

Living with scale

Human Cities

Challenging the city scale
2014-2018

Investigation

Living in the city scale

• London

• Brussels

• Saint-Étienne • Milan

• Bilbao

Human Cities

Challenging the city scale
2014-2018

Investigation

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Design

State of the Art

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Introduction

Since 2014, and thanks to the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union, the Human Cities_Challenging the City Scale project has been exploring the new and different ways urban dwellers can reclaim their urban space. Through the study of local actions initiated by communities, it promotes the development of an urban public space based on sustainability, conviviality, and solidarity. These values are shared by all the partners of a network that has kept growing since its creation: Cité du design Saint-Étienne [FR]; Politecnico di Milano, Milan [IT]; Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, Ljubljana [SI]; Clear Village, London [UK]; Zamek Cieszyn [PL]; Design Week Belgrade [RS]; Pro Materia, Bruxelles [BE]; Aalto University, Helsinki [FI]; FH Joanneum, Graz [AT]; Association of Estonian Designers, Tallinn [EST]; BEAZ/Bilbao-Bizkaia Design&Creativity Council, Bilbao [ES]; CultureLab, Bruxelles [BE].

After *Celebrating the Public Space* in 2006 and *Reclaiming Public Space* in 2010, the new project of the *Human Cities* programme, *Challenging the City Scale* questions urban scale and urban co-creation. *Human Cities*, a 12-partner network led by Cité du design Saint-Étienne since 2014, is a European project whose aim is to study how civil society, through community action, organises itself to regenerate the urban common space—a square, a street, or a neighbourhood, etc.

As more and more people in the world live in urban areas¹, cities must cope with many socio-economic and environmental issues. Challenges such as rising social inequality, social segregation, housing and energy crisis, a global economic crisis that limits the financial involvement of public authorities, unemployment and climate change... These are systemic issues that question the livability of future cities. At the same time innovative socio-technical opportunities have developed in the world and have stimulated large-scale alternative systems of organization based on collective or individual initiatives. This raises the question of preserving or creating the best lifestyle conditions for urban dwellers. Or in other words, is it possible to reconcile economic development, respect for environment, urban densification, and well-being?

These issues encouraged some city-dwellers to transform their environment through the actions of neighbourhood committees, associations or com-

¹ (33% of the world population lived in a city in 1960, 54% in 2016)/UN source)

munities. Their projects inspire and are inspired by a specific vision of society: reconsidering our living environment in relation to process design values such as creativity, experience and experimentation. The aim of this publication is to give a state of the art of their initiatives. Following a methodology² conceived by the Research Pole of Cité du design Saint-Étienne, the partner cities of the *Human Cities* programme have listed about 90 case studies in which inhabitants participated in the requalification of a public space, the strengthening of social cohesion, the preservation of a natural, architectural or culinary heritage, etc. These different initiatives are presented in three parts and have been described and problematized by three teams of writers.

The first part, written by the *Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia* (Ljubljana) lists various collaborative and co-creative tools used by communities to transform their public space. It presents new ways of involving residents and users in the conception phases of a transformation project. The second part, written by the *Politecnico di Milano* tackles the aims and issues of urban space: how can cities become more inclusive, attractive, playful, or comfortable? The third part, written by Saint-Étienne Cité du design, analyses these initiatives in terms of durability: can a balance be found between community projects and public authorities? What roles can the institutions involved play?

This publication relates specific case studies to theoretical concepts. Each of the twelve partner cities contributed to this collective work through a paper on a chosen subject or case study. The result is an instructive and detailed collection highlighting the ideas and experiences of those who work to enhance the livability of European cities.

² The State of the Art is a research tool developed by the Research Pole of the Cité du design. Its aim is to list the most innovating projects initiated by creative actors (designers, artists, architects, engineers, etc.) and to describe, categorize and problematize them according to a chosen theme. The description process is essential since a state of the art requires a fully documented text with numerous examples and the general principles involved in the creative process. This methodology is based on an approach that requires an objective description of the pro-

jects rather than a value judgment on what they are. Once listed, the projects are organized to identify recurrences. The different texts are accompanied with an iconography that goes beyond illustration to enter in dialogue with them. The aim is to identify research fields from what already exists, from what is implicit, or even missing. This is the prospective dimension of a state of the art that is here being requested: what exists as a chance to list future possibilities and the questions left unanswered by the numerous projects consulted upstream.

Slowly Ljubljana

Urban Planning Institute
of the Republic of Slovenia
Ljubljana

Tools for participatory provision
of urban public spaces:
Human Cities experience

The Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (UIRS) is the central Slovenian research organisation in the field of spatial planning and related disciplines. Founded in 1955, UIRS was transformed into a public research institute in 1993, a status which continues to apply to date. Its basic activities are research, education and publishing. It also operates a public library with an extensive literature stock and large collection of other references in the field of spatial planning.

Active citizens eager to change urban environments for the better utilising their own ideas and activities are good news for any future oriented city. The knowledge, abilities and other resources that individuals or groups of citizens hold, are a precious resource for the functioning and social cohesiveness of a contemporary city.

Unfortunately these attributes are often overlooked or not fully taken advantage of by the official mechanisms in top-down urban management approaches. Only wise governing and administrative bodies fully incorporate citizens into city making procedures to reach better final results. At the same time the grass-root and self-organized movements that are completely independent from the representations of official powers are on the rise.

This paper focuses on both types of participatory practices in the field of public space provision – initiated and led by some forms of power in a rather top-down manner as well as completely self-organized and sustained initiatives based on bottom-up approaches, which all have one common goal – to achieve places that will better respond to the needs and reflect the aspirations of the users.

The case studies collected during the Human Cities project illustrate the different ways the active participation of citizens is making urban public spaces better. More than the kind of the improvements that the initiatives across Europe seek to implement, this first part focuses on the tools utilised in getting citizens on board with the particular process of participative public space improvement.

For decades, the active participation of citizens in city planning has been an established concept, or at the very least a desire, in all levels of urban planning documents – international, national, and local. Many internationally approved documents stress the importance of democratic approaches to city planning issues in general (Habitat Agenda, 1996; UN, 2005; EC, 2010; Adopted Draft of the New Urban Agenda, 2016) and point out the specific role that the co-creation of public spaces plays in achieving better living environments in particular (UN Habitat, 2015).

These participatory approaches have gained additional attention with the rapid spread of information technologies that have reframed and reconfigured the relations between the players and the receivers in the reconceptualisation of the city (Brabham, 2009). The spread of personal devices that allow individuals to express his/her own points of view on urban design issues and instantly share it with wider communities is the new reality that city officials are still trying to make sense of (Campagna et al, 2013). There is a common understanding across the disciplines that making use of possibilities offered by new technologies is an opportunity for strengthening the participatory approach to urban planning, not only because it helps to achieve a more just solution in the end (Michell, 2003), but also because including users into the processes can bring about true innovation (Von Hippel, 2005).

Even if the political agendas and technological means develop in support of crowdsourced information for participatory urban planning, it still does not happen as often as one would expect. Research shows there are still major concerns related to the legislative aspects of the approach, data and identity protection, data processing, and issues related to the reliability of the information gathered this way (Buddhadeb, 2014, Correia de Freitas and Amado, 2015).

That said, citizens are not merely waiting to be asked their opinion; instead they are actively organising. The Human Cities' experience suggests grass-root activities related to public space reclamation are present everywhere in Europe and significantly contribute to the improvement of public spaces in various forms and by different actors (Copeland, 2008). The scene is vibrant and the recent economic downturn has obviously not suppressed it. On the contrary in fact, with less money allocated towards official city-led public space improvement programs, citizens have self-organized and have more say in their local environments (Nikšič, 2014).

The following review shows the variety and richness of the tools and methods that are used for participatory public space design, ranging between bottom-up and top-down, building on face-to-face or virtual encounters among actors and making citizens active to various degrees. Not all of them can be interpreted as tools for participation in the public space, but all of them can be seen as tools for participation in the improvement of public space. This means that some of the tools represent only a step in a series of activities to change real, physical public spaces for the better but have no direct, physical relation with the spaces themselves.

1. Formal vs Informal

The review is structured along three main lines that offer a deeper insight into the state of the art. The first distinguishing criterion is related to the level of formality or informality of the process the tool is used for. The public participation in public space redesign can be initiated and encouraged by the official structures of power or by civil society in a bottom-up manner which influences the choice of the tool. Some tools better fit the requirements of the well-structured, pre-defined, and hierarchical participatory practices used in official and legally binding procedures. Other tools suit the unstructured, informal and rather spontaneous functioning of civil initiatives that often do not have an official form but are built around the strong enthusiasm and contribution of the members.

An approach classically used in urban planning is that which formally includes public opinion out of obligation. Public opinion is asked only at a certain point of the whole process. This tool does not encourage a co-creation and development of ideas, but rather helps to collect comments of what has been proposed by some official bodies.

Saint-Gilles Esplanade/Sint-Gillis Voorplein
BRUSSELS, BELGIQUE

In 2013, the municipality of Saint-Gilles in Brussels decided to form a pedestrian area in Saint-Gilles Esplanade. Parallel to this political decision, there was a vote calling for projects to renew and reclaim the potential public space area, which was there but needed to be transformed. The local public authorities went through a long process of selection to finally decide in 2014 to select the project of the Brussels-based landscape architecture Bureau Bas Smets. This studio developed their idea and presented it via an exhibition of sketches, which were then the basis for the consultations with the wider public.



Saint-Gilles esplanade perspective, Bruxelles, 2014
© Bureau Bas Smets

Workshops are a more interactive form of a participatory process. They demand active input from the actors. In a workshop an idea or product is normally not only discussed and debated, but is also taken to a new level. Oftentimes workshop activities seek to solve an initial problem and aim to deliver a concrete result, either in an intellectual, non-material form or as a physical product.

Je participe à la rénovation de mon école
SAINT-ÉTIENNE, FRANCE

Je participe à la rénovation de mon école is an initiative developed by the Cité du design and socio-cultural center Espace Boris Vian in collaboration with local and regional authorities. It runs in seven public schools in the French department of Loire. The initiative is built around the provision of better schooling environments via a design led renovation. It is embedded into a wider idea of UNESCO's Creative Cities Network and combines two assets of St. Étienne: its historic industrial heritage and its contemporary development of creative industries. It aims to get the young population active in the design of their own (schooling) environments. The main principle is to achieve a well-designed environment with the pupils, working through the whole process from the initiation of ideas to the subsequent development and implementation. This is achieved through a series of steps among which workshops play an important role. Workshops are used at an early stage in order to raise the awareness of the importance of good and participatory design. The workshops are the medium that links designers and municipal schooling authorities, but also includes pupils, parents, teachers, other members of school staff to develop common scenarios and plans in a collaborative way. Workshops are placed into a broader and rather formal protocol that aims to assure that all main objectives of all involved parties are met (e.g. fulfillment of the official curricula).

Within such a robust framework there is enough space for fruitful interactions, exchanges, sharing and collaboration.



The primary school of Petit Coin, Saint-Étienne, France, 2012
Designer:
Agathe Chiron
© Aurélien Dupuy

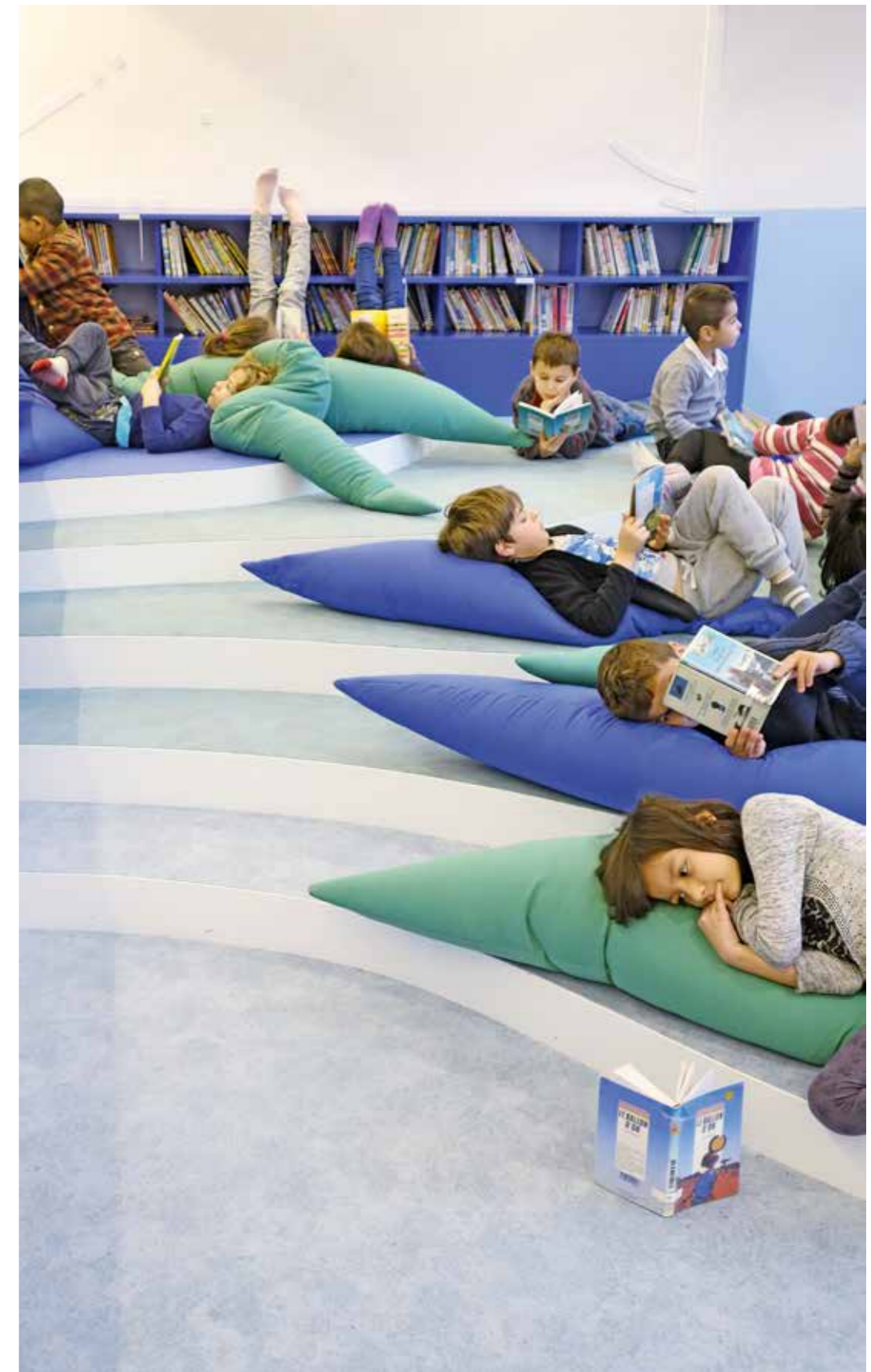


Another tool consists in organizing competitions and public calls for ideas. Competition is a participatory practice that demands less organizational management in terms of direct involvement with the public. This may be one of the reasons for its popularity in top-down participatory approaches. Entries are not usually interrelated as they are developed separately. It is up to the management authority of the call to merge the valuable ideas and thus make this approach qualify as participatory. An important issue is also the reach the public call has—if it does not reach a considerable volume of the potentially interested public, its participatory dimension is additionally threatened.

BilbaoTxokoak
BILBAO, SPAIN

The initiative is managed by Bilbao Ekintza, the local development agency of the Bilbao City Council with a public service mission to improve the quality of life of the citizens and the city of Bilbao. It ensures that development maintains a socio-economic balance among the city's districts and their residents. One of the tools is holding international and interdisciplinary public tenders, open to any individual or group, that seek new ideas for the urban recovery of greater Bilbao. The proposals are submitted anonymously which allows citizens to compete with professional bodies on an equal basis. This provides a venue for true citizen participation. All the received proposals must estimate the implementation budget. They are ranked according to a series of criteria, such as artistic quality (contribution to local identity), particularity (ability to address the requests and demands of the local population), viability (capacity for social and economic invigoration), innovation, visibility, sustainability of materials and techniques, and robustness and interdisciplinarity (ability to integrate diverse

The primary school of Petit Coin, Saint-Étienne, France, 2012
Designer:
Agathe Chiron
© Aurélien Dupuy



disciplines). One of the important aspects of the public tender is also the participation of the general public at a selection stage. All proposals received are published in the newspaper and the general public can vote on the proposals via their telephone. The result of telephone voting represents 25% of the final vote by the jury; the jury is composed of representatives of the city administration, local associations and academia, as well as some recognized personalities from the worlds of culture and media. Two editions of the call for proposals have been organized so far and the response of the public has been very high.



Exhibition with the selected proposals for the Bilbao Triennale Awards, Bilbao, Spain, 2013

The organization of various interventions in local public spaces by citizens themselves is a grass-root approach that embeds many essences of true participative practice. The occasions and activities that inspire people to come out of their private homes and be active in the public space vary. They are for example developed around the topics of food production/delivering/preparing/sharing, improving the physical conditions of public spaces, or providing cultural/socializing opportunities.

Bazilikijada
IZOLA, SLOVENIA

Izola is a small town in coastal Slovenia, where the historic tradition of a vivacious street life has started to vanish with the development of modern society, even when the social ties stay relatively strong. A group of locals recognized the problem of diminishing street life for the quality of daily life. They self-organized an Izolani association with the main mission to facilitate the conditions and events that will enliven their local public spaces. They also strive to inspire other citizens to organise events and meetings that will get local populations to spend more sociable time outside their homes. One of the best known and widely recognized events is Bazilikijada (Basil street-event). It was born spontaneously out of a habit of an inhabitant who was planting basil in the pots in front of her entrance door. More neighbors followed and soon the street was filled with pots planted with basil. This completely changed the appearance of the street and made it more inviting. Some inhabitants got the idea of organizing a street event where locals and visitors could try various dishes prepared with basil.

The event has been organized five times so far and has not changed in character. It stays spontaneous to its core—those who want to participate can propose their own dishes and offer them on the street. The only form of formalization is represented by the officially registered Izolani association which was needed in order to lead legal procedures with the municipality (registering public gathering, etc.).



Bazilikijada, Izola, Slovenia, 2015

Basil street-festival pops up on streets of Izola and encourages people to meet and to share basil food and other basil products.



Urban walks are a popular tool used in raising awareness of local public space issues. Walking, an obvious daily activity, is upgraded to focus on a theme and enriched with additional activities (such as play and creating, solving a quest, etc.). It is a handy way to get people on board in developing their own and active attitudes towards public space. With some adaptations, the tool can be used with any generational group which also makes it fully implementable in intergenerational communities.

Pazi!park
LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA

One of the association's goals is raising the general awareness of the importance of good public spaces for the quality of urban life. They try to achieve this by organizing playable walks around places. Different techniques are implemented such as photographing, video-recording, and sketching along the walks; each activity is adapted to the topic and the specific public involved.



Play in another way?, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2017 © Luka Vidic

A series of playful walks in the Tivoli Park were organised to bring nature in the cities closer to different types of users.

Space as a three-dimensional physical category is hard to mentally grasp for some people. Communicating the ideas for its

redevelopment may be thus difficult to anyone not trained in three-dimensional expression. This can often make thinking and expressing oneself about the possible future of one's local public space difficult. In such circumstances model making is a convenient and popular way of involving people. The approaches vary; from a built-to-scale model which uses predefined elements to consistently reflect the actual context, to a more artistic approach where the model building techniques are free and left for the participants to choose.

Place it!
U.S.A

Place it! is a design and participation based urban planning practice using model-building to involve the wider public in the planning and design processes. From his experience as an urban planner for the past 20 years, James Rojas realized just how difficult it was to get average citizens to participate in the urban planning of their city. Urban planning is a field that remains relatively inaccessible to nonprofessionals because of abstract language, and challenges reading maps and plans, etc. From this observation, he set up a participative planification methodology. Through workshops, James Rojas works to understand how to change the planning process and make it more open so that everyone can become an actor in the planning of the urban environment. The approach is built on the conviction that every citizen is an urban planner because everyone has a relationship with a city—simply by using it.



Envision Pacoima Wash, Bradley Street Festival de la Plaza, Los Angeles, CA, 2014 © James Rojas

2. Real vs Virtual

Another criterion for classification of participatory tools is related to the rapidly evolving new communication and information technologies. They open new channels and offer new opportunities for communicating one's convictions, ideas, and desires related to urban public spaces. When new technologies are implemented in participatory practices, rarely is the whole process undertaken in a virtual sphere, more often it is in combination with the tools for face-to-face encounters.

An example of such tool for a real-time-and-space interactions among users are hands-on-sessions. They aim to deliver a final product for a better functioning or improved experience of a concrete public space and are often used as a teaching method or a method of passing one's knowledge to other members of a community. Techniques such as street furniture design sessions or urban greens maintenance sessions, etc are often used. They happen in a real space and take the context of a concrete space as one of the starting points.

Sa.Und.Sa
ITALY

Sa.Und.Sa is an architecture studio created by Salvatore Carbone and Sara Omassi in 2007. The team runs participatory meetings to reactivate local common places and increase social cohesion. An essential part of their workshops is the construction of concrete elements that improve public spaces, done in a collaborative process with the citizens on board, and with prior analyses of the local context and discussions. Design workshops and interventions where participants design and (re)construct places by themselves are central to *Sa.Und.Sa's* approach.



Collaborative workshop UPDATE#05 - Abascio fountain in Altavilla Irpina, Southern Italy, 2015 © SaundSa



Collaborative workshop UPDATE#01 Estia, la stanza del focolare, in the ruins of Senerchia village, Southern Italy, 2013 © Sa.Und.Sa

In relation to public space participatory design, collective mapping is often used as a phase of the creative process. It aims to build a common, collectively approved record of the state of the art in a definite space. At the same time, it may envision the possible futures. The method of collective mapping is most often based on pre-defined, self-evident icons that are understandable to everyone and become a basic means of expression and communication. The icons can also be developed jointly through the collective process. In some cases, the mapping is closer to an artistic act as the language of expression is entirely dependent upon the producer.

Demo Graz Ya!
GRAZ, AUSTRIA

The initiative developed mapping into a joint creative act that aims to construct the collective examination of a certain place. The specifics of their approach are in a creation of self-evident icons that enable communication without a common spoken language. This is in line with, and contributes to, the belief that everyone who participates is an expert—no extra skills are needed for expression about urban matters.



Collective mapping iconoclastas, community garden Niesenberger, Pablo Ares, 2012



Social media as a universal contemporary tool of communication can be easily leveraged in participatory processes related to public spaces, as both public spaces and social media are a podium for people's interactions. Thus, it makes sense that social media be an easy entry point into the sphere of public space reclamation. Some initiatives may use social media as a starting point for their activities, while the interactions in the offline world may remain a side activity. Social media is especially handy to facilitate discussion, debates and awareness raising campaigns.

More city to Helsinki
HELSINKI, FINLAND

More city to Helsinki is a group of people established on Facebook to support urban Helsinki through networking and online discussions. The aim is to create an easily approachable forum for people with the same interest in developing the urban fabric of Helsinki. Its main motto is "We are creating a better city for everybody". The group quickly became popular in city planning circles, it also gained the media's interest and formed itself into an important movement with over 7000 members. From the beginning the discussions in the group have been actively moderated, keeping threads clean of provoking and off-topic comments. Many experts in the field, such as architects, city planners, and urban researchers, participate in the discussions. However, a large number of participants are laymen with an interest in city planning. The group has overcome the hurdle of digital to physical. The actual content of the group is digital or could even be described as intellectual capital. The group has the ability to affect the political climate regarding city planning and the results are already visible in the execution of ideas in some areas.

The three main modes of interactions within the group are: the interaction of the members who take part in the discussions, the knowledge and opinion exchange of other group members, and the extended influence of people who are not members,

but are connected to the group through intermediates. The strengths of the group are its transparency, approachability, and taking good care of moderation. Without these the group would not be as influential, nor as popular as it is today.



Urban Helsinki's proposal to extend the pedestrian center, born from the urban ideas movement developed by the group *More City to Helsinki*. © Urban Helsinki

Digital mapping is not merely an extension of collective mapping into the virtual world—more than a one-time exercise it is a continuing process that can attract various publics along the way. It is a flexible tool that can be quickly adjust to any new directions in the debates. It allows accumulation of extensive data-sets and requires good data management for sensible results.

maTIKO
BILBAO, SPAIN

In order to get to know the Urizarri neighborhood of Bilbao from the perspective of its citizens, a collective mapping was organized based on the usage of new technologies. Through this a broad database of various public space issues specific to local inhabitants was established. The activities were based on a digital workshop aimed at acknowledging, sharing, and communicating the characteristics of the Urizarri neighbourhood with a new, alternative approach closer to the needs of the people. By introducing this form of digital mapping, insights not often evidenced in official mappings were revealed. This form of crowdsourced information-collection is also an important tool for the activation of social relations within the neighbourhood, as it encourages people to share location-based information. Moreover, the dynamic form of this approach has high economic potential as a platform for the stimulation of the urban economy through the collaboration of business clusters, start-ups, and entrepreneurs.



Outcome of a workshop made in *Matiko* Auzo Factory, Bilbao, Spain, 2014

3. Acting vs Attending

The form in which a certain tool manages to encourage (or not encourage) a single citizen or a wider group of citizens to participate in improving public space is crucial. The level of involvement of citizens varies considerably from case to case. Based on the way citizens contribute to a public space reclamation initiative, two distinguished types of participation and corresponding tools can be identified. The first one is participation by acting. In this type of participation, the actor is alert and actively invests their knowledge, skills, ideas, time and resources in making things happen. The second type is participation by attending, where the actors hold a more passive position, i.e. a position of a follower or observer.

A typical approach used to facilitate participation by acting is volunteering. Volunteer activities have a strong driving force in people's self-determination for changing things for the better. Volunteering as a participative tool in improving public space has many forms. It is often related to improvements of the physical layout of a place or its environmental conditions.

Zimsko čiščenje
MARIBOR AND LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA

The winter cleaning of courtyards, access paths and public walkways from snow is performed by young volunteers as part of the activities within their students' organisations. In Maribor the activities, titled *Zimsko čiščenje* (Cleaning in winter), have a 10-year tradition. The Slovenian capital city, Ljubljana, joined recently with the project *Pomagam + migam = kidam* (I help + I am physically active = I clean the snow). The purpose is to offer help to the elderly and vulnerable groups of people who may have difficulties cleaning snow from the front yards of their homes. Both student organisations are in contact with elderly homes and centres, which have a good insight into the needs of the elderly and others in need. These activities strengthen inter-generational cooperation, as well as encourage other relevant actions, such as spring and autumnal work in the gardens surrounding elderly people's homes. These type of students' activities are reminiscent of the working brigades from socialist times, when the working groups were organized around volunteering in the spirit of brotherhood and comradeship. For today's student population, taking part in such actions is an opportunity to know the value of volunteering, friendship, respect, team work, and provides an opportunity to leave a lasting footprint of their own work.



Zimsko čiščenje, Maribor, Slovenia, 2014 © ŠOUM

Students enjoying in helping older people.

Another approach is to make people compete to achieve certain goals or gain a prize by contributing to a better public space. Most often the competitive component is used as a means to get people to participate, while other more profound objectives are tackled along the way. An issue could be that participants lose interest once the competitive factor is withdrawn from the activities.

Spust po Ljubljani
LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA

Spust po Ljubljani (Descent down Ljubljana) is a one-day ecological competition in the form of rowing, which has been running on Ljubljana's river for more than 20 years. It began when two local scout groups of Bičkova skala and Posavski kurirji got the idea to organize an activity in the city to promote the scouts' way of life, and raise the ecological awareness in relation to Ljubljana river. In these competitions groups of young people must solve tasks at individual checkpoints placed along the river. The tasks vary from passing on information, improving skills, to just for fun; while the central tasks involve collecting garbage along the riverbed. Thus, the City of Ljubljana has identified this organised action as a contribution to the revitalization program of the Ljubljana river, and has partly financed the activities. After several years the competition still inspires many young and young at heart, as it promotes quality, healthy and socially responsible expenditure of leisure time, as well as offering an unforgettable experience of the "water" public space.



Spust po Ljubljani, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2016 © Rod Bičkova skala

The competition tasks strengthen an ecological note, as well as test members' physical fitness on the water.



Learning by doing is a superb long-term tool, at its core it encourages participants to become active not only during the course of the activity but afterwards as well. It has the capacity to pass on knowledge, skills, and abilities to a greater number of people. Once acquired, participants can keep utilising them on their own. In relation to urban public space, the activities are often related

to disseminating knowledge on urban gardening, producing and maintaining street furniture etc.

Place au changement!
SAINT-ÉTIENNE, FRANCE

In 2011, the public urban planning agency of Saint-Étienne (EPASE) opened a public call for a redesign of a 670m² left over space in Châteaucreux area. Won by Collectif Etc., an association of students of architecture, the call eventually developed into a truly participative design process—as a number of local players and associations were invited to redesign the site. Three types of workshops have been set up and were fully open to anyone: a carpentry workshop to build all the urban furniture; a landscape and gardening workshop to create a shared garden; and a graphic design workshop to work on imaginary housing. The main aim was to teach people to take an active role in the maintenance of their public space while also socializing.



Place au changement!, Saint-Étienne, France, 2013 © ETC

Temporary public space with urban furniture and collective garden made after collaborative workshops.

—
The anonymous brownfield became "the square of the Giant", named after the wall painting made by street artists Ella&Pitr during the collaborative workshops.



Some initiatives use nutrition as an incentive for people to pause and socialize in the public space. Building on one of the basic human needs it hardly fails to get a response. Nevertheless, it normally has to be combined with other approaches to achieve some more considerable and long term public space improvements.

Odprta kuhna
LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA

Odprta kuhna (Open kitchen) is a unique food market project that brings food lovers and culinary adventurers to the stands of Pogačarjev trg—the open public space in the heart of Ljubljana and next to the city's main food market. For one week, it gathers chefs of carefully selected restaurants, inns and tourist farms from all over Slovenia to cook right in front of visitors in the open urban space. It has quickly become a synonym for

a Friday-get-together featuring international food and drinks, alongside beloved traditional Slovenian fare. The event attracts large numbers of locals, as well as tourists, and turns the nearby public space into a truly bustling place of informal encounters and delicious food.



Odprta kuhna, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2017 © Odprta kuhna

Lunch time at the Open Kitchen Food Market.

—
A place to meet friends, grab a bite and catch up.



The embellishment of public space by different forms of art can entice people into a space. When designed in a co-creative way or when conceived in a way that enables the passers-by to modify and interact with it, public art may not only act as a generator of the passive presence of people in public space, but a generator of new social bonds and activities.

Bus with us
GDYNIA, POLAND

The placement of interactive boards that can be altered by the manual intervention of passers-by, changed the bus stands into more than just a place to wait. They have attracted local children and their parents from neighboring housing estates to spend their time playing there, and have transformed their time waiting for the bus into a playful experience.

They are juxtaposed against the modern tendency to commercialise street furniture with billboards featuring advertisements. By transforming the bus stops into places which encourage creative activities, they now remind residents of the importance of art and playfulness in everyday life. The bus stops that underwent the transformation were chosen according to their frequency of use and their proximity to the neighbourhood; located along the main communication route, their impact also reaches all the users of public transport in the city. This case study notes the role of public art in achieving sustainable urban planning goals—it is a form of encouragement for the citizens to use public transportation more often.

Place au changement!, Saint-Étienne, France, 2013 © ETC

The anonymous brownfield became "the square of the Giant", named after the wall painting made by street artists Ella&Pitr during the collaborative workshops.



Odprta kuhna, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2017 © Odprta kuhna

This is how Fridays look like at the lovely Pogačarjev trg square in the heart of Ljubljana.





Odperta kuhna,
Ljubljana, Slovenia,
2017 © Odprta kuhna

View from the
top - sunny afternoon
at the Open Kitchen
Food Market.



Bus with Us, Poland,
2013

Bus stops are good
places for creative
activities.



Zusammensetzung. Mit Abstimmung
GRAZ, AUSTRIA

In essence this participative project aims to address the conflicts in public space by the usage of an artistic intervention. The central art object is an oblong curved table placed into public space, which acts as an attraction in and of itself, but also encourages citizens to sit along it and talk to each other in an effortless way. The curved form of the table encourages the changing of conversational partners by simply turning one's body in another direction—and through this enables the possibility of interactions amongst people from different walks of life. The role of the artistically designed table is not merely to arouse someone's attention, or to make him/her pause in space by sitting along the table, nor does it just improve the visual attractiveness of space, above all it inspires people in the public space to get active, to participate, and to play a role. As such it can be declared as a new genre of public art.



Zusammensetzung,
Graz, Austria, 2014
© Wolfgang Rappel

The main goal of the
initiator "InterACT-
Werkstatt für Theater
und Soziokultur" is to
deal with the political,
creative and lively
"Space of Possibilities"
in a city.

4. Discussion

In practice, formal and informal approaches are often combined, proving to be a recipe for success. Oftentimes the first step towards the participatory approach is initiated by an official body as a part of the prescribed public-involvement procedures demanded by law. Nevertheless the review of the participation tools that are used in formal approaches shows that true participation is rarely achieved this way if not linked with other actors skilled in moderation of truly bottom-up approaches. For example, public hearings might be a good step towards opening the discussion of urban planning matters to a wider public but not a sufficient step to a truly participatory public space design.

The main strength of the formal tools lies in their embeddedness in the official frameworks which gives them legitimacy from the start. Some bottom-up initiatives may face a shortage in this field. This can be a problem when the activities must be linked to some formal procedures to reach optimal results. Therefore some completely informal and spontaneous initiatives get formalized at some point and to a certain degree (e.g. registering as a society, interest group, civic club, etc.) in order to profit from the resources that are available within formalized procedures. This gives them the legitimacy to take the advantage of acquiring public funds or communicate with official structures more easily.

In the future the questions of how to support the fruitful balance between formal and informal approaches must be exhaustively addressed. This would be beneficial for both—formal and informal—approaches. Formal approaches would among other things benefit by getting a closer insight into what is going on in real life situations, while informal approaches would benefit by gaining some official and institutionalized support, which might be crucial to make their activities sustainable in the longer term.

Contemporary participation has not been limited to real space and time encounters as virtual interactions among actors are on the rise. The Human Cities inventory however shows that many classical participation tools built around face-to-face gathering of people are still an essential part of urban public spaces reinvention. Rather than being a competitive threat to classical approaches, virtual technologies are an important support.

So more than a question of which tools—face-to-face or virtual—have more potential to strengthen the participative approach to public space design, the issue of how to combine them in a most fruitful way must be addressed. Another important question is how any of them could initiate participation, i. e. make people enthusiastic to join and take part in participatory practices. Here the choice of the right tool seems to be crucial and depends on the audience it addresses—while younger crowds would most likely easily follow any digitalized approaches, older generations would prefer more classical ones.

Initiatives often start their activities by using the tools that support the participation of wider crowds by their mere attendance. Only when they grow in their experience, competences, and self-esteem do they try the tools that support participation by acting. This appears to be a well-reasoned approach on one hand as participation by acting is more demanding in organizational terms. On the other hand, the initiatives that do not integrate tools for



Zusammensetzung,
Graz, Austria, 2014
© Wolfgang Rappel

An "open" city is hospitable; diversity and differences are appreciated. Is Graz an "open" city in that sense? Do inhabitants of Graz deal with their conflicts in an open way in public space? To explore that question a unique and clearly visible table sculpture was designed by the Austrian artist Markus Wilfling.



Zusammensetzung,
Graz, Austria, 2014
© Wolfgang Rappel

The sculptural installation displayed on the main square of Graz.



participation by acting in their work may risk keeping superficial players in a participatory approach arena.

It is important to note that both groups of participatory citizens are needed for a reclamation of public space to be successful—without active players the activities would not happen, at the same time without people who come and make use of what is offered, the goal of organizing an activity to enliven public space would not be reasonable.

In practice the same tool used in participatory processes can involve both crowds—the one that contributes actively and the one that plays the role of a passive observer, follower or consumer of what has been offered. The roles are often blurred and changeable. It is important to understand these dynamics, namely the triggering factors that make people switch from a passive to an active role. This opens another important perspective—operating with the two groups of actors (active and passive) gets too superficial at some point. Each of the two groups is very heterogeneous within itself and includes actors with diverse characteristics. In order to really understand them, sub groups must be identified and even personal approaches undertaken.

Concluding thoughts

The Human Cities inventory has revealed the existence of a wide range of tools for the participatory provision of urban public spaces in Europe. They have proven to be an important means of sensitizing citizens to their local environment, but even more than that, they give them a chance to make local environments better through their own contribution.

Such an approach is beneficial for citizens as it gives the chance for their aspirations related to their local environments to be fulfilled. It also makes the social ties within the community stronger. In addition, it is hugely beneficial for the governing structures as well; not only in terms of making use of the local human resources available, but also by contributing to a truly inclusive society which is the goal of any democratic authority. Implementation of participatory tools in public space design bears an even greater importance as a bridge between all the stakeholders whose interests often compete in urban environments. An early and consistent implementation of participatory tools can help reduce the tensions and channel the discussions into a more constructive direction.

As such, these tools ought to be implemented regularly and developed even further by leveraging new technology, legislative advancements, and any other means at society's disposal. It is crucial, however, that by doing so the fundamentals are not undermined; it is human beings who are the real tool that makes a city a pleasant and habitable place.

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Omteci II

Milano

Design Department,
Politecnico di Milano

Prototyping the city:
goals and issues

By Davide Fassi & Laura Galluzzo

Politecnico di Milano is the largest technical university in Italy. It offers undergraduate, graduate and higher education courses in engineering, architecture and design. The Department, together with the School of Design, the Research Doctorate in Design, the Laboratories and the POLI.design Consortium, forms part of the Politecnico di Milano Design System, and has come to represent the largest research and education institution in the design field in Italy and one of the largest in the world in terms of numbers of permanent teaching and research staff (with over 100 internal staff), rivalling centres of excellence at the international level.

The Design Department promotes the significance of design and its practices as a key element of research and education; it practices the capacity to act within the various processes of production of tangible and intangible goods, focusing on the central role of the individual, the group, the community, and society as a whole. It highlights history and culture as founding elements of design, in an ongoing dialectic between the contemporary and historical roots. It shares methods and tools, which are continuously evolving, as a key element to support design, with various cores of the different areas of research cross-pollinating each other. Finally, it embodies a polytechnical approach: a virtual and concrete coexistence with an extremely broad, diverse range of polytechnical subjects, in which design not only plays a mediating role but is also a critical element which steers activities towards design ends and methods.

“Public spaces mirror the complexities of urban society” (Madinapour, 2010) and in the contemporary age public places become fluid spaces (Baumann, 2002) of exchange and participative action, not only as contexts but as scenarios able to embody new meanings, contributing to the creation of community identity (Borlini, Memo, 2008). Public space, forgotten for years by industrialized society, is regaining its traditional importance in our contemporary consumer and service society. However, below this veneer of conformity something is moving in the opposite direction: public spaces are becoming places of social innovation, offering a context where creative communities act (Meroni, 2007) to bring original solutions to everyday problems that the current economic system is no longer able to provide.

The bottom-up actions of these active groups of citizens who find their own answers combine with the top-down actions of institutions (Mulgan, 2008). This creates opportunities for social transformation and sustainable growth that is modifying the existing pattern, replacing the old individualistic values with a new sense of community, sharing, exchange of knowledge and information, and mutual support. The reclaiming of public spaces allows people to come together in an inclusive way—opening roads, squares, and the city itself to free enjoyment by all. This happens when people become fully aware of their rights and responsibilities, opening horizons to endless opportunities.

There are two main aspects to public space: one social and the other relating to its shape and form. The social aspect is the true essence of society and it affects the aesthetics and form of the urban site. As pointed out by Manzini (Manzini, 2010) a contemporary designer must be able to interpret the city as a place of “social laboratories where new ideas and new solutions are being invented and experimented within all fields of daily life”, where culture leads to new forms of citizen participation and a deeply renewed sense of community.

The first chapter analyzed the tools used by the various communities to set up the public space projects that were investigated during the research work carried out by the international Human Cities team. This chapter will analyze the prototyping processes used in the various projects and how they were carried out. An aspect central to all the case studies is the way in which the reference communities brought the spaces/services into being. It is this that makes it possible to analyze and evaluate the cases themselves, but also how they come to be enjoyed by a wider public.

Not all the projects are characterized by the same time frame: some are temporary, others are one-offs, others are ephemeral—lasting only a few days or hours—and are never repeated (Fassi, 2012). The duration of a project depends on various factors: the characteristics of the local area, the community running the project, the aims to be achieved by the reappropriation of public space. Some ephemeral actions often have a longer-term impact on the surrounding area because they raise questions forcefully with the communities living there and often also with the governing and administrative bodies.

However, above and beyond the varying duration and aims of each case, all the examples analyzed are tangible projects that have, over a longish period, been accomplished or prototyped. The prototyping process allows the ideas, projects and solutions adopted to be tested, for and with the users and those who will benefit from them at the times and in the ways envisaged. It thus serves as a sort of provisional run-through of the project. Prototyping is a tool

that comes from the ambits of product design and is also used, in different forms, in service design. In the projects illustrated here it has also been applied to space design.

The tools used for service prototyping tend mainly to be evocative simulations, but they may also be very realistic descriptions: ranging from rudimentary acted-out scenarios with hand-sketched screens or improvised props, to detailed mock-ups of the system, the environment and the staff. (servicedesigntools.org)

The main goal of prototyping the solutions is to make the ideas immediately tangible by focusing on the people at the center of them. It also allows different ideas to be explored in parallel (Brown, 2009). Prototyping public spaces means designing and creating installations, events and strategies that lie somewhere between the design of spaces and of services. Public spaces offer a perfect context for testing and prototyping bottom-up projects and actions with the local communities. (Meroni & Sangiorgi, 2011). Appropriate timing is vital to the expert designer's role in these processes of involving people in developing social innovations, because the initiatives must become self-sufficient and the community independent of professional expertise.

The selection of projects presented in this chapter shows how the strategies enacted in urban space may have different objectives, and may lead to different characteristics in different places. For this reason each paragraph heading contains an adjective that characterizes the public space in question: attractive, inclusive, well-equipped, playful, domestic. The main aim of the cases described in each paragraph will be to make the space attractive or inclusive, or to equip it better, and so on. This does not mean that the only aim of the community was the objective stressed in the paragraph in question, it is simply a way of classifying the cases, which helps to highlight the goals and the main issues in the designing of public urban spaces.

1. Make the public space attractive

Public space is full of possibilities, but the way people make use of it depends on what it is like. The capacity to bring a number of people together in a given place is strictly linked to the attractiveness of its form, use and structure. But what is it that makes a public place attractive?

Sometimes it is the perceived characteristics of the space itself or the presence of a scenario that differs from the surrounding context: a green space, a beautiful panorama, a quiet secluded spot within the city. More often however the attractiveness of a place does not depend only on its appearance, but also on how it can be used: a group of people come together there because they are attracted by the possibility of enjoying the particular situations, structures or services it offers.

Over time the attractiveness of its services, in particular, has contributed to determining one of the characteristics of the contemporary city: its fragmentary nature, which has turned some city areas into mere places of transit, or into deserted spaces where people never stop or even pass through (think for example of ex-industrial areas). With this in mind, there are many documented initiatives that seek to combine the demand for convivial places in the city with the need to reconnect certain areas with their surrounding urban fabric. These projects often develop around a strong theme that is able to stimulate the interest of a wide range of potential users: art, design, music, trade, social participation.

In Italy, one such initiative, which seeks to revitalize little-used places in the city of Milan and appeal to large numbers of users, is the Public Design Festival. This is an international research project that promotes research and the development of virtuous activities and innovative ideas capable of changing the way public space is seen and used, thus facilitating the meeting of design professionals with ordinary citizens.

Public Design Festival
MILAN, ITALY

The main promoter of the initiative is the Esterni group, in collaboration with the Municipality of Milan which is responsible for the bureaucratic side. Esterni is a cultural enterprise that has been designing public spaces since 1995. It designs community services, promotes and organises events to bring people together and develops the required participatory communication campaigns. We particularly owe Nicolò Bini and Anna Spreafico, the event co-ordinators, for the idea of the first Public Design Festival, which was held from 18th to 26th April 2009. Since then a selection has been made each year of the most innovative proposals and projects for turning areas of mere transit into accessible, interesting, enjoyable places, in other words into attractions. The event takes place during the Milan Design Week, which is the best time to find a high concentration of design professionals in the city and to trigger a design mentality among ordinary citizens, enabling them to see themselves as a community.

Esterni sees public spaces as the starting point from which to design the city of tomorrow, and design as an instrument capable of anticipating, interpreting and responding to the new needs of contemporary living by analysing the various aspects of public places. By means of an effective system of on- and off-line communication people are encouraged to discover new places in their city, which has temporarily been invaded by design installations, inviting them to experiment services, urban furnishings and solutions that make public places more sustainable and fun to go to. The places and activities change each year, so that the event is always stimulating.



Public Design Festival, Milan, Italy, 2009/ongoing © Luca Rotondo

The urban orchard: an unexpected green oasis in the urban chaos.

Milan is basically a city on a human scale, so it is an example of how specific, underused places need to be revitalized from time to time. Cases such as the city of Bilbao in Spain, where public space has recently undergone radical transformation, are rather different. From the dull, grey city suffocated by steelworks and containers from the industrial river port that it was until the seventies, it has become a green, human-friendly city with a new vocation for culture and tourism. Many of the initiatives aimed at citizen re-appropriation of public space see art as an attraction

factor. This is certainly true of the art events in the *Bilbao Art District*, a public/private venture in support of the visual arts in Bilbao that turns the city into a meeting point for various artistic figures and disciplines, as well as bringing art to the general public.

Bilbao Art District
BILBAO, SPAIN

Art as renewal: the *Bilbao Art District* continues along the path of transformation started 15 years earlier with the opening of the Guggenheim Museum, which has proved to be the winning option in giving the city a new identity and attracting visitors, as well as creating jobs. The main sponsors are the Bilbao City Council and the Provincial Council of Bizkaia, in collaboration with the most important museums: the Guggenheim, the Museum of Fine Arts, Rekalde Exhibition Room, the Maritime Museum and the shops of the Ensache district.

Now at its third edition, the initiative takes place during a weekend in May and offers a rich programme of art events, exhibitions, musical performances and other activities until late evening in the streets galleries of the city. The aim of design in an event of this kind is to increase the level of participation: both implicitly at event management level and explicitly through a series of activities designed to raise awareness and attract the public, especially young people, towards the arts. To this end, conferences, themed trails, guided tours, competitions and activities for children are set up, along with actions designed to make galleries more welcoming and user-friendly and art more approachable and affordable. The aim is to turn galleries into meeting places and encourage a critical sensibility among the public, a gamble for the future.



Bilbao Art District, Bilbao, Spain, May 2016

Amiarte, an association of people with risk of exclusion, making an art intervention in the street. Bilbao Art District project.

The importance of culture in the redefinition of public space is a central theme at this moment in history: social problems, environmental challenges and the economic crisis, all need to be tackled with innovation and creativity. How is it possible to redefine our current economic model and launch economic growth on the basis of knowledge? For the organisers of Belgrade Design Week the answer is design, an intuition confirmed by the noteworthy social appeal of the event: over 15,000 visitors each year, 50% of whom are locals, 30% regional and 20% international guests and visitors.

Belgrade Design Week
BELGRADE, SERBIA

The *Belgrade Design Week*, in Serbia, has become the most important one-stop connection points between the creative industries, businesses, governments, the academic world and the

mass media in south-eastern Europe. It is an event that sees the participation of all sectors of creative industries: design, architecture, publishing, branding, publicity, communication, art, photography, sales, education and culture management.

