently met one another to discuss, share, teach, learn, and elaborate on the range of perspectives they were working on. Along the way they discovered ways to ‘trade’ viewpoints, exchanging them with multiple participants and disciplines in public space projects.

All six researchers (6 x 1) have tested and developed a specific method on which art and design researchers can rely when working on public space projects in participatory ways. In addition, the sixth approach mentioned above — curating — has been used to investigate how these methods fit in a larger methodological framework that can guide future artists and designers as well as researchers and practitioners in other disciplines to work in participatory and public space contexts. The curatorial perspective in this way acts as a meta perspective which frames multiple types of knowing as a ‘collection’ or ‘collective’ (5 + 1). This enables the different participants to explore shared territories, cross boundaries, challenge existing positions, and develop new ones. In this volume the reader is invited to join this collective action of exploring, border-crossing, challenging, and developing positions. Furthermore, the reader is invited to reflect on the action, both from a 6 x 1 and 5 + 1 perspective.

Monologue, dialogue, triologue

As was introduced above, in our view developing this set of participatory art and design research approaches requires reflection-in-action. In this book this includes addressing theoretical, methodological, institutional, and practical issues by putting participation to the test in a variety of practices and discussing these from a variety of perspectives. The book is structured by characterising the contributions as *monologue*, *dialogue*, and *trialogue*.

Firstly, the six researchers present their approaches in monologues. Each is introduced by way of short descriptions of the concepts that play a central role in each of the approaches:

Intervention intervention; infrastructuring; power; support.

Performative mapping mapping; performativity; interface; spatiality.

Play play; ambiguity; children; collaboration; conflict.

Data mining data mining; big data; agency; empowerment.

Modelling in dialogue dialogue; multivocality; architectonics.

Curating translation; care; translation, mediation; mimesis.

Together these concepts form a lexicon that art and design researchers can use to reflect on participation in art and design research. Examples of each concept are provided in order to illustrate how theoretical and methodological issues play out in a variety of research practices. For further reading, literature references are provided.

Secondly, each of the six approaches is introduced by elaborating on one case study. These cases are not meant to represent the different research projects as a whole, but highlight some of the key issues involved. Readers are invited to reflect on these issues from a theoretical point of view as well as pay attention to the practicalities involved in carrying out art and design research centred around participation. What does participation mean in intervention, mapping, play, data-mining, modelling in dialogue, or curatorial practice? What critical roles can art and design researchers take? How can their methods be transferred and shared? What do participants (and other partners and stakeholders) want or expect from different practices? How do they feel and how do they react? What can we learn?

Thirdly, the TRADERS supervisors enter into a dialogue with each of the six approaches. Taking the key concepts and the case descriptions as a point of departure, Liesbeth Huybrechts and Veerle Van der Sluys, David Hamers, Henric Benesch, Susannah Hagan, Catharina Dyrssen, and Hilde Heynen react to the researchers' introductions of their respective approaches by shedding light on the value of each approach from an institutional perspective. With an institutional perspective we do not refer to internal politics and power struggles, but to the position of each approach in existing cultural, research, and educational practices in the different universities and art and design schools as well as the practices of collaborating institutions. How do the six approaches relate to current developments in these practices, and what next steps do they take?

Fourthly, in a second set of dialogues the approaches are reflected upon from a wider academic and/or societal perspective. Six external authors were invited for this: Ethel Baraona Pohl and César Reyes Nájera, Chris Perkins, Reem Charif and Mohamad

Hafeda, Diana Tanase, Meike Schalk, and Sophia Krzys Acord. Again taking the respective concepts and case descriptions as a point of departure, they position each of the approaches in current theoretical debates and/or today's socio-economic and cultural contexts in which participation is an issue.

In addition, this book offers a 'visual dialogue' between the six approaches. We invited Ida Liffner to illustrate the key concepts, quotes, and activities characterising each approach as well as some of the relations and confrontations between them. Specific elements of this graphic dialogue are used to introduce each of the six approaches in the monologue section; it can be found in its entirety as a poster linked to this book.

Finally, a triologue concludes this book. By way of a conversation between three authors, the contributions to this volume are reflected upon one more time. As a member of the founding and supervising team of TRADERS and as an editor of this book, David Hamers offers an insider's perspective. Adrian Friend joined the TRADERS supervising team at a later stage; his being relatively new to the programme gives him the opportunity to provide a fresh perspective. As an external advisor to TRADERS, Ruth Mateus-Berr has followed the programme from its beginning, but from a close distance. Their conversation about the theories, methods, practicalities and context of the set of approaches that feature in this book should not be read as a conclusion — as we think a single wrap-up would not fit with a multifaceted and multivocal research programme such as TRADERS. The final triologue can be considered an effort to synthesise, to interpret the book's contents from various angles and trade perspectives — common themes, shared ideas, conflicting concepts, and different points of view — one more time.

PART I

INTERVENTION

WHAT ARE YOUR OTHER SKILLS?

MY OTHER SKILLS? EXCEPT FOR BEING A YOUNGSTER?

PERHAPS I SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE DISRUPTIVE?

PRECISELY

OPEN



EVERY DAY, IN CASE SOMEDAY SOMEONE WOULD WANT TO COME IN AND IMAGINE A BETTER FUTURE.

YOU'RE WITH THE BIG GUNS NOW BUT WHAT ABOUT THE GRASS ROOTS?

HOW DID I GET INTO THIS?

WHAT AN INTERESTING EFFORT!

INDUBIO!

CAN THIS BE RIGHT?

WANTS TO TALK ABOUT PRESENCE. IS LATE DUE TO DISTANCE.

DE ANDERE MARKT

FRIDAY 11th OF DECEMBER 2015

RAIN. YUCK.

WEDNESDAY 28th OF OCTOBER 2015

TRAIN TIME = TIME FOR QUESTIONING ONE'S POSITION.

GENK BRUSSELS

SHOULD I MOVE TO GENK?

NO NO, DO NOT ENTER. YOUR OUTSIDER POSITION IS LIKE VITAMINS TO THE PROJECT

NEED MORE THAN AN OPEN-SIGN TO ENTER.

MAYBE OUR WINDOWS AREN'T TRANSPARENT ENOUGH?

FRIDAY 6th OF NOVEMBER 2015.

LEXICON – PABLO CALDERÓN SALAZAR

Intervention (noun) ^[1]

“The action or process of intervening.”

“Interference by a state in another’s affairs.”

“Action taken to improve a medical disorder.”

“An occasion on which a person with an addiction or other behavioural problem is confronted by a group of friends or family members in an attempt to persuade them to address the issue.”

Interventionist art and design practices are often driven by a wish to reclaim the common right to public space and regularly use a ‘hit-and-run’ tactic, attempting to create a temporary disruption in the status quo (Gielen, 2013; Markussen, 2013). Besides art and design practices, other fields — such as applied psychology — often use the concept of ‘intervention’ to refer to the practice of acting upon — and aiming to improve — a perceived critical situation.

Most definitions of intervention are based on the model of the autonomous practitioner, in which one person or a selected group of people decide whether a situation demands for a certain action with which they — often unannounced, unadvertised, and not commissioned — enter into a context (Markussen, 2013). In this sense, interventions are seen as short-lived and seemingly dissociated actions, which stand in contrast with more horizontal approaches of (long-term) participatory processes. My research explores the roles that ephemeral interventions can play in long-term participatory processes. In such an approach, the focus is not only on the specific qualities of a given intervention, but also on how it is embedded in a larger narrative. This is the case when an intervention is iterated with the participation of different people over an extended period of time, being not a one-off event but an

evolving participatory action; or when ephemeral interventions are made at specific moments in a long trajectory as a way of consolidating the engagement of people. Following this approach, we cannot understand interventions as separate entities, but as part of — and affecting — broader systems that extend over time and space.

Examples

The Other Market (2013)

Pablo Calderón Salazar

theothermarket.wordpress.com

The Other Market is a platform, materialised as a meshwork of pushcarts and stalls, to trade products and services without money, using dialogue as a currency. Through a series of interventions, it stages events that unveil the true aim of the project: foster public debates about relevant issues in society.

The Regenerators (2012)

Irene Pittatore & Annelies Vaneycken

anneliesvaneycken.be/the_regenerators

The project questions the role of artists — and art in general — in gentrification processes in city neighbourhoods; more specific of Porta Palazzo, Turin. The process kick-started by drawing a round table in the middle of *Piazza della Repubblica*, where a debate about art and urban requalification strategies on the district took place.

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Infrastructuring

No entries found.

Infrastructure (noun)

“The basic physical and organisational structures and facilities (e.g. buildings, roads, power supplies) needed for the operation of a society or enterprise.”

Infrastructuring can be understood as a constant and dynamic process of cultivating working relationships with diverse actors over long periods of time (Emilson, Hillgren, & Seravalli, 2014). In such processes there is more emphasis put on ‘things’ (such as socio-material assemblages) than objects, ‘agonistic public spaces’ over consensual decision-making, and ‘infrastructuring’ (as a sustained commitment to a context and its actors) over projects (Bjorgvinsson, Ehn, & Hillgren, 2010).

Neumann and Star (1996) first appropriated the concept of infrastructuring within the Participatory Design (PD) community in the mid-90’s, based on Star & Ruhleder’s (1996) approach to ‘information infrastructure’ as more than a disappearing substrate, and understood it as fundamentally relational, practical, and situated (Karasti, 2014). The concept has found application in many fields of practice within art and design research (e.g. artful infrastructuring, infrastructuring in the workplace, etc.), and in our research it finds special relevance as a means of ‘democratising innovation’. Such an approach is derived from a participatory design tradition of ‘democracy at work’, which addressed unions and factory workers, yet influenced by Chantal Mouffe’s (2000) ‘agonistic democracy’ and thus aiming to breed innovation practices in non-consensual and conflictive milieus. In our research, infrastructuring processes do not only deal with the specifics of design (research) activities (such as prototyping, co-design, and exhibitions), but also — and especially — with how these are embedded in, and contribute to, wider contexts and longer-term processes (e.g. the establishment of a cooperative, an institution, an organisation, etc.).

Examples

De Andere Markt (2015)

Liesbeth Huybrechts & Teodora Constantinescu (Hasselt University), Katrien Dreesen & Pablo Calderón Salazar (LUCA School of Arts).

deanderemarkt.wordpress.com

facebook.com/DeAndereMarkt

As a response to a changing work context in Genk (Belgium) — and the difficulty of traditional policy-making to address such changes —, De Andere Markt was initiated as a Living Lab to explore the future of work in the city together with its citizens in a long-term perspective.

Malmö Living Labs (2007)

The Stage, the Neighbourhood & the Factory

medea.mah.se/2011/02/participatory-design-anddemocratizing-innovation

Malmö Living Labs were set up as spaces where processes of ‘democratising innovation’ could take place through long-term engagement ‘in-context’ (as opposed to closed design studios), and where participants are encouraged to become active co-creators of their own environment.

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Power (noun)

“The ability or capacity to do something or act in a particular way.”

“The capacity or ability to direct or influence the behaviour of others or the course of events.”

“Used in the names of movements aiming to enhance the status of a specified group.”

Many approaches to the concept of ‘power’ have been built around the idea of institutional and governmental control (Krippendorff, 1995). Despite these stances being useful to understand the complex web of power relations in the context of a project, within our research ‘power’ finds special relevance as something referring to the individual and collective capabilities present and distributed throughout society (Foucault, 1980; Holloway, 2002). This implies taking into consideration situations of domination within society, yet focusing and highlighting on the capabilities of individuals and groups as means to break free from them.

Following Holloway and Foucault, the focus on power is made on the ‘power-to’, as it is related to doing, instead of the ‘power-over’, which refers to conditions of domination: “whereas power-to is a uniting, a bringing together of my doing with the doing of others, the exercise of power-over is a separation.” (Holloway, 2002, p. 29). The power-to is about my doing (action), but embedded within the doing of others, which brings forth the collective potential of power. Social and citizen movements are a clear example of how power can be exercised and not only resisted. This understanding of power stands close to the perspectives on ‘social justice’ of Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen (Robeyns, 2011), who suggest focusing on the capabilities of individuals, instead of their lacks and needs, as a way to empower them.

Examples

100in1day (2012)

100in1day collective

100in1day.com

youtube.com/watch?v=CMUNehRd5S4

100in1day is a festival where citizens are invited and encouraged to transform the city through 100 — or more — positive actions in one day. It is organised one-day-a-year and it is meant to show citizens the power they have to transform the city by creating a critical mass.

Atlas of Agendas (2015)

Bureau d'Études

bureaudetudes.org/2015/04/23/atlas-of-agendasmapping-the-power-mapping-the-commons-2015

Under the headline 'Mapping the power, mapping the commons', Bureau d'Études published a collection of maps that visualise (through infographics) the social, political, and economic power structures in the world, allowing people to inform, reposition, and empower themselves.

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Support (verb)

“Bear all or part of the weight of; hold up.”

Support (noun)

“A thing that bears the weight of something or keeps it upright.”

“The action of supporting something or someone or the state of being supported.”

“Evidence that serves to corroborate something.”

In art and design practice, plenty of attention has gone out to the produced objects (painting, product, project, performance, etc.), but very little has been said about the conditions that support them; that which allows them to stand. Celine Condorelli and Gavin Wade (2009) have precisely attempted to unpack the concept of ‘support’ (structures) by generating an archive of different initiatives and cases that illustrate the foregrounding of support in art and design (architecture) practices, as well as drafting a taxonomy to speak about it.

Further exploring the concept of support in art and design practices (and research) may allow to foreground the role and agency of previously invisible actors (e.g. construction workers of a building, factory workers of a given product, etc.), shifting the focus away from the ‘object’ to the ‘relationships to context’. This means understanding and approaching the interconnected web of relations necessary for a given project to take place, as well as nurturing them to allow the project ‘to stand’ (Condorelli & Wade, 2009). The lens of support also allows shifting the focus away from art and design practitioners and researchers as the central actors of a given project, to the networks of trust within specific neighbourhoods or communities. In such case, projects take place thanks to a complex web of relations rather than to a single empowered person. This distribution of agency throughout a network results in “sustainable mutual support structures in the form of physical spaces, services, economic funds” and other resources that its members can rely on (Yank, 2015, p. 153).

Examples

Wijkwaardenhuis (2013-2014)

Jeanne van Heeswijk

freehouse.nl

The ‘Wijkwaardenhuis’ (house of goods and values of the neighbourhood) was a space for cultural production in the Afrikaanderwijk district in South Rotterdam, born from the on-going project Freehouse. It served as a base camp and support for different productive initiatives within the neighbourhood, hosting diverse activities and being constantly open and accessible to anyone.

Eastside Projects (2008-present)

eastsideprojects.org

Eastside Projects is an artist-run public gallery in Birmingham. They support the production of art projects by envisioning new ways in which artists and curators can

work together. By commissioning, supporting, and/or presenting experimental art practices, they illustrate the value of art for society.

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DE ANDERE MARKT: A LOGBOOK – PABLO CALDERÓN SALAZAR

The following text presents the central case of my research (DAM — short for De Andere Markt, Flemish for [The Other Market](#))^[1] by building a semi-fictional narrative based on events that occurred in the course of 2015-2016. The narrative takes the form of a logbook and it illustrates the daily life of the project and the issues it deals with. The notes accompanying the text give theoretical and contextual support to the narrative, and may be read independently.

Wednesday 28 October 2015

“How did I ever get into this?” I thought while riding our heavy cargo bike, with the wind and rain beating my face, and going over a few sentences in Flemish in my head to be able to communicate what our project is about. Some 20 minutes earlier, we had prepared all the materials at DAM’s shop front to make an intervention^[2] at the public library, in the centre of Genk. Wednesdays are days when youngsters hang-out at the library after school, a good reason for us to go to the library today. We were joined by Boumediene ([Boumie](#)), a young photographer and a student at LUCA who grew up in the city and is connected to the local scene. The sign attached to the bike has a direct and seemingly easy question (“What are your other skills?”), yet we understand the difficulty for people when confronted with this question. It is not common to be asked what our skills are, let alone what our ‘other skills’ are. As much as the question — and the conversations triggered by it — are somewhat unsettling, the intervention would perhaps not qualify as disruptive as it does not generate a drastic interruption in public space. This makes me wonder *if it is still relevant for us to speak in terms of ‘intervention’*.

Wednesday 4 November 2015

Today the train from Brussels (where I live) was late. As we are still two keys short for the group that works in DAM on a weekly basis, one of my colleagues was not able to access the space in the morning. When I arrived, Teodora had been waiting for twenty minutes in the cold. In these cases I feel very self-conscious of my ‘outsider’ position and question the ethics of such a role. What are the implications of engaging in a long-term project based on ‘presence’, yet living 92 km away? Would it change anything if I lived in Genk or a neighbouring city?

Friday 6 November 2015

Routine day at DAM. I arrived at 10.05, turned on the light and the heating, prepared some coffee and organised the space to start working. These actions — which I always perform upon my arrival to DAM — comprise a kind of choreography and have become my daily routine. We normally work close to the window, allowing passersby to see us through the glass. When looking for a space, our main criteria was to have windows looking out onto the street, to become visible to the locals, but also to establish a sort of intervention in the everyday life of the neighbourhood by taking the form of a shop^[3]. Some people read our sign with a certain curiosity and others with scepticism, yet nobody dared to come in, which makes me question *if this kind of 'transparency' in our workspace is enough of a strategy to engage people*.

Friday 13 November 2015

Very busy week at DAM. The second international TRADERS Autumn School took place (see report: tr-aders.eu/traders-autumn-school-2015-report), with over 40 researchers and practitioners coming to the neighbourhood of Winterslag, home to one of the three coal-mines around which Genk was initially conceived and where DAM is located. The theme of the week is aligned with that of DAM, namely 'work', stemming from the city's changing work situation^[4]. During the week I led a working-group exploring the topic of 'interventions', which was joined by six other researchers and practitioners. In a conversation about the project, I expressed what I felt was an ethical conflict between doing a project based on 'presence' yet living in another city, to which one of the participants responded: "I don't see the conflict; in fact I think your position as an outsider is important! The energy you bring to this project has to come from somewhere". This made me understand the value of the outsider position^[5].

Tuesday 17 November 2015

Today there was little interaction at DAM. So much silence seems strange after such a busy last week. Days like today are plentiful, when no one comes in besides (one of) us, which leads me to ask myself if there is a point for us to be there every day. But DAM is a space for possibilities, where people can imagine a different future together and in order to create such a scenario it is important for us to simply be 'present': be there when somebody might want to come in. That is why we have regular 'opening hours' and at least one of us is in the space, even when nothing is planned^[6].

Thursday 19 November 2015

We received a visit from Gianluca Nobile ([Don Luca](#)), a local rapper and youth worker

who we had recently contacted to explore future collaborations; he expressed his interest in exploring strategies with us for re-positioning the 'Genkse Hip-Hop' (Hip-Hop from Genk) in Flanders and Belgium. Besides the interventions we make in the different neighbourhoods of Genk to reach out, we also contact specific people (such as Gianluca), who we invite to explore potential collaborations. The engagement of such key local players is essential for us to build a local network, which is becoming our greatest asset. Still, this process (of building a resilient local network) seems to be rather slow and something that cannot be rushed, which gives me a sense of anxiety; as much as I repeat to myself that these things take time, *my designer's instinct to see immediate visible outcomes inevitably takes a toll on me.*

Wednesday 25 November 2015

When I arrived in Genk today, instead of biking straight to DAM, as I usually do, I went to the city hall, where we had one of our bi-monthly meetings to discuss the state of the project^[7]. Being in partnership with the municipality puts us in a privileged position, as we have a direct connection with decision-makers and leverage to support DAM's network; but this same relationship constantly jeopardises our independence and grassroots nature. This condition means we must take a strategic position, in which we understand and address their policy concerns, while also bringing forth the interests of other civil stakeholders.

Saturday 5 December 2015

I am not used to working on Saturdays, but today I had to make an exception; a group of product design students from LUCA, who had taken DAM as a case study, gave their final presentation during today's farmers' market around the corner from DAM^[8]. Their collective project was aimed at searching for new strategies for DAM to reach out to citizens. They organised an event called '*De Andere Markt op de markt*' (*De Andere Markt* at the market), setting up a tent on the market to engage shoppers. When the students started to work with us, two months earlier, I felt they had difficulties grasping what DAM was about, but this action^[9] helped them to further understand and engage with the issues DAM deals with. Sometimes it is necessary to take direct action to understand what is at stake.

Tuesday 8 December 2015

An academic day at DAM, as my PhD supervisors came for a meeting; it was the second time we met here to discuss the advances in my research. Talking about my research in

the space where my case study takes place makes for an easier understanding of the issues I am dealing with. Moreover, these meetings illustrate the multifaceted nature of our space^[10], as one day it can host rigorous academic conversations or official meetings, while another day it may host drawing classes or sewing workshops.

Friday 11 of December 2015

Today my colleagues planned to carry out an intervention at the neighbourhood Christmas market. As I was not in Genk, Liesbeth and Katrien had prepared to go with the bike to the market, but torrential rain kept them from doing so. *Such situations make us extremely frustrated*, as we are not able to ‘release’ the energy accumulated in the days prior to the intervention and it generates ever more pressure on the project and ourselves.

Friday 18 December 2015

Once again, this was an incredibly calm and eventless week. On no day were there ever more than one of us working in the space at the same time, and we only had a couple of incidental visits. *It is definitely encouraging to see a curious passerby come in every once in a while, but DAM cannot rely solely on them.* This concern reminded me of the time I worked with Jeanne van Heeswijk in Rotterdam on the project ‘Wijkwaardenhuis’, where I occasionally had the exact same feeling of *pressure loss* due to the lack of planned activities. One day, after I expressed this concern to Jeanne, she smiled and explained me that “during its more than 5 years of existence, the project had been constantly generating concentrations of energy, to then disperse back throughout the neighbourhood” (for a longer reflection on this, see pablocalderonsalazar.com). These concentrations of energy could take the form of an event, an intervention, a lunch, etc. and would be part of what she considers acts of ‘urban acupuncture’^[11]. This invites seeing the city — and society, for what it is worth — as a complex system, in which an intervention in one of its parts will always affect the whole^[12].

Saturday 19 December 2015

After the failed intention to make an intervention the week before, and a week of low-pressure that had just passed, we had great expectations on performing an intervention during a Christmas market at C-Mine, the former main building of the Winterslag mine. We had plenty of great conversations and found it a great way to channel the *energy* we had been accumulating during the last few days. Furthermore, we started to understand this whole process in terms of flows^[13], which means accepting that there

will be moments of low pressure as much as there will be of high pressure^[14]. It requires a sharp sensitivity to understand and manage 'time'. And yes, perhaps our interventions are not disruptive to the institutional status quo. However, when they are embedded in a larger time frame (a longer process), they might not need to be disruptive. When thinking of these interventions in longer-term processes, we embrace the possibility that, instead of 'fighting the institution', we are actually contributing to build new types of institutions from within^[15]. In this case, we ought to embrace the concept of 'intravention'^[16] as that which comes 'from within' and engages in long-term processes that direct and redirect the flows. And these long-term endeavours may be seen as 'infrastructuring processes'^[17], made possible through building 'support structures'^[18] that distribute the power to discuss and design future imaginaries of work across the citizens of Genk.



De Andere Markt
Publicado por Katrien Dreessen [?]
Me gusta esta página · 7 de marzo · 🌐

Vandaag waren we met onze bakfiets te gast in de bibliotheek van Genk. We hebben verschillende Genkenaren en niet-Genkenaren (zoals Abou en Dosse hier op de foto) gesproken over hun talenten en vaardigheden. Stuk voor stuk interessante conversaties die we in de loop van de week verder delen.

Ver traducción
— con Pablo Calderón Salazar en 📍 Bibliotheek Genk.

📌 Etiquetar foto ✎ Editar

👍 Me gusta 🗨 Comentar ➦ Compartir 📷

👤 7 Orden cronológico ▾

Bibliotheek Genk Jullie moeten vaker komen 😊
Ver traducción
Ya no me gusta · Responder · Enviar mensaje ·
👍 3 · 8 de marzo a las 15:01

📷 Escribe un comentario... 📷 😊

Figure 1: Image of intervention at the public library in Genk shared on DAM's Facebook page. The comment by the library's Facebook account states: "You should come more often".

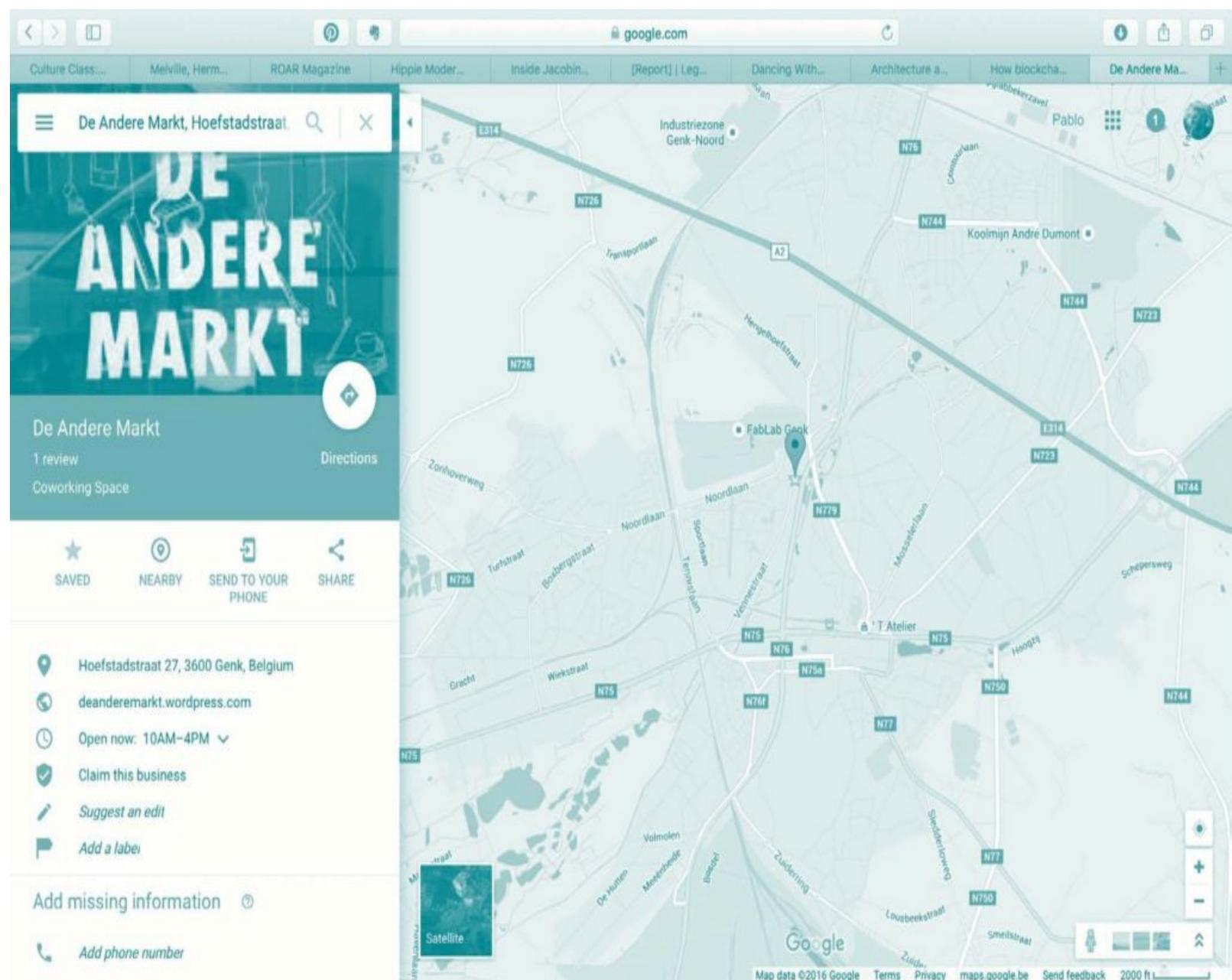


Figure 2: Screenshot of DAM's Google Maps link.

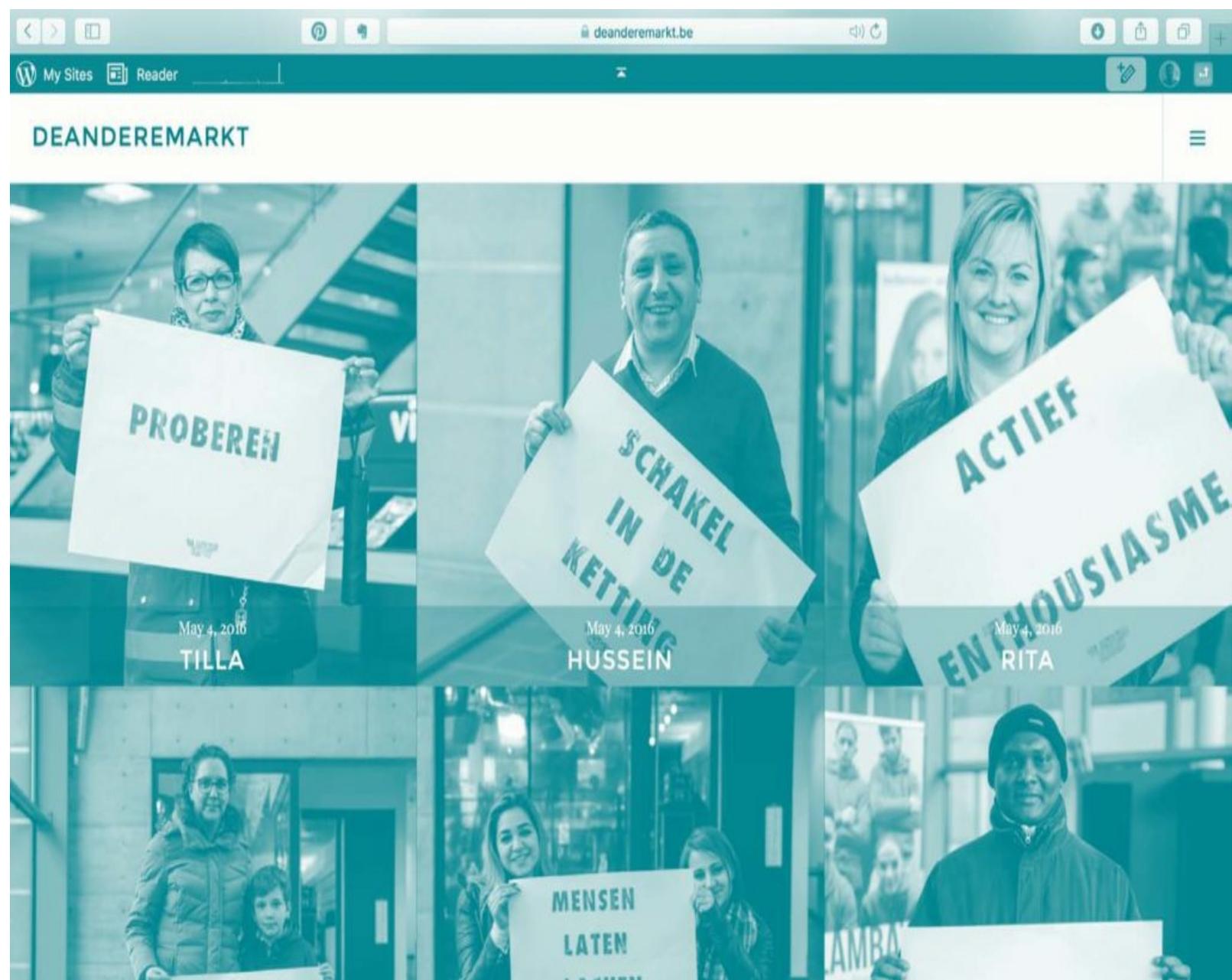


Figure 3: Screenshot of DAM's Website, making Genk's citizens' skills visible in the digital world.

facebook.com

De Andere Markt

Página Mensajes Notificaciones 1 Estadísticas Herramientas de publicación Configuración Ayuda

De Andere Markt
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De Andere Markt
Publicado por Katrien Dreessen [?] · 27 de mayo a las 16:42 · Genk ·

Gisteren kregen we bezoek van de blauwe (of betere - zoals zij zeggen) groep van campus O3. Allemaal nieuwsgierig naar wat we samen kunnen realiseren!

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0 de 0 Índice de respuesta

12 horas Tiempo de respuesta

Figure 4: Screenshot of DAM's Facebook page with a picture of its shop window, sign, and information about opening hours.

