DESIGN ACTIVISM
Developing models, modes and methodologies of practice
Formed in 1996, the purpose of IDEA (Interior Design/Interior Architecture Educators Association) is the advancement of education by encouraging and supporting excellence in interior design/interior architecture education and research within Australasia and being the regional authority and advocate for interior design/interior architecture education and research.

The objectives of IDEA are:
- to be an advocate for undergraduate and postgraduate programs at a university level that provide a minimum of 4 years education in interior design/interior architecture;
- to support the rich diversity of individual programs within the higher education sector;
- to foster collaboration between programs in the higher education sector;
- to encourage staff and student exchange between programs;
- to provide recognition for excellence in the advancement of interior design/interior architecture education;
- to foster, publish and disseminate peer reviewed interior design/interior architecture research.

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Membership is open to programs at higher education institutions in Australasia that can demonstrate an ongoing commitment to the objectives of IDEA.
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- AUT University, Auckland
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Professor Andrea Min, one of the founders of IDEA and a key figure in initiating the IDEA Journal, passed away on 26 March 2014. Past and present IDEA directors, members and executive editors would like to pay tribute by acknowledging his extraordinary contribution and commitment to IDEA over the past 20 years.

IDEA JOURNAL 2014
DESIGN ACTIVISM: Developing models, modes and methodologies of practice
Executive Editor: Dr Suzie Attiwill

PROVOCATION
The living conditions of First Nations communities, food-security concerns, access to clean, safe water, domestic violence – seemingly disparate subjects can be, and are being, connected to interior design teaching and practice. Such issues are particularly linked to the ongoing discussions of designers working within the new global design paradigm. There is evidence that a range of worthwhile initiatives have been undertaken by design professionals who choose to pursue socially responsible practices, and by educators and practitioners who are intentionally shifting away from a focus on pure aesthetics and market-driven practices.

Disillusioned with what they perceive as an over-emphasis of the design community on aesthetics, and its failure to meaningfully address the design needs of all-risk and low-income communities, several academics and practitioners have started to incorporate social justice issues into their design research and teaching – while a number of independent design practitioners are involving themselves in activism.

Design activism is a combined entity of aesthetics and ethics. It is trans-disciplinary, it incorporates mixed media, and it is inspired by the ethics of socio-political activism and community building. Several design activists have partnered with the design profession and specific political agencies to create design solutions that meet the needs of politically, economically, and socially disadvantaged communities, but initiatives are sporadic. In order to make what are now essentially grassroots initiatives a part of the mainstream, models and methodologies for action need to be developed within the design academy. As guest editor, this call is shaped by my desire to make ethics a more central component of interior design practice and pedagogy.

This journal’s theme calls for a re-thinking of interior design pedagogy and a review of current practices found in design activism. For instance, the author(s) could consider and highlight noteworthy projects of scholars whose pedagogy and critical work is linked with activism, and/or respond to pedagogical shifts found in the field of design activism, particularly as they emerge in and relate to the discipline of interior design/interior architecture.

The goal of this call are two-fold: to promote debate, discussion and theorization among designers, design academics and various segments of the general public about the place of ethics and activism in design, and to contribute to the development of knowledge that focuses on embedding design activism into the design curriculum and design profession. The overall objective of the call is to encourage a shift towards activism in interior design theory and design education.
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Design Activism: Developing models, modes and methodologies of practice

Lorella Di Cintro: Ryerson University, Canada

The overarching theme of this journal is design activism. Designers need to be activists, and radical shifts are needed to allow any form of activism to evolve. Institutions of higher learning and the profession need to nurture and equip the next generation of designers with new ways of learning and practice; to achieve any form of positive social change, design institutions, scholars and practitioners need to urgently change their models, modes and methodologies. Design pedagogy and practice needs to be realigned away from the current asymmetrical approaches to teaching, practice and research. Over the years, I have been nurturing and expanding an overall agenda that consistently works toward developing innovative solutions to benefit civil society and improve social innovation, sustainability and the environment. Design activism informs our models, modes and methodologies of practice and to re-evaluate the constraints of traditional design pedagogy and practice. As educators and designers, we have witnessed the sustainability agenda that consistently works toward developing innovative solutions to benefit civil society and improve social innovation, sustainability and the environment. Design activism acts not only my philosophy as a designer, but my philosophy and practice as a teacher and scholar.

Fieldwork in East Detroit (see IDEA Journal 2013) enabled me as both a design educator and practitioner to see the drawbacks of design and to re-evaluate the constrictions of traditional design practice and pedagogy. This experience led me to incorporate social justice theories, feminist theory and practices, and activism into my academic approach to design. I began to question whether new forms of social change in design could be relevant to design education and specifically interior education.

As design educators, students and practitioners I believe we are at a crossroad. One possible path is to continue to mould our identity as educators nurturing the next generation of interior design professionals. The other is to methodically step back and rethink where the profession is headed. This issue of the IDEA Journal focuses on moving beyond design activism as a curiosity to make a conscious effort to work toward a philosophical and pedagogical stance.

As educators and designers, we have witnessed the sustainability movement flourish from grassroots to a branded sensation. However, more change is still needed. Educators and future practitioners need to know that we can no longer put our environment at risk. We also need concrete and measurable objectives. Ideally, I am proposing that creating a better future will require a methodology of interdependence that can be disseminated promptly and equally on a global scale within academia and the profession – a mutually shared responsibility.

A small but growing collection of design researchers are working to develop studies to test models, modes and methodologies of design activism. The submissions in this journal identify some notable accomplishments in activism. Many of these design activism acts have been incorporated into pedagogical and practical venues. This issue of IDEA Journal aims to nurture a shift toward design activism within design pedagogy.

The visual essays by Juleanna Preston and Tüüne-Kristin Vaikla, together with the project review by Matter Practice’s Sandra Wheeler, situate us within the ‘activist space’ of an interior. Preston creates an activist interior as a small and polemic matchbox that travels from New Zealand to Los Angeles; while honouring a number of activists named Rosa (e.g., Rosa Parks). Vaikla draws us into an abandoned church in Estonia, sparking emotions by presenting an occupied space where peace and war co-exist. The project by Matter Practice literally and physically navigates through storms of collisions to create a peaceful and silent temporary station in one of the busiest intersections in the world: Times Square, NYC. Throughout these essays, the authors, as variously feminist, artist, candidate, educator and design practitioner all work to help reveal, document and explain the social nuances of contested interiors.

Davide Fassi, Alessandro Sachero and Giulia Simeone’s project from Milan, and Charity Edwards, from Melbourne, created design studios embracing the principles of activism. They took students out of the studio and challenged them to rethink their modes as activist designers. Both sets of students were asked to embrace latent spaces that were about to be demolished or revitalised. Educators and students used various tactics to approach the project, including strategies related to food security (insecurity) and the recent tactics found in the Occupy Movement. As they invested more time they all became active participants – activists in their own right.

The research papers by Cathy Smith and Michael Chapman, and Sally Stone, offer recommendations about explicit responsibilities for protecting the built environment. Their joint findings conclude that design activist models, modalities and methodologies matter albeit in the UK, Australia, or beyond and that as activists, we must ‘save to renew’ and ‘renew to save’ while we try to meet the desires and needs of others (users of the space). In these papers, design activism takes the form of traditional and non-traditional campaigning methods (placards as iconic building fragments), participatory/semipermanent environments and workshops.

Design activists also need to hear the voices of participants, users, elders and caregivers. By eliminating terms like ‘expert’ and ‘expert knowledge’, we can encourage a more inclusive modality of thinking and making. Ideally, a civil society is universally inclusive, with flexible goals that can adapt to change. Individuals all have their own ‘blind spots’, but together we can implement real change by including everyone and focusing on the ethics of caring. Jennifer Webb and Brent Williams explore the concept of inclusiveness, and Fleur Palmer explores a New Zealand Māori community’s vision for the future.

As design educators and practitioners continue to expand on design activism research, we will continue to encounter obstacles. This issue of IDEA Journal is a starting point for exploring the potential of some of the complex interrelationships and strategies between concepts, statements and projects. Design activism is needed within the twenty-first century context, particularly working to meet the needs of individuals undergoing changes in either their environmental and/or economic conditions.

NOTES

IDEA JOURNAL 2014 Design Activism: Developing models, modes and methodologies of practice
Dear Rosa

Julieanna Preston : Massey University, New Zealand

11 June 2013

Dear US Homeland Security Agent #94142587 Rosa Gomez,

I am writing to you today after having returned to my homeland, New Zealand, from a trip to the United States of America on 2 May 2013. I was processed through the Los Angeles International Airport in Terminal 5. You are the officer who inspected my bags.

During that inspection, you came upon a small matchbox, and as it was deemed to constitute a flammable substance, it was confiscated. Understandably so, as a list of prohibited items is clearly posted throughout the airport and on the Homeland Security website.

At the time, our interaction was necessarily brief because a queue of grumpy passengers from a 14-hour bumpy plane ride was forming. Perhaps you remember me? I have had time to reflect on this incident and think it important to share with you the nature of that matchbox and the power it holds.

I carry this small, seemingly innocuous toolbox with me at all times. Or at least I did. Fitting in the palm of my hand, it travels light. Though it is susceptible to being crushed or drowned, its interior is exponentially expansive due to the matter(s) it houses.

The outer surface of the toolbox discloses its original use to store matches. If there were matches inside the box they would not be just any matches, but safety matches, matches that are effectively impotent until struck across a surface specially coated with red phosphorous. The timber sticks have been soaked in paraffin and their heads dipped in a solution of potassium chlorate, sulphur, starch, a neutraliser, siliceous filler, diatomite and glue. This is a preventative measure that subdues their combustibility by the initial spark. So, the potential danger denoted by the red-coloured packaging is mitigated by separating the two active ingredients; the chance of two heads rubbing together to produce friction, and hence fire, is almost entirely eliminated.

The creation of fire is an important story in New Zealand’s indigenous culture. According to Māori legend, Mahuika, a goddess of the underworld, restored the gift of fire to the people after Maui, a demi-god associated with the sea, tricked her out of all but one of her fiery fingernails. Acting in anger, she threw the fingernail into the forest to set it alight. Later, after the rain god Tawhiri squelched the flames, the fire took refuge in the branches of the totara, mahoe and pukatea trees. So it was a small sliver of keratin, a tough protective protein, that brought fire into the world a small sample of a female body capable of destroying the world but equally so, keeping it warm, and casting light into the darkness.

These facets to the matchbox are volatile, literally and figuratively. They are political as well; it is no accident that the name Beehive Matches and the New Zealand House of Parliament share the same name. It is here that robust and often contentious debate is flung between ministers defending their ground, their constituents, and their principles in a building inspired by the social construct of honey bees, often interpreted as a monarchy but actually modelling a true egalitarian democracy. This coincidence of brand and building draws attention to the fact that the matchbox has two ends, by virtue of a tray sliding within an overall wrapper. Such open-endedness is pivotal to most heated discussions and key to my interest in keeping things in circulation without resorting to binary modes of thinking, acting, living and making. There is always more than one way in and out of an argument, a country, a space...

Imagine the matchbox on the table in front of you. If you slide it open it quickly reveals more than expected. You will not find (as the outside of the box promises) 45 neatly stacked red-tipped sticks, ‘lucifers’ as they used to be called, lying side by side like tiny soldiers ready to take action in defence of freedom. (At this point the anticipation of the smell of ignited sulphur may fill your nostrils.) Instead you will find a collection of materials eager to escape the close quarters of the spatial confines of a Pandora’s (tinder/tender) box eager to unfurl and proliferate in the exuberance of
fertile stuff. Beware! It is this liveliness of matter that may prove more threatening than the matches themselves! For in this mere 27 square-centimetre interior you will find a set of survival tools, everyday tools to live by, everyday feminist survival tools to lead life by.

Take care! Things coming out of the box onto the table in front of you will start to get messy, untasteful and disorderly. These bits of matter will want to comingle, copulate, assemble and conjugate. They will beg you to handle them and thus you are complicit in an out-of-the-box performative event.

Rosa, can I call you Rosa? I feel that in the process of writing to you about this box we have become more familiar, more intimate, and hence it seems more fitting to call you out as a person, with a face, rather than just a border-guarding uniform with a badge and gun bestowed with the agency to let me and my luggage in and out of the USA. As you looked at my passport and travel itineraries, did it mention that I am a feminist, a spatial artist, an academic, an alien and a believer that all things are vibrant and capable of acting on their own accord, especially when they form alliances with other mutually associating matter? I am a defender against assumptions around material inertness. My art works listen to materials, even the most banal or synthetic. For me they are swaggering, pulsating, pungent, bundles of energy, eco-political forces composed with animism. My body, like yours, is a bundle always reassembling itself in response to its environment. This would explain my sweating that day – simply salt leaching from my pores as the system tried to reach a state of equilibrium.

Though it is my ploy to stir up controversy and contest political, religious and social convictions, I hope that by admitting this belief I do not offend or upset you. Perhaps not, as I suspect it is part of your job to remain impartial, neutral, and objective unless the matter impacts upon the safe state of the nation. Those traits come with the uniform, I suppose. But as a woman working at the border, monitoring the crossing of territorial boundaries, are you not curious about how these small fragments of material stuff could help you survive? What challenges are you faced with as a twenty-first century woman?

Two bits of stuff leap out of the matchbox. One is coiled, sharp and shiny. It is a transducer to distribute heat, an energy broker for motors of all kinds, including the human body, which relies on the element of copper to maintain hair colour, heal wounds and balance hormones, amongst other things. With this small pliable piece of copper I can jerry rig a car, mend a fence, short an electrical panel or fix a pair of heels. The other, a wad of cotton fibres, is prone to suturing, sewing, repairing and maybe even in a pinch, fishing. Despite its tendency to tangle, the thread has an amorous alliance with knots, which reveals a simultaneously tensile and compressive attribute in the course of one continuous filament. (I adore these kinds of paradoxes!)

Rummage around in the matchbox and you will find a needle to make mending life easier. Needles are one of my iconic tools not because I am a talented seamstress but because of Flatland, Edwin Abbott’s tale of Victorian social hierarchy. In this novel, geometry merges with fantasy fiction to expose the dark side of social evolution. While the males take the form of various kinds of polygons, the females of the community are straight lines with one sharp end. They are required by law to waddle back and forth so they can be seen and to avoid skewering any one with their pointed end. I secretly revel in this invisible risk as I sit very still taking very shallow breaths. So, I can understand in profound ways why a needle might constitute a weapon of mass destruction.
The unpacking continues. A half-moon of soap may become tangled in the copper wire. Its primary purpose is to promote good hygiene but in an emergency, its body of slippery fat and oil can be rubbed on a surface to reduce friction, to increase ease of motion through decreasing physical contact. Literally on the other hand, soap, with a tad of water, as you know, expends itself in a lively, gendered and joyful eruption of bubbles. Harnessing the sexual tension implied by this substance is all that the copper wire can bear. And yet not far away or far behind, a tassel of human hair springs from the box as if to induce more laughter to combat or compound the hysteria of being a woman. Far from abject, this lock from my daughter’s very first haircut draws goose bumps and deep laughter at the slightest stroke. If you have a daughter you will know how precious this memento is.

Rosa, do you recognise the small globule of soft yellow substance? It is wax from our beehives located a short distance up the mountain. Its distinctive musky aroma fills my house. (Ah, this information may raise alarms because of the bio-security threat that beeswax highlights!) As an apiary excrement and building compound, beeswax softens in your grasp after a few minutes. It is a material that remembers; it already knows your skin surface through all the cosmetics and hair products you use. Like soap it is especially effective in reducing friction. With a wick, it can burn into the midnight hours, illuminating a good book, a sexual encounter or even a power outage.

Were you ever a girl scout, a girl guide, or have you ever received first aid training? If so, then you would know how important it is to be prepared. In the four years since assembling this box, I have never had to use this lone bandage. Perhaps as an actual and symbolic shield of protection it warded off injury. I am not sure. It always reminds me of the complications of being female, of menstruating, another messy matter. And it signifies my penchant to help, give aid, to rescue, sacrifice myself. I have for a long time wondered why the packaging is not part of the bandage. Would that not mean less waste and more wounded people could be helped?

Deep in the shadows of the matchbox hides a blood thinner, a remedy for migraines. This aspirin replaces the one I gave to an elderly man on the streets of Auckland who appeared to be having a heart attack. The coin, now missing, was spent to call an ambulance. The aspirin tastes as metallic as the coin, (I often stress and get headaches over money so they travel together!) The elastic
Julieanna

From one freedom fighter to another, though of very different sorts, some mountain of impounded items and make it your own? If so, it is yours. I can make another.

illegal goods in customs – the fiery bin full of contraband. Or maybe you will see fit to rescue it from this letter, my thinking has changed. I hope you neglected to send this matchbox to the fate of most to post it back to me. I was ready to contest that indeed it was not harmful. As I prepare to conclude loss. When I started writing this letter, my intent was to ask if you still had it and if you would be willing to consider the contributions and visibility of today’s practising female architects.

The combinations of practical and philosophical dimensions it affords are numerous. The survival kit revealed in Dear Rosa expands upon a sculptural work titled This is my feminist survival kit that previously featured as part of a group exhibition, 13.3%… (WUHO Gallery, Pasadena, California USA, 2010). According to curators Jayna Zweiman and Christian Stayner, the exhibition \#13.3%... borrowed from the conceptual structure of curator Lucy Lippard’s landmark 1973 exhibition of conceptual art, c. 7,500 in which each work on display fit into a standard manila envelope. Lippard’s exhibition contested the belief that there were no women making conceptual art at the time – and she did so by mailing evidence of this work directly to the gallery for display. Nearly forty years later, 13.3%… provides a space and form in which to consider the contributions and visibility of today’s practising female architects. As a creative work in its own right, Dear Rosa expands upon 13.3%’s conceptual and strategic use of the ubiquitous manila envelope; it concentrates on a common matchbox as a literal and conceptual catalyst of change incited by personal, material, political, cultural and historical inflections.

Dear Rosa affects multiple readings that both reveal and conceal a litany of associations to historic and contemporary feminist activism. For example, the name Rosa draws reference to Rosa Luxemburg (an early twentieth century German journalist, social critic and self-proclaimed citizen of the proletariat). Rosa Parks (an African-American who, in 1955 refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white passenger), Rosie The Riveter (an American cultural icon symbolising the economic power of women that emerged during WWII when women replaced men in the factories) and Rose Schneiderman (a Polish Jewish immigrant who worked to improve wages, hours and safety standards for American working women from 1904-1949).

Dear Rosa expands upon a sculptural work titled Dear Rosa becomes a feminist survival kit, it concentrates on a common matchbox as a literal and conceptual catalyst of change incited by personal, material, political, cultural and historical inflections.

Rosalba Carriera (a prominent Venetian portrait artist of the Italian Rococo) is the alias of a member of the Guerrilla Girls, a group of activists that describe themselves as ‘feminist masked avengers in the tradition of anonymous do-gooders like Robin Hood, Wonder Woman and Batman.’ They ask, ‘How do we expose sexism, racism and corruption in politics, art, film and pop culture? With facts, humour and outrageous visuals. We reveal the understory, the subtext, the overlooked, and the downright unfair.’ This survey would not be complete without mention of the feminist group subRosa, a collection of interdisciplinary feminist artists committed to combining art, social activism and politics to explore and critique the intersections of information and biotechnologies on women’s bodies, lives and work.17

The survival kit revealed in Dear Rosa draws reference to a wide range of contemporary ‘purses’ survival kits available online. Each kit gathers small quantities of notions and potions in handy band reminds me to be gracious, respectful, and supple as I reach out to other people, other things. It also demonstrates my (sometimes misguided) sense of community as a collaborative engagement, a deep sense of civic mindedness. It bestows a sharp sting the closest thing I have to a whip. It is good for bunching things together and to snap when things get out of hand. My other tool of choice would be the wedge/shim. It is no longer in the matchbox; I shoved it between two plastic panels above me in the plane to keep them from rattling on the long journey. A wedge has special powers to pry things apart whereas a shim can help make things level. Level-headedness is sometimes a great virtue. It certainly mattered when I surrendered the matchbox to you.

I am not claiming this unassuming box and its contents will help me, or you, leap tall buildings, establish world peace or solve poverty. It is unlikely to stimulate the kind of leadership that draws accolades, political position or vast wealth. While there is no guarantee that it offers protection from prejudice, hatred or misfortune, there is evidence to suggest it can prompt kindness, thriftiness and generosity. The combinations of practical and philosophical dimensions it affords are numerous.

I thought that when you took the matchbox away from me that smog laden morning I would grieve its loss. When I started writing this letter my intent was to ask if you still had it and if you would be willing to post it back to me. I was ready to contest that indeed it was not harmful. As I prepare to conclude this letter, my thinking has changed. I hope you neglected to send this matchbox to the fate of most illegal goods in customs – the fiery bin full of contraband. Or maybe you will see fit to rescue it from some mountain of impounded items and make it your own? If so, it is yours. I can make another.

From one freedom fighter to another, though of very different sorts, Julieanna

**AFTERWORD**

Dear Rosa
delves on the power of everyday things to serve as tools to survive with, and more so, tools with which to lead life. The text takes the form of a personal letter that operates across several levels of familiarity as a persuasive form of communication. It is driven by a series of visual images that unpack the contents of a small interior space, a matchbox filled with sundry items, essential accessories to an activism aligned with feminism.

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situations they can ameliorate. Is raised on what such ordinary materials can do—what danger or risk they can activate and what few coarse granules of salt, a lock of hair plus a coin and a shim, now missing. Hence, speculation

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mockery, usually because they are arguing against something so entrenched it’s the only way to tell “both sides of the story”. They overstate the case. They toss out provocations and occasionally to shake things up and rattle a few convictions. Be advised: polemics aren’t measured; they don’t device placed under your E-Z-Boy lounger. It won’t injure you (well not severely); it’s just supposed of stirring up controversy: ‘A polemic is designed to be the prose equivalent of a small explosive

Dear Rosa

By analogy. This begs a practice of reading between the lines, ultimately suspending practices that practice pries open a space to unlearn the authority of scholarly academic writing and privilege a exercise in ficto-criticism, a hybrid mode of writing that transgresses the boundaries between

categories/grab-n-carry-emergency-survival-pack, Pandora’s project: http://www.pandys.org/articles/rapekit.html, dvSurvival

=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=FxTUU8T3GIXz8QX_04LYCw&ved=0CCYQsAQ&biw=1297&bih=488


18. For example: for webarchive.google.com/awards/search?hl=de&lr=lang-de&source=web&start=1&num=20&q=2013+cyber+art+cyberfeminism


22. Where most polemical writing uses hostile language to shape a dispute or debate, Dear Rosa stirs its argument via a softer and more persuasive rhetoric most notably recognised in personal letter writing, a mode of writing that establishes familiarity, breeds increased levels of intimacy and urges the reader to take some form of action. In like manner, a box of matches harbours the potential for violent destruction as well as the promise of warmth. A mere glimpse of the matchbox’s interior contents begs questions about the viability of matches—what they can do, if they are dry, who might use them and if matches inhabit the box at all. The matchbox is shown to be inhabited by a clump of string, a length of thread, a ball of beeswax, a needle, a BAND-AID, a coil of wire, an elastic band, a piece of soap, a paper clip, a few coarse granules of salt, a lock of hair plus a coin and a shim, now missing. Hence, speculation is raised on what such ordinary materials can do—what danger or risk they can activate and what situations they can ameliorate.


3. In the 1960s, British architect Sir Basil Spence sketched out his startling Beehive for housing the executive and Luxemburg.html


5. ‘Honey bees enlist a caste system to accomplish the tasks that ensure survival of the colony. Each member of the community fulfills a need that serves the group. Tens of thousands of worker bees, all females, assume responsibility for feeding, cleaning nursing, and defending the group. Male drones live only to mate with the queen, who is the only fertile female in the colony. The queen need not lift a wing, as workers tend to her every need: “Ants, Bees, & Wasps (Order Hymenoptera),” accessed February 27, 2014, http://insects.about.com/od/antsbeeswasps/p/honeybeesociety.htm


ABSTRACT

A target positioned in the space formerly occupied by the altar gave soldiers the opportunity to establish a shooting range in Paluküla Church, while the church’s thick limestone walls created a secure depository for a gas company’s storage rooms (or was it the other way around?). After the Second World War, the pragmatic reuse of church buildings in Estonia, such as this one, brought these kinds of surprising change in function. The spatial environment of the church’s surroundings itself bears information concerning various different strata of the location’s history.

This visual essay presents a site-specific exhibition project that addressed this metamorphosis of space through the housing of new functions and an aim to find new methods for designers/architects in the repurposing process. The abandoned Paluküla Church on the small island of Hiiumaa in Estonia, used by military forces during the Soviet regime, became a laboratory – a test site – to experiment with a repurposing of the past through heightening spatial emotions to invoke different values.