Founded in 2005 as a non-governmental organisation, the *Belgrade Design Week* was the first festival of the creative industries in Serbia and the South East of Europe. In subsequent years it has successfully woven numerous intercultural and commercial relationships between the world design scene and the regional industries of Belgrade. The initiative falls into the great cultural festival tradition, acknowledging and filling the gap created by the total lack of creative industries in Belgrade and Serbia and bringing them into the world design scene. This was an important mission in spite of the absence of an adequate design sector in the country such as to justify a fair of this size. In Serbia the creative community falls victim to the dominating values of pop/commercial culture and the Belgrade Design Week holds among its objectives the challenge of indicating a new direction to follow: it is not by chance that "Brand New World" was the motto of the 2014 edition. As far as regards the urbanistics of the city, with the disappearance of the Yugoslavian Federation many government buildings lost their function or were downgraded to secondary level functions, a far cry from the glory of their representational past. The Belgrade Design Week also acts in this sense, helping to bring new life to such points of cultural reference in the city that have fallen into oblivion and offering visitors the possibility of taking a trip back in time through these buildings. Over time many places have been reopened or converted, such as the Museum of Contemporary Arts or the Stakloplan Factory, constituting a heritage of Serbian industrial architecture.



"Freedom squared" conference, Belgrade Design Week, Serbia, 2012 © Vladimir Mladenovic

The appeal of design and art is capable of inspiring events with high resonance and of acting virtuously, but another important attraction is music. *The Flow Festival* in Helsinki and the Urban Project in Tallin are examples, both focusing on the potential attraction of music, but different in terms of aim and the way the public space is used. *The Flow Festival* reappropriates urban places in decline, whereas the Urban Project seeks to introduce an element of novelty and entertainment to make all inside and outside public space in Tallinn more interesting and fun to frequent.

The Flow Festival
HELSINKI, FINLAND

The Flow Festival emerged in 2004 from an idea by Tuomas Kallio and friends of his from the jazz collective "Nuspirit Helsinki". The idea was to offer something new in the music and events field in Finland. The first editions of the festival were held in

the ex-railway houses: Parrukatu, 00540, Helsinki. Starting as a relatively small soul and jazz event, it succeeded in attracting 57,000 people in 2004 and had to move to a new home in 2010. The organisers continued the tradition of reappropriating and enhancing public space, by choosing the vast abandoned area of the ex-power station at Suvilahti, easily reached from the centre by public transport or on foot. The growing interest in the Flow Festival is due to the attention paid by the organisers to the experience offered by the event, as well as to the selection of the concert programmes: Flow is famous for its unique atmosphere, its art and decorations and the food and drink available. The general mood fosters comparison and exchange between different subcultures and although Flow has become one of the most important music festivals in Finland, it has kept its indie/underground identity which creates a feeling of community among its participants.

Tallin Jazz Festival
TALLINN, ESTONIA

Tallin Jazz Festival was conceived in 2010 as an experiment for 2011, the year in which Tallinn was elected European capital of culture. The organiser was the Jazzkaar Festival whereas the creative mind belonged to the saxophonist Siim Aidla; the George Ots Music School, the Estonian Music and Theatre Academy of Tallinn, the Viljandi Culture Academy in Viljandi and the Eller Music School of Tartu also collaborated in the project. In 2015 these were also joined by students from the Saue and Pärnu music schools. The Urban Project mainly takes place in the city centre, but the idea is to take music to unexpected places with a programme that varies in sentiment and state of mind. Performances are held inside public places such as shopping centres and airports, on public transport (trains and trams), as flashmobs in the city squares and in schools during break. The idea is to surprise the daily life of the city with brief performances of no more than 30 minutes that do not call for long introductions and feel like improvisations, in which both musicians and listeners have fun.

In the Flow Festival, design contributed to the identity of the event with as much visibility as the musical component. In the Urban Project, however, it plays a key role in achieving the objectives of the initiative: firstly by including the project within the Jazzkaar Festival from the point of view of visual communication, and secondly, on a concrete level, by creating easily-transported, pop-up solutions that are easy to dismantle and reassemble to guarantee the surprise effect of the performances and the success of the musical component.

When observing life in contemporary cities, the need to reappropriate spaces outside the home often emerges from the community itself in order to weave new social relationships (convivial situations, the sharing of goods and services, play parks) and to create working and/or commercial situations (new connections and co-working) or connections between citizens and services (installations and infrastructure).

So, we go to a place for the interaction possibilities it offers and the services we can find there: these are sometimes pre-existent services made functional again by reviving the flow of users who return to make use of them, or the introduction of services ex-novo to animate a place lacking in attraction. By using urban space as an attraction in which to develop new cultural and eco-



Flow Festival Helsinki, Finland, August 2015
© Jussi Hellsten



Tallinn Jazz Festival, Estonia, 2013
© Rene Jakobson

conomic relationships, Bilbao also reconfirms its status as an *avant-garde* art city with *Bilbao Arte Shop*.

Bilbao Arte Shop
BILBAO, SPAIN

Bilbao Arte Shop is an initiative involving art schools that turns the city's shops into a show case for the students by offering a unique experience for the discovery of art and commerce in the city. The organisers and promoters of the venture are the Bilbao City Council through Lan Ekintza, a local public company. The participants are 75 students from the faculty of Fine Arts at the University of the Basque Country, guided in their projects by professionals in the art sector from the Bilbao Arts Foundation. Finally, the Innovative Trades di Bilbao (CIB), a platform promoted by Lan Ekintza, seeks to reunite traders in an innovative spirit to make the city's commerce a benchmark for creativity and innovation. *Bilbao Arte Shop* is 50% funded by the European Social Fund: the project was presented on 29th June 2011 and is now, at its 5th edition, well-consolidated in the panorama of city events. The *Bilbao Arte Shop* experience is organised in guided visits and trails through the 13 city districts, in groups of 8-10 people previously booked by email or phone.

The *Arte Shop* is an innovative collaboration between young artists and the traders of Bilbao and an enriching opportunity for both. Students can take up the challenge and try out their creativity outside the academic environment, without limits of form and materials, focusing on the commercial aspect of the product. The resulting trail through the shops is as attractive and stimulating as a true exhibition, one of a kind and unrepeatable. To conclude the event, a prestigious jury selects three winning works and the public awards a special prize for the work it considers the best. The idea of the *Bilbao Arte Shop* is an example of how design can support the commercial activity in a city, offering a different environment in which people can enjoy a new purchasing experience.



Arte Shop, Bilbao, Spain, 2011/ongoing

Guide visit to art intervention in the shop. Sombreros Albero.

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Art Intervention in the shop using information and telecommunication technologies: Itxaso Denda.



In Italy, one intervention that uses art to relaunch the local economy is the Farm Cultural Park, an interesting project in which art becomes an integral part of a local context: the heart of Favara, a small historical Sicilian town in the province of Agrigento, transformed into a permanent exhibition of contemporary art.

Farm Cultural Park
FAVARA, ITALY

Farm Cultural Park is located in Favara, a small town in Sicily. The creative idea comes from the grassroots, the local community itself or, more specifically, from two of its members: Andrea Bartoli and Florinda Saleva, who decided to invest energy and money in renovating the centre of Favara and creating an open-air art gallery. As well as themselves, other artists take part in transforming the public space, experimenting with different types of creative residence inside the city, and the residents of Favara welcome visitors and artists and make them feel at home, making sure that their stay in the town is pleasant and comfortable. In particular, there is a group of citizens known as FUN (Favara Urban Network) made up of young volunteers who contribute by animating the town centre. As the project grew and the need for funding appeared, other people intervened in support of the initiative by creating a philanthropic community to back the *Farm Cultural Park*. The project consists of 7 small courtyards displaying a typical Arabian architecture (known as "Cortile Bentivenga", which form the backdrop against which artists can create their temporary works.

At present the complex counts three art galleries and a series of exhibition spaces: Farm-young-art, the Bartoli-Felter Foundation, Artegirovane Sicilia, the Terry Richardson Fan Club and the Uwe Jaentsh Museum. There is also a centre for contemporary architecture, which curates the temporary projects, a library, spaces for meetings, parties and events, language laboratories and educational departments for adults and children. Various fringe services are provided associated with catering (unconventional restaurants like "Nzemmula"), accommodation (a diffuse hotel) and transport (bike hire).

The importance and courage of this great venture can be appreciated even more if we look at the political context in which it has emerged: an area of Italy characterised by its lack of institutions and dominated by the local mafia. The town also has a high unemployment rate and little attention is paid to urban planning. This great project was made possible by the private initiative of Andrea and Florinda and the philanthropic community, who purchased the buildings in the town centre with their own investments and set up a private, community venture in the public interest of the entire community and its visitors. Currently, with its intense cultural programme, Favara has become a new centre of contemporary arts in the south of Italy and an example of how innovative, bottom-up drive can generate attraction, rivitalising the social, participatory dynamics of a community.

The ambits of intervention were designing public space (redeveloping buildings through the original use of the courtyards) and designing interiors to stage exhibitions (there are permanent and temporary exhibitions, but each space has been designed to display something). The result is fascinating: the *Farm Cultural Park* has become a place of visitor flows, of social and artistic interaction, a hybrid environment in which residents and visitors live

side by side with no distinction between public and private. From the farsighted initiative of two single individuals it has become a project that has benefitted the entire community of Favara.



Farm Cultural Park, Favara, Italy, 2010/ongoing

Art installations at Farm Cultural Park. (Source: <http://www.farm-culturalpark.com>)



Earth Market MILAN, ITALY

Earth Market is the agricultural market that recreates the atmosphere of traditional Italian markets, recuperating old values and experiences thanks to the power of conviviality, and re-launching spaces and relations with specific actors in the city of Milan. The project is organized through a co-funding agreement subsequent to a memorandum of understanding signed by Slow Food Italia and Parco Agricolo Sud; the main sponsors are the Milan City Council and the Fondazione Cariplo in the ambits of the "Feeding Milano Project-Energy for Change", a research programme promoted by the academic institutions (Politecnico di Milano, Design department and the University of Gastronomic Science) and Slow Food Italia. The main actors involved in the initiative are around 40 producers of a wide range of products, mostly from Parco Agricolo Milano Sud. Both the producers and ordinary citizens are beneficiaries: the first because of the opportunity to sell directly to the client, the second for the opportunity to purchase high quality products at good prices.

Another fundamental activity was the "Ideas Sharing Stall", animated by a group of design researchers at the Politecnico di Milano. It was run from the start of the activity until 2014 and consisted of a series of co-designing activities. The idea was to have a physical space in which to make contact with the potential users of the services to be developed and with whom to co-design, prototype and try out the food services before their actual implementation. *Earth Market* started as a simple farmers' market, but it went on to become a new public space for the neighbourhood and was taken as a point of encounter between citizens and as a moment of recreation because of the fringe

activities held there (Taste Workshops, co-designing meetings, music performances). The role of design in the *Earth Market* is basically explicit: the market is part of a research project in which designers participate and apply the skills they have developed in the various fields of design (interior design, service design, communication design). The result is the design of a new public space, in which the conviviality created by the combination of food, initiative and entertainment is the fundamental characteristic. An important role is played by service design with the Ideas Sharing Stall, which leads ordinary citizens to take part in the co-designing of new, short-chain, food and catering services, and in understanding people's needs and wishes. Thanks to this activity various services have been tested, among which the "Farmers' food box", the "Local Distribution System" and "Yes week-end". The last of these relates to a zero kilometre tourism system in the Parco Agricolo Sud Milano.



Earth Market in Largo Marinai di Italia, Milan, Italy, 2014 © Feeding Milan



Conviviality, music, art and design; fun and social participation; the creation of new synergies; the search for specific services or experiences: many are the components that contribute to making public space attractive. In this panorama design possesses the tools for organising, managing and structuring events and activities and making them successful. An attractive public space will be a place designed to fulfill and satisfy the expectations and needs of its citizens, connecting each individual to others and to the city dynamics. Attractive space is living space.

2. Make the public space inclusive

Inclusive is an adjective that means "having or embracing other things within", it evokes an image of unity in which a larger part contains smaller components within it. When associated with a public place this is a quality which indicates that the possibility of enjoying that space, and taking part in the activities carried out there, is extended to as many subjects as possible. For this

to occur it is essential that the right decisions be taken at the designing stage; that potential user diversity be taken into account so as to create projects (for products, services, spaces etc.) that can be used by everybody, not only by people with disabilities but also by other sensitive user categories: mothers with babies and toddlers, the elderly, children. From this we can deduce that the term is strictly connected with design for everybody (DfA_Design for All), indeed it is part of the definition itself: "Design for All is design for human diversity, social inclusion and equality".

To understand the importance of adopting a DfA method it is enough to look at some statistics: according to the EIDD - European Institute for Design and Disability, Stockholm 1993-there are 150 million people in Europe with disabilities, at least 15% of the total population, without considering that anyone may become temporarily disabled. The percentage of the elderly population is also significant: again in Europe, 100 million in 2000 and with an increase to 113.5 million forecast for 2025, almost 30% of the total population (source Istat - the Italian National Institute for Statistics). This is a vast user sector for which design is called to intervene to break down the current barriers faced by the elderly, such as limitations to mobility and access to public places, access to technology, need for health care and/or access to specific services.

The initiative partly owes its success to the working methodology used: designing effectively for diversity requires a close acquaintance with the users for whom the product or service is being designed. The best way of achieving this is to involve them in the creative process. Information plays a fundamental role, which means teaching professionals, students and institutions about the DfA approach and the benefits to be derived from inclusive design. This was the intuition of Ilona Gurjanova, president of the Estonian Association of Designers (EAD) and council member of the EIDD Design for All Europe, who saw the need to increase awareness of, and accessibility to, Design for All through the initiative *Cities For All-Tallinn For All*.

Cities For All, Tallinn For All TALLINN, ESTONIA

The project *Cities For All, Tallinn For All* started in 2010, bringing together a team of around 80 people including students from various European design schools, designers, representatives from the public sector and people with disabilities who wished to take part in the co-design process. The participants were asked to pursue three objectives: to make Tallinn more accessible and convenient for a wider range of residents (elderly people, young mothers and the disabled); to produce design solutions offering tangible results; to introduce the Design for All methodology.

After attending seminars led by design experts, participants divided into groups and worked on the development of solutions to three areas where accessibility was problematical: access to the city centre and cinemas; information design for public transport; products and services for the visually impaired. The output of the workshops were concrete design solutions that were presented during the European Innovation Festival and Design Night in 2011.



Cities for All, Tallinn, Estonia, 2010-2013

Urban walks and "gulliver maps", tools used by designers to involve various users to draw the guidelines for an accessible city.



Tallinn Transport TALLINN, ESTONIA

Tallinn Transport focuses on improving systems in the city by using tools, and making the surrounding urban panorama more people-orientated. The project started in 2011 with the aim of redesigning Tallinn's public transport system and making it more transparent, logical and satisfactory for passengers. The reason for this lies in the previous communication system for public transport services, which was created by various different entities (service providers, local authority departments, private ticket issuers and infrastructure management companies) and lacked any visual unity. The scenario to be worked on was restrictive: lack of resources (financial, human and time), bureaucracy and the infrastructure planning led the designers to opt for mainly strategic and graphic solutions because other elements such as lighting and the positioning of shelters could not be modified. Years of disorganised planning had led to visual confusion and a lack of regard for user needs.

The solution in terms of accessibility was made possible by unifying information, standardising and simplifying the message, thus optimising the user experience and making it more pleasant for all kinds of users (tourists, children, the elderly and people with disabilities). More specifically, the design action was to provide those responsible for public transport with the tools by which to manage, assess and create the communication graphics: a Tallinn Transport Design Standard was drawn up containing guidelines for the design and the communication elements (from infrastructure and information signposting to the definition of easily understandable language, coded by colour, typescript and layout etc.). The initiative won the 2012 Design Management Award, a significant accomplishment since it was the first time that a design management prize of such importance had been awarded to Estonia and confirmation of the social and commercial advantages deriving from good design management practice.



Tallinn Transport Design, Tallinn, Estonia, 2011
© Rasmus Jurkatam

We motivate people to choose sustainable mobility also for visiting leisure activities.

This example leads us to reflect on how urban mobility is capable of making public space inclusive, whether or not users have disabilities. Innovating the urban transport system, reducing the number of cars in circulation for instance, is an opportunity for citizens to make use of public space in different and more sustainable ways. *Threesome*, for example, is the provocative name of an initiative for the promotion of a sustainable form of mobility in the city of Ljubljana and throughout Slovenia.

V troje
LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA

A public event of *V troje (Threesome)* initiative on Novi trg square in Ljubljana promotes the benefits of using the bicycle for daily errands. Threesome is a competition in groups of 3 cyclists who will cycle to work for a month. The project owes its existence to the British Council in Slovenia, an institution that promotes cultural relations, language, the arts and other British values throughout the world and facilitates relations with professionals and people in general from other countries. In 2008, the British Council in Slovenia formed a group of 5 young professionals (a researcher, a web developer, a politician, a journalist and a public relations consultant) asking them to develop ideas for reducing CO2 emissions by cutting down the presence of automobiles on the road in favour of bicycles. Every day the kilometres covered by the group will be recorded, then added together to give the total for the whole month. The group with the highest total will be declared winner of the competition.

Since there are insufficient funds to carry out the project, it has now been put on hold and it is up to the three team members to decide whether or not to go ahead autonomously, asking the Danish Embassy in Ljubljana and other entities interested in sustainable mobility (Agency for Safe Transports, the Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, the Ministry of Transport and the Municipality of Ljubljana) to act as sponsors. The project was carried out for the first time in May 2010, and the prizes were placed at the disposal of the Danish Embassy. The success and continuing growth of the initiative enabled it to take place every year, with the participation of a different Ambassador as sponsor for the prizes each year, until 2015 when management was transferred to Bike2Work (a European mobility programme) and its name was changed to "Bring happiness to work".

Right from the beginning the project relied on careful design, particularly in terms of image: firstly its catchy name to attract the attention of the public, then its choice of logo and the production of souvenirs like T-shirts, posters and bike accessories.

The project was also advertised on the web through its internet website, which was subsequently improved to facilitate the user enrolment procedure. The primary objective was to raise awareness of the need to adopt more sustainable mobility solutions, but it owes its success in terms of participation to its competitive nature and to its social component as an opportunity to share an activity with different people: family members, work colleagues, friends and groups of the same age. Not only do cyclists benefit from the positive sides of competition and conviviality, but also the whole of Slovenia (especially the citizens of Ljubljana on account of the high level of participation), thanks to the reduction of particulate matter in the air and the benefits of cities and countries with fewer automobiles in circulation.



V troje (Threesome), Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2010-2015
© V troje.



The prospects opened of a more inclusive urban scenario are therefore not limited to offering a more accessible physical/spatial context, but also include the possibility for users to feel part of the activities and initiatives, and to enjoy moments of conviviality. Making a public space inclusive also means making a community aware of the problems and limits of the place they live in and, by using design tools, draw them into the renewal processes.

La Cartonnerie
SAINT-ÉTIENNE, FRANCE

La Cartonnerie is a sort of creative workshop dedicated to public places, shared by citizens and professionals who occupy urban spaces as architects, sociologists, artists, gardeners and designers. It is an innovation-generating environment, strictly connected to local life. Saint-Étienne is an industrial city that has felt the effects of the economic crisis strongly yet, in spite of this, has responded to the difficulties with creativity, associative dynamism and a cultural richness linked with immigration and the city's industrial past. *La Cartonnerie* has been installed on a 2000 square meter area in the heart of the Jacquard neighbourhood, located between the centre and the

newly-emerging creative district. It was created as a temporary, experimental public space by the association, Carton Plein, constituted on the initiative of EPASE (Saint-Étienne Institution for Public Development). Carton Plein is a multidisciplinary association that supports and promotes the public space projects proposed by its members: it is open to citizens from any sector, and occasionally invites external artists and researchers, hosted in dedicated residences, to bring their contribution to the research project.

Step by step *La Cartonnerie* has shaped itself to the opportunities the city offers: after the opening of the public site, collaborative activities and workshops were set up gradually creating an urban laboratory with co-working, and opening the residences in 2014. The association organises suitable situations (shared gardens, creative projects, events etc.) to encourage citizens to act tangibly on their living environment, and situations that facilitate exchange and the dissemination of information (workshops, performances, city walks, interviews and so on). The space is a sort of building site in constant transformation to open new perspectives.

In *La Cartonnerie*, design enables associative dynamics to form, thus developing the power of citizen action and participation in the invention of new models of urbanism. By exploiting the multiple human, cultural, physical and energy resources of a city, design leads to the construction of unique public spaces, and by applying new tools and forms of mediation it opens up the fabric of a city to its citizens and communicates the idea of people-centred public space. Design and creativity also work for local areas: in the long term they reinforce relationships between the city's institutions, local associations and residents. Creating a project of this kind during urban development enriches the social fabric and provides a real space open to debate.



La Cartonnerie, Saint-Étienne, France, 2011
© citedudesign

The experimental public space receiving the contribution of Human Cities partners for the summer edible garden and terrasse.



In other contexts, the active social participation of the whole city may be necessary when acting on the entire urban fabric. Large-scale projects acting in multiple neighbourhoods would require considerable financial investment and overall urban planning by the institutions, however, if citizens are well organized or they are adequately guided, they are capable of setting up small, scattered projects. One situation of this kind can be seen in Ljubljana.

ProstoRož
LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA

The *ProstoRož* association, literally "Space of flowers" is an initiative that explores, examines and opens up new possibilities for using public space in conformity with the needs of its inhabitants. It attempts to show how, sometimes, limited means and minimal actions are enough to fit out enjoyable spaces for going out, playing and working in the open air.

The association emerged from a particular urban and political context: after the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the economic concept of the free market was gradually introduced in Slovenia. It was a critical process for the city, which had to tackle phenomena like de-industrialisation, motorisation and suburbanisation. The centre of the city proved to be rather inadequate due to traffic and lack of services. On the basis of this observation the initiative was started in 2004, before the city council started working to improve the situation: the city renewal plan "Ljubljana 2020" was actually set in motion in 2006-2007. The idea for the project came from three women architects from the University of Ljubljana who were tired of their unappealing urban surroundings: Maša Cvetko, Ana Grk and Alenka Korenjak. Given the crisis in the building sector, they focus on bottom-up, participatory initiatives. Their projects are backed by other citizens, who carry out technical or managerial roles, and benefit from collaboration with associations in the city.

There are also situations where it is the city council which intervenes to propose initiatives for involving citizens in public space renewal processes: this is the case of "Savsko naselje", an idea to make local residents more responsible and active in the management of the neighbourhood itself. More specifically, the project consists in giving people the possibility of identifying the problem areas in the neighbourhood where they live and developing practical solutions to solve them.

In the case of *Knjižnica reči* it was a mother in Ljubljana who proposed an idea in favour of the community: after losing an adolescent son who was a basketball enthusiast, she donated the money set aside for him to the association in order to restructure the playing field where he used to train.

ProstoRoz's idea was to involve the students (around 14 years old) at the neighbourhood school in the designing of the new basketball court, making it accessible to people with disabilities. The project was presented, approved and carried out by the local council after a series of workshops held over several months. Now, the association and the young people are continuing their urban renewal activities in a playing field near the basketball court.

Another project set up by the association was to equip an unused space for a particular form of hire service. The name of the project is *Knjižnica reči*, literally "Object Library", and it was

inspired by a place in Berlin: a library where what was on loan was not books but objects. The selection of things collected was decided after a survey conducted among the townspeople to identify what they would most need to hire, such as trekking shoes, work tools, domestic appliances, etc. The project was financed by a city council fund for social projects, whereas the objects were made available by the townspeople themselves in exchange for a year's free hire; everyone else pays 30 Euros per year for the service.



Vintage market, Archive ProstoRoz, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2017



Art market, Archive ProstoRoz, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2017

Inclusiveness as participation: citizens included in public space will be active citizens interested in the dynamics of the place where they live, as long as they have the possibility of benefiting from services, places and activities. An inclusive space will therefore be an accessible environment for all, without any kind of barrier (be it architectural, visual, sensorial, cultural or linguistic, etc.) as is summarised in the declaration: "Making environments easy to use for everyone means considering signage, lighting, visual contrast and materials. Access to buildings isn't simply a question of their physical layout. It also requires people having sufficient information, often before they leave their house, that makes them feel confident enough to access a building or space. Ensuring this 'intellectual' and 'emotional' access means considering signage, lighting, visual contrast and materials. People's opportunity to use all elements within the site, including the inside of buildings, is crucial." (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, England, 2006). It is crucial to respect these guidelines so that everybody can enjoy the spaces in his/her own city, and subsequently, thanks to appropriate design-led initiatives, to see to it that the space is also endowed with the quality of uniting people and stimulating them to a social life.

3. Make the public space well equipped

Let's imagine having to undertake an excursion in the mountains: we'll need to take functional equipment with us that will satisfy all our requirements, but have nothing superfluous in our rucksacks. The same is true for a public space, suitable equipment is required for it to carry out certain functions. Fitting out public space does not necessarily mean massive interventions: a completely empty space does not lend itself to many functions and is not very inviting but it is enough to add a bench, for example, and it becomes a place where you can sit and rest or have a conversation. On the other hand there are some cases in which a space has unique, or particularly noteworthy, architectural and environmental characteristics, such that it becomes an attraction in its own right and invites people to gather there, think for example of certain mediaeval palaces to be found all over Europe. Naturally, many communities wish they had public spaces that are attractive in their own right, but if these are lacking then it will be necessary to fit out an area ad hoc to fulfil a prearranged function. One example of this is the Serravalle neighbourhood in the suburbs of Milan, characterised by its lack of a public square or piazza, an unusual situation in an Italian town.

Displace. Made in Chiaravalle MILAN, ITALY

The project, *Displace. Made in Chiaravalle*, was developed³ in 2014 to transform private empty space into a temporary piazza in answer to the local population's request for a public space where they could meet and socialise. The name of the project plays on the double meaning of the word "displace": "to move" and "this place" from an Italianised pronunciation of "this place in the sense of the place where you can feel comfortable and build relationships. This is the aim of the project for a temporary piazza in the suburb of Chiaravalle. The project seeks to create a place for meeting and proposing cultural and social actions, while awaiting the future design of a permanent piazza.

Chiaravalle is situated in the south-east suburbs of the city. It has a population of 1,355 inhabitants and although administratively part of Milan, it feels physically like an independent village. The neighbourhood is surrounded by a protected, green, rural area, the Parco Agricolo Sud, dominated by the mediaeval Abbey of Santa Maria di Rovignano. An abandoned railway separates the village from the Abbey, contributing to its isolated character, and only one bus route links it to the city. In the past Chiaravalle was an important agricultural centre belonging to the Abbey, but with the industrial development of the city it has gradually lost its significance.

3. The Displace piazza was designed by students from the School of Design at the Politecnico di Milano under the guidance of Interior Design teachers, Agnese Rebaglio and Luigi Brenna, with Annalinda De Rosa. It is part of a wider campaign, "Borgomondo per Chiaravalle sostenibile", an urban regeneration project aiming to create a cultural, creative, sustainable district in the city of Milan. The campaign was initiated and promoted by two cultural associations, Imondidelmondo founded by Daniela Rocco, and Terzo Paesaggio conceived by Andrea Perini, with the sponsorship of the Municipality of Milan. In addition to the founders, other entities have supported the initiative in various ways: Fondazione Cariplo (financial contributions), the Politecnico di Milano - Design Faculty (technical sponsor and tutor for the design process), Depur-Depuratore in Nosedo, Locanda Chiaravalle (technical sponsors) and the local enterprise, Strade Bianche, which has made part of its property available for the piazza.

From the outside it is easy to see the place as a functioning rural district, but in reality it is a commuter area, lacking in public and cultural spaces. In answer to this situation Chiaravalle is now living a process of transformation thanks to some active citizens who have decided to move there to enjoy the advantages of living in a country area.

The purpose of the piazza is to accommodate temporary events during the summer and welcome people to a place for relaxing, reading and sharing moments together, and it is intended for the whole community. The aim is to bring a shared project to life that is capable of connecting people and overcoming the divide between some of the local associations.

The arrangement plan for the piazza envisaged about ten items of self-built street furniture that could be repeatedly tailored to contingent requirements: large wooden archways mark the entrance and can also serve to provide covering; chairs, tables, vases, modular furniture and bookshelves can be rearranged to suit the occasion. The new piazza is an attempt to offer the local community an equipped, enjoyable place that compensates for the general lack of services, transport and cultural activities. From a design point of view, the empty spaces offered a stimulating opportunity to co-design significant places under the guidance of expert design.



Displace. Made in Chiaravalle, Milan, Italy, 2014 Courtesy the Displace team.

The construction workshop days.

Meeting with the citizens of the neighborhood at the beginning of the co-design activities.



Night Yard TALLINN, ESTONIA

Night Yard is an interesting example of urban activism in Tallinn, in Estonia. The three-day operation was part of the annual Design Night, and was carried out in the historical market square in the heart of the city, almost like an urban guerrilla action. An installation was set up that recreated the atmosphere of a back garden with grass, cushions, games and a fireplace: a place for resting, reading, meeting friends... The reason underlying this idea was that the square, full of costly

local items for tourists, has lost its identity and lacks an authentic local social life. The project creators, directors and builders are a group of young women, graduates in landscape architecture Aljona Galazan, Karin Bachmann, Merle Karro-Kalberg, Anna-Liisa Unt and Kadri Klementi who transformed the square with just a few elements, allowing local residents to re-appropriate a historical place of meeting and socialisation that had gradually lost its significance.



Õõ_ÕU, Night Yard, Tallinn, Estonia, 2008 © Kadri Klementi.

Atelier Toboggan SAINT-ÉTIENNE, FRANCE

Atelier Toboggan is a workshop to construct an urban slide in the streets of the French city of Saint-Étienne, conceived and organised by designers from the Captain Ludd group (formed by Pierre Brunet Vogel, Paul Buros, Romain Le Liboux and Léo Virieu) with the participation of students from Saint-Étienne College of Art and Design (ESADSE). The aim was to reunite the inhabitants of the Crêt-de-Roch neighbourhood of Saint-Étienne around a shared, do-it-yourself activity on the steps that constitute the main access to the neighbourhood. The activity seeks to act as a trailblazer for a programme of actions for residents who will regularly be invited to take part in small projects to improve the life of the community. The aim however is not only to organise a participatory action, but also a moment of learning and skills exchange between designers and citizens. The workshop, on April 2015, saw the participation of young people and adults in building the components of the slide: the children too contributed to the construction (by drawing, drilling and screwing) under the supervision of their parents.

Around 150 people were able to try out the slide, between 8pm and 11pm, on the evening of its inauguration. The Captain Ludd designers used an interactive, playful approach to establish a shared dialogue among designers and neighbourhood residents on aesthetic, creative and manufacturing notions, with an eye to sustainability. Indeed only waste materials were used for the project (wood and cardboard), which determined its final shape.

Les Vieux Beaux SAINT-ÉTIENNE, FRANCE

The project, called *Les vieux beaux* (the beautiful old ones), took place during the International Biennale design Saint-Étienne 2017. The aim was to investigate and create new scenarios for the transformation of the Jacquard neighbourhood. It was organised in collaboration with the Saint-Étienne City Council and l'EPASE (Local Planning and Development Authority) and was held



TOBOGGAN in the Crêt de Roch staircases, Saint-Étienne, France, 2015 © Captain Ludd

A collective slide to activate the city.



Les Vieux Beaux (the beautiful old ones), Saint-Étienne, France, 2015 © ETC

Playful urban furniture made with upcycled material from municipal stocks.

during the "Croisement" workshop led by Carton Plein and Cité du design, in collaboration with the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. Carton Plein is an association that emerged in October 2010 as a multidisciplinary team of architects and town planners, psychologists, graphic artists, artists, musicians and photographers.

The first *Les Vieux Beaux* intervention took place in December 2014 when ETC Collective drew up an inventory of neglected or abandoned city street furniture, from which suitable items were subsequently selected for renovation and reuse by Carton Plein. The first prototypes for recycled urban furniture were created during the following months and later exhibited in the International Design Biennale 2015. In addition, the workshop "Croisement", focusing on the production of other kinds of furniture in collaboration with citizens and Biennale visitors.

The objects collected were containers for glass, and school chairs. These containers deteriorate rapidly and when damaged they are stored by the Saint-Étienne City Council in considerable quantities. Now, with the ETC project, they return to a new life as "*les recycleurs*": new street seats that remain faithful to the aesthetics of the initial objects and invite the observer to remember their existence. Although the old school chairs in wood and steel have now disappeared, they constitute part of collective memory and have been recuperated with wooden frames to create "*les redoublés*": recreated seats of various types, from benches to rocking chairs. The project is interesting for the relationship between the ephemeral and sustainability: the recycling of worn-out furniture and the arrangement of these elements in public spaces for a month, in the context of an event (*la Biennale*).



Les Vieux Beaux (the beautiful old ones), Saint-Étienne, France, 2015 © ETC

Playful urban furniture made with upcycled material from municipal stocks.

Skupaj na ploščad! LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA

Bratovževa ploščad is one of the numerous dormitory areas of Ljubljana that have no life of their own or local identity. Although it can boast numerous paved spaces and green areas, these are desolate, lacking in facilities and unused. Their great potential was noted by two architects from the district, Damjana Hudnik Zaviršek and Špela Nardoni Kovač, who decided to transform a vast asphalt area between the buildings, and start up activities to encourage the neighbourhood residents to come out of their homes and live the shared open space. It is from here that the project derives its name *Skupaj na ploščad!* (Together to the platform!). Their role was to start and co-ordinate activities, prepare the space for events and involve as large a number of locals and volunteers as possible, to guarantee the success of the initiative. The aim was to turn a bare asphalt square into a space for so-

cialising and growing plants. To achieve this two kinds of activities were started up: in the first place, the residents were involved in designing and creating street furniture, which was entirely lacking. Secondly, theme events were organised to facilitate socialisation (cinema projections, an organised exploration of the place using all the senses, a sculpture laboratory, the exchange of unused toys, a knitting laboratory, a herb-sowing session etc.).

Thanks to the idea of the two architects it was possible to re-establish, or at least reinforce, the lost sense of community and overcome the general tendency towards individualisation in Slovenian society, reminding people about the old habits of meeting each other in the shared open spaces. By encouraging people to go out of their homes and interact with their neighbours the programme of events contributed to re-establishing social connections between residents. Everything started from the bottom, with no support from the authorities except for minimal city council funding and the issue of permits for the event organisation: a demonstration of how the power to change spaces and habits also rests in the hands of the community itself.



Skupaj na ploščad! (Together to the platform!), Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2016 © Blaž Jamšek/Photoarchive UIRS.

Pupils from the primary school OŠ Danila Kumar evaluated their open spaces at Bratovževa ploščad and listed their wishes for the future.

The initiative was then extended to the surrounding area. In order to call attention to other open spaces inside and outside the neighbourhood, walking trails were marked out on the ground linking residents with the surrounding countryside and with some local agricultural producers who occupied the area long before the district was built up in the seventies. The aim of the trails is to encourage exchange with these farmers, among whom there is still an attitude of refusal towards the "new arrivals" in the neighbourhood. Breaking down these mental barriers would benefit both sides. The simplicity and generic nature of these marked trails make them an easy way of stimulating residents to explore their surrounding area, one that is applicable anywhere.

4. Make the public space playful

Fun is a well-known concept, anyone can imagine a large number of playful situations and activities: some may involve a lot of people of all ages, others may involve people with certain characteristics (age, sex, personal tastes, etc.). A fun activity triggers pleasurable feelings, so public space can be made a fun place, indeed, it should be the place of preference for pleasurable activities and, above all, for social interaction outside the home.

So, a playful fun public space can be associated with a game function, a place equipped with structures that make it suitable for play activities: a basketball court for teenagers, a playground for



little children, tables for board games or cards for older people. Whatever the fun activity, play brings people together and the presence of play in public spaces is implicitly requested by local communities.

ReNewTown pilot project
VELENJE, SLOVENIA

Should the community nucleus be missing, there are projects that intervene on a social level to create new ties between the inhabitants of a city, as well as renewing the urban space. This is the case in Velenje, a town in the north-east of Slovenia which, during the second world war under the socialist regime of Tito, was transformed from a little village into a large mining town. At the time, the urban nucleus was built with the idea of creating "a town in a park" and giving the miners a healthy, green environment after their work underground. In accordance with the socialist spirit, numerous volunteers made their contribution to the construction of housing, infrastructure and administrative buildings. Nowadays, Velenje is a town of about 25,000 inhabitants and was selected by *ReNewTown*, a European project that deals with urban regeneration in post-socialist cities, to host a pilot project funded by the European Union for the renewal of an old public area. The *Velenje pilot project* took place in a very precise area of intervention: an abandoned playground of about 3386 sq.m, situated between 6 apartment blocks in via Kozeljskega in the local community of Gorica, destined to be transformed into a garden with a new playground. The project was designed to involve local residents, recovering the socialist tradition of solidarity and mutual help to bring local people together again in a shared activity.

The project had two main aims: to create a new, multifunctional, public space to be used by people of all ages and all social groups, and to create a strong neighbourhood community, by developing a multi-generational dialogue during the designing stage.

The operation was started in 2011, with a preparatory stage of context and target analysis, and completed in the summer of 2012, with 64 volunteers from the neighbourhood working for 1567 hours between the 9th and 13th July. Although the project was not developed in collaboration with the end-users, the participation of local people and citizen associations was considerable. *ReNewTown* brought together a large number of people with the shared aim of improving the appearance of their neighbourhood, making the transformation process itself fun, not just the end result of the playground reconstruction, and facilitating the creation of new social ties that will bring long-term mutual benefit.

Misunderstanding
GRAZ, AUSTRIA

Where does the inspiration for a touch of fun in public space come from? Architecture and design are capable of intervening playfully, varying colours, shapes and perspectives to amaze the observer and break with the dictates of convention. This was the challenge faced by a group of students during an academic design workshop in Austria, in the city of Graz, using as a reference a potentially amusing central theme to be transformed into a project. The idea of creating playful installa-

tions in urban space was developed during the "Projektarbeit" course, in the Master programme in Exhibition Design, based on the theme of misunderstanding (*Missverständnis* in German). *Misunderstanding* is seen as the result of an interference in communication between the sender and receiver of a message. So, the students analysed possible interferences and developed 11 settings dealing with a wide spectrum of actions: from imperceptible changes in common habits to absurd moments when oral signals are taken too literally. The initiative organisers were Anke Strittmatter (architect, town planner and set designer), Erika Thümmel (curator and set designer) and students in the Master programme: Bettina Bigler, Eva Brede, Sabrina Dojlidko, Elisabeth Eichberger, Christin Grabner, Kathleen Grüner, Katja Kraiss, Binela Licina, Sabine Pichler, Stefanie Wiesenhofer and Astrid Zawodnik. The workgroups dealt with all stages of the project, from the definition of concepts to the technical development of the projects, and the communication of events in the public space. *Misunderstanding* was set up in June 2012 in various central areas of Graz; every installation proposed a different interaction with passers-by, ranging from digital communication, to analogue communication through cups and threads hanging on a tree. The installations were explained graphically and people were free to interact and experiment with the installations.



Misunderstanding,
Graz, Austria, 2012
© Team Misunderstanding



T A L K Modell,
Graz, Austria, 2012
© Team Misunderstanding

ReNewTown, Velenje,
Slovenia, 2014
© Matej Vranič

The public space before
the implementation
of the project.

—
Volunteers at work





Everybody's a champion!
Saint-Étienne, France,
2015 © Charlotte Pierot

Introduction of bike polo, a sport using public space as a playground, to the inhabitants and users of Carnot-Manufacture district.

Everybody's a Champion! SAINT-ÉTIENNE, FRANCE

Everybody's a Champion! is an initiative that seeks to build, together with the town residents, the future of physical activities in urban contexts. The idea emerged in a larger, international event called People Olympics, a game with the theme of social innovation based on collective physical competitions, in which every city participating in the initiative enters a team of citizens (which may include as many as 10,000 people) whose physical activities are recorded on a portable electronic device, and their physiological data monitored. The results of the recordings are then compared with those of the teams from the other cities. The aim of *Everybody's a Champion!* (in French, Tous Champions!) is to promote physical exercise in urban areas through both mainstream sports, like football or basketball, and more "underground" ones such as bike-polo and street-golf. At the same time, a further aim is to organise prototyping and co-creating workshops for temporary facilities with the event participants, and together to imagine and explore new scenarios for physical exercise in the city.

Everybody's a champion! has taken place twice a year since May 2014 in the French city of Saint-Étienne, with the participation of over 250 people in the first edition and 11 proposed activities. The event owes its initial idea to the association, Cité du design, in collaboration with People Olympics, the city of Saint-Étienne, Saint-Étienne metropolitan area, OpenFactorySainté, OpenSCOP, Laboratory of Physiology and Exercise, and the Jean Monnet University. It takes place in the creative district of Manufacture Plaine Achille, where the presence and interaction of a variety of creative figures is useful to the functioning of the workshops: students of design and engineering, start-up incubators, fab lab managers and several agencies. The activities all take place outside, except for the workshops held at the fab lab and the Cité du design, and participation is administered informally: open to all, with the possibility of enrolling for multiple activities. The level of participation is monitored through surveys on paper. Design plays an important role in the success of the event: in first place, implicitly through the use of co-design methodology (ideating and prototyping workshops) in which participants are helped by designers and craftspeople both in the elaboration of new sports infrastructure for urban areas, and in imagining and discussing new future scenarios. From a town-planning point of view, the initiative triggers stimulating thought on the way sports activities can influence, or depend on, the urban infrastructure (illumination and street furniture).

CriticalCity
MILAN, ITALY

Changes that renew public space can also be triggered by the games themselves. Can a city be transformed by playful actions? A group of newly graduated students in Milan tried to do just this: Matteo Battaglia and Augusto Pirovano, later joined by Davide Portanome and Matteo Uguzzoni, had the idea of organising *CriticalCity*, an urban game in which the participants have to complete a creative mission to improve the city of Milan, especially more poorly-served areas and the city outskirts. The idea emerged in 2007, inspired by Jamie Lerner's Urban Acupuncture theory applied to the Brazilian city of Curitiba to resolve cer-

tain urban challenges. After a year of development, the *criticalcity.org* website was activated in 2008 and the first nocturnal event, *CriticalTrophy*, was launched in Milan. With time, the initiative spread to other Italian cities like Rome, Bologna and Florence, and a smaller version was started in Modena, Ancona and Brindisi. Since 2009 the project has been part of the Focus co-operative (which the creators of the game have also joined). However, the turning point came in 2010 when, with funding from the Fondazione Cariplo, the final version of the game was set up and renamed *CriticalCity Upload*. The first season of the game lasted one year and attracted around 5,000 players for a total of over 800 creative missions throughout Italy; four years later *CriticalCity Upload* ended with an event in Milan that attracted 13,901 players who completed an amazing 21,064 actions.

The creative missions concern various types of interventions, for example: "guerrilla-gardening" style actions like tree planting; organising convivial events on neglected roundabouts; organising flash-mobs or other socialisation facilitators. The main idea of *CriticalCity* is based on the creation of "local hubs", meaning sensitive areas where it would be opportune to accomplish missions that could be of benefit to the players. Such hubs are usually located in poorly-served or run-down areas, which are transformed through numerous creative actions, set in motion by the players themselves who can start up the process of activating the hub and making it official when three actions have been accomplished in the same place. Anybody can participate in the initiative: the first mission must be completed in the home of the player, who then acts alone in public space (stations, neglected parks, town squares etc.), creating connections between these sensitive places and developing positive interactions with people, especially immigrants, to reduce social marginalisation. The whole process is documented by photos and/or videos, and the hubs are marked on a map in a continuous, close relationship between real and virtual.

Public space is fun: "game design" is an emerging branch of design and aims to facilitate interactions between people through play in a stimulating, educational and fun way. In a game like *CriticalCity* it is necessary for the designer to play a director's role, generally narrating the game and then, more specifically, design becomes a tool for gathering consensus and guiding players actions with participatory practices.

The initiative depends on bottom-up actions and this is its particular strength: there are no specific, or particularly ambitious objectives to achieve on the part of the organisers, it is the citizens, when they become players, who are free to choose where to act and how. The game is implicitly a vehicle of values and virtuous actions that can bring about positive changes on various fronts: from the personal point of view of the single individual to the urban level of an entire community.



Critical City, Treviglio (Bergamo), Italy, 2014. © Rita Pidkivka

Creating new ways for waiting the bus in Treviglio.



Critical City, Milan, Italy, 2014. © S&V

A welcome committee for strangers at the Central Station in Milan.

In the heterogeneous panorama of scenarios dealt with, an idea of multifaceted "playfulness" emerges that takes into consideration various connotations of the term. Playful public space is functional and responds directly to the recreational needs of its users, making play and sports activities possible with a firm eye to social cohesion and with relational benefits for the various components of the community. Playful public space however is also what we think of from a different approach: it is fun and it is able to strike citizens on an emotional level, arousing positive sensations of amazement or joy and mirth. A playful, fun design action is undoubtedly an effective way of renovating a space and activating new flows towards it.

5. Make the public space domestic

The term domestic comes from the Latin word "domesticus", derived from "domus" meaning house, or home. From this it is easy to see that the word "home" embraces many concepts that go beyond the physical place of inhabitation. Everything that belongs to the home environment is domestic: the spaces, the activities that take place in the home, the relationships, the emotions we feel when we find ourselves in a familiar environment. Making a public space more domestic implies acting on its spaces, qualities and equipment to arouse positive sensations in those who go there: a sense of familiarity and intimacy, security and comfort; and maybe organising special activities for the same purpose.

One of these could be the pleasure of reading a good book, a moment of relaxation that often occurs in one's own home after buying a new book or borrowing one from a library. Tina Popovič, event organiser for the 2010 Ljubiana Festival, found herself queuing for a concert with some friends when she realised that the public space lacked interesting things to do.

Knjižnica pod krošnjami LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA

Knjižnica pod krošnjami (Library under the Treetops) meaning an open-air library in the city. To facilitate the realisation of her idea, Tina and two other women founded a non-governmental organisation called "Divja misel" (a translation of "La Pensée sauvage", in English "The Savage Mind", title of a book by the famous French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss), which then went on to set up various cultural projects on Slovenia.

Tina's initiative attracted the interest of the Slovenian Tourist office, which recognised it as an opportunity to develop something in public space that would be capable of attracting new tourists, particularly as recent urban and architectural renovations in the city centre had led to the creation of many new, but rather empty, public spaces. The support from the tourism office enabled Tina Popovič's initiative to develop and achieve its aim. Library under the Treetops is not merely a library, it has the ambitious aim of spreading a reading culture in Slovenia and attracting users who would not otherwise visit a library of their own accord. The solution lies in the inversion of the norm: in taking the library to the people and creating a cosy corner of public space in which to pause, read a book, and socialise. In fact Library under the Treetops does not offer a lending service, but enables people to conveniently enjoy an external environment and encourages interaction among readers.

The libraries keep to the opening hours of the places they are in, and stay open from May to September; the books are donated by the publishers, but a dedicated box is also provided in which people can donate their own books to the project.

The first library was set up in Tivoli park, the main green area in Ljubljana, followed by four others scattered around the city (at the Castle, Congress Square, Tabor park and along the Ljublanica river). The initiative was so successful that it started to spread to other cities like Izola, Polhov Gradec, Ribnica, Nova Gorica/Gorica, Kanal ob Soči and Mala Planina. As it expanded it became necessary to define an image that made the initiative recognisable in any location. At first, furniture was purchased in a shop, but later it was entrusted to a designer, Andraz Tarman, who designed shelving, partitions and notice boards. As well as creating an image, the products were designed to be easily accessible to everybody and adaptable to fit user needs. The management of the spaces is entrusted to numerous volunteers, often people who came into contact with the initiative and have since become keen supporters. Various commercial enterprises also collaborate, providing space for storing the furniture during closing hours.



Knjižnica pod Krošnjami (Library under the Treetops), Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2010/ongoing © Matej Perko

A book to read, a place to sit. In Ljubljana city center Park Zvezda

Les Apéros Urbains BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

What happens when a city lacks animation? This was the case in Brussels, in 2004, when François Lafontaine and Virginie Cwajagenbaum had the idea of organising aperitifs in public places where people could gather and socialise after work. The first "Les Apéros Urbains" (The Urban Aperitifs) was organised in 2005 through the social media and attracted the participation of 25 people. Starting as an informal event, on the fringes of legality, it gradually grew until the organisers had to face problems with the police due to the lack of authorisation to use public land. So, from then on, the initiative had to seek city-council backing in order to develop. Now the facebook page for Les Apéros Urbains counts around 37,800 followers and the event takes place in various places in Brussels, every Friday evening from 30th May onwards, from 7pm to 11 pm.



