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2014-2018

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Cité du design  
Saint-Étienne

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

By Franck Léard

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## Cité du design Saint-Étienne

## 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).



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

The originality of the Lescar 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 Lescar, 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 Lescar 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 Lescar 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

Lescar 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 Lescar 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 Lescar 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 400m<sup>3</sup> 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?



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

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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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](http://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<br>amount of respondents estimating the value as important (out of 18) | B<br>the total sum of points given to each shared value* | C<br>absolute ranking of a shared value ** | D<br>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  |
| ACCESIBILITY              | 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  
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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 investment<sup>1</sup>.

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.

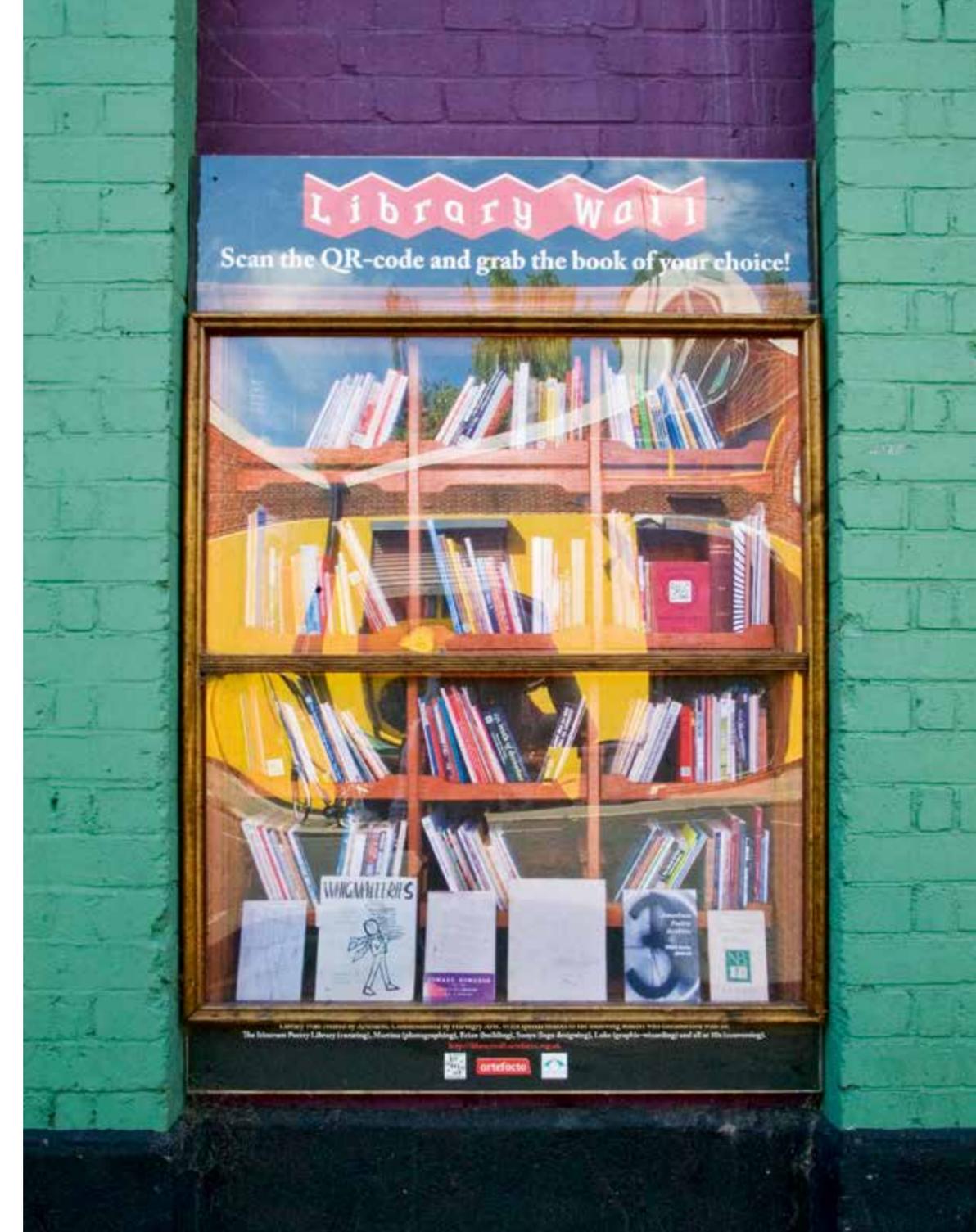
In the rest of the article we will briefly describe each project, discuss the similarities and differences between the 5 initiatives, and conclude with some reflections on the wider significance of these newly emerging urban actors for the practice of place making.