The project, titled Housewarming, took place from July to August in 2013 and created the momentary impression that there was life once again in the church. The exhibition was a chance for local community and others to experience, perceive and confront the transformation of the church while thinking about issues to do with repurposing buildings as a process that inevitably increases or decreases cultural values.
Academic Harrison Fraker defines Design Activism as:

… problem seeking: it is proactive, it chooses an issue (or set of issues) and explores it (or them) from a critical, sometimes ideological perspective. It uses design to recognize latent potential and make it visible. It explores “absences” in everyday life and gives them a “presence”. Design Activism reveals new ways of seeing the world and challenges existing paradigms.\(^1\)

In my research I analyse different possibilities for spatial intervention in the process of reusing buildings. Contemporary practices in the reusage process of old buildings are usually based on pure aesthetics and are shaped by market-driven concerns. In contrast, as an interior architect and artist, I am searching for alternative approaches that focus on the contemporary user of historical buildings with their specific values. My method is to incorporate knowledge of various disciplines in order to find new solutions at a transdisciplinary level. With the help of site-specific exhibition projects, thinking and working models, it is possible to create a laboratory – a test-site – to discover both existing values and, also, to test new ideas. It has become evident that a flexible and sensitive way of thinking leads to a solution that is able to interact with the lifestyle of the local community as well as the needs of users such as newcomers, tourists, etc.

I selected a sacral building/space as the subject of my research – Paluküla Church, on the small Western Estonian island of Hiiumaa – because it is a small and specific place, enabling the boundaries of the community to be more clearly perceived. It is also where my father was born and I have continued to visit since my childhood.

Above 

Figures 2-3: Paluküla Church (1820), Hiiumaa island Estonia / abandoned today. Photograph ©Vaikla Studio.
PAST/CONTEXT

This miniature neo-gothic church with lovely proportions was built in 1820 as Count Ungern-Sternberg’s family sepulchral chapel. However, due to the high level of groundwater in the area, it appears no body has ever been buried there. The congregation of the nearby Kärdla Church used to hold its holiday services there. At the beginning of the Second World War, the church building was placed at the disposal of Russian military bases. Empty cartridge cases can still be found on the floor and indicate a target was set up in place of the altarpiece. Locals recall that for many years during the Soviet era (1940–1991) gas canisters were stored behind the church’s thick limestone walls, as the local gas depot was located nearby. An industrial landscape evolved in the vicinity of the church and continues to operate – albeit only just – in the form of an auto repair shop, a woodworking shop, a plant nursery and other such facilities. The abandoned church building functioned as an international navigation mark for ships and continues to have this function today. For this reason, the church has a new roof and tower spire. The rest is in a state of neglect. Torn plastic sheeting covers the windows and flaps in the wind. Sometimes migratory swans fly in through the tower window to die.

PRESENT/ACTION

To begin the project, I used the well-tried method of interviewing, as people like to talk about architecture: about their own experiences, memories, expectations and dreams associated with a specific place, in this case an abandoned church building. The interviewees included officials who are indirectly connected to the church building. I asked them questions as to how they are connected to the building, how could it be used and, provocatively, whether the church building could be used as a nightclub or a home. To my surprise, I received relatively liberal responses. What was most important was that the church building could be used. A common response was that it could become a concert hall but respondents were also receptive to the idea of an athletics facility, as well as a home or a club. Personal contact with these people gave me the chance to recognise and analyse the attitude of locals towards the re-purposing of the abandoned church building and encouraged me to implement the idea of spatial intervention through a site-specific exhibition project.

Churches had many pragmatic uses during the Soviet era such as stables, workshops, sports facilities and warehouses. The project – titled Housewarming – aimed to make this past present while also introducing for discussion and debate the current trend of transforming sacral buildings into luxurious hotels, boutiques, restaurants, nightclubs and private dwellings. A combination of light and sound installations, together with the activation of indoor and outdoor space, was used to communicate these pasts as an imaginary poetic vision. To do this, I created a backdrop of sounds: a sea mark (wind and seabirds), a church (bells), a restaurant (forks and knives), a stable (animal voices), a nightclub (music), a sports hall (basketball), a workshop (hammer) and a home (children). These contrasting voices brought the empty abandoned space to life. In the night, the church was brought to life through using lighting to heighten emotion and a recording of nuns singing liturgical songs, composed in the twelfth century by Hildegard von Bingen.

Spatial interventions in the form of a wooden ‘red bridge’ (made with the help of local carpenters) provided the opportunity to move ‘above’ the dusty floor to a ‘red altar’ where visitors were invited to leave their personal thoughts and opinions on how to proceed with re-purposing the church. White curtains flying in the breeze invoked a sense of innocence and an illusion of a space full of life again.
In parallel with Housewarming, I held a transdisciplinary workshop titled Re-vitalization to develop contemporary ways of thinking and reinterpreting the church building through thinking models and architectural models. Students from the Estonian Academy of Arts worked together with academics and local people to address these issues.

FUTURE/IDEAS

The students familiarised themselves with the context and worked in groups to develop different ideas. Over the course of four days and nights, we “domesticised” the church for ourselves, using it as a laboratory for testing spatial possibilities including: a screening of the film Paradies: Glaube by Ulrich Seidl, an improvised zither concert, a performance of modern dance, a night church service and workshop presentations. All of these culminated in the opening of the Housewarming exhibition.

Opposite

Figures 6-7: Site-specific exhibition project Housewarming: light and sound installation as a revitalisation of space at night, Põltsamaa Church, 2013. Photograph ©Valkia Studio.
Figure 9: Trans-disciplinary OPEN workshop Re-vitalization: using the space as a lab (test-site). Photograph ©Vaikla Studio.

Figure 10: Trans-disciplinary OPEN workshop Re-vitalization: Performance by students of modern dance inspired by backdrop of sound, Paluküla Church, 2013. Photograph ©Vaikla Studio.
An exhibition of the architectural models created by the students, which proposed new futures for the church, was displayed in the crypt. Young architects, interior architects, designers and art historians were invited to make proposals. One proposition: the content of the church was to remain the same but the building was to be given a new form. In effect, the church was ‘hidden in a box’ as a strategy to attract more attention to it. In another case, the building was turned into a stopover providing lodgings for backpackers, and multifunctional furniture was designed for different kinds of use. In a third case, the space was activated by a mountain-climbing wall. Another group proposed a place where gay and lesbian couples could be married. During the repurposing process the question of spirituality in terms of what is sacred to people today and in the future was continually posed.
The exhibition project fulfilled its function by activating both the space and people, and enabled people to notice what already exists. During the project, hundreds of people (both locals and tourists) visited the church and filled hundreds of slips of paper with written personal suggestions that were then nailed to the ‘red altar’. The project was reviewed and critiqued in local as well as cultural and architectural media, and the local community nominated *Housewarming* as one of the most popular events of 2013 in Hiiumaa.

**CONCLUSION**

While the construction of new buildings transforms our surroundings, the function of historical buildings is also changed. Greater or lesser potential emerges for these buildings depending on their typology. Depending on context, some grandiose buildings fade into decay, are left vacant or have minimal function. Some are left in a state of ‘suspended animation’. Whether in the city or countryside, it seems inevitable that empty abandoned buildings attract violent interferences. In contrast, through my practice I pose the question: What forms can proactive spatial interventions take to create a positive connection with the surrounding environment (past and present) and communicate in a meaningful way with the local community with a view to future possibilities?

As an interior architect I feel an interest in and responsibility for addressing this question. Instead of producing aesthetically reconstructed buildings, I believe it is critical to create ‘alive’ spaces where intangible and architectural values meet and can be encountered. Historical buildings act as memory containers for local users. With the help of creativity and ‘design activism’ I am looking for edges where the liberal viewpoints of the contemporary world can meet the context of unique traditions; spaces where contradictions are possible and frictions are allowed I engage local communities in this process of revitalising space in order to discover the values of the building as it is and test the limits of new ideas. These events – site-specific exhibitions, workshops and spatial interventions – create a dialogue between the lost traditions of the past, and invite new traditions to be created through the transformation and translation of the potential of a building into the language of contemporary users.

My spatial interventions can be provocative and raise several uncomfortable questions as part of a process of involving grassroots initiatives to develop design proposals to meet the needs of different communities. The activation of space and bringing an environment to life through contemporary methods relies on a transdisciplinary approach, professional knowledge and skills, yet also on a sensitive approach to preserve what already exists, both material and immaterial, in repurposing the past for the future.

**NOTES**

2. Karin Kalda, a local resident interviewed by the author, Paluküla Church, June 26, 2013.
3. Officials included the senior inspector for Hiiumaa of the National Heritage Board, the chairman of the board of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church Kärdla congregation, the pastor for Hiiumaa and the rural municipality mayor. Residents of the town of Kärdla were also interviewed and included a schoolteacher, a master carpenter of the Paluküla woodworking shop, and several of my relatives (from a schoolgirl to linguist).
4. The workshop was held in collaboration with the Estonian Academy of Arts (EAA). Students worked with supervisors Tüüm-Kristin Välja/EAA; Tom Callebaut/ULCA, Sint-Lucas School of Architecture, Brussels/Ghent; Randolph Glavine/ULC, London; together with EAA academics: Martin Melioranski, Andres Ojari, Urmo Välja, Maris Mändel, Oliver Orr.
Peace & Quiet

Sandra Wheeler : Co-director; Matter Architecture Practice
United States

ABSTRACT

Peace & Quiet, a temporary dialogue station installed in Times Square, New York City provided a tranquil place where veterans and civilians – two wide-ranging groups whose paths increasingly do not cross – could openly engage each other in meaningful conversation. Conceived, designed and built by the Brooklyn-based firm, Matter Architecture Practice, this project review traces the development and collaborative process by which the station was realized and inhabited.

July 15, 2010

A man in an Army cap approached a perfect stranger who had noticed the Vietnam hat, and shook Mr. Bochicchio’s hand and said: “Welcome home!” Like this friendly, chatty man had come back from war this morning, and not 38 years ago. Everybody does that; Mr. Bochicchio said as the man walked off without another word. “Thanks for serving.” Never seen ‘em before.

While we may be critical of the wisdom of waging wars in far away places, it is impossible to not be touched by the personal stories of the struggles of the veterans who served in these conflicts – which seem to confront us daily in the media. Since we no longer build monuments, or only with reluctance and typically for the deceased, we asked ourselves what a possible response might be to the anecdote above. As a counterpart to the recruiting station, the possible commencement point for arduous and dangerous journeys for those lucky enough to return, we propose to erect a ‘Discharge Station’, to welcome and offer a centre for reflection on war’s deceased, Maya Lin’s powerful monument was a temporary dialogue station installed in the north end of the square from November 11 through 16, 2012 (Figure 1). It provided a tranquil place where veterans and civilians – two wide-ranging groups whose paths increasingly do not cross – could openly engage in conversation, share stories, leave notes, or just shake hands. Abstractly interpreted, these two structures were intertwined portals, bracketing experiences the vast majority of Americans only hear about in the news; events at the forefront of our national identity and economy, and yet often remote to those who do not, or dare not, enter these situations directly.

Rather than reiterate the construction strategies, publicity and programming of the project, which are well documented online, this review addresses the term ‘design activism’ and reflects on some of the actions and reactions encountered in the process of the station’s becoming. How do you practically design to activism? What are the resistances to it?

Robin Cambrales, writing in ARTnews, situated ‘this curious little structure’ as ‘being in the spirit of relational esthetics, the artistic strategy used to spark social interaction’. While this expresses an interpretative stance within the discipline of art criticism, it was not the consciousness by which we entered into the idea. Peace & Quiet insistently stems from an architectural response to a specific urban space and set of parameters; we were first designing a place to shelter an identified need, and not as long-standing advocates for a specific cause. Its designation as ‘public art’ certainly was due to it being presented by Times Square Alliance Public Art, however the relative obscurity and recent emergence of the term ‘design activism’ possibly prevented it being categorised otherwise, and ‘architecture’ is both too grand and too staid for its diminutive size ‘Activist Art’, on the other hand, is often central to definitions and objectives of contemporary art conceived for public space.

(A)POLITICS

After Peace & Quiet was green-lighted for installation, our ‘kick-off’ meeting with the Times Square Alliance entailed each party carefully gauging the stance of the other: were the potential implications understood by the Alliance, and to what extent did we intend this to be an overt political statement of an express position or not? While the station was not ever conceived to be a centre for reflection on war’s deceased, Maya Lin’s powerful Vietnam memorial on Washington Mall was undoubtedly influential. Arguably regarded as the most moving invocation of war in its making visible the tragic loss of life, its design is often interpreted as resulting from an anti-war position. Lin herself however considers it to be thoroughly apolitical. ‘As I did more research on monuments, I realized most carried larger, more general messages about a leader’s victory or accomplishments rather than the lives lost... I made a conscious decision not to do any specific research on the Vietnam War and the political turmoil surrounding it. I felt that the politics had eclipsed the veterans, their service, and their lives.’

We hoped to achieve a similar elusive sensibility: the endeavour would be to connect individuals on a personal basis through design and a neutral program, and not suggest any endorsement for or against the ethical validity of such conflicts; The approach

PEACE & QUIET

Located far opposite the US Army Recruiting Station, Peace & Quiet was a temporary dialogue station installed in the north end of the square from November 11 through 16, 2012 (Figure 1). It provided a tranquil place where veterans and civilians – two wide-ranging groups whose paths increasingly do not cross – could openly engage in conversation, share stories, leave notes, or just shake hands. Abstractly interpreted, these two structures were intertwined portals, bracketing experiences the vast majority of Americans only hear about in the news; events at the forefront of our national identity and economy, and yet often remote to those who do not, or dare not, enter these situations directly.

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would be strictly non-political, absent of judgment and beyond stereotype, yet with aspirations it would quietly probe civic and communal thought on the cost of conflict in our society, and spark some public discussion. Activism, even if unstated, requires a minimum amount of ambitious idealism.

The charge put to us by the Times Square Alliance was to source a ‘client’, who could advise the project from the veteran/military perspective. As we weren’t veterans, didn’t know veterans, or even have any contact with US veterans, there would be no shortage of irony if a place for military/civilian dialogue was designed without this very dialogue being part of the process. Our lack of connection with this community was due in part to being from an urban environment in the northeastern part of the United States, which has the lowest enlistment rate in the country, the relatively isolated profile of the military domestically, and the metrics of the deployment since 2000. Conscription was abolished in the United States in 1973, and all conflict since that time has relied on an ostensibly all-voluntary force. Just one-half of 1% of Americans have served in uniform at any given time in the last decade; during the Vietnam era, 9.7% of the population (30% of those eligible) served; in WW II, that figure was at 12%.4

THE GAP

Identifying ‘a client’ to approach took some time. Many organisations for veterans were involved in advocacy with set and necessary agendas, or they did not strike us as having the right tone for enabling a neutral program. In the protracted delay to committing to the project, we began to recognise our own fear and ignorance in stepping into the actuality of the project, despite an intellectual attraction to its ideas.

In early 2012, we identified a non-profit social justice organisation via an article in the New York Times, ‘Talking Out Loud About War and Coming Home.’ Veteran-Civilian Dialogue™ (VCD) was an evening-long bi-monthly workshop held at the Intersections International storefront in New York and occasionally other cities. VCD was created and directed by two licensed practicing psychotherapists who are both veterans: Scott Thompson, a former army chaplain; and Lawrence (Larry) Winters, almost twenty years his senior, who had served in Vietnam.5 Roughly seventy people, equal numbers veteran and civilian of all ages, came together for carefully facilitated social interactions developed to open channels of unfettered conversation around issues affecting both groups. The only thing off limits was politics. The key goal was to bridge the gap between the actuality of the project, despite our own presumptions about the military/veteran community and realise we were far less informed than we imagined ourselves to be.

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Swiftly debunked were assumptions that there was a largely dominant or unified political stance, reason for serving, demographic homogeneity, or singular response to the experience among veterans; or that there was a lack of critical reflection of their roles both as ostensible protectors of the country and unwelcome guests in foreign lands. One of the most charged conversations was around the moral dilemma of being from a society that dictates ‘thou shalt not kill’, while having had a job requiring this fundamental ethic be put aside. As Paul Wasserman (Iraq war veteran and poet with a Masters in philosophy and comparative literature), put it during one of the dialogues – ‘That is the gap’.

The prevalence of stereotyping among the civilians became stark as we shared the project with peers, who would often launch unbidden into what we must be like to work with military or veterans; we recognised their projections as views we also once incorrectly believed. Veterans, in turn, burdened by popular media profiling from movies (Rambo or Born on the Fourth of July were often cited) were suspicious and reluctant to share stories with civilians, and often automatically deemed them incapable of comprehending the complexity of the veteran situation.

The further Peace & Quiet was researched and developed the more unlikely it seemed it could ever effectively function as bridging this perceptual divide. Mining this gap became acutely more necessary.

MISSION (IMPOSSIBLE)

Over several months we had many long, insightful, and deeply invaluable discussions with Larry and Scott to hone actions for the station from which we would develop its design. In this sense, the process differed from more common standards of design practice, whereby the client establishes the program as the brief for the architect’s design. As with many projects engaging social or economic themes, the role of the designer/architect was expanded to include initiating the programmatic brief and identifying the purpose for the design itself. Through this process, which was so eye opening, Peace & Quiet shifted from being referred to as a ‘Discharge’ Station to one of ‘Dialogue’.

Our ‘clients’ asked probing questions, most likely to ascertain to what extent our intentions were genuine, but in answering we were forced to go beyond declaring the project as simply being a good idea. Why were we inspired to do it? What was our personal connection to the issue? Why did we believe it was important? What did we want them to do? Initially it seemed straightforward: as dialogue was so successfully being realised through their VCD program, we would host dialogues

we found it impossible to evaluate the probability of encountering post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or even how adverse such an experience would be.1 We began to recognise the extent of our own presumptions about the military/veteran community and realised we were far less informed than we imagined ourselves to be.

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to engage the public in a critical subject that is often avoided or viewed with apathy. However, issues of scalability, replicating an event tailored to a certain number of people to a diffuse context, or managing potentially very private exposure in a public place did not present easy or agreed upon solutions.

For many, a successful dialogue could only be achieved through something akin to the slow unpeeling of an onion, with participants reaching a moment of inner catharsis or revelation, where each person was introduced to something unknown about the other, and through this exchange could better recognize and situate themselves. While the dialogues had been constructed as a supportive outreach program defined as being distinct from therapy sessions, they could not be disassociated from a concept of mutual healing. Veterans and civilians each needed something from each other to complete that process. This begged the question of how one could be ‘healed’ if they, particularly civilians, did not consider themselves ‘sick’ in the first place.

Several people we consulted declared conversational intimacy would be impossible without an extended and controlled build up. As such the experiential sequence of the station had to be highly scripted if it were to work at all. Many veterans (later we noticed they were all from the Vietnam era) disagreed with the premise of exposing this discussion in such an open forum. For this generation, so condemned or cast aside by history’s placement of that war, conversations of this nature were only possible in established safe houses, far from public view. At times it seemed there was an underlying accusation of being ‘carpet-baggers’ for sensationalist reasons, making a sideshow out of a sensitive subject we did not own.

Conversely, others at Intersections International saw an opportunity for marketing on a scale they’d never had, leading to ideas being floated that were logistically and fiscally out of reach. Suggestions included station activity streamed to neighbouring billboards (this would have involved negotiations for global advertising’s most expensive space!) in conjunction with national broadcast; or banks of touch screens connected to social media, allowing anyone anywhere to participate and contribute to dialogues. The promise of Times Square, it seems, leads to an expansion of ideas, to grander and grander dreams. Media interface as the visitor experience began to dominate proposals for programming – both as an advertising opportunity for VCD, but also as a means to sidestep the challenge of facilitating face-to-face conversation in an unfiltered environment. However if the end goal of connecting would foremost be virtual, possible anywhere at any time, one’s beliefs. This was counter to what we were hoping to achieve; the station needed to remain a strictly analogue, physically present experience – even if documentation and outreach would be shared via contemporary social media. It would absorb the ‘risk’ of unscripted, and as such unpredicted, exchange between strangers. Looking back this now is seemingly obvious, yet it was not readily identified until it began to slip away.

COMMUNICABLE FORM

While schematic renderings and models had been produced for fundraising and approvals before we initiated programming collaboration, we chose to not present or develop them further while we jointly explored what the station needed to do and communicate. There were some given site parameters – it could not exceed 200 ft² (18.6m²) or be more than ten feet (three metres) high. It had to be deployed and fully installed in less than twelve hours, and be able to withstand a stampede. A few of the early gestures – the conceptual signifiers – we would retain: the shallow pitched roof, simultaneously channeling the icon of ‘house/home’ and the field tent, and an interior space significant enough to accommodate a large crowd.

As the experience brief developed, we felt it became more immutable and unaccommodating – in a sense unwittingly imagining a passive (and captive) audience instead of activating citizens. We insisted, correctly or not, that meaningful exchange could be attained even if the encounter was fleeting, unexpected, and left open-ended – which was most likely to be the case in Times Square. Drawing in a larger crowd would require offering several ways to enter into dialogue as we were aware that any sense of inflexibility or feeling pressured without choice, coupled with the associated fear of the subject, could potentially deter many people. Much time was devoted to exercises ‘choreographing’ visitor movement, which were intended to occasion unscripted and genuine interaction (Figure 3). While in retrospect these exercises seem somewhat absurd, they were invaluable as sketches for imagining likely engagement by people as they moved in and around the structure.

Above left
Figure 2: Study models of the station in development. Photograph: MATTER

Above right
Figure 3: Flow studies of circulation, based on scripted dialogue events. Drawings: MATTER
Within any population only a relatively small percentage can be relied on to enter an enclosed room and engage in conversation with strangers; the majority if the exterior of the station was an attractor, could be prompted to stop, read, and contribute if they saw others doing so; and a smaller number were likely to watch from afar and discontinued to leave any trace.16 Candy Chang’s deceptively simple Before I Die installation, realised in downtown Brooklyn in late 2011 not far from our office, was stunning in how it captured this desired range of interaction.17 Her strategy of using words as a motivator yet at an architectural scale was a synthesis of one of the VCDs existing outreach projects ‘Four words for war (or peace) is...’ and the urban siting of Peace & Quiet. The station’s exterior would have to function as an attractor, could be prompted to stop, read, and contribute if they saw others doing so; and a smaller number were likely to rely on to enter an enclosed room and engage in conversation.

STATION

Ultimately, to remain true to the project as it had been conceived, we had to broaden the veteran community outreach by working with more than one collaborator; each hosting the station on varying days and each bridging the veteran-civilian gap through different portals. The Pat Tillman Foundation, an organisation sponsoring post-military career studies at notable universities, had its local scholarship recipients host conversations and be available to answer any question thrown at them (‘Ever wonder what it’s like to sleep in a hole in the Iraq Desert?’).18 Scott Thompson, who was no longer running VCD but still working with us as a key consultant, and Benjamin Duchek, former artillery officer and founder of Socialgence, moderated intimate dialogue and led brainstorming on probes for the pin board.

PHOTOGRAPHY


DEPLOYMENT

How Peace & Quiet was made in the end was based on an economy of materials and basic framing construction (Figure 4). It was pre-fabricated in entirety as a set of demountable components in an available storage room barely larger than its footprint, that was located on the same floor as MATTER’s office and shop. The exterior cladding was Tectum, an interior acoustic panel product, painted with aluminium coating typically used to deflect solar rays on roofs. Its gleaming, strangely textured surface subtly reflected the changing glow from surrounding electronic billboards, a small facedet texture appearing suddenly overnight (Figures 5, 6, 7).

To cover the costs of construction many vendors willingly donated or discounted materials and furnishings. Station hosts provided some support, and there was a small grant from the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs. Regardless of the lack of funds, there was a strong commitment to move forward. Interestingly enough, Peace & Quiet’s Kickstarter crowd-sourced fundraising campaign, while successful in reaching its goal, did not gain viral momentum. This surprised us a little given the sheer number of veterans in the United States, and the universal support and appreciation Peace & Quiet received whenever it was presented. We wondered if its name, initially devised as being a descriptive counterpart to Times Square’s din, was what failed to resonate — that it was interpreted as a politically liberal anti-war, anti-veteran statement. That the timing of our campaign coincided with federal elections — always a bona fide circus in American politics with no shortage of partisan fundraising — and the flooding of New York City probably didn’t help.19 There were other, late-breaking, pressures. As the date of installation approached — November 11, Veterans Day — in the...
shadow of yet another much-publicized American mass public shooting event—a previously unexpressed nervousness about the project and its potential to cause controversy began to emerge. The Times Square Alliance, which was supporting the project through permitting logistics, security, and media outreach, asked for a pre-determined outcome for the station. Instead of being an event open to the random passerby, security required participation in dialogues be via web-based sign-up for pre-reserved time with locked-down scripts for moderation in place; pinning notes was eliminated from the exterior so that no user-generated comments would be visible to a passing public; and ‘Rules of Engagement’ had to be prepared and posted, clearly spelling out the allowable nature of the conversations. It was requested we arrange for professional trauma specialists to be on hand to assist anyone in need; installation dates were cut back from eleven to six days, inclusive of only one weekend day. While we were able to push back on some of the suggestions, most we had to accept. It was fascinating to watch a project selected and, to date, championed exactly for its promise to spark open civic discussion in a public square—the agora fulfilled in every sense of the word—being hastily required to adopt measures limiting its accessibility and discouraging spontaneous engagement.

