Participation in Architecture: agonism in practice

Ammon Beyerle 2018

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[This thesis is accompanied by five Creative Works booklets]
Abstract

Literature about participation in architecture promised architecture the restoration of a moral dimension, arguing that participation would offer opportunities for empowerment and deliver broad benefits. To its disservice, the field of participation has been dominated by a rational ideology, and a focus on agreement and decision-making – incorporated in the term ‘consensus’. The dominant approach to participation has been at the expense of difference, passions, arguments, resistances and tensions present in the participatory process – incorporated here in the term ‘agonism’. Exacerbating this gap between consensus and agonism, a lack of real-world examples and analysis of everyday participation, has led to a quite limited practical language about participation or descriptions of the concrete process of participation in action, and arguably an avoidance to design and critique participatory processes in architecture and urban design. This Doctor of Philosophy attempts to do participation in architecture through a series of Creative Works in practice, by carefully considering approach, and, designing for difference and bottom-up empowerment of others with social, physical, emotional and psychological benefits specific to each project. The methodology exposed the realities of participation in architectural design practice with communities, highlighting social themes for exploration and multiple modes for practice. This research project demonstrates that agonism is an action-orientated way forward for participation, arguing that the tension between architecture and participation is actually productive. It concludes that difference rather than consensus is crucial to participation, suggesting for architectural and urban design practice that the philosophical role of an architect is to consciously create and maintain opportunities to keep alive the participatory process in the world, by critically designing participation.
Declaration

This is to certify that:

– the thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD except where indicated
– due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,
– the thesis is fewer than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.
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Prologue

I can’t remember since when, but architecture for me has always required both a personal and professional undertaking. Rejecting early on the implication that learning a profession and practicing should be dispassionate, it became a key principle to me that an architect could only produce good architecture in relationships with other people. So, I rejected any assertion that involving other people in the process compromises the outcome.

I returned to Melbourne in 2005 to complete my final degree in Architecture, after what seemed a lifetime abroad, living in Berlin and Paris and working full-time as a project manager and drafter on numerous public projects. Abroad, and working as an architectural student in an engineering office, I found myself collaborating on dozens of different projects, responsible for the role of structural engineering, yet continuously changing my respective focus and interest, liaising with the architects, clients, economists, project managers, mechanical engineers, suppliers, lawyers, and builders.

In the first semester's studio after I returning to Melbourne, I was asked to design a medium density housing development. This seemed like a ridiculous notion – to design a (large) building myself – so I set about forming a team with fellow students during the first half of semester’s work for analysis and masterplanning, but in the end had to finish it alone. Then, in the second semester, a skilled tutor encouraged the whole studio to work in teams right to the end. It was a formative experience, and I continued the interest in team work throughout my Masters degree focusing on other ways of conceiving and learning beyond the expected role as the lone genius architect – which I have both loved and hated.

Across this, and emerging out of my adolescence, I have had an attraction and commitment to feminist thinking, within myself and without. This was in large part due to my mother, girl-friends, bullies, and separation from a fundamentalist Christian upbringing. I became sensitive to the manipulation of other people.

This led me early on in my architectural studies to be interested in the psychological, emotional, and humanistic aspects of architecture, within a context of late and post-modernist educators. This interest was enhanced by learning the German language and German philosophy from political and feminist teachers, and interacting with students outside of architecture in the humanities, engineering and law faculties.
In my postgraduate architectural studies, whilst learning about sustainability, urban design theory, contemporary landscape architecture theory and grappling with sole authorship in my design studios, I took a theory course that highlighted a post-structural reading of architectural theory around sexuality and authorship. As the final assignment for that course, I reviewed Jonathan Hill’s edited book *Occupying Architecture: Between the Architect and the User.* It was clear to me that a very different way of practicing architecture, did, could and should exist, and I wanted to know more about it.

*Occupying Architecture* brought together more than a dozen contributors, mostly academics from the UK, with various associations to the Bartlett School of Architecture and the Architectural Association, in London. The book was the seed to this research project, incorporating the many theoretical themes I was interested in and demonstrating the opportunity in, and importance of, exploring participation in architecture.

Subsequently I felt a strong moral imperative, however it seemed to me that there was a lack of knowledge about how to practice ‘participation’ in the literature – so I took it on myself to work it out.

I started teaching early, and one of the first courses I co-designed was in environmental design, for architecture and landscape architecture students. In it we focused on teaching students to have a close relationship with a suite of inner city sites, and through mapping exercises, identify conflicting desires, including public/private and human/non human systems. One of the foundational readings was Andrea Kahn’s “Overlooking: A Look at How We Look at Site or...Site as ‘Discrete Object’ of Desire”. Reading with Philippe d’Anjou’s “The Existential Self as Locus of Sustainability in Design”, and Kevin Lynch’s “Control”, we suggested that if people felt involved in their city, they might recognise their ownership, and be more likely to care and take responsibility for it. We taught that passions mattered to sustainability and public life. Another key reading was Michel De Certeau’s *The Practice of Everyday Life* which emphasised thinking through different forms of power: strategies and tactics.

A number of my students from this first environmental design course started the collective Urban Village Melbourne and invited to me to take part in the founding committee in 2009. Together, we focused on similar inner city projects, activating sites in Melbourne through architectural and landscape architectural design, fine arts and social work. It was almost all volunteer work. We incorporated, held roundtables at the university, threw parties, applied for community development grants, and published newsletters. At the

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time I was committed to making this my practice, and whilst leading a project for Cathedral Place, grappling with volunteers, people, stakeholders, and little money, I saw an opportunity to enrol in a Creative Works PhD, about participation in architecture. I hoped it would also support my teaching career. This intention extended through disbanding Urban Village Melbourne and starting the architectural practice Here Studio with my life partner.

My research project began with the premise that it would be carried out through Creative Works case studies. This implied that at least half of my research activity was practice-based. The two reasons I chose a Creative Works approach was that my aim was to develop understanding — including my own — for the practical aspects of participation in architecture, and, I had the opportunity — through my professional practice — to design and carry out real-world projects, start to finish, of manageable scales and contexts that would yield new learning and answer questions. My research approach from the outset was focused on developing and reflecting on my own work rather than analysing precedents and interviewing other people.

