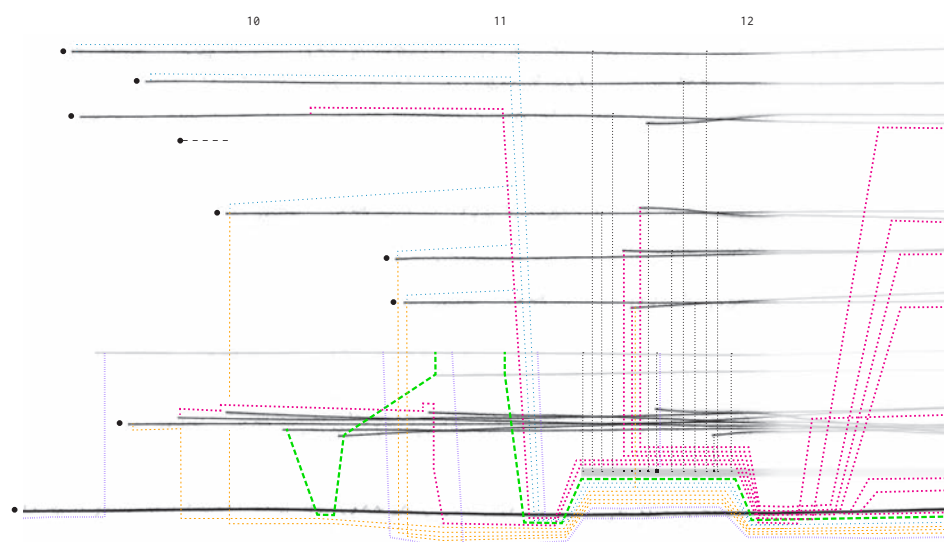


CHALMERS

JON GEIB

*Separations in Multivocality: Reconfiguring Dialogue Through Design*

# CHALMERS



## **Separations in Multivocality** Reconfiguring Dialogue Through Design

JON GEIB

*Department of Architecture*  
CHALMERS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY  
Gothenburg, Sweden 2017

THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF LICENTIATE OF ARCHITECTURE

## Separations in Multivocality

Reconfiguring Dialogue Through Design

JON GEIB



Department of Architecture  
CHALMERS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY  
Gothenburg, Sweden 2017

**Separations in Multivocality:**  
Reconfiguring Dialogue Through Design

JON GEIB  
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Department of Architecture  
Chalmers University of Technology  
SE-412 96 Gothenburg  
Sweden  
Telephone +46 (0)31-772 1000

Chalmers Reproservice  
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Front cover image: timeline diagram of the primary case study (see Figure 4)

# Abstract

## Separations in Multivocality:

Reconfiguring Dialogue through Design

Jon Geib

Department of Architecture, Chalmers University of Technology

This thesis takes an artistic research approach concerned with the designer's agency within processes of public space. It traverses contexts of urbanism, urban design, architecture, art, design and participatory processes but also draws from other fields. It aims to reconfigure a view commonly held in applications of dialogue and participation, particularly in urban development, that dialogue is a face-to-face process which should converge towards a single consensus. Instead, dialogue can be understood to happen both directly and indirectly in dynamic processes involving converging (connecting) and diverging (separating) forces which together produce *multivocality*, or the coexistence of a collective voice with multiple articulated voices. In critical response to the monovocality of our post-political, post-Fordist context, and to similarly monovocal communitarian or cosmopolitan alternatives, the emphasis here is on mechanisms of *separation* for their capacity to structure the differentiation required by multivocality. The most immediate question is how the designer can structure, negotiate and navigate the dynamics of separation and connection, articulating and disarticulating voices in order to enable, protect, amplify or produce new multivocality.

I experimented with and experienced these dynamics through my primary case study, *Ett skepp kommer lastat. . .* (2015-2016), a project I initiated in collaboration with the Frölunda Cultural Center and the Gothenburg Cultural Department, with the support of Chalmers Architecture and TRADERS. It involved eight groups of children and youth from three schools and inquired into the theme 'neighbors' from artistic, cultural, urban and architectural perspectives through a constellation of participatory workshops integrated with an exhibition.

Keywords: *multivocality, separation, dialogue, indirect dialogue, design, participation, post-political, artistic research, architecture, public space*



# List of Papers and other Publications

## Paper 1

Geib, J. (2014). The Challenges of Urban Activism in the New Neoliberal Context. In *criticall: International Conference on Architectural Design and Criticism - Digital Proceedings*, Madrid, 490-504. ISBN: 978-84-697-0424-0.

## Paper 2

Geib, J. (2015). Poetic Incommunicability: An 'Efficient' Creative Force. In *Transvaluation: Making the World Matter International Symposium [proceedings]*, Gothenburg. ISBN: 978-91-88041-00-5.

## Paper 3

Huybrechts, L., Benesch, H., Geib, J., Schoffelen, J. and Heynen, H. (2017, *forthcoming*). Institutioning: Participatory Design and the Public Realm. *CoDesign*.

## Book section

Geib, J. (2017). Designing Multivocality . . . from Outer Space [and lexicon entries]. In Hamers, D., Bueno de Mesquita, N., Vaneycken, A. and Schoffelen, J. (eds.). *Trading Places: Practices of Public Participation in Art and Design Research*. dpr-barcelona.

## Book of illustrations

Liffner, I., Roosenboom, M. and Geib, J. (ed.). (2017). *Modelling in Dialogue: Book of Voice-Illustrations*. [Digital and print publication]. Gothenburg: TMB Tabergs AB.

## Art book

Geib, J. (2015). *Poetic Incommunicability*. Vegetable Lamb Press. ISBN: 978-91-88249-08-1.

## Exhibition

*Ett skepp kommer lastat*. . . (2015). [Exhibition]. Frölunda Kulturhus, Västra Frölunda, Gothenburg. 12-29 November.

# List of Appendices

## [ *Groundwork and development* ]

Appendix 1 - Network maps

Appendix 2 - Theoretical-methodological framework diagrams

## [ *Publications* ]

Appendix 3 - Paper 1 - "The Challenges of Urban Activism in the New Neoliberal Context"

Appendix 4 - Paper 2 - "Poetic Incommunicability: An 'Efficient' Creative Force"

Appendix 5 - *Poetic Incommunicability*

Appendix 6 - Paper 3 - "Institutioning: Participatory Design and the Public Realm"

Appendix 7 - *Trading Places: Practices of Public Participation in Art and Design Research*  
[lexicon entries]

Appendix 8 - *Modelling in Dialogue: Book of Voice-Illustrations*

## [ *Case study documentation* ]

Appendix 9 - *Ett skepp kommer lastat. . .*

## [ *Workshops and events* ]

Appendix 10 - Lingua Franca

Appendix 11 - Problematising Post-Fordist Instrumentalisation of Art and Design Labor

Appendix 12 - Modelling in Dialogue (TRADERS Training Week)

Appendix 13 - "Multivocality, Design and Public Space"

# List of Figures and Tables

Table 1: TRADERS PhD network positions.	17
Figure 1: Mental map of research components.	25
Figure 2: The <i>Creativity Machine</i> .	33
Figure 3: The <i>Creativity Machine</i> .	33
Figure 4: Timeline diagram.	45
Figure 5: A4 letter to parents sent in advance of the first Museum Lesson workshop.	46
Figure 6: A4 program sent in advance of the first Frölunda School <i>fritidshem</i> workshop.	47
Figure 7: A4 program sent in advance of the second fritidshem workshop.	48
Figure 8: A4 program sent in advance of the fourth fritidshem workshop.	49
Figure 9: A4 program sent in advance of the two Museum Lesson workshops.	50
Figure 10: Project proposal sketch.	55
Figure 11: The space probe.	63
Figure 12: A 'gameboard with no rules'.	64
Figure 13: Space laboratories.	66
Figure 14: Exhibition - Frölunda School fritidshem children on their way to the vernissage.	68
Figure 15: Exhibition - the space laboratories seen from outside the Frölunda Cultural Center.	68
Figure 16: Exhibition - plan and interior elevations.	69
Figure 17: Exhibition - panoramic view from northwest corner.	70
Figure 18: Exhibition - panoramic view from northeast corner.	70
Figure 19: Exhibition - interior view of participatory sculptural installation (or, the 'ship').	70
Figure 20: Exhibition - view of the 'ship' from its southeast corner.	70
Figure 21: Exhibition - Frölunda School fritidshem children at the vernissage.	71
Figure 22: Exhibition - view from entry (southwest corner).	75
Figure 23: Exhibition - photo grid on the west face of the 'ship'.	75
Figure 24: Exhibition - 'the researcher from outer space' corner and handwritten letter.	76
Figure 25: Exhibition - dialogical field [notes].	77
Figure 26: Exhibition - 'May I borrow some sugar?'.	77
Figure 27: Exhibition - space probe - elevation and isometric views.	78
Figure 28: Exhibition - space probe.	79
Figure 29: Exhibition - space probe.	80
Figure 30: Exhibition - window collage boards.	80
Figure 31: Exhibition - 'A Room With a View'.	81
Figure 32: Exhibition - 'A Room With a View' - sample from the book.	81
Figure 33: Exhibition - 'A Room With a View' - sample of reference photographs.	81
Figure 34: Exhibition - space laboratories (or 'boxes') - video panel.	82
Figure 35: Exhibition - space laboratories.	82

Figure 36: Exhibition - space laboratories.	83
Figure 37: Exhibition - space laboratories.	83
Figure 38: Exhibition - space laboratories.	83
Figure 39: Exhibition - space laboratories.	84
Figure 40: Exhibition - hanging screens or 'sails' of the 'ship'.	84
Figure 41: Exhibition - expeditions - synchronized video panels.	85
Figure 42: Exhibition - expeditions - synchronized video panels.	85
Figure 43: Exhibition - expedition 'field notes' guide (blank example).	86
Figure 44: Exhibition - exhibition text and attribution.	86
Figure 45: Exhibition - gameboards ('gameboards with no rules').	88
Figure 46: Exhibition - gameboards - selected cards.	89
Figure 47: Exhibition - the expedition ship-apartment-research laboratory-spaceship (or 'ship').	89
Figure 48: Exhibition - the 'ship'.	89
Figure 49: Exhibition - the research laboratory-apartment.	90
Figure 50: Exhibition - the research laboratory-apartment-expedition ship.	90
Figure 51: Exhibition - the expedition ship with suggested instructions for participation.	90
Figure 52: Exhibition - the 'ship' and its explicitly participatory component.	91
Figure 53: Exhibition - growth diagram (display of space laboratories).	96
Figure 54: Stills from the space laboratory video panel.	101
Figure 55: Stills from the space laboratory video panel.	102
Figure 56: Stills from the space laboratory video panel.	102
Figure 57: Visual feedback from Önnared School participants on their experience.	112
Figure 58: Visual feedback from Önnared School participants, continued.	113
Figure 59: Visual feedback from Önnared School participants, continued.	114
Figure 60: Presentation choreography diagram.	126
Figure 61: <i>Mixed Messages</i> intervention.	128
Figure 62: Hundertwasser's ideological aesthetic superimposed on actual rectilinearity.	131

*Unless noted otherwise, all photographs were taken by the author.*



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# Contents

Abstract    A

List of Papers and other Publications    B

List of Appendices    C

List of Figures and Tables    D

Acknowledgements    G

## 1. Introduction    1

### 1.1 Person[s] Out of Place    13

1.1.1 Motivation and Pluridisciplinarity

1.1.2 TRADERS and Hyper-Epistemic Communities

1.1.3 Aims

1.1.4 Methodology

### 1.2 Person[s] In Place    26

1.2.1 Working within Institutions

1.2.2 Working with Institutions

### 1.3 Monovocality and the Post-Political    29

1.3.1 *AD2077: A Speculative Pre-Study*

### 1.4 Briefs on Appendices    35

## 2. Primary Case Study: *Ett skepp kommer lastat*. . .    41

### 2.1 Contextualization    51

### 2.2 Designing Multivocality . . . from Outer Space    60

### 2.3 The Exhibition    67

### 2.4 Reconfiguring Voices    91

### 2.5 Problematizing Contexts    107

## 3. Interlude: Secondary Case Studies and Experiments    121

## 4. Concluding Discussion and Further Research    133

### 4.1 Revisiting Context    136

### 4.2 Revisiting Multivocality, Separation and Design    141

### 4.3 Further Research    144

References    147

## Appendices 153

### [ *Groundwork and development* ]

Appendix 1 - Network maps 155

Appendix 2 - Theoretical-methodological framework diagrams 159

### [ *Publications* ]

Appendix 3 - Paper 1 - "The Challenges of Urban Activism in the New Neoliberal Context" 165

Appendix 4 - Paper 2 - "Poetic Incommunicability: An 'Efficient' Creative Force" 193

Appendix 5 - *Poetic Incommunicability* 203

Appendix 6 - Paper 3 - "Institutioning: Participatory Design and the Public Realm" 205

Appendix 7 - *Trading Places: Practices of Public Participation in Art and Design Research*  
[lexicon entries] 209

Appendix 8 - *Modelling in Dialogue: Book of Voice-Illustrations* 217

### [ *Case study documentation* ]

Appendix 9 - *Ett skepp kommer lastat. . .* 223

### [ *Workshops and events* ]

Appendix 10 - *Lingua Franca* 257

Appendix 11 - Problematising Post-Fordist Instrumentalisation of Art and Design Labor 259

Appendix 12 - *Modelling in Dialogue (TRADERS Training Week)* 263

Appendix 13 - "Multivocality, Design and Public Space" 273





## Chapter 1 - Introduction



This thesis takes an artistic research approach concerned with the designer's agency within processes of public space<sup>1</sup>. It traverses contexts of urbanism, urban design, architecture, art, design and participatory processes but also draws from other fields. It aims to reconfigure a view commonly held in applications of dialogue and participation, particularly in urban development, that dialogue is a face-to-face process which should converge towards a single consensus. Instead, dialogue can be understood to happen both directly and indirectly in dynamic processes involving converging (connecting) and diverging (separating) forces which together produce *multivocality*, or the coexistence of a collective voice with multiple articulated voices. In critical response to the monovocality of our post-political, post-Fordist context, and to similarly monovocal communitarian or cosmopolitan alternatives, the emphasis here is on mechanisms of *separation* for their capacity to structure the differentiation required by multivocality. The post-political pushes us to adopt a single voice—typically a neoliberal consensus model—in addressing the city, politics and development, driving increasing inequality, while communitarianism pushes a consensus model on social interaction. On the other hand, elements within post-Fordism and cosmopolitanism push incessant activity, connectivity, fluidity and flexibility, along with hyper-diversity and hyper-transparency such that a cacophony of voices is created and none can be distinguished nor maintained. In both cases, Jonathan Crary's diagnosis of the latter applies: no "inherent structure of differentiation" can be formed (2013, 13). The most immediate question becomes how the designer can structure, negotiate and navigate the dynamics of separation and connection, articulating and disarticulating voices in order to enable, protect, amplify or produce new multivocality. An ambivalent relationship to

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1. 'Space' and 'public space' are understood here in a relational sense from a socio-spatial-political perspective, as being partly produced by and partly structuring social and political forces. See: Heynen, H. (2013). *Space as Receptor, Instrument or Stage: Notes on the Interaction Between Spatial and Social Constellations*; and: Neal, Z. (2010). *Seeking common ground: Three perspectives on public space*.

context becomes necessary, as does a willingness to work in multiple modes in which the designer's degree of control varies widely. The dynamics of multivocality can be explored not only within or 'inside' of participatory processes, but 'outside': the related structures and design configurations before, between and after single periods of participation.

Research following this line of critical inquiry has relevance on a number of levels. Challenging the societal conditions described above includes reanimating democracy as an ongoing emergent process of articulation of diverse collective voices rather than solely as an instrument for honing in on a monovocal consensus. Dispositions towards acknowledging the diversity and complexity of public space processes are likewise strengthened, opening up richer modes of engagement by designers within urbanist, architectural and urban design practices who seek to explore alternative approaches and methods involving a wider variety of actors. Collaborations, and work with and within institutions<sup>2</sup> can be seen in a new way. The associated development of theory can play a role in expanding and deepening fields of design research.

Being part of an EU-funded network PhD project, TRADERS (Training Art and Design Researchers in Participation for Public Space), my research is often prone to aspects of a post-Fordist, hyper-active mode, which tends to aggravate the already messy nature of an artistic research approach. On the other hand, my research is embedded within and supported by multiple institutions, has a close collaboration with the Gothenburg Cultural Department and seeks to engage with institutions as part of its practice.

I experimented with and experienced these issues through my primary case study, *Ett skepp kommer lastat. . .* (2015-2016), a project I initiated in collaboration with the Frölunda Kulturhus [Cultural Center] and Göteborgs Stad Kulturförvaltningen [Gothenburg Cultural Department], with the support of Chalmers Architecture and TRADERS. It inquired into the cultural center's theme 'neighbors' from artistic, cultural, urban and architectural perspectives through a constellation of participatory workshops involving 159 children and youth from eight different groups (classes and after-school programs). As a starting point we investigated how neighbors communicate with each other *indirectly* through architectural interfaces (doors, windows, common spaces), and emphasized this indirectness by utilizing distanced methods and perspectival reversals of researcher and subject. Tours of local housing blocks, artistic expressions, interpretations and speculations, design of a 'space probe', and artistic production of an interior space led to a three-week participatory exhibition. Rather than meeting neighbors face-to-face, we got to know them—and for the most part, not know them—from a distance and from awareness of the limits of such a

---

2. The definition of 'institution' I use throughout refers to some kind of intentional formal or informal organization, typically in public or non-profit sectors, ostensibly devoted to aims, values and/or practices beyond those purely economic or personal.

pursuit. This aimed to build an urban empathy connecting to the increased 'dialogical capacity' argued necessary in the social relations associated with contemporary urban conditions (Amin, 2012; Hermans and Hermans-Konopka, 2010). Further, this case study brought the indirect, dialogical role of the artifact—non-verbal, non-human—into consideration and covers several conditions, mechanisms and configurations of multivocality in which the artifact is a critical component.

## Reader's guide

The text takes different formats in order to reach different communicative aims, including expressing a sense of multivocality of research material valid from a transdisciplinary knowledge perspective. The reader will primarily encounter essayistic, narrative text along with conceptual and theoretical analysis and reflection, but will also find photos, diagrams, workshop program sheets, participant feedback, content produced in workshops or curriculum exercises, exhibition caption text and other non-academic text and bullet point lists. The essay form attempts to capture some of the complexity and ambivalence involved in the artistic research process, my own positionality and in the relational nature of the subject matter. The bullet points function as sticky notes for points of interest that were part of my research process, but too profuse or divergent to be woven into larger patterns yet, and so act as placeholders for future study.

Throughout the text, I will analyze the key concepts—multivocality and 'voice'; separation; related issues of design and aesthetics; and context—on one or more of four levels:

1. material / artifactual
2. individual (participants including myself and collaborators)
3. institutional (including participants seen as groups—e.g. as school classes)
4. societal (wider critical context)

These levels are recognized as always entangled but will sometimes be separated for analytical purposes, especially to identify relations between them. My discussion of the primary case study aims not to identify fixed, essential qualities or relations, but to specify how they emerged, transformed and even changed valences over time and under different circumstances or 'contexts'.

This introductory section proceeds with an overview of the key concepts, then with a series of subsections focused on contextualizing my position in relation to the key concepts and wider theoretical concerns. If the reader instead wishes to begin directly with the primary case study, Chapter 2 includes a short synopsis, followed by more specific contextualization (Section 2.1), a short, non-academic overview text (2.2), an image-heavy

section on the exhibition, including a virtual walkthrough (2.3) and further discussion (2.4, 2.5). Chapter 3 acts as an unrestful interlude by taking cursory glances at nine secondary case studies and experiments in relation to some of the key concepts, in order to re-emphasize the frenetic conditions which surrounded and often interrupted the primary case study as well as the writing of this text. To maintain focus, the reader may wish to skip ahead to Chapter 4 which, in a reflective concluding discussion, revisits key concepts in relation to the primary case study, starting with a brief exploration of theory on 'context' (4.1) and closing with suggested directions for further research (4.3).

## Key concepts

### Multivocality and 'voice'

'Multivocality', for me, denotes a state of architectonic ambivalence in which one can simultaneously read semi-autonomous parts (exerting some agency) and qualities of a whole (commonalities, proximities and/or configuring frameworks) without that 'whole' being complete or conclusive. The relative autonomy and distinctness—or 'loudness'—of the parts keeps the whole from any claim to purity or finality. The mechanics of multivocality consist of "a unity that holds together and simultaneously separates its heterogeneous elements", according to philosopher Fred Evans (2008, 8).

I was drawn to explore multivocality during my inquiry into Russian linguist and culturologist Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogism (1984; 1981), which advocated for the dialogical qualities of the 'polyphonic novel' because they embodied the "immense plurality of existence" (xx) and "world-in-the-making" (30) that is human reality. This novel's form was marked by the semi-autonomy of both its author and its characters, who operated and spoke in different, often contradictory voices, languages and logics, intersecting with each other but without becoming subjects to one another. These qualities were starkly contrasted by Bakhtin with the stale monological qualities of the epic, a literary genre so rigid he likened it to marble. The epic spoke (usually about the past) in a serious, straightforward way with a single language and expressed a single, unified worldview, often through impossibly simple and one-dimensional 'heroes'. The novel, however, like the texture of polyphonic music with its multiple concurrent but independent melodies, gave a sense of three-dimensionality and complexity, of being immanently in a present in dialogue with the past and future. The novel spoke often in an irreverent<sup>3</sup>, indirect way with multiple intersecting languages and expressed multiple worlds in the process of becoming. Its more lifelike, sophisticated characters weathered internal conflicts and contradictions, hesitations, inconsistencies, and changes of heart, as well as showed greater tolerance for diversity and

---

3. This links to Bakhtin's discussion of the dehierarchializing function of carnivalization.

change. Thus, when Bakhtin spoke of singularity or 'wholeness' in reference to the novel's characters, he meant they are heading "toward[s] a new, complex wholeness on a higher level of human development" (1981, 38), towards a dynamic incompleteness, in contrast to the "ready-made" (34) 'hero' of the epic whose wholeness is complete and therefore static.

Bakhtin found plurality and infinite becoming in even the smallest units of expression, each word, for instance, containing links to an endless network of utterances and responses stretching from the past and anticipating the future, and each 'voice' itself multivocal. Yet—and I am not yet certain where Bakhtin addresses this—his use of 'dialogical' rather than 'polylogical' can also be read as a way of emphasizing the unavoidable dialectic between plurality and singularity—its illusion and practical reality.

The work of Bakhtin's contemporary, Viktor Shklovsky, Russian literary critic and novelist, follows a similar vein while more heavily underscoring the way that literary and artistic form or framing contributes to actively rekindling our humanity which, however ontologically dialogical, dies down with habit. Though Bakhtin once cited Shklovsky's description of a novel as "multi-voiced" (1984, 39), he otherwise uses 'polyphonic', and Shklovsky himself uses other terms: 'multileveled', 'multilayered' or 'multifaceted'. Later scholars seem to have additionally ascribed to their work the term 'multivocal', perhaps because its common definitions—

*Having or open to many different meanings, interpretations, or applications.*<sup>4</sup>

*Having many or different meanings of equal probability or validity.*<sup>5</sup>

—imply the copresence of singularity *and* plurality, as does 'polyphonic' in music by referring to an overall [loosely] unifying composition comprised of multiple melodies. In the common definition of 'polyphonic' one can miss the embedded dialectic, as it simply describes "producing or involving many sounds or voices"<sup>6</sup>, and mistake it for pure plurality, which might be rather anarchic or cacophonous. Additionally, because 'voice' connotes a slight degree more of agency, I chose to use [the Latin-rooted] 'multivocal' rather than [the Greek-rooted] 'polyphonic'.

What is at stake in choosing to work with multivocality as a designer and researcher is a critique of the societal harms of *monovocality*<sup>7</sup> and an engagement with the transformative

---

4. *Oxford Dictionaries*. [Online]. (2016). s.v. Multivocal. [Accessed 15 March 2016]. Available from: [en.oxforddictionaries.com](http://en.oxforddictionaries.com)

5. *Dictionary.com Unabridged*. [Online]. (2016). s.v. Multivocal. [Accessed 15 March 2016]. Available from: [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)

6. *Oxford Dictionaries*. [Online]. (2016). s.v. Polyphonic. [Accessed 15 March 2016]. Available from: [en.oxforddictionaries.com](http://en.oxforddictionaries.com)

7. Discussed in Section 1.3 - Monovocality and the Post-Political.



potential of the relation between processes of artistic and epistemological structuring or framing and socio-spatial-political change. While the 'social engagement' of Bakhtin and Shklovsky had its own historically contingent concerns, it often focused only on the relation between literary/artistic form and *individual* experience (the author, the reader, the artist, the poet). Much later, in coordination with his political philosophy, Jacques Rancière interrelated politics and aesthetics, holding that framing or reframing to effect a "reconfiguration of common sense"—whether in reference to a new political collectivity or a new subject of art—was at once an aesthetic and a political act, paradoxically grounded on the groundless "equality of all subjects" (Rancière, 2010, 18) in a democracy or through the autonomy of art. While Rancière's (and others'<sup>8</sup>) model of agonistic democracy works well as a philosophical construct, in practice an effective interaction between the 'dissensus' of pluralistic struggle and the 'consensus' of mutual respect and agreement on the rules of the game proves difficult to sustain. We have yet to effectively address what Evans calls the 'dilemma of diversity' or the "false choice between unity and heterogeneity, [or between] identity and difference" (Evans, 2008, x). Evans' proposed concept of society as a 'multivoiced body' is a response to this. Urban geographer Ash Amin (2012), urban sociologist Richard Sennett (2006) and political philosopher and feminist Iris Marion Young (1990), have, among others, explored similar concepts of society united by values of difference and heterogeneity.

While motivated by this wider societal critique and interaction of aesthetic and socio-spatial-political domains, I operate at the scale of a researcher and designer, so this thesis is most attentive and attuned to multivocality at this scale and frame of reference, and particularly as experienced through my primary case study.

To practice multivocally as a researcher means to embody its ambivalences by utilizing different art- and design-based methods while theorizing them in a wider [open] framework. An ethic of multivocality in design practice determines: engagement with different knowledge perspectives (as reflected in the frames of analysis: material, individual, group/institutional—including disciplinary domains—and societal), respecting them in their own right, while looking for connections across and between; opening up to different degrees of control and causality in relation to the 'design'; and employing multiple strategies advanced towards a single or related series of aims.

Emphasizing 'voice' also highlights that, while I also use the concept of multivocality to explore working through multiple strategies, methods, designed artifacts and media, this exploration is primarily concerned with how the designer can work with multiple involved

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8. Initiated by Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau. Alain Badiou, Bruno Latour, Jacques Rancière and Slavoj Žižek are among other proponents.

actors towards transformations in the direction of healthier democracy and a more just and equitable society. 'Voice' is central to these concerns.

The following aspects have been influential in shaping my thinking before, during and after the primary case study, but merit further investigation and theorization in future research:

- The 'voice' of the material/artifactual—the effects and affects of non-human objects, things, assemblages—, especially as described by political theorist Jane Bennett (2010).
- The 'social' defined much more broadly than face-to-face human interaction. Ash Amin's *Land of Strangers* references Bennett and Latour (2012, 6) in defining 'the social' as "the field of human and non-human association,...".
- The 'always-other' voice, as Bennett (2010) terms it in reference to Adorno's 'negative dialectics'. This voice is always muted, but may become audible if we recognize it. In other words, there is always an 'out-side', unintegratable, unknown, and we should rework our design perspectives to acknowledge this—build in space for it, leave undesigned space for it and not declare we have 'integrated everything' in a design. This relates to the idea of 'poetic incommunicability' in Paper 2 (Appendix 4).
- Ontologies of entangled, interlocking voices, 'shot through' with each other—the 'other-in-the-self'—are discussed by Bakhtin in terms of language, but also by Evans (2008) in terms of hybridity.
- The discussion on the hybridity of the individual self, including its multiple and dialogical qualities (Hermans and Hermans-Konopka, 2010).
- Ways of seeing institutions and institutional engagement multivocally. Mahoney and Thelen's (2010) work on institutional change and change agents is instructive here.
- How action is context-dependent with respect to multivocality. One might aim to enable already latent multivocality, protect it, amplify it and/or produce it.
- How the ambiguity and pluralism of multivocality is misused merits much more critical acknowledgment: Vladislav Surkov's 'multivocal' political manipulation strategy, which is termed 'sovereign' or 'managed democracy', for example.

### **Separation and the social**

To act, as a designer and/or researcher, in a careful, attentive way to the complexity and heterogeneity of both the situated and extended context is critical, and especially so when employing terms and concepts which may be misused or interpreted in a reductive way. As Amin points out in *Land of Strangers* (2012), it may seem strange to, in a time of worldwide unsettlements, to advocate the value of social distance and weak ties. A subtler argument is

necessary. 'Separation' should thus be understood and explored in a nuanced way, and further research in the following areas is necessary to construct more substantial theoretical underpinnings for such an approach:

- The necessity of a kind of separation that implies more than just distance or dispersal. In a post-Fordist / connectionist / flat / network context (Crary, 2013), elements may be separated (dispersed) yet *still connected to and co-dependent on* the network.
- The essential factor of temporality. Art sociologist Pascal Gielen (2013) argues that the relentless contiguity of the post-Fordist network stifles creativity. The remedy he suggests is *temporary* separation: a rhythm of oscillating between engagement with society and withdrawal to 'islands' isolated from it. I explore this briefly in Paper 2 through the concept of a 'black box with apertures', a space of refuge from outside demands which also allows the option to reconnect.
- How theories of architectonics and aesthetics might be extended to address the more complex 'social' described above by Amin which involves interrelations between humans and non-humans. How might they help in conceiving how separated 'parts' are configured, what internal and external mechanisms affect them and how do parts affect each other and the overall configuration? Although clear collage relations play a role, the aim is to study and describe a more complex separation occurring over time and in multiple ways. For example, the multiple layers in a literary work, Shklovsky points out, are not *simply* separated as in a [typical] "multistory construction with parallel, simultaneously existing floors" wherein the walls, floors and other components "exist in simple relations with one another that don't require an overly complex analysis", but instead collide in complex relationships often made 'palpable' by their contradictions. (1970, 305)
- The social misuses of 'separating' need more acknowledgment, for instance processes of 'Othering'.

## Design, aesthetics and separation

When approached from art and design related fields, the concepts of multivocality and separation immediately encounter questions as to how they might be read in or interpreted into activities and aesthetics of assembling, reconfiguring, constructing, framing and composing. During the primary case study, my activity along these lines was influenced by the following theoretical concepts (some in retrospect), which call for further exploration in future research:

- Creating an *open system* of multiple logics: Shklovsky's view that 'the poet' both creates "forests and gives suggestive paths that lead inside" (1970, 302). Closely related in sensibility is Italo Calvino's essay on multiplicity (1988) and Stan Allen's concept of 'field

conditions' (1999): "To generalize, a field condition could be any formal or spatial matrix capable of unifying diverse elements while respecting the identity of each." Architect Simon Nicholson's theory of 'loose parts' (1972) can be seen as another mode of this kind of open system which thrives from its internal conditions of separation, which, in this case, have value to pedagogy, creativity and the city. An open system, field or forest allows the parts to have greater possible autonomy by being able to connect or disconnect at will. In tension with this are "paths that lead inside" the forest, referring to a more precise and guiding mode of design.

- Designing not through synthesis but through *syncretism*. The latter could be seen as a multivocal mode of integration because it creates an overall framework tolerant of internal divergences and contradictions.
- The relations and distinctions between 'soft' (e.g. field conditions) and 'hard' separations (barriers).
- A concept of the 'semi-open work', which could be distinguished from Umberto Eco's 'open work' (1989) in that the latter is a term from art that generally refers to an artistic experience conceived as an interaction occurring *after* the artwork/design has been completed, rather than a more complex exchange over time in which the designer and participant effect each other in a coevolutionary process.
- The aesthetics of the relation between frame and content (Eco; Habraken; Aravena).
- The affective power of the frame/infrastructure (Larkin, 2013).
- How 'framing' articulates and disarticulates certain voices (Butler, 2009).
- The agency of forces of tension created through mechanisms of art and aesthetics (Rancière, 2008; Bishop, 2012).
- The importance of referencing aesthetics in relation to participatory work, e.g. Atelier Blink's discovery that many artists were not interested in participatory work because of losing their aesthetic control and thus a form of their own voice (Poncelet, 2014).
- 'Poetic-resistive' and 'poetic-integrative' are terms I used early in the research to describe what I would now call processes of separation and connection. The former describes a pulling away from context (e.g. estrangement) while the latter a striving to connect two different contexts (e.g. André Breton's Surrealism which sought a unifying poetic communication between apparent opposites).

## Context

By taking a process-oriented, relationalist approach, rather than an essentialist one, it becomes necessary to identify a 'context', however provisional or enduring, before using or reflecting on the other key concepts in any particular instance, especially when

transformation of the existing context is among the aims. Although ubiquitous in my practice, the idea of using 'context' as a conceptual lens came only later in my research process, during reflection on the primary case study. As such, most discussion on it occurs specifically in reference to the primary case study within Section 2.1 and 2.5, while the final chapter briefly opens up a broader discussion (4.1). Connecting points appear below, to be further investigated and theorized in future research:

- Understanding a complex, ambivalent relation to context is crucial: partly connecting while simultaneously partly separating from it. Shklovsky's *Bowstring: On the Dissimilarity of the Similar* (1970) discusses this at length with literary examples as an update to his concept of estrangement, which, to function, requires an orientation connecting to or reinforcing context and, simultaneously, one pulling away or breaking from it.
- How the conservative and/or progressive dimensions of context depend on one's frame of reference, intentions and theories of change. The demand to be or not be contextual can be: seen as mechanism seeking to preserve or abruptly reconfigure the status quo (instructive here are Rancière's philosophically linked concepts of the political and the aesthetic); part of an ethic of attentiveness, respect and/or solidarity; or part of a slow strategy to reinforce and build on larger and longer-term structures.
- Moving away from homogenized notions of context and their associated aims. Amin critiques both the consensus-building mode of communitarianism which aims to create a context with a single, strong identity, what he calls "the politics of belonging" (2012, 6), and a potentially anarchic cosmopolitanism which aims for a context with *no* identity (or a cacophonous plurality of identities). His interest is in the—arguably multivocal—gap "between singularity and plurality" (2).

The key concepts interact in an ecological way within the theoretical and methodological framework, meaning that they gain provisional form and meaning in non-linear relation with each other depending on my context of action or reflection as a designer and researcher. This context includes contingency, chance, my own subjectivity and research approach as well as the wider research context. Throughout my research process, the key concepts have transformed in importance and sometimes emerged, faded away or absorbed into each other. Figure 1 attempts to visualize a 'mental map' of the more persistent research components and the major shifts in focus, but is provisional itself. The key concepts reach their greatest precision during discussion of the primary case study in Chapter 2 and are revisited in concluding reflections in Chapter 4. Future research will aim to develop theory, in relation to these key concepts, to a much greater degree of precision.

## 1.1 Person[s] Out of Place

This section discloses my own positionality while emphasizing a thematic bridge linking myself and the case study context, as well as to wider theoretical concerns related to the contemporary urban condition and the nature of artistic research methods. To foreground my position[s] is a method—particularly of artistic research—which highlights my entanglement with the research content and makes a methodological-epistemological claim that reflecting on the researcher's position is also valid for contributing new insights and knowledge. The ambivalence of the figure of the 'person out of place' became apparent and tangible during the primary case study, but its ambivalence, even multivalence, is introduced first in this section.

My motivations demand the pursuit of an approach which leaves me partly 'out of place' within my disciplines of urbanism and architecture<sup>9</sup> (see Section 1.1.1). Others senses of being 'out of place' originate from the frame-setting structure of TRADERS and its operation as a 'hyper-epistemic community' (Section 1.1.2) and qualities of the contemporary urban condition<sup>10</sup>.

*Humanity is still on its way, which is why the person out of place is a traveler,...* (Shklovsky, 1970, 165)

The 'person out of place' is a figure from literary theory useful in thematizing several aspects of this research. Taken together with a counterfigure, the 'person in place' (Section 1.2), they analogize opposing relations to context. But, as context is relative to its frame of reference, these relations are potentially simultaneous given multiple frames of reference. Another way to say this is that the person out of place is always 'in place' in some way, so to foreground one figure is only to foreground one possible frame of reference. Yet, as hinted at in the above quote by Shklovsky, a case can be made that being 'out of place' is the predominate human—and now urban (Amin, 2012)—condition. Further, in Shklovsky's view, the person out of place also represents the artist's condition of estrangement: the writer/poet/artist perceiving with a "strained sensitivity" and "orient[ing] himself in the world with the help of art" (Shklovsky, 1970, 283). By extension the artistic researcher can also be seen as a person out of place, straining to understand the world in a new way through an artistic approach.

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9. To be clear, this is a chosen and desired 'out of place' position, as a pluridisciplinary approach can help to identify crucial issues that need to be addressed in architectural theory discourse. This will be dealt with in a later stage.
10. This is to be addressed in a later stage—also with respect to the case study context.

The contemporary urban condition, fueled by proliferating globalization and neoliberalism, war, technological change and increasing inequalities, mass displacement, migrations and ecological destruction, can also be characterized, though much more gravely, by a condition of 'persons out of place'. Amin's *Land of Strangers* (2012) argues that the radical heterogeneity of populations, cultures, spatial and virtual realms has resulted in new social relations marked most strongly by the condition of 'the stranger' (intensifying the already-existing forces of estrangement associated with urbanization). Amin does not idealize this figure but instead uses it as a foil to communitarianism, or the "politics of belonging", which he argues measures social relations against a fixed image of strong social ties. For Amin, the flip sides are repressive—'Othering' of and disciplining of the stranger—and permissive—cosmopolitanism's idealization of weak social ties and hyper-individualism. The celebration of plurality for its own sake too strongly resists political collectivity which is necessary "to ensure that pluralism does not degenerate into a free struggle that works in favour of the fittest" (7). Against this tendency, which dovetails with neoliberal weakening of the public sector, Amin's 'politics of difference' pairs two principles: that of multiplicity and that of the commons, the latter conceived as both a public sphere and a protective, redistributive public sector. Of concern in this research is how designers can engage in what Amin calls the gap "between singularity and plurality" (2) while aiming for a more robust commons.

### 1.1.1 Motivation and Pluridisciplinarity

My disposition leans more strongly toward the 'artistic' rather than the 'scientific' aspect of architecture, and towards the cultural and sociological aspects of urbanism rather than planning. Yet, I have never found myself comfortably lodged in any one realm, having long held a view that greater understanding comes with each new perspective taken. This evokes a dialogical ontology resembling Dutch psychologist Hubert Hermans's Dialogical Self Theory (DST), which proposes a "(partly) decentralized conception of the self as multi-voiced and dialogical" (Hermans and Hermans-Konopka, 2010, 31). Here, the 'extended self' is defined by an ongoing dynamic process of reconciliation between multiple 'self-positions' which include both interior and exterior positions. Like Amin, Hermans and Hermans-Konopka find that multiplicity in the self is dramatically amplified by contemporary conditions:

*In a globalizing world society, individuals and groups are no longer located in one particular culture, homogeneous in itself and contrastingly set against other cultures, but are increasingly living on the interfaces of cultures. (29)*

According to DST, the proliferating interaction between the global and the local (the self), increases the need for a "dialogical capacity" to navigate this expanding multiplicity and inevitable contradiction. But, on a societal scale, this is not enough. It could even facilitate further power asymmetries and injustices. Again, as Amin points out, without some principle of the commons, the pluralism of cosmopolitanism can "degenerate into a free struggle that works in favour of the fittest" (Amin, 2012, 7). To guard against this, he proposes a revitalized public sector as a new variant of the classic protective welfare state and I align with him on this.

Beyond the stated interest of TRADERS in social change, multiple motivations drive this research project. Most of these outstretch my own disciplines of urbanism and architecture because they are reactions to forces that have little regard for disciplinary boundaries. Most profoundly, this research is rooted in an ongoing personal interest in the dialectics of order and disorder and possible reconfigurations thereof. This is of great importance to me as a designer and of direct relevance to contemporary societal challenges given neoliberalism's 40-year 'ordering' of society through its 'disordering' of the public sector through deregulation, privatization and austerity (note that this is also a 'reordering', by reinforcing monopoly positions and further consolidating wealth in the hands of a few). Of specific interest have been homogenizing tendencies and forces which attempt to suppress or recuperate 'excesses' of complexity through calls to austerity (explicit or implicit): e.g. Protestantism, Puritanism, functionalist architecture's banishment of ornament, New Urbanism's disciplining of the disorderly organic city, the Post-Fordist city's economic appropriation of culture and creativity. It is when these reductionist forces work against distributive justice, human rights and the depth of human experience, especially in the current mode of capitalism, that they are especially pernicious. As such, I am in strong alignment with the spirit of movements such as alter-globalization and the Right to the City which seek to reimagine the social contract in the direction of a more equitable and just society. In this sense my research is partly normative<sup>11</sup>, as it is concerned with how society, and our engagement within it as designers and researchers, might be improved. To affect transformative change along these lines one will likely need to engage with fields outside of art and design such as political science, public policy, governance, economics, sociology, anthropology, law and so on.

My general societal critique has a disciplinary aspect which I deal with in this research: unlearning the compulsion to design everything. Or, rephrased and extended, learning to value what is not designed, designing-in space for it as well as leaving space for it. Within urban design and architectural design disciplines, there is already some degree of agency

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11. This aligns with the meaning of 'normative' as used in philosophy: inquiry into how things should be rather than just describing how they are.



available in these kinds of decisions. But, my research attempts to relocate this agency into a transdisciplinary frame—while *also* partly remaining in my own disciplines by strategically and selectively using their skills, knowledge, and domains as 'materials' to work with. What is at stake most immediately for me is to head further toward such a mode of practice.

A variant of this transdisciplinary plus disciplinary—or *pluridisciplinary*—mode is expressed in a future practice I imagined prior to this research and still keep in mind. It envisions critical, transdisciplinary projects of urban intervention designed to partly integrate approaches from education-related disciplines including art education, arts-based environmental education and experiential learning. This has influenced the project and especially the primary case study in important ways through: the methodology of working with children; collaboration with educational programs and institutions; and, integrating artistic expressions into a larger project.

The motivation for this hybrid or pluridisciplinary way of working also arises out of my several years of experience with the limited agency of working in a single discipline, architecture, with its tendency to be apolitical and its professionalized character. My masters thesis investigating the challenges faced by 'urban activism' found that hybrid approaches held much potential in resisting quick recuperation (this was reworked as a conference paper, see Appendix 1).

The following are aspects of the above which can be further explored in future research:

- The 'person out of place' in reference to the contemporary conditions of unsettlement, including: the migrant condition created by mass displacements and the nomadic practice of the post-Fordist artist/designer/laborer who helicopters in and out of a given context.
- Vilém Flusser's view that the condition of being out of place, of being in 'exile', catalyzes creativity; and Gielen's and others' view that creativity requires periods of disconnection from society and the issue being worked on.

### **1.1.2 TRADERS and Hyper-Epistemic Communities**

The origin of my research lies with TRADERS (Training Art and Design Researchers in Participation for Public Space), an EU-funded network PhD project which created six PhD positions for ESRs (Early-Stage Researchers) from a variety of art and design fields at institutions across Europe. We (the ESRs) each address the umbrella theme through our own approaches which have evolved from a given starting approach (or sub-theme) that functioned as a departure point. Each position is linked with an 'associated partner' with whom the ESR was to have a 'secondment' of 2-3 months (this parameter has been reinterpreted in many cases). We are literally meant to be 'persons out of place' as

candidates applying for positions were not to have been a resident in the country of the host institution for the past three years. Table 1 gives an overview of the positions:

ESR	Institution	Given approach/method:	Associated Partner
Pablo Calderón Salazar	Faculty of the Arts, LUCA / Katholieke Hogeschool Limburg, Belgium	Intervention	Z33
Annelies Vaneycken	HDK – Academy of Design and Crafts, University of Gothenburg, Sweden	Play	KOMPAN and City of Gothenburg / Cultural Department
Naomi Bueno de Mesquita	Design Academy Eindhoven, Netherlands	Multiple performative mappings	STBY
Saba Golchehr	The Royal College of Art / School of Architecture, United Kingdom	Data-mining	Commonplace Dig. Ltd.
Jon Geib	Chalmers University of Technology / Department of Architecture, Sweden	Modelling in dialogue	City of Gothenburg / Cultural Department
Michael Kaethler	KU Leuven/Planning and Development and the Architecture and Culture Theory research units, Belgium	Meta-framework	-

Table 1: TRADERS PhD network positions.

The TRADERS framework included a full slate of formal group training activities and common projects: an initial exhibition; two Summer Schools<sup>12</sup>; a midterm review; five Training Weeks which were each designed and organized by a different ESR; a website<sup>13</sup>; a closing conference with paper sessions coordinated and moderated by each ESR and supervisor (including the peer-review process); peer-reviewing and writing an article for an upcoming TRADERS-hosted issue of an academic journal; a book and a closing exhibition. The Summer Schools, conference, parts of the Training Weeks and the exhibition were open to a wider group of participants. Responsibilities for producing content and for organization, in particular, have sometimes varied widely across ESRs but, in all cases, have involved substantial time commitments on work that is often not directly related to our own research projects. We (the ESRs) also organized several informal meetings, activities and projects ourselves, including: early fieldwork; a 'Winter School'; an actively curated web-platform<sup>14</sup>; two PhD seminars; and workshops.

The initial understanding was that we would have a common case study in Belgium (in the cities of Hasselt and Genk). Concerns regarding the ethics of only remotely and intermittently engaging with the local context, and the consumption of time in relation to our individual research projects have—along with planning issues related to the initially

12. The second of which was delayed, so became the 'Autumn School'.

13. TRADERS. *TRADERS*. [Online]. [Accessed 27 March 2014]. Available from: <http://tr-aders.eu>

14. TRADERS. *TRADERS Talk*. [Online]. [Accessed 15 March 2017]. Available from: <http://traderstalk.org>

proposed case<sup>15</sup>—played a part in our reconceptualization of the common case study, which we redefined as a common laboratory for dialogue, exchange and experimentation.

This is a difficult moment to reflect on TRADERS. As the project is in its third and final year, our work on a number of collective productions grew intense last spring and shows few signs of letting up. At this moment, I am ambivalent about the relations between individual and group work in the project. Certainly, as a way of experiencing and exchanging diverse research realms and content it has been a source and space of inspiration, creativity, experimentation, exchange and network-building, and has at times improved the quality of my research along those lines. Especially in the first year and a half I was quite welcoming of this mode in contrast to the relative isolation and introversion of more traditional doctoral research. Yet, I am now feeling the effects of its downsides. The time commitments involved seem to have lowered the quality of my research in terms of depth, comprehensiveness and focus, and the high amount of demands related to ongoing group work and the closing of the project further imperils my individual work.

In many ways, TRADERS is the epitome of an 'epistemic community', a type of "driver of learning and knowledge generation" that Amin and Roberts (2008) differentiate from 'communities of practice' (353). The latter are defined by face-to-face social relations and typically aim to increase communitarianism (strong social ties). In their article, Amin and Roberts aim to counteract the tendency in social sciences to overvalue communitarian-oriented modes of "knowing in action" (357). To do this, they emphasize a variety of other modes including: craft/task-based, professional, epistemic/creative and virtual. In contrast to communities of practice which tend to be structured around social interaction based on close proximity, epistemic communities "tend to be structured more closely around common projects and problem-driven cooperation" (356), while social interaction tends to be a mix of direct, face-to-face contact and indirect communication over distance. Social ties in the communitarian sense are thus weak as trust is based on reputation and expertise rather than interpersonal connection. Epistemic communities can be frenetic, as they tend to be "temporary creative coalitions" where "knowledge [is] changing rapidly" and 'innovation' is "high energy" and "radical" in contrast to the "incremental" innovation of communities of practice (357). Further research can more closely investigate these qualities in relation to TRADERS as a case study of knowledge practice.

While this epistemic mode is quite dialogical and multivocal, I call into question its affect on our individual research projects and how this might affect TRADERS as a research project and wonder if what has traditionally been a long-term deep research effort (a PhD) is the appropriate place for this mode. Or, the research itself has to be reconceptualized,

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15. One of the two parts of the case involved a proposed rail line, but this proposal was abandoned soon after TRADERS began.

perhaps as a new type of frenetic artistic research. At the least, it must be transparent in acknowledging the proportion of effort and time spent on common activities that did not relate directly to our individual research. This could be visualized more effectively in a future text (for now, refer to Figure 1).

Although, to support this questioning of TRADERS, much more detail and analysis is required, I am, for now, terming TRADERS a *hyper-epistemic community* because it seems to have been pushing towards the extreme ends of its epistemic qualities at the expense of both the common project and our individual projects. In Amin's terms, there has been too much cosmopolitanism and not enough communitarianism. Although we have had many common activities, this has not been structurally built-in to our individual research, nor has our sense of obligation to and solidarity with the common activities always been strong enough that we could see them as worth sacrificing our individual research for—this again relates to the structural set up of a zero-sum game (for the most part) in which any effort in the common arena became a trade-off with the individual arena. As a result, we (the ESRs) sometimes moved to protect our individual research by neglecting common projects. For me, this has been simply a matter of survival by making the best use of a reduced amount of time. In the case of the common case study, either of at least two scenarios might have been less problematic. In one scenario, we (the ESRs) would have all sunk our teeth into the given common case study (or defined a new one), but abandon our expectations of each doing an involved local case study. This would likely have required more funding for travel (and then one could begin to further question negative impact on our families). A second scenario would have lessened the burden regarding group deliverables.

One can read into the EU's expectations for the project (and the external auditor's questions during the midterm review<sup>16</sup>) that some of the logic behind the project was more focused on wider goals of increasing knowledge through networking, mobility and entrepreneurship across national and international borders—indeed 'training' us for this—than it was about our individual research content. Yet, at the same time, its goal was also to strengthen transdisciplinarity as a mode of practice-based research in design and this was one of the first Marie Curie programs to fund art-based research. The ambivalence in my reflection here probably relates strongly to my own ambivalent position in a post-Fordist context which holds new opportunities but also places greater pressure and risk on individuals. This discussion will be developed further in future research.

The following are items of note, some of which suggest further investigation and theorization in future research:

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16. We (the ESRs) were asked whether or not we had taken a course in 'entrepreneurship', with the implication that we had been expected to.

- The frenzy of the TRADERS mode frequently created a feeling that content was suffering across-the-board due to the sheer quantity of obligations to different activities.
- The hyper-epistemic mode clearly connects with the always-networking post-Fordist worker and can be another mode of the post-political. On this latter point, Crary is a key reference (2013). Activity which is so diverse, profuse and mobile can end up homogenized, as no "inherent structure of differentiation" can be formed (2013, 13).
- Although each ESR was expected to be very active in practical case study work, no line item existed in the budget for materials. So, at times it felt like my approach had to go against the grain of an in-built bias against the value of involving physical materials and artifacts. At the same time, it seemed there was extra emphasis on networking—building and expanding the TRADERS network through its profuse activities, common projects and internal and external collaborations.

### 1.1.3 Aims

The aim of this text is principally to present, analyze and reflect on my primary case study with respect to the key concepts and their interrelation, my own position and situation as a researcher, and other aims of my research.

The broadest aims of my research are normative, as mentioned in Section 1.1.1. They motivate and guide the other aims, the first being to reconfigure our view of dialogue, opening up a more complex understanding of its dynamics. This allows extra focus on its undervalued qualities and mechanisms of divergence: multivocality, indirectness and incommunicability.

To begin to engage with this, the more precise aim of my research is to ask, from the perspective of a designer, how might multivocality be enabled, protected, amplified or produced? What are multivocality's conditions, mechanisms and configurations and how do they operate? What are the associated interrelations between voices and how can the designer engage in this dynamic of articulating and disarticulating voices? How might the designer engage with the concept of separation, which plays an ontological role in distinguishing unique voices? This field of engagement navigates and negotiates between singularity (of the designer and the design) and plurality (the participants, multiple voices, multiple logics). A further dynamic is added when working within and collaborating with institutions, as they can be read in both the singular (their overall identity) and the plural (multiple logics and practices). Although aspects of the latter are touched on throughout, I aim to develop this much further in future research.

The critical aim is to situate and contextualize the above-mentioned conditions, mechanisms and configurations affecting multivocality and highlight ambivalences and

ambiguities, including those of the designer's position. The designer's (and my) relation to the post-Fordist context is one of these ambivalences, and will be developed further in future research.

With regard to 'participation' the aim is to focus more design attention on the 'outside' of participation—the structures enabling it, the structures before, between and after the 'inside' of participation (a single period of participation). My research also aims to bring more focus on the role of the artifact in dialogue and participation. It can be seen to act both as a mediating force of indirectness and as another 'voice'.

Methodological aims include exploring working with institutions including cultural, educational and artistic institutions and working with children and youth.

#### 1.1.4 Methodology

The first phase of this study has lived up to artistic research's reputation for 'messiness'. It has largely been an explorative undertaking involving a substantial amount of empirical work in many arenas, but which consolidated around the primary case study (itself highly explorative). Throughout, extensive readings in theory have informed the empirical work and vice-versa. Making visible and describing every digressive detail of this process is not a priority for the present context. But, providing some detail is important to give background, to communicate an overall sense of its diffuse, 'hyper-epistemic' nature (sketched in Section 1.1.2, Figure 1 and Appendix 1) and to highlight how certain secondary activities co-evolved with emerging research themes by partly synchronizing with, entangling with and/or confronting them with new directions (see Sections 1.3.1; 1.4 and Chapter 3). Figure 1 visualizes a 'mental map' of the more persistent research components and key concepts. By tracing eight chronological shifts in research focus, one can see associations of various activities (including publications) with these shifts as well as the extensive influence of TRADERS as a parallel 'research arena' or domain.

Before I began this research project, I had some previous experience with creating hybrid methodologies drawing from other disciplines—themselves often hybrid—and gathering them into an more-or-less comfortable field of critically-oriented architectural and urbanist discourse. Yet, the TRADERS project widely expanded this field by involving more art- and design-based disciplines and foregrounding the role of *practice* in interaction with discourse. And, while it prescribed a starting thematic approach ('modelling in dialogue'), this was quite open. All of this, and the longer timespan of a PhD, has opened a much wider field in which to navigate. So, I was extremely fortunate then, given my architectural background, to have, very early on, looked out on this vast and complex landscape through a clear window which allowed me to imagine possible research methodologies. "Navigating in

Heterogeneity: Architectural thinking and art-based research" (2010), an article by my main supervisor, Catharina Dyrssen, argues that *architectural thinking* has a unique methodological value in artistic research (or 'art-based research'). As the latter is conceived as a complex, interactive process of "thinking-acting-composing" (224), architectural thinking is helpful "as a mode to construct, perceive and conceptualize complex situations", including the interaction of multiple methodologies in an evolving framework.

### Epistemological perspective

In the service of both normative aims and a transdisciplinary approach which values knowledge perspectives from other disciplines and from actors outside the research field, including those of case study participants, partners, collaborators and the public, I engage in multiple methodological approaches—or a 'methodological pluralism' (Biggs and Karlsson, 2010) which draws on the methodologies in these areas:

1. **Artistic research:** This is touched on at the beginning of this Section (1.1.4) and in the 'Origin story' of Section 2.1. Especially in light of my experience as a participant in my own case study, Varto's notion of the 'inspective' (in contrast to the aspective and perspective) in artistic research approaches is quite useful to highlight the degree to which focus is placed on the position of researcher: "the inspective means watching the stake burn while being burned."<sup>17</sup>
2. Theoretical approaches selected precisely from **several fields** including urbanism, urban design, architecture, art (literature, aesthetics, art criticism), design, participation and urban sociology.
3. **The 'making'** in art and architectural design practice.
4. **Pedagogy** (in the primary case study, for instance).
5. **Qualitative research:** A focus on a thematic approach in theory, practice and analysis. (Cresswell, 2009) Aesthetic quality is an important aspect.
6. **Normative research:** This research is partly hypothesis-led in the sense that it keeps returning to and recalibrating in response to its normative dimension which is critical of the neoliberal and post-Fordist context, advocating for not just description of and experimentation with alternative modes of participation, for instance, but associated structural changes in society. This is not an authoritarian type of normativity that holds what 'should be' to some fixed ideal, but a critical mode constantly in the process of becoming, questioning itself and opening to new perspectives and knowledge.

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17. Varto, J. (2009). *Basics of Artistic Research: Ontological, Epistemological and Historical Justifications*, 36.

## An evolving methodological framework

It is important to emphasize that the various methods involved in my research process emerged over time, and it was the artistic research methodology referred to above which enabled me to reconcile, navigate, tolerate, combine and otherwise compose these methods in an evolving framework. My research questions, likewise, have continued to evolve:

1. How can dialogue be understood in a more complex way that values its mechanisms of divergence and recognizes non-human agency?
2. How can the designer engage in articulating and disarticulating voices within multivocality, with emphasis on the former?
3. How do the mechanisms of multivocality and separation work in contexts of design and participation, including situations in which the designer is embedded within and/or collaborating with institutions?
4. How can we relate to each other in multivocal ways in such contexts?
5. How might the above questions suggest new frames of reference which alter our notions of 'participation'?

These questions were primarily pursued through my primary case study, but also featured in many other research activities and recurring forays into theory.

I have termed my methodological approach pluridisciplinary as it employs a hybrid of transdisciplinarity and disciplinarity (especially architecture and urbanism). It holds on to disciplinarity because, although transdisciplinarity generates a more sophisticated knowledge view by drawing from other disciplines and acknowledging more diverse sources of knowledge (non-professional participants and other forms of actants, including artifacts), it has a tendency to take this synthesizing too far by aspiring to a 'holistic' *overview*. This paradoxically misses the arguably *more* 'holistic' truth- and knowledge-value of including and acknowledging the *partial view* and the contingency and subjectivity of human experience.<sup>18</sup> On this latter point, it should be emphasized that, for instance, certain research action arenas relate strongly to my background (speculative urban projects, public space, craft of artifacts, etc.) and thus are partly bound up with my aims and methods. On the other hand, much value has come from a transdisciplinary approach, in the sense of co-creating and sharing knowledge, especially in my collaboration with Gothenburg's Cultural Department:

*This formal arrangement (initiated by TRADERS) sets a precedent for future collaboration between Chalmers Department of Architecture and the*

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18. See Bennett's discussion of the 'out-side': Bennett, J. (2010). *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. 13-17.



*Gothenburg Cultural Department. It is an ongoing recurrent dialogue with my assistant supervisor and co-adviser about the local context, ideas, people and culture, cultural and artistic programs/cases, policies, potential case studies, etc. The exchange of knowledge and network mapping enabled my main case study and many contacts for TRADERS Training Week #5.<sup>19</sup>*

Transdisciplinarity also relates to dialogical methods of perspective switching, which appeared in many forms in my primary case study.

There is a partial disconnect between the primary case study and the preceding research, which was much more involved in critique of recuperative and repressive tendencies associated with neoliberal urban development. This mainly comes from an embrace of an artistic research approach in which I was open to a discovery-led process rather than testing a preconceived strategy or method in a preconceived domain.

I have referred to my research as often being 'hyper-epistemic', due to the numerous activities and demands required by the TRADERS project, which, when interfering with my individual research, often resulted in diluted quality in one or both domains. Many decisions were taken or not taken—especially after the first year—purely out of calculating what was possible in a limited schedule. While recalibrating ambitions is part of any human process, and particularly design processes, quality can become a serious concern when these conditions of practice become too extreme.

## Methods

Through the ongoing collaboration with the city's cultural department, my research was already, to a degree, practice-based. It became much more so given the amount of TRADERS activities and considering that the primary case study took over half a year.

Many methods were employed in the primary case study. Most generally: collaborating with multiple institutions and participant groups of different ages and from different parts of the city; workshop methods including indirect exploration (observational tours, visual surveys), the use of workshop tools doubling as artistic artifacts, co-designing a 'space probe' artifact (also a public space intervention); an exhibition; and feedback questionnaires.

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19. From my 25% PhD Seminar text.

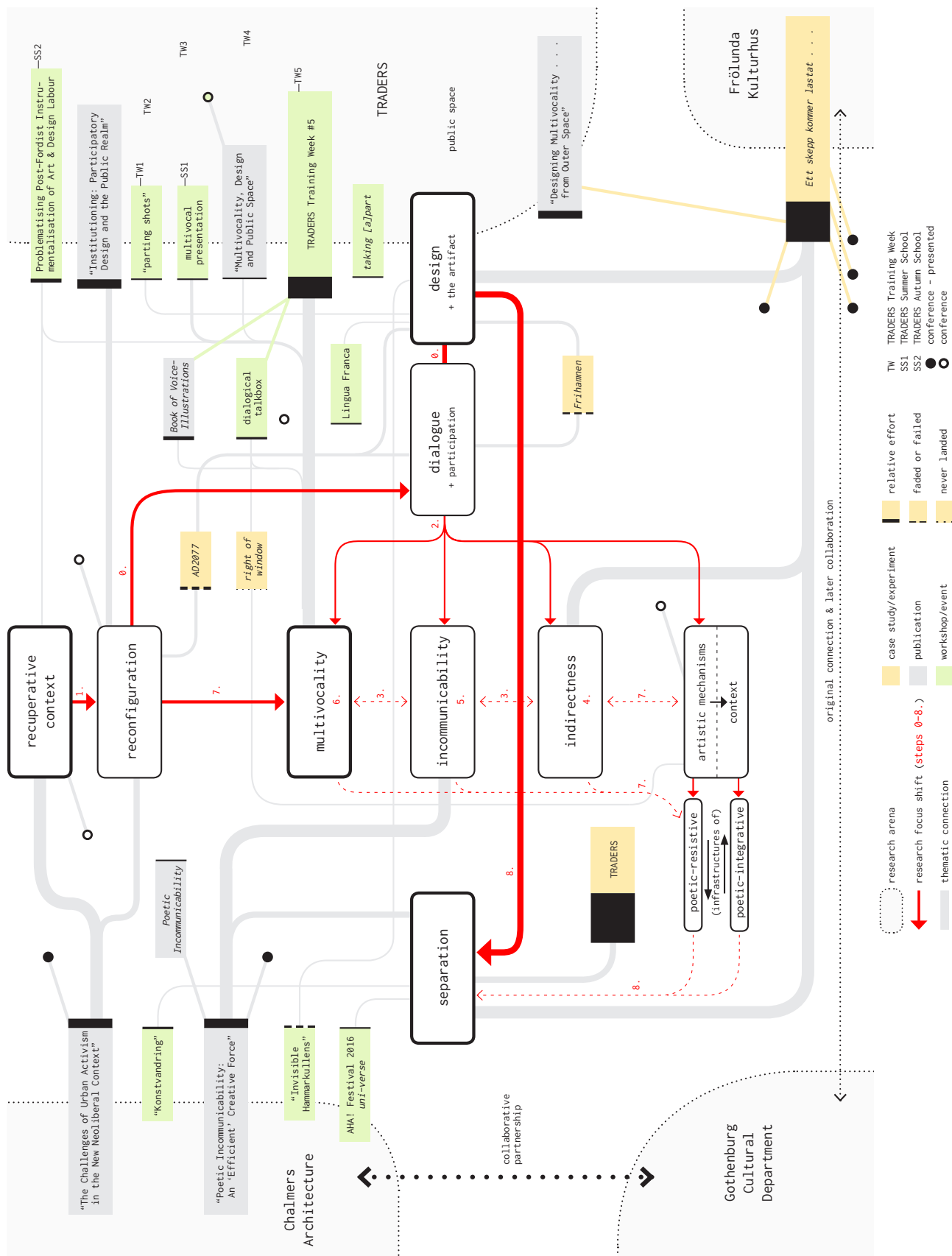


Figure 1: Mental map of research components.