The underlying reasons for the precautions were understandable—the liability if something did actually happen on NYC publicly operated land—but they also underscored why this particular conversation was so necessary. The gap between veteran and civilian worlds was such that the majority of civilians regarded any venture into this unknown territory with fear, and this only serves to perpetuate the problem.

In the end, almost no one used the web sign-up portal to pre-sign up for a dialogue, and this didn’t matter. What occurred was a fairly steady stream of people entering Peace & Quiet’s doors (interestingly enough this was more likely when they were closed). Many talked and left notes, some read, others recorded; a limited few wept or were amicably not quite sane (Times Square denizens). A good number were visiting New York as post-Super Storm Sandy relief workers. A retired army major general spoke at length to a street ‘kid’ who had dropped out and was living the underground party scene in NYC; a young woman who had pre-enlisted at age 17 explained how her crisis at having ‘collected’ souvenirs in Iraq led to a post-military degree in museum studies as a way of examining the meaning of artifacts and ownership of stories; a military officer riveted a couple for more than an hour as they asked question after question of what he did (they had never talked to anyone who had actually been to Iraq or Afghanistan before); an army wife encouraged children to write notes to an imagined child their age whose father was deployed; oral histories were recorded and posted online; tourists were asked to share their country’s civilian relationship with their military. One of the most significant crossings was with a high school social studies class from the Bronx who were on assignment in Times Square to interview passersby on their opinions regarding gun possession in civilian communities. We invited them in to write letters about what it means to ‘be protected’. As described in ARTnews: ‘Peace & Quiet, despite its chaotic location, created a safe space too … The site achieved that certain alchemy, so elusive and potentially life-changing, that makes taboos dissolve. Once the audience accepted the station as a transformative setting the personal could
REPLACE THE POLITICAL AND WORDS AND THOUGHTS COULD FLOW THAT HAD BEEN BLOCKED BEFORE.'

On the last day of the station we painted a navy blue rectangle on one of the station’s facades and took the notes outside, as originally intended. It more than tripled active involvement, and no one got hurt. Mainstream network media began to take notice, and then the next day the station was gone.

RETURN

In June 2014 we were contacted by the Center for the Art of Performance (CAP) at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). They were interested in reinstalling Peace & Quiet as a collaborative effort in conjunction with their presentation of BASETRACK Live, a theatrical performance piece that tells the impact of war on veterans and those close to them ‘without representing the characters as either heroes or victims...just ordinary people fundamentally changed by the extraordinary experience of fighting a war’. UCLA CAP would develop and host the programming and manage the construction. This opportunely spurred re-examination of Peace & Quiet as a replicable model, where we would design its structure and provide guidelines for the express tone and nature for dialogues, but others would inhabit those parameters to make it their own.

The artist Brian Haloran joined us in the studio during one of the programming discussions we had with Meryl Friedman, CAP’s Director of Education & Special Initiatives. In his evaluation, while Times Square was a key generator of the concept of the project, it also almost guaranteed its impossibility as an interior garnering mass participation. The impracticality with its immediate context was almost too great for many people to reconcile; the pace was too quick for anyone to linger long enough to slow into the zone of opening themselves up. Hence the challenge of reaching an inner sanctum of true dialogue possibly rendered Peace & Quiet a symbolic act rather than any kind of functional activism.

As designers and architects we are trained to anticipate a set of uses and then provide the form or place to enable those uses to take place. But we can only anticipate, plan for an unfolding of circumstances and give the work over to whatever is the will. Peace & Quiet Los Angeles was installed from October 6 through 10, 2014 on Royce Quad, UCLA’s oldest and most symbolic intersection. Its volumetric form was unchanged but the panelised acoustic shell which in Times Square had isolated interior from out, was replaced by two layers of woven silver fabric that produced a gauzy translucent screen, defining place and providing refuge from the blistering sun. The upper halves of the walls were pin boards mounted below the fabric. There were no doors, just open portals.

On the inside was mounted a timeline exhibition of correspondence, documenting the evolving form of letters home from the First World War to the present. People could sit, talk or write letters to service people stationed overseas, which would be delivered. Or leave a note. On the exterior there appeared each day a different question added in large type, with new pre-printed cards to respond. After less than one week all the boards were completely covered.

HOW DO YOU SERVE?
A HERO IS…
WHEN DO YOU FEEL PROTECTED?
WHAT’S THE BRAVEST THING YOU’VE EVER DONE?
WHAT DOES PEACE LOOK LIKE?

CREDITS: PEACE & QUIET, Times Square


STATION TEAM

Artistic director
Mike Rettenmaier

Artist and co-director
Brian Haloran

Station hosts
StoryCorps Military Voices Initiative, Pat Tillman Foundation and Tillman Military Scholars, Code of Support Foundation, Socialgence, Brian Fernandez-Haloran, Scott Thompson

Structural engineer
Hage Engineering PC

Station graphics and identity
VosBrenner: Michael Brenner, Nata Vo

Selected metal fabrication
Indianapolis Fabrications

Programming advisors
Scott Thompson, Lawrence Winters

Above

Figure 12: View of the installed station from the south. Photograph: Martin Sack.
NOTES


2. The photographer Alfred Eisenstaedt’s iconic image of the sailor spontaneously kissing the nurse, taken on V-J day, cemented Times Square’s association with the victory parade. Informal murals typically start in Union Square and wind to Times Square, such as those in protest of the Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown shootings.


4. As of April 14, 2014 there have been at the very least 17,600 violent civilian deaths as a result of the conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan; “Civilians Killed and Wounded,” Costs of War, last modified May 2014. http://costsofwar.org/articles/civilians-killed-and-wounded.


6. In a report published by the New Center more than three quarters of civilian adults aged 50 or older had an immediate family member who served or serves in the military; for many this took place before the end of conscription in 1973. Only 57% of civilians aged 30 to 49 could make that claim, and that figure dropped to one-third for those aged 18 to 29.


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12. As one young veteran, now working towards a graduate degree, told us: ‘In the age of the internet, I’d say most (75-85%) are the 30-40 minute visitors reading major text panels and looking at all the outward affect. This seems supported by articles on the subject. Lisa K. Richardson, B. Christopher Franh and Ronald Asensio, “Prevalence Estimates of Combat-Related PTSD depending on how it is defined. One of our program collaborators placed the percentage among post-9/11 veterans at slightly less than 20%, with 2-5% showing any outward affect This seems supported by articles on the subject. Lisa K. Richardson, B. Christopher Franh and Ronald Asensio, “Prevalence Estimates of Combat-Related PTSD: A Critical Review,” http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2187735/pdf/nihms296290.pdf.

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14. Approimate values for this were seen as analogous to typical visitor metrics for public exhibitions MATTER designed: approximately 10-15% of people are ten minute rushers and will only read the introductory panel and stop at eye-catching moments. Most (75-85%) are the 30-40 minute visitors reading major text panels and looking at all the material. The most rare (5%) is the three-hour visitor who will read every single label. These fall roughly into the same curve as described in Diffusion of Innovations theory the social science theory describing how a likely new idea, product, or practice will be adopted by a given culture.

15. After losing someone she loved, artist Candy Chang painted the side of an abandoned house in her neighborhood in New Orleans with chalkboard paint and stenciled the sentence, ‘Before I die I want to___”. Within a day of the wall’s completion, it was covered in colourful chalk dreams as neighbours stopped and reflected on their lives. www.candychang.com/before-i-die-in-nola/.

16. Each day new introductory signage, written by station hosts, was generated and posted on Peace & Quiet’s Facebook portal as it usually began with a question. Ever wonder what it was like to sleep in a hole in the desert? (Falk). Ever wonder what it’s like to be married to the military? Or have a parent serving in the armed forces, or have a childhood shaped by war? (Code of Support). While we have all been protected…to speak of being protected is not an easy task. (Halloran).

17. On October 29, 2012, New York City a storm surge caused by “Superstorm Sandy” flooded streets, tunnels, and subway lines, cut power in many areas, and caused devastating fires in Queens.

18. On July 20, 2012 12 people were killed and more than 70 injured at a movie theatre in suburban Denver. Cobrallas, when a gunman set off tear gas grenades and fired into the crowd using semi-automatic assault firearms.

19. In a 2009 California school shooting, a 14-year-old boy was reported to have been looking at “violent videos of gang fights and mass shootings” in an effort to learn how to plan a shooting.

20. “Stories We Carry” dialogues hosted by Scott Thompson, and StoryCorps MWF was sourced as the complimentary programming to accompany Basetrack in other cities where it was performed.


22. For more information on Basetrack, see http://basetracklive.com/about/. In a coincidental比拟ing of connections ‘Stories We Carry’ dialogues hosted by Scott Thompson, and StoryCorps MWF was sourced as the complimentary programming to accompany Basetrack in other cities where it was performed.

23. Station questions developed by the team at Center for the Art of Performance, led by Meryl Friedman, Director of Education & Special Initiatives.
Designing a Community Garden

Davide Fassi, Alessandro Sachero, Giulia Simeone: Politecnico di Milano, Italy

ABSTRACT

Politecnico di Milano Coltivando is a convivial garden where people meet, experiment, cultivate crops and share their skills and ideas. Coltivando uses innovative service and spatial design knowledge and community consultation processes. Coltivando is a design research project that is documented throughout its entire process. It is also a social as well as an educational experiment. People from the same neighbourhood yet strangers to one another and design students from the different disciplines of service and spatial design are brought together. This paper is a project review that analyses and explains the context, the main outputs and innovation, the process, the obstacles, the impact, the users’ needs, the transferrability of the solution and its dissemination.

THE IDEA

Coltivando is a public space where people cultivate vegetables in an urban environment within a university campus. At Coltivando it is possible to spend time there and meet people from the neighbourhood and others working in the university. With community gardens, opportunities exist for creative cooperation between planning and design professionals and those who focus on urban agriculture and food systems to reconcile constraints that range from zoning restriction to construction codes. As a community garden, Coltivando was initiated as an opportunity to play a vital role in bringing individuals and communities together; especially in our rapidly changing world and urban environments. It can be seen as a place for a diverse array of people to meet, share experiences, organise events and grow vegetables. Like a “Neighbourhood Lab”, a place that hosts activities to boost socialisation and communication among the people living in the surrounding area to enhance the relationship between people and spaces; we believed that a community garden could also be such a lab. Therefore Coltivando, besides being a garden, is a place of belonging for the surrounding neighbourhood of Bovisa.

MAIN INNOVATIONS

Coltivando is a design experiment conceived within the framework of two research programs run by POLIMI-DESIS Lab, a member of the DESIS Network, at the Politecnico di Milano Design Department. The first program – “Human Cities, reclaiming public spaces” (2010-2012) – worked on the regeneration of public spaces for urban communities. The second – “Feeding Milan, energies for change” (2010-2013) – aims to shorten the food chain in the Milanese region. Coltivando as a project brings together the concerns of both of these programs: it is situated in the public university space of the Politecnico di Milano’s Bovisa campus, allowing the local community to discover a hidden public place and helps people of the community to grow up their own food. It adds to the social and environmental value of the campus and the local community.

Within this framework, the research focus was oriented to make two different design areas – service design and spatial design – work together on the same project. It was a didactic and research experiment to combine competences to understand how they can enhance, as well as constrain, each other both in terms of the designers’ competences and design results. Coltivando includes design elements that are both ‘hard’ (spaces, infrastructures, garden beds, etc.), and ‘soft’ (service, participants, duties, timeframes, etc.). Coltivando had been a design experiment and an exercise to demonstrate how two different disciplinary approaches can help each other to get the best result at the end using the specific tools of spatial design and service design such as master planning, space layout, system maps, personas, storytelling and prototypes, designers worked side by side to make up a system made of place and people feeding each other: Involving potential users, from the early stage of the process, in designing and setting up both the space/hardware and the service/software, led to an integrated result where the place grows and improves itself as well as the community who take care of it. As an educational exercise, the junior designers were pushed to talk to each other to develop a coherent system under the supervision of two senior designers and professors.

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. Public space is often not obvious. When borders between private and public are blurred, new kinds of space are born which, although available to everyone, are not recognised as public. These can be described as ‘Hidden public spaces’; since residents, tourists or regular passers-by are unlikely to visit them unless deliberately directed there. In Milan, such places may even be like ‘a city within a city’ and despite their location on main routes, remain unknown. Others are actually not visible because they are located in a kind of urban backstage. Public university campuses are included in the latter category. Even though they are used by a specific kind of user (people who study or work there) they are perceived by other people as private areas (belonging to the university) even though the university is a public institution and therefore the campus spaces are also public. This is the case for the Politecnico di Milano campus in the Bovisa district, a former industrial area where Coltivando is situated.

Coltivando is a convivial project. Conviviality conveys a sense of sociality and sharing knowledge. Such a concept is extended to the overall project through the multi-disciplinary approach where designers from different backgrounds work together to build a coherent system. In this project, conviviality is also encountered in the participatory approach of the co-design sessions that invited
the community to share their ideas about the up-coming garden; in the location of the garden that blurs the borders of the campus and opens its gates to the neighbourhood, welcoming people from outside the university; in the system, that hosts shared plots where every member of the community can take care; in the community, that always welcomes new members without any specific enrolment procedure; in the layout of the space, where the absence of any fencing invites people to enjoy and respect the place.

As a collaborative service, Coltivando is designed to be a garden where the plots, as well as all the spaces, are shared within the community. Every member has his/her own duty to take care of everything with some members chosen among the others to co-ordinate specific tasks, such as seed planting, watering plants, care of garden tools, when and how to harvest, and communication. Problems, decisions and tasks are shared with the whole of the community.

The funding scheme of Coltivando is unique for many reasons; the garden is set up inside the Politecnico di Milano area as a public space and the university has provided a budget for all the logistics, the paperwork, and the hardware such as soil, steel for the boxes, hoses for watering, to set up the place. Further to this, other costs for the project and the personnel were covered by POLIMI-DESIS Lab as part of their research programs Human Cities and Feeding Milan. Currently, Coltivando is working on a volunteer base composed of community members and some guests who occasionally help in the garden. While contingent extra costs for hardware to improve the place continue to be covered by Politecnico di Milano, participants are also covering small frequent costs such as seeds, new tools and so on.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In the second half of the twentieth century the Bovisa district was subjected to great change due to the closure of almost all the industries located there. The Bovisa Durando campus of the Politecnico, which houses the School of Design, was built at the end of the 90s on the site of Ceretti & Tarfani, a historical company that produced cable railways, and whose presence resulted in the development of Bovisa as a working class district. This continues to form part of the historical memory of the community residents. The new life of the neighbourhood, however, brought an improvement to public transportation and the building of new residential areas. Today it is a green space with places to sit and a café. In spring and summer many students sit outside, enjoy the sun and take part in outdoor activities. The campus remains an island for students and most of the people who knew the place as an industrial site do not see how it has been transformed. The university community and the local residents have very few contact points in common. On the other hand, people living in the Bovisa area will get to know the university life, people and places better, and be involved in activities that could improve their quality of life.

been a strong tradition of community gardens run by working class families since the post-war period. They took advantage of empty spaces in the city and around the factories to grow their own food and to supplement their income. Traditionally, the Milanese urban garden was a small parcel of land situated on the fringes of the industrial sites with factory owners allowing them to be managed by local communities. More recently, the closure of factories and the unrestrained increase in the value of urban land has resulted in the urban garden almost disappearing, even though some those were of social, urban and historical value.

MAIN OUTPUT

Coltivando has four main goals and output aims: social, spatial, productive and educational.

Social: The goal here is to enable two kinds of community (university and neighbourhood) to make contact so as to give added value not only to the campus but also to the district. On one hand the university community will not only inhabit its work space as commuters, during working hours, but as part of a larger group interacting with local residents. On the other hand, people living in the Bovisa area will get to know the university life, people and places better, and be involved in activities that could improve their quality of life. Coltivando is unique for many reasons; the garden is set up inside the Politecnico di Milano area as a public space and the university has provided a budget for all the logistics, the paperwork, and the hardware such as soil, steel for the boxes, hoses for watering, to set up the place. Further to this, other costs for the project and the personnel were covered by POLIMI-DESIS Lab as part of their research programs Human Cities and Feeding Milan. Currently, Coltivando is working on a volunteer base composed of community members and some guests who occasionally help in the garden. While contingent extra costs for hardware to improve the place continue to be covered by Politecnico di Milano, participants are also covering small frequent costs such as seeds, new tools and so on.

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Spatial: Dedicating some of the green areas on the Bovisa campus to a gardening activity gives a new function to a place and involves the design of spatial solutions by students in the disciplines taught in the Politecnico di Milano (design, architecture and engineering). The result is a plot of 900 square metres facing onto one of the main neighbourhood streets that includes:

- boxes for gardening (garden beds made of steel) to be self-constructed with an instruction video and handbook;
- rest areas that are multifunctional and in future could be used for kitchen areas, educational activities, etc.;
- shelters for gardening tools;
- compost areas.

As a result of the onsite co-design activities, the functional distribution reflects people’s wishes concerning where to place things and the spatial dimension of specific areas. Regarding function and shape, the boxes are set in a grid that excludes physical boundaries but allows easy entry into the area, reminiscent of the Roman ‘cardo’ and ‘decumanus’; perpendicular paths that generate a sequential space. Being located in front of the main street it is very visible to people, who often stop to have a look at the vegetables and flowers.
Educational The Coltivando project was one of the first attempts in the Politecnico di Milano School of Design to compel the two different design perspectives of spatial and service design to work together on the same topic. Such an approach gave the students and teachers involved a rare opportunity to develop a more holistic solution.

According to Gustavo Primavera (a graduate student who developed the service project): “The multidisciplinary group warranted the definition of the “design problem” outside normal boundaries, reaching an enabling solution based on a new understanding of the complexity… Coltivando developed as a whole natural system and not as a collection of different parts relating to different disciplines.”

In addition, the student educational side was enriched by the cross-fertilization of some design tools traditionally adopted by one or the other perspective. Graduate students who developed the spatial project, Alessandro Sachero and Sonia Zanzi, observed that “working side by side with service design and developing part of the communication while designing the spaces, helped us to design a coherent and complete solution. The constraints that emerged working with other disciplines were a stimulus to go beyond our single perspective and figure out a real and reliable solution…We had the unprecedented chance to meet another design field, with its methods and tools.”

The students also had the opportunity to engage with a real project from concept to implementation phase. With Coltivando, they were forced to talk to real stakeholders, to network with local gardeners and local authorities, to ask about providers and their costs – thus building the first community of members – and, in some cases, were required to stop and rethink the solution according to its feasibility. This was a starting point for subsequent interdisciplinary collaboration with communication design students too, who later worked with transmedial and communication strategy output.

RESOURCES AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Initially the main design team comprised two senior designers – ourselves [Davide Fassi (researcher and professor in Interior and Spatial Design), and Giulia Simeone (researcher and professor in Service Design)] – and Paola Russo (Product Service System Design). As well as the main team, a pool of satellite-assistants provided their own contributions according to the expertise required.

Following is the history of the project that outlines the main areas of competence involved throughout the process.

Coltivando took over twelve months to develop. The first indications of interest for a community project focused on a vegetable garden began in the autumn of 2011 when five students out of sixty created a test garden for the community interaction. This demonstration experiment came out of a week-long workshop called “Temporary Urban Solutions.” Following this, a design research team was established. According to Sanders and Stappers, “co-creation practised at the early front end of the design development process can have an impact with positive, long-range consequences.” We organised three co-design sessions between May and June 2012. The first was an academic workshop involving people studying and working in the university; the others were community consultations open to local stakeholders and people from the Bovisa neighbourhood. The community-centred design approach was used to engage various stakeholders in the university community as well as in the community of Bovisa, and several tools were developed to enable many people to design their own garden.

In each workshop, designers proposed an in-progress concept of the convivial garden, according to the results of the previous session, and asked for feedback about the possible spatial layout and the rules to manage the future community. We developed tools to collect data and information from the people including questionnaires, space mock-ups and games to help the people to create their garden both in terms of space use and service rules. We split the people into groups of experts and beginners, to better understand the needs and the motivations of both the categories. They were asked to design in response to issues such as where to place the fruit trees, herb and vegetable lots, to create special lots for growing experiments, areas to relax and a playground for children to define the roles of members to run the service and ten basic rules to become a member. These issues became more and more defined and refined after each co-design session. At the end of the three co-design workshops, we used feedback from about a hundred people (experts and beginners, academics and residents) to inspire, and adjust to what was possible, the very first design proposal for the space and for the service model of the garden.

The design challenge at the end of this process was to match people’s desires with what was possible, the very first design proposal for the space and for the service model of the garden. The design challenge at the end of this process was to match people’s desires with what was feasible amid the constraints and the available budget. From this experience, we learnt that this phase of concept creation is very sensitive: the more the concept responds to the brief (from the university) and the earlier the local community is involved in the design process, the better is the result from the working project definition. Such an approach avoids the creation of unrealistically high expectations in the local community about the final result. People are also kept up-to-date with the progress of the project and feel that it is their creation. They remain aware of what is possible to achieve and what it is not.

One of the main outputs from the co-design sessions was not directly associated with design practice, but resulted in strong community-building. Through meeting at the workshop, people...
started to get to know each other; to understand each other’s competencies and to develop respect for each other – and this resulted in the development of a strong community base to run the service and care for the garden. As a consequence, strict rules were not required to make the garden run. This was another important outcome we learnt about designing a collaborative service. Throughout the service design phase, we stressed very much the issue of the rules to be a member of the community, such as defining work shifts, roles, timing and communication processes to keep community cohesion. At the end of this phase, moving on with the prototype of Coltivando, we found that soft rules and auto-regulation happen spontaneously and create a strong community that is able to trigger a democratic process to allocate the roles and determine the best way to run the garden.

After the co-design sessions, we presented the final working project and the final budget for the project start-up, to obtain funds from the university administration. In order to keep the attention and enthusiasm of the neighbourhood alive after the co-design sessions, during the summer the design team installed a ‘Box Zero’ prototype in the space. This was a demonstration box with basil and tomatoes that aimed to test the effectiveness of the box project, as well as to test the level of interest of the community gardens in Milan. The tradition in which these spaces provide any teaching in disciplines related to the cultivation and production of food has generated some concerns in the world of community gardens in Milan. The notion of a convivial garden as a tool for reunification has great potential in the formation of a community: the act of building and then sowing, cultivating and taking care of the plants, as well as harvesting the food produced, all collectively contribute to strengthening ties within the community that is being created, while at the same time, the opportunity for individuals to become self-sufficient in the production of fruit and vegetables is created. One year after the opening, the community of Coltivando totals twenty-five to thirty permanent members with an even increasing number of visitors who occasionally participate in maintenance activities and take advantage of the opportunity to spend some time in, and enjoy, a public green area.

The organisation of the community of Coltivando has been one of the main focuses of the design research project: to set up an independent group where members are able to self-regulate and manage critical issues that arise. As mentioned, a strategy was employed to designate co-ordinators for different activities such as the collection of the seeds, compost and irrigation as well as the management of communication. These co-ordinators became the reference points for other members for technical and practical support. This was important, as the group of people who attend the garden is very heterogeneous in terms of social and professional backgrounds as well as personal experience. The approach has created a dynamic organism capable of creating new incentives and an intense exchange of knowledge.

Some stories include:
— Rossetta, who is a fifty-three-year-old psychologist working in corporate training, used to be the first to be part of Coltivando. Even before the opening she took part in the testing phase, taking care of the first garden bed. Amazed by the potential of the Coltivando community she was able to involve other members in activities related to her work, such as writing a joint article with a partner or looking for collaboration in a new project that required different skills.
— Tommaso, who is a twenty-eight-year-old computer engineer and is passionate about and active in issues of environmental sustainability and self-sufficiency in food and farming. In Coltivando he found the place to put his ideas into practice. Although he doesn’t live in the Bovisa district and he is not part of Politecnico di Milano, every Saturday he crosses the city to spend time in the
garden, cultivating and sharing in the knowledge and experiences of other people.