#### 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.

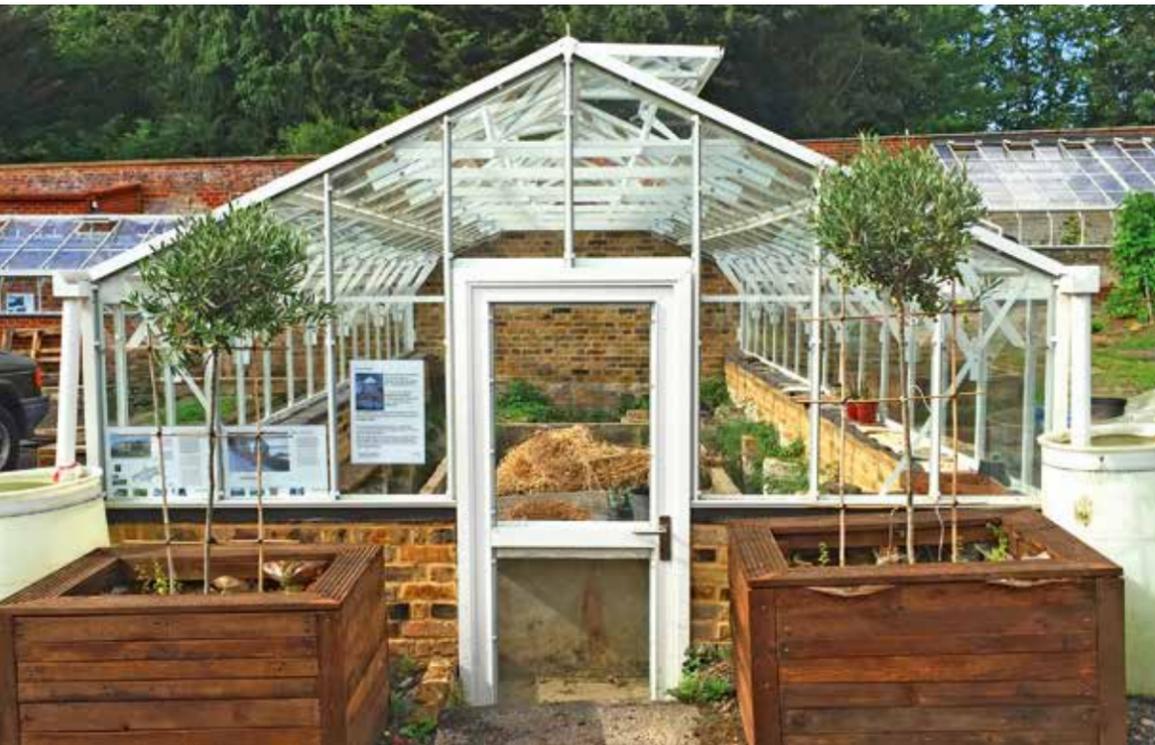
Space Makers continued to support the revitalisation process afterwards. They facilitated regular events to increase footfall and worked closely with the community to increase local participation. As a result, Brixton Village was always much more than a collection of shops and was more of a movement. 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

riar

### 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 Warsaw<sup>1</sup>.

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".<sup>2</sup> 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".<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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".<sup>5</sup> 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".<sup>6</sup>

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 Design<sup>7</sup>. 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 transformations<sup>8</sup>".

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"<sup>9</sup>.

