PLACEMAKING, CO-CREATION & STORYTELLING

AN INSPIRATIONAL TOOLKIT
BASED ON 4 ONLINE MEETINGS OF MINDS

EXPERIENCED DESIGN

EDS. DR. ANN LAENEN, STEFAN KOLGEN & NIKA LEVIKOV

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CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

Placemaking is about people, about living together, about a sense of belonging and carving spaces together, about co-creation and sharing stories. And it is crucial for society, especially now as it enters a new dimension in times of a global pandemic that affects us all. What will placemaking look like after COVID-19? What did we learn and what can we take with us to the future? How will we socialise, move from one place to another, (inter)act with and in public spaces after the pandemic?

These questions guided a series of four online sessions which were held between the 7th and 30th of April (2020), connecting placemaking with the future of cities, tourism, the arts, urban design and digital storytelling. Experts and other interested persons were brought together across borders to discuss possible ways forward by learning from good practices. The response was overwhelming, both from the speakers that were contacted to take part, and from the diverse participants eager to share and exchange ideas.

The concepts behind placemaking are not new and date back to the 60s when writers and urbanists like Jane Jacobs[1], William Whyte[2] and Kevin A. Lynch[3] offered new ideas on urban design catering for residents.

The term itself was coined by Fred Kent, a research assistant on William Whyte's *Street Life Project* which observed and

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[1] *The death and life of great American cities*

[2] *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*

[3] *The Image of a City*

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analysed the way plazas, parks, urban streets and public places in New York were used. Kent founded *Project for Public Places* (PPS)[4] in 1975 to put Whyte's findings into practice. Around 1997 PPS started to use the term Placemaking to describe this new way of urban planning, not just designing for people, but actually engaging them in the process: *inspiring people to collectively reimagine and reinvent the heart of every community, with attention to the physical, cultural and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution* (PPS, What is Placemaking, 2007).

In 2010, a NEA white paper merged creative and placemaking: creative placemaking includes the involvement of *partners from public, private, non-profit and community sectors in strategically shaping the physical and social character of a neighbourhood, town, city or region around arts and cultural activities* (NEA, 2010).

Yet placemaking is more than bottom-up urban planning and creative placemaking is more than just integrating art and cultural activities in a given place. If we follow Edward Casye's line of thinking, a place does not have to be solely physical (1996). It can also be spiritual, cultural, social and virtual. As such, placemaking is also about a sense of belonging, quality of life, co-creation and shared experiences. The arts can also work as a facilitator in the process rather than being an object in the space or place.

This leads to the view on placemaking that guided the Meeting of Minds series, observed in both the presentations and the discussions afterwards. The series explored a process of creating quality places where people want to live, work, play, shop, and learn (Wyckoff 2015) with an attitude of generating wellbeing and a sense of belonging.

The discussions were rich, intense and generated much food for thought. This publication is the result of an inclusive thinking process with all participants, offering a reflective and critical lens on placemaking. It works as a toolkit, gathering

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[4] https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking

the presentations and giving insight in the main topics and strong examples that emerged from the discussions. It also lists key points to consider whilst working with communities and involving people in a co-creation process. This series ends with a non-exhaustive reading list as there are many interesting papers, reports and links to learn from.
We hope you will enjoy wandering through this publication and get inspired.
Last but not least, we have to thank all the speakers and all participants because without them, we could not have made this booklet.

Dr. Ann Laenen & Stefan Kolgen

SESSION 1.
PLACEMAKING AND THE FUTURE OF CITIES
7 APRIL 2020

The first session explored possible ways forward in placemaking and the future of our cities and villages for residents and visitors using digital tools and new ways of destination tourism. Post-COVID tourism will not be the same again. A lot of touristic places are reviewing their way forward by looking for more liveable and sustainable solutions to benefit everyone.

Dr. Jo Morisson, Director of Digital Innovation and Research at Calvium Ltd, began the session by talking about Digital Placemaking for Towns and Cities. She highlighted how the use of digital tools can help in the liveability of places and spaces. One of the examples presented was the six month research project entitled 'Ideascape: Digital Placemaking for Porth Teigr', which identified ways in which digital placemaking can contribute to the social, cultural and economic prosperity of the place and thus enhancing the quality of life of its stakeholder communities. She also stressed the importance of community participation and ended her talk with a big challenge ahead: how to address the UN Sustainable development Goals to be achieved by 2030, and in particular, Goal 11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities.