— Agostina, who is a forty-five-year-old agronomist; she took part in all the co-design workshops despite being nervous at the idea of being enclosed in a university classroom, as she has always preferred to be outside and doing physical work. After a year’s participation in the activities of the group, she has become a point of reference for all the members — the ‘expert’ of the group. If there were any doubts about how to sow, or how to treat a sick plant or whether the compost is too wet, Agostina always has the answer (and if she hasn’t, she will go home and consult her text books).

TRANSFERABILITY AND DUPLICABILITY

In the course of its first year of life, Coltivando generated a widespread interest, from public and private organisations, in creating activities in the space at different levels and with different forms of interaction. Coltivando has become both a hospitable place and an experience to be shared.

From March to July 2013 a group of students and faculty of the Politecnico di Milano together with associations and members of Coltivando conceived ‘Il Sabato della Bovisa – Saturday in Bovisa’, a platform for actions, services, prototyping space and performances hosted at the campus and close to the vegetable garden, to reinforce the goal of bringing the district and the university together. More than two hundred and fifty primary school children in the neighbourhood came to visit Coltivando during April to observe the growing of vegetables, explore the area and assess the possibility of replicating the project in their spaces. Since December 2012 Coltivando has participated in activities of promotion and interaction organised by ZAC, a farmers’ market that includes both organic farms and local associations. Then, based on the experience of Coltivando, in January 2014 the first results of In un giardino – In a garden were presented to the district. In un giardino was a set of co-design activities in eight urban green spaces of the neighbourhood, in collaboration with two local associations in the area and with the students of the Final Design Studio of both BSc in Interior Design and MSc Communication/Movie Design.

In June 2013 at the Agriculture Civic Award and in February 2014 at the Ortofebbraio, Coltivando was submitted in the Urban Gardens category, putting forward the idea that the garden in the city has to be a place for biodiversity, a social incubator of practical knowledge and a public place that promotes the use of green spaces for food production. Coltivando is often used for practical assignments by spatial, product and communication design students to encourage a consideration of urban nature, the spread of biological wealth and natural resources, as well as encouraging the aesthetic diversity of human habitats.

DISSEMINATION

The dissemination of the results is twofold. The first started with a purely local activity of publicising the commencement of work, distribution of flyers, coming into contact with key players in the area such as local council, associations and existing urban gardens.

In October 2012, the Facebook page was created – today it has almost 2000 likes. This is the tool most used by the members to tell each other what is going on week after week. In support of this page, in December 2012, the website www.coltivando.polimi.it opened (with the aim of explaining the design process and using it as an entry into other media devices such as YouTube) where there is a collection of videos of co-design activities; the Flickr page showing the photo gallery; and a blog that records the sowing sequence and best practices used in cultivation in the form of a weekly diary, which provides a useful reference for decision-making season after season.

Since the beginning, Coltivando has attracted the attention of major national media, with articles being published in newspapers and magazines such as Ottagono and Inventario. Coltivando has also been presented at a number of conferences and international competitions along with other research-action projects.

Opposite
Figure 2: Coltivando – the gardeners, Milan, 2012. People in the early stage of the community building the garden beds. Photograph Alessandro Sachero.

Above
Figure 3: Coltivando – flyer, Milan, 2012. An example of a communication flyer used to invite the community to come to the garden at the very beginning. Currently, a flyer like this is issued weekly to present the main activity for the coming Saturday. Photograph Paola Russo.
WHAT NEXT?
This project enabled the research team to garner the interest of the local community, associations, informal groups of people and public bodies such as the municipality. It also has been recognised by other research teams within the Department of Design of the Politecnico di Milano as a valuable resource for both researchers and students to use as a means of experimentation for other design fields such as communication and product. This allowed the research team to engage the multidisciplinary approach with the Department of Architecture and the Department of Management Engineering – the project here was called compUS – incubation and settings for social practices. The project includes four main goals to be achieved by the end of 2016. One of them is to replicate the Coltivando project in another green area of the neighbourhood by adapting the system (both service and spatial/product solutions) to a different context and by involving over 75 people, including categories of user like the NEET (not in education, employment or training, 16-33 years old). This project has received the Polisocial Award 2014. Furthermore, some of the Coltivando users have started to collaborate with two kindergartens in the neighbourhood: the Politecnico di Milano one, which is based in the same campus, and the Comunale di via Guerzoni. They help the two schools interact with Coltivando by letting them use some garden boxes for small activities with the young children. In the Comunale di via Guerzoni, Coltivando users are also working as volunteers with the kids and the teachers to set up a small garden corner within the open-air spaces of Coltivando. This collaboration is still in progress and there is the potential that it could lead the research team to develop future solutions more focused on this young target.

NOTES
7. Temporary Urban Solutions’ workshop was held by Prof Davide Fassi and provided the MiC Product Service Environment at the School of Design of the Politecnico di Milano. Helped by Emily Ballantine Brodie, a practitioner from Urban Reformation, Melbourne.
13. The other three goals are the start up of PLUG – the social TV of the neighbourhood in collaboration with Images Lab research team of the communication design research area and RAA – a self-built and managed platform that will host sport and cultural activities around the neighbourhood in collaboration with the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies; the long-term economic sustainability of these three main outcomes is in collaboration with the Management Engineering department.
14. Polisocial Award is an initiative created by Polisocial, the academic program for social responsibility launched in 2012 by the Politecnico di Milano in collaboration with Fondazione Politecnico di Milano.
15. Polisocial aims to place the university in close contact with the dynamics of change in society, extending the university’s mission to social issues and needs that arise from the territory, on both a local and global level. Polisocial marks a new way to build and apply knowledge and academic excellence, combining social engagement with the two traditional pillars of academic activity: teaching and research. The award is granted every year to the best research projects with social purposes. www.polisocial.polimi.it
Unsolicited Interiors

Charity Edwards : Monash University, Australia

ABSTRACT

Developed from a contemporary theory lecture regarding economic realities and guerrilla practice, the studio Unsolicited Interiors proposes political engagement as a critical operation of interior architecture agency via the exploration of contested urban volumes, unsolicited intervention and choreographic occupation. A text and image review of this studio considers student response to political texts, design speculation, and public space disruptions through performance, photography, large-scale model-making and self-initiated actions. Discussion of a series of collaborative interventions with visiting Berlin-based collective raumlabor reinforces a positioning of design activism through acts of provocation and social inquiry as critical to spatial decisions in, and of, the city.

THE STUDIO AS SPATIAL AGENCY

Studio investigations developed from a contemporary theory lecture given in the previous semester titled Guerrilla Economy, which generated an unexpected volume of student response. The lecture reviewed economic recession, notions of austerity, socially constructed design values, critiqued methods of inquiry sanctioned by dominating political agendas and addressed guerilla design practice as a new and potentially confronting mode of operation for many students. They were asked to respond directly to the provocation: faced with a downturn in the global economy and also the local construction industry, what are the controversial experimental and self-initiated projects that can enable excluded practitioners (like ourselves) to reclaim position, power and even territory within tightly-held or increasingly-privatised spaces? For students of interior architecture not previously exposed to ideas of alternative spatial practice or tactical urbanism, the lecture provoked deep questioning and for many, the first recognition that in order to critique the city, learning, questioning and engagement must occur from, and within, the city streets.1

This paper discusses a third year design studio – Unsolicited Interiors – run as part of Monash University’s undergraduate interior architecture program. The studio worked to uncover disputed public spaces in the city and reconnect the interior to urban public space through student-initiated interventions. The formulation of the studio framework owes a debt to Volume’s exploration of unsolicited architectures and Hyde’s research regarding self-initiated projects at the traditional edges of practice.2 The Berlin-based urban collective raumlabor also acted as precedent for both pedagogical context and spatial practice, with members visiting to engage with students via lectures and workshops, and ascertaining the integrity of proposed student work through formal design critiques and informal discussion.

Table 1, with new work iteratively responding to prior actions. Each project was framed by a series of spatial strategies (mapping, precedent projects, physical model-making, diagramming, drawing, choreographed actions), supporting resources (radical texts, guest lectures, design activism blogs, recorded lectures, films) and design experiences (workshops, material sourcing, interdisciplinary collaboration, public interventions, large-scale prototyping) to reveal the many alternative strategies available to address engagement and self-initiated design action.

INTRODUCTION

Despite volatile financial factors affecting the profession of interior architecture, few alternative modes of practice are discussed which enable students to participate within a wider political economy that largely determines how, where and why we work. This paper reviews a recent interior architecture studio that positioned itself as precedent for both pedagogical context and spatial practice. By giving students the chance to consider these political and social expectations and deprivations, and to create targeted modes of action previously unimagined or unsupported by vested interests in the city.

A key qualification of the term agency was made for students: even when we are working as an individual we are never working alone. This underscored the challenge that personal agency and societal norms tend to operate as tangled oppositions,1 open to multiple interpretations. Expanding the notion of ‘interior volume’ to include broad social content, the studio aimed to reduce a dependency on form-making aesthetics and object fetishism in undergraduate design processes as methods inadequate to negotiate complex networks of built form, occupied space and lived experience.2 Focusing on the production of space as inherently temporal and political in action, the studio asked students to consider ongoing interventions and disruptions within the interiority of their city. Acts of provocation were seen as critical – both embedded in the pedagogy to disrupt student design process norms, and as a means by which students could initiate dialogue(s) with spaces and occupants of the city.

THE STUDIO FRAMEWORK

The Unsolicited Interiors studio was divided into six projects, outlined in Table 1, with new work iteratively responding to prior actions. Each project was framed by a series of spatial strategies (mapping, precedent projects, physical model-making, diagramming, drawing, choreographed actions), supporting resources (radical texts, guest lectures, design activism blogs, recorded lectures, films) and design experiences (workshops, material sourcing, interdisciplinary collaboration, public interventions, large-scale prototyping) to reveal the many alternative strategies available to address engagement and self-initiated design action.

1. Awan, Schneider & Till argue that new methods of spatial agency are required to short-circuit the continued experience of design practitioners as ‘impotent passengers on the rollercoaster of boom and bust cycles’.

IDEA JOURNAL 2014 Design Activism: Developing models, modes and methodologies of practice
Table 1: Unsolicited Interior studio outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Critical Operations of Urban Engagement</th>
<th>Spatial Strategies</th>
<th>Project Scope</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban Mapping + Urban Projection</td>
<td>Examination of existing urban conditions, comparative studies of precedent projects, and methods of documenting contested sites.</td>
<td>Introduction to peers, researching historical records, mapping volumetric experiences, collaborative networks.</td>
<td>As a studio-wide group, prepare a detailed collage plan of city sites in context, then in small groups compile specific precedent projects onto the map as a scaled comparison of spatial practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsolicited Interior as Speculation</td>
<td>Interior qualities of urban volumes and spatial intervention, theories of design activism and socio-political critique.</td>
<td>Documentation of speculative action and experience, physical model-making from found material sources.</td>
<td>Individually proposed intervention within a city site in response to researched context, personal experience and critique of current models of occupation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Phase of Engagement</td>
<td>Processes of city-based engagement and collaboration, The performative nature of interior experiences, theories of civic rights and guerrilla urbanism.</td>
<td>Negotiation with peers, diagramming of behaviors, design of thresholds and temporal activities.</td>
<td>Reconfigure previous proposal as an individually performed intervention, and in dynamic response to two other student proposals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior Re-Enact</td>
<td>1:1 scale testing of physical interventions, theories of micro-territories, narrative and the city.</td>
<td>Prototyping, time-based documentation, civic engagement.</td>
<td>Performed actions from individual projects within the streets of the city, concealed within a 1:1 prototype of each student’s intervention and documentation of passer-by responses using guerrilla filmmaking techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupy</td>
<td>Practiced disruption of urban behaviour, interrogation of techniques of public intervention.</td>
<td>Urban intervention, sourcing of found materials, testing of performative actions, group negotiations.</td>
<td>Claim the personal within public space, map/document the effect of the intervention, absorb the feedback from passer-by and reconfigure the group’s interruption of the public realm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsolicited Sites of Prolonged Action</td>
<td>Contested urban spaces, movement of bodies through the city, detailed exploration of physical intervention, material specifications, presentation and communication.</td>
<td>Iterative design processes, developing brief from detailed testing of actions, critique of modes of production (drawing, diagramming, physical model-making, choreographic representation), detailed refinement of physical proposal.</td>
<td>In response to initial proposal, propose additional urban intervention in new location and choreograph the ongoing interior experiences of both sites.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SPECULATIONS AND INTERVENTIONS**

This discussion examines three student works produced as part of the final project. Self-initiated Sites of Prolonged Action – and includes individual student responses and group collaboration beyond the confines of studio. During this project, students worked to reconfigure their earlier proposal and discover a new site for intervention to create a dual urban interior engagement – that is, a choreographed and ongoing critique of the Melbourne CBD.

Critical operations of spatial agency were self-directed by individual students, interrogated by the tutor and student peers, and based on research of city context and spatial practice tested through diagramming, drawing, filmed performance and physical model-making. The basis of the studio’s concerns was that the dual interventions be considered as a choreographed interior experience to enable a wider positive engagement with the city. In designing the final project, the students were required to prolong and expand their original proposals for an unsolicited urban interior; detail the lived experience of that interiority, register the bodily movements within and between each of their spaces, and negotiate the politics of such an ongoing provocation in the city.

Hinkel suggests that informal exploration of interactions, perceptions and changing relationships, located in and between public spaces can reveal the urban interior that we occupy as a contested experience. Informal critiques in the studio reiterated design strategies geared less towards the aesthetic qualities or physical form of urban environments, and more towards the ‘practised place of space’. Emphasis was placed on the production of interior architecture within the city as an intermediary zone: not an object, not a closed-off final condition, but performative and process-based, an ongoing improvisation and action. The Self-initiated Sites of Prolonged Action project allowed students to develop time-based manoeuvres – integrating current and future alternative uses of the Melbourne CBD via their own experiences in the urban field. The studio concerned itself with providing students with interdisciplinary tools to uncover a project in some ways already in progress in the city, and then to provocatively intervene in this situation.

**DEMOCRATIC HUB**

This design speaks to barely-registered structures of exclusion within the democratic city and the public reveal of political processes of urban experience. The student’s research uncovered Governor George Gipps’ dismissal of public squares planned in early 19th century Melbourne to prevent the popular thrall of democracy. This historical trigger led to a series of mappings, all underscoring the use of red braided ropes as a method of control in important urban centres. Drawing on the loaded imagery and materiality of glossy red ropes, the student worked to invert these assumed symbols of power and create new public gathering spaces and council chambers.
within the Swanston Street portico of the Melbourne Town Hall – saturating the experience of arrival into these spaces through multiple translucent thresholds, at once threaded together, tactile, brashly red and radical in identity.

Mozas states that ‘public space reflects the wishes and desires of the public which creates it. These aspirations give content to the space where human representation takes place.’

By building on memories of recent public protest and historical references to political action in the streets of Melbourne, the student elected to return civic functions of the Town Hall to the street and created an accessible terrain of provocation within this newly captured public interior – platforms, ramped walkways and plinths for expanded public assembly and community discussion groups, while the usual thoroughfare through the classical columns of the portico on Swanston Street was maintained, so that unexpected collisions between speakers, activists, community members, councillors and passers-by could create spontaneous engagement with the now openly democratic politics of urban governance.

The student paired this intervention with a soon-to-be-demolished modernist office block and public concourse in the financial district of Collins Street – offering a space of political performance and entertainment to the city. Creating a loosely terraced landscape of audience and performer spaces beneath a high-level rigging system integrated with an open steel structure and oversized light fittings, this alternative democratic hub focused on the provision of space for other voices and narratives within the tightly controlled corporate precinct. Incorporating the features of braided rope structures into the layout of lighting and audio amplification systems, the student sought to co-opt assumed power structures and develop a performance-ready interior within a familiar urban volume, without dictating the ultimate programming of the space. As Mozas notes, design strategies such as these support Koolhaas’ notion of specific indeterminacy in the city – ‘specific to this location and indeterminate due to the fact that the plan of action is not implemented according to pre-set values’.
Linking the two democratic hubs through the CBD, the student also choreographed a suite of digital incursions into laneways, tram stops and other thoroughfares – alerting occupants of the city to political decision-making events and new public narratives staged in co-opted urban spaces.

THE PHANTOM AND THE LABYRINTH

The focus for this design was an ongoing loop of operations in the city conceived to change over time in response to occupants' personal critiques. To enable rewriting of the city, the student created a scaffold of unexpected spaces and public behaviours, mediated via immersive engagement in the continued churn of the Melbourne CBD. Functioning day and night, and registered through social media platforms, this design aimed to address notions of the civic realm and urban development, and how these concerns are communicated to and between everyday occupants. The design linked interventions that privileged strategy and awareness above detailed interior environments. And although initially reluctant to disband a focus on form making, the student eventually proposed a cyclical approach to issues prevalent in the selected urban sites. Recognising that meaningful change occurs in response to discovery, awareness and open discussion, the student established a process of trial, implementation, reflection and iterative action to resolve various blighted areas of the Melbourne CBD. Departing from a usual focus on finely crafted formal responses to a design brief, open-ended design strategies were explored and space provided for others to adapt the interventions to their own ends.

Two sites for intervention were initially approached independently, and framed as The Phantom (the Melbourne Town Hall portico) and The Labyrinth (a corporate laneway accessed from Collins Street and Little Collins Street. The Phantom identified civic qualities of the Town Hall – discussion, debate and community change – and reconfigured these within a slowly shifting cavern-like interior for public assembly created within the Swanston Street portico, bringing the idealised functions of the council chambers to the occupants of the city. The Labyrinth was conceived as a forum between two venerable gender-specific clubs – The Melbourne Club and The Lyceum Club – and to encourage new members to enter the ageing institutions and reconsider their relevance to contemporary urban experience.

After reflecting on the challenges of transdisciplinary group work, the student began to approach the dual interventions in a fundamentally different manner. The design responded to other projects in the studio and incorporated multiple interventions into its expanding sphere of influence. The Phantom – now as strategy – detached from a specific site and networked with other locations through the city: shadowing occupants, registering their discoveries and dislikes, and streaming live video and digital experiences through a custom-made phone app to other occupants in the city. The Labyrinth similarly broke free from its physical form and emerged as the social relationship of the city itself – embedded with dualities, conflicts and spatial contests that are necessarily uncovered, discussed and negotiated by multiple individuals. The design is primarily interested in the discovery and organisation of interior environments – physical interventions are simply part of a cycle and related to the city as an occupation, which is sensory, political, technological and experimental. Ultimately, The Phantom and The Labyrinth is a project that supports personal and collective activities that can immerse, diverge and radically alter the experience of public space.
COLLABORATION BEYOND STUDIO – OCCUPY!

At the midpoint of their final projects, students also collaborated with visiting practitioners raumlabor to create urban interventions in multiple sites within the Melbourne CBD. By deliberately disrupting individual design process, the Occupy! workshop helped to cut across students’ personal agendas. A public lecture of raumlabor projects and practice and Q&A session was given by Christof Mayer and Andreas Krauth, and students were assigned to trans-disciplinary groups tasked with sourcing specific domestic materials – plastic wrap, buckets and brooms, and hazard tape – for a series of actions. Groups were led to several city street locations with ambiguously delineated public and private zones, and asked to ‘claim’ a piece of personal space by identifying and then shifting the usual occupations of the public realm through ‘domestic’ actions of appropriation by utilising materials they had sourced. Students needed to consider how ‘personal use’ could operate as provocation within common spaces, select micro-sites for occupation, negotiate strategic intervention in the city, and to carefully question the aim of their act of occupation.

The students faced extreme (even for Melbourne) weather conditions, combative security guards, and varying degrees of public engagement during their interventions, and were obliged to carry out their spatial practice as a mode of inquiry – to question their own roles in the intervention, explain their intent to interested passers-by and creatively circumvent officious private security guards – in order to continue their ongoing interventions. Studio tutors and raumlabor also shadowed the groups during the interventions – alternating between providing peer support and design interrogation as required by the student actions. The performed interventions were mapped and documented through photography, filming and social media, and students conducted critique sessions with raumlabor by co-opting an unused delivery bay of a nearby laneway.

Initially Christof Mayer noted the reluctance of many students to transgress behavioural norms in the city, despite their eagerness to do so in a theoretical setting. Andreas Krauth also questioned the motivation of some groups for their confronting interventions into public space, suggesting that action does not always need to be radically ‘political’ in a didactic sense to represent real change.

In response to this interim critique, groups relocated to alternate sites in the city, and repeatedly tested new actions with authentic engagement with passers-by. Provocations that employed game-playing techniques and cheery inclusion of others to occupy contested spaces often sidestepped any security presence, with guards unsure of how to respond to play-oriented rather than overtly political disruptions. More deliberately constructed interventions were however easily identified and ordered removed by security guards. Thus students began to address their own spatial agency and defend the public use of urban volumes in concert with the city and those who occupy it. By simply pursuing a claim of personal experience in public space the students recognised they were engaging in inherently everyday political actions that demanded a critique of how, why and by (and for) whom the city is regulated.

Figure 4: Narrative documentation of student intervention in collaboration with raumlabor. Photomontage: Karen Weston, 2013.
CONCLUSION

The Unsolicited Interiors studio declared interior architecture as a critical operation within the wider political economy of the city and sought to expand design pedagogy through active disruption of both the urban fabric and student assumptions regarding their own spatial practice. The aim of the studio was to enable students to uncover and fully participate in a shifting, relational city with sometimes barely visible vested interests that direct normative, controlled environments. The studio included a wide spectrum of activities structured to produce unexpected effects upon the students and their occupation of urban interiors, at all times encouraging a culture of open critique, social inquiry, unsolicited actions and spatial agency.

As students worked through the performative and disruptive behaviours demanded by the actively provocative approach of the studio, many contextualised their own roles in design practice and recognised social and political responsibilities inherent in their development as designers. Students expanded their assumptions of spatial practice, identified their own lived experience in the city, and conceived alternative methods of engagement in the complex economic volatility that surrounds the profession of interior architecture.

Students were able to access new and challenging modes of operation within the supportive environment of the studio – deconstruction of radical texts, large-scale prototyping, collaboration with trans-disciplinary practitioners, negotiated group actions, peer debate and ongoing critique – but the real success of the semester lay in the profound changes to their own design practice.

Shifting attention from purely form-based responses within the design process, many students recognised the limits of an emphasis on aesthetics in their own decision-making. Though initially reluctant to depart from this mainstream practice, the ongoing events of the studio encouraged students to pursue provocation, public engagement and new methodologies of interior architecture practice that question the very urban environment we occupy – expanding the aims of the studio into their everyday lived experience.

NOTES

1. Arjen Oosterman, ed., Volume #14: Unsolicited Architecture (Amsterdam: Archis Publishers, 2007). Based on the work of a design studio run by Ole Bouman at MIT.
Contributory Economies, Design Activism and the DIY Urbanism of Renew Newcastle

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ABSTRACT

This paper will deploy French philosopher Bernard Stiegler’s neo-Marxist notion of the contributory economy to explore conceptions and practices of DIY (Do It Yourself) urbanism, with a specific focus on disused interior spaces. Reference will be made to contemporary design and architectural discourses on DIY urbanism and design activism, particularly in relation to the Renew Newcastle scheme in Newcastle, Australia. Although Renew is now a recognised model for urban regeneration, it began in 2008 as a socially-orientated experiment within the unoccupied shopfronts and tenancies of this rapidly-transforming post-industrial city. Its DIY urbanism occurs alongside established institutional and commercial entities and as such, it could be superficially understood as an extension of, rather than an alternative to, mainstream project procurement models. Here, Stiegler’s invocations of contributory economies, driven by an ethic of care or cura, suggest a way of understanding Renew Newcastle’s urbanism as a participatory economy coexistent with the same capitalistic economy that prompted the urban decline it addresses.