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





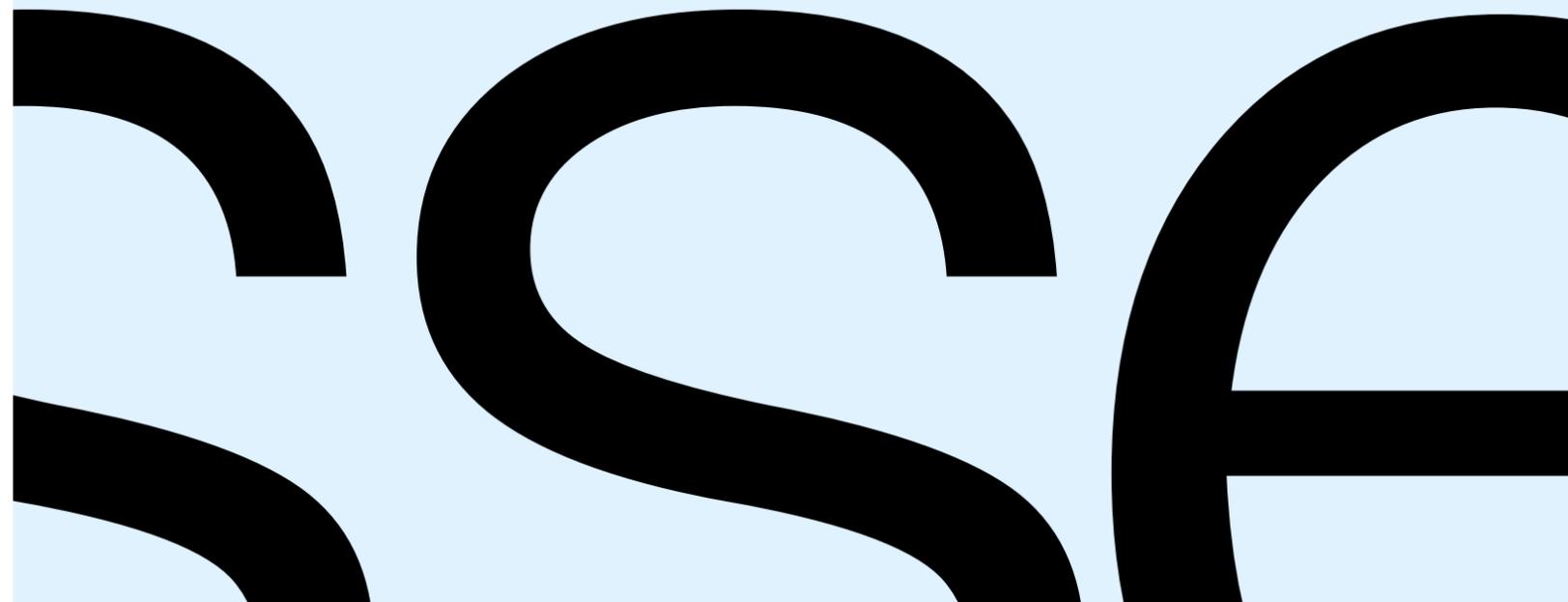
From "100 Creative BDW Playgrounds for Children of Serbia" to the Grand Park of Kragujevac



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

Brussels

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"<sup>1</sup>. 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](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 design<sup>2</sup>. 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 GIS<sup>3</sup>, 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*"<sup>1</sup>.

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*"<sup>2</sup>.

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 Wrentschur<sup>3</sup> and Erika Thümmel<sup>4</sup>.

#### Who were the initiators?

Veronika Kaup-Hasler, director of the *steirischer herbst festival*<sup>5</sup>, met graphic designer Pablo Ares and sociologist Julia Rislér 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"<sup>6</sup>.

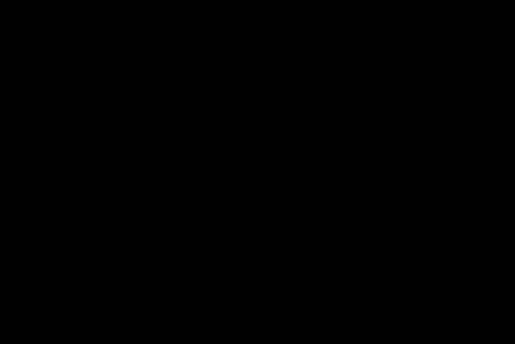
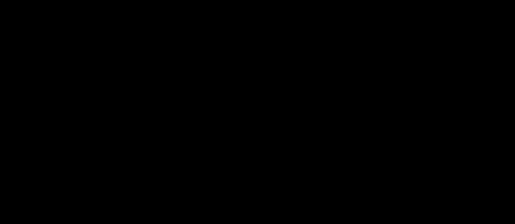
Four topics were identified; the focus of this paper will be mainly on the community garden project<sup>7</sup> [Figs. 1-2].