I considered participation as a fundamentally different approach to design practice that suggests an entirely different tone, that starts by listening, critically looking for moments to get involved, and proposes modes of practice to build best-fit physical and meaningful community empowerment outcomes. Architecture and urban design is all about participating with others. Typical architectural design devices such as structure and aesthetic, program and material may also be mobilised to these ends. Here, the purpose of architecture would be defined in process — in participation with other people, and all its effects are thereby political. It follows that the activity of architectural design in participation is to design both the outcome and the process.

My thesis thus starts with questioning what participation is, and then moves to focus on how to do it. It starts with an understanding of the theoretical merits of attempting and maximising participation, and an awareness of broad interconnections of relevant theory in architecture, urban design and landscape architecture — yet not knowing what participation really means or entails in practice. The focus of this research is therefore on developing practical definitions and approaches, not reasons for why or if to do it.

As reconstructed in my Theory Review, the first learning in the research was around the identification of the significance of agonism in participation, which may be defined as valuing conflict/tension as a creative part of the process. This is defined in Chantal Mouffe’s The Democratic Paradox. Agonism is a pluralist approach to decision-making and action that values negotiation, difference and arguments as the (radical) space of democracy. Where previous work in the field focused on consensus and associated key words such as ‘agreement’, ‘rationality’, ‘neutrality’, ‘balance’, ‘needs’ and ‘problem-solving’, my divergence towards agonism opened up participation to complex spaces of social conflict/tension. These complex spaces are typically

challenging for architectural approaches that are heavily influenced by Modernism. Deeply reliant on neoliberalel politics and capitalist economics, I read Modernism as embedded in continuing paternal privilege. Notwithstanding the history of architecture, a possible application of agonism is to think of challenges to architecture as opportunities pregnant with possibility for learning and political change.

As intoned in my Practice Review, and, demonstrated through the Creative Works projects themselves, the second learning in the research was that participation in architecture is not just about considering how others (clients, users, communities) participate in the process, but how the architect(s) may participate too. This enabling finding about the active role of the architect initially came from considering the space between Richard Sennett’s “Open City”, David Harvey’s “Freedom of the City”, and Henry Lefebvre’s “Right to the City”. I wondered – if the city is made through everyday synthesis, where the emphasis of making the city is ‘use’, not ‘exchange value’, and, where cities should be about increasing participation – what is the role of the architect? Simply put, my response was a form of hypothesis, that if it is philosophically important for citizens to have the power to shape their own cities, should not the architect as an engaged citizen, an active participant, have that power to too? This response opened my research to the personal dimension of the architect, one’s own practice, experience, and motivations. It implied that participation (in architecture) is deeply political.

My use of the term ‘participation’ and its themes are decidedly inter-and-multi disciplinary because its purpose and methods are critically about inclusion and connection – mental, physical and environmental. As such, undertaking to develop both theoretical and practical understanding with a focus on architectural design practice, I have drawn and interconnected theory from a number of disciplines – sociology, planning, urban design, politics, and art theory – to remap what is a participatory design process and how it might be practically achieved. Because of what it involves and the methods undertaken, the works included in this research are particularly sociological within a frame of informing architecture.

Although my theoretical and practical research was carried out in simultaneously, for clarity this thesis has been arranged sequentially in two parts. The first half, Background, is a review of literature and precedent methods about participation processes that considers what is participation in architecture and urban design and what it means to do it – how might it be done. The second half, Discussion, is a critical discussion both of the projects themselves critically, one by one, and synthetically, as overarching questions and proposals.

5. As a way of consciously thinking out of this space, I have taken up excluding gender pronouns when writing in the third person, and also consciously including first person singular and plural pronouns.

for practice. My Creative Works booklets – a selection of four major projects that I undertook and a fifth separate compilation of other projects – support my case by case analysis and critique, and document and exhibit some of the formative creative projects undertaken in the duration of my PhD research.

Throughout my research, the learning was always developed in a back and forth between literature, and my real-world projects. Subsequently, the relationship between the different reading/writing and drawing/building parts of my research was pluralistic – sometimes complimentary and logically integrated, sometimes disjointed, contradictory and non-linear. To link the two I listened, wrote, spoke, projected, used my hands, and wondered, alone and with other people. I assumed from the start that in a Creative Works research methodology, theory would be found and developed both in writing and in building, separately and together.

The following theoretical base focuses on the practice of participation in architecture, leading to the concept of agonism. In some ways I created a tautological loop where I have justified the relevance of participation by doing it. From an understanding of why to, and working how to fulfil that relevance in practice; I sought not to prove the effectiveness of participation, but to understand how to do it, critically. Finally, as a Creative Works project in the real world, I looked both to gain a know-how, and, fulfil a responsibility to design participation into the public projects I undertook with other people. I wrote my Theory Review last both out of the difficulty and challenges of retelling the story, and finally embracing the opportunity to explicate anew my practical experience into a respectable body and history of theory.

*   *   *

Through theory and practice-led means, this research project undertakes to contribute understanding to the architectural design practice loosely defined as ‘participation’. Participation suggests an alternative role for an architect to be socially defined. Participation is a real opportunity.
Introduction

Aims

The primary aim of this research is to prove the critical possibility of participation in architecture – that participation can be designed, carried out and analysed in a critical way. This is the key action that I have endeavoured to explore through Creative Works: to see it as a positive opportunity for knowledge, and through Creative Works, treat it as a positive opportunity for material and social architecture. To do so, I develop terms for critical judgement of projects in themselves and create real-world examples.

This thesis explores participation in architecture; asking what participation means, and – as will be expanded in the text and the Creative Work – what it means when taking on a methodology of agonism where the hard stuff of tension, conflicts and differences might be realised. Purposefully, my Creative Works approach is heuristic. I ask: what happens when a participatory process consciously values agonism? This research is about the instrumentalisation of the theory of agonism and participation in architecture, to learn what comes out of practice and – as an architect – to make something more beautiful out of that opportunity.