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1. De Andere Markt (DAM) is a living lab initiated by researchers of LUCA School of Arts (campus C-mine) and Hasselt University, where we collectively explore the future of work in Genk. It is an open work and exhibition space freely accessible to all citizens of Genk from Tuesday through Friday, from 10am to 4pm. The core team who founded DAM, and work there on a weekly basis, is composed of Liesbeth Huybrechts and Teodora Constantinescu (Hasselt University), and Katrien Dreessen and Pablo Calderón Salazar (LUCA School of Arts). ↵
 2. Complementing the physical location, we organised interventions in public spaces of the city, where we invited people (passersby) to make a poster describing their skill, which they further elaborated on in a short video statement. After that, Boumie took a portrait of the person holding their skill-poster, making a clear link between the person and their skills. These interventions worked as a way of opening up the debate on 'work in Genk'. All the content generated (portraits, videos, etc.) was uploaded to our blog and Facebook page, making people — and their skills — visible to the community. ↵
 3. One of the core aspects of my research lies in understanding two types of interventions: ephemeral (hit-and-run) and permanent (long-term). The shop front represents an intervention of the second kind, as it attempts to dwell in the assemblages of the daily life of the neighbourhood, establishing a place that might eventually become part of the community. ↵
 4. Genk started to grow at the beginning of the 20th century around three coal mines (*Winterslag, Waterschei, and Zwartberg*), which were the economic base of the city until the 1960s, when a large manufacturing plant of Ford was established in the city. The latter produced 6.000 direct — and another 6.000 indirect — jobs until its closure in December 2014. This — literally — put the city in a post-Fordist condition (of work and labour) and became the backdrop for the creation of *De Andere Markt* and the framing of the TRADERS Autumn School 2016. ↵
 5. In *The Nightmare of Participation*, Markus Miessen (2010) proposes three roles that might contribute to situations of participation: the 'crossbench practitioner', the 'uninvited outsider', and the 'unwilling participant'. Referencing Edward Said's *Representations of the intellectual* (1994), Miessen argues for the importance of the intellectual as an outsider, for he/she is alien to the special interests which are represented on the inside. Likewise, in this project I understand the power that I, as an outsider, can bring by having an external 'perspective' on the context and less specific interests at stake to bias my decisions (e.g. I am not connected to any local party, organisation, etc. and my relation to the Art School is temporary). ↵
 6. The definition of 'prefigurative interventions' by Andrew Boyd (2012) resonates with our intention to create a space for possibilities: "[they] are direct actions sited at the point of assumption — where beliefs are made and unmade, and the limits of the possible can be stretched". DAM stands close to this approach, as it attempts to create a space for imagining and building possible alternative futures collaboratively. ↵
 7. The rent and services of the shop front are financed for two years by the city administration under the department of Participation; some costs of the interventions are also sponsored by the city in the context of a yearly program called 'G360'. (See post on Genk's website: <http://www.genk.be>) ↵
 8. The DAM shop front is located 20 m away from the *Vennestraat*, the main street of the neighbourhood of Winterslag (see location on Google Maps: goo.gl/maps/Lp6aVL7NTzo). The intention to establish the project on this site was to connect to existing networks, thus taking part in the social workings of the local community, but also to embed ourselves in the everyday life of the cité (garden city), using daily practices as means of appropriation of space (Lefebvre, 1995). ↵
 9. In relation to how some particular situations demand the need of action, Zizek wrote, in the context of the

elections that Syriza won in Greece in January 2015: “There are never perfect conditions for an act — every act by definition comes too early. But one has to begin somewhere, with a particular intervention; one just has to bear in mind the further complications that such an act will lead to.” (Zizek, 2015). Despite being said as a political commentary, such affirmation bears relevance for us in understanding that — rather than inquiring whether an intervention should be done — there should be great care in considering the potential implications of a given intervention. ↵

10. One of the main goals of DAM has been to bring together different sectors of society (academia, public sectors, private sectors, local organisations, etc.) in one and the same place, fostering new collaborations and connections. This makes the shop front an agonistic space, where a radical form of democracy is enacted (Mouffe, 2005), and whose procedures and lessons will be relevant for actors beyond academia and/or the design world. ↵
11. In her text ‘The artist will have to decide whom to serve’, Van Heeswijk (2012, p. 80) refers to (cultural) interventions as a form of “urban acupuncture, that will allow the sensitive places in our society to emerge and the blocked relational energies flow again”. ↵
12. (Second order) Cybernetics focuses on self-adaptive complex systems that are difficult or impossible to control due to their high complexity. Stafford Beer (1975) had started to explore how such principles might contribute to the management of large-scale organisations (and even countries, as was the case with project Cybersyn in Allende’s Chile) (Medina, 2011). In such cases, the challenge is to build a responsive system so that when there is an action performed in one of its parts, it would positively affect the functioning of the system as a whole. ↵
13. Gunter Pauli (2010; 2013) calls for re-thinking the economy in terms of flows, stating that when, for example water is stuck, it will start to smell bad; instead, he urges to allow all the resources to flow. Considering ‘time’ as one of our most important resources, this concept becomes relevant in considering the flows of time and energy invested by members of the project. This inevitably allows for precious resources — as ‘time’ is — to be valued and used to their maximum potential (e.g. using time as a currency, or implementing goods and time exchange). ↵
14. The cardiac cycle is divided into five phases, two of which imply a radical change of pressure in the heart: the ‘diastole’ (or joint diastole) and the ‘systole’ (or atrial systole). During the diastole, the heart is relaxed and the ventricles are expanding and filling up with blood, at which point the pressure in the heart (ventricles) is low; during the systole, the atria contracts, pumping blood into the ventricles and, therefore, generating a considerable increase in pressure in the heart. This process can be seen as an analogy to long-term participatory projects such as DAM (Calderón Salazar, 2014). ↵
15. Amador Fernández Savater (2016) explains how the only way of fighting ‘power’ is to build new infrastructures within the existing ones, which echoes The Invisible Committee’s (2014) take on the futility of ‘seizing governmental power’, as it is not where power resides anymore. We could relate the traditional take on interventions (as a disruption of the status quo) to traditional takes on revolution (as seizing government), as they respond to power concentrated by the state. Instead, our take on interventions addresses the new conditions of power, distributed throughout institutions and infrastructures, by proposing and designing new types of institutions that can grow within the system in place. ↵
16. Alberto Altés Arlandis and Oren Lieberman propose to shift the approach from intervention, to ‘*intravention*’. This neologism combines the roots ‘intra’ and ‘vention’, meaning ‘coming from within’. Through this approach they advocate for a practice that taps into the existing dynamics of the contexts they intervene, rather than starting from an external influence that affects the internal workings of a given group or community. This approach, they argue, also favours durability and long term effects of their actions, one of the main critiques posed on interventionist practices: “If we think of it (the intravention) as a ‘thing’, we can speak of its durability, as its inherent ability to both dwell within the assemblages, clusters and meshworks in which it takes part, as well as to coordinate and curate those assemblages.” (Altés Arlandis & Lieberman, 2013, p. 41). ↵
17. Infrastructuring processes are characterised by the continuous building of long-term relations of trust with

different types of actors over time (Emilson, Hillgren, & Seravalli, 2014). In this project, an infrastructuring process has been put in place by setting up DAM as a local Living Lab focusing on 'democratising innovation'. Its functioning relies on building networks of people, groups, things, places, etc. and the commitment to establish long-term relationships of trust. In this sense, the emphasis of infrastructuring processes is not set on the specifics of design activities (co-design workshops, receptions, lessons, etc.), but with how these contribute to a larger process (e.g. establishment of or integration in a cooperative, an institution, an organisation, etc.). ↵

18. Celine Condorelli (2009) highlights the lack of attention that architectural practice and research dedicates to what she calls 'support structures', which she describes as those which 'stand behind', allowing the central object to 'keep standing'. Framing DAM as a support structure highlights its power to serve as an aide for the existing networks and projects of the neighbourhood and the city. While the concept of 'invention' is useful when assuming an attitude when entering a local context, that of 'support' allows us to establish the procedures for working within it: the two concepts are not exclusive to each other, but complement and precede each other. ↵

ON INTERVENTIONS AND INSTITUTIONS – LIESBETH HUYBRECHTS & VEERLE VAN DER SLUYS

Many perspectives exist on how research through design can contribute to creating alternative futures for our cities. One of these focuses on how small-scale citizen / professional initiatives can play a role in shaping our cities. Without a profound research into the role of the small-scale in city-making, it might be easily romanticised or not taken seriously. Our research units, Social Spaces (LUCA School of Arts, University of Leuven) and Spatial Capacity building (ArcK, UHasselt), investigate how research through design can support these small-scale initiatives to form, consolidate, or challenge institutions in the city space in order for them to become an active part in designing our future cities. We will briefly address some viewpoints on this issue, to then discuss how the TRADERS research on interventions has enriched the position of our research units in this debate. We will end with a reflection on our contributions in this field and the challenges we face.

The need for institutions

TRADERS researchers are active in the areas of architecture, urban planning, participatory design (PD), and participatory arts. In these contexts, the relationships between small-scale initiatives in city-making and existing institutions have been subject of discussion.

When referring to the institutional in architecture and urban planning, Ampatzidou et al. (2015, p. 70) talk about the ways in which the governing and administrative institutions of a city can open up their infrastructures for citizen collectives to work further and improve upon them. They also address how legal or administrative practices can be opened up to be used by these collectives to shape the city. Ahrensbach & Beunderman (2012, p. 89) discuss the potential of what they call ‘the civic economy’ or citizens who organise themselves in new types of collectives, commons, and

organisations. They see a role for design to contribute to the challenge of practice in all sectors of society in order to support this alternative economy. They articulate a need for policy-makers, designers, and large economical players to welcome leadership and initiatives from a wider range of people than the 'traditional' institutions and to tap into local capabilities and opportunities.

PD is an approach that foregrounds the political goal of democratising design by giving users more control in the design of technologies or processes (Bratteteig & Wagner, 2012). In this context several discussions are taking place on how to enable new types of institutions to develop. Teli (2015) enters this discussion with a plea for designers to find allies in the 'Fifth Estate', a social group of highly skilled citizens, often the drivers behind civic initiatives such as co-working spaces. He argues that with them as partners, design researchers can look for the practical means to support and conduct projects that contribute to (digital) social innovation. Kyng (2015) talks about the need to build the 'middle element', or structures that are able to sustain democratic control beyond initial design and implementation phases. To support the sustainability of small-scale projects and initiatives that grow from collaborations between designers and (collectives of) citizens, he suggests a need to set up a new, maybe even permanent organisation, an institute, that sustains the results of participation.

In the literature we can distinguish three approaches to dealing with institutions: the consolidation, challenging, and formation of institutions. Obviously, tensions may exist between the goals in setting up permanent organisations (e.g. Kyng, 2015) versus creating a fertile ground for a diversity of civic initiatives to flourish (Ahrensbach & Beunderman, 2012), which make the debate surrounding institutions a controversial matter.

Forming, consolidating, and challenging institutions via interventions

Exactly because of the controversial character of defining relations between small-scale initiatives and institutions, the TRADERS case-study in Genk pays explicit attention to 'capacity building' by means of small-scale initiatives in order to form, consolidate, and challenge institutions. We rely on Gordon and Baldwin-Philippi (2014) who describe the process of capacity building as people who collaboratively (1) reflect on spatial issues and (2) develop confidence in their own ability to act on those reflections. We started a Living Lab, called *De Andere Markt* (The Other Market), to explore the future of work in the city of Genk, and which would constitute the hub for the central case study of Pablo Calderón Salazar's PhD trajectory.

In this case study, the capacity-building process that we develop with small-scale initiatives has three levels of influence: the individual, the collective, and the institutional. Small-scale initiatives that impact work in Genk are, for instance, neighbourhood shops, urban farmers, or designers working with refugees. These often grow from individual or collective interests, skills, or talents. The Living Lab has done efforts to bring these initiatives together in more visible collectives and to enhance their potential impact on a larger city scale. To achieve this we have involved them in different types of dialogues that contribute to different forms of capacity building. These dialogues focused on the capability to collaboratively visualise existing challenges and opportunities for the organisation of these collectives in the city (strategic and connecting dialogues, referring to the practice of ‘consolidating’); to collaboratively reflect on the current organisation in the city (questioning and agonistic dialogues, referring to the practice of ‘challenging’); and to take future-oriented action together, making use of design language (expressive dialogues, referring to the practice of ‘formation’) (Huybrechts et al., 2016).

Pablo has focused on the reflective level by giving form to — the above mentioned — dialogues through interventions that challenge the existing organisation of the city. With a cargo bike retrofitted with a DIY printing press, he enters public space and asks people to describe their skills and how they can contribute to give form to alternative futures for work. They express this in a few key words, which are printed on a poster to then be photographed. The story behind these words is registered via a podcast. This results in a series of posters and podcasts — a collage of more than 150 citizens’ skills — that are displayed online (deandermarkt.be) and in the Living Lab venue.

Reflections

After two years of TRADERS field research in Genk, we can observe roughly two ways in which these interventions supported small-scale initiatives taking part in city-making, especially at the level of challenging existing institutions.

1. Many of the existing institutions in the city are linked to traditions of public services, political ideas (e.g. party unions), or economic markets (e.g. car production). Via the interventions with the cargo bike, their repetition over time and distribution in space, a much richer diversity of cultural practices, interests, etc. have surfaced. These practices slowly started to network in new types of collectives that form the base for a greater *diversity* of potential urban institutions around food, energy, making, etc. that challenge the existing ones.

2. The speculative character of the stories resulting from the interventions and the collation of these speculations in collages, allow citizen initiatives to frame their own story in a greater discourse on alternative futures for work in and beyond Genk. This has allowed not only to consolidate the existing city landscape, but has also given *depth* to the new types of institutions that need to develop in the city space.

Our experience with interventions in participatory design and work has evidenced that interventions mainly focus on challenging institutions and are ephemeral and often unidirectional in character. Regular analysis of our fieldwork showed that research through design processes can enhance the value of this approach, by seeing it as one part of a complex ecology of dialogues between small-scale initiatives and large-scale public and private partners. It is through this variety of dialogues that strong visions on the future of work and potential urban institutions start to emerge, critically connecting existing work traditions with speculations on alternative futures. In order to achieve and connect this variety of dialogues, we feel that PD research needs to investigate and dive deeper into a practice of ‘institutioning’ as a dynamic way of forming, consolidating, and challenging institutions. This practice can provide support so that these strong visions of the future become reality.

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INTERVENTIONS, WHAT INTERVENTIONS? – ETHEL BARAONA POHL & CÉSAR REYES NÁJERA

Very often, the term ‘intervention’ is unilaterally used to signify opposition (you are either for or against something). This strong binary tension can easily be understood as a result of how loosely we use the concept. On the one hand, in recent years, and somehow recalling the spirit of the ad-hoc proposals by the cultural avant-garde and radical architects of the 1960s and 1970s, we have witnessed a renewed interest in small-scale interventions performed by temporarily using public space to provoke large-scale transformations. These interventions have the potential to highlight certain tensions and reveal possibilities for action. Nevertheless, the question remains regarding their capability to trigger substantial change. On the other hand, ‘intervention’ is a concept that has been prompting negative assumptions lately, as it is often used to describe interference by means of control and surveillance.

But the real question goes beyond the ambiguity of a term, and it is systemic and inherent to capitalism and neoliberalism. More often than not, the real interventionists are not political powers but economic ones, represented by the pervasive presence of financial forces in every little corner of the city, in the neighbourhoods, in our homes. Every time you walk in a public space you find yourself immersed within a set of active forms fuelling consumption and individualism. Such pervasive interventions reach the personal sphere through advertisements or online algorithmic suggestions of things you are made to think you need. We are living within an established order where even our desires and feelings are evaluated in terms of money and currency. Disguised as innovation, continuous growth, and the praise of individualism, these are the real interventions we have to recognise and unmask if we are committed to building inclusiveness into our cities. But, where to situate the space for action? Is there any possible outcome resulting from these actions that can act as a catalyst for richer forms of urbanity?

If “the political struggle is also the struggle for the appropriation of words” (Rancière, 2012, p. 78) we can see a good example of such appropriation in the project *De Andere*

Markt (The Other Market), in which Pablo Calderón Salazar takes the role of a ‘civic interventionist’, and goes into public space speaking the same language used by the economic powers and neoliberal system (appropriating the same financial words: ‘market,’ exchange,’ ‘value,’ ‘trade’). By doing so, this public action triggers conversations and debates that open mental frameworks and question the terminology we are so used to hearing, but rarely evaluate in a critical way. This drives our mindsets towards new and diverse ways of building other types of value that do not rely on traditional economics nor a monetary system. Pablo’s project also responds to Jacques Rancière’s (2004) definition of ‘politics’ as something invariably local and occasional; it shows that distributed interventions in public space can be used to translate abstract financial jargon into contextualised and political engagement with urban realities, by means of conversation.

Revealing the way a relational system operates is key to knowing how to intervene (in) it. It is from interaction within a social context that we artists or designers, first as citizens and then as spatial practitioners, can overcome the fear of the other, so well and manipulatively exploited by certain politicians, and of much interest for many multinational corporations.

Moreover, it is at the interstices of the interactions between ‘the same’ and ‘the other’ where communities evolve, where not only the social, but also the political life in cities becomes enriched and can enjoy a broader impact. Jon Nixon (2015, p. xiii) argued that “to speak of the politics of friendship is to speak of the power that is activated when human beings think together and act together.” This argument helps us understand that the most efficient interventions in the 21st century are those that are capable of activating support structures based on commitment and allegiance of friendship (Condorelli, 2014).

In this context we can see new types of civic interventionists taking action: they are often not easily discernible, as they are neither oppositional nor heroic. They do not opt for confrontation, but are guided by affective tactics such as gift-giving, humour, compliance, distraction, entrepreneurialism, and a certain degree of meaninglessness (Easterling, 2014). They act guided simultaneously by generosity and selfishness, accepting that these are not necessarily contradictory notions. The selfishness of pursuing better working and living conditions for themselves, and the generosity of struggling for exactly the same conditions for others.

After the financial crisis of 2008 that strongly affected many southern European

countries, unemployment became normalised as a by-product of the rhetoric of austerity spread by their governments. As a response to this brutal situation, a group of neighbours in Barcelona created a peculiar ‘support structure’. It was born from the simple — but radical — act of taking care of ‘the other’ as part of ‘the us’. At first, a simple shopping trolley was used to take care of a small number of ‘others’ who were facing a difficult economic situation. The trolley — operated with empathy and common sense — went from one store to another, and from one apartment to another, until a neighbour’s network emerged that took care of filling the trolley with basic products and delivered it to the home of some family whose economic situation prevented them from accessing essential goods. This bottom-up approach to connecting people has demonstrated to be much more effective than top-down policies that are usually created for the same purpose, because this small-scale activity has the powerful effect of creating — and strengthening — personal relationships.

This initiative born around a shopping trolley has grown organically, adapting to the social and cultural context of the neighbourhood. Nowadays, it has become an NGO named *De Veí a Veí* (from neighbour to neighbour) structured around a board of volunteer neighbours and a series of work groups to carry out their support actions^[1]. A group of advisors, who are also neighbours, helps detect needs that remain hidden from official social services^[2] and act as connectors with other agents, including local businesses. This group has activated other initiatives guided by affective tactics: time banks to support leisure for single parents, public school lunch scholarships, a local chain support for young designers to develop products for the local community, local consumption networks to support small local businesses, and even an energy bank to detect and reduce energy poverty, which has just started to be noticed amongst neighbours^[3]. *De Veí a Veí* operates like a relational network in latent space (Hoff, Raftery, & Handcock, 2002), with projects organised as small clusters around specific neighbours with certain skills and knowledge, but always responding to other neighbours’ actual needs. Due to this distributed agency, every *De Veí a Veí* volunteer is able to intervene in real time where most needed. As a civic interventionist, every neighbour is able to act on their surroundings, helping the collective struggle to overcome severe situations generated by economic scarcity. As a result of this dynamic complexity, most of its projects are not completed as originally foreseen, some are even abandoned, while others evolve into different outcomes, and constant evaluation by means of conversation keeps the ideas flowing within the group.

The kind of aforementioned civic interventions are rarely spotted and supported by

urban policies, as they move out of the scope of conventional metrics — e.g. working status, per capita income, education level, indebtedness —; yet they can be helpful to understand the impact of citizens' interactions on the urban realm, as they are expressions of the complexity and indeterminacy of social relations within the city.

Ursula K. Le Guin wrote the following:

I will try never to use the metaphor of war where it doesn't belong, because I think it has come to shape our thinking and dominate our minds so that we tend to see the destructive force of aggression as the only way to meet any challenge. I want to find a better way (Le Guin, 2016, para. 5).

To find better ways of overcoming the interventionism of financial forces, we need to change our current languages and metrics. A possible path to follow is engaging in citizen interaction as a basic element of spatial design practices; that is, practices that consider public space as first and foremost a space of social relationships, and not a mere aggregation of individuals and their interests (Fisher, 2009). The conversations held as part of Pablo's *De Andere Markt* (The Other Market) and the empathy and support in *De Vei a Vei's* interactions suggest that such better ways are possible.

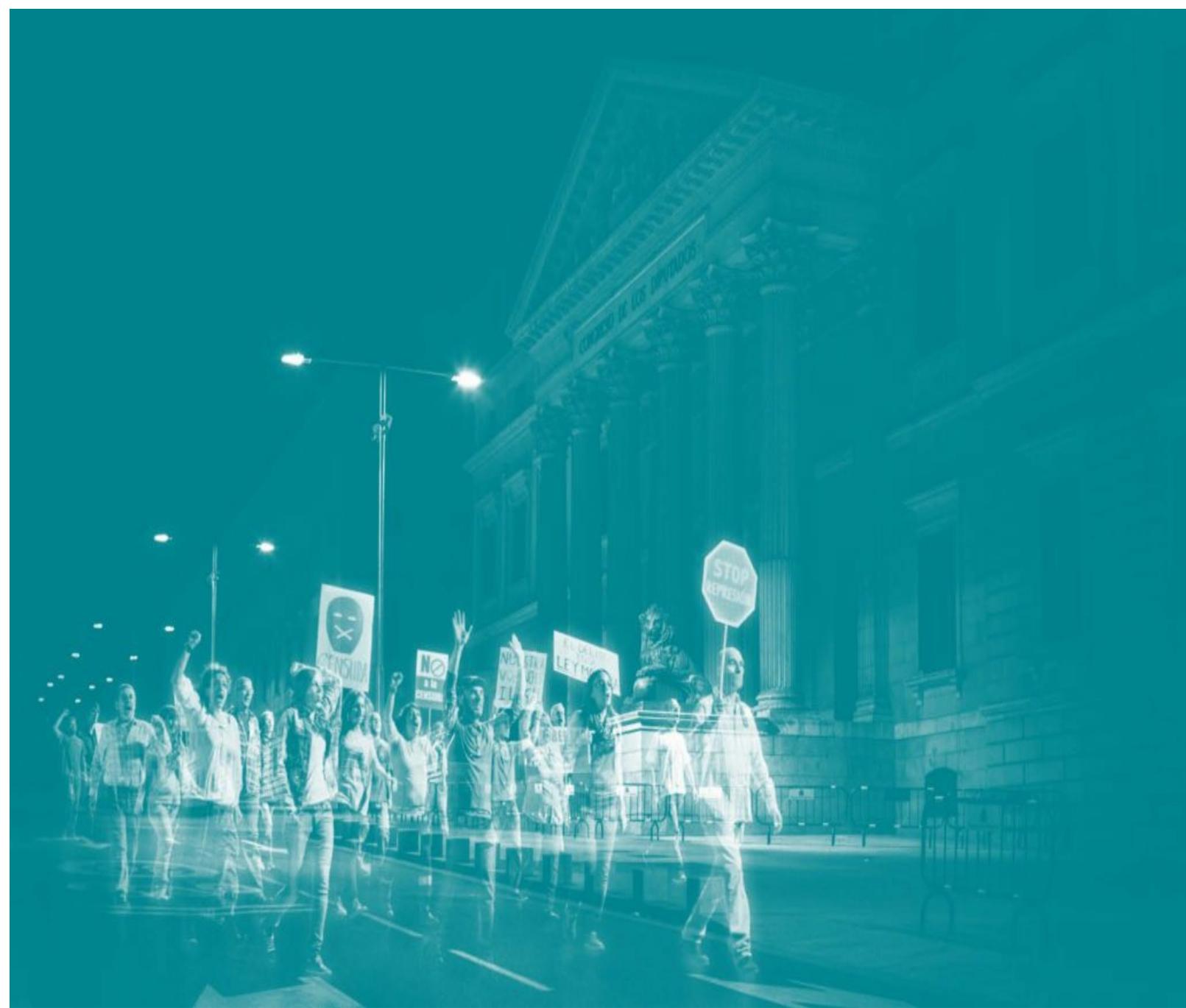


Figure 1: Hologram protest in Spain, April 2015. Courtesy of No Somos Delito.

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1. Available at: facebook.com/DeVeiaVeiSantAntoniDeBarcelona↵
 2. The following serves as an example: the 'Barometer of Children and the families of Barcelona' which provides data from 2014. Available at: w110.bcn.cat/portal/site/ObservatoriSocialBarcelona↵
 3. Energy poverty refers to a lack of access to modern energy services due to the difficulty to pay the bills for basic supplies of electricity, gas and water. According to the Barcelona Social Services Report, in 2014 around 13,3% of young adults lived in homes suffering energy poverty. In the San Antoni neighbourhood, where De Veí a Veí works, the percentage rose to 14% (Observatori Social Barcelona, 2017). ↵

PART II

PERFORMATIVE MAPPING



LEXICON – NAOMI BUENO DE MESQUITA

Mapping (noun) ^[1]

“A diagrammatic representation of an area of land or sea showing physical features, cities, roads, etc.”

“A diagram or collection of data showing the spatial arrangement or distribution of something over an area.”

Mapping (verb)

“Represent (an area) on a map; make a map of (...).”

“Record in detail the spatial distribution (of something).”

Maps enable us to ask different questions about the world than those, for instance, a text would afford. Where a text is linear, maps are relational. The graphic annotation and spatial positioning requires translation and abstraction, engendering a different logic/way of engaging with the subject of research. Yet, there is a critical and conceptual difference between maps as artefacts and mapping as performance. Where geospatial maps help us measure, notate, and coordinate the world around us, mapping as a performative endeavour enables us to question and negotiate the world in its making and remaking.

When organised as a collective endeavour (involving multiple actors) and as an iterative process (working in cycles of mapping and re-mapping), mapping is opened up to participation. Collective mapping thus allows us to engage with public space or public issues through negotiation. From this viewpoint, mapping is not a process of creating objective representations, but rather a way of constructing forms of knowledge that can cope with multiple perspectives on reality (Burns & Kahn, 2005).

Examples

You Are Near (2014)

Naomi Bueno de Mesquita

performativemapping.com/you-are-not-here

What does it mean for YOU (e.g. represented by Google maps' well known blue dot) to always be positioned at the centre of a map? This game examines the consequences of the centric positioning of a subject in digital maps. What happens to the user of the map when YOU are not at the centre anymore? In this game the subjects are only able to 'find themselves' on the map through collective navigation. Only by moving around and by paying attention to one's physical surroundings and to other players, do sense of scale and direction emerge.

Walkaway (2015)

Naomi Bueno de Mesquita

performativemapping.com/wegwandelen

A form of unmapping that allows people to erase the city's map by walking its streets. The app was presented, together with Sigrid Merx and Liesbeth Groot Nibbelink, at the Play | Perform | Participate Conference (Utrecht University, 2015). Conference members could experiment with the app as a form of mapping that is performative and one that re-enacts and negotiates public space. This experience underpinned a discussion about Cartesian conceptions of map making in contrast to critical cartography.

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Performativity (adjective)

“Relating to or of the nature of dramatic or artistic performance (...).”

“Characterised by the performance of a social or cultural role (...).”

“Relating to or denoting an utterance by means of which the speaker performs a particular act (...).”

My research examines the performative way in which knowledge is produced within and between actors and/or systems; that is, between humans and technological systems, humans and (non-)humans, and between technological systems and other technological systems. In this performative account, knowledge is seen as a transformative act that is produced through actions.

This conception correlates with a ‘thinking-through-making’ approach (DAE’s Knowledge Circle, 2017), stemming from a shift in arts and humanities that problematises more traditional research training; one in which distanced observation is applied to produce knowledge about the world. In the performative approach, knowledge rather occurs as a material process through actions and interactions (Barrett & Bolt, 2013). This approach is inspired by Rancière’s conceptions of *The Emancipated Spectator*, contesting that knowledge is not something that someone possesses to impose on the other. Instead, it proposes that knowledge is to be performed by all actors on equal ground and that it emerges through actions / interactions. This approach is rather more experiential and allows for knowledge to be transferred and transformed.

Examples

Mapping Invisibility (2015)

Naomi Bueno de Mesquita

performativemapping.com/outofstate

Undocumented immigrants were coupled with project participants to perform a mapping of the city in search of strategies for hiding in the public spaces of Amsterdam. A web application traced the cartographers' footsteps while recording their dialogue. This performative mapping set in motion a variety of feelings that can be experienced in public places and the map can be re-enacted by following the storylines.

Nomadic Theatre. Staging Movement and Mobility in Contemporary Performance (2015)

Liesbeth Groot Nibbelink

dspace.library.uu.nl/handle/1874/310682

A Ph. D. study in which participants engaged in 'promenade performances' or 'walking theatre'. It investigates performances in public space that attempt to (physically) mobilise the spectator and rethink the conditions of the stage (Groot Nibbelink, 2015).

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Interface (noun)

“A point where two systems, subjects, organisations, etc. meet and interact (...).”

“A device or programme enabling a user to communicate with a computer (...).”

“A device or programme for connecting two items of hardware or software so that they can be operated jointly or communicate with each other (...).”

Interface (verb)

“Interact with (another system, person, etc.) (...).”

“Connect with (another computer or piece of equipment) by an interface (...).”

Interfaces function as mediators between different systems. If we want to understand the levels of participation in today’s digital-physical public sphere, the examination of interfaces is crucial. As digital interfaces often form part of highly abstract and/or invisible processes (i.e. algorithms), it is increasingly more difficult to determine if/when participation is foregrounded. In my research, interfaces are explored as material means through which people can create particular, shifting (Lammes & Wilmott, 2013) or augmented (Manovich, 2006) spatial relations. Departing from the interfaces’ enabling capacity in creating / shifting spatial relations, design choices therein are examined for their participatory affordances and/or limitations.

My research sets off from Galloway’s notion of the interface as a form of relationship with technology; the interface is not something — some kind of technological object or boundary point — but rather *produces* something. Interfaces should therefore be seen as processes (Galloway, 2012). Hookway, in a similar vein, contends that: “interfaces are sites of contestation between human and machine, the material and the social, the

political and the technological; they are encounters with and through technology” (Hookway, 2014, p. 9).

Examples

Borders (2004)

Naomi Bueno de Mesquita

performativemapping.com/borders

Borders is an interactive installation that translates movement into sounds. The installation emphasises the playful process of interdependencies that are inherent in making borders. Using 14 laser beams, a gridded space with 49 intersections was created, each linked to a different tone, which is audible only when a person stands at an intersection and interrupts two beams simultaneously. As soon as someone else moves into the same line and interrupts a beam that crosses another intersection the tone changes. When a number of people are standing in the installation, all positioned between the lines and at a safe distance from one another, nothing can be heard. In the installation, people have to collaborate to create a musical composition, communicating the paradox inherent to borders; the line that makes a distinction but needs collaboration to exist.

[urban interfaces] (2014)

Nanna Verhoeff et al.

urbaninterfaces.sites.uu.nl

“A platform for a critical investigation of urban interfaces for creative and participatory engagement at the crossing of academic research and cultural practices. Focusing on mobile and situated media, arts and performances, the platform brings together and initiates critical reflections on, and actual interventions in, sociospatial activities and their shaping and staging of urban culture.”

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Spatiality (adjective)

“The spatial distribution of population.”

My research contends that spatiality is an engagement with space in time. In this conception, space is always under construction and is understood as in the process of becoming (Anderson, 2008). A way to engage with space in time is through spatial practice. Mapping is an example of a spatial practice; one that not only helps to understand existing spatial configurations but also one that enables their reconfiguration.

An example of a spatial configuration that could be contested is a map. Maps, by default, create an abstract model for space. The model is based on a set of axioms that define all that may enter its space in terms of certain relations. Euclidean space, for example, has three axes that define what it means for an object to be placed there. As the process of abstraction is inherently embedded with power, the research explores who is involved in the process of abstraction: what scale or perspective is applied, what is placed at the centre and what is left in the periphery, what is highlighted, what is obscured, etc. Normally choices such as these are made by cartographers / designers. This research aims to enable others to participate in the spatial practice of mapping and to develop a more participatory and critical approach to spatial configurations.

Examples

[596 Acres \(2011\)](#)

Paula Segal et al.

596acres.org/en

A land access programme that was started in Brooklyn (NY) due to a shortage of space.

A team of law and information design professionals aimed to help citizens transform vacant public land into community resources. By mapping open data on vacant land — provided by the city — they developed online tools that transformed city data into ‘readable’ information for citizens, for instance in the form of maps or posters.

Million-Dollar blocks (2006)

Laura Kurgan

spatialinformationdesignlab.org/projects/million-dollar-blocks

The project looks at the ‘microgeography’ of mass imprisonment by colour-coding blocks of New York City neighbourhoods by their incarceration rates. The visualisations highlight facts about the criminal-justice system and are a powerful critique of mass incarceration, one that requires viewers to consider the specific geographies behind it (Kurgan, 2013).

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PERFORMATIVE MAPPING AS A CASE OF 'INTER-FACING' BETWEEN CITIZENS AND UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS – NAOMI BUENO DE MESQUITA

Navigating the grey area I finally arrive at the police station. I align the blue ring with the red circle till I get the audio playing. An African accent recounts a story. I look at the huge logo sculpture protruding from the building; a few police vans and cars are parked around the building and a floating platform for bikes. The man had been feeling insecure and hopeless, as I learned later in the audio. He had been locking his bike on this very platform. The man continues with his story. Two police officers approach him and ask him about the bike. Does he have papers for it? They ask him. The two women who he tells this story to ask him in a surprised tone 'Do you even need to have papers for a bike?' (personal workshop logbook notes by Arash Ghajarjazi, 2016)

This fragment comes from a log of a participant who re-enacted an audio-map created by an undocumented immigrant a year earlier. Why and how this map was made will be explained later. First, I would like to give a brief introduction to the critical and conceptual difference between maps as artefacts and mapping as performance, and what I distinguish as 'performative mapping'.

Maps are products of a design process. There are a lot of decisions to be made and every decision influences the final outcome of the reality that is portrayed. My interest lies not in the decisions that are made, but the ones that are yet to come, in the phase where maps are collectively performed (where users can both make and remake maps), where maps are forever chased, where maps can take new directions. To perform a map is to 'interface'; between conflictual points of view, between the physical and the virtual, between the tacit and the explicit, between the known and the yet to be discovered. It is this state — in-between — where change can take place, where change takes its place.

In this account maps are not merely seen as representations created by a cartographer, but as practices constitutive of multiple actors. The performative approach sees mapping, furthermore, not simply as taking place in time and space but also being capable of constituting both. As landscape architect James Corner stated:

The agency of mapping lies in neither reproduction nor imposition but rather in uncovering realities previously unseen or unimagined, even across seemingly exhausted grounds. Thus, mapping unfolds potential; it remakes territory over and over again, each time with new and diverse consequences (Corner, 1999, p. 213).