INTRODUCTION

In a 2013 interview titled ‘We are entering an era of contributory work’,1 Stiegler argues that the twenty-first century heralds the emergence of the contributory economy as an alternative to that of both nineteenth century ‘productivism’2 and the subsequent twentieth century consumerism. According to Stiegler, the contributory model differs from its predecessor through its focus on sociality, participation and heterarchic production methodologies. For Stiegler, the contributory model replaces mainstream consumerism, leading him to declare that ‘consumerism has had its day’.3 It is the contention of the present paper that the DIY urbanism of Renew Newcastle can be understood as an example of Stiegler’s contributory economy and attendant ethic of care that coexists with, rather than supersedes, mainstream consumerism. Based in Newcastle, Australia, Renew contributes significantly to its host city’s complex and unique urban condition, accommodating an expanding artisanal ‘maker’ culture alongside the world’s largest coal export port, 200kms from Australia’s largest city (Sydney). In 1997, the departure of the BHP steel works from Newcastle undermined the economic cycles upon which the city was formerly based as well as the traditional proletarian identity of the region. Like the earthquake event a decade before, this dramatic change placed the city in a state of flux. By the turn of the millennium, and despite the growth of newly developed regions around the city, Newcastle’s central business district remained in decline due to speculative investment patterns and movements of capital away from its traditional centres of economic and cultural stability. Many retail tenancies shifted from their former CBD locations to new peripheral suburban developments, effectuating an evacuation of Newcastle’s inner city generally and the main street (Hunter Street) specifically.4 Even so, the dereliction and abandonment that ensued spurned new modes of occupation and participatory models of economic activity. The temporary reoccupation of empty retail and commercial spaces in the CBD facilitated by the Renew Newcastle scheme during the last five years is an example of design activism transforming the failures of the spaces of capitalism into alternative modes of architectural and spatial practice: modes not unique to Newcastle, but certainly endemic to it.

With this in mind, and in response to this journal’s theme of ‘Design Activism’, the present paper concerns itself with a particular problematisation of capitalism and a subsequent theorisation of...
an alternative and more socially-oriented economic and spatial model. Focus is on the relation between recent discussions and practices of DIY (Do It Yourself) urbanism and Stiegler's notion of ‘economies of contribution’. These practices appear to resonate with Stiegler’s notion of ‘contributory economies’ because they are not reliant upon the commodification of a discrete product or building outcome by an independent client body. Rather, projects are self-initiated as part of a deliberate attempt to circumvent standardised procurement methods that exclude the ‘users’ and/or the public from the production process. Driven by a concern for an active public realm, these low-budget and self-initiated practices and projects are often a reaction to difficult fiscal circumstances associated with urban de-investment and decay (Figure 1). By drawing upon Stiegler’s notions to engage with specific conceptions and examples of DIY urbanism, both the opportunities and challenges of this design approach will be identified, including its discernible coexistence with mainstream capitalism and consumerism. This paper concentrates on two fields of discourse: contemporary design and architectural discussions outlining conceptions of DIY urbanism, including Renew Newcastle and the philosophical writings of Stiegler. Stiegler’s writings are influenced by contemporary Marxist discourse1 and by the writings of post-structuralist philosopher Gilles Deleuze.2

URBANISATION AND CONSUMERISM: MAINSTREAM AND ALTERNATIVE PRACTICES

The concept of consumerism has been historically conceptualised as inseparable from the urbanisation of the built environment, particularly with respect to the expansion of post-industrial urban markets and the consumerism of the nineteenth century. Architectural theorist and historian Kenneth Frampton argues that the emergence of shopping centres in the mid-nineteenth century was a key moment for the architectural disciplines because design became tied to consumerist forces in the city: a space dense with retail opportunities and products.3 As such, many theorists aligned with Marxism rejected the city in its entirety as a zone inherently geared to the expansion of capitalism. Writing in 2004, eminent ethnologist Marc Augé argued that architecture is also central to the globalisation of cities and the obliteration of place-specificity.4 Similarly, urban geographer David Harvey suggests that architecture and urban development support the fiscal conditions and organisation of labour essential for capitalism’s expansion.5 Both Augé and Harvey criticise the architecture of a hegemonic capitalist city, continually expanding and attracting potential consumers to itself. This model is the antithesis of many post-industrial cities, which, while aspiring to the attractions of the global and networked city, become increasingly marginalised because of the departure of capital away from their centres. As civic areas progressively lose the capacity to generate capital and encourage consumerism, vacancy replaces the zone of commerce and its associated programmatic networks. For Augé, this vacancy engenders a dispersal of power, capital and urban activity away from its centre and towards the periphery. Yet in the twenty-first century city, this dispersal has created opportunities for non-traditional urbanism and architectures to emerge; their attendant production methodologies and programs situated outside of the traditional boundaries of capitalism but simultaneously inside its abandoned commercial interiors, buildings and urban landscapes.

DIY urbanism6 has been positioned as a post-Marxist, post-industrialisation production methodology7 and is (similar to the contributory model) closely associated with the figure of the ‘amateur’8 and the technologies of open-source software and online social networks.9 As a notion and term, DIY urbanism is used in contemporary design and architectural discourses to encompass a range of different ‘bottom-up’, 10 ‘citizen-led’11 and ‘grassroots’12 activities occurring in existing city spaces. The projects of DIY urbanism could be understood as a form of ‘tactical urbanism’,13 ‘place-making’ and ‘tactical urbanism’.14 The label of DIY urbanism is associated with a wide spectrum of projects, particularly those experimental ‘tactical interventions’15 occurring in the interstitial spaces between and within buildings, public spaces and ‘shopholistic’ art projects, community gardens made by local residents, guerrilla knitting and seed bombing to name a few. Regardless of their location (inside or outside buildings) and type, these DIY projects temporarily transform the surrounding urban condition. Urban theorist and writer Joni Taylor notes that DIY urbanism usually operates outside of sanctioned financial, legal and institutional frameworks: ‘It looks beyond the Masterplan and reimagines the idea of the urban utopia, not as the functionalist failed city of the past, but as a better place to live’.16 Irrespective of their professional training, designers and architects may also be the initiates of DIY projects through their involvement in the design, production and project occupation phases; deploying temporary and unusual materials and interventionist processes normally considered to be outside the remit of professional practice. According to Australian architect Rory Hyde, these alternative practices are a form of design activism enabling artists, designers and architects to address their civic and social responsibilities through the creation of public space.17

Alternative DIY practices exist in a complex interrelation with mainstream DIY and consumerism. As argued elsewhere, this interrelation was particularly evident in the co-option of DIY techniques and practices by the North American counterculture of the late 1960s and early 1970s.18 Architectural and urban theorist Mini Zeger also distinguishes DIY urbanism from other commercially driven forms of DIY.19 Even so, she notes that the outcomes and products of DIY urbanism may superficially resemble those of mainstream DIY practice, retail and commerce. Thus ‘Do-yourself urbanists’ are somewhat paradoxically bound to, yet differentiated from, the mainstream DIY community and its attendant consumerism.20

[DIY urbanists] are motivated more by grassroots activism than by the kind of home-ec craft projects (think pickling, IKEA-hacking and knitting) sponsored by mainstream DIY and consumerism. As argued elsewhere, this interrelation was particularly evident in the co-option of DIY techniques and practices by the North American counterculture of the late 1960s and early 1970s.21 For Stiegler, however, capitalism has an inbuilt and unavoidable obsolescence extending from its displacement of the issues of humanity, interconnectedness and sociality from technological production systems. This displacement is evident in the segregations of labour and economic markets, which obfuscate socially beneficial and direct participation in production.22 In his 2004 text The Decadence of Industrial Democracies, Stiegler argues that consumption initially developed by harnessing the forces and capacities of human desire and culturs the Latin term for private leisure humon,23 Human desire alone is nonetheless insufficient for sustaining consumerist economic and design activity. For consumerism to self-perpetuate there must also be a perceived and insatiable need to consume and embrace an ever-expanding range of new products, goods and services. Accordingly, consumerism must transform itself and desire into business need or neg: the calculable, necessity-driven aspects of existence.24 This transformation of desire into need produces a scenario in which the natural balance between utram and negot is overturned in favour of an artificially elevated sense of necessity reflecting all aspects of life. To encourage consumer activity, Stiegler also argues that there must be an

A REMEDY AND ALTERNATIVE TO CONSUMERISM: DIY PRODUCTION AND THE FIGURE OF THE AMATEUR

The aforementioned themes of urbanisation, creativity and consumerism inflect much of Stiegler’s discourse, including The Decadence of Industrial Democracies: Deleuze and Discursively, Volume 1 (2004); Pour une nouvelle critique de l’économie politique ou For a New Critique of Political Economy (2009); and the aforementioned interview. We are entering an era of contributory work (2013). Stiegler posits ‘contributory economies’ as an alternative emerging economic model to the orthodoxies and inflexible practices of the capitalist system and its attendant ‘culture’ industries. The latter are seen by Stiegler as an extension of capitalism through a central focus on profit rather than social and cultural transformation.25 He, like Marx himself, accepts not only the inevitability of capitalism but its capacity to invade every aspect of contemporary life. As Augé notes, ‘The Decadence of Industrial Democracies’

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accompanying transformation in the relations and connections between humans and the material world. Promoting the ‘chronic and structural obsolescence’ of objects encourages consumers and individuals to replace seemingly redundant items with new products. Consumers therefore develop superficial, empty and ‘disposable’ relations with objects and the material world, resulting in an attitude and ethic of ‘carelessness’.

As an alternative to the all-pervasive capitalist economic model, Stiegler outlines the more socially-orientated economy of contribution which is (like DIY urbanism) bound to the figure of the ‘amateur’, the self-producer and the do-it-yourselfer, rather than the passive consumer. For Stiegler; the inevitable obsolescence of capitalism has enabled the current ‘reign of amateur’ to emerge. Amateurs or ‘do-it-yourselfers’ are essential to Stiegler’s contributory economy because of their direct investment in the products that they both produce and consume. It is the complex interwining and blurring of production and consumption processes that differentiates the contributory economy from mainstream consumerism: thus the ‘contributor’ is not just a producer or simply a consumer. Of note is Stiegler’s differentiation between two types of do-it-yourselfer: the ‘traditional amateur’ aligned with participatory economies; and the goal-focused do-it-yourselfer – otherwise known as ‘un bricoleur du dimanche’ or ‘Sunday handyman’, aligned with traditional consumerism.

Of note is Stiegler’s differentiation between two types of do-it-yourselfer: the ‘traditional amateur’ aligned with participatory economies; and the goal-focused do-it-yourselfer – otherwise known as ‘un bricoleur du dimanche’ or ‘Sunday handyman’, aligned with traditional consumerism. The traditional or artisanal amateur is, for Stiegler: ‘primarily motivated by their interests rather than by economic reasons. They can also develop greater expertise than those motivated by economic reasons.’ Incidentally, this distinction between committed and occasional do-it-yourselfer recalls Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s philosophical distinctions between the occasional hobbyist and the traditional artisan: their artisan, like Stiegler’s ‘traditional amateur’, is immersed within the material world and the flows and capacities of matter. Through vested interests in production systems rather than fiscal gain alone, Stiegler’s contributory economy potentially reinstates a sense of care and interconnectedness between people, their objects and technologies; the ethic of carelessness characterising consumerism is thus replaced by an ethic of care.

Stiegler’s understandings of the do-it-yourselfer, sociality and consumerism appear to resonate with those of an earlier North American academic theorist of DIY, Albert Roland of the now-defunct United States Information Agency. In a 1958 essay, Roland also identified different types of do-it-yourselfer based on focus and motivation. His invocations of the ‘craftsmen-hobbyists’ and ‘oldtime craftsman’ are similar to Stiegler’s ‘traditional amateur’, motivated by an interest in the work itself. Whilst noting the difficulty of pinpointing precise inner motivations for engaging in DIY pursuit, Roland argued that many of the post-war do-it-yourselfers relied unnecessarily on DIY kit assembly as a shortcut to a more engaged and meaningful investment in productive acts. Although Roland and Stiegler’s respective invocations of the amateur were developed in different historical, cultural and technological contexts (1958 and 2013 respectively), both associate DIY with an economics founded upon sociality.

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youselfers of the 1950s often participate in groups organized to bring together fellow craftsmen. Accordingly, DIY can be understood as a social phenomenon focusing on relationships among people. Stiegler’s equivalent contributor-amateurs of the 2013 operate through online social networks16 united by specific investments in DIY pursuit. New digital technologies, free and open-source software and tools such as web-based platforms promote knowledge sharing amongst online communities; shared digital production workplaces such as the fab labs allow ordinary individuals to make their own objects18 in an inexpensive and accessible manner. These digital and online technologies are seen to empower citizens with the knowledge that will enable them to directly participate in design and production activities. Examples of participatory production methodologies, in which ordinary consumers directly influence corporate branding and content, are increasingly invoked in the mainstream media. A recent article in the ‘Good Weekend’ supplement of The Sydney Morning Herald refers to the allied term ‘sharing economy’ to refer to the emergence of a new economic model […] a virtual marketplace of peer-to-peer exchange, using the web to tap into idle capacity and unused abilities […] we are all potential “micro entrepreneurs” unshackled from industrial-age structures and freed from greedy corporate middlemen.19 Indeed, it is Stieger’s contention that the do-it-yourselfer, amateur or “contributor of tomorrow” is becoming the dominant force in world economies because of her social, rather than purely economic motivations. For an earlier, pre-digital example of the participatory model, Stiegler refers to the French international retailer Fnac – initially founded in 1954 by two members of the Young Socialist movement. Within the Fnac model, customers were seen as participants who directly contributed ideas and suggestions to the business and production direction inextricably binding production to consumption.20

CARE, INTERVENTIONIST PRACTICE AND THE DIY URBANISM OF RENEW NEWCASTLE

Through its emphasis on social, cultural and urban transformation and the heterarchical relation between production and consumption, the discourse on DIY urbanism appears to closely resonate with the tenets of Stiegler’s notion of contributory economies. However, closer analysis of a particular example of DIY urbanism – Renew Newcastle – also indicates an inextricable bind between DIY modes of operation and mainstream commerce: a bind also evident in the aforementioned discourses on DIY urbanism. Described by its founders festival director and Australian media presenter Marcus Westbury, as a self-initiated example of DIY urban renewal21 Renew organises inexpensive, temporary rolling-lease arrangements with the property owners of unoccupied commercial spaces until (and if) a long-term tenant is installed. Accordingly, fitouts are constructed by their artisan-tenants with little or no alteration to the existing building shell, often using affordable or recycled materials. The temporality of Renew Newcastle interiors is particularly evident in the self-built office workspace of the architectural firm Anthrosite; designed for quick disassembly and removal, the workspace includes a suspended ceiling made of inexpensive netting and timber/laundry pegs (Figure 2). From its inception in late 2008 as a not-for-profit entity, Renew Newcastle’s agenda was to recuperate the city’s urbanity through the temporary occupation of abandoned shopfronts and other unused spaces by local emerging artists, designers and other low-budget22 producers financially precluded from accessing standard commercial properties. In the late 1990s, the failure of homogenous commercial strategies for Newcastle’s urban spaces – many in place since early colonisation – prompted the effective ‘evacuation’ of CBD commercial space that continued unabated for the next decade.23 These vacated interiors were the same spaces targeted by Renew Newcastle for a range of modes of design activism and temporary occupation. In its earliest stages, Renew projects took the form of artistic installations, temporary stalls and non-standard studio spaces. As the profile and success of Renew Newcastle expanded, the tenancy type shifted accordingly and included creative office-based practices and commercial, albeit artistic, retail: a recently created area of The Emporium, The Project Space, reinstates opportunities for temporary works and non-standard retail that are reminiscent of Renew’s earlier temporary projects (Figure 3).24 All of the aforementioned projects, retail-based or otherwise, are seen to support Renew’s experimental socio-cultural agenda. To borrow from Westbury: ‘It’s not about money. It’s not about certainty. It’s about opportunity for experimentation.’25

Although Renew Newcastle is a self-initiated, ‘bottom-up’26 response to the failures of mainstream consumerism and urbanism, it is also now supported by public and private investment in recognition of its contribution to the city’s rebirth as a global tourist and cultural destination.27 Renew currently receives funding and in-kind support from both state institutions and private developers, including the New South Wales State Government and its Premier’s Rural & Regional Grants Fund,28 its most prominent tenancy. The Emporium, located in a heritage building (currently) jointly owned by a private investor and developer – the GPT Group – and UrbanGrowth NSW, the land acquisition and development section of the NSW State Government – also indicates an inextricable bind between DIY modes of operation and mainstream commerce: a bind also evident in the aforementioned discourses on DIY urbanism. Described by its founders festival director and Australian media presenter Marcus Westbury, as a self-initiated example of DIY urban renewal21 Renew organises inexpensive, temporary rolling-lease arrangements with the property owners of unoccupied commercial spaces until (and if) a long-term tenant is installed. Accordingly, fitouts are constructed by their artisan-tenants with little or no alteration to the existing building shell, often using affordable or recycled materials. The temporality of Renew Newcastle interiors is particularly evident in the self-built office workspace of the architectural firm Anthrosite; designed for quick disassembly and removal, the workspace includes a suspended ceiling made of inexpensive netting and timber/laundry pegs (Figure 2). From its inception in late 2008 as a not-for-profit entity, Renew Newcastle’s agenda was to recuperate the city’s urbanity through the temporary occupation of abandoned shopfronts and other unused spaces by local emerging artists, designers and other low-budget22 producers financially precluded from accessing standard commercial properties. In the late 1990s, the failure of homogenous commercial strategies for Newcastle’s urban spaces – many in place since early colonisation – prompted the effective ‘evacuation’ of CBD commercial space that continued unabated for the next decade.23 These vacated interiors were the same spaces targeted by Renew Newcastle for a range of modes of design activism and temporary occupation. In its earliest stages, Renew projects took the form of artistic installations, temporary stalls and non-standard studio spaces. As the profile and success of Renew Newcastle expanded, the tenancy type shifted accordingly and included creative office-based practices and commercial, albeit artistic, retail: a recently created area of The Emporium, The Project Space, reinstates opportunities for temporary works and non-standard retail that are reminiscent of Renew’s earlier temporary projects (Figure 3).24 All of the aforementioned projects, retail-based or otherwise, are seen to support Renew’s experimental socio-cultural agenda. To borrow from Westbury: ‘It’s not about money. It’s not about certainty. It’s about opportunity for experimentation.’25

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Government. Renew’s relationships with both private and state development entities have been publicly recognised as an exemplary business and economic model through a number of awards. This unique bind between Renew’s DIY urbanism, mainstream commerce and the entity of the state precludes certain tenants who are seen to be competitive with existing city businesses and/or who do not fit the definition of an arts or cultural provider.

As a form of urbanism and interior spatial practice, Renew Newcastle appears to invoke the twin conditions of otium and negotium that Stiegler argues are a necessary component of human comportment. Grounded in genuine concerns for Newcastle’s social and urban vitality and otium, Renew’s projects are enabled through negotium and brokerage with the city’s property owners and the local council, and their associated legal and fiscal structures. Renew explicitly differentiates itself from mainstream or established retail and consumerism through its primary conceptual focus on place-specificity, localised production and emerging creativity: concerns also invoked in Stiegler’s arguments for the contributory economic model. The blurring of the processes of production and consumption characterising Renew’s self-initiated projects allows for a new urbanity to emerge that is site-specific and bound to ambitions of ‘social inclusion and authenticity’, to borrow from Stiegler’s terminology. Renew’s contributory model involves the overt display of production and consumption, process and product, within and alongside (rather than in competition with) the processes and operations of mainstream retail and consumerism; its artisan-tenants frequently construct their works inside their shop and office spaces (Figure 4). Accordingly: ‘Renew Newcastle is not about turning the city into another suburban shopping centre or filling every shop with one type of gallery. It is about making Newcastle a place with a wide variety of unique creative things and energies.’

One project example involving a deliberate interplay between the conditions of otium and negotium, pleasure and business, is the 2009 Hunting Grounds temporary installation by Kim Bridgland, Ksenia Totoeva and other collaborating architectural students from the University of Newcastle. Contributing design skills and labour, the students initiated the project in response to an early call for projects by Renew Newcastle. The installation was located in ‘The Room Project’ space (a former shop), and was comprised of upcycled and individually calibrated pieces of timber forming an undulating floor surface with a new and alternative materiality to the generic commercial space in which it was sited (Figures 4 and 5). Hunting Grounds deliberately challenged the functional use of dormant retail spaces because its sole purpose was to provide a sensory and auditory experience, and to invite atypical modes of occupation in a retail space void of commodities. The timber pieces registered the movement of the audience (the architecture students themselves alongside the general public) who travelled freely in and through the space, accompanied by an ambient soundscape. The students adjusted and nuanced the placement of the timber pieces in the space without altering the building shell per se; as such, the work was effectively produced in the same location as it was consumed. The ‘consumer’ (here, the audience of students and the participating public) was invited to consider the careful reprocessing of the objects of everyday life within a former commercial space that is particular to the Newcastle milieu. Like many other
CONCLUSION: COEXISTENT PRACTICES AND THE ETHIC OF CARE

According to Stiegler, the contributory economy has already replaced the superseded consumerist economic model and the amateur CONTRIBUTOR has emerged as a hybrid creative entity encompassing the figures of the producer and consumer. The contributory production methodologies associated with this current ‘reign of the amateur’ are seen to restore the balance between the conditions of otium and negotium formerly displaced by the processes of capitalism and attendant focus on fiscal gain. Within the contributory model, the typical segregation of production from consumption is undermined and ruptured. A rupture that is particularly evident in examples of DIY urbanism that are self-initiated by their ‘consumers’. Importantly, the contributory economic model is implicated in new conceptions of urbanity and creativity that complicate a purely Marxist concept of the city, inseparable from the spread and success of mainstream capitalism and consumerism. Even so, it could be argued that the spaces of cultural production are, in many instances, an extension of mainstream consumerism in their primary concern with profit – a point made by Stiegler himself.

The notion, discourses and practices of DIY urbanism are arguably different from mainstream cultural practices because of their social and cultural priorities. Indeed, when explored through the conceptual framework of the participatory model and the attendant ethic of care, these DIY practices may challenge Stiegler’s contention that the contributory economy stands in place of consumerism. The spaces of the Renew Newcastle scheme reside within the spaces and processes of mainstream consumerism and as such involve a DIY urbanism that is coherent with rather than completely substitutive of, the urbanspace associated with the capitalist product. A case in point is the aforementioned Hunting Grounds installations its careful, hand-crafted and site-specific materiality defies the generic and placeless character of the intact, though vacant host ‘commercial interior’. One could therefore argue that it is through the coterminous conditions of contributory and mainstream capitalism that the relationship between architecture, design and systems of mainstream consumerism can be recast; and a radical, hybrid mode of spatial practice and production, unique to the last decade, can be understood.

REFERENCES

This paper refers to both an English translation and the original interview published in French in Rue89:
3. Ibid., 6:03/11:1 minutes.
7. Stiegler makes direct reference to Deleuze’s notion of the societies of control, specifically the all-pervasive nature of capitalism. Stiegler, The Decadence of Industrial Democracies, 23.
8. This temporary, self-initiated intervention sits over an existing fence and folds out to create a space for neighbourhood social interaction. The Fence Project can be cut out from a single sheet of weather-resistant plywood and assembled with standard screws and hinges the cutting template will be made available for free public download. See https://diyarchitecture.wordpress.com/fence-para-diy-urbanism/.
13. Ibid., 6:03/11:1 minutes.
14. Ibid., 6:03/11:1 minutes.
18. Ibid., 6:03/11:1 minutes.
20. Ibid., 6:03/11:1 minutes.
23. Rory Hyde, “The Urban Activist: Camila Bustamente,” in Future Practice: Conversations from the Edge of Architecture, IDEA JOURNAL 2014 Design Activism: Developing models, modes and methodologies of practice
57. This urban decline has been associated with complex intersecting issues including the local unemployment and associated economic problems triggered by the 1999 closure of Newcastle’s large BHP Billiton steelwork manufacturing operation, and the relocation of capital to peripheral suburban manufacturing centres. Joanne McCarthy: “Picking Up the Pieces,” Newcastle Herald, August 28, 2010.

Rolyn Hyde (Holbrook Taylor and Francis, 2012), 104.
26. Ibid. 2.
28. Ibid. 81.
31. Ibid. 66.
33. Stiegler is particularly scornous of ‘American capitalism’ which ‘implments the American way of life’ as a new global economy through the psychopower of marketing.” ibid. 95.
34. Stiegler and Faney: “Nous entrons dans l’ère du travail contributif.”
36. Ibid., 159.
37. Ibid., 159.
38. Ibid., 159.
40. Ibid., 159.
41. Ibid., 159.
42. Ibid., 159.
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57. This urban decline has been associated with complex intersecting issues including the local unemployment and associated economic problems triggered by the 1999 closure of Newcastle’s large BHP Billiton steelwork manufacturing operation, and the relocation of capital to peripheral suburban manufacturing centres. Joanne McCarthy: “Picking Up the Pieces,” Newcastle Herald, August 28, 2010.

IDEA JOURNAL 2014 Design Activism Developing models, modes and methodologies of practice
Gate 81: Saving Preston Bus Station
Sally Stone : Manchester School of Architecture, United Kingdom

ABSTRACT
The discovery and recognition of the embodied meaning of a place can be interpreted through the existing building. The installation artist, the designer and the architect regard the building not as a blank canvas but as multi-layered structure, which they have the opportunity to activate. They have the opportunity to reflect upon the contingency, usefulness and emotional resonance of a particular place and use this knowledge to heighten the viewer’s perception of it.