The secondary aim of this research is to develop the concept of ‘agonism’ in participation in architecture. The concept of agonism connects participatory design, group decision-making, community consultation, and political action, and by opening up the research to this concept, it is expected that new outcomes might emerge, or indeed through architecture, become more attainable. The creative endeavour is to take on agonism as a practical action, that is everyday and nuanced.

Agonism is an action-orientated approach to pluralism developed by political theorist Chantal Mouffe, as a response to the field of deliberative democracy. It is about embracing arguments, and valuing tensions, passions and conflict, rather than avoiding them. Agonism contrasts antagonism; where antagonism would see enemies to destroy, agonism seeks adversaries that define us through difference. Agonism is a theory of positive difference.

By working this secondary aim through my research I hope to incorporate learnings back to practice about agonism, which might otherwise be a difficult concept to grasp in everyday life. Agonism, this thesis argues, is one way out of the lack of conscious participation, or perceived failures of participation in design which make the practice less relevant for architects. Critical practice contrasts normative practice. Through this work it is possible to find some tangible methods for practice – methods which depart from the traditional ideals of rational decision-making, and consensus.
To ground the theoretical aims of this project this PhD uses methods typical of architectural explanation and critique when treating the Creative Works. My intuition is that participation (and agonism) needs to be brought into a language which is accessible for the consideration and practice of architects. The research is effectively working to explore a flip-side of architecture – the unspoken and unconscious, the implicit and subtle, that people outside of architecture perceive are the actual limitations of architectural practice: in community development, social health, and the political sphere.

This project emphasises architecture as a verb; an action rather than a noun. This may seem quite simple, but it is a poignant distinction: it matters how architecture is done. The thesis argues that participation is an architectural undertaking, and that a commensurate level of critique about participation may be, and can be applied through design.

Outcomes

This PhD has a number of outcomes from research. These outcomes are in order of prominence, and logic:

1. Practicing participation in architecture through agonism requires a particular mind-frame; and this mind-frame critically redefines existing and everyday terms into a new vocabulary for architecture.

2. Participation in architecture effectively means consciously designing the design process to include other people; because normative approaches to architecture are fundamentally less-participatory, the terms of architecture provide a critical opportunity to develop participation.

3. The task of developing participation in architecture can be recognised by asking ontological questions throughout a project; and in doing so one can critically pre-empt a particular mind-frame: Who – what does an architect do?; Where/when – where is the participatory moment?; How/why, – why say that?; and How/when – how to make it happen?

4. Through Creative Works, participation and agonism can be critically mobilised in architecture; in my case studies I developed a set of seven ‘modes of practice’ as constituent elements of agonism and participation in architecture: communication, event, governance, making, material, process, and space (occupation).

5. An architectural project that is carried out through agonistic participation can be critically organised through overarching themes and concepts; in my case studies, I developed four key ‘themes’ for participation: site/space, making/materialisation, practice/place, and facilitation/leadership.

6. Through participation, the practice of architecture interacts with groups of people and their selves; below the surface architecture represents and develops many types of space for interaction: physical, social, mental and emotional.

7. Agonism and participation can provoke new thinking about architecture and the training of architects.
Figure 1: Diagram describing the structure of the thesis.

**STRUCTURE OF THE EXEGESIS**

1. **Planning** involving:
   - facilitation
   - working with individuals & groups
   - leadership and legacy
   - methods and outsidedness
   - emphasising the facilitation of others

2. **Participating** involving:
   - occupation
   - critical heuristics
   - agency and responsibility
   - an aesthetic narrative
   - emphasising the amateur architect

3. **The political** involving:
   - challenges
   - methods
   - manifestation(s)
   - edges and limits
   - emphasising decisions and actions

4. **methods, practice, principles chapter**
   - three methods for how to research:
     - reflection in action
     - thick description
     - case studies
   - practical participatory design methods for:
     - oneself
     - others

5. **methods chapter**
   - four case studies:
     - cathedral place
     - pop-up hub melbourne
     - hub melbourne
     - ballarat coworking & civic hall
   - the project and the aim of participation
   - what were the propositions for participatory design?
   - what were the occupations and reflections in the project?
   - theme for each project
   - selection of 3-4 modes of practice (from a set of 7)
   - 7 modes of practice:
     - communication
     - event
     - governance
     - making
     - material
     - process
     - space (occupation)

6. **case by case critique**
   - considering the:
     - what and why of practicing participation
   - case studies booklets

7. **a synthetic discussion chapter**
   - asking:
     - who / what?
     - where / when?
     - how / why?
     - how / when?
   - significance of ...
   - themes & opportunities
   - practical applications & typologies

8. **considering (agonistic) participation in architecture**

- **theory, literature, purpose chapter**
- **in select periods of time:**
  - 1968-69
  - 1970s
  - 1980s
  - 1990s
  - 2000-2006
  - 2007-2011

- **consider participation in architecture as a practice of:**

- **case by case discussion of case studies chapter**
- **4 themes:**
  - site/place
  - making/materialisation
  - practice/place
  - facilitation/leadership

- **4 themes:**
  - explicit
  - implicit

- **7 modes of practice:**
  - communication
  - event
  - governance
  - making
  - material
  - process
  - space (occupation)
INTRODUCTION

Summary

This next section of this introduction summarises the findings of each chapter of the thesis. [See Figure 1]

I. Background

Theory Review

- Participation in architecture through agonism, draws on disciplines of philosophy, politics, planning, architecture and urban design with key texts linking 1968-9 and 2005-6.
- A theory of participation in architecture has been dominated by ideals of consensus and avoidance of conflict, which agonism unlocks.
- Participation offers new spaces for architects to get involved in and contribute to, ones that activate developing understandings of difference, identity, community and agency.
- Agonistic participation engages spaces of the unspoken, it includes psychological, emotional, and social spaces.

The Theory Review chapter is an exploration of what – what are the key themes and ideas underpinning participation in architecture through agonism. Drawing on disciplines of philosophy, politics, planning, architecture and urban design it pieces together a rich history of key theories and theorists, to highlight the philosophical processes and themes at play in participation. These are then explored and developed in my Creative Works. These processes sketch a system of thinking about participation as an architect, that are stated in Discussion – Part 2.