## 1.2 Person[s] In Place

The 'person in place' acts a counterfigure to the 'person out of place' and is likewise multivalent. Here, it primarily refers to engaging *within* and *with* institutions. The former is about foregrounding how one is already 'in place'—the power relations one is embedded *within*, particularly the way institutional framing and support shapes one's efforts. The latter is about choosing to engage 'in place' rather than exclusively 'at the margins', in particular to collaborate with established, developing and nascent institutions but—crucially—with an understanding that they are not monolithic. Rather, institutions are complex, multi-layered and dynamic, as are the possibilities for engaging with/within them to achieve gradual institutional change. (Mahoney and Thelen, 2010) 'Working with' also means taking institutions as research 'content' in theory as well as practice: speculating on new institutions, institution components and ways of working; and delving into theory on institutions, institutional change and methodologies of engagement.

While this text contains examples throughout of relations with/within institutions, the next stage of research will more explicitly address these. A forthcoming article, "Institutioning: Participatory Design and the Public Realm" (Appendix 6 - Paper 3), could be considered a bridge into this terrain.

Future research can also address another sense of the 'person in place':

- A figure attentive to the everyday concerns and constraints of the present (including human nature), in contrast to their neglect or diminishment by aesthetes or utopian thinkers who assume a future magically free of such frictions.

### 1.2.1 Working within Institutions

The figure of the 'person in place' also foregrounds how my research is framed by, dependent on and shaped by its context. Being supported by and embedded *within* multiple institutions—TRADERS, Chalmers, the Gothenburg Cultural Department, and the primary case study further with the Frölunda Cultural Center, Frölunda School's after-school program, the city's Museum Lesson program and the International School—it is critical to view the research, including the case study, as interdependent with these institutional relations. They set specific circumstances and afforded conditions without which the work would have turned out otherwise.

The hyperactive mode of my research may, on the surface, resemble that of the post-Fordist freelance worker especially subject to neoliberal *precarization* (Lorey, 2015), yet the underlying conditions are substantially different. My research is salaried and secured (to a

much greater degree) over four years<sup>20</sup>, and there is no expectation that it serve private industry nor generate [short-term] profit (though it should be a step allowing advancement to the next 'project'). More often than not, the time constraints and funding conditions have been much more generous than for projects subject to private-sector conditions, for instance. That said, there are hints and incursions here and there reflecting a wider trend of neoliberalization of research and precarization of institutions that can be explored in further research.

Two points require further study, especially in relation to multivocality, in future research:

- A dynamic rather than a static concept of being 'in place'. Given a relational perspective (e.g. Appadurai's 'process geography') which understands things as always being in the process of becoming, working *within* or 'in place' is not a stable condition. Something 'in place' is always moving 'out of place' or 'to another place'. Selves (Hermans and Hermans-Konopka, 2010), identities (De Cauter, 2014), locales (Appadurai, 2000), disciplines, etc. are always already multivocal and in flux.
- An ontology, connecting with the previous point, of 'multivocal withinness', or being 'in place' within and between multiple configurations or assemblages that comprise even a single institution. Mahoney and Thelen (2010) make clear the inherent multiplicity within institutions that a 'change agent' can strategically engage with. Bennett's descriptions (2010) of the interactions of assemblages, drawing on Deleuze and Guattari, provide a way of thinking and communicating this complexity. Engagement is not between two 'wholes', but between certain parts that are constantly in motion (each part differently). Bennett describes, using Deleuze and Guattari's terminology, how a part (or 'vector') "can be so contingently well placed in an assemblage that its power to alter the direction or function of the whole is unusually great" (2010, 44). 'Littoral' art practice, drawing its name from the "ever-changing interfaces" (Littoral, 2016) of the intertidal or littoral zone, also holds potential in thinking how one might operate critically "at the interstices of disciplines and institutions" (Kester, 2004, 167).

### 1.2.2 Working with Institutions

The figure of the 'person in place' also expresses my aim to work *with* institutions, to actively orient myself towards being *partly* 'in place'—or 'in multiple places' (as in always remaining partly 'out of place'—automatically, but also by intention). This requires a critical strategy of engaging with 'the center'/'core' as well as with the 'periphery'/'margin'.

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20. This is not even to mention the remarkable Swedish social welfare system which provides generous health care, parental leave, child benefits, and unemployment insurance, among other benefits.

It recognizes that power relations cannot be erased, but can be reconfigured towards positive societal transformation. By working only at a microscale and 'at the margins', one may render 'humanitarian aid' in the short-term, but miss larger scale structural conditions causing greater harm in the long-term. This begins to warn of being so 'in place', so focused on details at the margin, that one misses a chance to be more transformative. Premised on her political theory of 'agonistic pluralism' (Mouffe, 2000; 1993), Chantal Mouffe makes a call, among artistic practices, for strategies of "engagement with institutions" (Mouffe, 2013, 66):

*Critical artistic practices do not contribute to the counter-hegemonic struggle by deserting the institutional terrain but by engaging with it, with the aim of fostering dissent and creating a multiplicity of agonistic spaces where the dominant consensus is challenged and where new modes of identification are made available. (Mouffe, 2013, 68)*

As this and the previous section constitute a preliminary inquiry, further development of the following issues is left for future research:

- Reframing the notion of efficacy to go beyond the individual scale, as transforming structural conditions is no individual effort. Framing action/agency in an individual way also reinforces post-Fordist modes of entrepreneurialism and temporary projects.
- Weighing the benefit of engaging with existing educational institutions as a way of building on existing democratic structures. More change is potentially effected than through approaches gambling on finding effective acupuncture points.
- Comparing theories of institutional change. Mahoney and Thelen's theory of gradual institutional change (2010) holds that institutional change is predominantly slow rather than quick and revolutionary. This has resonance with critiques of views of capitalism (or power) as monolithic—that it must be changed entirely and all at once or not at all. Feminist economic geographers J. K. Gibson-Graham highlight how, under the surface of capitalist markets and wage labor, there are already many existing alternative economies. (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 70)<sup>21</sup>.
- Relating theories of gradual change, institutions and the dynamics of culture. One can compare Rancière's and Mahoney and Thelen's views on change with the range of definitions of culture. Alesina and Giuliano (2015) cite the definition by Guiso, Sapienza and Zingales (2006) as the predominate 'empirical' definition: "those customary beliefs and values that ethnic, religious, and social groups transmit fairly unchanged from generation to

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21. They borrow an iceberg diagram credited: "From Community Economies Collective 2001; drawn by Ken Byrne."

generation" (900). This differs from 'theoretical' definitions which treat 'values' and 'beliefs' differently and seem to focus more on how culture changes across generations through experience. One might then read culture as a sort of 'common sense' constantly subject to ongoing processes of both gradual and sudden transformation. How culture interacts with institutions and vice-versa, including how artistic and cultural activities—where 'ends' are more immediate and pluralistic—interact with ends-focused, instrumental needs and aims, is a topic for further research.

- Studying, from a designer's perspective, how conducive a multivocal approach can be in 'tethering' ends-based normative aims to non-ends-based artistic and cultural activities without the latter becoming too instrumentalized. This a key question explored in many of the cases and reflected on throughout the thesis.
- Exploring further the creation of institutions, or *instituting*. As David Harvey's concept of 'dialectical utopianism' suggests, this means engaging with the 'closure' of proposing and/or creating something (a political claim, an institution, a building, a project, etc.) rather than remaining in a purely 'open' mode. This is done in a critical way involving constant questioning and reformation. (2000)<sup>22</sup>

### 1.3 Monovocality and the Post-Political

This section builds on the concept of multivocality in relation to a critique of *monovocality*, particularly that of the post-political context. Monovocality operates in a variety of ways, as outlined below, but is united by its intentioned suppression of countering "structure[s] of differentiation" (Crary, 2008, 13). Monovocality can be achieved through consensus- or dissensus-oriented conditions.

Although the prefixes *uni-* and *mono-* both mean 'one', I use 'monovocal' rather than 'univocal' because *mono-* further connotes a sense of isolated and homogenous oneness, whereas *uni-* can also connote a more dispersed and heterogeneous oneness (e.g. 'united', 'union', 'universe')—an important quality of multivocality. This said, 'univocal' is more common, besides being etymologically correct in matching two Latin roots (*mono-* is of Greek origin).

Those that believe they [or society] stand[s] to benefit from the status quo strive for a 'monovocal' politics which aims to preserve and consolidate their power position while suppressing political challenges. Rancière notes this 'policing' to be a paradox of democracy

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22. Also see the discussion of dialectical utopianism in Section 4.1 of Paper 1 in Appendix 3.

because even those that successfully enact 'the political' by reconfiguring the status quo—quickly move to preserve the new status quo once in power.<sup>23</sup>

But, while mechanisms in democracy (and other political systems) can be described as monovocal, the 'post-political' or 'post-democratic' condition goes further. Instead of actual democracy, pursuit of consensus on a single logic of technocratic governance subservient to 'free market' capitalism becomes the rule. This has roots in the 'end of history' (Fukuyama, 1992) in which all other political ideologies were demoted as inferior alternatives after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

Yet, dissensus as a guiding principle can be paradoxically monovocal in its homogeneity, as it can lead to a cacophony of voices (Evans, 2008) which mask power relations and weaken any attempt at constructing a countering "structure of differentiation" (Crary, 2008, 13). And, as many have pointed out (e.g. Sennett, 2006), the pseudo-egalitarian mantra of the 'free market'—of an open playing field in which anyone can 'succeed'—masks the monopolistic practices behind which have resulted in ever greater concentration of wealth.

The following speculative pre-study imagines how a multivocal strategy might engage in a monovocal political context, and even play two monovocalities against each other (the post-political and the rhetoric of the creative city/creative class). The fact that this is even imaginable is the first clue that these contexts are actually not entirely monovocal, although that is their clear vector from certain frames of reference. Further research exposing the ambivalence and multiplicity within these apparently monolithic structures—including capitalism, as mentioned—would resonate well with the same approach in relation to institutions.

### 1.3.1 AD2077: A Speculative Pre-Study

This pre-study from 2013-2014, AD2077, is highlighted here because it initially formed a strong bridge between my previous research and my early PhD research, and remains conceptually relevant. It is located here rather than Chapter 3 because it was conceived as part of an earlier iteration of Paper 1 (Appendix 3), specifically in response to the monovocal political context of the Dallas, a major city in the United States historically (and still) strongly dominated by private-sector oriented forces and discourse. Like many cities, it grew rife with contemporary hype about the creative city/creative class.

Having a potential case I was already familiar with was helpful because, being new to Gothenburg, I was separated from the local context and had to discover and invent my own case studies (although my supervisor coordinated an interesting set of starting possibilities—Frihamnen, Bergsjön and *Göteborgs Konsthall*—which helped build local knowledge and

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23. Also see Section 2.1 of Paper 1 in Appendix 3.

contacts). *AD2077* was an extension of the *Creativity Machine*, a 'design case study' (projective rather than empirical) in the masters thesis I completed in Belgium (c. August 2013). It was a spatial-social proposal for a specific urban site in Dallas, which explored the kind of 'urban activism' suggested by the research. Although physically remote at the time, I was actually quite familiar with the context, having lived in Texas for several years. The thesis was reformulated as a conference paper (Paper 1 in Appendix 3) early on in my PhD studies and the case study seemed ideal to extend into some kind of action research as it connected to a timely and contentious local issue as well as resonated with my TRADERS-given research theme 'modelling in dialogue'.

The organization *AD2077* was to be a vehicle for introducing the *Creativity Machine* project publically and a mechanism—or a 'conversation project'<sup>24</sup>—for intensifying dialogue about the future of the Dallas Arts District. It was to explore a multivocal approach which included participatory action research and engagement with diverse, sometimes irreconcilable constituencies (e.g. local artists and big business). Following BAVO's theorization of activist strategies of over-identification (2007) and Rancière's philosophy of dissensus and aesthetics (2004; 2010), the first intention was to generate a constellation of tensions by inducing and intensifying debates which would draw reactions from all sides, rather than simply aiming critique directly and predictably.

Given local traits of over-optimism, business dominance and political conservatism, the design aimed to build up an ambiguous, complex critique by strategically oscillating between appeals to the ambition of the city's identity and artistic novelty on the one hand, and to economic instrumentalization of artists on the other: *putting artists to work for* the creative city economy. An escalating feud between two major actors in the Dallas Arts District was used as a springboard to frame the project, which was further localized through dialogue with an upcoming artist housing project. Plausibility was built into the utopian spatial proposal and tethered social processes, which integrated David Harvey's theory of 'dialectical utopianism' (2000), but added a third element—the semi-indeterminacy and reconfigurability of spatial form. When drafting, as part of my masters thesis, the following project narrative about the *Creativity Machine*, I considered it as or even more important than the spatial design, because it encoded within itself a set of reference points for dialogues that might have ensued had the case study developed more substantially. It was envisioned as a public statement (though very much oriented to the referenced constituencies) to pair with future distribution of the spatial design:

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24. Conceived as a kind of 'conversation piece' diffused and extended over time.



Project narrative (The *Creativity Machine*) [August 2013]<sup>25</sup>

Dallas needs a distraction. The escalating feud between the Museum Tower and the Nasher Sculpture Center is absolutely dogging our reputation—even internationally. Growing pleas from high-profile cultural and business leaders for a swift resolution reflect the gravity of the threat to our Arts District's success. We simply cannot afford further lambasting...and dithering to re-enact the tragic narrative of the Montagues and the Capulets is unthinkable.

However, the animosity accumulated already is such that a resolution—which will of course come—is *insufficient*. Only something bold—almost visionary—expressing a completely new way of working together will allow us to break through this impasse, regain lost ground *and stake out a vanguard position* ahead of the global interurban competition.

Thus, entering center stage, the *Creativity Machine*, a project of reconciliation and ambition, proposed as a brand new collaboration between the Museum Tower, the Nasher, Flora Lofts and other city stakeholders. The *Creativity Machine's* form is as novel as its program. No other city has such an example of *creative infrastructure* for large-format outdoor installation sculpture and event culture. And, no other city values their artists so highly.

The *Creativity Machine* is a signature architectural ensemble symbolizing the Arts District's advanced commitment to and investment in the twin drivers of the 21st century economy—creativity and artists. Hovering lightly but monumentally over the intersection of the Flora Street axis and North Pearl Street (transformed into a roundabout), its planted, solar panel-studded canopy and sophisticated structural frame clutch a cruciform volume containing co-housing for a few hand-picked artists and creatives. Studio and workshop space are afforded, as is a limited-access temporary exhibition/installation space (comprising one of the cubic 'lobes').

A hanging scrim system of industrial-scale steel chains, perforations and clasps, combined with built-in hoist-and-trolleys, offers endless possibilities for artistic installation, architectural and sculptural reconfiguration and provides an elegant trellis for climbing vines on the south faces. A parallel structural frame extends from the upper floors of the Flora Lofts, framing a dramatic reconfigurable space—especially suited for 'car-free' events. This 'playground' setup is also wired as a stage set for the latest in new media art and event technology. Consider it a 'modern-day monkey bars'.

But these elite creative inhabitants (appointed by an independent panel) won't be caught just hanging around. They share all the objectives of the Flora Lofts artists (productivity in generating creative programming and enhancing the neighborhood's vitality) and have three important additional responsibilities: to provide peer training to artists not yet oriented towards Dallas's new socioeconomic mission; to brainstorm integration of artists' housing in future

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25. Geib, J. (2013). *The Challenges of Urban Activism in the New Neoliberal Context*. MA thesis. Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. 108-109.

development; and to choreograph interactive public events which transmute the tensions of social inequality into creativity.

Performance-based bonuses (assessed by an independent board of cultural, business and finance leaders) and top-level salaries attract a wellspring of creative talent to "Come and Make It." The endless novelty of reconfigurable outdoor event and installation space combined with vanguard programming enables the *Creativity Machine* to position Dallas on the leading international edge of cultural economic development.



Figure 2: The *Creativity Machine*. Site plan and perspective showing a scenario for large-format installation art.<sup>26</sup>



Figure 3: The *Creativity Machine*. Historical Dallas photograph recalling a time of greater intrepid creative spirit and verticality of play. At right, the 'flag' of the *Creativity Machine* as a synthesis of historical political symbolism.<sup>27</sup>

The following project narrative, written to launch the AD2077 organization website (which then lay dormant indefinitely), likewise took an ambiguous multivocal approach, sometimes synthesizing an appeal to various constituencies (e.g. city history and identity, the creative city, business interests), sometimes collaging separate appeals:

26. Ibid, 114; 113.

27. Ibid, 112; 115.

**Project narrative (AD2077) [December 2014]<sup>28</sup>**

*"In the beginning [November 10, 1977], Kevin Lynch saw the site, and saw that it was good: and the Dallas City Council said let there be an Arts District, and there was an Arts District. (It had been decided to let all the city's major arts institutions be gathered together unto one place: and it was so.) And so on..."*

With the end of the first fifty years of the Arts District in sight, and the 'build-out' freshly completed in 2012, the question of the future of the Arts District is as conspicuous as ever. Yet, with recent squabbles, we've taken our collective eye off the ball. This, combined with the fact that all the major cultural buildings are now in place—leaving us with nothing big to anticipate—, has us a bit stuck in the mud.

AD2077 aims to renew and reinvigorate our commitment to creating a vibrant, vanguard arts district.

As a platform for curated dialogue on the future of the Arts District, AD2077 hopes to facilitate creative foresight, canalizing the high aspirations of local business, arts and community leaders. Amidst the overall dialogue—when we'll often find our heads in the clouds—, the proposed *Creativity Machine* acts as a first common project, providing a strong frame of reference and grounding—something 'big' we can zero in on and sink our teeth into without fretting over the whole shooting match.

Supporting this platform, the AD2077 organization, an emerging consortium of local and international arts organizations and business and finance leaders, is dedicated to advancing and affording the creativity necessary for Dallas to stake out a leading position among the global interurban competition.

How do we visualize the Arts District roughly two generations—62 years—from now?

## **Reflection**

While more in-depth reflection will be reserved for potential further research, a few remarks can be made. AD2077 can be seen as multivocal in the sense of being a hybrid of: research, 'real' (genuine, plausible), utopianism and subtle critique. Multivocality is arguably created through precise strategic articulations of the various 'voices' within: market-friendly terminology, creative-class phrasing, appeals to social justice and appeals to an avant-garde artistic and urban spirit. Another way to see this is in what would have been my curating strategy for the AD2077 website, which declared itself as an "emerging platform for curated

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28. AD2077. (2014). The First 100 Years. 23 December. AD2077. [Online]. [Accessed 29 March 2017]. Available from: <http://www.ad2077.org/?p=162>

dialogue on the future of the Dallas Arts District, revolving around the *Creativity Machine*"<sup>29</sup>: I would have aimed to graft dissensual modes to consensual ones and vice-versa.

The design of the *Creativity Machine* intended to be a 'semi-open work', meaning it was open to further imagination and articulation (the core volume, nestled in a generous structural frame, is only defined spatially as a polycube) but its configuration and structural framework is highly considered (not presuming to be 'neutral'). Had this pre-study developed into a case, these aesthetic relations might have been the subject of actions and workshops.

There seemed to be exciting potential for developing AD2077, especially after I met in late 2013 with the director of CentralTrak, a university artist residency for local and international artists. But, I only got as far as creating the website with a post or two. It was another early expression of overambition, one especially incompatible with the research context created by the time-intensive demands of the TRADERS project.

## 1.4 Briefs on Appendices

*Appendices are arranged in four categories: groundwork and development; publications; case study documentation; and workshops and events. They can be coordinated with Figure 1.*

### [ *Groundwork and development* ]

#### Appendix 1 - Network maps

Included here are two incomplete efforts to map networks of knowledge (primarily local) and actors (primarily related to potential case studies). Because of demands on my schedule, and reprioritizations which questioned the value of this practice, keeping up this documentation was repeatedly abandoned. I returned to it sometimes out of a desire to 'visualize the mess' (or the 'hairball' as it is termed in the field of network visualization) and juxtapose the relatively narrow—though still wide and diffuse—course of action taken with the wider field of background research, workshops and other small experiments, dead-ends and unfollowed leads. While many precise trajectories—both logical and coincidental—could be read into these maps, they more importantly show the overall diffuse and complex organization of the initial stages of my artistic research approach and the 'flat' post-Fordist mode of constant network-expansion partly implicated in the structure of the TRADERS project. Indeed, I started the second map (Appendix 1.2) when it appeared that TRADERS

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29. AD2077. (2014). AD2077. [Online]. [Accessed 29 March 2017]. Available from: <http://www.ad2077.org>

would require us to contribute towards a similar network map produced as a group deliverable.

## **Appendix 2 - Theoretical-methodological framework diagrams**

Included here are selected diagrams used to work out and represent the evolving theoretical-methodological framework. The most significant evolution seemed to be the falling away of the 'suppression of depth' theme. A more precise focus on "structures of differentiation" (Crary, 2013) replaced it while I re-embraced the 'superficial' weak social ties described in urban sociology. ('Surface depth' can be conceptualized, but this is another discussion.) However, the theme of depth returns in reference to the epistemic conditions created by the TRADERS project which often limit the depth of my research.

## **[ Publications ]**

### **Appendix 3 - Paper 1 - "The Challenges of Urban Activism in the New Neoliberal Context"**

This conference paper investigated the recuperative, post-political neoliberal context in which urban activism often finds itself operating. Dispositions useful in this context include Jacque Rancière's agonistic and paradoxical concept of democracy, David Harvey's 'Dialectical Utopianism' and Francis Alÿs' artistic-political poetic ambiguity. Strategies which utilize hybrid (what I would now also call *multivocal*) approaches are concluded to be less prone to recuperation. Rancière's and Harvey's constructive frameworks go beyond the Left's aversion to power and institutions, signaling that urban activists should also engage with the 'core' of society, rather than just its margins.

### **Appendix 4 - Paper 2 - "Poetic Incommunicability: An 'Efficient' Creative Force"**

This conference paper experimented with a multivocal format based on Gregory Bateson's 'metalogue'<sup>30</sup> device, in which the structure of the text itself also communicates and reflects the content, in this case estrangement, incommunicability and creativity. The main text, in traditional academic format, is differentially collaged with a poem running in parallel, but which bridges at certain points, slowing down (and frustrating) the reading process and potentially peeling new divergent meanings off of the main text.

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30. Bateson, G. (1972). *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology*.

### **Appendix 5 - *Poetic Incommunicability***

I adapted Paper 2 (Appendix 4) into an artwork (or 'art book') taking the form of a limited print A5 publication. It was born out of an invitation from my colleague Anna Maria Orrù to collaborate with her new publishing line, as well a prior intention of extending the conference paper through additions and reconfigurations (in this case through reformatting and minimal rewriting).

### **Appendix 6 - Paper 3 - "Institutioning: Participatory Design and the Public Realm"**

Included here is an early draft of my text contribution towards an article co-written with four other authors (involved with TRADERS as supervisors or managers) for a TRADERS-hosted issue of the *CoDesign* journal. It briefly describes my case study from our proposed framework of 'institutioning'. The original draft was twice as long, and the final version looks to be even shorter and further reworked. My collaborative work on the journal issue is a significant part of my TRADERS responsibility and includes meta-reviewing submitted papers and co-writing an introduction to the issue. For the article, I also contributed in early conceptual and theoretical development, bringing in Mouffe (in Gielen, 2013) and Mahoney and Thelen (2010) as key primary sources in reference to engagement with institutions, theories of gradual institutional change and change agents.

### **Appendix 7 - *Trading Places: Practices of Public Participation in Art and Design Research* [lexicon entries]**

As another of the TRADERS project's group deliverables, we published a book together in 2017 which includes, for each of the ESRs: a description of our primary case study (a modified version of this text comprises Section 2.2 - "Designing Multivocality . . . from Outer Space") and keywords elaborated for the lexicon (included as this appendix); texts by our supervisor; and texts by an external contributor.

### **Appendix 8 - *Modelling in Dialogue: Book of Voice-Illustrations***

Throughout the fifth TRADERS Training Week, 'Modelling in Dialogue' (TW5), which took place in Gothenburg 23-25 May 2016, Ida Liffner and Marthe Roosenboom of Studio Goja were invited not only to document vignettes from and participate in the proceedings (primarily lectures and an artistic workshop, reading group and dialogue) but also to be free to critically 'speak' through their illustrations. These on-site 'voice-illustrations' were then re-assembled in full afterwards in a 170-page digital publication—and later a print publication given to the participants. Constituting an ambiguous accentuation of the already expressive aspect of representation, the mode and degree of inflection of these voices

is ostensibly indeterminate though more-or-less graspable by way of participants' own memories. Special thanks to both Mohamed El Sioufi, honorary professor at Chalmers c. 2014-2015, and the *Growing with Design* conference (2015) at the University of Gothenburg's School of Design and Crafts (HDK) for inspiring the idea, the former wondering about artistically documenting prosaic events and the latter employing an on-site illustrator. The *Book of Voice-Illustrations* is available as a pdf (46mb).<sup>31</sup>

### [ *Case study documentation* ]

#### **Appendix 9 - *Ett skepp kommer lastat*. . .**

Partial textual and visual documentation from my primary case study, including an actor map, a letter sent to [60] inhabitants, the 'gameboards with no rules', the space laboratories, the press release<sup>32</sup> and images of and text from the exhibition's participatory cards. Much additional documentation is available to draw upon in future analysis and/or dissemination including: workshop dynamics and methods, the participant 'field notes' guides provided during our tours of the Mandolingatan apartment blocks, my interior survey of these blocks and content of the gameboards and space laboratories. Most of the material included here was collected, along with additional documentation, into an A4 booklet I created in February 2017 for the most involved group of participants (from the Frölunda School).

### [ *Workshops and events* ]

#### **Appendix 10 - *Lingua Franca***

This was a collaboration with TRADERS colleagues Michael Kaethler and Pablo Calderón Salazar in which we co-produced the final stage of a workshop. The aim was to put the melodrama of design language to the test by placing stickers of design buzzwords in public spaces during 'Design Week' at the Design Salone in Milan. We used these interventions as material 'conversation pieces' to reflect more broadly in a public discussion.

#### **Appendix 11 - *Problematising Post-Fordist Instrumentalisation of Art and Design Labor***

With my TRADERS ESR colleague Michael Kaethler, I co-designed a workshop as part of the TRADERS Autumn School, 'On the Role of Participatory Art and Design in the Reconfiguration of Work (in Genk)'. The workshop problematized the role of local/global

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31. Geib, J. (2016). Fifth TRADERS Training Week: 'Modelling in Dialogue' - Book of Voice-Illustrations. 16 September. TRADERS. [Online]. [Accessed 16 September 2016]. Available from: <http://tr-adars.eu/fifth-traders-training-week-modelling-in-dialogue-book-of-voice-illustrations/>

32. The text, in this case, was proofread by a native Swedish speaker.

art and design labor through [self-reflexively] fleeting engagement with the site-specific needs of Betty's Garden, a local gardening initiative with which we coordinated. Design/art solutions (some co-designed) were offered multivocally in the form of an open-ended almanac (*Betty's Almanac*) that might be chosen from or used as inspiration—rather than given as a recommendation.

## Appendix 12 - Modelling in Dialogue (TRADERS Training Week)

As part of my formal responsibilities in TRADERS, I was tasked with designing, planning, coordinating and hosting the fifth and final TRADERS Training Week (in collaboration with my host institution and TRADERS associated partner, the Gothenburg Cultural Department). For each of these events, the local TRADERS researcher invites the others (as well as local researchers and other guests) to the local context (in this case for three days) and coordinates training in the host researcher's thematic approach. I took the opportunity to foreground artistic and cultural approaches to dialogue and participation, emphasizing the role of multivocality in both design aims and methods and the role of institutions in advancing societal change in collaboration with artists and designers. Children's and youth's rights and perspectives, along with pedagogies linked with art, design and participation were also featured. A variety of academic, artistic and cultural actors, including the public, were engaged via workshops, lectures and a reading group. The program booklet includes: an overview, schedule, literature reader bibliography, *dialogical talkbox* description and description of my design concepts.

## Appendix 13 - "Multivocality, Design and Public Space"

For the closing TRADERS conference, each ESR was responsible—together with their supervisor—for coordinating and chairing a paper session. This appendix includes the session call I wrote with my supervisor, Catharina Dyrssen. It focused on a main theme of 'designing *with* and *for* multivocality', but in an open way to invite a range of paper contributions. We were required to lead and participate in a two-stage peer-review process involving two invited external reviewers (in the first stage). Out of thirteen papers submitted, seven were selected for presentation and publication. We had a rich paper session with quite diverse presentations (including a minor audience intervention by the Politics of Fear collective) and a stimulating panel discussion. A report on the conference and other documentation can be found on the TRADERS website.<sup>33</sup>

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33. TRADERS. (2017). MEDIATIONS – Art and Design Agency and Participation in Public Space – TRADERS conference. 26 January. TRADERS. [Online]. [Accessed 26 January 2017]. Available from: <http://tr-aders.eu/mediations-art-design-agency-and-participation-in-public-space-traders-conference/>





## Chapter 2 - Primary Case Study

*Ett skepp kommer lastat. . .*



Following a brief synopsis of my primary case study, *Ett skepp kommer lastat. . .* [*A ship comes loaded. . .*] (also referred to as *Ett skepp*), Section 2.1 will discuss contextualizing factors including: how the project emerged, the direction of my research at the time and notes about the local and wider context. Because the case is composed of multiple themes, several subprojects and various twists and turns which, at various times, entangle with or parallel each other, a panoramic overview is useful before going into further detail. For this, Section 2.2 adapts a text written in the spring following the case study for an upcoming publication (the TRADERS book). The text describes the case and the concepts and theory that informed it. As the exhibition became such a significant part of the project, Section 2.3 provides a description of its design concept, its spatial and thematic organization and its artifacts through a virtual walkthrough. If the reader prefers to start with more empirical material, skipping ahead to Section 2.3 and returning to Section 2.2 may be desirable. Section 2.4 switches to a reflective mode to discuss how certain reconfigurations of voices were affected through the exhibition and designed artifacts. Section 2.5 zooms back out to reflect on crucial aspects of the project, particularly in relation to the key concept of context.

#### Case synopsis:

My second year of PhD studies (2015) began with the emergence of a case study based in Frölunda, a southwestern subdistrict of Gothenburg. The case would eventually come to be called *Ett skepp kommer lastat. . .* [*A ship comes loaded. . .*] after the name of a Swedish children's game in which players take turns guessing the imagined contents of an incoming—but distant—ship. Based on mutual contacts in the city cultural department and resonance of my research interests with the upcoming programming theme of the Frölunda Kulturhus

[Cultural Center]<sup>34</sup>, I was invited by one of the cultural producers there to propose a project for their autumn theme 'neighbors'<sup>35</sup>. The ostensive point of departure I proposed was a collaborative investigation of how *indirect* communication takes place between neighbors through architectural interfaces (doors, window and common spaces). The inquiry would proceed through a series of workshops with a group of local children, the Frölunda School *fritidshem* [leisure-time centre<sup>36</sup>]. Indirect relations between case components, distanced methods and perspectival reversals (of researcher/participant and subject) aimed to amplify themes of *distance*, *abundance* and *unknowability* and encourage an associated empathy arguably required in today's urban condition in which 'the stranger' predominates (Amin, 2012). The case would grow into a four-month constellation of 13 participatory workshops involving—to varying degrees—159 children and youth from eight different groups (classes and after-school programs), including groups from Önnared School and The International School of the Gothenburg Region (ISGR). Workshops consisted of scientific *and* artistic research methods: observational interior and exterior tours of a series of local 1960s apartment blocks, artistic expressions, interpretations and speculations including the design of a 'space probe' and artistic production of an scaled interior space. The workshops produced work for and were integrated with the culminating participatory exhibition which took place in the main exhibition hall of the Frölunda Cultural Center, 12-29 November 2015.

A timeline diagram, Figure 4, shows the overall configuration of participant groups which were held in parallel but connected indirectly through common workshop artifacts, themes and the exhibition. A letter to the parents of the participating students is included as Figure 5. Workshop programs, distributed to the participating teachers ahead of each workshop, are included here as Figures 6-9.

- 
34. A relatively large complex centrally located in Frölunda. It includes an exhibition hall, workshop spaces, library, theater, cinema, swimming pool, handball hall and cafe. It was established in 1980 and also housed a high school until 2010. See: Frölunda Kulturhus. (n.d.). *Frölunda Kulturhus*. [Online]. [Accessed 15 January 2015]. Available from: <http://www.frolundakulturhus.se/>
  35. The cultural producers at the Frölunda Cultural Center have the agency to set their own programming themes. They decided on 'neighbors' as a theme after being inspired by the work of Marit Lindberg, a Malmö-based artist they were beginning to collaborate with on what would become her work *Stjärnorna i stjärnhusen* (2016). This work involved public space walks through a neighborhood of Frölunda accented by singing and musical performances seen and heard through local apartment windows. The performers were not necessarily the inhabitants, and included musicians, children and others. To achieve this required a long negotiation process with inhabitants and the housing company. We discussed intersecting our projects somehow, but lack of time and other circumstances prevented it. Lindberg, M. (n.d.). *Marit Lindberg*. [Online]. [Accessed 1 March 2015]. Available from: <http://www.maritlindberg.se/>
  36. The *fritidshem* or leisure-time centre is a form of child care in Sweden for students aged 6 to 12 years which collaborates with and supplements pre-schools and schools, with the aims of providing after-school and holiday support for parents who work or study and "stimulating students' development and learning, offering them a meaningful leisure time, promote comprehensive contacts and social community" [Google translation]. In the case of Frölunda School, the *fritidshem* is embedded in a space within the school itself. See: Skolverket [Swedish National Agency for Education]. (2016). *Fritidshem*. [Online]. [Accessed 29 March 2016]. Available from: <https://www.skolverket.se/skolformer/fritidshem>

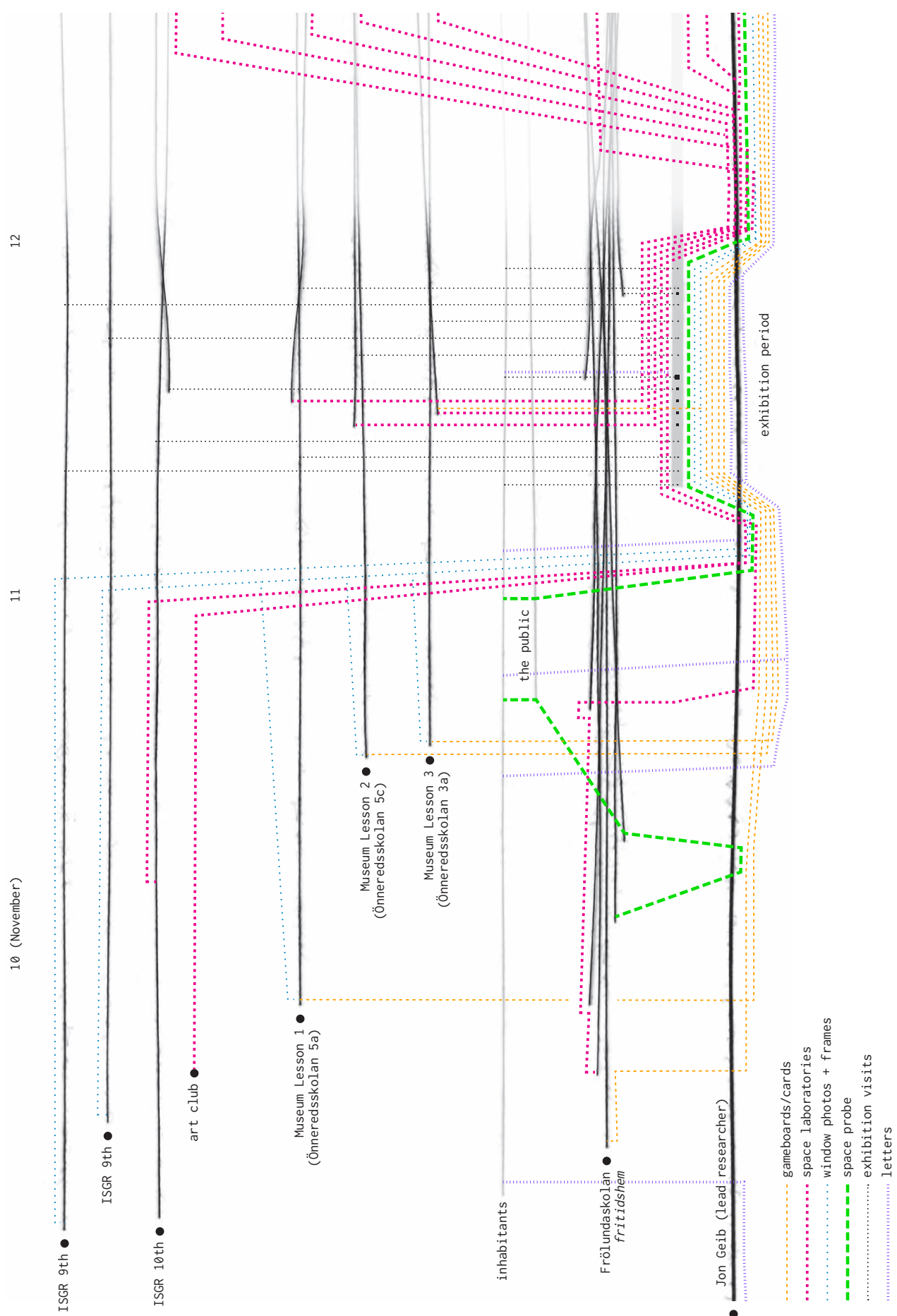


Figure 4: Timeline diagram

25 september 2015

Introducing...

“Who is your neighbor?”

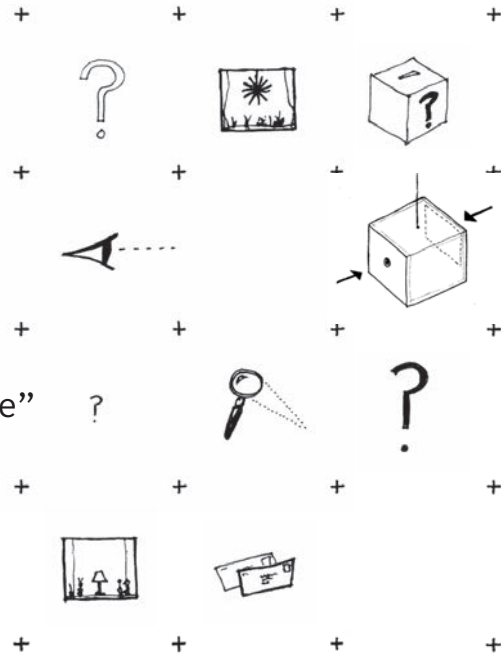
...or:

“A ship comes loaded...”

...or:

“The researcher from outer space”

...2 explorative Museum Lessons in coordination  
with an exhibition in the Frölunda Kulturhus:  
between 9 and 29 November: opening on the 20th



Dear Neighbor and Parent,

We are very enthusiastic about collaborating with Charlotte's class and your child during the course of two Museum Lessons to come (28 September and 18 November). We will collectively explore the Kulturhus's theme of 'neighbors' through a variety of approaches.

We'll build curiosity for getting to know our neighbors better. And, as importantly, we'll learn empathy and respect for what we cannot know: the limits of discovery, the 'stranger'...the depth and richness of human experience.

The project is a collaboration between: myself, Doctoral student, Urbanist and Architect at Chalmers University of Technology, Department of Architecture (also in the TRADERS PhD network: [tr-adars.eu](http://tr-adars.eu)); Vici Hofbauer, architectural pedagogue currently pursuing a masters in Child Culture Design (CCD) at School of Design and Crafts (HDK); Frölunda Culture House with Anne Svanholm, pedagogue & Culture Producer; Gothenburg City Department of Culture; and Frölunda School.

I am truly from 'outer space', having arrived in Sweden from the U.S. through Belgium. I can only speak a little Swedish, but I'm learning (Vici & Anne speak fluently). Indeed, from our neighbors' perspective, we all come from 'outer space', to one degree or another.

I hope to meet you at the exhibition opening!

Yours sincerely,

Jon Geib  
[jongeib@gmail.com](mailto:jongeib@gmail.com)  
+46709209713

Vici Hofbauer  
[vicihofbauer@gmail.com](mailto:vicihofbauer@gmail.com)  
+46736973696

Anne Svanholm  
[anne.svanholm@afh.goteborg.se](mailto:anne.svanholm@afh.goteborg.se)  
+46313662731

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Figure 5: A4 letter to parents sent in advance of the first Museum Lesson workshop. (A similar letter was sent to parents ahead of the first Frölunda School fritidshem workshop.)

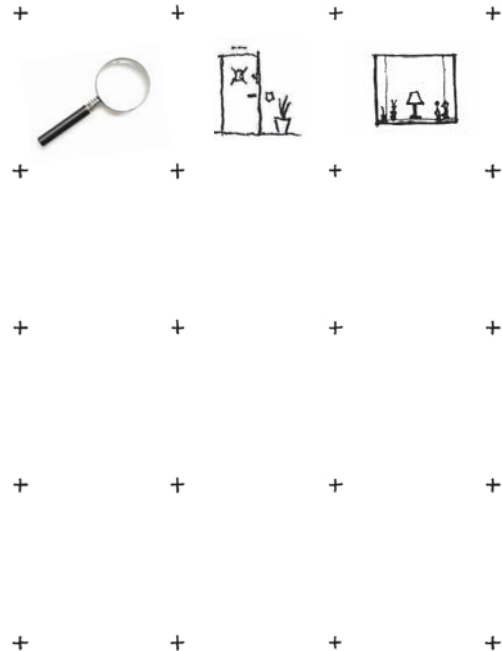
“Ett skepp kommer lastat...” ...eller: “Forskaren från världsrymden” ...eller: “Vem är din granne?”

16 sept. 2015

## workshop 1

program:

- 13-13.20 [all children arrive by 13.20]
- ‘behind-the-scenes’: sharing of my recent neighbor experience (sanding wood for workshop 2 on my balcony!)
  - video clips re: neighbors, windows
- 13.20-35
- introduce myself - the ‘alien’ researcher
  - children introduce themselves & share one thing about neighbors
  - introduce what we’re going to do
  - form groups
- 13.35-50
- *walk to Mandolingatan*
- 13.50-14:30 walking tour scavenger hunt
- follow guidemap through residential hallways (in groups)
  - pick one spot outside, investigate windows (*have 2 binoculars*)
- 14.35 meet at M43
- sharing what we found (10 min.)
  - presentation by Susan (5 min.)
- 14.50
- *walk back to Frölundaskolan* (by 15.00)



inquiry question:

- How do neighbors express themselves to other neighbors indirectly? -- through expressions in their windows and around their doors (we look for clues).

themes:

- ‘neighbor spectrum’: those you know well...a little about...nothing about (strangers)
- guessing game: *speculating* on meanings, reasons, about our neighbors
- empathy and respect for what we cannot know (due to the limits of discovery, and privacy)

+ + + + + + + +

Figure 6: A4 program sent in advance of the first Frölunda School fritidshem workshop.



“Ett skepp kommer lastat...” ...eller: “Forskaren från världsrymden” ...eller: “Vem är din granne?”

22 sept. 2015

## workshop 2

program:

12.00 • [*arrive at Frölunda Kulturhus*]

12.00-10 • gameboard activity:  
children take 3 minutes to write or  
draw something that interested them  
from last week on a card & place it  
in the gameboard

12.10-20 introduce the ‘Space Laboratories’

12.20-13.40 ‘Space Laboratory’ experimentation  
• children begin creating their own  
imagined interior & window view  
(drawing, painting, gluing paper &  
loose parts,...)

13.40-50 guessing game  
• taking one example: we first look  
from the outside at the window  
& make guesses about the scene  
inside, then we take turns viewing  
the interior scene through the  
peephole.

13.50 • *walk back to Frölundaskolan*  
(by 14.00)

+ + + +



+ + + +

+ + + +

inquiry question:

- How might it feel to be viewed as a neighbor? -- reconciling the difference between outside and inside expression.

themes:

- self-expression: creating our own window view and interior scene
- the limits of guessing/misinterpretation: difference between exterior view & that hidden inside
- building empathy: experiencing what it's like to be viewed as a neighbor

+ + + + + + + +

Figure 7: A4 program sent in advance of the second fritidshem workshop.

“Ett skepp kommer lastat...” ...eller: “Forskaren från världsrymden” ...eller: “Vem är din granne?”

5 oct. 2015

## workshop 4

program:

13-13.20 [all children arrive by 13.20 at Frölundaskolan]

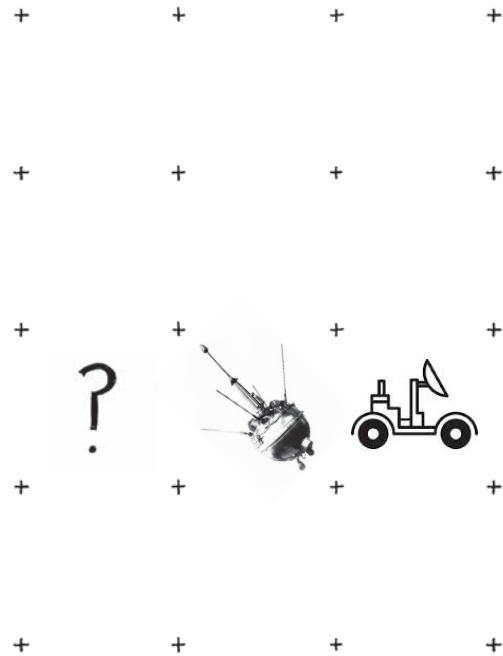
13.20-30 • introduce our ‘neighbors’ from Önneredsskolan, doing similar research

13.30-13.45 presentation/discussion about space probes and explorer ships

13.45-14.. brainstorming our own ‘space probe’  
• what do we want to find out about our neighbors?  
• how can we collect this data?

14.15-50 putting ideas to paper  
• drawing and describing our ideas on paper, overlaid on drawings of the space probe’s ‘skeleton’

14.50-15 • wrap-up  
(by 14.00)



inquiry question:

- How can we discovery more about something from a distance?

themes:

- the aims & methods of research & exploration
- indirectness: interaction with neighbors mediated through another element



Figure 8: A4 program sent in advance of the fourth fritidshem workshop (the third was an extension of the second workshop, and the fifth was a visit to the exhibition and its vernissage.)

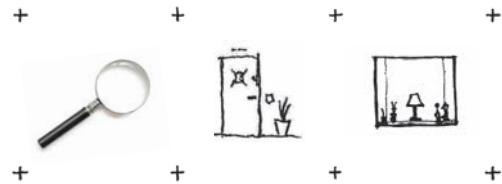
“Vem är din granne?” ...eller: “Ett skepp kommer lastat...” ...eller: “Forskaren från världsrymden”

28 sept. 2015

## verkstaden 1 av 2

program:

8.30 [alla barn anländer at Frölunda Kulturhus]



- 8.30-45 • presentera oss - forskarna “från världsrymden”
- barn presentera sig och dela en sak om grannar
- införa vad vi ska göra

8.45-50 • promenad till Mandolingatan 39

- 8.50-9:20 • vandringstur skattjakt
- följ guidemap genom bostadsområden hallar
  - välja en plats utanför, undersöka windows (har 2 kikare)

9.20-30 • gå tillbaka till Frölunda Kulturhus (med 9.30)

förfrågan fråga:

- Hur grannar uttrycka sig till andra grannar indirekt? - Genom uttryck i sina fönster och runt sina dörrar (vi leta efter ledtrådar).

teman:

- “granne spektrum”: de du känner väl ... lite om ... ingenting om (främlingar)
- gissningslek: spekulerar på betydelser, skäl om våra grannar
- empati och respekt för vad vi inte kan veta (på grund av att gränserna för upptäckt, och integritet)

+ + + + + + + +

Figure 9: A4 program sent in advance of the two Museum Lesson workshops (similar to that used for the fritidshem but more abbreviated given the shorter and less flexible time available).

## 2.1 Contextualization

### Contextual preconsiderations

Early in my first year of PhD studies (2014), while trying to understand more of the local context, I encountered fatigue, cynicism, disappointment with and severe critique of Gothenburg's use of participation in urban development. A strong critical voice on this subject is Catharina Thörn, a sociologist at the University of Gothenburg. She has documented, presented and written about the harsh redevelopment of the former industrial and harbor area of Hisingen as well as the participatory project *Dialogue Södra Älvsstranden* (Thörn, 2008). In the latter, months of sincere participation of various multidisciplinary teams (including Thörn) amounted to little more than an insulting request that each team contribute a seconds-long clip to be used in a promotional video for the city development company. Thörn is an activist herself and writes on gentrification. Together with photographer Katarina Despotović, she produced *Den urbana fronten: En dokumentation av makten över staden* [*The urban front: A documentation of the power over the city*] (2015), a visual and textual account of the redevelopment process in Hisingen, which makes visible the existing context that was doubly-erased—first through denial of its existence and denigration, then through actual demolition. Nearby, the city appears to be experimenting with a different approach at Frihamnen ['Freeport'], the oldest and most central area of the city's former harbor area. At Frihamnen it claims to be creating an area affordable for all, but doubts are accumulating given the pressure from big development companies. The structural problem seems to be a radical asymmetry in power relations in favor of the development companies, besides the privatization of the city's own housing companies (and their move towards market logic). Participation in an instrumental logic of problem-solving and product-making in this rigid market-driven context is all but a dead-end:

*[P]articipation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless. (Arnstein, 1969)*

The context and quote above reinforced a premeditated move in my research into exploring a more cultural mode of participation, a move precipitated by the normative—and strategic—idea that participation and dialogue should not be considered *only* as a means to an end, temporarily invoked to fix or make something (instrumental or economic), but also as ends in themselves. The two logics—participation towards structural change and participation as an urban cultural process with value in itself—might be strategically tethered together multivocally. This is similar to how the artistic/activist strategy of

overidentification operates (see Paper 1 in Appendix 3) and is along the lines of what I explored in the pre-study AD2077 (Section 1.3.1) and in the *dialogical talkbox* (Chapter 3).

The first participatory project I encountered in Gothenburg was *Hemma på vår gata* [*At home on our street*] (c. 2013-2014), conceived by the nonprofit organization Folkstaden and a tenants association. The project focused on children's "visions for housing and urban living" (Folkstaden, n.d.) and on bringing children into dialogue with practicing architects. Seven school classes and as many architectural firms participated, along with the project's architect-pedagogues. My co-supervisors Ylva Mühlenbock and Borghild Håkansson enthusiastically recommended the project and put me in contact with its organizers, the architect-curators Magdalena Forshamn and Tomas Lundberg of Folkstaden. We met in the project's final phase, an exhibition in the Stadsmuseet [City Museum]. Their decision to end the project with an exhibition was specifically meant to address the problem of participant disappointment. Dialogue processes can become a 'list of wishes', most or all of which are unfulfilled in an instrumental mode which requires that the process narrow down to one result. Magdalena and Tomas bypassed this instrumental mode, first by explicitly focusing on *imaginary* buildings and urban designs and, second, by conceiving the exhibition itself as the result. For the participants, it was not only satisfying to see their own work displayed, but it was also a moment of surprise because, as the last step in the process, the architects' translated the childrens' visions—seriously—into scale models and drawings, professional in their aesthetic quality. Among the more utopian visions (as I could tell as an observer): a cloud-house reached by a ladder from a giant rock form with a home carved into a cave; a new candidate for 'tallest skyscraper in the world'; a neighborhood with underground (and underwater) houses; and a heavily-sculpted hill providing all manner of unique living (and hiking) experiences. The project's complex rhythm of participant involvement was another inspiring quality. Not all actors were present at every step. Over more than a year it grew in several steps, starting with students working individually, then collectively, then with architects visiting them, then with the students visiting the architects' offices. Magdalena and Tomas called this method "collage dialogue" (Forshamn and Lundberg, 2014). This method resonated with my interest at the time, based on the artistic mechanism of aesthetic distance (Rancière, 2009), in the potential of the designer's agency in composing relations *between* periods or 'chapters' of participation, relations which did not flow entirely smoothly but might accept and play with disjunctures.

In retrospect, the degree to which *Ett skepp kommer lastat*. . . was influenced by the methods and methodology of *Hemma på vår gata* is notable. Another similarity is that, although we both had funding behind our projects (they from Kulturbryggan, Västra Götalandsregionen, Bostadsbolaget and Hyresgästföreningen, I from TRADERS) we still see the need for more city funding and execution of similar projects involving children. The

need is especially apparent to match the city's stated interest in the rights of children. This is a common political problem whereby visions and stated values are not proportionally supported in practice. Both of us have also presented our projects in various contexts—including contexts of cultural planning and policy—as a way of showing an alternative mode of participation involving children, architecture and the city. We met each other again at the Nordic Urban Laboratory conference in April 2016 in Gothenburg, where we each presented, and later discussed the possibility of doing an joint exhibition together in the future.

The following aspects will be explored further and saved for discussion in a future phase:

- My reflex to work in a project mode and the convergence of artistic and experimental approaches with the post-Fordist 'project'.
- My lack of insistence on working in some extreme 'problem area'. I would rather engage *both* the 'core' and the 'margin' in a way that could effect the 'margin' structurally, rather than just 'rendering aid' in the 'margin' (see Bourdieu's critique and many similar of the 'two-handed' model in which hard economic sectors inflict pain and soft social sectors 'patch-up' the damage or soothe the pain.<sup>37</sup>). A related line of critique concerns fatigue in the 'margin' about always being the first targets or 'lab rats' of experimentation.<sup>38</sup>
- My decision to work with children enrolled in schools, but to engage them *outside* of the classroom and the multiple rationales involved, including: working with participant groups comprised more democratically than self-organized volunteer groups; producing public space through process-based practice; enacting the idea that children and their activities should be a visible part of the city (Aldo van Eyck, Christopher Alexander); aiming for the critical pedagogical benefits of having children engaged with their environment (drawing inspiration from the fields of critical pedagogy and place-based education, in particular Colin Ward's idea of the 'exploding school'); emphasizing the strategic activist potential of working with children, who might be listened to more closely as the inheritors of current policies and practices; and building towards a future practice combining art education with urban intervention.

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37. Bourdieu, P. (1998). *Acts of Resistance: Against the New Myths of Our Time*, as discussed in: BAVO (eds.). 2007. *Cultural Activism Today: The Art of Over-Identification*. 25.

38. Fattah, N. A. (2014). Sluta göra oss i förorten till labbråttor [Stop turning us in the suburbs into lab rats]. *ETC*. [Online]. 16 December. [Accessed 12 November 2016]. Available from: <http://www.etc.se/ledare/sluta-gora-oss-i-fororten-till-labbrattor>

## Origin story

*As a rule, artistic research is not hypothesis-led, but discovery-led* (Rubidge, 2005, 8: quoted by Borgdorff in Biggs and Karlsson, 2010, 56).

*The erratic nature of creative discovery—of which unsystematic drifting, serendipity, chance inspirations and clues form an integral part—is such that a methodological justification is not easy to codify. (57)*

It was such a chance encounter that led to this case study. During a personal tour, led by my co-supervisors, of Västra Frölunda, a southwestern district of Gothenburg known for its assortment of housing typologies and large cultural center, the Frölunda Kulturhus, we, by chance, encountered Anne Svanholm, a 'cultural producer' whom they knew previously. Conversation turned to a lack of communication across scales of cultural institutions (between city, district and subdistrict). Some time later, Anne and I met again to share our interests, but without feeling any compulsion or urgency to collaborate. We discovered an overlapping interest: their upcoming autumn (2015) programming theme, 'neighbors', resonated with my interest at the time in exploring an urban sociology of strangers (Amin, 2012; Young, 1990; Sennett, 1977), dialogue and indirectness. Anne invited me to propose a project at the cultural producers' next meeting. Figure 10 shows my proposal sketch.

Two items that should be noted in relation to the early formation of the case study:

- Anne is in charge of theatre at the Cultural Center, so after the initial meetings and after the project was accepted to move forward, I began working more closely with Britta Andersson, another cultural producer in charge of exhibitions (along with Per Nyman, whom I worked with closely during the exhibition installation). Though Anne was closely involved as a pedagogue for the fritidshem workshops and at key meetings, she was less involved in day-to-day project coordination.
- Further description and analysis of this early formation could be developed in future research, as it relates to the forces and strategies a designer-researcher might engage with in relation to working with institutions in a post-Fordist context (by choice or necessity). Part of this could be addressing the case more from the perspective of the cultural producers and the other institutions involved.

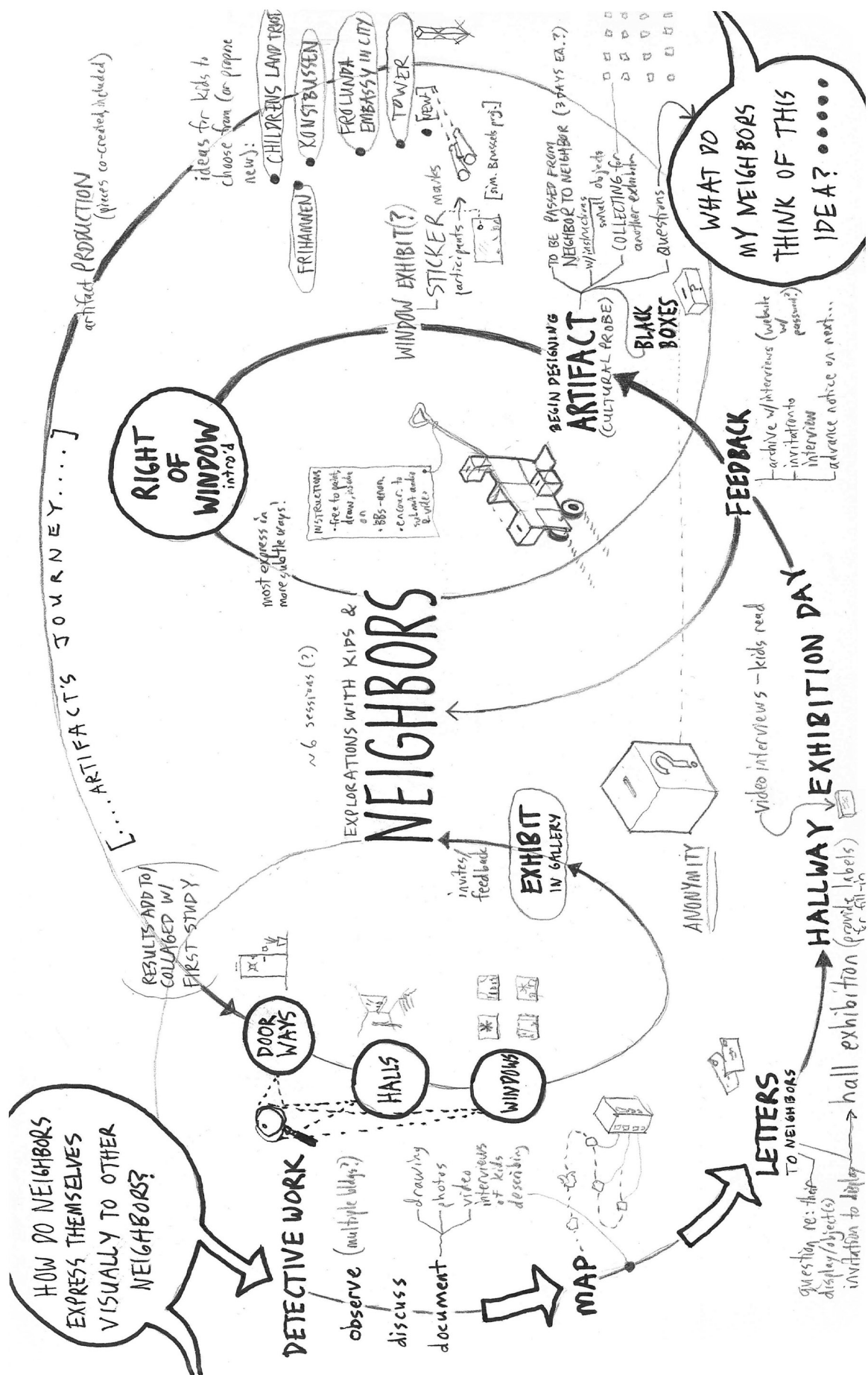


Figure 10: Project proposal sketch



## Research context

At the time of my proposal, I had gravitated, through Bakhtin (1981) and Chia and Holt (2009), to the notion of *indirectness*—as an undervalued quality of dialogue but also as an underexplored design strategy. Taking indirectness as a point (or hazy cloud) of departure, the case went on to explore a host of related themes: indirect communication; distance and distanced research methods; the stranger, the outsider and the unknown; overabundance and the limits of discovery; architectural interfaces (spatial insides/outside) and corresponding switching of perspectives; multivocality, including its aesthetics and the voice of artifacts; hybrid creation and the designer's participation; and taking children and youth, and their work, seriously. The project intended to articulate some of these themes through the organization of the project itself. As originally proposed, this first took the form of relations between the workshops:

*It would be a series of six workshops with local children, interconnected by a willfully complex system of indirect feedback wired between workshops, between designer/researcher and participants, and to/from local inhabitants. We would investigate how neighbors communicate indirectly with each other via architectural interfaces (doors, windows, common spaces) and use distanced methods (observational studies, letter-writing, a cultural probe, etc.) to amplify our own experience of this indirectness.*<sup>39</sup>

During this time, I had also been impacted by what could be called the 'design methodology' of Breton's version of Surrealism. He used the image of creating a willfully complex "foolproof knot" (not able to be untangled) to convey this methodology, which aimed to undo the "formal fiction" between the apparently opposing realms of poetics/dreams and politics/actions. The poet (by extension, the 'designer') weaves, interlaces and oscillates between these realms in order to generate a "vigorous communication" between them:

*to unite, by means of a foolproof knot whose complexity is designed to make it so, this process of transformation with that of interpretation.* (Breton, 1932, 128)

## Attaching to and separating from context

My approach to the local context in the leadup to the project was marked by a tension between my instinctive concern for site-specificity and the parameters that I chose to—or contingently had to—accept. Some of these parameters were specific (doing a project with

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39. From an earlier draft of text written for Huybrechts et al. (2017, *forthcoming*). Institutioning: Participatory Design and the Public Realm. *CoDesign*. (Paper 3 in Appendix 6)

the Cultural Center, in Frölunda) and some general (with a group of local children, involving local residential buildings). As illustrated below, acceptance of some parameters meant foreclosing other possibilities that would have potentially been more site-specific and/or strategic. On the other hand, as a designer, I came to appreciate the constraints and contingencies that shaped the project, as they formed an emerging context of their own which allowed me to avoid a situation of 'staring at a blank page'.

The general parameter of 'working with a group of local children' was quickly made specific as a result of collaboration with the Cultural Center. In an early planning meeting with the cultural producers (a staff team of several people charged with different facets of the cultural center and its programming) they suggested I might work with the *fritidshem* [leisure-time centre] of the nearest elementary school, Frölunda School, as they had an ongoing collaborative relationship with the teacher. This existing relationship, the school's proximity and the collaborative suggestion<sup>40</sup> made it seem the appropriate choice, and this was reinforced by a subsequent historical understanding of the school which surfaced during the parallel research inquiry described below. With more time, I could have explored working with another group, perhaps an informal group that had not yet engaged with the Cultural Center. And, indeed, the original idea intended to thread in, via various attachments with certain workshops<sup>41</sup>, a handful of these kinds of groups both local and citywide: a local youth democracy group; a informal local group of elderly people; and social organizations I had met with in my first year—Staden vi vill ha [The city we want], for instance. My decision to work with the *fritidshem* was an example of choosing to reinforce or *consolidate* certain institutional frames (Huybrechts et al., *forthcoming*) rather than to challenge them. This opens up possibilities—first practically, then critically—for challenging these and other frames in different ways. This could turn into a method of working multivocally with regard to institutions: simultaneously reinforcing existing voices while challenging them with new divergent voices, new ways of thinking and practice, within the overall voice of the institution as a differentiated landscape or assemblage. And, in terms of Mahoney and Thelen's 'change agent' typology, there are strategic actors who could be said to act multivocally by eschewing a fixed, rigid identity and who may follow some of the institution's 'rules' and ignore others, depending on the circumstance. Further, they are actors often "embedded in a multiplicity of institutions" (2010, 9;22).