Presentation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1SYSDEStt7s
Link: https://calvium.com/

Frank Cuypers, Senior Strategist at Destination think!, gave a global perspective on cities, placema(r)k(et)ing and tourism in times of COVID-19, arguing that now is the time to re-think tourism. The world will be different after the pandemic and future tourism must respect locals. Community involvement is key in developing sustainable relationships. For Frank, placemaking and placemarketing are interchangeable. Cities are about everybody; people make their place and co-creation with locals is key. It is all about ownership and respect. Take, for example, the Kiwi-project in Whakatāne (New Zealand) where locals and tourists joined forces. Tourism can only give value if the experience is beneficiary for the citizens and the visitors. A place must be known before it can be understood.

Presentation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YLuC9hCQfas
Link: https://destinationthink.com/

The discussion about the future of cities and touristic destinations started with one of the participants highlighting that if you want to make an urban area more liveable you have to look into the aspect of mobility. It was felt that if one wanted to improve the quality of life and make places more attractive, one needed to re-think the way we go about mobility as it has a direct impact on the liveability and sustainability of spaces and places. It was also recognised that at this moment a lot of cities are experimenting with alternative ways of movement and redesigning accessibility for cars, cyclists and walkers. Hopefully some of these experiments will be implemented after the COVID-19 crisis.

There was a general feeling that to make this work, one should pay attention not just to macro-mobility, but also micro-mobility to have a holistic view of how people move and access places, including vulnerable people, and thus design inclusively. To quote one of the participants: Include the less mobile persons and do it in a participative way. This is a major challenge but without that there is no ownership. We need to have leadership that is willing to take up this challenge. This approach allows for a collaborative way using

co-creation involving all stakeholders and users. Jo Morisson illustrated this with her company's Ideascape experiment: *Our co-creation workshops for Ideascape had councillors, architects, artists, residents, people from the cultural sector, tenants, people working in the area and so forth. [...]it wasn't about tourism persé. We looked at the mixed-use development, we were looking at what the future development might look like to live, to visit, to work in*.

Recognising the different stakeholders and communities and building a sustainable relationship with them is crucial both in urban development and tourism. It takes time to develop these relationships as they are built on trust, making the long-term benefits undeniable. As Frank Cuypers mentioned: *citizens are always there. You always have to take them into account in a respectful way. There are destination marketing organisations that will have less problems after COVID-19 because they have such a good connection with their residents. And these residents will help them to rebuild or even to reimagine the whole tourism thing. It takes a while. If they step in, then you have a winning combination*. The residents have ownership of the programme that has been set up and they feel responsible for it, therefore they will help to re-establish it. He highlights the example of Elkhart, Indiana, where destination marketing is embedded in diverse communities.

This is a long-term process and often designers, developers, strategists and politicians will design what they think is good for the people living in these places instead of roping them into the process itself. They are often seen as one homogenous group, as one of the participants highlighted: *I'm not a designer, but I'm a resident of Valletta. As such I'm engaged all the time in the placemaking that should be going on in any city. I want to suggest that we should be talking about communities instead of community. Often the designers, the politicians and so on, design places so that they think it's going to be a fixed end product. And they, be it conscious or not, often design places for specific*

communities, not taking into account the different communities within the city.

It is important to realise that there are different communities in a city with different needs, and thus that it is better to speak in plural rather than a singular community to cater for each group appropriately.

We also have to listen to their stories and not jump to conclusions. Take for instance the project *People Make Glasgow*, which was about bringing placemaking and the community together. The idea was good. Research showed that change happened, but it was economic rather than cultural. As one of the researchers mentioned during this discussion, *it was about pushing brands rather than celebrating the past, so the more economical drive did not really consider the communities or the people, but rather emerging with the "new" without celebrating the "old", the rich history of the city*. A crucial aspect of placemaking is to instil a sense of belonging. To achieve this, the local culture must be understood and celebrated. This allows for responsible tourism in which the hosts are also engaged with sustainable results over the long-term that benefit economy. It is also key to work on a strategy aiming for quality rather than quantity, a choice often difficult to make.

Keywords during this discussion session were:
micro-mobility, impact, ownership, sustainability, respect, responsible tourism, communities, visitors, strategy, economy.

EXAMPLES

https://www.visitelkhartcounty.com/cities-towns/
A cultural milestone with a vibrant, diverse and unique community. Elkhart, Indiana connected its communities with

several common threads. They all claim their own distinct personality.

https://www.whakatanekiwi.org.nz/
The Whakatāne Kiwi Trust is a community-led registered charity promoting the protection of Kiwi and other indigenous species in the Whakatāne area. Here locals and tourists work hand in hand.

https://peoplemakeglasgow.com/
As the initiators mention: *The people of Glasgow are at the heart of this brand - we have created something which presents a truly distinctive identity for the city and on behalf of Glasgow, I would like to warmly thank all those who gave their ideas so generously.*

https://fairbnb.coop/
FairBnB is putting its platform at the service of the communities and the health organisations in the cities where we are active. By booking now a stay for later in the future, we will immediately donate 50% of the booking fee to relief funds in our destinations. Fairbnb.coop will directly cover all transaction costs allowing our fair Hosts and the relief funds to get as much resources as possible.

https://www.euronews.com/2020/04/19/venice-considers-a-new-tourism-model-after-covid-19-lockdown
Venice considers a new tourism model after COVID-19 lockdown. The Coronavirus crisis is prompting authorities in the Italian port of Venice to reconsider its mass-tourism model.