The thesis argues that participation in architecture models deep interaction with processes of being and becoming. Because participation in architecture works (and works through) issues of change in community and self, the combination of architecture and participation is fundamentally challenging; highlighting the significance of place and its making. People and their occupations are made at the same time as their environment, in multiple forms and materials, in processes of mutual negotiation.

Participation offers architecture affects for social processes that are emphasised through agonism. Agonistic participation highlights critical aspects of occupation and makes particular processes of change more significant than others. These processes offer a deeper understanding of participating in creative work and being with others. These concerns provide new and diverse spaces for architects to get involved in and contribute to, by design.

This thesis explores the development of the theory of participation – agonistic participation effectively – to uncover fundamental gaps within being and becoming processes, especially in disciplines of creativity. The Theory Review chapter elaborates on different purposes and themes of participation one may explore in an architectural brief, and begins to piece together different stages of creative and philosophical
processes which are synthesised in Discussion – Part 2. It may be implied that working in this space accords architectural practice meaningful potential – in action.

Agonistic participation, this thesis argues, offers a conscious approach that neither excludes nor avoids the messy, vital stuff of participation. It offers a critical practice; which values tensions when people get involved, ones that would otherwise play out subconsciously or that a typical architect would aspire to avoid in the ideal design process (thereby denying fundamental aspects of change and meaning in the creation of space). Through agonistic participation, architectural practice can engage in the psychological, emotional and social aspects of space. How to do this – and make the most of the opportunity of participation – is the subsequent question for my Practice Review chapter.

Practice Review

• There are many design-orientated approaches to participation.

• Through developing an understanding of how to approach participation, a practitioner can draw methods from disciplines of architecture, urban design, and art practice.

• Many of the different meanings and approaches of participation explore spaces of the unspoken.

• Common modes and themes of participatory practice can be recognised, which a practitioner or researcher may adopt as methods.

My Practice Review draws on many design-orientated approaches to participatory practice. It considers meaning and significance; exemplar methods towards engaging with the other and the self; and reflecting. Focusing on important precedents in the literature, my Practice Review is orientated towards broad learnings – and tips – for my Creative Works approach, rather than providing an exhaustive review or local context.

Although my research is not an historical study, this review describes the main types of participatory design practices in time that have developed which contextualises the processes outlined in my Theory Review. Considering art practice and urban design is fruitful in not only developing terms for practice, but terms for explanation, presentation, and critique. The chapter concludes that many of the key methods for practice are attempts towards like-minded goals and common concerns for empowerment, change and creativity.

Many examples of approaches to participation are not unique to architecture, and the chapter presents a suite of considerations which could inform an architect’s critical design of all aspects of the design process, where one idea is not necessarily better than another. This observation has influenced the development of three areas of my Creative Works research: a description of designing the process of architecture and participation; a vocabulary for this design undertaking – from which to inform each of my Creative Works; and a syntax – through case studies, that each exemplify the appropriate mobilisation of themes and modes for a specific project. The particular approaches to participation that I develop respond to precedents in architecture, urban design and art practice.
Through these different meanings and approaches – description, vocabulary and syntax, the Creative Works searched for getting into the space of, and towards the unspoken. Using both a Theory and Practice Review, and my own practice (described in a set case studies) this thesis identifies elements that I use to design my own participatory practice processes. These techniques are responses to the unspoken spaces within each project. (For simplification, my experience as a practitioner in the Australian context is left relatively mute.)

This research project defines the role of the architect as someone with expertise and power working with people and space. Together, my Theory Review and Practice Review construct a series of philosophical processes concerned with being and becoming of both architect and community. These two chapters open up methodological questions to develop new participatory principles that are concerned with (en)action.

Research Methods / Creative Works

- A deliberate decision was made to learn about practice by undertaking a Creative Works PhD.
- Three key methods of the research are: reflection in action, thick description; and case studies.
- The Creative Works projects develop the context and framing in themselves and against each other, rather than emphasising links to history, theory and analyses of precedent practices.
- Heurism is a fundamental term for the research approach, and it develops direct and indirect connections to theory, across many projects.

These two short chapters outline the key research methods I employ in the PhD, and, list and structure how I explicate my Creative Works. The decision to undertake the research by Creative Works governs the balance of analysis and the emphasis of discussion and synthesis towards developing practical knowledge. It frames my approach to reading in the background chapters – I am looking for purpose(s), approaches and principles for participation in architecture to explore in my own projects, and reflect back to the field. To do so I am undertaking an embedded, ethnographic approach. One goal is to develop and demonstrate mixed methods for both practice and research, another is to assume a heuristic approach (cognisant of the background theory) and see what happens in the context of real-world projects by getting in and doing it.

To undertake this research through Creative Works, the key research methods are reflection in action, thick description; and case studies. Day-to-day this means considering text and image, drawing, making, listening, reading, speaking and writing. The embedded, ethnographic approach means that I go about deciphering the social relations, meanings, rituals, and stories to respond to in the design of participation – sensitively and analytically. It includes implicitly and explicitly interacting with different participants, working through the exigencies of each project situation, and directing a team of people towards achieving a brief. A concept of ‘antinomous’ value leads me to both value and analyse my design projects in themselves, case by case; and compare my projects to each other and discuss in a synthesis. Layering my analysis and discussion like this I mean to – directly and indirectly – confirm, extend, and contrast the questions, learnings and conclusions from my Theory Review and Practice Review, in, with and through my new practical knowledge.
2. Exposition

Creative Works booklets (1: Cathedral Place, 2: Pop-up Hub Melbourne, 3: Hub Melbourne, 4: Ballarat Civic Hall / Coworking Space, and 5: Other Projects [online only])

- A visual and descriptive exposition of different architectural / urban design projects I led over time, designed with participation and agonism in mind.
- A description of each project from the perspective of an architect looking for the opportunity in agonistic participation.
- A demonstration of time, stages, and design of design processes – documenting the intention and experience of each participatory theme in practice.
- Together the booklets propose practical design actions for participation in architecture, which I describe as modes of practice.
- Images and captions of key scenes in each project give a sense and demonstrate the experience, meaning and significance of agonism in participation in a tangible way, related to architecture.