Les Apéros Urbains, Brussels, Belgium, 2005-ongoing

Les Apéros Urbains attracts professionals from all over Brussels to gather on Fridays in magnificent places in the city.

PleinOPENair BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

PleinOPENair (outOPENdoors) is an annual festival of open-air cinema, free of charge, that explores little known or abandoned corners of the city, following an idea by two local associations: Cinema Nova and City Mine(d). Founded in 1997, Cinema Nova is a film theatre in Brussels orientated towards showing independent films and videos, which has gradually become a point of reference for alternative, rather than mainstream, audiovisual arts in Belgium and abroad. The association consists of 15 members and hundreds of others who regularly serve as volunteers.

City Mine(d) is an international network of individuals and groups involved in local actions within the city. Through debates, artistic projects and campaigns it brings questions generated in local neighbourhoods to the attention of a wider political arena (also at European level).

The aim of the PleinOPENair initiative is to go beyond a traditional setting to reach a wider public, offering a programme in line with the social changes of the moment. Every year since 1997 the festival has proposed a specific theme, in line with the film programme, that tackles such urban issues as the privatisation of public space, insecurity, or the sustainability of cities. In the same period as the film projections, a series of cultural and artistic activities are organised in the city in support of the festival programme (debates, guided walks, musical performances and so on).



PleinOPENair, Brussels, Belgium, 1997/ongoing © cinema Nova

As mentioned previously, making public space more domestic may involve multiple factors: a physical domestic environment; an activity that usually takes place at home; arousing positive feelings of familiarity and intimacy. For example, we could imagine a space with a homelike feel, or the garden or courtyard at home with a dinner table laid ready for guests, prepare the dishes in the kitchen at home and serve them to a group of people who wish to share a meal in an informal atmosphere.

Restaurant Day HELSINKI, FINLAND

Restaurant Day is a culinary carnival that takes place four times a year, during which anyone may open their own restaurant for one day. Many are the people who organise or go to eat in one of these pop-up restaurants just for fun, to share new culinary experiences and enjoy with other people the spaces where we live our everyday lives.

The event was conceived by three friends, Antti Tuomola, Olli Sirén and Timo Santala, as a revolutionary act to contrast the demanding bureaucratic procedure required to open a restaurant. They had the idea of setting up a bicycle-bar in which to sell drinks and tapas, inviting friends to do the same. To bring the idea of Restaurant Day into being, the first volunteers created an association, with one of the creators, Timo Santala, as managing director.

The first Restaurant Day was held in Finland on 21st May 2011. It involved 13 cities and 45 restaurants, but it rapidly spread to other countries: the 15th February 2015 edition saw the participation of 1,375 restaurants spread over 34 countries. Altogether, from 2011 to 2015, Restaurant Day attracted 17,400 restaurants, 70,000 restaurateurs and about 2 million clients. Anyone can take part in the initiative, just enrol on the website and decide on a menu and the number of people you can catered for. After that, give vent to your creativity: the name of your restaurant, the furniture and furnishings, how to serve the food, which friends to draw in to lend a hand. The location is a key element: in summer, the ideal places are parks, courtyards and street corners; in winter, houses, offices and other places under cover are preferable. For one day, cooking enthusiasts have the opportunity to open the restaurant of their dreams, moving rapidly from conceiving to achieving.

A small act of rebellion has given rise to a worldwide public event: as well as the Finland Prize, Restaurant Day was nominated Cultural Act of the Year 2011, Food Phenomenon of the year 2011 by Gloria food and wine magazine, and Best Event 2012 in the Best of Helsinki competition.



Knjižnica pod krošnjami (library under the tree tops), Nova Gorica, Slovenia © Tina Popović

Reading tour around Slovenia.



Restaurant Day, Helsinki, Finland, 2011/ongoing
Image courtesy of Restaurant Day/Tuomas Sarpara

A popular concept in Restaurant day is selling food out of your window using a basket for the orders and deliveries.



Restaurant Day, Helsinki, Finland, 2011/ongoing
Image courtesy of Restaurant Day/Heidi Uutela

Ville Hulkkonen setting up the Truffan Tyrnibaari, a bar that sells foods using the Finnish superfood, sea buckthorn.

Making a public space more domestic brings various benefits to the single individual, who finds himself in a place similar in some ways to his home environment, and therefore in a situation that is psychologically and physically ideal: a condition that may also bring benefits to the whole community, if applied to the world of work. This intuition has been understood and applied for a long time in co-working environments: places that offer a suitable space for working outside the home, but that are equipped with many of the comforts typical of the domestic environment, such as a place for cooking and eating meals or a quiet place for relaxing. However, some people have thought of extending their experience of co-working to co-living, giving a team the possibility of coming together to live in a shared space and thus developing projects in a shorter time and a more intensive way. One young couple decided to create such a space in a locality that lacked anything of this kind, but which is very interesting for its historical and social context: the city of Matera in the south of Italy, famous for its "Sassi di Matera", ancient cave-like stone structures considered to be one of the earliest human settlements in Italy (dating back to 7000 BC).

Casa Netural MATERA, ITALY

Capital city for the region of Basilicata, with a population of 60,000 people, Matera is a UNESCO heritage site and has been declared European Capital of Culture for 2019. As well its cultural interest, it is also a sensitive area due to the economic problems and backwardness suffered by many cities in Southern Italy. Given these premises, in 2012 and at their own expense, Andrea Paoletti and Mariella Stella set up "Casa Netural", a new kind of co-working environment inside the Sassi, which soon turned into a multifunctional public space. Andrea and Mariella also established numerous collaborations with other innovative local and national companies and entities, such as Impact Hub in Bari (another co-working environment), Fred (social book-sharing network), Gnammo (social-eating platform) and many others. In order to open and manage the space they founded an association and put together a team of 10 young professional designers, photographers, managers and tourist guides: a multidisciplinary group that animates the space and looks after the guests and their needs. Anybody can use the *Casa Netural* for various purposes ranging from event organisation to work, for teaching or learning: indeed the space has been designed to be open in the sense of sharing and collaborating, but also open architecturally: a 80sq.m structured open-space with alternate work-stations and places for relaxing, a kitchen and a panoramic terrace. The project and communication have been supervised by Andrea, an architect specialised in the design of

co-working spaces all over the world, and now studying a modular, flexible system for interiors. The communication material too has been carefully designed so as to unite all the activities under the same image. On a designing level however, the main focus was on participatory design including co-design methodology and tools, with a community-centred approach. The aim of Casa Netural is not only to facilitate new connections between people, collaboration and the exchange of skills, but rather it seeks to be a generator of innovation and growth for the area, inspiring people to change; a neutral space that hosts relation flows and interconnections.

The main services offered by *Casa Netural* are three: Co-working, with a membership card like similar services; Co-living, addressing entrepreneurs, self-employed professionals and start-up groups who wish to develop projects quickly; and finally the Dream Incubator, a consultancy for citizens with innovative ideas who wish to transform them into business projects.

The importance of an initiative like this is to act as a bridge between citizens with dreams and the world of start-ups and enterprises, helping to transform the entrepreneurial intuition of a single individual into an object of public interest for the community; this is possible thanks to the multidisciplinary of the team managed by Casa Netural.



Casa Netural, Matera, Italy, 2012
© benatural



M3 Unblock it!, Dolinka Służewiecka WARSAW, POLAND

In this case it is a co-working environment that acquires domestic characteristics, but is the process possible in reverse? The physical home environment can become the object of study, analysis, debate and exchange of ideas about the future of public space. This was the idea that came to the Polish association, "Odblokuj" (Unblock: Association for the Improvement of the Living Environment), consisting of a group of architects, designers, artists, photographers, graphic artists and sociologists

working on the development of multidisciplinary urban projects. The association set up the project, M3 Unblock it!, a platform for spatial and artistic activities, created inside a typical two-room apartment for three people built in a residential area of Warsaw after the war. The residential apartment blocks were called "Służew nad Dolinką".

The association symbolically transferred a residential model typical of the seventies to a public space, the structure of which became a frame for numerous public events, exhibitions and meetings linked to cultural, architectural, historical and natural themes. The initiators of the idea presented the history of one of the most characteristic residential complexes in Warsaw and the visions for its future. They started a debate trying to answer the question of whether, 30 years after its creation, it has been possible to create a neighbourhood; they reflected on what the area might look like in 2030, and above all, they concentrated on the present, trying to re-launch the valley area.

The interior designers demonstrated some possible ways of restructuring a two-room flat, adapting it to the requirements of various generations of residents. In collaboration with the local residents, who provided the books, a neighbourhood library was also created, in the living room.

Exhibitions associated with the architecture of the area and its past were also organised: series of photographs concerning the space and inhabitants of the valley. The presence of the M3 apartment in the Służewiecka valley was also intended to trigger debate about improvements in the quality of life in urban districts and the use of green areas. Local citizens were involved in the development and creation of the pavilion, as well as becoming the main beneficiaries of the creative workshops and the debates proposed. The initiative was important on a social level to bring local people together in shared activities.

Domesticity is that quality of space that makes users feel they are in a situation that is in some way similar to their own homes. Feelings of belonging, wellbeing, relaxation, fun, happiness and warmth are awakened in comfortable, safe places, where it is possible to enjoy and share pleasurable leisure activities like cooking, eating, listening to music, reading a book or watching a film. The private sphere of the home and the public sphere of outside space are two dimensions subject to constant comparison and exchange to satisfy all the needs of individuals.

Concluding thoughts

As we can see in the case studies presented in this chapter, the strategies used in prototyping the projects vary. They can be classified on the basis of their impact on the place where they occur and on the communities taking part in the realization of the projects themselves. As mentioned in the introduction to the chapter, time is a decisive factor in the relationship between the prototyped projects, their final realization and the involvement of local communities.

What is interesting is the distinction between the terms temporary, ephemeral and provisional: "Temporary is on the border between provisional and ephemeral. Ephemeral is all that has a short life, generally of one day. The term is very often used in the field of biology to describe what is born, grows and dies within 24 hours, leaving little trace of itself due to its intrinsic nature. Provisional is

an event originally intended for a medium-short term but which, for various factors whether external or internal to its provisional nature in itself, moves into the medium-long term. Provisional refers to all that substitutes what is real, appearing as an expedient in the place of reality, which is reproduced, shown, represented. The temporary takes certain characteristics from these two extremes, building its own autonomy: like the ephemeral, it has a time limit, but it might have the opportunity of living longer than initially foreseen, of extending its own life-cycle, dying to be born again somewhere else and leaving traces of its own passage. At the same time, it shares some characteristics with the provisional: although it maintains its own qualities and does not appear as a mere substitute for reality. It generates added value to the existing world. The temporary is developed with a precise, programmed objective, with a scheduled time horizon and with well-identified aims." (Fassi, 2012)

Some cases represent a sort of test, to generally try out the installation in question, the main objective of which is to involve the local residents and communities who live in those particular urban spaces. Other cases can already be described as nearly complete accomplishments of their projects: they are not just initial tests but almost full renderings in which the communities are thoroughly involved. It is often the end-users themselves who build and set up installations and equipment, maybe under the guidance of facilitators such as individual designers or groups of designers who steer the process.

Finally, some projects may leave an inheritance that is still more important than the initial temporary action carried out in the public space in question. These are projects that can be considered successful: best practices in which the facilitators have focused their task and at the end of the set-up stage have left the project in the hands of local communities who manage to guide and run it. In the next chapter we shall investigate the idea of inheritance more fully, especially the sustainability of public space projects characterized by a bottom-up process.

When talking about temporary installations however, it is important to remember that even when the structure can be physically dismantled the memory of that particular spot may be permanent. Duration is the mark that a project, a place or an event leaves on the memory of the users, even in the case of temporary structures and temporary uses that may be characterized by a longer-lasting permanence. Such is the case of temporary projects, which were created to revitalize and reclaim unused zones of the city but which then trigger long-running processes that end up leaving an indelible mark on the city, on the space and on the uses of the site. For this reason we like to speak of temporary structures and uses but permanent memory.

M3 Unblock it!
A platform of spatial and artistic activities, Poland, 2011

The aim of the project was the symbolic transfer of a model of a typical '70s flat to the public space.

The depiction of the M3 flat in the open space was supposed to provoke a discussion on the improvement of life quality and the use of green areas.



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Cité du design, Saint-Étienne

Cité du design Saint-Étienne

How to make bottom-up initiatives viable and sustainable?

The Cité du design is a platform for innovation, research, advanced education, economical development and promotion of art and design supported by the City of Saint-Étienne, the Saint-Étienne Metropole, the Rhone-Alpes Region, and the State (Ministry of Culture).

The Cité du design and the Saint-Étienne Higher School of Art and Design have formed an EPCC (public institution for cultural cooperation) since 2005, a legal tool combining the cultural and economic aspects of design. At the heart of a Living Lab, the Cité du design focuses on innovation through uses and social mutations.

It is the driving force of the local, national, and international development of a territory, Saint-Étienne, UNESCO City of design.

“Human communities have tremendous and inherent self-healing abilities. Though usually invisible, the mechanisms of social cohesion characterising them are very powerful and can enable communities to regenerate after a shock through the re-contruction of the social structures that foster and support its survival in a new environment ⁴”.

Public space planning has ceased to be an exclusively specialist’s territory. It has become the subject of citizens’ debates in a large number of European cities. Residents, associations, shopkeepers, urban planning experts, local councillors—all engage together to define a collective space in which individual needs and practices will fuse into a common project. How can these initiatives be made viable? How can communities organise to implement those actions?

The meaning of the French word ‘*communauté*’ differs from its English counterpart ‘community’, which naturally conveys the notion of ‘empowerment’. While the French term is thought in relation to the concept of ‘nation’, in the sense of national community, the Anglo-Saxon political tradition has given to ‘communities’ that of an organized micro-society.

The French word ‘*commun*’ refers to the totality of goods shared by a group of people. It actualised into ‘*communaux*’, the communal lands that prevailed in Europe until the 18th century. These communal lands consisted of parts of the village land that were not individually owned. They were de facto communal—that is they were held in common by all inhabitants. Often described as “*vain and vague* ⁵”, they were composed of paths, ditches and hedges, diverse areas of woods and moors, and sometimes of a river, or even, though more rarely, of a pond. While they sometimes provided villagers with their only source of pasturage for livestock and wood for fuel, they were also open to the most deprived people, allowing them to raise a cow or a sheep for their basic food needs. With enclosure conducted by the State these common lands have now almost disappeared. However the concept of the common (in the sense of that which is common) is recently being re-evaluated with the rise of the collaborative economy, also called the sharing economy. In their last book, *Common. Essay on revolution in the 21st century* ⁶, Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval re-define the concept of the common in view of the contemporary enclosure of the web and extend its meaning to those of cooperation, co-production, and collaboration.

Economist Olivier Pastré ⁷, who champions bottom-up economy, defends the principle of subsidiarity, according to which the responsibility of a public action—when necessary—has to be handed over/entrusted to the competent authority the closest to those who are directly concerned by this action. This socio-political principle was first conceptualised by German philosopher Althusius, who defined hierarchy as support rather than supremacy. The hierarchical order should not intervene unless mobilised by the next lower social body having failed to solve a problem on its own. This ascending organisation of power is in complete

opposition with the orthodox model of task delegation controlled by the highest policy-making spheres. It is a principle which not only ensures that those who are concerned are not disconnected from the public decision-making process but which also empowers individuals at each social level for their capacity to find the solution that is the most relevant to their needs. In short the principle of subsidiarity aims at determining the level of intervention that is most relevant.

This third part collects projects implemented by civil society actors (residents, students, associations, artists, concept designers, etc.) who have transformed public spaces and contributed to restore and generate social cohesion within them. Challenging the city scale is not only the modification of green spaces, abandoned buildings, or neglected neighbourhoods, it can also mean—in line with the digital common that are the collaborative interfaces or platforms—inventing virtual versions of the city we all live in. Thus allowing the actors of these changes to design the collective services of the city of the future.

1. When local communities take on the requalification of green areas

Urban green areas come first in the regeneration process of public spaces because they allow a more spontaneous and immediate community-based engagement. Perfect for leisure or breaks, they can also be used for actions targeted towards urban sustainable development such as composting, gardening, recycling and sorting, or mulching, etc. Community gardens are spaces where people meet and can get informed on issues related to food and health. The experience of sharing and environmental learning take shape through collaborative initiatives in which communities can reclaim their place within the neighbourhood they inhabit.

Chestnut Park
CIESZYN, POLAND

The redevelopment of *Chestnut Park*, a town park in Cieszyn in Poland, is an urban renewal project illustrating new design and conception dynamics. Rarely used by people, the park had become an abandoned urban space—most likely because of lack of maintenance and renovation. In order to restore its lost conviviality, the City of Cieszyn initiated public consultation workshops. And in 2012, an exhibition entitled *Where to play?* and showing drawings of kids’ playgrounds triggered a series of questions on playground spaces in the city. It also was the occasion to raise awareness of the park’s future. This first event was followed by the creation of a working group—composed of urban residents, town representatives and designers from *Pracownia K studio*—in charge of answering the following question: *What and where can we play in Cieszyn?* To analyse the qualities of Chestnut Park, residents and consultation workshop participants were asked to draw the site from memory. The aim was to discriminate the most important areas of the park from those that were unacknowledged. To compare

4 Servigne and Stevens, *Comment tout peut s’effondrer. Petit manuel de collapsologie à l’usage des générations présentes*, 2015, éditions du Seuil, coll. « Anthropocène ». In this work, (How everything can collapse. A short guide to collapsology for present generations), Servigne and Stevens propose an interdisciplinary study of current crisis phenomena and the

possible exit strategies, starting with a new *vivre ensemble* (modes of living together) based on local communities.

5 Ces terres dites “vaines et vagues” <http://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/communaux/>

6 Pierre Dardot, Christian Laval, *Commun. Essai sur la révolution au XXI^e siècle*, Paris, La Découverte, 2014.

7 Olivier Pastré, French banker and economist, and author of “*Repenser l’économie – L’économie bottom-up, La sortie de crise est entre nos mains*”, Paris, Fayard, 2013 (*Rethinking economy – The bottom-up economy. Crisis exit is in your own hands*)

the drawings with reality, walks in the park were then organised. This exercise revealed flaws since the park was not really adapted to the young kids and the elderly people who used it. Those discussions led to the definition of four different zones that could meet the present and future needs of the park's users: sport, nature, culture and relaxation. The town council took care of the installation works (benches, play areas, electricity and water supplying). Prototypes were realized and installed in the park to get feedback from users and to gradually improve their pertinence and suitability. The medium-term objective is to add new equipment that would be designed in collaboration with local associations and NGOs.



Chestnut park, Cieszyn, Poland, 2013
It was the first natural playground for children in Cieszyn.



Chestnut Park renovation process proves the necessity of a constant dialogue between the different actors of an urban site, whether they be users or founders, in order to plan and carry out a viable long-term project⁸. Developed by a multidisciplinary team made of residents, city representatives, designers and local associations, this initiative has addressed what should be at the core of preoccupations: the reality of the park's uses, the specifics of its local environment and of its users (residents, professionals, and so on). The whole process was based on a constant dialogue with the public authorities (two representatives of the city council have been involved from the initiation phase of the project). Thanks to the discussions that took place, a long-term and economically viable future for the park has been made possible.

⁸ It is interesting to underline that the project was conducted under the supervision of design studio Pracownia K., which played a crucial role in the conception and implementation phases of the project. It generated ideas and forms for future realisations while taking into account budget constraints.

The Walled Garden LONDON, UK

Carried out with similar community mobilisation, *The Walled Garden* project is a communal garden in Bedfords Park in the Borough of Havering in East London. Initiated to help marginalized local residents, the project started in 2011 when Thomas Ermacora, founder of *Clear Village*, visited the site. Convinced by the potentialities of a place that had been badly neglected over the last 12 years, he partnered with Havering Council, owner of the place, and local community group *The Friends of Bedfords Park*, to transform the garden into a food-growing space that could address some of the area's most urgent social problems: obesity, a rapidly ageing population seriously challenging the health care system, low-frequency physical activity, etc.

The Walled Garden develops targeted programmes for disadvantaged people such as long-term unemployed, older people, disabled people or deprived teens. Activities mainly focus on alimentation, and their aim is to improve the health, well-being, and life expectancy of the people in the area. *The Walled Garden* experiments with a model of shared garden space aimed at being replicated in other places facing similar issues.

Thanks to a major grant from the *Local Food programme*, restoration works began in 2013. While historical walls and buildings were repaired, a toilet block, a kitchen and teaching rooms were built. About 6,000 square metres of unused space was transformed into a growing space.

At the same time, the project team organised a host of events and public meals to promote the garden and engage the local community. These included a *Big Dig*, a *Big Lunch*, a *Midsummer's Night Event*, and many others. In addition, the team worked together with local partner organisations to develop targeted programmes for beneficiary groups, such as training programmes for unemployed, social activities with an emphasis on physical exercise and well-being for older people, and the *Grow Cook Eat programme* to raise awareness about healthy eating habits among deprived school children, and thus reduce their risk of developing obesity.

Design has played a two-fold role in the project. The conception of the garden was based on a co-creative approach. In September 2011, a *Garden Angels Lab* brought together dozens of volunteers to design an initial vision for the garden. And in March 2013 a series of Co-Design Labs were held for local people to provide ideas on how to re-design the garden. The ideas were then reworked by professionals and resulted in an overall plan for the garden. The different programmes and activities in the garden have been developed through the same participatory design process. Co-design Labs were organized for volunteers, schools, and organisations representing the elderly and unemployed people. The aim of each lab was to identify with participants how the garden could address their specific needs and requirements.

After this design phase, *The Walled Garden* project became viable thanks to the support of *The Friends of Bedfords Park*, a voluntary group of local people who promoted the garden among the local population. About twenty committed volunteers regularly contribute to gardening and maintenance works.



The Walled garden, London, UK, 2014
© Thomas Ermacora



One of the main assets of the project was its capacity to coordinate public intervention and local involvement. It has been developed in close collaboration with the Council owning the Walled Garden and through the teamwork of both users and partner organisations—a synergy that offers significant advantages. The project addresses the needs and aspirations of all participants at all levels, whether individual or administrative as for its strategic management. If this collaborative approach has received large support and secured significant funding, its inclusive nature slowed its implementation: developing a thorough understanding of the needs and possibilities of each stakeholder and organising a monitoring process which may involve all participants at every step of the project requires a lot of time. This questions the organisation of community-based urban regeneration as well as the upstream anticipation of partner contribution. What are the relevant protocols for collaborative actions? How can design interplay with public policy? Can we imagine our authorities being redesigned^{9?}

⁹ The Research Department of Saint-Étienne Cité du design is conducting the Authorities and Design research programme, which studies how citizens reclaim the space of political representations.

¹⁰ The first programme—'Human Cities, reclaiming public spaces' (2010–2012)—worked on the regeneration of public spaces for urban communities. The second—'Feeding Milan, energies for change' (2010–ongoing)—aims at shortening food chains in the Milanese region. Both research programmes (one European, the other national) have resulted in the conception of a first prototype, before the Politecnico invested 12,000 euros to implement the garden.

Coltivando. The convivial garden at Politecnico di Milano MILAN, ITALY

The *Coltivando* project is not as dependent on municipal policies as the former ones since it is situated in the more limited space of a university campus. It is a shared garden experiment conceived within the framework of research programmes¹⁰ run by POLIMI-DESIS Lab¹¹, a research lab at the Politecnico di Milano Design department. The originality of the project lies in its community-centred approach¹², which involves both the university students and staff and the inhabitants of Milano Bovisa district. The project was initiated in Autumn 2011 when students created a garden after a workshop called the *Temporary Urban Solutions*. The following year three co-design sessions were organised to include other stakeholders and to adjust the first proposal. About 100 people (experts, academics and residents) participated in the project. One year after the opening of the garden, the *Coltivando* community reached 25 to 30 permanent members and an ever-increasing number of visitors who occasionally take part in maintenance activities.

Not only has the *Coltivando* initiative resulted in the creation of a new convivial space enhancing trans-generational exchanges of ideas and best practices but also in reconnecting the campus to its urban context. Two communities have thus been able to meet through the shared garden: the academic community, used to work in a specific environment, can now interact with representatives of the civil society within the boundaries of the campus. The people of Bovisa area also have the possibility to participate in leisure or sports activities. The collaboration between the internal academic community and the local external one has helped the common space of the campus to open to its neighbouring community.



Coltivando, Milan, Italy, 2014
© Politecnico di Milano

The convivial garden mixing generations and populations on the grounds of Politecnico di Milano Bovisa campus.

¹¹ The POLIMI-DESIS Lab belongs to DESIS Network and is based in the Department of Design at the Politecnico di Milano. It is composed of a group of researchers who have adopted a strategic and systemic approach to design, with a specific focus on design for services and design activism. It has a background in service and product-service-system design for sustainability and investigates the way design can support and trigger social innovation, combining creativity and visioning with the possibility to engage in co-design processes.

¹² According to Meroni (2008), Community Centered Design (CCD) is an approach that scales up the consolidated methods and tools of User Centered Design to community size. She proposes to refer to design focusing on creative communities (Meroni, 2007) as CCD", in which understanding values and behaviours and collaborating with the most active social communities in conceiving and developing solutions (Ogilvy, 2002; Jégou, Manzini, 2008) is the distinctive work of the designer". CCD is not focused on a single user but on the entire community as enabling local change, as a resource to be valorised and from which to learn.



Garden without borders is a community garden with an unusual situation since it is located in Cieszyn, a town on the Czech-Polish frontier, where 35,000 citizens live on the Polish side and 30,000 on the Czech side of the border. It is situated on Castle Hill in Cieszyn, on a parcel of land that used to be a car park. It rapidly became a working and playing space, and the aim was to manage to cook a collective meal from community grown products.

While young people are more and more attached to social media communication, several local associations joined to co-create a garden that could help reconnect active citizenship with reality. *Garden without borders* is a place where people can learn about ecology, work from natural materials, and develop sustainable development and environmental respect (efficient energy use, waste management, recycling, etc.) This approach emphasises experience and know-how sharing.

The project also stresses the importance of a three level cooperation—local government, NGOs and citizens—for a project to be durable in the urban public space. *Garden without borders* was indeed funded by the local government, and participants were fully responsible for the realisation of the garden. In collaboration with local NGOs, Design studio *Pracownia K.* monitored the design process so as to create a space meeting the needs of the gardeners and the requirements of the projects.



Garden without borders, Cieszyn, Poland, 2015
© Parostatek

Growing from seeds.
Author: Justyna Świerczek,



Garden without borders, Cieszyn, Poland, 2015
© Svátek čaje

Urban garden in use,
Author: Šimon Horák,

Les Composteurs de quartier (*The neighbourhood composters*) is the name of a collective urban composter designed by a community of women to encourage city-dwellers to adopt sustainable development practices. In 2011 in Nantes, the members of *Les Idéelles* association decided to organise activities that would take place in the public space of their neighbourhood. Their first initiative was the creation of a garden combined with a small composter. After contacting *Faltazi* studio design to help them improve this equipment, a prototype was created in 2013 in partnership with the association *Compostri*¹³. *Faltazi* imagined a collective composter that serves as street furniture offering new functions in terms of urban integration and simplification of composting processes¹⁴. After an initial phase of negotiation, the City of Nantes agreed to fund the project. Four years later, in 2015, the composter was installed in the Malakoff district in Nantes.

This equipment can be used by each and everyone: urban dwellers who do not have a garden but want to compost their kitchen waste, taxpayers who want to reduce their tax incentive¹⁵ when required by their town, conscious consumers who know that composting at source produces ten times less CO2 than biowaste collection, regional authorities wanting to develop policies of waste reduction at source and to significantly reduce the amount of landfilled and incinerated waste at a lower cost, as well as other local actors such as companies, institutional catering establishments, commercial catering businesses, hotels and restaurants, supermarkets and hypermarkets, mini-markets, distribution centres, markets, companies without catering activities but likely to produce organic waste, market gardeners, florists, festivals, or any structure developing shared composting.



Shared composter
Ekovore, Malakoff district, Nantes, France, 2014
© Faltazi
www.ekovore.com

13 *Compostri* assists people in the implementation of shared compost projects in the Nantes Métropole area.

14 *Faltazi* design studio has developed a wide range of outer shells (wood, steel, weathering steel, powder-coated steel to your choice of colour) to allow for optimum integration, in accordance with local town planning guidelines.

15 In France the Tax incentive helps financing the waste elimination public service. It has replaced the Household Waste Removal Tax (*Taxe d'Enlèvement des Ordures Ménagères*) since January 1st 2014. It is based on actual use and incites people to reduce their household waste

The results of the initiative are mixed. The project encouraged residents to work together and proved their empowerment at neighbourhood level. Although local elected officials pointed the positive aspects of the *Composteurs*, their future is somewhat compromised. Many municipalities in France are already under contract with waste collection and management companies—a legal situation adverse to waste management alternatives being included on the city councils' political agenda.

These various initiatives echo the Transition town movement, which invites groups of citizens, NGO networks, and *in fine* local authorities to step up and mobilise around the common goal of reimagining and rebuilding their world. This approach is based on themes such as energy, economy, food and means of subsistence, transports, education, health, or even spirituality. Even though it claims its non-political nature, it can impact the political life of a city. Incidentally, the first transition initiative in the city of Totnes in the United Kingdom has promoted knowledge and experience transfer through study trips with elected officials from other regions. Citizens imagine collectively the solutions adapted to their common reality whether it be launching their own local currency (to encourage re-localisation and boost local trade, including food production), strengthening the relations between residents and local economical actors, creating shared gardens and co-ops, bartering, exchanging and recycling, car pooling and sharing, developing soft mobility and promoting energy sobriety. The common goal of these different approaches is to build resilience. For waste sorting to be the first step towards resilience, it has to be followed by its converting into insulation materials.

2. When a local community takes on the requalification of abandoned buildings

The increasing number of abandoned buildings in urban areas is one of the symptoms of *shrinking cities*. This expression refers to urban decline in many western cities. The phenomenon appeared in the US in the 1970s following the first oil shock, and the concept emerged in Germany at the beginning of the 1990s to describe the evolution of some cities in former East Germany. It later encompassed the study of the effects of population migration and of industry evolution through Europe and the world.

The process of urban decay has both economic and demographic causes since the deindustrialisation of some regions goes with rising unemployment and depopulation. Urban mutation has become a recurring preoccupation of local elected officials and is now receiving a growing media and urban research attention.

The Shrinking Cities International Research Network is a research consortium of 30 scholars and experts that was founded in 2004 within Berkeley University's *Center for Global Metropolitan Studies*. It is pursuing researches on shrinking cities in a global context through notably the consequences of the current housing crisis on the cities already economically weakened by deindustrialisation. European studies explore the consequences of regional industrial decline and the issues related to the isolation process of the urban areas that are disconnected from the new economic centres emerging from demographic transformations.

Urban decline features abandoned industrial areas and city centres in many European cities, especially in small and medium-sized agglomerations unable to compete with the drawing power of metropolises. While old industrial premises turned into

derelict land precluding any economic development, the decline of economic activities caused the increase of commercial vacancy. With the disappearance of convenience stores, which shape the maintenance of social cohesion, entire streets and neighbourhoods have lost their attractiveness.

Abandoned neighbourhoods are economically and socially weakened and cannot be managed according to the traditional urban development models, which are subordinated to the economic growth paradigm. The initiative project developed by the Project Office Philipp Oswalt aims at understanding the causes and consequences of urban shrinkage as well as developing innovative urban policies that could improve the prospects of cities with negative images through strategies based on the development of culture. In his books *Notes on the Moire House* (or *Urbanism for Emptying Cities*¹⁶) Ernesto Oroza shows that citizens have the power to reinvent the organisation of their every day life so as to change and adapt abandoned urban spaces to their needs.

When communities reclaim vacant urban spaces, social dynamics, neighbourhood attractiveness and economic recovery are re-stimulated. The following projects are based on the rehabilitation of abandoned buildings through initiatives designed by and for the population. Associative and cultural life has been a key factor in transforming vacant spaces into common ones.

The *Cascina Cuccagna* project started in the 1990s when a group of residents opposed Milan City Council regarding the future of a 17th century farm house that was left abandoned to disuse and decay. Residents wanted to preserve and restore it while the City had decided to demolish it. The absence of specific policy from the authority triggered a wave of protest from the residents, who gradually organised and joined together to form the *Associazione Cooperativa Cuccagna*, a cooperative that could engage in a credible dialogue with institutions and develop a reliable programme to rehabilitate the farm. *Cascina Cuccagna* has now become a laboratory for civic participation, which runs many activities and initiatives related to sustainability, culture, social cohesion, urban agriculture, and food.

Cantiere Cuccagna Consortium is a network of sociocultural local associations managing the space and the activities provided in the old farmhouse. The main beneficiaries are the local residents and more generally the inhabitants of Milan who consider *Cascina Cuccagna* as one of the city's most gorgeous and enjoyable places.

16 Ernesto Oroza, Gean Moreno, *Notes sur la Maison Moirée* (ou un urbanisme pour des villes qui se vident), Saint-Étienne, Cité du design and Saint-Étienne School of Architecture, 2013.



Cascina Cuccagna,
Milan, Italy, 2016
© Cité du design

The courtyard set-up during Milan Design Fair.



St-Clements hospital
LONDON, UK

St Clements hospital is a historical hospital site of 19,000 square miles that was redeveloped into an affordable housing complex in the London borough of Tower Hamlets. East London has been subjected to major real estate changes in the last ten years, especially near and in the Olympic site of the 2012 Games. An increasing demand for housing has caused the soaring of property prices. The average home cost more than 620K£ per year in 2014, which had an impact on the local population, and especially on families.

In 2011 the Greater London Authority issued a call for tender for a redevelopment project in St Clements hospital site. *The East London Community Land Trust* (ELCLT), an activist network for community ownership since the early 2000s, won the bid and became the owner of the whole site in partnership with Galliford Try, a construction company, and The Peabody Trust, a housing association. The specificity of the project is that twenty-three houses will be made available for ELCLT members and sold at half the market price in East London.

The collaborative aspect has been a central preoccupation during the elaboration phase of the project. As ELCLT says on their website: "If local people aren't involved in the design process then the expertise of the local area is not capitalised on and people feel alienated by the entire process, often resenting any form of change that is being proposed. It is their home—they deserve their say." During the consultation stage ELCLT held a dozen of workshops on the whole site with more than 250 people participating. The results of these workshops formed the basis of the propositions for the bid. In the next phases the community was consulted several times on specific design ideas. Architects and masterplanners John Thompson and Partners held a series of workshops. More than 350 people took part and had the opportunity to help develop design solutions that were integrated to the final project.



St. Clements Hospital,
London, UK, 2014
© Robin Houterman/
Clear Village

Renovation works in progress.

This predominantly collaborative design project was developed by private structures. Unlike the bottom-up approaches presented in this state of the art compendium, the top-down conception in that case has allowed the elaboration of a legally and financially stable project. While the initiators (developer and associations) developed a fully mastered framework, residents, empowered by the collaborative design process, were able to adapt its content to their specific needs. The housing issue is a societal concern that triggers significant civic mobilisation. Involving the community in the very definition of the project has strengthened this initiative and ensured its viability and sustainability in the neighbourhood.

Dodo Ry
HELSINKI, FINLAND

Dodo Ry is an environmental association based in Helsinki. Its goal is to promote renewable energy, common spaces and urban gardening. It reclaims abandoned industrial buildings to promote a collaborative design approach through workshops and discussion groups that address issues related to city of the future.

Dodo groups have also formed in other major cities such as Lahti, Oulu, Tampere or Turku, but the *Dodo Ry* site in Helsinki offers an urban farming garden, a café, a greenhouse, and other projects related to food production. Among its 300 members, 36 are junior members under 29. Their activities include urban agriculture courses, managing an urban gardening centre, outdoor kiosks with solar chargers for smartphones, reading groups, walks in the city, and a urban life fair.

Ex-Fadda. Laboratory of Knowledge
DENTICE DI FRASSO, ITALY

Ex-Fadda, Laboratory of Knowledge is a creative and design-led social innovation hub situated in Dentice di Frasso former winery in the Puglia region in Italy.

In the last ten years, the political situation in Puglia has changed radically, with a specific focus on young people. A regional Programme for Youth called '*Bollenti Spiriti*' was implemented to help young people to realise social innovation projects for local communities. *Ex-fadda* emerged from this context, financially and politically helped by different institutions such as *Regione Puglia* and the municipality of San Vito dei Normanni.

After booming activities until the 1950s, the Dentice Frasso family winery was abandoned, and then bought by public authorities. In 2010 the young company *Sandei* and five local sociocultural associations won the call for applications for the temporary management of the site, and received 60,000 euros. As this

Dodo ry, Helsinki,
Finland.
Image courtesy of Dodo
ry/Kimmo Kivelä

Dodo ry has an urban farming garden, a greenhouse and a café at Pasila railyard in Helsinki.



amount was not enough to cover the full renovation costs, the members of *Sandej* imagined a renovation project in collaboration with the local community. The project was based on self-build from waste materials or materials given by companies.

Ex-Fadda now runs several projects and activities: a recreation centre, a music school, a carpenter's workshop, a collective of photographers, a library, a bar and a radio. There is also a social restaurant—*X Food*—using local food-suppliers and employing 16 disabled people, and an open air space—*X Lives*—for young people to organise parties and concerts. *Ex-Fadda* can be seen as a space of flows, the practical application of a new concept of flexible public spaces, whose meanings and uses are defined by users according to their different needs.



Ex Fadda, Dentice di Frazzo, Puglia, Italy, 2014
X-food restaurant.



Sharing and discussion are key factors in the management of this public space based on general assemblies. Public authorities only assume a neutral and supportive role since the management of the common by the community has priority over any outside intervention.

Consulting people to address their needs (when the project is not community-initiated) is the best way to anchor these initiatives within the social reality of a neighbourhood. However, open and collaborative design approaches require a precisely defined formal framework that will structure and help implement the collected ideas without losing sight of the initial objectives. The constant presence of a managing body—whether it be a local association, a foundation or an artists' centre—is necessary to create and facilitate dialogue with the population as well as to act as intermediary with the required public authority. For these initiatives to be relevant and durable, a balance has to be found between the framing stage of the project, often developed with local governments, and the more informal and natural approach of the local communities involved in its conception. The dialogue with public

institutions brings the political and financial support needed to consolidate the initiatives developed.

3. When an artistic community bets on cultural projects to revitalise a neighbourhood

The requalification of a neighbourhood through cultural initiatives is synonym with revitalisation and attractiveness and can help other types of activities to be reintroduced. Many European cities such as Milan, Lyon, Graz, Bellgrade, Helsinki or London have supported the creation of arts centres in deprived neighbourhoods. Cultural projects can contribute to restore social cohesion, stimulate local community work, fight against social exclusion, or reconstruct individual and collective identities. How can these initiatives be financed? How can locally empowering cultural projects stand the test of time? In other words, how can such projects be made durable? Should they be made durable? What are the ultimate and actual benefits of such initiatives?

The following projects illustrate this will for neighbourhood requalification through different cultural initiatives: incubators for creators and artists in deprived areas, artistic projects organised by cultural centres, or art interventions fostered by local artists.

Grad European Center for Culture and Debate BELGRADE, SERBIA

The Grad European Center for Culture and Debate—also known as KC GRAD—was opened in 2009 in the heart of Belgrade, on the banks of the Sava River. It occupies a post-industrial empty warehouse and is the result of a rehabilitation project following the determination of the municipality to regenerate a relatively deprived industrial area of the city. It is a cultural and arts and design place which gathers interdisciplinary actors and is open to the population. Project initiators are invited to cooperate and take part in the dynamic life of the place. It has now become one of Belgrade's most prominent post-industrial venue with more than 8,000 visitors each month, which adds up to approximately 70,000 visitors a year. The activities offered are diverse and range from exhibitions, festivals, performances, lectures, debates, book presentations, workshops, music events, and film screenings...



GRAD European Centre for Culture and Debate Belgrade, Serbia, 2009/ongoing ©Nemanja Stojanovic



Urban project incubator BELGRADE, SERBIA

Urban project incubator is a Goethe-Institut project supported by the City of Belgrade and the Municipality of Savski Venac. It is an incubator involving ten local and international projects in the fields of art, architecture, urbanism and social engagement. These initiatives were present and operational in Savamala in 2013, a historically rich neighbourhood that had lost its attractiveness and dynamism.

Art historians and sociologists were actively involved in the analysis and development of the processes implemented through the incubator. Aspects of daily life in the neighbourhood and its local collective memory were collected to preserve the authenticity of the place. Through the independent crowdsourcing platform Nextsavamala people were invited to reflect and discuss their ideas for the future development of their neighbourhood. Activities were organised through diverse cultural programmes. Under the slogan *We Also Love the Art of Others*, the artists' cooperative *Third Belgrade* worked jointly with artists who were responsive to *the spirit of Savamala*. As for *Listen to Savamala!*, it is a sound art project implemented to collect old and new sounds from Savamala and feed them back into the same area in formats such as installations, concerts, or radio programmes.

Savamala's low rents and creative energy encourage alternative life styles. Its studios and galleries, clubs and bars, new start-up enterprises and small shops are fertile breeding-ground for creation. Savamala has thus become an experimental proving ground for a number of projects ranging from urban regeneration to cultural transformation.



Savamala, Belgrade, Serbia, 2013/ongoing

Annenviertel! The art of public intervention GRAZ, AUSTRIA

Annenviertel! The art of public intervention is a project that has been initiated by the contemporary art association Rotor in 2009 in Graz. Its aim was to involve artists in urban transformation projects so as to confront artistic freedom of expression with the norms and constraints of the public space in terms of living together and services. Rotor directors Margarete Makovec and Anton Lederer, and cultural theorist Elke Krasny first identified and contacted a large number of local associations working on various social subjects (immigration, genre, religion, culture, retired people, etc.). Guided tours have also been organised to fully grasp the social context of the Murvorstadt, a former mining area characterised by a high percentage of socially deprived population and by an important cultural diversity shaped by successive migratory flows.

The same year, Graz City Council initiated the renovation project of a zone nearby the train station. The communication campaign developed by Rotor revealed the issues at stake in this neighbourhood, proving the project was relevant with the city's urban. A mapping study was conducted with the different local actors to implement the artistic projects in urban space. A dialogue was initiated with other European art institutions in order to contextualise a new project framework and to exchange networks right from the start so as to make these initiatives durable.

If Rotor received governmental and EU grants, the success of the programme is first and foremost due to the commitment of stakeholders. The communication tools used allowed artists, theoreticians and activists to meet local people, politicians, shopkeepers, civil-servants, and so on, to build a strong participative network around the project. The inhabitants of an area who live and work side by side are brought together to conduct actions, thus contributing to make their neighbourhood more autonomous.



Annenviertel!, Graz, Austria, 2013 ©rotor-engage

Mood of people in the district Annenviertel.

Map and process desk.



Restoring social cohesion and stimulating local community work, fighting against social exclusion, or contributing to social and professional integration are the intended outcomes. However, a cultural project alone cannot confirm and solve all the socio-economical problems of a neighbourhood or a city, especially when cultural development sometimes tends to become a speculative concern.

Jakomini Quarter
GRAZ, AUSTRIA

The *Jakomini pilot project* started in 2010 and was also implemented in the city of Graz. It addresses the problem of vacant ground floor retail spaces through street regeneration. The area that was chosen is a depopulated district crossed by two former commercial streets, Jakoministraße and Klosterwiesgasse. Public authorities (Graz City Council and its Department of Economic and Tourism development in cooperation with Creative Industries Styria) initiated different actions to address this issue, and a design competition was organised to redefine the identity of the Jakomini district.

The winning project, "Ready. Steady. Go." by architects Sandra Janser and Elisabeth Koller, has a strong visual impact. Their proposal takes the form of running tracks painted on the streets and covering an area of 4,600 square metres. It marked the aforementioned streets as a significant area encouraging the development of an artistic network. Following this intervention, public authorities offered low rents for the artists who wanted to open their studios in those 2 streets. In one year about fifty companies have settled in the vacant premises, and *Jakomini Quarter* has now 89 start-ups.

The transfer of the project to other cities can only be possible if artistic intervention sends a strong public signal. Its implementation in common public spaces that are not normally used is a way for local communities to reclaim their common spaces. The economical aspect of the project, contrary to the usual speculative system, guarantees a socially stable neighbourhood.



Jakomini street, Graz, Austria, 2016.
© team Jakomini

3 Minute service intervention by FH Joanneum students - Passers-by are invited to be pushed through Jakomini Street while having a cup of tea.

NIL28
MILAN, ITALY

NIL28 is a participative project conducted in Milan by an association of creative professionals founded in 2011. Since then Sergio Colantuoni, Controprogetto, dotdotdot studio, Grammatiche metropolitan, Metrogamma and CameraZimma Architetti have been designing creative interventions in the neglected areas of their city.

Their first intervention, entitled "Neighbourhood sitting", took place during the Milan Design week in 2011. All the residents of the neighbourhood were invited to bring a chair and sit around a 120-metre long table. This social and provocative installation was based on a quite informal and convivial principle, in contrast with the Design Week official events. It was followed by a series of interventions designed to improve the surrounding public space: transformation of a weekly local market into a neighbourhood living room, creation of a repair workshop, guerrilla gardening actions on abandoned parking spaces, or creation of an information totem for elderly people who are not able to use the internet. The aim of the project is to transform an urban zone into a creative district, an area strengthened by its creative emulation spirit. By giving back to streets and squares of a city their original function, public space is used as an authentic and shared place for social exchange.



Members of NIL28, Milan, Italy, 2011



Neighbourhood's sitting, NIL28, Milan Design Week, Italy, 2011
© NIL28 - Sorrentino

These locally anchored artistic interventions can contribute to change the image of a neighbourhood and enhance its attractiveness. This renewed dynamism, however, might lead to gentrification. Gentrification is the progressive embourgeoisement of a city's low-income areas. In her last book "Paris without the people. The gentrification of the capital city¹⁷", geographer Anne Clerval describes the key-factors of this social mutation. As deindustrialisation and rising unemployment are gradually driving lower-income families away from some neighbourhoods, vacant and abandoned properties are re-occupied by artists. Educated low-income people follow, drawn by a blooming artistic and creative emulation. Houses are being restored and local services reorganised to adapt to a new attractiveness. The revaluation of

17 *Paris sans le peuple. La gentrification de la capitale*, Anne clerval, Paris, La Découverte, 2013.

neighbourhoods encourages housing market speculation and the displacement of the last poor urban residents in favour of upper-income people.

The causes of this process are resonant with the described projects, in which cultural initiatives are carried out to revive run-down and low-class areas. The socio-economic consequences of these projects may not be those that were originally expected: as land value is increasing with growing attractiveness, social ambition is replaced by economic speculation.

4. When communities get organised to live together

In the face of globally and rapidly rising land value, more and more people face being shut out of the housing market. Getting access to housing requires measures that include daily practices and uses to allow low-income people to get affordable and decent housing.

Solutions have been found to tackle the housing crisis. Architects work at reducing the cost of housing, lessors propose specific housing schemes, or citizens develop new way to live together. Alternative experiences become more visible. Even though they are still marginal and independent, some are more organised, or even legally supported. Cohousing, houseshare, housing communities, or intergenerational housing are among the new habitats which durably change the relation to housing and property. These mutations raise issues specific to living/housing-space sharing since the distribution of common goods and spaces challenges the different uses of living spaces. Housing has to be redefined according to new models of community life.

The following projects are examples of space sharing approaches through which groups of people reclaim neglected post-industrial areas or create community villages. Alternative housing models address current socioeconomic issues and fundamentally change our relations to space, property and community.