The relationship between the building and its wider location has often been seen as somewhat ambiguous and yet it is possible to describe some spaces as encapsulating, in miniature, the characteristic qualities or features of a much wider situation. The interior has an obvious and direct relationship with the building that it occupies, the people who use it, and also it can have a connection with the area in which it is located.

Preston Bus Station is a marvellously brutal building. In 2012, the Preston City Council proposed its demolition and replacement with a surface car park; they refused to consider proposals for building re-use. This provocative act galvanised the various groups that were campaigning to save the building and proved to be the impetus for a number of different types of projects.

Gate 81, a collaboration between architects, designers, academics and arts organisations, curated a series of events within the Bus Station with the intention of raising the profile of the building. This paper will discuss the nature of the building, document the Gate 81 projects and report upon this sanguine approach to conservation.

INTRODUCTION
Buildings outlast civilisations. Throughout history buildings have been used, reused and adapted, they survive as culture and civilizations change. The already built provides a direct link with the spiritual survival of particular elements of any built environment that are an important part of our ‘fundamental urban condition’. The history of the buildings and the streets is often generated by the ordinary actions of local people, many of whom believe that their identity is essentially tied to the place that they inhabit. Meining and Jackson celebrate these circumstances: ‘... one of the greatest riches of the earth is its immense variety of places ... individuality of places is a fundamental characteristic of subtle and immense importance.’

At the risk of sounding too partisan and biased, I would say that even in historic times documents were not always available, and buildings (monuments, vernacular constructions, and public works) are themselves important texts, often providing the first and most lasting impression of a culture.

Places are also defined by the people who live within them. As individuals and communities, deep significance is attached to familiar places, and thus complex relationships can develop between the residents and the place that they inhabit. This quality that is present in the nature of the buildings and the streets is often generated by the ordinary actions of local people, many of whom believe that their identity is essentially tied to the place that they inhabit. Most people live relatively close to where they work, and therefore their activities form the environment and create the character of the place. This local distinctiveness is characterised by the activities that occur within the specific environment. Thus, significant markers are formed, in both the present and in the past, which will allow a society to relate to a particular environment. Events that hold value in a community are often manifested in physical form, and therefore allow a population to trace back meanings and connections with their past. This organisation of the past seems to stimulate social cohesion and the feeling of being part of a community and so, physical links with the past are often important elements within the cohesion of a community.

Thus all environments are different, and all have evolved their own and individual characteristics. Places, whether interiors, buildings, situations or larger urban developments are particular to their own situation and have been formed by a huge collection of different factors. Meining and Jackson celebrate these circumstances: ‘... one of the greatest riches of the earth is its immense variety of places ... individuality of places is a fundamental characteristic of subtle and immense importance.’

Above
Figure 1: Preston Bus Station. The enormous Brutalist structure consists of a series of car parks on extended floor-plates that float over the double-height space of the public concourse. Photograph Sally Stone.
The twentieth century city is a combination of two different ideas; the traditional city of streets and squares, and the modern city of isolated elements surrounded by parkland. The traditional city is really composed of spaces, which are lined with buildings. So, for example, the primary street within an urban environment is a long thin space through which people travel, it is bounded by structures that face onto this space. The shapes of the buildings are somewhat deformed to accommodate the pure nature of the street, and thus it is the space that is the predominant element of the composition. The archetypal town- or city-square is a further illustration of this model or pattern. The open space of the square or plaza is usually regular or pure, with the primary facades of the buildings lining the edges of the space. The nature or organization of the individual buildings does to a certain extent reflect this relationship, but it is not completely dependent upon it. The front facade may be regular, but the remainder of the building can be shaped somewhat irregularly to accommodate the nature of the location and the need for the purity of the exterior space.

The city-in-the-park is the opposite; isolated buildings set within open land, thus emphasising the purity of the building rather than the space, which just surrounds the structures in an ill-defined manner. The tenet of Modernism was that the whole building should be integral, and thus of a consistent quality. The building was a complete and unified whole, a primary structure. Vast swathes of many traditional European cities were razed and replaced in the name of Modernist progress. The new buildings themselves are often strong clear statements of intent and purpose, but the overriding problem was, in general, the lack of consideration to local context and local conditions.

Preston, a small provincial city in Lancashire in the north west of England is no exception; it has evolved into this awkward mixture of the traditional and the modern. Neither situation really responds to or complements the other, and so the city has grown into a collection of individual structures and spaces.

Preston is an estuary town, well positioned on a ridge above the floodplains of the River Ribble. This line or edge, known as Fishergate, is part of pre-Roman route that crossed the country in an east-west direction. It intersects at the Flag Market Square with a north-south track, Friargate. This road was formed by its connection with the first and lowest crossing point of the river: The Minster marks the eastern end of the city centre, while the train station is positioned at the western point and Fishergate is stretched between them. Close to the Minster are the open Flag Market Square, the Harris Art Gallery, the Victorian cast-iron covered markets and the Town Hall. These civic elements are testament to the once great wealth of the city.

The settlements that were established here in the Bronze Age show how strategically important is the position of the city. The tidal river certainly provided a safe landing point that allowed for relatively straightforward travel across the country into Yorkshire and Northumberland, while also offering the first safe crossing of the river for north-south travellers. The Romans built an important fort just a couple of miles away and it is one of the few places mentioned in the really rather hazy record of the Northwest of England in the Domestacy Book. The name of the city is thought to derive from Priest-Town, which shows its pre-Reformation relationship with the string of abbeys that cross the country at approximately this latitude, ending at Fountains Abbey in North Yorkshire.

Preston in some respects is a typical industrial city: By virtue of its connections with the cotton industry, it experienced massive expansion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and by 1867 it possessed seventy factories. Charles Dickens used Preston as a model for Coke Town, the industrial town described in the book Hard Times. This rapid development destroyed many of the medieval structures, but the pattern of the city centre, to the most part, was retained. Indeed, many of the small streets or to use the Lancashire term, weinds to the south of Fishergate reflect the pre-industrial routes and field patterns. The city experienced another surge of optimism at the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century. Slums were cleared to accommodate the redevelopment of the city centre, and steps were taken to ease traffic congestion with the construction of the Preston Bypass, which opened in 1958 and subsequently became Britain’s first motorway. Even given this, the city has retained an attractive disposition, especially when viewed from a distance against the Lancashire hills. Preston has a picturesque quality of outline and a suggestion of spaciousness from a distance which distinguishes it from most Lancashire cotton towns.

In the middle of this farrago of different styles and approaches is the ‘marvellously brutal’ Bus Station, which was constructed in 1969 by BDP Architects. It is situated to the north-east of the Town Hall and the markets. It is an incredibly long and elegant building, and is reputedly the largest Bus Station in Europe. The building contains a series of car parks situated on extended floor plates with upturned curving parapets, which appear to float over the double-height space of the public concourse; the interior of which still contains the original rubber flooring, timber benches and white-tiled walls. The building itself very much reflects the confident and positive attitude that was prevalent at that time; after all, it opened in the same year that the first man walked upon the surface of the moon. For a provincial town (Preston was not endowed with city status until the Queen of England’s Golden Jubilee of 2002) to construct such a building shows bold self-confidence, in both the place itself and also in the future of public transport. The architectural language of the building can be described as Brutal, in that it is constructed from raw concrete, but it was also designed to emulate an airport; even the different bus stops were referred to as Gates.

**Figure 2:** The centre of the city of Preston is situated at the junction of Friargate, which runs north-south through the city, and Fishergate, which extends east-west. The Bus Station is built just to the north of the Minster and to the east of the civic buildings. Image credit: Reuben Roberts and Sally Stone.
The area was previously densely occupied with mills and terraced houses, many of which were simply demolished to accommodate the building and its apron. The building is situated a couple of blocks from the Town Hall, but is very simply parallel to it and therefore to Friargate. It is placed within an open expanse or concourse, which was designed to allow the buses to flow freely around the building. Pedestrians are separated from the traffic by distinct undergound routes. However, the position of Preston Bus Station within the city’s doesn’t work – it is essentially cut off from the centre by the 1970s Guild Hall, the St. John’s Shopping Centre and the concourse itself. The relationship with Church Street is lamentable in fact this area of the city, which was once thriving and profitable, has become, in places, derelict. The ring road has exacerbated the problems; effectively cutting the north of the city from the centre, and thus the land to the east, beyond the Bus Station is almost inaccessible. This is not something new, it was actually foreseen by Derek Linstrum in his mostly ecstatic 1969 review of the building for the Architectural Journal. The failure to estimate the building’s potential is as important an addition to the town’s social life.

Despite these shortcomings, it is a significant building. It is an enormous and elegant 171 meters long (560 – it is, after all, a pre-decentralisation building), and can quite fairly be described as a landmark, and therefore an important element within the collective memory of the city. Preston is very much defined by this building. Even though, when it was constructed, it paid little heed to the pattern of the place, it has become a well-loved element within the bricolage of Preston. Thomas Schumacher described how the historic and the modern city can develop an uneasy yet settled relationship, with each style complementing and contrasting with the other: ‘Some ideal forms can exist as the failure to estimate the building’s potential as an important addition to the town’s social life.’

The instigators of Gate 81 were convinced that the Bus Station had considerably fallen since the building was constructed and, because the city centre had to compete with huge out-of-town shopping centres such as the Trafford Centre, visitors to the city centre had also dropped. The funding supplied by central government to the council was severely cut, and so the city council was placed in an extremely difficult situation; they had to choose between those services that they considered imperative and those that were a luxury. They felt that they were subsidising a White Elephant. To compound this, very little had been spent on the maintenance of the building, and so by the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, Preston itself was in a fairly lamentable state and the Station needed some serious attention spent on it. The council argued that if the site were cleared, when the economic crisis was over they would own a very profitable piece of land ready for development. Demolition would not only make this site available, but also make accessible the somewhat inaccessible land behind the building.

There had been a campaign to save the building when the Tithebarn Project was proposed, and listing, which would have made demolition extremely difficult, had been applied for twice, and twice refused. The Twentieth Century Society had actively campaigned to save the building and was instrumental in the listing application, and a number of lone campaigners and small organisations were also very vociferous in their attempts to bring notice to the structure. The building was well recognised and supported by designers and architects, indeed it almost won the poll organised by BDP Architects to select the favourite building constructed by the practice during their 60-year history. However, within the city of Preston, the building was very much taken for granted; residents considered it just part of the landscape of the city.

The lack of a real development plan for the city centre meant that for a long time the status quo remained. However, in December 2012, the city council announced that its intention was, within six months, to demolish the Bus Station and replace it with a surface car park. This provocative act actually galvanised the various groups that were campaigning to save the building and proved to be the impetus for a number of projects.

**GATE 81**

Gate 81 was formed in the face of this intended demolition. It was a collaborative project created by an architect, an academic and an arts director, all of whom were residents of the city, and who believed that the building was a major cultural landmark that should be preserved and creatively adapted to serve the city. The instigators of Gate 81 were convinced that the Bus Station could act as a key building and public space to make Preston accessible and temper the decay that was (and still is) affecting the city.

The position of the designer or architect, in the last generation, has radically changed. The role is far greater than the ‘masterly, correct, and magnificent play of masses brought together in light.’ Dan Hill, in the foreword to Rory Hyde’s book *Future Practice*, describes the designer as: ‘Community Enabler, Contractual Innovator, Educator of Excess, Double Agent, Strategic Designer.’ A new type of generalised design practitioner is developing, one who is involved with horizontal connections across disciplines. And on the very edge of this, beyond the Strategic Generalist and those engaged with Multidisciplinary Orchestration, is the designer, architect or activist engaged with Disruptive Change Agency. These are people for whom the built environment is important, and they feel that they can make a difference, not through the traditional craft of architecture but through non-antagonistic, small, local interventions, whether they be social, physical or temporal.

As custodians of the built environment they use non-traditional models of practice to generate a feeling of civic responsibility within the local population of urban users and dwellers. Guerrilla knitters and embroiderers are a fantastically-easy example of this type of activist; local people who bring attention to specific elements and fixtures in the city by decorating them. The ‘Slow’ movement is also a fine example of this type of gentle activism. From Slow Food, to Slow Homes, the idea is that things are prepared in accordance with local customs and practices, using high quality, locally sourced ingredients. These principles, which are embedded in the climate, the context, and the people, are based upon the idea that we celebrate what is good and distinct about what we already have; vernacular food, clothes and buildings that have evolved directly from the individual place or region. Slow Food, which was founded in 1989 in Italy, is a global grassroots movement that now has thousands of members around the world. It links the pleasure of food with a commitment to community and the environment.

The urban activist is not actually a twenty-first century phenomenon. Patrick Geddes used a process of darns and repairs to create collective public gardens from disused and abandoned patches of land in Victorian Edinburgh. Geddes championed a process of darns and repairs, a process of small, local surgery rather than the massive swathes of reconstruction that were characteristic of the larger-scale interventions, whether they be social, physical and/or temporal. From Slow Food, to Slow Homes, the idea is that things are prepared in accordance with local customs and practices, using high quality, locally sourced ingredients. These principles, which are embedded in the climate, the context, and the people, are based upon the idea that we celebrate what is good and distinct about what we already have; vernacular food, clothes and buildings that have evolved directly from the individual place or region. Slow Food, which was founded in 1989 in Italy, is a global grassroots movement that now has thousands of members around the world. It links the pleasure of food with a commitment to community and the environment.

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in a given site, rather than an abstract ideal that could be imposed by authority or force from the outside. He firmly believed in these ideas, and chose to live in a remodelled home, rather than build something new. He also instigated the renovation of a number of important buildings in Edinburgh, arguing that the adaptation process was much more productive that simply razing the structures and erecting something new.

This uncovering of alternative practices can define a different way of working. Small temporary interventions within a place can change its meaning by highlighting, juxtaposing and transforming features, thus the interventions become a spatial collage. Temporal changes can make visible the potential of a building by changing the users’ perception of a place, and so the practice can encourage the place to be viewed differently, to be studied from a different angle, to be reconsidered.

Interventions can subvert how people think and feel about a place and are often used to start finding out what, if any, changes local people want. Participants and instigators play a more active role in this category. Instigators of these methods tend to be artists, community groups, and other informal collectives. Interventions can be a positive way of stimulating ideas for an area, and can make people aware that changes are happening.

The specific intention of Gate 81 was to create a series of projects that would bring to greater attention the plight of Preston’s Bus Station, with the objective of raising the profile of the building, and therefore increasing the chance of saving it from the intended demolition. There had been a considerable amount of negativity surrounding the future of the Bus Station, and this was an attempt to bring some optimism to the situation. The aims of the groups were deliberately non-antagonistic; that is, provocative but not confrontational. It was not about demands, demonstration and therefore increasing the chance of saving it from the intended demolition. There had been a considerable amount of negativity surrounding the future of the Bus Station, and this was an attempt to bring some optimism to the situation. The aims of the groups were deliberately non-antagonistic; that is, provocative but not confrontational. It was not about demands, demonstration and protest, rather Gate 81 wanted to celebrate and appreciate the building: indeed, explicit within the manifesto was the intention to ‘… enjoy the building while we still can’, and with reference to the airport-style agenda of the original architects: Preston Bus Station has 80 Gates, we’d like to keep it this way.

Gate 81 was launched in January 2013 by myself, an academic and director of Continuity in Architecture (CA) at the Manchester School of Architecture (MSA), together with creative producer Ruth Heritage from They Eat Culture (TEC) and architect Dominic Roberts, partner at Francis Roberts Architects. It was an open data, co-design project that staged a series of live and virtual projects that used Preston Bus Station as a vehicle for discussion of such issues as citizen engagement, cultural heritage, urban design, artistic engagement, sustainable redevelopment, preservation and protection, and it acted as catalyst for discussions about the consequences that Modernist buildings have upon dense historic town centres in the twenty-first century.

The idea was to generate a series of different types of projects, with different user groups using the building as the vehicle. The notion of removing art and cultural events from the ramshackle atmosphere of the art gallery or institution, and relocating them into the open situation of the publicly accessible building is not new. The removal offers greater possibilities of interpretation, and certainly, larger and more culturally varied audiences. The building can be considered as an object that has been taken out of context and understood from an unexpected viewpoint: this is a process that will disrupt the familiar and rational structure of a given everyday. This is a strategic act of interruption, which effectively promotes the de-familiarisation of the everyday environment and habitual scenario. The ephemeral nature of alternative situations and different possibilities, and thus the familiar becomes strange. The everyday context also not only blurs the distinction between the different disciplines that contribute to the project, but also ensures that the work is more accessible. Audience members may have encountered the site previously and therefore have a different memory of the space, or have varied perspectives of the site informed by their knowledge or lack of knowledge of the surroundings. The artist Gordon Matta-Clark described this as ‘a kind of complexity which comes from taking an otherwise completely normal, conventional, albeit anonymous situation and defining it, translating it into overlapping into multiple readings of conditions past and present’.

THE PROJECTS

The first physical project was a midnight poetry reading, the first act of Gate 81 was to empower people with knowledge. The complete archive of the original architects, BDP, had been lost in a fire at their storage warehouse in the 1980s, so there was no drawn record of the Bus Station. Gate 81 commissioned a set of downloadable drawings that were made freely available to everyone. These were in both CAD and PDF form, so that anyone could make a proposal for the redevelopment of the building. All proposals were then exhibited on the Gate 81 website. There had been a lot of suggestions made for the adaptation of the building on social media sites; this allowed more people with greater involvement with the future of the building.

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The most ambitious project was the workshop or HacLab, which was held on a Saturday in May at the northern end of the ground level concourse of the Bus Station. This was a one-day event that could be likened to a village gala. It was deliberately highly accessible and open to anyone and everyone. Lots of different activities were planned; some were more serious than others. The day centred upon an open charrette or workshop, which was interspersed with a series of lectures. The workshop was really well attended; some people actively joined in the search for ideas for the future of the building, some noted their memories of the place on specially printed postcards, while others just listened. Alternative activities occurred during the day: Four Lost Buildings was a curated walk around the city, deliberately highlighting a number of great Preston buildings that had already been demolished – or were about to be. Gate 81 also curated three exhibitions, all of which were designed to open at the workshop. Chris Jones, an installation artist who was born in Preston, constructed a large model of a distorted Bus Station based upon his early memories of travelling into the building on the curved flying ramps. This was displayed in an unoccupied shop unit. Jamie Hawksworth was commissioned to photograph users of the building. His images of empowered local residents looking directly back at the camera and at the viewer were printed on vinyl and stuck straight onto the tiled interior walls of the building (the images are still, over a year later, on display). 0point3recurring, an artists’ collective that works with light and sound, built an installation that collected fragments of images of the users of the Bus Station; these were distorted and then projected onto the tiled interior wall of the building. A café set up a stall selling locally-sourced food and a group of school kids screen-printed tee shirts with their own images of the building. A number of important academics and facilitators spoke during the day; these included the director of the Guild Celebrations, which had taken place the year before. She encouraged ‘action, more action and then yet more action’ if the building was to be given the sort of attention that Gate 81 felt it deserved.

BDP Architects sponsored a one-day charrette, which was held in their head office in Manchester. Ironically these were the architects of the original building and the now-abandoned Tithebarn shopping centre scheme that was intended to replace the building. Academics and students from the schools of architecture in Manchester, Liverpool and Central Lancashire, as well as professional architects and designers, attended the charrette. BDP’s chairman, David Cash, who quite romantically remembered the time that BDP was still in Preston and the legacy of the founder Sir George Grenfell-Baines, launched the event. Professor Kevin Rhowbotham – an academic, architect, author and broadcaster – delivered the keynote talk, which was more like a call-to-arms. He invoked the memory of Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter’s seminal book Collage City and pressed contributors to consider the dialectical opposition of the object and the field, and how each can distinguish the other.

Other projects included visits to local primary schools to discuss the importance of the cultural legacy of place, and a one-week project entitled Preston Interotta at the Antwerp Winter School. A group of internationally mixed students were asked to explore the nature of the fragment within an historic city. They brought the Bus Station to Antwerp, with the intention of it occupying a definite place within the urban environment; it interrupted the city.
The last project was a procession; not an aggressive march, demonstration or protest making demands and ultimatums, but more like a cavalcade or cortège. It was again an opportunity to celebrate, recognise and enjoy the building. Continuity in Architecture in collaboration with the Gate 81 project team constructed a huge model of the building, which was based upon the Ancient Roman warfare technique of the turtle formation. This was carried in sections through the streets with the intention of creating recognition and delight.

Amazingly, the council supported all of the projects, and were very happy for the building to be used as a venue for a series of artistic interventions. The very people who had condemned the building actually attended (and enjoyed) many of the events.

The Twentieth Century Society kept up their pressure and again applied for the building to be listed. The RIBA launched a Twitter campaign and a tee-shirt competition; the president, Angela Brady, mentioned the need to save the building at every opportunity and John Wilson, a Preston resident, appeared on television and radio voicing his support.

The campaign to save the building was widely reported, locally, nationally and internationally. The local daily newspaper, Lancashire Evening Post, provided the campaign to save the building with a significant amount of coverage, and the local radio and television stations reported on the individual projects. (Talking to the reporter in the Bus Station before 7am on a dark and cold winter’s morning was not fun, but it was worth it). The national TV and press picked up on the story initially through their architectural pages and later, within the more general news. A BBC children’s program even wrote a song about the building! The plight of the Bus Station even received international coverage, from Italian design magazines to a New York radio station.

CONCLUSION

We won! In September 2013, Preston Bus Station was granted Grade II Listed Status. This means that the building cannot be demolished or altered without permission. Obviously, this
doesn’t mean that its future is absolutely secure and that it can be forgotten about. Great care needs to be taken when considering its future. The building could still be demolished if the council finds the right buyer for the site and can convince the government that it is in the best interests of the city for the area to be free of all existing structures and other impediments. Attention must also be paid to any remodelling of the building the city needs a thoughtful, contextual response rather than an overpowering and gratuitously flamboyant solution. But still, this is a great victory for those who regard the building as having quality and worth and as an important element in the make-up of this northern English city.

English Heritage posted this notice about the listing:

English Heritage is very pleased that the Heritage Minister has agreed with its advice to list Preston Central Bus Station and Car Park at Grade II. A dramatic building which combines innovation with architectural panache, the Bus Station fully deserves this marker of special recognition.

With an unusual blend of New Brutalist architecture mellowed by the curves of the roof and the sweeping ranks of the car park, this ‘megastucture’ was designed to recreate a sense of the monumental within the British town scene: it is a landmark in the innovation of transport-related buildings as well as a landmark of Preston.13

Gate 81 has helped empower local people to contribute towards the future of their own city. As the profile of the building began to rise within the city, so did the numbers of local people wanting to keep it. The city newspaper, which ran a poll of the residents’ favourite building, declared that it moved from the most hated to the most loved.14 The live interactive workshop encouraged debate, design and exchange. It was attended by a large cross-section of interested people, including people who were neither academics nor artists. Other events, including the site-specific exhibitions and the procession, also engaged local people with this local project.

Gate 81 was supported by the Arts Council and by Manchester Metropolitan University. It actively engaged academics and students of architecture from the schools in Manchester and Preston, it involved professional architects, artists and designers, and it engaged with the residents of Preston, from the drivers and the passengers of the buses to the teachers, lawyers and nurses who live in the city. This was nationally recognised when in December 2014 the Heritage Alliance awarded the campaign to save the Bus Station their prestigious Heritage Alliance Heroes Award.15 The Heritage Alliance is a coalition of 97 independent heritage organisations in England, and as such it acts as a powerful, effective and independent advocate for the movement. They specifically cited the Save the Preston Bus Station campaign as a ‘phenomenal example of people power’ and a fine example of how it is possible to save a piece of heritage through public pressure.16

Ikevitably the Bus Station will have a great impact upon the condition of the city in that redevelopment plans will have to consider the presence of a hugely loved enormous modernist structure on the edge of the city centre. The building will continue to be a landmark within the city and the city will continue to be redefined by the Bus Station. When Preston City Council failed to appreciate affection that was felt for the building within the city it fell to local people to actively agitate, to attract attention, to make their opinions noticed, and through the power of public opinion combined with local design activism, the Bus Station will continue to be part of the cultural legacy of the city of Preston.