A set of five booklets provide an exposition of the Creative Works projects. Booklets 1: Cathedral Place, 2: Pop-up Hub Melbourne, 3: Hub Melbourne, and 4: Ballarat Civic Hall / Coworking Space exhibit the main Creative Works projects that I analyse in detail in my thesis. I undertook Creative Works from the beginning of the research in parallel to reading and thinking, and as such produced many examples and a network of thoughts. [See Figure 2] The booklets are a way to capture this, for a moment, and explicitly set up the exegesis discussion in two parts: Firstly, an in depth analysis which extracts themes in the context of practical methods for each case study; and a synthetic discussion which informs a methodology for participation in architecture using agonism in practice. I prepared each booklet from the perspective of an architect looking for the opportunity of agonistic participation to be played out and (instrumentally) useful.

The Creative Works approach demonstrates that the theory is possible, describes what happened, and reflects on how one designs and the challenges of the participatory approach. My selection of projects also demonstrates development, as the Creative Works increased in competence and understanding over time.

The Creative Works are presented in separate booklets to highlight the different outcomes and qualities of my hands-on research. In addition to my four major projects; the fiches [online only] catalogue the minor projects that influenced my thinking during my candidature. The booklets use a mixture of images and little text to tell critical stories and show my relevant design developments, each employing summaries, photos, diagrams and captions.

I have first structured the presentation of my major projects in each booklet into three parts: 1. Aim of participation; 2. Propositions for participatory design; and 3. Occupations and reflections. Each part starts with a succinct two-page summary, followed by images and captions of crucial moments to form a story of the project. This structure explicitly recognises and considers the important aspect of time in a design process.
Figure 2: Timeline of the Creative Works, at January 2013.
EARCH PROJECTS

TEACHING
I have structured each project through a set of design actions which are used in the project and can be critically analysed. This lens assumes that architecture is typically directed by a critical departure from — and adherence to — design concepts, but emphasises that in participation those concepts are numerous and process-orientated. A multi-modal approach develops broader concepts and experiences of participation. In architecture these ‘modes of practice’ have physical manifestations, and may be understood through the language of space. As Creative Works of participation in architecture, I embedded my philosophical contribution through the development of themes in the projects themselves, and disseminated my new knowledge in the public realm through the application of different modes of practice and subsequent experiences with the participants of each project.

The second layer structuring each case study booklet, focuses on a selection of three or four key modes that were explicitly important to each project. This mechanism acts to articulate the commonalities and practical methods developed across my Creative Works. It also elaborates my initial findings around ‘purpose’, ‘principles’ and ‘approaches’ and suggests a way to critique participatory work. Leading to my Discussion section, these modes of practice directly (and tangibly) describe what is agonistic participation in architecture, and how to do it.

The layout changes somewhat across the case study booklets, I developed the balance between text and images chronologically — completing one booklet after another. Notably, the significance of creativity in the first cases (Booklets 1: Cathedral Place, and 2: Pop-up Hub Melbourne) is more theoretical — I was finding my way. The booklets use long captions to tell a story supported by snapshot images of exemplary moment/ scenes in the project. The third case (Booklet 3: Hub Melbourne) is significantly more practical and visual — I was getting the hang of it — this booklet uses many images and multiple examples to tell a story with short supporting captions. The fourth booklet (Booklet 4: Ballarat Civic Hall / Coworking Space) attempts to strike a balance between words and images.

My selection and organisation of the case studies provide an insight into the varying small scales, contexts and timelines for (agonistic) participatory architecture. The major case study projects: the first deals with a collection of small projects over a number of years for one medium-sized, heritage, public open space in the capital city of Melbourne, Cathedral Place; the second and third, Pop-up Hub Melbourne, and Hub Melbourne, deal with two consecutive stages of a small, relatively short project inside a semi-public, heritage building, in Melbourne to make a new coworking space; and the fourth booklet, the Ballarat Civic Hall / Coworking Space, deals with two interrelated public projects over a number of years in the second-tier city of Ballarat, one is a development of the same programmatic concept used in the second and third case study — a new coworking space, and the other, is a site with large open spaces, various structures and a large heritage building — again an existing place.
These major projects and the booklets, provide a multi-modal experience of participation in architecture and agonism in my practice, using text and images. Each project booklet is set out with a background, a series of propositions and a reflection of outcomes, positing architecture as both ‘noun’ and ‘verb’. Browsing and reading through the booklets; a reader sees context, proposals and tests, and the unpacking of participatory themes in ways critically orientated towards design-processes. Specific themes come out of each project, and synthetically respond to theory and precedent practices.

Using images and captions of key scenes in the booklets, I attempt to make my practical knowledge as tangible as possible. I seek to demonstrate the turning points in the work; the (agonistic) moments; the sense of these agonistic moments and what happens; what could happen; and, as Creative Works – how I responded and worked them as a developing creative researcher.

3. Discussion

Part 1: a case by case critique

- A critique of what happened in the case studies through considering the main theme of each project as a brief, and the action and experience of the key modes of practice that I applied.
- I ask, how successful was I? What are some of the features of this mode of practice? What worked? What didn’t work? What could have been done better?
- These cases provide a detailed analysis to draw out design moves – through identification, description and exposition of acts, patterns and scenes. These are used to build an understanding and definition of agonism and participation in architecture.
- These cases locate some general learnings for further practice and theory in the field.

This thesis has two Discussion chapters to demonstrate that participation in architecture is a credible undertaking. These explicate what agonism is for architecture.

My first discussion chapter is a case by case critique and uses a typical architectural approach: considering what was designed in each project against an understanding of the brief. Comparing moments in the project, I ask what were the actions that were undertaken and what subsequent experiences of my practice came out through the key modes of practice. The chapter tries to be critical by asking: how successful was my practice? what were the features? what worked? what didn’t work? what could have been done better?