SESSION 2.
PLACEMAKING, CO-CREATION AND THE ARTS
9 APRIL 2020

C reative and artistic placemaking focussing on co-creation was the main theme of the second session. It is a specific way of using the arts to empower people and create change and/or to critically reflect on challenging topics related to liveability and a sense of belonging.

Kristina Borg, a freelance, socially engaged artist and art educator, presented 'The waves that narrate the story' which relates to 'No Man's Land'. This project was developed for the exhibition Dal-Baħar Madwarha (The Island is what the Sea Surrounds), curated by Maren Richter and commissioned by Valletta 2018 - European Capital of Culture. The project questions the spaces between 13 towns/cities from Kalkara to Valletta and from Valletta to Sliema. It shows how collaboration with locals, artists and local councils made one reflect in an artistic way on how such spaces affect the locals that inhabit it, from workers to commuters, and how they permeate in one's social life and political processes.

Presentation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZyOmXiPyYKg
Link: https://www.kristinaborg.com/

Nusquam Productions, which is run by artists **Mariangela Ciccarello** and **Philip Cartelli**, focused on 'The collaborative process behind filmmaking'. They narrated the evolution of a recent project that began at a residency in Għarb, Gozo (Malta, 2017) during which the artists collaborated with primary school students and members of the refugee collective Spark15 to produce a single channel video "Under the Moon" (2018). This led to the completion of a short film "Sublunary" (2019) which premiered at the Torino Film Festival in November of the same year. In "Sublunary," a young woman investigates an island's geologic specificity, discovering hidden strata where history and memory meet barely submerged narratives of displacement and imaginaries of possible futures.

Presentation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UEOTWfVFNsk
Link: https://www.mariangela-ciccarello.com/nusquam-productions

Stefan Perceval, actor and director of theatre company Het Gevolg in Turnhout, Belgium, talked about opening his theatre to people that never would have considered it to be a place to visit. He showed how stories of people can be part of a quality theatre production and how it creates a sense of belonging for them. They start to see the theatre as a place where they are welcome and can be themselves. He stressed the importance of listening to their stories and to create a relationship of respect and trust.

Presentation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6-gnvcCz_w
Link: https://www.hetgevolg.be/

As was already mentioned, engaging communities in the placemaking process is important. It creates ownership, civil pride and overall wellbeing. The relationship is built on partnership and respect, and the arts and co-creation are ways to achieve this in an organic and sustainable way.

However, engaging communities is not easy. The fact that they sometimes do not engage is due to a variety of factors.

There might be engagement fatigue from previous projects that went wrong, lacked appropriate maintenance or were deemed unappealing by the target community. If the context is not engaging to start with, why should one participate? This question was raised by one of the participants: *When you are listening to people and you make space for them to be themselves, you inspire a deep gratitude, loyalty and trust. If people are not engaging, it might be that the contexts are not engaging to start with. In this way, it connects to placemaking. As individuals can listen and make space, environments can make space or not. An environment can be more rigid or more accommodating for reconfiguration by users*. It is vital to know the community where work is taking place and to further respect its values and needs.

A large part of what followed in the discussion focused on how to appropriately approach communities and labelling emerged an important barrier. According to Kristina Borg, the use of the word vulnerable, for example, risks 'othering' a person. *We often talk about projects engaging with vulnerable community groups, but what defines vulnerability? I avoid using it because automatically it puts me on a different level. I prefer the other person I work with to be on an equal level*. We can understand that avoiding labels when working with members of a given community allows for equal status and ensures trust develops alongside the partnership. But this takes time and sometimes time is not at hand, so then you have to find your way around it with respect for the participants and without labelling. This is what Philp Cartelli and Mariangela Ciccarello did. Due to the limited project time in Gozo they opted to reach out to a group of people that who had identified themselves as 'refugees', To quote Philip: *when we worked with them we asked them to tell their stories through their narratives, which was from that particular perspective that they already had chosen for themselves. We were able to interact with them beyond that to some degree and remain in contact with them up until today. But the nature of the project did mean we could not spend as much time with them as we wanted*. In other

circumstances Philip and Mariangela would have invested in learning and understanding the multidimensional complexes of the individuals they were working with and employ that richness gained into their project.