The practice of cartography has taken an interesting turn with the digitisation of maps and the public appropriation of digital tools; the clear-cut line between map maker and map user has become blurry and contested due to applications and software that allow people to (re)make maps. For example, the public availability of GPS, the developments in OpenStreetMaps and participatory Geographic Information Systems, and the open sourcing of mapping practices by Google (releasing its programming libraries and data formats) (De Souza e Silva, 2014) have all contributed to a performative turn in cartographic practice. Digital technologies can not only give people agency in the choice of data to be mapped, they furthermore — and most importantly — can enable them to participate in the practice of meaning making (making sense of data) that is inherent to map making. The shifts towards mass availability, networked connectivity, and interactivity have led to a rise in the number of people who are involved in critical cartography today.

Nevertheless, if we want to determine if and how agency is foregrounded in the cartographic praxis, it is imperative to study the mediating interfaces; to examine their affordances and enabling power. After all, in today's digital cartographies, the interfaces (rather than maps) are the mediators in the process of sense-making. Although my research contends that the participatory qualities of digital cartographies lie in the iterative process of making and remaking maps, the interfaces' underlying, predefined, and computational mechanisms are to be scrutinised if we want to examine their participatory qualities. Therefore, in this research, the participatory qualities of cartography are studied on various levels and through the examination of the mediating interfaces, emphasising how certain design choices allow for appropriation and collective co-authorship of spaces. In this quest I am especially interested in voicing people who are less likely to participate in public (space) issues or who (because of various reasons) have limited access to the public realm. The following case study shows some of the aspects of how I strive to do this.

Mapping Invisibility: an inventory of strategies for hiding in the public spaces of Amsterdam ^[1]

The workshop Mapping Invisibility took place in Amsterdam in January 2015. The workshop formed part of the programme Out of State, which took place at the Frascati

theatre. Out of State brought together a range of researchers, artists, architects, and writers / journalists to engage with and reflect upon the condition of (the currently estimated 15.000) undocumented citizens residing in Amsterdam. It is anticipated that, by the year 2050, 200 million people may be forced to flee their homelands (O'Rourke, 2013, p. 179) and thus, being stateless might become the future scenario for many.

Mapping Invisibility was organised and designed by myself in collaboration with Platform Scenography^[2] and Wereldhuis Amsterdam^[3]. For the workshop a number of undocumented immigrants from Wereldhuis Amsterdam were invited to take part in a collective mapping exercise together with other participants. These were people within and outside the network of Platform Scenography as well as my own network who were interested in and who subscribed to this workshop. The workshop was set up with a clear question in mind: What are the hiding strategies of being 'illegal' in the public spaces of the city? The project's aim was to investigate the everyday practice of the undocumented citizen and to look for ways to make part of that practice visible and perceptible for others, precisely because much of the life of the undocumented is about invisibility.

Six small groups were formed, each group comprising of at least two cartographers — an undocumented immigrant (the guide) and a workshop participant (the guest) — who walked the city together for the duration of four hours. The walk itself was tracked via a web application on a mobile phone with GPS, and visualised in real-time on a digital map that could be viewed on a website by other people present at the theatre.

The walk was structured by a legend which was set up as follows: a week prior to the mapping the participants were sent an email asking them to reply with feelings they thought undocumented people may experience while walking through the city. The most mentioned words became the map's legend. On the day of the workshop, the undocumented citizen(s) guided the participant(s) to places in the city with the chosen feelings in mind. For example, when the feeling 'disconnected' was mapped, some undocumented had a clear place in mind to go to (leaving a thick line of this place on the map), while others felt it to be a continuous mood and therefore kept walking (leaving a thin line on the map). The digital map was evolving while the workshop was taking place. A total of four words — stressed, powerful, happy, and disconnected — were mapped and one hour was planned for each feeling. Changing from one word of the legend to another happened at a fixed time and by all cartographers simultaneously. Each time a new feeling was being walked, the trajectory had a different colour. The longer the cartographers stayed in a certain location, the thicker a line would be drawn

on the digital map, this way communicating the importance of a place in relation to a feeling. This was relevant for the visualisation of the diverse ways of responding to the same feeling.

The conversation between the guides and the guests was recorded along each track. In the dialogue with the undocumented co-citizens the participants could evaluate preconceived ideas about the chosen words. They could, for instance, check to what extent the selected feelings matched the feelings experienced by these people in their daily lives. By discussing issues such as these, participants could probe the map's legend during the mapping; a legend that was not a given in the first place, but constructed together with the participants. Throughout the workshop the map's legend remained a point of departure for debate; a meeting point between the participant and the undocumented. In effect, in this mapping, changes to the legend were suggested and discussed by the cartographers.

Moreover, the participants were able to discover these people's diverse perceptions and uses of public places. For instance, a number of hiding / camouflage strategies were discovered, such as lingering in the library or pretending to be waiting for a train. Also, it became clear that certain places and routes were avoided, such as streets with cameras installed. Paradoxically, these places became 'visible' because they remained unmapped. Furthermore, places and things that triggered certain memories and feelings were mapped and photographed. For example, one undocumented associated a land surveyor's tool seen on the street with the feeling of 'powerlessness'. The gauging rod reminded the man of his desire to work, and the fact that it was unmanned made the feeling even stronger. As the mapping progressed it became apparent that some things collectively trigger a certain feeling. Pedestrian crossings, for example, raised the level of stress in the whole group because, as I understood later, of a higher chance of being caught there.

In the walk that the participant and undocumented performed, the latter was the navigator. Nanna Verhoeff (2012) and Liesbeth Groot Nibbelink (2015) denote that: "Navigation is not only directional, pointing the user where to go, but also an act of construction. Therefore navigation is a procedural, experimental and creative form of both reading and making space." (Groot Nibbelink, 2015, p. 98). In this case the undocumented directed the user where to go / join him, at the same time, where the guide would bring the guest was also influenced by the predefined legend and the directions the dialogue was taking. The navigational aspect here lies in the direct interaction between the guide and the guest that shaped the walk. In this process, a

space of engagement is constructed. This space of engagement, both a result of transferring knowledge as well as feelings, is proposed as an intersubjective undertaking, where taking the time and effort to encounter the other, either face to face or by retracing someone's steps (which we will see later), are the prerequisites for creating a space of engagement. The space of engagement constitutes both an engagement with the subject itself; the undocumented or that of being invisible, as well as an engagement with the subject of mapping; mapping's enabling ability, to act and speak.

The result of the collectively performed cartographies (the drawn GPS lines and the pictures that were taken) were screened in real-time at the Frascati theatre — the main venue for the programme Out of State — serving as a conversation piece for the people who were present at the theatre at the time that the workshop was taking place. As a public debate was able to emerge around the map, the undocumented had the ability to steer the direction of this debate without jeopardising their fragile position; the design of the application was made in such a way that the undocumented could stay anonymous. The participants of the workshop said that participating in the mapping left quite an impact. One of the participants who works with undocumented on a daily basis (I found out later that he worked for the Dutch immigration and naturalisation service) said that this was the first time that he was actually able to experience their perspective. He invited the undocumented to his house after the workshop had finished. Also, other participants I spoke to a couple of months after the workshop told me that the walk was etched in their memories, as some places they pass by on a regular base are now permeated with the stories of the undocumented.

Consecutively to the walk and live performance of the unfolding map at Frascati, there is a third way that this workshop is able to affect participants. The result of the audio recordings were stored in the form of a location-based archive so that after the day of the workshop the stories / testimonies / memories and/or impressions would become available to 'the public'. In this case it is not the undocumented themselves, but an audiotrack that you follow. The mobile phone functions as a navigational device in which the sound is pointing you where to go. The invisible storylines can be picked up at any time by going to the departure point and downloading the track as an MP3. When you start moving, the track will play and the story is revealed. If you wander off the original route, the sound will fade out and you have to find your way back on the track. It is only by being physically present in the exact same location and by following the same route that the story unfolds. Public space in this way becomes an archive of

personal stories that can be unlocked if one — carrying the right equipment (a phone and a pair of headphones) — tries to engage by synchronising direction and pace.

Different time frames are at play and become blurred in the experience of the listener of the audio track: the current moment of listening, the moment the story was told, and the moment that the story is describing. Aligning with these undocumented citizens produces a number of affects. Uncertainty is felt in regard to not knowing what is coming next while trying to stay on track. The fine line is in consonance with a daily recurrent theme for the ‘illegal’ immigrant; one of hiding and becoming public. Furthermore, the workshop makes the stories of the undocumented latently available in the city’s public domain, while tracing someone’s steps (through the urban fabric) and words (in the audio storyline) becomes a situated and literally grounded way of transferring knowledge. Knowledge in this case explicitly includes feelings, both the original feelings (stressed, powerful, happy, and disconnected) that guided the cartographers in the first phase of the mapping, and feelings that are newly produced — experienced, transferred, transduced by way of the different ‘interfaces’ — in later phases. As one is guided by the storyline, the listener’s way of walking with their particular movements become visible to others in public space; the urban passers-by. For instance, a story is told about a specific situation where — on the day that the story refers to — a bike was parked. However, nothing is to be found there the moment it is listened to. Urban passers-by might become curious as to why someone is standing still at a specific location while staring at a concrete wall.

The two officers detain the man, bring him to the station and verify that the bike is not missing or stolen. He is absolved from this one but he has no papers for himself. Next thing he knows, he tells the two women, he is in prison for a good deal of six months. He is smiling, which surprises the women, and is probably looking at the building without really intending to. The building with those vertically obtruding concrete rods are damping an aura of indifference for the man. I may smile but inside, that is, inside my head, it aches, he remarks. I am trying to stay aligned with the red dot on the screen. It seems that it moves around a little bit. (Personal workshop logbook notes by Arash Ghajarjazi, 2016)

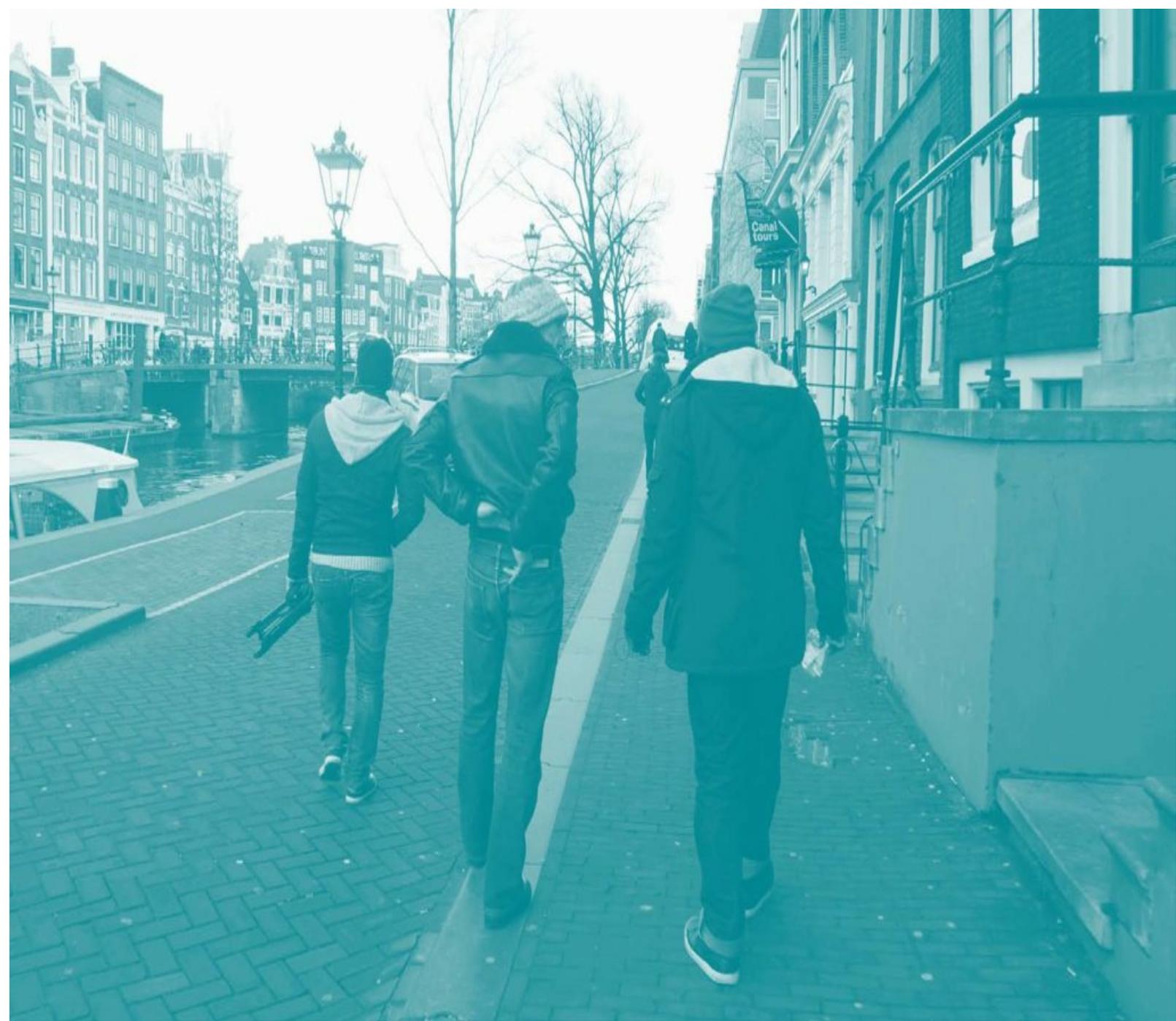


Figure 1: An undocumented immigrant guides a participant through 'his' city. The photo was taken by one of the participants during the workshop Mapping Invisibility in January 2015.



Figure 2: A map that is updated in real time, visualising the walked tracks (line) and the corresponding intensity of emotions (size of dot) felt by the cartographers.

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2. Platform Scenography is an analog as well as digital platform that seeks to make of scenography an independent design discipline. Via encounters, cross-pollination, and confrontations the platform aims to develop a language with which the discipline of scenography can be better recognised, discussed and analysed. This workshop was commissioned by and done in close collaboration with two curators of Platform Scenography: Anne Karin ten Bosch and Sigrid Merx. ↵
3. Wereldhuis is a cultural centre in Amsterdam where undocumented immigrants gather daily or weekly for various purposes. ↵

TO WALK, STUMBLE, HESITATE, AND LISTEN TO PRACTICE PARTICIPATION – DAVID HAMERS

“Navigating the grey area...” (Bueno de Mesquita, 2017, p. 51) — for design researchers, engaging with public spaces and public issues often means just that, navigating a grey area, exploring new territories and constantly evolving networks. However, grey areas hardly ever remain grey. While navigating and by navigating, what at first glance may seem shallow often comes alive with colour.^[1]

In Naomi Bueno de Mesquita’s design research workshop, Mapping Invisibility, navigation involves interaction, between a guide (an undocumented immigrant) and guests (workshop participants) as well as between this group of actors and their surroundings. Following Nanna Verhoeff (2012), Naomi considers interactive navigation to be a practice of both reading and making space. Let us consider both ways of relating to space in order to understand the workshop’s merit in the context of participation issues in general, and its added value for the TRADERS research programme and Design Academy Eindhoven’s contribution in particular.

Reading space in this workshop means reading the urban landscape that the workshop’s participants navigate from a number of preselected perspectives, i.e. four feelings chosen by the participants. These perspectives / feelings constitute a legend that enables the participants to co-create a digital, real-time map while walking and talking, *by* walking and talking.

To understand how this reading of space in this case involves making space, the workshop’s navigating practice has to be considered as a practice involving mapping. Mapping in Naomi’s view, as well as in the view of Design Academy Eindhoven’s Readership Places and Traces, is a verb. Mapping is an act. It is performed. Referring to James Corner’s view on mapping, this act is not one of reproduction or imposition, but rather an act of “uncovering realities previously unseen or unimagined, even across

seemingly exhausted grounds” (Corner, 1999, p. 213). Thus, mapping enables the workshop participants, using Corner’s vocabulary, to unfold potential: “it re-makes territory over and over again, each time with new and diverse consequences” (ibid.).

By being a mapping practice, reading space can become making space, unfolding “new realities out of existing constraints” (ibid., p. 251), both by exploring new routes and by experiencing and interpreting existing ones from a fresh perspective. This space, these realities, do not only refer to the physical space of the urban environment that is navigated, mapped, read and re-made. They also refer to the space of engagement constituted by the participants taking the time and effort to encounter the other, as Naomi writes. This encounter can take place both during the workshop, in face-to-face dialogues, and after the workshop has ended, when someone — anyone, at any given moment — takes the time and effort to retrace the guide and guests’ steps by opening a web application on their mobile phone, going to the original walk’s departure point, and retrieving one of the stories from the workshop’s digital archive. By first “navigating the grey area” and then trying to “align the blue ring with the red circle” (Bueno de Mesquita, 2017), one can start the track and listen to the story unfold, again, anew.

Neither during the workshop nor afterwards does walking necessarily mean keeping a steady pace. It involves coming to a halt, for instance in places where the guide remembers some incident and experiences a feeling included in the mapping workshop’s legend, and needs to reflect on this. Walking perhaps here and there even involves stumbling, dodging and turning around. Along similar lines, talking in this case includes remaining quiet every now and then. It may include hesitation, for instance when the guide is looking for words to share thoughts and feelings, or when participants engage with what is shared with them.

In this respect the workshop fits in a tradition of public space design research and design education at Design Academy Eindhoven. Both in the research of the Readership Places and Traces and in the design curriculum of the Public-Private department, stumbling and hesitating, tracing and retracing, mapping and re-mapping, and listening and listening again, are used as methods to explore what was ‘previously unseen or unimagined’. In this way, familiar routes and daily routines — ‘seemingly exhausted grounds’ — are deliberately interrupted. In Naomi’s workshop participants are literally stopped in their tracks. They are provided with an opportunity to discover what was hidden from view and rethink what they thought was happening in their city. The workshop stages an unfamiliar yet oddly recognisable city; it forces (or enables)

participants to engage with what Michel de Certeau (2002, p. 96) has called the “disquieting familiarity of the city”. Together with their guide the participants explore and re-make a territory and reflect on the consequences this has, both in everyday life and in professional practices that involve public space and public issues. The city that seemed familiar can become unsettlingly unfamiliar, which raises questions regarding to whom the city belongs and who belongs to the city. Whom do we welcome in ‘our’ city? And what does ‘our’ city offer those who may not feel very welcome?

Mapping Invisibility, however, also renews Design Academy Eindhoven’s ways of engaging with public space and public issues. Until recently, the digital technologies that play such a central role in the workshop, had a relatively minor position in DAE’s design research and design curriculum. Of course, high-tech equipment and digital methods are used in an increasing number of design (research) projects, yet low-tech approaches still predominate, with a considerable number of projects deliberately celebrating the analogue as part of a revaluation of the crafts. Although projects such as these offer a valuable contribution to both the design practice and society, I think the fast-paced development of the digital, the virtual, and the connected in public space and their relevance for the public domain demands designers and design researchers to engage more in-depth with web technologies and locative media. The space that is unlocked by GPS, online maps on mobile phones, augmented reality applications, and other related digital technologies may be considered virtual; it is real in its consequences.

Mapping Invisibility and the research into performative cartography of which it is part can be a stepping-stone in this regard. Combining the socio-spatial and the digital, the workshop helps participants explore participation in an urban environment in which some feel at home while others may feel alienated, not by considering participation as an abstract concept, but by putting it to the test in a practice of ‘inter-facing’ and ‘inter-acting’. As a design practice, this case of performative mapping creates the conditions in which the qualities and limitations of different forms of participation, both mediated and face-to-face, can be explored. By using the generative power of digital technologies — i.e. creating a real-time map, and storing and unlocking invisible storylines — combined with experiencing the physical characteristics of public space and engaging in a dialogue about the more elusive characteristics of the public domain, some of what so often remains invisible can be revealed and reflected upon.

It is this combination of acting and reflecting that allows the design in this workshop to become design research (Design Academy Eindhoven’s Knowledge Circle, 2017). By

acting, the workshop participants make something visible. This has consequences. The participants affect something, while they are also being affected themselves. By *reflecting*, insights into what has been made visible and what and whom has been affected can be discussed and shared, first among the smaller collective of workshop participants, and then, perhaps, also publicly.

In this way, a workshop such as this entails both collaborating in a collective act in public space, for instance by co-creating a legend in order to walk and talk together, as well as participating in a public debate, for instance by probing and adjusting the legend after having walked and talked together. Participation in the fields of art and design is a thorny issue. The inherent tension between inviting people to collaborate in a joint process while simultaneously introducing de-familiarising elements (Shklovsky, 1917), makes participation 'risky' (Huybrechts et al., 2014). In the research of my Readership at Design Academy Eindhoven as well as, I think, in the TRADERS research programme, we consciously choose to run this risk. This requires, I argue, that art and design research is not regarded in the same light as time-efficient processes that offer clear-cut solutions to problems in public space, but as practices in which stumbling and hesitating are valued as vital qualities in exploring the city. Participation in such explorations means going back and forth, exchanging looks and thoughts, negotiating the urban environment and urban conditions.

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THE WIDER SIGNIFICANCE OF PERFORMATIVE MAPPING –

CHRIS PERKINS

In July 2016 Pokemon-GO-mania began to stalk the world. The game was downloaded more times in its first week than any other app in history. In the game people run through cities, smartphones in hand, eyes glued to the screen on which a mapped backdrop moves in parallel to their tracks through the city — a map against which fictional and virtual Pokemons appear and disappear. Indeed “the map is your main view while playing Pokémon GO, and it is based on the actual real-world map of the streets and pathways where you’re standing!....” (Pokemon GO, 2016). The map is central to the other elements of the augmented reality app: a backdrop sourced from Google appears as the game board across which players navigate, other elements of the interface allow the game to be played, and the relation to the world beyond the device is crucial to the game. The fact that the map is central to the latest moneymaking craze in a ludified world tells us certain important things about mapping. Maps as a cultural form have the power to seem to be real. They appear to show the world ‘as it is’ — and deploy Cartesian logic to objectify, classify and place things. They have a scale. They are designed. They code the world (Pickles, 2004). And they are still frequently regarded as a form of technical and useful knowledge (Turnbull, 1996). The Pokemon maps work in this way as a practical tool, helping players to run and catch their targets.

Challenges to the scientific hegemony of mapping came in the last two decades of the twentieth century, and critical cartographic scholars such as Brian Harley (1989) and Denis Wood (1992) questioned its objective neutrality, arguing that maps also *construct* a world acting as powerful and fixative devices that represent, and in so doing make claims on the world which they depict. The map becomes a material semiotic thing facilitating translations from one world to another — an immutable mobile, which can be carried around to fix and control (Latour, 1986). After the digital revolution, maps actively envisage a user and also increasingly have the capacity to induce certain kinds of behaviour, through a quantified algorithmic logic (Gekker, 2016). The playful

interface and rule structure, with which Pokemon GO influences behaviour, reflects the importance of a well-designed location-based game in our culture, but also reflects the neoliberal imperative driving a games industry, and the nostalgic desire of many players to re-enact their past and the formerly completely screen-based experience of The Pokemon franchise. The map becomes part of the player's everyday life. Yes, maps do work as tools, but their framing also does political work.

However, the game and the map that facilitate gameplay are also performed. Affordances are enabled by the interface — seeking, catching, battling, healing, and reviving in the game-world, but also navigating in the real world across the map, to find Pokestops^[1] or Gyms and in doing so competing with other players. Mapping in a broader context has increasingly been rethought as much more than a scientific controlling of the world, or a fixative political device (Dodge, Kitchin, & Perkins, 2009). It is increasingly also understood as performative — mutable, constantly called into being by actions that are made possible through an assemblage of affordances, technologies, media, feelings, places, semiologies, and embodied experience. Designs induce, but they are enacted in practice. Technology has certainly encouraged this shift — the certainty of the map is rendered ever more doubtful. Crowd-sourced mapping competes with national surveys (Perkins, 2014). Mashups^[2] are deployed to overlay personal information onto shared mapping, just as the Pokemon characters appear on the map. GPS receivers in devices precisely locate smartphone users, but also feed this data into software, where events or emotions (Nold, 2009) can be coded so that they too can appear overlain onto mapping. Everyone can change the map on their screen, and systems are designed to create a personalised geography that displays on smartphone screens reflecting past browsing histories. There is no longer one map but many fleeting, constantly updated mutable images. This means the personal history of playing Pokemon GO can be recalled. Performance can be compared against other players. Uncertainty, competition, and possibility replace fixity and inevitable outcomes.

The Pokemon GO website recognises that “you’ll always be in the center of the map” (Pokemon GO, 2016) and in most smartphone-based mapping apps this is the case — nowadays the map follows you, so that as you move through a terrain the map automatically moves with you, and shows your changed position. But that is not inevitable, it is a particular assemblage that only came together after the mass deployment of smartphones from 2007, and the widespread dissemination of the Google maps API from 2005. On the contrary, I would argue that performativity is always contingent — a mapping assemblage comes together in particular times and

places — in some contexts a layered interface calls into play a navigational logic (Verhoeff, 2012), in others a more ludic potential for subversion exists (Lammes & Perkins, 2016). Military applications are likely to deliver different affordances to those facilitated in artistic interventions. Administrative mapping is likely to feel different to mapping where individual perceptions are foregrounded. There is no inevitability about the relations between interface design, placing of users in an interface, the ways mobility is scripted, or the public space being mapped. You were outside the map in the era of paper mapping. Why should the map not move away from you? Why should you not be hidden in the map? Why does the map even have to be visible? Why can you not make the map as you walk through it, or touch or smell the map?

The relations of an embodied and mobile experience to its remediation in mapped form is central to the Pokemon GO experience, but it is also central to Naomi Bueno de Mesquita's research. Her case (Bueno de Mesquita, 2017, pp. 51-57) goes beyond the narrowly ludic rationale of Pokemon GO to explore this *relationality*, in which memories of mapped events are crucial. A practice in which mobile experience of urban space is enacted and remade through different mappings of the built fabric, highlighting the nature of invisibility, but also crucially a practice that embodies different experiences of that built fabric. A performative mapping is thus always situated and always historicised, a mode of mapping called into being in particular mapping moments (Dodge, Perkins, & Kitchin, 2009).

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1. A Pokestop is a place in Pokemon GO that allows players to collect items, which help to capture Pokemons. ↵
 2. A mashup is a web page that combines information from more than one source. ↵

PART III

PLAY

ADULT-DESIGNER

CHILDREN, AND THEIR CULTURE OF PLAY AND WONDER, FORM GOOD ALLIES IN DISORGANISING THE WORLD:

SIMULTANEOUSLY BUILDING UP AND BREAKING DOWN.

CHILD-GROUP



MHM

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A DOMINATING ADULT CULTURE OPENS UP TO LEARN FROM CHILD CULTURE?



UH OH. I'LL NEED TO MAKE ORDER!



NEED TO TAKE A CRITICAL STANCE TOWARDS THE CONTROL ATTRIBUTED TO THE ADULT ROLE.

MY DAD COMES HERE SOMETIMES AND THEN AND ONCE I FELL OVER A TURTLE

WHY ARE PARKS CALLED PARKS? I LIKE THEY SHOULD BE CALLED IT WHEN BE CALLED IT RAINS SPARKS! WHY?

I KNOW A THING. CAN I SAY MINE PLEASE!



CHILD SPACES: SELF-CHOSEN SELF-INVENTED SELF-DIRECTED

THE HERMITS PIT

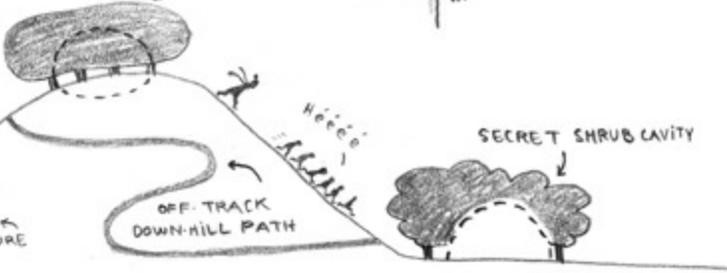
PARK GUARDIANS

(PROBABLY) HERMIT

TREASURE

OFF-TRACK DOWN-HILL PATH

SECRET SHRUB CAVITY



LEXICON – ANNELIES VANEYCKEN

Play (noun) ^[1]

“Activity engaged in for enjoyment and recreation, especially by children.”

“Behaviour or speech that is not intended seriously.”

“The state of being active, operative, or effective.”

“Scope or freedom to act or operate.”

Play is an activity, restricted in time and space and shaped through a set of mentally fixed rules, that allows us to act and think in ways that go beyond the concrete here-and-now. It generates new, hands-on situations and imaginary worlds in relation to how we operate in daily life. Following Roger Caillois (1961), play is situated in the transformation between two types of play; the type of play where players perform a set of rules that are laid down by others (*ludus*), and the self-chosen and self-directed play where players define their own rules (*paidia*). In my research I refer to paidia-oriented play as ‘free play’ since the players themselves are ‘free’ to create, reform, and break their own rules within the limited constraints of its social, cultural, economical, and political context. In line with Caillois’ theory, Augusto Boal developed theatrical techniques such as *Theatre of the oppressed* (1979) where the spectator shifts roles from ‘ludus’ towards ‘paidia’, and becomes an actor him/herself. The empowered ‘spect-actor’ (Boal, 1979) thus takes a pro-active stance in co-constructing the design project.

My research, which inquires how socially engaged design can contribute to children’s participation in society, allows them the opportunity to engage in public debates, adopt the ‘free play’ approach and the ‘spect-actor’s’ role as a departure point for questioning ‘roles’ and performativity in participatory design. Who are the players in such collaborative design processes, which role do they play, and what agency and power do they possess? Who defines and controls the rules of these roles, and who performs?

Rather than assigning the actors of the design process a fixed task, we may understand such collaborative design processes as an inter-play between the giving and taking of these roles, agencies, and powers.

Examples

Postcards from the Desert Island (2011)

Adelita Husni-Bey

vdrome.org/husnibey

vimeo.com/100885362

In the Postcards from the Desert Island project, the artist invited a group of pupils to turn their school hall into a new territory. The project revealed children's organisational methods, their approaches to the critical issues raised by self-governance and by the possibility of imagining institutions and social relations from scratch.

Playful Rules (2014)

Annelies Vaneycken

officeforpublicplay.org/department/playfulrules

Playful Rules is an artistic walk in which children guided an audience through their local park. Through a series of 'performances' the children re-enacted and presented how they perceive, experience, and deal with socio-culturally conditioned norms that define their social behaviour in relation to various types of visitors of the park. They also invited the audience to test newly invented 'rules' based on their own experiences and play activities.

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Ambiguity (noun)

“The quality of being open to more than one interpretation; inexactness.”

Ambiguity entails a state of uncertainty in meaning when taking several interpretations into account as plausible. Working with ambiguity in a design context corresponds with a design approach that strives to generate new meaning rather than design for solutions. More specifically, when working in the context of participatory design, ambiguity allows the designer to open up the design process for a plurality of meanings, generated by multiple participants that are, in turn, part of diverse publics (collectives, communities, and cultures). In such ambiguously driven participatory design, the participants are not approached as one group that interacts with the designer and/or stakeholders through one, consensus-driven voice, but the designer interacts and negotiates with the plurality of voices, even if they may differ and oppose each other.

In my research, ambiguity is seen as an engine for promoting critical debate and exchange within the plurality of voices and the meanings generated. In particular, it focuses on how the inclusion of children’s voices and meanings — especially those that differ from adults — enable the designer, as well as adults in general, to learn from children’s experiences and make them question existing meanings which in turn contribute to generating new meanings, perspectives, and possibilities.

Examples

Play Space – Burj el Barajneh (2005)

Febrik

febrik-playspace.tumblr.com

[Creative Refuge: Art-based research workshops with children in Palestinian refugee camps, 2104](#)

vimeo.com/17722948

This project, mapping Palestinian refugee children’s invented play, reveals a ‘hidden playground’ dispersed in the camp’s public spaces. It communicates various spatial, social and political constraints they live in. The hidden playground also gives insights into how children negotiate their right of space and play, outside defined programmes of public spaces such as parks and playgrounds.

Recipes for Uncontrol (2015)

Annelies Vaneycken

officeforpublicplay.org/departments/recipes-for-uncontrol

Recipes for Uncontrol deals with young adults' frustrations in/with public space. Their mappings reveal emotions, uses, and desires that possibly oppose those of other publics and other groups. The collaborating group of young adults proposed playful ways to mediate differences through a series of ambiguous instructions in the form of recipes.

Literature references

Huybrechts, L. (Ed.) (2014). *Participation is risky: Approaches to joint creative processes*. Amsterdam: Valiz.

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Children (noun)

“A young human being below the age of puberty or below the legal age of majority.”

“A son or daughter of any age.”

“An immature or irresponsible person.”

“A person who has little or no experience in a particular area.”

Since the conception of the term childhood, history has taught us that children, as a group and as individuals, are controlled and restricted by adults. To this date, many Western nations still undervalue and exclude children from processes of decision-making. In most cases it is only adults who participate, even when it comes to matters that affect children in a direct way. However, this is changing, and the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) is just one example, addressing the empowerment of children by means of participation.

My research focuses on children and ‘children’s culture’ — being “the expressions of culture that children produce in their own networks; that is, what with an overall term one could call their play culture” (Mouritsen, 2002, p. 16) — as valuable actors and contributors to meaning-making and the making of society in general. My research inquires how the revelation, promotion, and incorporation of children’s qualities, such as their play, contribute to design, and how the appreciation of children’s culture, in

turn, contributes to children's empowerment and participation. What does it mean when a dominating adult culture opens up to learn from children's culture and the idiosyncratic qualities of their self-initiated and self-directed play? Children, in their role as playful dis-organisers, can teach adults to imagine, test, and control new meanings that transcend and bypass entrenched conventions and preconditioned ways of interacting, experiencing, seeing, and designing cities' public spaces.

Examples

The Model – A Model for a Qualitative Society (1968)

Palle Nielsen

thedoublenegative.co.uk/2014/01/pallenielsen-the-model

macba.cat/en/essay-palle-nielsen

afterall.org/journal/issue.16

This artistic installation, transformed Stockholm's Moderna Museet into a giant adventure playground, attracting thousands of children, during three intense weeks. Through his work, Palle Nielsen calls for children's participation in society; he promotes their joyfulness, imagination, and creativity as important qualities for a better society.