My original aim in relation to public space was to engage significantly with the inhabitants of a local residential building, although quite indirectly and with much of the

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40. I have noticed that, for me, designing tends to be a more meaningful process when it involves the collaborative input of others in a rhythm oscillating between individual and collective work, rather than purely individual or purely collective work.

41. Those that would have involved the 'artifact-probe'/cultural probe (which later became a 'space probe'). See: Figure 10 and Figure 11.

activity taking place within private space and at thresholds—or 'architectural interfaces'—of public and private space. This engagement was envisioned occurring through a letter-writing exchange with the inhabitants (by the children and I) leading to *in situ* exhibitions in these threshold spaces (one in apartment hallways and the other in windows). The letters would have aimed to prepare the way for an artifact-probe (a kind of cultural probe), which might have traveled on a pre-determined circuit between about 20 interested inhabitants, who would each have had 2-3 days with it to respond to its written, visual, auditory and tactile data inquiries. Most of this did not materialize, for reasons discussed elsewhere, but my concern at the time was choosing which building to engage with. I asked the cultural producers if they knew a sociologist who might know about local issues and demographics. Again, due to their previous engagement with the Frölunda School, they could point me to Allan Dale, a Development Manager of Public Health for the district Askim-Frölunda-Högsbo, who had worked closely with the school. He had a wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm which he generously shared.

During our meeting<sup>42</sup> we covered a wide range of issues related to social conditions: inequality, quality, social cohesion, involvement, security and health. At this point the project had evolved to involve two sets of parallel workshops, the local group and another group from some other—as yet undetermined—part of the city, so a wider perspective and a more complex geographical dialogue was now naturally in play. We discussed the substantial disparities across Gothenburg in terms of education level, income and life expectancy, especially as revealed in a recent report by the city itself, *Inequality in Living Conditions and Health in Gothenburg* (City of Gothenburg, 2015). This report noted inequality not only across districts but *within* two of them specifically: Askim-Frölunda-Högsbo and Västra Hisingen (with the City Centre having the least differences) (12): one could have less in common with one's neighbor than with someone from another area. Dale described Frölunda favorably as a "mini-Gothenburg" for its diverse multiculturalism, but noted that this can come with challenges. In a measure of 'social capital', it was found that 40% of the inhabitants<sup>43</sup> of the Nya Frölunda subdistrict had a low level of trust in other people (compared to a citywide range of 11-50%) (City of Gothenburg, 2015).

A number of initiatives resulted in improved conditions at Frölunda School c. 2012-2015 (the cultural producers later shared with me that Dale was a key figure in the school's turnaround). Rather than describe the range of problems and initiatives, I will briefly focus on two issues that relate more closely to the case. First, there had previously been an "8-2pm" mindset at the school, with no time allotted for culture. This changed when the El

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42. Dale, A. (2015). Conversation with the author. 24 June, Frölunda.

43. Adults (aged 30-64).

Sistema model<sup>44</sup> was brought in, along with its focus on music and social interdependence. This provided some support for after-school activities, but the need for further support remained. Again, this seemed like the time and place to work with an institution rather than challenge or avoid it. The second issue at the school was a general sociological phenomena of peer-pressure that was felt locally. Mere co-presence of difference (of a wider range of 'neighbors'), Dale noted, works to reduce the stress of peer-pressure, especially that felt by poorer children, who may take their more affluent peers to be representative of 'normal'. Also of note is displeasure with Älvstranden [the 'RiverCity'] which, from its inception and by its very name, has put Frölunda and many other areas outside the imagined city. This topic would reappear later in a conversation I had with an inhabitant during a public space intervention (involving the space probe).

Returning to our discussion on local demographics, Dale emphasized how increased data and data resolution (as well as use of and visualizations of this data) has helped increase precision and attentiveness in relation to distribution of social services and support. But, when I attempted to discuss individual buildings (to possibly arrive at choice of what buildings to engage with the project), he made a critical point that having *too fine* a resolution in data (defined as under 300 people) was unethical as it would expose the inhabitants to stigmatization (e.g. possibly being able to identify who receives social assistance). A likewise memorable point had been made much earlier in the previous year in an unrelated conversation in which I learned that the [city-level] cultural department could not selectively pick and choose individual children or youth to work with. It had to be done through democratic platforms *accessible to all* (typically collaborations with educational institutions). This democratic ideal perhaps had no greater expression than in the golden years of *folkhemmet*, the Swedish model of the welfare state in the 1950s, when, ideally, housing for all was provided in the same standard of quality, but with differential subsidies. The kind of 'social housing' known in the U.S. and elsewhere, which is almost automatically stigmatized as a result of its socially and spatially segregated buildings of inferior quality, has not yet formally appeared in Sweden. The broader point here is that overfocus on 'being contextual' is not always an appropriate or even ethical approach, particularly from the public sector's perspective, given its historic role in protecting and promoting the 'public good' (Christopherson, 1994). There is also a resonance here with Appadurai's caution against thinking in terms of 'trait geographies' (especially those that would include the social) which emphasize permanence and fixed identities. He instead proposes 'process geographies' focusing on the ever-changing specificities and modulations of flows and disjunctures. (Appadurai, 2000, 6-7)

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44. A music program for poor children which was created in 1975 by José Antonio Abreu, a Venezuelan educator, musician and activist.

All of this resulted in another moment of letting go of the persistent notion that design is best when it engages with 'context' at the smallest possible social scale. By being forced to step back a scale in my deliberation, I could imagine the inhabitants more democratically in interaction with the processes of our workshop, and less by their *specific* demographic 'traits'. In this sense, it didn't matter where we would engage, and so a confluence of other reasonings (some *generally* demographic) moved me to choose to engage with Mandolingatan, a series of five high-rise (12-story) 1960s apartment blocks. These reasonings included that: it was comprised of rented apartments rather than condos<sup>45</sup>; it had a demographic diversity (of mainly older but many younger inhabitants); it was on a shortlist of suggestions from the cultural producers; and it was located directly between and in view of both the Cultural Center and the Frölunda School.

## 2.2 Designing Multivocality . . . from Outer Space

The text which follows after the section break below is a slightly modified version of a text I was required to write in the spring following the case study for the TRADERS book (Hamers et al., 2017). Also submitted for the book were definitions and examples of three keywords for the book's 'lexicon' (see Appendix 7). The book features texts from: the six PhD students in the network, our supervisors and invited external contributors. We were asked to write an 'engaging' 1,800-word text (with three images) describing our primary case study through our research lens to a broad audience including researchers, practitioners and policymakers. Given the complexity of the case and the short writing timeline this was challenging, and the result ended up perhaps trying to pack in too many of the concepts and theories that informed the case. It was also the first written reflection.

A new version of the following text is imagined as a companion text to a future digital exhibition catalogue. This catalogue would be an expanded presentation of the exhibition, while the imagined companion text would provide insight into some of the unexhibited processes involved, including my research approach. This companion text would also help communicate the critical logic behind the project to cultural department actors, for instance. And, it would communicate by embodying—not just describing—multivocality by bringing in more voices: quotes from participants, stories of the project's 'outliers', stories of my own

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45. Engaging with a more predominately *urban* morphology was the main thinking here (choosing to engage with apartment buildings rather than with single-family houses, for instance). But, also factoring in my decision was a normative belief that the smaller size and affordability of apartments enables a better urban condition (more just, diverse, dense and sustainable). I also likely fell prey to the common compulsion in participatory work to engage with poorer communities. An intriguing idea to extend the project was suggested during the licentiate seminar: turn the tables and have the fritidskem investigate the villas of the more affluent Önnared School children.

practical struggles (e.g. sanding plywood sheets on my apartment balcony, no doubt disturbing neighbors to some extent), previously unseen data from the space probe, etc.

Geib, J. (2017). Designing Multivocality . . . from Outer Space. In Hamers, D., Bueno de Mesquita, N., Vaneycken, A. and Schoffelen, J. (eds.). *Trading Places: Practices of Public Participation in Art and Design Research*. dpr-barcelona.

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*We arrive at the seventh floor. A larger-than-life cat head is spotted and our research team flocks to investigate. On a door at the end of the hallway hangs a majestic photo cutout. It speaks of the inhabitant behind, emitting a Mona Lisa gaze so serious it is only slightly undermined by the candle-in-the-cake effect of a tiny Swedish flag poking up behind the cat's ears. Now, the researchers, half of a class of 30 schoolchildren, ages seven through ten, were presumably debating what this cat really meant, but they spoke Swedish—so I only understood the escalating commotion. Then, the cat moved . . . as the door opened.*

*All at once, the distance I had designed into this first workshop collapsed . . . and we were very directly meeting the apparent object of our study, our 'neighbor'.*

This encounter was generated within an artistic research approach of simultaneously modelling and experiencing the dynamics of dialogue and the multivocality of public space—of both affecting and being affected. The wider aim was to explore how a cosmopolitan public culture of participation might be animated<sup>46</sup>, one that sees the city as a place where "strangers are likely to meet" (Sennett, 2002, 39), but, also—predominantly—as a place of strangers (Amin, 2012).

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

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46. This should be given more depth in further research, but it may be too wide-ranging/open to be worth developing. Rather, I will try to envision it more sharply through case studies and specific examples.

## Not borrowing a cup of sugar from your neighbor

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

Although 'neighbors' is a purely relational term, open to a wide range of interpretations from neighbor-as-friend to neighbor-as-stranger, we tend to gravitate, sentimentally, towards the former—the sweet image of our next-door neighbor lending us a cup of sugar. This habit persists, even as we live predominantly as "urban neighbors" (Amin, 2014), inhabiting multiple diverse, spatially-dispersed realms enabled and compelled by globalization and technological change. Psychologist Hubert Hermans' 'dialogical self theory' argues that as the world becomes more "heterogeneous and multiple"—even contradictory—, so do we. Our increasingly 'multi-voiced self' requires a stronger 'dialogical capacity' to reconcile the various roles that we—and others—play. (Hermans and Hermans-Konopka, 2010, 29-31) Faced collectively as an urban society, this cognitive challenge becomes a cultural one.<sup>47</sup>

## Modelling the voice dynamics of dialogue

'Neighbors', in describing *a relation* between *you* and *another*, expresses the essential threefold structure<sup>48</sup> of dialogism, Bakhtin's socio-linguistic theory of dialogue (Holquist, 2002, 36). Bakhtin saw this dialogical relation—in language, literature and in life—as a *dynamic* relation, animated by two opposing tendencies analogous to physical forces: centripetal forces which pull things inwards, *unifying* towards a single voice, and centrifugal forces which draw things apart, *producing multiple* diverging voices (Bakhtin, 1981). We pursued these contrasting movements through our twin pedagogical aims of: 'building curiosity for getting to know our neighbors better' and 'building empathy and respect for what we cannot know: the limits of discovery, the 'stranger'...'.

In this way, the project set out to animate the dynamic of dialogue by modelling intensified versions of it, normatively amplified towards multivocality. The design aimed for this not only in the day-to-day details of artistic-pedagogical content but, crucially, *in the architectonics of the project infrastructure*, or in the relations between project parts and the project whole, over time. 'Parts' included all human and non-human participants, both designed and emergent: individuals and groups, workshop activities and subprojects,

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47. This urban-sociological 'dialogical capacity' (both among citizens and by policymakers) is a critical contemporary need and so will be further investigated.

48. In Holquist's view, the basic unit of dialogue for Bakhtin is "an utterance, a reply, and a relation between the two" (36). Similar terms of "a center, a not-center, and the relation between them" also describe the 'self' (28) as well as broader socio-political relations (33). See: Holquist, M. (2002). *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World* (2nd ed.).

materials, research tool-artifacts<sup>49</sup>, environmental experiences, thematic metaphors, the unexpected, the unknown and the unknowable.

### Exploring from a distance within a spacious artistic framework

The initial plan (Figure 10) was to explore, through several workshops with the Frölunda School *fritidshem* (the local elementary school's after-school 'leisure-time centre'), how neighbors *indirectly* communicate through architectural interfaces (doors, common spaces and windows). Our research methods took a deliberate distance, studying and aiming to generate indirect dialogues with the inhabitants of a set of five local apartment buildings through observational tours of their environment, letter-writing and communication through artifacts. The latter included a partly co-designed wagon-like 'artifact-probe', which would have traveled unaccompanied between inhabitants before returning to the final exhibition with its collected data. That this wagon morphed into an 'expeditionary ship' and finally into a '*rymdsond*' ['space probe'] which I instead walked around the local area, testifies not only to the flexibility inherent in the multivocality of metaphors, but to the benefits of beginning a project with a complex but open artistic framework, one spacious and adaptable enough to reconfigure and expand in response to emergent conditions.



Figure 11: During one of its missions, the space probe coincidentally encountered one of the participating children and her family, who recognized the part she had made. During the exhibition, the space probe played a double-voiced role as art object and active participant, collecting new data (including responses and new questions to neighbors).

The project's scope was considerably enlarged and enriched through a widened collaboration with Göteborgs stad Kulturförvaltning [Gothenburg Cultural Department] and their Musei-Lektioner – Stadens Rum [Museum Lessons in Public Space] program. This brought on board a necessary Swedish-speaking pedagogue as well as three groups of

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49. This is a term I use to convey the intended double existence of certain artifacts, which were designed to play roles as both workshop tools and as artworks which would later be exhibited.



children from Önnared School, a school in an adjacent subdistrict, Önnared. They would, separately, be 'invited over by their neighbors' in Frölunda (the Cultural Center, but also more broadly) for a pair of workshops called *Vem är din granne?* [*Who is your neighbor?*]. The sites and activities of these workshops echoed those of the local fritidshem yet took place on the latter's 'home territory'. The children from Önnared School, then, had a further intensified sense of being a 'stranger', of being cautious guests trusting of their hosts, but also, at times, of being intruders.

Meanwhile, three classes of youth from The International School of the Gothenburg Region (ISGR) took part, but even more distantly through curriculum exercises. The eight groups were held apart as parallel layers (Figure 4). Most probably never met, although they heard of each other.



Figure 12: One of the four 'gameboards with no rules' used in *Ett skepp kommer lastat*. . . workshops, each with 45 wood playing cards. Although common themes of neighbors and windows were shared across groups, the pedagogical context of each group's interaction with the gameboards varied, as did the 'rules' they developed.

### Hearing places, hearing things

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

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

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

### Voices from the outside

My lack of Swedish language proficiency—initially somewhat discouraging—magnified the theme of indirectness and further differentiated our voices. Besides generating a spirit of trial and error—via our attempts to speak with each other—the language barrier created a sense of more reciprocal power relations. Taking advantage of this, one of the children, by volunteering to be my 'Google-Translate', claimed a group leadership role. And, with each rediscovery, a buzz of fingers surrounded the spelling mistake I'd made in a handwritten letter in Swedish on the exhibition wall (Figure 24). I enjoyed the lessons these laughing students gave, surely a subtle variation on the 'ignorant schoolmaster' (Rancière, 1981).

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

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

### An unknown ship on the horizon

While Novalis observed, romantically, that "everything at a distance turns to poetry" (Eitner, 1955, 286), Shklovsky reversed that logic in "Art as Device" (1990) his seminal essay inventing the term *estrangement*: the poet turns (applies) distance to everything. He joins Breton in conceiving the poet-artist as not just emotive, but *as a designer* who creates

elaborate infrastructures for perception. Shklovsky likens this designed complexity to a forest interlaced with suggestive paths (Shklovsky, 1970, 302).

The span of these poetic approaches was engaged by the project's primary title, *Ett skepp kommer lastat*. . . [A ship comes loaded. . .], the name of a Swedish children's game in which players take turns guessing the contents of a imaginary distant ship. The game is [always] lost when a player fails to recount this fictional inventory. Adults can play: *an anchor, apples, en anka (a duck), apor (monkeys), an alligator, aspirin, almonds, arithmetics, animals, Aladdin and an analyst*,...

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

We could only guess the contents of those apartments. Had anyone been watching us from behind their doors? In a later, paired workshop, we turned the peepholes around and looked in. Each researcher received a carefully designed *rymdlaboratorium* [space laboratory]—to imagine their own space (or their neighbor's). These laser-cut 6mm poplar plywood boxes (15x15x12cm) presented the viewer with a distorted, fish-eye perspective of a space dominated by an opening to the outside. Further perspectives were at play: the view of peers looking in and their own view while creating the space. These 'laboratories' were given to each participant after the exhibition to emphasize the project as a process of ongoing experimentation and participation as a reciprocal exchange.



Figure 13: Space laboratories.

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

Throughout the project, participants were taken seriously as collaborators with their own voices as part of an urban science and ethic of "cross-referencing all kinds of knowing in the city and treating these sources of knowledge as equivalent, as equal" (Amin, 2013). The final exhibition extended this through its carefully considered design and aesthetic which meticulously displayed our workshop tool-artifacts, treating them *as hybrid artworks*. Design attention in the project was focused on high quality frames—common poetic themes, well-made durable artifacts and the exhibition design—which aimed to amplify participants' voices without distorting their original expressions. With one exception (the addition of photographs—see Figure 30), their work appeared as it had been expressed during the workshops (and they had been informed in advance that their work had artistic as well as research/educational value and would be exhibited). As such, their voices were literally recognizable within the larger [multivocal] whole, and were considered to hold equal value in comprising its form.

At the same time, the project as a 'whole', as an open system of indirect, differential relations, achieved its greatest intensity in the final exhibition which acted as a nexus of indirect communication between all the participants. There, they met each other again—through each other's artwork.

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

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

## **2.3 The Exhibition**

This section intends to acquaint the reader concretely with the exhibition and its design concept, eventual organization and contents. After a series of overview images, including an overall reference plan with interior elevations (Figure 16), the original design concept will be presented as well as how it evolved as a result of collaboration and my desire to amplify the



emerging partly-self-reflexive theme of 'the researcher from outer space'. A virtual walkthrough will follow, taking the reader on one trajectory through the exhibition seen through photographs<sup>50</sup> and the original text of wall captions. For brevity, further commentary will be kept to a minimum and focused on clarification of content and key points of research interest.



Figure 14: I accompanied the Frölunda School fritidshem children to the exhibition vernissage at the Frölunda Cultural Center (walking from their school). They spotted the space laboratories through the exhibition's glazed east wall (see Figure 15). 20 November 2015.



Figure 15: The space laboratories, here visible along the east wall of the Frölunda Cultural Center on the day of the vernissage. 20 November 2015.

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50. Children whom are visible in the photographs have given their permission (as have their parents) for use of these photographs in presentations of the research.

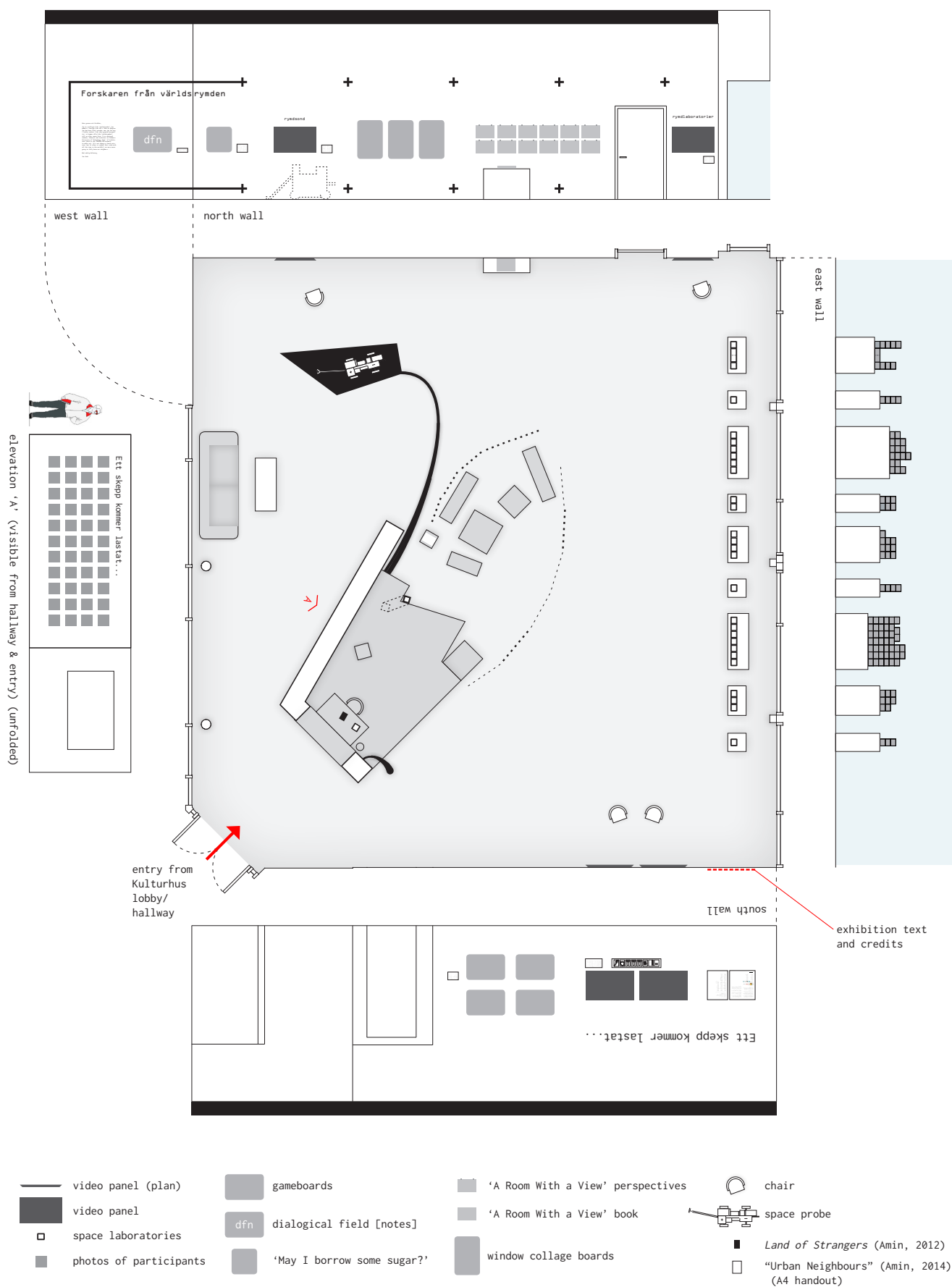


Figure 16: Frölunda exhibition plan and interior elevations.





Figure 17: Exhibition view with the space probe in the foreground (from northwest corner).

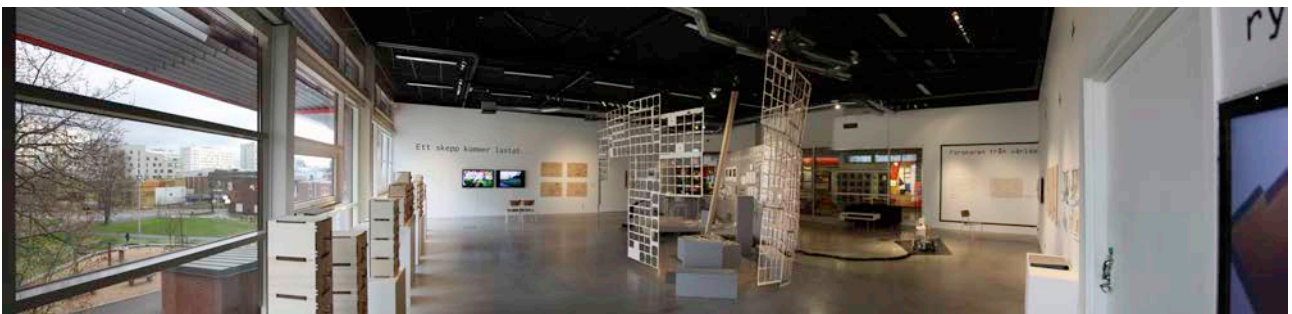


Figure 18: Exhibition view (from northeast corner).



Figure 19: Exhibition view of the participatory sculptural installation (or, the 'ship') (looking southwest at entry). The hanging screens made visible a large part of the process and its scale: they were all of the sheets used to laser-print the pieces used in the space laboratories.



Figure 20: Exhibition view of the participatory sculptural installation (looking northwest).



Figure 21: The fritidshem children were among those attending the exhibition vernissage (beginning at 13:00 in order to match their hours). Britta Andersson and Per Nyman, cultural producers in charge of exhibitions, briefly introduced the exhibition and invited me to say a few words.

### The design concept and its emergent development

In a meeting with Britta, Per and Anne, cultural producers at the Cultural Center, I proposed an initial exhibition design concept which would play two aesthetic logics off each other spatially: a formal, clean and controlled aesthetic and an informal, messy and partly unpredictable aesthetic. Aesthetic control is the agon of many designers' (including my own) struggle with participatory processes, and this was an opportunity to exemplify and test frame-to-content relations in a setting other than that of the workshops. Specifically, the austere, controlled aesthetic would line the perimeter, immaculately displaying all of the work produced in the workshops while the messy, chaotic process aesthetic would be conveyed through a free-form sculptural installation positioned askew in the center of the space (slightly off-center to open up towards the space laboratories lining the glazed east wall)<sup>51</sup>. The idea of this installation was not only to reveal much of the project's inner

51. This was also designed to provide space and orientation for a possible musical performance that might have taken place at the vernissage (a project being organized in parallel by another cultural producer).



workings, but to re-animate its investigative spirit and aesthetic ambition. It aimed not only to display process but to embody it and connect it to the participant's and exhibition visitor's experience. The sensibility and aesthetic I envisioned was very in tune with that of Swiss artist Thomas Hirschhorn, particularly his *Stand-alone* solo exhibition at Arndt & Partner in Berlin (2007) (Hirschhorn, n.d.). Again, the method of collage and its mechanism of separation reappears:

*I want to put together what cannot be put together, I think that's the aim of a collage and it's my mission as an artist.* (Hirschhorn, n.d.)

Returning to the tension between the two aesthetics, this would be intensified by a spatial gesture similar to that involved in our workshop activities—perspective-switching. Upon entry, visitors would immediately be in the position of apparently looking inside an apartment from the exterior. This was a perspective pulled directly from the exterior elevation of the space laboratories, in similar proportions and likewise floating in isolation (Figure 22). This white wall with an opening and a slightly flared side wall would form a partial shell of the formal, controlled aesthetic, partly-encasing its unruly contents and requiring that they could only be fully revealed by the visitor's circulation.

This had all been just a very loosely sketched concept. It more-or-less carried through to the final exhibition, but how it did so is important because it illustrates how my voice was tempered and split, both intentionally and contingently. For many reasons, I had decided to collaborate with Monique Wernham, a local artist I had developed a friendly relationship with over the past year around our mutual interests in dialogue, participation and art. (Wernham, n.d.) (My co-supervisors should be credited for originally introducing us.) I had a general interest in collaborating with artists; a specific interest in expertise related to participatory exhibition design; was uncomfortable with having too much freedom (the full exhibition space as a 'blank slate'); concerned about having potentially too loud a voice in proportion to the other participants; and, with only one full week to construct/install the exhibition, I was worried about time. From Monique's and my own perspective, this was a professional collaboration because I hired her at her full hourly rate for 4-5 full days without asking for a discounted rate. In this respect, I did not want to encourage economically precarious post-Fordist labor.<sup>52</sup> I perceived the collaboration as professional as well, but for me it was also a personal economic sacrifice (drawing from my own money, as no research funding was readily available for collaborators or consultants). I, then, in a sense, became

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52. Besides being aware of the economically precarious position of most artists, I myself have been a freelancer in the design field for a few years in the U.S., so experienced the reality of often acquiescing to requests for discounted rates in order to: follow the lure of potential future work, expand my network or simply to get by economically.

the precarious laborer. Here, again, I was lured by the momentum and novelty of the emerging overall situation and made a strategic decision not to be a purist on this point.

Returning to the exhibition design, Per and Britta should be credited, along with Monique, as design collaborators. Although Per and Britta had given me ultimate design discretion, they all improved the design and shaped it in significant ways. Working on the sculptural installation, particularly, was similar to a design-build process with numerous examples of design decisions taken along the way in response to dialogues between us, the installation-in-progress, available materials and time constraints. The configuration of the raised floor and eventual floating podium blocks, developed in this manner, for instance. When raised theatre platforms became unavailable, we moved to plywood pallets, a more flexible system. The rougher edge-faces of these pallets, the ship theme and long pieces of dimensional timber we encountered among the Cultural Center's large cache of materials got us thinking about introducing a wood 'mast', which we later assembled by nailing together a few of these pieces. The spatial layout of the podium blocks—and even including them at all—was partly determined by what podiums were available and by Monique's concept for a seating area for the participatory component. Deferring to her expertise, I gradually embraced an emerging aesthetic which was evolving away from what I had originally envisioned. This new aesthetic was much more restrained and appropriate to generating an aesthetic dialogue in the space. Already, by its central, rotated orientation and its fragmenting, splaying components, the ensemble created an aesthetic tension with the work displayed along the perimeter. The determined and minimalist positioning seen in theatre set design (part of Monique's background) were applied to architectonic elements (walls, screens, a raised floor, a column or 'mast', floating podiums, a table and chair, framed pictures and other elements) to give the overall installation a sense of movement and vitality. The pre-envisioned messiness was remapped onto a metaphorical reading of the implied interior space of the installation as my 'research laboratory'. Process drawings, documents, texts, quotes, photos, samples, prototypes, etc. were taped and pinned intently to the interior wall and stacked and strewn across the desk and floor, as if the space was still in use.

As *Ett skepp* was engaging with multiple metaphors, and my own approach strongly inspired by and interactive with theory, the experience of the process aesthetic was intended to be as or more cerebral than it was kinetic. A number of Hirschhorn's works [e.g. *Gramsci Monument* (2013), *Bataille Monument* (2002) and *Deleuze Monument* (2000)] collage engagement with philosophers with very hands-on everyday activities, without necessarily alienating the viewer. For Hirschhorn, "real participation is the participation of thinking!", not consumption (Bishop, 2012, 264). In some ways, the exhibition ended up as an 'Amin Monument', with his *Land of Strangers* (2012) positioned at a key point and A4 handouts of his article "Urban Neighbours" (2014) available at another, but the content

went beyond these two elements and included a variety of quotes from theory, philosophy and poetry, scattered in file folders on the floor and on the desk. I foregrounded two quotes by writing them in hand on the inside wall of the installation at different locations:

*Séparés, on est ensemble [Apart, we are together].* (Rancière, 2008, quoting Stéphane Mallarmé, *Le Nénuphar blanc [The White Water Lily]*, 1897)

*Everything at a distance turns to poetry. . .* (Novalis, 1798 in Eitner, 1955)

Including these philosophical and poetic 'strained perceptions' (Shklovsky) was principally done to make my position as a researcher and all its theory-related baggage more transparent, but also to declare that this theory can be connected to everyday strainings to know one's neighbor (and struggles with not knowing), as well as to the project's activities.

The aesthetic shift from what might have been a Hirschhornian all-over tape-frenzy towards precision alignment of discrete parts in relation to each other and to the overall space sharpened the ensemble's multivocal metaphorical reading as well as allowed us to define precise spatial and thematic relations between it and the surrounding artworks. Clearer collage relations were possible versus the more blurred or confused relations that would have resulted from the former cluttered, atmospheric approach. The platform of the space probe curled out with intention to meet a panel showing video from its journeys and the 'researcher from outer space' title text, while the longest arc of laser-cut screens was convexly counterposed against the long line of space laboratories. Each of the following metaphorical readings were much more legible than they would have been with a more frenzied aesthetic: an expedition ship, an apartment, a research laboratory, a spaceship. A brief summary of these readings—aside from the already-described research laboratory reading—makes clear the importance of partial autonomy of form for legibility. The freestanding monolithic white walls and wall opening (proportional to a full-scale window) suggested an apartment. As a floating object with two abstract curved 'sails' made of laser-cut screens (the recycled negative images of all the space laboratory pieces) and a tilting central wood 'mast', the ensemble could also be read as a ship, perhaps an expeditionary ship partially swaying in a storm—or breaking apart (several freestanding podiums of various sizes were positioned outside of the raised floor, but still inside the sails). The participatory dimension of the ensemble clarified this reading with its instructions titled "*expeditionen fortsätter* [The expedition continues]". The raised deck and its oversized tether to the space probe suggested that the latter was being towed along on a black-tape platform or raft. And, lastly, to suggest a [fainter] reading of the ensemble as a spaceship (of the 'researcher[s] from outer space'), the interior walls, floor, podiums, desk and chair were painted a light grey. Several of the laser-cut screens were glued to the wall beforehand, so

when painted with the wall suggested some kind of alien mechanical texture. The black-taped space probe tether and another short but fat 'tail' could be read as some kind of energy or exhaust ductwork. In summary, although subject to some overlap and synonymity, these readings were primarily affected through relations of collage.

### A virtual walkthrough

Unless noted otherwise, all italicized text is taken directly from the English version of the exhibition wall captions (a Swedish version appeared side-by-side).

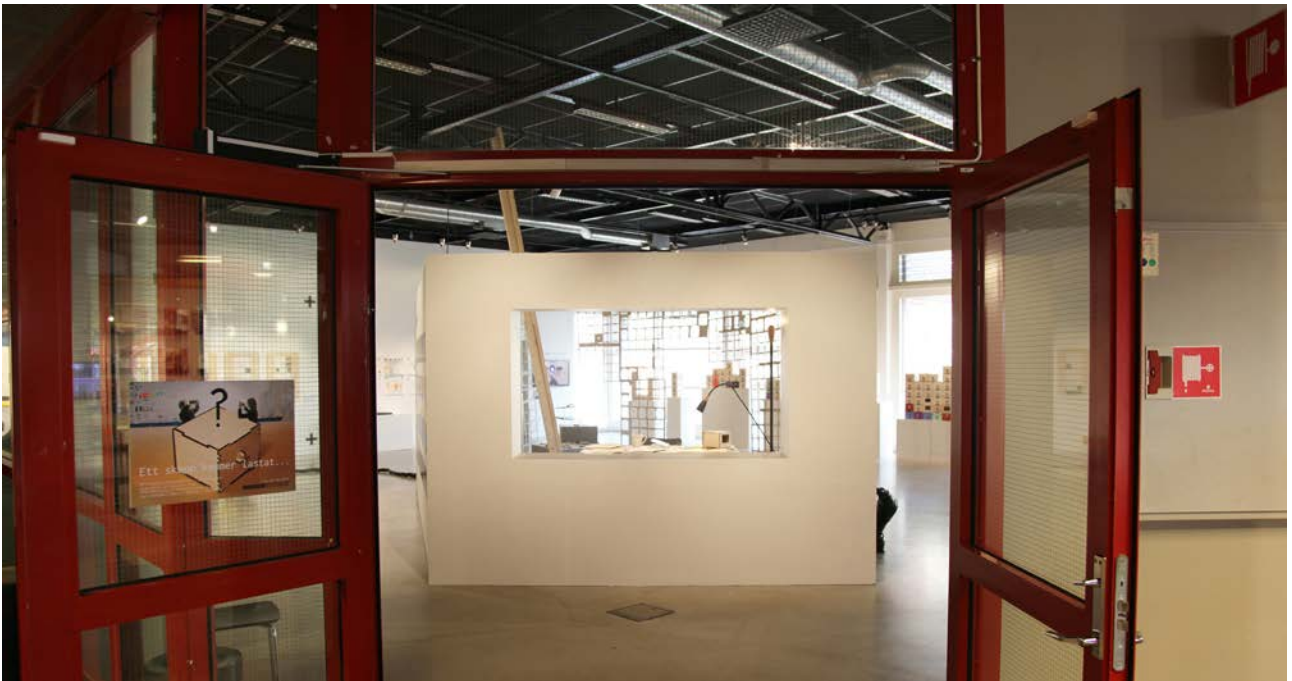


Figure 22: View from exhibition entry (southwest corner).



Figure 23: A randomized grid of selected photos I took during the workshops (an equal number from each of the four groups). The photos were selected to foreground the workshop participants

and processes, and to place the former within a nonhierarchical but exclusive field of their peers. This conceptually separated the four groups as a larger 'core group' defined by their more local and direct involvement (their other project peers, the youth from the three ISGR classes, were not included here as they did not visit Frölunda until the exhibition and I did not work with them directly). The articulation of this free-floating wall was designed in negotiation with the cultural producers, who emphasized the importance of the children seeing themselves (literally) as part of the exhibition. This was confirmed by one of the fritidshem children, who gave this overall written feedback:

*It was good and exciting.*

*It was cool to see yourself on video and pictures inside the exhibition.*

*I would like to do this kind of research.*

Visibility through the glazed west wall was also emphasized as a way of drawing in passers-by. (Also see Figure 16 - Elevation 'A').

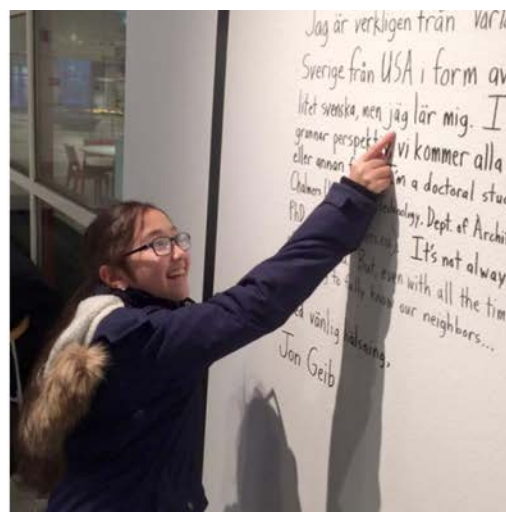


Figure 24: I hastily wrote a letter on the wall to address visitors traveling this direction. This corner was organized thematically by 'the researcher from outer space' (black title text in northwest corner). At right, a Museum Lesson student pointed out my basic spelling mistake. The black tape frame on the wall anchored the theme and held the project's two most self-reflexive components (Figure 25 and Figure 26). Proximity to the space probe and its video reinforced the outer space theme, but the continuation across the wall of the black tape into a crosshair grid opened up for an intermingled transition to other themes (drawings and photographs of existing apartment windows in Frölunda and imaginative visual and textual speculations about the interior spaces and inhabitants behind).

The crosshair grid tracking along the wall referenced a graphic motif I developed for the project early on, based on hand-drawn crosshairs scanned and precisely aligned in a kind of 'quivering grid'. The 'quivering', a result of being hand-drawn, slightly reinforced its openness (described in the caption of Figure 25). On this note, it may be worth comparing with other 'vital grid' aesthetics such as that of the artist Zimoun<sup>53</sup>. This graphic motif was integrated with the presentations, letters to parents and the workshop programs (Figures 5-9), as well as with follow-up material (a feedback questionnaire for all participants and a documentation booklet for those from the fritidshem).

The positioning of the sculptural installation or 'ship' and its formal side face (see Figure 23) opened up a wider sightline, encouraging circulation in this direction as a way of introducing visitors

53. See: Zimoun. (n.d.). *Zimoun*. [Online]. [Accessed 14 November 2016]. Available from: <http://www.zimoun.net>



indirectly (in a way estranging them) to the overall project by way of this secondary theme. The original text of the letter in this corner was half Swedish, half English:

*Dear neighbor and parent [the latter was meant to be 'stranger'],*

*I am truly from 'outer space', having arrived in Sweden from the USA by way of Belgium. I can only manage a little Swedish, but I'm learning. Indeed, from the perspective of our neighbors, we all come from 'outer space', to one degree or another. I'm a doctoral student, urbanist and architect at Chalmers University of Technology, Dept. of Architecture (also in the TRADERS PhD network: tr-aders.eu). It's not always a lonely mission, but it often is rushed. But, even with all the time in the world[s], we were never going to fully know our neighbors. . .*

*Sincerely,*

*Jon Geib*

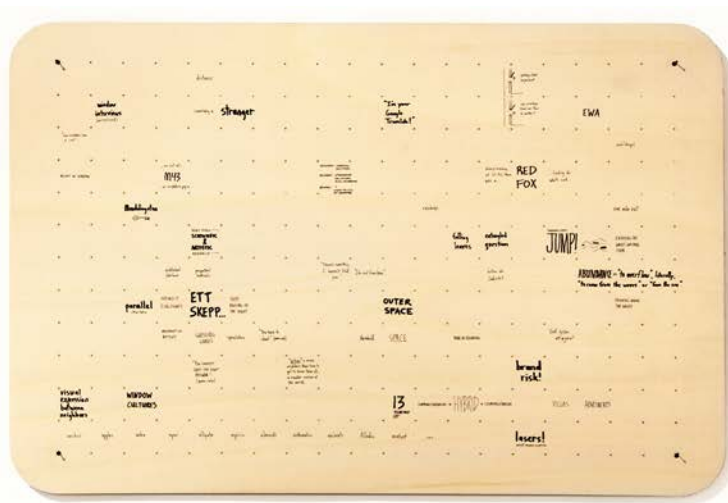


Figure 25: Dialogical field [notes]. *The dialogical field (a crosshair grid) is much more open than the 'cage' of a regular grid, and allows non-hierarchical collage relations between multiple elements. Here, I use it to note a constellation of memorable moments and aspects of the project.*

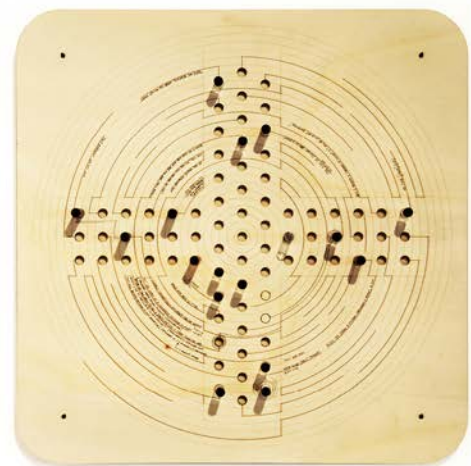
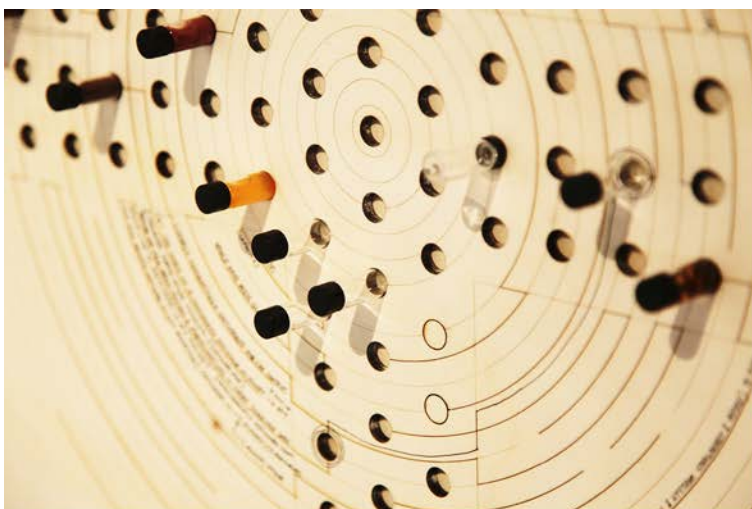


Figure 26: "May I borrow some sugar?" *To counterbalance, perhaps, our intense focus on indirect approaches, I sought more direct contact with neighbors.*

*The original idea was to borrow the classic question between neighbors, "May I borrow some sugar?", to ask, essentially, "May I borrow some art?".*

*For each social interaction, the question and approach would be intentionally different, and this would later be noted with the displayed contents.*

*But, like Ett Skepp..., this became another game that can't be won, that required too much precious time (from both me and from participants), that seemed limitless in its variations. This is not to say it wasn't fun to play the game.*

*I eventually turned the question on myself, gathering samples of everyday materials which have been prominent during this mission.*

This subproject failed in its initial concept that I systematically engage with my own neighbors (again, for lack of time). Instead, a handful of other hidden (or incommunicable) voices from my social network were quite obscurely brought in. It became most useful for expressing the theme of failure/limitation central to *Ett skepp*. The glass vials and pegboard holes were also designed into the space probe and suggested a similar use for 'sample and data collection'. This modularity was compellingly suggestive to certain visitors, who relocated some vials to the space probe (and filled one with a tuft of puppet's hair).

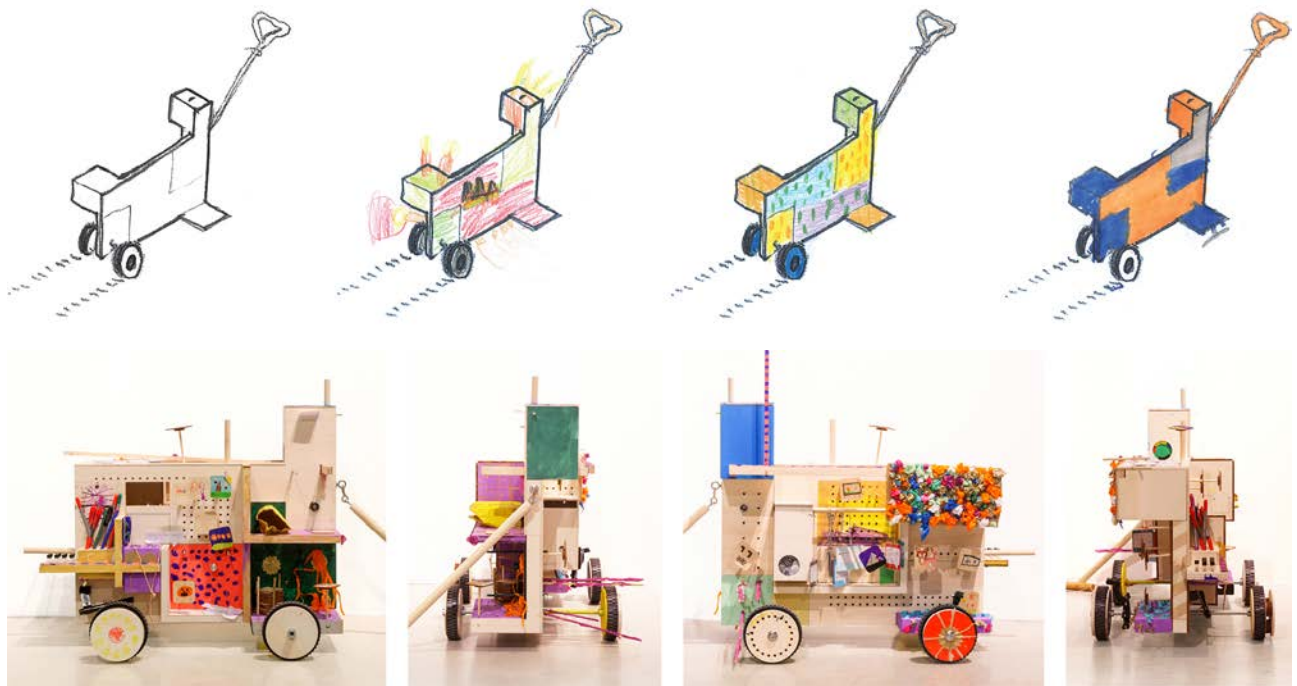


Figure 27: Space probe. *In a four-part process, children from Frölundaskolan's after-school group (teacher Ninni Khosravi) and I designed a 'space probe' together, to be sent on an expedition, not to outer space, but within Frölunda...to find out more about our neighbors.*

*In the first workshop we asked 'what do we want to find out?' and 'how can we collect this data?' from a distance. In small groups, the children drew their ideas overlaid on two-dimensional drawings of a pre-designed 'skeleton'. [three partial examples are shown above]*

*Between the first and the second workshop, I interpreted and added ideas from each group, further articulating the probe's design, while constructing it primarily out of removable parts.*

*In the second workshop, these parts were distributed to each group to further articulate. At the end, the probe slowly emerged as each part was fit into place.*





Figure 28: Space probe. The probe garnered interest and interaction from all ages. At bottom right, during their visit, 10<sup>th</sup> graders from ISGR answered some of the 15 or so questions posed on laminated cards dangling from the middle of the probe (top). The absence of any instructions created ambiguity in interpreting how or if one might engage with it. Pens, thought-bubble notepads, pegboard surfaces, glass vials and holders, the 'ballot-box' language of its forms (containers with slots for deposit), a wagon-like handle and previous appropriation were suggestive enough for many. Two of the three 'ballot-boxes' had a degree of transparency to them: the first and largest (at left) had a large open 'window', allowing a view of accumulating contents (or another method of deposit). (The idea of cutting-in a window came directly from one of the participant groups). The second (at right and above) had a clear lens cut into its lower half, allowing a spherically-distorted view of the contents, which could also be artificially illuminated (a light being the idea of another participant group). The lack of a three-dimensional plinth (only a taped 'platform'), along with the suggestiveness of the probe itself as a perhaps still movable vehicle created uncertainty for many visitors, especially for children who wanted to engage with it. While at the exhibition, I was asked several times (often by parents) if touching or moving it was allowed. Although comprised mainly of laser-cut pieces, and very formally considered in its design and construction, it had certain rickety and informality to it. Each wheel was slightly different, its axels were wobbly and some of its removable pieces were loosely attached and even repeatedly rattled off during its travels (there was time for repair but not re-engineering). This, combined with the clear layering of appropriation—mostly by children—(drawings, writings, paint, glued-on elements, cards attached via dowels) seemed to generate a certain empathetic attraction, especially among younger children who could see that other children had been involved.





Figure 29: Space probe. At right, children from the fritidshem walked the probe around the gallery during each of their two formal visits. The video panel (at left) displayed: video footage from the probe's journeys into public space from on-board cameras; video footage from the two workshops in which the probe was partly conceptualized and articulated; and an image sequence of each group's drawing proposing what the probe should do and how it might be articulated.



Figure 30: Window collage boards. *Part of our Mandolingatan expedition involved observing windows from the ground outside and picking one to draw.*

*When each group (from Frölundaskolan and Önnaredsskolan) returned to the Kulturhus, all the windows were collaged into these boards.*

*Later, the empty spots were filled with photographs of windows recently taken throughout Frölunda.*

I had taken these photographs for the ISGR assignment (see Figure 31 and Figure 32), where they functioned as a starting point which was eminently local yet disconnected. Some of these photographs also appear on the 'ship'. Multiple such 'circuits' were created that circulated artifactual elements between certain subprojects or exhibition components.



Figure 31: 'A Room With a View'.

There are two people who live in this artwork. A man and his roommate. The room is split in two as it reflects upon the characters feelings. On one side we see vivid colours, while on the other, it's black and white and even depressing. The roommate is lively and happy while the man has multiple phobias and anxieties. The man has built a city on his side of the room as he does not want to go out and the floating eyeball represents his fear of being looked at and judged. The roommate is out often and has friends over, but the man only sees them as destructive. Finally, the roof is how they act in front of each other and they don't show their true selves.



Figure 32: 'A Room With a View'. From inside the book (a wall caption was not provided but in retrospect should have been): *A surrealist exercise in one point perspective by: MYP 9, teacher [lärare]: Lydia Regalado*

About 50 students from two 9<sup>th</sup> grade ISGR art classes participated via this assignment. Using the photographs mentioned in Figure 30, they were to imagine an interior, inspired by Surrealism, that would correspond minimally to its exterior view (the window's proportion and elements visible in its threshold space) and render it using perspective technique. They also wrote a text narrating a story about the space and its inhabitant[s]. Before their teacher gave them this assignment I presented the overall project and gave them the collection of photographs to choose from. All of the students' work, including each reference photograph, was presented in an oversized A3 book and 12 perspectives were selected by the teacher for wall display.



Figure 33: A selection of reference photographs used in 'A Room With a View'.





Figure 34: Space laboratories (or 'boxes') [video panel with headphones]. *During our experience at Mandolingatan, our neighbors may have been looking at us through their door viewers. By turning the door viewer around we can experiment with an imagined interior space and window view (from both inside and outside).*

*Children and youth of a variety of ages and time commitments participated in workshops and assignments involving these artifacts (and three more on 16, 17 and 18 November).*

*By providing solid construction of quality materials and removable parts, the possibility of use beyond the workshop setting is afforded. After the exhibition, each artifact is returned to the participant.*

*Please respect this and the fragility of the artifacts.*

The video panel presented: footage documenting the workshop process of the fritidshem group; still and video documentation of the 10<sup>th</sup> graders' boxes, edited to coordinate with the voiceovers they had recorded or scripted for me (for examples see Figure 54, Figure 55 and Figure 56); and still and video documentation of some of the fritidshem children's boxes.



Figure 35: Space laboratories. In all there were 107 boxes, with 106 exhibited—as one student requested that his box not be displayed. For a diagram of the incremental growth of their display, see Figure 53. The three Museum Lesson classes, each with about 20-25 students, changed the display significantly over three days (16-18 November) in the exhibition's first week.



Figure 36: Space laboratories. One of the Mandolingatan apartment blocks is visible beyond, at left. In two instances, individuals paired up to form a 'double box'. One box was turned upside down. Another blocked the through-view by introducing an interior wall. A group of six placed their boxes together in a standalone tower (along with a figure rappelling by a string) that was later filled in by other classes (this can be read in Figure 35 as the column, third from left, of four boxes capped by two offset boxes). A few taped or glued shut the removable sides.



Figure 37: Space laboratories.



Figure 38: Space laboratories. All but a handful of participants followed my lead in orienting their boxes toward the glazed east wall. To brighten the interior views in the dim winter light, we installed lights which could be moved within a limited range. This also illuminated the boxes' back



faces, unintentionally creating an effect through the peephole view which, especially in the late afternoon and evening, reflected the rear 'façade' of the boxes' configuration back to the viewer as if it was an building across the way.



Figure 39: Space laboratories. It is not the intention of this research to systematically analyze all the content produced during the workshops. That said, the variety in expression should be noted. Although, from my viewpoint, most expressions were generally benign, some were especially imaginative such as the interior above (second from the right) which includes a 'meta' mini-version of the box's cardstock insert. A few students from Önnared School expressed preconceptions based on stories they had heard from their friends about frequent gunshots in Frölunda (the two at left).

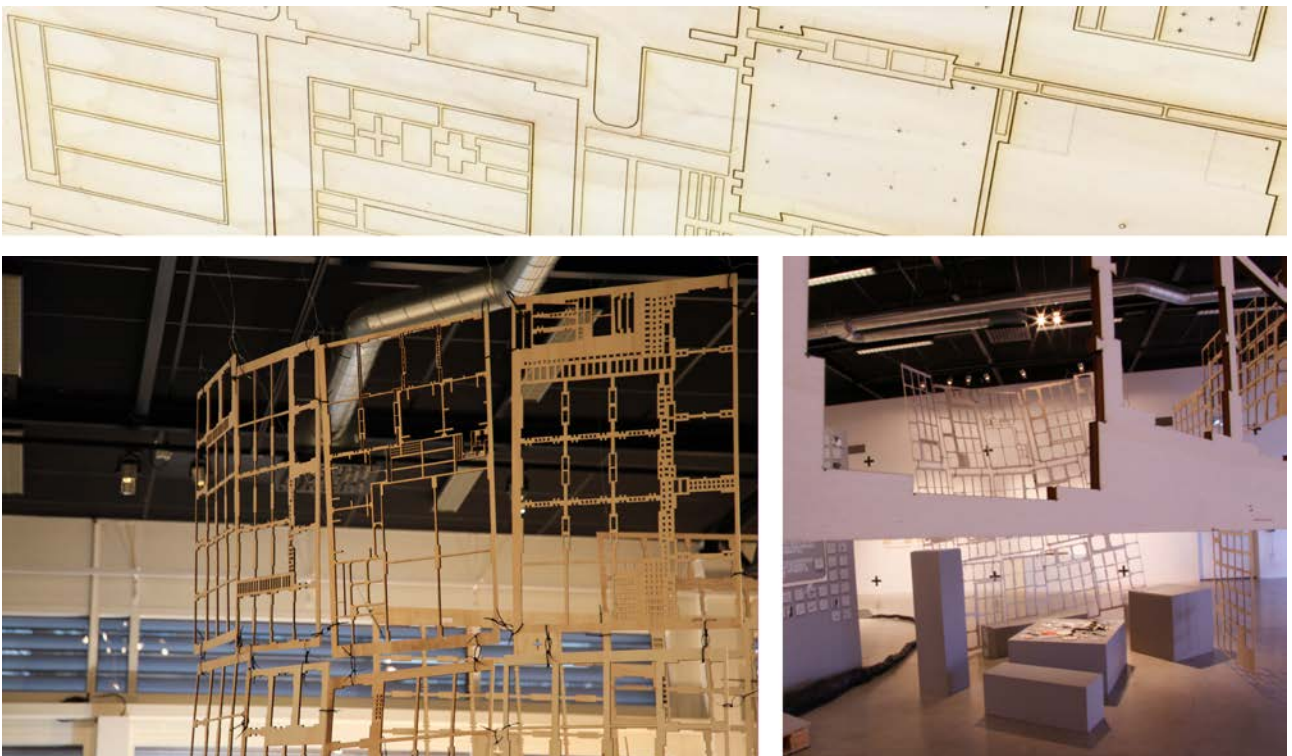


Figure 40: Hanging screens or 'sails' of the 'ship'. These screens expressed a large part of the extensive box-making process as they were all the sheets used to laser-cut the pieces (at top, an example). They, for the most part, curved convexly, counterposed against the row of space laboratories as their negative figure.



Figure 41: Expeditions. *Our first approach to researching 'neighbors' was common to both children from Frölundaskolan (one class) and Önnaredsskolan (three classes), who participated in workshops on four different dates.*

*We went on an expedition (also discovery trek or scavenger hunt) through common hallway spaces in the residential buildings of Mandolingatan, and afterwards, from the ground, made a visual survey of its windows.*

*We were looking for clues about how neighbors express themselves indirectly: a welcome sign, picture or decoration hung on a door, a vase of flowers or a sculpture placed on a windowsill, for instance. Of course we only covered a small fraction of the terrain, reminding us that, indeed, there is more on that ship than we can possibly discover.*

*Inevitably, we also experienced a variety of memorable direct interactions with neighbors: often friendly, intriguing, vivid and/or tense. We still recall the unique sights, sounds and smells and there's no doubt that our neighbors heard us at times. The researcher always effects what is being investigated, in one way or another.*

*Many of the visiting children from Önnaredsskolan experienced not only an apartment building for the first time, but also a fantastic trampoline landscape in the park beside the Kulturhus.*

*Between each workshop, small adjustments were made by the pedagogues to the "field notes" guide which each child took on the expedition. The latest iteration is represented here on the left.*



Figure 42: Expeditions. *Two synchronized video panels and display of a blank 'field notes' guide (Figure 43). The video panels juxtaposed similar workshop activities by different groups in a shifting collage, with groups taking turns on each panel and the audio track shifting back and forth as well.*

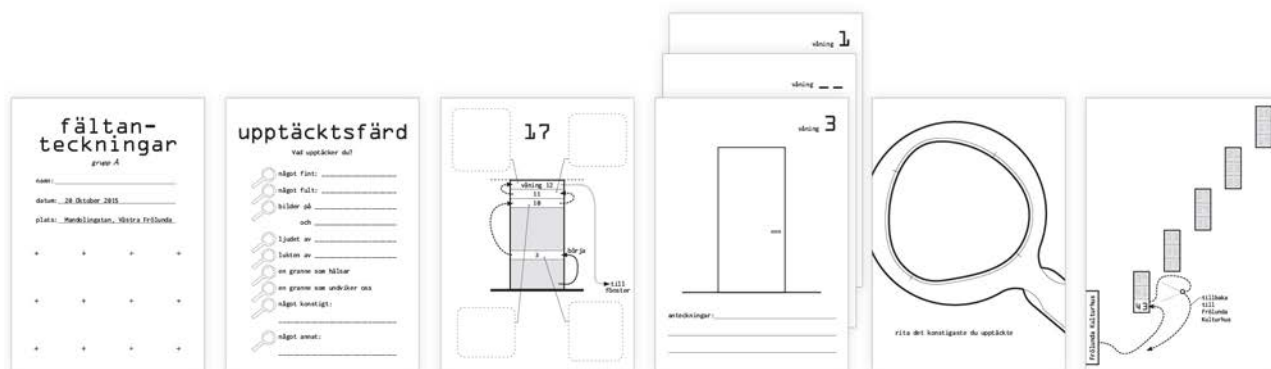


Figure 43: Expedition 'field notes' guide. A blank example of each page of the A5-sized guides used during the tours was installed below the video screens.



Figure 44: Exhibition text and attribution. *Ett skepp kommer lastat. . .* [A ship comes loaded. . .] was clearly the primary title and theme, having the largest wall text and a generous surrounding space, although *Forskaren från världsrymden* [The researcher from outer space] (Figure 25) and *Vem är din granne?* [Who is your neighbor?] (Figure 50) were secondary titles. To locate the synchronized video panels here was crucial to emphasize that the expedition was the key starting point for most of the groups. A counterclockwise circulation trajectory would have led visitors here first (after they passed the gameboards). What follows is the English version<sup>54</sup> of the exhibition text and attribution:

*Children from Frölundaskolan, together with a researcher 'from outer space', have been exploring what it means to be 'neighbors'. In parallel, their other 'neighbors' from Önnaredsskolan and The International School of the Gothenburg Region (ISGR) were invited to embark on similar expeditions. We experimented with a constellation of indirect methods, focusing on visual expression between neighbors.*

*The Swedish children's game, Ett skepp kommer lastat. . . [A ship comes loaded. . .] played a metaphorical role, building curiosity for getting to know our neighbors better, but also teaching us empathy and respect for what we cannot know: the limits of discovery, the "stranger" ...the abundance, depth and richness of human experience.*

54. A number of Swedish words remained even in the English version, which indicates both the hastiness of my work and a creeping of two languages into each other (Swedish into English more than vice-versa).



*Now, the metaphorical ship[s] have come in and docked for an exhibition at the Frölunda Kulturhus gallery, although at least one among them continues to curiously gather data, mistaking the shiny floor for an uncharted sea. . .*

*The project is a unique cross-institutional, multi-disciplinary collaboration between Chalmers Tekniska Högskola Institutionen för Arkitektur, Frölunda Kulturhus, Göteborgs stad Kulturförvaltning, Frölundaskolan, Önneredsskolan, The International School of the Gothenburg Region (ISGR) and the EU-financed research project TRADERS (training art and design researchers in participation in/for public space).*

Collaborating Partners: [logos displayed] Chalmers University of Technology, Göteborg Stad Kulturförvaltning [Gothenburg Cultural Department], Frölunda Kulturhus, TRADERS

Special thanks to: [logos displayed] Frölundaskolan, Önneredsskolan, ISGR, Musei-Lektioner [Museum Lessons], right of window, Ms. Regalado, Bostads AB Poseidon, and:

[listed in two columns] Abraham, Allan Dale, Anna-Karin Ingelström, Anne Svanholm, Arash Afkari, Borghild Håkansson, Britta Andersson, Catharina Dyrssen, Charlotte Wangson, Debbie Anderson, Ewa, Fredrik Hedvin, Henry Kateregga, Jannicke Fyhr, Joachim Harrysson, Katarina Hansson, Lars Jonsson, Lydia Regalado, Miriam, Monique Wernhamn, Per Nyman, Peter Lindblom, Ninni Khosravi, Susan Landin, Tabita Nilsson, Tony Andersson, Torbjörn Alström, Vici Hofbauer, Ylva Mühlenbock, Yuliya Sotnyk Larsson, all other support teachers, and many more...