Stefan Perceval acknowledged that in a different way by arguing the importance of listening carefully participants' stories. He uses these stories to create high-level productions and does not categorise the people he works with. What they have in common is that they would never spontaneously enter a theatre, nor think that they could perform in a play that they co-created with the director. Through the process, the play becomes theirs and the theatre as well. He concluded with the advice: *Please listen very carefully to the participants' stories because if you listen very well to their stories and you start from their lives, then they build a space of their own of which they are very proud of; it is their space. That is beautiful to see. Art can empower people to share their stories. Then you are building lovely communities.*

Listening to stories of the past are the way forward to a more liveable way of placemaking. A project that is mentioned between the examples illustrates that quite well. Artist, Deema Shahin, worked in 2016 and 2017 with residents from Gozo on a project called *Home is Where Mom Is*. It is based on the concept of motherhood. For her a mother has evolved to become a friend, a sibling or a father or simply someone who continuously affects people in the way a mother does, with her care, love and bringing together people and ideas, so it had rather become the dream of a mother figure in Gozo. She collected stories and created portraits of different 'mothers'. As such she captured Gozitan life in a particular way, with all its strength and vulnerability. The participants took ownership of the project and it is remarkable to see that participants are still referring to it years later.

Arts and art institutions can play an important role as well. The Centre for Contemporary Arts (Glasgow) in the 90s serves as a strong example. As one of the participants mentioned, it was developed in a grassroots way as a

community centre. *There was a lot of involvement of the residents and the community in different events that were happening there, exhibitions relating to the history of the neighbourhood, but then it changed and residents started to complain that the centre was not so accessible anymore. And it was discussed that the approach of Glasgow had a lot of downsides because a dominant history was put into place. Who owned it? There are many histories around certain neighbourhoods that are important to be told*. As the programming changed, people felt that it was not the same anymore leading to reduced engagement. We have to keep on listening to the different voices and stories of the residents and visitors to find the right mix and to create a greater sense of belonging.

Keywords during this discussion session were:
respect, trust, listen, ownership, labelling.

EXAMPLES

https://www.bloomberg.org/program/arts/asphalt-art-initiative/
The Asphalt Art Initiative grant program is designed to fund visual art interventions on roadways, pedestrian spaces, and public infrastructure in small- and medium-sized U.S. cities.

https://interartive.org/2017/06/home-is-where-mom-is
A community project by Deema Shahin stemming from her feeling of not belonging to a particular place but to many. To her, the idea of home is connected to her mother rather than a physical place, which gave rise to this project.

https://arestlessart.com/

A Restless Art (book and coordination: François Matarasso) is about community and participatory art. It's about what those practices are, how people think about them, why they're done and what happens as a result. It's called 'a restless art' because this work is unstable, changing and contested. It involves a range of ideas and practices. It crackles with artistic, political, ethical and philosophical tensions that give it life, energy and creativity. They make it matter in people's lives.

SESSION 3.
PLACEMAKING AND URBAN DESIGN
14 APRIL 2020

T he third session concentrated on the interactive/co-creative, people-centred approach in the process of planning and designing public spaces to develop places where residents feel engaged and have ownership. By taking the effort to reimagine public spaces together, shared value is maximised and the connection between places and its users is strengthened.

Jacques Borg Barthet is Director of Practice at AP Valletta, architect and urban designer who focused in his presentation on Playspace, a Valletta 2018 and Valletta Design Cluster event. The event was part of Design4DCity, developed by AP Valletta and We Live Here in consultation with Invisible Playground (Berlin) and the Siggiewi Local Council (Malta). It uses architectural props and stories to prompt children to reconsider the nature of public space and reimagine the realm of tarmac.

Presentation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aribv8S6Zo4
Link: https://www.apvalletta.eu/work/playspace

Joanna Frank, Founding President & CEO of the non-profit organisation Center for Active Design (CfAD) in New York, talked about the Civic Design Guidelines, a ground-breaking playbook for creating well-designed and well-maintained public spaces as a force for building trust and healing divisions in local communities. The guidelines are based on a lot of research and experimentation. She also detailed the relationship between health and design of public spaces, linking it to the challenges we have today due to COVID-19.

Presentation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=edHlt03Pe_c
Link: https://centerforactivedesign.org/

Creating liveable public spaces and places is not just about co-creation but also about co-governance. It is important for experimentation to factor in publics and government, to seize the moment, play with prototypes, test and go through iterations before implementing a sustainable, long-term solution.