Pace-setters & Front-runners (2016)

Trage Wegen, zZmogh/das Kunst & Annelies Vaneycken

officeforpublicplay.org/departement/dialogue-shapers

The project used urban paths, trails, alleyways, and back roads as fertile settings for informal and experimental behaviours in public space. Through participatory, play-based, and artistic practices, the children explored possible meanings of urban paths in relation to their daily experience, access, and appropriation of the city and its public spaces; this was done in collaboration with other children and in dialogue with policy makers.

Literature references

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Collaboration (noun)

“The action of working with someone to produce something.”

“Something produced in collaboration with someone.”

“Traitorous cooperation with an enemy.”

In participatory design, the designer opens up his or her design process to work ‘together’ with ‘others’, usually non-designers. The ‘others’ that participate in the design process may be the ones that eventually gain from the design outcomes, but in order to get there, their particular experiences, knowledge, or ‘expertise’ are needed in the design process. In turn, the designer depends on the qualities and cooperation of the participants — only ‘together’ they are strong and capable to produce. Even though these collaborations can be seen as forms of mutual exchange, issues of inequality need to be addressed, e.g. differences in power and levels of profit.

In my research, when working in collaborative design processes with children, there is a need to take a critical stance towards the influence and control attributed to the roles of other actors involved in the design project: direct actors (designers, pedagogues, etc.); indirect actors (parents, educational and cultural institutions, etc.); and actors related to the broader context (policy makers, community, culture, ...). In addition, the research explores how ‘free play’, as a way of creating, reforming, and breaking rules, enables children to de-control these predefined roles and power structures, and may contribute to their empowerment.

Examples

Risk Centre (2013)

Onkar Kular & Inigo Minns

onkarkular.com/index.php?/project/risk-centre
researchonline.rca.ac.uk/1478

Risk Centre transformed the interior spaces of Arkitekturmuseet in Stockholm into a site-specific risk assessment facility and educational performance space. The centre recreated familiar scenes and places in which school groups from the municipality of Stockholm and the general public were invited on guided risk tours in the centre as a way to further examine the complex subject of risk.

Playful Monstration (2014)

Annelies Vaneycken

officeforpublicplay.org/department/playful-monstration-speels-betoog

This project experimented with a variety of pedagogies and design techniques such as non-linear structures of adaptability, the deconstructing of the pedagogue, and radical play. The designer took on a non-hierarchical position that allowed the children to partly self-initiate and self-direct the design process. This was mainly supported by the children's collaborative construction of the sculpture-character 'Mister Wiels' who replaced the designer's leading role. As the children toured Mister Wiels through the city, they relayed their narratives of city life, objects, memories, moments, and questions onto him, thus together exploring their own lives through this artefact.

Literature references

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Conflict (noun)

“A serious disagreement or argument, typically a protracted one.”

“A state of mind in which a person experiences a clash of opposing feelings or needs.”

“A serious incompatibility between two or more opinions, principles, or interests.”

Conflict (verb)

“Be incompatible or at variance; clash.”

“Having or showing confused and mutually inconsistent feelings.”

Togetherness is sociable and fun but the assembly of people also causes friction and disagreement. In order to avoid such conflicts, society has invented various sets of rules — formal as well as informal — that direct human behaviours and actions in acceptable and expectable roles. Over time, these limitations of human behaviours and actions become naturalised; there is no more critical reflection on one’s behaviours or actions, even when they are out of their context. Public spaces, being distinct spaces for togetherness in cities, are places where citizens perform such prescribed roles. These roles do not only control human behaviours and actions into an automatic, uncritical world, they also affirm dominant powers and maintain established norms and values. However, the ever-changing conditions of city life demand dynamic processes that enable citizens to rethink entrenched conventions.

In my research, children’s play and its particular deregulating quality is seen as a drive to activate critical queries and debate that may re-orientate or even disrupt the inevitability of daily life. In the safe zone of play, conflict becomes a productive ground that allows for the testing of new perspectives and new possibilities outside daily life.

Examples

Interplay – Carpark (2012)

Bahbak Hashemi-Nezhad

This project consists in a series of playful experiments for critical reflection on and in public space. While creating statements about failed policy-making and raising questions about the promises of the pending regeneration, the games temporarily activate abandoned developments in public space. Each game overlays a series of new play rules in relation to the spatial qualities, history, access, and pending changes specific to the space.

Public Borders (2014)

Annelies Vaneycken

officeforpublicplay.org/department/public-borders

This experiment included an explorative walk in which a group of children inquired what borders they encountered in public spaces — visible as well as hidden ones. In response, the children created a series of counter-reactions through playful movements and body language for the particular borders they had identified. These expressions were captured in scores and performed back in public space, hence questioning and disrupting its conventional norms and behaviour.

Literature references

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1. All definitions in this lexicon (unless referenced otherwise) are retrieved from Oxford Dictionaries, available at oxforddictionaries.com

BEYOND THE LINE: DESIGN FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE LIGHT OF CHILDREN'S CULTURE – ANNELIES VANEYCKEN

Playful Rules^[1], Park de Forest (Brussels, Belgium), August 2014

We walk and hop along a light-brownish gravel path, down a hilly park somewhere in the south of Brussels. The sharp stones make cracking sounds under our shoes; it translates the vibrant energy present in our group. One child makes a small sprint, others follow, and I — the unfit designer — start running behind them. The group of children unites again when they stand still in front of a white line^[2] painted onto the firm blades of grass. I take time to catch my breath. The children start walking on the line, one after the other, and again... I follow. Our walking bodies start shaping into a 'line', moving through the park. This human line, creating a new temporary path, contrasts with the planned network of pathways in the park. Following the white line, we re-shape our group formation; the former organic cluster of children results in a smooth line — the children seem to be quieter now. The line takes us uphill towards a shrub, where it continues over and beyond. This obstacle allows me to re-introduce the aim of our walk, which the children seem to have forgotten in their enthusiasm.

I had asked the child-group to guide me through their local park and show me their favourite places. Being a local myself, I am curious to know what favourite places the children will show me and if these will be similar to my own.

I am overwhelmed by the plurality of their answers and possibilities. Everyone seems to have such a place, but their individual stories become lost in simultaneous narration. I feel we need some structure here, and I assume this to be part of the adult's role. I will have to interrupt the buzz of words, and then comes the difficult part: I will need to point at one child and give him/her the privilege of starting. I know the choice will never be the right one and other children will be unhappy and impatient for their turn.

I try to come up with a good argument why a particular child has the right to go first. Should it be the youngest one? Should it be a girl? Should it be the newcomer?

It is Félix in his over-enthusiastic act — jumping in the air, screaming loudly, waving his arms — that breaches my pondering and takes the lead. Once I confirm his eagerness, he runs — screaming — down the hill. The other children do not moan, neither do they complain. They immediately imitate his spontaneous expression of victory. There is no time for me to think; my feet respond by running down the hill behind them.

I find the group in front of an isolated shrub. I wonder what is so special about this European yew tree. To me, it looks like an ordinary shrub one can find in any other Belgian city park. Besides, this is not a *place* but rather a *thing*. My disappointment ebbs when Félix unexpectedly disappears into the leaves of the shrub. Unsurprised by his *magical* move, most of the children follow him inside the shrub. Accompanied by two more children, I remain baffled *outside* the shrub... waiting for their return. The *insiders* invite me to join, “Héééé, where are you? Come inside!”. While responding “But... I am too tall to fit inside the shrub”, my body presses itself into the hole appropriated by the children as an entrance to *their* shrub. To my surprise, I come into a large cavity that forms the inside of the shrub. A group of seven children, and my squatting self, surrounded by a thick sheath of branches and green leaves. This green wall isolates us from the rest of the park; we are invisible for other park visitors. Inside the shrub, the park also becomes invisible to us, but still, the muffled sounds that permeate through the porous green coat give us a feeling of trust and connectedness: we know where we are and if we wanted to, we could return to the *big* world very quickly. The isolation offered by the shrub transforms it from a thing into a place, one that is *exclusive* for us. It became *our* place and this feeling of commonality initiates a closer bounding of our group.

After the discovery of the shrub, the children show me other secret places that were previously unknown to me; an astonishing revelation for a daily user of the park who assumed to know the park inside out. The children show me a hidden place with an unexpected large pit, only accessible via a treacherous journey through stinging nettles. The two *owners* of the pit have appropriated the place by giving it a name, The Hermit’s Pit, referring to the fact that both children believe that a hermit lives there whenever they are not present. Most of the time the children just sit at the bottom of the pit — about one meter deep — but the pit also serves as a storage place for the large branches they find around the park. Finally, the children take me to a steep hill, tucked away on the east side of the park. A place I have visited before by using the landscaped path that

winds safely down the slopes of the hill to insure a safe and easy return to the foot of the hill. This time, the children take me via invented tracks that go beyond the formal path. Their adventurous downhill descents help me re-experience the site in new and playful ways.

Why collaborate with children!

Cities are living organisms. They are subject to constant change due to their interaction with citizens and being intertwined with social, political, and economical factors. In order to deal with change and the growing complexity of current and future Western cities in a more social sustainable way, we need to include *all* parties involved in the making processes, including marginalised publics such as children^[3]. For the design of public space, within this fundamentally and ideally democratic project, the challenge is to include *all* citizens in the production and development of public space, and to broaden and deepen processes of decision-making in terms of participation. The role of the designer here is not only concerned with how to design the materiality of public space, but also concerned with how to design opportunities for including those marginalised publics in the public sphere.

Designers and artists typically perform the role of questioning and critiquing established values through their work. Children and their culture of play and curiosity form good allies in disorganising the world: disrupting routines by which public space is fixed, rethinking the rules on which the city is based, and interpreting public space in new ways. In this research project, I use my design practice — such as the Playful Rules experience described above — to inquire how children's culture and play can contribute to the rethinking of adults' performativity. Here children are seen as valuable actors that unpack and challenge norms, roles, and behaviour in a city, contributing to a playful mind-set that imagines new perspectives and possibilities.

What we can learn from children (on ambiguity)

The children walking over a white line in an open grass field...

The children uncovering a path in a thicket of stinging nettles...

The children creating adventurous downhill descents on a steep hill...

The children residing in a pit...

The children unwinding in a cavity inside a shrub...

... are all examples of how children as individuals and groups create their own paths that go beyond planned paths and sometimes beyond 'accessible' zones. Their activities

in the park also teach us how they find, create, and appropriate their own spaces — public or hidden places. In turn, from their stories I learned how the children create imaginary worlds that allow them to attribute new meanings to these places. Our collaborative explorations in the park taught me how children find, appropriate, and create different kinds of paths and places beyond the formal. These ‘child spaces’ (self-chosen, self-invented, and self-directed) reveal how children negate planned spaces and the controlled (expected and accepted) behaviours and roles that are culturally and socially ascribed to those places. This is a disobedience that does not only disorganise prescribed and pre-scripted roles and behaviours, but also produces new values and space for re-interpretation. Here we may not only understand the role of a/the ‘dis-organiser’ as rebellious, but also as constructive: being the ‘re-organiser’. Children’s play, understood as an ongoing cycle of destruction and construction, operates in a state of constant becoming, as an open project, engaging them as pro-active co-authors (self-invented and self-directed) in the process of (meaning) making.

The painted line as line, the painted line as path...

The shrub as shrub, as place to repose, the shrub as a hiding place...

The pit as pit, as dwelling for an absent hermit, as storage place for found branches...

... tells us about the plurality of meanings that children attach to spaces. New interpretations that are generated through children’s play do not exclude previous ones, but allow co-existence. The ambiguity of children’s meaning-making of space challenges designers and adults to approach public space as being multi-layered as well as co-constructed by many authors. Opening up the production and development of public space for a diversity of voices also calls for including marginalised publics and contributing to processes of democracy. In addition, and following Chantal Mouffe (2007), such dissent-driven agonistic spaces also create a state of uncertainty that makes us question social, political, and culturally entrenched values, meanings, and roles, and hence invite us to perform the role of critiquing.

How we can learn from children (on children and participatory design: role playing)

The original methods for participatory design developed in 1970s’ Scandinavia for dealing with small scale (work) communities require evaluation and adjustment when working on issues that concern society and public space, both consisting of larger and more diverse communities (Bannon & Ehn, 2012). Issues of inequality arise and become exposed when assembling a large number of different actors for collaboration; they demand a rethinking of power structures, such as position and balance between

traditional power actors (government) and participating actors (citizens), as well as between different groups of citizens.

Roger Caillois' (1961) 'play-continuum', ranging from rule-bound 'ludus' to spontaneous uncontrolled 'paidia', may help us unpack power positions in participatory design processes. What type of play or what type (and level) of participation can take place in predominantly controlled processes and what can we learn from children's disobedience and pro-active re-interpretation of roles as a means to counter hegemonic structures?

The children leading the designer-researcher through the park...

The designer-researcher re-introducing the aim of the walk, which the children seem to have forgotten in their enthusiasm...

The child (Félix) breaching the designer-researcher's pondering and taking the lead...

There is no time for the designer-researcher to think; her feet respond by running down the hill behind the children...

... clarifies how children were interacting with the design framework and goal I had predefined, and how they sought for ways to initiate their own ideas. Their pro-active stance engaged me, the designer, to perform the role of 'the ignorant schoolmaster' (Rancière, 1991), to dismiss my own knowledge and open up to understanding the specificity of the knowledge and the activity already at work within each of the children. To see — and work with — the children as equal knowledge contributors blurred the boundaries between the roles of specialist and amateur and made me value them as 'emancipated spectators' (Rancière, 2009), able to generate their own meaning-making. In addition, the children's playful strategies made me reconfigure the original goal by opening up the design process for directions, ideas, and 'rules' that were initiated by the children themselves, thus enabling them to act as 'spect-actors' (Boal, 1979) and bring about change in their own situation.

The children's input in the Playful Rules design process questions and shifts traditional roles between the 'adult-designer' and 'child-participants', and between adults and children in general. These types of collaboration are opposite to traditional pedagogical models where children typically learn from adults, and suggest reversing roles so that adults learn from children. Following Wall's (2010) ideas of 'childism', I argue for adults and designers to focus on children's experiences as a prism for unpacking public space; to learn from 'children's culture' rather than using 'adult culture' as a standard norm through which society and public space are seen and developed; and finally to approach

children's culture as the rich diversity it is, rather than as a uniform group. This calls for a design in the light of children's culture; how design contributes to the process of including children and, in turn, how contemporary participatory design processes that work on societal issues, like the production and development of public spaces, may learn from children's participation.

Inverted Line, Johanneberg (Gothenburg, Sweden), February 2016

More than two years later 'the line' returns in Sweden, as an inverted variation. I am walking to work on a dull winter morning. Both eyes fixed on the ground, staring at the repetition of my walking feet. While reorienting my gaze, a line somewhere beside me catches my attention. A bike had passed the snow-covered lawn beside the path and left a mark in the shape of a grass-green line, uncovered in the white snow. This 'inverted line' immediately brings back memories of the white painted line in the Park de Forest in Brussels and to the children walking and hopping the line. The memory of the children's play makes my feet leave the clean dry path and follow the inverted line by shuffling my shoes playfully through the thick layer of snow. I continue my walk, as I continue my explorations searching for new paths.



Figure 1: Explorations in the Park de Forest.



Figure 2: Walking the white line.



Figure 3: Into the shrub.



Figure 4: The Hermit's Pit.

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1. Playful Rules is part of the design-based research project in which Annelies Vaneycken (Office for Public Play) inquires how ‘children’s culture’ may inspire and bring new perspectives for ‘adult culture’ in relation to design for participation. More info via officeforpublicplay.org/department/playful-rules↵
 2. The white painted line was part of “Orbit” by Hanne Van Den Biesen & Sam Dieltjens, one of [the temporary artistic interventions](#) part of The Incroyable Téléphérique. ↵
 3. The ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC 1990) strives for including children in processes of decision-making regarding matters that affect them directly (article 12 of UNCRC). ↵

TO BE A STUDENT OF DESIGN — HENRIC BENESCH

We all play roles, roles that in turn depend on other roles. For the moment, you are playing the role of the reader, just as I — when I was writing this text — played the role of the writer. That is, the writer stipulates the reader (as well as the opposite). The actor stipulates the audience just as the doctor stipulates the patient or the adult stipulates the child. Our roles change our perspective on the world. A woodcutter looks differently upon a forest than a bird-watcher. Furthermore, we never just play one role, and our roles are also context sensitive. We might all be sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, partners, mothers, and fathers but depending on where we are, we might be perceived as citizens, immigrants, locals or foreigners. Also, roles that are accessible in one context might be inaccessible in others, for instance because of lack of networks or paperwork. Some roles we pick whilst others might be forced or projected upon us. Either way, roles give focus, traction and access to certain perspectives and lines of action, but also limit and deny you other perspectives and actions. They may liberate as well as shackle and stigmatise.

At design schools such as the institution where I work (or perform the roles of educator, supervisor, and researcher, just to mention a few), we train students and PhD students to play the role of the designer and the design-researcher. In hindsight of the era of modernisation, the role of the designer has roughly played out in the triadic set-up of designer (consultant), producer, and consumer (client). Also, we can now see how modernisation, where design and designers have played an important part, has had an enormous effect on the quality of life, primarily for the people in the global north but also — in alliance with capitalism — not only has it produced prosperity and wealth but also poverty, inequality, and marginalisation on a global scale. This development in turn has challenged design education, design research, and design practice to take on a broader scope of roles in terms of planning and managing different forms of processes — public as well as private, bottom-up as well as top-down — which in various ways, in various domains, and on various scales seeks to turn this tide (Bremner & Rodgers,

2013; Fry, Dilnot, & Stewart, 2015). Even though progress has been made in this regard, it is apparent that today's design education, design research, and design practice is still haunted by the frameworks and roles that have been passed on from the hey-days of the modernisation era.

As an educator / supervisor / researcher at a public institution such as the University of Gothenburg dealing with design, it is my obligation to contribute to the unpacking of this 'hauntology' (Fisher, 2014). Even more, it is also my obligation to take part in the re-imagining and re-working of design beyond these limitations. Following this, an important part of training designers is to make the students and PhD students aware of the roles they play and more so, to train them to critically challenge the role of the designer and its various configurations in its expanded field.

Annelies Vaneycken's PhD project, which I supervise, addresses this challenge in a very concrete methodological way by asking the simple question: What can children teach us about the design of public space? Here a number of issues are implied. First of all, it is suggested that the designer still lacks knowledge about how to design (in this case) public space. Secondly, it is suggested that children have knowledge about public space that designers do not. Thirdly, it is also suggested that children can at least partly transfer this knowledge to designers. In other words, by raising this question and by identifying children as teachers, Annelies points at one particular variation of the designer-role, namely the student-role.

To consider the implication of this role we need to return to the way we understand design. If we think of design as a particular assemblage of a wide set of assumptions, techniques, and methodologies, it is clear that design as a practice is fundamentally forward-looking and future-oriented. As such, it is well configured within modernity as a projective practice of imagining where you would like to be (Appadurai, 1996). In other words — designers do not only conduct projects (noun) — they also project (verb) — and more so, they are projective (adjective) — explicitly as well as implicitly. That is, design and designing is a vehicle for all kinds of assumptions, definitions, and propositions of why, how, and for whom — most often stipulated by those already socially, politically, and culturally capable and accountable. If we have in mind 'the woodcutter' and 'the bird-watcher' and pair this dilemma with the demographic profile of higher educations, as well as intersectional and postcolonial perspectives on design education, design research, and design practice today (Akkach 2003; Abdulla et al., 2016), we obtain a situation which in fact contributes to the status quo which is often said to be challenged. This is the situation where the notion of design predominately

continues to be the playground of a male, white, western, upper-middle-class elite, having limited access to other perspectives of the past, present, and future of being human beyond that scope.

In the case of working with children, as our largest marginalised group (Wall, 2010), we often make the particular mistake of thinking that just because all of us have been children we can account for what it is to be a child, and in doing so we in effect project our adult framework of childhood upon children. We know how it is to have been a child but we do not know how it is to be a child today — neither here nor elsewhere. What Annelies does in her project is first and foremost acknowledge these inherent limitations and pitfalls. She initiates, but she does not lead — she follows. For a moment she projects, but more so, she also receives. She is attentive and not only projective. She becomes a student (of design).

In doing so, she points at the idea that if we are to move beyond the modernist-capitalist framework of design / designers, we must explore and develop roles besides the traditional modernist consultant / expert. And (again) this harks back to the question of design. In a seminar in June 2016 at HDK Academy of Design and Crafts, we had the fortune of having Clive Dilnot presenting and revisiting a paper he wrote in the 1980s: 'Design as a socially significant activity' (Dilnot, 1982). He points at how the concept of 'design' as we know it today, stipulated within a modernist-capitalist framework, in effect has become a sub-branch of technology and engineering. More importantly, he also points at 'design' as an activity, as the transformative capacity of individuals and groups that foregoes these distinctions. That everybody, in their ability and capability to transform the world they live in, is a designer in a broader sense.

In such a context, the study of design becomes even more urgent — a systematic study of the way individuals and groups, situated within certain social, cultural, and political configurations, transform the very fabric and materiality of the world they inhabit — through hard work as well as through play, through ingenuity as well as through imagination. This does not in any sense undo the importance of designers, but it changes the scope and possible approaches in design practice, design education, and design research — the roles we play. In particular, it points at how the persuasive projective qualities of design practice, which makes the profession so easy to capitalise on, and particularly problematic in relation to participative processes, has to be balanced and challenged by non-reductive modes of attentiveness and receptiveness.

Annelies' work and the future development of it, are making important contributions to

the development of frameworks, methodologies, ethics, and roles in relation to these challenges. Frameworks, methodologies, and roles that bring designers, design students, and design researchers in an in-depth dialogue with a wider as well as a more specific range of perspectives (intersectional, intercultural, and postcolonial) in more reciprocal and less reductive ways. This is true, particularly in relation to the master programme to which she is connected — Child Culture Design — and certainly in relation to the broader design education and design research at HDK and beyond. Helping all of us becoming better students of design.

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A SPACE FOR AMBIGUITY: PLAY AND PLAYFULNESS AS SPACES OF PROTEST – REEM CHARIF & MOHAMAD HAFEDA

When thinking about play, the word can suggest a diverse range of social and spatial practices that employ a playful mindset able to question social norms and to creatively suggest alternatives. This mindset is attributed to child play but often occurs outside of it. The child / adult dichotomy, when opened and viewed as a notion of oppositional forces, can change the way in which we interpret play from a Colin Ward perspective as a politically charged, non-conclusive practice about breaking of order on a small scale in everyday life (Ward, 1966). The playfulness aspect of play crosses age, gender, and culture because playfulness can be applied to many practices, such as playing with words or with ideas. It is a disposition “that continuously questions bodies, space and materials to see what more can be done with them” (Lester, 2014, p. 200). Play and playfulness emerge as “a form of protest that may be low-key, exercised through spontaneous, impromptu and resourceful acts that stake a claim for modest redistribution of space / time” (ibid., p. 202). Looking at playgrounds as public social spaces reveals how communities operate, how they innovatively respond to limited resources, and relate to each other and to their environment. Such (inter)actions express their aspirations through the way they engage with the spaces, adjusting them and reimagining their potential. Playfulness can be about play itself, but can also function as a form of community protest against social ideas, authorities, and processes of decision-making in the public realm.

Play as protest: public play practices

Annelies Vaneycken’s lexicon for ‘Play’ notes Roger Caillois’ (1961) two types of play: the first follows rules set by others, or regulated play (*ludus*), and the second is self-directed play (*paidia*) (Vaneycken, 2017). This text suggests that an activity approached with a playful mindset and taking place in the public realm is a form of protest because of its ability to subvert, continuously question, and break order. We refer to these

activities as 'public play practices', they include self-directed play (*paidia*) and the subtext occurring during regulated play (*ludus*), and extend to culturally specific public practices and codes of conduct, such as satirical humour in local poems, songs or theatrical productions, political rumours, socially engaged art works, and subtle political chatter while engaging in social games like backgammon.

James Scott uses the term 'public transcript' to describe the open, public interactions between 'dominators' and 'oppressed', and the term 'hidden transcript' for the offstage critique of power within this context. He suggests that we can "interpret the rumours, gossip, folktales, songs, gestures, jokes, and theatre of the powerless as vehicles by which, among other things, they insinuate a critique of power while hiding behind anonymity" (Scott, 1990, p. xiii). By tapping into public play practices, one can reveal the hidden transcript of the community, their unique way of using play to debate and express opposition and propositions for change. Thus, looking closely at public play practices shows genuine signifiers of public opinion and raises questions about the way consultation, participation, and collective engagement take shape.

The diagram, 'Why do we play? A list of public play practices (a work in progress)' (Febrik, 2016) (Figure 5), explores the different types of public play practices noted through Febrik's research into social playgrounds. Some occur in the traditional playground while others occur outside of it, transforming, temporarily, any public space into a public ground for resistance. Whilst all of the public play practices mentioned are politically charged, some are more purposeful than others. The protest is sometimes a direct 'public transcript' (play with a purpose) and sometimes a 'hidden and subtle transcript' (play for play). Different types of public play practices transform public spaces into areas for conflict, negotiation, and transformation.

The protest aspect of play opens an opportunity for individuals to make personal use of and comment on these public spaces. It is one of the ways in which communities make decisions about their environments and how these should work. Henri Lefebvre's triad spatial model (conceived, perceived, and lived space) suggests that public spaces are often planned, designed, and used by different groups of people, who may not have the same vision about the nature of a public space. Ideally, though not frequently, planners aim to partner with the users in the design of their environments. Lefebvre's 'lived space' (Lefebvre, 1991) and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's ideas of 'lines of flight' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1998, p. 205) allude to public space practices as ways in which people creatively subvert and rework public space to make space for themselves, for their desires and beliefs. This suggests that people transform the space they use,

appropriating its meaning and function and thus protesting against the processes of public space making. What is interesting here is that public play practices build on this type of protest, carrying with them a wealth of politically charged 'hidden transcript' built into everyday practice. Play initiates both negotiation and conflict, thus making the dynamics of playing incredibly valuable, as they reveal the way in which the players (the community individuals or groups) relate to one another, their hierarchies, power struggles, and frustrations or preferences. Public play practices are one of many practices taking place in the public realm and they may be an unexpected and effective mechanism for revealing the hidden protest.

Encouraging public play practices through the social playground

Whether in spaces designated for play or spaces where play coincidentally occurs, public play practices open up a dialogue about the role of play and playfulness in processes of public space design. It is not only about formal processes of participation, but also about a parallel process in the everyday context through the reading of the 'hidden transcript' of how communities engage through play. In order to encourage public play practices as a mechanism for revealing the hidden transcript of public spaces, one must accept different types of ambiguity and unpredictability that nurture a playful environment and disposition. Using this mechanism to inform public design processes may mean ambiguity in either the programme, or the form / physical language, and/or the boundaries of the site. The ambiguity of these components makes space for 'lines of flight', or space for people's appropriation in accordance with their needs and desires.

When we play, we rearrange the space imaginatively by using it differently than its original purpose, thus making it ambiguous. Febrik's project Play Space (2005)^[1] is a good example of how public spaces in the Palestinian Refugee Camp *Burj el Barajneh* were transformed by children to play spaces in the absence of any childhood spaces within the camp. The children's insertions were public protests against their least claim to space, as they inserted their playgrounds fleetingly and frequently in-between the functions (or programmes) of others. This type of ambiguity of programme is something that was more prevalent in the 1970s and in the urban landscapes of Aldo van Eyck for example, where playgrounds appeared as part of the urban landscape, on pavements, courtyards, and any open public space. There was ambiguity as to where the playground began and where it ended. It became absorbed into the physical language of the streets of the city. This type of fragmented playground aimed to initiate public play practices connecting people and expanding the possibility of the use of space, while the

clear marking of territories as playgrounds takes away opportunity for overlap between community groups as they negotiate the sharing of the space. Furthermore, whilst the fragmented playground offers physical ambiguity and opportunity for inventive engagement, the traditional playground protects children's right to play in contexts where they are overlooked, such as the Palestinian refugee camps. Here, the naming and holding of visible and permanent territories of play becomes imperative as an expression of protest.

To retain certain ambiguity in the formal design and planning stages became an important challenge for the project Edge of Play (in collaboration with UNRWA^[2]'s Talbiyeh Camp Improvement Project (TCIP), Talbiyeh Refugee camp in Amman, Jordan 2009-11)^[3]. The balance between ambiguity and clarity was addressed through the design of a 'social playground', a multi-generational multi-purpose space that transforms with the needs of the community and hosts a variety of public play practices. Aligned with Liane Lefaivre's "the playground as the smallest stitch in the urban fabric ... with a specific strength in connecting people to spaces" (Lefaivre, 2007, pp. 24-25), the social playground thus aims to facilitate overlaps and negotiations within the community and to highlight the protest of unrepresented groups through prioritising their claim to space. The bigger UNRWA project, and through it also the Edge of Play, experienced challenges, in part due to the lack of transparency and efficiency of both the institution and the community which resulted in monopoly of participation, selective involvement, social alliances, and strategic decision making of local community groups (Al-Nammari, 2011). This led to the construction of only half the social playground (the space for children's play but not that for adults). Interestingly, this enabled for the first time a conversation about the concerns of the participating community regarding the public visibility of women, the pedestrianisation of public spaces, and the appropriation of open spaces by male youths. As such, the 'social playground' can take many forms when acting as a mechanism for inviting social engagements and negotiations in the community.

Public play practices can encourage public engagement and act as social activators on a small scale in everyday life. Rethinking public space and its physical and programmatic ambiguity as a means to invite further play, protest, and 'lines of flight', becomes central to facilitating 'social playgrounds' that nurture dynamic public play practices. When carefully observed and studied, play and playfulness in the public realm can be a very useful mechanism, different in logic from current modes of consultation and participation regarding the production of public space.

PLAY FOR PLAY



←----- FOR HAPPINESS ----->

←----- TO FOLLOW A CURIOSITY ----->

←----- TO MAKE A FRIEND ----->



←----- HABIT/CULTURAL PRACTICE
(BRING COMMUNITY TOGETHER) ----->



←----- RESPOND TO LIMITED RESOURCES
INVENT NEW POSSIBILITIES ----->



←----- PARTICIPATE IN SOCIETY ----->

←----- RIGHT TO SPACE ----->

←----- DEMOCRATIC PRACTICE ----->



←----- PROTEST AGAINST A SYSTEM/STRUCTURE/
ORDER/CONTROL AT ANY SCALE ----->



←----- TO LEARN ----->



←----- SPECTULATE ON SOCIAL NORMS/
ENVIRONMENTS ----->



←----- MAKE A POLITICAL COMMENTARY ----->



PLAY WITH A PURPOSE

DEFINED SPACE

AMBIGUOUS SPACE

Figure 5: Why Do We Play? A list of Public Play Practices (a work in progress). Febrik 2016. Layout by Marwan Kaabour.

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1. Available at: febrik-playspace.tumblr.com↵

2. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) was established after the 1948 Arab – Israeli conflict and provides direct relief to Palestinian refugees in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, West Bank and Gaza. ↵

3. Available at: febrik-edgeofplay.tumblr.com↵

PART IV

DATA MINING



UNDER REPRESENTATION: BLACK (1/4 PROJECTS) ASIAN (1/4 PROJECTS)



SEES PATTERNS + MAKES THEM LEGIBLE.



UNDER REPRESENTATION: 20-24 (5/6 PROJECTS) 25-29 (4/6 PROJECTS)

WE'RE HERE!



OVER REPRESENTATION: 50-59 (5/6 PROJECTS) 40-49 (4/6 PROJECTS)

CAPITALIST INTEREST



'SCUSE ME, WHAT DOES THE DATA SAY THAT THEY WANT?

HEY, DESIGNERS, LEARN HOW TO USE BIG DATA, BUT STAY CRITICAL!

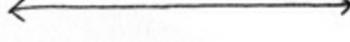
YEA



UNCRITICAL PRAISE

ATTITUDES TOWARDS USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND BIG DATA:

POSITION YOURSELF ON THIS SPECTRUM:



NAY



IRRATIONAL RESISTANCE

HEY, IF YOU GIVE US SOME PERSONAL INTEL, WE'LL LET YOU VOICE YOUR OPINION

UHM OK, I'M 26, ASIAN, MALE AND SELF-EMPLOYED. I WANT SAFE STREETS

NOTED

I WILL USE ALL OF THIS WITHOUT QUESTIONING IT'S CONTENT

NAIVE DESIGNER

COLLECTED DATA

I'm just gonna go over here, cause it feels good.



* CONSUMERS, ALSO KNOWN AS USERS OR CITIZENS.

LEXICON – SABA GOLCHEHR

Data mining (noun) ^[1]

“The practice of examining large pre-existing databases in order to generate new information.”

Data mining allows us to explore relations between items of information without a priori knowledge of the nature of these relations. Within such explorations computers are fundamental; they allow us to manipulate and analyse large volumes of data through powerful algorithms.

In conventional research, data analysis follows the formulation of a hypothesis and aims to answer a specific predetermined question. Conventional databases, in a data-scarce world, were designed to answer that question efficiently. In today’s Big Data world, however, the enormous amounts of data are diverse in quality and format, and rarely fit within predefined categories (Kitchin, 2014). Therefore, the formulation of a refined question will only emerge after collecting and exploring the data. Furthermore, Big Data analytics allow for a different epistemological approach to research, where the emphasis lies on exploring the how, rather than the why. Since searching for causality can be difficult, Big Data champions propose that instead we should pay attention to discovering patterns and correlations. While such correlations do not inform us about the underlying reasons for certain phenomena, they can inform us about what is happening and help us frame a direction for further causal investigation (Chadwick, 2013; Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier, 2013). In my research, a data-driven approach is adopted, where the formulation of a research question or hypothesis is postponed, and instead correlations in data sets are explored in order to gain new insights.

Examples

Commonplace case study (2015)

Saba Golchehr

sabagolchehr.com

Comparing data on user demographics collected by the tech start-up firm Commonplace (commonplace.is) with the United Kingdom Government's open data on local demographics provided empirical evidence to identify a lack of representation of local residents in various community consultation processes. By focusing on correlations in the analysis of this tech firm's datasets a democratic deficit was brought to light in community consultation for local developments in the built environment.