Participating classes:

Frölundaskolan - lärare [teacher] Ninni Khosravi [Fritidshem, 7-10 år]  
Önneredsskolan - 5A - lärare Charlotte Wangson [Musei-Lektioner Stadens Rum]  
Önneredsskolan - 5C - lärare Fredrik Hedvin [Musei-Lektioner Stadens Rum]  
Önneredsskolan - 3A - lärare Yuliya Larsson [Musei-Lektioner Stadens Rum]  
ISGR - MYP 10 - lärare Lydia Regalado [Art class]  
ISGR - MYP 9 - lärare Lydia Regalado [Art class]  
Art lessons - lärare Lydia Regalado

Participating students/researchers/artists:

[listed in five columns] Adam Lundin, Agnes Hagby, Ahmed Jobsen, Ajna Skangic, Albin Fahlman, Alex Dearman, Alexander Norrbrink, Alexander Rembisz, Alexander Sanderson, Alfons Sellin, Algot Ahlström, Alice Aurell, Alice Bråthen, Alice von Brömssen, Alicia Halldin, Alicia Tenggren, Alina, Alva Ekman, Alva Kjellberg, Amelie Lewenhaupt, Ameya Deshpande, Ananya Joshi, Angelika, Anja Nader, Anne Beckers, Anne Svanholm, Anton Berg, Antonia Barenkob, Arvid Bertilsson, Axel Baltzersen, Axel Hermansson, Axel Vemdal, Caroline Egeskov, Chanell Flores Atroozmehr, Chevy Johnsson Blomqvist, Christian Oguz, Cornelia Deniz, Cornelia Teghult, David Hepoaho, Diana Golbarg, Eilia Sotodeh, Ella Jonasson, Elsa Olsson, Elvina Rexhaj, Emil Gimring, Emilia Kurtis, Emma Malmberg, Emma Ward, Emran Roashan, Eric Olander, Erik Palmér, Erik Zettergren, Ester Wennerberg, Ethan Lin, Farhang Said, Felix Lindfors, Filip Leidewall, Frida Lundgren, Gabriel Budak, Gabriel Gomez, Gaël De Coninck, Gaia Simonetti, Guo Cong, Gustaf Malo, Hampus Bidhagen Kvistberg, Hampus Malm Lindblom, Hugo Patriksson, Ian Karlsson, Ida, Ida Funevik Andersson, Ida Ringsberg, Ida Sääf, Indah Nurbaiti, Inno Rege, Isabella Donner, Isak Anderberg, Isak Tenggren, Ismail Ali, Isra Ali, Ivan Ivanik, Jakob Almgren, James Greasley, James Harte, Janna Stangenfjord, Jean-Baptiste Mellinand, Jeremy Galland, Jimmy, Johan Martinsson, Jon Geib, Jonathan Aslan, Jonathan Bylund, Josef Elgohary, Josefine Klingberg, Julia Lind, Julia Silveira, Kaho Sato, Kairi Pullerits, Kaoru Fesenko, Klara Gustafsson, Lamar, Leonora Ernst, Linda Mohammad, Linnea Berg, Linus Gunnarsson Andersson, Lovisa Johansson, Lucy Heckemann, Ludvig Adler, Ludvig Magnander, Ludwig Seebass, Lukas Jonsson, Lukas Larsson, Lukas Lindström, Magda Sloninska, Manasi Hardikar, Marcus Gourlaouen, Marcus Johansson, Marcus Norrbrink, Maria



Eiliasson, Martin Jarlbäck, Max Zayashnikov, Medha Agrawal, Meja Raimer, Mia, Mithra Zaeri, Noa Saastamoinen, Noel Aydin, Nora Gimring, Nora Rosendahl, Nora Sandenvik, Oliver Ahlström, Orie Grime, Oscar Teiffel, Paul Schindler, Peter Landes, Philip Boustedt, Popa Markos, René Mouawad, Sakshi Mahindrakar, Samuel Ibrahim, Samuel Monachon, Sara Ashtekar, Sara VitalDurand, Saskia Muench, Sebastian Fernström, Sebastian Maureira, Stella Postleb, Tanay Dashottar, Thea Johansson, Theodore Rees, Tilda Sjö, Tindra Antonsson, Tova Persson, Tyra Dahlqvist, Vanessa Johansson, Vici Hofbauer, Viktor Lind, Viktoria Petrova Vasali, Vilhelm Franzén, Vilma El-Aaraj, Wendy Wang, William Hansson Jörgensen, William Hultén, Wilma Zackariasson, Zaira Bernhardsson, Zaki



Figure 45: Gameboards (or 'gameboards with no rules'). *New variations on Ett Skepp... were played using these "gameboards" during workshops with children from Frölundaskolan and Önnaredsskolan. (The fourth game will be played on 17 November)*

*The open framework of the narrative themes (neighbors and their windows) and of the board itself encourages players to collectively determine the specific rules of gameplay.*

*One group agreed on five "Secret Rules" \*:*

- *The one that finds all the windows first.*
- *You cannot guess the right answer.*
- *Find the ones that fit together.*
- *You have to cheat.*
- *One card at a time.*

*\*Translated from Swedish by my architect-pedagogue colleague, Vici Hofbauer, who worked with this group.*

The cards of the lower right gameboard have a different visual aesthetic because circumstances prevented this Museum Lesson group from doing this activity during their first workshop. Instead, their teacher had them articulate the cards during classroom time (with graphite and colored pencils) and place them during their second workshop at the Cultural Center on 17 November. In the meantime, the modularity of this empty board and loose cards (scattered about on the 'ship') led to another game of *Ett skepp* being played by unknown exhibition visitors (the last image of Appendix 9.3 shows the result). I had to remove these cards so the Museum Lesson group could place theirs. Here I regretted not having followed through with making a fifth board for exhibition visitors, which might have been placed on a table somewhere on or around the 'ship'.



Figure 46: Selected cards from the gameboards. At left, an apparently layered view looking out of a window at a cat in the neighbor's window. At middle, the cat referred to in the opening of Section 2.2. At right, a lady we encountered on the top floor (also placed in the top row of a gameboard) during one of our tours of the apartment blocks. She yelled at us for being so loud in the hall outside her door. Eventually we reconciled after she found out from us that the landlord (Bostads Posiedon AB) had given us permission. As each participant received two cards, their 'voice' in this framework was split and separated, giving the potential for two different expressions.



Figure 47: The expedition ship-apartment-research laboratory-spaceship (or, the 'ship').



Figure 48: The 'ship'.





Figure 49: The research laboratory-apartment.



Figure 50: The research laboratory-apartment-ship asked "Vem är din granne? [Who is your neighbor?]" which had become the title of the Museum Lessons and overall prompt for the participatory component (next two figures). The cards at right were placed by exhibition visitors, again partly owing to the modularity of the designed artifacts and the informal aesthetic here.



Figure 51: The expedition ship, showing suggested instructions for engaging with the cards. See Appendix 9.6 for the three prompts given and for the results.



Figure 52: The 'ship' and its explicitly participatory component.

## 2.4 Reconfiguring Voices

Early on, the project dramatically expanded in scope from a single participant group to eight groups (and their associated institutions). Relations between 'voices' now assumed an additional scale beyond individual voices, taking the form of indirect *inter-group relations*. New inter-institutional (or inter-collaborator) relations were also now in play and likewise evolved throughout the project. The project remains a hazy way to think about and wander through the various themes invoked along the way, but, sharpening focus reveals that the key critical and strategic logic in the project deals with mechanisms of *separation*: investigating *indirect* rather than face-to-face communication between 'neighbors' and thus emphasizing a more socially-separated concept of being a neighbor; separating myself and the participants from our object of study (neighbors) by using distanced methods (rather than face-to-face methods); spatiotemporally separating the groups rather than trying to merge them; aesthetically separating my voice from the voices of the participants in our hybrid artworks; and separating the two aesthetics of the exhibition.

But, critically, a logic of separation also tends to automatically imply and summon an instinctive countermovement to connect or bridge, as explicated in sociologist Georg Simmel's essay "Bridge and Door" (1909). This simultaneity of and oscillation between movements of convergence and divergence is at the heart of theory on dialogue and multivocality (Hermans and Hermans-Konopka 2010; Evans, 2008; Holquist, 2002; Mendelson, 2002; Bakhtin, 1981; Shklovsky, 1970; and others) and will be developed further in future research. In this sense, foregrounding 'separation' in the case study made more sensible other kinds of connections: through artifacts, through common participation

in a larger project and through the exhibition. It also functioned to make more potent the outliers, the moments where this system of indirectness, distance and separation inevitably ruptured and *direct* face-to-face encounters took place. These moments now stand out in memory: the 'cat head' incident—the moment during one of the apartment block tours when an inhabitant opens her door<sup>55</sup>; the difficult moment when a lady on the top floor yelled at us about the noise we were making<sup>56</sup>; a brief encounter occurring just as we were beginning a tour, when an elderly inhabitant smiled his way through our crowd of chattering schoolchildren so he could exit; and, most exceptionally, an exchange of letters between myself and one of the inhabitants<sup>57</sup> which led to our informal meeting and tour of the exhibition-under-construction, and later followed by this inhabitant being the first visitor to the exhibition opening, reading my handwritten wall letter and understanding exactly the spirit of the project as captured in the letter's last line (see Figure 24).

### A reconfigured space of representation

The chance to give the project a full exhibition in the main exhibition hall of the Cultural Center was another drastic shift in the project's dynamics. Although my original proposal suggested a culminating gallery exhibit, since I was an invited guest I was under no expectation or thought of anything more than something modestly scaled. My approach at the time was quite nearsighted or step-by-step, open to the project's emergent evolution. The novelty of the whole thing pulled my instinctive energies to weak points such as practice—my inexperience with conducting workshops, let alone workshops with children. And, my research interest at the time was perhaps too focused on the process. Only now can I feel how important some kind of final shared result was for the participants (some examples will appear in the next section). In the early stages, the 'the ship'/space probe was the artifactual centerpiece, so the cultural producers had suggested it be featured in a small hallway exhibit and we proceeded with this as our mutual expectation. Then, as a combined

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55. As described in the opening of Geib, J. (2017). *Designing Multivocality . . . from Outer Space*. See Section 2.2. The cat in question was later illustrated by one of the children on a gameboard card and annotated with information gathered during the incident: it was 13 years old. See Figure 46, at middle.

56. Also illustrated on a card—placed in one of the gameboard's top rows—which shows a frowning woman with a head colored deep red. See Figure 46, at right.

57. In order to design the various workshop tour routes (7-8 in all, as most classes split into two groups of 10-15 students), I had made an exhaustive visual survey of all of the hallways of each of the five Mandoligatan buildings (noting all signs of inhabitants' expressions on and around doors and in the hallways), to make sure each route included something to see on at least half of the floors. This partly informed the selection of who I sent letters to. These carefully designed letters with custom envelopes included a description of the project and upcoming workshops that inhabitants might encounter or decide to participate in, along with a notice about the date of the final exhibition and a suggestion that they might participate by articulating the two blank 'cards' included (the size of which matched the gameboard cards). I sent 60 of these letters to a mixed, partly random selection of inhabitants, with more than half going to those who I had noted had already exhibited something outside their door. The others were chosen to involve a mix of young, old and families with children. See Appendix 9.2.

result of the project's expansion in scope (both organizationally and artifactually) and a vacancy in the Cultural Center's exhibition calendar—and perhaps partly in response to the emerging aesthetic qualities of the artifactual components (which I shared throughout the process, including a space laboratory prototype)—, the cultural producers generously offered the project a full exhibition. This expansion of the space of representation (from about 20 square meters to about 180) and its prestige (as the primary exhibition space in the Cultural Center) was a key turn in the project. The cultural producers should be credited mainly for affecting such a significant reconfiguration of the participants' voices (including my own)—relocating them from what would have been a small secondary display for hallway passers-by to a center stage with strong capacities for amplification (a press release, a feature in the Cultural Center program brochure and a vernissage). This new scale of space, this extra breathing room, also partly led to the emergence of the gameboards and window tower boards as, suddenly, *all* artifacts (not just a number limited by the space) took on a multiple-significance as workshop tools, artworks and as artworks that could be displayed.

### Reflections on ethics and power in the exhibition design

With this reconfigured spatial situation, I could reinforce the ethic of reciprocity towards participants that I had noted earlier in the *Hemma på vår gata* project, which had also culminated in a serious, highly visible exhibition which integrated participant visits as activities in the project. I extended this ethic to include giving the space laboratories back to the participants after the exhibition. This was also inspired by my TRADERS ESR colleague Annelies Vaneycken, who believes in 'giving back' to participants and whose artistic projects frequently employ her background in the aesthetics of graphic design to add value to the artifact[s] she makes for (and with) participants. (Vaneycken, n.d.) Further, a transdisciplinary perspective—which I subscribe to in part—contends that knowledge and content produced by 'non-experts' is of equal value to the research being conducted.<sup>58</sup> Conceiving participants as fellow collaborators on these equal planes of value, the final exhibition and the space laboratories could be seen as shared productions to collectively take pride in (rather than as gifts). I observed great excitement and sensed interest and pride amongst the participating classes when they first saw the exhibition. This was especially the case for the fritidshem group, as they had been the most involved and the most local. Considering this, we coordinated the vernissage's start time so that they could attend and feel recognized for their role (Figure 21). Upon entering the exhibition for the first time at the vernissage, the children immediately ran to the space laboratories (that they had seen

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58. Also integrated in my thinking is alignment with Rancière's theory of the aesthetic, in which a fundamental freedom of subjectivity, along with the "equality of all subjects" justifies the artist in claiming anything as the subject/content of a work of art (Rancière, 2010, 15-16). This is also discussed in Chapter 4.

first from the exterior, see Figure 14), quickly taking in several views and calling their peers to look in particular boxes. It appeared that 106 boxes soon became overwhelming, so many children peeled off to see other exhibited works, especially the video panels. The space probe's video was especially exciting to them because, although they knew I was going to walk it around in public and ask people the questions they had written, it seemed they were not expecting video documentation of this. Amid the excitement, a support teacher came to me and said [paraphrasing] "this is so good for them". Many children brought their parents outside of the programmed visits, and I ran into several families coming from or going to the exhibition or other facilities in the Cultural Center.

When it came to attributing the work, Anne and I decided there would only be an overall group attribution (my and the other pedagogues' names were listed alphabetically among all the other participants) rather than attributions attached to each individual or group of artworks. This was a separation designed to avoid stigmatizing particular age groups or classes—a visitor could not judge groups based on aesthetic quality, skill, age or their school's location. By removing attributions connected to specific artworks, the participants had to be seen by exhibition visitors in a different way, more as collaborators in an overall collective project and less as individuals with varying skill levels. As multivocality requires both convergence (singularity) and divergence (plurality) of voices, here was a rewiring of 'voices' (identity characteristics or 'traits', to use Appadurai's term) into a singularity (the overall group attribution signaled the project as a single collective collaboration rather than a collection of individual works).

But, despite—and because of—aiming to approximate Amin's democratic ethic of 'urban science' by attempting, on a philosophical level, to value all of the participants' voices equally, numerous power dynamics were preexisting or set into motion by the exhibition. Although the overall group attribution made clear that the work was produced collaboratively, it had been far from—and had not intended to be—an evenly-balanced collaboration (if there is such a thing), as it was I who: spearheaded the project; set the artifactual/aesthetic frames; and had an orchestrating, steering and curatorial role (I acted both 'outside' and 'inside' of the participation as organizer, designer, researcher and participant). But, because there was *only* an overall group attribution, visitors could not easily discern certain power relations such as who the pedagogues were, where they came from and how they were supported (and now I regret not giving Vici and Anne more of a voice for their close involvement, although they were also listed in the 'special thanks to' section of the credits). That this was my PhD research case study could have been spelled out more transparently in the main text. This fact was somewhat hidden as it could only be understood by the exhibition visitor putting together readings of both the main exhibition text (Figure 44) and the handwritten wall letter (Figure 17, at right, and Figure 24). It was

also difficult for a visitor to understand that the fritidshem had more of a voice in the exhibition by virtue of being more closely and more frequently involved. On the other hand, most of these obscured power relations resurface for 'secondary audiences' (Bishop, 2012) (and even some original participants<sup>59</sup>), through discussions and presentations of the project at conferences and now in this thesis.

The display of the space laboratories (see Figure 36 and Figure 53) exemplifies its own case of obscurement of power relations. It also shows how each group was empowered differently through indirect relations with one another and by parameters I set as the exhibition designer. Although I wanted the participants to determine where their boxes would be displayed, I also wanted to give preference to the fritidshem children in order to reinforce their closer connection to the project. As the Cultural Center was their 'home territory', I thought it especially important that they have the 'first say', and thereby set an initial direction for the growth of the display. For this part of the exhibition design, I gave up much design control, though in an episodic way (itself highly controlled) and within certain parameters (i.e. the boxes had to be arranged along and parallel to the glazed east wall and on the available podiums<sup>60</sup>). The Cultural Center and I arranged an extra meeting with the fritidshem so they could bring their space laboratories<sup>61</sup> to the actual exhibition space and decide where they should be displayed (and have them stored until the exhibition). For the latter to happen, we had to momentarily intrude on the existing exhibition while the children arranged and oriented their boxes. During this process, it appeared that friends stuck together but welcomed adjacent additions, and, after ten minutes or so, all boxes (of the children present that day) were adjoined in four groups of three and one group of four. I carefully documented and—with some exceptions detailed below—later adhered to this precise configuration, which influenced the podium layout. To put myself and other groups in dialogue with the display, and the fritidshem boxes in the position of having 'new neighbors', I joined two of their box-groups into a wider block of six, and inserted two narrow podiums between three other box-groups. Before the exhibition opened, I determined the placement of the boxes from: the fritidshem children who had been absent; the tenth grade ISGR students; and two art lesson students (time constraints combined with lack of planning prevented these three groups from visiting). My compositional aim was an overall dynamic balance that could invite a somewhat organic growth from the remaining three participant groups. I dispersed the boxes somewhat evenly, but also clustered some.

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59. Some power relations, which were not self-evident, were more-or-less clear to the participants themselves during the project, but others have been clarified since through follow-up material (e.g. 25 of 31 of the fritidshem participants now have a booklet including the diagrams shown in Figure 4 and Figure 53).

60. My first thought was a combination of suspended and stacked boxes, but, it quickly became obvious this was visually and logistically too fussy.

61. It was a quite a procession as we walked together from their school to the Cultural Center, each child carefully carrying their box, and most dressed up for Halloween.



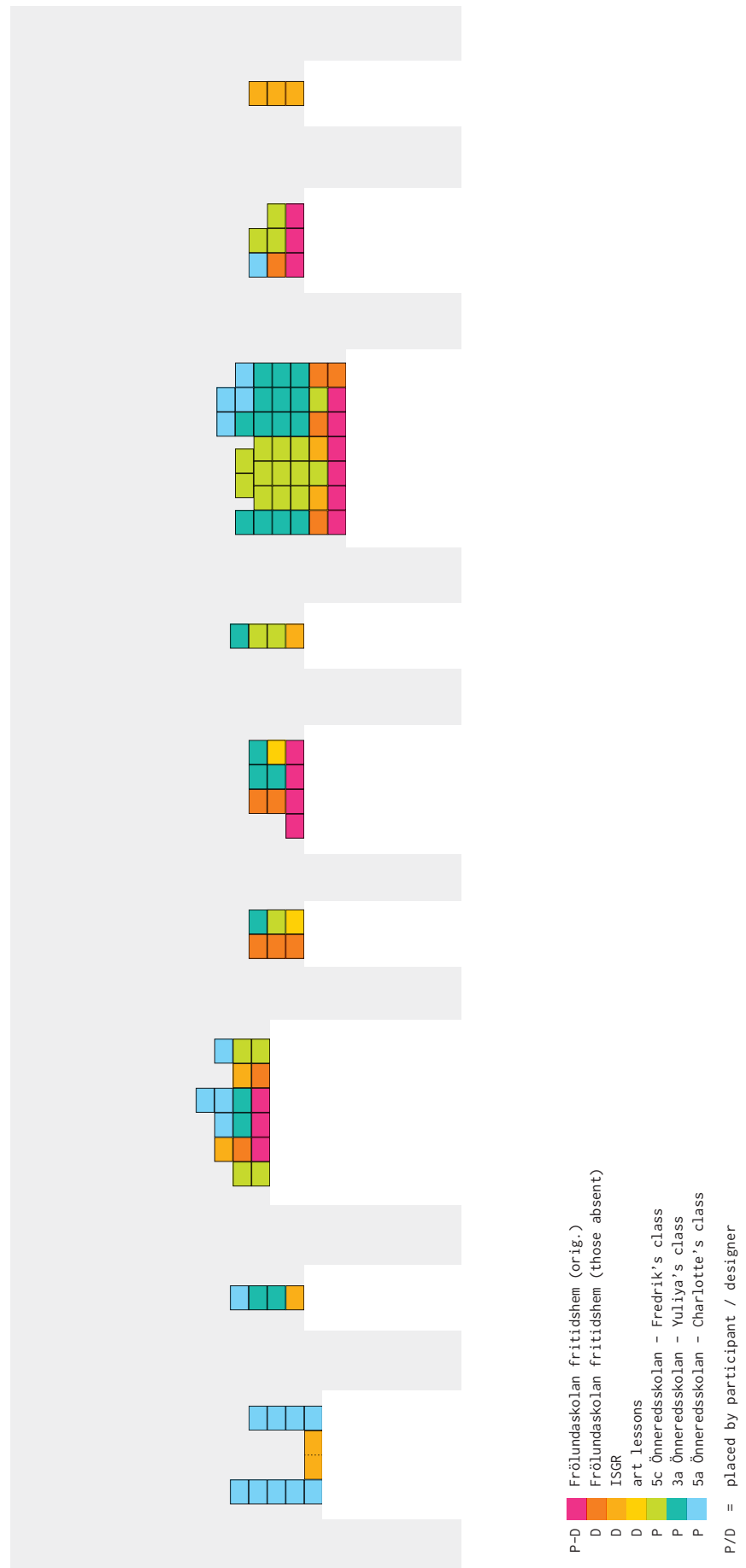


Figure 53: Growth diagram (display of space laboratories)

About a week into the exhibition, the display grew substantially in size over three consecutive days as, at the close of each workshop, each of the three Önnared School classes added their boxes in reply to the current configuration.<sup>62</sup> The interaction of the existing display configuration with individual participants newly contributing their boxes amid the various group dynamics and incidentals of the moment was fascinating to witness. Exhibition visitors, however, lacked a description or diagram such as Figure 53 indicating each group's (and my own) relative position and influence—or 'voice'—in the display's growth process. The accumulating layers or 'voices' were not articulated and thus inaudible, except for each group 'hearing their own voices' as they placed their boxes. This could perhaps be termed a 'multivocality of limited vision' or a 'bokeh multivocality'<sup>63</sup>, in which multiple voices are known to coexist within a larger collectivity, but have a blurred quality because only one voice is articulated (or 'in focus') at any one time. Although each group's 'voice' was obscured to the others during the course of the exhibition, these 'voices' are now articulated all at once for a secondary audience in order to illustrate the differential empowerment of the groups in shaping the exhibition display.

A few examples stand out of how power relations shifted as a result of individuals' voices being articulated. First, Gabriel and Wilma from the fritidshem appeared prominently in the image I quickly created for the *Frölunda Kulturhus Program* brochure, website and press release (see Appendix 9.5). I consciously choose to feature Wilma, as she was the one participant who was also an inhabitant of one of the Mandolingatan apartment blocks. This more personal relation to the project seemed to affect her positively. I can only speculate that this could have slightly empowered her, but also that it could have drawn unwanted attention. I did notice that she appeared front and center for the welcome speech made by Britta and Per at the start of the vernissage, and that she twice took the lead in walking the space probe around the gallery. She might already have been a leader among the group, though. Further evidence to support that this was a generally positive experience for her came coincidentally. Some weeks before the exhibition, as I was walking the space probe outside of the Mandolingatan apartment blocks, I ran into Wilma and her family. After some discussion about the space probe and closer inspection, her mother told me Wilma was really enjoying the project.

A less pronounced example of altered power relations is my quoting of Meja, a student from Önnared School, on the 'dialogical field [notes]', saying "I'm your Google Translate!" (Figure 25). This might have remained an obscure reference but I pointed it out to her, to

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62. These workshops might have taken place earlier in the first week of the exhibition, but I was obligated to take part in the TRADERS Autumn School during this time. It turned out that this also provided me the time necessary to finish assembling the boxes in preparation for the workshops.

63. Borrowed from the term 'bokeh', which is used to describe the aesthetic quality of out of focus background areas in a photograph.

her great joy, after we met by chance at the exhibition. On the other hand, Meja's excellent English speaking skills (she had lived for some time in the U.S.) and extroverted behavior draw attention to power relations linked to group dynamics throughout the project. Widely varying English speaking skills, along with participants' introverted or extroverted behavior, resulted in only some students being able to approach me to chat and ask questions. Thus, in terms of group dynamics during workshops, some individual voices had a built-in power position—although I did flail away at times in trying to reach out to other participants with fragments of Swedish.

Some would question if the power relation of my own involvement was too exaggerated, in particular by the enlarged space of my own voice within the exhibition (i.e. the central installation, the handwritten letter on the gallery wall, the dialogical field [notes] and the 'May I borrow some sugar?' piece), all of which aimed to [implicitly] acknowledge and materialize my participation and subjective, personal, contingent and privileged position as the project's primary designer, manager, curator, etc. As I became more self-reflexive about my position as an outsider, I saw the representative and pedagogical potential of canalizing this as a meta-narrative. By replaying [some of] the project's themes and processes through the dramatized (partly-fictional, sometimes exaggerated) setting of the central installation, a static representation of a 'completed' project could be avoided. Further, while the exhibition work was given an overall group attribution, it is chained to the overall project, which for me has extra value as it functions as a research case study and probably has some [undetermined as of yet] value for me as a post-Fordist 'project' (to leverage towards another project, adding interest and legitimacy to my 'portfolio', etc.). I have presented the overall project many times as 'my' work (although always crediting the work as collaboratively produced). These power relations linked with my own involvement are sometimes moderated and sometimes magnified, but become more noticeable when acknowledging the designer's agency—especially if the designer is also the project initiator.

In an agonistic model of democracy, power relations are never truly equal, only potentially reconfigured. Situations are thus better understood as dynamic rather than static. A more difficult calculus is then required by the designer to determine the appropriate approach to making power relations more transparent and/or working to reduce or reverse them. Perhaps this is where 'context' can best assist, although seeking equal or inverted power relations is to make a possibly *acontextual* claim that participants' voices have an equal (or greater) right to be listened to. This is Rancière's notion of the radical (because paradoxical) 'equalitarian right' in a democracy (Rancière, 2010): the equal right of any group to make any claim, however grounded or ungrounded. The right to make these claims is what is equal, not the ensuing outcomes—which will likely be greatly influenced by the context.

## Reconfigurations of participants' voices

The design of the exhibition aimed to effect a reconfiguration of the participants' voices in two primary ways. First, in relation to exhibition visitors and secondary audiences or 'external-others' and, second, in relation to the other project participants or 'internal-others'. The first relation is more general and is better understood with further description of the exhibition and its reception later in this section. In reference to 'internal-others', the exhibition was the first time each group had been exposed to all of their own previous work and to the work of all of the other groups—and, by extension, to the other participants, including myself and the other work I made for the exhibition. Each participant's—and each group's—'common sense' about the project, especially their sense of its scale, was potentially radically expanded through encounter with the space of the exhibition and its contents. Each group had had only a very abstract and unquantified sense of the overall project's scale because no group met another directly. To reinforce the project's aim of encouraging an empathy corresponding to an understanding of 'neighbors' as also distanced and interacting indirectly, we (the pedagogues) had emphasized the other groups as 'neighbors' in a few instances. Although we brought this up only very briefly, we did note, at the time, that some children seemed to understand the analogy. Yet, it was through the exhibition itself that each group could more tangibly and persistently feel the project's larger scale and a connection with the other participant groups. This stood out, albeit nonchalantly, for one of the fritidshem children, who shared the following general comments about the project:

*Jag tyckte att det var kul att vara med om en sådan här grej.  
Tyckte det var kul att andra barn än mina fritidskompisar var med också =)  
Har aldrig gjort något sådant så det var både kul och annorlunda.*

[I thought it was fun to be part of such a thing.  
Thought it was fun that children other than my leisure-time [fritidshem]  
friends were along too =)  
I have never done something such as this so it was fun and different.]

Not only could each group see that other groups used the same (or very similar) materials (i.e. workshop tool-artifacts such as the gameboards, the space laboratories, etc.), but they could also see that many groups used these same materials in different ways. The fritidshem, for instance, was the only group who, for the most part, painted the exteriors of their boxes. Some students from the Museum Lesson groups wrapped their boxes with colored tape, while no one in the ISGR group chose to alter their box's exterior. Workshop tool-artifacts were intentionally *not* bound to (and thus separated from) a single workshop method. This

allowed them to become methodologically multivocal in the sense that many different methods could be used across different instances of the same form of artifact, the latter acting as a 'controlled variable' unifying the different methods. So, not only can one read differences in the expressive individual content, one can also detect different patterns in the content which express the different workshop methods used. 'Voice' here thus has a double character which links two scales: one located in the specificity of individual expression and one articulating broader, more collective differences between the participant groups.

These two scales can be described in reference to the gameboards (Figure 12, Figure 46 and Appendix 9.3), on which one can read up to 45 distinct individual voices (equaling the number of cards/spaces). These expressed various participant interpretations of what they had experienced during the expedition tour, illustrations of their neighbor (at home, in Frölunda or otherwise) and/or speculative illustrations of this neighbor's interior space seen from the inside or the outside. Qualitative differences in individual voice are also apparent and we (I and Vici Hofbauer, the architect-pedagogue I worked with during the Museum Lessons) noted some of these for at least one of the groups. The aforementioned story of the angry top floor lady stands out. And, one of the participants told Vici that a figure illustrated with a speech bubble saying "*dumma ungar* [dumb kids]" was a reference to a grouchy character in their own neighborhood in Önnared. At the same time, one can see broader, more subtle differences which express the various methods taking place during these workshops. The gameboard's 'rules'—how it could be played as a game and/or by what logic the cards should be placed—were to be developed by the participants themselves, whereas the 'rules' regarding themes of possible expression were framed by us as pedagogues slightly differently for each group within the overall theme of neighbors. One group decided to make a memory game by requiring that each participant make the same illustration on each of the two cards they received (typically of a view into or out from a window). Another group focused much more on the physical figure of their neighbor and allowed animals to count as 'neighbors' as well.

The space laboratories illustrate the widest variation in how individual and group voices were articulated. Here, there were differences in terms of content, pedagogical method, time, materials and media. The fritidshem and art club had an open-ended brief, as did the ISGR students, except for a requirement that they take a Frölunda window [photograph] as a starting point (this was to tether them to Frölunda in some way since none of their work took place there). Vici had much more workshop experience than I and in our reflection after one of the space laboratory workshops she observed that having these kinds of parameters, as opposed to a 'blank slate', can stimulate creativity. So, in a following workshop, we had participants draw 'a neighbor'—real or imagined—and then suggested that they could use the space laboratories to create this imagined neighbor's interior space.

Depersonalization can also free up creativity, loosening the maker's identity from what is made.<sup>64</sup> In terms of time, the three Museum Lesson classes had only a single workshop to work on their space laboratories, while the fritidshem had two longer workshops plus an unknown amount of time in the several weeks leading up to the exhibition (after the second workshop at the Cultural Center, they asked if they could bring their boxes back to their classroom for further work on them). Meanwhile, the 10<sup>th</sup> graders perhaps spent as much time as the fritidshem, during art class and on their own outside of class. Additionally, they wrote a voiceover narrative (some also recorded one) to accompany video documentation of their boxes (see Figure 54, Figure 55 and Figure 56). Some focused on describing their artistic thinking while others on presenting a fictional narrative. In the exhibition, this additional material was presented on a video monitor with headphones positioned at the end of the display of space laboratories (see Figure 34).

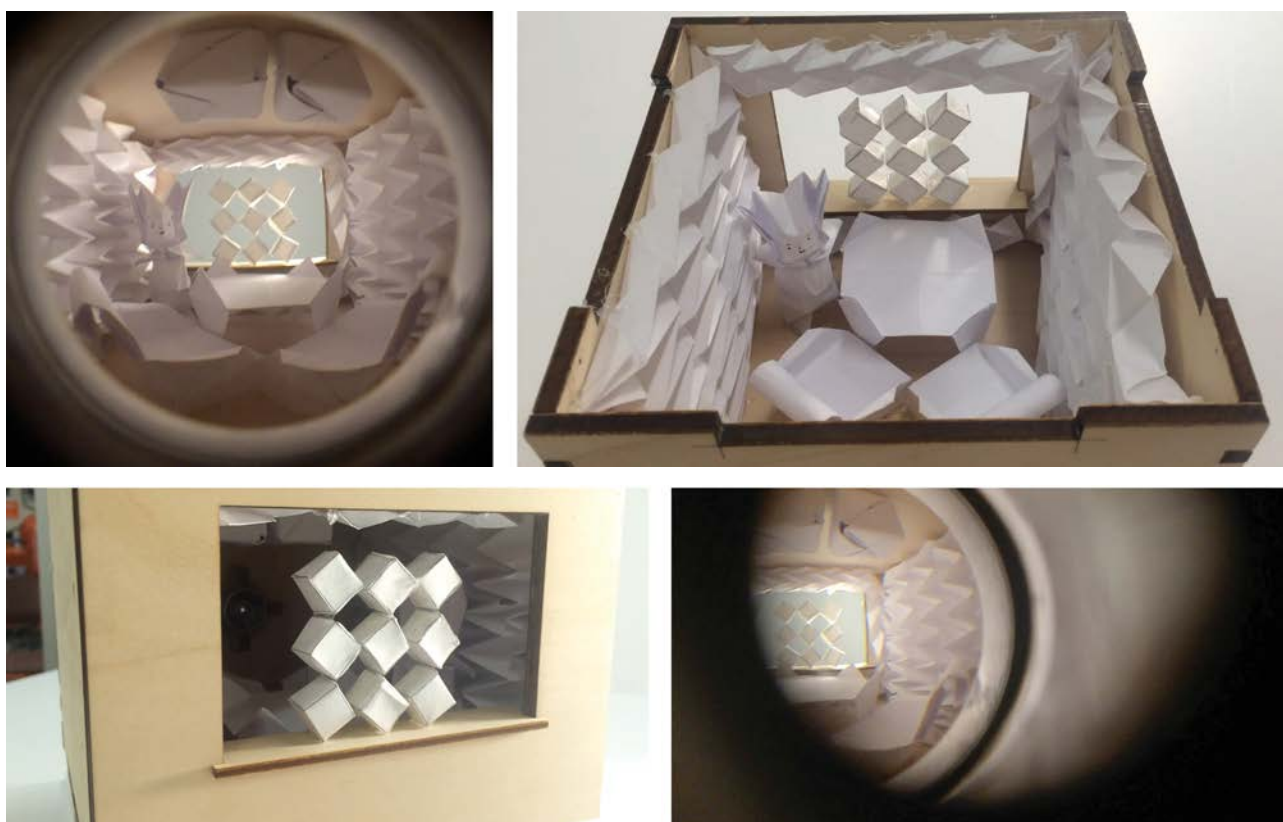


Figure 54: Stills from the space laboratories video panel. The accompanying voiceover narrative by Ameya follows:

*"My box is a simple monochrome room, completely made up of paper and made in the paper-folding style of origami. It also uses a branch of origami called kinetic origami, which deals with the movement of origami structures. The walls are made up of a fold called the miura-ori fold. It really illustrates the value from the other end coming closer to ours. We can also notice how all the walls are in one-point perspective, leading to a vanishing point somewhere on the front wall. The room*

64. This was an observation shared with me by Allan Dale during his visit to one of the space laboratory workshops involving the fritidshem.

*also consists of two simple chairs that have a curved back. The table is a simple petal-fold that highlights the elegance in the room. Finally, we have the transforming cubes which are abstract, but they can be seen as a bookshelf. Finally, we have the origami man which is really intricate and detailed. The entire room is completely white which doesn't give off emotion, but this is left to the lights to give an artistic feel to the room."*



Figure 55: Stills from the space laboratories video panel. The accompanying voiceover narrative by Kairi follows:

*"This box tells the story of a far-away land where a curse has taken all the life from nature. The trees stand dead with no leaves clinging to their branches and it has been a very long time since the flowers last bloomed. The grass is turning dryer and yellower every day whilst cracks are forming into the dry, dusty ground. Not a single animal dares to enter this haunted forest, not even mentioning live in it. However, in the middle of it all lies a little egg protected by a very much alive—as well as green—moss. Now, this isn't just any ordinary egg. When the sun sets and darkness comes out, then it begins to glow and glisten like stars in the sky. It has yet to hatch and rumors say that when that day comes, it will bring back all the life to this cursed forest. The trees will finally have leaves hanging on their branches, the grass will be greener than ever and birds will be chirping wherever you go."*



Figure 56: Stills from the space laboratories video panel. The accompanying voiceover narrative by Stella follows:

*"For this interior room I decided to really focus on the walls rather than furniture or decoration. The furniture is simple and squared, only a bed, bookshelf and a desk. There is also a chair as furniture but I did not make it from scratch. I kept it all in black and white as it is not what I'm*



*emphasizing on. The little details I added to the shelf and desk, along with the blanket, is in fact Playmobil, as it adds something to it and makes it personal. The walls, as stated, are the main focus. I choose pictures of book covers, album covers and movie covers, along with two actors—Dylan O'Brien and Thomas Brodie Sangster. This room isn't exactly what I would like as my own room, but, rather, me in a box. It's as if I have taken myself and placed myself in this square and this is the result. Of course, some things I left out like the fact that I like the Mets. And, I couldn't really put my sarcasm in there, either."*

These accounts seemed to be quite popular with the children, perhaps simply as a different way of looking at the boxes, perhaps because they admired the skill level. The voiceovers, originally written in the native language of the international school students (English), were not available in Swedish, and neither was the audio in the other video panels made available bilingually. With more time or resources, subtitles might have provided opportunities for the groups to [indirectly] connect more. But, as it was, this language separation re-emphasized the distance between the groups which, through estranging (foreign language features in Shklovsky's elaboration of estrangement) might have generated a different kind of empathic connection based on the kind of weak social ties discussed elsewhere (i.e. following Amin, Ranci re, Sennett, Young et al.). In terms of materials used in the workshops, many differences were simply matters of contingency, for instance modelling clay became available for the three Museum Lessons but we had not provided it for the fritidshem group. It is important to reiterate that the 'controlled variable' here was the artifact as designed before the workshops, which, through interaction with the fluctuating 'variables' of workshop methods, participant involvement and contingencies, assumes a hybrid character. Here the artifact acts very much like the architecture of an urban apartment block, being a more-or-less controlled variable, background to an endless diversity of use and appropriation. Hopefully, this diversity of use, seen in terms of disparities in space laboratory worktime, did not get pushed too far in the extreme (one student's feedback did express a wish for more time).

The exhibition itself would also make visible that not every group did the same activities. The space probe had been exclusive to the fritidshem, and the perspective drawings to the 9<sup>th</sup> graders, so, to the other groups, these appeared as brand new components of the project. And, because the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade youth had been involved *only* in the perspective drawings and the space laboratories, all of the other components appeared brand new to them. So, besides an element of surprise resulting from encountering my configuration of their work for the first time (which a truly co-designed exhibition would have lacked), the exhibition also produced different textures of experience for each group, exposing the project as a larger, more complex assemblage comprised of various tendrils, appendages and absences, and wider than any one group's experience. In terms of multivocality, this is a critical point. While the exhibition itself connected all the components through spatial and



thematic co-presence of the three related titles and themes (*A ship comes loaded. . .*, *The researcher from outer space* and *Who is your neighbor?*), each group had their own unique connective logic to the overall project determined by the activities they had been involved in. These activities may or may not have overlapped with those done by other groups. Only in the case of the three Museum Lesson groups, were groups involved in the same number of and kinds of workshops, although methods across the three did vary. Had the fritidshem also been involved in making the perspective drawings, they would have had a hand in every type of project activity, so, on this level, lacked a uniquely articulated relation to the project. Connectivity to the overall project, combined with differences in each group's connective logic and absences of connections—or separations—, was a way of attempting to articulate various voices within the project's overall multivocality.

Returning to reconfiguration of the participants' voices in reference to 'external-others', it must be emphasized that the exhibition invited new voices into the project through its explicitly participatory component—the central installation—which engaged exhibition visitors (although previous participants were also implicitly invited to participate). This widening of the collective effort of the project perhaps further reconfigured the workshop participants' sense of the project and who was involved. The distinctness of the participatory process (drawing/writing responses to three prompts) and its artifactual component (blank, laser-cut grey chipboard cards) from any other workshop tool-artifact—aside from content (neighbors) and some aesthetic qualities (rounded squares with crosshairs)—functioned to further articulate these new voices. Visitors were asked to respond to one or more of three prompts: "*Berätta en historia där din granne ingår*. [Tell a story where your neighbor is included.]"; "*När och hur lägger du märke till din granne?* [When and how do you notice your neighbor?];" and, "*Berätta något om dig själv som dina grannar inte känner till*. [Tell something about yourself that your neighbor does not know.]" (for the results, see Appendix 9.6). They could then place their card to be exhibited on the interior walls of the 'ship' (a pattern of pre-driven nails was provided on the wall).

Finally, switching perspectives to the external view of the project illustrates what is or could be the most impactful reconfiguration of voices. Seeing the exhibition in person made a vivid impression on certain actors in the city- and regional-level cultural departments. It was perceived by many of them, who I spoke with, as a new way of working with children and of taking them seriously. It reconfigured their 'common sense' about what kind of project was possible with participation involving children. Foremost was the aesthetic quality of the overall exhibition and the way it integrated the children's and youth's work (our hybrid works) in the same serious way (precise, careful, considered), in contrast to the 'cutesy' aesthetic seen in many exhibitions involving children's work which mimics childlike qualities of playfulness, naiveté and lack of skill (the unsteady line, colorful bouncing

typefaces, etc.). Although usually well-intentioned, this latter aesthetic frames the work with a layer of judgment that diminishes and excludes it from being taken as serious work of equal voice with professional or adult work. In the carefully considered design and aesthetics of the workshop tool-artifacts, along with the use of high quality materials such as finished wood, the project aimed for an ethic of taking participants' work seriously (particularly children's and youths'). The exhibition design and its framing and configuration of the work extended this ethic into further spatial and material terms which themselves have an affective power or 'voice' (Bennett, 2010).

### Criticality of content cut off in an early stage

Given my recent research critiquing the neoliberal context<sup>65</sup>, the question arises: why didn't this project end up being more critical in terms of its content? A brief archaeology of the project reveals two significant junctures in which certain project components shifted in relative scale and importance. The first occurred in relation to the artifact-probe, which, in its original design, would have been the primary project component. The itinerary of its original journey, as described earlier in Section 2.1, would have had it—unmanned—visit 15-20 inhabitants and engage them with written (or recorded) questions from the fritidshem children. Crucially, I would *also* ask questions, as I wanted to emphasize my own participation in creating this artifact-probe as a hybrid of design and co-design. My questions would address local, but mostly *para-local* issues and speculative ideas such as: a children-owned land trust<sup>66</sup>; a Konstbussen [art bus]<sup>67</sup>; a Frölunda embassy in the center city; and questions about urban planning in Gothenburg, particularly about the Frihamnen development and the proposed 50-story tower in Hisingen. But, the artifact-probe's role drastically changed due to a lack of response to letters I had mailed to the inhabitants of Mandolingatan (see Appendix 9.2), but also due to the new opportunity of having a full exhibition. It became necessary to reconceive the artifact-probe as a 'space probe' (coinciding with the addition of the 'outer space' metaphor) that I would take on walks through public spaces in Frölunda (instead of it being passed between inhabitants' private spaces)<sup>68</sup>.

Around the same time, another project component—the space laboratories—exploded in scope with the addition of three new participant groups (the Museum Lessons). Also

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65. See Appendix 3 - Paper 1: Geib, J. (2014). The Challenges of Urban Activism in the New Neoliberal Context. This paper was preceded by two quite critical masters theses.

66. This was explored in the *dialogical talkbox* I organized during TRADERS Training Week #5. See Chapter 3.

67. Similar to the city's long-running *Bokbussen* program, which brings buses as mobile libraries to outlying areas.

68. So, for me, it did not function as a space probe (i.e. sending it out of sight to have it return later).

contributing was the larger than expected fritidshem class and my decision to add the 10<sup>th</sup> grade class and its 11 students to the project. This, combined with the unexpectedly slow process of laser-cutting and assembly, meant that I was preoccupied with making the space laboratories for a good part of the project. This further attenuated the space probe's role because, as it turned out, I only had time to take it into public space twice, and for only a few hours each.

All this said, I did get an opportunity during one of my walks to pose some of my own questions, and to an inhabitant of Mandolingatan. In our conversation, we discussed the *Ett skepp* project which led her to share some stories about her own neighbors and to answer many of the questions posed by the children. I then explained that I was more than just a messenger—I had my own questions. In response to my questions about her neighborhood and about urban planning in Gothenburg she often shared quite critical views (the city's obsession with being some kind of 'Manhattan', for instance). But, interestingly, after learning that the project mainly involved children, she suggested that we steer our conversation elsewhere because she didn't want to expose the children to too much negativity. She then reformulated one of her critiques—which bemoaned a nearby and relatively new housing development which "removed a lot of nature"—in terms of its impact on local animals. To do this, she cited a red fox that, like clockwork, used to visit the foot of her building at the same time every evening, but which, since the new construction, had not returned. The notes I took during our conversation lay at the bottom of one of the rectangular appendages or 'ballet boxes' of the space probe. Again, with more time, the data collected by the probe could have been made visible in the exhibition. On the other hand, leaving it separate, unknown and unreachable reinforced the project's themes of the limits of discovery, distance and speculation. If this data gathering process had been a much more significant part of the project, I imagine I would have apportioned my time differently to find a way to represent it. At present, my aim is to represent the unseen data in a future digital exhibition catalogue.

### Concluding remarks

Multivocality and 'voice' were discussed here primarily at scale levels consisting of relations between individual participants and relations between participant groups. A material, artifactual level also factored in in terms of care in design, quality of construction and craft. These aspects had a substantial effect on many of the reconfigurations, particularly the key reconfiguration of cultural actors seeing the participants and their work in a new way, and seeing the project as a new method of engagement. The possibility of this reconfiguration was first enabled on an institutional level, by the Cultural Center offering a full exhibition. Concern for craft and the involvement of artifacts also led, however, to the suppression of

some potential voices, for instance, by attenuating the space probe's role in the project and therefore reducing the quantity and quality of voices which might otherwise have been articulated through it. Ethical concerns were central, motivating and witnessed: on a material level in concern for design and craft and in the returning of the space laboratories to the participants; on an individual and group level in terms of attentiveness to power relations associated with group dynamics, authorship and attribution; and, on an institutional and a societal level through an ethic of treating children and youth and their work seriously. The methodology of the project, focused on indirectness, distance and separations between the groups, the inhabitants and the public, arguably opened up more space for reconfigurations of voices—both emergent and aimed for through design—to take place. This more dynamic field then, in turn, further reinforced the pedagogical aims of building more curiosity towards, and more empathy and respect for unknown 'neighbors', a kind of knowledge developed with increasing 'dialogical capacity' for difference, limitation and the unknown.

## 2.5 Problematizing Contexts

This section revisits the discussions on context from Section 2.1 to reveal some further areas of doubt about the my role as a designer in this case study in relation and response to 'the context'. When was indirectness too indirect, or estrangement too estranged? It also aims to illustrate, through examples, the ambivalence and relativity of the term 'context' and to put the project in a wider critical context.

### 'A bridge too far'? - questioning the project premise

A major moment of doubt descended on me not long into the project, soon after meeting the fritidshem children for the first time, in advance of our first workshop (with my co-supervisor accompanying me to help as translator). I found myself noticeably downcast for being unable to connect with the children in a more meaningful way. We could piece together only the most basic and tentative of verbal interaction across the language divide that separated us. Although this divide was inevitable and anticipated, when embodied it went against the grain of many related instinctive desires: to make stronger social connections; to achieve deeper understanding and knowledge; and to gain more grasp of the situation. These desires were more intense as a result of hindrances on other fronts: the fleetingness of my obligatory and hyper-epistemic involvement in TRADERS and the associated weakening of my individual research (see Section 1.1.2) and, the language barrier which has hidden from me all manner of Swedish context and contemporaneity. Would the

compound effect of these factors and the themes of indirectness and distance create a configuration so dispersed that no worthwhile constellation could even be formed—was it setting up 'a bridge too far'?

These concerns also tugged at ethical hesitations related to memories associating contexts of learning or 'education' with responsibility for conveying knowledge through spoken or written discourse. These were entrenched associations dislodged by a number of inspiring teachers along my own path (via bell hooks and other critical pedagogies, critical theory and, most recently, artistic research approaches), but associations that nevertheless linger due to their pervasiveness in societal structures and, in particular, due to new demands on learning and creativity as instruments for economic growth.<sup>69</sup> What would be missed because of this experiment? Was the apparent loss of potential subtle, profound insights a disservice to children who might have learned much more through direct dialogue with a native speaker? My concerns were also tied to an artistic researcher's thirst for qualitative content and to a researcher's mandate for representable 'results'. Both were resisted by my focus on indirect relations and effects which are quite difficult to trace and more often than not so subtle or diffuse as to be indeterminable. Further, the project was conceptualized as an artistic cultural process rather than an instrument for producing something which could be transferred afterwards. In the end, we could be said to have been very inefficient in coming up with packageable 'results' or transferable knowledge<sup>70</sup>. But, the question is not necessarily what *more* was learned, but what *else* was learned, or, what was *otherwise-than-knowing* (Varto, 2013).

Also haunting me, and other socially-engaged designers under the pressure of post-Fordist precarity, is an industry of apparent 'best practices' for 'contextual' work. Exemplary projects here offer much inspiration, but achieving something similar eludes many because of the difficulty and rarity of these projects—and the latter probably results from their highly contextual, contingent qualities. These projects are *more than* projects: deeply-rooted, situated collaborations that emerge in a bottom-up fashion. They tend to ignore the background structures that enabled the designer's agency and participation in the project (as well as how the project benefits the designer). As is evident now, even if had I begun a highly contextual case study from day one, that engagement would have been interrupted frequently and for long periods (by TRADERS-required activities), potentially uprooting whatever roots that had grown. And, to decide in advance that a case study here

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69. Although these demands are now globalized in 'creative class' rhetoric, Clair Bishop traces one of their primary roots to the cultural policy strategy of UK's New Labour party (1997–2010). Bishop, C. (2012). *ARTIFICIAL HELLS: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, 13-18. Also see "Academic Capitalism", 268-271 and *Volume #45: Learning*. (2015).

70. This was mainly due to the prioritizing of process. However, at the level of research, many aspects of the project aim to and could be said to be possibly transferable if recombined, recalibrated and situated in an appropriate response to another context.

would be highly contextual would itself have been quite contrived and violent in relation to the context, as I had no former embeddedness in Frölunda.

Although *indirectness* was the very core material of the work as originally proposed, it had been projected outward onto external indirect relations: between workshops, participants, artifacts and inhabitants. I had not considered the indirectness of my own role as it was evidently 'hiding in plain sight', first experienced as no more than a background situation to pragmatically resolve through collaboration with a Swedish-speaking pedagogue. This betrayed related projective biases: a designer's fixation on *the design* in spite of growing acknowledgment of the designer's role as a participant as well (Miessen, 2010); a longstanding personal gravitation towards the metaphysical—*the idea*—over the physical (perhaps as a foil to the banality of untheorized or unremarkable buildings); and, an accompanying modernist belief in a degree of transposability, including transpositions between the abstract and the concrete. A further but not insignificant factor (here and across-the-board) seems to be a lack of time to reflect, in this case mostly resulting from the project's ambition towards organizational complexity and aesthetic quality, but also aggravated by TRADERS-related scheduling demands that continue to have me on the run.

On two occasions, sharing some of these feelings of doubt precipitated responses which redoubled my energies and added a new layer to the project. A brief discussion with my supervisor led us to realize that my sense of detachment was an existential condition of the project which actually reinforced its experimental interest. And, while anxiously discussing the upcoming first workshop (also my first workshop with children in general) with my contact at the cultural department, he said (paraphrasing), "to them you're from outer space". This metaphor affected a shift in the direction of my thinking, from reactive resistance to active embrace. It acted in concert with three other factors which also had the latent capacity to align with this metaphor: the project's original intention of creating an open system in order to foreground the space between elements (workshops and participants); the crosshair grid graphic motif which already emphasized space (as a field) rather than containment (see Figures 5-9; 16; 24); and the artifact-probe wagon, which had been the lead actor since its proposal, but which had since taken on a second identity as a ship—*the ship of A ship comes loaded*. . .—so a third and eventually lasting identity as a 'space probe' followed easily. Amid this emerging system of metaphors, I embraced and sometimes employed in workshops the persona of an 'alien researcher' or *forskaren från världsrymden* [the researcher from outer space].

This outsider figure made more transparent my role in the project and functioned as an ever-present analog to the unknown neighbor or 'stranger'. It dismissed any pretensions or claims to embeddedness or to complete understanding of the local context. I found this so important that I elevated it as another title of the project—for clarity's sake a secondary title

but for almost all practical purposes, a co-title. Here, too, was an instance of a syncretic approach to integration, assembling by separating in layers rather than uniting by flattening into a single layer (a synthetic approach).

### **"It was too much, he came every day"**

If certain phrases tend to strike me as particularly emotive in lived experience and in my own propositions, then they also play a strong role in my analysis. A single comment returned on a feedback form by one of the fritidshem children after the end of the project still sticks with me. With each repetition it provokes an surge of ambivalence: "It was too much, he came every day." From this perspective, I was the guest that overstayed. The particular context of the fritidshem was perhaps not the place for long-term engagement. This again references the clash between instinctive longing for greater connectivity and the project's emphasis on weak social ties. Although I did visit the fritidshem quite often (at the highest frequency: weekly over a five week period, for about two hours each visit) I can easily imagine a much more involved project with double or triple the number of visits, which could be called a 'more situated', 'deeper' or 'more contextual' project. But, at some point, deeper engagement would begin to encroach on: the fritidshem and the school as institutions; the roles of the teachers; and how they serve and provide space for children. The fritidshem is typically a mix of programmed and unprogrammed activities, the latter being initiated by the students themselves. It is hard to imagine the whole class electing to participate in a project involving a degree of long-term involvement approaching Kester's normative vision of dialogical aesthetics (2004) or that, at perhaps its most extreme, has artists or designers living on site for years on end.<sup>71</sup> Teachers have their own role, pedagogic vision and agenda and could be undermined if this role were borrowed or complimented for too long by an outsider. This case study allowed me to experience the tension between the desire to further engage and develop the project and the problem of demanding too much of participants (including fellow collaborators, teachers and students).

Further engagement in the context of the Museum Lessons would have been even more problematic, as these lessons are vehicles for the legal right of every child in Sweden's schools to one museum visit per year. After much headache, we managed to coordinate a reconceiving of this single visit as two separate lessons, although each session was brief (one hour). Theoretically, with more time, the project might have been integrated into Önnared School's curriculum (as it was with the ISGR—but here it was *only* integrated in the curriculum, as the youth did not participate in workshops). This would have increased the

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71. Or architects—for example, during the project *WiMBY! (Welcome in My Backyard!)*, the Dutch architecture firm Crimson Architectural Historians relocated their office to Hoogvliet (a suburb of Rotterdam) from 2001 to 2007.

chances of developing more of a dialogue with the pedagogical content. As it was, it was the *complexity* of integration with the rest of the project that I originally envisioned for the Museum Lessons that led to their schedule being resolved only at the last minute. In order to keep their involvement, we had to reduce the connectivity of the Museum Lessons with the rest of the project and somewhat simplify their content. Integration with the curriculum, which would have necessitated complex coordination between two institutional layers (the school and the Museum Lessons program), would therefore have required even more time and planning.

### **Mixed reviews**

Feedback from the participants was requested after the exhibition by way of a form (an A4 print) that I asked their teachers to give to them. It started with a single open-ended prompt (in Swedish), "Your thoughts about the project?", which was supplemented by a series of more direct questions, but, visually, these appeared compacted at the bottom of the page with no space after them. This framing is likely one reason they were not responded to directly. Only children from the fritidshem returned these forms (10 of them), most likely due to our closer and more frequent relationship. But another significant factor had to have been my long delay in returning the boxes after the exhibition. In retrospect, the feedback should have been requested soon after—or in—the last workshop. This again illustrates a larger problem of getting involved in and handling such a large effort while also being involved in TRADERS activities. Some of the project becomes not about thoughtful consideration but simply about managing an optimum engagement across too many domains. Thankfully, one of the Önnared School teachers (class 3A) actually required her students to reflect about the project on an A4 page divided into two: a blank upper half for drawing and a lined bottom half for text. Their visual feedback, provided in the following three Figures, is particularly interesting to see which aspects of certain artifacts and thematic metaphors were employed by participants, and how they used them to visually describe their perception of the project and/or their experience of it.



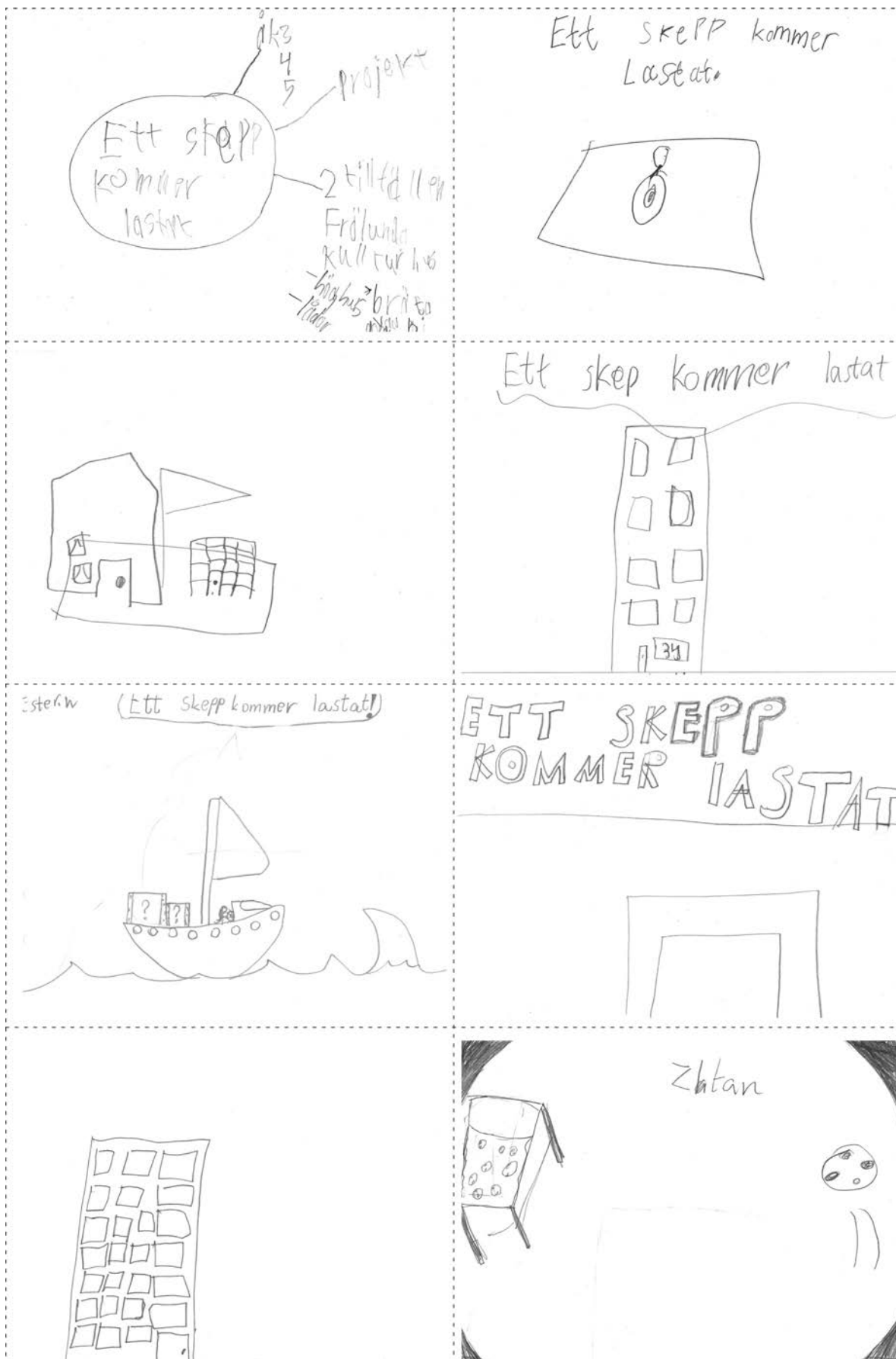


Figure 57: Visual feedback from Önnared School participants, returned along with text reflections on their experience.

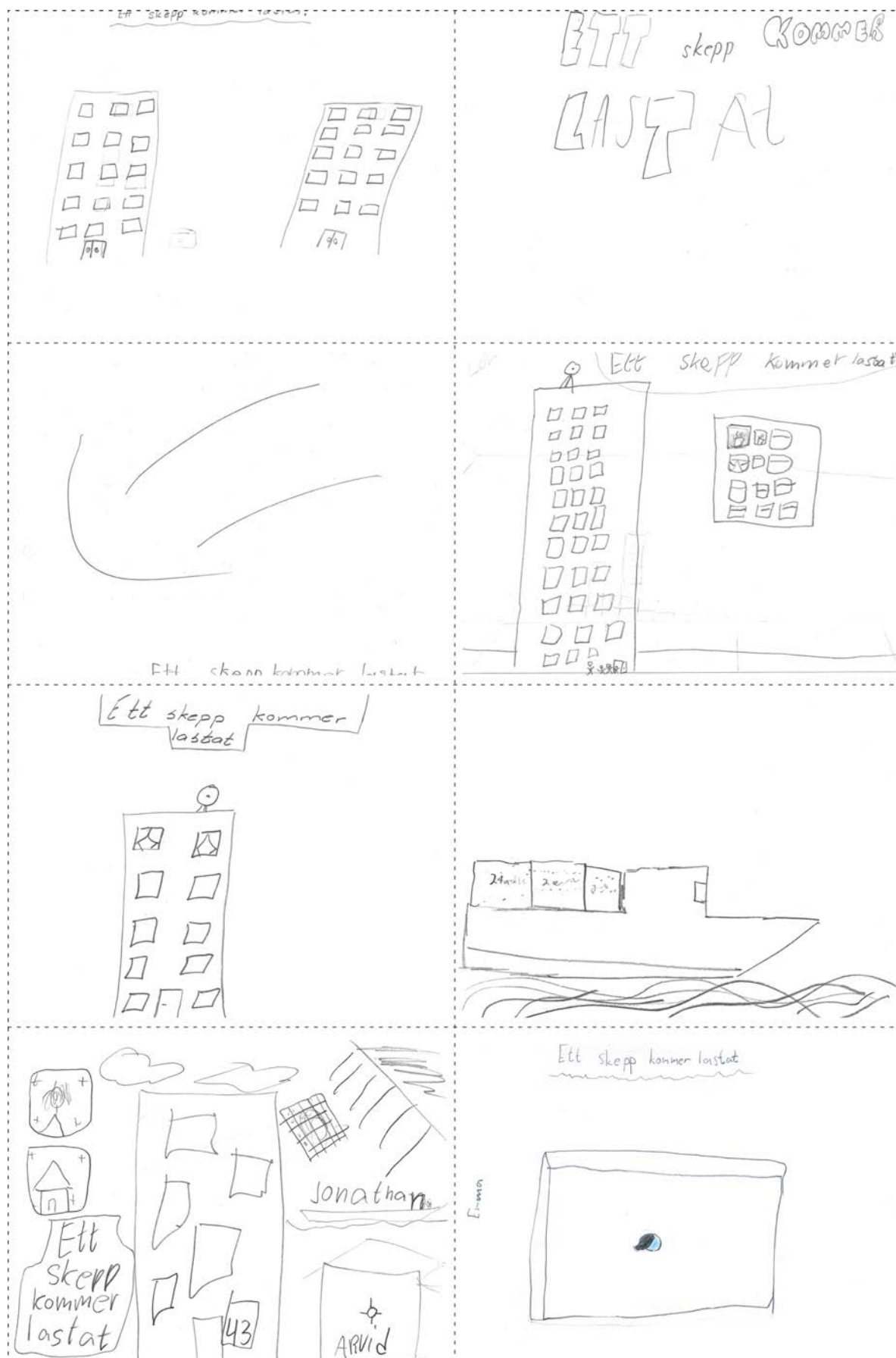


Figure 58: Visual feedback from Önnared School participants, continued.