The biggest challenge is to create change, which begins in the mind and this can only work with awareness of the cultural context. As Jacques mentioned, *Culture is always fundamental to this. What is the culture of the people you are working with and what is the culture of the decision makers in this respect. Following that, how can you convince them in looking at things in a different way?* When you understand the culture, you hold the power the yield change. It helps if leadership and vision are in place at this point. One of the participants gave the example of Singapore in the 60s. Lee Kuan Yew was able to turn Singapore into a Garden City and thus, transformed the culture. Despite its many challenges, this initiative was successful because of effective collaboration including a clear vision and leadership. Turning the city in a garden was only possible because the Prime Minister wanted and believed in it. The same seemed to have happened in New York under the Bloomberg administration. As Joanna highlighted: *What does it take as leadership to have a big shift in the perception of the city itself? We saw*

that under Bloomberg, a very strong personality; the power to actually change something. The overarching idea about New York City during the Bloomberg administration was that the City needed to compete on a world stage as world class, so it needed to really concentrate on the quality of life to those people living in the city, and it was not always people-centric. The strong leadership and vision behind the change resulted in an appropriate playground for the New York Plaza project. Interventions with minimal technology allowed for unique transformations of public spaces. Although not all were successful, everyone had the opportunity to engage in alternative ways to use space. As such, these kinds of interventions serve as an effective way to test new models.

When working in or with government, it is important to understand progress not in the form of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), but in terms of human wellbeing. If residents feel good in a place, that also has implications on the economy. Thus, metrics should not be solely economical, but also based on psychology. Designers and artists have a responsibility to be part of that shift.

This does not only depend on leadership, however. As Joanna said, *It is our responsibility as designers to get involved into the narrative as well. So yes, leaders have their priorities and they come up with a brand and hire some big company probably to inform how things should be, but it is our role also to get involved into the conversation, to advocate for our perspective and what we believe in, to bring our knowledge and expertise at the table as well. It is important not to be passive in this, but really dig into the cities we live in as well as a lot of other different cities. If we want change, we need to be that change and act.*

Joanna's colleague, Suzanne Nienaber, also highlighted the importance of sharing the findings and stories behind these experiments: *By sharing data and stories of other cities that have successfully implemented new ways of using public space, you can help build an appetite for it in other places. Temporary interventions and experiments help to evaluate*

the impact and to convince neighbourhoods to work on it too.

The Center has been doing it systematically for several years. As such, the *Assembly Guidelines for Civic Design* are based on four years of experience in co-creating liveable places. It is one of the many resources available today on the topic. The online platforms *Project for Public Space* and *Urban Living Labs* feature several good practices. Urban Labs in particular allows academia to collaborate with local stakeholders and other users are able to share their expertise, paving the way for new collaborations and sustainable, liveable transitions.

One of the key takeaways from the above resources and discussion was understanding the delicate selection process when picking communities, localities and neighbourhoods to work with. The choice has to be driven by their needs but also by their resources since implementing urban design is one part, while maintenance and aftercare once the implementation is completed follows. Far too often this can be forgotten, which then results in a neglected project. When engaging a community or neighbourhood with the process of designing a public space for them, it is imperative that they truly desire engagement and that they have ability and knowledge to continue the project post-implementation. Jo Morisson mentioned rightly that we cannot just rely on the community because not all communities have enough people to take part once a participatory project is finished. She advises: *Be careful with just relying de facto on the community. Not all communities have sufficient people who are able to take on a project after the participatory part is finished. We'll start something up and then it will be running for free taken care of by these happy people who do not have time on their hands and so forth.* A project's longevity can be easily broken under the weight of assumption, which brings the discussion back to ownership. Is the project about the artist or about the community? What is in it for both parties? How can one avoid engagement fatigue and find a match between the intentions of the designers and artists

and the community? Respectful co-creation with communities and neighbourhoods is founded upon trust that fosters pride in what is achieved.

Keywords during this discussion session were:
inclusive design, co-creation, empowerment, maintenance, aftercare, engagement fatigue, civic pride.

EXAMPLES

Plaza Project New York
https://globaldesigningcities.org/publication/global-street-design-guide/streets/pedestrian-priority-spaces/pedestrian-plazas/case-study-plaza-program-new-york-city-usa/
The Plaza Program is a citywide effort led by the Department of Transportation (DOT) of New York City to create cost-effective, high-quality public spaces in underutilised roadways throughout the city. The program aims to prioritize areas that currently lack open space, especially in high-pedestrian or low-income neighbourhoods.

Build the City
https://www.culturalfoundation.eu/library/build-the-city-magazine
The 26 practices highlighted in this publication are civil-public partnerships based on principles of the commons, i.e. enabling citizens and governments to share power, co-design and co-shape legislation, management or collective action for the common good.

Design4DCity
https://design4dcityblog.wordpress.com/
By adopting the concept of common space and of commoning[5] as a constructive, proactive and creative approach, an overarching vision stretching from 2016 to the year of the European Capital of Culture and beyond is being adopted for this initiative. The idea of common space evokes here the set of special relations produced by 'communing practices'.