Million Dollar Blocks (2006)

Spatial Information Design Lab

spatialinformationdesignlab.org/projects/million-dollarblocks

The Spatial Information Design Lab analysed data from the US criminal justice system to map the landscape of incarceration and re-incarceration of offenders for five cities in the US. In their study they found a correlation between the spatial concentration of offenders in several neighbourhoods and the number of re-incarcerated offenders from those areas. In many cases the spatial concentration was so high that public spending on imprisonment exceeded one million dollars a year for a single urban block, which is public investment that could be used instead to improve local civic infrastructures (such as education, housing and employment) to help prevent re-incarceration.

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Big Data (noun)

“Extremely large data sets that may be analysed computationally to reveal patterns, trends, and associations, especially relating to human behaviour and interactions.”

The term ‘Big Data’ was coined by scientists and computer engineers and is a result of advances in digital sensors, communications, computation and storage that have allowed us to capture and store much larger amounts of information that is of value to business, science, government, and society (Cukier, 2010; Bryant, et al., 2008). From a business perspective the ‘peta-’ and ‘zeta bytes’ of data from and on the public have proven to be a successful marketing tool. Amazon, for instance, collects data on online user interactions to look for correlations in product sales, and suggesting correlated products to customers has increased their sales significantly (Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier, 2013). Search engine companies, such as Google, have created an entirely new business by collecting data that is freely available on the internet, and by providing that data to people in useful ways.

Big Data includes data collection, data analysis, and data visualisation. In my research, I aim to move beyond the ‘Big’ in Big Data, and deconstruct this concept to understand the implications of this ‘data revolution’ for design practice, design research, and user participation. I have therefore broken Big Data down into a study of

1. the shift from hypothesis and theory-driven research towards data-driven research;
2. computational analysis, i.e. complex algorithms, to discover patterns in data (often used for predictive analytics);
3. the availability of new (digital) data (sources), e.g. social media, Internet of Things, open (governmental) data, etc.

Example

Urban Eindhoven (2010)

Space & Matter – Architecture and Research Office

For the redevelopment of the former energy plant 'Strijp S' in Eindhoven, architecture office Space & Matter conducted a study into existing users of these abandoned spaces. By analysing location-based data from social media platforms the firm was able to identify two existing user communities. Based on these findings, the office developed a conceptual design that would allow for these users to appropriate the design and take ownership over the space.

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Agency (noun)

“Action or intervention producing a particular effect.”

“A thing or person that acts to produce a particular result.”

“To engage in areas where it is needed most, architecture must begin a new critical

project to reclaim the inherently political nature of the practice.” — Camillo Boano, 2013

To have agency means being able to intervene in existing processes and to exercise power in order to ‘make a difference’ to the status quo (Giddens, 1984, p. 14). My research explores how architects and other spatial designers can act as agents who help enable citizen empowerment in the design of the public realm.

The design and development of public space and the built environment is under continuous negotiation by a variety of agencies, such as policy makers, private developers, urban planners, and so on. The continually evolving relations and tensions between these various agents — influenced by a multitude of forces (e.g. political, environmental, economical, social, etc.) — call for architects to reconfigure their role within such spaces of contestation in order to find opportunities to enact their (spatial) agency. Furthermore, architects and socially engaged designers involved in the design and development of the built environment have a social responsibility to act on behalf of others. By empowering citizens to take control over their environment these practices can assume this responsibility and exert their agency to enable alternative spatial processes and become agents of (social) change.

Examples

Commonplace case study (2015)

Saba Golchehr

sabagolchehr.com

In the Commonplace case study, I adopted the tech firm’s technologies to intervene in the development of their software in order to change the state of affairs. This case illustrates how designers can use their agency to steer the output of technological developments in a different direction, and with that aim to restore equilibrium between different forces (state, public, and market) within existing procedures and infrastructures (Lyster, 2016).

Art & Architecture Practice (1994-present)

Muf architects

muf.co.uk

This London-based firm is a ‘collaborative practice of art and architecture committed to public realm projects’ (muf.co.uk). Their planning processes concentrate on including the voices of others. Furthermore, decisions on spatial and material designs

are born from negotiations between public, private, communal, and individual agents (Schneider et al., 2009).

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Empowerment (noun)

“Authority or power given to someone to do something.”

“The process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one’s life and claiming one’s rights.”

Notions of power relations, the redistribution of power, and empowerment are

important concepts in the exploration of citizen participation in public space. Julian Rappaport (1984) defines empowerment as a process or mechanism through which individuals and/or groups can gain control over their lives.

Architects and other socially engaged designers can use their (spatial) agency to help empower citizens to 'take control' over their environment and allow for alternative processes in the design and development of the built environment. Such an empowerment not only aims to enable citizens to take action and become pro-active instead of being reactive, it also aims to move towards a more equal distribution of power, and with that a more just society (Schneider & Till, 2009). My research explores what role(s) architects can play in the process of empowering politically marginalised groups — which are currently excluded from decision-making processes on the development of public space and the built environment — by engaging with and/or adopting digital technologies.

Example

[596 Acres \(2011\)](#)

596acres.org

596 Acres is a non-profit organisation comprised of a team of design, law, and information technology professionals based in New York. Their practice aims to help citizens transform vacant public land into community resources by analysing the cities open data on vacant land and communicating this to the public in various 'read-able' ways (Segal, 2014).

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DESIGN FROM THE INSIDE-OUT: CRITICALLY ADOPTING BIG DATA METHODS – SABA GOLCHEHR

The emergence of Big Data and data mining has provoked a large debate on the role of data collection and analysis in many fields (Anderson, 2008; Bollier, 2010; Kitchin, 2014; Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier, 2013). Within the architectural profession it has resulted in two distinctive attitudes towards these new advances. Some architectural practices praise technology and adopt Big Data — often uncritically — to inform their design projects, while others reject computer-mediated approaches entirely and take an antagonistic stance towards a technology-dominated society and environment.

Learning from — and adopting — Big Data technologies enable opportunities for architectural and urban designers to discover new kinds of agency in today's data-governed world when designing for the public realm, and particularly when designing public spaces. This is not a rejection of the value of embodying a critical position, but a suggestion that this criticality is used to intervene from within existing systems and infrastructures. Instead of condemning new digital developments entirely, more designers could adopt new digital tools to help enable different outcomes. Instead of merely reacting to a situation, they could engage with and change situations they find socially unjust and/or unacceptable. However, such a pro-active attitude requires designers to learn and understand the rules of the data game prior to engaging with it.

Resisting new technologies

Current uses of Big Data technologies are primarily driven by neoliberal forces, where data mining enables companies to learn about our spending patterns, social relations, and so on, through opaque algorithms with the purpose to increase their profits (e.g. Amazon, Facebook, Wal-Mart) (Burrell, 2016; O'Neill, 2016). This capitalist use of technology has raised resistance in many critical disciplines, including architecture. Some architects use resistance to recast today's 'Big Brother' society and aim to

challenge and ultimately change this reality. Criticality and resistance however are not the only — and often not the most effective — approaches to change a state of affairs. In fact, adapting to altering realities — instigated by advances in industrial and technological systems — and adopting new technologies to operate critically within these systems has enabled the architectural discipline to advance. In the early 20th century, industrialisation and mass production influenced designers to explore standardisation. Information technologies used during the war opened up new design imaginaries on communication and information in networked urban settings.

Architecture is an ever-evolving discipline that needs constant re-evaluating and repositioning in order to survive and remain relevant within a dynamic society. Critical and adversarial approaches (i.e. through activism) challenge this necessity, while adopting or ‘hijacking’ modern technologies allows architects to accept new realities and explore ways to redirect — instead of reject — the status quo (Lyster, 2016).

Uncritically adopting new technologies

At the other end of the spectrum we find architectural practices that have started to adopt data mining as a method to inform their design strategies. However, both architectural practitioners and researchers often put too much emphasis on the technology and lose sight of their critical position as architects within these processes. Designers should be aware both of what is lost if they ignore new digital tools, and of the implications of uncritically appropriating Big Data technologies, which can result in various (unintended) externalities. This has occurred before in the uncritical acceptance of participatory approaches in the design and development of public space, where citizen engagement has often become instrumentalised to legitimise the reduction of state resources and responsibilities. Or they have led to ephemeral architectural interventions in public space that ultimately contributed to rising land and property values — transforming designers into often unwilling agents of gentrification.

While large amounts of data on users can certainly be valuable in public space research and design, a more critical reflection is needed regarding what kind of data is used and for what purposes. Currently, (real-time) data on how people use public space consists either of data collected by mobile phone tracking and sensors (e.g. parking sensors, congestion charge zones, public transportation cards, etc.) informing us of how and when people move through the city, or by social media data, informing us of what people say (and feel) about a place. These types of data, however, cover only two aspects of the vast data landscape that is available. Architects could take a critical position and question whether the data they use to inform their approaches truly serves the quality

and values of the public realm. Does this data show whether a public space is truly public, can they tell who is included or excluded, and can they show how communities take ownership of these spaces?

I propose a different source of data to learn about this missing layer of engagement in public space: data produced through ‘civic applications’. Civic applications — or civic ‘apps’ — are digital technologies developed to mediate different aspects of public life in the built environment between (local) councils, private actors and the public. Some examples of such digital applications are Fix My Street, Street Bump and Adopt-a-Hydrant^[1]. Over the last years, an increasing number of civic apps have been developed to support citizen participation in public space. In my research, I explore what kind of data is produced by such platforms, and study how it can be of use when exploring issues of civic empowerment and emancipation in design for citizen engagement in public space. I propose that such data can potentially inform designers in developing socially sustainable spaces that enable citizens to appropriate and take ownership of their environments.

Civic apps

Civic applications aim primarily to encourage citizens to participate in the design and development of their environments, and ultimately to increase citizens’ social capital. Moreover, due to the ideologically driven desire to diminish the role of the state — and therefore its costs — through increased citizen engagement (e.g. the ‘Big Society’ in the United Kingdom or the ‘Participation Society’ in the Netherlands), city governments are welcoming such technological means of promoting civic participation.

Accordingly, over the last decade, digital civic platforms have allowed citizens to identify and map problems and/or propose solutions to issues in their environment in order to promote action from (city) councils (De Lange & De Waal, 2013). Such civic apps are a potential source of currently untapped information on citizens and communities engaged in the development and sustaining of local environments. In order to extract knowledge from the (meta-)data of such applications, designers need to become familiar with these apps and the data they generate. I will illustrate such an approach through a case study I conducted at the tech start-up firm Commonplace.

Commonplace case study

Commonplace is a social enterprise that has developed a digital application to engage citizens in local developments in their neighbourhood. This tech startup has developed

an online app for community consultation, which collects qualitative data from local citizens and provides this data to their clients: public and private property developers, housing associations, local councils, and self-organised citizens in Neighbourhood Forums^[2]. With their digital platform Commonplace tries to tackle traditional approaches to community consultation, where methods such as public hearings, community forums, and town meetings often reach only a small sample of the community. Digital technologies such as the Commonplace tool enable citizens to engage in a consultation process without the obligation to be physically present at set hours in a set location. The Commonplace app offers an online platform where citizens can share comments about their neighbourhood and/or communicate their feedback on design proposals for their local environment. Clients using this tool receive regular updates on the consultation process through an online dashboard presenting them with a summary of the number of comments posted, the number of visitors to the platform, a list of all users' comments, and a demographic profile of users that registered to the platform.

Users who wish to place a comment first have to sign up by filling out their name, email address, and a password. When an account is created, users are presented with some questions on their age, gender, ethnicity, ownership status, and so on. The user can choose if they would like to provide this data to Commonplace. Commonplace does not offer this data to their clients directly, but uses it anonymously to provide their clients with a general profile of users in their projects (e.g. *x percentage of users are between the age of 30-40*). This data is currently not used for further investigation into the consultation processes.

By examining Commonplace's datasets, and comparing these to matching census data on neighbourhood residents, I studied whether community members involved in the consultation process through the digital application were a representative sample of the local neighbourhood. In this exploration, I compared the numbers on age, ethnicity, and ownership in the Commonplace datasets to the United Kingdom government's open datasets on local demographics (Figure 1: p. 103). Comparing the data for six Commonplace projects resulted in the following conclusions:

- Residents between the ages of 50-59 (in five of the six projects) and 40-49 (in four of the six projects) were overrepresented in the community consultation process.
- Residents between the ages of 20-24 (in five of the six projects) and 25-29 (in four of the six projects) were underrepresented in the consultation.

- Residents of a *White ethnic background* (in three of the four projects) were overrepresented in the consultation.
- Residents of an *Asian ethnicity* (in all four projects) and of a *Black ethnicity* (in three of the four projects) were underrepresented in the consultation.
- In all three projects homeowners were overrepresented, while renters were underrepresented in the consultation.

Figure 1. Analysis of Commonplace data compared to ONS census data

This analysis reveals that the Commonplace app offers empirical evidence of a democratic deficit in community consultation: evidence that shows that there are clearly some groups that are excluded from existing decision-making processes. The start-up firm is now developing a beta-version of the app in which this feature will be incorporated in the dashboards they offer their clients. This way their clients will be able to get real-time feedback on the consultation process, which enables them to alter their promotion and communication strategies during the consultation period. Ideally this will allow them to reach a wider and more representative demographic, and therefore empower politically marginalised groups — that are currently excluded from decision-making processes — by including them in the consultation process.

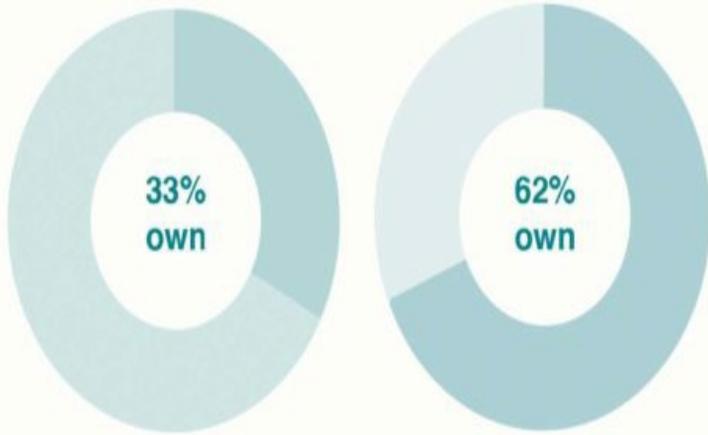
Finally, the case study illustrates that adopting prevailing technologies can result in strategic interventions that attempt to alter situations from within. As with most data-driven technologies, the development of digital tools from social enterprises such as Commonplace is primarily directed by capitalist forces: the firm needs to be profitable in order to survive, therefore the software developments are primarily focused on serving the market — i.e. the paying clients. Through adopting new technologies, designers can intervene and promote alternative courses in such developments and enable more democratic outcomes. In the Commonplace example, the intervention has resulted in the development of a feature that supports democratisation of the community consultation process. It has therefore helped to steer the output of the existing technology in a slightly different direction, and aims at restoring equilibrium in the development of such tools to serve both the community as well as the market. Moreover, analysing the Commonplace datasets revealed which community members are more actively engaged in the development of their local environment and which members are excluded from current decision-making processes. For architects and other socially engaged designers this data can be of value for attempting to empower

ignored community members by developing alternative strategies aimed at increasing inclusiveness in participatory mechanisms, or for acting on behalf of the excluded in decision-making processes. Furthermore, this data can help designers identify communities that are more likely to engage in — and take ownership of — their local environments, which can help safeguard the social sustainability of designs proposals for local public spaces^[3].

New digital tools like data mining do not have to be foregrounded within the architectural discipline, but they are useful instruments that enable alternative approaches and interventions aimed at serving the public. It is however crucial that architects remain critical of their role and agency in shaping the built environment — and try to avoid becoming instrumentalised to reinforce exploitative systems — when adopting Big Data, participatory, temporary, or any other ‘state-of-the-art’ approaches.

Commonplace data analysis *example*

TENURE



Total residents

CP users

AGE

Total residents CP users
< 20

20-24

25-29

30-39

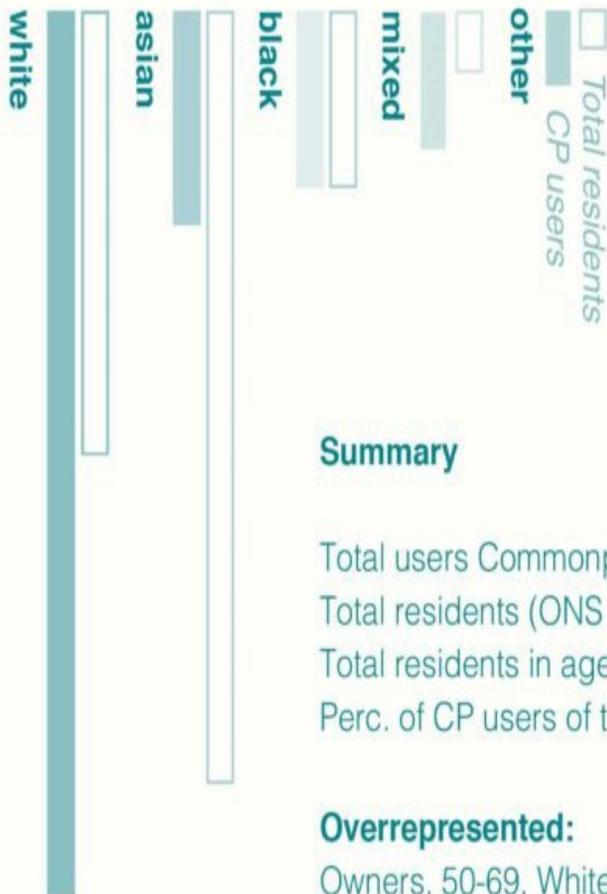
40-49

50-59

60-69

70 +

ETHNICITY



Summary

Total users Commonplace: 43
 Total residents (ONS Census): 14,480
 Total residents in age range (20-70+): 10,609
 Perc. of CP users of total residents: 0.41%

Overrepresented:

Owners, 50-69, White (& Mixed)

Underrepresented:

Renters, under 20-24 & 40-49 & 70+, Asian

Figure 1: Outcomes of data analysis for one of the Commonplace projects (data analysis and visualisation by Saba Golchehr).

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1. More information about these civic applications can be found here: fixmystreet.com, streetbump.org, and adoptahydrant.org↵
 2. The United Kingdom's 2011 Localism Act enables citizens to form a Neighbourhood Forum and develop their own planning guidelines for their neighbourhoods. More information on the Localism Act in 'A plain English guide to the Localism Act', November 2011, Department for Communities and Local Government. ↵
 3. Further reading on this in author's forthcoming publication: Golchehr, S. & Bueno de Mesquita, N. *Introducing digital methods for ongoing community participation*. ↵

DATA MINING AND THE DESIGN OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT – SUSANNAH HAGAN

Like many other Higher Education Institutions in the United Kingdom, the Royal College of Art (RCA) has both furthered and ignored the ‘digital revolution’. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that a number of the six Schools that make up the College have dipped their toes in the water, and others have opted for total immersion. The RCA School of Architecture, in which the TRADERS Researcher, Saba Golchehr sits, has partially engaged with the digital, primarily through drawing and design software.

The production of drawings is now entirely digital, delivering animations, simulations, fly-throughs, and rotating models as well as the standard plans, sections, and elevations. A few architecture schools use more radical software: parametric programmes that share the design work by enacting rules set by the architect, particularly useful at urban scales with many complex variables.

What software has not been used for, although the concept of ‘user participation’ in the design process is as fashionable in the United Kingdom as elsewhere in Europe, is to engage real users in the design process — to reach more of them or at least understand more about them. Saba’s research interrogates data mining and Big Data in the pursuit of greater local engagement in the development of the built environment, and as such, contributes something entirely new to the RCA School of Architecture in terms of design methods. Were this aspect of the digital to be taken up methodically by staff and students in architecture schools, speculative designs would be based more on the complexities of real communities and less on generalisations or overly bespoke designs for an unrepresentative few.

This is important because there is, and has been for some decades, a crisis of identity in architecture in this country, both within academia and the profession, as the architect

has been gradually de-centred in the production of the built environment through a failure to adapt to a new political and economic dispensation. The post-war settlement in Britain saw the state, the population, and the architect all more or less in step. The state was interventionist, first during the war in order to win it, then after the war in order to recover from it. The population was used to top-down paternalism, and 45% of all architects were civil servants, that is, directly employed by the state, with all the power to intervene in the built environment this implies. The consensus also sat well with the nature of design-as-planning, that is the delineation of a future intention by those trained to delineate it.

This is still the nature of design, and much confusion is caused by those who equate citizen participation in the design process with the dismissal of design expertise (Wates & Knevitt, 1987; Till, 1998). Architects do not spend five to seven years training because everyone can translate a verbal programme into the plans, sections, and elevations that describe three-dimensional form. But neither can the architect any longer expect to impose designs on people by means of the state clearing the way for them and bestowing legitimacy, as was the case in the early to mid-20th century. In the United Kingdom, the state has since sought to divest itself of sole responsibility for producing the built environment, enlisting the help of the private sector through 'PPPs' (Public-Private Partnerships), in which the state initiates and facilitates, and the private sector finances or co-finances and delivers. Under New Labour, this arrangement had a social dimension. Citizens were to take ownership of services offered by 'co-designing' them. Much of this — the community consultations, the planning hearings, the polls, the online questionnaires, the workshops — could be, and was, window-dressing. It does not have to be, however, and those architects who have committed themselves to *meaningful* consultation with users, and user participation in design development, point towards a new settlement between a neo-liberal state, a much more varied and sophisticated population than post-war, and the architectural profession.

Who, though, are these citizen participants? At present, they tend to be either so generic that reference to them is irrelevant, or so specific that their individual needs and preferences are outdated far more quickly than the new design tailored to them. In consulting on developments of any size, it is very difficult to get a truly representative sampling of an affected population to participate. Mothers with young families cannot come to evening meetings; the working population is busy all day and often tired at night; carers are as unable to come and go as freely as those they care for; children rarely if ever have a voice. Meaningful participation, however, requires that all, or as

many constituencies as possible, are included in the design process, and the ethical use of new digital civic applications can make a significant contribution to that inclusivity by engaging across a diverse population in substantive ways.

Saba's chapter in this book describes first hand some of the range of 'civic apps' and the software firms developing them, and confronts the challenge in getting the architectural profession to both understand and incorporate them into their practice. The easiest, but slowest way is to introduce new technologies to future practitioners in schools of architecture, but there are practitioners already committed to making consultation more representative, and the few already using civic apps need to multiply in order to drive the development of the apps themselves into becoming even more responsive — and responsible — tools. This is probably a question of learning by example, and of the effective dissemination of research such as Saba's.

This research into data mining and Big Data has been carried out in the interests of improving the breadth and depth of citizen participation in the production of the built environment. As such, it sits within a larger cross-disciplinary enquiry into participation pursued by all the researchers involved in the TRADERS project. Each of them has investigated the subject in their own ways, from the vantage point of their own disciplines, and each of them has opened up the act of participation past its present narrow bounds by interrogating the relationship between those who want to do something and those it is going to be done to. In Saba's case, this has meant interrogating the relationship between those who want data and those who are asked for it, and exploring new collaborative, rather than exploitative, ways of generating it; something the architectural establishment, as represented by the Royal Institute of British Architects, and its reinforcement of conventional power relationships between client, user and architect, would do well to consider.

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THINKING WITH DATA – DIANA TANASE

Data mining influences the day-to-day decisions everybody makes. Its connections to our realities are hidden. How many of us ask, where is the data for my weather forecast? How does LinkedIn know who to suggest as a new connection? How does Amazon get it right with its recommendations? How did the bank manager decide on my recent loan? How is a feasible embryo chosen for IVF?

This is a growing list of scenarios that has data mining at its technical core and that extends across different domains, and impacts us as individuals, as members of neighbourhoods and organisations, as city dwellers, and citizens.

From the perspective of computer science, the scenarios above share a common sequence of actions: collect data, clean it, analyse it, run statistical inference models, and gain insights about a problem or segment of the world. Though this appears to be just a pipeline process, it is not. Each step enumerated above is highly complex from the selection of input data to the generation of an output. Paramount to tackling complexity is to have a guiding purpose (*what* are we trying to understand or solve?). The data manipulation needs to be scientifically correct, while the choice of data mining techniques (classification, regression, similarity matching, clustering, co-occurrence grouping, profiling, causal modelling, etc.) is strongly connected to the purpose of the data exploration.

The outputs are never yes or no answers to questions, but estimations of the likelihood a certain event will happen. Hence, the key aspect to data mining is the interpretation of the output by experts with an understanding of the particular fragment of reality under investigation. Computer scientists and mathematicians are aware of this aspect and consider it paramount that a data mining task should always involve a domain expert that would add the humanistic thinking to the process.

Architects are traditionally the mediators between the spaces we live in and the spaces

we could live in. For them data mining with its mathematical toolbox could enable the discovery of patterns of interactions and relationships within a given space, which in turn would enable anticipating future interactions between humans or between humans and a particular space. In effect, data mining brings in the means to perform a detailed analysis of a space or social context, which will then inform architects in their thinking of strategies for long-term solutions. The collection of case studies from Deutsch (2012) describes different instances where data on the built environment has informed design. It also demonstrates that the application of data mining is widening across the architecture, engineering, and construction (AEC) industry, which in turn is leading to procedural changes. Furthermore, the *Digital Built Britain* (2015) document is a recent expression of government level support for the digital transformation of existing practices in fields such as architecture.

Therefore today's architects, as well as any other domain experts, need to take a principled approach to reframing their question or problem as a data mining problem. This approach can be referred to as thinking with data (Shron, 2014). This is, in summary, a process of analysing and scoping the problem space that starts by establishing the context (physical, social, geographic, political). It is followed by an exploration of the nature of the problem in that context, a formulation of the vision — how will the world look like if successful, and finally an intervention or communication of the results for wide adoption.

Saba Golchehr's research adopts thinking with data as the overall approach in her research on participation in public spaces, aiming to empower people in being active participants in the decision-making around the design and maintenance of those spaces.

As a TRADERS researcher, Saba's context is of an architect in negotiation with different stakeholders involved in initiating, deciding, and executing how public spaces are shaped. The problem arising in this context is that participation from the wider public is fragmented, with only a few participants active in speaking out or prompting change. For a long-term strategy, the architect needs the detailed image to go beyond the physical aspects of a space, and moving towards understanding the issues concerning the people that will inhabit or interact with a new environment.

This neighbourhood level of understanding of a social context can be achieved through computational methods of analysis, with the precondition that members of the community feel incentivised to participate by a shared allegiance to a specific cause (Eagle & Greene, 2014). Civic apps support communities in rallying around a common

goal and enable the direct communication with the public. An analysis of this communication can identify the active members, describe the levels of representation of people from different backgrounds, and in the end help the architect to deconstruct and zoom in on the problems. The civic app itself can be maintained in place even after a project ends in order to support continuous feedback and early intervention on new issues. The vision is of a community who can continuously take part in deciding and initiating change in its public spaces. The outcome of this approach requires further exploration, but it is essential to any future architectural practice.

From a computer scientist's perspective, Saba's research is a much-needed effort to understand from inside the architecture field what it means to think with data, enabling the translation and interrogation of how data arrives at being evidence in decision-making. The Big Data technology supporters have claimed that with enough data, we will be able to understand more. Yet, this only leads to data-noise and an increase in data analysis complexity. It is necessary that practitioners from other disciplines like architecture direct the data collection processes, and the exploration of data, using advanced analytics. Data visual exploration tools are currently being developed in the data science community in order to open up the data mining toolbox to a wider group of people, but it will still require a good understanding of what it means to think with data and its limitations in capturing a given problem-context.

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PART V

MODELLING IN DIALOGUE

YES, SURE I REMEMBER THE CAT INCIDENT OF 2015. IT WAS JUST THE FIRST OF MANY UNEXPECTED EVENTS.

THE CITY:
A PLACE WHERE STRANGERS ARE LIKELY TO MEET.
BUT ALSO:
A PLACE OF STRANGERS.



THESE MANY VOICES CAN LAY GROUND FOR A STRUCTURE WHICH ALLOWS PARTICIPATION AND TRUE INFLUENCE.



LET'S MAKE IT WORK.

LET'S MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT.



WE SET OUT TO EXPLORE HOW NEIGHBORS (INDIRECTLY) COMMUNICATE THROUGH ARCHITECTURAL INTERFACES.



LEXICON – JON GEIB

Dialogue (noun) ^[1]

“A conversation between two or more people as a feature of a book, play, or film.”

“A discussion between two or more people or groups, especially one directed towards exploration of a particular subject or resolution of a problem.”

Dialogical (adjective)

“Relating to or in the form of dialogue.”

In contrast to a dialectic, which steers a conversation to a point of closure in which a common ground and/ or a solution to a problem is achieved, dialogue is an open-ended process of dynamic alternating exchange between *you* and *another*. It may, intermittently, move towards a common ground, but it never lands. This basic relational dynamic can be extended beyond the directness of face-to-face communication to include all manner of dialogues marked by varying qualities of indirectness. Further, new materialist perspectives (i.e. Bennett, 2010), allow us to consider the active role of non-human participants.

Our understanding of dialogue has been narrowed by how and why we use it. Dialogue can increase our mutual understanding and therefore empathy, but many overemphasise this *unifying* and *clarifying* capacity, either under the misconception that full transparency in social communication is possible (or desirable), or, in strategically using dialogue as an instrument to advance an agenda. However, dialogue is as much or more about valuing differences, misalignments, and pluralism. These other qualities of dialogue have great value in activating a more dynamic, creative, and democratic public culture.

Examples

The School of Panamerican Unrest (2003-2009)

Pablo Helguera

pablohelguera.net/2006/06/the-school-of-panamerican-unrest

The primary component of this art project by Pablo Helguera was a road trip covering the length of the American continents. Along the way, stops were made in public spaces where a 'portable schoolhouse structure' was installed to host films, discussions, and performances with and by local collaborators and the public. The work's meaning emerged out of these dialogical encounters.

It Is What It Is: Conversations About Iraq (2009)

Jeremy Deller

jeremydeller.org/ItIsWhatItIs/ItIsWhatItIs

creativetime.org/programs/archive/2009/deller

As part of Jeremy Deller's art project It Is What It Is, he, an American veteran of the Iraq War and an Iraqi citizen, towed the mangled remains of a car destroyed by an explosion in Baghdad across the United States. Framed as neutrally as possible, this arresting conversation piece encouraged open-ended dialogues rather than winner-takes-all debates.

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Multivocality (noun)

"Susceptibility to interpretation in a number of ways; ambiguity, polysemy."

Multivocal (adjective)

“Having or open to many different meanings, interpretations, or applications.”

“Having many or different meanings of equal probability or validity.”

Design for increased democratic participation in the city is hampered by homogenising, single-voiced discourses: the politics of consensus and technocracy, identity politics and nationalism, city branding fashions and diluted use of terms (i.e. ‘sustainability’), and foremost, the dictatorial voice of the market. Dialogue and participation processes — especially in urban development — are too often only employed *temporarily*. However, textured with voices throughout, these processes inevitably steer towards a specific solution or end — often premeditated.

Yet, the multivocal qualities inherent in participatory processes can also be integrated into the ends. Participation can be further *inscribed into* the city’s infrastructures to build democratic and cultural values by articulating, amplifying, and creating multiple voices. This requires designers and policymakers to further shed compulsions of control and consistency by integrating artistic, experimental approaches and space for the unplanned, the emergent, and the unknown into their methodologies and designs. ‘Multivocality’, as an active and supportive infrastructure, provides a valuable model. ‘Designing multivocality’, then, while seeking to engage many voices, foregrounds the role of infrastructure in its additional, broader purpose^[2] of animating a cosmopolitan public culture.

Examples

MOTBILDER [COUNTERPARTS] (2014)

ICIA – Institute for Contemporary Ideas & Art

icia.se/se/projekt-och-produktioner/tidigare-11268195

As part of an art project addressing the public realm through speeches, statements, city tours, installations, text, performance, etc., ICIA bought an insert in Gothenburg’s major newspaper. It contained information about the project’s curated components, but also gave unrestricted space to organisations and agents that would normally never have this range of voice (reaching 100,000 people).

Frilagret (2012-present)

Göteborgs stad Kulturförvaltning

(Gothenburg Cultural Department)

Frilagret is an open culture centre in Gothenburg which grew out of a two-year dialogue process between the city and its youth. Programming is determined by proposed initiatives, suggestions, and requests from youths and young adults (13-30 years old), who are supported with space and professional assistance regardless of their prior knowledge and background.

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Architectonics (noun)

“The scientific study of architecture.”

“Musical, literary, or artistic structure.”

“The principle of structure and governing design in an artistic work, as distinct from its texture or stylistic details of execution.” (Baldick, 2001, p. 19)

Architectonics, as the science of relations, is concerned with the composition of relations between parts and between parts and wholes (Holquist, 2002). If public space is primarily understood as relational space (Massey, 2005), an architectonic approach holds great potential in prioritising these interrelations. Likewise, as dialogue is defined by its relational structure, the challenge of navigating, activating, and/or intensifying

this structure becomes central for design practices engaged with issues of dialogue, participation, and public space.

In emphasising an active, strategic design approach which foregrounds relational structures, my research conceives the term 'dialogical infrastructures'. This compound concept speaks to both of the "two levels of organisational structure" which Hamdi found necessary in participatory urban development: 'emergent' and 'designed' (Hamdi, 2014, p. 93). Analogous to Eco's literary concept of 'open work' (Eco, 1989), dialogical infrastructures are designed to provide space and possibilities for unplanned, emergent dialogue, and participation.

Examples

Quinta Monroy housing (2004)

Alejandro Aravena

elementalchile.cl/projects/quinta-monroy

Chilean architect Alejandro Aravena is renowned for his social housing designs such as Quinta Monroy (2004) which, within a strong spatial frame, built-in a distinct rhythm of generous open spaces which can be incrementally appropriated by inhabitants through self-built construction.

Ett skepp kommer lastast... (A ship comes loaded...) (2015)

Jon Geib

The 'gameboards with no rules' of *Ett skepp kommer lastat...*, aesthetically structured but programmatically vague, were designed as 'dialogical infrastructures' on a workshop scale. Their high aesthetic and material quality accentuated the children's individual expressions, while simultaneously framing a collective reading. Combined with the absence of prescriptive rules, the grid configuration or 'dialogical field' prevented the 'whole' from being overly deterministic.