#### 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."<sup>8</sup>

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

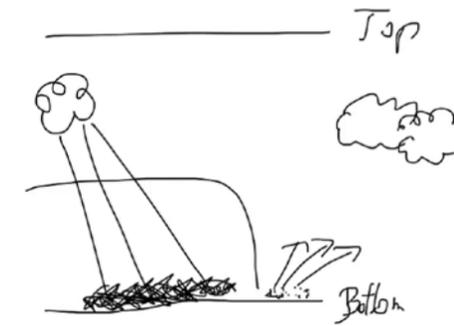
↑ Fig. 7: *Ready, Steady, Go!* The red running track realised by architects Sandra Janser and Elisabeth Koller, 2010, Photograph @Jasmin Schuller

The Verein *Jakominiviertel* association ([www.jakominiviertel.at](http://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.

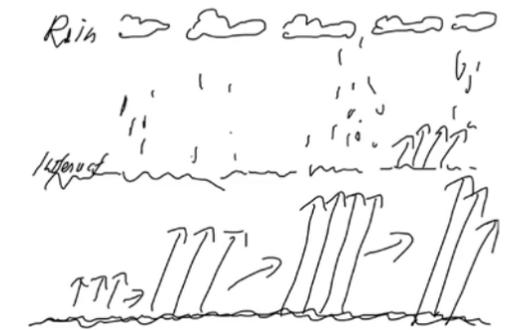
While the situation of *Jakoministraße* has improved, there are still empty shops. In the 2015 summer term, Exhibition Design master students of Joanneum University of Applied Sciences took stock of the situation and analysed 17 aspects of the urban everyday life in the quarter. The outcome was then 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 map<sup>9</sup>.

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?*"<sup>10</sup> 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*"<sup>11</sup>.

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*"<sup>12</sup>. 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 knows<sup>13</sup>."

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."

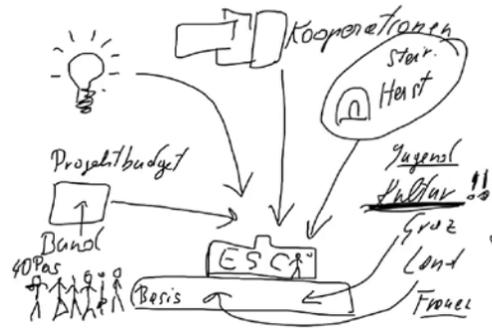
### How was the project financed?

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 Jakomini district 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 difficult<sup>14</sup>" 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 capital<sup>15</sup>".

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

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

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 outcome<sup>16</sup>", Wrentschur says.

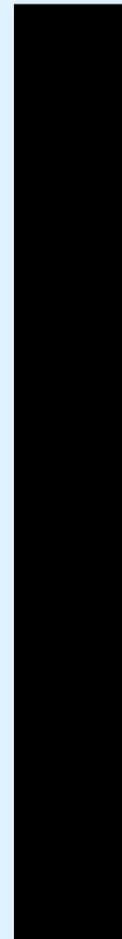
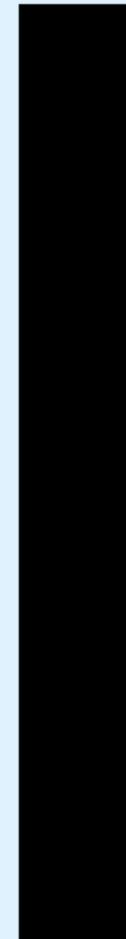
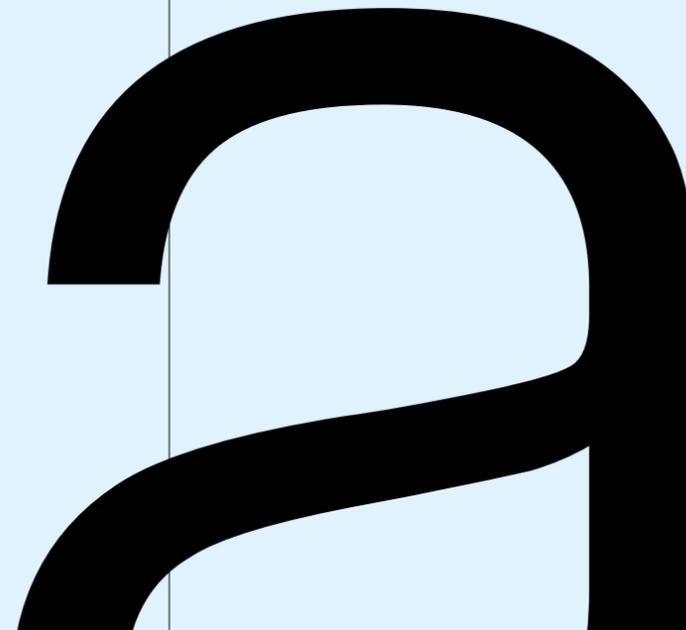
All the people interviewed agree that voluntary work is needed and desirable, because the stakeholders will then identify with the activities and be ready to assume responsibility for their success.