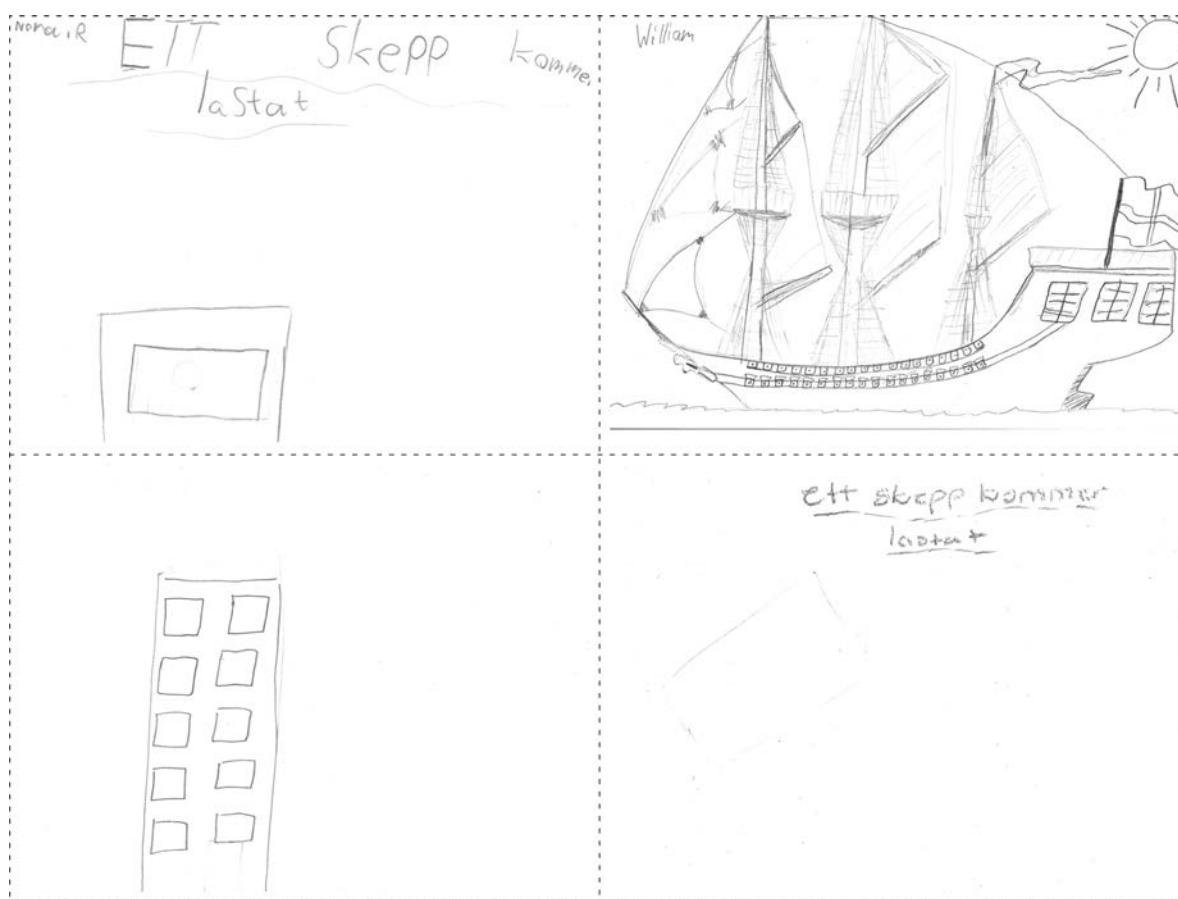


Figure 59: Visual feedback from Önnared School participants, continued.

One unexpected result of the project (although somewhat anticipated after touring the apartment blocks myself) was the ambivalent experience of many of the participants, especially the Museum Lesson groups who were visiting from the more affluent subdistrict of Önnared. The feedback of each participant from the 3A class contained almost unanimously both positive and negative reflections, the latter regarding the unpleasant smells in the apartment block during their first workshop, and the former regarding their enjoyment of working on the space laboratories at the Cultural Center in the second workshop. In the following selections of feedback (which aim to be generally representative) from a visiting group and from the local fritidshem, one can read a difference across the groups. First, a selection of five reflections from fritidshem participants (translated into English):

*It was fun and exciting.*

*The funniest thing was when we did the houses and cart.*

*It was a bit sad when we only went in the hallway but otherwise it was fun.*

*It was fun. I would love to do something like that again.*

*It's different, but creative.*

*It's good for kids to learn new things so that they also become creative.*

*The project was good. It was fun to decorate the house.*

*It was exciting to build "space-cart".*

*I want to be in a similar project again!*

*It was a good project.*

*It was fun to know about our neighbors, whoever they are and see how their accommodation looks.*

*It was interesting to make our own house and collaborate with friends.*

Now, a selection of five reflections from Önnared School (3A) participants:

*I think that the project was fun. Less good was that we went into the tower with the No. 43 [the address of one of the apartment blocks]. The two sessions were fun but the project No. 2 [the second Museum Lesson] was much more fun with houses and keyhole. I was at the exhibition and it was just as good.*

*Hello Jonathan my name is Jakob I did not think it was very fun =( the house smelled of cigarettes.*

*!Ett skepp kommer lastat!*

*My class participated in two lessons. They were called 'Who is your neighbor?' and 'Ett skepp kommer lastat'. The first lesson we went to a high-rise! It smelled of vomit. It was fun to build a room! It was not so fun to go to the tower.*

*We have participated in a project that has had two occasions at Frölunda Cultural Center. The first time we had to go into a high-rise and write on a block how it smelled and describe how it looked inside. The second time we had to go down into the basement [a workshop space in the Cultural Center] and choose a neighbor and make the room and if you did not know how the neighbors room looked, you had to do as you think the room looks and I think that the second time was the most fun, but both were fun.*

*We had to go to the Frölunda Cultural Center twice.*

*The first time we got to visit a high-rise building that smelled like smoke and grandmothers. The second time we had to make boxes that looked like the room and so Jonathan filmed us. When we were done with the boxes the Frölunda Cultural Center had the exhibition.*

*I thought it was really fun and I think you should continue.*

The fritidshem participants made only one mildly negative comment about the apartment block ("it was a bit sad..."), perhaps due to greater familiarity with similar contexts, but also possibly due to being involved in not two but seven workshops. For the Museum Lesson groups, an instant polarity was unintentionally created by virtue of having two workshops which could be judged against each other (the initial concept had been to have the same number of workshops as the fritidshem). Even so, there hopefully was some estrangement value in this as a 'multivocal experience' which introduced a new social-spatial awareness. Further research along these lines needs to make a more robust link between environment-based educational approaches (e.g. the Reggio Emilia Approach and Colin Ward's 'exploding school') and the decision to engage with pedagogic and educational institutions outside of the classroom—and, in the process, transforming public space.

### The dialogical and exhaustion

Accompanying the dialogical are a number of themes which offer many potentials in regard to content and aesthetics but, which, when intersected with embodied practice, can quickly turn problematic due to their propensity to spiral out of control and lead to exhaustion. This is especially the case if one is prone to overworking—or over-networking—e.g. under the influence of post-Fordism. The themes to be cautious about include: abundance, excess, inexhaustibility and incomprehensibility. In *Ett skepp*, I played with these themes and experienced some of their dangers:

- *Ett skepp* had a clear theme of overloadedness which first sprang from the loaded, ungraspable ship referenced in its title and from the urban scale involved: the five Mandolingatan apartment blocks carried over 2,000 inhabitants, so we were immediately forced into a position of limitation. My ingrained instincts as a designer and researcher towards comprehensiveness—and, at the same time, towards aesthetic quality—clashed further with this overloadedness in different ways as I tried to engage as thoroughly as I could within the limitations it created. This meant, for instance, undertaking a comprehensive visual survey of the common spaces but being limited to sending letters to only 60 inhabitants because they were handmade.<sup>72</sup> And, the workshop tours took an approach of breadth rather than depth, taking participants somewhat briskly through several floors in two or three apartment blocks, rather than focusing more deliberately on just one. Although the limitations created by this overloadedness automatically reinforced the theme of distance in relation to neighbors, there were clearly downsides.

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72. But, even this number was nearly too much on a practical level, given the time each took to create. In retrospect, I would have tried to maintain a similar level of quality while utilizing more standard sizes.

- As the project went on, I grew more personally affected by related themes contained in the titular metaphor: the exhaustion and incomprehensibility resulting from overloadedness. This especially influenced my design of the exhibition's installation—where, on the one hand I was making my own voice more transparent (and thus louder) through its very presence in proportion to the rest of the exhibited work, but, on the other hand, dehierarchizing (or dialogizing) it by amplifying a sense of *our* impossible tasks: us getting to know all of our neighbors and me managing to navigate the case study.
- I could feel a resonance with and connection to symptoms of the post-Fordist context through my own self-sacrifice (i.e. time<sup>73</sup>, health and finances). But, this sacrifice was also driven by: an artistic drive towards curiosity and quality; a designer's and researcher's drive towards comprehensiveness; the novelty of the situation—as it was my first time leading workshops with children and coordinating collaborations from within a research position; and, a feeling of having to go 'all-in' to 'perform' a substantial, fruitful case study which would be instrumental for my individual research and the TRADERS project.
- The expansion in scope which occurred in *Ett skepp* is perhaps also symptomatic of the unbounded nature of explorative, discovery-led methods in an artistic research approach.
- Multivocal approaches seem inherently prone to the danger of overloadedness, as illustrated by Italo Calvino in the context of literature in his essay "Multiplicity" (1988), which highlights the pitfalls and potentials of authors' inevitably unsuccessful attempts to have their novels be about *everything*.
- A potentially problematic correspondence exists between values of and aesthetics of incomprehensibility (also related to the previous point) and Marxist literary critic Fredric Jameson's concept of 'cognitive mapping'. This warrants further investigation and delineation.

## On to the next project

During the exhibition period, there was discussion among my supervisors and some cultural department officials about the exhibition continuing to another venue. Rather than a repetition, this would have been conceived as a living extension of the project—especially in the gesture of the project as an ongoing research process—involving: new workshops; integrating exhibition ideas from current participants; taking the space probe on new journeys through public space; and, new perspectives on the previous work. Yet, any chance

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73. I was on 50% parental leave throughout most of the case study but, in order to more fully develop its potentials, explore emergent possibilities, maintain my own standards of quality, and, at key moments, to keep the project afloat, I encroached significantly on this. It was surely this experience that invoked me to push for integrating the theme of the post-Fordist designer's [structural and perceived] compulsion to sacrifice (personally, biologically and financially) into the design of a workshop at the TRADERS Autumn School (Appendix 11), which took place just after the *Ett skepp* exhibition opened.

of immediately capturing this momentum faded. This was partly because I felt both an ethical duty and an aesthetic desire to pristinely and exhaustively document all of the work, and this had to happen soon after the exhibition because I had promised to return the space laboratories to each of the participants. This intense period of documentation was then interrupted repeatedly by various TRADERS responsibilities. So, it was not until the second week of February that I was finally able to return the last boxes. In spite of this, there remains a remote possibility of another exhibition, but, appropriately, it would be separated from the project by a gap of at least two years. Again, my instinct is to regret and bemoan this but, I would not, in retrospect, have done things differently so as to try to enable a second life for the project. In taking this stance, I go against the post-Fordist grain of the network- and project-dominated 'third spirit of capitalism', as illustrated by Boltanski and Chiapello with what they term a 'model test', defined as: "[t]he end of a project and the beginning of another" (1999, 125). In this model, success is measured not by the value of the project itself, but by how much it increases one's capacity to transition to the next project (i.e. by how well it preserves and develops the network). This mode's impact on artistic practices and its encouragement of entrepreneurial logics will be brought up in further research<sup>74</sup>. In spite of my aversion to this paradigm, for pragmatic reasons, I must swim with it at times. And, it should be pointed out that many who appear to be resisting this 'model test' are failing not on principal, but from exhaustion.

Although I did manage to return the participant's space laboratories (not doing so would have been unconscionable as these were promised and many times asked for) and distribute feedback forms, I still—over a year and a half later—have not managed to produce the digital exhibition catalog that I told many people, including the participants, that I intended to make and send to them. To me this is deeply regretful. It echoes many other efforts lingering, aborted, flailing or failing due to overambition, overextension and my unwillingness at times to compromise on quality. The timing of the period following the case study was particularly difficult as my obligations to TRADERS quickly expanded and occupied an even greater proportion of my time for most of the ensuing eight months. For me, my failure to create the digital exhibition catalogue signifies a lack of substantial follow-up with the participants and too sharp and too quick of a departure from the project's various contexts, in a way that can make the themes of limitation and separation take on a painful association. During my recent visit to the fritidshem, though, this was counteracted

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74. This can start with a more thorough inquiry into Boltanski and Chiapello's critique of the 'projective' mode. (also discussed in "The Projective City" in: Bishop, C. (2012). *ARTIFICIAL HELLS: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*. 215-217.)

by being greeted with smiles and positive energy from the original participants who were still enrolled—and remarkably taller.<sup>75</sup>

### Concluding remarks

Throughout this section, 'context' is revealed as holding many possible interpretations varying in tandem with my often ambivalent and reciprocal relations to it during the case study and in reflection afterwards, whether these relations were framed by certain: design, research, pedagogical and/or critical aims; instinctive desires and doubts; themes of content; structural conditions and limitations of the project—especially those affecting my involvement and agency in terms of *time*; or wider critical perspectives. The process of reconciling efforts to reinforce context, desires to connect more deeply and the wide range of intended or inevitable separations from it, mirrors the project's aim of building up 'dialogical capacity' at inter-group and urban-sociological levels. Thus, in my own struggle to navigate multiple and ambivalent relations to context, I experienced a similar mode of learning.

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75. Our last meeting had been about a year before, in February of 2016. For each of the original participants I brought a 75-page A4 booklet that I had created to serve as a kind of exhibition catalogue. Although its design was well-considered, its timeline had been rushed. It featured further documentation but very little new reflective text and it ended up with the wrong kind of binding.





## **Chapter 3 - Interlude**

### **Secondary Case Studies and Experiments**



This chapter acts as an unrestful interlude by taking cursory glances at nine secondary case studies and experiments in relation to some of the key concepts, in order to re-emphasize the frenetic conditions which surrounded and often interrupted the primary case study. To maintain focus and avoid motion sickness, the reader may wish to skip ahead to Chapter 4. The case studies and experiments that follow are connected, in varying degrees, to the primary case study and theoretical framework through a logic of *exploring configurations of separation and connection* between multiple, often contradictory voices and logics. Separation is the critical component, though, as motivating the research is an aversion to a particular fallacy behind the 'will to connect': that difference is (or should be) afterwards erased. Rather, as Simmel's essay "Bridge and Door" (1909) portrayed, disconnection and connection imply one another in manifold relationships (bridges, doors and windows being archetypical). Assemblage theory, in holding that assemblages may be comprised of parts with varying degrees of autonomy and out of sync with each other (Bennett, 2010), also helps resist the urge to focus only on the connectedness of the whole while ignoring the parts. This theory will be engaged with in future research (Bennett and DeLanda are initial references, and it may be worth going to the original source in Deleuze and Guattari).

Each item will be described only briefly, leaving the possibility for further analysis, development and/or future separate publication at a later stage. AD2077 is located instead in Section 1.3 because its approach very actively addresses the monovocal political context discussed in that section. When suitable, additional content has been included in the Appendix. 'Experiment' denotes an ephemeral workshop or one-time project, while 'secondary case' denotes potential case studies that might have but did not develop into a primary focus. I have excluded numerous (but often time-consuming) items that never really took a first step into an action mode, including potential work: in the suburban area of Bergsjön; with Göteborgs Konsthall [Gothenburg Art Hall]; with Staden vi vill ha [The city we want]; with the Collaboratory/Future City Lab; on a semi-participatory pavilion project

and more. Also excluded are all of the other TRADERS activities, which might have involved experimentation/empirical work but which were not relevant enough to my research approach (or were simply too much to report on). Included are briefs covering the following items: exploration of a local urban development, Frihamnen, as a case study; a workshop in the TRADERS Summer School; a workshop in a TRADERS Training Week; teaching engagements in masters-level education at Chalmers Architecture; a workshop in the TRADERS Autumn School; engagement in concept design and planning for an art and science festival at Chalmers; design, planning and coordination of a TRADERS Training Week and a workshop within; and exploration of a thematic, 'meta' case study.

## **Frihamnen**

I explored this contemporary urban development project in Gothenburg as a potential case study with the intent to investigate the dynamics and configurations between top-down and bottom-up approaches and between design and emergence. For this massive riverfront densification (15,000 new inhabitants), the city has been experimenting here with a 'soft' method of urban development, integrating artistic and cultural practices in a gradually transforming park activated with artworks, events, urban agriculture, a sauna, a beach, a playground, a pool, etc. Politicians have claimed that this development will be affordable for all, but this faces resistance from large housing corporations. How these 'soft' methods influence and extend into long-term materialization was of critical interest. All this said, I no longer keep up with this project—although refamiliarizing myself with it may be valuable in order to update my contextual analysis regarding the use of art, culture and participation in urban development.

## **A multivocal intervention of interventions**

The TRADERS Summer School (October 2014) was a three-day event attended primarily by PhD students and consisting of lectures, fieldwork and workshop sessions in which each group was 'mentored' by a TRADERS ESR. My group consisted of Bahbak (London), Inês (Portugal) and Susannah (London). After sharing our research and practices, we decided to challenge the workshop session's underlying assumption that we would come to a consensus and produce a single participatory intervention. Instead, we took this as an opportunity to explore how we might *each* design an intervention, yet still have a group identity and voice. We played with the customary rigidities and expectations of workshopping and began to see the entire session as the site of intervention, and the 'participants' as the other workshop groups. For instance, we used a required interim presentation not to transparently present

our work-in-progress but simply to gather audio samples of questions from the audience, which we used in our final presentation.

For our final presentation we pulled our chairs into a circle (rather than face the audience). Beforehand, we had set up a camera to film the audience and made sure they noticed this. This video could be seen as the actual presentation (to a secondary audience). It recorded the audience, us and the projector screen which would play recordings of video and audio throughout. We proceeded to follow a complex but structured choreography (Figure 60) that began with audio playing from a blank video (the content of Inês' intervention). Then, a question was suddenly aired (by audio—and this was one of the previously-recorded questions from the audience), which cued Inês to present her intervention (to us) as a monologue for about 30-60 seconds, while related but muted video played on the projector screen as background. This was followed by a short dialogue between all of us. The rest of us in turn followed this pattern. The content of each of our proposed interventions—some hypothetical, some enacted prior to the presentation—was important in principle, but not to the overall choreography. To conclude our presentation, we turned our chairs to address the audience, explaining what we each thought our group effort had been about:

*So, actually, our video is happening right now, and this has been about rethinking research structures, processes and principles. It's about an intervention within an intervention, and everything is an experiment. (Inês)*

*And, also I think it's the sort of realization or the recognition and activation of the nuances and, perhaps, the generative value of critical difference inherent within this group, within the wider group and then beyond that, particularly in participatory practice. (Susannah)*

*I guess the value of questions and timing the questions and ending with questions. You've probably seen us experiment with this and include you guys somehow in the process. And, the questions that came up yesterday, although some of them were very short and fast, have been repeated and somehow—we filtered through those questions for what we are producing now. So that was an important process for us to experiment with. (Bahbak)*

*We saw this as a study in how to design a larger framework that resists the suppression of complexities and subjectivities in a dialogical approach which enables multiple voices to work together both autonomously and collectively. (Jon)*

We explored 'multivocality' through interplay between us as individual researchers with different approaches, different audiences, multiple forms of media, varying modalities of activeness/passivity and by dividing the time sequence—and reframing it by expanding it to include more than just the final presentation.

Figure 60: Presentation choreography diagram.

Working with ESR colleague Pablo Calderón Salazar's approach of 'Intervention' during his TRADERS Training Week (#1) in Genk, Belgium, our group's public space intervention, *Mixed Messages*, existed as a real, ephemeral (30 minutes) experience within an imagined (hypothetical) larger video documentation project I proposed and titled *Parting Shots*. This referenced the recent sour breakup of the multinational corporation Ford and the city of Genk and would have aimed to provide a platform for Genkenaars' voices on this monumental breakup (the Ford plant, having been the lifeblood of Genk for decades, was suddenly set to close). The platform would have been modular to allow for incremental growth (rather than a fixed documentary) and exhibit qualities of ambivalence and ambiguity in line with the phrase 'parting shot', which generally connotes angry words said just before walking out the door but need not be negative—it could be neutral, ambivalent or even positive—just a quick 'shot' taken when parting ways (e.g. often uttered by cowboyish characters in cinema or witty comedians). It would have provided room to voice frustration at saying goodbye to Ford *and/or* to speculate on Genk's future. The brevity of the concept, perhaps appropriately mimicked the brevity of the intervention—allowing

reference to a very heavy, sensitive situation without the burden of dwelling exhaustively on it (and perhaps revealing paths to follow further in depth later). The strategy of a 'Parthian shot' (often mistaken as the etymological origin of 'parting shot') is also interesting in reference to Genk's apparent misfortune—Parthian archers would appear to be retreating on horseback at full speed, yet were actually executing an offensive move, their bodies turned backwards to shoot arrows. A third meaning, perhaps most direct and accessible, is to what would have been the platform's succession of camera 'shots'—of: Genkenaars speaking 'parting shots'; of film of the last remnants of the Ford factory and industrial Genk; but, also, of future-oriented images, or simply everyday images that did not fit the simplistic narrative of Genk's inevitable conversion into a [literally] post-Fordist economy.<sup>76</sup>

The actual intervention (Figure 61) involved laser-cut/engraved artifacts, audio samples, an improvised voice recording and 'mixing board', and 'parasiting' an existing public space installation. (Involving artifacts and audio material was a requirement of the Training Week.) We leveraged our rushed, low-budget workshop project into something more publicly visible by appropriating part of a temporary street furniture sculpture located next to Genk's main train station. Here, we set up a low-tech, improvised 'mixing board' and then engaged with about 50 passers-by over the course of a few hours. With audio samples collected earlier through fieldwork (heavy industrial sounds, local interviews about Ford and the general situation, local music, a fellow train passenger, etc.), we produced five audio tracks. Participants could raise or lower the volume of the various themed tracks (industrial, nature, voices, traffic, commercial) while listening (publicly) to the resulting mix in real-time (about 5 seconds lag). Participants were also invited, by hand-held microphone, to say a few words about Genk, or Ford Genk. Their voice sample was then integrated into the mix as a sixth adjustable layer. In exchange for receiving their customized sound track by email, we asked if they would send us a photo of what they decided to do with the following artifact we gave them: a simple laser-cut wood artifact or 'card' engraved with 'FORD' and 'GENK', punctured with holes (to afford hanging, tying, etc.) and separated by a dotted line, dimensioned such that it would take clear intention to actually break it into two pieces.

Especially interesting for me in terms of multivocality was the jumping between mediums (audio, visual, artifactual, digital) and domains (public interaction, personal ownership of the cards, photos taken in private which are then returned to another public—researchers, but hypothetically, given commitment to a larger, longer project, to a public website). Out

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76. The approach of Abounaddara, a Syrian film collective, is inspiring in the way it seeks to complexify a single narrative of the conflict, combining "the temporality of journalism and the poetics of cinema, the mixture of documentary and aesthetic values". See: Kennedy, R. (2014). Syrian Filmmaking Collective Wins Social Justice Art Prize. *The New York Times*. [Online]. 27 October. [Accessed 15 November 2015]. Available from: <https://artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/27/syrian-filmmaking-collective-wins-social-justice-art-prize/>



of 10-15 participants, 4-5 completed a sound track, 10 took a card, and one returned a photo to us. The next day we learned that another participant had posted a photo of her card to Instagram. This led us to reconsider the relevance of digital spheres as sites of/for engagement, especially after we discovered, through the #fordgenk hashtag, an older activist action in which the monument sign to the Ford Factory (reading "GENK FABRIKEN") had been hacked to say "GEEN FABRIKEN" ["NOT A FACTORY"].



Figure 61: *Mixed Messages* intervention.

## Design and participation workshops

With the 'Design and Planning for Social Inclusion' masters studio of Chalmers Architecture, I collaboratively developed, along with Emílio Brandão (architect and instructor) and Sigrid Östlund (a PhD student colleague), project themes for an extended workshop in Hammarkullen, Gothenburg (1-3 October 2015). The workshop was eventually called *Invisible Hammarkullens* (after Calvino's *Invisible Cities*). I led a subcomponent of the workshop which included designing and constructing a wood structure with a group of students. This structure was designed to be appropriated by other groups of students as part of supporting their own participatory workshops during Hammarkullen's annual Kulturvandring [Culture Walk/Wandering] festival.

In the previous year (October 2014), I designed a workshop in collaboration with Emílio and Hammarkullen's Kulturvandring festival, in which students engaged and worked with local and visiting artists to design a *konstvandring* [artistic wandering]. Students, in groups of 3-4, designed a way to involve and 'guide' participants along a portion of the circuit, coordinating with the other student groups on the use of participatory artifacts, a larger narrative and the connection and choreography *between* groups.

## ***Betty's Almanac***

This is also known by its workshop title "Problematising Post-Fordist Instrumentalisation of Art and Design Labor". Here, I co-designed a 'worktable' (small group workshop) in coordination with a local community garden as part of the TRADERS Autumn School in Genk, Belgium, 10-13 November 2015. For a full description see Appendix 11.

## **AHA! Festival 2016: Uni-Verse**

I joined the planning team for the concept phase and later-stage support for this three-day art and science festival at Chalmers which explores meeting points between art and science. During a group brainstorm to come up with a title, after 'the universe' emerged as a possible theme, I proposed the hyphen to parse it into two modes I refer to as the *poetic-integrative* (a desire and method of unifying) and the *poetic-resistive* (a desire and method of diverging). 'Verse' connotes not only a line of poetry but the poet's subjective/aesthetic (and practical) 'turning' from one line to another. The word has etymological roots in the plowman's agricultural practice of 'turning' from one row or *versus* to the next (*vertere*, "to turn"; *versus*, "a line, row, line of verse, line of writing"). 'Uni-verse' is thus defined as multivocal, encompassing the movements toward both objectivity and subjectivity found within art and science. The festival, now in its fourth year, began in the Architecture department, but last year joined in collaboration with the Physics department. I invited noise artist and theoretician, Joseph Nechvatal, who gave a talk about his book *Immersion Into Noise* (2011) and created an audio installation. As the AHA platform is fertile multi- and transdisciplinary ground conducive to testing new modes of collaboration, this year's festival may be another opportunity to experiment.

## **Modelling in Dialogue (TRADERS Training Week #5)**

As part of the TRADERS project, each ESR (except one) was required to design, plan and coordinate a 'Training Week', inviting the others (as well as local researchers and other guests) to the local context, training them in the host ESR's thematic approach. A specific budget (quite sufficient) was provided and managed locally by the ESR and their supervisor. I hosted the fifth and final Training Week, which I planned in collaboration with my supervisor, Catharina Dyrssen, and my supervisors from practice, Ylva Mühlenbock and Borghild Håkansson of the Gothenburg Cultural Department (the TRADERS associated partner). For me, preparations amounted to five weeks of full-time work, requiring me to postpone my licentiate seminar.

With the three-day event, my intention was to foreground artistic and cultural approaches to dialogue and participation, emphasizing the role of multivocality in both

design aims and methods as well as the strategic role of institutions—especially those of the public sector—in supporting and advancing societal change in collaboration with artists and designers. Children's and youth's rights and perspectives, along with pedagogies linked with art, design and participation were also featured. We engaged the local context and a variety of academic, artistic and cultural actors, including the public, through workshops, lectures and a reading group. The program booklet, including an overview, schedule, literature reader bibliography, *dialogical talkbox* description and design concepts text, is included as Appendix 12.

The design concept was multivocal in the sense that I choose to include speakers with whom I had had a wide variety of relations: some who I had spoken to or worked with closely; others I had never met except through their work; others were almost entirely new to me; and still other voices were more unexpected and emergent (e.g. in the *dialogical talkbox* session, described in the following section).

To integrate a distinct dialogical layer, two illustrators were invited not only to simply document vignettes from the proceedings on-site, but to 'speak' critically (being more subjective and selective than one already is). Their illustrations were later assembled into a digital book (see Appendix 8) which was also printed for the participants.

### *Dialogical talkbox*

This session, within the TRADERS Training Week I organized, explored how 12 participant-speakers from diverse realms (researchers, youth, members of the public) could give a lecture with 24 voices in a non-hierarchical but structured 'checkerboard' pattern (see the fifth page of Appendix 12). Highly prompted expressions were counterposed with as many highly undetermined. Participants were asked, some weeks in advance, two separate questions: "What if children owned parts of the city?" and "Who are you?", and asked to respond through separate 1-2 minute presentations. The first question was highly specific and speculative, and elaborated in a short description, while the second was quite open (we invited participants to present themselves, their current project, interests, inspirations, especially as they relate to art, design and/or the city).

The first question intended to draw a diverse range of reactions to the idea of a new type of community land trust: a network of land owned and operated by children and youth. This experiment was similar to *AD2077* in its intention of weaving in a utopian layer. The thought was also to potentially connect to a longer project in coordination with the case which follows.

## Right of window

*Like all things in architecture, openness and closure only matter if they can assist man in his alternating inclination towards inside and outside.* (Van Eyck, 1956 in Ligtelijn and Strauven, 2008, 126) [emphasis added]

This early-envisioned 'meta' case study (that might have framed and interacted with other case studies, as I tried but mostly failed to do with *Ett skepp*) takes an artistic-architectural starting point in the late Austrian artist Friedensreich Hundertwasser's proposed 'window right' or 'right of window'. This legal right appeared in at least one of his building's list of tenant rights and was among many rights (human and vegetable) that he would advocate for over his lifetime. By claiming it, apartment inhabitants could paint, tile or otherwise decorate the extent of the wall outside their window that was within their arm's (or paintbrush's) reach. This, he hoped, would work to counteract what he saw as dehumanizing and relentless, barren rectilinear architecture, especially that going up in Vienna with mass standardization. It would make it "visible from afar to everyone in the street that someone lives there who is different from the imprisoned, enslaved, standardised man who lives next door." (Hundertwasser, 1990) Although he was vehement in his ideological opposition to the straight line, the aesthetic quality of some of his work arguably comes from the superimposition of free-flowing wandering lines or forms on a rectilinear background (see Figure 62). This connects closely to the aesthetics I have started to experiment with: the play between controlled design frameworks or 'support' and an emergent, organic and potentially unruly 'infill' articulated by way of collaboration and/or participation ('support/infill' are terms used by Dutch architect, educator and theorist N. John Habraken (1974)).



Figure 62: Hundertwasser's ideological aesthetic (against any straight line), when superimposed on actual rectilinearity, collided the two systems, creating an arguably more complex aesthetic. At left, a photograph taken by Hundertwasser in 1952 of a sewer grate alluding to the mass standardization of housing (Taschen, 2013, 33). At middle, "The Hamburg Line" (1959) a continuous line drawn over two full days at the Institute of Fine Arts in Hamburg during Hundertwasser's time as associate

professor. (Restany, 2001, 27). At right, a view of the Hundertwasserhaus in Vienna, 1983-85 (architects Hundertwasser and Josef Krawina, planning by architect Peter Pelikan).

The 'right of window' was conceptualized as a multivocal spatial metaphor poetically linking interrelated assertions of rights to creative expression and political-spatial rights. These rights include: the Right to the City, rights to visibility and to invisibility. These components would have been engaged through action and reflection on/about the literal and figurative threshold space of the window, under the umbrella of a 'right of window' organization. Seen as a hybrid of normative aims, poetic frameworks and artistic practices potentially operating simultaneously, 'right of window' would have had "several metaphors that are latent in it", as Philip Wheelwright says of one of Heraclitus' *Fragments* (1959, 99).

During my trip for the InSEA conference in Vienna, I met with the Hundertwasser Foundation to find out more about their work, introduce myself and pose the idea of future collaboration. For now, though, it is all clearly too ambitious to develop in practice. But, in future research, the figurative threshold of the window (and door) as an operable aperture affording both connection and disconnection could be developed further theoretically (the 'Black Boxes Breathing' section of Paper 2 (Appendix 4) lightly engages with this).

## **Chapter 4**

### **Concluding Discussion and Further Research**



During the process of reflection on the primary case study, the key concept of 'context' grew in importance for its capacity to communicate and critically challenge the other key concepts. Thus, Section 2.5 raised a number of practice-oriented considerations in regard to 'context' that can now be revisited in a more theory-oriented discussion in the following section (4.1). This is followed by Section 4.2, which revisits the other key concepts—gathered under the terms 'multivocality, separation and design'—in relation to the primary case study and to the designer's agency more broadly. Finally, Section 4.3 indicates the key aims and possible points of departure for further research.

Before continuing, it should be reiterated that, although theory is very present in and impactful on my empirical work, this thesis leaves more substantial development of theory and concepts for the next research stage. Even so, as mentioned, theory and empirical work are highly interactive in my research approach, and it has been important to emphasize this. Chapter 1, for instance, discussed the main points of theory—the key concepts—through perspectives on the role and agency of involved actors, disciplinary approaches and project contexts, especially in relation to my own position as a designer/researcher. To further acknowledge the influence of theory, I will give a brief background on the emergence of the key concepts within my research process.

Initial literature studies helped to construct an alternate understanding of dialogue which emphasized qualities of indirectness, incommunicability, multivocality—qualities avoided or ignored when dialogue is used as a unidirectional process converging towards consensus. These qualities inform the expanded multidirectional understanding of dialogue I have explored. Among these qualities, 'multivocality' became a touchstone: because of the connotation of 'voice' with societal issues of participation, democracy, public space, spaces of representation, and so on, and because of its emphasis (perhaps *too* much emphasis if the analogy with the novel's author is taken too strictly) on the designer as someone who can calibrate, articulate, stage, amplify, enable, reveal, etc. multiple voices within a larger



framework. This led to the question of how the voices in multivocality are interrelated and how the designer can engage with these relations (by both designing and not designing them). 'Separation' emerged as a key parameter structuring all three qualities, particularly multivocality, first for its role in enabling specific voices to be heard distinctly, then to let them engage dynamically without compulsion to merge.

'Context' was a late-arriving but fundamental theme, implicit in the figures of the persons 'out of' or 'in place' and central to analysis and reflection. 'Context' can be seen in relation to compositional issues (how to design or deal with divergence), but it is also critically charged in the sense that, in a given situation, one may or may not desire to be 'contextual'. The notion of context is highly relevant to discussions on interactions between the global and the local, including the nomadism within post-Fordism and art/design practices and it holds interesting parallels with the architectural or urban project's relation to its site or context. Although the next section expands on some of these issues, future research will engage more intensely with them.

## 4.1 Revisiting Context

The normative aim of *Ett skepp*, at the level of the participants, was mainly to build empathy towards their unknown neighbors, tolerance of limits and the unknown, connecting to a wider societal-level need for greater 'dialogical capacity' or empathy towards 'strangers' (Amin, 2012). Considering that this aim intended to break up a view of context as fixed—single, stable and knowable—, there were many design instances and movements that were intentionally *not* calibrated closely with context seen in this way. Here, one can recall the way the project evolved, expanded and multiplied over time in relation to potentials and contingencies, rather than confronting the context with a single response—however well-attuned it might have been. One can also think of the certain degree of indifference I held—at the level of workshop design and content—towards the specificities of the local inhabitants, the participants and the exhibition visitors. These specificities are of course cherished personally, and were experienced vividly throughout the project, but, again, the aims and the research interest lay at less-specific registers: urban social relations, enacting artistic-cultural processes in public space, the relations between project components. For example, while the workshop designs and tool-artifacts were designed contextually in some senses—e.g. considering the age of the participants—they were primarily designed as infrastructures or scaffolds with capacity to support a wide range of expressions and interests rather than custom-designed along a narrow line of inquiry. And, although the work was later exhibited, analyzing the specific content of this work with/for the participants would have been counterproductive to the project's aims as it would have been a move towards singularizing or stabilizing knowledge about the context.

Conditions of my individual research situation—the language barrier, lack of time and frequent interruptions—played a large role in providing opportunities to accentuate the project's aims, but also in generating anxiety about how aspects of the project might have been improved with more focused and deeper attention.

It should also be noted that creating new artifacts is another way of potentially colliding with a static notion of context, as even the most contextual building, for example, changes the experience of a site—its scale, rhythm, texture, and so on.

### Art as a simultaneous separation from and connection to context

An artistic approach denotes a specific relation to context which is nearly always about distorting or reconfiguring a singular, monovocal 'context', *separating from* this context to some degree, in order to reconfigure it. Rancière's formulation of 'the aesthetic' (and 'the political') as a 'reconfiguration of the sensible' is about creating a 'new' context through reshaping and redividing<sup>77</sup> the old (separating anew). Shklovsky's work on the relation between 'form' and 'content' is helpful in thinking the complexity of relations between and in theorizing how one might engage with these relations as a designer.

I came to Shklovsky's work by way of my early interest in *indirectness* (and this out of my reading of Bakhtin). First, through his seminal essay "Art as Technique" (also translated as "Art as Device") in *Theory of Prose* (1925) and later through *Bowstring: On the Dissimilarity of the Similar* (1970). The former epitomizes the school of literary criticism that would come to be known as Russian Formalism. In this school, techniques or 'devices' of art/poetry were 'isolated in the laboratory', considered apart from the wider social or historical context, and considered as mechanisms in themselves, as 'form'. 'Form' was said to define art rather than 'content'. Shklovsky's essay coined the term 'defamiliarization' or estrangement (*ostranenie*), and went so far as to claim that content itself was not important, that art was simply the sum of its various devices. The underlying motivation for the Formalists was to fight against the 'automatization' of perception (part of the wider 'automatization of society'<sup>78</sup>), to study how these mechanisms wake up and renew perception.

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77. Eric Méchoulan points out that the French *partage* of Rancière's '*partage du sensible*' "can have two almost opposite meanings, the first is 'to share, to have in common,' the second, 'to divide, to share out.'" See: Méchoulan, E. (2004). Introduction: On the Edges of Jacques Rancière. In *SubStance*. #103, 33(1), 3-9.

78. Assumably related to industrialization, but also to political context (opposing Bolshevism resulted in Shklovsky having to go into hiding at least twice.). Shklovsky perhaps had some personal interest in indirect, obscure and ambiguous approaches, as a way of eluding the censors of the day.

*By 'enstranging' objects and complicating form, the device of art makes perception long and 'laborious.'* (Shklovsky, 1925)

Yet, by 1970 in *Bowstring*, Shklovsky, looking back on his youth, espoused a softer Formalism, being more transparent about theorizing and acknowledging the artist's relationship to context or 'content' (estrangement was always a mechanism about pulling one away from context or habit). In new terms, Shklovsky defines art as the collision of the old (the similar) with the new (the dissimilar), or, as he memorably puts it: "the innovator is a guide who changes the tracks but who also knows the old pathways" (423). Context as a collection of sedimented rules and habits—familiarity—is essential in this formulation as he later shows by quoting the composer Stravinsky, who was often accused of ignoring the traditional 'rules' of music, but who, in fact, actually had deep knowledge of and respect for the rules and the restraints they provided, as they were essential to "prevent free will from degenerating into full blown exorbitance" (228). This recalls the critical regionalism approach in architecture which sought to bridge [conceptually separated] vernacular and modern traditions.<sup>79</sup> This artistic approach does not aspire to an absolute avant-garde newness but rather stages a conflict between the contextual and the anti- or para-contextual, and from these tensions it draws its energy and potential agency.

In the primary case study, connectivity to context or to 'the old' can be read in my decisions to engage with existing institutions and programs: the Frölunda School, its after-school program, the Museum Lessons, etc. For participants, a secondary audience and myself, these existing elements of 'the old' provide certain restraints or familiar pathways from which to venture out from into the 'new'. But connecting to 'the old' can also generate transformative effects by reinforcing and building on the momentum of existing long-term processes, e.g. the after-school program, which itself had been reinforced by the school's embrace of the El Sistema model. These agencies relate more to mechanisms of gradual institutional change than to mechanisms of art, but both will be discussed further in future research.

Another reading would note that each individual workshop activity or tool-artifact in itself was without a great deal of 'newness' or unfamiliarity and so might be considered "old pathways" in Shklovsky's terms. The innovative 'changing of the tracks' then, to continue his analogy, came rather in the novelty of configurations between the groups and other project components, and in other inlaid elements such as my voice in the exhibition. This begins to describe a method that, rather than trying to innovate the entirety of the content, configures 'contextual' work (here meaning somewhat predictable or familiar work) in

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79. See: Frampton, K. (1983). Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance. In Foster, H. (ed.). *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*.

unfamiliar ways *and* strategically inlays unfamiliar or critical aspects. This method, which I have also explored in a number of secondary case studies and experiments, overturns the idea that the designer must: 'rethink everything' (designing and redesigning everything possible); be in control throughout; and be constantly anchored to a central thread or single purpose. Instead, this method is a way to both value plurality of voices and experiment with the strategic value of inlaying the designer's voice. In *AD2077*, the designer's voice swam in and out of a maelstrom of different aspects and activities within the umbrella project (most remaining hypothetical). Other, less critical voices—creative-class- and commerce-boosters—did the same, at first simulated by design, but, then—had the project been taken further—perhaps in actuality. One can imagine that the project might have then been able to leverage agencies provided by 'the old' (mainly funding, legitimacy and communications), to see how far one could transparently smuggle in progressive ideas (i.e. a radical urban project and program with associated support including top-level salaries for artists). To return to Shklovsky's analogy, perhaps there is more transformative potential in rerouting or 'changing the tracks' than in creating whole new rail lines.

### The myth of a stable context

'Contextual' or 'situated' is often understood automatically as a positive quality in itself for its association with modes of embedded, slow, long-term engagement which hone in on and *defer to* assumably stable (or specific) qualities of a particular site or situation. 'Contextual', though, might better be said to indicate an interactive process of seeking greater understanding of a situation and calibrating and recalibrating action in dialogue with it—including with time constraints, contingencies, conflicts and miscommunications, which also form part of the context.

In "The Production of Locality" in *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (1996), Appadurai flags as "one of the grand clichés of social theory" the assumed stability of locality as a fixed property and the accompanying narrative of its assailment under modern conditions. Appadurai argues instead for understanding locality as fragile and ephemeral, requiring constant production, reproduction and maintenance (although this is increasingly difficult<sup>80</sup>). He distinguishes 'locality' from a more stable category of 'neighborhood', viewing the former as "primarily relational and contextual" and the latter as "scalar or spatial" (179).<sup>81</sup>

Appadurai's discussion is insightful in relation to multivocality because the 'production of locality' operates as a convergence mechanism (towards a single voice) (analogous to the

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80. See p. 189. See also: Amin, A. (2012). *Land of Strangers*.

81. Appadurai's discussion about the definition of 'context' will be brought into further research.

political mechanism Rancière calls the 'police') yet is constantly frustrated in this task by contingencies and other factors related to the challenge of actually situating idealism, as well as by global/outside forces. The 'production of locality' resembles the use of dialogue as a convergence mechanism towards consensus in that both, in their unidirectional pursuit of an abstract, singularizing ideal, have to repress or ignore complexity and multidirectionality in order to achieve an [illusory] stability.

Understanding context as indicating fixed traits or properties (Appadurai's 'trait geographies')—or context as a sum of interrelations is also problematic in that it tends to obscure latent agencies which might be activated to transform the context. The key here is a certain freedom of separation from [the constraints of] context, a freedom to reconfigure a new context, as in the fundamental freedom Rancière finds in the philosophy of democracy and aesthetics.

### **Institutioning as engagement with context**

During an inquiry into the contemporary challenges of urban activism (see Appendix 3), it became clear that if the Left was to have any future (and, if we are to), a new kind of engagement by artists, designers and/or activists was called for. Many have critiqued the left's aversion to power, to wielding power or to 'closure' (e.g. Harvey, Unger and Rancière)<sup>82</sup>. As discussed in Section 1.2.2, Mouffe calls for a new critical engagement with institutions against the alternative strategy of withdrawal or 'exodus'. She dispels the idea that institutions are monolithic blocks to be automatically shunned.<sup>83</sup> Theories of gradual institutional change, particularly Mahoney and Thelen (2010), question the validity and efficacy of revolutionary change as a model and instead propose a much more nuanced and actionable view describing a fourfold typology of gradual institutional change as well as four categories of 'change agents', while acknowledging that manifold combinations are manifested in practice.

That my PhD position included a formal link with Gothenburg's Cultural Department, a public sector partner, has brought a new view on Mouffe's call, besides opening up new perspectives (e.g. the role of culture, democracy from the public sector's point of view, etc.). It has become easier to think of change in meso-scale terms, somewhere between the intersubjective and Rancière's political 'reconfiguration' which involves the formation or articulation of new collectivities. In this meso-scale is where indirectness operates (usually

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82. See: Harvey, D. (2000). *Spaces of Hope*. 154-196; and Rancière, J. (2010). *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*. 59-61.

83. My co-authors and I embrace this call in the article referenced in Appendix 6. Mouffe, C. (2013). Institutions as Sites of Agonistic Intervention. In Gielen, P. (ed.). *Institutional Attitudes: Instituting Art in a Flat World*. 63-77.

slowly), as captured by Mahoney and Thelen's almost geological terms for types of gradual institutional change: 'displacement', 'layering', 'drift' and 'conversion'.

Within any given institution, one can analyze a complex landscape of action vectors driving towards (or parasiting on) either the old, the new, or some combination. But, when stepping back to ask what is specific about a city-level—and a public sector—institution, one can see that, in a democratic system, a public sector institution works against the grain of 'the political'. It is, in Rancière's terms, 'the police': setting policy, governing, distributing resources, exerting power. It has a strong hand in 'setting the context'. In this sense, a designer engaging with institutions, or 'institutioning' (Huybrechts et al., *forthcoming*—see Appendix 6), is engaging with context, with consensus, with policing, and may variously challenge or consolidate institutional frames (or create new ones).

Yet, context, when understood as 'the local', is often resisted—especially at a larger scale level—by a public sector institution who sees their role as protecting and promoting the wider 'public good'. Part of this role is to uphold democratic principles by avoiding favoritism towards a specific local group. This oversimplifies, however, as there are numerous nested scales within any institutional level which equate to smaller and smaller publics (for example an urban development in a specific neighborhood). That said, a city-level *cultural* department has an automatic interest in the translocal, and most likely an interest in the global. This establishes conditions for resisting context, for resisting the 'production of locality'—or at least entering into a dialogue with it.

To engage with institutions is to enter into a heterogeneous field, potentially reinforcing some existing structures (context) while reconfiguring others (resisting and/or transforming the context).

## 4.2 Revisiting Multivocality, Separation and Design

### Multivocality and 'voice'

The primary case study allowed a number of different conditions, mechanisms and configurations of multivocality to be explored, both from an 'exterior' perspective of designing *for* multivocality and from an 'interior' perspective of also being a participant *within* multivocality—with my own voice effecting and being effected by the changing project dynamics. The shifts and evolution towards making my own 'voice' more present in the project can be seen as important for strengthening its multivocality, but firstly for making my power relations (and my various positions of weakness, e.g. language, experience, etc.) more transparent. This self-reflexivity was also the key theme of the

TRADERS Autumn school workshop (*Betty's Almanac* / Appendix 11). In a post-Fordist context increasingly binding work to a nomadic, individual identity or voice, critically disclosing one's relation to the project (and the project's relation to wider societal level) becomes a more difficult but pressing challenge.

The role of the 'voice' of the material/artifact and the environment in *Ett skepp* was critical in a number of ways, especially from a disciplinary perspective of architecture and urbanism. Principally, it acted as a pedagogic method (both actively in the artifacts I constructed, and passively—the environment of public space acting as a 'third teacher'). As inter-group relations were central to *Ett skepp*, functioning as an analogue to indirect relations between neighbors/strangers, artifacts and environments (workshop sites and the exhibition space) were key conduits of indirect relations between participant groups, along with shared themes and a type of knowledge about each other that did not require them to have met in person. 'Articulating' the voice of artifacts through careful design attention and craft reinforced an ethic of taking participants seriously, which was understood on an individual level but also enabled a larger reconfiguration in the way exhibition visitors and public-sector cultural actors saw the participants and their work. With care not to fall into processes of consumerism or aestheticization, the 'voice' of the artifact—or spatial design in the case of *AD2077*, for example—can be acknowledged to have a substantial role in aiming for political reconfigurations.

Engaging with multivocality as a designer involves a structural problem and risk of dilution of effort and focus. The turbulent, impossible investigative task of pursuing all knowledge about neighbors, dramatized by the exhibition, paralleled my own artistic research process which was aggravated by the hyper-epistemic conditions of TRADERS. This overloadedness—at times too much for any 'dialogical capacity' to handle—should elicit cautions when engaging with multivocality, especially given the many resonances with post-Fordist modes of constant activity and overactivity.

## Separation

By placing design focus primarily on the 'outside' of participation in *Ett skepp*—the indirect and often separated relations between groups, workshops or periods of participation—more and other types of relations could be created and other types of reconfigurations achieved in the realms between. Keeping the groups separated seems to have been made potentially effective mainly by the key turn in the project which was afforded by the institutional level: the expanded space of representation that the full exhibition gave. Without it, other methods would have been required to counterbalance potentially too much divergence in voices.

At the workshop level, on the 'inside' of participation, separation of the workshop participants from the local inhabitants through distanced methods played a similar role in opening up another kind of knowledge more empathetic and tolerant of the unknown. Ruptures in the system [of indirectness] stood out more in memory—perhaps also in the memory of the participants.

Strategies of only loosely connecting or 'tethering' normative aims—however utopian (e.g. those of the *dialogical talkbox* or *AD2077*)—to artistic and participatory processes seem to hold potential in providing artistic, cultural and/or pedagogical or other value in the present while using this very value to scaffold passages through which these aims might travel. The indirect link between the two seems to encourage each to be more dynamic and open to cross-influence, and for relations over time to become a key factor. The rhythm of interaction between the two has been of key experimental interest, whether it was the staccato pattern of presentations on starkly different topics in the *dialogical talkbox* or the irregular and obscured intertwining of the two in *AD2077*.

Separations within multivocality are complex and changing over time, often changing valences to become connections. My attempt to bend the figure of the 'researcher from outer space'—a figure of separation *par excellence*—into a plural and connective 'we researchers' is one example. Separations are often entangled or ambivalent when considering different frames of reference or analytical levels, so, while the groups in *Ett skepp* were separated, for instance, they were simultaneously connected by the wider institutional collaboration.

There are affinities between the aims and methods involved in the primary case study, research methodology and a public-sector perspective in terms of a certain ethic of separation. As a pluridisciplinary research approach and transdisciplinary ethic requires embracing separate modes of knowledge and participant input, so a public-sector perspective of embracing diverse modes and practices of culture resists attempts to synthesize them by smoothing over their differences.

### **Design, aesthetics and separation**

Rather than designing only objects, processes, or towards purposes, I have been most interested in exploring a multivocal approach of designing both 'forests' or 'field conditions' and 'paths that lead inside', which can be seen as designs (attempts to transforming existing situations) laying *within* rather than as singular, monovocal centers of attention. This is seen in *Ett skepp* in the contrast between its openness (e.g. the spacious and indirect 'constellation' relation between the workshops and groups) and the intensity of design focus on individual workshops, artifacts and aesthetics. *AD2077* likewise imagined a larger project structure within which individual workshops and designs would lay within. The



various cases and experiments could also be said to explore different degrees and modes of relation *over time* between the 'whole' design (or forest and its paths) and the design 'parts' (or paths).

Aesthetics as a Rancièrian mode of reframing or reconfiguring thus operated, in the primary case study, mainly within an 'internal landscape' made heterogeneous and shifting by its separations—in the way that intentioned design moves set or shifted interrelations between the 'forest', its various 'paths' and various participants/groups (including myself) and their [art]work. Yet, this landscape became an aesthetic framing itself when the exhibition design reconfigured this landscape's components and presented this reconfiguration to exhibition visitors and participants with intense care and seriousness.

This framing became the key larger-scale reconfiguration: that of taking children and youth seriously by treating them as fellow collaborating artists/researchers and their work on the same plane of value.<sup>84</sup> This was also linked to my attitude from the start which conceived of and made sure that the workshop tool-artifacts had aesthetic and artistic value.<sup>85</sup> This aestheticizing of process rather than just the result arguably elevated the overall quality which better enabled the participants to be taken seriously, and see that they were being taken seriously. The ethic of equality is what enabled the reconfiguration which resulted in the cultural department actors recognizing this project as another way of working with children (and way of exhibiting their work), that takes them seriously. This ethic automatically risks obscuring power relations in its attempt to reorder them. The issue of power relations in participatory and collaborative processes remains as difficult as ever, perhaps even more so in artistic and cultural registers where value, meaning and reality are more subject to bending and inversion. But, the exhibition acted as a hybrid of this equality-ethic and a more dynamic making-transparent-of my large role in the project, as well as animating the project as a continuing process by involving the exhibition visitors in the participatory installation.

### 4.3 Further Research

Further research will sharpen focus on theorizing the mechanisms that have been empirically explored in the primary case study and draw them further into and from an urban-architectural perspective of alternative pluridisciplinary practice. This will be connected

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84. To problematize: it was not the participants, but me who made the decision to treat their work on the same plane of value, so this mediated process would fall under Rancière's notion of aesthetic reconfiguration which involves a 'politics of aesthetics', rather than an 'aesthetics of politics' (which would more describe a group that self-organizes to claim equal treatment, for instance).

85. Part of this was so that the artifacts and quality of materials could speak more loudly to the participants in an affective pedagogical sense—also to partially compensate for our lack of verbal communication.

with problematizing my position within the contemporary post-Fordist context—individually and in relation to working with/within institutions. The aim will be to build up a more nuanced language and understanding to communicate the dialogical relationalities involved, further studying 'separation' as a strategy, but also as a condition already present within contexts in which a designer might engage (e.g. the 'disjunctures' discussed by Appadurai). The prospective theory domains include: aesthetics (Rancière); assemblage theory; dialogism (Bakhtin); the global/local; new materialism, especially Bennett's 'vital materialism' (2010); collage theory and perhaps some noise art theory (Nechvatal, 2011); field conditions; and contemporary theory on estrangement in relation to post-Fordism and creative practice.

Further areas of theory to develop include: the agencies of a dialogical approach; definitions and theories of culture; wider societal implications of artistic and cultural modes of participation; the relation of aesthetics and aestheticization to certain power relations (processes of gentrification, for instance); and the value of 'dialogical capacity' in contemporary urban conditions.



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## Appendices

[ *Groundwork and development* ]

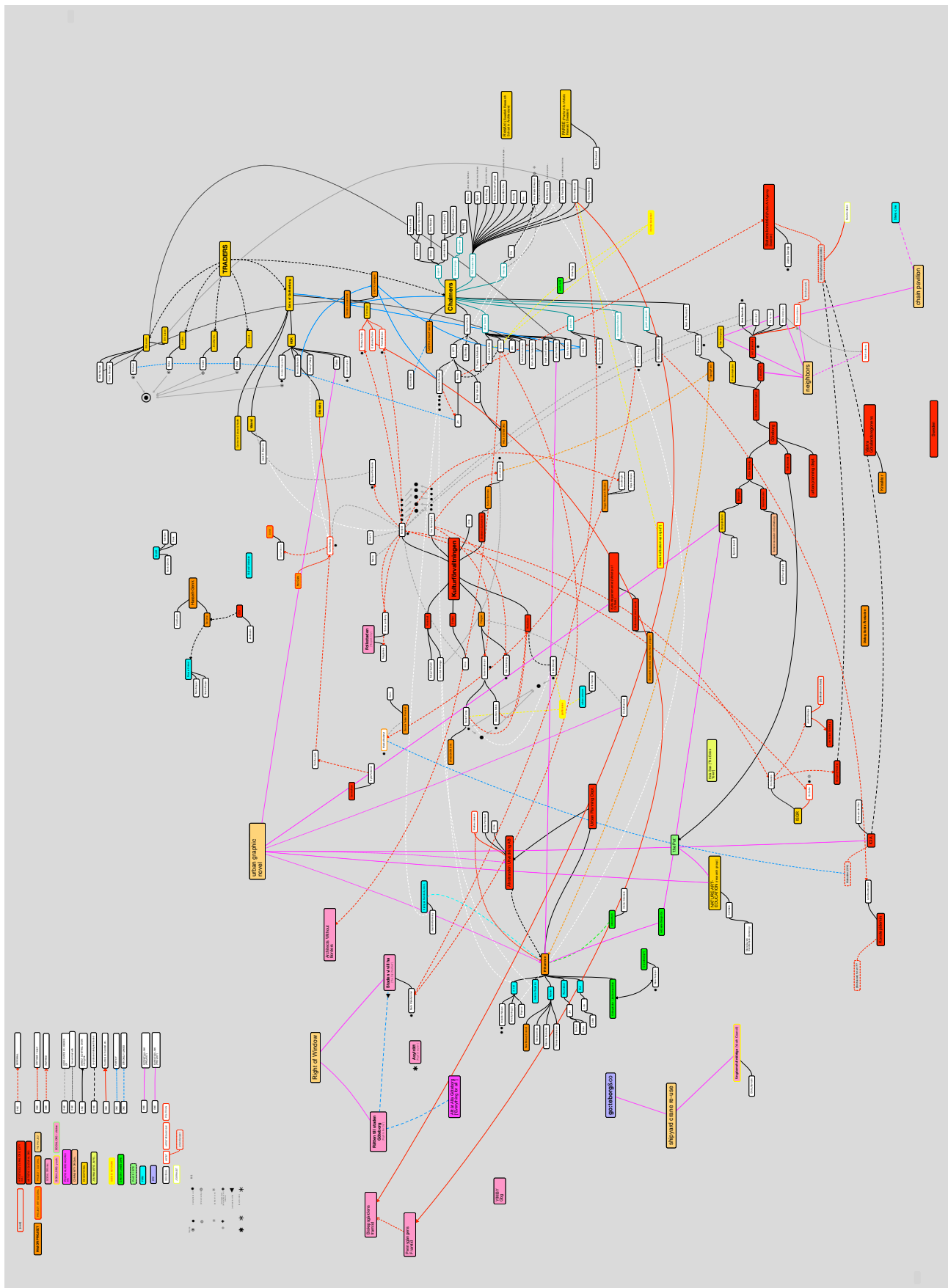
## Appendix 1 - Network maps

*Incomplete representations from efforts to map networks of knowledge (primarily local) and actors (primarily related to potential case studies).*

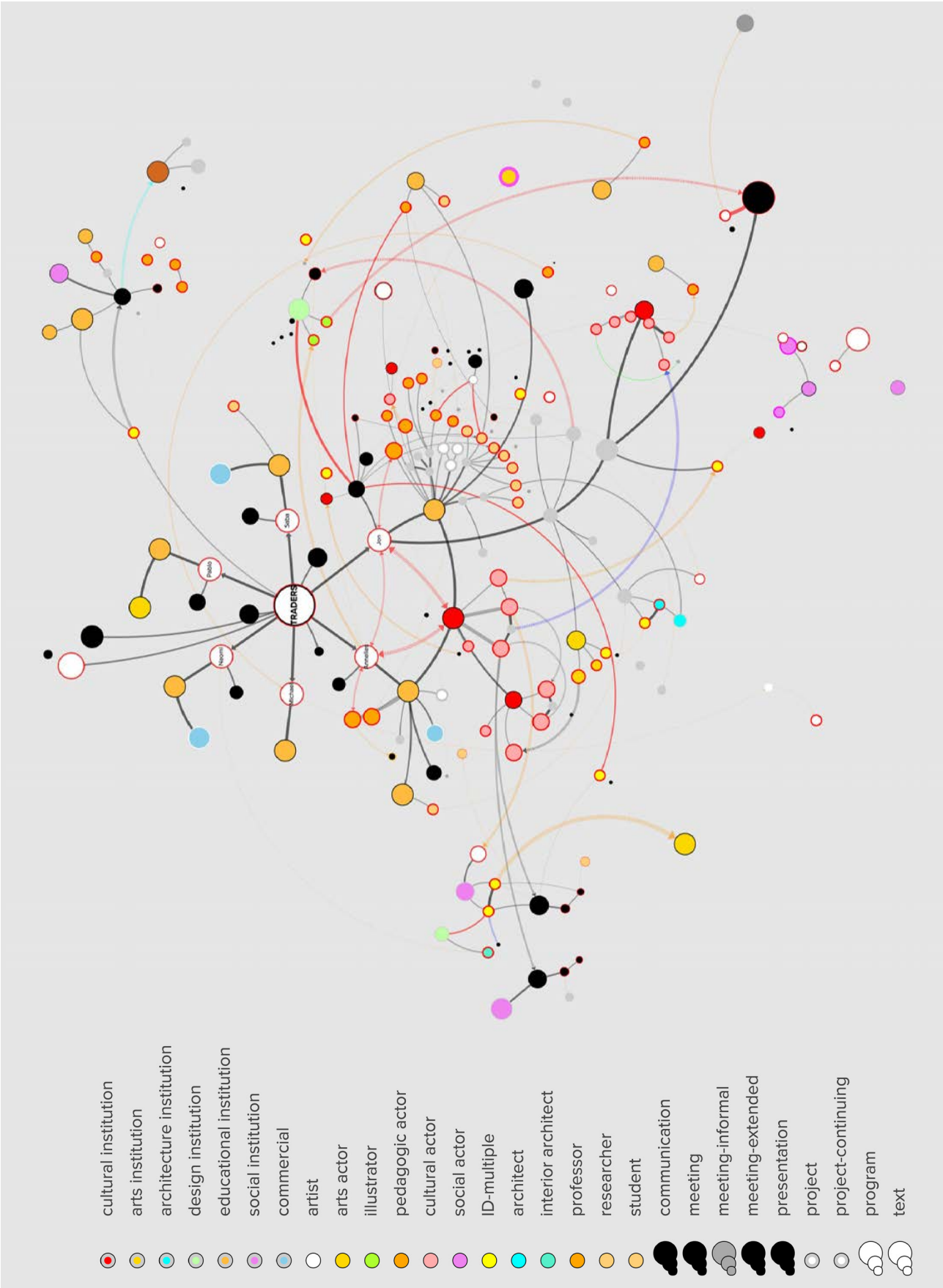
1.1 Initial local network map (weighted towards 2014)

1.2 Later network map [partially] updated with non-local actors (TRADERS, etc.)

## Appendix 1.1 - Initial local network map (weighted towards 2014)



Appendix 1.2 - Later network map [partially] updated with non-local actors (TRADERS, etc.)