Haringey warehouse community
HARINGEY, UK

Haringey warehouse community is a creative community of people who have transformed former industrial warehouses in the city of Haringey in England. Haringey Arts is the social enterprise running the warehouse community. It is in charge of curating artistic projects and coordinating the whole warehouse site. It helps connecting all the creative talent in the area, whether they be artists in residence, owners, local associations or Haringey Council. The organisation has implemented a programme to develop the identity of the artistic community. More than 1,500 people are now living in Haringey's redeveloped spaces.

Haringey workhouses are former abandoned textile factories that were gradually turned into collective live/work spaces. Haringey Council first accepted this transformation, before publishing a report in 2013, limiting the use of the industrial sites and denouncing the residents' precarious living conditions. The warehouse residents were worried and feared eviction, but local media picked up the story and the community became a recurring subject of local debate. When the Council finally decided to support creative industries, the residents develop initiatives to promote their community, including the inHouse Festival, a film festival which has become a large-scale event. The warehouse community works closely with Haringey Arts and initiated

most of the region's artistic projects, arts having an explicit role in local policies.

It took time for the warehouse residents to be accepted by the local population and authorities, but they gradually proved their talents and abilities. Today, however, just a few of them assume full responsibility of the initiatives conducted, even though the future of the community depends on all its members. Similarly, there should be more than one source of financing—as it is the case today. This raises the sensitive issue of a necessity for political support. The initial impulse, based on protest and a will for autonomy, is now being limited by essential financial needs.



Haringey warehouse community, Haringey, UK, 2014
©Robin Houterman/ Clear Village.

Entrance to Catwalk Place with part of the mural commissioned by Haringey Arts and Prowell Ltd.

Canning Town Caravanserai
LONDON, UK

Caravanserai is an experimental and locally-driven public space opened in 2012 in the east London district of Canning Town South. Canning Town is one of the most ethnically diverse and most deprived wards in London. The organisation of the London Olympic Games in 2012 in East London changed its image radically. In 2010 the London Development Agency (LDA) and the London Borough of Newham launched the *Meanwhile London Competition* to garner ideas for temporary uses on three prominent brownfield sites. The competition brief asked projects to have a locally-driven approach, enticing for the local population and visually attractive to signal the potential of the area, and promoting entrepreneurial activities. Ash Sakula's *Caravanserai* was one of the winning proposals.

The on-site facilities were built over two years with more than 50 volunteer trainees working alongside skilled professionals. Everything was built on site, including the 17-metre long table designed by the Caravanserai team with materials donated by local company Loughton Scaffolding.

Canning Town Caravanserai opened a few months before the 2012 Olympic games. Inspired by the caravanserais that lined the Silk Road, and that offered visitors not only food and rest but also opportunities for business and cultural exchange, the Caravanserai is something of a small village. It has a community garden, an open-air theatre, a children's play area, sheltered tables, market kiosks for local entrepreneurs, and a micro-manufacture workshop. Canny Ash of Ash Sekula aims for the Caravanserai to be a model for a new type of public space, which integrates forums and facilities, events and activities, all collaboratively created by local hosts and guests.

However, financial viability remains Caravanserai's major problem. And although some small stands can be rented out, the principal resources come from volunteer work, materiel donations, and

grants. These types of urban regeneration projects would need public authorities to be involved at a more strategic level.



Canning Town Caravanseraï, London, UK, 2013 © Robin Houterman/Clear Village

Each shed has its own function, for example a community classroom.

Lescar Pau, an Emmaüs Village LESCAR, FRANCE

Lescar Pau is an Emmaüs Village founded in 1982 at Lescar, a municipality located 10km away from Pau, in the South West of France. As an independent community offering an alternative way of life, the Village is increasingly sought out by people in precarious situations or on an ideological quest. Today, it is home to a motley crew of 130 individuals: companions, employees, volunteers and trainees. After Germain Sarhy met Abbé Pierre, he set up the village, a community whose aim is to distance itself from consumerist societies. Gradually, the community was organised as a micro-society based on such values as sharing, solidarity and mutual assistance, relying on recycling, restoring and selling various objects. All the members are thus involved in a variety of activities including waste rehabilitation, eco-construction, fixing and repairing, maintaining the village or working in the shared garden. They accept, for an allowance, to conform to the ground rules and values of the community.

Community houses efficiently address the issue of social housing. However their implementation is often hindered by the necessity for political and financial support. In order to perpetuate them the residents of alternative dwellings organise themselves along rather strict lines which leave them limited freedom. This is in part what the experiment of the Emmaüs Village of Lescar Pau demonstrates: its social structure, under the guise of embracing an absence of hierarchy, is rather rigid, and the members are expected to relinquish some of their rights as citizens.

5. When a project is supported by a virtual community

A community is said to be virtual when the interactions between the different members take place on IT networks. This new mode of relationships was foreseen by Joseph Carl Licklider and Robert William as early as 1968. They heralded in *The computer as a communication device*¹⁸ the emergence of interactive online communities, not based on geographical closeness but on common interests. This may be observed in Helsinki or Bologna, where some projects are supported by social networks. The onset of these emerging communities raises some questions: what is their impact on real life? Do they actually allow their members to influence the social context of a neighbourhood and its residents?

¹⁸ *The computer as a communication device* was published in *Science and Technology* in 1968

Kallio movement HELSINKI, FINLAND

Kallio-liike is a virtual group founded in 2011 in the old working-class neighbourhood of Kallio, Helsinki. Notorious for its underprivileged, bohemian and student population, this neighbourhood is a big favourite with middle-class families with young children. Erkki Perälä founded the movement after hearing that some aid services might get closed and people were threatened with evictions. Arguing that the neighbourhood belongs to everybody, *Kallio-liike* is open to everybody and to all sorts of ideas, organising events for the benefit of the residents. Although the movement is independent, there is a political involvement to serve the interests of the local population. The aim of the members is to maintain the dynamic social diversity of Kallio in spite of the ongoing process of gentrification.

The main actors in this organisation are local volunteers. Events are organised together with some associations and small businesses from the neighbourhood, blurring the differences between the different parties. The structure of *Kallio-liike* allows the members to take part in a project or drop out of it very freely, and the volunteers often enrol for only one or two projects.

Kallio-liike usually organises carefully chosen activities in one street or another, thus encouraging the development of a localised common identity. The main event every year is the *Kallio Block Party*, which occupies a large part of the neighbourhood, welcoming some 10,000 people. Flea markets, meals and political debates are organised throughout the year. The members also get involved in urban planning, with for instance the development of cycle lanes along Hämeenkatu Street. Other neighbourhoods in Helsinki, such as *Töölö-liike* and *Laru-liike*, have followed suit.

Kallio-liike's main asset is solidarity, uniting the local participants and consequently capturing the attention of the media. The participants try to highlight certain local concerns that they believe are insufficiently taken into account by the authorities. In September 2015, the *Kallio-liike* facebook page got 14,833 likes, representing almost half of the neighbourhood's population. This shows that this virtual movement is widely supported, as it deals with very real issues and locally organises concrete events.

Social Street BOLOGNA, ITALY

The idea of *Social Street*, set up in Bologna in 2013, originates from the Facebook group "Residenti in Via Fondazza – Bologna" whose members wanted to maintain a social link between the street residents. Federico Bastiani, one of these locals, decided to create a Facebook group in order to meet people whose children were the same age as his own son. Three months later the page had about 500 members. The people at the origin of "Residenti in Via Fondazza" took up the idea of a *Social Street* closed group on Facebook, thus realising their project without the constraints of setting up a new platform.

The ultimate aim of *Social Street* is to encourage interactions between the residents of a same street, using a common platform on which ideas and projects are shared, leading to film screenings, meals, and so on. One of the specificities is that roles are not fixed; anyone may organise an event or simply participate in one without contributing to its organisation.

Emmaüs village Lescar Pau, Lescar, France, 1982/ongoing © citedesign, 2015

Examples of eco-construction built by the community.



Kallio movement, Helsinki, Finland, 2011/ongoing
Image courtesy of Panu Pakkamäe

The popular flea market enlivens the area and promotes reuse and recycling of old clothes and things.



There are currently 53 different *Social Streets* in Milan, with a total of approximately 7,224 members. Other cities are following the example: 365 *Social Streets* are listed in Italy, and some have recently appeared in France, Great Britain and Spain.



NoLo Social District, Milan, Italy, 2015/ongoing ©Rosario Mignemi

GiraNoLo ("Exploring NoLo") tour, 2017. Bottom-up tours of the neighborhood on various topics; each stop is curated by one or two local citizens.

More city to Helsinki
HELSINKI, FINLAND

More city to Helsinki is a group which aims at creating discussions and therefore promotes urban environments in the whole of Helsinki. Every now and then an urban planning question from one of the neighbouring cities is brought up for discussion, but only when Helsinki is or would somehow be affected by the consequences of that decision. As many of the members agree that infill development is the easiest and most effective way to create new urban areas, many of the more tangible subjects deal with the outskirts of the inner city.

In 2009, Mikko Särelä (post-doctoral researcher at *Aalto University*, researching in computer networks, Internet, security and critical infrastructure) started a group on *Facebook* called *Lisää kaupunkia Helsinkiin*. The aim was to create an easily approachable forum for people with the same interests, developing the urban fabric of Helsinki. The group quickly became popular in city planning circles, and in 2013 it already had 900 members. At this point, the media started to pay attention. Since then the growth has been rapid, and today the group has over 7,000 members.

However, many of the participants are neophytes with an interest in town planning. The group has an influence on the atmosphere of urban planning in Helsinki and the surrounding region. It provides a platform for new ideas for the city or solutions to existing problems, both structural and practical. Several events such as excursions and meetings have been organised through the group. Smaller combinations have also been established within the group, the most famous of these being the Urban Helsinki-group, whose members proposed an alternative master plan for the city in 2014.

These three projects highlight several positive traits. Indeed, a virtual community enables to quickly set up a more efficient form of counter power than a traditional association dealing with the media and the authorities. Set up costs are also reduced. These *Facebook* groups have the actual ability to impact a street or a neighbourhood, organising meals, film screenings or any other event susceptible of maintaining social bonds in urban environments. But they can also be more ambitious, like the group *More City to Helsinki*, who played a major role in the development of

the city. These remain relatively rare examples. How could local authorities and virtual communities work together using social media? To what extent is it possible to exceed the level of electronic involvement?



More City to Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland, 2011 © Carlos Iamuela

Iansibulevardi Kaupunkibulevardit rose on the horizon the group in spring 2011. In autumn 2011, it made the council amend the initiative of a street in the west bus.

6. When projects become services...

Western countries have been going through a thorough economic mutation since the end of the 20th century. With the relocation of industries and the advent of state-of-the-art technologies, workers have largely been replaced by service providers. Services used to be the prerogative of domestic servants and were of little value in a world dominated by the laws of industrial production, but they have now found a new place thanks to the new economic models, becoming a crucial source of income in the process. Today value is not in the product any more but in the trading. As Cyril Afssa states in his book *Designing Services. Why have domestic servants become fast-food restaurants and digital apps?*, "service implies a task is performed by a third party for a fee, it's a social exchange whose worth is based on action or reflection, even though it may sometimes involve tangible objects. [...] These actions and reflections are not invested in objects and constitute a crude job whose value is itself"¹⁹.

Services are based on peer-to-peer interactions, and production is no longer a matter of manufacturing and selling, but rather of sharing and exchanging. This new approach challenges the foundations of a market-based economy. Laurent Habib²⁰, in his book *The Force of the ethereal*, argues in favour of a service-based economy as "the appearance of a more durable and virtuous set of values, whatever the point of view: economical, social, environmental, or even moral. Value is less and less attached to the material world, but has shifted towards the intangible."

19 *Design de service. Pourquoi les serviteurs sont-ils devenus des fast-foods et des applications numériques?* Saint-Étienne, Cité du design, 2013, p.11.

20 Laurent Habib, CEO of Havas France and president Observatory of Intangibles since May 2011, author of *La force de l'immatériel, pour transformer l'économie*, Paris, PUF, 2012.

The following projects deal with services offered to communities. Anchored in a local area, driven by social and ecological motivations, they represent alternatives to usual modes of consumption. Associations are often at the onset of these projects, which have become independent and evolved into payable services, spurring a new economy.

Brixton village LONDON, UK

Brixton Village is an indoor market from the 1930s located in Brixton in south London. The site was acquired in 2007 by London & Associated Properties and slated for redevelopment. At the time the market had been going downhill for years and twenty units were sitting empty. To maximise the value of their investment, the owners proposed to demolish half the site and construct a ten-storey apartment block on top of it. However, the proposal met with great resistance from the local community. The 'Friends of Brixton Market' led a determined campaign to conserve the market and the owners were eventually forced to withdraw their proposal in 2009.

The result was a deadlock. The solution that was proposed by the local council was to turn to *Space Makers* in the hope that they could initiate a project that could achieve a win-win situation for both sides. The subsequent success of the project is a strong argument for trying to set up similar projects elsewhere: projects that are driven by a 'catalyst' organisation working together with the local authorities, site owners and the local community.

With seed funding from London & Associated Properties, *Space Makers* started their initiative to rebuild the social life of the market. They launched a social media drive and managed to attract more than 350 people to their first 'Space Exploration' event. *Space Makers* gave interested people a week to come up with proposals for taking over a vacant unit; those with successful proposals would then get three months free rent. 98 proposals were submitted within the week and *Space Makers* selected 30 of them. These ranged from food stores to lantern-makers, from fashion boutiques to community shops, and from galleries to band rehearsal spaces.

Space Makers continued to support the revitalisation process afterwards. They facilitated regular events to increase footfall and worked closely with the community to increase local participation. As a result, *Brixton Village* has always been a movement much more than a collection of shops. As Dougald Hine, the founder of *Space Makers*, said: "it wasn't just about businesses. You came down there and it felt like a space you wanted to spend time in." Six months after the project started, *Brixton Village* was being written about in the *New York Times* and *Time Out*. And by the time *Space Makers* finished their work, the market was fully let for the first time in 30 years.

The initiative can be described as a 'flow' that overcomes the barrier between the private and the public and commercial. *The Brixton Village* project made the most of the DIY spirit that was already part of the area and enabled local people to apply this in the commercial setting of a marketplace. On the one hand this created a flow towards entrepreneurial activity. On the other hand it also transformed the character of the market by reducing the emphasis on pure business and emphasising a spirit of innovation and collaboration.

The success of *Brixton Village* has also been its weakness. It has become a well-known destination and some criticize it for having turned into a place for 'yuppies' from other parts of London, rather than a place for the local community. As was the case in *Brixton Village*, where a space is owned by a big landlord with commercial interests, it is particularly difficult to maintain the community spirit of a project and keep the risk of gentrification at bay.



Brixton Village market, London, UK, 2009/ongoing © Robin Houterman/ Clear Village

Brixton Village was voted best private market in 2013.

Urban Shepherds SAINT-DENIS, FRANCE

Every year a few acres of arable land disappear because of urban sprawling. Responding to this fact, five friends founded the association *Clinamen* in 2012 in Saint-Denis so as to reintroduce agricultural practices in urban areas. In 2014, *Clinamen* set up a cooperative called *Les Bergers urbains (Urban Shepherds)*, which was meant to become a research centre for the development of urban agriculture. The aim is to help citizens-residents, sponsors, local companies-move on to new ways of managing green spaces, maintaining urban grazing land, vegetable gardens or building hen-houses.

Urban Shepherds can mainly be found around Paris and in Northern France. They advise both private owners and local communities to improve their public parks, neighbourhood squares, wastelands, motorway embankments or roundabouts by installing different services. For instance, a hen-house may be built on a surface of between 10 and 300 m², plots from 1,000 m² to 20 hectares may be turned into grazing land, between 30 m² to 1 hectare is needed for kitchen and market gardens, and between 30 m² to 5,000 m² for agriculture, transhumance should not exceed 12 km/day. Only volunteers run the association, which gets financial input thanks to the flock and farming equipment.

These two projects all have led to the setting up of services for communities, whether they be related to food or the maintenance of green spaces. They follow the principles of "short circuits". Traditionally used when referring to agricultural production, the phrase indicates that the actual distance between producer and consumer is reduced-this distance may be spatial or human. Indeed, the number of intermediaries between producer and consumer is taken into account as well as the actual geographical distance between the production site and the selling point. Some projects combine both notions of proximity, thus embracing the economical and social values of sustainable development. The idea of short circuits challenges production and distribution methods, and leads to a more collaborative mode of consumption.

Concluding thoughts

The processes of collaborative design are often resorted to when public spaces (green spaces as well as abandoned buildings) are to be redefined. A community's involvement suffices to trigger a project, but this study has shown that the support of local authorities is crucial to ensure its longevity. This support may be obtained right at the onset of the project or once things are in place, and it may take different forms, from mere political support to subsidies. These projects have positive effects socially, environmentally and/or culturally, but it remains difficult to assess their actual economic impact. Maybe this study should be continued, integrating assessing tools to take the financial aspect into account. But economic profit is rarely the driving force behind these projects, which are therefore to be evaluated according to other criteria. This is what Ivan Illich suggests in *Tools for Conviviality*²¹: « I choose the term "conviviality" to designate the opposite of industrial productivity. I intend it to mean autonomous and creative intercourse among persons, and the intercourse of persons with their environment; and this in contrast with the conditioned response of persons to the demands made upon them by others, and by a man-made environment. I consider conviviality to be individual freedom realized in personal interdependence and, as such, an intrinsic ethical value. I believe that, in any society, as conviviality is reduced below a certain level, no amount of industrial productivity can effectively satisfy the needs it creates among society's members. » Another example is provided by Bhutan's famous Gross National Happiness. Evaluation criteria therefore raise questions, which may be tackled by Human Citizens in their design development projects.

This study also underlines the necessity for the different parties involved in a project to communicate, indeed dialogue is necessary between residents, promoters, public institutions, companies, and so on. On several occasions, mapping was mentioned as a useful tool allowing all people concerned to have a common image. Indeed, designing maps or any other visual documents to analyse a site and therefore grasp its strengths and weaknesses

is a very effective first step. Such documents show a territory's experience; they support exchanges between all the actors and include the outlines of a common project.

Finally, the third part of the study tackles projects set up by virtual communities. Information and communication technologies have indeed given rise to a new kind of communities, sustained by social networks and freed from the constraints of the actual physical world. These virtual communities open up onto a different level of understanding and acting in the city. They embody a new way of challenging urban environments thanks to participative facilities and thanks to certain values they defend, notably conviviality and spontaneity.

The development of virtual platforms thus offers new modus operandi to the residents who wish to have an influence on their neighbourhood. One example is *MySociety*, an e-democracy project based in the UK. The aim of *MySociety* is to offer IT tools that will have an actual impact. Some of these tools include the following: *Alaveteli* helps citizens access theoretically public documents which are in fact difficult to find, *WriteToThem* makes communication between elected representatives and citizens easier, *FixMyStreet* allows people to report urban issues directly. The latter is an open source platform allowing city dwellers to notify the local authorities when they become aware of problems including, broken street lamps, damaged benches or littering. Could these apps and services facilitate exchanges between residents and local authorities? Could they lead to another way of relating to common spaces? Is open sourcing the advent of a new age for urban planning? It is obvious that these new developments are placing users in a new position of power, not as the result of some revolt against public authorities, but thanks to a process granting them freedom and autonomy. If control technologies become the norm in the near future, will freedom of choice be guaranteed in spite of third parties looking into the interface or the proposed services? This question is the main issue regarding the actions of citizens in the long term, and even the official establishment of these actions should be considered.

Les bergers urbains
(Urban shepherds),
France, 2014/ongoing
© Guillaume Leterrier



21 Ivan Illich, *La Convivialité*, 1973. Published by Seuil, Points Essais, 2003.

Conclusion

Human Cities – Challenging the city scale: State of the Art proves the diversity and vitality of citizen-led initiatives in European cities. These projects reflect a common will to create or strengthen urban social cohesion and to open up to others, welcome them and share with them the specificities of a neighbourhood or a city. The challenges cities are to face in the future will test the solidarity and social cohesion of their communities. It is good news that some cities are already working on and experimenting the Human Cities they want for today or tomorrow.

We should however analyse the ambitions and realities of these actions with a critical eye if we want to assess their relevance and reproducibility. The examples studied in this publication have benefited from a combination of favourable circumstances: one or several participants had the skills and resources required to initiate a project which – through its nature and its compatibility with its socioeconomic and cultural context – received the support of the population. The success of these actions indeed depends mainly on high levels of involvement from the citizens they are aimed at. It is therefore essential to encourage exchanges between and feedback from the “initiators” in order to identify common success factors among situations that may be different but close in their intention.

Cities provide a large number of services to individuals (whatever their expectations or their physical, personal and socio-professional situations) as well as to economic actors. The skills required needs to be various and interdependent to reach accuracy. Some of these initiatives are deeply rooted on a will to do without institutional rigidity and to involve city-users in a more direct, rapid and pragmatic way than with that of a classical democratic process. These *bottom-up* initiatives have an impact on the life of the city since they reclaim public space and tackle issues that fall within institutional or political expertise. In some way they give urban citizens the possibility to get pragmatically involved into political actions and to put into practice, as individuals or communities, their beliefs and aspirations. Experimentation is thus made easier and more rapid because of the flexibility and immediacy of this ascendant approach.

That being said, inhabitants cannot be the sole driving forces. Large-scale projects and those tackling important but often unattractive issues can only be initiated by authorities. As for citizen-led projects, their longevity will depend on the capacity to expand the scope of expertise. Whether it be for the project itself—humane and material resource management, communication strategy implementation, public access management—or for its proper and specific interfacing with the city—urban global network and transport management, securisation of public spaces, temporary or long-term provision of public spaces by authorities, etc.

The projects that already shape and will shape the Human Cities of the future will involve numerous and very different actors: urban citizens from all backgrounds, skilled professionals from diverse fields, local associations with city-oriented activities, public authority representatives... On various occasions this paper has shown that architects and designers had a central role as empathic mediators between citizens, communities and elected representatives. With their knowledge of representation tools and design methods they can synthesize a project input data and transform them into actions within the city. They focus on observation, experimental approaches, and co-creative processes with citizens. As such, they invent new methodologies proving that public space planning is no longer a specialist's prerogative.

We hope that the results of the *Human Cities_ Challenging the City Scale* project will help change the perception of European policymakers about the valuable role of inhabitants and creators in reinventing a more humane city—collectively.

















- 81 *Knjižnica pod Krošnjami (Library under the Tree-tops)*, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2010/ongoing
- 82 *The Grand Park of Kragujevac*, Belgrade, Serbia, 2014
- 83 *Annenviertel!* The art of public intervention, Graz, Austria, 2013
- 84 *ReNewTown*, Velenje, Slovenia, 2012
- 86 *Coltivando*, Milan, Italy, 2014
- 87 *The Grand Park of Kragujevac*, Belgrade, Serbia, 2014
- 88 *Zusammensetzung*, Graz, Austria, 2014
- 89 *Earth Market* in Largo Marinai di Italia, Milan, Italy, 2014
- 90 *Skupaj na ploščad!* (Together to the platform!), Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2016
- 92 *ReNewTown*, Velenje, Slovenia, 2012
- 93 *Knjižnica pod Krošnjami (Library under the Tree-tops)*, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2010/ongoing
- 94 *Zusammensetzung*, Graz, Austria, 2014
- 95 *Emmaüs Village Lescaur Pau*, Lescaur, France, 2015
- 96 *M3 Unblock it!* Warsaw, Poland, 2011

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Cité du design
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society to a society
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From a consumer society to a society of salvage: a social and industrial experimentation at the village emmaüs Lescar Pau

By Franck Léard

Through collective representations as well as through common sense, the mentioning of alternative ways of life, that present concrete solutions against the principles of a capitalist economy and a consumer society, receives in many ways numerous positive comments and ratings. Indeed, who would not be enticed by a way of life other than the one proposed by the dominant socio-economic system of western societies which we hear everywhere that it has reached its end because of the economic, social and ecological disasters it generates. It is exactly on this principle of alternative ways of life issued from consumerist societies that is based the Village Emmaüs of Lescar Pau, situated in the south-west of France, around ten kilometres from Pau, head chief of the Pyrénées-Atlantiques County. This community's project searches to develop and create a "concrete utopia" based on a collective of Emmaüs companions and volunteers. The goal is to be as independent as possible from production and consumption models specific to common ways of life in our societies. In this community, the independence of individuals as well as the autonomy

of the collective as a result is seen as a standard principle if not a priesthood since it relies heavily on religious precepts inspired by the Abbé Pierre, it's founder who initiated the Emmaüs movement in 1949 leading to the formation of hundreds of communities in France and in the world. If the Emmaüs village of Lescar-Pau, built in 1982 at the initiative of its mentor Germain Sarhy, still currently active, is greatly based on the original precepts of the Emmaüs movement, it has more or less distanced itself by attaching to a strong radical left ideological dimension. In fact, it differs from other communities on this point, the latter being much more neutral from the political point of view are more orientated towards the principles of social economy (housing, social and identity reconstruction of people with marginal trajectories exclusionary or issued from precariousness). The Lescar Pau community distinguishes itself from the latter by literally taking to the autonomy from the consumer society but also from intra governance models (compared to other Emmaüs communities) and outside the community (particularly with public institutions).



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The originality of the Lescaur village lies in the experimentation of the organisation of a collective life based on an activity of salvage- recycling- transformation and resale of very diverse donated objects, clothes, furniture and household electrical goods (like other Emmaüs villages) that originate from the generosity of the local inhabitants. This is done by a counter spokesperson that promotes a point of view that is pro-ecological, anti-productivity and anti-capitalist through different cultural events (festivals, debate-meetings and other mediation activities). The specifications of this experimentation, necessarily imperfect according to its initiators, illustrate the outline of innovative solutions, even if sometimes contradictory, as to collective lifestyles, organizational models of a production activity, governance models and its insertion in a urban environment with activities typical of a consumer society.

An island in a consumerist ocean

The utopia begins in a zone situated a couple of kilometres from the centre of Lescaur, it's town of implementation and its 10000 inhabitants that belong to the conurbation community of Pau, also located 10km away from the Village. The urban composition of Lescaur has an important specification: it is constituted in "strips", namely a lined alternation of a natural zone, a housing zone and a vast commercial zone called Lescaur Soleil which offer the Palois community a centre of commercial activities of more than 320 brands and 10000 parking space (one of the most extensive in France since it stretches across 3 different towns). Access to the Village is via the north of the natural zone of Ousse, directly from the exit of the A64 motorway which opened in 2008. The Village is therefore the first edifice that you see from this motorway exit. The entrance to the town is marked by the visible presence of the Village indicated by the large sign Emmaüs in front of its admittedly smaller car park, but that stands out for the difference with city entrances more frequently observed in French municipalities.

Many projects of implementation of an artisanal or commercial zone in proximity of the Village has been reflected upon since the eighties but the various political mandates have never been able to achieve it mainly because of the existence of

Lescaur Soleil located below the town. The latter, in addition to its strip configuration, has a historical city-centre with diminished activities apart from religious edifices and ancient buildings ("maisons béarnaises" from the 15th and 16th centuries) that seem to be frozen in time. The feeling of a "museumized" town is present as the activities seem to have been shifted to the commercial zone. Rare cafes, squares occupied by a few tourists, the urban centrality seems to have been recomposed in favour of a new urban centre that is Lescaur Soleil. As a testimony to this, the town hall changed place in 2011 and was moved to the Baron d'Ariste's castle situated outside the city-centre in a 6 hectare estate. The town therefore recomposed in an uncommon way that follows the evolution of its demography (2800 inhabitants in 1968 and 10000 at the last census) but also the evolution of its main activity that represents the giant commercial area one of which's biggest buildings is called "Quartier Libre".

The Village's geographical and urban position, easily accessible because of the proximity of the motorway and yet isolated from the rest of the town of Lescaur because of the extension of the latter towards the south, gives it visibility and uniqueness. By receiving donations from inhabitants of a zone of 50km in the surrounding areas and benefiting from a privileged implantation, the Village also acquires an important symbolical position. Island of production and alternative consumerism, situated a couple of kilometres from one of the biggest commercial centres of the country, it presents itself as an integral part of the consumerism flows as well as one of the ends of the chain because of its activity of salvage of products coming from this same type of consumption. During the summer, and because of its salvage activity, it therefore receives around 500 vehicles per day (a record of 800 vehicles was observed on one particular day) and close to 400m³ of salvaged merchandise taken in. Irony of the urban re-compositions according to the municipal mandates or involuntary subversion of local urban plans, its isolated situation allows it to acquire the image of a more ethical and noble trade based on other values than the one of consumerism. Its implementation since the eighties, as well as the acquisitions of adjacent lands, have resulted in its extension into a space of 11 hectares where



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take place the various activities that have given it a configuration that is almost insular in regards of the town. The financial independence of the area is obtained thanks to the community's activity (generating around 3 million euros in sales revenue), the food autonomy is almost completely ensured (around 95% according to the people responsible for the area) thanks to the farm managed by the village, the eco-construction of residences occupied by the companions are constructed by themselves (their equipment comes from the Villages' salvage activities), energy and water provisions are the only "concession" links that remain with the public authorities. The latter turn a blind eye on the construction permits of these houses or the extensions to already-existing buildings. This insularity, from the productivity and consumerist world of consumption and from the alternative production, represent the ideal place of creation of a work and life community in the sense that its goals are the deinstitutionalisation of its members and the will to only use public assistance when it is really necessary.

The relative adherence of members to the community's values.

If the principle of independence and autonomy is proudly proclaimed by the site's manager as well as by the members of the community, they can only partially achieve it. Indeed, this is visible if you look at the fact they have to resort to different commercial companies (for some food products or products that are impossible to make on site) or industrial companies (like the ones that transform clothes into thermic insulations for the companions residences) or even institutional partners (political partners from the community conurbation in order to become the second recycling centre of the town). This contradiction has been recognised by the community's initiators who put forward the structural impossibility of achieving complete autonomy. Yet, the use of the semantic field relative to the contestation of the capitalist system and to the promotion of autonomy has numerous symbolic and communicational virtues that have a real effect on perception that outsiders have on the Village. The communication around these ideas is important for the community who, for that purpose, employ a press agent to broadcast (by a website, Facebook and through the

local press etc.) the agenda of the different cultural events offered by the Village. The authentic effect generated by these communication processes is not without producing a symbolic and sympathetic capital to Emmaüs users (whether they are clients from different stores or donators) or to employees, volunteers working with the companions. But they often obscure the scenes of the activity itself.

It organises itself by basing itself on an intentional community of socially-precarious people. Work is therefore defined by its emancipatory values from a consumers' society, it allows the companion to adopt an activation and revision power around his lost dignity in a society of assistance or after a difficult life trajectory. To regain its dignity, the person is encouraged to engage in a collective and supportive activity. Thereafter, the sociological composition of the companions reveals a great number of people that are highly de-socialised with great difficulties of socio-economic insertion into society (undocumented people, wayward youths, legionaries, people coming out of or having being in prison etc.). The principal of unconditional welcoming that is so specific to this community means that a high diversity of people with different backgrounds and different ways of embracing the community's values meet. However, once taken into this de-socialisation and necessary identity reconstruction spiral, they find themselves obliged to adopt new rules of life. According to the estimations of a companion, only around 20 or 25 companions out of 130 present completely embrace the life project and the community values; the rest are considered like "consumers" of the support and help given to them. If we add to this heterogeneity the volunteers and employees with different kinds of motivations (participation for religious reasons, participation for commitment reasons, employees looking for a salary or political activists), the solidity and stability of the community can only materialise itself by imposing constraints to collective life centred around a high valorisation of work.

Here, the everyday life is organised around work rhythms that exceed the legal 35 hours a week framework. The 40 weekly hours worked in the community are compensated at around 400 euros a month for the companions present for

more than 3 months in the community. Before this period, the "savings" they receive are of around 50 euros a week. The integration period of 3 months and the small revenue allows them to evaluate their embracement not only to the values but to the rules of collective life. That is how a high internal social control is developed. Its goal is the respect of the rules of a community life in particular the principal components that are the harshness applied to the task, the stigma of nonchalance and the use of "the helping hand" to break the specialised division of labour. However, and paradoxically, the speech about autonomy and the absence of a controlled labour remains dominant in global operating principles of the activity. Thus, in the absence of any kind of declared formal hierarchy, another hierarchy constitutes itself based on the embracement of values and the implication towards tasks. This common culture is composed of a double ideological discourse on autonomy and individual emancipation by labour: fashioned in the strength of the ideological discourse of struggle against capitalism values and celebrating the values of the community against individualism in consumer societies, the culture put into place pressures its members, without imposing on them directly, to lean towards another kind of productivity et other labour organizational methods.

The social innovation resulting from this composition ties together the informal control of the implication in work and the formal freedom of action in the workshops, the recognition of the diversity of adherence to the life project and the implicit stigma of superficial commitments, the freedom to leave the community when the rules are not suitable anymore but no setting up time for reintegration into the socio-economic system to which it is exposed to. These paradoxical opposed couples show that the experimentation on the living and the "do it together" feeds many contradictions, sometimes out of touch with the speech given by the community as well as with its intentions. Indeed, in order to propose an alternative to principles governing lifestyles issued from consumerism, it is necessary to be inspired by it, and even to reinforce it by an ethical discourse that might be able to erase those contradictions.

The organisation of the industrial activity of the community.

Social experimentation based on an available population allows to largely overcome the principles governing the working activities of the consumerist society. The social and professional status of the companions was left in limbo for many years giving them only a minimal recognition of their status as workers. Thus, the law of the 1st of December 2008 contributed to the creation of a specific status for people belonging to community in-take agencies and solidarity activities. This status gives them guarantees regarding the quality of life in these communities (decent housing, social and individual support, financial support in the form of a community grant "savings").

This status distinguishes itself from the status of employee through the disappearance of the subordination link. That being said, what seems like acknowledged from the relationship worker/community's point of view because of its autonomy, does permit the acquisition of the customary rights of an employee in the general scheme. Therefore, the companions, despite their demanding activities, do not have access to the training courses, professional integration rights that are proposed to employees, job seekers and volunteers. This statutory characteristic, contributes to maintaining the companion in a dependence relation in regards to the community and to form a set of professional practices and specific competences led by the ideal model of autonomy and individual and collective emancipation.

The absence of an explicit subordination or a formal hierarchy within the activity of the whole site does not only serve to experiment or put into place one of the known themes concerning auto-management free work organisations. It also impacts the whole process of production by placing humans in the middle of the production line. The activities of production/recycling/transformation/reparation/sales are rationalised in order to ensure the functioning of the whole production line but they are not looking for profitability or an exacerbated optimized flow of processed goods on the entire site. Here, the necessity for productivity is justified by the consistent flows of the donations and the

relatively limited stock capacities (the site contains 6000m2 of workshops and warehouses). For the activity of collecting the donations, just before the sorting activity that selects goods according to their value or to their possibility of reparation, we can say that the activity is subject to unrestrictive rules in the way it operates. This allows the worker to embrace his work with no reference to a one better practice compared to another or enacted by the carrying out of security norms or gestural optimisation norms. Here lies the emancipatory power of work because the worker must chose his own way of working. If any error arise, they are only sanctioned by a reminder as a mockery or a reprimand but do not constitute a sign of incompetence or incapacity. Of course, the hierarchy of each person's differential abilities is implicit and each is subject to an evaluation on the know-how or on the type of work commitment. For people with reduced abilities or specialised competences, there is the possibility of changing position depending on the daily needs and even depending on the precise moment: the arrival of a clothing shipment that is superior to the daily average provokes the creation of a human chain solicited through the speakers present in all workshops, bringing people from other workshops who interrupt their activities to lend a hand in urgent moments. The routine and the weariness in regards to the repeated daily activities is therefore minimised, and controlled through a possible position rotation. The adaptive flexibility of tasks, the rotation of job positions, the versatility that this generates as well as the non-imposition of excessively strict standards (however combined to a diffuse normative control) contribute to strengthen the influence of the worker on his activity. The presence of volunteers, all in temporary activity, generates a grand tolerance in regards to the imperfection of the gesture, the patience of the companion whilst working there for many years (some are present since 30 or 25 years) therefore leveraging its know-how and his professional identity for an immediate transmission to the newcomer. The latter are also characterised by a formal plasticity where the assignment of activities, although it may be sustainable, can also be reconfigured, moved, enlarged or reduced according to an initiative, an idea or according to the departure of a person specialised in a specific task. The reconfiguration of the area,

especially in the clothing workshops, allows, for example, to move the creation workshops into a workshop of refurbishment of old furniture abandoned following the departure of its leader in order to grant a larger storage area to the clothing sorting workshops. The malleability of work spaces is therefore used depending on the flow necessities and needs, the individual initiatives and the collective decisions regarding the enlargement of such and such area. To focus on the individual or collective work at the expense of the working tool is, for this particular point, a radical innovation, or at least a significant change in the ways of thinking the industrial tool in itself even if it is done outside the elementary security norms or space requirements.

Social and industrial innovations at the heart of functional incoherencies.

In the diversity of the malleable division of work, dynamic activities linked the flow of reception of objects, activities of sorting/distribution and activities of commercialisation of stocks can be distinguished. In the more static activities, especially those concerning the reparation of, for example, home electrical goods or computer goods, we can see that the hire of specialised employees levels the companions' potential incompetence. However, the long-term presence of some companions contribute to the development of expertise and know-how: some, present for more than 20 years, have accompanied the technical evolution of products of grand technicity and have developed resourcefulness skills thanks to the stock of replacement items that they accumulate "just in case". Their expertise recognises brands and their reputation, each objects specificities regarding how solid or how fragile it is, the factory defaults as well as the items that are rapidly degraded by use. They know make one working DVD player out of two broken ones. The principal of programmed obsolescence does not mean anything here as there is always a way or a solution in order to repair. Ingenuity combined to resourcefulness skills is based on the idea of an individual initiative in the continuity of emancipatory autonomy.

Yet, these different ingenuities, preliminary innovations, know-how and expertise developed in an autonomous manner, are marginally capi-

talised in regards to the transmission of competences within this organisation. The idea of capitalisation being, by principle, suspect or ideologically reprehensible means that the work organisation around and by the individual autonomy linked to the contribution to the becoming of the community generates a number of functional incoherencies that, paradoxically, damage the basics of the activity. The idea of a too strong formalisation of the organisation, of an optimisation of the production tools or a rationalisation of the activity would be contrary to the fundamental principles of the community. Here is the sign of an expression of the Christian disdain that inspires the community towards all types of formalisation that ruin the gesture of cooperation and solidarity that characterise members of one community. Adding to the popular habit of rejection towards anything that is relative of an intellectuality or a formal abstraction of a practice, considered like relevant of a bourgeois or engineer ethos, the know-how skills, competences and innovations actually put into place refer to an action pragmatism that is sufficient in itself and that creates the pride and dignity of the community but also of the companion. Thus, outside of any kind of functional logic or simply outside of the comfort of execution of a task, the companions value a type of virility and abnegation, especially the more strenuous activities. Even in the most repetitive work positions, it is not always well perceived to sit down or to find a comfort of execution that could be understood like a non-chalance or a search for extra ease. Everything linked to a potential improvement in the sense of an optimisation is perceived as a request for profitability. Archaism and anti-productivity in such an organisation, even a productive one, is one of the numerous contradictions present within this organisation that refuses to see itself as it is fearing to keep the flaws.

This fear of technical rationality can also be observed as a kind of productive technophobia and relative suspicion towards the ergonomic ease. Here, nothing replaces the human gesture and they prefer to be active, stay standing, bend down or lift something; in short to use human production forces rather than to base themselves of a comfort of realisation. Here, the human takes precedence over the man: by preferring to value the effects of work on men

rather than giving him the good conditions and work tools, we reverse what prevails in the contemporary industry in its search for productivity optimisation.

That underpinning of activity could mean that the productivity and consumerist model exhausts human potentials of realisation of common action. The criticism of the technique is based on the hypothesis that it will always be an instrument of subjugation for the profit of capital, leading men astray from their nature to produce by themselves and destroying the environment as well as social relations. The idea of assistance contained in the technical support in human activities is rejected as well as those proposed by the public authorities in regards to socio-economic insertion of marginalised populations. This multiform rejection of assistance illustrates the strength of radical political convictions to which is mixed a residue of religious postulates that is at the origin of the Emmaüs movement.

The Lescar Pau experimentation seen as a crucible for innovation potentials

As fragile and contradictory as is the experimentation of the Lescar Pau Village, it has the merit to highlight many innovation themes and it does so on many different levels: social, industrial and in its relations to existing institutions. Whilst having to compose with numerous internal contradictions as well as having to base itself on numerous legal loopholes, games with the institution or on a theoretically positive social image, the community demonstrates that it is possible to develop a human, social and industrial project without opting for an excessive management.

At a social level, it offers a self-management model that contrasts with the existing models that prevail in other types or work organisations. The autonomy implementation, the invitation to take initiatives and the cooperation in regards to common decisions are necessary conditions in order to achieve the community's human project. The versatility generated by the independent attribution of tasks and by the united rotation of positions represents an advantage in regards of the "un-routinisation" of fastidious manual work that is sometimes done



by the companions. This provokes a certain dynamic within the labour team that, in turn, generates a functional interdependence that has positive effects on the feeling of belonging to the community. At a time where current organisational models place a certain weight of excess rationalisation on the worker (stress, burn-out, suffering at work...), soft management techniques developed by the Lescar Pau organisation in order to rethink labour should be taken into account. At the industrial production level, the demand for initiative, the absence of a strong hierarchy of social relations like the malleability of production workshops put into perspective the fundamentals of the industrial production models. The desire for independence in regards to the dominant productive system and the auto determination of functioning are done in such a way that they avoid a number of obligations that industrial companies are confronted to (security norms, quality of production, work conditions). However, the centrality of the human project in the production process shows that inverting the regular principles is not counter-productive if we manage to make the most of some institutional obligations and constrains.

The radicalism of the community, could be seen as an important message in order to think about the new types of collection action that a political emancipatory project bases itself on in regards to the existing types such as the wage system and, to a lesser extent, those coming from a social and solidarity economy. On one hand, this community radicalism is an economic and territorial actor that takes part in a production/consumption cycle in which it says it plays the role of salvage and on the other hand, it reaps the benefits of a system that it criticises whilst drawing resources to finance, think and fulfil a political, social and economic project. Through its stability, through permanent common ways of life as well as its production model, it presents itself like a landmark for sustainable socialisation in regards to the changing and unstable contemporary societies for people in highly precarious situations. Benefiting from favourable conditions, reproducing at their own scale some aspects of the socio-economic system that it criticises, the societal alternative that this community pursues is not free of internal contradictions. Some could point towards a certain type of circumstance-ambiguity, some arrangements with legality and an economic model chosen more than endured but isn't that one of the ways to play with the same weapons than the system that they want to fight against?



Department of Design
Politecnico di Milano

Social innovation
initiatives as design
actions within the public
space: lesson learnt
from a number of case
studies in Italy

By Daniela Selloni

riser

Abstract

This article discusses a set of Italian case studies about the use of public space, building upon the work developed within the 'State of the art', the first part of the EU Research Human City (2014-2018). We start from the hypothesis that these case studies are social innovation initiatives and express a diversified use of design. Here is why, building upon a framework developed by Manzini (2014/b) we attempt to classify case studies as actual 'design actions' having different purposes and to understand how *expert* and *diffuse design* (Manzini, 2015) are interwoven. Finally we propose a reflection about the use of public space as a 'prototyping space' for social innovation, where design knowledge, methodology and tools may contribute in creating a new collective confidence in the possibility of changing things.

Background knowledge: social innovation and design

This article starts from the analysis of several Italian initiatives aiming at improving the use of public space: they are 15 case studies mainly located in the city of Milan plus other cases coming from South Italy.

They have some fundamental features in common, that represented criteria for selection:

- they are principally bottom-up initiatives, meaning that they originate outside institutions: they are for activated by ordinary people who, in a way, may be defined as 'active citizens';
- they aim at solving everyday problems by using creativity and a sort of 'design thinking' approach, here is why these groups of citizens may be viewed as actual creative communities: "people who cooperatively invent, enhance and manage innovative solutions for new ways of living " (Meroni, 2007, p.30);
- they make an unprecedented use of the public space and, thus, they reconceive the idea itself of public space, extending its boundaries and increasing the range of activities to experiment.

In addition, there is another important common characteristic: these case studies may be viewed as a constellation of social innovation initiatives because, in way, they attempt to tackle problems that are otherwise difficult to solve (Mulgan, 2006, p.8; Murray et al., 2010, pp. 3-4).

The most well-known definition of social innovation is provided by Young Foundation in 'The Open book of Social Innovation': "new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. In other words, they are innovations that are both good for society and enhance society's capacity to act." (Murray et al., 2010, p.3).

To extend this definition we here include the notion of social innovation provided by Phills et al. (2008) in the Stanford Social Innovation Review: "a novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than existing solutions and for which the

value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals." (ibidem p.36) Hence, they argue that social innovation can be a product, a process, a technology but also a principle, a piece of legislation, a social movement or some combination of them.

In addition, Jégou and Manzini (2008) in their book 'Collaborative services' state that "the term social innovation refers to changes in the way individuals or communities act to solve a problem or to generate new opportunities. These innovations are driven more by changes in behaviour than by changes in technology or the market and they typically emerge from bottom-up rather than top-down processes." (ibidem, p.29).

This last one is the definition that better fits to the considered case studies because of the crucial role played by ordinary people and because it focuses on the change of relationships that is affecting the boundaries between the state, the market, family and community, making them more and more blurred and, as a consequence, also influencing the use of public space.

Hence, the selected case studies may be viewed under a social innovation perspective: this is a multidimensional concept, a sort of umbrella that covers a wide range of more or less successful initiatives, but, within this variety, there is a common characteristic that focuses on creating new social relationships and collaborations that mainly happen in the public space and that contribute in changing it, hopefully in more positive and constructive way.

As designers and researchers in the field of design for social innovation, we are especially interested in investigating how design contributed in shaping the identity of the considered case studies and if this intervention led to obtain more effective and long lasting results.

Taking a step back, Manzini, in his article 'Making Things Happen: Social Innovation and Design' (2014), attempts to provide a definition of design for social innovation, highlighting the emergence of a new field of design activities. He points out that designers must use their skills to support promising cases of social innovation, in other words to make them more

visible designing their products, services and communication programmes, and thus supporting their scaling-up. Manzini refers to a set of new approaches, sensibilities and tools that are transversal and range from product to service design, from communication to interior design, from interaction design to strategic design.

Not by chance, in the considered cases, the boundaries among different design disciplines are indistinct and they blur into each other, all the design contributions pursue the same purpose: making public space a fruitful ground for new relationships and collaborations, regardless of the adopted design approach. In his recent book 'Design when everybody designs' (2015) Manzini also discusses the 'diffusion of the design mode' meaning that design is facing a great change and is becoming a widespread activity. He argues that "the current context encourages people to design their own lives" (ibidem, p.31) and he observes the emergence of the implicit and *diffuse design*, which is put into play by 'non-experts', with their natural design capacity.

The rise of *diffuse design* is connected in a way to the development of social innovation initiatives: "talking about social innovation, we have seen that, driven by necessity or desire to use their 'natural' design capacity, and sustained by the diffusion of digital media and the new social networks, many people take active part and collaborate to create new forms of organizations (creative communities and collaborative organizations), participating en masse in solving complex problems ..." (Manzini, 2015, p.47). Many of the considered cases show individuals or groups that are representatives of this *diffuse design* mode and, in addition, we observe that they are developing design skills that are moving away from the area of *diffuse design* of that of *expert design*.

According to Manzini (2015, p.37) *expert design* is performed by design experts, "people trained to operate professionally as designers, and who put themselves forward as design professionals". It is interesting to note how both *expert* and *diffuse design* characterize the selected cases and sometimes they are strictly interwoven. This observation, together with

the evidence that our case studies deal with designing an ecosystem of products, spaces, services and communication programmes, lays the foundations for starting our analysis in which the various case studies are discussed and classified as 'design actions' aiming at improving the use the public space.