The case studies identify and describe acts in a participatory design project. These acts can be analysed for patterns which define agonism in participation in architecture. It is then possible to describe the limitations of this Creative Works method and provide general learnings for further projects and ongoing research in this field. That further research might emphasise traditional methods such as an in depth analysis of precedent participatory projects and practices, and interviewing other practitioners or project stakeholders to extract different learnings from their stories and experiences.
Part 2: a synthesis

- Can the thesis provide advice, pedagogy, and mentorship from my research perspective?
- Can the PhD offer a set of disciplinary patterns and cycles that explain how the participation process progresses as creative action research, and how each step might be framed in a way that resonates and is emergent?
- Can this work offer a suite of methodological questions that reveals paths and different approaches into participation in architecture through agonism in practice; including concepts, proposals and possible solutions?

My concluding discussion pulls the research into an instrumentalisation, where others may take up the next steps in their own work. Instead of providing a manual, my proposal is two parts – a set of heuristic processes that describe steps in action research across different philosophical perspectives; and a suite of questions that help to frame the topography of participation in architecture. The processes and questions suggest methodological approaches which provoke understanding and reveal different paths forward.

Beyond the explicit language, definitions and discourse developed in this thesis, there remains one lingering question from research through design, beyond simply demonstrating my own improvement: if as a practitioner I can understand the methodological questions, themes and process, and I have a series of modes of practice to work through, and I practically understand how things work in the space of architecture and participation, – what drives this? What is the energy required to link all of this together and make it happen?

*   *   *

I wonder if perhaps participation is a vision of what the world can be and from that becoming, a purpose and responsibility of contributing architecture. These flow to sustainability through responsibility, and to beauty though understanding. In short. I ask: which politics? I share concepts, make proposals and suggest possible solutions. Yet, I realise and project that in getting there, an architect carries themselves.
This chapter summarises a history of academic research about participation in architecture and urban design, and associated disciplines, as a place to situate the Creative Works learnings that follow. This chapter is a means to explicate practice-based learnings against a theoretical landscape which offered limited practical knowledge. What follows is a history of approaches and themes of participation in architecture that lead to a critical practice.

Theory of participation in architecture was refreshed in 2005 with the edited book Architecture and Participation. A curation of writing by associated architecture and planning theorists, and practitioners from the University of Sheffield, The Bartlett School of Architecture at University College London, and The Architectural Association, and Europe, it arguably extended and reiterated themes and associations introduced in 1998 with the edited book Occupying Architecture. However; both books lacked an exposition of what it means to practice participation. Participation is a holistic approach to practice. It responds to and activates a full breadth of themes and debates in architectural theory. Participation is philosophical. Participation is a different approach to the normative role of the architect that focuses on design objects. Participation emphasises the process. Participation emphasises the activities and opportunities of non-architects, and in the process of making architecture, the different roles of ‘client’, ‘user’, ‘citizen’, and ‘occupant’ in making their own environment. Participation is about the interaction of the architect and the user. Participation sets up a critical consideration of how an architect approaches practice with other people and situations.

In this context, agonism – a theory of difference, valuing tensions, embracing conflict, and engaging in arguments and then taking action, may be a poignant development in the theory of participation in architecture.

What the deeper question is, considering a definition of what is participation in architecture – and further, the significance of agonism in a history of that definition – is actually how to do participation in architecture. The focus is on developing an approach to architecture, not a judgement of whether or not participation is good and effective. Participation as a theory for architecture has developed for some time, yet understanding about how it could develop in practice is lacking. What need this chapter tries to meet, is finding understanding of purposes of participation, and a context from which principles might develop.

This chapter, effectively the literature review for a Creative Works research project, attempts to show how the literature has defined participation in architecture, and how it is done. For the exegesis, this chapter provides a foundation of select limited sources, through a chronological literature review: 1968-9, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, 2000-6 and 2007-11, focusing on the seminal texts specifically about participation, that bear direct relevance to architectural practice and define the role and approach of the (agonistic) architect. The edited book Architecture and Participation – a 2005 refresh of the theory of participation in architecture since 1968 – provided the starting point for reading and an initial approach to the terms of participation in design. The selected texts are drawn from planning, social theory and art theory; yet the focus of the discussion remains on investigating theory about the practice of architecture and urban design. The final sections and the discussion expand this narrow focus to explore some of the emerging themes engaging architecture and participation at the time of the PhD research project, leading to the next chapter; a succinct Practice Review. Both reviews prioritise written work, and highlight some important built examples; the Practice Review then attempts to summarise key practices. By writing a synthesis of ideas from – and discussion of – the key texts that informed the approach(es) taken in my Creative Works, and, selecting periods and moments to construct a theoretical context, a history of theory in participation in architecture is apparent. This history is intended to be generative for the purpose(s) of a Creative Works research project, and therefore not definitive.

Each section of this chapter is organised in three parts, each about philosophical action-research processes, that emerged from a reflection on the whole research project. These processes unpack and reconstruct the approach to participation in architecture demonstrated in my Creative Works and explicated in the final Discussion chapter. The three parts are:

- Planning: or Facilitation of others;
- Participating: or The amateur architect; and
- the Political: or Decisions and actions.

This research conflates ‘architecture’ and ‘urban design’ for simplicity and purpose. Where architecture typically concerns a specific building, site, brief, budget and set of client relationships, urban design concerns a diversity of buildings, issues, sites, impacts and formal and informal relationships in the broader public interest. Urban design as a discipline can also be approached through town planning, economics, politics and landscape architecture. This research seeks to make a contribution to the practice of architecture and urban design. Herein, it looks to understand participation and its methods for the architect.\footnote{Or ‘architect’ and ‘urban designer’}.\footnote{Granted, the word ‘architect’ can be broadly defined, however the purpose of this research is to expand the concept of architect as produced by architectural education, and professional practice. Architects necessarily interact with many entities that determine the form of the built environment, including clients, builders, subcontractors, building regulators, suppliers, developers, planners, and engineers. An architect has a professional relationship to these people. For clarity, I will specify when the default definition of ‘architect’ is otherwise.}
1968-9: the ladder of participation

A history of theory in participation in architecture begins just after Harold Garfinkel’s *Studies in Ethnomethodology* and Gans Herbert’s *The Levittowners* in 1967 with seminal publications by Henri Lefebvre in 1968, and Sherry Arinstein, Giancarlo De Carlo, and John Friedmann in 1969. These seminal texts considered participation in the conception and formation of the modern city, bearing connection to Jane Jacobs’s *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* in 1961 and Christopher Alexander’s “A City is not a Tree” in 1965. It was a fertile time for discussing participation – of the Paris May 1968 student and worker revolt, the American civil rights movement, Guy Debord’s Situationists, Scandinavian trade union movements, and the UK Skeffington Report in 1969 investigating how people could be more directly involved in planning processes – notable emerging examples in practice included the work of architects Walter Segal, Herman Hertzberger, Ralph Erskine and Henry Sanoff, and even more generally, Community Technical Aid / Design Centres, supported by the State in England and North America.