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1. All definitions in this lexicon (unless referenced otherwise) are retrieved from Oxford Dictionaries, available at oxforddictionaries.com↵
2. Sanders and Stappers speak of the design field's expansion to include designing for purposes not just products (Sanders & Stappers, 2008). ↵

DESIGNING MULTIVOCALITY... FROM OUTER SPACE –

JON GEIB

We arrive at the seventh floor. A larger-than-life cat head is spotted and our research team flocks to investigate. On a door at the end of the hallway hangs a majestic photo cut-out. It speaks of the inhabitant behind, emitting a Mona Lisa gaze so serious it is only slightly undermined by the candle-in-the-cake effect of a tiny Swedish flag poking up behind the cat's ears. Now, the researchers, half of a class of 30, ages seven through ten, were presumably debating what this cat really meant, but they spoke Swedish, so I only understood the escalating commotion. Then, the cat moved... as the door opened. All at once, the distance I had designed into this first workshop collapsed... and we were very directly meeting the apparent object of our study, our 'neighbour'.

This encounter was generated within an artistic research approach of simultaneously modelling and experiencing the dynamics of dialogue and the multivocality of public space — of both affecting and being affected. The wider aim was to explore how a cosmopolitan public culture of participation might be animated, one that sees the city as a place where “strangers are likely to meet” (Sennett, 2002, p. 39), but also — predominantly — as a place of strangers (Amin, 2012).

The cat incident had been the first of many welcome outliers in a project initiated as a collaboration between my PhD research and the Frölunda Kulturhus (a cultural centre in western Gothenburg, Sweden) engaging with their programming theme 'neighbours'. It would grow to become an intricate construction of thirteen workshops, three curriculum assignments, and an art club project, culminating in a three-week art exhibition. In all, 159 children and youth from eight different classes (grades 1-5, 9 and 10) in three schools and over a dozen pedagogues participated.

Not borrowing a cup of sugar from your neighbour

The theme 'neighbours' provided an opportunity to explore a different approach to dialogue and participation, one less focused on bringing people together face-to-face than on the possibilities generated by drawing them apart.

Although ‘neighbours’ is a purely relational term, open to a wide range of interpretations from neighbour-as-friend to neighbour-as-stranger, we tend to gravitate, sentimentally, towards the former — the sweet image of our next-door neighbour lending us a cup of sugar. This habit persists, even as we live predominantly as ‘urban neighbours’ (Amin, 2014), inhabiting multiple and diverse, spatially-dispersed realms enabled, and compelled by globalisation and technological change. Psychologist Hubert Hermans’ ‘dialogical self theory’ argues that as the world becomes more “heterogeneous and multiple” — even contradictory —, so do we. Our increasingly ‘multi-voiced self’ requires a stronger ‘dialogical capacity’ to reconcile the various roles that we — and others — play (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010, p. 29-31). Faced collectively, this cognitive challenge becomes a cultural one.

Modelling the voice dynamics of dialogue

‘Neighbours’, in describing *a relation* between *you* and *another*, expresses the essential threefold structure^[1] of dialogism, Bakhtin’s socio-linguistic theory of dialogue (Holquist, 2002, p. 36). Bakhtin saw this dialogical relation — in language, literature and in life — as a *dynamic* relation, animated by two opposing tendencies analogous to physical forces: centripetal forces which pull things inwards, *unifying* towards a single voice, and centrifugal forces which draw things apart, *producing multiple* diverging voices (Bakhtin, 1981). We pursued these contrasting movements through our twin pedagogical aims of: “building curiosity for getting to know our neighbours better” and “building empathy and respect for what we cannot know: the limits of discovery, the ‘stranger’...”.

In this way, the project set out to animate the dynamic of dialogue by modelling intensified versions of it, normatively amplified towards multivocality. The design aimed for this not only in the day-to-day details of artistic-pedagogical content but, crucially, in the architectonics of the project infrastructure, or the relations between parts and the project whole, over time. ‘Parts’ included all human and non-human participants, both designed and emergent: individuals and groups, workshop activities and sub-projects, materials, research tool-artifacts, environmental experiences, thematic metaphors, the unexpected, the unknown, and the unknowable.

Exploring from a distance within a spacious artistic framework

The initial plan was to explore, through several workshops with the local elementary school’s after-school free-time club (Frölundaskolan fritidshem), how neighbours

indirectly communicate through architectural interfaces (doors, common spaces, and windows). Our research methods took a deliberate distance, studying and engaging indirectly with the inhabitants of a set of five local apartment buildings through observational interior and exterior tours of their environment and artistic documentation through artefacts made of durable materials. The latter included a partly co-designed wagon-like ‘artefact-probe’, which would have passed between a network of inhabitants before being returned to the final exhibition with its collected data. That this wagon instead morphed into an ‘expeditionary ship’ and finally into a ‘*rymdsond*’ (‘space probe’), with which I walked around the local area, testifies not only to the flexibility inherent in the multivocality of metaphors, but also to the benefits of beginning a project with a complex but open artistic framework, one spacious and adaptable enough to reconfigure and expand in response to emergent conditions.

The project’s scope was considerably enlarged and enriched through a widened collaboration with *Göteborgs stad Kulturförvaltning* (Gothenburg Cultural Department) and their *Musei-Lektioner – Stadens Rum* (Museum Lessons in Public Space) programme. This brought on board a necessary Swedish-speaking pedagogue as well as three groups of children from *Önneredsskolan*, a school in an adjacent sub-district, *Önnereds*. They would, separately, be ‘invited over by their neighbours’ in *Frölunda* (the *Kulturhus*, but also more broadly), for a pair of workshops called *Vem är din granne?* (Who is your neighbour?). The sites and activities of these workshops echoed those of the local ‘*fritidshem*’ yet took place on the latter’s ‘home territory’. The children from *Önneredsskolan*, then, had a further intensified sense of being a ‘stranger’, of being cautious guests trusting of their hosts, but also, at times, of being intruders.

Meanwhile, three classes of youth at The International School of the Gothenburg Region (ISGR) took part, but even more distantly through curriculum exercises. The eight groups were held apart as parallel layers, and most probably never met, although they heard of each other.

Hearing places, hearing things

Throughout, we were joined by others speaking indirect languages: ‘the environment’ and ‘things’. For many children, familiar only with a ‘villa life’ of detached houses and private gardens, our expedition tour was their first experience inside an apartment building, and the novelty stirred much curiosity. Built-in garbage chutes triggered impromptu analysis of floor-to-floor communications, while tinkerers found door letterboxes both irresistible and erratic — sometimes protesting to their owners. The

artificially lit hallways were often dreary in their barren silence, drawing extra attention to expressions like welcome signs, nameplates, handcrafts, pictures, children's drawings, faux plants, stickers, notices, or otherwise (e.g. giant cat heads). Unfamiliar casseroles and "smoke and grandmothers" hung heavy in the air as well as later in our olfactory memories. And, each group eagerly answered the loud call — coming from the trampoline-landscape park that we passed on the way — to bounce. It was nothing like at home.

The environment is understood as the 'third teacher' in the Reggio Emilia Approach to early childhood education, complementing the learning facilitated by adults and peers (Strong-Wilson & Ellis, 2007). This notion becomes even more interesting for artists and designers in view of new materialist philosophies such as Bennett's 'vital materialism' (2010), which emphasises the 'thing-power' of materials, tools, artefacts, and assemblages. These, too, are in dialogue with us.

Voices from the outside

My lack of Swedish language proficiency — initially somewhat discouraging — magnified the theme of indirectness and further differentiated our voices. Besides generating a spirit of trial and error — via our attempts to speak with each other — the language barrier created a sense of more reciprocal power relations. One of the children, by volunteering to be my 'Google-Translate', claimed a group leadership role. And, with each rediscovery, a buzz of fingers surrounded the spelling mistake I had made in a handwritten letter in Swedish on the exhibition wall. I enjoyed the lessons these laughing students gave, surely a subtle variation on the 'ignorant schoolmaster' (Rancière, 1981).

The language barrier also brought constant attention to my outsider status (as an English-speaking U.S.-born transplant living on another side of the city), and later sparked another name for the project, *Forskaren från världsrymden* (The researcher from outer space). But, we soon realised that, from our neighbour's perspective, we were all 'from outer space'.

Suggestive thematic metaphors such as this acted as poetic counter-movements striving to unify the distanced parts. André Breton's model Surrealist poet likewise aimed to generate "vigorous communication" between apparently opposite realms (1990, pp. 138-139).

An unknown ship on the horizon

While Novalis observed, romantically, that “everything at a distance turns to poetry” (Eitner, 1955, p. 286), Viktor Shklovsky reversed that logic in “Art as device” (1990) his seminal essay inventing the term ‘estrangement’: the poet turns (applies) distance to everything. He joins Breton in conceiving the poet-artist as not just emotive, but *as a designer* who creates elaborate infrastructures for perception. Shklovsky likens this designed complexity to a forest interlaced with suggestive paths (Shklovsky, 1970, p. 302).

The span of these poetic approaches was engaged by the project’s primary title, *Ett skepp kommer lastast...* (A ship comes loaded...), the name of a Swedish children’s game in which players take turns guessing the contents of an imaginary distant ship.

The game is (always) lost when a player fails to recount this fictional inventory. Adults can play: ‘an anchor, apples, *en anka* (a duck), *apor* (monkeys), an alligator, aspirin, almonds, arithmetic, animals, Aladdin, and an analyst...’

While we considered ourselves *both* scientific and artistic researchers, our latter role was enhanced by this game metaphor as it opened space for imagination and speculation, while encouraging respect for the unknown and especially *the unknowable*. Housing blocks were now ships at sea and they were loaded. A crew of over 2,000 inhabitants was aboard those five high-rise apartment buildings floating in echelon formation. Our brief tours covered only an absurd fraction, making our undertaking immersive rather than exhaustive.

We could only guess the contents of those apartments. Had anyone been watching us from behind their doors? In a later paired workshop, we turned the peepholes around and looked in. Each researcher received a carefully designed *rymdlaboratoriet* (space laboratory) — to imagine their own space (or their neighbour’s). These laser-cut poplar plywood boxes (15x15x12 cm) presented the viewer with a distorted, fish-eye perspective of a space dominated by an opening to the outside. Further perspectives were at play: the view of peers looking in and their own view while creating the space. These ‘laboratories’ were given to each participant after the exhibition to emphasise the project as a process of ongoing experimentation, and participation as a reciprocal exchange.

Conclusion: democratic urban science and spaceships that stay...

Throughout the project, participants were taken seriously as collaborators with their

own voices as part of a democratic urban science and ethic of “cross-referencing all kinds of knowing in the city and treating these sources of knowledge as equivalent, as equal” (Amin, 2013). The project, composed as a ‘semi-open system’ (Dyrssen, 2010) of indirect, differential relations united by carefully considered design, well-crafted artefacts, and poetic themes, came to its greatest intensity of ‘cross-referencing’ in the design of the exhibition. Here, our research tool-artefacts were meticulously displayed in their original form as individual and group artworks, yet newly gathered into larger collective configurations, themselves arranged within the overall exhibition conceived as a multivocal ‘whole’. Participants thus met their project ‘neighbours’ indirectly — through encounters with each other’s artwork and a re-encounter with their own.

While the exhibition appeared to be the closing of several chapters, three workshops were timed to add artwork incrementally, and a multivocal central sculptural installation — ‘an expedition ship-apartment-research laboratory-spaceship’ — dramatised an ambitious, turbulent and ongoing research process. Shipwrecked or just sprawling, it continued to collect data (as did the space probe), inviting visitors to join us in asking “Who is your neighbour?”.

This open-endedness demonstrated the mode of multivocality explored both in this project’s processes and in its aim to reframe participation from a more cultural perspective. This mode considers dialogue as an ongoing democratic cultural practice which takes multiple voices in the city seriously and seeks to articulate and animate them through design frameworks which also build-in space for voices unplanned, unexpected, and to-remain-unknown.

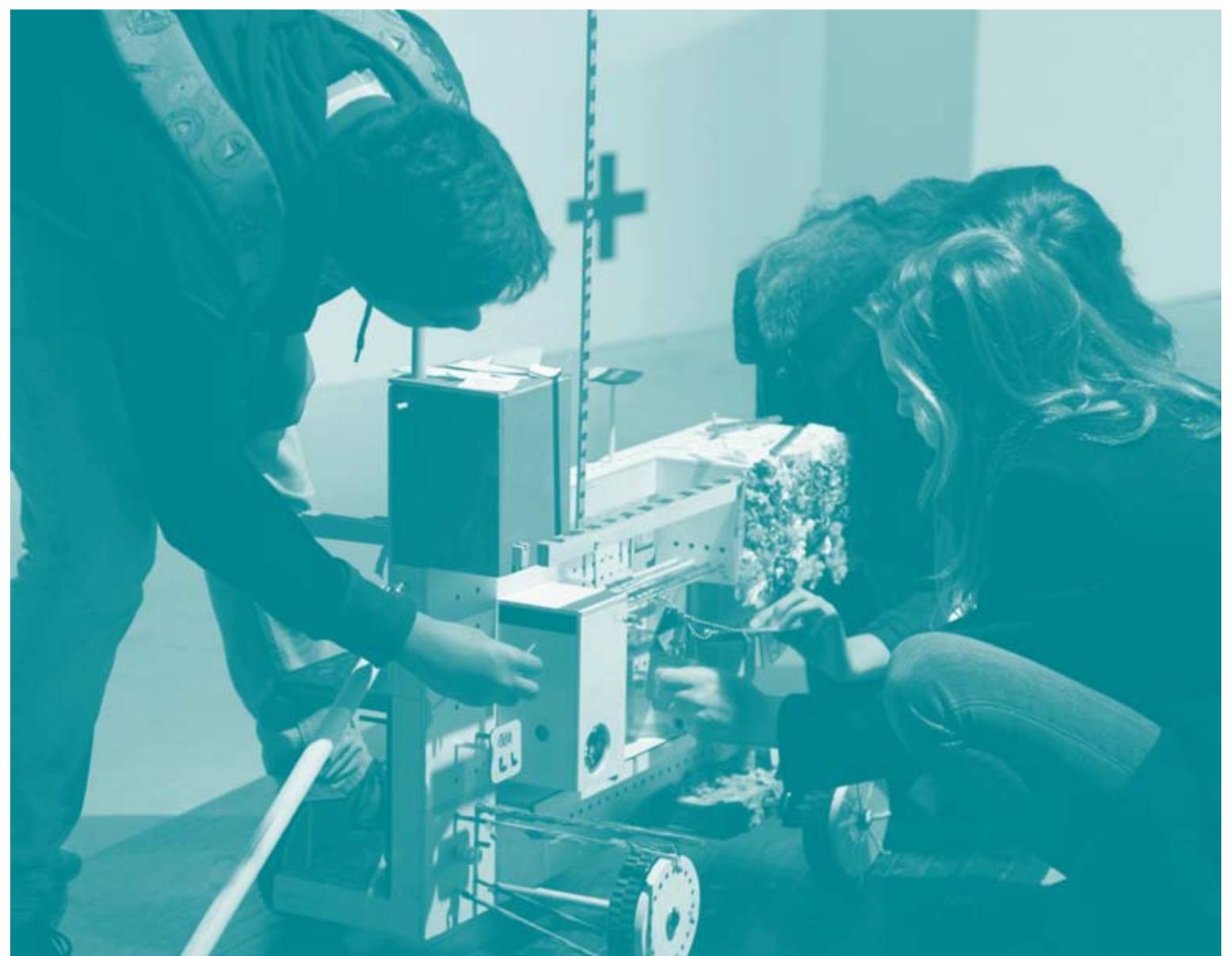


Figure 1: During one of its missions, the space probe coincidentally encountered one of the participating children and her family, who recognised the part she had made.

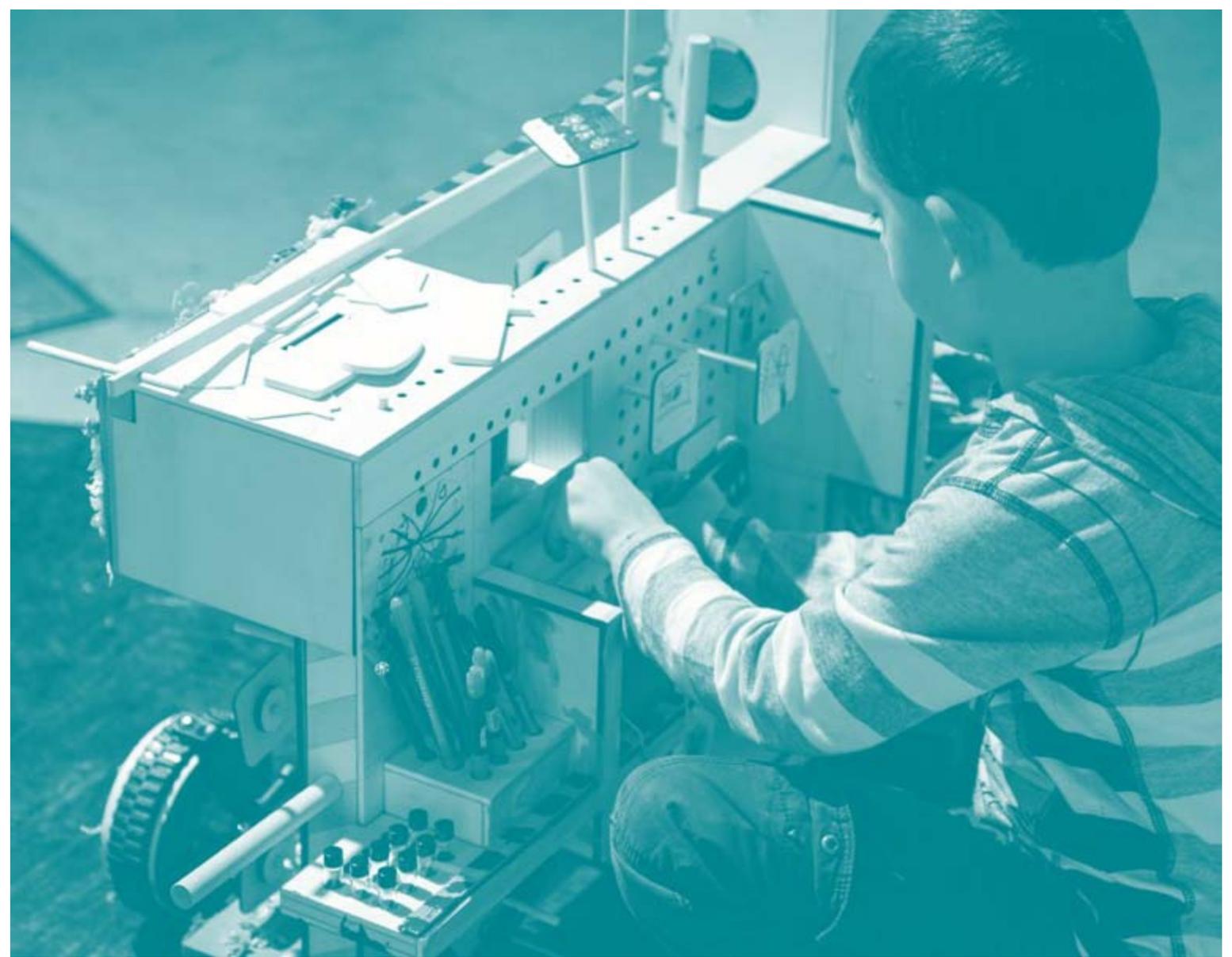


Figure 2: During the exhibition, the space probe played a double-voiced role as art object and active participant, collecting new data (including responses and new questions to neighbours).



Figure 3: One of the four 'game-boards with no rules' I designed for the Ett skepp kommer lastat... workshops, each with 45 wooden playing cards to be articulated and arranged by the participants. Although common themes of neighbours and windows were shared, the pedagogical context of each group's interaction with the game-boards varied, as did the 'rules' they developed.

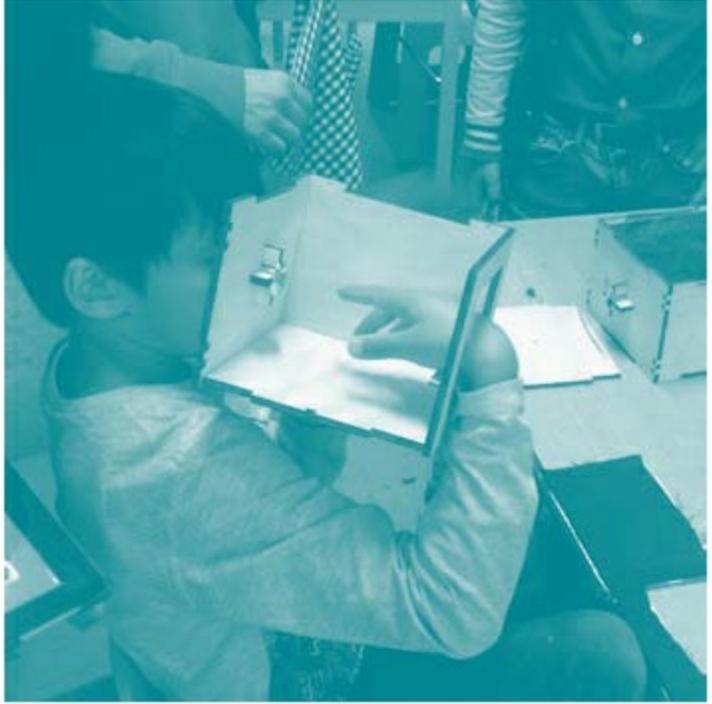


Figure 4: Space laboratories.

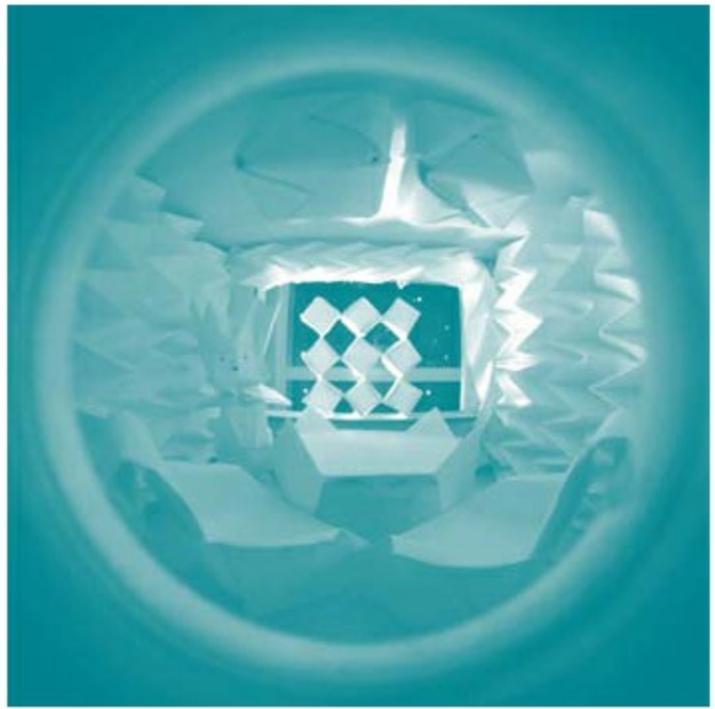
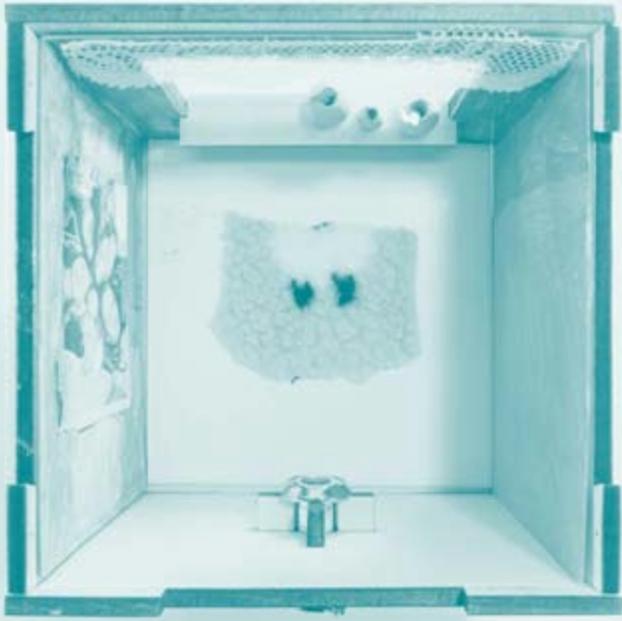


Figure 5: Space laboratories.

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1. In Holquist's view (2002, pp. 28, 33, 36), the basic unit of dialogue for Bakhtin is "an utterance, a reply, and a relation between the two". Similar terms of "a center, a not-center, and the relation between them" also describe the 'self' as well as broader socio-political relations. ↵

CAPACITIES OF AESTHETICS: APPROACHES OF ARCHITECTURAL MULTIPLICITY – CATHARINA DYRSSEN

In Sweden, unlike in many other countries, urban planning and design have been part of architectural education since the 1930s, due to quite radical connections in the Modern movement between Swedish ‘Architectural Functionalism’ and early formations of the welfare state (Caldenby & Nygaard, 2010, pp. 315-328). These links have continued to provide opportunities for architects to work across the span of scales from regional contexts to building detail. For long, though, architectural training remained conceptually quite static to public space, shaping ‘well designed’ spaces as stable framings for accessibility, democracy, and encounters with strangers. Architects often assumed either a visionary or a stabilising role here, also mediating between conflicting interests when shaping spatial solutions. Today, however, architectural competence involves a much more diversified understanding of urban spaces and landscapes, regarding them as active agents in complex, dynamic systems and processes that are affected, transformed, and experienced through a range of spatial-material, social-environmental, technological, aesthetic, and bodily-mental conditions (see for instance aaa, 2007).

A corresponding shift in aesthetics from ‘normative beauty’ to ‘synthesising competence’ also refers to the aspect of research, where architectural and artistic practices can generate knowledge by critically interacting with cultural themes and through (re-)inventing-mapping-forming-rethinking situated problems. This of course also involves collective ‘remodelling’ actions and dialogues concerning the complexities of urban space and the continuous transformations of urban-architectural landscapes. Artistic approaches can produce alternative understandings, solutions, and unexpected insights that help articulate marginalised voices and perspectives, using multiple formats of communication — film, drawings, models, full-scale interventions, etc. — on matters of concern (Biggs, & Karlsson, 2010; Swedish Research Council, 2016). When linked to ethics, history, cultural, and environmental circumstances, aesthetics offers

modes of thinking where “many types of futures are offered, in which we try out new ways of forming the world we inhabit” (Braae, 2015, p. 309), and has an essential capacity in the continuous alteration of contemporary public spaces and urban landscapes (Braae, 2015, pp. 122-153, pp. 275-316; *PARSE*, 2015).

Changes in economic and demographic structures, with increasing inequalities, declining welfare state and challenges facing democracy and public space, raise demands on social and environmental sustainability that need to be addressed with multiple, relational design approaches, and this also urges architects to engage more directly with citizens of many ages, origins, and social classes. Aesthetics and artistic methods — fine-grained, pluralistic, and explorative — play important roles as modes of understanding and acting within a range of participatory possibilities also involving public and academic institutions. Understanding aesthetics, architecture, art, and design as transformative modes for interplaying the new with the old, the existing with the imagined, implies a compositional, attentive intelligence able to unlock stereotypes on, for instance, identity, style, and preservation, as well as grasp spatial logics of cultural variety, urbanism as process, challenges on civil rights, and formations of public space. Here, the architect as urban designer seeks partially new proficiency in enriching — not reducing — the urban environment, and this is what our education tries to train.

Jon Geib’s investigations of multivocality, within the Chalmers theme of *Modelling in Dialogue*, is essential and valuable in order to bring ‘more voices’ and forms for articulation to the urban debate. He searches for new methodologies to work with ‘multivocality’, also exploring the mechanisms of urban transformation related to public space and institutions. His workshops with children, for instance in the after-school in the Gothenburg suburb Frölunda, has encouraged ‘silent’ groups like children to express their urban social-spatial concerns and desires from their own premises. In turn, this asserts expanded understandings of ‘interaction’. In his contacts with the Gothenburg Cultural Division and various art institutions, he finds crucial aspects that public cultural institutions face today, such as how to involve disregarded groups or restage processes of cultural diversity. He also contributes to contemporary urban and design theory by opening critical perspectives on the concepts of dialogue and participation in architecture, elevating their inherent but undervalued mechanisms not only of consensus, so often considered typical for Swedish planning processes, but rather of divergence: What could a multivocal dialogue be? How can participation be reframed from more strategic artistic and cultural angles, through wider scopes of action, also addressing power perspectives? And how can the agency of the designer

develop in order to trigger, shape, or help modelling the ‘infrastructures’ — the complex sets of ‘scaffolding’ — that can support and amplify qualities and democratic rights related to public space?

By letting his investigations oscillate between theory and practice, including hands-on explorative, multivocal design cases, his work can develop a fuller range of knowledge on the conceptual levels, the operative mechanisms, and architectonics of multivocality. In continuous perspective shifts between practice and theory he uses his own competence as an architect, urbanist, urban designer, and scholar with explorative modes of architectural research in contact with artistic domains as well as with humanities and social sciences. This also enables him to address the theme of ‘modelling in dialogue’, and what it can imply to interweave the discursive and the pedagogic with material and transformative making.

In many ways Jon’s research strategy and our department’s doctoral training have profited from TRADERS, especially its being constructed as a small scale European collaboration, with the early stage researchers (ESRs) carefully selected to form a dense network. The six ESRs have used their range of educational backgrounds as architects, artists, and designers, and from the start formed an active core group in intensive exchange, backed up by the profiles of their hosting institutions and collaboration partners. The range of shared training activities — including open summer schools, focused training weeks, practice workshops, seminars with the ESRs as alternating hosts and pedagogues, and a concluding conference — has encouraged them to nurture explorative action, co-production, and knowledge exchange.

But the intense TRADERS activities have also sometimes caused a too heavy workload for the ESRs, particularly when colliding with the formal demands in the Swedish standards for doctoral programmes with four years of full time studies. From my viewpoint as supervisor, though, the project has given many inspiring exchanges of ideas and contributed to stimulating our department’s strategic management of practice-based doctoral education. In our local context it has triggered further collaboration with the Academy of Design and Crafts (HDK) and the Faculty of Fine, Applied, and Performing Arts at Gothenburg University which holds a strong profile in Swedish artistic research. This has also been a key to other interdisciplinary collaborations linking architecture to humanities, education, medicine, natural and social sciences, supporting architecture as a small ‘making discipline’ to not only depend on the technical university’s authority but also expand thematic contacts with

other academic domains and show how artistic-cultural practices can be strong in their societal relevance.

It has also been a privilege for Chalmers Architecture and HDK to have the City of Gothenburg's Division of Cultural Administration as our shared associated partner. The staff there (primarily Ylva Mühlenbock and Borghild Håkansson) shared our quest for long-term collaboration. In their strategic and coordinating roles for cultural development in the city, they are relatively shielded from political election cycles, and can operate across disciplinary and institutional borders. As experienced cultural actors with research competence, they have also transmitted an awareness of urban governance as institutional practice, both as 'tactic machineries' and in terms of how incremental changes can support long-term transformation through interlinked issues of art, culture, pedagogy, public space, democratic processes, segregation, and ongoing urban development projects. Their active involvement and wide-ranging networks, reaching both to urban political levels internationally and into the regional art world, has provided the two local ESRs with vital orientation, extensive contacts — at the Art Museum, Frölunda Cultural House, with professional artists, etc —, and useful, pragmatic advice. The city has also arranged two larger public conferences (Nordic Urban Laboratory and Knowledge Göteborg, both in spring 2016) where TRADERS was introduced and the ESRs presented their projects.

In sum, the two academic environments in Gothenburg have benefitted from the small, agile network of TRADERS as well as from connecting with the city's institutional and political networks, the local, and the international fruitfully working crosswise in a 'matrix construct'. We believe this creates additional opportunities for the ESR's training as well as to expose their competences and the project to a larger audience over time. The diverse, evolving structure of TRADERS also points towards the interacting layers, perspectives and approaches, the multiple capacities and creative tactics of art and aesthetics to deal with the complex urban issues at stake. For architectural education, research, and practice it is crucial to develop thematically-oriented methodologies and contextualised theory in order to meet with societal needs. TRADERS has enhanced an explorative space to rethink stereotyped notions of participation, democracy, and public space and to try new approaches. And from this space, Jon's qualified work through both theory and practice now moves forward most convincingly to contribute to the profound, long-term, and often intricate modes through which art, architecture, design, and cultural activities permeate urban transformation today.

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PROJECTING CRITICAL ARCHITECTURES – MEIKE SCHALK

This short text, addressing the concept of ‘critical projections’, takes recourse to a famous discourse emerging in 1968 asking about art and architecture’s ability to interact critically in a political and social context. I will trace this theoretical debate along a few moments in history to show how it has shifted from negation, as critical instrument, to ‘post-critical’ or ‘post-theoretical’ affirmation of neoliberal conditions with ‘projective’ architecture, and recently also to more self-empowered conceptions exploring options for an engaged practice.

Can architecture be a critical project?

In 1968, architectural historian Manfredo Tafuri, to whom the debate on ‘critical architecture’ was once attributed, was appointed as chair of the history department at the Instituto Universitario d’Architettura di Venezia. In Venice, he began his ambitious ‘historical project’, and simultaneously led the institutional transformation of his department, which under Tafuri came to be known as The Venice School. This school would subsequently develop a reputation for its radical Marxist historical analyses of architecture (Tafuri, 1968).

Revolutionary and institutional was the way in which Tafuri conceptualised the shift from what he called ‘operative criticism’, which he saw as a form of instrumentalisation of history by modernist historians and critics who used history’s authority to legitimise their favoured strands of architecture practice, to one which allowed for various open-ended constructions of history (Leach, 2014; Hoekstra, 2005).