## Appendix 2 - Theoretical-methodological framework diagrams

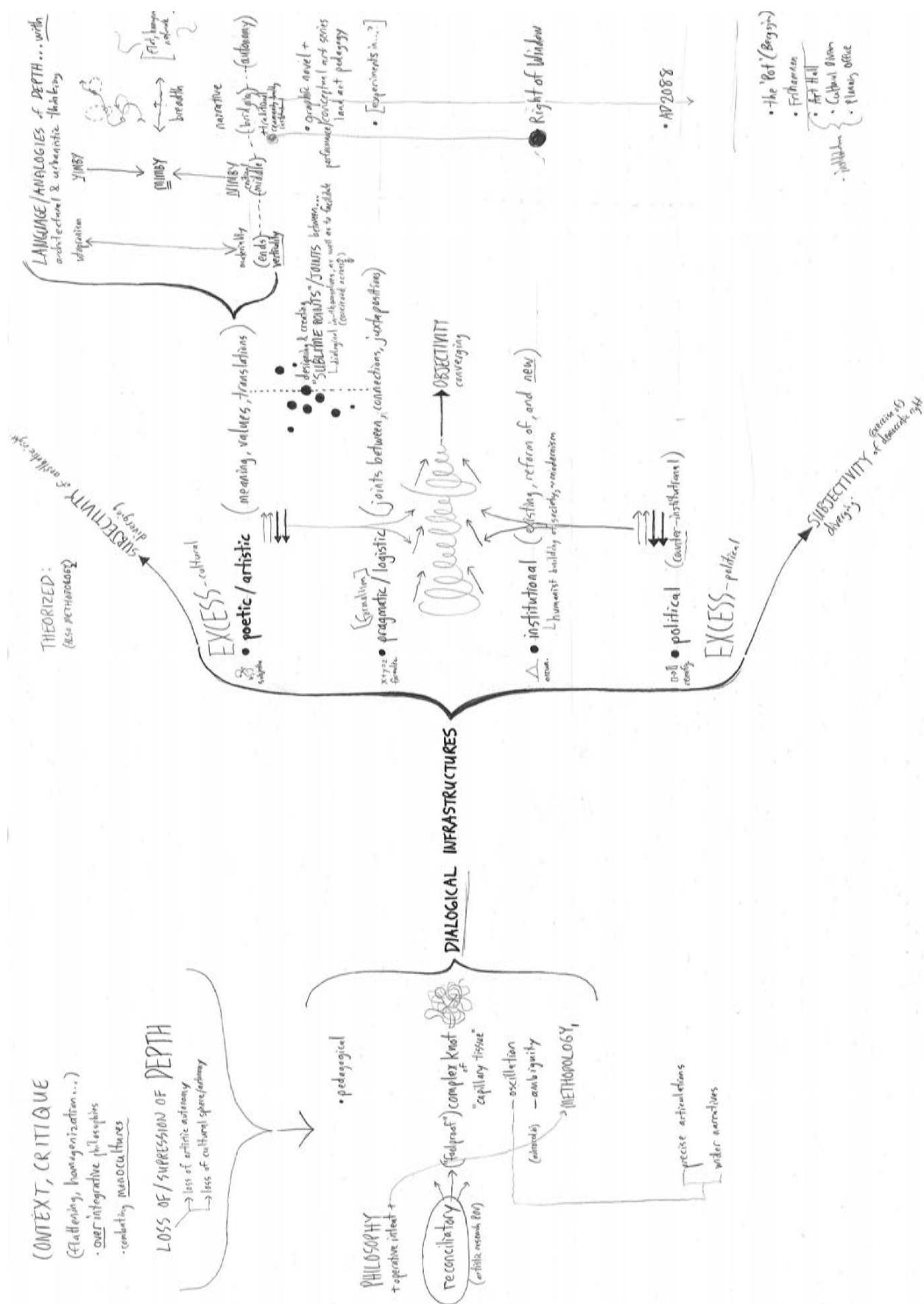
*Diagrams used to work out and represent the evolving theoretical-methodological framework.*

- 2.1 'Disrupting World-Flattening: Designing Thresholds Between/As Worlds'  
(March 2014 - for *Transvaluation* course)
- 2.2 'Dialogical Infrastructures' (July 2014)
- 2.3 TRADERS midterm review posters (June 2015)



[illegible]

## Appendix 2.2 - 'Dialogical Infrastructures' (July 2014)



## Appendix 2.3 - TRADERS midterm review posters (June 2015)

addictions and overcome them, not by covering them up, but by pursuing them."

—Theodor W. Adorno, 1962, quoted in Bergman & Madsen, *Accidents*, 2005

s and gives suggestive paths that lead inside."

—Victor Shklovsky, *Lessons On the Difficulty of the Simple*, 1970, 302

communication that breeds communication."

—Neil Postman, "Technology, Autism, 'Meaning along communication'", 2011, 24

together opposite qualities and solutions?"

—Abdo Van Sark, *On the Other Side of the Coin*, 1992

**Philosophy:** is an experimental urban planning process in Gothenburg integrating alternative spatial practices who consider the city with visual, artistic, cultural and social aspects and events. Of interest are the dynamics between top-down design, bottom-up emergence and design for the latter—as well as the strength of connection to the long-term development.

**Thematic myths & fallacies → corrections**

- singular fixed identity → multiple, variable identity
- fully 'authentic' contextualisation/groundness → local-global dialogue
- harmonious community (economic) → diversity & disagreement (ideological), urbanity (living & work) (co-existence of divergences)
- fully transparent communication → interplay of transparent & opaque (mis)communication
- stable equilibrium → dynamism, complexity
- autonomy → redundancy, excess (sustainability vs. frailty)
- total control/integration/synthesis → 'loose parts', increased variation, spontaneity
- laissez-faire → institutional support/regulating against misregulation
- efficacy of direct action → direct & indirect action

"A work of art must cut through the contradictions of life."

—The poet both "creates such forests and gives them a name"

TRADERS is a meta-case on collaboration (a D.I.)

Paradoxically "it is the interruption of communication that breeds communication."

"When is architecture going to bring together the fragmented?"

AD2077 is an emerging platform for curated dialogue on the future of the Dalarna Arts District, weaving around the **Creativity Machine**. It explores the potential of multivocality in the designer's role and methodology as a hybrid of (long-term) participatory action research, 'loose' (spontaneous, playful), (un)planned/positive (re)identification and subtle (negative) (re)identification. The spatial & social design is a (re)negotiation work, open to further imagination and articulation. (www.ad2077.se)

# Dialogical Infrastructures

speculation by design

—Alexander Kasper, *Speculation by Design*, 2010

...true Dadaist, one must also be an anti-Dadaist.

—Herrmann, *Germany from Weimar to Hitler* (London: Duckworth, 1967), 425

Historical, political, economic and ecological trends urgently demand cultural shifts towards increased democratic participation, involving both greater public sector support and bottom-up leadership.

The concept of "dialogical infrastructures" proposes that rather than simply used as means to specific urban development ends (capital & to point it out, culture, dialogue and participation are also increasingly built-in and involved into the city, constantly stimulating and facilitating a dynamic public culture.

Methodologies and theoretical frameworks for addressing public space, urbanity, democracy and the social take inspiration from dialogical, artistic and poetic qualities: multi-voiced, spontaneous, indirectness, opacity, excess, chance, ambiguity and paradox.

Microtopologies and theoretical frameworks for addressing public space, urbanity, democracy and the social take inspiration from dialogical, artistic and poetic qualities: multi-voiced, spontaneous, indirectness, opacity, excess, chance, ambiguity and paradox.

speculation: integration, integrated space & respect—for the unrepresentable

sometimes the holistic slips into the totalistic."

—Neil Postman, *The Architecture of Complexity*, 2003, 42

wish to divest existence of its rich ambiguity..."

—Frederick Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 1876/1982

**The Dialogical Field**

- Realm of multiple interactions, interrelationships, values, the realm of fluxes
- "an abundance of close, a 'Protean variety' of concepts which taken together render an idea, vision, 'contingency' or 'all its fallacies', *Indefinite* 2002 110
- Equilibrium playing field of poetic & political claims

"To be a true Dadaist, one must also be an anti-Dadaist."

—Herrmann, *Germany from Weimar to Hitler* (London: Duckworth, 1967), 425

...sometimes the holistic slips into the totalistic."

—Neil Postman, *The Architecture of Complexity*, 2003, 42

"Above all, one should not wish to divest existence of its rich ambiguity..."

—Frederick Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 1876/1982

**It's shoppe kommer i slutet... ("A Ship Comes Loaded...")**

will be a series of parallel participatory workshops in collaboration with the *Staden Rum* (Public Space) Museum. Children from the *Staden Rum* (Public Space) Museum after school time group will dialogue with their local neighborhood through the *Staden Rum* (Public Space) Museum and a traveling artifact-cultural project or 'shop', as well as with their other 'neighbors'—children from across the city participating in *Staden Rum* (Public Space) Museum Lessons.

One sentence, 195 variations  
 Emma, Clara, daughter of the abundant Sun, 1912  
 One story told 99 ways  
 Hanser, Emma, daughter of Sun, 1942  
 One city described as 55  
 The City, Emma, Clara, 1912

## Designing Multivocal Approaches to Participation in the City

Jen Gels, PhD Student, Urbanist, Architect (jgels@chalmers.se)  
 Chalmers University of Technology, Department of Architecture | City of Gothenburg, Department of Cultural Affairs | TRADERS ("Modelling in Dialogue")  
 Main supervisor: Carina Öster  
 Assistant supervisor: Ylva Malmgren  
 Co-mentor: Bengt Malmgren

30 June 2015

# Dialogical Infrastructures

## Designing Multivocal Approaches to Participation in the City

Jon Sells, PhD Student, Urbanist Architect (j.sells@kth.se)  
Chalmers University of Technology, Department of Architecture | City of Gothenburg, Department of Cultural Affairs | TRADERS ("Modelling in Dialogue")  
Main supervisor: Catharina Dyrman  
Assistant supervisor: Thea Holmström  
Co-advisor: Bengt-Åke Nilsson



30 June 2015

### research method:

A dynamic multidisciplinary hybrid of artistic, design and scientific research

### research questions:

How do artistic practices produce multivocality in/for public space?

What are the mechanisms—artistic, poetic, dialogical and participatory—operating within this multivocality and how do they produce values?

How might this change the societal role of design and approaches to producing public culture?

### research objectives:

Through a deeper understanding of the qualities of dialogue, this project aims to depose the current means-ends (instrumental) paradigm of participation, proposing [infrastructural] approaches which increasingly *build-in* and *inscribe* art, dialogue and participation *into* the city. The designer's role likewise becomes more dynamic in interplay with paradox and emergence.

### results so far:

Thanks to active engagement with the public-partner collaboration, local network mapping and early case study development, situated knowledge has already been produced, reciprocally. Besides further case study development, further influence can be leveraged by connecting to an ongoing research project at Mistra Urban Futures.

### training received:

Through the TRADERS Summer School, two Training Weeks, an informal 'Winter School' and internal workshops, these and our own research themes have been debated, juxtaposed in dialogue and explored through hands-on practice: participatory art and design; public space; intervention strategies; audio and video techniques; and playful approaches to public space.

### prognosis of future impact:

Besides enlarging my academic and professional network, TRADERS has opened up new [post-]disciplinary perspectives suggestive of future career paths. The provision of artistic/design research has been a key bridge between the relatively small and closed domains of academia, architecture and urbanism and the proliferating domains of art, creativity and social innovation.

[ *Publications* ]

## Appendix 3 - Paper 1 - "The Challenges of Urban Activism in the New Neoliberal Context"

*Conference paper.*

Geib, J. (2014). The Challenges of Urban Activism in the New Neoliberal Context. In *criticall: International Conference on Architectural Design and Criticism - Digital Proceedings*, June 2014, Madrid, 490-504. ISBN: 978-84-697-0424-0.

### **Abstract:**

The aim of this paper is to investigate the challenges faced by contemporary urban activism in the new neoliberal context. This typically Western context is marked by an expanding 'post-political', 'post-critical' atmosphere of consensus. In artistic practice, the 'political' and the 'critical' have been increasingly forgotten by various 'ethical turns'—which have been continually recuperated to serve the neoliberal dictate of omni-economization. Increasingly shrewd recuperation mechanisms—such as the embedding of artists and activists into gentrifying restructuring operations—have exploited the depoliticizing effects intrinsic to the most recent 'ethical turn'.

Jacques Rancière's definition of the 'political' as a dissensual reconfiguration of the status quo is critical in gauging and grounding urban activism's political dimension. Further, his definition of 'democracy' justifies political challenges which might disrupt technocratic 'good governance'.

To situate the most recent 'ethical turn', historical movements and tendencies within the disciplines of art, architecture and urbanism are investigated with respect to their political ambitions, utopian component and to recuperative processes which have become often instantaneous and even pre-emptive.

Certain fundamental dispositions are recommended for urban activism within a pluralist approach. Rancière's definition of 'the political' provides the basis for articulating activism both conceptually and tactically while David Harvey's 'dialectical utopianism' suggests a model for integrating utopianism. Francis Alÿs' maxim of 'sometimes' illustrates the potential of the ambiguity inherent in artistic approaches. Contemporary strategies of dissensus, over-identification, oscillating and interlacing and spatialization can be effective. And, while a holistic transdisciplinary disposition is an essential compass, disciplinarity can be strategically employed.

The marginal efficacy of urban activism is a structural condition and should not distract from the much greater threat of depoliticization. This threat is aggravated by the increasing synchronization of the domains, aims and interests of neoliberal capitalists, technocrats, artists, alternative practitioners and 'creatives'. To maintain a critical disposition and resist

recuperation, urban activists can combine clear Rancièrian definitions of 'the political' and of 'democracy' with a sophistication of both disposition and strategy through hybridized integrations of dialectical utopianism, ambiguity, ambivalence, dissensus, over-identification, disciplinary autonomy and spatialization, taking care to focus on both the residual *and* the core of society.

**Keywords:** *urban activism, depoliticization, ethical turns, the political, recuperation*

## 1. Introduction

A great disciplinary convergence is underway. Artists are increasingly intent on achieving an immediate social impact, at times submerging their work into life itself. This "post-studio artist" may be mistaken for a researcher, anthropologist, social worker or 'knowledge producer'.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, a growing body of architects, urbanists and planners, like-minded in their desire to "actually practice [their] criticism" spatially<sup>2</sup>, embarks on an often coinciding path of 'alternative practice'. An 'urban' dimension is bound up with entering the social and spatial arena of public space. But the transformative, activist potential of these practices is threatened internally and externally by an expanding depoliticizing atmosphere of consensus and recuperation. This paper aims to investigate the challenges faced by contemporary urban activism in this new neoliberal context.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Consensual Times<sup>4</sup>

Pervading our times is a "hegemonic consensus"<sup>5</sup> on the essential claim of Francis Fukuyama's 'end of history' thesis: that the union of Western liberal democracy and free

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1. Debbaut, J., M. Verhulst and P. Vermoortel (eds.). *Out of the Studio!* (proceedings of the symposium 'Out of the studio!' held in Hasselt, Belgium on 26 - 28 October 2007, a symposium on art and public space). Z33, 2008.
  2. Miessen, M. *From Written Word to Practiced Word* (Markus Miessen interviewed by Brendan Cormier and Arjen Oosterman). In Volume #36: Ways to Be Critical. July 2013, 101.
  3. Given the explosion of discourse and practice related to both 'socially-engaged' artistic practices and urban issues, this work offers a limited perspective gravitated toward the *Reflect* series of the Netherlands Architecture Institute (NAI), which detected the phenomenon of the 'new commitment' in 2004, and manifested it in three primary research sources: *New Commitment: In Architecture, Art And Design* (2004); *Urban Politics Now! Re-Imagining Democracy in the Neoliberal City* (2007); and *Art and Activism in the Age of Globalization* (2011). The influence of the Dutch context is also explained by its relatively vivid relationship with 'creative class' theory, as it exhibits both pioneering extensions to and heavy criticisms of the theory against a more complex background of welfare state erosion. In contrast, applications of 'creative class' theory in the U.S., where it has faced much less critical scrutiny, have been timid and tame.
  4. As it turned out, this title also formed part of that of a collection of articles by Rancière: Rancière, J. *Chronicles of Consensual Times* [*Chroniques des temps consensuels*]. S. Corcoran (tr.). New York, Continuum, 2010 (2005).

market capitalism represents the inevitable 'end point' of society's evolution and political organization.<sup>6</sup> Over its 30-year rise, neoliberalism has redefined politics into "a series of technologies of governing that fuse around consensus, agreement and technocratic management"<sup>7</sup> submissive to the globalization of 'free market capitalism'.<sup>8</sup>

Insisting politics is defined by "debate, disagreement and dissensus"<sup>9</sup>, Jacques Rancière, Chantal Mouffe and others<sup>10</sup>, find the *absence* of politics in the consensus approach, leaving it both 'post-political' and 'post-democratic'. Conceiving a 'post-political' city requires uprooting its historically political nature<sup>11</sup>, twice annulling the concept of 'urban activism'.

## 2.1 The Political

*Democracy is the institution of politics as such, of politics as a paradox.*<sup>12</sup>

Key to Rancière's definition of 'the political' is his framing of democracy's double bind by excavating to a more "radical paradox": "the ultimate ground on which rulers govern is that there is no good reason as to why some men should rule others." This equalitarian right—of the 'unqualified', the *demos*—to govern, is the "anarchic foundation of the political" and transcends technocratic repression of democratic demands, even those "[resisting] good policy".<sup>13</sup>

In Rancière's framework, 'the political' is defined by a 'dissensus' process, a "reconfiguring [of] the distribution of the sensible which defines the common of a community".<sup>14</sup> This disruption to the consensus on an existing social and/or spatial order is justified as an "equalitarian challenge"<sup>15</sup> and must be "re-enacted ceaselessly" to 're-open'

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5. Swyngedouw, E. *The Post-Political City*. In BAVO (eds.). *Urban Politics Now! Re-Imagining Democracy in the Neoliberal City*. Reflect #6, NAI Publishers, Rotterdam, 2007, 65.

6. Fukuyama, F. *The End of History and the Last Man*. The Free Press, New York, 1992. For a lineage of 'end of history' constructs going back to Hegel, see: De Cauter, L. *Afterthoughts on Posthistory*. In *Entropic Empire: On the City of Man in the Age of Disaster*. Reflect #9, nai010 publishers, Rotterdam, 2012, 213-219.

7. Swyngedouw. *The Post-Political City*. 59.

8. 'Free market capitalism' continues to be a euphemism for what is really a cognitively dissonant mix of deregulatory libertarian rhetoric with regulatory policies designed to preserve 'monopoly' or 'plutocratic capitalism'. John D. Rockefeller, American industrial titan (Standard Oil) and the first billionaire (1916) is said to have throughout his life repeated the mantra: "Competition is a sin."

9. Swyngedouw. *The Post-Political City*. 59.

10. E.g., S. Žižek and A. Badiou, among others.

11. See: Aureli, P.V. and M. Tattara. *The City as Political Form*. In De Baan, C., et al. *Visionary Power: Producing the Contemporary City*. Nai Publishers, 2007, 17; 27; and: Swyngedouw. *The Post-Political City*. 59.

12. Rancière, J. *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*. S. Corcoran (ed., tr.). Continuum, Bodmin and King's Lynn, 2010, 50.

13. Ibid., 43; 45; 47; 49-54.

14. Rancière, J. *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*. S. Corcoran (tr.). Polity Press, Cambridge, 2009 (2004), 25.

15. Corcoran, S. In Rancière, J. *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*. 5.



the space "that the practice of ruling relentlessly plugs".<sup>16</sup> The selectivity of political demands and new "framings" of a we"—and the autonomy implied—constitutes the 'aesthetics' of politics for Rancière, whose work interrelates the two by interrogating the 'ethical turn' in each.<sup>17</sup>

Mouffe distinguishes the politics of agonistic struggle between adversaries from extreme Schmittian politics of "defining the enemy"<sup>18</sup>. The 'consensus' missing in the latter is a common agreement "on the rules of the game" and mutual respect.<sup>19</sup> Besides the autonomy inherent in dividing, this sense of commonality is shown by Eric Méchoulan to be connoted by the original French *partage* ('distribution/sharing') in Rancière's definition.<sup>20</sup>

Strict consensus creates an illusion that power can be "dissolved"<sup>21</sup>, masking power relations—which *cannot* be eliminated, only *reconfigured* through politics. That today's "structure of mistrust" has made unmasking these relations so effortless points to the potential in Rancière's philosophy of "fundamental confidence".<sup>22</sup>

## 2.2 The Stylish Post-Political

*...the end of history will mean the end, among other things, of all art that could be considered socially useful, and hence the descent of artistic activity into the empty formalism of the traditional Japanese arts.*<sup>23</sup>

Waves of renewed social commitment or 'ethical turns' have reacted against Fukuyama's forecast. Though hypothesized as manifestations of "bourgeois boredom"<sup>24</sup>, the thesis is eluded by an "increasingly chaotic and barbaric"<sup>25</sup> world reality, better characterized by

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16. Ibid., 54.

17. Ibid., 141.

18. De Cauter, L. with P. Deboosere. *The Rise of Rogue States: The Construction of an Enemy After the Cold War*. 2006. In De Cauter, L. *Entropic Empire: On the City of Man in the Age of Disaster*. Reflect #9, nai010 publishers, Rotterdam, 2012, 29.

19. Mouffe, C. *The Return of the Political*. Verso, London and New York, 1993, 94.

20. Méchoulan, E. *Introduction: On the Edges of Jacques Rancière*. In *SubStance*. #103, Vol. 33(1), 2004, 4.

21. Mouffe, C. *An Agonistic Model of Democracy (excerpts)*. In Jahn, M. *Pro+agonist: The Art of Opposition*. Northern Lights.mn, Walker Art Center, Spring 2012, 41.

22. Méchoulan notes the absence of the term 'defiguration' in Rancière's discourse. Instead, he consistently uses 'reconfiguration'. Méchoulan. *Introduction: On the Edges of Jacques Rancière*. 4-5.

23. Fukuyama. *The End of History and the Last Man*. 320.

24. Lesage, D. *Discourse as Resistance: Digression on Documenta 11*. In De Cauter, L, R. de Roo, K. Vanhaesebrouck, (eds.). *Art and Activism in the Age of Globalization*. Reflect #8, NAI, Rotterdam, 2011, 65.

25. De Cauter. *The New World Disorder*. In *Entropic Empire: On the City of Man in the Age of Disaster*. 9.

intensifying bifurcation and stratification of 'post-historical' space over the historical—amidst looming ecological catastrophe.<sup>26</sup>

Yet, post-history suffuses new modes of 'stylized' criticism. In contemporary art, Charles Jencks detects, in 2007, the "Angry Serene". Noting the decline of the *anger* mode, dominant since the 1950s, Jencks attributes its cooling to widespread scepticism and resignation towards *never-ending* problems. A new mode of nonchalance, enabled by virtuosity of presentation, illustrates that the critical "need not be the choleric":<sup>27</sup>

*...[It] depends for its charge on presenting the nastiness and horror of the modern world with an unruffled professionalism. No wonder these artists look to Renaissance sprezzatura...*<sup>28</sup>

BAVO highlights how a similar stylized mode of "simulated activism" is used to facilitate Dutch neoliberal urban development. The "seemingly subversive character" of artist interventions embellishes while draining energy from existing and prospective resistance. When artists do address conflict, "the sting [is taken] out" through aestheticization.<sup>29</sup>

A related phenomenon, described by Roemer van Toorn in 1997 as 'Fresh Conservatism', "presents the normally discrete character of conservatism in a spectacularly fresh fashion, as a work of art"<sup>30</sup> under the motto:

*Whatever you do, do it cool.*<sup>31</sup>

An avant-garde of architecture, art and film flatters our egos with optimism, openmindedness, desire for newness and enough superficial "subversion and radicalism" to keep us entertained and "out of mischief". Long-term projects of deregulated capitalism, consumerism and "superindividuality" thus advance less encumbered.<sup>32</sup>

An emblematic hue of the post-political is found in Dieter Lesage's reading of Rem Koolhaas's 'barcode flag' design for the European Union (2002) (Figure 1), which strikes

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26. Refer to: De Cauter, L. *The Capsular Civilization: The City in the Age of Fear*. Reflect #3, NAI, Rotterdam, March 2005; and De Cauter. *Afterthoughts on Posthistory*. In *Entropic Empire: On the City of Man in the Age of Disaster*. 213-219.

27. Jencks, C. *Why Critical Modernism?* In *Architectural Design*. Vol. 77, 2007, 140-145.

28. *Ibid.*, 142.

29. BAVO. *Democracy and the Neoliberal City: The Dutch Case*. In BAVO (eds.). *Urban Politics Now! Re-Imagining Democracy in the Neoliberal City*. 223.

30. Van Toorn, Roemer. *Fresh Conservatism: Landscapes of Normality*. In *Quaderns* 215. Barcelona, 1998, <http://www.roemervantoorn.nl/freshconservatis.html> [accessed in March, 2013], 1.

31. *Ibid.*, 2.

32. *Ibid.*, 2-3.

him as cleverly calculated by Koolhaas who realized "that for the left, the market may become acceptable through its aestheticization".<sup>33</sup>



Figure 63: Left: Rem Koolhaas's 'barcode flag' design for the European Union. Right: OMA project image. OMA. *EU BARCODE, NETHERLANDS, ROTTERDAM, 2001*. <http://oma.eu/projects/2001/eu-barcode/> [accessed in August, 2013].

## 2.3 Repression of Activism

*Neoconservatism can be considered as the armed wing of neoliberalism.*<sup>34</sup>

Working jointly with 'soft' mechanisms repressing activism are ratcheting 'hard' pressures. Compounding admonitions for consensus and *stability*, a neoconservative atmosphere of securitization and fear permeates the new neoliberal city. This "climate of antiterrorism"<sup>35</sup> reached fever pitch in the post-9/11 era with the 'War on Terror'—also a "war on difference"<sup>36</sup>—and shows signs of resurgence with increasing "intolerance towards", even criminalization of activism and protest.<sup>37</sup> The panopticism of the 'surveillance state' and its distressing corporate alliances<sup>38</sup> exacerbates self-censorship.

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33. Lesage, D. *Cultural Resignation Today: On Over-Identification and Overstatement*. In BAVO. *Cultural Activism Today: The Art of Over-Identification*. Episode Publishers, Rotterdam, 2007, 88-89.

34. De Cauter, L. *From Ground Zero to Tahrir Square: The Post-9/11 Era Explained to Children*. 2011. In *Entropic Empire: On the City of Man in the Age of Disaster*. 18.

35. *Ibid.*, 16-17.

36. Gómez-Peña, G. and T. Miller. *After 9/11: Two Veteran Performance Artists Swap Stories On Flying in Times of War*. In De Cauter, et al. (eds.). *Art and Activism in the Age of Globalization*. 59.

37. De Cauter provides a number of recent examples from the Belgian context in: *From Ground Zero to Tahrir Square: The Post-9/11 Era Explained to Children*. 2011. In *Entropic Empire: On the City of Man in the Age of Disaster*. 17. Also: Burghardt, T. *Pentagon Rebrands Protest as 'Low-Level Terrorism'*. In

## 2.4 Instrumentalization in the New Neoliberal City

*There is no such thing as society, only individual men and women...and their families.*<sup>39</sup>

Margaret Thatcher is quoted by BAVO to illustrate the paradox Immanuel Wallerstein noted in the "dependence of capitalism on non-capitalist social formations for its reproduction"<sup>40</sup> and the remedial role depicted in Pierre Bourdieu's two-handed system of "soft, social sectors" which reliably dress the wounds inflicted by the "hard, economic sectors".<sup>41</sup> In assessing the state of urban activism, Margit Mayer emphasizes this "flanking mechanism" of the social sector during the historical process of neoliberalization.<sup>42</sup> More extreme and more dissimulated, this compensatory relationship (also providing a "purely symbolic" hope-giving role<sup>43</sup>) is becoming *operative* through ever shrewder recuperation.

Consequent to the rising pressure of global intraurban competition, the neoliberal city gradually 'hijacked' and moderated "(sub)culture, local flair, and even [activist] movement practices" to fashion their 'brand' and feed the "growth machine". Mayer shows that progressive discourse was recast in a "politically regressive, individualized and competitive direction" and softened: e.g. "combat[ing] poverty" became "fighting 'social exclusion'".<sup>44</sup>

More superficial understandings of 'activism' led to what Miguel Robles-Durán terms "instant activists". Though socially-minded, they neglect the language of historical activism ("struggle, confrontation, justice, politics, conflict, urgency, necessity and survival...") and, lacking "any political or critical position", are easily absorbed into the latest fashions and urban development schemes.<sup>45</sup>

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Dissident Voice. 19 June 2009, <http://dissidentvoice.org/2009/06/pentagon-rebrands-protest-as-low-level-terrorism/> [accessed in June, 2013].

38. Ahmed, N. *Pentagon bracing for public dissent over climate and energy shocks*. In The Guardian. 14 June 2013, <http://m.guardian.co.uk/environment/earth-insight/2013/jun/14/climate-change-energy-shocks-nsa-prism> [accessed in June, 2013].
39. Margaret Thatcher quoted in: BAVO. *The Freedom Not To Have a Wal-Mart: Contemporary Anti-Capitalist Documentary and Its Enlightened Critics*. In Hofmeyr, B. (ed.). *The Wal-mart Phenomenon: Resisting Neo-liberalism through Art, Design and Theory*. Jan van Eyck Publishers, Maastricht, 2008.
40. Ibid.
41. BAVO. *Always Choose the Worst Option: Artistic Resistance and the Strategy of Over-Identification*. In BAVO (eds.). *Cultural Activism Today: The Art of Over-Identification*.
42. Mayer, M. *Urban Activism Today*. Keynote, 22nd International Network for Urban Research and Action, Tallinn, Estonia, 18 June 2012, [http://inura2012tallinn.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/mayer2012\\_tallinn-talk\\_urban-activism-today\\_fin.pdf](http://inura2012tallinn.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/mayer2012_tallinn-talk_urban-activism-today_fin.pdf) [accessed in April, 2013].
43. BAVO. *Always Choose the Worst Option: Artistic Resistance and the Strategy of Over-Identification*.
44. Mayer. *Urban Activism Today*.
45. Robles-Durán, M. *The Rise of Instant Activism, and How it's Transforming Architecture, Urbanism and the Way Our Cities are Built*. In De Cauter et al., (eds.). *Art and Activism in the Age of Globalization*. 184-190.

This fleetingness, when stirred with post-Fordism in the 'network society', can be dizzying. Pascal Gielen opens a window onto a contemporary 'art scene' of "global nomads" who retain their mobility by being "relatively free of obligations" through the "freedom of temporary and flexible relations" of the 'scene'.<sup>46</sup> Their mobility folds into the "hyperkinetic frenzy of total mobilization"<sup>47</sup>, and acts out that of the capitalist entrepreneur, who must perpetually mine new markets. Post-Fordist hyper-individuality negates society, atomizing it to the point that "everybody is or acts like a firm, every individual a mini-corporation"<sup>48</sup>.

Naturally, and via policy, 'creativity' became conflated with individualistic entrepreneurship. Claire Bishop shows how Dutch cultural policies c. 2005-2006 emulated those of the UK's New Labour Party which emphasized "the role of creativity and culture in commerce and the growth of the 'knowledge economy'". Promoting an "openly instrumental approach", teaching creativity in schools became important because:<sup>49</sup>

*the population is increasingly required to assume the individualisation associated with creativity: to be entrepreneurial, embrace risk, look after their own self-interest, perform their own brands, and be willing to self-exploit.*<sup>50</sup>

But how to capitalize (literally) on this bottom-up energy? Mayer finds the "hallmark of the roll-out neoliberal city" to be integration of "increasingly professionalized, formerly alternative community-based organizations" into urban renewal policy.<sup>51</sup> Developers and municipalities have discovered that by pre-assimilating artists and activists, the financial costs of community resistance can often be averted. Robles-Durán's study of five years of the discourse of "pro-market international organizations", finds "one constant key recommendation":<sup>52</sup>

*the need for persuading citizens in adopting new patterns of behavior in favor of public-private urban investment and redevelopment, emphasizing that*

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46. Gielen, P. *Art Scene – Control Machine*. In De Cauter et al., (eds.). *Art and Activism in the Age of Globalization*. 86.

47. Peter Sloterdijk quoted in: De Cauter. *Entropic Empire: On the City of Man in the Age of Disaster*. 61.

48. De Cauter et al. (eds.). *Art and Activism in the Age of Globalization*. 15.

49. Bishop, C. *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*. Verso, London and New York, 2012, 15.

50. *Ibid.*, 15-16.

51. Mayer. *Urban Activism Today*.

52. Robles-Durán. *The Rise of Instant Activism, and How it's Transforming Architecture, Urbanism and the Way Our Cities are Built*. 185-186.

*careful attention should be taken as this must not be seen as being imposed from outside.*<sup>53</sup>

Over the same period, he notes: "the [urban redevelopment] market has made a great leap in incorporating the 'activist' into its daily life operations". Doing so can, further, rehabilitate 'brand identities, "masking [them] as 'democratic', ecological and socially responsible"<sup>54</sup>, even while the grunt work of raising real estate values<sup>55</sup> proceeds. (Figure 2)



Figure 2: FREEE (art collective). *The Economic Function Of Public Art Is To Increase The Value Of Private Property*. 2004, <http://freee.org.uk/works/the-economic-function-of-public-art-is-to-increase-the-value-of-private-property/> [accessed in February, 2014].

Though essentially just a slippery, scientifically dodgy 'manualization'<sup>56</sup> of the preceding, Richard Florida's 'creative class'/'creative city' theory has had a devastating effect on urban discourse and policy. In spite of recent debunkings<sup>57</sup>, its massive influence is ongoing. It claims that a very broadly-defined socioeconomic 'class' of 'creatives' are now "primary drivers of economic development"<sup>58</sup>, and, that cities must attract them by re-branding themselves as 'creative cities'.<sup>59</sup>

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53. Ibid., 185.

54. Ibid., 187.

55. In the sense of artificially stimulating the 'natural' process of gentrification.

56. Peck refers to the broader "burgeoning business of manualizing local creativity strategies". Peck, J. *Struggling with the Creative Class*. In International Journal of Urban and Regional Research. 29, 2005, 766.

57. Critics have shown that Florida regularly confuses causation with correlation as he attributes the cultural scene of economically prosperous cities to an influx of 'creatives' rather than recognizing it as a by-product of economically prosperous cities. See: Ozimek, A. *Richard Florida Is Wrong About Creative Cities*. In Forbes. 23 May 2012, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/modeledbehavior/2012/05/23/richard-florida-is-wrong-about-creative-cities/> [accessed in April, 2013]; and: Moretti, E. *The New Geography of Jobs*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012.

58. Peck. *Struggling with the Creative Class*. 740.

59. Florida, R. *Cities and the Creative Class*. Routledge, New York and London, 2005.

*"Just what do you see as the political role of the creative class? Will they step up to the plate and help lead this society in a better, fairer direction?" Florida was stumped.*<sup>60</sup>

Worse, Florida admits that the 'haves' ('creatives') are dependent on the existence of an army of 'have-nots' (implicitly, 'uncreatives')—low-paid service workers—while dangling a libertarianesque carrot that 'creativity' is latent in everyone.<sup>61</sup> The insecure lifestyle of 'creatives' is glamorized<sup>62</sup> and conflated with innovation and ultimately entrepreneurialism:

*The subject of the Creative City is not Homo Ludens as imagined by Nieuwenhuys, but the entrepreneur in all its guises, for the creative city is an entrepreneurial city.*<sup>63</sup>

Friedrich von Borries and Matthias Böttger propose that "boundaries between marketing, criticism and participation are blurring. While marketing strategists have long since recuperated "classical forms of criticism", the process, once taking generations, is now near-instantaneous. These conditions, in an increasingly tenuous economy, lead many to see themselves as "cultural self-marketers" and express new willingness to collaborate—even *initiate* projects—with the "avant-garde of global marketing". Referencing Comme des Garçons' 'guerrilla stores' in Berlin, they uncover this new "structural phenomenon" of "voluntary neoliberalization".<sup>64</sup>

### 3. [Recuperated] Ethical Turns

To put today's critical and political dimension in a clearer historical context, this chapter surveys a genealogy of recuperated 'ethical turns' within art, architecture and urbanism. Crucially, Rancière considers the latest 'ethical turn' a "joint suppression of both aesthetics and politics".<sup>65</sup> Lucas Verweij and Ton Matton, pointing to its seamless integration into the façade of consensus, parallel the "double agenda" of today's profit-motivated corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies with the logic of mid-nineteenth century living and

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60. Markusen, A. *Urban development and the politics of a creative class: evidence from a study of artists*. In *Environment and Planning A*. Vol. 38, 2006, 1921.

61. "He reminds his readers that they depend on an army of service workers trapped in 'low-end jobs that pay poorly because they are not creative jobs' while pointing soberly to the fact that the most creative places tend also to exhibit the most extensive forms of socio-economic inequality." Peck. *Struggling with the Creative Class*. 757.

62. Also see: Gielen. *Art Scene – Control Machine*. 87-88.

63. Oudenampsen, M. *Back to the Future of the Creative City: Amsterdam's Creative Redevelopment and the Art of Deception*. In Lovink, G. and N. Rossiter (eds.). *MyCreativity Reader: A Critique of Creative Industries*. Institute of Network Cultures, Amsterdam, 2007, 174.

64. Von Borries, F. and M. Böttger. *False Freedom: The Construction of Space in Late Capitalism*. In BAVO (eds.). *Urban Politics Now! Re-Imagining Democracy in the Neoliberal City*. 137-138.

65. Rancière. *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*. 105.

working condition improvements, which aimed to *increase productivity* by bettering health.<sup>66</sup> Similarly, Merijn Oudenampsen shows how the new neoliberal city, in the case of Amsterdam, conceives of itself as a business, mimicking a market strategy of "invest[ing] in culture as long as it adds value to real estate"<sup>67</sup>.

### 3.1 From Modernism to Postmodernism

*Architecture or Revolution. Revolution can be avoided.*<sup>68</sup>

The quote above can be read counter to Le Corbusier's intended sense: avoid revolution by relinquishing architecture's ambition of political change. This is easier and, historically, has been the rule. Mary McLeod, in 1989, traces architecture's diminishing political claims across multiple variegated strains of postmodernism. She qualifies her analysis, noting the inherent limitations of architecture's critical power<sup>69</sup>, particularly the easily recuperated ambivalence of its "formal reception".<sup>70</sup>

McLeod demonstrates that the *first* motive of the modern movement was to tackle social issues by changing the architectural production process, and that therein lies architecture's political potential, unique among the arts. Form was generally seen as *reflecting* changes in production, not as an autonomous "critical or utopian tool" in itself.<sup>71</sup>

Early postmodernists, disillusioned with the modern movement's failed social program, alleged that its mute formal language, appropriated as "routinized corporate [and militaristic] modernism", was linked to its urban failures: bleak public housing and destruction of city cores. But, after the failures and recuperations of two early responses, the populist participation and "visionary architecture" movements of the 1960s and 1970s<sup>72</sup>, postmodernism—aside from some left-wing critics<sup>73</sup>—retreated further into 'resistive' politics

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66. Verweij, L. and T. Matton. *Engagement has become everyone's friend*. In New Commitment: In Architecture, Art And Design. Reflect #1, NAI Publishers, Rotterdam, 2004, 167-168.

67. Oudenampsen, Merijn. *AmsterdamTM, the City as a Business*. In BAVO (eds.). Urban Politics Now! Re-Imagining Democracy in the Neoliberal City. 119.

68. Le Corbusier, quoted in: McLeod, M. *Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era: From Postmodernism to Deconstructivism*. In Assemblage. No. 8, February 1989, 25.

69. This structural condition is examined specifically in: Fischer, O. W. *Architecture, Capitalism and Criticality*. In Crysler, G. C. et al. (eds.). The SAGE Handbook of Architectural Theory. SAGE, London, 2012, 56-57.

70. McLeod. *Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era: From Postmodernism to Deconstructivism*. 25.

71. Ibid.

72. Discussed in: Heynen, H. *Intervention in the relations of production, or sublimation of contradictions? On commitment then and now*. In New Commitment: In Architecture, Art And Design. Also refer to Heynen's discussion of Constant's New Babylon in: Heynen, H. *Architecture and Modernity: A Critique*. MIT Press, Cambridge and London, 1999, 173.

73. McLeod cites Tomás Maldonado, Kenneth Frampton and Martin Pawley: McLeod. *Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era: From Postmodernism to Deconstructivism*. 27.



of preservation. Coinciding with the dominance of conservative economic and political forces<sup>74</sup>, postmodernism's elitism, and particularly its populism, became complicit with consumerism:

*Architecture became trendy, part of a lifestyle consciousness, and thus more and more streamlined in order to meet the demands of the trendsetting class.*<sup>75</sup>

Reprising the modern movement, it quickly became "*the new corporate style*"<sup>76</sup>. (Figure 3)



Figure 3: A selection of images used by Mary McLeod in her article: *Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era: From Postmodernism to Deconstructivism*. In *Assemblage*. No. 8, February 1989, 22-59.

A descent into "formal hermeticism" through negation and hyper-individualistic subjectivism marked the poststructuralism and deconstructivism of later postmodernism. Though effective in exposing earlier frauds, McLeod finds, in its "endless textuality" and annihilation of the 'author', master narratives and utopian dreams, dangers of "total relativism" and aversion to collectivity:

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74. Political conservatives, led by the Reagan administration, launched an all-out assault on the social, deeply cutting funds for public housing (by 90%) and social programs which "virtually eliminated [architectural] commissions oriented toward the poor and minority groups". McLeod. *Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era: From Postmodernism to Deconstructivism*. 29.
75. Heynen. *Intervention in the relations of production, or sublimation of contradictions? On commitment then and now*. 45.
76. McLeod. *Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era: From Postmodernism to Deconstructivism*. 29.

*Regardless of epistemological questions, some values, however provisional, and some notion of collective identity are probably essential to political action and social betterment.*<sup>77</sup>

The "death of the author" is even more problematic for her as it undermines "emergence of alternative voices" by undermining autonomy of 'voice' itself.<sup>78</sup>

McLeod is most concerned by the acceleratingly quick and overwhelming recuperation by an "increasingly commercialized society". Modest approaches—e.g., 'regionalism as resistance'—were drowned out by the "homogenizing forces of mass media and the increasingly multinational scale of finance and the construction industry".<sup>79</sup> The impotence (and appropriateness<sup>80</sup>) of sharper approaches is also noted: "Any sensation, pleasurable or painful, instantly becomes fodder for both high culture and mass consumption."<sup>81</sup> Already, she finds the 'cycle of appropriation' nearly instantaneous and quotes a characterization of the avant-garde as a "kind of research and development arm of the culture industry".<sup>82</sup> The associated ever-growing sense of futility led to the "complacency of the 1990s"<sup>83</sup>.

### 3.2 The Post-Critical

*To 'solve', not to 'problematize', marks the new 'post-critical' approach: the ideal of autonomy as a precondition of architectural 'criticality', which distances itself from building, is replaced by an immersion into practice.*<sup>84</sup>

The emergence of 'post-criticality'<sup>85</sup> tells one story about the crisis of architectural criticism. Despite embracing new complexity, the concerns of post-critical practices ("realism, pragmatism, and professionalism") and their proposals are set in stark opposition to the impenetrability and arbitrariness of late postmodernism, whose discourse and forms required an "'explanation' by the professional critic". Presentations of often simple

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77. In a footnote, McLeod references Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's "strategic essentialism" as an seemingly appropriate concept. Ibid., 51. Also see: De Cauter, L. *A Plea for Cosmopolitics*. In *Entropic Empire: On the City of Man in the Age of Disaster*. 160-164.

78. McLeod is referring to the lack of diversity within the profession, as the dominant voices of the time were "almost always male, white, and middle class". But, if 'the political' is the forming of new collective voices, her concern can be applied broadly today. Ibid., 53.

79. Ibid., 34-36.

80. "Are radical formal statements necessarily the most appropriate means to shelter people whose lives are already filled with the disruption and frustration that deconstructivist architecture celebrates? Would scarce resources...be more appropriately spent...than on structural acrobatics?" Ibid., 54.

81. Ibid., 53.

82. A characterization by Thomas Crow. Ibid., 54.

83. Heynen. *Intervention in the relations of production, or sublimation of contradictions? On commitment then and now*. 46.

84. Fischer. *Architecture, Capitalism and Criticality*. 58-59.

85. Fischer also terms it 'post-theory'.

buildings are simplified using "diagrams, slogans, logos and new media" to "recognizable icons, core messages, or brands", to encourage quick comprehension and an "intensive experience or atmospheric 'feeling'".<sup>86</sup>

While also stemming from the "collapse of actually existing socialism and the crisis of the European left", Ole W. Fischer highlights the post-critical's "proactive" embrace of economic globalization, under the self-interested reasoning that "critical thought, intellectual resistance and elaborative theoretical constructs" were counterproductive in a "competitive global market of architectural design".<sup>87</sup>

Van Toorn finds the post-critical emanating from the American 'projective practice' movement, which bypasses the predictable pain of politics and utopian dreams—and the strenuousness of criticality—by simply no longer bothering. Instead, it "surf[s] the turbulent waves" of the market as Western affluence ("computerized production, technological and genetic applications, and commercial and cultural entertainment") allows reality to "seem more exciting than dreams".<sup>88</sup>

More recognized by its *method* than its result, projective practice's "addiction to reality"<sup>89</sup> leads it to unearth "all kinds of latent beauties, forces, and possibilities" which are mobilized and "where possible, idealized". The "distancing of critical theory" is traded for hands-on managerial and technical dispositions. Though "utopian moments" *might* result, the design—founded on *technically-augmented* reality—aims primarily at functioning "interactively" with the users, themselves typically immersed in the 'hyper-reality'<sup>90</sup> of the "global middle class".<sup>91</sup>

Van Toorn classifies three strains of praxis. 'Projective autonomy' and its "meticulously crafted forms"—mild, minimal and abstract—*assure* rather than subvert. The 'interaction' invited by its more caricatured forms constitutes little more than passive amusement reinforcing the "branding game".<sup>92</sup>

The unpredictable forms of 'projective mise-en-scène' result from intense 'neutral' investigations into "extreme reality" (accepted as *given*), often taking "Dutch pragmatism to

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86. Ibid., 56-60.

87. Ibid., 58-60.

88. Van Toorn, R. *No More Dreams? The Passion for Reality in Recent Dutch Architecture...and Its Limitations*. In Saunders, W. S., (ed.). *New Architectural Pragmatism*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2007, [http://www.roemervantoorn.nl/Resources/Toorn,%20van\\_%20No%20More%20Dreams.pdf](http://www.roemervantoorn.nl/Resources/Toorn,%20van_%20No%20More%20Dreams.pdf) [accessed in March, 2013], 1.

89. Ibid., 9.

90. A term borrowed from: De Cauter. *Entropic Empire: On the City of Man in the Age of Disaster*. 66.

91. Van Toorn. *No More Dreams? The Passion for Reality in Recent Dutch Architecture...and Its Limitations*. 2; 8.

92. Ibid., 4-5.

absurd, deadpan extremes". Users are choreographed as "leading actors" in a process dramatizing the "mutations" of the everyday.<sup>93</sup> The obsession with process marks a "new paradigm" for Van Toorn, who characterizes the attitude towards built form as the "putatively cool 'Whatever'".<sup>94</sup>

Glorifying the sophistication of self-organization (as found in "geology, biology, and even history"), 'projective naturalization' gratifies our senses' "craving for the accidental" by translating notions of ever-changing open processes into "smooth and fluid" forms using the latest technology. As it "allows flows of consensus to follow their trajectories", Van Toorn finds its aims *procedural* rather than political.<sup>95</sup>

Though approaches which reveal hidden qualities certainly have potential, simply magnifying existing realities often worsens them. While underscoring that an apolitical tone in itself "sets a political and social direction [of consensus]", Van Toorn further argues that "utopian dreams"—far forgotten—could "provide frames of reference for political action".<sup>96</sup>

The post-critical in urbanism and planning is identified by BAVO as 'post-planning'. Constant appeal to the city's vast complexity—which is said to thwart any willful attempt to shape it—and the 'inevitability' of its development, rationalizes its reduction of politics to repressive (neoconservative) and technocratic (neoliberal) management. Even slight attempts to act politically are to be "exorcized as the specter of the modernist idea of the malleable city, a nostalgic belief in grand narratives, and/or rigid thinking in long bygone ideological schemata", making way for the "prime mover" in the city: the neoliberal market. Symptomatic are discourses characterizing the "urban process" as:<sup>97</sup>

*a (business) negotiation between different actors, a computer game, an acupuncture treatment, a military operation, etc. In short, one is encouraged to act upon the city in all kinds of ways except in strict political terms.*<sup>98</sup>

### 3.3 Art's Autonomy Dissolved into Life

While a wealth of new creative opportunities issued from art's transcendence of disciplinary boundaries into the 'expanded field'<sup>99</sup>, so did vulnerabilities to instrumentalization. The

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93. Ibid., 5-7.

94. Here Van Toorn paraphrases Dutch writer Harm Tilman: Ibid., 2.

95. Ibid., 7-8.

96. Ibid., 9.

97. BAVO (eds.). *Urban Politics Now! Re-Imagining Democracy in the Neoliberal City*. 7; 11.

98. Ibid., 8.

99. Art critic and theorist Rosalind Krauss's seminal article mapped the various paradigm shifts which redefined sculpture: Krauss, R. *Sculpture in the Expanded Field*. In *October*. Vol. 8, Spring 1979.

shift from standalone sculpture to the site-specific works of the 1970s required the "continual relocation of one's energies"<sup>100</sup>, prefiguring the nomadism of the post-Fordist artist. Conservative 'place-making' campaigns applied new interest in the *process* of art "production, presentation and reception"<sup>101</sup> while "institutional critique" gave way to populist "'art for everyone'" in the 1980s. A significant "turn to the ethnographic"<sup>102</sup> emerged in the 1990s as conceptions of 'site' further dematerialized and artists tackled difficult public-interest issues.

But, in the late 1990s, Nicolas Bourriaud described emerging 'relational art' as public interest<sup>103</sup>, functioning as a *sanctuary* and laboratory for experiments in re-establishing authentic human relations. His capitulation to larger hegemonic forces is clear:

*the role of artworks is no longer to form imaginary and utopian realities, but to actually be ways of living and models of action within the existing real...*<sup>104</sup>

Calling it emblematic of "art's new modesty" and its post-utopian disposition, Rancière's finds Bourriaud's 'micro-utopias' (such as "talking to your neighbor"<sup>105</sup>) barely distinguishable from 'ordinary life'. Something is lost in the attempt to merge art with life. He describes it as the *tension* between the autonomy of art—what he calls "art as resistant form"—and 'art as life', in the "dialectic of the 'apolitically political' work".<sup>106</sup>

While relational art is derided by BAVO as "perhaps the ultimate, hidden reference behind the embedded cultural production in the Netherlands"<sup>107</sup>, the lineage of artist instrumentalization tracks back to the 'place-making' campaigns of the 1970s which charged artists to be "'useful' in the physical sense"<sup>108</sup>. And, today's 'experience culture' finds art used to fuel consumer capitalism's 'culture industry', with museums increasingly catering to the wishes of "art consumers" by providing "mere experiences", hollow of contemplation

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Pieter Vermeortel analyzes the subsequent literature regarding the relation between art and public space in: Debbaut et al. (eds.). *Out of the Studio!*.

100. Krauss, R., *Sculpture in the Expanded Field*. 42.

101. Here Vermeortel cites Miwon Kwon: Debbaut et al. (eds.). *Out of the Studio!* 14.

102. Foster, H. *The artist as ethnographer?* In *Return of the Real, Art and Theory at the End of the Century*. 1996. Quoted in: Ibid., 15.

103. Ibid., 15-16.

104. Bourriaud, N.. *Relational Aesthetics*. Les presses du réel, Paris, 1998, 13.

105. Stretcher. *Nicolas Bourriaud and Karen Moss* [interview]. In Stretcher. 18 October 2002, [http://www.stretcher.org/features/nicolas\\_bourriaud\\_and\\_karen\\_moss/](http://www.stretcher.org/features/nicolas_bourriaud_and_karen_moss/) [accessed in July, 2013].

106. Rancière. *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*. 21; 42; 51.

107. BAVO. *Neoliberalism with Dutch Characteristics: The Big Fix-Up of the Netherlands and the Practice of Embedded Cultural Activism*. In Braidotti, R. (ed.), M. Dumas and A. Mik. *Citizens and Subjects: The Netherlands, for example*. JRP-Ringier, Zürich, 2007.

108. Miwon Kwon's *Once Place after Another; Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (2002) is quoted in: Debbaut et al. (eds.). *Out of the Studio!* 14.

(Figure 4).<sup>109</sup> Rudi Laermans finds newly 'engaged' art increasingly indistinguishable from consumerism.<sup>110</sup>

Further, as art's "'self-criticality' turns inwards", Rancière notes that its playful "procedures of delegitimization" become almost "indiscernible from those spun by the powers that be".<sup>111</sup> Finally, by merging with real life to restore the "social bond" through communitarianism, art echoes the restorative aims of postmodernism while abandoning the critical potential of its autonomy.



Figure 4: Artist Carsten Höller has installed several playground-inspired tube slides of various configurations in art galleries. *Untitled (Slide)*. 2011 (at the New Museum), <http://underscoreg.com/art-review/experience-is-not-art> [accessed in August, 2013]; [http://www.artnet.com/magazineus/news/corbett/carsten-holler-at-the-new-museum-10-26-11\\_detail.asp?picnum=4](http://www.artnet.com/magazineus/news/corbett/carsten-holler-at-the-new-museum-10-26-11_detail.asp?picnum=4) [accessed in August, 2013].

### 3.4 The 'New Commitment'

The 'new commitment' was as a clear reaction to the frivolity and banality of postmodernism's long-festering political apathy (recurring in the post-critical).<sup>112</sup> Already, in 1989, McLeod notes that "advocacy architecture and pro bono work are almost dead", warning of extreme shifts in the architect's image ("from social crusader and aesthetic puritan to trendsetter and media star") and in architectural education:<sup>113</sup>

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109. Dercon, Chris. *I speak on behalf of myself*. In *New Commitment: In Architecture, Art And Design*. 94; also: Bishop, C. *Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics*. In *October*. No. 110, Fall 2004, 55.

110. Laermans, R. *The engaged city*. In *New Commitment: In Architecture, Art And Design*. 66.

111. Rancière. *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*. 52; 54.

112. This theme forms part of the book's opening essay. Boomkens, R. *Engagement after progress*. In *New Commitment: In Architecture, Art And Design*. 15.

113. McLeod. *Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era: From Postmodernism to Deconstructivism*. 38.

*In the 1980s most schools stopped offering regular housing studios; gentlemen's clubs, resort hotels, art museums, and vacation homes became the standard programs.*<sup>114</sup>

These conditions drifted into the 1990s, paralleled by vigorously growing concern for the negative effects of globalization. Rene Boomkens notes that deconstructivism's fragmentary narratives were traded for a "new universalism, or a new *engagement*, for new seriousness" as key influential thinkers shifted to engage "serious political and ethical questions".<sup>115</sup> Lieven De Cauter credits the 'alter-globalization' movement—staunchly against the "new neoliberal world order"—with putting "social criticism and involvement [...] back on the agenda".<sup>116</sup> And, with the monumental shocks of 9/11 and the 2008 financial crisis and continuing turmoil worldwide, there is growing rejection of the 'end of history' thesis.

Yet, there are already signs of recuperation. Boomkens warns of parallels with the "radical individualism" of 1960s existentialism, which held that "'living is rebelling'"—'engagement' being a kind of mood, "gesture" or "attitude". Citing Michel Foucault's reading of Kant, Boomkens argues for a more collective and durable framing of 'commitment' that "transcends the individual" and "one-off *decision[s]*". Foucault argues that Kant found "the *enthusiasm* of the more or less passive bystanders and spectators"—sparked by "a radical event"—to be the "most important indicator of the historic importance of the [French] revolution".<sup>117</sup> The shock effect of Kant's 'radical act' disappears as artists engage participants in "comfortable consensus". Stefan Hertman notes that a consensus atmosphere, created by "pressure of popularization", has led to "simply advocat[ing] commonsense perspectives and then describ[ing] this as commitment".<sup>118</sup>

Vagueness in "*buzzwords*" like "criticism, protest, activism, commitment, resistance, etc." is shown by Karel Vanhaesebrouck to put the 'new commitment' at risk of becoming a "fashionable, meaningless category [...] incorporated with amazing ease into the post-Fordist rhetoric of the 'creative society'".<sup>119</sup> Meanwhile, artists and a promotional 'culture industry' wield this discourse in a manner wildly out of proportion with the efficacy of their efforts. Vanhaesebrouck suggests the art system is not only burdened by guilt over its

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114. Ibid.

115. E.g., Jacques Derrida. Boomkens. *Engagement after progress*. 15.

116. De Cauter, L. *Beyond postmodern melancholy: Critical pessimism versus 'glocal' panic—the 'new commitment'*. In *New Commitment: In Architecture, Art And Design*. 32-33.

117. Boomkens. *Engagement after progress*. 18-22.

118. Hertmans, S. *Aesthetics as a Service Club: A Few Thoughts on Commitment in the Arts*. In De Cauter et al. (eds.). *Art and Activism in the Age of Globalization*. 57-60.

119. Vanhaesebrouck, K. *As Dead as a dodo? Commitment beyond Post-modernism*. In De Cauter et al. (eds.). *Art and Activism in the Age of Globalization*. 21.

commodification, but, more severely, fails (or is unwilling) to "imagine change as a real possibility at the theoretical as well as practical level, let alone a revolution".<sup>120</sup>

## 4. Conceiving Urban Activism

The regular accumulation of recuperations repressing the political suggests a structural condition facing urban activism. Rather than exchanging politics for ethics in response, counter-structural dispositions—grounded in 'the political', democratic right and the dialectical use of utopianism—can form the basis for hybrid approaches which tactically integrate various strategies.

### 4.1 Dispositions

Amidst the fluctuating heterogeneity of contexts, tactics and efficacies, certain superstructural dispositions can provide guidance in guarding against the pitfalls of apoliticism, steering the choices of projects and by acting as a reference plane for experimentation.

Holding to a Rancièrian conception of the political, the urban activist must realize that simply raising awareness is not necessarily a 'reconfiguration of the sensible'. *Articulated* rather than general approaches promise to rise above what Rancière calls the "law of a global situation"<sup>121</sup> under which general denouncements (e.g. against consumerism) become self-parodies "since it is very difficult to find anybody who is actually ignorant of such things".<sup>122</sup>

A collective dimension is crucial. Rancière's framework transcends the individual and enacting 'the political' is often a "speech situation", made up of "new forms of collective enunciation".<sup>123</sup>

Negation alone *could* constitute 'politics', but Rancière's terminology ('reconfigure', not 'defigure') implies a constructive dimension. And, because making bold demands—that may be 'unreasonable' or 'impractical' to the pragmatic 'real'—is justified by equalitarian democratic right *and* is often an effective negotiation tactic, a utopian disposition further beckons.

*No wind helps him who does not know to what port he sails.*<sup>124</sup>

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120. Ibid., 21-22.

121. Rancière. *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*. 192.

122. Ibid., 144.

123. Ibid., 6; 139.



To confront a chronic lack of political imagination in providing any alternative to escalating inequalities, David Harvey proposes 'dialectical utopianism'. It integrates an 'either-or' dialectic confronting that of the purely 'both-and' (typically Leftist) which "refuses specific recommendations", eschews universalism<sup>125</sup> and attempts to "endlessly" evade the issue of closure:

*to materialize a space is to engage with closure (however temporary) which is an authoritarian act.*<sup>126</sup>

His analysis finds that 'utopias of spatial form' and 'utopias of social process' inevitably stumble in trying to escape from, or by failing to compromise with, the other. He synthesizes them into what he calls a "spatiotemporal utopianism", where utopian dreams and *existing* social processes engage in an endless dialectic of 'either-or' and 'both-and'.<sup>127</sup>

Though extensive engagement with 'closure' is proposed, investing *too much* in either closure or intentionality risks forfeiting the potential critical efficacy of ambiguity and ambivalence.<sup>128</sup> Critical art's success, according to Rancière, stems from the contradiction, ambiguity and tension inherent in interlacing and "shuttling between" 'art as art' (autonomy) and 'art as life' (heteronomy) across the "aesthetic cut" that "separates consequences and intentions".<sup>129</sup>

*Sometimes something poetic becomes political  
and  
Sometimes something political becomes poetic.*<sup>130</sup>

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124. Roberto Unger, quoting Michel de Montaigne, is quoted by David Harvey in: Harvey, D. *Spaces of Hope*. Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2000, 188.

125. As McLeod and others have found, any serious alternative to the status quo will have to embody—at least in an interim sense—*some* common values, some notion of what 'port' we should aim to sail to. De Caüter's plea for an "ecological and global" 'cosmopolitics' illustrates a contemporary appeal to a degree of universalism. Harvey contends that the "contemporary 'radical' critique of universalism is sadly misplaced" and should rather direct itself on the institutions which "translate between universality and particularity rather than attack universalism per se". The dynamic aspect of the 'utopia of social process' can work to keep these mediating institutions "as open as possible". See: De Caüter. *A Plea for Cosmopolitics*. 160-164; also: Harvey. *Spaces of Hope*. 242-243.

126. Harvey. *Spaces of Hope*, 183.

127. Ibid., 174. See Chapter 8, *The spaces of Utopia*. 133-181 and Chapter 9, *Dialectical Utopianism*. 182-198.

128. From a strategic perspective, 'commitment' is problematic because it "does not readily allow space for ambiguity and ambivalence". Heynen. *Intervention in the relations of production, or sublimation of contradictions? On commitment then and now*. 42; 44.

129. Rancière. *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*. 115; 132-33; 149; 151.

130. Medina, C. 'the 21st century has just begun'...beyond the poetic and political divide. In Debbaut et al. (eds.). *Out of the Studio!* 198.

Cuaauhtémoc Medina contends the "relationship between poetics and politics [is] contingent, contextual and historical", citing the axiom above from Francis Alÿs' 2003 re-enactment of *The Leak* (1995) to suggest that Alÿs' "gentle concept" of 'sometimes' *also* implies "'almost'" by indicating that the "timing of the relation between art and politics [is] conditional: neither 'never' or 'always'; nor 'must' or 'shouldn't'".<sup>131</sup>

## 4.2 Strategies

To navigate the contradictions and tensions inherent in politics and aesthetics, a general pluralistic disposition, flexible and willing to employ hybrid approaches (e.g. Figure 5), is essential. Hilde Heynen advises the 'new commitment' to integrate *design* in hybrid with social engagement while Fischer notes that "a new critical theory in architecture will involve reflective and projective modes, contemplative and active intervention".<sup>132</sup> Though hybridizations must be realized in 'moments of closure', one can preserve openness by conceiving them as *procedural*—temporary and experimental.



Figure 5: Hermann Knoflach's 'Walkmobile' is a hybrid critique utilizing spatialization and over-identification. *Gebzeug [Walkmobile]*. 1975, <http://urban-activismeng.blogspot.be/2009/09/walkmobile.html> [accessed in March, 2013].