A practical and seminal example at this time was the work of Walter Segal in England – a German-born architect who worked with the Lewisham local government to develop ways for local residents to design and build their own affordable homes. Presenting over 200 houses in the UK and founding a ‘Do-It-Yourself’ approach, Segal’s ‘self-build’ method employed a semi-prefabricated, stick-system, screw-and-bolt timber structure that avoided wet trades. It involved the design of the system and assembly process – the kit rather than the outcome. For Segal, the architect’s role was to deal with the technical and administrative concerns, and demonstrate how-to on-site.
Architect Herman Hertzberger was active from 1960, including the iconic project *Centraal Beheer Apeldoorn* (1968-72), although gained wider, international recognition as a participatory architect with publication of the Lessons for Students in Architecture series in 1991. Hertzberger developed a body of design work that emphasised participation in the outcome – that is, participation by the users after the building had been built. Space, for Hertzberger can be designed to provide and encourage participation, communicate, empower and stimulate connection and invitation. With less of an emphasis on aesthetic forms and a strong sense that it was unfinished – a flexible framework of balconies, ledges, terraces and steps designed in an open way for people to appropriate and define – the architecture *required* participation.

Rather than simply ‘flexibility’, Hertzberger’s design principles were ‘polyvalence’ – that forms could resist fixed meanings and be turned to different inhabitations through use; and ‘incompletion’ – that the architecture looked and was unfinished. Together, concrete planters that looked ugly without plants, and circulation spaces that invited occupation, formed an armature that requested the inhabitants’ use and completion. Describing Hertzberger’s first Montessori School (1966):

> The central point of the school hall is the brick podium-block, which is used for both formal assemblies and spontaneous gatherings. At first sight it would seem that the potential of the space would be greater if the block could be moved out of the way from time to time and, as was to be expected this was indeed a point of lengthy discussions. It is the permanence, the immobility, and the ‘being in the way’ that is the central issue, because it is indeed that inescapable presence as focal point that contains the suggestions and incentives for response. The block becomes a ‘touchstone’ and contributes to the articulation of the space in such a way that the range of possibilities of usage increases. In each situation the raised platform evokes a particular image, and since it permits a variety of interpretations, it can play a variety of different roles, but conversely also the children themselves are stimulated to take on a greater variety of roles in the space.\(^9\)

> The skeleton is a half-product, which everyone can complete according to his own needs and desires.\(^10\)

Hertzberger’s written and built work offered strong themes for practicing participation in architecture.

> Architects should not merely demonstrate what is possible, they should also and especially indicate the possibilities that are inherent in the design and within everyone’s reach.\(^11\)

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Planning: facilitation and the right to control

Early theory about participation (1960s, 70s and 80s) was led by planning theorists, who focused on the process of city making and the problem of authenticity in participation. The seminal text in 1969 by Arnstein, “A Ladder of Participation”, contended that real participation is about citizens gaining control and empowerment. “Designed to be provocative”, Arnstein presented a hierarchy of eight rungs on a ladder from ‘manipulation’, ‘therapy’, ‘informing’, ‘consultation’, ‘placation’, ‘partnership’, and ‘delegated power’ to ‘citizen control’; and grouped participation into ascending degrees: from ‘non-participation’, to ‘tokenism’ and ‘citizen power’. [See Figure 3]

Reflecting on federal programs in North America, Arnstein provided examples of practices at each level of participation, and their subsequent outcomes and limitations. In the first section, a French student protest poster warned about the reality of in-authentic participation and those that seek to profit from it.

Attempting to contrast ‘empty ritual’ processes with potential benefits of participation: “participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless” – Arnstein placed ‘control’ at the top of ladder. Being fundamentally about changing power, the ladder effectively shuns and reinforces hierarchies, and both by extension, the role of facilitators of participatory processes. It sets the stage for an agonistic theory.

Also in 1969, theorist, activist, writer and architect De Carlo gave a seminal lecture in Liège published as “Architecture’s Public” declaring that the problem of architecture is fundamentally about participation. De Carlo highlighted the political responsibility of the architect, contending that because architecture was wedded to the ‘Modern Movement’ and its ‘elite’ clients rather than the general public, architectural practitioners and academics were complicit in producing inhumane urban environments. The Congrès

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14. Declaring “je participe; tu participes, il participe, nous participons, vous partizpez, ils profitent”. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. De Carlo only produced a few built projects, the best known include a Masterplan for Urbino (1958-64) and Terni Social Housing (1969-74).
what is (agonistic) participation and architecture

Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne (CIAM) conferences of Frankfurt 1929 and Hoddeston 1951 which led architects to design mass housing with maximum efficiency, were examples of how architects had become ‘ignorant’ about problems of ‘why’ by focusing on problems of ‘how’, inevitably ‘excluding’ reality from the planning process’. Since then, De Carlo argued, architecture had lost its credibility. Architecture therefore needed to fundamentally change how it interacts with people. Connecting a deeper purpose for participation, De Carlo warned that “architecture is too important to be left to architects” theorising that “the main 
raison d’être of human beings in this stage of their evolution is the destiny of making conscious transformations of their environment.”

De Carlo proposed that architects needed to ‘discover’ the needs of the user, and would then (re)gain legitimacy through ‘democratic’ decision-making with users of architecture, concluding that one way is for architects to start to ‘formulate hypotheses’ and ask questions (particularly about ‘why’ not just ‘how’).