Assembly Civic Design Guidelines
https://centerforactivedesign.org/assembly
The Assembly Guidelines capture the culmination of four years of research and collaboration — with input from 200+ studies, 50+ cities, and dozens of expert advisors — to provide evidence-based design and maintenance strategies for creating cities where people trust each other, have confidence in local institutions, and actively work together to address local priorities.

The Urban Village Project
https://www.urbanvillageproject.com/
The Urban Village Project re-thinks how we design, build, finance and share our future homes, neighbourhoods and cities. The aim is to allow for cheaper homes to enter the market, make it easier to live sustainably and affordably, and ensure more fulfilling ways of living together. Here's how we envision that to happen.

Urban Living Labs
http://www.urbanlivinglabs.net/p/snap-shots.html
European cities face a pressing challenge — how to provide economic prosperity and social cohesion while achieving environmental sustainability? In response, new collaborations are emerging in the form of urban living labs — sites devised

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[5] *The use of a common space by its residents, visitors etc ...*

to design, test and learn from social and technical innovation in real time.

Rethinking our streets
https://londonlivingstreets.com/2020/04/16/rethinking-our-streets-urgent-policy-responses-to-covid-19/
We are London Living Streets, volunteers from all boroughs of London, campaigning to transform our streets and public places to create a city that enables and inspires people to walk. We want a city that is open to everyone — not just car users — to enjoy.

SESSION 4.
PLACEMAKING AND (DIGITAL) STORYTELLING
21 APRIL 2020

P lacemaking is not only connected to a physical space; it can also be virtual. In this session we looked at how stories, digital or otherwise, are connecting people and enhancing their wellbeing. The examples presented showed how storytelling could create a sense of belonging and how the digital world adds value to that experience.

Dr. Shreepali Patel, Director of StoryLab (research institute, Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge) and eminent filmmaker, guided the participants through a couple of StoryLab's on-going research projects exploring and experimenting with the storytelling form. She talked about speculative design, freedom of play and the importance of experience. Take for instance The River, a 360 VR experience designed to provide a location based atmospheric experience originally designed for hospital patients unable to physically unable to experience the space themselves, but was released as part of the Covid-19 lockdown for all to experience on mobile technologies. The river location was chosen because of its association with therapy, peace and freedom. Another example is Italia Terremotata, forty years after one of the most devastating earthquakes in Italian history, this 3D cloud point based interactive documentary investigates the long lasting impact on the rural community of Senerchia, Irpinia in southern Italy.

Presentation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qO_wVU2pdP0
Link: https://storylabresearch.com/projects/

Stefan Kolgen is a Belgian digital storyteller and transmedia expert based in Malta. His talk focused on the social connection in a community through a transmedia storytelling project. Jefke Tuf was a digital storytelling and cultural mapping project that started in 2014 within the community of Winterslag (a former coalmining village in Limburg, Belgium). It is an interactive walk that leads you through the village; it is also a non-linear documentary, a radio broadcast, an interactive book and an exhibition, but above all, it is a project that gained the trust and the support of a diverse community that also participated. The stories of the community were mapped and connected with a metaphor. Jefke Tuf, a nurse taking care of the miners and driving through Winterslag on her Solex to visit families at the time the mine, was still alive and this created another social layer to the project in which the concept of taking care of one another in today's complex world is expressed. Through mapping stories and opening up cultural heritage, Jefke Tuf gave something back to the community.

Presentation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n94fwujQOe0
Link: https://stefankolgen.wordpress.com/

The first part of the discussion focused mainly on the strength of storytelling for placemaking. Using storytelling, whether it is digital or physical, help to create a sense of belonging. The two speakers also gave good examples of how the physical and digital intertwine. As one of the participants mentioned in the discussion: capturing stories co-created with the residents and visitors creates a sense of belonging. *It can also help to better understand a place and its residents and highlight its strengths rather than its weaknesses*. It can also allow us to better understand particular situations and cultural backgrounds.

When choosing technology we tend to go for the newest, hottest trend, but as Stefan Kolgen puts it, we often do so with disregard for old technologies that may serve as far more effective and appropriate in certain contexts: *When choosing technology to capture stories, I try to find the technology that works for most of those participating in the*

project and then reinvent in a way it has never been used before. That is how I approach things. Sometimes, and although I'm very fast in my thinking, it goes too fast and we tend to skip the possibilities of technology of yesterday because there is already something new before having used its potential.