NOTES

2. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
Here Schumacher discusses the theory of ‘contextualism’ as the reconciliation of modern urbanism with traditional old towns; an alternative to the destruction of central parts of cities. This theory tries to find a middle ground between a kind of unrealistic ‘freezing’ of the existing that allows no changes, and urban renewal that completely destroys the existing urban fabric and its qualities.
8. The name Preston is thought to be derived from the Old English (Anglo-Saxon) Preosta-Tun, the ‘tun of the Priests’—Ibid., 13.
10. It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood, it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage. It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves for ever and ever and never got uncoupled. It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of building full of windows where there was a rustling and a trembling all day long, and where the piston of the steam-engine worked monotonously up and down, like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness.'
15. Building Design Partnership (BDP) Architects is a major international, interdisciplinary practice of architects, designers, engineers and urbanists. They were founded in Preston by Sir George Grenfell-Baines in 1961.
the built environment: paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks. He describes landmarks as readily identifiable objects that serve as external reference points.


20. The Trafford Centre is a huge shopping mall constructed in 1998 on the outskirts of Manchester just 40 minutes drive from Preston.

21. The Twentieth Century Society was founded in 1979, and exists to safeguard the heritage of architecture and design in Britain from 1914 onwards. http://www.20csociety.org.uk


26. The masterly, correct, and magnificent play of masses brought together in light’ was of course Le Corbusier’s definition of architecture.


28. Ibid.

29. For example, see: ‘Knit The City: your friendly neighbourhood graffiti knitting art collective,’ accessed February 2014, http://www.knitthecity.com


36. For example, see “Knit The City: your friendly neighbourhood graffiti knitting art collective,” accessed February 2014, http://www.knitthecity.com


39. Ibid.


46. Kevin Rhowbotham, “What Do You See?” (keynote address delivered at Gate 81 Preston Bus Station Workshop, May 11, 2013), The Preston Guild is a historic celebration of the city and its people. It is held every twenty years and dates back to 1179 when the right to hold a celebration was conferred upon the city by King Henry 2nd. It is the only guild that is still celebrated in the UK. The expression ‘Once every Preston Guild’, meaning ‘very infrequently’, has passed into fairly common use, especially in Lancashire, England. The cost of the 2012 celebration was over £5 million. 46. Kevin Rhowbotham, “What Do You See?” (keynote address delivered at Gate 81 Preston Bus Station Charette, June 26, 2013).


Rethinking Our Values to Achieve Emancipatory Design

Jennifer Webb and Brent T. Williams: University of Arkansas, United States

ABSTRACT

The need for inclusive environments accommodating the entire range of human functioning, both people with disabilities as well as those who are not presently disabled, has not been achieved despite decades of discussion and a growing list of standards and legislation. Perhaps because disability has always been a part of human existence and has been part of the discourse in environmental design for decades, it is not viewed as emergent and the inclusion of people with disabilities is not seen as a crisis. Nonetheless, people with disabilities represent one of the largest marginalised segments of our population. Inclusion does not subvert the other issues with regard to function or aesthetics but fulfils criteria necessary to achieve good design.

This paper explores critical aspects of emancipatory research and identifies opportunities for what should rightly be called emancipatory design. The most significant characteristics relevant to developing emancipatory design values include: 1) redistributing power within the social relationships of design; 2) adopting the biopsychosocial model of disability; and 3) facilitating users’ reciprocity, gain and empowerment. These fundamental strategies are necessary to ensure a long-term engagement in social justice and achieve good design.

Inclusive design is essentially a value-based process, which takes as its premise the fact that everyone has a right to participate in community life. Consequently, a powerful argument to support the importance of teaching inclusive design is the need to assist students in the development of their own set of values to underpin their future practice as built environment professionals. Inclusive design can fulﬁl this important function. It is clear that teaching students how to include: 1) redistributing power within the social relationships of design; 2) adopting the biopsychosocial model of disability; and 3) facilitating users’ reciprocity, gain and empowerment, these fundamental strategies are necessary to ensure a long-term engagement in social justice and achieve good design.

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BARRIERS TO INCLUSIVE DESIGN

Why has the need for inclusive design and research not attained the visibility of other socially driven objectives? Environmental barriers have been discussed by scholars and explored by select practitioners for decades. Handicap design, accessible design and universal design have been included in design curricula and program accreditation standards for many years. Instructional texts, handbooks, and websites are plentiful, yet examples of environmental barriers are numerous even in award-winning designs. It is critical to understand that inclusive design requires that complex social issues be challenged and that the core values of design students and practitioners be transformed to enable all community members to participate equally in their near environments. Social concepts surrounding health and ageing, legislation, building codes, construction costs, and, most importantly, cultural stigmas must be addressed before comprehensive change can be achieved.

Most people are unable to imagine a future with limitations. Loss of ability may happen to others but ‘it will not happen to me.’ Short-term disabilities resulting from life events such as sport injury or chemotherapy are as difficult to anticipate as long-term disabilities resulting from disease or accident. While most people understand the likelihood their health status and ability will change as they age, research findings show that individuals, regardless of age, still believe design of home and neighbourhood will not accommodate their altered abilities. Most people are unable to imagine a future with limitations. Loss of ability may happen to others but ‘it will not happen to me.’ Short-term disabilities resulting from life events such as sport injury or chemotherapy are as difficult to anticipate as long-term disabilities resulting from disease or accident. While most people understand the likelihood their health status and ability will change as they age, research findings show that individuals, regardless of age, still believe design of home and neighbourhood will not accommodate their altered abilities.

The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) results in an underestimation of required accommodations. Advocates and politicians are reticent to calculate of the cost of a client. This belief is often accompanied by the assumption that inclusive design solutions are expensive and, often, too expensive for a typical project. The perceived cost and the difficulty determining the cost benefit of inclusive design also serve as a hindrance to inclusive design. The cost benefits of sustainability, affordability and even safety have been presented as argument for their incorporation. Long-term energy cost savings weighed against resource expenditures is the driving force behind the sustainability movement. Likewise, the images of flattened elementary schools help drive the call for shelters in schools regardless of the cost. Advocates and politicians are reticent to calculate of the cost of the lives of elementary school children.

The pursuit of inclusion is most easily calculated. Existing research demonstrates that anticipatory accommodations result in a small percentage increase to new construction and contribute to a more successful design solution over the life of the project. For example, building lobbies frequently feature a grand stair designed as a focal point while the nondescript elevator is located discreetly to the side. The elevator cost could be seen as disproportionately high if attributed only to persons using wheelchairs. In contrast, the

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by each individual being overlooked. Someone who is deaf is treated as if they have mobility limitations and a person with a mobility limitation is spoken to very loudly. Etiquette of interaction, appropriate language, offers of assistance and curiosity about the individual result in awkward exchanges or in no exchange.

Barriers to inclusive environments must be put into context. Ubiquitous accessibility standards are viewed by people with disabilities as insufficient and represent a separate and unequal approach to inclusion. The immediate aftermath of the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center illustrates the ramifications of what people with disabilities refer to as the ‘afterthought’ approach. With the lifting of elevators inoperable, persons with mobility disabilities were instructed, per the emergency plan, to ‘wait’ to be assisted and, consequently, suffered the highest mortality rate of any group. Because standards and regulations regard disability as an ‘other’, afterthought approaches such as ‘wait’ are presumed acceptable for people with disabilities. People with disabilities claim these instructions would not be tolerated if based on gender, age, race, ethnicity or education. Without the voice of people with disabilities incorporated into design solutions, marginalisation and injustice will continue to prevail.

Fundamentally existing legislation and standards such as ADAAG are an extension of our societal values and, as such, reflect the medical model of disability and the belief that people with disabilities are outside the norm. Consequently, minimal design requirements perpetuating discriminatory and socially unjust design solutions are viewed as adequate solutions. The imposition of afterthought ‘fixes’, allowed and tacitly approved, perpetuates ‘separate but equal’ approaches to design schemas that undervalue people with disabilities as part of the human continuum. For this reason, it is critical to recognise that people with disabilities are a socially oppressed group and that existing design priorities and processes perpetuate the oppression.

Clearly, the assumption underpinning this paper is that interior design education does not foster the value system and knowledge necessary to achieve true inclusion. Emphasising what is different about people of various minority groups, prioritising aesthetics over the human condition and injustice will continue to prevail.

In contrast, an emancipatory process prioritises goals specifically benefiting people with disabilities and more importantly, including people with disabilities as collaborators underpins this process. Mike Oliver states the process ‘…should not be seen as a set of technical, objective procedures but as a set of interchanges or in no exchange. Of equal importance is the realisation that other disciplines, having already engaged in these value shifts, can provide a best practices process. An important precedent is the disability research community’s transformation from traditional research to what is now known as emancipatory research. Traditional research is entrenched in the scientific method, emphasising distance and objectivity within the process while acknowledged methods are constrained and formulaic. Findings are framed in perceived limitations and assumptions and are objectively stated within the existing body of knowledge. The investigator has the power from the formation of the research question through final dissemination, over all aspects of the process and over all of the participants. This process is grounded in the belief that the researcher is the unchallenged expert.

In contrast, an emancipatory process prioritises goals specifically benefiting people with disabilities and more importantly, including people with disabilities as collaborators underpins this process. Mike Oliver states the process ‘…should not be seen as a set of technical, objective procedures carried out by experts but part of the struggle by disabled people to challenge the oppression they currently experience in their daily lives.14 Oliver further challenges the prevailing scientific method and interpretation of findings as disingenuous and offers the emancipatory paradigm as a way of re-focusing efforts on the dissolution of social oppression.15

If students are to engage in emancipatory activities as nascent designers, assumptions about people with disabilities must be challenged through education and exposure, abolishing ignorance and...
fear through knowledge. How, then, should students be prepared to engage with those different from themselves? The most significant characteristics relevant to developing emancipatory design values include: 1) redistributing power within the social relationships of design; 2) adopting the biopsychosocial model of disability; and 3) facilitating users’ reciprocity, gain and empowerment. These fundamental strategies are necessary before implementing overarching design processes and ensuring a long-term engagement in social justice.

Unequivocally, achieving emancipatory design also requires a deep and long-lasting realization of both personal and cultural values. Our values, whether instilled at an early age or assimilated over a lifetime, grow or degrade with our repeated engagement and application. It is our experiences that are key. Instruction in an open and challenging environment provides for the experience of different viewpoints and encourages and reinforces values of inclusion that lead to emancipatory practices. In contrast, instruction that prioritizes unquestioning respect for the status quo (e.g., ADAAG Checklist) and relies on penalties as a method of correction perpetuates tradition and conformity.

The transformed value system must be followed by professional standards of behaviour that advance the goal of emancipatory design. Codes of ethics currently associated with professional interior design organisations oblige design practitioners to conform to specific standards and ‘comply with all …laws, rules, regulations and codes’ and they must ‘consider the health, safety, and welfare of the public in the spaces they design.’ There is, however, significant difference between ‘do no harm’ and emancipatory ethics, which call for advocacy and demand improvement of the human condition for all.

This thinking could be challenged on the basis of the law alone. The ADA demands an ‘equivalent experience’ for all people and thus a separate but equal approach to design is not acceptable. Current design ethics plainly do not oblige the designer to advance the social agenda of people with disabilities. Contemporary discourse reveals that codes of ethics in the design disciplines ‘concentrate on personal responsibilities of architects [and designers of all disciplines] and ignore the bigger picture, which consists of social structure, power, unethical attitudes and behaviors of the profession.’

Emancipatory values and associated ethical practices must transform design thinking and be established early in design education. Issues of social justice, professional responsibility and personal ethics must become explicit in every aspect of contemporary design education. Learning objectives and project briefs must clearly state expectations and student assessments must reinforce inclusion for all users. Accepting solutions that preference aesthetics or form over the inclusion of people with disabilities negates all preceding efforts. Can something exclusionary be beautiful? More importantly, design innovation that includes the widest range of users and challenges prescriptive attitudes, and resulting disabling environments are socially constructed and culturally perpetuated, in essence a form of structural oppression. As an extension of disability rights, an emancipatory framework removes disabling social and physical barriers and an emphasis on the abilities of disabled people to ‘cope’ or ‘adapt.’

The built environment is a social construct reflecting the beliefs and values of its culture and so achieving emancipatory design requires significant change in the values of the design community. Emancipatory design requires that concepts of normal be replaced with a comprehensive knowledge of and respect for the entire range of human functioning. Along with the biopsychosocial model and other existing models such as the Person-Environment Fit model and Temporarily Able Bodied, design thinking can be transformed to accommodate the greatest variety of users’ possible. Dan Formosa, of Smart Design, explained the role of the extreme: ‘Our clients come in and say “here is our average customer…” and we listen politely and that’s great. But we don’t care about that person. What we really need to do to design is look at the extremes… the person with arthritis… or the athlete…. If we understand what the extremes are, the middle will take care of itself.’

To achieve emancipatory design outcomes, it is necessary to distinguish between the medical and the biopsychosocial models of disability. The medical model conceptualizes disability as a problem of the person, directly caused by disease, trauma, or health condition. Sustained medical care is intended to fix a broken person. In this model, barriers to the environment and to participation are the result of the person’s lack of ability.

In contrast, the biopsychosocial model acknowledges functional differences and conceptualises disability as a problem caused by the cultural and ideological context of the social environment in response to the person’s ability or specific level of functioning. Disability is created by disabling attitudes, and resulting disabling environments are socially constructed and culturally perpetuated, in essence a form of structural oppression. As an extension of disability rights, an emancipatory framework removes disabling social and physical barriers and an emphasis on the abilities of disabled people to ‘cope’ or ‘adapt.’

The inclusion of a biopsychosocial model of disability in the design studio fosters the belief that all users are to be included at the outset of all projects, thereby eliminating the separate but equal methodology. Adopting this model of human functioning also suggests categories inherent in instructional objectives such as ‘design for disabilities’ and courses titled Universal Design Studio be abolished. Students and practitioners must design for an unqualified continuum of users in every project and segregating thinking and language only perpetuates the problem.

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Emancipatory design must likewise narrow the distance between what is built and for whom it is built by bringing designers and users together. The emancipatory process engages people with

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disabilities as insiders thereby framing the issues from the emic perspective. The emancipatory process allows issues to emerge and reject design solutions based on insufficient design standards. This process and the emic view achieve innovative, inclusive design solutions.

While participatory design practices are not new, seldom are they fully implemented. Henry Sanoff states that ‘The activity of community participation is based on the principle that the environment works better if citizens are active and involved in its creation and management instead of being treated as passive consumers.’ Emancipatory processes require deep, sustained involvement from project inception through the final design assessment.

Participation, as a component of emancipatory values, makes inherent sense in the interior design studio and service learning projects are frequently steeped in these values. The opportunity for students to have first-hand interaction with users, act upon the spaces and receive feedback from stakeholders is invaluable. These experiences remain the single best way to dispel myths and increase comfort when working with people with disabilities. Combined with other learning methods, reflective assignments enhance learning outcomes and should be used when working with people with disabilities on the design of interior spaces in home, work, and leisure settings.

Further, it is critical to emphasise that inclusion occurs when all users are given a voice at the beginning and throughout every project and not as superficial feedback following critical design decisions. Common in disciplines such as counselling, values education utilises a guide to instruct, focus, and reflect upon instruction where issues of social justice are important. In contrast to experiences where students only facilitating resolution but solidifying students’ understanding of the critical nature of their own work. Documentation of work, access to design solutions, donations of materials and labour and visibility for their struggle for a barrier-free life are meaningful contributions.

Design students, faculty and practitioners must engage in the greater fight for the emancipation of people with disabilities through design excellence. There must be careful consideration of the reciprocity in the relationship, ensuring gain for the users and empowering them by providing deliverables that remove barriers in the built environment. The opportunities for students to capture the attention of the media can be used to focus attention on significant social issues, not only facilitating resolution but solidifying students’ understanding of the critical nature of their own work. Design students, faculty and practitioners must engage in the greater fight against oppression.

Oliver asks if researchers will ‘use their expertise and skills in their [people with disabilities] struggles against oppression?’ Likewise, the intention and obligation of the designer requires a long-term commitment to reducing oppression and improving conditions for people with disabilities. In an emancipatory design process, the same distribution of rights and responsibilities must be shared between designers and users, allowing the design solutions to be shared and disseminated as an important method of reducing oppressive social relations. For-profit design firms such as IDEO, as well as not-for-profit design organisations such as Project H and academic community design centres, place their skills and knowledge into the hands of the community enabling the residents and citizens to gain both broad knowledge of issues as well as specific solutions to problems.

Even more importantly, these diverse entities are passionate advocates, assuming responsibility for securing community buy-in, educating stakeholders, and maintaining an active role from project conceptualisation through final implementation.

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CONCLUSION

‘Shouldn’t being a designer mean more than the traditional model of object maker and creator of more crap? Shouldn’t we be trusted to make things better?’ There is no better time than now, an era of socially driven design agendas, to address the far-reaching need for truly inclusive environments. The privilege and power of perceived ‘typicals’ – non-disabled people – drive current design priorities and it is this social context that must be changed by transforming current values in interior design education and practice. Characteristics of the emancipatory research paradigm can serve as an effective framework for this transformation.

Research and design cannot be perceived as perfectly parallel systems of discovery and problem solving. Traditional research, while not obligated by its nature to improve the human condition, nonetheless reveals the unknown or the unexplained, thereby providing critical knowledge about the world around us. It does not harm or endanger the wellbeing of individuals or society. Indeed,
the medical model of disability used in traditional research facilitates lifesaving interventions and makes everyday life easier and more fulfilling for many people with disabilities. Controlling diabetes and improving vision are two simple examples. Is traditional design equally meaningful? Designers and design critics might argue for form alone. More pragmatically, the purpose of design is to provide for people and their activities, fulfilling both individual and group needs and values while working within specific constraints. Good design is expected to avoid formulaic methods, challenge conventions and knowledge, and the peer review process recognizes innovation. Inclusion does not subvert the other issues with regard to function or aesthetics but fulfills all criteria necessary to achieve good design.

It is at this point that traditional research and design comparisons must end. Is design that is not emancipatory at its very heart bad design? The answer must be yes. While research is still producing meaningful and useful information, design that is not emancipatory actively excludes people and prevents their participation as respected members of their family, their community, their workplace. Designers must be accountable for reducing the oppression of people with disabilities, moving from the minimal compliance of codes and convention to reducing oppression and increasing inclusion through environmental design. When is the exclusion of any person or group of people from participating in their government (e.g., US Capitol Building) or in their community good design?

Emancipatory core values as an integral component of design thinking must be established early in a student’s career. A shifting value system is not about making someone feel bad; the value shift focuses on doing what is right because their values inform what is good: fully functioning, aesthetically pleasing and universally inclusive environments. Logically, (or anyone) feel bad; the value shift focuses on doing what is right because their values inform what is good: fully functioning, aesthetically pleasing and universally inclusive environments. Logically, interior design students and practitioners should be experts in removing physical barriers and not in fixing ‘broken people’. The role of the designer, therefore, fits seamlessly into this model.

These concepts are equally important and valid when working with all marginalised or underrepresented groups. Empowerment must be the final outcome of the learning activities. Students are empowered by the experience of affecting change and will carry forward the important value shift. More importantly, people with disabilities and other user groups will be empowered by information and knowledge necessary to affect change in their own environments.

Len Barton states: ‘there is the need to increasingly recognize and more thoroughly understand and practice the art of “listening” to the voices of disabled people.’ He further states that self-criticism is necessary on the part of the researcher, determining the meaningfulness of final outcomes. Likewise, the effectiveness of an emancipatory design process can only be discerned when the designer engages in a frank assessment, confirming the voices of people with disabilities have been heard.

In moving towards inclusive design a perceptual shift is required to ensure the inclusion of marginalised and oppressed persons. This begins with a collaborative design process in which individuals currently marginalised become actively engaged in the design process and their experiences are embodied within the overall design process. Ultimately, designers must approach challenges in a way that makes everyone feel truly included. Even when design objectives are removed directly from end users, the designer must maintain a personal goal to provide inclusive environments.

Unlike other methodological approaches, an emancipatory design process requires that knowledge and skills be placed at the disposal of people with disabilities. Consequently, educators must examine the level of engagement and follow by ensuring that all parties benefit from learning activities. Even more importantly, this paradigmatic shift places responsibility on the shoulders of educators to encourage and facilitate social activism on behalf of the people with disabilities and other marginalised persons. Empowerment must be the final outcome of the learning activities. Students are empowered by the experience of affecting change and will carry forward the important value shift. More importantly, people with disabilities and other user groups will be empowered by information and knowledge necessary to affect change in their own environments.
When functioning is understood as a broad continuum and disability seen as a social construct, emancipatory design reveals the structures and processes that create disability. Emancipatory design becomes the deconstruction of prescriptive and pre-conceived solutions and engenders the application of good design. The establishment of a workable dialogue between the design community and people with disabilities is necessary to remove environmental barriers. Equally, users of the built environment and those who create it are empowered by the knowledge and understanding engendered through an emancipatory process.

NOTES
19. Oliver, "Changing Social Relations.
24. Oliver, "Changing Social Relations.
25. For example, see Jennifer Webel, Brent T. Williams, Karydon H. Smith and Nancy G. Miller, "Chapter 5: Redefining Disability" in Just Below the Line: Disability, Housing and Equity in the South ed., Karydon H. Smith, Jennifer Webel and Brent T. Williams. (Fayetteville, Arkansas: University of Arkansas Press, 2010), 1: 13-13.
26. Rae, "What’s in a Name?"
Envisioning a Future

Fleur Palmer (Te Rarawa/Te Aupouri) : Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand

ABSTRACT

In Aotearoa (New Zealand), existing territorial legislation and provisions within planning law currently prevent Māori from fully entering into a negotiation with district councils, in terms of creating a vision for their future, without having to make strategies that conform to Western models of land use and Western ideas of how district councils think Māori should live. On Māori land, development is mainly restricted to farming activities, as most Māori land is zoned Māori own little land in urban centres or in commercial and industrial areas, as many were historically alienated from ancestral land, and as a consequence were excluded from towns in relation to land ownership. The structure of existing legislation does not encourage Māori to test their own ways of thinking in terms of how they want to occupy urban or rural areas. Existing territorial legislation also discourages Māori from exercising their imagination in terms of developing alternative models to zoning regulations, and thinking about how they could occupy space that they have been excluded from in a way that supports the economic and social development of their communities. What happens when Māori take control and visualize their own future, unburdened by the constraints of legislative control?

ENVISIONING A FUTURE

Since the 1960s, the Motu family have wanted to build houses on their land. The family lives in Kaitaia and their ancestors have lived in this region for centuries. Colonisation has led to extensive alienation of Māori from their land in the area. The extended family now live on a one-hectare rural block in a cowshed and a series of makeshift lean-tos, caravans and tents. Planning legislation that alienates Māori from exercising their ways of thinking in terms of how they want to occupy space has been influential in the current situation in regard to the Motu family. The Motus have faced on-going and insurmountable difficulties in being able to develop their land for over fifty years, forcing them to live in substandard housing, something is clearly amiss.

While district councils insist that they are inclusive of Māori in meeting Tītiri O Wānanga obligations, in reality, this only happens through a process of consultation; rather than in terms of encouraging Māori to activate any change within the district plans or associated Acts. This would make a significant difference in terms of how they could actually use their land, or give them access to better housing. Under current legislation, the right of the government to assert laws always overrides any ability for Māori to control how they use land. This in turn breaches any principle of partnership, or duty by the government to act in good faith (partnership). In asserting the laws by which Māori live, gross assumptions have arisen in relation to how these laws have been implemented and in spite of rhetoric aimed at being inclusive and reaffirming current legislation, has created overwhelming obstacles – which have made it difficult for Māori to make any headway in building affordable and healthy housing or to build any other development on their land that is economically sustainable. Issues surrounding land use are further complicated with a multiple ownership structure, which also limits the number of houses that can be built on collectively owned sites. For Māori, the question is always how can the existing cultural biases that restrict development on our land be overcome? And how can we, as Māori encourage policy changes within existing territorial legislation to actively instigate changes that economically and sustainably support the development of our land and our communities.

HOW DISTRICT PLANS RESTRICT MĀORI DEVELOPMENT

Different regions in Aotearoa have varying regulations for dealing with Māori land. Some councils have specially designated zoning which permits papakainga (village) development on Māori land, others have nonspecific zoning which allows for papakainga development under what is called the integrated development rule, but this is mainly for rural areas. This rule permits (at the council’s discretion) low density housing at a rate of roughly one house per 12 hectares (this density varies depending on which council is involved and where the land is located). The densities of housing that are permitted only allow for a very small percentage of the multiple owners associated with Māori land to actually build houses on their land. This immediately alienates the majority of shareholders who will never be allowed to build. Māori landowners aren’t always aware of this limitation. In general the regulations do not encourage the alternative intensive aggregation of high density or mixed use dwellings, which would make developments on Māori land more affordable and more accessible to multiple owners. While the provision of a marae (Māori meeting house) or kōhanga reo (Māori pre-school), and other community facilities are normally permitted, the provision of other buildings that would support economic activities such as small businesses or alternatives to farming practice are not. This means that prospective inhabitants have to either rely on growing an income from small farming blocks that are not big enough to be economically sustainable, or work elsewhere to pay their mortgage. While limited provision has been made for papakainga development on rural land, because of extensive land loss, little provision has been made within district plans for papakainga development in urban areas.