As for his inquiry into the critical capacity of architecture as a proper site of resistance, he answered his own question in pessimistic terms: Modern architecture had failed as a ‘critical project’ because of its entanglement and complicity with the capitalist system. In Tafuri’s reading, while architects are indeed capable of understanding the contradictions that are produced by the modern city — between the personal and the

system — architecture was structurally incapable of solving the social contradictions that it addressed. This assigned architecture and art, at best, to “form without utopia” and to a position of “sublime uselessness” (Tafuri, 1979, p. ix). Although the Venice School offered a model for the politicisation of architectural debate, it viewed a critical practice as a practice in its own right, not directed at any specific purpose, and not applicable as a corrective for architects in terms of how they might anticipate alternative futures.

What can ‘projective architecture’ do?

Tafuri’s critical practice has been challenged. In the well-documented debate that started in the early 2000s in the US with an article by architects Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting, the terms ‘projective’, ‘post-critical’, and ‘post-theoretical’ were alternately used in a discourse criticising criticality and its “pessimistic prognosis” of architecture practice (Somol & Whiting, 2002, p. 73). The latter was to be replaced with a more optimistic outlook for the profession, realised by taking a pragmatic position and focusing on architecture’s performance or practice instead of its methods and theories. Projective architecture was presented as cool, relaxed, and easy, in contrast to critical architecture which was ‘hot’, difficult, and overwrought. Rather than looking back or criticising the status quo, the projective sought to look ahead and propose “alternative (not necessarily oppositional) arrangements or scenarios” (ibid., p. 75). Specific focus was placed on the qualities of a designed object, which included sensibility, effect, ambience, and atmosphere. The future was pictured in terms of the virtual (what if?), the diagram (a real yet to come), and included surprise. However, projective architecture was meant to stay within the realm of its own expertise: design. It did not challenge political reality or include a social agenda for architects. On the other hand, the discourse on projective architecture challenged the hegemony of entrenched theory by introducing new terms and sensibilities.

Can architecture construct a better future?

At much the same time as the ‘projective’ debate surfaced, the philosopher Elizabeth Grosz posed the question: “can architecture construct a better future?” And how could it do so without access to another notion of ‘time’ than that of projection and planned development, in which the future is fundamentally treated the same as the past? (Grosz, 2001, p. 137)

As a figure of thought, Grosz suggests the term ‘embodied utopias’ that relies on the

paradox-inducing tension between two concepts: 'utopia' meaning non-place, nowhere, at no time, or everywhere at anytime, and 'embodiment' understood as experience and situated in the here and now. While utopias imply universal and normative imaginations of spaces of political and personal ideals and the projection of idealised futures, embodiment has never had a place within utopia. Grosz notes that in utopian visions there was no future for positions that acknowledged sexual and racial specificity and different values among its subjects. She reminds us that no utopia has been framed yet that takes account of the diversity not only of its subjects but also of their utopian visions. To prepare for a better and possible future, she suggests that practitioners and theorists must acknowledge what dominant discourses and practices of architecture owe to practices and discourses that have been discarded, ignored, never invented, or unexplored.

Theories and their effects

Gender, queer, and critical theorist Eve Kosofsky-Sedgwick distinguishes between 'paranoid' and 'reparative' critical practices, not as theoretical ideologies but as changing and heterogeneous relational stances. With this she explains how 'strong theory' and 'weak theory' are necessarily related, and distinguishes the question of truth-value from the question of performative effect. As protagonists of strong theory positions, she mentions, obviously, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud.

She compares strong theory to traits of paranoia, which risk "blotting out any sense of the possibility of alternative ways of understanding or things to understand" (Kosofsky-Sedgwick, 2003, p. 131). She emphasises that there are other ways of knowing that are being practiced, such as everyday theory, which also affect knowledge and experience. She suggests: "While paranoid theoretical proceedings both depend on and reinforce the structural dominance of monopolistic 'strong theory', there may also be benefit in exploring the extremely varied, dynamic, and historically contingent ways that strong theoretical constructs interact with weak ones in the ecology of knowing" (Kosofsky-Sedgwick, 2003, p. 145). In both paranoia and strong theory no amelioration within existing structural conditions is possible, and yet some way out must be constructed. Grosz's approach of the composition of 'embodied utopias' is suggestive here, which challenge strong theory and make social and political engagement not only possible but ethically necessary. Kosofsky-Sedgwick herself offers 'reparative' reading as a suggestive, pleasurable, and highly productive means of engagement.

Weak theories and projective practices, which operate through performative acts and

effects, can critically subvert strong theories and thus expand our ways of knowing. Architecture relies on both method and performance, strong and weak theory, and a critical and projective practice produced from within the institution. As *Architecture From The Outside* (Grosz, 2001) it enables an ethical, politically, and socially engaged practice for the future.

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PART VI

CURATING



LET THE KNOWLEDGE COME!

SURE

MYTH
SCIENCE

GOD OF TRANSITIONS AND BOUNDARIES. (BORDER CROSSINGS)

HASTA LA VISTA BABY!



* MARIA LIND, 2010.



* HANS ULRICH OBRIST



IN-BETWEEN POSITION

ICH HABE KEINE ANHNUNG!

HE SAYS HE'S NOT SURE.



TRANSLATION SHOULD NOT SEEK TO REPEAT THE ORIGINAL, BUT WATCH OVER ITS 'MATURING PROCESS'



THE INDIVIDUAL

↑
MAKING MEANING BY FRAMING, OR CREATING CONTEXT THROUGH THE ACTION OF CONNECTING.

LET'S BE RATIONAL!

BUT, IT'S LIKE YOU DON'T CARE



THE COLLECTIVE

LEXICON – MICHAEL KAETHLER

Care (noun) ^[1]

“The provision of what is necessary for the health, welfare, maintenance, and protection of someone or something.”

“Serious attention or consideration applied to doing something correctly or to avoid damage or risk.”

How does a curator position him/herself in relation to the artefacts or individuals related to their practice? Likewise, this question can be posed to designers or artists. A number of professions have in-built codes of conduct, such as the Hippocratic Oath of ‘do no harm’ for medical practitioners. However, such a consideration is lacking in the world of cultural production. Reflecting on curating’s etymological roots as ‘caretaker’ and its historical iterations involving caring for infrastructures, objects, invalids, and souls, it is important to keep in mind curating’s ethical position with different *actants* — that of caring — and its wider implications.

Care expresses relationships, a way of understanding inter-subjective and subject-object relations as ontologically connected. Care implies otherness, a limiting of the self for the other and recognition of one’s connectedness with others and objects. Feminist Care Ethics argues that the more you are connected the better the self is (Tong & Williams, 2014). The political scientist Joan Tronto (2005) identifies four elements in an *ethic of care*: attentiveness, competence, responsibility, and responsiveness. These stress a sense of obligation that one has towards the world around them and, interpreted in a curatorial or cultural production context, denotes how one understands their role as including broader ethical demands.

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Translation (noun)

“The process of translating words or text from one language into another.”

“The conversion of something from one form or medium into another.”

Translation is an act of distortion, manipulation, and transformation of forms. Michel Callon (1980, p. 211) argues that when communicating between worlds, translation involves “creating convergences and homologies by relating things that were previously different”. This entails a considerable amount of creative licence. Walter Benjamin (1996) goes so far as to refer to translation as *Umdichtung* — implying re-creation. He argued that translation should not seek to repeat the original but watch over the ‘maturing process’ of the original, which entails nourishing or enriching it. This has repercussions; in Italian there is a marked similarity between the words *traduttore* (translator) and *traditore* (betrayor). Translation suggests a break of fidelity with the original while retaining a devotion to it through recreation.

For the curatorial process, translation entails communicating amid unique worlds, such as those of the creative producer and the audience. Curating is a cross-disciplinary practice that brings together multiple ideas and translates these using various media, staging techniques, or conceptual frames. As such, translation is a creative application of curating, a transformation between theory, practice, and representations, between creative languages and forms, in short, between ways of knowing and ways of expression.

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Mediation (noun)

“Intervention in a dispute in order to resolve it; arbitration: the parties have sought mediation and it has failed.”

“Intervention in a process or relationship; intercession.”

Mediation is an ontological position of being *in-between* but also a type of intervention in a process or relationship. Mediation is not passive. To mediate implies participating, both with objects or humans in the exchange of forces. Actor Network Theory (Latour, 2007) makes an important distinction between mediators and intermediaries, whereby the latter neutrally transmits information and the former are entities that multiply difference. Mediation is not about containing opposing forces but conducting them, amplifying and articulating. Similarly, Gilles Deleuze (1997, p. 125) stresses the importance of mediators as catalytic conduits when looking at the relations of mutual resonance and exchange between philosophy, art, and science, claiming, “mediators are fundamental. Creation is all about mediators. Without them nothing happens. They can be people — for a philosopher, artists or scientists; for a scientist, philosophers, or artists — but things too, even plants or animals ... Whether they are real or imaginary, animate or inanimate, you have to form your mediators.” For the curator, the role of mediator takes on important dimensions. The curator as mediator echoes Michel Serres’ (1997) ‘third-instructed’, a role that gives up the comforts of disciplinary specialism in order to operate in the spaces in-between. For Serres, this ‘middle position’ is a place of wisdom, a space of transformation and multiplicity, which lies amidst a barrage of singular understandings.

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Mimesis (noun)

“Imitation, in particular: Imitative representation of the real world in art and literature.”

Theodore Adorno’s *Aesthetic Theory* (1997) develops a unique notion of knowledge within art. He argues that a distinct type of reason exists within art — mimesis; one that challenges the subject-object relationship found in instrumental reason. Mimesis, he argues, emphasises the affinity between things and individuals. It ruptures instrumental reason’s claim to totality, opening a new relationship between the subject and object and thus upsetting any single claim to epistemological or ontological purity. “The subject does not appropriate the object but rather assimilates itself to the object (...). Mimesis precedes both the subject and object and is constitutive of both” (Flemming, 1998, p. 697). Adorno stresses that art is not pre-rational but a “rationality that criticises rationality without withdrawing from it” (1997, p. 55). Hilde Heynen and Ruth Soenen’s (2012, p. 44) reading of Adorno suggests that, “the mimetic moment of cognition has to do with the possibility of approaching the world in a different way than by rational-instrumental thinking.” Mimesis opens up how one thinks about the production and transference of knowledge in and through art.

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1. All definitions in this lexicon (unless referenced otherwise) are retrieved from Oxford Dictionaries, available at oxforddictionaries.com

THE CURATOR AS HERMES: A MEDIATOR BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE WORLDS – MICHAEL KAETHLER

If Apollo is the Greek god of the arts, who is the god of curating? The French philosopher Michel Serres provides a compelling account of the god Hermes as a unique and necessary character able to connect objects, persons, and events through time and space. For Serres, who decries the compartmentalisation of knowledge, Hermes offers us a unique example of a knowledge operator who can forge passages between different knowledge worlds — the mimetic, scientific, mythical, physical, or put simply, between the reason of the sciences and that of the humanities or the arts. This demands new operators of knowledge and new operations, which Serres (1982) defines as interference, translation, and distribution, all of which converge towards the idea of communication.

In this philosophy of communication, Serres (1994) explores the knowledge operator through Hermes — a messenger who navigates across and through space and time, forging unpredictable and unexpected associations between objects, persons, and events recognising a multiplicity of knowledge worlds, which co-exist without hierarchies. Hermes is mediation, translation, multiplicity, and communication. He embodies the figure of a free mediator, a nomad who wanders through time and space to establish connections — the god of the crossroads (where statues of him were commonly erected) — between myth and science. He is also an ambiguous figure, simultaneously embodying the attributes of commerce and of theft, of weights and measures and also of creativity and invention.

This is not unlike many of today's definitions of contemporary curating. Take, for instance Maria Lind's (2010, p. 63) description of curating as, "...a way of thinking in terms of interconnections: linking objects, images, processes, people, locations, history, and discourses in physical space like an active catalyst generating twists, turns, and tensions." Paul O'Neill (2012, p. 129) characterises it as a "distinct practice of mediation"

and refers to exhibitions as a “co-productive, spatial medium, resulting from varying forms of negotiation, relationality, adaptation, and collaboration between subjects and objects, across space and time.” Likewise, Hans Ulrich Obrist (2011, pp. 166-167) the prolific Swiss curator refers to the role of the curator as “connecting different people and practices, and causing the conditions for triggering sparks between them.”

For Serres, Hermes represents a ‘mature knowledge worker’ who is able to create passages and transmit a more complete form of knowing, shining light on signs and symbols which are ‘hermetic’, traversing the noise of interference (incommunicability) towards the making of meaning. Serres (1995) laments our singular modes of thinking as a restraining dogmatism and argues that to overcome this will require adopting a “comparative pluralistic epistemology of the journey”. To do this he gives us Hermes as an example of, and inspiration for, unrestricted thinking, seeing beyond typical dichotomies of knowledge and instead focusing on discovering new translations or passages between different ways of knowing. In giving us Hermes, he prompts us to reflect on what roles exist today that embody these qualities.

The curator, I argue, is one of the few positions today where Hermes would find himself at home — as mediator, translator, and conveyor of meaning but also as an ambiguous figure who plays tricks and denies facile classification or method. Through the staging and framing of cultural artefacts, the curator creates new physical and conceptual relationships, merging audiences, spaces, and ideas into new composites that transcend their invariable appearances. Curating is not merely descriptive; it is active and transformative. Exhibitions “test out reality” as Obrist claims (2011, p. 167), unlocking the meanings inherent in the different but relationally connected artefacts (Smith, 2015). It is the staging of a knowledge journey where the curator, at the crossroads, gently directs the entwining of different media to invoke experiential and cognitive responses. The curator is positioned as mediator between the artist or designer, the artefacts (exhibition), and the audience or participant, situated in both worlds in order to translate between them and through this translation new cultural expression emerges. The curator proactively threads together different forms of knowing to create new knowledge, or taking from Obrist’s definition above, to create the conditions for triggering sparks.

The etymology of the curator derives from the latin *curare* — ‘to take care of’ — and has been used across a wide range of roles going back to the Roman civil servants who oversaw public works for the public good such as bathhouses, sewers, and aqueducts; caretakers of minors or lunatics in the 14th century; priests devoted to tending their

parishes' souls; keepers who were responsible for overseeing, preserving, and organising the 'cabinets of curiosities' of collectors. Today, curating contemporary art and design has morphed into an increasingly dynamic and active role dealing with many similar themes of its historical trajectory, fusing social, metaphysical, and object-relations through new knowledge junctions. An ethic of 'care', I argue, still grounds this role, a care for the content and its social and cultural implications. This, I must add, distinguishes curating from the current market trends appropriated by prosumers who 'curate' their lifestyles.

With the echo of Serres' proclamation, "let the new knowledge come" (1989, p. 177), my research has sought to understand the unique knowledge approach of curating. I do not wish to elasticise curating, stretching it to fit every domain, but instead to learn from its particular approach to knowledge — principles and practices — in order to give inspiration to other fields. To do this involves analysing curating from different perspectives such as through organisational theory or systems thinking. Moreover, in the spirit of Hermes' mediation of new passages between knowledge worlds, it is critical to explore curating's potential as a medium from which non-art and design fields can take inspiration. What does such a unique knowledge role mean in a variety of other settings?

Rethinking stakeholder negotiations: a curatorial approach

Today's multiparty stakeholder negotiations are organised around a facilitator who seeks to funnel the process towards reaching a consensus in order to move forward with a set of objectives. This has been informed by managerial approaches, using incentives to find compromise. The role of the facilitator in such a case tends to take a mantle of neutrality with a disinterest in a specific outcome, instead focusing on nurturing the contributions from participants. This assumes that presenting the 'facts' (information) and holding a rational exchange, with the right incentives, will lead to a common understanding and ultimately a workable solution. This appears to be a process devoid of *meaning*, with a hollow view of knowledge and deprived of an ethic of care. How could a curatorial approach offer an alternative?

An economist, a landscape architect, and I were invited by the region of Lazio to host a three-day workshop to revitalise a 400+ hectare asset of land in the city of Rome. The land in question has been held up in an intractable deadlock for nearly three decades. Our task was to identify a common vision for it amidst a multitude of differing and antagonising positions. To do this, we began exploring a curatorial approach to

participatory planning in public space; how can we entwine different forms of knowing, what is our ethic of care, what does a stakeholder meeting-as-exhibition look like? If an exhibition is a 'knowledge event' (Martinon, 2014) then why not frame or stage the stakeholder meeting as an exhibition?

Our first step involved looking at different definitions of curating across a body of literature. We identified a number of relevant themes: a curator as caretaker, which we took to signify a deep interest in the process and outcome of the event; a curator as mediator and translator of different types of knowledge, working with analytical and poetic messaging; a curator as meaning maker, framing the event towards transferring significance; a curator as narrator across scales, giving attention to the constitutive and constituted narratives, which emerge at the micro-to-macro / matter-to-meta level, from the individual artefact to the overall message of the exhibition.

The three-day event, attended by policy makers, urbanists, representatives of business interests, and local initiatives followed Hermes' trajectories, working between knowledge worlds and creating passages between individual and collective interests, between rational pursuits and emotional sensibilities. The most significant shift from traditional approaches was the pursuit of meaning-making in lieu of consensus building. Our intention was for participants to leave with a renewed connection with the site and a belief in its potential for the local and regional community. We believed that this was more important and lasting than focusing on finding a solution that was agreeable to all the stakeholders.

The role of the curator was to frame and promote individual and collective explorations of multiple types of knowing in relation to the context — from deeply personal to collective, from analytical to experiential. We *framed* the event as an exhibition, which included a series of artefacts acting as sensorial stimuli, physically situating the participants within a gallery. Analytical discussions, such as using systems thinking to understand the context, were paired with creating visual artefacts that represented the discussions — each group established a socio-technical bricolage of images, sketches, and even poems to represent their ideas, desires, dreams, and future trajectories. These artefacts, we anticipated, would better retain their memories and inspiration from the event than any written policy report afterwards.

As curators, we subtly guided the processes with an interest in creating significance around certain themes for particular objectives. Our *care* for the context led to carefully reframing debates, nudging themes towards our own ideological interest. This is a

controversial element, whereby the curator is ideologically present within the ongoing negotiation. To avoid overt questions of accountability and transparency we attempted to be clear about our personal interest in the event and our desired outcome.

In this case, the curatorial approach for multiparty stakeholder negotiations is a prime example of rethinking the way we engage with singular forms of knowledge. To call what we did 'curating' is a stretch; nevertheless, it is inspired by, and borrows from, the curatorial, providing a new mode of engagement that produces meaning. It was a successful engagement that fostered new intersubjective and subject-object relationships. Interviews conducted by a social-psychologist researching the event noted a sense of overwhelming positivity and optimism when discussing the future of the site with the participants, highlighting a common theme of 'collectivity'. Whether a concrete action will occur directly related to these three days is uncertain. However, we hope that the new relationships the 'exhibition' inspired will overtime result in sustained and meaningful future developments.

Just as Hermes created passages between worlds, so can a curatorial approach forge connections between the physical and mythical, rational, and intuitive, between objects and subjects, and intersubjectivities. A curatorial approach is a suitable response to Serres' calls for a 'new knowledge' or a 'mature knowledge', an *operation* that connects knowledge worlds, time, and space, that eschews method and provides meaning. Serres stresses the difficulties of translating between knowledge worlds; it is not as easy as opening one door and stepping through another. However, it is in these spaces between where messages become transformed through the act of mediation and it is here where creativity and innovation emerge — in the passage. The curatorial works within that space — traversing the divide — helping one navigate through complex territories like Hermes waiting at the crossroads to offer direction or inspiration.

Visita il Parco agricolo Casal del Marmo

L'ennesimo complesso residenziale a Roma



Figure 1: Provocative visual stimuli.



Figure 2: Moments of reflection and signification through connecting with the context.



Figure 3: Thinking from a systems perspective.

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MIMESIS AS THEORY – HILDE HEYNEN

Can a theoretically inclined scholar, who is educated in social sciences and planning, be seduced to make an artist of himself? Can he be challenged to design exhibitions and to perform art works? The designated role for Michael Kaethler's work within the TRADERS consortium was that of the person who would devise the theoretical 'meta-framework'. This 'meta-framework' would allow one to understand and position the different approaches to design, participation, and public space embodied in the work of the other researchers. Whereas the five others were from the beginning engaged in research trajectories that were explicitly understood to be artistic or designerly — leading to PhD's in the arts or similar degrees — Michael's work was to be somewhat more conventional. The expectation of both his supervisors — my colleague Frank Moulaert and myself — was that Michael would produce an elaborate theoretical text that would articulate, on the basis of his close interactions with the other researchers, their self-understanding and that would clarify how their work was positioned vis-à-vis one another. For myself I also understood his work to be a kind of mapping of the TRADERS' approaches within the wider field of design, participation, and public design. These expectations however were challenged from the very beginning of the project.

Michael's PhD-trajectory is conducted within the Department of Architecture and the Faculty of Engineering Science at the University of Leuven. Both his supervisors are involved in teaching theoretical courses in different programmes: Frank Moulaert in the field of planning theory (closely aligned with social sciences), and myself in that of architectural theory (closely aligned with architectural history). This environment offers educational programmes for engineer-architects and advanced programmes in the fields of urbanism and conservation. All such programmes wrestle with the relationship between design studios and theoretical courses. Is it more important that engineer-architects are completely competent in the scientific intricacies of building physics, able to elaborate the complex mathematical models that explain heat and

moisture effects in walls and roofs? Or should they rather be skilled and prolific designers, who are very much in tune with the world of art and culture? And what about their social engagement? These multiple competences — sciences, humanities, and design — are all addressed in our educational programmes, and it is not easy to find a balance. The relationship between scientific and designerly competences is especially at stake. Should science dominate design or should it be the other way around? We have solved this dilemma by adhering to the belief that they should be seen as semi-autonomous in their relation to one another: studios relying on design and theoretical courses relying on science should be able to fully unfold their capacities to engage students in their specific endeavours, but they should do that without mutually compromising one another. Thus it is fully accepted that studios should be theoretically informed, but that they nevertheless constitute autonomous trajectories, because they require other ways of understanding and exploring realities — studios are in no way just ‘applied theory’. Reversely, theory can relate to the topics covered in the studios, theory can reflect upon its outcomes, but theory can as well develop a discourse that is independent from the studios and that participates in an autonomous scholarly realm where writing or calculating is more important than designing. In our teaching we thus develop these different strands of knowledge building in their own autonomous ways, believing that they should inform one another but that they cannot be reduced to one another (VLIR, 2011, pp. 129-204).

Within my own intellectual development I have come to believe that theory and design both rely on two different modes of knowledge building: rationality and mimesis. I am using the term mimesis in the sense of Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno, who both see the mimetic faculty as a capacity to grasp similarities or to perform similarities (Heynen, 1999, pp. 97-100, 183-188, 192-225). Mimesis thus has to do with imitation, with playfulness, with acting out, with shaping and forming things that somehow resemble something else or that resonate with something else — a cartoon image of a politician or a toy of a child that resembles an adult tool. For Benjamin, the mimetic faculty is at stake in translation from one language to another, which can only be faithful when not being literal (Benjamin, 1986). When poetry or literary texts are translated, it certainly is not the word-by-word literal translation that generates the best result, but rather the skilful reproducing of similar effects in another language, which might be the result of words, sentences, or images that are quite distant from the original. Mimesis thus has to do with a transfer from one realm into another, with metaphors, with performances, etc. Mimesis does however not result in perfect reproductions (an assembly line is *not* a mimetic device), but rather comprises playful

enactments that also produce shifts and critical distance. The cartoon image of the politician can be critical because it is not an exact likeness, but exaggerates certain features. A theatre play or a film can critically depict a historical event by reframing it, e.g. by showing it from the viewpoint of the victims. Adorno is convinced that art can be critical because it is mimetic and hence escapes from the rationality that is dominant in economy and social life (Adorno, 1997; Cahn, 1984). I think that his argument, though it dates from the 1960s, is fairly convincing.

Theory and design both need rationality and mimesis, but in different proportions. Theory, in being about concepts and discursive articulations, is more heavy on the side of rationality and analytic thinking; design as a creative undertaking leans more heavily on the side of mimesis and sensuous capacities. Both faculties are however required in both theory and design: if theory is not mimetic at all, it cannot build a close understanding of what it is supposed to theorise; if design is not the least bit rational, it is gratuitous and threatens to become irrelevant.

Interestingly enough, I have witnessed a shift in the work of Michael, which I was not expecting from the beginning: it seems that he is gradually loosening his reliance upon rational and analytic thinking alone, in order to explore more mimetic ways of knowledge building. At the start of his PhD trajectory, he was very keen on long and intricate discussions with the other TRADERS, in which they investigated their different understandings of 'design', 'participation', and 'public space' in long-winded (and often nightly) conversations. All of them were invited to explain which were their favourite authors and to relate their work to the positions developed by these authors — an exercise which gave rise to a lot of discussion. Although these conversations have doubtlessly been fruitful in that they obliged everyone to become more articulate about their own and one another's work, they nevertheless did not always result — Michael tells me — in very satisfactory outcomes or clearly delineated positions. The whole group was often 'lost in translation', concepts remained rather muddy, and a consensus was mostly not in reach.

The most interesting thing that happened, I believe, is that the others convinced Michael that he should also become creatively involved in that he should set out to design himself and to (co-)curate exhibitions. Michael has enthusiastically embraced these suggestions and has come to understand his own work in terms of 'curating' rather than in terms of the 'meta-framework' that we as supervisors had expected him to develop. Whereas the 'meta-framework' idea would have been fully in tune with a sociology-of-knowledge approach, 'curating' is a concept which is less academic and

more artistic^[1]. It relates more to ideas of exploration and care, and has to do with organising a selected body of art works within a certain pattern. That pattern might be rationally explained, but it might also be based upon sensuous similarities related to colours, materials, or shapes, or it might rely on specific intentions of the curator, e.g. with respect to the societal role of art or the way the visitor might be involved. This turn towards curating necessitates Michael to rely more on his mimetic faculties, since curating is not just about concepts and analysis, but also about patterns and similarities that resist conceptual articulation. 'Curating' art and design works involves bodily ways of knowing and sensuous experiences, and requires a designerly input, since the curator also has to think about combinations of art works and trajectories of the visitors. This matters all the more when the common theme in the TRADERS work has to do with participation and public space: here it is important to understand what public space and participation are all about and to reflect on these themes (that would be the rational approach), but it is also particularly relevant to be sensitive to the physicality of these spaces (large, open, green, small, enclosed, cosy?) and to the choreographies of bodies moving in space and interacting with each other (aspects that require a more mimetic approach).

It seems that Michael, in preparing for these exhibitions and in working with the other researchers, is developing mimetic and performative tools that take the idea of 'positioning' more literal than before: participants in the workshops are now asked to not only talk and think about different approaches, but also to act them out and to visualise them. Michael thus is exploiting all kinds of mimetic exercises and he seems to be very enthusiastic about their outcome.

It is my hope that this mimetic turn in Michael's work will be to the benefit of the overall TRADERS enterprise, because it has the potential to demonstrate how interactions between different modes of knowing could result in more complete, more encompassing, and more critical understandings and interventions.

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1. For the sociology-of-knowledge approach see Moulaert, MacCallum, & Jean (2013); for the artistic character of curating see Hoffmann (2004). ↵

THINKING WITH CURATING: AN INTERVIEW WITH SOPHIA KRZYS ACORD – BY MICHAEL KAETHLER

Why should we consider knowledge when thinking about the arts?

If we want to understand why the arts matter we need to understand what we do with them, which is to create situations for knowing.

Where do we experience artistic knowledge today?

Contemporary artistic practices break with conventions of genre, value, and style, seeking to blur academic discourses and aesthetic objects, and sacred spaces within public life. These transformations led noted critics to describe art today as post-historical (Arthur C. Danto) or de-aesthetic (Charles Rosenberg). Curators have become particularly central in this context of aesthetic disruption as mediators between artist and publics, museums and market, and oeuvre and its narrative. As the French sociologists Nathalie Heinich and Michael Pollak first pointed out, the contemplative value of art has given way to its communication value, experienced through the medium and discourse of the exhibition; today's publics consume the experience of an exhibition as a whole, not simply as individual artworks (Heinich & Pollak, 1989).

Your research on knowledge in contemporary art and curating makes a point of stressing *knowing* as opposed to *knowledge* in relation to art, why is this an important distinction?

The move from *knowledge* to *knowing* acknowledges this role of mediation. Mediators are everywhere, omnipresent; the idea that an artwork is somehow a repository of knowledge that exists unto itself is to ignore the acts of mediation. I do not just mean the interventions done by humans like artists, curators, or even audiences, but also spaces, artefacts, and texts. The situation in which the work of art is experienced, the physical place (such as, but not limited to, an exhibition), the temperature, even the smell of the place; these 'actants' (as Bruno Latour would say) are all constantly interacting, producing micro-transformative acts that shape the opportunities to make

knowledge with a work of art in a particular situation of reception. As a result, we can't say that a work of art contains a piece of knowledge about the world that is transmitted passively to viewers; we have to say that artistic mediation involves viewers as co-producers of what can be known — viewers are involved in assembling *knowing*. This slight turn of phrase focuses on the pragmatics of the artistic encounter as it unfolds in space and time and reveals the generative capabilities of the arts for change.

Does that refute the notion of an artwork as a repository of knowledge or provide an alternative, perhaps supplementary, view through which to see knowledge?

What we know about the world is not merely lodged in our heads, it is also lodged in our bodies, emotions, and environments. The *knowing* approach is a move away from knowledge as overtly cognitive, to the felt dimensions of knowledge. If we emphasise how knowledge is felt we understand knowledge to be something to act on, something dynamic, not something which is static or fixed. This is not to dismiss the artwork, because it remains an incredibly important (indeed unique!) actant in the aesthetic situation. But, the tools we have to talk about knowing in art must move beyond the discursive, to the embodied and emotive.

When it comes to art, do we need to have a cultural education to enter into this act of 'knowing'? Without the right education, does one leave the museum empty handed or with misconceptions about art?

Curators and other art world 'elite' make decisions based on a rich cultural vocabulary, which they have developed through extended immersion in the art world. They have what Pierre Bourdieu describes as a *pure aesthetic* shaped by art historical / theoretical knowledge, but they also have what the British sociologist Paul Willis refers to as *grounded aesthetic* experiences with art based on their imaginative symbolic work drawing from other domains. Thus, the idea that there is a divide between elitist and grounded experiences of art is false. In fact, the very figureheads of the art world do not make this divide. Though they may work within clean white museum walls, the manual labour of installation inspires the creative play of the grounded aesthetic. A curator may notice the prettiness of the colours. He may love if something reminds him of the thing that hung over his bed as a child. She may be captivated by an unexpected association between two pieces sitting next to each other for the first time. And, when faced with brilliant originality, curators may be at a loss for words. If pure and grounded aesthetics blur for these so-called tastemakers, then we need to realise that anyone's experience with art engages with their own symbolic vocabularies and felt meaning systems. Rather than discourage grounded experiences with artworks, museums can recognise these

multiple entry points. To presume that there is only one type of knowledge and that it requires an educational immersion into the art world is not one borne out by those producing within the art world, so why expect it of our visitors?

Then curators are mediators who know how to work with and between pure aesthetic and grounded aesthetic experiences? How do they do this?

In his classic ethnography of art education in the United Kingdom, *The intelligence of feeling* (1976), Robert Witkin observes that cultural professionals are unique in that while everyone experiences their world through their active senses, artists are trained to also 'sense their own sensing'. Where others may neglect or be overcome by emotions and perceptions, artists recognise that knowledge comes through all of our senses and are adept at forging a juncture between embodied knowing and cognitive ability to describe that knowing.

Curators know how to channel their sensing through the medium of the exhibition. They know how to work within the handcuffs of the big institutions, as well as how to work the subtle cues — how to turn an artwork just a little bit so that you come upon it and notice a different feature of it or it picks up the light in a different way, or they know how to hang things next to each other so that you notice something you would not normally have noticed, which might prompt a question. As cultural professionals they are aware of the things that they notice sub-cognitively and can make that experience of knowing available to others through the exhibition. They are experts not only of heady theory, but also of spaces and physical encounters.

I have noticed a trend where curators speak more about curating and meaning making and much less about curating and knowledge production.

I surmise that what we seek to do through exhibitions is convey what we can only experience in embodied ways. Just as you can only experience pain fully in an embodied way. And you make personal meaning by relating your sensing to more verbalised discourses on that topic. But certainly you cannot reduce what you have learned to just the feeling or just the discourse. It requires both. I wonder if the language of 'meaning making' is an attempt to recognise the embodied dimensions of the knowing process.

Is this unique to art and curating?

No and yes. On the one hand, all knowledge is embodied; humans are not heads on sticks. But, art is a unique sector of society in which artists and curators seek to make us aware of the fact that we have both the power to know and to examine, question, and reshape what we know about the world. And, most of all, when the rest of the world

seeks to fix knowledge as immutable, curators provide vital spaces for nurturing forms of knowing that are genuinely emergent.

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PART VII

DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION – DAVID HAMERS, ADRIAN FRIEND, & RUTH MATEUS-BERR

David Hamers

In this volume issues of participation have not been discussed in general but have been approached from different perspectives. Six approaches have been explored conceptually and have been applied in different cases and contexts. In this way participation was deconstructed into a range of interactions, dialogues, and negotiations that art and design researchers come across in their practice, and that can be discussed and reflected on for the further development of research methods in the field of art and design. The aim of the book is to ‘trade’ places (positions, perspectives), and explore what it means to trade: why do we trade, how do we trade, who trades, and what is traded in participatory projects?

Ruth Mateus-Berr and Adrian Friend, I would like to invite you to engage in a dialogue to reflect on some of the issues addressed in this book. Together we can interpret the book’s contents from various angles. As a member of the founding and supervising team of TRADERS and as an editor of this book, I can offer an insider’s perspective. Adrian, you joined the TRADERS supervising team at a later stage; your being relatively new to the programme gives you the opportunity to provide a fresh perspective. Ruth, as an external advisor to TRADERS, you have followed the programme from its beginning, but from a close distance.

Having read the contributions to this book, do you share the sense of urgency that the different contributors of this book express? And, have you enjoyed the ‘trading’?

Ruth Mateus-Berr

Yes, the book is very inspiring. I appreciate the rigour in the thinking and doing of the TRADERS group, addressing and readdressing participation from a variety of perspectives. The different tracks in this volume let us participate in processing,

stumbling, skipjacking, and self-reflecting. The visual interpretation of the different types of 'agency' of the TRADERS researchers demonstrates their individual practices as well as some theoretical issues.