Tactically utilizing the tension between 'real life' and the autonomy provided by disciplinarity also works against the predictability of stubbornly consistent strategy, which, especially in art, tends to "[neutralize its] political potential".<sup>133</sup>

131. Ibid.

132. Heynen. *Intervention in the relations of production, or sublimation of contradictions? On commitment then and now*. 46; also: Fischer. *Architecture, Capitalism and Criticality*. 68.

133. The polarized positions of art theorists Claire Bishop and Grant Kester are convincingly critiqued by Kim Charnley from this perspective, Charnley finding that by insisting on rigid 'consistency' (Bishop on the autonomy of art; Kester on ethics) both end up "neutralizing the political potential" automatically by

Besides its mechanical role in 'the political', dissensus might be elevated as a virtue in itself (politically and culturally), as well as strategically canalized. Against the totalizing nature of plans "without contradiction, without conflict", James Holston proposes paradoxically integrating dissensus into the consensus process of "state building" it works against.<sup>134</sup>

And, because the "terms of dissensus" form a conduit through which art and politics might connect<sup>135</sup>, even an apparently indifferent aesthetic movement could, in turn, disrupt an existing social order as the "freedom of the aesthetic" is based on:<sup>136</sup>

*the equality of all subjects—the once scandalous fact that ordinary things, let alone the lowly people, can comprise the main subjects of a book.*<sup>137</sup>

Targeting political art's crisis of efficacy, BAVO proposes to build on a strategy of 'over-identification'<sup>138</sup>, in which artists, facing today's immense recuperative power

*strategically give up their will to resist, capitulate to the status quo and apply the latter's rules even more consistently and scrupulously than the rest of society.*<sup>139</sup>

Its *positive* and *negative* prefixes exaggerate either the target of critique's expressed ('lip service') or repressed (exploitative) intention, respectively. The logic thus 'laid bare' often induces the embarrassed target's denial and subsequently moderated position, while galvanizing bystanders to take a position.<sup>140</sup>

But, this play with sincerity, BAVO notes, is not nearly as effective strictly applied as hybrid approaches which, oscillating between and/or interlacing modes, can resist "easy recuperation" while provoking *both* the Right and the Left. Christoph Schlingensiefel's mode of "artistic resistance" aims to "produce the contradiction", or as another described it, he "creates situations that not only are not clear, but also *cannot* be made clear". This

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'expelling' the tension in the contradiction. Charnley, K. *Dissensus and the politics of collaborative practice*. In *Art and the Public Sphere*. Vol.1(1), 2011, 37-38.

134. Holston, J. *Spaces of Insurgent Citizenship*. In *Cities and Citizenship*. Duke University Press, 1999.

135. Rancière, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*. 140.

136. For Rancière, aesthetic dissensus is a "paradoxical form of efficacy" of art because there is a "principal of indifference" created by the "aesthetic rupture", 'cut' or 'distance' which prohibits a predictable, direct connection between the intention of the artist, the "sensory presentation" of the work and the effect on the spectator or community or their "way of making sense of it" (the political dimension). *Ibid.*, 15-16; 193.

137. *Ibid.*, 16.

138. "This term was coined by Slavoj Žižek to denote the unique subversive strategy of the Slovenian avant-garde group Liabach in communist Yugoslavia of the eighties." BAVO (eds.). *Cultural Activism Today: The Art of Over-Identification*. 6-7; 28.

139. *Ibid.*, 6.

140. *Ibid.*, 30.

'cognitive friction' undermines consensus, preparing the ground for potential political reconfiguration.<sup>141</sup>

As our energies and time are more and more relocated to cyberspace, the already limited political potential of real form and space is further diluted:<sup>142</sup>

*Our activism has been reduced and confined to the square inches of our computer screen. [...] We express our dislike of what's happening in the real world with a like.*<sup>143</sup>

To the extent that spatial reconfigurations can be *twinned with* specific political actions and motivations, a spatial strategy can be effective. Yet, an overkill of focus on residual spaces has revealed a susceptibility to recuperation via the 'patch-up' function provided. While these interstitial spaces are essential—for experimentation, incubation, even real political action—the historical evidence on recuperation calls for a multi-theatered approach *also* focused on the core of society.

## 5. Conclusion

The marginal efficacy of urban activism, essentially a structural condition, should not distract from the much greater threat of depoliticization. Driving this threat are ever more contrived recuperations and the consensus mechanisms of the 'ethical turn' in politics and in art. Aggravating matters is the increasing synchronization of the domains, aims and interests of neoliberal capitalists, technocrats, artists, alternative practitioners and 'creatives'. To maintain a critical disposition and resist recuperation, urban activists can combine clear Rancièrian definitions of 'the political' and of 'democracy' with a sophistication of both disposition and strategy through hybridized integrations of dialectical utopianism, ambiguity, ambivalence, dissensus, over-identification, disciplinary autonomy and spatialization, taking care to focus on both the residual *and* the core of society.

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141. In this regard, BAVO cites Christoph Schlingensief's action in Vienna, *Bitte liebt Österreich!* [Please Love Austria!] (2000). Ibid., 34.

142. The spread of 'non-places' was already analyzed by Marc Augé in 1995. See: Augé, M. *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*. Verso, London and New York, 1995.

143. Dadara's *Likefesto* is a artistic cultural critique of Facebook's 'like' button. See: Dadara. *Likefesto*. Like 4 Real, 2013, <http://like4real.com/en/likefesto> [accessed in June, 2013].

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## Appendix 4 - Paper 2 - "Poetic Incommunicability: An 'Efficient' Creative Force"

*Conference paper.*

Geib, J. (2015). Poetic Incommunicability: An 'Efficient' Creative Force. In *Transvaluation: Making the World Matter International Symposium [proceedings]*, 21-22 May 2015, Gothenburg. ISBN: 978-91-88041-00-5.

### **Abstract:**

Amidst the hysteria for constant connectivity, transparency and 'efficient' creativity which belies the current crisis of creativity, this paper asserts the value of *poetic incommunicability*—to creativity and to society. The role of the poet-artist-designer is vital in constructing structures of *multivocality* which activate the dynamic relations between communicability and incommunicability. The paradoxically 'efficient' mechanisms of these structures can be understood through theories of poetry depicted by Viktor Shklovsky and André Breton.

The 'black box', a figure of incommunicability borrowed from science, represents the possibility of *temporary disconnection*, a critical precondition of creativity. Conceptualizing and valuing such spaces while designing the interruptibility of their reciprocal relations with communicability—the architecture of their porosity—becomes the primary task of 'dialogical design'.

These themes are explored, conveyed, delayed and complicated through the device of the metalogue, which collages and connects, often in a more physical narrative sense.

**Keywords:** *incommunicability, multivocality, creativity, dialogical design, black boxes, opacity*

## Hysterical Creativity

Could one productively *self-destruct* while writing a conference paper—that wonders about inner well-worn design of coherent self-construction—for the sake of black boxes, efficiency in drawing out the reader’s incomprehension? If one burrows into the city, advocates for the aporias asserts the Right of Window, to be seen and to sleep, inherent in the *multivocality* of dialogue, hopefully so. to see ‘blind

A whole range of tropes—flattening, hollowing, liquifying, diffusing, smoothing, spots’ soothing—have been deployed to criticize the forces of homogenization with so prevalent today. Art sociologist Pascal Gielen wields nearly all of them in *Creativity and other Fundamentalisms* (2013), which sees the contemporary artist confined without... to a ‘flat’ or ‘wet’ world where creativity has been replaced by ‘creativism’ (95), a ...and so on fundamentalist ideology demanding an incessant rush of superficial flux. ...and something else...

The spatiality of the metaphors is important.

Transfusion and redefinition of creativity began in the 1970s slowly, accelerating dreams in the 1980s. Especially with financialization, ‘creative capitalism’ operationalized from a worm’s creativity, valuing only excerpts it could control and measure, especially in the short bed, term. Gielen finds artists today thus commanded to use their creativity ‘efficiently’: behind a modestly, directly (in the ‘real world’) and always towards entrepreneurial ‘lu-creativity’. m... The lingering ‘ethical turn’ in art and politics (Rancière 2004) provides an flimsy alibi. of intent.

This modesty pairs strangely with the impassioned hysteria (from both neoliberal no land and artistic discourses) which would have us believe we live in a veritable golden age to sail of creativity. Peter Murphy refutes this in “The Creativity Collapse” (2013), citing the to. *declining* rate of creativity in OECD countries since the 1970s. Gielen links the current mania for creativity with the recurrent cultural tendency to ‘rediscover’ a romanticized pauses, version of some quality just as it disappears.

Hysteria also characterizes the Post-Fordist condition of the new creative subject draws the who must constantly connect to and expand their network, self-promoting in shutter competition to improvise their own security via the next project. In *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep* (2013), art critic and essayist Jonathan Crary describes this frantic dream, ‘always-on’ condition which reimagines the world “as a non-stop work site or an always happy to open shopping mall of infinite choices, tasks, selections, and digressions” (17). Just as wake

a hysteric's streaming and uncontrolled emotion overwhelms any variety in expressed as a figure content, the omnipresent brightness of Crary's 24/7 erases any "inherent structure at the window, of differentiation" (13). The hysterical becomes habitual and —at the window-view— vice versa. (certainly behind this unseen barrier)

opens the window, each time newly constructed, Jamesian 'flights' and 'perchings', Proustian *moments bienheureux*, closures and missed communication, Charles Moore's foreword to Jun'ichirō Tanizaki's *In Praise of Shadows* clouds obscuring (1977(1933)) sheepishly admits to the Western architect's obsession with light. the sun from fussy

Illuminated transparency—Crary's "fraudulent brightness"—implies the eradication hysterics of "any mystery or unknowability" (19), enabling myths of predictability, control and hysteria efficiency (Rothbard 1979). In the view of the enlightened, the first machines were made wants of glass, as it were. Le Corbusier instructs: "The lesson of the machine lies in the pure glitter and relationship of cause and effect." (Foster 2013, 59) The lesson learned was the too-shine. tempting possibility of knowing all—*omniscience*. No wonder that finance moved into fiction,

No wonder that science moved away from the serendipity of discovery and faith. (Murphy 2013), avoiding the "sensation of surprise" which Albert Einstein held to be "one of the primary motives for scientific thought" (Shklovsky 1970, 64).

That this knowledge could be fully and efficiently communicated was an adjoining conceit. Literary theorist Viktor Shklovsky's *Theory of Prose* (1925), which introduced the idea of *ostranenie* or defamiliarization (also 'estrangement'), argued that . . .ships passed.. . the poet or artist does not nor should not dutifully imitate reality as it is. Rather, they *design* a process of perception "...he could paint only when surprised" that is intentionally delayed, drawn out and often complicated by "a number of by all-at-once parallel structures" or worlds (metaphors with multiple meanings, streaming riddles, analogies, loose ends, etc.) (117). Shklovsky associated the demand for meaning 'efficiency' in poetry—that it should become more prosaic— though "we can still only fully with the expanding 'automatization' of society, or, as Gerald L. Bruns puts it in the develop one introduction: "modernity begins with the discovery that the book of the world is mental 'path' written in prose." (xi) at a time"—the single logical

The omniscient disposition behind technocratic approaches can quickly escalate, line, an observation made by the art critic and art historian Hal Foster in his commentary on the single Norman Foster's architecture: "...sometimes the holistic slips into the totalistic." (Foster voice. 2013, 47). Delusions of *omnipotence* follow those of omniscience, providing another route to homogenization—the funneling towards and strengthening of a single voice.

Applied to the social, the myth of total transparency and total communicability leads the to a similar monovocality. waters call us to participate *in*

As if built in to our human nature, idyllic, utopian visions of society in the world, but

perfect harmony are regularly summoned, and zealously. Political philosopher Iris Marion Young reads this ‘ideal of community’ or communitarianism in a double action across philosophy, sociology, politics, public space and the city in “City Life and Difference” (1990). She finds it exemplary of the ‘logic of identity’ widely contested by postmodern critics, whose reductive unifying force “denies and represses difference” (98;227). It reveals “a longing for harmony among persons, for consensus and mutual understanding” (229), predicated on the valuing of and aim for an illusory “social transparency” (230). She quotes Michel Foucault’s description of this ‘Rousseauist dream’:

a transparent society, visible and legible in each of its parts, the dream of there no longer existing any zones of darkness, zones established by the privileges of royal power or the prerogative of some corporation, zones of disorder. It was the dream that each individual, whatever position he occupied, might be able to see the whole of society, that men’s hearts should communicate, their vision be unobstructed by obstacles, and that the opinion of all reign over each. (Foucault 1980, 152) (229)

Likewise, discourses and practices of art and design which invoke ‘dialogue’ tend to overvalue its *unifying* and *clarifying* mechanisms and associated communitarian benefits: increased mutual communicability—‘social transparency’—of the ‘view eases us closer to univocal consensus.

Young notes further that the apparent absence of mediation in face-to-face social relations—their ‘immediacy’—is seen to reinforce the utopian desires for “purity and security” threatened by the *distancing* (both temporal and spatial) which comes with the abstraction of mediation. (234) The reality of the latter resists all attempts at unification. It structures experience with multiplicity.

“*Séparés, on est ensemble* [Apart, we are together.]”

Echoing Richard Sennett’s definition of a city as “a human settlement in which strangers are likely to meet” (1977, 39), Young’s ‘ideal of city life’ proposes a ‘politics of difference’ framed as a “relationship of strangers who do not understand one another in a subjective and immediate sense, relating across time and distance.” (234)

Very little creativity takes place in utopia, though there is much ‘happiness’.

Utopia ignores the human condition. There are no strangers. if “men’s hearts...communicate”

We may be living in this utopia, among others. we may be sleep-walking after the end of

Prefiguring the paradoxical contiguousness *and* atomization of our Post-Fordist network culture, the philosopher, writer and journalist Vilém Flusser, in “To Scatter” (1985), warned of the heavy toll taken on society in the preceding decades by mass media and the ‘happiness’ of ‘mass culture’: “The present dispersal of society has resulted from a general wish to be happy.” (65) This ‘mindless happiness’ was reinforced

by the distribution structure and pervasiveness of ‘technical images’ which enabled a canceling out of Hegel’s ‘unhappy consciousness’ by a superseding of the experimenter... distinction between public and private space, between inside and outside. ...I unsettle all ‘Consciousness’ was linked to things.” not just a psychological architecture of contrast and contradiction. Whether by “dispers[ing] themselves” (as in Flusser’s context) or by uniting themselves in communitarianism, Flusser’s observation holds: “People want to... “People wish to be settled: only as far as they are unsettled is there any hope for them.” ...lose consciousness, to become happy.” Though in a different way today, people are “so completely socialized” (64) that there are no more strangers.

To be a stranger is to be highly creative.

This was Flusser’s determination a year earlier, in “Exile and Creativity” (1984). To the outsider, the exile, the stranger, “everything is unusual” and they must decipher, process and transform this ‘data’ into “meaningful messages” in order to make sense of, navigate and inhabit their unsettled condition—‘data transformation’ being a “synonym for creation”. (104) In time of course this becomes habitual, so the deeper question of “human dignity” and freedom is the right “not of coming and going, but rather of remaining a stranger”. (108)

The hysteria of the ‘creative city’ repeats that of market fundamentalism: we are mandated not to coexist or collaborate, but to ‘play on the same team’ (Peck 2005, 741).

Teammates are never strangers.

“But is he who opens a door

### Chiaroscuros of Incommunicability

and

With only lenses of transparency, the value of *incommunicability*, of opacity—to he who closes it creativity and to society broadly—is not seen. the

same

In contrast, chiaroscuros of incommunicability (or communicability) come into view. being?”

Amit Pinchevski, senior lecturer in communication and journalism, takes issue with the tendency of discourses, particularly in communication theory, to view imperfections in human communication “as a problem”. (2011, 27)

“From candle to oil lamp, oil lamp to gaslight, gaslight to electric light--

his quest for a brighter light never ceases,

he spares no pains to eradicate even

Instead—working his argument through the literary figure of Bartleby—the minutest shadow.”

he finds that paradoxically “it is the interruption of communication Well, “a well-stocked mind, that breeds communication”. (54) This dynamic reciprocal relation between the perhaps, but a

two polarities of communicability animates a stirring, morphing, flickering vagrant mind.

palette of brightness and darkness, consisting in large part of in-between shades. “...Tanizaki

Incommunicability forms an “underlying indeterminacy ripe with creative does

possibilities”. (48)

wander...”

...through the landscape in view, re-instantiating fragments “of time in the pure state”

The inverse of excessively bright images, excessively dark images would be equally      nexuses unstimulating in their uniformity or monologism. It was the mistake      of sensations wonder of the post-critical, for instance, to rationalize the abandonment of constructive change      with based on a romanticization of the insurmountable complexity or ‘incomprehensibility’ of      Nadja. society and the city.      “...because it’s only the beginning.”

These chiaroscuros—which change in relation to the subject’s perspective (whether poet-artist-designer, theorist-critic-historian, reader-participant or some combination)—can be viewed across the mechanics of poetry theorized      ...of structured digressions by Viktor Shklovsky and André Breton.      “to evoke the underlying associative network indirectly”

The theme of Shklovsky’s *Bowstring: On the Dissimilarity of the Similar* (1970) is a nuanced extension of his concept of estrangement: the reciprocal relation between voluntarily and the similar and the dissimilar as the fundamental mechanism of art. We      involuntarily experience the ‘contradictoriness’ of life through the “collision of      vivid *moments bienheureux* or structures” constructed by the poet-artist. (285)      ‘fortunate moments’

In focusing on the similarities of structures (e.g. genres and forms), Shklovsky argues literary theorists miss the point. The frustration with Shakespeare’s surprising ‘illogical’ use of canonical models is the point: “it was Shakespeare who engineered the contradictions”. (189)      “dialogical, rewired images”

But the finer point is that the old (the similar) is not altogether negated but in fact used to transport the new: “The innovator is a guide who changes the      nucleus and fringe tracks but who also knows the old pathways.” (423) This ‘dissimilarity of the similar’ is      a an ‘efficient’ method as it works from within: “it uses the system as part of its new      paradox of message without destroying the entire system.” (57)      ‘self-determination and security’ “...through misrecognition, one arrives at recognition”

This dynamic could also be put in terms of order and disorder. Shklovsky highlights Stravinsky’s reflections on his own innovative compositions, which were said to upend settled laws of music—but that were actually ‘restrained’ by his profound knowledge of those very laws. Without a certain degree of order “everything disintegrates”, “degenerating into full blown exorbitance”. (Stravinsky 1936) (228)

Returning to estrangement: it is not a single-purposed or standalone device. Although, as it propels towards incommunicability it “makes perception long and ‘laborious’” (1925, 6), it also enriches the potentialities of ‘communicability’. The “complicated and multilayered” structures of Alexander Pushkin are said by Shklovsky to “resemble a forest”. But the poet both “creates such forests and gives suggestive paths that lead inside.” (302)      “Art is a means of experiencing the process of creativity.” “...a shift in emphasis away from an overly ideological adherence to clarity toward a more contingent, strategic orientation...

The surrealist discourse of ...explicit communication is a cultural assumption; it is not a André Breton in *Communicating Vessels* (1932) holds the task of poetry to be this linguistic suggestiveness—the generation of a ‘vigorous communication’ between two distant, imperative.” apparently antagonistic realms. (109) Between these “strategic ambiguity promotes realms is the space of ordinary incommunicability, the space in which the poet strives to unified overcome and activate through poetic infrastructures of “conducting wire” or “capillary diversity” tissue” (139): complex interlacing, shifting, crossing, tangling...but also by oscillating ships between the polar realms—the abstract interior world (of emotions, imagination and passing mystery) and the concrete exterior world (of facts, reality and action). Breton’s political and aim was provisional unions of these realms—that of a tangled ambivalence of interpretation (poetics) and that of port and drift transformation (politics), respectively.

At the same time, *incommunicability* “formed a mainstay of aesthetic experience for Breton”, though this was primarily related to his political frame of reference (surrealism located the political at the scale of the individual psyche), his stance against “Happiness, like exchange value—a viewpoint “matters to me only insofar as I have not yet the idea of an ending, managed to make others share it”—and his aversion to Dada’s populism was impossible.” (its “Artificial Hells”). (Witkovsky 2003, 130)

Shklovsky and Breton, both adherents to poetic approaches employing multiple often shifting meanings and believers in the power of poetry to activate the changeability of things, drew attention to “the dialectics of inside and outside multiply Heraclitus’s paradoxical-metaphorical constructs, particularly: “harmony with countless consists of opposing tension, like that of the bow and the lyre.” (c. 500 BCE in: diversified Shklovsky 1970, 55; Breton 1925, 134) He was known as ‘the Obscure’ or ‘the Dark nuances’. One’ for his “acceptance of the ontological status of paradox—an acceptance, that is the physical to say, of the view that paradox lies inextricably at the very heart of reality.” and the (Wheelwright 1959, 92) Accordingly, Shklovsky and Breton held the poet-artist’s meta-physical role to be to rouse us from our slumber and facilitate our experience of the paradoxical nature of life. the other day friendly strangers tried to force open

This role is all the more critical as our human nature (modulated by context) the door, permits our consciousness to easily slide away—whether by force of habit or then the window, will. Murphy notes that whole historical periods—including our own—have succumbed by to this slide into “something less enigmatic, less ironic, shallower and pettier”. But, “brute optimistically, he points to periods in Western culture of “intense creative impetus integrity”. marked by a pervasive sense of paradox” (those of Luther, Shakespeare, Hegel and Kierkegaard). (21) another sideway suggested

The twofold nature of the poetic mechanism is worth repeating. by Gregory

Shklovsky’s poet-artist consciously constructs paradoxical, often self-refuting Bateson: structures in order to explore the paradoxical nature of experience. a sort of



Kathleen Marie Higgins found Nietzsche's use of aphorisms as an "authorial metalogue strategy" to be "particularly good at provoking the ongoing activity of revaluation that Nietzsche encourages". (Higgins 2006, 416) of sorts,

These poetic structures or 'internal models of the world' (created by the poet-artist to 'recognize' and 'orient himself' in the world—but which inevitably fracture in some manner on contact) give us access to his artistic perception which is "formed on the basis of a strained perception, as if through inspiration". (Shklovsky 1970, 283)

conveying the incommunicable:

"According to Proust, the function of the work of art is to permit the observer/reader to partake in the consciousness of the artist"

*Ostranenie* (estrangement) then becomes familiar to us both:

*Ostranenie* is the sensation of surprise felt toward the world, a perception of the world with a strained sensitivity. The term can be established only by including the notion of "the world" in its meaning. (283)

In the account of Einstein cited by Shklovsky, a more spontaneous version of this mechanism was shared by science. It also triggered the scientist to *wonder*. As Murphy lamented, science has increasingly shifted away from this mode.

Shklovsky observes: "Science avoids the act of wondering, it tries to overcome the element of surprise. Art preserves it." (284)

"...falling with the stone, flying with the bird"

### Black Boxes Breathing

When science wants to forget that it can be surprised it formulates 'black boxes'.

When scientists lack understanding of (or do not need to understand) some part of a larger system in their experiment, they schematize it as a 'black box'—it cannot be seen into. 'Grey boxes' are partially understood. The content of 'white' or 'glass boxes' is considered entirely visible and understandable.

We increasingly live in one large glass box. Crary's '24/7' brightens it further with incessant surveillance and activity: "interfacing, interacting, communicating, responding, or processing within some telematic milieu" (15). This experiment—"the calculated maintenance of an ongoing state of transition" (37)—runs without pause, as we do.

But we know:

Every man supposes himself not to be fully understood... The last chamber, the last closet, he must feel was never opened; there is always a residuum unknown, unanalyzable. (Emerson 1841, 265)

Considering this and returning to Gielen's metaphors—the endlessly open waters, the shapelessness and mist of the network—an apparently stark inside-outside dialectic is called for. Both Gielen (90) and Murphy (2007, 22) underscore the critical importance of Jamesian "resting-places", critical importance to creativity of *disconnecting temporarily*. Gielen elaborates further, of

citing Plato, Richard Sennett and Paolo Virno who stress “the importance of perching, ‘unsocial’ behavior as a precondition for creativity.” Echoing Flusser’s ‘exile’, Gielen sees the key to generating creativity lying in “the oscillation between flights a social environment and isolation”, in temporarily withdrawing from the dominant frenzy culture to ‘islands’. (91)

One must breathe. you’re hysterical—make a breath.

Starvation is not just the fate of those stuck on islands—nor suffocation that of those sealed in opaque boxes. Bruno Latour warns that “transparency and immediacy are bad for science as well as politics: they would make both suffocate.” Latour points to the longstanding fallacy of full transparency in political representation— transparency: “How can architects continue to sell this line?” —efficient, flawless communication. New forms integrating opacity and delay are called for. (Latour 2005, 11;16) “Like all things in architecture,

The lesson of the poetic is that this will not come naturally—it will take openness and closure conscious effort, intentioned design and constant cultivation. only matter if they can assist man in his alternating inclination towards inside and outside.” Conceptualizing and valuing spaces of incommunicability while designing the ..... *interruption* of their reciprocal relations with communicability becomes . . . the primary task of ‘dialogical design’. The challenge of brea t h i n g black boxes is the architecture of their porosity—the functionality and qualities of ..... their openings, their thresholds—their breathing mechanisms. objects The poet-artist-architect adds a new vocabulary of black boxes. Internally- . . . controlled apertures modulate visibility, autonomy, integration, countermeasure, hiding the formula, participation, observation, difference, indifference, otherness...—in ways . . . every day . . . reassembling the crooked timber. . . . impenetrable to glass boxes.

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## Appendix 5 - *Poetic Incommunicability*

*Adaptation of an academic paper into an artwork taking the form of a limited print A5 publication. Displayed at the Art Book Fair Berlin (Museum für Gegenwart), 11-13 December 2015.*

Geib, J. (2015). *Poetic Incommunicability*. Vegetable Lamb Press. ISBN: 978-91-88249-08-1.



JON GEIB

Poetic Incommunicability



VEGETABLE LAMB PRESS

Murphy refutes this in "The Creativity Collapse" (2013), OECD countries since the 1970s. Gielen links the current creativity with the recurrent cultural tendency to quality just as it disappears.

Hysteria also characterizes the Post-Fordist condition of connect to and expand their network, self-promoting in their own security via the next project. In *24/7: Late* critic and essayist Jonathan Crary describes this frantic 'always-on' condition which reimagines the world "as a non-mall of infinite choices, tasks, selections, and digressions" uncontrolled emotion overwhelms any variety in expressed Crary's *24/7* erases any "inherent structure of differentiation" (13). The hysterical becomes habitual vice versa.

Jamesian

Charles Moore's foreword to Jun'ichirō Tanizaki's *In* sheepishly admits to the Western architect's obsession with

citing the *declining* rate of creativity in no  
mania for land to sail to  
'rediscover' a romanticized version of some

the new creative subject who must constantly draw the  
competition to improvise shutter  
*Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep* (2013), art to

stop work site or an always open shopping happy to  
(17). Just as a hysteric's streaming and wake as  
content, the omnipresent brightness of a figure

and at the window,  
—at the window-view—

(certainly behind this unseen barrier)  
opens the window, each time newly constructed,  
'flights' and 'perchings', Proustian *moments bienheureux*,

*Praise of Shadows* (1977(1933)) closures and missed communication,  
light. clouds obscuring  
the sun from  
fussy

## Appendix 6 - Paper 3 - "Institutioning: Participatory Design and the Public Realm"

*Early draft of my text contribution towards a co-written journal article, which briefly describes my case study from our proposed framework of 'institutioning'.*

Huybrechts, L., Benesch, H., Geib, J., Schoffelen, J. and Heynen, H. (2017, *forthcoming*). Institutioning: Participatory Design and the Public Realm. *CoDesign*.

### *Ett skepp kommer lastat. . .*

The TRADERS project framed my PhD research in two ways. It provided international-scale legitimization of and support for artistic research, reinforcing an active tradition in Sweden and incubating a sect within the architecture department of my host institution, Chalmers University of Technology. Second, it formally linked me to the city of Gothenburg's cultural department via a brief 'secondment'. Yet, this frame was ambiguous enough (Mahoney and Thelen, 2010, 11;21) that we could challenge it by more closely integrating the partner in an ongoing co-supervisory role. This, combined with process- and practice-focused artistic research (Biggs and Karlsson, 2010), brought 'institutioning' frontstage.

The landscape opened up by this relationship led to my primary case study in Frölunda, a subdistrict of Gothenburg nicknamed a 'mini-Gothenburg' for its wide disparities in living conditions and health. A recent report also finds a low level of social trust (City of Gothenburg, 2015). During a chance encounter between my co-supervisors and I and a cultural producer of the Frölunda Kulturhus, a large cultural center, we discovered overlapping interests which could consolidate our strategic frames: their upcoming autumn (2015) programming theme, 'neighbors', resonated with my interest in exploring a cultural form of participation influenced by an urban sociology of the 'stranger' (Amin, 2012). I was invited to propose a project.

It would be a spiral of six workshops with local children, interconnected by feedback between workshops, researcher, participants, local inhabitants and artifacts. We would investigate how neighbors communicate *indirectly* via architectural interfaces (doors, common spaces and windows). Distanced methods (observational tours, letters-writing and a cultural probe) would amplify our own experience of indirectness. Imaginative speculation would also feature, as it does in *Ett skepp kommer lastat. . .* [*A ship comes loaded. . .*], a Swedish children's game in which players take turns guessing the contents of an incoming ship.

This hazy system of multidirectionality and metaphors of the unknown encouraged 'field conditions' (Allen, 1999) which, combined with the openness of the Kulturhus, enabled the

project to nest coherently in multiple institutions. Its parts could be reconfigured such that the scope could balloon: from an expected class of 12 students to, in all, 159 children and youth from eight different classes (grades 1-5, 9 and 10) participating in 13 workshops over four months. Keeping the groups separate (they never met) reinforced indirectness while facilitating coordination (e.g. enabling the inclusion of three additional classes from the city's main international school).

The dramatic expansion in scope arose out of my need to collaborate with a Swedish-speaking pedagogue in order to communicate with the original participant group, the local primary school's *fritidshem* (after-school 'leisure-time centre'). By sharing this obstacle with the cultural department, a resolution was found in the form of a widened collaboration. Three classes from a neighboring, more affluent subdistrict would join through an existing city program, 'Museum Lessons in Public Space'. This resulted in two pedagogues becoming available.

However, the project's complexity challenged the habitual frames of this program and participating teachers. After being offered a full exhibition at the Kulturhus, we significantly reconfigured timelines and content, splitting lessons in two so each class could visit the exhibition. Coordination was very difficult as teachers were accustomed to single, stand-alone lessons. Accommodating the latter required adjusting the lesson descriptions, bracketing out the wider project and simplifying the name to *Vem är din granne?* [*Who is your neighbor?*]. In this push-pull, informal institutional frames (norms, shared understandings) were found to be fairly malleable.

Each group visited the exhibition separately, meeting the other participants only indirectly—through our hybrid, syncretic artworks (created by the participants and myself). Exposure to their 'neighbors' perhaps reanimated empathetic relations with local inhabitants, their own neighbors and others. Making the project public had further local effects, but as important are potential institutional effects. Officials in the city- and regional-level cultural departments were impressed by the high aesthetic quality of the exhibition design and its artworks. Many saw a compelling new way of working with children and of taking them seriously. Such "untraditional angles of vision" can exert an 'enlightenment effect' (Weiss, 1977), potentially translating to further support for alternative approaches. And yet, the project arguably has more demonstrative force for not being entirely alternative: it challenged certain institutional frames but, simultaneously, consolidated others.

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## **Appendix 7 - *Trading Places: Practices of Public Participation in Art and Design Research* [lexicon entries]**

*Text in an edited book.*

Geib, J. (2017). [Lexicon entries]. In Hamers, D., Bueno de Mesquita, N., Vaneycken, A. and Schoffelen, J. (eds.). *Trading Places: Practices of Public Participation in Art and Design Research*. dpr-barcelona.

## Multivocality (noun)

*Susceptibility to interpretation in a number of ways; ambiguity, polysemy.*<sup>1</sup>

also **Multivocal** (adjective)

*Having or open to many different meanings, interpretations, or applications.*<sup>2</sup>

*Having many or different meanings of equal probability or validity.*<sup>3</sup>

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

But, the multivocal qualities inherent in participatory processes can also be integrated into the ends. Participation can be further *inscribed into* the city's infrastructures to build democratic and cultural values by articulating, amplifying and creating multiple voices. This requires designers and policymakers further shed compulsions of control and consistency by integrating artistic, experimental approaches and space for the unplanned, the emergent and the unknown into their methodologies and designs. *Multivocality*, as an active and supportive infrastructure, provides a valuable model. 'Designing multivocality', then, while seeking to engage many voices, foregrounds the role of infrastructure in its additional, broader purpose<sup>4</sup> of animating a cosmopolitan public culture.

*Example: MOTBILDER [COUNTERPARTS] (2014) (ICIA - Institute for Contemporary Ideas and Art)*<sup>5</sup>

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  3. *Dictionary.com Unabridged*. [Online]. (2016). s.v. Multivocal. [Accessed 15 March 2016]. Available from: [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)
  4. Sanders and Stappers speak of the design field's expansion to include designing for purposes not just products. See: Sanders, E. B.-N. and Stappers, P.J. (2008). Co-creation and the new landscapes of design. *CoDesign*, 4(1), pp. 5-18.
  5. ICIA. (n.d.). *Motbilder*. [Online]. [Accessed 15 April 2016]. Available from: <http://www.icia.se/se/utställningar-och-projekt/tidigare/motbilder-2014-11268195>; Facebook. (2014).

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

*Example: Frilagret* (2012-present) (Göteborgs stad Kulturförvaltning [Gothenburg Cultural Department])<sup>6</sup>

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

## References:

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*Motbilder*. [Online]. [Accessed 15 April 2016]. Available from:  
<https://www.facebook.com/events/368873956597148/>

6. Frilagret. (n.d.). *What is Frilagret?*. [Online]. [Accessed 15 April 2016]. Available from:  
<http://www.frilagret.se/english/>

## Dialogue (noun)

*A conversation between two or more people as a feature of a book, play, or film.*<sup>7</sup>

*A discussion between two or more people or groups, especially one directed towards exploration of a particular subject or resolution of a problem.*<sup>8</sup>

also **Dialogic/Dialogical** (adjective)

*Relating to or in the form of dialogue.*<sup>9</sup>

In contrast to a dialectic, which steers a conversation to a point of closure in which a common ground and/or a solution to a problem is achieved, dialogue is an open-ended process of dynamic alternating exchange between *you* and *another*. It may, intermittently, move towards a common ground, but it never lands. This basic relational dynamic can be extended beyond the directness of face-to-face communication to include all manner of dialogues marked by varying qualities of indirectness. Further, new materialist perspectives<sup>10</sup> allow us to consider the active role of non-human participants.

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

*Example: The School of Panamerican Unrest* (2003-2009) (Pablo Helguera)<sup>11</sup>

The primary component of this art project by Pablo Helguera was a road trip covering the length of the American continents. Along the way, stops were made in public spaces where a 'portable schoolhouse structure' was installed to host films, discussions and performances

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7. Oxford Dictionaries. [Online]. (2016). s.v. Dialogue. [Accessed 15 March 2016]. Available from: en.oxforddictionaries.com

8. Ibid.

9. Oxford Dictionaries. [Online]. (2016). s.v. Dialogic/Dialogical. [Accessed 15 March 2016]. Available from: en.oxforddictionaries.com

10. Particularly: Bennett, J. (2010). *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*.

11. Helguera, P. (2006). *The School of Panamerican Unrest*. [Online]. [Accessed 15 April 2016]. Available from: <http://pablohelguera.net/2006/06/the-school-of-panamerican-unrest/>

with and by local collaborators and the public. The work's meaning emerged out of these dialogical encounters.

*Example: It Is What It Is: Conversations About Iraq* (2009) (Jeremy Deller)<sup>12</sup>

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

## References:

- Bakhtin, M. M. and Holquist, M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
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- Holquist, M. (2002). *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World* (2nd ed.). London and New York: Routledge.
- Pinchevski, A. (2011). Bartleby's Autism: Wandering along Incommunicability. *Cultural Critique*, (78) 27-59.
- Sennett, R. (2012). *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures, and Politics of Cooperation*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

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12. Deller, J. (2009). *It Is What It Is*. [Online]. [Accessed 15 April 2016]. Available from: <http://www.jeremydeller.org/ItIsWhatItIs/ItIsWhatItIs.php>; Creative Time. (2009). *It Is What It Is: Conversations About Iraq*. [Online]. [Accessed 15 April 2016]. Available from: <http://creativetime.org/programs/archive/2009/deller/>

## Architectonics (noun)

*The scientific study of architecture.*<sup>13</sup>

*Musical, literary, or artistic structure.*<sup>14</sup>

*The principle of structure and governing design in an artistic work, as distinct from its texture or stylistic details of execution.*<sup>15</sup>

Architectonics, as the science of relations, is concerned with the composition of relations between parts and between parts and wholes.<sup>16</sup> If public space is primarily understood as relational space<sup>17</sup>, an architectonic approach holds much possibility in prioritizing these interrelations. Likewise, as dialogue is defined by its relational structure, the challenge of navigating, activating and/or intensifying this structure becomes central for design practices engaged with issues of dialogue, participation and public space.

In emphasizing an active, strategic design approach which foregrounds relational structures, my research conceives the term *dialogical infrastructures*. This compound concept speaks to both of the "two levels of organizational structure" which Hamdi found necessary in participatory urban development: 'emergent' and 'designed'.<sup>18</sup> Analogous to Eco's literary concept of the 'open work'<sup>19</sup>, dialogical infrastructures are designed to provide space and possibilities for unplanned, emergent dialogue and participation.

*Example: Quinta Monroy housing (2004) (Alejandro Aravena)*<sup>20</sup>

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

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13. Oxford Dictionaries. [Online]. (2016). s.v. Architectonics. [Accessed 15 March 2016]. Available from: [en.oxforddictionaries.com](http://en.oxforddictionaries.com)

14. Ibid.

15. Baldick, C. (2001). *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (2nd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press. (Original work published in 1990), p. 19.

16. Holquist, M. (2002). *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World* (2nd ed.). London and New York: Routledge, p. 28.

17. Massey, D. (2005). *For Space*. London: SAGE.

18. Hamdi, N. (2014). *The Spacemaker's Guide to Big Change: Design and Improvisation in Development Practice*. London and New York: Routledge, p. 93.

19. Eco, U. (1989). *The Open Work*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

20. Elemental. (2016). *Quinta Monroy*. [Online]. [Accessed 15 April 2016]. Available from: <http://www.elementalchile.cl/en/projects/quinta-monroy/>

*Example: Ett skepp kommer lastat. . . [A ship comes loaded. . .]* (2015) (Jon Geib)<sup>21</sup>

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

## References:

- De Landa, M. (2006). *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity*. London: Continuum.
- Holquist, M. (2002). *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World* (2nd ed.). London and New York: Routledge.
- Eco, U. (1989). *The Open Work*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Shklovsky, V. (1970). *Bowstring: On the Dissimilarity of the Similar*. Champaign, Dublin and London: Dalkey Archive Press.
- Suchman, L. (2012). Configuration. In C. Lury and N. Wakeford (eds.). *Inventive Methods: the Happening of the Social* (pp. 48-60). London: Routledge.

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21. See Figure 12.





## **Appendix 8 - *Modelling in Dialogue: Book of Voice-Illustrations***

*Overview of a 170-page collection of on-site illustrations made by two illustrators during TRADERS Training Week #5.*

*All illustrations by Studio Goja [studiogoja.se]*

*Editing and Cover Design: Jon Geib*

Liffner, I., Roosenboom, M. and Geib, J. (ed.). (2017). *Modelling in Dialogue: Book of Voice-Illustrations*.  
[Digital and print publication]. Gothenburg: TMB Tabergs AB.



> 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 // 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 . . .  
 . . . 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 \ \ 22 21 20 19 18 17 16 15 14 <<  
 > 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 // 33 32 31 30 29 28 27 26 25 24 23 . . .  
 . . . 26 27 28 29 30 31 \ \ 40 39 38 37 36 35 34 <<  
 > 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43...47 // 58 57 56 55 54 53 52 51 50 49 48 47...41 . . .  
 . . . 48 49 50 51 \ \ 62 61 60 59 <<  
 > 52 53 54 55 56 57 // 65 64 63 . . .  
 . . . 58 59 \ \ 67 66 <<  
 > 60 61 // 70 69 68 . . .  
 . . . 62 63 64 \ \ 73 72 71 <<  
 > 65 66 67 // 75 74 . . .  
 . . . 68 \ \ 76 <<  
 > 69 // 77 . . .

voice-illustration sequencing  $(v_1t_1, v_1t_2, v_1t_3 // v_2t_3, v_2t_2, v_2t_1)_1, (v_2t_4, v_2t_5, v_2t_6, \dots)_2, \dots$   
 > = voice 1 start                      v = voice  
 << = voice 2 start                      t = time (chronology)  
 // = inflection point                      ( )<sub>x</sub> = event







[ Case study documentation ]

## Appendix 9 - *Ett skepp kommer lastat. . .*

*Partial textual and visual documentation from the project and the exhibition.*

*Ett skepp kommer lastat. . .* (2015). Exhibition, Frölunda Kulturhus, Västra Frölunda, Gothenburg, 12-29 November.

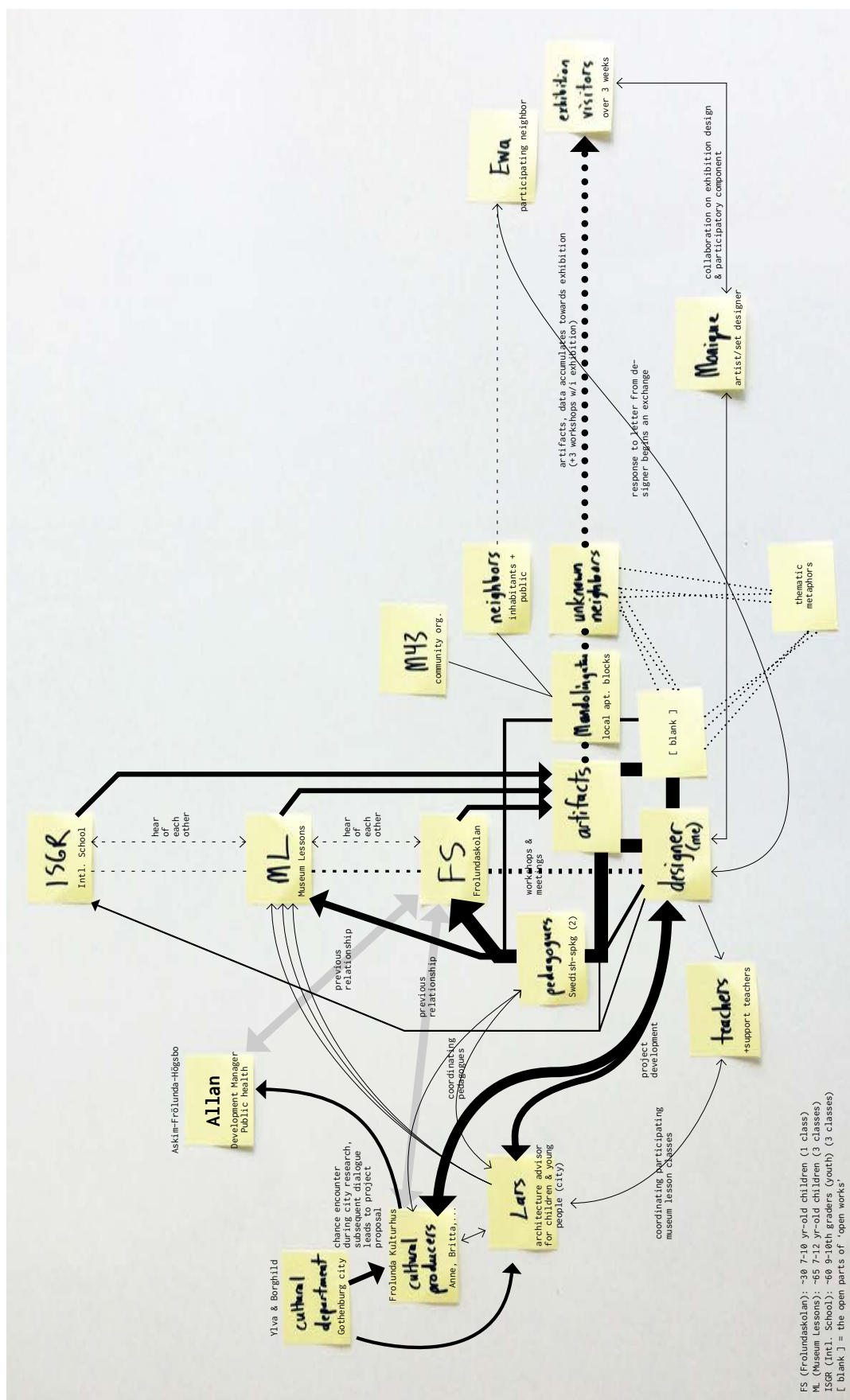
- 9.1 Actor map
- 9.2 Letter to [60] inhabitants
- 9.3 'Gameboards with no rules'
- 9.4 Space laboratories
- 9.5 Press release<sup>1</sup>
- 9.6 Exhibition - participatory cards<sup>2</sup>
- 9.7 UIA Architecture & Children Golden Cubes Awards entry

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1. The cultural producers of the Kulturhus helped with checking this translation.  
2. Monique Wernham and I together brainstormed the three 'prompt' questions which begin the text documentation here. The translations are hers.



## Appendix 9.1 - Actor map



## Appendix 9.2 - Letter to [60] inhabitants

Kära granne,

10 september 2015

Här har du en snäll inbjudan att delta i ett konstnärligt-kulturella-pedagogiska projektet som leder till en utställning i Frölunda Kulturhus. Trettioen barn från Frölundaskolan och lika många från Stadens Rum Museo Lektioner (år 1 - 5) kommer att ha flera lektioner under de kommande tre månaderna på temat "grannar".

Vi ska bygga nyfikenhet för att lära känna våra grannar bättre. Och lika viktigt, får vi lära empati och respekt för vad vi inte kan veta: gränserna för upptäckt, den "främlingen"...djup och rikedom av mänsklig erfarenhet.

Projektet är ett samarbete mellan mig, Doktorand, Stadsplanerare och Arkitekt at Chalmers tekniska högskola, Institutionen för arkitektur (även i TRADERS Doktorand nätverket: tr-aders.eu), Frölunda Kulturhus, Frölundaskolan och Göteborgs stad Kulturförvaltning.

Så, hoppas vi att du kommer att delta genom att interagera med oss (indirekt) de datum som anges nedan, samt genom att bidra till utställningen.

Med vänlig hälsning,

Jon Geib

vänligen sänd att ange ditt deltagande



16<sup>och</sup> 23<sup>\*</sup>  
sept. sept. \*trevande

Barnen går på en rundvandring i Mandolingatan att leta efter ledtrådar till hur grannar uttrycka sig i inre gemensamma utrymmen och i fönster.



växter,  
skulpturer,  
hantverk,  
lampor,  
... vad annars?

28  
sept.

Barnen kommer att följa samma väg som den 16, men vi ber dig att placera något nytt och/eller detta kort utanför dörren på detta datum.

du kan använda detta kort som en "utställning etikett" eller mikro sockel ... att uppvisa något om dig själv eller "grannar" tema.

barnen kommer att samla in korten under sin rundvandring och uppvisar dem senare i Kulturhus!



28  
sept.

Tejpa denna gula form i  
ditt fönster för att visa  
ditt deltagande.



klistermärke

Samma dag som vi ber dig  
att placera något på din  
fönsterbräda eller i ditt  
fönster...något du vill  
ställa ut.

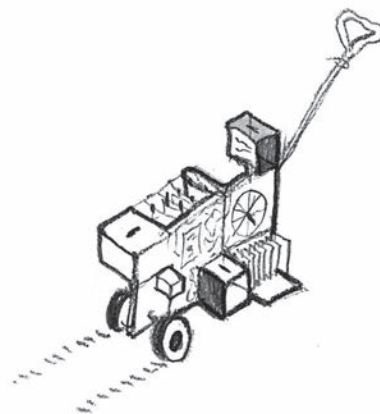
Barnen kommer att söka  
efter dessa former  
och gissa vad det nya  
objektet är (och möjliga  
betydelser).

18-31  
okt.

Barnen och jag kommer att designa en  
"rymdsond" eller "skepp", en liten  
trä vagn, vilket kommer att göra en  
resa mellan grannar för att samla in  
uppgifter för att sedan ställas ut  
anonymt på Kulturhus.

Om du vill delta, kommer vi att  
samordna\* en tid och datum för  
"rymdsonden" att anlända utanför  
din dörr, och du kommer att ha 2-6  
timmar att spendera med det, innan vi  
transporterar det till nästa granne.

\*e-post är att föredra



9-28(20!)  
nov.

Kulturhus utställning  
öppning på 20:e

Se den medföljande  
kuvertet för hur man  
ska vara en del av  
utställningen.



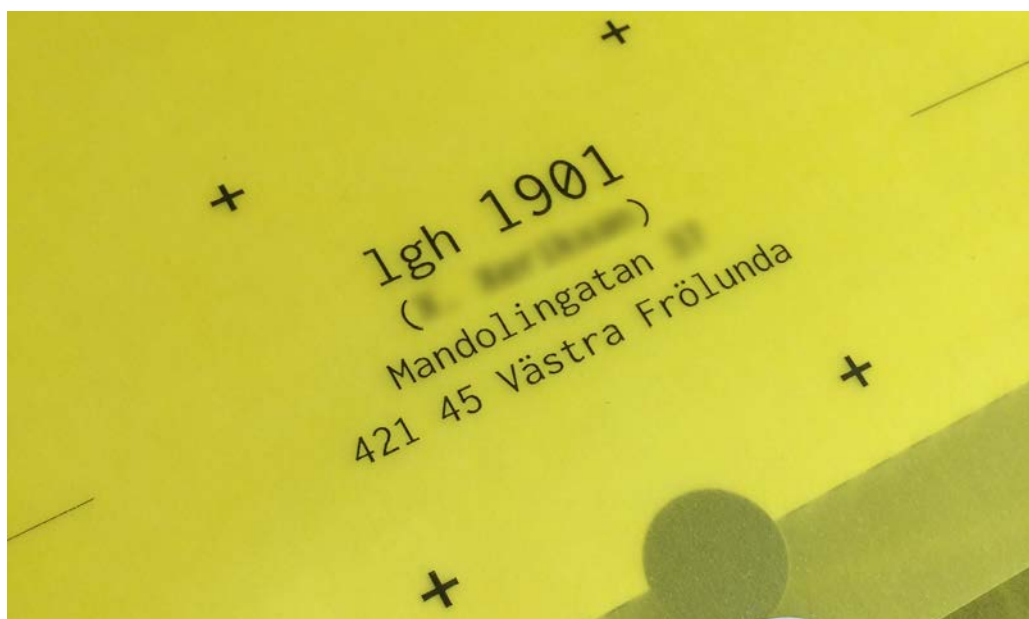
"Ett skepp kommer lastat..."  
...eller:  
"Forskaren från världsrymden"  
...eller:  
"Vem är din granne?"



FRÖLUNDA KULTURHUS

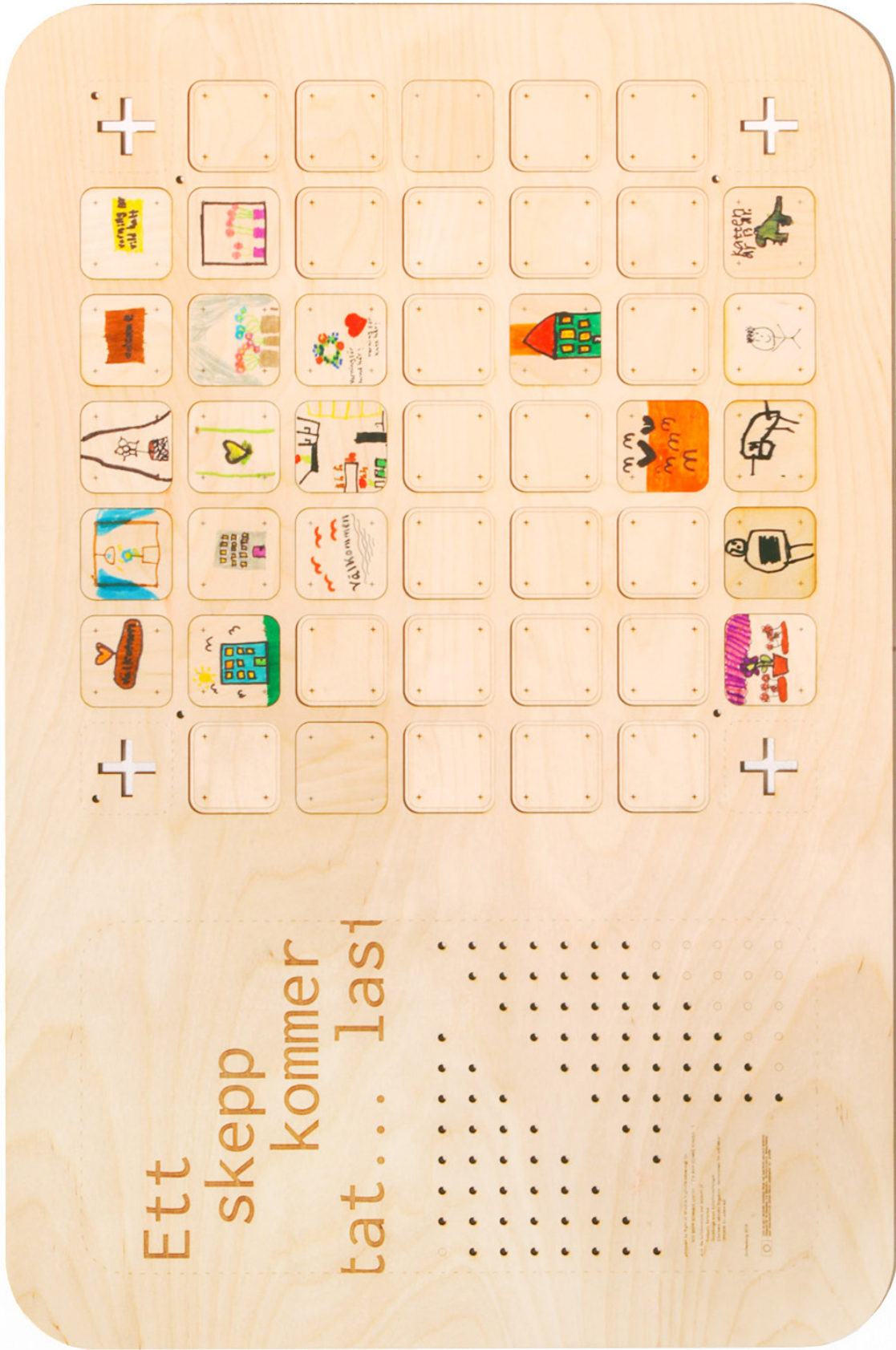
[www.rightofwindow.org/ett-skepp/](http://www.rightofwindow.org/ett-skepp/)







Appendix 9.3 - 'Gameboards with no rules'

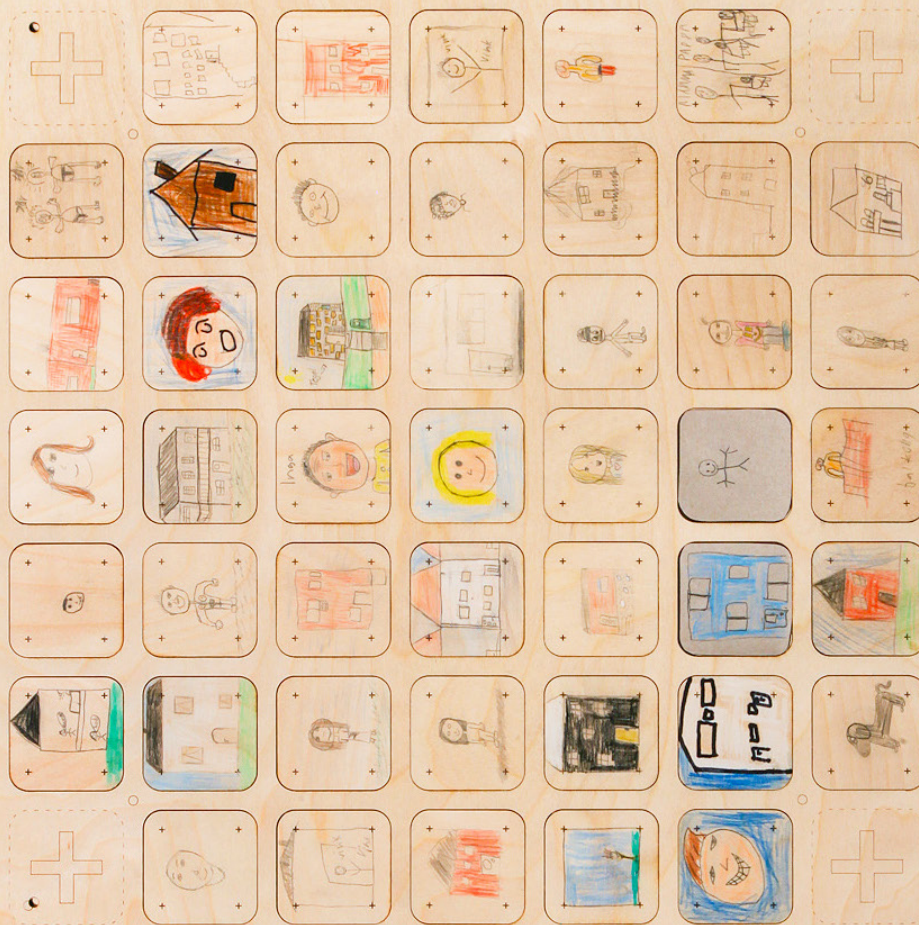






[illegible]

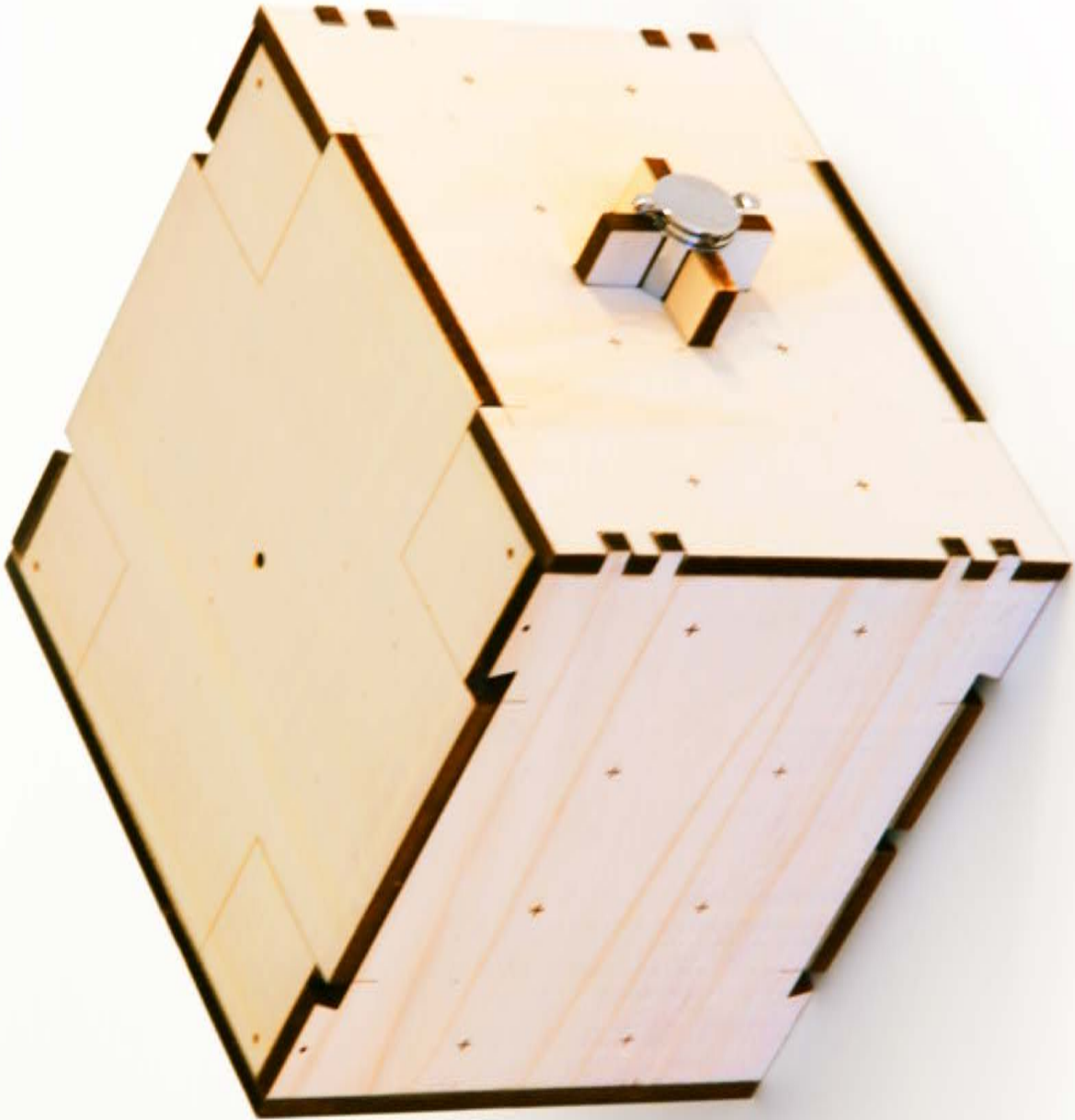


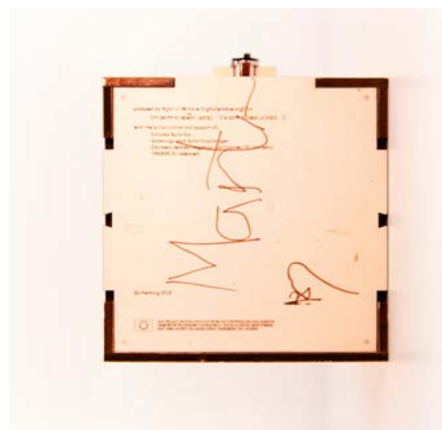
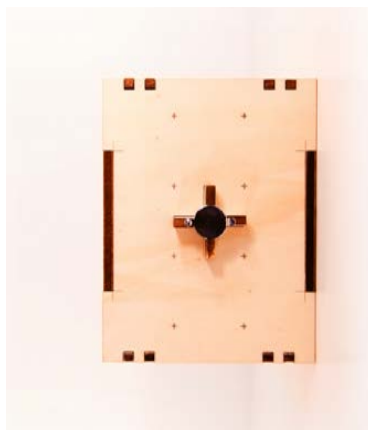
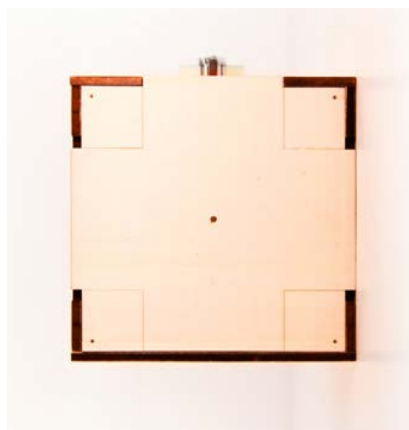






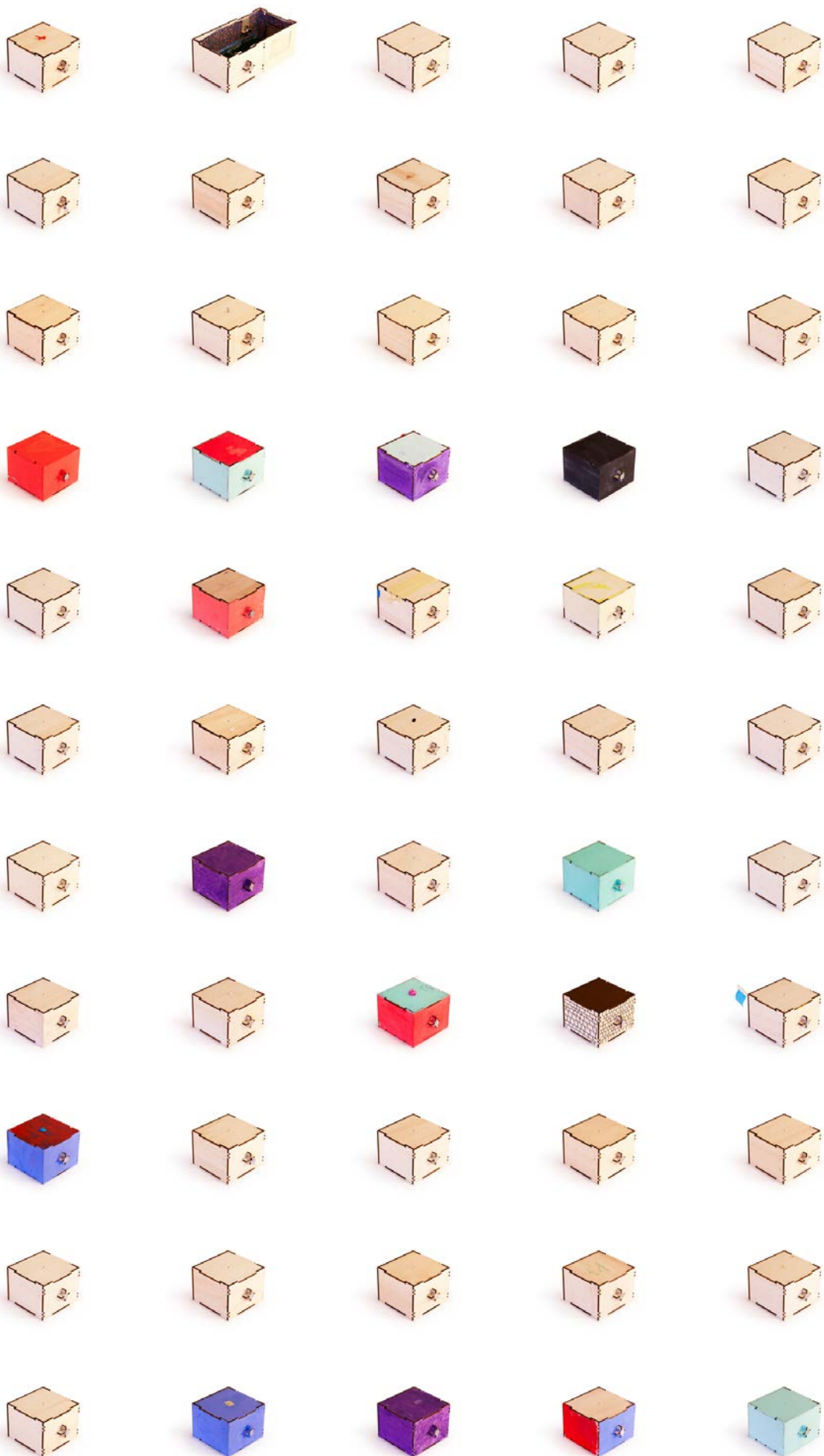






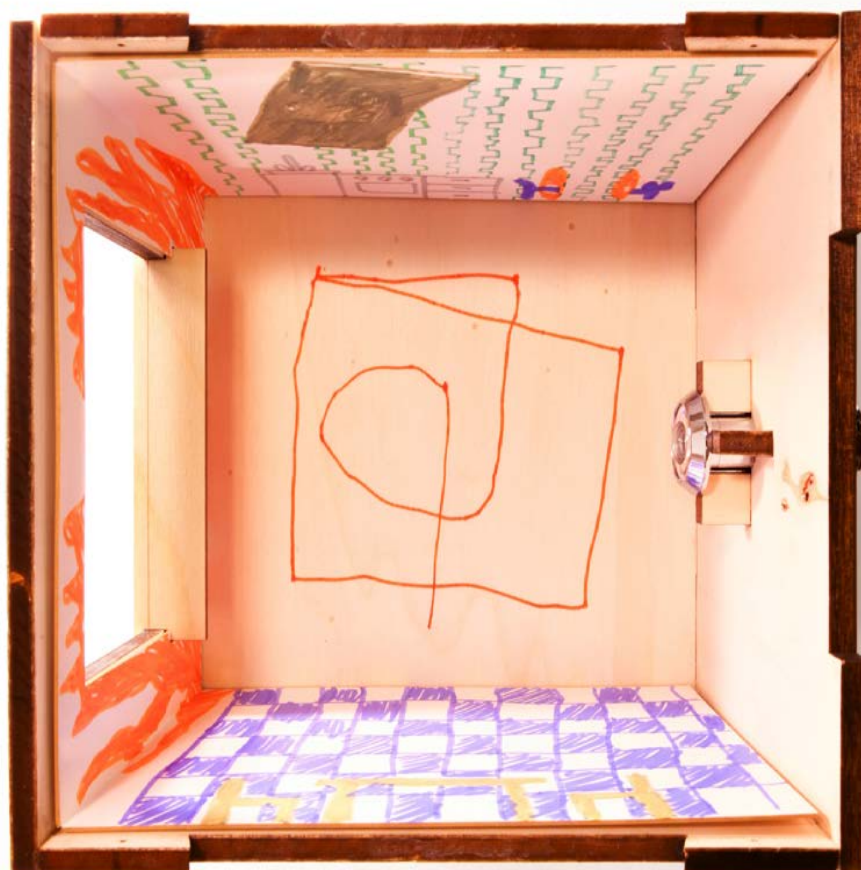


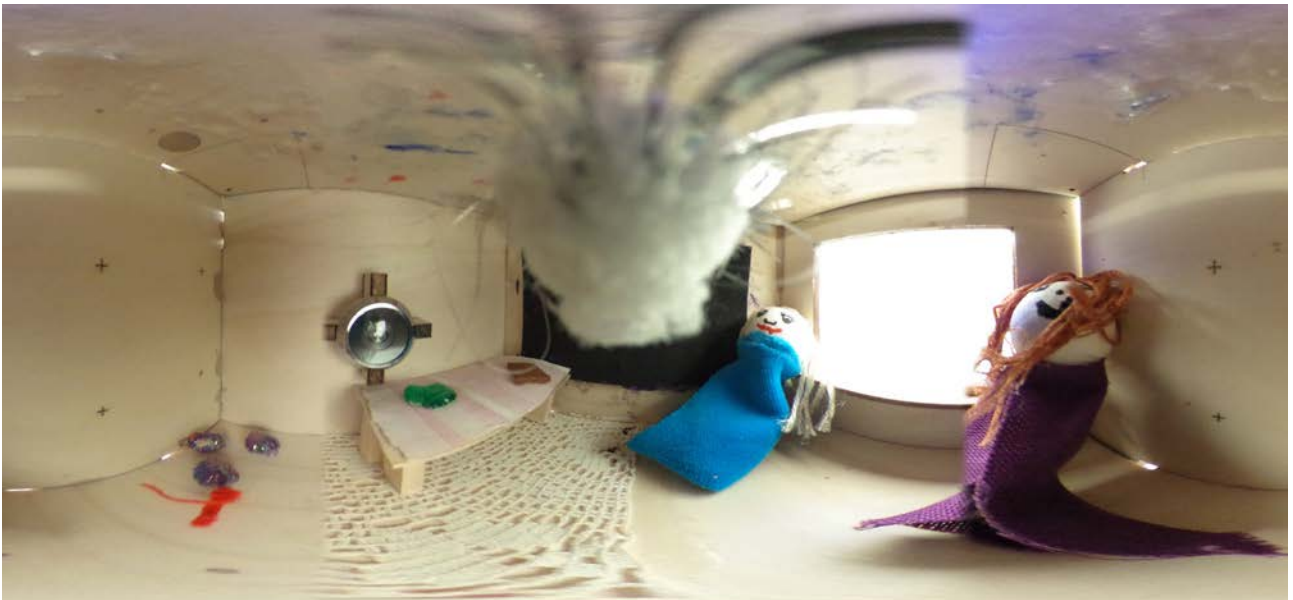
















## Ett skepp kommer lastat...

The Frölunda Kulturhus's latest exhibition, *Ett skepp kommer lastat...*, represents the culmination of an artistic research project involving over 110 children and youth and a doctoral student 'from outer space'.