The second part centred around the measurement of impact and funding. The impact is inherently part of the story. Dr. Shreepali highlighted: *Funding in the arts is always an issue, for funders to actually recognise the impact of what the arts can do. It is difficult to convince them. We had the same when setting up Storylab. Then we made The Golden Window. I had taken a very pragmatic approach to it. I understood we had to gather evidence for impact. Not realising that you create the impact. We were just substantiating our impact – what the film meant to the parents, for instance. But where we really captured the impact was then we used the film with health care practitioners to understand how patient and patient care feels in that environment of neo-natology.* The observable impact did not come from dissemination itself, but on understanding the psychological effects and personal relationships to the data being gathered to make the film. Indeed, showing impact through financial gain is not itself the best form of measurement in some cases. It is equally important to measure wellbeing, a strength the arts bring in the process of placemaking by facilitating direct connections to people involved.

Storytelling brings to light the diverse narratives of communities and neighbourhoods to lay building bricks for progressive futures. By listening to the stories behind the wall, we create more sustainable, inclusive and beautiful places to live.

Keywords during this discussion session were:
storytelling, sense of belonging, connecting people, co-creation, impact, technology

EXAMPLES

Arriving - Audio book
https://storylabresearch.com/projects/arriving/
Arriving at a new place' is a core aspect of migration, but stories of arrival are not limited to the migration experience. We all have stories of arrival (e.g. school, workplace, new home) to tell, reflecting commonalities of human perceptions, reflections and emotions.

Anti-Eviction mapping project
https://www.antievictionmap.com/about
The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project is a data-visualisation, data analysis and storytelling collective documenting the dispossession and resistance upon gentrifying landscapes. Primarily working in the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, and New York City, we are all volunteers producing digital maps, oral history work, film, murals, and community events.

City Chromosomes
https://stefankolgen.wordpress.com/2004/09/22/ citychromosomes-story-of-a-city/
Antwerp was World Book City in 2004. This event made us wonder how we could involve Antwerp citizens in writing literature by using a very popular new media tool such as mobile phones.

KEY ELEMENTS TO TAKE AWAY

The presentations and discussion sessions highlighted some interesting points to takeaway. Below is a non-exhaustive list of themes, criteria and tools that prove to be crucial whilst implementing sustainable projects and policies involving citizens, residents, visitors and tourists.

The themes are mobility, responsible and sustainable tourism, inclusive design, liveability, sense of belonging, ownership and empowerment. The criteria include maintenance, aftercare, respect, trust and commitment to make it work and the tools encompass empowering communities, co-creation, collaboration, co-governance, partnership, (digital) storytelling, experiment and the arts.

Projects should begin with an integrated approach including a vision, a strategy over the long-term and support of strong leadership for success.

Key elements to takeaway are grouped under four stages, note that these phases are non-linear and that they can refer back to one another in the process.

DEFINE

Start from a vision
Take an integrated approach
Work on a long-term strategy
Evaluate, learn and document

DISCOVER

Learn about the context
Listen to the stories behind the wall
Do not start from scratch but build on existing projects

ACT

Seize the moment
Experiment, test, iterate
Look for quality rather than quantity
Be inclusive

ENGAGE

Co-create
Co-governance
Engage communities with respect
Factor in maintenance and aftercare
Build sustainable relationships
Trust
Empower
Share the lessons learned

RESOURCES

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BIOGRAPHIES GUEST SPEAKERS

Jacques Borg Barthet is Director of Practice at **AP Valletta**. He read for a BA (Hons) in Architecture at the University of Malta and an MA in Urban Design at Oxford Brookes, U.K. In 2007 he co-authored the Kamra tal-Periti's award-winning publication: The Urban Challenge: Our Quality of Life and the Built Environment. He maintains an active an interest in issues pertaining to governance for environmental quality and was, until recently, undertaking a PhD on urban governance for urban environmental quality, focusing on candidate cities for the European Green Capital Award (not completed). Jacques lectures in regional development and urban design at the Faculty for the Built Environment of the University of Malta.

Kristina Borg is a freelance socially engaged artist and an art educator. In her interdisciplinary research-practice she spends time integrating into specific communities and devotes her attention to relationships between people. In dialogue with the community and/or the place, her work focuses on socio-political issues in urban-collective spaces.

Frank Cuypers is senior strategist for the Canadian Company **Destination Think!** and visiting lecturer in Antwerp, Innsbruck and New York. Frank is perceived as a thought leader in think about places and elements of placemaking within tourism and city marketing. He has been given keynotes on five continents and worked with more than a hundred places around the world going from major cities such as Auckland, Ottawa, Montreal, Vancouver, Amsterdam,

Copenhagen, and countries such as Japan and the UK, to states and provinces such as Colorado, California, British Columbia and islands such as Aruba, Tasmania and New Zealand. Frank works as a volunteer strategist in Malawi.