Hypothesis and methodology: social innovation initiatives as design actions

As argued in the previous paragraph, the 15 case studies may be seen as social innovation initiatives that use both *diffuse* and *expert design*. This is the starting point to formulate the hypothesis that guides this article:

'if the case studies we are dealing with are social innovation initiatives and express a diversified use of design, they may be classified as actual design actions, according to the activity carried out and to the skills applied in carrying it out.'

To verify this hypothesis, we wish to analyse case studies adopting the framework described by Manzini in his contribution to the book 'Design for Policy', edited by Bason (2014, pp.106, 110).

He classified *design actions* into 2 main groups: 'design initiatives for favourable environments', aiming at making co-creation processes easier and 'design initiatives for enabling solutions', aiming at supporting specific co-design processes. Within each group he identifies several clusters of initiatives according to the aims and results that are most significant and that are synthesized using a verb representative of the *design action*, such as 'exploring' or 'amplifying' or 'triggering' etc.

Here below the list of design actions proposed by Manzini:

Group 1. Design initiatives for favourable environments (Manzini, 2014 p.110)

- AMPLIFYING. Giving existing best practices visibility (applying different communication tools).
- STORY TELLING. Proposing narratives to support best practices and emerging ideas (building scenarios).
- CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT. Promoting a new

deeper culture on sustainable qualities and sustainable ways of living and producing (using design culture and sensitivity to develop new conceptual tools).

- TOOLS AND METHODS DEVELOPMENT. Promoting tools and methods to facilitate co-design processes (using previous experiences, and previous design tools and methods, to define new ones, more appropriate in the field of social innovation).
- TO INCREASE DIFFUSE DESIGN SKILLS. To teach citizen how to use at best design tools for non-professional designers (organizing design workshop and seminars).

Group 2. Design initiatives for enabling solutions (Manzini, 2014 p.106)

- EXPLORING. Helping in understanding people's and communities' needs and capabilities (applying ethnographic methods).
- TRIGGERING. Feeding the partners' conversation with visions and solutions ideas (organizing co-design workshops).
- PROTOTYPING. Making new ideas tangible (realizing working prototypes).
- ENABLING. Making solutions more accessible for the citizens co-producers (designing dedicated products, services and communication artifacts).
- REPLICATING. Making solutions replicable in different contexts (designing dedicated products, services and communication artifacts).
- SYNERGIZING. Systemizing different solutions at a territorial scale (developing planning-by-projects programs).
- DEEPENING. Improving the cultural dimension of the new proposals (applying design culture and sensitivity to proposal sustainable qualities)

Hence, in the following paragraph we shall attempt to group the various cases according to the *design action* that mainly corresponds to them, and, thus, we wish to investigate on the real aim of the activities that may be devoted to 'triggering' or 'enabling' or 'synergizing', etc.

Case study discussion

As stated, in this article we want to classify 15 Italian cases connected to an innovative use of public space: these initiatives were already an-

alysed in a previous stage of the Human Cities research, by adopting a specific template that described them under different perspectives. On one side it attempted to provide basic information, on the other side to highlight few important elements such the contribution of design, their identity in between formality and informality, the role of some actors as 'local heroes', etc.

Hence, in this article, we assume the essential contents of these cases and we just provide a brief description of each one. It is important to notice that, as researchers in the Department of Design of Politecnico di Milano, we had a direct contact with the majority of these cases (by making activities together or just having conversations), and few of them may be considered as part of our action-research projects, such as 'Coltivando', 'Milan earth Market', 'DisPlace-made in Chiaravalle' and 'Cascina Cuccagna'. Thus, we could count on a previous investigation that is the result of both desk and on-field research.

Here below a short list of the case studies in one-sentence definition.

1. SOCIAL STREET - A network of Facebook groups aiming at promoting socialization among neighbours resident in the same street. (Milan and other 393 cities mainly distributed in Italy).
2. CRITICALCITY - A game for 'urban transformation' in which participants run creative missions to improve the city. (Milan and other Italian cities)
3. NIL28 - An association of creative professionals and studios devoted to activate citizen participation through cultural actions in a neighbourhood of Milan.
4. CASCINA CUCCAGNA - A new public space in the centre of Milan: an old farmhouse transformed into centre for place development and civic participation.
5. MILAN EARTH MARKET - A farmers' market in the centre of Milan that has become a new convivial public space for citizens.
6. THE SEASONINGS' GARDEN - A non-profit association whose aim is the social integration of disadvantaged people through their involvement in participatory activities in a public vegetable garden. (Milan).

7. PUBLIC DESIGN FESTIVAL - An International research project, which presents every year in Milan the most interesting and innovative projects designed for public spaces.
8. NON RISERVATO - A network that connect professionals, industries, associations organizations and all the civic groups involved in urban and social regeneration of public open spaces in Milan.
9. COLTIVANDO - the convivial garden at Politecnico di Milano is a place where people meet, experiment, cultivate crops, and share their skills and ideas. Coltivando uses innovative Service and Spatial Design knowledge and community consultation processes. (Milan).
10. DISPLACE. Made in Chiaravalle - A private empty space in the Chiaravalle suburb of Milan is transformed in a temporary square: an urban regeneration initiative for a neighbourhood reclaiming a public space.
11. EX-FADDA - An old winery located in the heart of Apulia transformed into a new public space for meeting, creativity and social innovation. (San Vito dei Normanni, Apulia)
12. CASA NETURAL - A project for co-working and co-living, but above all a "dreams incubator" located in the "Sassi di Matera", in the heart of Basilicata (Matera).
13. FARM CULTURAL PARK - The heart of a historic Sicilian town - Favara - is transformed into a permanent contemporary art exhibition.
14. ORIZZONTALE: DO IT YOURSELF ARCHITECTURE FOR COMMON SPACES - An architecture collective based in Rome whose interest is the reactivation process of urban scrap through "public acts" in form of semi-permanent architecture or installations.
15. SAUNDSA ARCHITETTI - Architect duo who works on participatory projects, auto-construction and regeneration of public spaces as common good. (Campania and other Italian regions).

Starting from the observation that each initiative is complex and stratified and thus may be classified in more than one cluster, we here attempt to provide a synthesis just selecting the design action that is most representative for the case study, without aiming at providing a comprehensive description.

We first distinguish those cases that are 'design initiatives for favourable environments' from those that are more recognizable as 'design initiatives for enabling solutions'. As stated, the first group is related to the creation of favourable conditions to make things happen (and thus to creating a proper 'culture' through design initiatives), while the second one is more related to providing a specific solution (a set of products, services, and communications) that enable people to achieve a result. Within each group we classify case studies according to some of the *design actions* proposed by Manzini (2014): our cases do not cover all the clusters, thus we just selected the most representative.

Design initiatives for favourable environments

AMPLIFYING

Within the Amplifying cluster there are all those cases that apply different communication tools in order to increase the visibility of meaningful activities that improve the use of public space. This is a sort of strategic design action in which different initiatives are collected together and shown as part of a common narrative, hopefully creating a favourable environment for the emergence of new ones.

The 'Public Design Festival' in Milan may be considered as an amplifying exhibition of the worldwide best practices in the use of public space. The curators (and local heroes) of the Festival devote a great effort in analysing the global background of projects about new solutions for a better life in public spaces, selecting the most innovative and interesting ones. Furthermore, the Festival takes place during the Milan Design Week: this is the best occasion to have in the city the most influent characters of the design realm and to reach the widest public as possible. The Festival hosts designers from all over the world, who, together with their intervention and installations, pacifically occupy the city for a week, creating a favourable environment for conversation, ideas' dissemination and merging design approaches coming from different cultures.

Today the Festival, started in 2009, still keeps its original impulse, combining informal and formal features and above all realizing an actual living exhibition of temporary urban solutions that

amplifies their visibility and enhances a form of public imagination among citizens and participants. This result is also achieved thanks to the design of an effective communication through online and offline platforms that makes the Festival and its activities highly recognizable.

'Non Riservato' may be considered as another amplifying initiative, because it provides a map of all the activities of social regeneration and urban participation in Milan. The concept of Non Riservato originated in 2011, when the cultural association Ex-Voto organized a series of meetings related to citizens' engagement in the public realm. These events represented the basis to create an information and communication tool able to collect and amplify all the Milanese initiatives in the same field.

Currently, Non Riservato is an online and offline agenda of social events, that allows citizens to be constantly updated and above all is a powerful double example of design for services: on one side it offers to people a tool, a guide and a diary to let them feel part of the community; on the other side it provides a space for citizens and associations to promote themselves, their projects and attract new active participants. Hence, Non Riservato may be viewed as an open amplifying tool that is specifically designed to spread initiatives and diffuse a culture of reclaiming public space, hopefully preparing the ground for the emergence of new and more disruptive initiatives.

Both case studies selected for the Amplifying cluster combine different design approaches in developing their activities, more specifically we wish to highlight how they constitute actual design initiatives: Public Design Festival is a living exhibition of temporary urban solutions and Non Riservato is an open and interactive map of initiatives, both reaching their objective of amplifying their contents and values by using design tools.

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

This cluster collects cases that promote new ways of living the public space, hopefully more sustainable and attractive. Hence, under this category there are those initiatives that are exercising a great influence on the creation of

a new culture in re-imagining life in the public space, by offering exemplar initiatives that simply show how different options are possible, developing projects with a high symbolic (but also practical) value.

'Farm Cultural Park' represents a best practice of cultural development: the two founders of this initiative were able to transform the heart of a historic Sicilian town (Favara) into a permanent contemporary art exhibition, always accessible for citizens and visitors. They reconceived Favara's public space in an holistic perspective, designing everything at different scales: from the buildings to the objects, including installations, signage and live events that involve all the inhabitants of the small town, or better, they are active part of the 'exhibition.' This impressive effort creates an actual hybrid environment, built for and with residents and visitors at the same time, without distinguishing the two domains, what is private and what is public and thus, proposing a new way of living the public space able to create a model and share a culture.

'Orizzontale' provides another best practice of cultural development. The objective of this architecture collective based in Rome is to make the citizens conscious of the potentialities of common disused spaces through 'public acts', in form of semi-permanent architecture or installations. Hence, they support the creation of a new sensitivity acting as 'cultural provokers': for example 'Work-watching' was a five-steps stair totally built with recycled materials that had the function of a sitting meeting place and of a watching point from where the inhabitants could control the works in progress. Orizzontale not only attempts at building a new awareness about public space through temporary installations, but also at enhancing innovative forms of collaboration with citizens: ordinary people support them by delivering recyclable materials and findings useful for their public actions, creating a virtuous collaborative cycle.

'NIL28' may be considered similarly to 'Orizzontale': it is a group of creative professionals sharing the same working space and neighbourhood in Milan, who decided to design some provocative interventions in order

to activate local inhabitants. Here is why NIL28 conceives a set of actions to improve the surrounding public space: to transform the local weekly market in a 'neighbourhood living room', to launch a workshop for teaching how to fix/reuse objects, to initiate guerrilla gardening actions on abandoned flowerbeds, to create an information totem about neighbourhood activities for elderly people that are not able to do not use the internet, etc. They work as a contemporary avant-garde composed of 'intellectuals' that want to create and diffuse a new culture, not by chance they also created a 'manifesto' with their philosophy, explaining their purpose to tackle local social issues by means of culture and aesthetics.

Hence, the idea to create a new and deeper culture on a more pleasant and sustainable way of living the public space is here proposed in several modes: in Farm Cultural Park we notice the effort of integrating various design interventions in an holistic perspective that generates a common framework, while in Orizzontale and NIL28 it is interesting to notice the use of design activism as a conceptual tool that fosters a renewed awareness on the part of citizens.

Design initiatives for enabling solutions

TRIGGERING

The *Triggering* cluster includes all those cases characterized by the use of co-design activities to feed the social conversation among different actors who want improve the use of public space. For example, 'DisPlace' is a series of co-design sessions to create and build a new square in the Chiaravalle suburb of Milan, an urban regeneration initiative in which citizens were involved from the very beginning by the main promoters, a group of local associations together with a class of BSc design students and professors of the School of Design-Politecnico di Milano.

The most striking peculiarity of Chiaravalle is the absence of a public square, here is why DisPlace 'occupied' a private area, temporally granted, carrying out a seasonal transformation from an empty space into a temporary square. Designing and making together installations and furniture actually fed the discussion among residents with visions and ideas: citizens

felt free to change settings and experiment diverse solutions. Hence, the square was conceived as an interactive place specifically designed for triggering inhabitants' imagination and inviting them to participate in a shared creative process.

The Seasonings' Garden in Milan is another example of using co-design activities to trigger people's participation in the creation of a public vegetable garden. This process is developed in an informal way, designers are not involved and a non-profit association coordinates the initiative. The Seasonings' Garden was set up because of the will of re-appropriation of a disused park by a group of women passionate in plantation: they wanted to experiment the benefits that people (especially disadvantaged people) could get from being in touch with nature by organizing a set of participatory activities in the public space. This group of women experimented that sharing a piece of field, tools and time together is not only a way to foster cooperation and social integration, but also a way for creating a shared vision about the use of public space. Not by chance, the experience in the Seasonings' Garden allowed people to feel comfortable to begin other similar processes with other gardens, triggering a form of green activism.

Also the experience of the Architect duo SaUndSa in Campania may be viewed as an attempt to feed a wide conversation about public space reactivation through the creation of a workshop format called 'UPDATE #Urban upgrading processes'. It has simple but meaningful guidelines –participatory project, auto-construction, public space regeneration- replicable everywhere there is the possibility to reactivate a common place. The intervention of design in providing visions and solution ideas is evident and well formalized in a set of programmes, methods and tools that lead to replicate five UPDATE workshops in in different Italian cities, triggering an unprecedented collaboration among representatives of the municipalities, citizens and designers.

The presented cases show how 'triggering' is an actual design action that may become a powerful means for enhancing citizens' activ-

ism. Feeding the social conversation with more or less formal co-design activities is the first step to generate those visions and ideas that make people more confident in the possibility of changing things.

ENABLING

The *Enabling* cluster is probably the most design-oriented category because it collects those cases that engage citizens in developing solutions for the public space through the design of dedicated products, services and communication artifacts.

The Earth Market in Milan, with its 'Ideas Sharing Stall' is an example of making solutions more accessible to people by creating a new convivial public space. The Ideas Sharing Stall is a sort of 'window' in the market where the reference communities of producers and citizens, jointly with potential stakeholders, get to know the possible services to be implemented in the city by using as set of dedicated artifacts designed by a group of researchers of the Department of Design-Politecnico di Milano. Hence, the purpose is to enable citizens by involving them in short co-design sessions using specific tools (mock-ups, service prototypes etc.) and, at the same, contributing in creating a new public space, in which the conviviality created by combining food, design, activism and entertainment is the crucial feature. It includes design elements that are both "hard" (spaces, infrastructures, garden beds, etc.), and "soft" (service, actors, duties, timeframes, etc.). Because of the infrastructures, buildings, boundaries and gates, the campus appears to be a difficult place to enter and enjoy for the people of the neighbourhood: sometimes public space is not obvious.

The 'Coltivando' project, developed within the Politecnico di Milano campus, shows how it is possible to enable people to take care of public space by combining a set activities having diverse purposes: spatial (by giving a new function to a place), productive (by producing food), educational (by experimenting with students and professors) and social (by allowing the meeting of different people).

The social scope is probably the most important one: the aim is to enable two kinds of community to make contact (university and

neighbourhood) so as to give an added value not only to the campus but also to the district. The main idea relies on the use of a convivial garden as an enabling tool for reunification: the act of building and then sowing, cultivating and taking care of the plants, and harvesting the food produced together contributes to strengthen ties within the community that is being created.

The group of people who frequent the garden is very heterogeneous in terms of social and professional backgrounds and personal experience, but this has not prevented them from creating a dynamic organism capable of creating new incentives and an intense exchange of knowledge. The role of design in enabling this group is crucial: it includes design elements that are both "hard" (spaces, infrastructures, garden beds, etc.), and "soft" (service, actors, duties, timeframes, etc.), and above all, the POLIMI researchers created an actual service and spatial design toolbox, available to anyone interested to support the launch of a similar experiment.

PROTOTYPING

This cluster includes all those cases that, in a way, represent working prototypes of innovative and sustainable use of public space. They are Ex-Fadda, Cascina Cuccagna and Casa Netural: they are examples of how it is possible to give new life to neglected buildings in public space, making new ideas tangible through a set of experiments and within a 'test environment' specifically created, where it is possible to run a trial and error process by making things together.

Ex-Fadda is an old winery located in the heart of Apulia that, day by day, is transformed into a space for meeting and creativity: the collective restoration is an actual participatory prototyping activity, in fact a high number of local people is involved in a project of "self-building", creating a sentiment of ownership of the place. At the same time, Ex-Fadda is attempting to test several initiatives: a recreation centre for children, a music school, a carpenter's workshop, a library, a restaurant and a radio. The founders of Ex-Fadda conceives the old winery as an open platform, in which every citizen can start an activity or join existing initiatives, considering Ex-Fadda as a "space for opportunities" where people can benefit from process-

es of education by prototyping together and, thus, distributing the ownership of the place.

Also Cascina Cuccagna, an old farmhouse located in the heart of Milan, may be intended as a working prototype of an innovative public space for collaboration and civic participation. The Cuccagna Association, a group of citizens who saved the farmhouse from abandon and decay, conceives the building and its garden as a space to welcome and support the creativity of citizens. Here is why they organize residency opportunities (by offering spaces, equipment and collaboration) for people who want to experiment original projects sharing the same civic mission of the Cascina. Currently Cascina Cuccagna is a "network of skills, energy, professionalism and resources" (Vicari Haddock and Moulart, 2009, p. 213) in which citizens develop numerous kinds of activities, such as a carpenter's workshop, a do-it-yourself bike repair place, a vegetable garden, and many other temporary initiatives that work as prototypes in search for development and validation.

The founders of Casa Netural, a co-working space located in the 'Sassi di Matera', define their space as a 'dreams incubator', meaning that they offer to people the possibility to experiment and to actually prototype their ideas. More specifically, Casa Netural creates a Co-living project in which 'potential innovators' come as guests that live and work within the same space, meeting the local community and trying to imagine together the possible future for the territory. In this perspective, Casa Netural may be seen as a prototyping space that works as interconnector between the inside used for co-working and the outside used for communicating and sharing with the rest of the citizens, working as a sort of 'protected environment' (Ceschin, 2012) for collaboration.

SYNERGIZING

Even if case studies as 'Social Street' and 'CriticalCity' may cover multiple clusters, we wish here to highlight their 'synergizing character', or, better, the fact that they are designed to connect and systematize diverse actions occurring in the various public spaces.

For example, Social Street started from a single initiative in Bologna, aiming at organizing and

sharing initiatives on a street level among residents and in one year it has been able to grow and diffuse in the rest of the country. The main idea at the basis of Social Street is to conceive any activity as a good occasion for socialization, and thus as an opportunity to establish synergies and connections: from breakfast to dinner, from movies to exhibitions, from sharing to swapping, each event can be shared with residents in the same street and bring positive implications to the whole local community. The Facebook group is here conceived as a bridge from virtual to real life, establishing synergies and combining local and global levels of interactions.

CriticalCity is a game for urban transformation specifically designed to gather participants around the same social scope by accomplishing a set of creative and interconnected missions, hopefully having fun and at the same time developing a new form of civic activism.

The game connects different people and different areas of the city, establishing unprecedented synergies and new alliances for transforming neglected neighbourhoods. Similarly to Social Street, CriticalCity is a project conceived at a local scale but then able to be replicated and adapted to other cities and situations. These two initiatives are two powerful examples of how 'synergize' may be seen as a 'design action': they are developed using simple formats, easily understandable by everyone. In this way every citizen is a node of a wide and interconnected network that combines different scales: virtual/physical and local/global, systematizing different initiatives under a common organizational and meaningful frame.

DESIGN INITIATIVES FOR FAVOURABLE ENVIRONMENTS		DESIGN INITIATIVE FOR ENABLING SOLUTIONS			
AMPLIFYING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Design Festival Non Riservato 	CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm Cultural Park Orizzontale NIL 28 	TRIGGERING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DisPlace The Seasonings' Garden SaUndSa 	ENABLING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milan Earth Market Coltivando 	PROTOTYPING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ex-Fadda Cascina Cuccagna Casa Neutral 	SYNERGIZING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Street CriticalCity

Table 1. Synthesis of case studies' taxonomy

Conclusions: public space as a 'prototyping space' for social innovation?

As stated, our case studies may be viewed as social innovation initiatives, characterized by an interwoven use of diffuse and expert design. More specifically, they are actual design actions that aim at creating favourable environments and/or enabling solutions for everyday life, ranging from 'amplifying', 'triggering', 'prototyping' etc. (Manzini, 2014/b).

In this final paragraph we want to put a spotlight especially on the 'prototyping' action, because we think it is something more than 'making ideas tangible': in the described case studies public space represents the 'stage' for actual participatory prototypes (Coughlan et al. 2007; Blomkvist, et al. 2012), working as a 'protected environment' (Ceschin, 2012) for testing ideas together.

We think that to set the proper conditions for prototyping is a crucial design action that means to increase people's confidence in the possibility of being able to affect their local situation. In other words, people may suppose: " if we are engaging in testing something, it is precisely because we think that we can influence and change things'. Public space is the perfect and natural stage for raising this kind of awareness and prototyping ideas realizing actual 'mise en scène'. Even if sometimes these prototypes do not lead to solve problems, we think that in any case they enhance public imagination and hope

(Selloni, 2014) and this happened also thanks to the power of design (both diffuse and expert design), which is essentially a propositional and inspirational activity (Margolin, 2012).

Hence making and performing together may have a great educational value for the society as a whole, fostering changes in behaviour and increasing the awareness on the possibility of improving the current situation.

Expert designers should support this process and increase their responsibility putting their methodology, tools and skills at the service of the public interest, fostering the diffusion and replication of prototypes. In this sense we wish that this new stream the Human Cities research might enhance a sort of 'urban acupuncture by prototyping' (building upon the theories of Lerner, 2014), observing and experimenting effective and pleasant ways of living public space.

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Urban Planning Institute
of the Republic of Slovenia
Ljubljana

Civil Initiatives Improving
Urban Public Spaces

By Matej Nikšič

Urban

Introduction

Public participation in urban planning has been a well-developed concept within the profession for many decades. It is often regarded as a measure of how inclusive and democratic the urban planning process is, and there seems to be a wide consensus on its advantageous effects for the involved parties in scholarly investigations (Arnstein, 1969, Kaza, 2006, Denters and Klok, 2010, Moore and Elliott, 2015). At the same time a vivid discussion is going on related to what are the definition and attributes of truly participatory processes in contemporary urban planning.

Chattopadhyay (2012) argues that there is still a large gap between constitutional provisions for participation and their actual implementation. His distinction between so called numerical and effective representation addresses an important question: to what level a general public is able to truly get involved in participatory approaches. He argues that most of the citizens, especially from socially and economically disadvantaged environments, are unable to directly raise any issue and/or participate

in discussions, so the numerical representation cannot be automatically translated into the effective representation. In the case of urban public space this means that legally binding procedures of public participation are not necessarily culminating in public spaces that would reflect the truly participatory inputs from general, non-professional publics.

This relates to the ladder-hierarchy of levels of participation that Arnstein developed back in 1969. She structured the community participation in eight levels and classified them hierarchically. First two, manipulation and therapy, are regarded as nonparticipation with the reasoning that the main purposes of the two are to educate or cure the community members. Further three levels are informing, consultation, and placation and she describes them as tokenism—the participants act as advisories rather than decision makers. The highest levels are partnership, delegated power and citizen control—they allow the participants to have a stronger voice in the decision-making process. This is particularly important in urban public space design because public space is a com-

mon space of anyone and in one way or another touches the lives of all citizens.

In the last two decades urban public spaces have been given new attention within the urban planning community (Castells, 1994, Madanipour et al, 2014). Scholarly reviews detected novel approaches to public space reanimation, among others the engagement of the civil society that self-organizes either to improve urban public space by a direct action in space or indirectly through claiming a say in official planning procedures (Houlstan-Hasaerts et al, 2012). While public space has appeared as one of key topics in strategic documents that are guiding the future development and qualitative up-grade of urban settlements at a global scale, participatory approach is seen as a central tool to reach the goal—the inclusive public space that will reflect the aspirations and serve the needs of local communities (Habitat III, 2015). However some crucial questions stay rather under investigated. What are the main motivations of people who took an active position in these processes? Why do they want to have a say? What are their personal and professional characteristics? How do they organise to achieve the goal and which shared values unite them in their endeavours?

Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) who studied the link between inequality and representativeness claim that citizens are motivated to participate based on their personal costs and benefits. Similarly Kaza (2006), based on a research of individuals' and groups' incentives to participate in planning procedures, points out that if these costs outweigh the perceived benefits, it will not be in one's interest to participate or even communicate within the participatory processes.

Xu (2007) argues that the dependency on public services is an important motivator for people to take (or not) a pro-active role—the more dependent people are of these services, the more motivated they are that these services are of a correct level—which makes them more involved into common matters and participating. Jointly with a review of some other studies done in the global west (Rubin and Rubin, 2001, Steggert, 1975) she argues that gender, educational and income levels, occupation, ethnicity, living arrangements and membership in certain types of groups are the key factors that dis-

tinguish people who participate in community affairs from those who remain uninvolved. Additionally she stresses that these factors are deeply culturally conditioned so any world-wide generalisations are not possible, on the contrary—based on the findings of her research in China she finds some major differences between Chinese and western practices.

The socioeconomic status of participant is important factor according to Verba et al (1978) too. They studied the socio-economic circumstances of individuals and how they influence the likeliness for their participation. The findings show that socioeconomic status leads individuals to develop a certain set of civic attitudes which leads to a higher or lower probability for a participation. The participation is higher in smaller communities, while urbanization decreases participation according to their findings. Besides economic status Smith et al (1980) point out the general wealth as an important factor too—they claim people working in professional occupations, along with those with higher levels of education, more often become involved in organized community activities. But Xu (2007) came to the opposite conclusion based on research of Chinese practice, claiming that in urban settlements people with lower levels of income and education were more likely to participate. Which once more can be explained with their greater dependency from and thus involvement with the public programmes and amenities. This again points out the cultural embeddedness too, and the complexity of mechanisms that influence people's (motivations for) participation.

Based on the US evidence Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) also link the question of active participation to the question of inequality and representativeness by arguing that the level of participation is an indicator of inequality—the lower the level of participation is, the higher the degree of political inequality and the more serious the problems of representativeness are. This clearly puts part of the responsibility for the operational participation into the hands of the politics and official procedures.

The role of administrative structures is pointed out by Denters and Klok's study too (2010). They studied a participatory approach to urban planning in a Dutch city of Enschede after it experienced a devastating fire. They investi-

gated the role of former residents in the reconstruction of a devastated district in the city centre and showed how a well-ordered process and a mobilization campaign helped keeping people motivated and actively involved through the whole process of the urban reconstruction. By studying people's subjective interests, place of residence (i.e. the distance of their home from the epicentre of destruction) and the homeownership they concluded that two most important motivational factors are people's (various) subjective interests and the physical proximity of their homes to the place(s) that is being examined.

The property ownership was identified as an important factor in a study by Hooper and Ortolano too (2012). It showed that contrary to the expectations of movement leaders, the question of property (non)ownership was central to the decision one will take (or not) an active role in a civil movement. The authors report that people who were the property owners were significantly more likely to participate in a risky and time-consuming activities than the renters. The three factors that favoured participation by the owners in this study were the nature of expected payoffs, greater belief in the effectiveness of the action and greater connection to place. Renters may be unlikely to participate in activities focused on the long-term future as payoffs. The authors conclude that it is important to find the stakes that would be attractive enough for all the parties, including non-owners.

Moore and Elliott (2015) point out that often the motivations of urban planners to work in a bottom-up manner are not clear either. They stress the importance of participatory design for the planning process as it can serve as a tool for getting in a dialogue with the communities. True dialog is only possible if the parties besides the ability of speaking also have the ability of listening. An attentive listener at the side of the authority can largely contribute to a more just city by hearing the points of views of the citizens and thus being able to address the real problems of the community and support it to make its own contribution.

Pares et al (2012) pointed to another important issue. Based on the study of 10 deprived neighbourhoods in Spain they argue that not the lack of opportunities for participation but sometimes it is rather the inflation in the

number of participatory forums without proper coordination that limits the range of the participatory approaches, which at the end can result in a participatory fatigue. Similarly the inappropriate administration's response—the production of participatory structures that respond to the functional logics of the administration more than to the capacities, interests, and dynamics of the local network of civil society organizations—can again lead to the reduced motivation by citizens.

A survey

The review of the scholarly work shows that participation in urban planning has many facets that have to be addressed in order to get the general public properly involved. What interest us in this paper most is the active participation of citizens in public space redesign. Human Cities consortium implemented a mapping of current bottom-up initiatives that work towards the improvements of the public spaces in contemporary Europe (www.humancities.eu). The mapping uncovered a rich array of initiatives and their activities, each of them with its own triggers, dynamics and goals.

To better understand what triggers some citizens to create or to get involved in bottom up initiatives, their motivations together with their social backgrounds and their values needed to be researched into some more detail. The final goal of such research is to have a clearer picture of the appropriate approaches to get locals involved in the urban public space improvement initiatives.

The research was done between June and October 2015 and implemented through a structured questionnaire accessible on-line. For the potential interviewees that refused the usage of an online form, an eye to eye interview following the same questions was organised and the answers transferred into the on-line database by an interviewer. The gathering of a data was done in cooperation between Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia and Dutch Saxion University.

The sampling was based on the results of State of the art (SoA) mapping within Human Cities Challenging the city scale endeavours (Nikšič et al, 2015) and previous mapping done at earlier stages of Human Cities project (Nikšič et al, 2011)—the representatives of all mapped

initiatives, i.e. 34 all-together, were invited to take part in filling in the questionnaires. 18 of them decided to participate, 9 from each country. The recruiting process was rather demanding, a number of invited potential respondents hesitated or even refused to take part in the survey, most of them due to a lack of time, while some of them found revealing their motivations too personal information to be revealed.

The questionnaire was partitioned in three sections. Section one dealt with the personal characteristics of each interviewee. Firstly the basic statistical data (e.g. age, gender, education) was collected, followed by data that helps understanding the broader context of their personal lives, such as respondents' childhood experience with the living environments, their current job status and responsibilities, the wider socio-economic characteristics of the household they lived in as a child and live in now etc. Section two dealt with the respondents' engagement with the bottom up initiative. It addressed the motivations that made the respondent active in initiating or joining it at an early stage and the aspects that are important for such an initiative run smoothly. Third part addressed the respondent's general values in life as well as specific values related to public space provision in an urban environment.

This article is a sum-up of all the answers received to the date as in November 2015 for the sections one and two of the questionnaire. The results from part three of the questionnaire are not reported in this paper. This report does also not comparatively interpret all the answers yet, but quantitatively and qualitatively analyses particular answers.

The sample

The majority of the respondents is aged between 26 and 55, 2 between 16 and 25. The majority of respondents has at least one child. Only 4 respondents live in a one person household, all the others share it with at least one person. In majority of cases these households are not intergenerational—more than a half (10) of the respondents live in a single generation household. About one quarter of the respondents lives in the households where (not all members) are family-relatives.

Not many of the respondents declare that they have no financial worries at all to sustain their household—only 3 respondents choose this option, while 8 declare their financial situation as average and nearly the same number (7) described it as somehow making the ends of months meet.

The majority of respondents (13) changed their place of permanent residency at least three time, 8 of them even more than three times.

The respondents come from different professional backgrounds (e. g. arts and culture, journalism, healthcare, geography) and nearly all of them from humanities and social disciplines—there was only one respondent coming from the technical disciplines. 11 respondents estimate that their profession is strongly related to urban public space (level 4 or 5 on a 1-5 scale, where 5 is a strong relation; this scale applies in further text too). On the contrary more than a half (10) respondents estimate that their study was little or only average related to urban public space (level 1 or 2 on a 1-5 scale). 13 respondents estimate that they deal with high responsibilities at their job (level 4 or 5 on a 1-5 scale). Nearly all respondents (except one) find their jobs creative (level 4 or 5 on a 1-5 scale). Another observation to be made is that only one was a retired person while all the others in an active career stage.

Results

When asked to choose from a given list and rank the factors that motivated them to start and develop the initiative, the most common choice is *the pleasure of seeing results of initiative's actions*. The ranking of other listed motivations is shown in table 1. [→]

Some other motivations that respondents find important were recalled additionally to the pre-listed ones. One of them is a notion that by running such an initiative they are doing something good for the community. The biggest beneficiaries of the initiative's actions are the citizens in general by respondents' opinion, followed by members of the initiative itself and members of the specific local commune the initiative addresses. Another motivating factor recalled by respondents was the conviction that

Table 1: Final ranking of listed motivations that respondents have to judge according to the significance in their decision to start and develop the bottom-up initiative for public space improvement. Each respondent had to dedicate a mark from 1 (not important at all) to 5 (very important) to each listed motivation, the table shows the average value for the whole group of respondents.

PLEASURE OF SEEING RESULTS OF INITIATIVE'S ACTIONS	4,1
TO HAVE FUN	3,7
PERSONAL GROWTH	3,6
IMPROVING MY SKILLS	3,6
GETTING TO KNOW LOCAL ENVIRONMENTS BETTER	3,4
GROWING NEW FRIENDSHIPS	3,2
FEELING OF BEING USEFUL	3,2
GETTING TO KNOW LOCAL COMMUNITY BETTER	3,1
BETTER CHANCES OF PROMOTION IN MY CAREER	2,5
PERSONAL RECOGNITION	2,4
STARTING POLITICAL CAREER	1,6
FINANCIAL BENEFITS	1,2
POSSIBILITY OF MEETING MY FUTURE LIFE PARTNER	1,2

by their activity they are doing something good for one's children future in a neighbourhood, as well as proving that people have capacities to create their living environments on their own.

When asked what respondents think motivates other active members to join the initiative they estimate growing new friendships and having fun as two most important motivations.

Among the factors that demotivate respondents to dedicate time and energy to the initiative, the following are named: organisational and technical obstacles, lack of interest or no respond from general public on one hand and the expectation they will be at a disposal at any time on the other hand.

Lack of institutional support including financial support was often highlighted too, even

if the great majority (16) of respondents declared that their initiative is in some form supported by the institutional bodies. When estimating the importance of such a support from 1 (not important at all) to 5 (very important), the average score of the respondents is 3,7—only four respondents marked this importance with 2 or less.

Another strong demotivating factor is a need to "dance" with the system and all its bureaucratic and political peculiarities. One respondent mentioned that if the initiative is perceived by general public as politically motivated this decreases the eagerness to work within the initiative too. As well as if too much time needs to be sacrificed—this demotivates people to take part.

As the Human Cities project is built around the notion of the shared values on public space, the respondents were asked to point out the values that they find important for the members of an urban society to cohabit well. The respondents were given the list of values and asked to pick five most important ones. The interpretation of the meaning of each value was left to the respondent her-/himself. The table 2 [↓] shows there seems to be a consensus among the respondents that the following values are most important (arranged in an abc order): aesthetics, conviviality, leisure, mobility, respect, sensoriality, solidarity, sustainability and well-being. When the initiators of the civil initiatives are asked to evaluate how important each of these values they indicated is for them, it turns out that sensoriality, aesthetics and leisure are the three front-runners.

HUMAN CITIES SHARED VALUE	A amount of respondents estimating the value as important (out of 18)	B the total sum of points given to each shared value*	C absolute ranking of a shared value **	D relative ranking of a shared value ***
EMPATHY	6	69	11,50	3,83
WELL-BEING	18	106	5,89	5,89
INTIMACY	17	103	6,06	5,72
SUSTAINABILITY	18	106	5,89	5,89
CONVIVIALITY	18	99	5,50	5,50
MOBILITY	18	117	6,50	6,50
ACCESSIBILITY	14	116	8,29	6,44
IMAGINATION	4	48	12,00	2,67
LEISURE	18	136	7,56	7,56
AESTHETICS	18	137	7,61	7,61
SENSORIALITY	18	144	8,00	8,00
SOLIDARITY	18	121	6,72	6,72
RESPECT	18	134	7,44	7,44

Table 2: The ranking of the so called Human Cities shared values

* each of the respondents had to dedicate a certain amount of points (from 1 to 13) to each shared value that he estimated as important in a previous step, the column sums up the values from all respondents

** calculated as a quotient of B and A

*** calculated as a quotient of B and a total number of respondents in a sample (i. e. 18)

Table 3: The ranking from the most to the least important factor for the initiative to run successfully by the opinion of the respondents.

According to the respondents the most important characteristics of a good leader of a bottom up initiative is the ability to motivate people to join and contribute followed by the ability to integrate the professional expertise of the members into the functioning of the initiative. The respondents find it also important that the leader has good ideas and is able to think out-of-a-box.

The important factors for the initiative to run successfully are good communication and team work, followed by some other factors, as shown in table 3 [↓].

Other than above listed factors that respondents mention in a second recall are shared vision, addressing the appropriate societal challenges, commitment, humour and cosiness feeling within a team, as well as preparedness of the members to listen to others' suggestions and ideas.

The most important contribution of an initiative is bringing life back to public space, but also strengthen the social ties within local community according to the respondents, while an indicator of a long term success of an initiative is a spin-off effect – new activities, programs or new initiatives born out of an existing one are a prove of its real success. The ranking of some other factors is shown in table 4 [→ P.138]. Besides listed ones, some respondents additionally mention the fulfilment of the goals as well as long term financial stability as the indicators of a long term success of an initiative.

GOOD COMMUNICATION	82
TEAM WORK	81
ENTHUSIASM	73
INITIATIVE TO BE NETWORKED WITH OTHER ALIKE INITIATIVES	69
ADEQUATE HUMAN RESOURCES	68
KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF MEMBERS	68
HAVING SUPPORT BY OFFICIAL/INSTITUTIONALIZED BODIES	66
ADEQUATE FINANCIAL RESOURCES	64
GOOD LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	64
WELL DEFINED GOALS	63
GOOD PLANNING OF THE ACTIVITIES	60
A PROPER WORKING/MEETING SPACE	58
ACCESS TO INTERNATIONAL KNOWHOW AND GOOD PRACTICES	55

SPIN-OFF EFFECT (NEW ACTIVITIES, PROGRAMS OR INITIATIVES BORN OUT OF IT)	76
RISE OF NUMBER OF PEOPLE THAT BENEFIT FROM INITIATIVE'S ACTIVITIES	70
LOCAL RECOGNITION OF THE INITIATIVE AND ITS GOALS	68
RISE OF NUMBER OF ACTIVE MEMBERS	63
GLOBAL RECOGNITION OF THE INITIATIVE AND ITS GOALS	47

Table 4: The ranking of the long-term success factors as seen by the respondents.

The respondents were also asked to define a question that they would ask to their fellows in similar initiatives across Europe, thus their central concern regarding the existence of the initiative is revealed. The most of the suggested questions are related to recruitment processes and getting wider public engaged. Questions like these appear on the list: How do you get volunteers involved in the project? How do you motivate people to join—which are the three best tools proved to be useful in your case? How do you keep all members engaged in participating in the community and various projects? How do you make inhabitants participating? When you make events—how many people attend them?

Another broader group of questions was related to the organisational structure and functioning of the initiative, such as: How are you guys organised? How do you facilitate both vision/direction and partnership/inclusion? What kind of relation between leader and members is most desirable? Do you think that it is necessary to have the leader of the group as a motor of the activities that you organise?

Other proposed questions to be asked to similar initiatives are related to:

- communication strategies (How do you present your ideas to people who live in a city?)
- financial issues (How do you financially support the projects of your initiative?)
- the course of development of an initiative (Do you have the same ambition at the end of the project as at the beginning?)
- the connectedness with other initiatives (How to create a platform so that we could

connect and find each other and reinforce each other's projects?)

- the personal cost-benefit evaluation (Do you feel better working for the community? Would you start a new one?—initiative is meant here)
- the question of (non)volunteering (How do you balance between spare time investment and making money out of it?)
- public space improvement practices (What is the common practice of improving public spaces in your city?)

Observations

Some preliminary conclusions can be made based on the in-depth study of 18 creators of bottom up initiatives that took part in a survey so far in the Netherlands and Slovenia. Regarding the initiator's professional profile they are as follows:

– Someone with a professional practice in social disciplines or humanities is more likely to initiate and organise a civil activity aiming to improve public space. At the same time initiator's professional background by study (degree obtained during the schooling process) is not necessarily directly related to public space at all. This means that educational background plays much lower role than the actual expertise someone possesses. The importance of someone's expertise is highlighted also in their opinion that one of the central challenges for them as leaders of initiatives is how to integrate member's knowledge and abilities into the work of the initiative.

- The survey suggests that people who perceive their job positions responsible are more susceptible to become initiators of civil initiatives related to public space.
- The initiators do not start their initiatives out of the perception of their job as uncreative, just on the contrary—the survey suggests that people who can develop their creativity at their job are more likely to become initiators of public space related initiatives. Thus their active involvement can by no means be interpreted as a compensation for a boring job or a compensation for a finished career (retirement life stage).

Regarding the management of their initiative the following observations can be made:

- One of the biggest challenges that initiators find in running an initiative is motivating and getting new people on board to help run an initiative. This issue was risen many times, which calls attention to the need of further research to better understand the drivers and motivations of one's active involvement.
- The human resources are a more important factor for a success of an initiative than the financial ones according to the replays of the respondents.

Two most important prerequisites for a success of a bottom-up initiative dealing with urban public are:

- Enthusiasm of members—this was clearly among most important factors for the initiative to run successfully mentioned by the respondents
- Financial support is not central but an important factor influencing the successfulness of the initiative too. Especially a long term financial stability is seen as a crucial aspect to reach the goals.

Regarding the long-term success criteria, the following observations can be made:

- The most important contribution of an initiative is bringing life back to public space.
- Strengthened social ties within local community are also seen as a proof of a long-term success of an initiative.

And finally the last observation is related to the motivations of initiators to start an initiative:

- The initiators' work is rather altruistic—they invest their resources in order to contribute to a better life of the community.
- Having good time with other people and friends is an important motivator to start and run an initiative too. The importance of the sociability factor is reflected in a notion that low respond rate by general public is a strong demotivating factor.

Conclusion

The overall goal of this research is to have a clearer picture of what can be done to get citizens more active in the initiatives that aim at improving their local public spaces. A central role in these endeavours play the initiators of concrete initiatives—they are the true motors of bottom-up initiatives, therefore the planning practice can benefit from getting to know their motivations, aspirations and personal goals better, and thus offer a greater support. A survey shows that these are enthusiastic people who believe in possible improvements of their living environments with their own contribution. They are well aware of the importance of getting others working in the same direction and trust in the citizen's power, while they are still aware of the limitations that the lack of financial resources may cause. They generally come from financially average or under average positioned households, but do not seek financial benefits in their civic endeavours—besides the pleasure of seeing improvements in the community they enjoy a pleasure of new friendships and social ties built up through collaborative processes. In order to better understand their values they have in common, the third part of the questionnaire will have to be interpreted too. This will reveal their general values in life as well as particular values related to public spaces, which can offer another important insight into the matter.

Limitations to the study and next steps

This paper reports the results of an ongoing survey. The current size of a sample as in November 2015 allows some preliminary conclusions. Adaptation of the questionnaire according to the findings of the above presented stage of the survey can hopefully lead to a broader sampling. When implemented in different cultural milieus this can help understanding the cultural differences too.

The sampling in a current survey was centred on the initiators of the initiatives only. In order to gain an overview of possible differences between initiators and other members of initiatives, the survey sampling shall include all (categories) of members of initiatives (starters/late joiners, active/passive members etc.)

in the future. Such an approach can point out some crucial differences and help addressing the important group management issues.

In 2016 and 2017 a continuation of survey is scheduled. If you would have interest in getting actively involved in a research or being informed of the progress and results, do not hesitate to get in contact.

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Clear Village
London

Bottom-up placemaking
& emerging urban actors
in London

By Thomas Ermacora, Frank van Hasselt
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In the 1990s, after decades of population decline, London has restored itself as a magnet for people from all over the world. It is now estimated that London's population will hit 9 million before 2020. As a capital of international finance, London has seen major developments leading to an ever-changing cityscape; planning has taken place for more than 200 buildings over 50 meters tall. Major developments such as Battersea Park and Royal Docks are spurred by international capital flows and aimed at serving the global elites. Even less prolific developments in lesser-known areas of London, such as Woodberry Down in Hackney, go on sale first in places like Hong Kong, Shanghai or Kuala Lumpur to cater for the newly rising Asian elites. In fact, the British Property Federation reported that 61% of all new homes sold in the capital in 2013 were bought not to live in, but solely as an investment¹.

These developments are usually facilitated by a network of "traditional" urban stakeholders; major investment companies, large developers and international architecture firms in conjunction with local borough councils, most of whom

are eager to attract new investments to their area. These developments however are often confronted with local resistance, particularly in those areas where new developments replace council housing estates. Local action groups have mushroomed around London in areas where social housing residents are being evicted to make room for new housing to be sold on the global market. They have had mixed success; whereas in Hoxton residents have successfully opposed the take-over of their estate by a New York investment company with the help of left-wing campaigner and media personality Russell Brand. Residents in other areas, such as they Heygate Estate in Elephant and Castle, have not been able to prevent the demolition of their homes.

Apart from these concerns about gentrification and social cleansing, there is an increasing awareness that these new developments lead to a further privatisation of public space. Privatisation of public space is not a new phenomenon in London; famously, Canary Wharf, built in the late 80s and 90s, is under surveillance of its own private security company;

the Broadgate development around Liverpool Street, including a "public" plaza, is owned by British Land and GIC and even the publicly accessible space surrounding City Hall is owned by a Malaysian investor. More recent and future examples include areas such as Granary Square in Kings Cross, the Nine Elms development in Vauxhall, and the Olympic Park. As written in an article in the Guardian in 2012, developers often argue that in fact public space is created where none existed. This might be true from a spatial perspective as often times these places are indeed publicly accessible and visually indistinguishable from "real" public space. The reality is these spaces are privately owned and their use is restricted and controlled by private security.

These kinds of developments have recently led to discussions about a loss of "urban commons", ie spaces that are publicly or community owned, and strategies to reclaim them. In the spring of 2015, LSE Cities/Theatrum Mundi organised a high profile competition asking for new ideas and models to address these concerns surrounding urban commons. Arguably though, London is already seeing an exciting range of initiatives that create a new kind of urban common. These are "bottom-up" initiatives, introduced by a wide range of "newly emerging" local urban actors and often aimed at creating tighter communities and increasing community well being. London has a dynamic landscape of charitable organisations and community groups. Some groups tend to be more activist, while others are focussed on community-based projects such as community gardens, collective housing, and public space improvements.

This article will explore some of these recent initiatives and the newly emerging actors behind them—and focus specifically on the interests of the groups and organisations driving these initiatives. This is of interest particularly from the perspective of creating "Human Cities" and the question of how the creation of more "human" cities can be facilitated. Understanding new actors' motivation to initiate and drive bottom-up projects could help policy makers to work together with them and design policies to make best use of the energy and skills within these community groups and organisations.

Clear Village has researched five such initiatives from different London-based organisations. The initiatives are:

- Haringey's Warehouse initiatives—driven by Haringey Arts, a group of local residents
- Brixton Market—driven by SpaceMakers Agency, a professional agency consulting local residents and other stakeholders
- Canning Town Caravanserai—driven by Ash Sakula Architects, an architects firm focused on community participation
- St. Clements Hospital—driven by East London Community Land Trust, an action group
- Bedfords Park Walled Garden, a community-focused food growing space run by Clear Village.