The project is a unique cross-institutional, multi-disciplinary collaboration between Chalmers University of Technology, Department of Architecture, Frölunda Culture House, The City of Gothenburg Cultural Department, Frölunda School, Önnared School, The International School of the Gothenburg Region (ISGR) and the EU-financed research project TRADERS (training art and design researchers in participation in/for public space).

*Ett skepp kommer lastat...* features a variety of hybrid artworks, made by both children and youth and Chalmers PhD researcher Jon Geib. They are displayed swirling around a participatory sculptural installation which embodies the project's multiple metaphors: ships, apartments, spaceships, expeditions, laboratories.

November 11 - 29

Frölunda Kulturhus, Exhibition Hall

[Mon-Thu: 12.00-19.00; Fri-Sun: 12.00-16.00]

Opening reception Friday, November 20, 13.00-19.30

Children from Frölundaskolan, together with a researcher 'from outer space', have been exploring what it means to be 'neighbors'. In parallel, their other 'neighbors' from Önnaredsskolan and The International School of the Gothenburg Region (ISGR) were invited to embark on similar expeditions. We experimented with a constellation of indirect methods, focusing on visual expression between neighbors.

The Swedish children's game, *Ett skepp kommer lastat...* [A ship comes loaded...] played a metaphorical role, building curiosity for getting to know our neighbors better, but also teaching us empathy and respect for what we cannot know: the limits of discovery, the "stranger"...the abundance, depth and richness of human experience.

Now, the metaphorical ship[s] have come in and docked for an exhibition at the Frölunda Kulturhus gallery, although at least one among them continues to curiously gather data, mistaking the shiny floor for an uncharted sea...

#### About Jon Geib:

Jon Geib is an urbanist and architect whose doctoral work explores the potential of multivocality in the designer's engagement with the city, in view of the themes of dialogue, participation and public space. The aim is to reorient concern along hybrid cultural, artistic and activist trajectories, towards values in processes as well as transformative results. Poetic frames, speculative urban designs and experimental prototypes for public policy act as 'dialogical infrastructures' geared to animate a cosmopolitan public culture.

#### Contact:

Britta Andersson, Cultural Producer  
[britta.andersson@afh.goteborg.se](mailto:britta.andersson@afh.goteborg.se) | 031-366 27 29

Jon Geib, PhD Researcher  
[geib@chalmers.se](mailto:geib@chalmers.se) | 070-920 97 13

#### Collaborating Partners:



Göteborgs  
Stad



TRADERS

#### Special thanks to:

Frölundaskolan Önnaredsskolan



Musei —  
Lektioner

right of  
window



THIS PROJECT RECEIVES FUNDING FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION'S SEVENTH  
FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME FOR RESEARCH, TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT  
AND DEMONSTRATION UNDER GRANT AGREEMENT NO. 608299

## Appendix 9.6 - Exhibition - participatory cards









Berätta en historia där din granne ingår.  
[Tell a story where your neighbor is included.]

När och hur lägger du märke till din granne?  
[When and how do you notice your neighbor?]

Berätta något om dig själv som dina grannar inte känner till.  
[Tell something about yourself that your neighbors do not know.]

- - - - -		
stick figure in fish(?) pose	"Benjamin" + stick figure	["I go in the same class as my neighbor now!" [+smiley face]]
"NU-ÄR DE - STELLA I-GEN - LAG VIL - BARA SELAE NSAC" ["NOW THEY - STELLA AGAIN - I WANT - JUST SELAE NSAC"]	scribbles	scribble
	scribbles	scribble
"MIN LILE BROR HETER RUBEN" + landscape(?) silhouette ["MY LITTLE BROTHER IS NAMED RUBEN" + landscape(?) silhouette]	"BAJS FLUGOR" + two abstract shapes ["POO FLIES" + two abstract shapes]	"min grnor" ['grnor' crossed-out] / MALS" written in pencil vertically, scratches
	starburst figure	scribbles
stick figure on all fours	scribbles	heavy abstract scribbled shape [somewhat approaching the shape of a crosshair]
"TUSSAN" + caricature (cat?)	scribble + "Röv" [scribble + "idiot"]	heavy abstract scribbled shape
scribbles in an abstract shape...	Sanna Skolan! [heart] [True School! [heart]]	figure with long hair and long-eared cat(?) [signed] "SARA"
scribbles	abstract shapes	"LiTE MELKER"
Berätta en historia där din granne ingår. + scribbles [Tell a story where your neighbor is included. + scribbles]	curly-Q scribble over text	ice cube-looking form amidst driving rain(?)
	TABE [stick figure + abstract form]	stick figure head
scribbles	[portrait of man w/glasses] "5th Floor?"	"HPRIE HPRIEY" (?)
"MMAW" + scribbles	"""MIN GRANNE HAR EN LILLA SYSTER // DET VILL JAG OXÅ JOAR JÅR HA!"" ["My neighbor HAVE A LITTLE SISTER // I want UXO Joar JAR HA! (?)"]	"STELLA OCKSOL" [heart]
two suns, a cloud and scribbles	T VILL JAG OXÅ JOAR JÅR HA!""]	"GODSOCK / VIZÖR / KFOFX / M" on an added speech bubble
one-story house w smoke trailing out pitched-roof's chimney	scribbles	scribble
"EVELIN // STELLA" + scribbles	"LAG E SMART" ["TEAM(?) E SMART"]	portrait / bust
"HPRIEY"	stick figure w/large smiling head	scribbles; stars
star		"Viktori skolah" (?)
"VATO SKA OPA UTIFON 1. BAAAFPADOA... 2. FRADERA.."	"Mig granne knackar på fönstret varje gång man går för bi och vinnkar." ["My neighbor knocks on the window every time you go for us and waving." (?)]	"Min granne röker." + "Biä" ["My neighbor smokes." + "?"]
scribbles		female figure
"Min kompis heter melker" + heart ["My friend is called melker(?)" + heart]	doodles & scribbles	scribble
stick figure head with heart	diamond overlaid and "Diamonds Are A Girls Best friend."	"När tidningarna samlas vid dörren - vet jag att de inte är hemma..." ["Once the papers are collected at the door - I know they are not home ..."]
"LLL // IIII"		
"LÖI ÖLI"	"Jag går i samma klass som min granne nu!" [+smiley face]	"Min granne röker." ["My



neighbor smokes.”]	THINK I’VE EVER HEARD JUST MY NEIGHBOR, ONLY PLEASANT SOCIAL OCCASIONS.	curious scribble shapes
“TV SPEL” [“PLAYS TV” (?) ]		“IPA”
När och hur lägger du märke till din granne? “Vet inte” [When and how do you notice your neighbor? “Don’t know”]	wind-up figure	“SAÖLALF”
two figures at a table	VARFÖ / SKA OPA UT I FONRJIA / 1. BARAFRADKULT / 2. FRADETBRANDWAR / 3. M KOPYOMA (???)	scribbles
“JÖÄLL”	tiny scribble	face with one eye looking through magnifying glass
figure w/long long arms w/ butterfly(?)	sketched scene(?)	fully colored black
Berätta något om dig själv som dina grannar inte känner till. “ESTELLE. / DOM HAR EN HUND” [Tell us something about yourself that your neighbors do not know. “ESTELLE. / THEY HAVE A DOG”]	scene	robot figure
“Vära grannar är BÄST!” [“Our neighbors are the best!”]	scene + “2099”	“RUBEN”
“Simon”	scribbles	“UR”
“Hej! Jag heter Alice / mina grannar heter Eva och Sven Erik / Men jag har många grannar. Dem är snälla.” [“Hey! My name is Alice / your neighbors name is Eva and Sven Erik / But I have many neighbors. They are kind.”]	“ÖAF Ö ELL IL / NA / ...” (?)	“M SOMI AL L SO”
two figures standing	“LIAÖS / MAJA / 2FLL / MAJA” (?)	clothing pieces
“MIN GRANNE FISER I HISEN... DET LUKTAR USHIGT” + scribbles [“MY NEIGHBOR FARTS IN THE ELEVATOR... IT SMELLS USHIGT(?)” + scribbles]	“BLAE / house facade / SMALL / SOAMLAI” (?)	“Done Hill!” + houses, cat face, greenery
“Janna är min granne. Han är världens bästa granne / från Alice” [“Janna is my neighbor. He is the best neighbor / from Alice”]	“SÄÖL / SÖLAIILI” (?)	eight floating faces
house	“VILDA HAR GJORT” [“WHAT HAS BEEN DONE” (?) ]	LI-LO / På museum. + dwg of mother & daughter [card torn in 4]
face w/frame	three-part shape	scribbles + cruciform sketch
“TROLLMOR” [“TROLL MOTHER” (?) ]	scribbles	“ASTRID SÅVDE ÖVER ÅS - MEG OCH_D-ERTS TELLA”
“FRIS” (?)	“!WHAT ARE THOSE!”	scribbles
scribbles	Zara C__ / 91(?) (?) + scribbles	scribbles
solid star; scribble	drawings, box w/”/ON / IOX”	“ALICE[heart]” + picture of girl
I MOST NOTICE MY NEIGHBOR WHEN I HEAR A GROUP OF LAUGHING PEOPLE PROBABLY HAVING DINNER ON THEIR TERRACE OUTSIDE (SO, THE NOISE TRAVELS). I DON’T	blank w/straight red line (?)	eyeballs(?) & kissing(?) amoeba shapes
	graffiti-like block text: “MOTIV / (?)” (?)	“ELV LIV”
	a sun	“ULI ULI”
	mother & daughter + scribbles	house & tree
	scribbles	heavy scribbles
	scribbles	abstract lounging figure
	“Grannen på ena sidan spelar jättehög jugoslavisk musik island. Hans bror/kompis springer alltid (går aldrig!) i trappan. =)” [“The neighbor on one side plays very loud Yugoslavian island music. His brother/friend always runs (never walks!) the stairs. =)”]	scribbles
	curious scribble shape	“STAN SALTA”
		“ÖALA SI ALS AF”
		stick figure
		“Having had a few particularly noisy neighbors in the past, I am hyper-attentive to any disturbance I make. It’s when I’m making noise that I most

think about my neighbor."	clouds and prominent sun	MALAMALA" [?]
a tree inside a box (connecting the crosshairs)	stick figure w/4 arms	dots (some in loose grid, some in a line); four shapes [?]
flying bug/box w/a tail (?)	beetle-catapillar-type bug w/ antennae	"MACDONALS PON FRIT"
scribbled out sketch of cat (?)	"IRIS AV KERSTIN" w/scribbles ["IRIS FROM(?) KERSTIN"]	some kind of animal inside a window (circumscribed by the crosshairs)
"Jag lägger märket till inga nar hon holler på med sin träd gård." ["I notice when she is with her tree farm."]	scribbles	"Hej! Jag hatar dig [Hi! I hate you]"
"Emma.Malmborg"	scribbles	"Kram [Hug]" [on a speech bubble note]
rocket(?) and purple scribbles	"Min granne knackar på rutan i hennes kök varje gång vi går förbi!" ["My neighbor knocks on the pane(?) in her kitchen every time we walk past!"]	"MATAR FÅGLAR PÅ VINTERN" ["FEEDING BIRDS IN WINTER"]
stick figure and house(?) & "Je t'aime"	scribbles	"KLARA" [w/heart & cloud around both]
"THE FRENCH PHOTOGRAPHER	scribbles	"Min granne är konstnär och har olelanderlig stid" [on an added speech bubble] ["My neighbor is an artist and has impeccable style" [on an added speech bubble]]
"I was looking for this photographer and had been told he lived in this building. I arrived at the building and encountered a lady who lived on the third floor. She hadn't heard of the French photographer and even insisted she would know if he did live there because she knows everyone in this building. Turns out. . .he lived just above her!" -paraphrasing Lenneart"	"Jag spelade fotboll på gården och bollen hamnade på blommorna och dem gick sönder då blir min granne ARG!!!" + angry stick figure ["I played football in the yard, and the ball ended up on the flowers and them broke when my neighbor gets ANGRY!!! + angry stick figure]	BOK OM APA // LOK LOK // ['APA' in a rectangle; a stick figure] // Dum hö godis [on added speech bubble] [BOOK ABOUT APA // Onions Onions // [ 'APA' in a rectangle; a stick figure] // Dum hay candy [on added speech bubble]]
blockish face with stick legs & arms	female cat w/exaggerated ears	"iBLAND JÖR JAG DET I HISEN [heart]" [iSometimes I do in the elevator [heart]] [notice my neighbor]]
heart	"FOLKE" [spelled backwards] [?]	"ELIA"
scribbled out stick figure	"LIA" [?]	"Att de hostar och röker. Att de har en hund som bor nån annan stans." ["That they cough and smoke. That they have a dog living someone else."]
sketchy angle & "FOLKE"	THE Gustafssons were here! / We love our neighbors / Julia & Alex / You Rock! / love from US / The Gustafsson 5! XX + two hearts	"EAI / M (or W?)"
two-story house with pitched roof & 4 windows	figure at window w/text "ving__ ving__(?)" [?]	"M L H"
3 flowers w/stalks(?)	"EUEL INOCK STELLA [two Chinese(?) characters] PETER"	sketchy ovalish shape & scribbles
2 balloons & framed message: "Mina grannar har alltid fest de är ganska jobbigt" [2 balloons & framed message: "My neighbors are always partying they are pretty dicey"]	"Hej! Jag heter Emma. Min granne heter Inga. Hon är snäll rolig och gammal. Men jag har många grannar." ["Hi, I'm Emma. My neighbor is Inga. She's kind, funny and old. But I have many neighbors."]	scribbles
snowman	"Emma.Malmborg"	
"Vem är de? Who are they?"	"Min grannes gräsklippare låter som en helikopter." ["My neighbor's lawnmower sounds like a helicopter."]	
block letter 'N' (?)	"MOAMACA // 72HAN // MOA23 //	
outdoor scene w/single-story pitched roof house, person, bus/truck labeled 'BOSS',		

## Appendix 9.7 - UIA Architecture & Children Golden Cubes Awards entry

*Entry in an international competition of projects involving architecture and children.*

*February 2017.*

At the urging of my co-supervisors in the Gothenburg Cultural Department, who were themselves encouraged by a colleague who had seen the *Ett skepp kommer lastat*. . . exhibition, I prepared an entry for the UIA Architecture & Children Golden Cubes Awards (also known as the 'Golden Cubes Awards') on behalf of and in coordination with the Frölunda Cultural Center and other project 'team members' for the 'institution' award category (the other three possible categories were 'school', 'written media' and 'audio visual media'). The entry consisted of an A2 poster (conforming with a required layout template) and a 'sample of the original material'. I have represented here the poster text and supplementary information regarding project credits, a text description of the space laboratory I submitted as a sample and an image of the original poster. The project was awarded an honorable mention [*hedersomnämmandet*] at the national level by Sveriges Arkitekter [Architects Sweden].<sup>1</sup> Of particular note, besides the value of the 'free expression' text as my most recent attempt to provide a concise overview of the project, was my decision to apply on behalf of the Cultural Center, rather than as an individual. Although my contacts there were initially surprised by this decision, given the amount of creativity and work I had contributed towards the project and on the entry, I saw this as the most appropriate path considering that: the Cultural Center was a key dialogue partner in the evolution of the project and associated design processes; it acted as a physical and structural nexus through which all the other project components were linked; this case study reflected a designer-led approach interested in the agencies opened up by engaging with institutions.

Name of the Project: **A Ship Comes Loaded...** [*Ett skepp kommer lastat...*]

Award Category: Institution

Team Members: **Anne Svanholm, Britta Andersson, Per Nyman**, Cultural Producers (Frölunda Cultural Center); **Jon Geib**, lead designer, pedagogue, PhD student, urbanist & architect (Department of Architecture, Chalmers University of Technology; the EU project TRADERS); **Ninni Khosravi**, teacher (Frölunda School); **Lars Jonsson**, collaborator (Gothenburg Cultural Department); **Vici Hofbauer**, pedagogue; **Lydia Regalado**, teacher (ISGR - The International School of the Gothenburg Region); **Monique Wernhamn**, artist

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1. Lindgren, J. (2017). De kan vinna pris för arkitektur med barnfokus [They can win a prize for architecture with focus on children]. *arkitekten*. [Online]. [Accessed 22 March 2017]. Available from: <http://arkitekten.se/nyheter/de-kan-vinna-pris-arkitektur-med-barnfokus/>

Collaborating Organizations/Institutions: **Frölunda Cultural Center; Chalmers University of Technology, Department of Architecture; TRADERS** (Training Art and Design Researchers in Participation for Public Space), an EU network PhD project ([tr-aders.eu](http://tr-aders.eu); [traderstalk.org](http://traderstalk.org)); **Frölunda School; Gothenburg Cultural Department; The International School of the Gothenburg Region (ISGR); Önnareds School; Bostads AB Poseidon** [housing company]

Funding credits: European Union's Seventh Framework Programme; Chalmers University of Technology, Department of Architecture; Frölunda Cultural Center

Age Group of Audience: Children & youth ages 7-12 and 14-16 (exhibition: all ages)

Number of Participating Children: About 350 (159 students from 8 different classes and after-school programs); about 1,900 exhibition visitors

Duration of Activity: About 35 hours (2-7 workshops of 1-2 hours with each group, plus some independent activity) and a 3-week exhibition

Country/City: Sweden / Gothenburg

Name of the Entrant: **Frölunda Cultural Center** [Frölunda Kulturhus]

Free Expression: This multifaceted project was initiated as a collaboration between our Cultural Center and Jon Geib, a PhD researcher. It became a constellation of 13 workshops involving 159 children and youth in eight different school groups from three parts of the city, and was integrated with a three-week exhibition. We began by asking: "how do neighbors communicate *indirectly* through architectural interfaces (doors, windows and common spaces)?", and pursued this with the local after-school club through observational tours of local apartment blocks, the children noting welcome signs, nameplates, handcrafts, plants, sounds, smells, and so on. Afterwards they illustrated their memories of—and speculations about—our unknown neighbors and their apartments as game pieces on a pre-designed laser-cut plywood gameboard. Through the metaphor of *A Ship Comes Loaded...*, a Swedish children's game in which players take turns adding guesses about the contents of an incoming ship (until memory fails), we imagined our neighbors floating in housing blocks and similarly unknown, encouraging an empathy increasingly needed in an urbanizing world. Classes from a neighboring district echoed this workshop through Gothenburg Cultural Department's *Museum Lessons in Public Space* program, but as 'outsiders' or 'researchers from outer space' (as we all were, to some degree, especially the English-speaking PhD researcher from across town). The pedagogues and local group then designed a 'space probe' to ask neighbors questions from a distance. Finally, by turning door

peepholes around to look into 'space laboratories', five groups were able to imagine and make their own (or neighbor's) windowed interior space, and most added them incrementally to the exhibition. Here, these and other workshop tools, designed doubly as artworks completed by the participants, were displayed—yet newly gathered into larger collective configurations. Participants thus indirectly met their *other* 'neighbors'—through encounters with other groups' artwork and re-encounters with their own. Meanwhile, a participatory sculptural installation dramatized our artistic research process as an endless expedition, inviting visitors to join us in asking "who is your neighbor?".

Outcomes & Evaluation: Extending the project to study the 'home territories' of the other school groups would have generated further empathy and dialogue, as would more workshop time. Feedback found that children felt important and most had fun—especially with making activities—while being challenged by an urban environment-based learning experience. They were positive about being part of a wider project, especially encountering themselves and their work among unexpected new material in the exhibition (e.g. seeing how other participants used the workshop tools in different ways). The quality of the exhibition and its workshop tool artworks led visitors and cultural officials to recognize a new way of collaborating with children and youth and of taking them seriously.

Sample of the original material: As a sample of the original material, we have included one of the 'space laboratories' (there were 107 in total). This workshop tool/artwork comprised the subject for: five workshops with 94 children aged 7-12; a curriculum exercise (art class) for twelve 10th graders; and an art project for two children involved in after-school art lessons. Each 'space laboratory' was returned to the participants after the exhibition (and some weeks of documentation). Seven participants among the 10th grade group and two from among the 7-12 year old groups elected to leave their space laboratory with the PhD researcher, possibly to be included in a future exhibition. Before being introduced to the participants in 'making' workshops (supplied with crafting materials: paper, markers, paint, clay, wood, pipe-cleaners, etc.), the space laboratories were first designed, fabricated and assembled by Jon Geib, the lead designer and PhD student/researcher. The space laboratories were constructed of laser-cut 6mm poplar plywood, a 3 mm poplar plywood 'window sill', high quality wide-angle door peepholes/door viewers and optional three-sided white chipboard wall inserts. While the proportion of the window opening to the overall space was meant to suggest a generously-sized, windowed space seen at eye level, no other references were provided, leaving participants greater freedom to articulate their own space whether it approached the literal detail level of an architectural scale model or something more abstract (one participant, for instance, covered every interior surface with illustrations of outer space). It also served to bring focus on the relation between the interior and

exterior space via the window as an interface with a significant public 'face' to the outside. Participants were free to make any modifications and articulate the exterior as well as the interior. Some chose to join together in a group of two and break down the wall between, another turned his upside-down, some added interior walls and a group of 5-6 chose to install theirs together in the exhibition. The top and right sides are designed so they can be removed to make working with the artifact more accessible as well as to be more conducive to future experimentation. A removable folding white chipboard insert also aided accessibility, and helped the participants in moving between 2D and 3D. The four notches on each side allowed multiple boxes to be stacked together and secured via half butterfly key joints (these small pieces are not included in the sample provided here). Two butterfly key joints on the bottom allowed securing in the other direction. Two small holes on the left side, and three on the right, allowed the loose pieces to be pinned, if desired (pins not included). A hole in the top pieces afforded a way to hang something in the interior. The door peephole could be unscrewed and cleaned or replaced if necessary (if the lens were accidentally scratched or painted on, for example). The 'crosshair grid' graphic motif—expressed in the cruciform peephole holder and the laser-etched perimeter grid pattern—was explored in and coordinated with the rest of the project as a 'dialogical field' which allows non-hierarchical collage relationships between diverse elements, besides vaguely touching back to architecture as a dialogue between the horizontal and the vertical. It has a far greater sense of openness than the 'cage' of a regular grid. For best viewing of the space laboratory interior, hold up to daylight or a bright light to allow the window opening to illuminate the interior.



# GOLDEN CUBES AWARDS

www.architectureandchildren-ua.com

AWARD CATEGORY:  
INSTITUTION

## NAME OF THE PROJECT:

**A Ship Comes Loaded...**  
[Ett skepp kommer lastat...]

## TEAM MEMBERS:

\*full list of credits is attached  
**Anne Svanholm**, **Britta Andersson**, **Per Nyman**, Cultural Producers (Frölunda Cultural Center); **Jon Geib**, lead designer, pedagogue, PhD student, urbanist, architect (Dept. of Arch., Chalmers Univ. of Tech.; EU/ TRADERS); **Ninni Khosravi**, teacher (Frölunda School); **Lars Jonsson**, collaborator (Gothenburg Cultural Dept.); **Vici Hofbauer**, pedagogue; **Lydia Regalado**, teacher (ISGR); **Monique Wernhamn**, artist

## AGE GROUP OF AUDIENCE:

Children & youth ages 7-12 and 14-16 (exhibition: all ages)

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING CHILDREN:

About 350 (159 students from 8 different classes and after-school programs); about 1,900 exhibition visitors

## DURATION OF ACTIVITY:

About 35 hours (2-7 workshops of 1-2 hours with each group, plus some independent activity) and a 3-week exhibition

## COUNTRY / CITY:

Sweden / Gothenburg

## NAME OF THE ENTRANT:

**Frölunda Cultural Center**  
[Frölunda Kulturhus]

## FREE EXPRESSION:

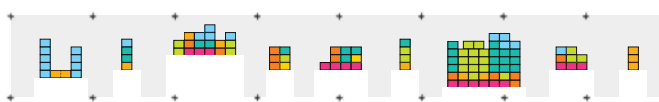
This multifaceted project was initiated as a collaboration between our Cultural Center and Jon Geib, a PhD researcher. It became a constellation of 13 workshops involving 159 children and youth in 8 different school groups from 3 parts of the city, and was integrated with a 3-week exhibition. We began by asking: "how do neighbors communicate indirectly through architectural interfaces (doors, windows and common spaces)?" and pursued this with the local after-school club through observational tours of local apartment blocks, the children noting welcome signs, nameplates, handcrafts, plants, sounds, smells, and so on. Afterwards they illustrated their memories of—and speculations about—our unknown neighbors and their apartments as game pieces on a pre-designed laser-cut plywood gameboard. Through the metaphor of *A Ship Comes Loaded...*, a Swedish children's game in which players take turns adding guesses about the contents of an incoming ship (until memory fails), we imagined our neighbors floating in housing blocks and similarly unknown, encouraging an empathy increasingly needed in an urbanizing world. Classes

from a neighboring district echoed this workshop through Gothenburg Cultural Department's *Museum Lessons in Public Space* program, but as 'outsiders' or 'researchers from outer space' (as we all were, to some degree, especially the English-speaking PhD researcher from across town). The pedagogues and local group then designed a 'space probe' to ask neighbors questions from a distance. Finally, by turning door peepholes around to look into 'space laboratories', five groups were able to imagine and make their own (or neighbor's) windowed interior space, and most added them incrementally to the exhibition. Here, these and other workshop tools, designed doubly as artworks completed by the participants, were displayed—yet newly gathered into larger collective configurations. Participants thus indirectly met their other 'neighbors'—through encounters with other groups' artwork and re-encounters with their own. Meanwhile, a participatory sculptural installation dramatized our artistic research process as an endless expedition, inviting visitors to join us in asking "who is your neighbor?".

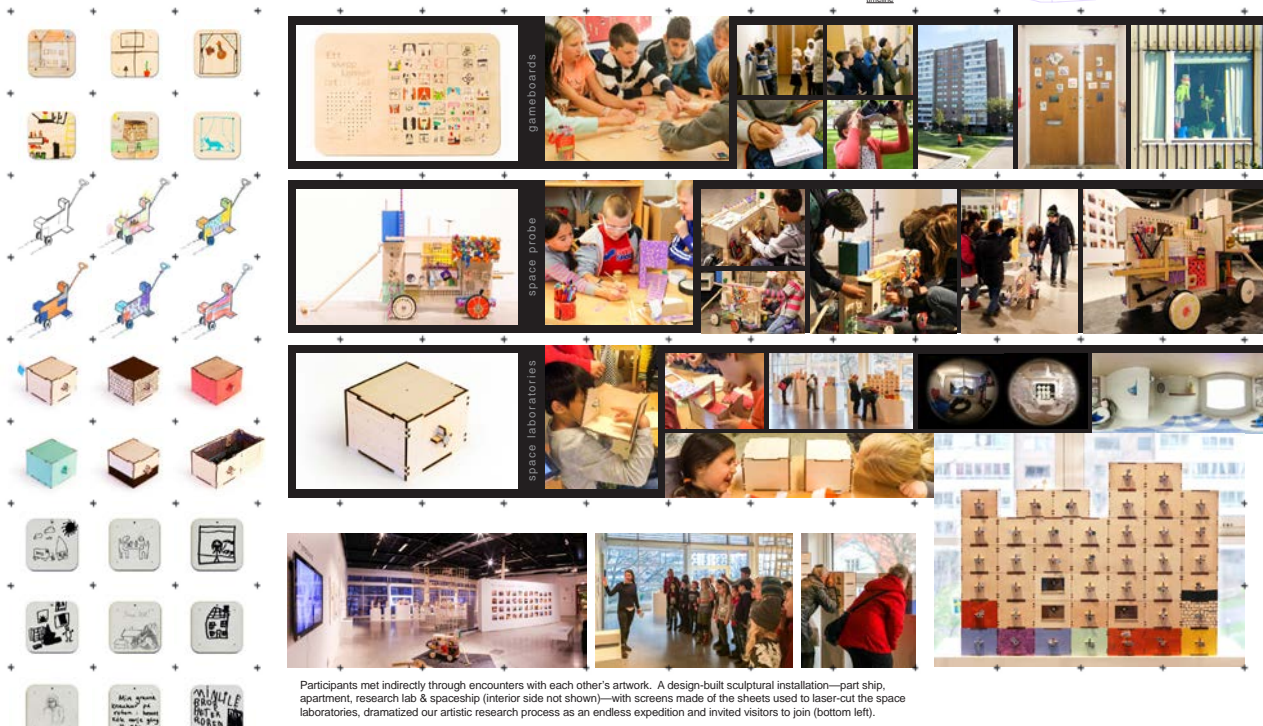
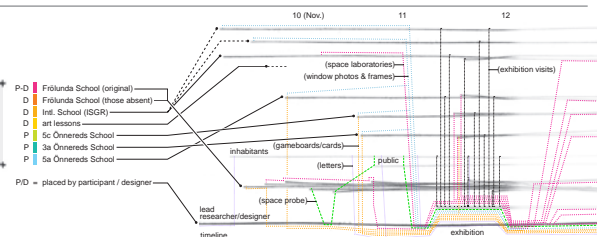
## OUTCOMES & EVALUATION:

Extending the project to study the 'home territories' of the other school groups would have generated further empathy and dialogue, as would more workshop time. Feedback found that children felt important and most had fun—especially with making activities—while being challenged by an urban environment-based learning experience. They were positive about being part of a wider project, especially encountering themselves and their work among unexpected new material in the exhibition (e.g. seeing how other participants used the workshop tools in different ways). The quality of the exhibition and its workshop tool artworks led visitors and cultural officials to recognize a new way of collaborating with children & youth and of taking them seriously.

## IMAGES:



This diagram shows how the display of the 'space laboratories' grew incrementally, particularly with 3 workshops taking place during the opening week of the exhibition. Placement was determined primarily by 4 participant groups in dialogue with their peers and preceding groups, but also by the exhibition designer (PhD researcher) in the case of 3 smaller groups.



Participants met indirectly through encounters with each other's artwork. A design-built sculptural installation—part ship, apartment, research lab & spaceship (interior side not shown)—with screens made of the sheets used to laser-cut the space laboratories, dramatized our artistic research process as an endless expedition and invited visitors to join (bottom left).





[ Workshops and events ]

## Appendix 10 - Lingua Franca

*Workshop and interventions in public space, including a public discussion.  
'Design Week', Design Salone, Milan, Italy, 15-19 April 2015.*

**Problem:** A combination of specialization and technological achievement has increased the amount of rhetoric and jargon in design. At the same time, there is a growing importance for design to be communicated across boundaries to give shape to the growing complexity and pressing environmental, social, and economic concerns of our society. But, what resources are available for identifying means of reclaiming language? Will disambiguating rhetoric and translating jargon help design language resonate with meaning across diverse publics?

**Concept for Milan:** Lingua Franca is the second in a series of explorations on giving meaning to design language. This project seeks to situate common design rhetoric and jargon used at design fairs—in this case the Design fair in Milan—within everyday life in the city. Participants are given a package of words, which can be placed on physical objects and spaces, in effect labeling them and, thus, taking the word from the abstract into the concrete. Those with the package partake in a process that transforms the city into a physical embodiment of language; this will allow situating words in context (the city), in order to give wider access to the terminology and the wider practice of design. Moreover, this exercise would transform the city into a living encyclopedia, which would allow different groups of citizens to engage with language used in design in concrete ways. Ultimately, it will foster discussions both in the street and in the design community on the use of words and the accessibility to their multiple meanings.

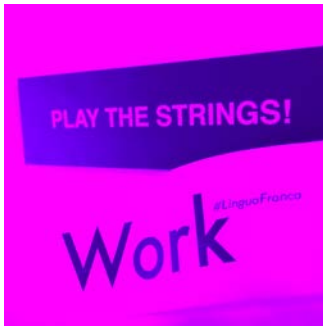
### **Practical:**

Thursday afternoon: Short discussion, instructions and distribution of kits.

Friday: Interventions. Instead of being an invasive activity, asking people to change their plans to use the kits, the idea is that people can take the kits around their normal *route*, and put their stickers up along the way. The kit will include: a package of words on adhesive paper, which are mined from other design events; an explanation of the activity; and instructions on how to upload any photos taken (which is encouraged) to be uploaded to social media. The collection of hash-tagged and geo-tagged words will be aggregated on the Lingua Franca blog.

Saturday afternoon: Panel discussion. Reflective moment where the people who participated in the activities and guests discuss language and design within the context of translation and situation in theory and practice.

Potential panel: Tamar, Michael, Pablo, Angela Rui, others tbc



## Appendix 11 - Problematising Post-Fordist Instrumentalisation of Art and Design Labor

*Co-design of a worktable in coordination with a local community garden as part of the TRADERS Autumn School.*

*Genk, Belgium, 10-13 November 2015.*

Together with TRADERS colleague Michael Kaethler, I designed a 'worktable' (a small group workshop) as part of the TRADERS Autumn School, 'On the Role of Participatory Art and Design in the Reconfiguration of Work (in Genk)'. Our worktable problematized the role of local/global art and design labor through [fleeting] engagement with the site-specific needs of Betty's Garden, a local gardening initiative. We employed ambiguous negative over-identification in the leadup and initial stage of the project, couching our involvement in terms of service-providers determined to offer our 'client' solutions to the narrow problem at hand. Naturally, given the mix of critical art/design researchers, there was some resistance, hesitance and even near revolt throughout, though the latter was precipitated more by the presumptiveness of believing we could provide qualitative solutions ethically after helicoptering in for just two days. We addressed this in our 'final' proposal by refraining from making a single 'team' recommendation to be *deployed*. Instead, we [multivocally] proposed an open-ended almanac (prototyped in the form of a half-log binder and laminated pages—co-designed with Jos Lycops of Betty's Garden) which could function as an ongoing collection of ideas and inspiration—to be *appropriated*. It included (or could include): our own quickly brainstormed design/art solutions; poetry, selected and/or written by members (a weekly poetry night was a key ongoing ritual of Betty's Garden); plenty of blank space for future ideas (expandable via its binder format), historical anecdotes, information about specific fruit and vegetables, narrations of phenomenological experiences in the garden, etc. Worktable participants were contacted in advance and asked to bring an object which, for us as organizers, played multiple roles: as a source of ambiguity and uncertainty, as a conversation piece, as inspiration for design proposals and as a symbol of post-Fordist commitment/sacrifice on the part of the artist/designer.

Dear [six worktable participants],

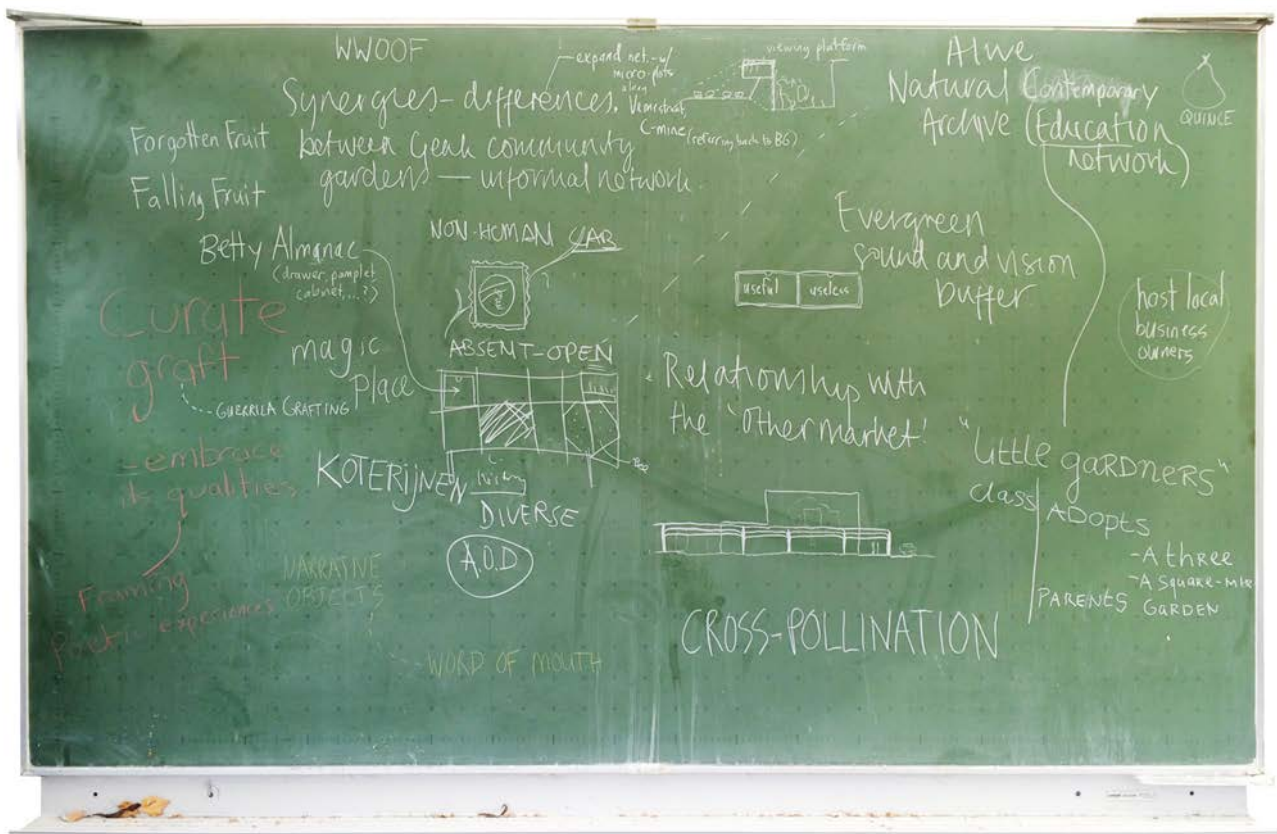
Jon and I are looking forward to some thoughtful collaboration and exploration together during the TRADERS Autumn School. / The working table, as outlined in the abstract, will be looking at the frictions that are found between the local and global aspects of our current design/art labor practices. With this in mind, we would like to avoid the current trends of impersonalized exchanges between highly mobile creative professionals. As such, we ask that you bring an object that you wouldn't normally want to part with but that you are willing to potentially sacrifice for this project.

We will leave it vague at this point with much more to discuss on Thursday the 12th and Friday the 13th. [...]















## **Appendix 12 - Modelling in Dialogue (TRADERS Training Week)**

*Including overview, program, literature reader bibliography, dialogical talkbox description and design concepts.*

*Gothenburg, Sweden, 23-25 May 2016.*





<p>+</p>	<p>+</p> <p>Cover illustration by Emil Ulfhammer [<a href="http://cargocollective.com/emilulfhammer">cargocollective.com/emilulfhammer</a>].</p> <p>TRADERS Training Week #5: Modelling in Dialogue was designed, planned and coordinated by Jon Geib, in collaboration with Catharina Dyrssen (Chalmers University of Technology, Department of Architecture, Professor in Architecture and Design Methods / PhD Supervisor) and Ylva Mühlenböck and Borghild Håkansson (The City of Gothenburg, Cultural Administration / Supervisors from Practice).</p> <p>Additional thanks to:</p> <p>Aneta Smilevska          Anna-Johanna Klasander          Annelies Vaneycken          Emilio Brandão          Jaan-Henrik Kain          Lydia Regalado          Malina Strömgren          Natalie Novik</p> <p>***</p> <p>TRADERS [<a href="http://tr-aders.eu">tr-aders.eu</a> + <a href="#">TRADERS Talk</a> + <a href="#">Facebook</a>]</p> <p>Chalmers University of Technology, Department of Architecture [<a href="#">website</a>]  <i>Chalmers tekniska högskola, Institutionen för arkitektur</i></p> <p>The City of Gothenburg, Cultural Administration [<a href="#">website</a>]  <i>Göteborgs stad Kulturförvaltningen</i></p> <div>  <small>THIS PROJECT RECEIVES FUNDING FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION'S SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME FOR RESEARCH, TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AND DEMONSTRATION UNDER GRANT AGREEMENT No. 606269</small> </div> <p>+</p>	<p>+</p> <p>Modelling in Dialogue, the fifth 'Training Week' of the EU project TRADERS ('training art and design researchers in participation in/for public space': <a href="http://tr-aders.eu">tr-aders.eu</a>, <a href="http://traderstalk.org">traderstalk.org</a>) foregrounds artistic and cultural approaches to dialogue and participation, emphasizing the role of multivocality in both design aims and methods as well as the strategic role of institutions--especially those of the public sector---in supporting and advancing societal change in collaboration with artists and designers. Children's and youth's rights and perspectives, along with pedagogies linked with art, design and participation are also featured.</p> <p>In the TRADERS project (2014-17), six PhD researchers engage the common umbrella theme from different institutions, disciplinary perspectives and subthemes,</p> <p>including 'intervention', 'play', 'multiple performative mapping', 'data mining', 'modelling in dialogue' and 'meta-framework', while coming together 2-3 times per year through formal and informal gatherings. The Training Week is one such occasion when the local PhD researcher invites the others (as well as local researchers and other guests) to the local context and coordinates training in the researcher's thematic approach.</p> <p>The three-day event is designed by local PhD researcher, Jon Geib, in collaboration with his host institution, Chalmers University of Technology, Department of Architecture and associated partner, Gothenburg Cultural Department. The Training Week engages the local context and a variety of academic, artistic and cultural actors, including the public.</p> <p>+</p>
<p>+</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>+</p> <p>including 'intervention', 'play', 'multiple performative mapping', 'data mining', 'modelling in dialogue' and 'meta-framework', while coming together 2-3 times per year through formal and informal gatherings. The Training Week is one such occasion when the local PhD researcher invites the others (as well as local researchers and other guests) to the local context and coordinates training in the researcher's thematic approach.</p> <p>The three-day event is designed by local PhD researcher, Jon Geib, in collaboration with his host institution, Chalmers University of Technology, Department of Architecture and associated partner, Gothenburg Cultural Department. The Training Week engages the local context and a variety of academic, artistic and cultural actors, including the public.</p> <p>+</p>
<p>+</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>+</p> <p>TRADERS</p> <div>    </div> <p>CHALMERS          Göteborgs Stad</p> <p>+</p>

23 May – Monday		24 May – Tuesday	
9:30-12:30	workshop w/Marika Hedemyr @ Korsvägen Swedish Artist combining choreography and philosophy in the context of public spaces [ <a href="http://marikahedemyr.com">marikahedemyr.com</a> ]	9:00-10:00	Anna van der Vliet “ICIA: Institute for Contemporary Ideas & Art” Founder and Artistic Director [ <a href="http://icia.se">icia.se</a> ]
12:30-14:00	Lunch	10:30-12:30	dialogical talkbox What if children owned parts of the city? // Who are you?
14:00-15:30	Marika Hedemyr “Eating the Cannibal: The Event Series – How to balance art, poetics and politics when creating performative art in public space in an Event City” [lecture-performance] [ <a href="http://marikahedemyr.com">marikahedemyr.com</a> ]	12:30-14:00	Lunch
16:00-17:30	Meike Schalk “Critical Projections: Can Architecture Be An Ethical Practice?” Chair MSc program Sustainable Urban Planning and Design KTH School of Architecture and the Built Environment [ <a href="#">profile</a> ]	14:00-14:45	Erling Björgvinsson “Narrating Collaboration & Critique in Post-Fordism” Professor of Design, School of Design & Crafts (HDK) [ <a href="#">profile</a> ]
		15:00-16:00	reading group discussion w/Erling Björgvinsson On Sara Ahmed’s “A Willfulness Archive” (2012)
		17:00-	dinner w/Studio Goja The studio focuses on children and children’s stories in participatory design projects, developing user-inclusive design processes and experimenting with play as a design tool. [ <a href="http://studiogoja.se">studiogoja.se</a> ]

25 May – Wednesday		26 May – Thursday	
+		+	+
9:00–9:30	<p>Ylva Mühlenbock &amp; Barbro Johansson  “Culture encounters without borders: models for creating quality in elderly people’s everyday lives” <a href="#">[link]</a>  <i>Kulturförvaltningen</i> (Gothenburg Cultural Department) / Centre for Consumer Science, University of Gothenburg</p>	9:30–12:30	TRADERS Scientific Meeting
10:00–10:45	<p>Mania Teimouri &amp; Lars Jonsson  “Children’s Perspective in Urban Development”  <i>Kultur i Väst</i> <a href="#">[link]</a> / Göteborgs Stad <i>Kultur Barn och unga</i> <a href="#">[link]</a>  Regional/city architecture advisors for children &amp; young people</p>	12:30–14:00	Lunch
11:00–11:30	<p>Daniel Terres &amp; Stella Pilback  “Urban Art”  <i>Urban Konst</i> / Youth Culture Unit (Cultural Dept.) <a href="#">[urbankonst.se]</a></p>	14:00–16:00	TRADERS Management Meeting
12:00–12:30	<p>Mija Renström  “The Workshop as an Artistic Method: Art, Education &amp; Social Commitment”  Artist and Curator of Education (<i>Göteborgs Konsthall</i>)  <a href="#">[mijarenstrom.com]</a>; <a href="#">Göteborgs Konsthall</a></p>		
12:30–14:00	Lunch		
14:00–16:00	<p>dialogues / <i>sagostund</i> (storytime)</p>		
16:30–19:30	<p>boat tour, seminar &amp; dinner  on the <i>Kulturbåtarna</i> (Culture Boat)</p>		
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venues:				
23	24	25	26	
X	X	X	X	Korsvägen
X	X	X	X	Chalmers Fakultetsväning (Vera Sandbergs allé 5b)
	X			Chalmers Conference Centre (Chalmersplatsen 1)
	X			Studio Goja (Underåsgatan 20A)
		X	X	Litteraturhuset (Heurlins Plats 1)
		X	X	Kulturbåtarna (pick-up: Rosenlunds brygga / return: Marieholm)



<p>+</p> <p><b>Literature reader</b></p> <p>AHMED, Sara, "A willfullness archive", in: <i>Theory &amp; Event</i>, Volume 15, Issue 3, 2012. [for reading group discussion with Erling Björgvinsson]</p> <p>AMIN, Ash, "Land of Strangers", in: <i>Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power</i>, Vol. 20, No. 1, 2013, pp. 1-8.</p> <p>CALVINO, Italo, "Multiplicity", in: <i>Six Memos for the Next Millennium</i>, 1988, pp. 101-124.</p> <p>FRUG, Gerald, "Democracy's Future: What's Left?", in: <i>Public Culture, Volume 25: Infrastructures of the Urban</i>, Number 2, Issue 70, Spring 2013, pp. 311-314.</p> <p><u>further reading 1:</u></p> <p>BENNETT, Jane, "Thing-Power V: Thing-Power and Adorno's Nonidentity" [subchapter], in: <i>Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things</i>, 2010, pp. 13-17.</p> <p>BJÖRGVINSSON, Erling, "The Making of Cultural Commons: Nasty Old Film Distribution and Funding", in: Pelle Ehn, Elisabet M. Nilsson, and Richard Topgaard (eds.), <i>Making Futures: Marginal Notes on Innovation, Design, and Democracy</i>, MIT Press, 2014.</p> <p>FLUSSER, Vilém, "The City as Wave-Trough in the Image Flood", 1988, in: <i>Critical Inquiry</i> 31(2), 2005, pp. 320-328.</p> <p>+</p>	<p>+</p> <p>MEDELSON, Michael, "The Principles of Antilogic as Praxis", in: <i>Many Sides: A Protagorean Approach to the Theory, Practice and Pedagogy of Argument</i>, 2002, pp. 112-131.</p> <p>SENNETT, Richard, "The Open City", in: <i>Berlin: Towards an Urban Age</i>, November 2006.</p> <p>SIMMEL, Georg, "The Stranger", 1908, in: WOLFF, Kurt H. (ed., tr.), <i>The Sociology of Georg Simmel</i>, 1950, pp. 402-408.</p> <p><u>further reading 2:</u></p> <p>RANCIÈRE, Jacques, "Does Democracy Mean Something?", in: <i>Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics</i>, Steven Corcoran (ed., tr.), Continuum, 2010, pp. 45-61.</p> <p>VALVERDE, Mariana, "Seeing Like a City: The Dialectic of Modern and Premodern Ways of Seeing in Urban Governance", in: <i>Law &amp; Society Review</i>, Volume 45, Number 2, May 2011, pp. 277-312.</p> <p>WALL, John, "Why Children and Youth Should Have the Right to Vote: An Argument for Proxy-Claim Suffrage", in: <i>Children, Youth and Environments</i>, 24(1), 2014, pp. 108-123.</p> <p>YOUNG, Iris Marion, "City Life and Difference", in: <i>Justice and the Politics of Difference</i>, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1990, pp. 226-256.</p> <p>+</p>
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participants		design concepts
<p>Ameya Deshpande Anna van der Vliet Anna Maria Orru Annelies Vaneycken Barbro Johansson Borghild Håkansson Catharina Dyrssen Daniel Terres David Hamers Emmy Erskine Erling Björgvinsson Henric Benesch Ida Liffner Jon Geib Lars Jonsson Linda Sternö Lydia Regalado Mafalda Gamboa Maja Kekoni Mania Teimouri</p>	<p>Marika Hedemyr Marthe Roosenboom Meike Schalk Michael Kaethler Mija Renström Monique Wernhamm Naomi Bueno de Mesquita Natalie Novik Pablo Calderón Salazar Paul Schindler Saba Golchehr Samantha Hookaway Sandra Hillén Sigrid Östlund Stella Pilback Vici Hofbauer Ylva Mühlenbock</p> <p><u>via video:</u> Elias Persson</p>	<p>James Harte Kairi Pullerits Kaoru Fesenko Leonora Ernst Oscar Teiffel Poppy Langridge Svea Fritsch</p> <p><u>via audio:</u> Alex Moreira Lúcia Silva</p> <p><u>via illustration:</u> Emil Ulfhammer</p> <p><u>via text:</u> Stella Postle Tanay Dashottar Tova Persson</p>

One might be tempted to scale up William James' metaphor of 'flights and perchings' (1884) to draw a distinction between the relatively stationary position of the Training Week's host researcher and designer (in this case, myself) and that of invited researchers and guests. Yet, for all of us, these moments of knowledge exchange and collaborative experience involve thrilling encounters with new perspectives. That the designer might also be surprised and venture along unanticipated lines of flight radiating from and through the design is an essential principle of multivocal design. For this reason, and to strengthen the collaborative dimension (many of the names arose in discussion with fellow collaborators Catharina, Ylva and Borghild), I choose to include speakers with whom I had a variety of relations: some I'd spoken to or worked with closely, others I'd never met except through their work, and still others were almost entirely new to me. The *Kulturbåtarna* (Culture Boat) excursion and the 'dialogical talkbox' session in particular, consciously created space for voices even more unexpected and emergent.

'Voice' in my research is understood in a political, practical and an extended, new materialist (and Reggio Emilia Approach) sense: environments, things, artifacts, assemblages,...have voices. As voices become more indirect or 'distant'--mediated, refracted, even incommunicable--their latent 'dialogical' capacity grows. Urbanities of difference and of the stranger (Young; Sennett; Amin; et al.) value and thrive on the possibilities of the dynamics these distanced relations bring. To integrate a distinct dialogical layer, Marthe and Ida of Studio Goja were invited not only to document vignettes from the Training Week proceedings on-site, but to 'speak' through these illustrations, which later will be assembled into a digital booklet. As such, the echoes of their voices will be louder than their source.

				<p>Jon Geib is an urbanist and architect whose doctoral research explores relations between the city, design and dialogue, with particular focus on the potential of multivocal approaches in animating a cosmopolitan public culture. Dialogue and participation are reframed as ongoing democratic, artistic and cultural practices which take different voices in the city seriously and seek to articulate them through 'dialogical infrastructures' which build in space for voices unplanned, unexpected and to-remain-unknown. The architectonics of these multivocal designs (the relations between parts and between parts and wholes) is of crucial importance.</p> <p>Jon's doctoral research at Chalmers University of Technology, Department of Architecture is a collaboration with the Gothenburg Cultural Department as part of the EU project TRADERS (training art and design researchers in participation in/for public space).</p> <p>Contact:  Jon Geib, PhD Student, Urbanist, Architect  + Chalmers University of Technology, Dept. of Architecture, City Division  + City of Gothenburg, Dept. of Cultural Affairs  + TRADERS [<a href="mailto:traders.eu">traders.eu</a> + <a href="mailto:TRADERStalk.org">TRADERStalk.org</a>]  Sven Hultins gata 6, 412 96 Gothenburg  Mobile: +46709209713  geib@chalmers.se / <a href="mailto:jongeib@gmail.com">jongeib@gmail.com</a></p>		



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"When we take a rapid general view of the wonderful stream of our consciousness, what strikes us first is the different pace of its different portions. Our mental life, like a bird's life, seems to be made of an alternation of flights and perchings."

--William James (1884)

"Bakhtin's socio-literary theory of dialogue...saw [the] dialogical relation--in language, literature and in life--as a *dynamic* relation, animated by two opposing tendencies analogous to physical forces: centripetal forces which pull things together and inwards, *unifying* towards a single voice, and centrifugal forces which pull things apart and outwards *producing multiple* diverging voices (Bakhtin, 1981)."

--Jon Geib (Manuscript submitted for publication)

"Echoing Flusser's 'exile', Gielen (2013) sees the key to generating creativity lying in "the oscillation between a social environment and isolation", in temporarily withdrawing from the dominant culture to 'islands'. (91)

--Jon Geib (2015)

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## Appendix 13 - "Multivocality, Design and Public Space"

*Conference session call.*

Geib, J. and Dyrssen, C. (2016). Multivocality, Design and Public Space [session call]. MEDIATIONS: Art and Design Agency and Participation in Public Space, London, 21-22 November 2016.

New configurations and temporalities of social-spatial relations are intensifying the already pluralistic dynamics of public space, further challenging the traditional notion of the designer's privileged hand in its formation.

Historically, and by habit, designers have been strongly tempted to seek unifying strategies, whether in aiming their assumedly neutral work towards an unspecified public, or, in taking sides and teaming up with specific publics. In either case, many designers' methodologies, even if open and ambiguous initially, eventually filter and steer towards a single consistent outcome—a clarifying *resolution*. This reflex towards univocality and its implications in terms of urban form, dialogue, participation, the public and democracy can be critically challenged and experimented with through dialogical approaches rooted in the concept of *multivocality*.

As the design paradigm continues to expand its emphasis on *processes* and *purposes*, the multivocal can open up a new role for design in the dynamic formation of public space: designing *with* and *for* multivocality.

This call is an invitation to rethink the formation of public space and to reconceptualise design aims and methodologies in terms of multivocality—both figurative and literal. Might design processes, in producing difference and diversity in a dynamic interactivity, *become* public space? And, might this lead to an expanded notion of participation as a democratic cultural practice?

We welcome contributions in the form of research papers that critically address one or more of these themes:

- dialogical approaches: designing *with* and/or *for* multivocality
- relational public space and implications for dialogue, participation and/or urban form
- participation as a [multivocal] democratic cultural practice
- explorative, possibly hybrid modes of design collaboration including pluri- and transdisciplinarity
- new forms and strategies of multivocal urban activity and activism
- issues of access and agency
- engagements with the material and the digital (as actors with 'voices')
- multivocal artistic devices and artistic research approaches
- multivocal urban narratives linked to public space[s]