Tītiri O Wānanga obligations indicate that Māori are active partners in determining what is allowed to be developed on their land, but existing territorial legislation and zoning laws dictate
what is allowed to be built and assumptions have been made in terms of determining how Māori use their land. Māori are confined by rules that were initially determined by Western policy makers. The consultative process that has been implemented to rectify any issues is also burdened by an existing social, cultural, economic and political framework that undermines self-determination by Māori. It is difficult to challenge the restrictions imposed by planning regulations, in spite of the fact that Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles are meant to be recognised and they provide for, and support, the right of iwi and hapū to self-manage and control their resources in accordance with their tribal preferences (rangatiratanga).

In order to instigate change over rigid legislative control, councils have relied on encouraging active participation of all inhabitants who are affected by the decisions that are made. But what does this really mean, and how effective is this process? Despite the rhetoric of inclusiveness, this structure systemically fails to have any positive effect on outcomes for generating better housing options for Māori. This is because the real discussions that need to be had, in order to implement profound changes, have already been ‘defined by the framework and possibilities of the prevailing society’. New Zealand’s zoning laws are primarily structured on a Western model of development and land use; which assumes that a small number of Māori may occupy their land primarily as farmers. This assumption is indifferent to multiple shareholders associated with Māori land blocks or aspirations of alternative development, which would be more sustainable for Māori communities. The institutionalised indifference to Māori needs in terms of land development perpetuates ongoing social injustice and inequities.

HOW CAN VISUALISING A FUTURE BE AN ACT OF EMPOWERMENT?

In 1952, the Hawke family were evicted from their village at Orakei in central Auckland. Their eviction occurred just prior to Queen Elizabeth’s visit to New Zealand. At the time, New Zealand was caught up in the hysteria and fervour of patriotic pride. Government officials were keen to demonstrate to the Queen our elevated status as a democratic, socially unified and progressive country. When they realised that the Queen’s official motorcade would take her along Auckland’s picturesque waterfront – past the Māori village of Orakei – they felt that this would tarnish an otherwise perfect vision of white middle class suburbia exemplified by the surrounding housing developments in neighbouring suburbs. The Māori village of Orakei was considered an ‘eyesore’ as it was built using makeshift materials and it was deemed to be a potential disease centre. It had to be destroyed. Of approximately two hundred families living in the village, fifty were relocated to state houses sited on Maori land on an adjacent hillside next to Bastion Point. The rest were left to fend for themselves, with many families living in rental accommodation in South Auckland. Looking for a better housing solution, the Hawkes wondered how they could develop 100 hectares of land they owned in Karaka, South Auckland. (Figure 1) but, like the Motu family, they were limited in terms of the number of houses and type of development that they could do under existing legislation.

For families caught in the daily grind of simply managing to survive day-to-day in either standardised or overcrowded housing, or being held back from being able to build affordable and better housing through obstructive legislation – it can be difficult to collectively imagine an alternative reality. But a strategy that could activate change is one that experiments with and generates aspirational visualisations of what people would like to see happen without being burdened by territorial restrictions or limited by the pragmatics of financial constraints. With influences from anthropology and participatory action research, mapping using three-dimensional visualisations has been developed. This process draws on various methods used in other countries, which have become more prevalent over the last few decades as a way of empowering local communities. By using three-dimensional maps to construct collective aspirations, Giacomo Rimbaldi writes that these ‘maps are more than pieces of paper. They are stories, conversations, lives and songs, lived out in a place and are inseparable from the political and cultural contexts in which they are used’.

As a means of considering a way of inhabiting a place, the following project outlines a series of visions that were developed from a dreaming session with members of the Hawke family. In the session, the family were asked to consider how they would design their own future if they could become more intimately connected to this land through physical occupation. Scaled contour models of the site were provided and the family were given social injustice and inequities.
given materials to play with to represent houses, trees and gardens and so on, and through a series of prompts over a quick twelve-hour period they created several models of how they imagined they could occupy their land. These proposals were not bound by any constraint. Instead of developing a singular proposal, several proposals were generated. This encouraged a playful degree of competitiveness between the different groups (such as, who was able to come up with the best ideas) and led to the emergence of differing perspectives. These aspirational models of land use and development radically differed from what is permitted under existing legislation.

Under current legislation, the family are restricted by planning rules, which limit the number of houses and the type of development that they would ideally like to see happen. Instead of conforming to existing legislative constraints, the approach was to find out how the families would like to see their land developed. The production of three-dimensional models captured key aspects of their aspirations. Four proposals for the site were generated, three of which are presented here.

The first proposal, called Te Karaka Toiwhenua (Figure 3), was focused on connecting Te Ao Maori (the Maori world) with modern science and technology through tourism ventures. The proposal used Maori icons and explicit designs that were linked to Nga Atua Ora (the spiritual realm). The coastline, the wind, the sea, the relationship between Ranginui and Papatuanuku (sky father and earth mother) and all natural and connected elements within the site were considered in terms of how they could be harnessed to develop the whenua (land) and the moana (sea). Alongside a strong environmental focus, which included the provision of a bird sanctuary for migrating birds, and oyster farms, the group was also interested in proposing a development that would enable families to be self-sufficient through tourist-based industries and job creation. The scheme included security and maintenance facilities, buildings such as a whare tupuna (carved meeting house) to house historical artifacts and a whare wānanga (house of learning) for developing knowledge in Maori law, technology, social sciences and business management. To support employment options they proposed an extreme adventure tourism venture which included a hotel and flying fox, accessed via a hovercraft airport shuttle, to an off-shore dive centre and helicopter pad. The dive centre was equipped with a submarine where patrons could catch their fish and have it cooked within an underwater restaurant. The proposal also included a retractable stage for theatre and kapa haka (music and dance), which could also host international events. The residents would be housed in underground earth homes. The surrounding land would be developed for gardens to provide food for inhabitants and for tourists, and an extensive botanical garden like the Ellerslie Flower Show. A water tower would store water on the site, while wind turbines would generate power not only for the settlement but on-sold as surplus to neighbouring communities. The proposal was driven by an interest in long-term sustainability in terms of generating enough profits to support future descendants, with the intention of purchasing neighbouring sites linked to the ancestors.

The second proposal, named Karaka Kaikano (Figure 4), was interested in developing a Hou Ora, (Maori centre) to generate employment for its inhabitants through tourism, while preserving...
the natural environment. The focus was on stabilising the eroding coastline through planting. Kai moana (sea food) production would be developed through oyster, mussel and tuna (eel) farms. The inhabitants would all live in solar-powered rammed-earth huts, with zero-waste composting toilets. They would learn about rongoa (Maori medicinal knowledge), and Maori taonga (sacred treasures and customary rites) in a whare wananga for music and performing arts. The knowledge developed through the whare wananga would be shared as a cultural experience with tourists staying in solar-powered Bora Bora huts (over-water pole houses) located along the shoreline. The proposal also had performance and theatre facilities, a cultural centre, a boutique vineyard, forestry along the boundary and self-sufficient gardens.

The third proposal, named Tame Haaka Panapa (Figure 5), planned to pay for a two-stage future development by leasing 50 acres at the front of the site. Under this scheme, each owner would get ten acres to house their extended whanau (family), with the provision of a family whare taonga (treasure house), communal marae (meeting house), tennis courts, recreation centre, an orchard with a processing plant, a vineyard and a large maara kai (food garden) to feed the
community. The whole development would be serviced by wind turbines to generate power to the site. A stadium and five-star hotel connected by a bridge to Weymouth, and high rise buildings along the waterfront serviced by a bus company, would provide income and jobs for the inhabitants. Along the waterfront there would be a rock pool garden with multi-storey hotels and Club Med-style tourist facilities, fishing charters and a seahorse farm. Of the three schemes, this proposal had the most intensive housing development. To get back neighbouring land, the strategy was to marry neighbouring farmers.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In a study on participatory mapping methods used in the Brazilian Amazon, geographers Regina Almeida and Renato Gavazzi write that ‘ethnocartography allows indigenous groups, through mapping activities, to achieve an understanding of their social environmental reality, its complexity, its potential and its political constraints’.

Under current legislation, Māori are struggling for the right to make decisions in terms of how they use their land and resources. For Māori this struggle is always linked to thinking about who out of the vast numbers of shareholders that collectively own their sites can build houses on the land, and how they can generate an income to make any development affordable and economically sustainable. In the proposals designed by the Hawke family during the dreaming session, they said they wanted to be able to house all shareholders who wanted to live on the site rather than just the limited numbers permitted by densities under current legislation and they were also interested in making their development environmentally viable by building extensive business enterprises that were linked to tourism and fishing ventures, and harnessed the potential of the coastal location (activities that are currently not permitted). The role of kaitakanga (guardianship), as one of healing the whenua (land) and providing ways of improving the quality of life for all the families involved, was also of paramount importance. This was played out through the provision of extensive planting schemes to stop erosion; setting up protected areas for wildlife; schemes to stop erosion; setting up protected areas for wildlife; and building facilities that housed educational programs that promoted business, health and cultural activities.

Zoning laws implemented by district councils are indifferent to meeting Māori needs; they obstruct Māori from developing sustainable and affordable housing on their land by limiting any income-generating aspects of land development. Apart from allowing for the provision of community facilities, there is also a lack of support within zoning laws for the development of alternative business enterprises on Māori land that aren’t solely dependent on farming practice. Zoning that favours individual housing development also places restrictions on what can be built, by not allowing for the provision of high-density housing that would more constructively meet the needs of multiple shareholders and make developments more affordable.

As a methodology, participatory mapping initiatives have been developed as a tool for empowering indigenous communities in many other countries, as a way of drawing together communities who have been unable to develop their land due to complex problems; for examples please refer to Di Gessa, Taylor and Lauriault, and Almeida and Gavazzi.

In a wider context of Aotearoa, the issues that the Hawke family face in relation to land use are issues that are faced by all Māori landowners. The visualisations that they generated manifest the wide gap between Māori aspirations for strong economic and social development for their communities and the inability of government to meet these needs under current legislation. For the Hawke family, the dreaming session served two functions. In the first instance, the maps were a fun way of starting a conversation that galvanised the family in a non-confrontational and inclusive way to help them think collectively about what they could do with the land. Secondly, through their development, these visualisations can also serve as a tool to negotiate the terms by which local councils are able to actively support the sustainable development of Māori land for the benefit of all shareholders and thereby support the right for Māori to self-manage and control land in accordance with their preferences and Tiriti O Waitangi obligations.

NOTES

4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
The debate over both community and planning and the large issue of their coming together in community planning reflected the economic and political changes since the 1970s. In the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century socially-driven planning more broadly addressed the issues and concerns of what community is in a locally given context and in a globally transforming world. Lived difference and situated knowledge distinguish one community from another community. The effects of globalisation, neocolonialism, neoliberalism and austerity impact communities around the globe.

Drawing on locally situated knowledge and paying attention to difference has critically expanded the repertoire of planning methods to achieve community involvement and transfer of power. This, in turn, has produced a growing body of theoretical reflections on community engagement. Reena Tiwari, Marina Lommerse and Dianne Smith, the three editors, shaped the volume through carefully chosen international contributions ranging from listening to the local knowledge of village women in rural India to pro bono work in suburban Australia, from hypothetical urban planning in Japan to women’s health knowledge in rural Uganda. All the examples chosen embrace an embedded and locally informed knowledge. The examples allow insights into the growing complexities profoundly challenging communities in different parts of the world. Equally, the becoming of a community is under threat. Community building requires resources, time and space. These are under threat and extremely unevenly allocated. All the more, methods and practices of community engagement need to be swift, alert, resourceful and critical.

Bridging the commitment to community involvement, capacity building, teaching, design and planning, the editorial team is astutely aware of the legacies and histories of community planning. They critically expound these in order to broaden the basis of knowledge for a critically informed and reflective future practice. Reena Tiwari teaches at the Departments of Urban & Regional Planning and Architecture at Curtin University and focuses on community involvement in the integration of urban development; Marina Lommerse teaches at Curtin University and works with creative people and communities to strengthen individual and collective capacity and agency; Dianne Smith teaches at Curtin University and was previously at Queensland University of Technology and focuses on design for the cognitively impaired. Their teaching, research, and creative practices cross back and forth between theory and practice, between people, communities, capacities and shared concerns. The book is as much a reflection on community engagement and capacity as it is a tool supporting future practices.

Knowledge is key to a renewed transdisciplinary and community-based practice. It is commonly held that knowledge and the capacity to work and to act are deeply bound up with the demands of cognitive capitalism and its accelerating global expansion. Therefore, the shared production knowledge as a community-based activity has to fight to take back the knowledge and its economics. This makes community-based knowledge production matter and has to secure ways keep the gains for the communities who are in fact producing the knowledge together and should therefore rightly be the ones who benefit from it.

The editors write:

Although a transdisciplinary approach is not new in itself, by making it explicit as an aspiration, we highlight the possible limitation of those projects that only bring together differing contributors at core moments for their expertise, without reflecting or planning for the potentially new ways of conceptualizing and of actioning what needs to be done. By constructing a project as transdisciplinary, all people are ongoing contributors, who are able to wander into others’ discipline-specific arenas and vice versa.

This commitment to wandering is something the book offers to its readers. They wander and learn. The transdisciplinary community of readers is invited to put to use the book’s knowledge. This will be of help to expand both community planning and transdisciplinary practice. The book is a useful tool ready for teachers and students alike. Equally, the ways of doing things explicated in the global case studies are of relevance for community organisers, activists, researchers, planners, administrators, but also funders and donors.
The contributions do not privilege one knowledge or one method over the other; staying true to transdisciplinarity as a community. Contributors include Mohammed Ali at Curtin University, who focuses on health and nutrition in Bangladesh and in Australian Indigenous people; Denise da Luca, who works at the Sustainable Design Program at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design and communicates nature’s principles to business organisations in search of radical transformation; Salvatore di Mauro, who teaches at Griffith University and focuses on public art and design with communities; Jaya Ernest, a leading expert in International Health who teaches at Griffith and focuses on post-conflict adversity and resilience among migrant and refugee communities; Annie Farren, who is the director of the Fashion Design and Research Hub at Curtin University; Mark Jones, who is Professor of Transcultural Health Improvement at Curtin and works with health care systems of developing countries; May Lample, who is a research assistant at Kimanya-Ngeyo Foundation for Science and Education in Jinja, Uganda; Damian Madigan, who lectures architecture at the University of South Australia and focuses on models of flexible housing; Carmen Mendoza-Arroyo, who is a professor at the Universitat Internacional de Catalunya and focuses on sustainable urban regeneration and development; Sarah McGann, who lectures at Curtin University and focuses on designing health, hospitality and recreation projects; Barbara Mlech, who is Curtin University’s Humanities Director of Graduate Studies and combines creative production research with feminist and Lacanian studies; David Morris, who focuses on designs for Indigenous communities and directs the Student Construction Program in the School of Art, Architecture and Design at the University of South Australia; Yatin Pandya, who is an author, activist, and architect whose firm FOOTPRINTS E.A.R.T.H. (Environment Architecture Research Technology Housing) is in Ahmedabad; Bob Pokrant who is Professor of Anthropology at Curtin University with a focus on community adaptation to climate change in South Asia; Veena Poonacha, who is Professor and Director of the Research Centre for Women’s Studies at SNDT Women’s University in Mumbai and works on empowerment projects for rural women in Southern Gujarat, Western India; Mokhlesur Rahman, who is a development practitioner in community-based natural resource management in Bangladesh; Clancy Read, who cofounded I.D.E.A. Global Consulting and focuses on humanitarian organisations; Debra Singh who is a medical doctor and cofounder of the Kimanya-Ngeyo Foundation for Science and Education in Jinja, Uganda; Nancy Spanbroek, who teaches at Curtin University and explores the interface between design pedagogy, community and exhibitions; Pere Vall-Casas, who teaches at Escola Tècnica Superior d’Arquitectura de la Universitat Internacional de Catalunya and focuses on urban sprawl repair. The areas of expertise of all the contributors clearly demonstrate their specialisation in health, creativity, the environment, alliance building, and feminist and gender methods. This mix brings to the fore the most challenging and troubling areas of uneven development owed to the precarity of space, time and bodies under the conditions of neoliberalisation and globalisation.

Currently we are witnessing an ever more accelerating process of uneven development paralleled by newly emerging zones of accumulation. Underprivileged communities pay the lion’s share of the price. Their access to material resources and their knowledge gains are restricted. Uneven development is understood as the deepening of injustice and the unequal distribution of resources and wealth across societies. All the more, actions of support grounded in community engagement have to re-capture and re-appropriate community knowledge and capacity building. Drastic measures of neoliberal market economies and austerity measures implemented by neoliberal governments are increasingly damaging to communities and to the time-intensive practices of capacity building. In essence, the globalisation advocated by the neoliberal economists is damaging to what is at the core of community building. Time and space together are in jeopardy, but they are needed in order to build lasting and resilient structures. The time invested together (rather than spent together) in the transdisciplinary practice of community planning and capacity building is crucial to strengthen resistance against the increasing precarity of community. Therefore, community planning and capacity building have taken on an unprecedented urgency in the twenty-first century.

With regard to the knowledge communities that are brought together in this book, the community of authors and the people who are part of their projects, the editors rightly position community as a discipline in its own right, or rather, as I prefer to name it, a trans-discipline. The politics of community involvement throughout the contributions in this volume move from the participant or recipient model of community members to a knowledge-based collaboration. We propose that the individual community members, alone or as a group, bring their own core knowledge and skills to any project. They are able to sit comfortably within a transdisciplinary context as equal yet unique players and contributors – not just participants or recipients. In order to address pressing matters of urban injustice, rural and environmental precarity, health issues and uneven development, the disciplinary character of community as a trans-discipline needs to be strengthened and strategically employed. The three parts of the book on Firstly Normatives on Models, Methodologies and Methods; secondly Unfolding Challenges and Removing Barriers in the Community Engagement Process: Opportunities for Transdisciplinary and Translocational Applications and thirdly Community Engagement and Capacity Building: A Transdisciplinary Perspective, allow for its critical and strategic use in teaching, theory, and practice. As much as social and material infrastructures are needed for capacity building, knowledge infrastructures are equally needed. M2: Models and Methodologies for Community Engagement is a timely contribution to supporting this much-needed knowledge infrastructure.
Biographies

Michael Chapman is an associate professor at the University of Newcastle where he is currently Head of Discipline (Architecture). He teaches architectural history, architectural theory, design and research methods. His PhD, which focused on theories of the avant-garde and their relationship to architecture, was awarded in 2011. His current research is into the historical relationship between industrialisation and modernism.

Lorella Di Cintio, PhD, has been educated in Canada, United States and Europe in the fields of interior design, architecture and philosophy. Her research and practice focuses primarily on design activism and the social and political positions undertaken by designers. She is the founder of The Design Activism = Change Initiative. She recently received the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Award from Ryerson University and the Interior Design Educators Council’s award for Community Service.

Charity Edwards has been educated in the diverse fields of anthropology, literature, interior design and architecture, and is both a practising architect and lecturer in Interior Architecture at Monash University. She teaches design studio, contemporary theory and construction, and also collaborates with other practitioners to create interiors, buildings and landscapes. Her current research focus is transdisciplinary in nature covering climate change politics, philosophy and urban uncertainty.

Davide Fassi, PhD, is an architect, a visiting associate professor at Tongji University and assistant professor at the Politecnico di Milano. He teaches in the BSc Interior Design and MSc Product Service System Design at the Politecnico di Milano. He is the co-ordinator of GIDE (Group of International Design Education) and a member of the international co-ordination committee at DESIS Network (Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability). His research topics focus on community-centred design. He has published in Tottenerre (2010) and Temporary Urban Solutions (2012). He initiated Coltivando, the convivial garden at the Politecnico di Milano and il sabato della Bovisa, two social design projects in Milan.

Elke Krasny is a curator, cultural theorist, urban researcher, writer and professor of Art and Education at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. She was the 2014 City of Vienna Visiting Professor at the Vienna University of Technology, the 2012 visiting scholar at the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal, visiting artist at Simon Fraser University’s Audain Gallery in Vancouver 2011-12 and visiting curator at the Hong Kong Community Museum Project in 2011. Recent curatorial works include Mapping the Everyday: Neighbourhood Claims for the Future at the Audain Gallery, Vancouver, and Hands On Urbanism 1850-2012: The Right to Green at the Architecture Centre Vienna and at the 2012 Venice Architecture Biennale. She co-edited Women’s Museum. Curatorial Politics in Feminism, Education, History, and Art.

Fleur Palmer (Te Rarawa/Te Aupouri) is a registered architect and senior lecturer at Auckland University of Technology. She has an MPhil in Engineering and is currently doing a practice-based PhD on Māori housing. Her PhD tracks the consequences of complex historical, legal, cultural and political issues which have significantly impacted on Māori housing, and considers ways of challenging a historical legacy of discriminatory legislation and segregation from rural and urban areas by rethinking and reworking sites of resistance and inertia, and through collaborative participation developing ways to achieve sustainable and affordable housing.


Alessandro Sachero, interior designer; graduated in 2012 from the Politecnico di Milano, where he works as a tutor in the Interior Design program. He has co-developed the project Coltivando, the convivial garden at the Politecnico di Milano. He is currently a research fellow at the Design Department, working on the concept and project development of the indoor and outdoor exhibition spaces for Expo Milan 2015.

Giulia Simeone studied Service Design at Politecnico di Milano, graduating with a PhD in 2005. She is part of the co-ordination team of the international DESIS Network (Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability, www.desis-network.org), and a member of the POLIMI-DESIS Lab within the Department of Design at the Politecnico di Milano. She currently holds a post-doctoral position...
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Sally Stone is the Master of Architecture program leader at the Manchester School of Architecture, and also the director of the College of Continuity in Architecture, a postgraduate studio for teaching and research. She has written extensively about interiors and the remodeling of existing buildings. Her international research profile includes a number of published books, inclusion in edited books and journals, invitations to speak at international conferences and requests to direct European workshops. She is the co-recipient of the 2014 Heritage Heroes Award in recognition of the work on Preston Bus Station.

Tüüne-Kristin Väikla has been educated as a designer and she is currently a PhD candidate at the Estonian Academy of Arts (EAA). Her research is focused on questions resulting from the transformation of buildings and the metamorphosis of space that arises when new functions are accommodated. She has worked on a wide range of projects from interior architecture to art installations. She was the curator of the Estonian National Exhibition at the 13th Venice Architecture Biennale 2012 and the curator of the Symposium of Interior Architects (SiSU) 2014 and 2015 in Tallinn, Estonia. Tüüne-Kristin is a practising interior architect at Väikla Studio and teaches at the EAA in transdisciplinary fields. She is a member of the board of the Estonian Association of Interior Architects.

Jennifer Webb, PhD, NCIDQ, LEED AP, is an associate professor of Interior Design in the Fay Jones School of Architecture at the University of Arkansas. Her professional work in the corporate and healthcare sectors has directly influenced her teaching and research efforts. She has written journal articles, books and book chapters about the interaction of the interior environment on human behavior, particularly that of diverse user groups. She is a passionate advocate of design and its role in improving lives. Her goal is to improve users’ health, safety and welfare in interior settings through teaching and research.

Sandra Wheeler is founder and co-director, with Alfred Zollinger, of the Brooklyn-based firm MATTER Architecture Practice. MATTER’s work encompasses architecture, exhibition design, installations, furnishings and proposals for public interaction within the urban environment. She is also currently serving as creative director responsible for leading the exhibition design and public presentation for the Humanities Action Lab Global Dialogues on Incarceration project. Co-ordinated from The New School, HAL Global Dialogues is an international collaboration of universities, issue organisations, and public spaces, experimenting with how the humanities and design can open new civic engagement in urgent social matters.

Brent Thomas Williams, PhD, is an associate professor and the program co-ordinator of the Rehabilitation Education and Research Program at the University of Arkansas. He has authored journal articles, book chapters and books addressing the inclusion of persons with disabilities. As a service provider, administrator, educator, researcher, author and advocate he has over twenty-five years’ experience in the field of disability in academia and the service sectors. In all these capacities he has applied his knowledge of the holistic approaches of inclusion requisite for career development as well as independent living within the community for persons with disabilities.
IDEA JOURNAL 2014 DESIGN ACTIVISM: Developing models, modes and methodologies of practice

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