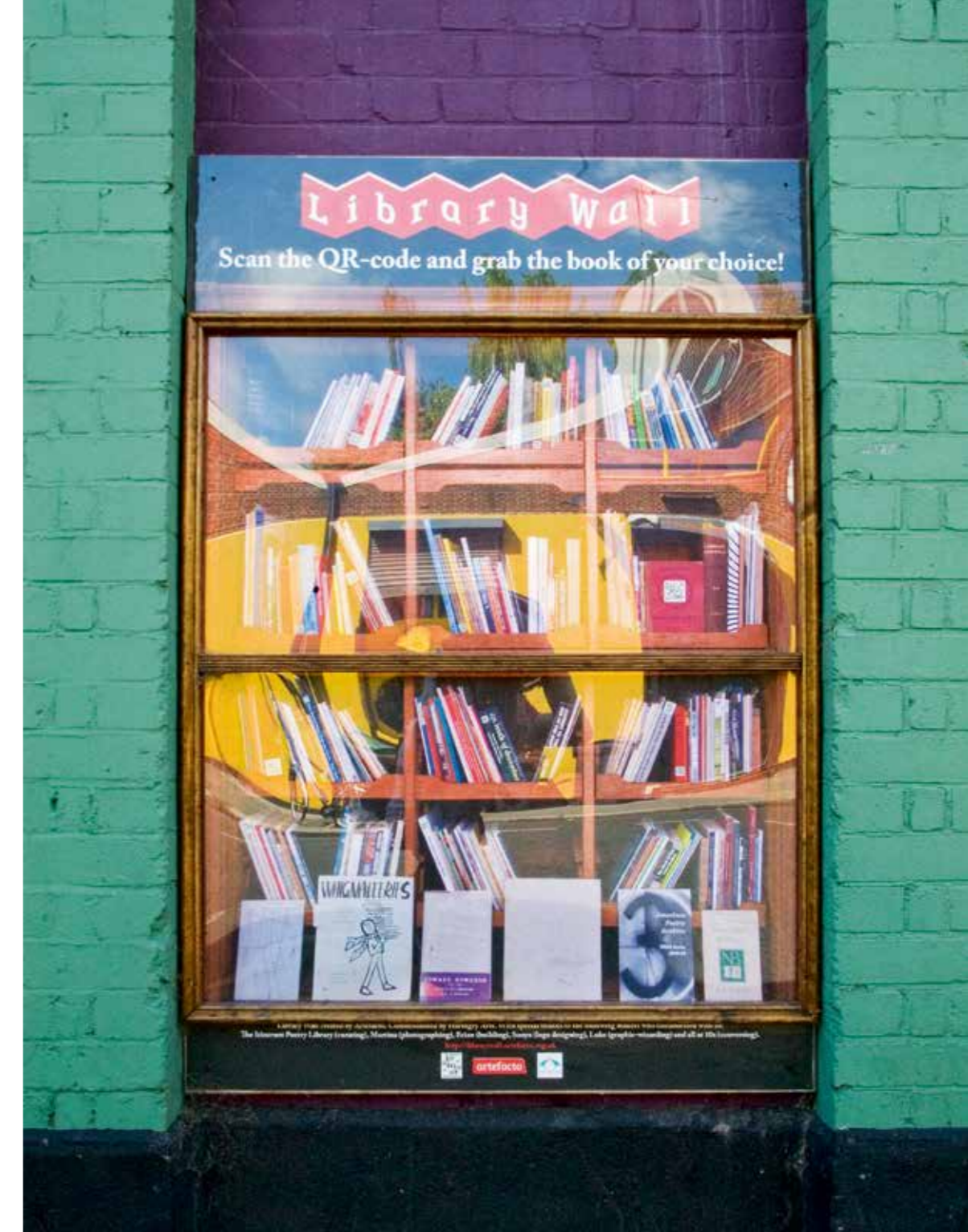
In the rest of the article we will briefly describe each project, discuss the similarities and differences between the 5 initiatives, and conclude with some reflections on the wider significance of these newly emerging urban actors for the practice of place making.

Haringey Warehouse Communities

The Haringey warehouse community is comprised of two areas of formerly industrial warehouses. Over 1500 people live here as part of a community of artists, makers, performers, architects, etc. Some of them have lived in the area for twenty years. The warehouses in the area previously hosted textile manufacturing which from the beginning of the 1990s began to move out of the area. The spaces left by the industries have gradually been converted into a mix of uses, mostly communal housing and artist workshops.

Initiatives to support the warehouse community in a structured way began in 2008, when Haringey Arts was set up in 2008 with funding from Haringey Council. When funding ran out a few years later a period of low activity began, until 2012 when local residents James West and Carolina Khouri took a lead as co-directors and revived Haringey Arts as an independent organisation.

Since then Haringey Arts has focused strongly again on supporting the development of a true warehouse community and facilitating initiatives by local artists that support this goal. One of their first initiatives was to open up the community on an Open Warehouse Day in May





2013. Together with local landlord Provewell Ltd they have set up a programme to develop the identity of the warehouse community through a series of commissions to local artists. These include a series of four destination signs, including a large mural on one of the warehouses' façades. New commissions for 2015 include a fence upgrading project and a courtyard upgrading initiative to create permanent outdoor spaces for local residents to meet.

In addition, local residents have started taking initiative to promote the warehouse community. This includes the inHouse Festival, first organised as a Film Festival in 2014, but now a broader event spread over several locations in the area. Haringey Arts supports these initiatives by acting as a platform, making connections between related stakeholders. Local residents can also fundraise for their initiatives via The Village Fund.

Although the warehouse community has recently come under threat from the local Council following a report on "dangerous" living arrangements and overcrowding, both directors assert that Haringey Arts is not politically motivated. Working closely with the local landlord makes Haringey Arts vulnerable to accusations of political bias, yet the absence of any strategic plan undermines that argument substantially. Haringey Arts' objectives, according to the directors, are purely in the interest of building a local warehouse community and facilitating community action aimed at creating a common warehouse identity, stronger support networks and a more productive place to live.

East London Community Land Trust

Although many areas in London have experienced something of a property boom in recent decades, East London in particular has been subject to major transformations. This started in the early 1980s with many of the dysfunctional docklands being transformed into housing and office areas, a process continuing today. A new node of intensive property development has also emerged around the site of the 2012 Olympics.

These new developments have often provided housing unaffordable to local residents. The price of existing housing has surged too, as a result of high demand across London, and cash-buyers in Tower Hamlets in particular.

Average house prices in 2014 were as high as 620k, way out of reach for families living on the area's median income. It is often the price of land that makes house prices this high, rather than construction costs. The story of the East London Community Land Trust started in the late 1980s when local residents constituted Telco (The East London Communities Organisation), now Citizens UK. The lack of affordable, decent-sized housing for local families soon came up as an important issue. The first steps towards a community land trust came in the early 2000s. In 2003 the proposal was made to mayoral candidates to hand over land to a community land trust, enabling local people to build their own homes. All mayoral candidates said yes and the search for a site was on. In 2004, a petition written by ELCLT that asked for affordable housing in the form of a land trust was included in the London Olympic 2012. However, after London was awarded the Games, ELCLT was asked to first pilot a scheme before a site in the Olympic Park would be made available.

It was December 2008 when ELCLT decided to start campaigning for the site of St. Clements Hospital, which had become dysfunctional in 2004. The campaign gained political support from the London mayor and eventually also from Tower Hamlets council. ELCLT put in a bid with two partners to develop the land, but lost. However, the developers of the winning bid decided to incorporate the ELCLT proposal in their plans. ELCLT became the owner of the whole site, with Peabody and Galliford Try as leaseholders (meaning only a home, not the land will be sold to new owners). Homes built for ELCLT will be made available for members of ELCLT and sold at an estimated price of half the market price in East London. The price of a home is calculated using mean income in the area as a starting point, meaning houses are truly affordable for local people.

The development process has been inclusive and community design absolutely central to the process. In total over 500 local people involved in workshops during the bid development and master planning stage. Even more locals have been engaged with the site through the Shuffle summer and winter festivals, taking place in the historic yet dilapidated buildings on site. Construction works have now started on the site and it is expected that the first homes will be delivered in 2016.

Brixton Village Market

The story of Brixton Village Market starts in 2008 when the owners of this 1930s indoor market in South London proposed a major redevelopment of the site. At the time the market had been going downhill for years and a fifth of the one hundred units were sitting empty. To maximise the return on their investment, the owners proposed to demolish half the site and construct a ten-storey apartment block on top of it.

Brixton is one of the areas in South-London that are on the brink of major transformations—leading to concerns about and protests against gentrification. Also the redevelopment of the market met with local resistance. Residents formed The 'Friends of Brixton Market' and led a determined campaign to conserve the market and the owners were eventually forced to withdraw their proposal in 2009. The result was a deadlock.

Lambeth Council then proposed to turn to regeneration agency Space Makers in the hope that they could initiate a project that could achieve a win-win situation for both the developers and local residents. With seed funding from London & Associated Properties, Space Makers started their initiative to rebuild the social life of the market. They launched a social media drive and managed to attract more than 350 people to their first 'Space Exploration' event. Space Makers gave interested people a week to come up with proposals for taking over a vacant unit; those with successful proposals would then get three months free rent. 98 proposals were submitted within the week and Space Makers selected 30 of them. These ranged from food stores to lantern-makers, from fashion boutiques to community shops, and from galleries to band rehearsal spaces.

Space Makers continued to support the revitalisation process afterwards. They facilitated regular events to increase footfall and worked closely with the community to increase local participation. As a result, Brixton Village was always much more than a collection of shops and was more of a movement. As Dougald Hine, the founder of Space Makers, said: "it wasn't just about businesses. You came down there and it felt like a space you wanted to spend time in." Six months after the project started, Brixton Village was being written about in the

New York Times and Time Out. And by the time Space Makers finished their work, the market was fully let for the first time in 30 years.

Space Makers call themselves a "utopian regeneration agency". They work on a project or consultancy basis with local authorities, architects, funders and private developers. Yet their interest goes deeper; one could call Space Makers a team of individuals searching to be a catalyst for projects/interventions that make a difference in places. They see their main work in facilitating positive bonds between different stakeholders, always including local communities and supporting these communities to organise themselves. Crucial to them is not to "build themselves into the fabric of the place", but to pull out at the moment a local community can carry an initiative further themselves.

For Space Makers, the process is the core of their own inspiration. Reflecting on the success of Brixton Village, Douglas Hine said: "We could have turned into this company that was basically a guerrilla regeneration agency going in and mobilizing the cool to transform spaces that were getting a bit down at heel. But to me that would have been ignoring all of the bits that I knew coming out of that project that hadn't felt quite right and I knew that if instead we dwelt on those bits and we went through the bits of brokenness, we would find new and different things to do that would continue to matter to us and be exciting, in the way that Brixton Village had mattered to us and been exciting with all of its imperfections."





Canning Town Caravanserai

In 2011 the mayor of East London borough Newham, Sir Robin Wales, and mayor of London Boris Johnson launched a competition to find "meanwhile uses" for three brown field sites in East London. The competition invited anyone with an idea, from developers to investors and community groups, to devise temporary uses for the sites that are local in nature but able to reach a global audience.

One of the sites was just opposite Canning Town station—a rather deprived area in the shadow of London's finance centre Canary Wharf. London-based architecture firm Ash Sakula won the competition for this site with their proposal to establish a "Caravanserai". The idea was to create, in Ash Sakula's co-director Cany Ash's words, a "small village of community activities, inspired by the medieval network of safe, hosted spaces along the Silk Route that provided resting spaces for travellers and traders".

A few months before the opening of the Olympic Games in 2012 the Caravanserai opened. It had been built gradually with the help of over 50 volunteers who trained their construction skills and used remediated and salvaged materials sourced and donated from various construction sites in the area. The site itself contained a community garden with 18 allotments, an open-air theatre, a children's play area, sheltered tables with seating for 60 people, a micro-manufacture workshop, market kiosks and the Oasis café/bar. With such amenities Caravanserai has been able to host a wide variety of activities and events, ranging from school visits, language classes, corporate volunteering days, community feasts, performing art shows and music festivals. Other activities continue to be developed with different community groups. As such, the Caravanserai is intentionally a cumulative process with participatory opportunities emerging, enabling the local communities to become active in their public realm.

Beyond creating a community space, the project has to be understood as an experiment in creating local employment opportunities and an economic and cultural legacy for the area. In Ash Sakula's own words: "It is a living manifesto for a new generation of public spaces, integrating forums and facilities, workshops and workspaces, all collaboratively produced by

hosts and guests, with artists and architects, thinkers and makers, businesses and communities. It centres on a vibrant, adaptable, open courtyard, surrounded on all sides by busy shops and bustling production business spaces where innovative and sustainable business ventures are invented or re-imagined.

Ash Sakula themselves, at first sight, seems a conventional architecture firm, though with a broader than usual portfolio, including housing, art and public space projects. Yet the Caravanserai shows a practice devoted to actually taking leadership over a civic project, putting themselves in the heart of the community. The Caravanserai is run as a not-for-profit limited company, with Cany Ash acting as chair and executive director. Funding has come from a variety of sources—London & Quadrant Foundation, the Development Trusts Association, Newham Council, Comic Relief and the European Union's Youth in Action programme. Yet commercial viability is a challenge and there is a continuous exploration of potential income streams including grants, donations, cross-subsidisation from commercial activities elsewhere and income from the space itself through events.

Bedfords Park Walled Garden

Bedfords Park Walled Garden, built in the 1770s, was the food growing space of Bedfords estate manor house, dating back to the 1400s. It later became Havering Council's plants and flowers nursery before being abandoned in the end of the 1990s. Since then it was left overgrown, with the walls on the brink of collapse and many of the glasshouses subject to vandalism.

In 2011 Clear Village founder Thomas Ermacora came upon the Walled Garden during a walk in Bedfords Park and, interested in the opportunities of the space, discovered that a local community group, the Friends of Bedfords Park was already putting an effort into an initiative to restore the space. They decided to start collaborating on the project and engaged Havering Council, the owner of the space, into the project as well. After a period of fundraising and project planning, the project really kicked off in the spring of 2013 when full-time Clear Village staff came on site. The renovation of the walls started and growing space was cleared up and prepared for production. Since

then 320m of the 3.5 meter high garden walls have been renovated or rebuilt; 70 meters of lean-to-glasshouses and cold frames and the historic pineapple and fern houses have been newly built.

To engage the community with the space, Clear Village organised workshops in one of the nearby community centres as well as focus groups with local organisations representing different groups in the community. These brought a lot of ideas to the project and gave the space a more particular focus ensuring that the project responds to local needs. This led to the definition of four particular beneficiary programs, currently provided from the space:

- a Grow>Cook>Eat programme that focuses on teaching children aged 8-12 about healthy eating, aimed at developing an understanding of how food affects ones body and contributing to long term health and well-being. The programme was successfully piloted in the summer of 2014. All children showed an increased understanding of eating healthily and parents told us about the positive impact on their households, including eating more vegetables. The programme takes place as school holiday programmes and a Saturday club.
- a "Growing Friends" club for people aged over 50s. This programme offers supervised gardening and social activities, aimed at increasing physical activity and overcoming social isolation among this group.
- Work placements for long-term unemployed people – this is a 4-week programme on a rolling basis aimed at increasing confidence and motivation in among participants. About 90 people participate annually.
- Horticultural training for long-term unemployed, young offenders and young adults with special needs. This programme provides training that leads to a qualification in horticulture.

On top of these programmes, at the moment around 40 volunteers work regularly on site and help in the growing of vegetables, fruits and herbs. There are also public events to further embed the Walled Garden in the local community – including a schools harvest festival to engage local schools.

A project board made up of project partners (including Friends of Bedfords Park, Havering Council and other local organisations) governs the project. The board is chaired by Clear Village at the moment, but the goal is to develop this group into an independent community-led board by 2018 when it is planned that the garden will be handed over into community ownership. This will require the development of different long-term income streams that will make the Walled Garden financially self-sustainable, which is one of the main responsibilities for the project board.

A hand-over to the community is an explicit goal of Clear Village, which aims to be a catalyst for community-led regeneration. Clear Village is set up as a charity aimed at delivering social impact in communities through initiating projects where there is an identified need. It takes financial responsibility for projects that are self-initiated – either funded by grants or income from consultancy work. Clear Village will stay involved in projects until they are financially sustainable and there is a group of local community members that are able and empowered to run the project by themselves. Participatory design and community consultation are key in this process.

Discussion and conclusions

The above projects show a variety of newly emerging or "non-traditional" actors leading projects to transform urban spaces. "Non-traditional", because these actors reflect a range of organisations, either community-led or led by professionals, that previously have not regularly been involved in urban projects. This is not to say that London has not known citizen-led urban initiatives in the past. In fact, London has always known a wide network of community groups active in the urban physical and political space. Some of those have taken up a leading role in urban projects; perhaps the most well known example are the Coin Street Community Builders, who developed affordable housing, public spaces and a community centre on a site of 5.5 hectares on London's South Bank. Other types of community groups, such as so-called "Friends groups" have been involved with the maintenance of public spaces while sometimes campaigning for or developing new public amenities themselves.

We'd argue though that the non-traditional actors we describe are quite different from traditional citizen-led groups. Many of these traditional groups, including the Coin Street Community Builders, came into being in reaction to proposed developments by traditional actors. In general, their purpose was often to oppose development proposed by local authorities or external actors, rather than stimulating positive action. As said before, London still has many action groups, yet as the projects above show, the new actors have a pro-active rather than a reactive agenda.

The organisations we researched all have positive, developmental goals in their genes. Delivering benefits to the local community is a key aim to the work of all actors involved in the projects, whether these benefits are affordable housing, increasing social cohesion, stimulating and supporting entrepreneurship, or improving health and well being among local residents. These outspokenly social objectives are often core to the organisations' other projects/activities as well. For example, Clear Village aims to support social entrepreneurship and community cohesion through its Small Works social enterprise and community

hubs and SpaceMakers develops projects such as community markets that create a true sense of local community and support local traders.

Community engagement and participatory design are seen as key to delivering these community benefits. Haringey Arts provides opportunities to artists to conceive and make art works that together establish a new local identity, around which they aim to build the community. For Clear Village, participatory design is central to the processes of conceiving projects through creative Labs. East London Community Land Trust has involved many local residents in the development of the St Clements Hospital site through design workshops. As the ELCLT says on their website: "If local people aren't involved in the design process then the expertise of the local area are not capitalised on and people feel alienated by the entire process, often resenting any form of change that is being proposed. It is their home – they deserve their say".

Interestingly, the projects described have all very different stories on how they began. While St Clements Hospital came forth from a long process of campaigning for more affordable housing, Bedfords Park Walled Garden was the result of the discovery of the garden by chance. And whereas Haringey Arts was (re) initiated by two individuals, Caravanserai was ultimately the result of a competition started by local authorities. Newly emerging actors are "activated" in different ways.

This suggests that policy makers could help activate actors in different ways. In fact, in recent years London has known a few different policy programmes that have supported newly emerging actors. Examples include:

- competitions, such as the one from which Caravanserai resulted. Other examples include a recent competition for a pop-up space in Brixton, won by another architecture firm in collaboration with a range of local organisations.
- the pocket park programme, which was a city-wide programme aimed at supporting the development of small green spaces around London. In two rounds the programme provided 100 pocket parks with in total 1.5 million of match funding. The programme supported a wide of actors, in-

cluding community groups, charities, architecture firms and others to complete their projects.

→ the Mayor's High Street Fund, which makes use of crowdfunding platform Spacehive to support local initiatives to improve High Streets. Not only does the Mayor pledge to fund the most promising projects, the High Street section of the Spacehive website itself is an opportunity for the individual projects to present themselves and become part of a "movement" around the particular goal of upgrading high streets around London.

The above shows that, as much as London is a playground for global investors, London is also a fertile ground for urban social innovation through new groups of citizens, both professionals and non-professionals. So while global capitalism is the dominating force behind the

shaping of London's skyline, on the ground, local people are driving numerous examples of citizen-led projects that create places that aim to contribute to community well-being. In fact, all around the world we see examples of new groups of citizens or professional organisations taking action to improve their neighbourhoods and cities. Examples outside London range from the cheap, informal "spot-fixing" of the Ugly Indian to high-profile, multimillion-dollar projects such as New York's High Line and +pool. To a certain extent it can be argued that these projects of citizen-led placemaking reflect broader, upcoming trends in society, such as the rise of social entrepreneurship, crowd-funding and the sharing economy. It is now the task for policy makers to recognise the need for these projects, understand people's motivation and develop the policies and tools to support them.



Zamek
Cieszyn

Crafts inspirations behind
Polish designers' work
in the public space

By Lubomira Trojan

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Introduction

The presence of crafts workshops in European cities is a common phenomenon dating back to early Middle Ages. In Poland, the progress of crafts resembled that in other European countries, however, it reached its ending phase at the turn of the 21st century. Some of the workshops were closed, and some of the skills were forgotten as the last masters were gone. A few artisans remain professionally active, though. It is estimated that Polish crafts organisations comprise around 300,000 enterprises nowadays.

This article presents initiatives reflecting the interest in traditional crafts in Poland. Polish designers are becoming more and more fascinated with quality handmade products, which is the result of the latest global design trends and a natural reaction to world's market economy as well as the mass production of poor-quality objects and wastefulness. Crafts have become a source of inspiration for creating new products and they start appearing in the public space—both in cities and in the media—thanks to the designers' activity.

The subject proves very interesting as it is a reflection of social changes from the last few years. In the communist times, Polish crafts flourished. The disappearance of crafts businesses was caused by the growth of the new

capitalist system and market economy, the emergence of big shopping centres, and the society's mass excitement with purchase possibilities and the constant exchange of goods which had not been available before. Talented people vanished along with their businesses. The designers who bring crafts back to the public space and awareness save particular competences and talents from oblivion. At the same time, they present their role in the creation and conservation of the identity of small communities. The new products and solutions, being a result of the designers' and craftspeople's cooperation, are tailor-made from good-quality materials and are meant to serve for years. Therefore, the designers' presentation of crafts' significance can promote solutions which are best for the environment and become an inspiration and good counsel for the development of local communities and cities. The studies on the crafts inspirations present in Poland have been based on the accounts of designers who have participated in some of the processes as well as co-created them. The phenomena have been divided into two groups: those which raise awareness and promote crafts in the media and those which have resulted in specific installations in the urban space. The scope of the phenomena, the adopted design methods, and the grounds for the designers' research have undergone a comparative analysis.

Crafts in Poland

In the beginning, Polish crafts business was aimed mainly at the needs of the family and neighbours. With time, the demand for hand-made products increased: people inhabiting particular villages started to specialise in particular sectors. Then, crafts enterprises began to move to cities, where they experienced a boom. The branches which were the first to develop were smithery and steelwork. Further on, trades such as cooperage, pottery, baking, brewing, tanning, shoemaking, and tailoring emerged. Certainly, all the crafts had their ups and downs, and the status of a craftsman and of handicraft weakened in the times of industrialisation.

In the newest history, in the days of communism, which lasted until 1989 in Poland, artisans were widely respected. They formed quite a numerous group, and Poles, living in the constant state of shortage, needed craftspeople's skills to have their goods repaired. Then, customers did not care as much about quality or mastery of the work as about the possibility of renewing the objects which were absent from shops. Shoemakers, tailors, or places where you could fix your stockings thrived. Glass grinders, saddlers, carpenters, and others were also highly valued.

The period of transformation and the emergence of the prospering market economy, which flooded Poland with goods that had been previously unavailable, brought about a slow retreat of crafts and craftspeople. The Polish people followed the pattern which was characteristic of developed countries: quick consumption and lack of respect for things. Instead of being repaired, they are thrown away, which is caused, unfortunately, by economic reasons as well: repairing broken equipment can sometimes be as expensive as buying a new product.

Modern design's fascination with crafts

The recent fifteen years have brought changes in the design sector, whose process of development in Poland is a very interesting one. When Zamek Cieszyn – the first regional design centre in Poland – was born, the English word "design" was approached with mistrust. Design

was understood as a symbol of luxury and extravagance, as something for the wealthy and the elite – thus, it created distance. Designers' activities and projects were usually connected only with the products and graphics as such, not really with changing people's lifestyles. Polish design in those times did not aspire to be a tool of change, although this was the very characteristic that designers tried to propagate. The English word finally found its Polish counterpart (which is now normally phonetically transcribed as *dizajn*); before that, phrases like *wzornictwo przemysłowe* ("industrial design") or *projektowanie* ("designing") would be used. Polish designers started to creatively and successfully adapt Western solutions to Poland: they borrowed not only innovations related to products, public space design, and new materials but also design thinking and service design methods. Inspired by the Scandinavian "design ladder" and particularly by all the examples of companies employing design in their development strategies, the designers undertook new challenges, which were the consequence of understanding design as a process.

The natural flow of currents and inspirations as well as the observation of the growing wastefulness of resources and materials made some of the designers start projects which were a reaction to consumerism. The eco trends, the DIY approach, and the cradle-to-cradle design were promptly and positively accepted by Polish designers. The memories of the hard days of communism, the permanent want of goods, and the impossibility of satisfying basic needs, which were typical of that system, as well as the ability of making and repairing everyday objects with your own hands and reusing them are still present in the minds of Polish families and the social tradition, and reflected in Polish design. It is worth pointing out here that discussions about the nature and individuality of local design are frequent in Poland, as we like asking ourselves the question whether there is something that makes it different from design in Western Europe. Tomasz Rygalik, a recognised Polish designer, claims that Polish design does differ from the European and that fact can be best described by the word "ingenuity". That ingenuity is visible in the ability to create things from scratch, "make bricks without straw", and reuse materials; it is evident in people's tech-

Creative workshops in the Beskid mountains allowing the designer to meet the local culture.
© Rafal Soliński





Creative workshops in the Beskid mountains allowing the designer to meet the local culture.
© Rafal Soliński

A chest seat inspired by traditional local dowry chests.
© Rafal Soliński



nical shrewdness, and in cunning, understood positively.

That context and that approach gave rise to some designers' fascination with the "slow" movement, eco-design, and creative combining of traditional culture and innovations, while natural materials attracted and inspired them to further research. "The modern times are a good moment to rediscover crafts, whose traditions are still strong, and the generation of experienced master artisans are still in their prime. Sometimes they have more energy than I do. They like challenges, for instance, finding new technological solutions", says Ewelina Czaplicka-Ruduca, a student of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw¹.

Both Europeans and Poles are convinced that it is worthwhile to return to handmade products, to create lasting and durable solutions, and to stop wasting resources. This results in initiatives of cooperation with craftspeople, or broadly speaking, folk artists. Those people have some skills, so to speak, at hand, while younger people lack them. The artisans also possess a kind of secret expertise, and they interpret and see the world differently, leading a more traditional life, living in accordance with the cycle of nature. The designers also appreciate the opportunity to create bold, unique products and to participate in the final process of production. They have the chance to see the tools, choose the materials, and obtain perfect quality. In this process, the designer becomes an apprentice, a student, an imitator, acquiring the technical skills and drawing inspiration from the methods of productions. However, the superior value of this kind of collaboration is what they gain from the inter-generational communication and exchange of thoughts and experience.

It must be emphasised, though, that the fascination with traditional culture is one of an "urban" perspective. The designers and recipients of the newly emerged cultural offer appreciate the mastery of disappearing talents, the abundance of cultural resources, and the mixture of cultures, but they do not attempt to understand them completely, to immerse themselves in a given culture or system of values. Such attitude has been a general characteristic of the age of postmodernity in the recent decades. The play with conventions, the eclecticism of forms, and another wave of interest in "the Other" – meaning also the traditional, primal, natural "other", understood eclectically to meet the needs of mass culture – are also characteristic elements of the postmodern era. Nevertheless, the meetings and the process of rediscovering traditional crafts are also meaningful for the artisans themselves: they can see the value of their work from a new point of view, give it another context, and after many years of repeating schematic movements, accept new technological challenges. To notice fascination and interest with their work in young people's eyes is also of importance to them. The main problem of today's craftspeople and artists is the lack of trainees, continuators who would not be discouraged the difficulty and arduousness of their work or by the fact that it is not well-paid. In the past, artisans' children would follow in their footsteps, but now they are not interested in continuing their profession. That is why the trend of rediscovering crafts by the designers is a chance to preserve the master techniques and methods. Simultaneously, the innovative approach to new products, taking care of their functionality and responding to the needs of modern users increase the demand for handmade products.

What is more, the designers create an interesting image of a particular space, city, or street. Crafts workshops are usually situated in city centres to be close to the clients. Even though the premises are usually small, their location makes the rents grow. If the demand is not sufficient, it is hard for the business to survive. Craftspeople emphasise that their activity may become a tourist attraction and thus improve the way people perceive a given city. The simplest solution would be to choose one or several streets where all the flats and offices could be hired or bought by artisans. Surely, a closer cooperation of local authorities and designers concerning the promotion of urban space by means of handicraft would bring many interesting ideas.

The promotion of crafts among users and in the media

The promotion of crafts among users and in the media

The first meetings of designers and artisans resulted in the transfer of skills and creation of new products. The experienced masters who were still active in their profession

1. <http://wysokieobcasy.pl>
19.09.2015

taught the designers tricks of their trade. They were encouraged to do so by, among others, the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, which, in 2012, inspired students to take part in a project on reviving dying professions (*Zawodowcy – Historie Ginących Zawodów*). To enter the project, a student would have to find a workshop which could make the product proposed by the student, and then design an object inspired by the given craft. Seven students worked in a spring production studio, iron foundry, metal spinning workshop and at a shoemaker's, tailor's, and leatherworking shop. The results of the project were shown at exhibitions in several places in Poland.

Another institution whose activities encourage designers to cooperate with artisans is Zamek Cieszyn – a regional design centre situated at the border between Poland and the Czech Republic, in a close vicinity of the Beskid mountains. The closeness to the mountain area, where people maintain the skills related to wool processing and wooden objects production, as well as the fact that some of the natural resources present in that region are wasted (e.g. sheep wool is burned) were impulses which brought new initiatives to life. Their goal was to inspire designers with the opportunity to create new products and services making use of materials available in the Beskid mountains: wool and wood. The project called "Wool Design. Carpathians" was particularly important: it included designers from Poland, Czech, Hungary, and Slovakia, and it was run under the International Visegrad Fund. At the planning stage, a method employing elements of design thinking was adopted. Two kinds of workshops were organised: first, creative workshops allowing the designers to meet the local culture, and then workshops which let them verify, realise, or modify their conceptions. During the first workshops in the mountains, the designers met the local people, who showed them their work stations, the tools they used, and the material processing techniques. The designers clearly stated that those meetings and the relationships they established with people from another generation, representing a different lifestyle, were of great value to them. The outcome of their meetings were products made of Beskid wool. A similar effect was achieved in another project as well: one

related to wood processing and creating furniture inspired by traditional local dowry chests.

Another initiative of Zamek Cieszyn (realised for the Adam Mickiewicz Institute to celebrate the 600th anniversary of Polish-Turkish diplomatic relations) was a creative international exchange: three designers from Poland worked in Turkey and Turkish designers worked in Polish crafts studios. The project was called "Craft. Old for New". The exchange was especially inspiring, as it allowed a meeting of two distinct cultures and sets of values conveyed by them. The products created during the project were exhibited in Turkey at the 2nd Istanbul Design Biennial and in Poland at Zamek Cieszyn. One of the objects was dedicated to public space: a Turkish designer Şule Koc observed inhabitants of Polish cities who, missing the sun after the long winter, exposed their faces to the sunshine at bus stops, in parks, or in other public places; then, she created a one-person public seat which lets you follow the apparent motions of the sun and put your face always in the direction of sunlight. The shape of the seat was inspired by the techniques and solutions which the designer learned in the carpentry workshop of Szymon Sławiec; this is also where the seat was made.

The results of the three projects coordinated by Zamek Cieszyn were presented at the exhibition entitled "Design at the Source".

The cooperation of the designers and artisans resulted not only in the prototypes displayed at exhibitions but also in products which actually entered the market. Ewelina Czaplicka-Ruduca collaborated with craftspeople from Praga, a district of Warsaw, to create a fashion collection and a series of men's shoes. Weronika Woch sewed leather bags in cooperation with a leatherworking studio. Interestingly, the owner of the studio offered the designer to take it over from her and now Weronika is the sole owner of the studio. Another designer, Iza Sojka, opened the first cement tiles studio in Poland. The first commercial experiences of the designers have proven that despite the relatively low standard of living in Poland, there is a growing group of conscious consumers who appreciate the quality, uniqueness, and individuality of handmade objects.



"re:design" project – new signs and displays for five workshops in the historical centre of Gdynia
© Traffic Design

The new signs referring to the nature of the given craft and to pre-war Gdynia typography
© Traffic Design



Due to the growing number of products appearing both at exhibitions and on the market, numerous activities aiming to list and promote the remaining active master artisans were undertaken. For example, Fundacja Lokalny Certyfikowany ("Local and Certified" Foundation), which promotes entrepreneurs, created an online map of craftspeople from Warsaw. Detailed descriptions of artisans, their trades, skills, and achievements have started to appear in the media, on the internet and in the lifestyle press and programmes. Nonetheless, two design graduates, Marta Mach and Agata Napiórska, founders of *Zwykłe życie* ("Ordinary life") magazine, point out that the subject of crafts is hardly present in the media: "We decided that presenting a new lifestyle image of crafts may be a chance to revive it".² The girls have created a brand called Edward, selling products made by artisans and redesigned by designers. They remark: "This is all about changing the way people think. We want them to stop thinking: I'll buy something cheap and when it breaks, I'll throw it away and buy something new. Things can live more than one season. If we shop less, we have more time to reflect on what we are going to buy. That means reduction and selection".³ This becomes a design manifesto and a hint for the consumers helping them make their purchase choices. The designers take yet another step: by means of initiatives promoting crafts and related values as well as through ensuring that crafts find a special place in public awareness, they design a change of people's habits, behaviours, and attitudes.

"So you want to save the dying crafts calling for change of thinking?", Janek Gleń, a journalist, asked Marta and Agata.⁴ The designers responded: "Saving is too big a word. We can support them, though, thanks to our magazine and the Edward brand. Many young people are able to spend a lot of money on popular designer clothes. Why not go to a fashion fair and buy them from their peers, why not go to a crafts shop and buy handmade gloves? This is not a question of a lack of resources, but a lack of knowledge and fashion."

2. <http://twarzewarszawy.pl>, 08.01.2014

3. *Ibid*

4. *Ibid*

Projects in the public space

Thanks to the designers' work – creating new products and promotional actions in the media – the knowledge of the value of crafts is becoming widespread again. A new fashion emerged, for all that is handmade, pro-ecological, sustainable, and anti-consumerist. This fashion is characteristic of the community of designers, however, people centred around the broadly understood human studies take an active part in its popularisation.

Another project which played an important role in the promotion of the value of folk art and handmade products in Poland was a festival organised by designers and the Seweryn Udziela Ethnographic Museum in Kraków. "The Małopolska Thing. Ethnodesign Festival" took place in 2009 and 2010 and was an inspiring impulse to take a closer look at the relations between ethnography and design (which have existed in Poland since the 19th century) and their modern connections. During festival, there were discussions about the significance of patterns from ethnographic collections in contemporary times. The participants wondered whether the popular references to cultural heritage respond to the market needs or if they are simply a way of aestheticisation of daily life. What is important, the organisers of the festival invited Polish designers and gave them a task: to try to understand what the artisans wanted to convey through the objects they made, to examine the museum's collection, and to turn on their imagination. The designers entered the museum's storerooms and acquainted themselves with the meanings, functions, and ornamentation of the objects located there. There were two exhibitions forming a part of the festival: *Wolnica, Wolność, Wyobraźnia* ("Wolnica, Freedom, Imagination") and *Rzecz małopolska – park doświadczeń kulturowych* ("The Małopolska Thing: Park of Cultural Experiences"). They were both presented in the public space of Kraków. The latter exhibition, whose curator was Olaf Círut, was a result of the cooperation of designers and artisans who co-created interactive installations: a world of things which lets you play with both design and ethnography. The installations were located by the Vistula river in Kraków and in two other Polish cities, Nowy Sącz and Tarnów. You could find among them a gar-

den full of flowers deriving from dowry chests, garden appliances inspired by Polish legends, scaled toys which were once made for children by artisans. The objects—big, clear, colourful, encouraging to touch them—made it possible for the users to play creatively and at the same time experience tradition. The projects were the result of recreating traditional decorative patterns and artisan objects typical of the region of Małopolska, whose capital is Kraków. They also constituted a way to express the respect for the techniques of painting, paper cutting, weaving, or wood carving. The organisers of the festival said: "These projects, artistically recreated and adapted to modern times, are supposed to show how cityscape could change by means of design inspired by ethnography".⁵ A quotation from the festival press material can sum up the total results of that event: "This experimental festival proves that when we treat museum items as our own historical traces, it may turn out that the past understood this way is a story of our today's culture. But we need to ask questions, not just thoughtlessly cite".⁶

Another good example of an initiative which gives new meanings and emphasises the value of crafts without "thoughtless citing" is the action taken by leading Polish designers in the north of Poland, in the city of Gdynia. It was a part of the "re:design" project realised by Traffic Design⁷. The outcome of the project were new shop signs and displays for five crafts workshop in the historical centre of Gdynia.

The first symbolic expression of reviving the value of crafts in the minds of the inhabitants of Gdynia was a mural by Jan Bajtlik. Its typography alluded to Gdynia's modernist architecture and it was dedicated to local craftspeople. Then, a more numerous group of designers took care of the shop signs and displays of several workshops: leatherworking studio, sewing machine repair point, tailor's, shoemaker's, and fabric shop. The new signs were hung on the shops—they were painted, forged in metal, referring to the nature of the given craft and to pre-war Gdynia typography. In the beginning, the scope of the project was not big, but it is going to be continued. Its next stage will be window expositions created in cooperation with designers. Patryk Hardziej, the owner of Negation Studio and one of the participants of the pro-

ject, explains the approach and principles beyond the designers' work: "When designing for craftspeople, you need to highlight the tradition and convey it in a way which makes it legible in the contemporary intergenerational discourse. In the course of years, that discourse has become distorted by trends, system changes, and deficiencies in aesthetic education of the society. That is why it is high time to fix it. As we were working with the artisans, it turned out that they are open even to far-reaching transformations⁸".

Cieszyn is another example of a city whose space is modified in order to underline the potential of local crafts in improving its tourist appeal and fortifying the identity of its residents. In 2012, the design centre of Zamek Cieszyn and Cieszyn city hall founded the so called "Chamber of Cieszyn Master Artisans" (*Izba Cieszyńskich Mistrzów*). The place was opened at the workshop of the last Cieszyn gunsmith, Jerzy Wałga, and is meant to commemorate the achievements of the artisans who worked in Cieszyn not so long ago: people thanks to whom the history of the city and the region is so colourful and versatile. Gunsmithing (Jerzy Wałga is now the only person in Cieszyn who knows the tricks of this trade) of the "Cieszyn school" is inscribed on the Polish UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The place was designed by young designers from the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków. However, not many residents and tourists found it, as it was not sufficiently advertised outside the building and people were not encouraged to come in. Therefore, the next initiative of Zamek Cieszyn was to design a new information board next to the entrance of the building and to improve the look of the hall leading to the gunsmithing workshop. The works were undertaken by the local housing authorities (Zakład Budynków Miejskich). To make the sign, the designers used the motif of artisan tools and local materials (wood).

All that was shown in Zamek Cieszyn at the exhibition entitled "Design in Public Space. Change". It is a good example of the concept which formed the basis for the project: how local institutions can join their forces to change and improve the perception of the city at least on a small scale. A small workshop and slightly forgotten people have been reintroduced and returned to the col-

5. <http://www.etnodizajn.pl>

6. *Ibid*

7. <http://www.trafficdesign.prowly.com/>

8. <http://www.designalive.pl/nowe-szyldy-dla-rzemieslnikow/>

A garden full of flowers deriving from dowry chests in Kraków
© The Małopolska Thing, Ethnodesign Festival

The installations, made by designers and artisans, were located by the Vistula river
© The Małopolska Thing, Ethnodesign Festival



lective memory in a modern and attractive way, thus becoming a showpiece of the city, a place important not only to tourists but also to the artisans' families and the residents of Cieszyn, who have a chance to appreciate their own cultural heritage.

Translating tradition into modern context appropriate for the modern addressee is also the idea behind the Serfenta Association from Cieszyn. Unlike in the majority of the projects described here, the association was not founded by designers but by ethnologists. It is a fruit of their ethnographic fascination with the works of basket weavers from various regions of Poland. The founders of the association started their project by research trips and documentation and popularisation of the work of traditional basket makers living and working in Poland and in the neighbouring countries. Among others, their research resulted in several exhibitions and in the creation of a series of how-to videos entitled "Weave it yourself" presenting chosen traditional weaving techniques. Paulina Adamska-Malesza, a co-founder of Serfenta, continued the study of basketry with her friends (a few designers among them), going beyond its ethnographic significance and context. While doing their research, they took an interest in the living architecture movement, which had already become very popular in Western Europe. This trend in eco-architecture enabled them to transfer the craft techniques and skills to large-scale products for public spaces. Buildings and other objects made from living willow can decorate gardens and parks, but apart from their ornamental function, they are also useful. They can serve as playgrounds for children, shelters, fences, benches, or pavilions. Today, the living architecture has become a commercial enterprise for Paulina and her friends: they founded a social cooperative Parostatek, whose part is an entity called Żywa Architektura (which means precisely "living architecture"), offering "a unique mixture of garden art, craft, design, and architecture"⁹.

Their living pavilions and shelters can now be found in several Polish cities, including Cieszyn and, at the other side of the border, Český Těšín. One of their commissions was to create two ten-metre-high pavilions for OFF Festival

in Katowice, a popular Polish music festival, which wants to be perceived as a unique and ecological event. By treating crafts as a set of techniques, skills, and competences which can be of value in the modern world and by discovering the needs of the modern users of public space, the living architecture objects have become objects for sale. The traditional weaving techniques were used in a non-traditional way and thus found their place in the commercial free market.

The future of the cooperation between designers and artisans

All of the abovementioned examples prove that the cooperation between designers and artisans can be successful. Nevertheless, the actions are still taken on a small scale, mainly in the centres of larger cities or in cities where you can find institutions promoting this kind of approach, setting a good example, and initiating new projects (like in Cieszyn, or Gdynia, with its design centre and powerful community of designers). Those examples show how great opportunities can be found in the rich craft tradition as well as how inspiring and interesting it can be for the people who design new products and services and recreate the public space. Some of the Polish designers who draw from the handicraft tradition declare that they have great aspirations regarding the change of consumer habits and behaviours. The designers want to change the attitudes of the buyers and users by providing them with high-quality products which can be used for a long time, by promoting such products, and by highlighting the role of the author (craftsperson, designer, creator) who has put a lot of time, effort, and attention into the creation of such objects. That is the goal of the designers' activities which transfer crafts to the public space. They enhance the consumers' awareness concerning the importance of crafts in the development of society, they also strengthen the feeling of pride in how our family, neighbours, and fellow citizens contributed to the growth of cities.

Moreover, all the projects reflect the sense of responsibility assumed by the designers who want to change the reality and stay independent of mass-market production and the system

9. <http://www.designalive.pl/nowe-szyldy-dla-rzemieslnikow/>

fuelling global consumption. Many designers replace the authoritative style of designing with a role of coordinators cooperating with various specialists. Such attitudes and behaviours will surely never become large in scale and so they will not change the consumers in a radical manner. The products which are commercially attractive and—as this is still an important factor in Poland—do not exceed the purchasing capabilities of the Poles have the greatest chance to reach the collective consciousness of people.

However, all the initiatives which make us realise that the world's natural resources are growing short and all the projects respecting both the creator and the use, change our environment to some extent. Undoubtedly, they provoke to reflect on the patterns of our everyday behaviours. Polish designers manifest their enthusiasm and involvement, which makes it safe to assume that the revival of crafts through the designers' cooperation with artisans is in good progress.



The projects were the result of recreating traditional decorative patterns and artisan objects typical of the region of Malopolska © The Malopolska Thing. Ethnodesign Festival

Belgrade Design Week

From “100 Creative BDW Playgrounds for Children of Serbia” to the Grand Park of Kragujevac

By Vesna Jelovac, Jovan Jelovac, Aleksandru Vuja, Natasa Cica, Desanka Belancic

rsn

An innovative path towards private-public-people-networks partnership in the development of green areas in a non-EU country.

How to transform a periodic initiative into a continuing, sustainable and effective design process, counterbalancing missing institutional policies support? The project 100 creative BDW Playgrounds for Children of Serbia is an example of action led by the independent citizen's association Belgrade Design Week, who's original mission was the annual production of the leading design festival in South East Europe. Faced with a lack of organization of public authorities on this matter, the association decided to rely on its own resources—a network of international companies and experts, design methodologies, and the Human Cities_Challenging the City Scale European programme—to answer the emergency of upgrading the playgrounds in Serbia. As the approach initiated in 2014 received successful feedback, expanding in the city of Kragujevac, the methodology seems to pave the way for an innovative form of public space planning in Serbia.

After 10 years of Belgrade Design Week's editions (2005-2014), disappointed with the impossibility to extent a seven-day festival into a year-long project and Serbia's non-ability to create its own design institutions which would work continuously during the whole year, such as UK's Design Council, BDW has decided to shift its intentions to a more hands-on experience. After learning invaluable lessons from lectures, exhibitions and workshops by the

"Greatest Creative Minds Of The 21st century" from all over the world, connecting them and networking them with the local creative scene, we looked around and identified the most neglected and weakest members of our population—namely children, youth and seniors—who needed assistance in improving the quality of their everyday life by applying "design thinking".

In our search, BDW embraced the possibility to become part of the EU HUMAN CITIES/family, in order to sample and exchange the best "design thinking" methodologies from EU-wide partners, and promote it in a still non-EU country, with no significant design industry and no design institutions at all capable of being a leading guidance. Hoping that a new focus on such a prominent EU project may contribute to a wider acceptance of "design thinking" in the Serbian public, institutions and media, BDW paused its festival's editions from 2015 to 2018, with the vision to improve planning processes relating to quality of life in Serbia using "design thinking" as a tool. Following our mission to improve the built environment and facilitate citizen's participation in dialogue with the public sector, BDW investigated in particular the situation with public spaces and concluded that playgrounds for children and exercise grounds for seniors, often life threatening and closed by inspections, had been completely neglected.



From "100 Creative BDW Playgrounds for Children of Serbia" to the Grand Park of Kragujevac

As first step BDW launched a national PR campaign "100 Creative BDW Playgrounds for Children of Serbia", with the aim to build environments designed according to EU environmental and sustainability standards in as many municipalities and towns across Serbia as possible. We established collaboration between some of the best Serbian creatives in the fields of urban planning, architecture, innovation and design, with some of the leading international equipment manufacturers. The idea was that new, innovative playgrounds would be built on public land selected in cooperation with local municipalities, utilising a unique formula of public-private partnerships between local governments and private corporations, who donate the equipment and project, all strictly on a non-profit basis for all participants.

In the first two years of 2014 and 2015 BDW implemented the State of Art phase of the HUMAN CITIES/project. The goal was to test and build our own capacity to plan and manage, as an independent citizens' initiative, such projects of public-private partnerships on a satisfactory high level, and within an optimal time and budget framework, connecting the users-citizen, with donors, creatives and producers-construction companies. BDW conducted numerous surveys and analyses of the state of desolate playgrounds and city squares in Belgrade, as well as interviewed key stakeholders for the project from the administration of the City of Belgrade, all the way to numerous potential investors and partners from business, academia, media and other related independent citizen's initiatives.

In that process, BDW defined, for the first time in Serbia, the term of "destination" playgrounds and opened two innovative creative playgrounds at the, arguably, most prominent leisure location in Belgrade, the central Kalemegdan park at the confluence of the Sava and Danube river. This way, we set a highly visible benchmark for everyone who wanted to repeat the formula. The playgrounds were built in 2014 and 2015, with total areas of 800 m² and 2000 m² respectively, implementing successfully the first ever private/public partnerships in Serbia.

As next step, mixing the selected methodologies of Jan Gehl and the IDEO HCD TOOLKIT

for a successful participation of citizen in the process of urban regeneration, with our own lessons and experiences learnt from the first two Belgrade projects, BDW decided to embark on its most ambitious "participatory urbanism" project. To proof the point, the tailor-made project for the HUMAN CITIES/initiative was aimed not at Belgrade, but at Kragujevac, a most interesting post-industrial city in transition, deep in the heart of Serbia, with structural and regeneration problems akin in many respects to Saint-Étienne in France, as the former historical "weapons foundry of the nation".