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.

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 10.000m<sup>2</sup> 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.

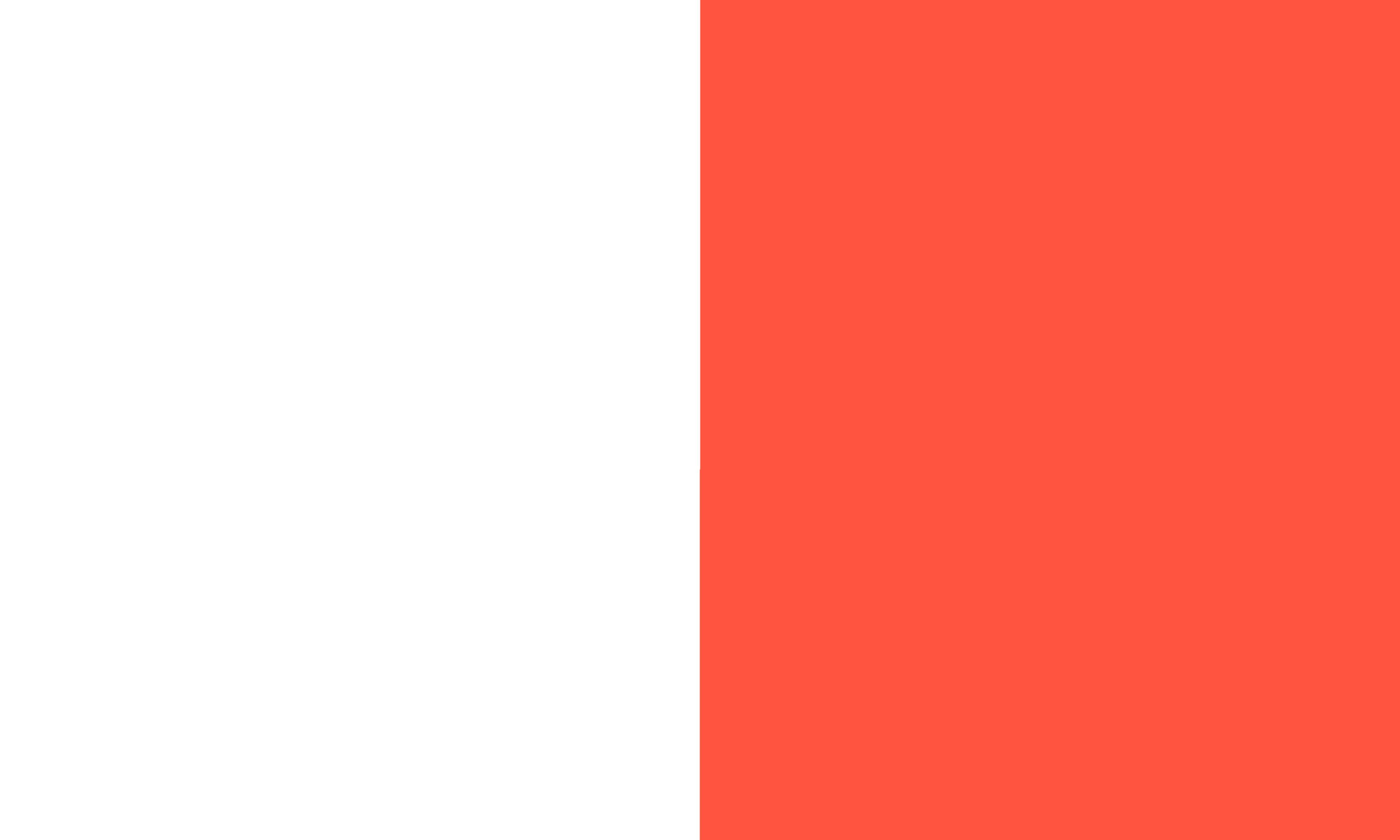
The methodology chosen was that of BootCamp, a comprehensive workshop with a threeday format and that was inspired in experiences carried out in American universities. Over 30 Industrial Design pupils participated in those activities, conducting different dynamics that generated ideas and creativity 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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Human Cities\_Challenging the  
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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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