Joanna Frank is the Founding President & CEO of the **Center for Active Design** (CfAD) in New York, where she advances design and development practices to foster healthy and engaged communities. CfAD is the operator of Fitwel, a unique certification system originally developed by the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Fitwel has translated the global public health evidence base into practical design and operational strategies for buildings and communities to optimise health. Prior to launching CfAD, Ms. Frank worked for the City of New York during the Bloomberg Administration, where her positions included Director of Active Design and Director of the NYC FRESH program. Ms. Frank's career started in real estate development as a partner at Bright City Development, LLC where she was responsible for mixed-use residential projects that prioritised sustainable design. Ms. Frank is a member of the Urban Land Institute's Affordable/Workforce Housing Council and an active partner in ULI's Building Healthy Places initiative.

Stefan Kolgen is a Belgian digital storyteller and transmedia expert based in Malta. He obtained his B.A. in sound and imaging techniques at the Hoger Rijksinstituut for Toneel- en Cultuurspreiding (H.R.I.T.C.S.) in Brussels in 1989. After working as a 35mm documentary maker, he switched to television and video and worked for several broadcast companies in Belgium and the Netherlands.
Due to his early interest in computers and BBS-networks (Bulletin Board Systems), he started combining storytelling with the upcoming internet full-time in 1993. Testing and introducing new technologies and communication tools within the work of (socio)cultural institutions is at the forefront of his work, as well as implementing them in projects involving as many people as possible in a creative process:

e.g. CITY Chromosomes (2004), serious game RFID Snakes & Ladders (2006), transmedia theatre Paola246 (2007), interactive graphic novel Dansen Drinken Betalen (2014), transmedia community project Jefke Tuf (2015).
He was coordinator new media and community manager for several major cultural events and institutions in Antwerp: e.g. Year of Paul van Ostaijen (1996), Van Dyck 1999, Antwerp World Book Capital (2004-2005), Youth Theatre HETPALEIS (2000-2007).
He co-curated with Ann Laenen the group exhibition The Island Indoors with Maltese and Belgian artists and Aaron Bezzina's solo exhibition Corpus Adflictum. Currently he's working on the community arts project Fragile.
Together with Ann Laenen, he founded **Experienced Design**, a company delivering services for the cultural and educational sectors in strategic thinking, design thinking, experience design and marketing.

Dr. Jo Morrison is Director of Digital Innovation and Research at **Calvium Ltd**. She works at the intersection of design, research and business. Focussing on digital innovation, she creates and delivers successful strategies and projects to maximise impact, accelerate growth and create rich customer experiences across a range of sectors - including property, the creative and cultural industries and education. Discovering the opportunities and value that bespoke digital placemaking affords clients involved in large scale urban developments is a core area of Jo's work - with the aim of creating more pleasurable, sustainable and citizen-centred future cities.

Nusquam Productions: **Mariangela Ciccarello** (1983, Italy) is an artist working in moving image, installation, and sculpture. Her work has been featured at the Locarno Film Festival, Edinburgh International Film Festival, Torino Film Festival, Harvard Art Museum, and Film Society of Lincoln Center among other venues. In 2019-20 she is a participant in the Whitney Independent Study Program – Studio Program.

Philip Cartelli (1984, USA) is a moving-image artist and researcher. He holds a PhD in Media Anthropology from Harvard University, where he was a member of the Sensory Ethnography Lab, and a PhD in Sociology from the Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales. He is chair of the Department of Visual Arts at Wagner College in New York City.

Dr. Shreepali Patel is Director of the **StoryLab Research Institute**. Her research focuses on multimodal narratives, audio-visual technologies, user experience and multiplatform deliveries. Her industry experience as a filmmaker includes the BBC, C4, C5 and HBO, drama, promos and commercials, and working on a number of UK based and international feature films.

After years of acting and directing for major theatre companies in Belgium, The Netherlands and Germany, **Stefan Perceval** has been the artistic leader and general manager of **HETGEVOLG** since February 2014. From experience he knows what if feels like to constantly be on survival mode and what theatre can mean when you're not living the life you want to live. Stefan has an impressive resume when it comes to working with all kinds of groups. His work varies from unique projects in schools and neighbourhoods all over Belgium, over projects at well-known Flemish social-artistic organisations, up to international projects like ART-is EuropeProject (A European projects stimulates Inclusion and Self-development of adults with learning disabilities through the (performing) ARTS). Stefan Perceval challenges the participants to think about themselves and their place in the world, through the possibilities and powers of theatre.

EXPERIENCED DESIGN

Experienced Design is **Dr. Ann Laenen** and **Stefan Kolgen**. It stands for 25 years of experience in Marketing, PR and Digital Design and Services, with Ann being the strategic expert and Stefan being the technology and social media expert. It includes expertise in on- and offl ine marketing & communication, transmedia storytelling, project management and consultancy. In all this the visitor/customer is at the center. Our keywords are service design, visitor/customer experience design, human centred design, co-design, co-creation & curation. In short design thinking is our core business. *ExperiencedDesign@gmail.com*