The result of the process was the new project for the "Creative Park for Children and Seniors", that covers an area of about 10.000 square meters in the Grand Park of Kragujevac, with key financial and operational support by the "Dragica Nikolić" Foundation, the First Lady of Serbia's own charity, in cooperation with the City of Kragujevac, designed by Serbian creatives, build by local construction firms, with help of global equipment makers, planned and managed by BDW. On a greater scale, it was also the start of the process about the revitalisation of important historical green areas in Kragujevac, beginning with the central "Great Park".

The new concept for Kragujevac's most important park opens the doors for the development of the city's key green areas for at least the next ten years, both through public-private partnerships in the financing process, as well as with full participation of citizen in the decision-making process. This way the city boldly goes beyond the local, and signals a desire to assess the social responsibility of Kragujevac in the framework of European cities that belong to the HUMAN CITIES/project. As an ecosystem, the Grand Park is a rare urban tissue of park greenery maintained over one hundred years. What BDW did was to combine the best benefits of this heritage with the potential of new social interactions, a microclimate and emotional aspects that it generates with a new urban planning. The idea was to contribute to the general perception of "participative urbanism" as a focus point, around which we can gather our attention, assess our will for a better tomorrow, and present it as our contribution to the urban community gathered around the pan-European HUMAN CITIES/project.



From "100 Creative BDW Playgrounds for Children of Serbia" to the Grand Park of Kragujevac





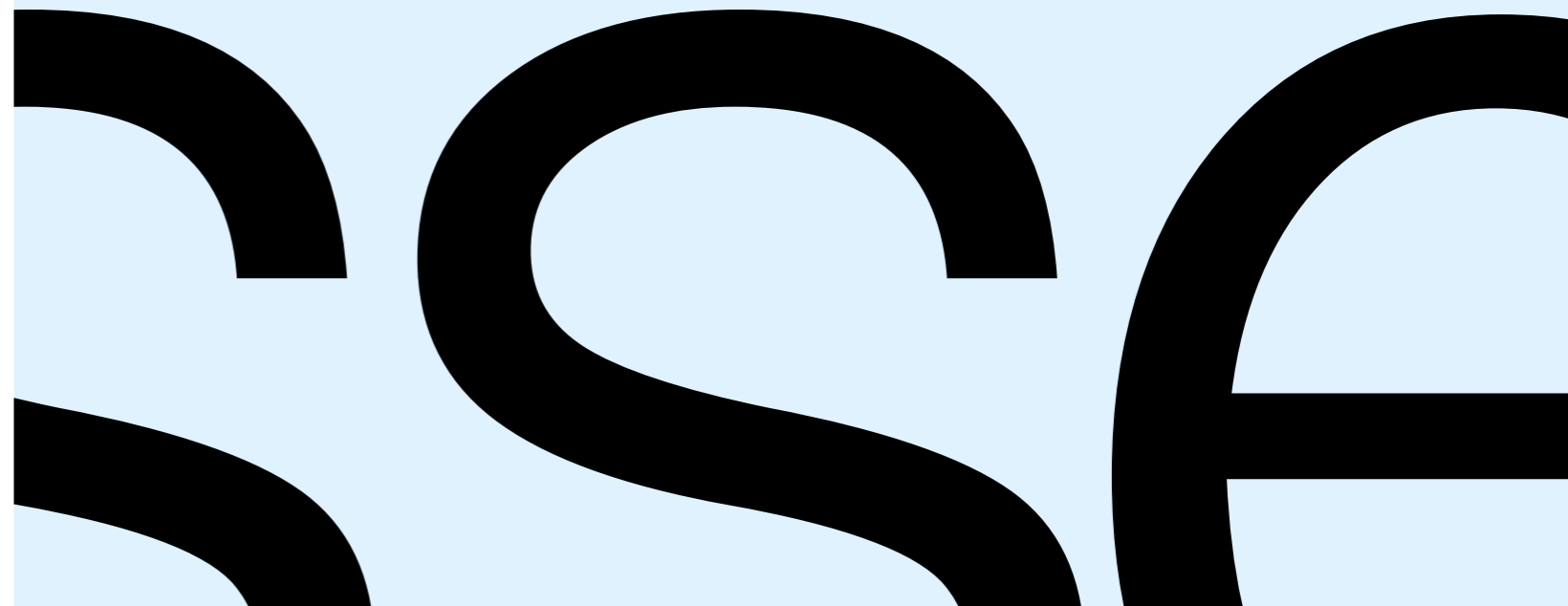
From "100 Creative BDW Playgrounds for Children of Serbia" to the Grand Park of Kragujevac



Saint-Gilles Esplanade
Urban Renewal Project
Brussels

From the Brussels Urban
Land to its Landscape
Stories

Interview of Bas Smets [Bureau Bas Smets]
By Lise Coirier [Pro Materia Association,
Brussels, Belgium]



Saint-Gilles Esplanade Urban Renewal Project Brussels

From the Brussels Urban Land to its Landscape Stories

Interview of Bas Smets [Bureau Bas Smets]
By Lise Coirier [Pro Materia Association,
Brussels, Belgium]

Lise Coirier: We are here in your studio in Brussels, rue de Flandre, in the center of Brussels. We are going to speak today about Human Cities, how do people change the city and how to scan flow space in Europe today, especially here for Brussels. What would be for you the DNA of the City of Brussels in terms of urban landscape and how do you work on the urban fabric in your various projects?

Bas Smets: It is interesting to talk about DNA when applied to Brussels because I think the main characteristic of the city is something that has been lost. Brussels lost its river that has been vaulted in the 19th century. And ever since, urban planners, landscape architects, artists are looking in a way to bring the lost city or the lost river back into the city. And same for us, when I started the office some years ago: looking at how to bring this value back into the city. The public authorities did recently a study on Brussels, on how to build up a vision for Brussels in the upcoming 20 years. We understood it's not the river but the tributaries and the secondary valleys which have brought the water towards the central river. Ever since, we've made this image and have applied it as an exemplary landscape, the best 'belongscape'.

[LC] Can we see this image?

[BS] Yes, you can see it, in Brussels, there is no more river. There is the canal, it is just behind the other side of the street and here you see all the tributaries which are the small waterways bringing the flow towards the central canal that drains water to Antwerp and then into the North Sea. And starting from this exemplary landscape or the best belongscape, you can actually understand the use of this map as a kind of reference to the different projects developed in Brussels. It is interesting to see that we actually use it both for big parks such as Tour and Taxis (12 hectares transformed into

a new park space). But we can also use it for the competition we did for reconnecting the Jardin Botanique to the North Station (Gare du Nord). We also apply it in Saint-Gilles Esplanade for the new central square, as well as for the competition of the South Station (Gare du Midi). In these four projects, my office has always been looking at enhancing the specific situation of Brussels being made up more of secondary valleys rather than a main river. Trying to find the new image for the City as a whole, speaking about the flows, the city has lost its river. We have to find a new way to organize the city, the flows, by projecting some 'imaginary mapping' onto the city.

Let's take the example of Paris, the Seine provides you with an automatic reference into the city because you know where you are. Boulevards and avenues are parallel or perpendicular to the Seine. Therefore, you can orientate yourself. In Brussels, on the contrary, most people who are visiting Brussels find it a difficult city. The idea of these eight tributaries have become a logic to me in order to give a new idea of the city and how to orientate yourself in the city fabric.

[LC] What will be your statement in very short about Brussels and potentially what it can offer?

[BS] Brussels offers a cityscape made of tributaries. Compared to Paris, the city which has one river and a centralized power system. Brussels has 19 municipalities and no main centralized power. 8 tributaries could be the image of 19 municipalities which means that they have to work together to make these 8 tributaries becoming one singular and powerful system.

[LC] You don't really see Brussels as one municipality but you look at the region, the new region that has been created in 1989 with the 19 districts.

[BS] And even for the region, I think that Brussels by definition is not a centralized city but actually a kind of network city where we have to find the new type of landscape which is not based on concentric growth but on connected links to the secondary nature. It's not a main nature but the secondary one which would be the most important.

[LC] And Brussels is mainly urban?

[BS] As much as Flanders, it's one urbanized endless city if you like between Brussels and Antwerp for example; it's just one urbanized area. So we have to look for a new way of giving the road to nature to the city fabric.

[LC] Is it due to the density?

[BS] Yes, because of the density. It's one of the highest populated areas in Western Europe. So we have to find a new way of bringing nature in.

[LC] Can you tell us a little bit more about the 'landscape stories' of Brussels?

[BS] Brussels is quite typical for most of the Belgians because we are in a city without a river, mountains or landscapes elements. We are looking for secondary details to be put together to create a network and a continuity. Every competition we do, we try to use it to make of course public spaces but also to give a meaning to the existing elements around it. I will later illustrate my thoughts with the two of the most extreme examples: Tour and Taxis park and Saint-Gilles Plaza.

[LC] But first, what is your methodology applied to an urban landscape?

[BS] It always starts with the reading of the territory to re-understand all the elements in place and how—by a kind of mental switch—we can certainly use elements to create another image, another use, another ecology, another climate in some case, another way of organizing and using the city fabrics. It's more like a scientific approach where you have a precise reading of existing elements. We try to understand how we can interact, implement a system and make sustainable changes. It's applicable to a landscape park at Tour & Taxis of 12 hectares but it's also true for a more human scale public space like the one we are doing now on Saint-Gilles Esplanade. This is a small space but a big picture. We are not only starting with a reading of the large scale but also a reading of the material from which the space is made up today to see how we can change it.

In Saint-Gilles, we have done a double reading—one of the territory and the other one of the larger scale. For example, it's interesting to see that there is a double system on Saint-Gilles Esplanade: its lines of the West flank of the river. So the river is gone but everything keeps the memory of the passage of the river. There is a double system, on one hand, the lines of the river, and on the other hand, there is a number of 19th century monuments, going from the prison to the city hall to the main round of the church and to the Porte de Hal. There is also a number of parks that actually reveals the slopes of the valleys of the Senne. The esplanade is actually lined right at the intersection of a park and these monuments. How can we reveal

this layout by using those differences in height to organize the use of the space? Today it's mainly bars and restaurants on two sides with outdoor terraces and, half of the week, there is the open market space. It's always a conflict between terraces and the bars!

[LC] We are entering in the most specific question of the multifunctionality of the space and the mix of functions. And also the story of people owning the space. How do you deal with it? With free space? Because you have to take into account many actors and flow spaces.

[BS] Yes, that is the reason why we propose a plan with large scales. Every bar opens space but it's not felt to be one plaza. If you are sitting on one bar, you are not sitting on another bar. No appropriation of the space. You never feel like you are in a plaza like in Italy. Because it's the fault of design. Design is an issue here. The design of the street is done with a number of trees, but it's not an avenue but a plaza, so they have to put back the idea of a plaza in here. First of all, the municipality decided to have a car free space, of course the parking space isn't necessary anymore. They tried for the last years and it worked very well, except now people are between parking spaces not used anymore and the terraces. It's a kind of misuse of the available space. So we decided that we cannot make a space unified as a whole by looking on how the market is organized. We have found out the number of bands, 5 of them can be used for half terraces on each side of the plaza. Half double terraces organize the market space in-between or even occupy the whole space. The 5 bands can also allow 'wild' terraces but they also mark the different uses of the spaces. And these bands are in final well designed to re-create the concept of the street in a very simple way to order the limits of the terraces.

[LC] And what have been the stage of the project? At which point you stand now in terms of the duration, conception and construction of the space? How is the process?

[BS] The typical process is first the competition, a year ago with a professional jury headed by the Mayor. We have developed further the projet by talking to all the different actors involved into the project.

[LC] Including the citizens?

[BS] First the professionals, then we organized in 2014 an exhibition and printed a flyer/poster to explain the design step by step. We have the model here at the office. This one was shown last fall to the public in presence of the mayor. It was a possibility to write some comments and raise some important questions. Some reactions were about the fact that we had to put some trees to keep a green face in different locations on the plaza. At the same occasion we explained the idea that we want to reuse the blue stones to re-design the flow on the esplanade. We told to people that we would cut and reuse the stones on the sidewalks. I like the image of the space with the reuse of existing elements.

[LC] That's part of your approach to try to reuse and to innovate with what already exist on the territory?

[BS] Absolutely.

[LC] That is also the way with Tour and Taxis?

[BS] Tour and Taxis is the reuse of the foundation. We reuse the gravel to create.

[LC] So for you the materiality of the space is very important, the tactility as well as the visual and aesthetic dimensions?

[BS] We work with materials, like naturals stones and trees. Of course it's not like Internet where you can create like you want. You have to keep the foundation.

[LC] What is the relationship to people; how people are engaged in the process of creation?

[BS] The moment on which we present a project, we know that the population is an important actor. For Saint-Gilles Esplanade, we have been doing different meetings for people who have bars, restaurants and market spaces. During these encounters, we made some consultations. Because they use the space, they need the space. That's why it's important to see how we can design it. Our research is only for achieving the best possible design.

[LC] Are you happy with this project? What are the the strengths and weaknesses?

[BS] The strength is a very clear organization of the use of such a big space in a natural way. The plaza will give the unity of the space. Today it's very cut up by the use of the different parts. We will reveal the 19th century facades. We will link the church to the plaza and to the square. We will try to activate the space with the market, terraces, open cinema, concerts... to create some volumes and real use of the living esplanade.

[LC] Will it become as an open air stage?

[BS] It will become like a theater which the idea that the city is a stage knowing that Brussels has so many bars and potential recreative spaces.

[LC] For Saint-Gilles Esplanade, what is your reference?

[BS] Sienna has its plaza which has been revealed. The plaza of Saint-Gilles is now really empty and that is why people living in Belgium likes Antwerp because of the fantastic and remarkable facades in this city. So we will create the same scenographic effect on Saint-Gilles Esplanade with its 19th century facades and a flow space only dedicated to recreative activities, the market place, the church and the pedestrians.

[LC] What could be the weaknesses?

[BS] The psychological consciousness and tensions could be a weakness. We have to make sure that everyone follows the same logic. For

instance, with the bus company we have to make sure that having smaller streets could not be a problem. We talk with people from the market to explain them how to organize the market and the flow space. Even if we are not directly activating the plaza, it was necessary to meet all the actors. Because public space is used by so many people, that is the reason why we have to talk with each other. That's the main part in our communication system. That's the key for a public space to communicate when and how we would like to organize and reveal the space.

[LC] How do you handle the informality of the space? How do you keep a good balance in the use of it?

[BS] That is the work of design. We try to be minimal but to maximize the multiple usage of the space.

[LC] What's the frame? How do you describe it? Where is the frontier of your project?

[BS] It was a very important decision to find the limits for the intervention in the public space. You can see it clearly in our drawings and 3D images.

[LC] What about the budget?

[BS] It's a low budget as usual. The idea to reuse the blue stones helps to reduce the budget. And the rest of the money allows to create a beautiful space.

[LC] Is it typical situation in Brussels to have access to a limited budget?

[BS] It's not only Brussels. For the public space in general, it's always necessary to reuse existing materials and to create quality with a low budget. It's more like a challenge.

[LC] Could you name some of the nice entrepreneurs in this process?

[BS] We work with the church to organize weddings and how to use the space in front the it. We always take into account their questions and try to explain them the steps of our decision making.

[LC] In this project, how would you evaluate the impact? How do you manage it?

[BS] We'd so many meetings with all the different partners. And everytime, again and again, we explained the project and answered their questions.

[LC] In Human Cities Project, we are sharing 13 values to measure flow space and positive impacts. What about Empathy?

[BS] Empathy was managed by the municipality. It wasn't my merite. The design follows all the decisions to give them a beautiful plaza.

[LC] What about comfort and well-being?

[BS] The well-being and the different uses of the space are present because people can meet, organize activities, in combination with the market. The market is important in a city because people doesn't need to go to a mall to get what they need. We enhance the contacts with the locals. That is the reason why this plaza is an important place.

[LC] Will the mobility be increased as well as the accessibility?

[BS] The mobility will increase with the pedestrian area. In terms of accessibility, we made mobility studies for achieving the best results.

[LC] Have you been like collaborating with associations?

[BS] Mostly through the consultations of the public. We talked with the people who are involved.

[LC] And what about the politicians?

[BS] The city council is present with us. For us, it's really important to have their support because you do that for them and for the citizens who live there.

[LC] What about aesthetics, intimacy, conviviality, imagination, leisure, sensoriality, solidarity and respect? How could you sum up these values within your project?

[BS] I think it's the job of an architect to try to organize the values in one strong design. It's like a mosaic, many elements have to be combined in one strong image.

[LC] I think that the project is quite singular knowing that you propose a reuse of materials with a high quality design.

[BS] The idea here is a strong simplicity and at the same time a possibility to find a new position in the urban space.

[LC] With the absence of trees on the plaza, how to punctuate the space?

[BS] Trees are really important. The problem is that there are couple of trees on the plaza but it looks like an oversize avenue. Taking away these trees and organizing them more in front the church is for us the best solution. Presence is there but we make more urban space.

[LC] And do you think it is good when everything is uniform today in a public space?

[BS] A frame is necessary for some uniformity. We design for the city and the public choses for its public space.

[LC] What's the plan for the construction phase?

[BS] It's always hard to speak about timing but it should be delivered in 2017.

[LC] Are you in love with Brussels? Do you like the city?

[BS] It's a difficult question because Brussels is a city in which we can do many things but at the same time it is a quite difficult one. Before improving the flow, we first look at the quality of public space. There is a lot to be done! With collaborations between associations, designers, artists, and the politics, we can even push more changes.

Aalto University,
Faculty of Architecture
Helsinki

Happy together vs.
melancholy of loneliness.
Disruptive practices on
community and privacy

By Antti Ahlava, Mia Hertsberg, Fernando Nieto, Jarmo Suominen & Pekka Tynkkynen

A large, bold, black graphic of the word "Disruptive" is positioned on the right side of the page. The letters are thick and stylized, with the 'D' and 'S' being particularly prominent. The word is partially cut off by the right edge of the page.



Aalto University,
Faculty of Architecture
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Happy together vs.
melancholy of loneliness.
Disruptive practices on
community and privacy

By Antti Ahlava, Mia Hertsberg, Fernando Nieto, Jarmo Suominen & Pekka Tynkkynen

This article handles key concepts of spatial urban development associated with the theory of participatory design from the point of view of the current Finnish architectural discourse. From our perspective, it is apparent that much of the concepts used in participatory design are already inherently part of contemporary architectural and urban design, even down to the legislative level. On the other hand, a problematic rises when concepts from one field are transmitted to another. Concepts find different meanings in different discourses. Thus communicating conceptual counterparts between discourses is seen as an important phase in an interdisciplinary project such as Human Cities.

Further this article makes first steps in identifying a current mainstream architectural aesthetic present in Finland, perhaps also the Nordic cultural area. Drawing comparisons from the well-known Helsinki School of Photography -movement, we call this current stylistic sensitivity its architectural parallel, Exit School of Architecture. From the perspective of this stylistic regime, stereotypical results of participatory architecture are seen as lacking local identity, often constitute of ad hoc constructions and a haphazard overall feel. Thus we seek to question the possibilities of creating a local Finnish/Nordic aesthetic and approach for a participatory project. Aalto University project Labs for Learners is examined as a potential future ground for experiments on implementing a new kind of participatory architecture in the form of a new kind of school concept.

This article will critically analyse the type of key concepts of spatial urban development associated with the theory of participatory design, including “participatory design” itself, “innovating with people”, “challenging design”, “design with people”, “design as a tool”, “human-driven design”, “human-based design”, “urban experiments in design”, “engaging design”, “co-creation in design”, “design change”, “empathy in design”, “wellbeing in design”, “conviviality in design”, “unplanned activities in design” and many more.

The focus of the Human Cities project (2014-2018) is to analyse, test and implement the process of engaging people in co-creating and challenging the city scale in Europe today. Underlying the project there is an assumption that “people” are the key to “design change” in a network society and to respond to the changes in physical and digital space. Through applied research and co-creation, Human Cities network appears as a continuous “human-driven” cultural programme questioning the position and status of people in relationship to their city and the dynamic cityscape.

This interdisciplinary and multicultural European partnership brings together designers, architects, urban planners, researchers, sociologists, philosophers, psychoanalysts, translators, artists, historians and art historians and bloggers. To go beyond planning practices on the urban territories, the partner cities research unplanned activities within a frame of interdisciplinary collaboration and thirteen values:

- EMPATHY
- WELLBEING
- SUSTAINABILITY
- INTIMACY
- CONVIVIALITY
- MOBILITY
- ACCESSIBILITY
- IMAGINATION
- LEISURE
- AESTHETICS
- SENSORIALITY
- SOLIDARITY
- RESPECT

In addition to these values, the research program emphasizes diversity and encouraging encounters of people. Many of these values are self-evident, useful and commonly shared within the variety of disciplines and their discourses, including sustainability, aesthetics, leisure and imagination. However, some of these terms do not have a tradition of usage within a discipline. For example, empathy, wellbeing and conviviality are not commonly used concepts in conventional architectural discourse. Because different disciplines and very often also their sub-genres have their own discourse, it might be a reason for misunderstandings, when one implies concepts and reasoning from a different discipline to another. For example, the new term "human-based" design has caused confusion amongst architects, for whom design has usually been conducted in collaboration with clients, and ment for people to use. Many concepts in contemporary design discourse derive from industrial design, where traditionally there has been an elemental relationship between a designer and an industrial company. In that kind of context, human or user-oriented design can actually be new.

A discourse analysis of participatory concepts

Before starting up with experimentations in the various cities involved into the network, it was decided to create a common ground to all the partners based on the State of the Art projects/programs/actions in the urban space. The project focuses on unplanned activities following the principles of social innovation as defined by Ezio Manzini (professor at Politecnico di Milano and manager of DESIS Network-Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability, and one of the mentors of the previous Human Cities projects). In order to create a common ground for interdisciplinary discourse and multi-professional urban development projects, it is crucial to have common understandings on key concepts and the feasibility of their usage.

Ezio Manzini states that "today, social innovation is as important, and maybe more important than, techno-scientific and business innovations. Because these social innovations tend to be grass roots efforts developed from the bottom up, the top needs to help cultivate them or risk crushing them. This danger exists because these grass-roots efforts are currently not recognized for their potential in quite the same way as are other, more established types of innovation"¹. Most of Manzini's core concepts are however already inherently part of today's architectural and urban design, often deeply enough to be part of legislation. Social innovation, when inserted into architectural and urban design processes, can be a source of misunderstandings, because architecture in itself is social innovation. Even the very common project management practices address an architect as a person, who assists the client in project development (and leads design development). Designing places for living and working is core social innovation, in other words, taking social innovation away from architecture is making it non-architecture—a place devoid of the social sphere of transactions is a non-lieu, a place for no one and nothing. It seems thus that a concept such as social innovation points more readily to items, products of industrial design for instance, that are born and act in surroundings that are, already, materialized social innovation, that is architecture—our built environment. Because of these differences in discourses, it is important to discuss what these different concepts could

1. Ezio Manzini, 'Service Design' [Lecture], http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_0jc7naMK78.

mean within different disciplines. It is however true that grass-roots efforts could be more readily and subtly involved in architectural and urban design processes. New methods, technologies and approaches ought to be developed in order to produce architecture that takes into account perhaps a broader understanding of the concept of a "client".

There are also other key differences between common terms in architectural design and other disciplines. One of them is "participator"—a term from social discourse, often phrased as "stakeholder" in more economic jargon. Both of these have traditionally been referred as project team members, clients or users in architecture, with slightly different meanings. "Participatory design"—referring to collaborative design methods utilizing a wide range of information from project participants can negotiate common aims in process. It requires an open mindset, social skills, and extrovert mentality from the project members. Social and economical terminologies have thus not only strongly entered architectural vocabulary, but also brought certain practical imperatives.

Helsinki and social governance

The field-specific meanings, which are crucial to Human Cities network and project, are part of the problematics of participatory governance of a city. This regime of discourses usually refers to empowering urban planning and design². In Finland, the planning and design of urban environments is governed by Building and Land-Use Law, which states that participatory processes are obligatory in official urban planning. The residents by and near an area, where official planning is intended, must be heard during the planning process. This is usually implemented so that planning officials arrange public discussion meetings during the development of master and city plans plan. The internet is used as a tool here increasingly as well. In addition to this, there are many voluntary participatory methods used in Finland, including Urban Design Management and other communicative and collaborative design methods, where the range of project participants has been expended to include others than only residents. Restricting participation to residents is often problematic in planning areas, which do

not have residents yet, are to be realised in far future or where most of the users of the area are other than residents.

An intensified version of participatory urban development in Finland is communal housing projects, where an association or just a group of people establishes a unit for developing a block or a building by themselves. These are also Finnish digital tools for enhancing public participation, including Soft GIS³, a map tool for gathering information about a site.

Participation has entered urban design and planning also through industrial designers and architects, who pursue so-called *service design* in urban projects and even within planning bureaus. As an extension to the capabilities of architects, Aalto University established a professorship for *service architecture*, implementing developed service design in new architectural production.

Bottom-up activities in Helsinki based on less regulation

In previous studies, we have analysed typical urban user-led events and spaces in Helsinki, including Restaurant Day, Cleaning Day and Kallio Movement. What is common for these events is their ability to exist despite of regulation. Restaurant Day and Kallio Day are based on people selling food or household objects to anybody without official regulation for a day. There is also Flow music festival, which occupies an unused power plant area for transient use despite of official planning regulations. At the moment the makers of this article are developing a new type of school in Helsinki region, freed from regulation concerning the physical premises of education. This experiment is part of our contribution to Human Cities project and called Labs for Learners. One important characteristic of this project is to invent creative uses for unused or poorly used space. Low use ratio can be an opportunity for urban activism.

Embedding design to life

Helsinki was World Design Capital in 2012. The theme of the year was "Open Helsinki—Embedding Design in Life". This presence of design in life has often been described through the objects people have in their homes—typ-

ically in Finland good quality respected design products from such companies as Iittala, Fiskars and Marimekko. This homeliness of design means nowadays in Helsinki as well low-key cultural events with design edge, such as Night of the Arts, when the city is filled with art and design related events and the public also often becomes a creator of art themselves. Also the WDC pavilion was namely a location for everyday events for the public. One symptom of the openness and closeness of design in Helsinki is the re-born "Mari Village" concept by the textile and fashion company Marimekko, entering the city centre with a great variety of pop-up type presences: kiosk-like shops, exhibition spaces, event spaces, moving saunas, etc.

Labs for Learners/School as a Service

The flexibility of regulations and putting emphasis on the user's ability to control their everyday life is at the bottom of our experiment called Labs for Learners. This is a project based on the idea of School as a Service. It belongs thematically to access economy, is sustainable, and advances diversity and the optimization of the use of space. The model is based on renting access, not space. Critical thinking is part of the project as well: during the project development stage of the project, the students are asked where they would like to learn and when. The school will use several locations on the Aalto University campus for its activities. This symbiosis also requires a behavioral change. Co-working will work not only in the level of design, but also implementation, when schoolchildren will collaborate with university staff and faculty. They participate creative processes on the campus, asking questions the students may not yet ask.

In this experiment, we collaborate with project participants in order to actually realize the new school in Otaniemi. As part of Human Cities project, we are going to concentrate on certain aspects of this co-school: the methods and implementation of:

- PARTICIPATION
- FACILITATION
- COMMUNICATION
- BRANDING
- PROTOTYPING
- POST-PRODUCTION
- REPORTING

Initially we find hotels as an interesting applicable reference and business model for a co-school. Hospitality business tends to have separated operator business from ownership. Who could the receptionist of a co-school be? When we are redefining the ecosystem around a space it is useful to start by mapping overlapping public uses of spaces.

These aims require an own identity for the co-school. Usually the spaces of participatory design and co-creation have cheap aesthetics of graphic colours, ad hoc constructions and they tend to become quite similar everywhere. Instead of this, we would like to support local identities and contextual differences in developing the co-school. A local adaptation is needed. We need to define what is flexibly open to contributions and what fixed.

Spaces are part of ideology in the sense of their expressivity, individualism, and experimentalism. There is a certain Nordic cultural ambience we found culturally cohesive and applicable here, as the basis of the co-creation of shared value. This is a holistic human background, which brings meaningfulness on existential level to also Finns: equality, quality, social realism, existentialism and experiential ambience.

The Nordic cultural heritage can be seen based on common features, themes, motifs, expressions, mentality and atmosphere—in a wide range of art forms from painting to moving images and sculpture to architecture and literature. It is related to the dynamics in a culture of pioneering democracy, equality and respect of individuality. This requires consideration of how to take into account introvert tendencies both in a design process and in actual design.

- POP-UP VS. LONG LASTING
- LOUD VS. SUBTLE
- FAST VS. SLOW
- COLONIAL VS. LOCAL
- APPEARING VS. EVOLUTIONARY
- ONE-OFF VS. SEVERAL ITERATIONS

Participatory processes and their end results tend to produce activities and environments, which do not match typical Nordic mentality as expressed in Nordic art. Co-design is usually open, social, extroverted, flashy. This is difficult in a culture, which is based on the cultivation of restricted expression.

This is the starting point of branding. We would like to develop means for empowering individuals also on the level of ideology: individualism and existentialism of architecture. Because between the mind of an individual and the society there are cultural myths and motifs, we will start by stereotyping cultural mentality, which is essential for identity.

We are interested in the question of what is architect's role in introducing participatory design to Nordic cultural stereotypes. In a similar manner as local art movements struggle with overwhelming global movements of art, the same applies to architecture: there are local differences. Everyone understands that such genres as impressionism or realism have spread all over the globe, while as the LA Fetish Polish Cool School from 1959 has not been that familiar amongst for example Lapland's artists. The ubiquitous expressionism has been famous up there instead. It is a common assumption that global cultural movements and globalization in general spreads homogenization. However Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri very convincingly argue in their book *Empire* (2000) that globalization is actually based on the production of local differences. This also means that there is a demand for local cultural movements to support global economy. One such cultural movement is Helsinki School of Photography, a branded line of photographic artworks by students and graduates stemming from Aalto University Department of Media.

Because of the linkage of architecture to its technical function of controlling environment, it is not always obvious that it has all the characteristics of an art form. However in a similar manner as an art painting can be separated from painting a house, architecture is

very different from mere building. If we consider architecture as an object of aesthetics, it is not only about such aesthetic categories as beauty or the sublime. We can see that the same artistic movements that become expressed in painting or photography, very often have their manifestations in parallel architecture as well. Art movements affect architecture through personal influence, but there are also local artist communities including architects. One example of that is Frank Gehry's position in the art scene of Los Angeles since the 1950's, combining the Santa Monica LA look of Larry Bell and John McCracken with the local collage art of Wallace Berman and Edward Kienholz from Ferus and Semina gallery communities in Topanga Canyon in his architecture.

Helsinki School of Photography

A local art movement can be one person at the beginning. This was the case when the rector of University of Art and Design Helsinki, Yrjö Sotamaa, asked Timothy Persons, an art curator from California to have a look at the unit of photography studies at UIAH at the end of 1990's. Persons followed the lectures and study courses of the program and concluded that if the quality and importance of the unit should be developed, it would require a place for exhibiting the works of students as well as investment in the facilities and equipment of the activities in order to professionalize the unit. With the help of Persons, the program established Gallery TaiK at the centre of Helsinki and Persons started curating the work of students. These exhibitions started also travelling to foreign art galleries and art fairs and rapidly formed the fame of Helsinki School of Photography.

Helsinki School of Photography consists of tens of photographers who have graduated from the school since c. 10 years now. This collection of artists naturally displays a wide array of subjects and characteristic expressions despite Person's curating. However, there are certain symptoms which are typical for Helsinki School of Photography: the theme of loneliness, seriousness, inertia, simplicity, symmetrical, central compositions, frontality without depth, patina, romanticism, the avoidance of sunlight and shadows, as well as a distinct pictorial odor & taste.

The gravity of Helsinki School of Photography certainly stems from the cultural associations of these photographs and their characteristics. There is Finnish art from other art forms, which fulfills the same descriptions. For example Aki Ollikainen's novel *Nälkävuosi* (2013) is very Helsinki School-esque in its Spartan romanticism. Kaija Saariaho's atonal music is core Helsinki School, as well as the general enthusiasm with Metal music in the country. Susanne Gottberg's black and white paintings share the Helsinki School mentality as well as the serious modernist industrial design by Harri Koskinen. Perhaps the widest source of Helsinki School type interdisciplinary affinity comes from contemporary Finnish cinema: Aki Kaurismäki's ascetic working class romanticism, Aku Louhimies' suburban depictions of domestic violence, as well as the social realism of Aleksí Salmenperä and Antti Heikki Pesonen. Eija-Liisa Ahtila's odd art films could also be seen belonging to this genre.

Exit School of Architecture

Our experimental thought is this: how would Helsinki School of Photography appear if it was about architectural creation? Which kind of architecture could be called "Helsinki School of Architecture"? Maybe this is already existing? Which could the exemplary works of architecture in this genre be? We think that it should be simple, simultaneously bohemian and Spartan, romantic and ascetic. It could be called almost sacral, but it can also depict everyday life in a mood of sacredness. It should preferably be colourless, but it can never be mediocre. The images showing Helsinki School of Architecture should deliver a feeling of loneliness likewise with the photography movement.

The fact that it is possible to think manifestations of the same aspirations in photography and architecture tell not only about darker cultural capital in our country, but it tells also about a possible common Nordic heritage. What else is the work of August Strindberg, Ingmar Bergman and Henrik Ibsen, than manifestations of a common Nordic mentality of Helsinki School type of life mentality.

There are some contemporary architectural works where the "Helsinki School" mentality

is stronger than elsewhere. JKMM's Seinäjoki Library with its gloomy concrete boxes and crisp cuts of space feels very "Helsinki School", as well as for example the recent diploma work from Aalto University's Department of Architecture by Luis Guillermo González Torices for the Ecumenical Monastery in South Karelia.

Identifying and communicating a new participatory style

We have now made some first steps identifying the apparent modern Nordic heritage in arts and questioned its presence in contemporary Finnish architecture. First of all this means we might actually be in the midst of defining an architectural style that has been developing during the past 10-15 years or so and has thus far been unnamed and largely unnoticed, or at least has enjoyed very little analytic effort in the architectural discourse. Whether this architectural sensitivity we identify as the "Helsinki School" is actually still only developing or rather turning to something else already at this point, is of course, quite unknown to us. More than attempting to wrap up a stylistic movement we are perhaps just trying to get a grasp of what seems to currently be a noticeable stylistic pattern. One might even talk about a Helsinkian, Finnish, Nordic architectural mainstream, a stylistic approach that seems to convince a majority of actors in the field, from critics to investors to academia. Perhaps it does this by both its imminent "coolness" and "naturalness", both of which essentially are values hinting towards "good life", "nordic quality", and "uniqueness". Out of these, coolness encompasses a more urban and social side while naturalness, its counterpart, comes from the supposed Nordic or Finnish inner landscape of tranquility and near mythological human/nature relation.

Looking at the stereotypical co-creation produced architecture from the point of view of "Helsinki School of Architecture", much of it seems rather haphazard, devoid of tranquility, myth, ancestral roots, too colorful, too social and too ephemeral. Pop-up shops, temporary installations, urban workshops, DIY saunas, and other urban happy places born from urban activism, spontaneity, perhaps different manifestations of downshifting etc., generally share a common architectural language that

seems to come from something like a less unhappy, "everything turned out OK"-version of Mad Max. Could this be because when co-creating architecture in a participatory context, the design process is often very quick, stylistic or artistic goals are hardly ever given much emphasis, budgeting falls in the DIY segment and the whole project generally tends to follow a kind of grass root level democracy type of narrative?

Is it then possible for a "Helsinki School of Architecture" sensitivity to be injected into the DNA of a participatory design project? Certainly this must not only be an extra layer of gloom onto an otherwise socially laid back and reckless architecture. The communication of a certain type of sensitivity should perhaps be attempted to the core of the whole design process. Assuming that possibly any Finnish or Nordic citizen potentially participating in a design process would possess some inherent information about how to make something with a sacred feeling might be too farfetched, but essentially we might just be talking about a cultural imagery recognizable to most people having spent their lives in the Finnish cultural

environment. The imagery of Helsinki School of Photography perhaps never entirely appealed to large masses in Finland, but it certainly carries a common stylistic language that can be seen adopted even to contemporary Finnish produced TV commercials. Further of course this stylistic taste that lives in Helsinki School of Photography has roots in much earlier and well-known oeuvres of Finnish art and popular culture. Thus it is fair to say that we are handling an already vastly communicated and familiar cultural "feeling". To unearth and crystallize this aesthetic from the mental imagery of any participatory designer is thus the way to start creating a co-created simulation of "Helsinki School of Architecture".

Based on this theme, we at Aalto University have produced an exhibition called Exit School of Architecture, which does not aim at competing with the brand of Helsinki School of Photography. The word "exit" refers to a detachment both from normative, main stream architecture to a more existential creation, and from urbanism to nature. We are also planning to turn this project into a book.

FH JOANNEUM
Graz

Between Bottom-up
and Top-down.
An Approach

By Anke Strittmatter

rsz

The pressure on public space has been increasing in recent years. Inner cities in particular are becoming progressively "eventised"; a phenomenon that can also be observed in the city of Graz, with activities of a purely promotional character being held in addition to traditional events, such as Christmas or Easter markets, carnival parades or demonstrations. One of these promotional activities was "Pole Position Graz" where virtually all of the inner city was blocked off for a racing-or rather advertising-event for Red Bull. There is also less conspicuous appropriation of public space, with al fresco restaurants, for example, spreading out into squares and streets.

Given the growing privatisation of public space and the blatant lack of consumption-free, open urban areas that are available to everyone any time, many citizens share a growing desire to have a say in the development of their city or their neighbourhood. They wish to exercise a determining influence without delay, as the implementation of projects by municipal planning offices often involves lengthy processes. We are talking here of a strategic appropriation of public space by individuals or groups. Such interventions can certainly lead to long-term plans; but they are primarily an initial spark that creates awareness of the potential for change and the benefits it may entail.

This is also the central approach taken by the European research project Human Cities_ Challenging the City Scale within the Creative Europe programme. "*People are the key to design change in a network society and to respond to the growth of 'flow space', which is both physical and digital*"¹.

Reference is made here to the flow space concept developed by Manuel Castells. "*The 'space of flows' the concept I advocated a decade ago, represents the material arrangements that allow for simultaneity of social practices without territorial contiguity. (...) The geography of the new history will not be made of the separation between places and flows, but out of the interface between places and flows and between cultures and social interests, both in the space of flows and in the space of places*"².

Top-down town planning, i.e. the conventional approach to urban planning, is certainly still justified in cases of technical/infrastructural issues. The supply of infrastructure or the disposal of waste water and refuse, for example; or the legal implementation of concepts and construction. In Austria, the proportion of spatial and urban planning that is not determined by particular, individual interests is generally rather small.

1. From the mission statement: *Human Cities. Challenging the city scale*

2. M. Castells. *Grassrooting the Space of Flows*. In *Urban Geography*, 1999, pp. 294-302

However, there is a growing belief—especially in the field of traffic planning, an area where individual interests can differ widely—that the expertise of empowered citizens can and should be used through participatory projects. Public open space, i.e. parks, streets and squares, lend themselves as a space of possibilities for citizens.

Three projects of Graz presented in the first part of the book have been selected for in-depth analysis with regard to their position between bottom-up and top-down. The analysis involved interviews with the main actors in these projects to discover: To what extent do we act independently? How many constraints imposed by authorities do we encounter in terms of licences, but also financing? How much can be achieved exclusively through citizens' initiatives and how much through respective subsidies from public authorities? How do we develop projects that are not subsidised, how much money is attributed to which project and how do these structures take on a life of their own? Where do the projects rank between the poles of bottom-up and top-down and where are their limitations?

This in-depth review focuses on *Demo Graz ya!*, a project carried out by *Iconoclasistas*. Reni Hofmüller, director of *ESC medien kunst* labor gave a video interview and shared with us the genesis and effect of this project about collective mapping. *Collective mapping* is a tool that allows the generation of a collective understanding of a certain space [Figs. 1-2]. The other interviewees were Michael Wrentschur³ and Erika Thümmel⁴.

Who were the initiators?

Veronika Kaup-Hasler, director of the *steirischer herbst festival*⁵, met graphic designer Pablo Ares and sociologist Julia Risler of *Iconoclasistas* on one of her trips through Argentina. Free software is as important to *Iconoclasistas* as to the members of ESC and this is where Reni Hofmüller comes in. She was asked to curate a project with *Iconoclasistas* for the 2012 edition of *steirischer herbst* and to exhibit the outcome of the project at the premises of ESC.



Collective mapping in the community gardens. Sketch made by Erika Thümmel during the video interview with Reni Hofmüller.

Collective mapping requires a group of people sharing the same concern or question about a specific location. In the case of *Demo Graz ya!* Reni Hofmüller contacted Graz-based artists and sociologists and asked them to first clarify which relevant questions these could be and to what extent the art scene can create room for discussion or possibilities for implementation. From the beginning, Reni Hofmüller wanted to adopt a transdisciplinary approach to her research, "because the city is such a heterogeneous and intersectional space that it is much more exciting if I try to bring different people with different perspectives together"⁶.

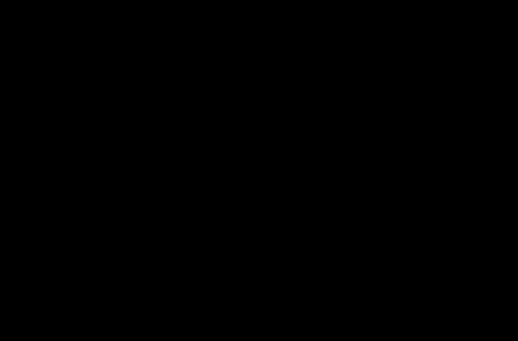
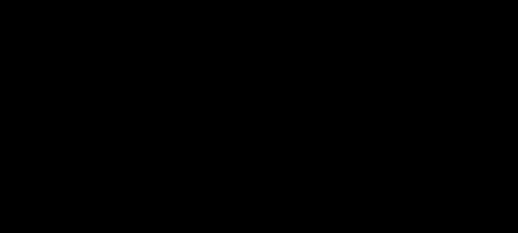
Four topics were identified; the focus of this paper will be mainly on the community garden project⁷ [Figs. 1-2].

What were the objectives in terms of bottom-up?

Reni Hofmüller interprets bottom-up as follows: A group of people living, for example, in the same street who are faced with the same issues or problems. Collective mapping can be very helpful here because it is conducive to the discussion process.

She is, however, not altogether happy with the term "bottom". "How do we define bottom? Who is bottom and when are you bottom? Depending on the current situation, I will be somewhere between bottom and top. Bottom may not be such a good term in general; after all who wants to be at the bottom? I think if we want to use this analogy, bottom-up really means self-organising groups. Community gardens as such are bottom, and find forms of organising themselves."⁸

3. Michael Wrentschur of *interACT*, Werkstatt für Theater und Soziokultur explained the participatory art project *Zusammensetzung. Mit Abstimmung*. Together with passers-by, possible modes of handling conflicts in public space were explored in the squares of Graz [Figs. 3-5].
4. Erika Thümmel is a member of the *Jakominierviertel association*. She described various efforts adopted by the Municipality of Graz and businesses in the Jakomini quarter in recent years to counteract the vacancies in this district of Graz. [Figs. 6-9]
5. *Steirischer herbst* is an annual international festival for contemporary art that takes place in autumn (Herbst) in Styria. The central focus of *steirischer herbst* is to link various disciplines of art (theatre, visual art, film, literature, dance, music, architecture, performance art, new media and theory). It is a multi-disciplinary or omni-disciplinary festival and sees itself also as a "producing festival".
6. From: video interview with Reni Hofmüller of 19.08.2015
7. Other issues and places were: Open/public space. Who are the users?, The visible/unvisible: Gentrification of the Lendplatz, Self organized cultural practises in the city. Who owns the land? A survey on the functioning of community gardens.
8. From video interview with Reni Hofmüller of 19.08.2015



Collecting Mapping

Collective mapping requires a group of people sharing the same concern or question about a specific location. The first step in a workshop on *collective mapping* is an explanation of the method, the tool.

The central theme of the workshop on *collective mapping* was the collection of all of the information that the participants find noteworthy. Based on this input, icons are developed that can be placed on the map. The final product may be the edited map, or a fine-drawing, or a print version or a pdf file. What is decisive is that the map is merely part of the process. The actual product/outcome is the discussion among the participants and the networking that results between them.

Fig. 1, 2: *Collective mapping*, *Iconoclasistas*, Niesenberg community garden in Graz, Pablo Ares, 2012. Licensed by: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

The icons were developed in cooperation with graphic designer Pablo Ares of *Iconoclasistas*.



Passers-by

Passers-by and members of *interACT* discuss possible ways of handling conflicts in public space. Venue: Schloßbergplatz square.

Passers-by are invited to sit down at a table designed by artist Markus Wilfling and to share a cup of tea and a talk. Wilfling designed the table in a way that symbolizes openness and dynamism. Thanks to the dimensions of the table people can conveniently engage in conversation with the persons sitting opposite or turn around and talk to the people sitting behind them.

Fig. 3, 4, 5: *Zusammensetzung. Mit Abstimmung*. Schloßbergplatz Graz 2014. *interACT*. Photograph@Wolfgang Rappel

Cards are used to vote on the sense and nonsense of strategies.



Jakoministraße

Jakoministraße used to be a thriving, flourishing street in the city centre of Graz, close to a traffic hub. It connects the city centre with the Graz Exhibition Grounds and the Stadthalle event centre and is frequented often by tourists who either walk along the street or take the tramway. Since vacant premises and empty shop windows do not give a good impression of a city, the Department of Tourism and Economics decided to become active and together with Creative Industries Styria put the focus of its initiative on the creative sector.

The structure of the *Jakomini pilot project* included three levels: rent subsidies for designers who wanted to open their studios in one of the empty spaces, a so-called "visual frame" to distinguish the project area, and the coordination of the whole project.

Ready, Steady, Go! was the result of a competition of 28 designers. When the winning project was presented during the annual "Design Month" festival in 2010, it provoked a huge media response not only in Graz but also internationally.

↑ Fig. 6: Empty shops in the Jakoministraße, 2009, Photograph@Erika T

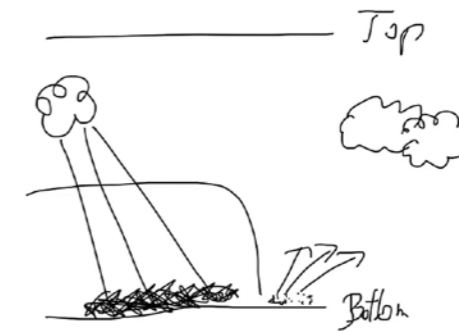
↑ Fig. 7: *Ready, Steady, Go!* The red running track realised by architects Sandra Janser and Elisabeth Koller, 2010, Photograph @Jasmin Schuller

The Verein *Jakominiviertel* association (www.jakominiviertel.at) was founded in the wake of the *Jakomini* pilot project in 2014. The businesses in the quarter wish to continue and expedite the activities with the aim of organising joint projects and providing mutual support in the handling of events and orders.

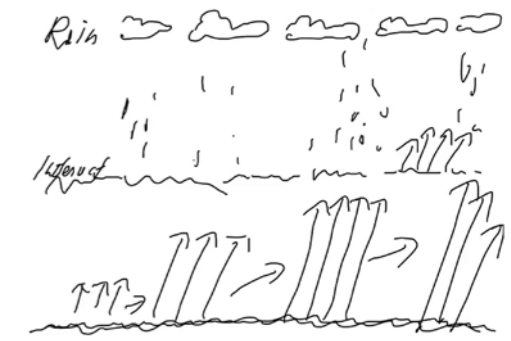
While the situation of *Jakoministraße* has improved, there are still empty shops. In the 2015 summer term, Exhibition Design master students of Joanneum University of Applied Sciences took stock of the situation and analysed 17 aspects of the urban everyday life in the quarter. The outcome was then presented in one of the empty shops, and a catalogue of the exhibition

↑ Fig. 8: City councillor Gerhard Rüscher talking to entrepreneurs in the quarter in one of the workshops organised by Raimund Gamerith, 2013, Photograph ©Jasmin Schuller

↑ Fig. 9: Situation *Jakoministraße* 2015, Photograph@Anke Strittmatter



Position of the *Demo Graz Yo!* project between bottom-up and top-down. Sketch made by Erika Thümmel during the video interview with Reni Hofmüller.