Concerning the question about 'trading', I would like to discuss a number of past developments that caused radical change in thoughts about and attitudes towards trading and exchanging. Trading in general can be considered in economic terms as financial bargaining or bartering (Mauss, 1967). Cash has been the currency for trading goods since long. First, traders exchanged 'goods for goods'. Then cash was introduced to exchange 'money for goods'. Now it is rumoured that cash will be abolished, as already witnessed through dwindling cash circulation and increasing worldwide disputes commonly headlined as "War on Cash" or "Death of the Banknote" (Lui & Moschik, 2017). Advocacy for the demise of cash leans itself to political goals such as reducing crime, tax avoidance, terrorism, human trafficking, and money laundering. With this knowledge, the understanding of social, cultural, and aesthetic dimensions of this medium is important in order to grasp the reality of the demise.

What do we need now? There is a lot of debate about the changing relations between supply and demand, not only of goods but also of labour, and theorists such as Jean Baudrillard have deconstructed concepts such as 'need' and 'utility' (Baudrillard, 2006; Mateus-Berr, 2014, p. 230), arguing that objects have lost their functional identity and turned into simulacra, an avatar of themselves. What remains as value is not considered as an inherent property of objects, but is the consequence of judgments made about them by subjects (Appudurai, 2010, p. 3; Simmel, 2009, p. 73). These judgments have significant consequences for our wellbeing (including the wellbeing of others), our health, the environment, etc. So, in our exchange of 'goods' and in processes of mutual valuation, a renewed balance and reciprocity (Mauss, 1967) seems to be needed. In my view, this is what the TRADERS team has engaged in.

Posing the question 'what, if money loses its value?' and learning from the past, I like the example of the Barter Theatre which was founded in 1933. It is one of the longest running theatres in the United States, located in Virginia. During the Great Depression people could not afford to pay for theatre tickets so performances were traded for farm goods. People were problem-solvers, and found solutions for their needs. But what if people lose their self-confidence, for instance as a result of losing their job? They could very well remain passive, just like other marginalised groups in society that seem to have lost their voice. In my view, TRADERS empowers these groups, helps them rethink the relationship between people, and between people and their environments

by engaging them in processes of (re)design. To use the capability of art and design means to use its tools in a critical way. This requires us to reflect on art and design in a political frame (Fry, 2011, p. viii). Theorist Nick Currie (2005, p. 1) reflects on the conceptual and immaterial qualities of current designers' work, claiming that "rather than products, these people are designing situations, intervening in existing arrangements, framing everyday activities in ways that make us think of them, unexpectedly, as 'design'".

For the TRADERS researchers, trading as I see it, means facilitating or provoking dialogues, and co-designing objects, spaces, environments, and conditions for a variety of exchanges, including experiences, time, skills, and insights. Pablo Calderón Salazar has created a platform, *De Andere Markt* (The Other Market), "to trade products and services without money, using dialogue as currency" (Calderón Salazar, 2017). He stresses the urgency and need of using participatory design strategies in the sense of "agonistic democracy" in order to foster sustainable growth of innovation practices in non-consensual and conflicting milieus. By initiating 'intraventions' (Arlandis & Lieberman 2013, quoted by Calderón Salazar, 2017) he focused on crafting articulations of people's capacities. This way people are given confidence. As Pablo shows in his case study in the Belgian city of Genk that these interventions, although they may seem small-scaled, have the capacity to empower people and revitalise communities in times of socio-economic decline. Demonstrating that small interventions can affect a larger whole, Pablo quotes the Dutch artist Jeanne van Heeswijk, who refers to this kind of interventions as "urban acupuncture" (van Heeswijk, 2012, quoted by Calderón Salazar, 2017). Pablo also makes it clear that acupuncture tactics not only require temporary 'pressure' but also the commitment of long-term relationships and the building of trust, on-site, for instance by organising a series of local co-design workshops. For this to work in a project over a longer period of time, moments of 'pressure' need to alternate with moments of relaxation, metaphorically described by Pablo as the diastole and systole movements in the cardiac cycle.

Approaching trade from another angle, Annelies Vaneycken focuses on 'play'. She describes two forms of play by paraphrasing Caillois (1961): one in which players perform a set of rules that are set down by others, and one in which players define their own rules (Vaneycken, 2017). Here, trading can be understood as negotiating rules rather than goods or services. Annelies's approach to socially engaged design centres around listening to multiple voices to propose playful ways of mediation, and, I would add, empowering the "oppressed" (Boal, 1979). Her strategy includes introducing

ambiguity and disrupting the existing distribution of social roles and power relations. Her approach, therefore, deliberately causes friction, disagreement, and debate. Conflict is considered as a positive element in trying to deconstruct conventions and explore novel solutions to societal problems. This belief is founded on children's attitudes in play: constructing and destroying their own projects in iterative cycles, and regarding these phases as fun and prosperous. I remember well our playing session in Gothenburg, where we broke Annelies's rules and started to conquer the city with games that we re-imagined with a lot of fun, or our exploration in Genk, where we had to analyse an abandoned rail track area through play.

Naomi Bueno de Mesquita also argues that trading involves questioning and negotiating — even hacking — the world, though by different means. I remember well a discussion with Naomi, when she argued for the importance of ICT and hacking competence in design education. In this book she elaborates on this by arguing for an in-depth engagement of designers and design researchers with the digital and virtual layers that web technologies, locative media, and data add to our public spaces and to the public domain. She researches how knowledge is produced in hybrid ecologies, by a variety of interdependent, both human and non-human actors. She invites actors to become 'emancipated spectators' (Rancière, 2009) by having them engage in so-called 'performative mapping'. Mapping for her means a "spatial practice, which helps understand existing spatial configurations but also reconfigures them" (Bueno de Mesquita, 2017); a practice that can empower participants, and provoke new directions. In her case study *Mapping Invisibility*, the exploration of empowerment and the search for new directions centre around the experiences and spatial strategies of undocumented immigrants (an estimated 15.000!) in the public spaces of Amsterdam. Maps were drawn of routes associated with feelings that differ considerably from conventional city maps, and an online archive of personal stories was created that allows trading positions with a marginalised group. Exchanging perspectives and 'giving voice' in this mapping practice does not always go 'fluently'; as you, David, point out in your contribution to this volume, it includes stumbling, which could be compared to the "stammering and stuttering" in the understanding of Deleuze (cf. Stevenson, 2009, p. 82).

Jon Geib engages in trading in open-ended dialogues in order to "[value] differences, misalignments, and pluralism" (Geib, 2017). He refers to Hubert Hermans' dialogical self theory to argue that the world and its people are "multiple". He orientates on public space as a relational space (ibid.; Massey, 2005), and, referring to his architectural

background, suggests prioritising these interrelations as “dialogical infrastructures”: an “elaborate infrastructure for perception” created by a designer (Geib, 2017). Jon describes a case study in a neighbourhood in Gothenburg, where he aims at getting to know one another (better) through “building empathy and respect for what we cannot know” by researching the “language and environment of the things” (Boradkar, 2010), the material culture of expression. Concretely, this means that workshop participants in this research engage with, for instance, doors and the decoration of the forecourt shared by neighbours. Jon quotes the environment as a “third teacher”, as understood by the Reggio Emilia approach, as well as Bruce Mau and the OWP architects (2010), emphasising the “thing-power” of materials and “vital materialism” (Bennett, 2010). I remember his presentation at the European Regional Conference of INSEA, where he described how carefully the objects of the participating children were placed in the museum and how competition and hierarchy were eliminated as much as possible.

Saba Golchehr trades empowerment in order “to increase citizens’ social capital” and avoid the “instrumentalization” of publics that is all too common in many governments’ citizen participation workshops (Golchehr, 2017). Many people know Richard Sennett’s book *The craftsman*, but quote it in a wrong way; he encourages the use of the “digital” as a new craft. During the exhibition *Handicraft: Traditional Skills in the Digital Age* at the Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna, Sennett was upset by the fact that people misunderstood his book as a plea for traditional crafts (2016). Saba has understood this; she advocates the use of civic apps to involve people in a more inclusive and ‘humanistic’ thinking (Tanase, 2017, p. 108) process in urban design and architecture. She urges designers to explore the possibilities offered by civic apps to generate knowledge of urban spaces from a variety of perspectives, including those of urban dwellers that are commonly overlooked in consultation processes.

Michael Kaethler trades knowledge from the social sciences with knowledge from artistic practices. He refers to the practice of mimesis in the sense of a poetic approach (Adorno, 1997): “a rationality criticising rationality without withdrawing from it”, very different from both “rational-instrumental thinking” (Kaethler, 2017) and ‘naively’ adapting gut feeling while neglecting science. On the one hand, in the field of art and design, intuition – although well-researched (e.g. Klein, 2003; Howes, 2006) – is still often referred to as a “sixth sense” that does not need further justification. To me this is a rather dangerous proposition, as it reminds me of the 1920s and 1930s when Nazis combatted the use of intellect, as well as politicians such as Donald Trump, who “rather trust gut feeling than statistics” (Schulz, 2017, p. 96; Kaindlstorfer, 2017). On the other

hand, art and design researchers are easily accused of not being informed by scientific practice. Michael, however, argues that artists are trained to “sense their own sensing” (Krzysz Acord, 2017; Witkin, 1976). He emphasises the relevance of embodied knowledge combined with the cognitive ability to describe that knowledge. In his view, a curator can help exchange this kind of knowledge with scientific knowledge. It requires the curator to be attentive, responsive, and responsible (Kaethler, 2017; Tronto, 2005, p. 251-263). Michael compares the role of the curator with the Greek god Hermes, “the mediator, translator, and conveyor of meaning, but also as an ambiguous figure who plays tricks and denies facile classification or method” (Kaethler, 2017). This describes fairly well the artist as a shaman in its original importance, a wanderer between the worlds. For Michael it is rather the curator, mediating between audience, space, ideas, and designers and artists, directing “the entwining of different media to invoke experimental and cognitive responses” (ibid.), going beyond one’s disciplinary expertise, practicing “relational art” (Bourriaud, 2002), and re-arranging politics of power.

As argued in “Art and design as social fabric” (Mateus-Berr 2014, p. 223), I believe society could benefit from insights into how to approach other ideas through different media, through what I call ‘perspective taking’. It involves engaging all one’s senses, including their interdependencies. Feyerabend (2010, p. 132) has argued that “knowledge needs a plurality of ideas, (...) and that well established theories are never strong enough to terminate the existence of alternative approaches.” He argues “against established methods” in science, encouraging “irrational approaches” as a basis for experimental research. He believes that scientists should therefore use artistic research (Sandquist, 2013). Florian Dombois (2007, p. 86) suggests that, “because science has explained the world successfully, but not exhaustively, an alternative is needed that returns to view the things that science has neglected”. Yes, true, but this requires us to define new research methods within the art-based and design research fields that exceed established definitions (Mateus-Berr, 2013, p. 162), combining rationality and the senses. Frank Wagner (2015, p. 103) argues that “design emerges through cognitive intelligence, creativity, empathy and flexibility”, and he believes that the designers of the future should act as mediators. I think that TRADERS points in this direction.

RMB

Coming back to the point of urban acupuncture, David and Adrian, do you think such a strategy could work? How can we make urban acupuncture tangible and visible, and turn it into a sustainable approach?

In order to consider the possible effects of urban acupuncture, we need to distinguish between the spatial and social effects of this kind of intervention. In the field of spatial planning and design the benefits of acupuncture strategies – or tactics – are widely acknowledged, just think of the revitalising effects of the upgrading of small squares and local streets in some neighbourhoods in Barcelona in the 1990s, and the many bottom-up urban gardening initiatives that in many countries have given an impulse to urban renewal during the last decades. Some of these small-scale spatial interventions have had effects that were visible almost immediately, not only to neighbourhood volunteers and the professionals they co-operated with, but also to government officials and real estate developers who learned to see that large-scale urban planning is not the only strategy available to improve the urban environment.

The social effects may take more time to become manifest. Of course, people who are directly involved in local interventions are very committed and often experience joy in collaborating. Involving a wider circle of people, however, requires not only strategies to get their initial attention and have them engage, but also persistence to keep them involved after the novelty wears off. This is a considerable challenge. Most acupuncture-style interventions that I know struggle with longer-term engagement. One of the ways to deal with this is to build a network that will last after the designer has left the scene. This requires a number of things, varying from a local sense of urgency to knowledge and skills that enable stakeholders to effectively address the issues at stake. One of the questions the art and design researchers in the TRADERS programme have asked themselves is how to generate and share this knowledge and transfer these skills.

Each of the researchers has, in their respective research projects, approached this question differently. Naomi, for instance, refers to Ranci re's (2009) conception of knowledge not as something that someone possesses and imposes on someone else, but as something that is performed by all actors on equal ground and that emerges through actions and interactions. In this way knowledge and skills can be developed and tested in collaboration, and transferred across social boundaries and through networks. Both Naomi and Annelies stress the role of playfulness in such processes. Elements of play can help generate enthusiasm, create a 'safe' testing ground, and build trust among participants. Although I am well aware of the fact that this does not guarantee a successful transferral of knowledge and skills, I think it is quite clear that the conventional 'trading' strategies – the current default of economic exchange and

commodification that you, Ruth, allude to, and that is also referred to in Ethel Baraona Pohl and César Reyes Nájera's contribution to this book – have reached their limits. So, coming back to the question if urban acupuncture could work, I would argue that asking interventions to deliver short-term (economic) effects – as is dictated by mainstream economic efficiency-driven thinking – in most cases leads to disappointment, but that a longer-term 'return on investment' – to hack this concept from the dominant discourse – can be justly expected. This return on investment can include both spatial and social (as well as ecological) effects, provided that designers and design researchers critically deploy the right skills and tools.

RMB

Yes, I agree; in this context it is interesting to recall Liane Lefaivre's (2007) understanding of the playground as "the smallest stitch in the urban fabric" (Charif & Hafeda), in the sense of a fractal, a Mandelbrot set, a mirror of the whole. Perhaps, strategies that are successful in a playground can be a positive example for other, wider societal contexts. Actually, in the Netherlands, so-called Polycentric, Interstitial, Participatory Public Space (PIP) (Lefaivre & Döll, 2007) has become the participatory approach to engage citizens bottom-up in urban design processes. On the basis of Aldo van Eyck's refusal to standardise playgrounds, and further elaborated on by Cor van Eesteren and Jacoba Mulder, more than a thousand playground-designs in Amsterdam were established through neighbourhood workshops as a way to learn what children want and need (ibid.). More recently, Lefaivre and Döll have experimented with PIP in Rotterdam in districts with a high number of foreign-born children. One could argue that we need playgrounds such as these to develop common memories, and that these playgrounds should be a model for our cities. To take it a step further, I would even make the analogy that citizens in many countries and political regimes resemble voiceless children (Mateus-Berr, 2011).

Adrian Friend

I think it import to bring the discussion around to some historic base to help frame Ruth's call to arms and need for greater designer empowerment witnessed in many of the TRADERS research projects. Thereby I would like to contextualise the debate a little as well as try and use the pedagogic vehicle of the 'Live Projects' to frame a way of working that is free of the professional strait jacket and as a means to encapsulate the multiple directions posited. Live Projects were first established in United Kingdom Universities in the 1950s (Brown, 2012) as a bridge between art and design studio teaching and the industry, which at that time was desperate to call on as many designers

as possible, trained and untrained, to rebuild post-war Britain. The relevance today is that within Higher Education Academies, Live Projects harbour tactics and approaches that can assist the training of researchers in art and design participatory practice. Raising awareness of these skill sets can help to define this area of emerging practice that is participatory by nature, but also helps to define new emerging pedagogies that counter many established learning criteria that have defined much of today's professional design practice.

Firstly, why does participatory practice differ from professional practice and why is it now an essential ingredient of 21st century modern day design practice? In the last thirty years designers have essentially been 'forced' to be more participatory by the deregulation of local government design services that in the heyday of the mid-20th century dominated housing, the design of public spaces and community projects, etc. This politicisation of design was highlighted in Ramia Mazé's TRADERS closing conference (Mediations, 2016) talk on Politics and Design Agency. Through the deregulation of local services and the privatisation of public, design has by necessity become political and designers, as agents of change, now need to be more ethically aware of the nature of what they are doing and for whom.

That is why now I think it vital to chart this recent rise of participatory practice, where its roots lie in earlier debates on 'reflective practice', which cemented the traditions of professional practice (till 2008) and tested in Live Projects, that often deploy a triumvirate of interactions between community/ designer-teacher/ designer-student in acting as 'bureau de change' (Brown, 2015), creating something which is more than just a by-product of a brief given by a client to be executed by a designer.

Jeremy Till argued that much of the earlier theorising of reflective practice in the 1980s was for maintaining a pedagogical status quo that the professions supported (Till, 2005); a systemic belief that to exist as a 'professional in practice' replicated lessons given in one-to-one design tutorials, and that Schön's 'reflective practitioner' (Schön, 1983) essentially ratified this pedagogical model of which many of today's design professionals are alumni. So the DNA of most designers is hardwired by their education, preventing them from operating as 'traders' without losing the fundamentals of their professional training.

Yet, Live Projects break from this tradition – in promoting collaborative practice by their very nature, offering opportunities for design authorship to be shared and 'traded', whereby roles and specialisms potentially even trade places. As such and for

professional practice to be participatory, the role of the ‘experiential’ in art and design theory is key. The internalised reflection of the art and design professional, promoted by Schön and Kolb’s Experiential Learning Model (Kolb, 1984) of the 21st century has become a newer form of externalised reflective practice where ‘trading’ mimics the highly contextual, situated and contingent contexts of Live Project pedagogies recently theorised by Brown and Moro, where a Live Project “is not (...) a place to reflect on one’s own learning, but (...) a place to share that reflection with others” (Brown et al., 2012, p. 7).

What I have learned directing the Live Projects programme at the Royal College of Art since 2014, is that often if the final design is a product of participatory practice then it is also more likely, by design, to be polyvocal and encourage participation and engagement. And this aspect of participatory practice “in, by and through design” (Frayling, 1999), connects nicely with the talk that Jane Rendell gave at the TRADERS closing conference highlighting the subtleties whereby “what it takes to make a relationship to make a thing” (Zeiger, 2013) becomes “what it takes to make a thing to make a relationship.” In other words, the designer not only addresses the brief, but throughout the development of the project constantly challenges it and adds to it from multiple directions as authorship is shared and transferred between the stakeholders in a form of collective criticism allowing designers to reframe, reclaim and reanimate themselves: “Collective criticism is born of the social web. It operates on, across, and between platforms. It is made up of individuals, but takes its power from responsive dialogue, not autonomous authorship. Simply snarking from the ether doesn’t count” (ibid.).

DH

It is indeed good, Adrian, to not forget the important role of the material practice in participatory processes. In my view, too often participation is reduced to being a social process. Especially in the fields of art and design, the material plays a crucial role in rallying participants around a common (or contested) goal. I find the translation of “what it takes to make a relationship to make a thing” into “what it takes to make a thing to make a relationship” very interesting. It connects nicely with Jon’s effort to combine the experience of engaging in a dialogue with hands-on, physical research, e.g. by paying attention to the material environment, i.e. doors, common spaces, and windows in his case study in the urban context of a Gothenburg neighbourhood, and by involving children in modelling activities, i.e. making what he describes as ‘tool-artefacts’. In this sense Zeiger’s claim that collective criticism is born of a social web

covers only one part of the collective. I would argue that this web or collective also includes objects, spaces, devices, data, and other ‘non-human actors’ – to refer to actor-network theory – which I consider to be an integral part of the TRADERS network.

In his contribution on curating, Michael also refers to this heterogeneity of the network when he quotes Maria Lind (2010, p. 63), who describes curating as “a way of thinking in terms of interconnections: linking objects, images, processes, people, locations, history and discourses in physical space like an active catalyst generating twists, turns and tensions”. Collaborating in generating and transferring this kind of knowledge is quite complex. As Michael argues, it requires negotiating and mediating, which in turn include adaptation and transformation. There are hardly any givens, almost everything is contested. I think all TRADERS researchers agree with Michael that aiming to ‘trade’ in this way means trading with care.

RMB

David, above you include data in your list of objects, spaces, and devices. Herewith you refer not only to the material as a vital element in the ‘social web’ but also to the immaterial, digital and virtual. In the TRADERS programme, Saba and Naomi engage in working with data collection, apps, and interfaces. They both re-design digitally mediated processes around public space and public issues. How would you describe the similarities and differences between Naomi’s and Saba’s approaches?

DH

Naomi’s and Saba’s approaches share a sense of urgency regarding the impact of ICT, and argue for paying more attention to both the risks and affordances of ICT in participatory art and design practices. They also both focus on the ways in which data becomes information (cf. Design Academy Eindhoven’s Knowledge Circle, 2017). However, both their interests and methods are quite different. Naomi focuses on the impact of different design choices regarding digital mapping interfaces, for instance to what extent one is enabled to co-author (co-create) a map’s legend (or key) and in this way influence which (raw) data can be turned into (meaningful) information. Saba focuses on the use of data in urban design processes. She urges designers to critically appropriate Big Data technologies and develop and use so-called ‘civic applications’ to generate data that can be processed into information; this can play a meaningful role in civic empowerment and emancipation in urban design and architecture and citizen engagement in public space. Where Naomi reconsiders the design and use of digital maps as a spatial practice, Saba reconsiders exclusionary consultation and decision-

making processes in urban design and architecture. In that sense, they are addressing quite different participation issues.

DH

As was outlined in the Introduction and as has been made clear in the various contributions, participation can mean a lot of things, and is valued differently in different contexts. While some argue strongly for increasing public participation, others warn against an instrumentalisation of publics (cf. Miessen, 2010). In this book, the TRADERS' researchers have presented a variety of designs of concrete testbeds to (re)conceptualise, (re)claim, or (re)animate participatory art and design research in their own way. Adrian, Ruth, how do you address issues of participation in your own practices? Do you recognise some of the challenges addressed by the researchers?

AF

For me, TRADERS is more about placing value in the 'experiential' and it is this that is the beginning of a journey into the 'art of trading' that relies on new criteria and systems that transcend the straitjacket of the 'scientific' specificity of knowledge, and embrace the narratives and freedom of experience found in new sources of knowledge and emerging forms of professional practice. More akin to techniques of knowing and doing that grow through the experience and practice of a craft, but which adhere so closely to the persona of the practitioner as to remain out of reach of explication or analysis, as argued by Michael Polanyi, introducing a series of lectures on *The Tacit Dimension* (Polanyi, 1966), "that we can know more than we can tell" (Polanyi, 1966, p. 4). An interest in 'what it means to *know*', which was further elaborated by Tim Ingold (2013), as to what it means to 'tell', who argued that personal knowledge is not quite as tacit as Polanyi thought, that the verb to tell has two related senses. On the one hand, a person who can tell is able to recount the stories of the world. On the other hand, to tell is to be able to recognise subtle cues in one's environment and to respond to them with judgment and precision. Using the analogy of a hunter's narrative sprinkled with contextual details, Ingold argues that storytelling gave novices the chance to discover for themselves what meanings the stories might hold in the situations of their current practice.

To tell, in short, is not to explicate the world, to provide the information that would amount to a complete specification, obviating the need for would-be practitioners to inquire for themselves. It is rather to trace a path that others can follow. Thus the hunter, educated in stories of the chase, can follow a trail; the trained archaeologist can follow the cut; the competent reader can follow the line of writing. The key thing about stories is that they provide practitioners with the means to tell of what they know *without* specifying it (Ibid., p. 110).

For me it is about finding the shared aspects that by nature are, importantly, non-specific so as to then define and make them specific collectively. That is how we work best and extend our authorship in, by and through the design of new materials and ways of making that invariably require closer collaborations through sharing and trading with experts in digital fabrication, robotics, and material engineering. In trading we extend our authorship as well as devolve control, which sounds counter-intuitive but is a welcome result of collective criticism that comes through participatory practice.

DH

It is interesting that you connect the practice of storytelling with that of participation. One could argue that there is a certain tension between the two, in the sense that storytelling is often understood (and practised) as a unidirectional activity. However, I agree with you that storytelling requires taking ‘subtle cues’ from one’s environment and responding to them. I think a good storyteller looks around and listens, in order to notice things that need attention and possibly adapt what is being told. In a recent text about storytelling in design (Hamers 2016, p. 79-81), I argue that the act of storytelling is an act of intervening. Stories can be beautiful, enjoyable, and entertaining, but they can also make us understand something and make us change perspectives – stories can move us. In my view, this transformative quality of storytelling means that (designers as) storytellers have a responsibility to act with great care, which requires them to not only develop content and skills, but also address and explore ethical aspects of the craft. This indeed requires designers to create space for what is not yet specified. Furthermore, if designers are to be the agents of change that they are so often asked to be (and claim to be), then they should have the courage to allow others (listeners, users) to suggest alternative meanings, to recount the story in ever-changing contexts. In this sense storytelling can be considered a participatory practice, one of collaborative meaning-making.

RMB

I would like to specify a bit further what participatory practice entails. In general, I believe that there are still many projects which centre around ‘author design’ and most of the projects that claim to be participatory are rather co-designed. I consider co-design to be a “a design methodology, a form of participatory design strategy, which aims to involve the stakeholders to ensure that designed products or processes meet their needs and comply with the diverse requirements of the users” (Mateus-Berr et al., 2015). The difference between co-design and a participatory approach is that co-design aims for collaboration at some important phases of the process whereas participation

engages stakeholders during the entire process of creation. Whereas some forms of co-design seem to merely replace the former User Centred Design, most participatory projects are more political in their attitude, recalling efforts in the 1970s to involve workers in the design and use of computer applications in the workplace in Scandinavia (Ehn & Kyng, 1987) and the human rights movement in the United States. Huybrechts (2014, p. 121-122) argues that a participatory mindset requires of designers to both become involved in a thorough way with participants (e.g. communities or organisations) and give up a considerable part of their authorship or autonomy over a project. It is very difficult for designers to give up the *Gestaltung*.

DH

As a final question, what do you think will be the next step in reflecting on and further developing the practice of participation in art and design research?

RMB

I believe that the answer to this question depends on the political regime in a country. If politics takes less responsibility – as we currently see happening in many European countries – some citizens will become more active to address their own needs and engage more with their surroundings. We can already witness an increase of improvisation and local interaction that in some respects includes elements of what Adrian describes as “collective criticism”. The nature of markets may change considerably as users become more active participants and overtake makers’ (authors’) roles. To some extent the ‘makers movement’ and FabLabs enable them to use design to meet their wishes. This, however, may cause a crisis in art and design, because if “everybody is an artist” – echoing Joseph Beuys’s slogan – then perhaps the role of artists and designers becomes more marginal. I am confident that ‘conventional’ artists and designers will still be needed for expert tasks, but I expect more and more to work as ‘translators’. Referring to the tension between becoming involved in a thorough way with participants and giving up a considerable part of one’s professional authorship and autonomy, this new practice will reveal new ‘risky’ trade-offs (Huybrechts, 2014) and will have uncertain outcomes. That said, does the emancipated user still need designers? Yes, according to Frank Wagner (2015, p. 104), designers will have to re-invent their job description, again and again.

AF

We are on the cusp of a step change in which professionalisation of design is about to be further deregulated and fracture into a myriad of multiple design disciplines and specialisms necessitating freer and more fluid trading. Out of this will emerge new

taxonomies of professional practice, arguably more defined by the popularity of collective criticism, manifest in the universal language of 'hashtags', redefining a system of parts in flux and dialogue with each other rather than an entity that is recognisable as a whole; a system based more on pragmatics of uncertainty (Massumi, 2015).

I believe the rise of diversity in alt-professions will manifest in new cooperatives and collectives. We may well see the return of earlier models such as 'workshops' that, as Sennett (2012) has argued, have been since ancient times a model for sustained cooperation, both as the most important institution anchoring civic life and as a productive site practising the division of labour to a far greater degree than farming. It seems a desire to make technical competence a new social experience has returned, as is manifest in the recent popularity of MakerSpaces in the UK, currently totalling 98 and counting (Nesta, 2017). MakerSpaces or FabLabs are networked models of small-scale making-based businesses within the fabric of the urban environment, leaving many to believe that future sustainable cities will exist on redistributed manufacturing, where skills and products are made and shared – where potentially every citizen is a TRADER.

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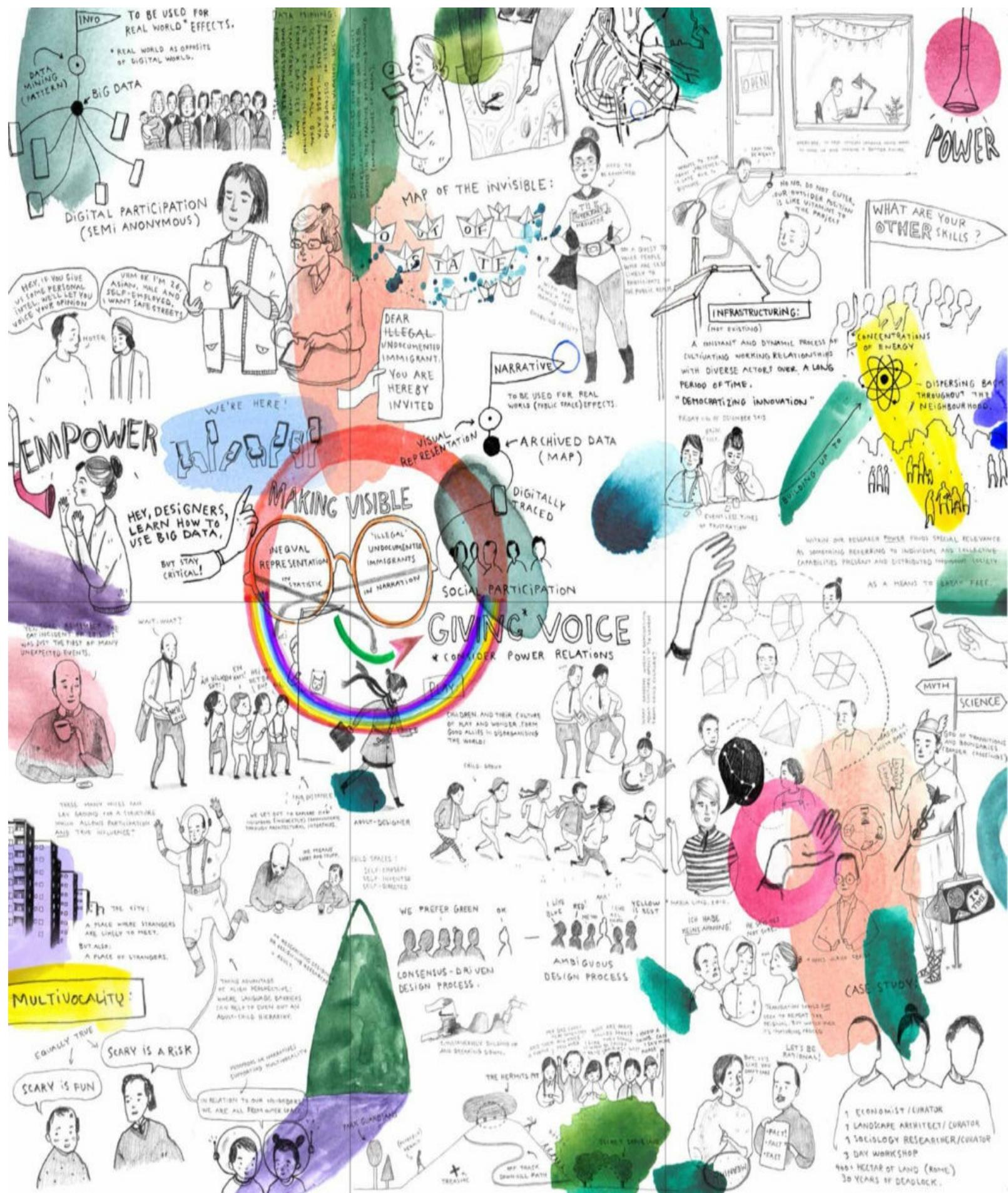
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26

VISUAL DIALOGUE –
IDA LIFFNER



We invited Ida Liffner to illustrate the key concepts, quotes, and activities characterising each approach as well as some of the relations and confrontations

between them. Specific elements of this graphic dialogue are used to introduce each of the six approaches in the monologue section. We chose to work with Ida because we are fond of her illustration work and because she was familiar with the TRADERS programme. As an outsider she has been able to give us a new (meta) perspective on what has already become so familiar to us. In the creation of her graphics Ida was given complete artistic freedom.

The visual dialogue can be found in its entirety as a poster inserted in the printed book, or as a digital file in high resolution following this link:

[Visual Dialogue by Ida Liffner](#)

BIOGRAPHIES

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dpr-barcelona is an architectural research practice and independent publishing house based in Barcelona, founded by Ethel Baraona Pohl and César Reyes Nájera, dealing with three main lines: publishing, criticism and curating. Their work explores how architecture as a discipline reacts in the intersection with politics, technology, economy, and social issues. Their research and theoretical work is linked to leading publications in architectural discourse, such as *Quaderns d'arquitectura i urbanisme*, *MAS Context*, and as Archis advisors for *Volume* magazine, among many others. For the third Think Space programme with the theme 'money' they have curated the exhibition *Adhocracy ATHENS* (together with Pelin Tan) at the Onassis Cultural Center in 2015. dpr-barcelona is member of the Future Architecture platform, the first pan-European platform of architecture museums, festivals and producers, bringing ideas on the future of cities and architecture closer to the wider public. dpr-barcelona.com

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TRADERS

TRADERS – ‘Training art and design researchers in participation for public space’ – is a programme that focuses on developing a methodological framework to work on public space projects in participatory ways.

The TRADERS programme explores ways in which art and design researchers can ‘trade’ or exchange knowledge with multiple participants and disciplines in public space projects and – at the same time – trains them in doing so. TRADERS allows to bundle the strength of disciplines such as art, design, architecture, and urbanism to commonly approach and challenge other disciplines and sectors.

TRADERS opens up the debate about the roles that art and design research can play in engaging people in public space and public issues.

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TRADERS

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