Position of the project *Zusammensetzung*. Mit *Abstimmung of interACT* between bottom-up and top-down. Sketch made by Erika Thümmel during the video interview with Reni Hofmüller.

The central theme of a workshop on *collective mapping* is the collection of all of the information that the participants find noteworthy. This information is written down on a large map, and based on this input, icons are developed that can be placed on the map⁹.

What is essential here is that the map is only part of the process. The actual product is the discussion among the participants and the networking that results between them.

The dialogues that emerged for the community gardens included statements such as "*Great, you've found a solution for the waste water issue,*" or "*Cool, you have a bus. Can we rent it?*"¹⁰ For Hofmüller, it is important that the focus is on the participants' reflections on the environment in which they move. It is not about achieving rapid results or about promising that the results will automatically lead to improvement.

According to Hofmüller, the method of collective mapping was a successful approach to the topic of community gardens. "*In this case, the tool was luckily of a kind that they (the participants) could really use. They were neither instrumentalised nor manipulated, which I believe is very important. And their time was not wasted either*"¹¹.

Hofmüller also takes a critical stance towards the term "participation", although she appreciates that there are people who concern themselves with things that are not right and

try to find alternatives. "*There are people who stand up and advocate something, but in most cases the something is actually a somebody; usually a group of people deemed to be discriminated against. I don't know, but there is always this distance between US and THE OTHERS*"¹². Hofmüller makes a case for "complicity" – meaning above all the absence of any hierarchy between the actors involved.

What was the timeframe and what does it tell us about the sustainability of the project?

For Reni Hofmüller it is important to emphasise that such projects above all require time. It was some nine months from the first phase of communication to the implementation of the activities in public space. The activities themselves took about one week. The results were then prepared over another week and exhibited for two weeks at ECS during the *steirischer herbst* festival. Hofmüller believes that the project's sustainability is demonstrated by the fact that they are still receiving inquiries about how to use the method of collective mapping. The map created for the community gardens was put up in a garden shed and used and edited for another two years.

Hofmüller notes that she was positively surprised when members of the community gardens of Graz actually started to exchange views in the first place; this was something they had never thought of doing before. "*Even if there are no concrete results in terms of a process of*

9. The final product may be the edited plan, or a fine-drawing, or a print version or a pdf file that is made available online for further use.

10- From: video interview with Reni Hofmüller of 19.08.2015

change, one can say that relations can develop if the encounters were positive. And these relations will then make it possible for things to happen. Whether they will happen nobody knows¹³".

Hofmüller is very much in favour of making individual initiative the top priority. She considers it to be the most essential aspect, but also thinks that it makes a lot of sense if interested people can consult people like her who have many years of experience in this field. She could imagine offering a "how to", a sort of guideline on how to approach similar projects, e.g. whom to contact, when to contact them and how. Again, she makes it clear that projects of this kind take time. "Things like this cannot be conjured up within a week, over a weekend or even an evening. At the outset, I know that it will take as long as it will take."

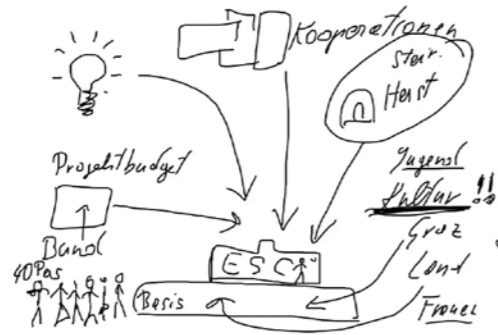
How was the project financed?

ESC is managed by a small team of two working part time and two people each working 10 hours a week, plus some freelancers hired for light or computer engineering tasks as required.

ESC receives some basic financing through multi-annual contracts with the Cultural Office of Graz and the Cultural Department of the Province of Styria. In addition, there is project-specific funding from the federal level, in some cases for the annual programme too.

ESC is very well networked with other organisations. This networking mainly involves the exchange of know-how in implementing projects simply and at low cost. This is very important to Hofmüller, who is convinced that sustainability and saving resources should also mean using good materials and avoiding exploitation.

In the case of collective mapping, there is also volunteer work provided by members of the community gardens who give their time and networks.



Financing of Demo Graz ya! Sketch made by Erika Thümmel during the video interview with Reni Hofmüller

Conclusion

The in-depth analysis of the Graz "State of the Art" projects showed that none of these projects was initiated by citizens alone. In two cases, the initiative was triggered by people from the art scene who provided the impetus. The Jakominiertel pilot project was even a top-down project that—at least initially—received good infrastructural and financial support from the public domain which made it possible for young creative people to set up in the vacant premises. Their experience in the development and implementation of ideas and concepts then led to many small-scale bottom-up activities.

As far as the connection between sustainability and financing of the examined projects are concerned, all interviewees agree that such projects will only be viable in the long term if there is regular new impetus. Reliable, stable funding is not the only factor, but it is important.

Projects could easily peter out if there is a lack of support. "Without funding it would be very difficult¹⁴" says Michael Wrentschur. Financing requests, however, are becoming ever more complex and consume time and energy. All the people interviewed agree that the procedure could be designed in a way that saves resource much more effectively. Erika Thümmel thinks applications covering more than two pages are unnecessary and calls the current method a "waste of public capital¹⁵".

Erika Thümmel and Michael Wrentschur agree that two factors are essential for the success of sustainable projects in this sector. Firstly a place, a point of contact, with the necessary infrastructure; and secondly, a contact person. In the case of the Jakomini district and the problem of vacant premises, this would be a small office staffed for a few hours at least. The office could also be used by creative artists as a shared space. For Thümmel it is important that there is a person who takes care of the coordination of the many activities in the quarter. People who run shops or organise workshops and the people living in the quarter need a go-to person, and they expect this person to pro-actively encourage networking between all actors. Financial support should also include a budget for activities in the district, Thümmel

says, to make flea markets or the staging of empty shop windows possible.

According to Wrentschur, the participative theatre work of *interACT* also requires a contact person in addition to the basic infrastructure. This person should be qualified to accompany the processes "without wanting to influence their outcome¹⁶", Wrentschur says.

All the people interviewed agree that voluntary work is needed and desirable, because the stakeholders will then identify with the activities and be ready to assume responsibility for their success.

At the same time they are also convinced that without the input of the public domain it will be very difficult for such projects to be successful in the long term.

14. From video interview with Reni Hofmüller of 19.08.2015

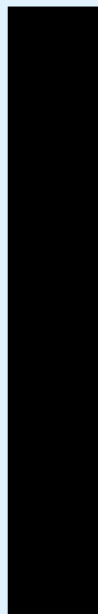
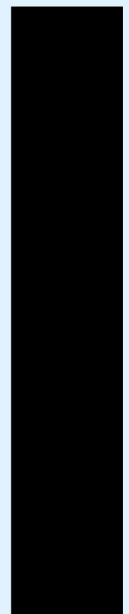
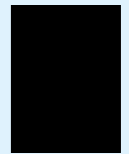
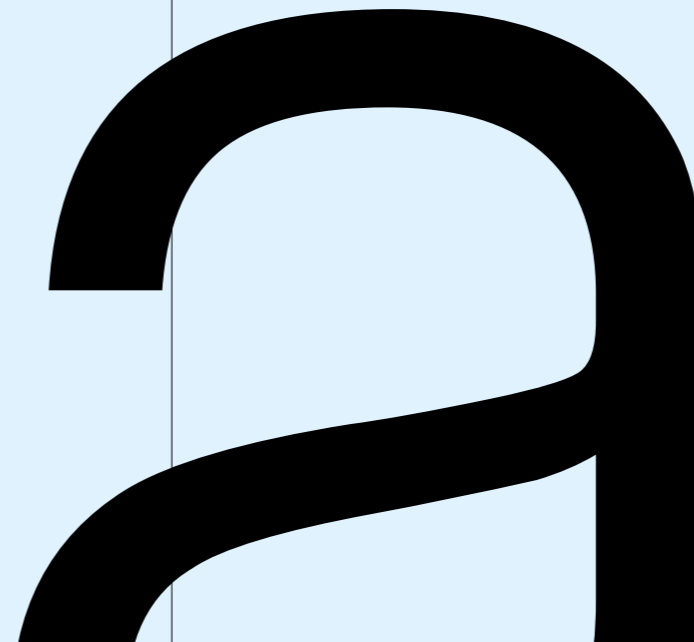
15. From: video interview with Michael

16. Wrentschur and Erika Thümmel of 24.08.2015

Estonian Association
of designers
Tallinn

Cities For All, Tallin
For All

By Llona Gurjanova



Foreword

Many of us have found ourselves cursing aloud when:

- Your wheeled suitcase gets stuck in the holes in the pavement or you cannot cross the street when looking for a hotel or when the metro does not have an escalator.
- The elevator is not working or you cannot fit into it with your big bags.
- You are lost in a foreign city – you cannot find the hotel, bus stops, etc.
- You accidentally take the bus which goes to the opposite direction and miss your plane because of it
- "Thanks" to an inefficient sign system, you find yourself in the wrong airport.

Furthermore, what should a conference guest in a wheelchair feel when he is not able to get to the city centre from the airport within 24 hours and cannot give his presentation because of that?

Who do you blame? Yourself? That would be the case if you believed that we need to change our behaviour based on the circumstances.

Grounds for change

Product and service developers and architects should be able to immediately react to the changes which occur in the world and predict their possible consequences. The designers, architects and urban planners have the responsibility for creating an environment where both a mother with a stroller and an overweight person would feel good.

But what is happening in the real world? Design concentrates on the traditional mainstream and on the young, healthy, right-handed, technology savvy, wealthy male who belongs to the race and culture which is predominant in the area. Even though older people constitute the majority of the market and people over the age of 55 have managed to save a considerable amount of money, they as consumers are ignored.

The changes in the society are usually caused by the technology and the market forces, where the products, production capacity and the image of the brand play an important role. Lately, the user with its needs and peculiarities has started to influence these processes. We might say that the era of social innovation and design

has arrived. In addition to globalisation, digitalising and the immaterialisation of the industry, the worldwide trends of this century also include demographic changes and predominantly the gradual aging of the society. It has been estimated that by the year 2025, there will be approximately 113.5 million citizens who are over the age of 65 living in the European Union.

If we do not think about our retirement now and how we, or those close to us, could lead a fulfilling life after, for example, fracturing a hip or suffering from paralysis, then when will we? According to statistics, every fourth person in the ten new EU member states suffers from some form of disability. A disability does not necessarily include a wheelchair, it can also be sensory, physical or cognitive. Thus, diabetes, short-sightedness and colour blindness are also disabilities.

Nowadays people want to travel and the same applies also to the elderly and the disabled people. As the life expectancy is rising, the number of travelling elderly people is constantly increasing.

Tourism is one of the leading global industries which characterised by a high employment rate and fierce competition. Should the travellers be lured with history, culture, entertainment or convenient travelling? High level of service and product design guarantees convenient travelling—a flawless information system, a well-designed and communicated traffic system, easily operable ticket machines, access to transportation and buildings for people with special needs, hotels which take people's wishes into account, free wifi, taking the needs of children and older people into consideration, etc.

According to the European Commission, all environments, products, services and user interfaces have to be accessible and usable for people of all ages and with disabilities in all situations. *"When you are designing for the young, you discard the old. If you design for the old, you also take the young into the account,"* said the renowned medicine professor Bernard Isaacs once. "Design for All" is a way of thinking which positions the human being into the centre of the problem and takes all kinds of different and unexpected points of view based on the needs of different people into consideration when finding a solution.

Many people might feel left out because they might feel that we are only concentrating on the needs of disabled people. The popular prejudice seems to be that universal design is just a buzzword, it is expensive, bothersome, inaeesthetic, aimed at older people, can be applied to physical objects only and regards only services provided by the public sector. However, if you think about it, it is actually the other way around. It is not expensive if users are involved in the design process from the start. It is innovative because it presents a greater challenge for the designers and the architects. And it is aimed at all of us because none of us can be sure that we will not be in a wheelchair tomorrow.

Even though automatically opening doors, ramps and packaging aimed at people who suffer from arthritis are designed for people with special needs, they have also become the favourites of the so-called normal people. Tourists with wheeled suitcases and mothers with strollers are also grateful for the ramps. None of us wants to spend more than a few seconds on opening a wrapper and everyone wishes that learning to use your new phone would be a pleasure rather than an ordeal. A questionnaire which was conducted in the UK revealed that more than 85% of people struggle with that...

Design plays an important part in changing the human environment which can help to improve the quality of life in a city and influence the behavioural patterns of its inhabitants. Design is seen as way of finding solutions to the problems. While developing a comprehensive transportation system solution, you cannot get by without an engineer and a designer—low-floor buses, trams, easily accessible bus stops which include all the necessary information, ticket machines which are installed at a suitable height, easily readable maps, simple and clear traffic systems and signs. Design can help to boost profits by increasing the number of visitors, making the whole system more functional, attractive and safe and helping to raise people's respect and sense of responsibility towards public property—clearly everyone benefits from making the most of the urban space!

"In September 2010, a small group of enterprising individuals launched an ambitious project in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia. The aim was to

publicise methods and illustrate practices to make the city a better place to live, work and visit for everybody. Human diversity in practice. At last, a touch of reality in this grey world of standardisation and conformity! The method used is Design for All, the guilty parties are the Estonian Association of Designers, aided and abetted by other nefarious institutions in Tallinn, as well as the notorious School of Design from Saint-Étienne, France, and with the support of EIDD—Design for All Europe.

Suitably, the project was geared to take place during Tallinn's period as European Capital of Culture in 2011. Suitably, because design is perhaps the pre-eminent tool for ensuring that culture pays its way... and that is something that culture has to learn to do very quickly indeed in today's rapidly collapsing economic climate. To tell the truth, it is not the first time that Design for All has found a welcoming niche in a European Capital Culture agenda—that also happened in Vilnius in 2009 (Is it in the Baltic DNA to be more open and innovative, or are the others just pathologically behind the times?). But this is the first time that the project has lasted for a full year. Of course, it does not lead to nirvana immediately—Rome was not built in a day and neither was social inclusion. But the milestone is here for all to see.

Now is the time to celebrate Tallinn's achievements because tomorrow we start setting and aiming for new goals."—Pete Kercher, EIDD Design For All Europe, September 2011

Research

In 2010, the Estonian Association of Designers launched the project "Cities for All—Tallinn for All", which is part of the international IF... Innovation Festival programme, in order to make Tallinn a more user-friendly city. The aim of the project was to get tangible results for making the city more accessible and convenient through practical experiments and social inclusion. This is the only way for providing practical schooling for students, drawing the attention of the public and the opinion-formers to certain shortcomings in the urban environment and to the Design for All" methodology which aims to promote the application of the principles of good design on the human environment and making the surroundings more open and satisfying for all. Today, not enough time and effort

is allocated to mapping the needs of the elderly and the disabled people.

Students from Estonia and France, designers, foreign and local experts, representatives of the city and the disabled people gathered for the first time in September, 2010, as a part of Design Night festival. They started mapping Tallinn, evaluating the pavements and entrances from the point of view of stroller and wheelchair accessibility, analysing the transportation system, auditing information systems (different signs), observing the quality of public services (for example, information centres), testing how easily tourists can get lost when going to the hotel from the harbour or the airport, etc. More than 80 people participated in the workshop and they were divided into thematic groups which moved around in the city for three days. The workgroups consisted of different design students, physiotherapists and people with special needs—blind people, people with a wheelchair and people with other disabilities. During the period of three days, the main accessibility problems in Tallinn were mapped and people learned a lot about human behaviour.

During the period of a year, the aim was to develop around ten new products or services—accessibility solutions, new business models, etc. The students started developing the solutions under the guidance of their mentors and the workgroups communicated in a special internet environment. In May, 2010, all the groups met again at the international seminar Mobility, where they introduced their projects and tested their products on users and other conference guests. Several people from different countries who follow the "Design for All" ideology have been involved in the project, including the president of EIDD Design For All Europe, Finn Petren, and Pete Kercher. One of the mentors in Tallinn was Francesc Aragall from Barcelona who helped to make Barcelona 90% accessible so that there are ramps on all the curbs between pavements and roads which enables people with strollers, suitcases and wheelchairs to move around easily. Furthermore, Julia Cassim who has acquired a lot of experience working at the Helen Hamlyn Centre at London Royal College of Art held intensive workshops. Italian designer and EIDD Design for All Europe vice president Avril Accolla shared her experiences



which she has gotten from being involved in different product development processes.

The students tackled the following topics:

- Evaluating how easy it is to find your way in Tallinn
- Does the street furniture take into account the needs of disabled people?
- How accessible are the public toilets?
- Evaluating the communication of public knowledge and labelling objects
- Is the existing information graphics system in the public transport informative?
- How to distinguish low-floor buses, etc.

Furthermore, they evaluated the efficiency of the existent city maps and transportation system. One of the important topics was accessibility which is limited in Tallinn due to high curbs, cobbled stones and insufficient information. "During the years 2007-2010, we mapped the accessibility problems on the main tourist routes (Toompea, city centre, Kadriorg, Piritä) in cooperation with the Estonian Union of Persons with Mobility Impairment and informed the Transportation Department, the Municipal Engineering Services Department, the District Administrations and the owners/custodians of the sites, tourist objects, etc." summarises Leelo Ilbis, Leading Development Specialist at the City Enterprise Board.

The design teams try to combine design and engineering in order to make the popular sites in Tallinn accessible to all. These people are constantly cooperating with each other and with the representatives of the city to make sure that their work serves its purpose and to find ways of applying their ideas. One of the challenges they faced was auditing the accessibility of cinemas. Black Nights Film Festival wanted to make sure that their service is available to everyone and contacted our workgroup with a proposal for cooperation. The students and the test group, which consisted of people with different disabilities, visited several cinema screenings and expressed their opinion on how to make the visit to the cinema more convenient for all.

The work group of French students tried to solve the problems which stem from the lack of social design and from an unsafe and inconvenient infrastructure. It was not easy to design

navigation products for tourists and blind people. While testing the products, the students learned a lot about what needs to be taken into account when designing a product.

As a part of the "Cities for All-Tallinn for All" project, the Gulliver Map (the name is based on J. Swift's novel) is installed in the city centre. Gulliver Map is a project launched by a Japanese architect, Junzo Okada, and it aims to find a consensus between the citizens and the city and to improve the atmosphere of the city.

A huge map is installed in the centre of the city where people of different ages can write about their pleasant and unpleasant experiences in the city while concentrating on the issues of accessibility and functionality. Prior to that, a group of students conducts a questionnaire among the inhabitants of the city to get an overview of the most significant problems. The project is carried out by students, volunteers and designers who supervise them. The project has been carried out in several cities, most recently in Catalonia. The results will be presented to the city government for analysis. The outcomes of the project will hopefully draw attention to the concerns of people with special requirements and help urban planners in making the city a better place for everyone.

Accessibility

Kalle Pabut, interior architect-designer: *The Accessibility Workgroup which included students from different universities presents two solutions/environment analyses - one of them tackles the topic of the accessibility of Tallinn Old Town and the Gulliver Map project and the other includes the accessibility analysis of the cinemas which take part in Black Nights Film Festival (PÖFF). The final presentations of these projects were compiled by the students of the Design Department of Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences Merike Saks, Reena Rist and Katrin Kobolt.*

In order to solve the problems of accessibility, analytical studies "Accessibility Analysis and Solution Offers for Old Town" by Deli Trestip and Triin Valk and "Mapping Accessibility in Ylemiste City and Solutions" by Hindrek Väravas were conducted as a part of the project. The latter is a

joint analysis of ÜLEMISTE CITY and TECHNOPOLIS ÜLEMISTE territory with suggestions for making it more accessible and visually attractive and it is based on student projects which were designed as a part of the joint Universal Design programme of the Design Department of Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences and the Occupational Therapy Department of Tallinn Health Care College. Based on the conclusions drawn in these two studies, the project "Tallinn– This Is A City That Cares About Everyone "Gulliver Map"" Was Compiled By Merike Saks, Reena Rist and Katrin Kobolt to invite the community to take part in the Gulliver Map project.

However, one cannot underestimate the contribution of different lecturers and students from various universities, members of the organisations for disabled people, employees of different departments of the Tallinn City Government and volunteers who helped to conduct these surveys, took part in test groups and conducted environment analyses.

Accessibility working group was supervised by Kalle Pabut. and mentored by Francesc Aragall from Spain, Barcelona Design for All Foundation.

Francesc Aragall:
The aim of our working group was initially to analyse the accessibility of the Old Town and explore possible solutions for the problems that we would encounter. Surprisingly in the initial phases of the work we realized that the Old Town has become more a tourist attraction than an environment that Tallinners use and enjoy usually. That fact changed radically the scope of our project towards another subject: How the Old Town is perceived by the Estonians? Which are their memories, the problems that they face, the aspects that they like more in this part of the city? After the accessibility field analysis we came with the idea of using the methodology of the Gulliver Map to offer the citizens the possibility of expressing their feelings and aspirations about the Tallinn Historical Centre throughout a festive activity. The results will be used to drive future interventions... we hope so.

Kalle Pabut:
People in Estonia do not have a common understanding of the accessibility of the environment and how to coordinate the activities which are

connected to this topic and these issues cause problems. As a result, several solutions which are proposed in good will may become obstacles rather than helping to solve the accessibility problem. The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications has adopted the regulation no 14 of titled "Requirements for ensuring that persons with reduced mobility and visually impaired and hearing impaired persons are able to move in public places and buildings" which the designers should follow in order to guarantee the accessibility of public spaces for disabled people. Unfortunately, no regulations have been introduced on the living environment. However, the problems exist not only for disabled people but many of these issues concern everyone. Thus, it would be preferable if everyone's needs would be taken into account then eliminating these problems or else borders between different environments are created. In addition to that, the lack of material resources and time also complicate tackling the problems in this field. The lack of awareness and our attitude towards other people can sometimes hinder us from noticing the problems around us. Furthermore, the lack of informative materials and training may hinder people who are involved in these problems to develop effective solutions for accessibility problems. Despite that, there are several positive examples in Estonia of how companies, organisations, administrative agencies and local governments have cooperated to guarantee accessibility in their area, for example, the mapping of the Tallinn tourist routes which was started by Tallinn Tourism Board, liikumisvabadus.invaainfo.ee, low-floor buses, etc...

As a part of Design Night festival, "Gulliver Map", which is a 40m2 map of Tallinn Old Town, is installed in the city centre, Vabaduse square, on September 19, 2011. The project is based on the methodology which was developed by Junzo Okada, who is a Japanese architect, in Tokyo in 1989. The input of the product is collected from different interest groups in order to guarantee better access to Tallinn Old Town area, to products, services and information. The inhabitants and the tourists have the opportunity to express their feelings, wishes and needs and share their view on what the historical centre of Tallinn should be like. Furthermore, the event can become the joining force between the community, the city government, urban designers and other people who are connected to urban planning.

In addition to the accessibility study of Old Town, the aforementioned workgroup also introduces the pilot project for making all the venues which take part in Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival accessible for everyone. Based on the study which mapped the accessibility issues in Foorum and Solaris cinemas, which was conducted by our test group, the initial solutions were developed to make sure that everyone can enjoy the movies.

The results of our work are presented to the Tallinn City Government and hopefully they will consider implementing some of them to provide better access not only to Old Town but also to the whole of Tallinn and different services and information.

The solutions offered to Black Nights Film Festival will be implemented in order to improve the accessibility of the venues where their films are screened which will definitely help to improve the usability of these venues outside the festival as well which, in turn, will help to include different user groups into Estonian cultural life.

The first steps to include different social groups into the creative process is informing– creating a unified notification and information system which would include different interest and user groups. According to the European custom, different foundations deal with these issues: with mapping the accessibility of the area, conducting studies and analyses and offering solutions for improving the situation which would include the demand for investments, possibilities for implementation and calculations of its efficiency. I think that the Estonian society is ready to contribute to a better quality of life.

There is no innovation without implementation. Thus, the development is determined by the needs of the users. The more social groups are involved in it, the more innovative the society is. Artificially directed economical or political innovation is bound to fail and leave wounds on the country's economy.

Information design

The main topic of graphical designers was information design of public transport. Two working groups were dealing with bus stop problems and

problems in the bus. Norman Orro was responsible for transportation maps, Ivari Lipp with timetables; accessible vehicle was theme for Daniel Kotsjuba; Hardi Niilo was dealing with QR codes and general questions.

"Alterenative working rooms", was the theme for the HUB model group, which consisted of Kristi Rummel, Ott Metusala, Ronald Pihlapson, Karmen Heinmaa. The supervisor was designer Hannes Seeberg.

Norman Orro:
During the first workshops of this project our team developed an interest in public transportation problems. We are trying to approach these problems with methods of graphic design and find solutions that are not only effective but also accomplishable. Our collaboration with Transport Department led us to the understanding that improving printed timetables in public transport stops would be a priority. It appeared to be a difficult assignment– a low budget design project with considerable limitations had to be turned into an accessible and attractive design solution. By today, for the phase of testing, timetables have been improved in terms of legibility and usability especially for color-blind, visually impaired and tourists; timetables provide more detailed information for planning a journey and help transportation workers in their duties.

TEAM:
Norman Orro: design management, transit map, timetables
Kristi Rummel: project management, timetables, identity
Ivari Lipp: timetables
Karmen Heinmaa: pictograms, vehicle signage
Daniel Kotsjuba: accessible vehicle graphics, bus shelter sticker
Hardi Niilo: 3D graphics, bus shelter infrastructure
Ronald Pihlapson: language advice, vehicle stickers

Supervised by Kristjan Mändmaa, Norman Orro. Mentor - Julia Cassim, London Royal College of Art, Helen Hamlyn Centre.

Now young graduates have established a professional design team – *Disainiosakond*. They have been working on Tallinn Transport design strategy and implementation for over 4 years now and made some great breakthroughs. They have implemented a design standard and applied it throughout the whole system. All the mediums of Tallinn Transport are following the design standard: vehicle design, geographical and schematic maps, digital solutions and printed matters. New connections with other public services have been found. In 2012 Tallinn Transport work won the European Design Management award. Due to that their other clients from public sector are Port of Tallinn, Estonian Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, Estonian Center of Architecture etc.

Social design

The challenge for French students from Saint-Étienne Cité du design was lack of social design, insecure and inconvenient existing infrastructure. New or improved products designed to fit public urban space. Services and products which could help blind people and foreign people to situate themselves in the town.

Theme: Triangles

Fabien Barrero-Carsenat and Jean-Baptiste Bru.

The triangles are orientation benchmarks allowing to guide blind people or partially sighted persons in a particular direction. They constitute because of their shape an extra help for the white stick guidance in a urban environment full of obstacles. For example, they can be used in the malls to indicate the route to the information center or to keep the person away from a potential danger like the curbs.

Theme: Bornes RFID

Fabien Barrero-Carsenat, Jean-Baptiste Bru, Valentine Henry, Jo-Anne Kowalski, and Camille Tricoire.

Nowadays we notice that more and more partially sighted people or blind people travel autonomously. Because of this idea of autonomy we thought about the following idea: when you arrive in the airport, port, station, an information center of tourist office gives you a card (credit card format). You will have to give some

personal information such as your age, mobile phone number, origin and language; they will give you a card programmed according to your profile. This language parameter and your choice of type of card (Orientation, access, shopping, freeways.) will allow you once in town to scan this swipe card in the different yellow terminals located in a wide environment and to obtain directly on your mobile the formation in the sound; image, text format (according to the parameters and the eventual disability). This system is accessible for everybody and can be updated in real time answering the needs of each people in an optimal way.

Theme: Carte

Jo-Anne Kowalski and Camille Tricoire.

The map completes the action of the terminal and the natural location tools of the user. The work consisted in the working out of a very simplified map, easy to read for a sighted person and for blind people. Thanks to this map, the visitors can get their bearings in the city in a very autonomous way, and travel the way they want, contrary to a guided tour which leads you from one point to another following a specific route. It defends and allows the intuitive and independent moving while giving a mean to get one's bearings anytime they want, through various types of data.

The map was drawn following the particularities of any city/village: different districts, or parts of cities, which names and boundaries often depend on the history of the city or on the inhabitants' preferences. Consequently, our map is a booklet composed of several maps, one for each part of the town. The maps contain the most important information; the terminals deliver more detailed information about the place where we are. Any information indicated on the map like colors, pictograms; names is transcribed in tactile language: Braille for the words, textures for the colors and/or pictograms.

A RFID chip is located inside the back cover. It is materialized by a schema which allows the users to perceive well the chip and to familiarize themselves with the electronic element. The RFID chip interacts with the terminal which gives hearing information which comes to complete the map information. At anytime, a contact be-



tween the terminal and the map is enough to be able to locate oneself and/or to receive more detailed information about one's situation.

The design working group was supervised by designer Fabien Combe and mentored by Avril Accolla, Vice President of EIDD Design For All Europe.

Participants of the project:

- Estonian Association of Designers
- Cite du Design, Saint-Étienne
- École Supérieure d'art et de design de Saint-Étienne
- City of Tallinn
- Tallinn – European Capital of Culture 2011 Foundation
- Estonian Academy of Arts
- Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences
- UT Pärnu College
- Transportation Department
- Municipal Engineering Services Department
- The Estonian Chamber of Disabled People
- Tallinn City's Board of Disabled People
- Black Nights Film Festival
- EIDD (Institute for Design and Disability-Design For All Europe)



As it is the case in disciplines such as the industrial design which links both the creative and the business outlook in the same project, to obtain productive work involves fleshing out in detail the objectives of the project from the very first moment and integrating both visions in it. Arteshop is above all defined as a community promoted by the innovative shops in Bilbao; CiB with the aim of disseminating and get the innovation message across the commercial sector in Bilbao. In order to achieve that objective, CiB has chosen to follow the Living Labs EnoLL's philosophy; a network of living labs created in 2011, which is: "generate innovation through collaboration among agents from different sectors and promoting research in real environments through creative process". A first approach to the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of the Basque Country allowed participation of its pupils in the Arteshop project; every student would carry out an artistic intervention specifically for every shop and the latter would showcase it for two weeks. The competition's slogan is: "Every shop, a work of art".

24 shops and 24 students took part in the first edition. Overall assessment was positive and the project continuity soon became clear. Despite this, the organization underlined the importance of the language gap and the problems it brought about.

Improving the dialogue between artists and traders became a goal to be accomplished. For that purpose, collaboration with the Foundation Bilbao Arte was sought. This is a centre of artistic production, also under the authority of the City Council of Bilbao - that makes the required means and infrastructure available to young creators for the development of their artistic proposals. It was agreed that

10 artists from the Foundation would become mentors for the Fine Arts students and would provide them with support and supervise their interventions and their progress.

There was also an intermediate figure that provided a larger perspective of the artistic reality, that had a bigger knowledge of the working processes, facilitated the students' involvement and their relations with the shopkeepers. In the first edition, there was a high level of expectation on both sides whereas in the following ones, the perspective changed; it was assumed that, above particular interests, the final objective was primary; that of achieving sales promotion through synergies. From that moment onwards the project definition process was considered key. Furthermore, and in order to underscore the result of the collaboration between traders and pupils, a competition was organized so that the three best projects could be rewarded with a jury made up of respected artists among other professionals. The number of participants multiplied and amounted to 75 and three well-known commercial areas joined in the project. These hosted exhibitions with the own works of the mentors in their premises. This initiative has been maintained in later editions and has had a multiplying effect in the dissemination of the event. Further on, the Ribera market of Bilbao joined in the project. This is the biggest covered market in Europe with 10.000m² and also the new Bilbao Tourism Office located in a landmark building of the city. This has implied a professionalization process in the way the work is being tackled by artists and shopkeepers to the point that the fourth edition has included a document with the description of the project, the technique, materials used and several drafts. It has to be signed by them

and the tutors. Also, contacts with comments on the proposals and its developments have to be held on a monthly basis. In 2015, Arteshop expanded its programme with some Commercial Tours which consisted in groups of 8-10 people visiting the participant shops in a guided tour. Pupils explained the key elements of their works and shopkeepers did the same about their businesses. Apart from those visits, lots were drawn for 20 awards of 50€ each that had to be spent in the shops attached to the project. The constant inclusion of well-received features presented in every edition has made participants and citizens' involvement grown considerably higher along these five years and has both consolidated and helped the project mature.

Arteshop is no longer an initiative solely for students, mentors and shops, the role of citizens has been strengthened and their influence has grown more important. This can be seen through traditional media and social networks and the interest they follow every edition with. It is therefore clear that what started as a project to boost the local commerce has turned into a learning opportunity for all of its participants: shopkeepers, students, artists, organizers and citizens. Two of the main lessons learnt via the Arteshop initiative are: working with people who provide new outlooks to daily work is stimulating and that initiatives are enhanced when different agents get involved in them. In particular, shopkeepers highlight the fact that the project has helped them be able to offer their clients a new shopping experience, achieve a higher visibility for their business, assume that citizens back up those shops that make an effort towards innovation and appreciate the added value generated by art. Pupils highly appreciate to have their work showcased before the great public, the challenge of facing the particularities of the project (limited budget, space characteristics, etc), getting involved directly through their art into the community, as well as the awards granted by a prestigious jury. Artists value the fact that they can make their artistic capacity available for the students and also the acquired experience in coordinating and adapting their works of art in the exhibiting spaces, lastly, the opportunity of showcasing their creations in unusual places of great visibility for new publics. Concerning the Faculty of Fine Arts, Arteshop has made

possible that faculty students can carry out practical work in a real space, in such a way that the artistic quality of such a space can be perceived directly and that links with other institutions that are beneficial to its development can be strengthened. As to Fundación Bilbao Arte, it points out that it is through such an experience that art gets closer to the city, that it has become a referent in artistic assessment and that artists can have the opportunity of creating new works and showcase them in open spaces to the public.

Bilbao Ekintza has achieved the goals of offering a higher visibility to the trades of Bilbao, stimulating consumption in the districts of the city as well as broadening relations with institutions. In regards to the citizen, he or she values Arteshop simply because small shops can be better known and because it is a new, attractive and surprising initiative that presents art as a common good, enjoyable in an ordinary environment. Can all the positive assessments take credit for the effort carried out along these years by the organization in improving the matching between shopkeepers' objectives and students when defining the project? This is indeed although not exclusively one of the key factors. As a matter of fact and as we pointed out in the beginning, strengthening the first contact and the exchange of information prior to the drawing of any kind of proposal have been and still are the permanent challenges of Arteshop, apart from being one of the great teachings that the competition has left to its promoters. Recently, the Bilbao Bizkaia D Week 2015 was celebrated in the city of Bilbao, an event sponsored by the City Council of Bilbao and the Regional Council of Biscay through the BiDC (Bilbao, Bizkaia Design Council). The programme included 44 activities that had been fostered by different local agents all of them involved somehow in the creative industries sector and among them, Bilbao Ekintza, CiB and the University of Deusto. As a result of the collaboration between Bilbao Ekintza, CiB and the University of Deusto, the first edition of the Technoshop programme was kicked off. This initiative was also inspired in the living labs philosophy in which 16 city shops and 34 university students of industrial design engineering have participated. The specific objective of the project was to improve the aesthetics and the use of shop windows of those



Artist: Laura Garcés
Marquez. Shop:
"Urban Bike"





Public's award winner
 Artist: Rakel Carrero
 López. Shop:
 "La Huerta del Botxo"



Artist: Ander Prieto
 San Sebastián
 Shop: "Aurorakids"

shops through new technologies and to a lesser extent to prove that an alliance between engineering, technology, innovation and commerce is possible and even key in the improvement and development of the city. Rightly, the project's foundations stated that both pupils and trades/shopkeepers had to make an effort towards the initial briefing.

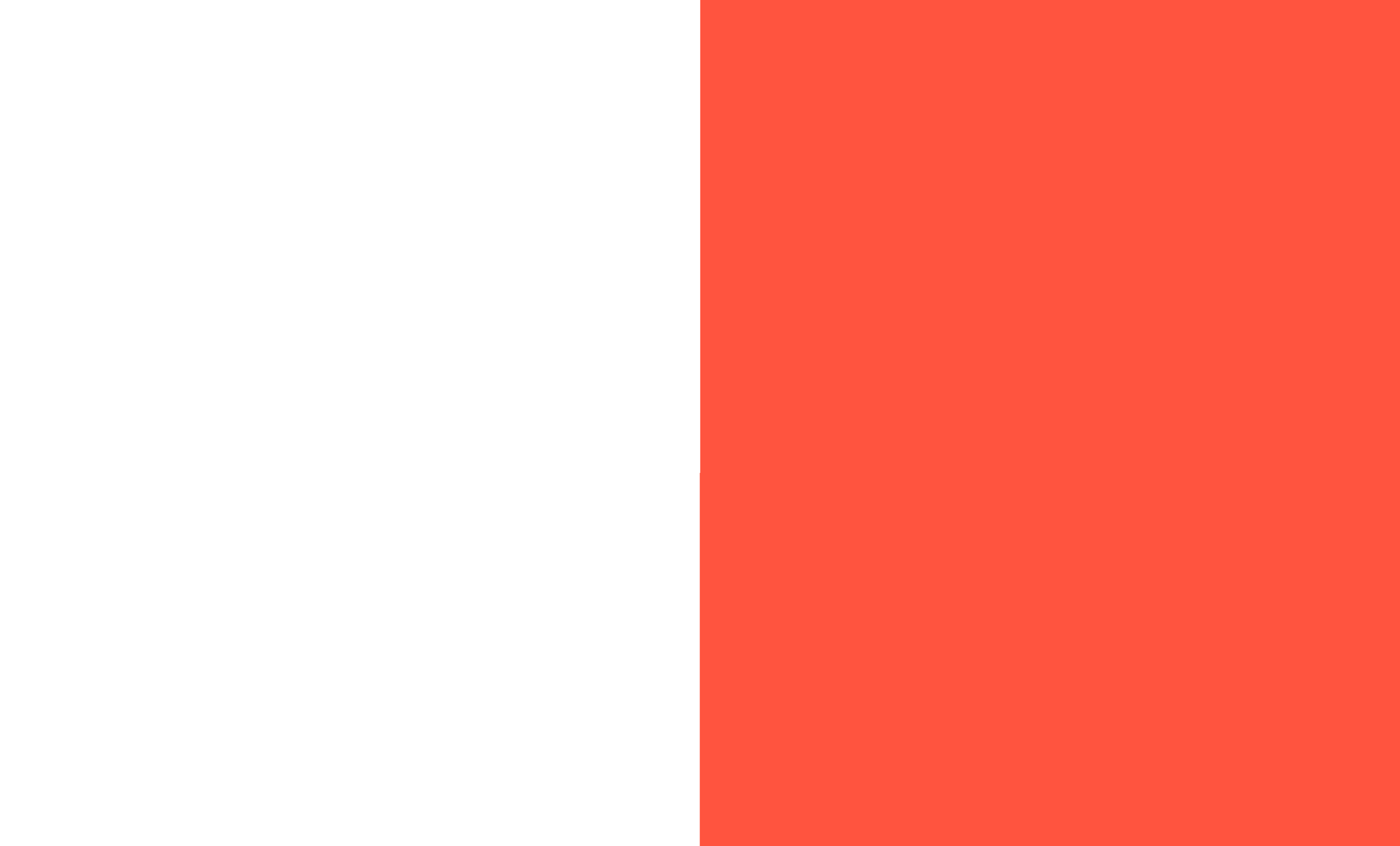
The methodology chosen was that of BootCamp, a comprehensive workshop with a three-day format and that was inspired in experiences carried out in American universities. Over 30 Industrial Design pupils participated in those activities, conducting different dynamics that generated ideas and creativity applicable to projects. They were also introduced to Arduino, the new free software platform. Once the finalist projects were selected, those were further developed along six weeks in which weekly meetings were held with the tutors who were in charge of guiding the work from the in-

itial stages of the draft projects up until those ideas were put into effect. Likewise, constant meetings with shopkeepers were held for a period of two months. According to everyone's needs and after an intense idea-generation process, the pupils carried out models and prototypes in the Deusto FabLab, the fabrication laboratory of the University of Deusto. The outcome of the projects resulted in the installation of 16 shopwindows in different shops in Bilbao which became intelligent and interacted with the presence of the citizens that came up to look at them, fostering thus the commercial activity. In a subsequent analysis and before confirming that a second edition will be launched, both, the University, Bilbao Ekintza and CiB verified the fact that the previous definition of the projects, together with the tutors' role as a link between ones' expectations and others' proposals had been key to the success of the project in the whole.



Artist: Jesús Pueyo,
Maite Leyún y Miriam
Martín. Shop: "Oficina
de Turismo"





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of the Republic of Slovenia,
Ljubljana (Slovenia)

Authors:

- Matej Nikšič, Nina Goršič, Biba Tominc Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, Ljubljana
- Daniela Selloni, Laura Galluzzo, Davide Fassi Design Department, Politecnico di Milano
- Olivier Peyricot, Isabelle Daëron (associated researcher) Cité du design, Saint-Étienne

Translations:

Françoise Marel
Karine Roche

The contributions to this book
have been peer reviewed

Editorial coordination:

Isabelle Daëron

Graphic design:

Audrey Templier

Printing and binding:

Birografika Bori, Ljubljana

Contributors:

- Cité du design [Saint-Étienne]: Nathalie Arnould, Claire Lemarchand, Isabelle Daëron, Floriane Piat, Mikaël Mangyoku, Marie Seng, Eléa Tellier, Pauline Avrillon
- Design Department, Politecnico di Milano, [Milan]: Annalinda De Rosa, Davide Fassi, Laura Galluzzo, Daniela Selloni, Sara Trivellato
- Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia [Ljubljana]: Lucile Fauviaux, Nina Goršič, Matej Nikšič, Biba Tominc
- Clear Village [London]: Thomas Ermacora, Frank van Hasselt, Robin Houterman, Sarah Mann
- Zamek [Cieszyn]: Ewa Gołębiowska, Beata Mońka, Anna Palka, Lubomira Trojan
- Association Belgrade Design Week [Belgrade]: Vesna Jelovac, Jovan Jelovac
- Pro Materia [Brussels]: Lise Coirier, Louisa Vermoere, Wing-Lam Kwok
- Aalto University – Faculty of Architecture [Helsinki]: Antti Ahlava, Mia Hertsberg, Fernando Nieto, Sanna Rossi, Jarmo Suominen, Pekka Tynkkynen, Natalia Vladykina
- FH JOANNEUM University of Applied Sciences [Graz]: Anke Strittmatter, Erika Thümmel
- Estonian Association of Designers [Tallinn]: Ilona Gurjanova, Kirke Tatar
- BEAZ & Bilbao Ekintza [Bilbao]: Maria J. del Blanco, Carolina Gutierrez Gabriel, Igor Arrien Garmendia; Maialen Intxausti; Asier Larringa Casado

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City Scale project

Coordinator:

Josyane Franc, Director
of International Affairs,
Cité du design Saint-
Étienne

Project manager:

Camille Vilain, International
projects manager, Cité
du design Saint-Étienne

Project assistant:

Inge Eller, Cité du design
Saint-Étienne

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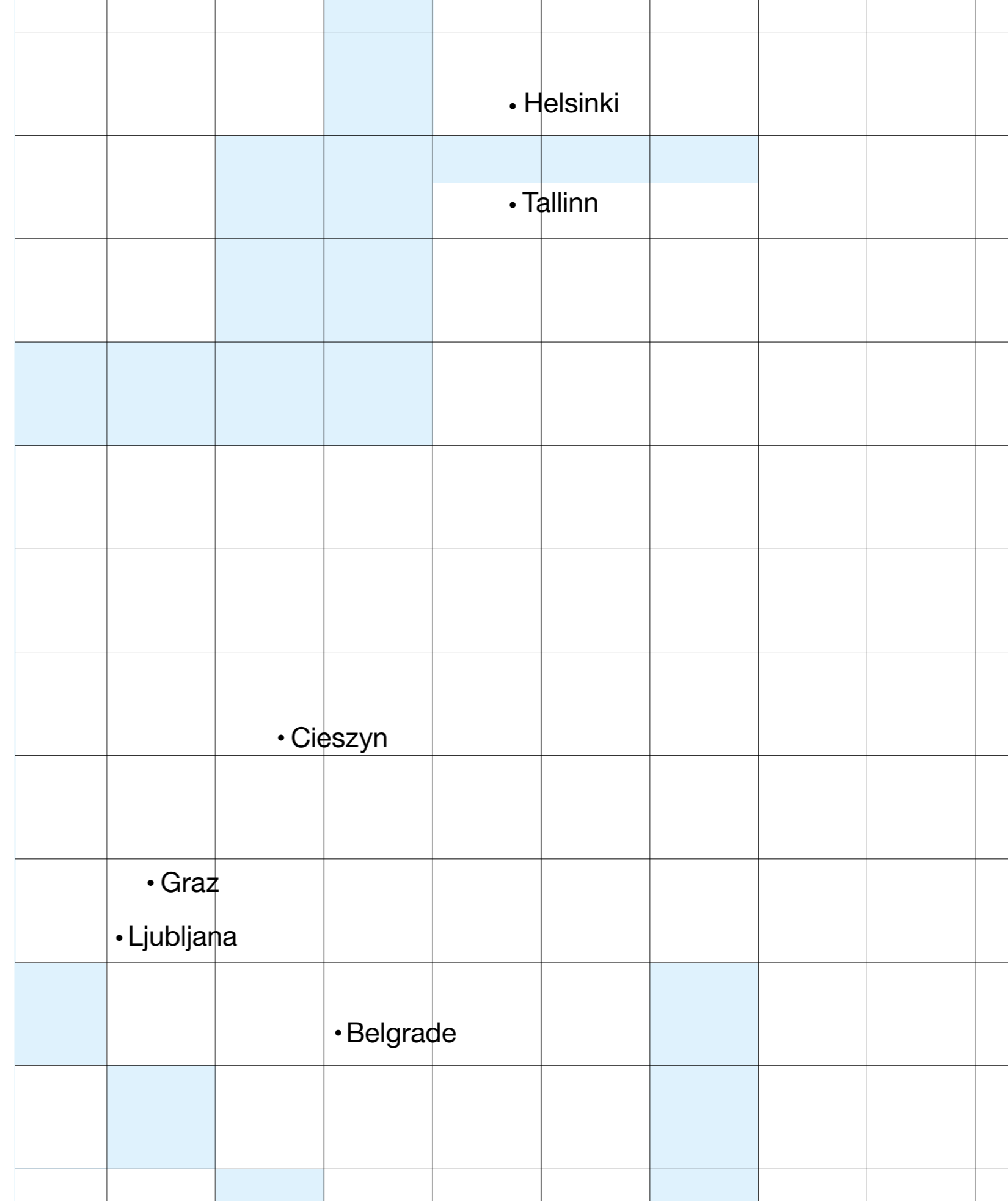
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Human Cities

As cities organizations are facing major urban and technological transformations, European citizens are taking possession of their cities, collaborating or acting for its renewal. Which kind of tools are set up to think and produce the public space together? How to make these bottom-up initiatives sustainable?

Human Cities_Challenging the City Scale is a European project, co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union 2014-2018. Gathering 12 partners from 11 countries led by Cité du design Saint-Étienne, it explores how inhabitants reinvent the contemporary city through experimentation and surveys. This publication is a collaborative research work, made from more than 80 case studies collected by the partners in Europe. They tell about actions led by creative citizens to transform their urban environment. Researchers from Cité du design Saint-Étienne, the Department of Design of Politecnico di Milano and Urban Planning Institute of The Republic of Slovenia Ljubljana provide a state of the art of these initiatives. Analysing these multiple examples, they investigate how urban dwellers participate, get organized and collaborate with creative professionals to prototype more liveable cities.

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