De Carlo’s seminal lecture draws debate about city-making into line with Henri Lefebvre’s (increasingly) seminal work Le droit à la ville, translated later into English as “The Right to the City” in 1996. Writing at a time of civil unrest about the role of the (De Gaulle / Pompidou) government in planning cities and critiquing the role of capitalism in urbanisation, Lefebvre’s premise was that the city should be a ‘synthesis of everyday life’ – valuing ‘use’ over ‘exchange’. But for these activities – also described as ‘everyday life’ and ‘inhabitation’ – effectively Lefebvre argued that the only experts who should conceive the city were philosophers – not architects or planners.

Lefebvre emphasised a number of key principles for city-making: ‘centrality’ matters (that the centre of decision-making be in the city – which is also spatial) and that synthesis should remain in the realm of everyday use and social life (or philosophy).

The architect, the planner, the sociologist, the economist, the philosopher or the politician cannot out of nothingness create new forms and relations. More precisely, the architect is no more a miracle-worker than the sociologist. Neither can create social relations, although under certain favourable conditions they help trends to be formulated (to take

18. Ibid., 8-9.
20. Ibid., 13-20.
22. Lefebvre, “Right to the City.” Lefebvre’s writing was widely influential well before 1996, via earlier translations of Lefebvre’s peers and students.
23. Lefebvre refers to the œuvre of the city, emphasising the meaning of work rather than beautiful object. Ibid., 65-67, 75, 148, 56-9.
what is (agonistic) participation and architecture

shape). Only social life (praxis) in its global capacity possesses such powers – or does not possess them. The people
mentioned above can individually or in teams clear the way; they can also propose, try out and prepare forms. And
also (and especially), through a maieutic nurtured by science, assess acquired experience, provide a lesson from failure
and give birth to the possible.26

At first reading, these admonitions by Lefebvre pose difficult questions regarding the role of the traditional,
form-and-function focused architect, vis à vis the importance of citizen participation in the process of the
city and urban design. Lefebvre introduced lasting terms for the construction of the city: ‘historicité’ and
‘oeuvre’ emphasising rights of appropriation and participation (critically, rights of use rather than exchange),27
yet Lefebvre’s concept of ‘the urban’ was critical of the abstract processes by which professionals carefully
construct plans, meanings and forms. Arguably providing early foundations for a theory of agonism, Lefebvre
suggested that we should abandon our obsessions, especially concepts of rational cohesion, integration and
synthesis:

… society wants itself and sees itself as coherent. It seeks coherence, linked to rationality both as feature of efficient
organisational action, and as value and criterion. Under examination the ideology of coherence reveals a hidden but
none the less blatant incoherence. Would coherence not be the obsession of an incoherent society, which searches the
way towards coherence by wishing to stop in a conflictual situation denied as such?

This is not the only obsession. Integration also becomes an obsessional theme, an aimless aspiration. The term
‘integration’ used in all such frequency that it must reveal something. On the one hand, this term designates a concept
concerning and enclosing social practice divulging a strategy. On the other, it is a social connotator, without concept,
objective or objectivity, revealing an obsession with integrating (to this or that, to a group, an ensemble or a whole).
How could it be otherwise in a society which superimposes the whole to the parts, synthesis to analysis, coherence to
incoherence, organisation to dislocation? It is from the city that the urban problematic reveals this constitutive duality
with its conflictual.28

Sitting at odds with an hierarchical model of power, yet reiterating a philosophical approach of asking
questions towards participants gaining their own practical consciousness, “Right to the City” at the extreme,
suggests cities might be best made without architects.29

26. Ibid., 150-51.

27. Ibid., 19-20, 27, 65-67.

28. Ibid., 144-45.

29. See also Boudon and Lefebvre, Lived-in Architecture; Bernard Rudofsky and Museum of Modern Art (New York N.Y.), Architecture without
Architects: A Short Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987 (1964)); De Carlo,
“Architecture’s Public,” 13-14. Parts of this section were originally developed for an unpublished journal article “Failures and Successes of
Community Development in Public Space: Design, participatory pluralism and Being-in-the-same-World” edited by Lee Stickells. Lee Stickells,
“Editorial: The Right to the City, Rethinking Architecture’s Social Significance,” Architectural Theory Review 16, no. 3 (2011). This followed a
symposium paper by the same name Ammon Beyerle, “Failures and Successes of Community Building in Public Space” (paper presented at The
Right to the City, Tin Sheds gallery, Faculty of Architecture Design and Planning, University of Sydney, 2011).
Participating: professional action and leadership

In the journal issue following “A Ladder of Participation”, planning theorist John Friedmann set down “Notes on Societal Action”, seeking to recover the active ‘role’ of the (planning) practitioner ‘guiding’ planning processes, and starting to paint a different picture of community participation that focused on the (social) benefits of the process. Action was integrally important. Friedmann’s work in this context sought to define what is planning, contending that the planner was an active participant in making the city and in guiding societal action. Friedmann influenced the discipline of planning through a focus on dialogue, social reform and transformation through practitioner empowerment – not through being hands off.

Friedmann’s notion provided an alternative direction to Arnstein; instead of reinforcing the dimension of hierarchy in participation so that citizens should gain control, the experience of the process itself and engaged leadership was important so that society itself should be improved. Concluding, Friedmann highlighted the roles of ‘conflict’ and ‘action’ as factors of success, suggesting a political approach: “Awareness of the inevitability and uses of conflict must be coupled with knowledge of the dynamics of power and the art of getting things done.”

1970s: building the unfinished

Many of the key texts for participation in architecture during the 1970s took on themes of ‘phenomenology’, ‘everyday life’ and ‘place’ developing from the philosophy of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). Translated into English in 1971, the ontological text for architecture, “Building Dwelling Thinking” by Martin Heidegger, asked:

1. What is it to dwell?
2. How does building belong to dwelling?

and replied:

1. Building is really dwelling.
2. Dwelling is the manner in which mortals are on the earth.
3. Building as dwelling unfolds into the building that cultivates growing things and the building that erects buildings.
or (in German):

\[\text{ich bin, du bist}.\]

Heidegger pointed out an essential link between being and building – ‘dwelling’ – which implicated the importance of participation in making architecture as a fundamental activity. “Only if we are capable of dwelling [sic], only then can we build.” Behind this was a deeper understanding that being is inseparable from the world. By extension any making of the world is participating in the making of oneself, or put another way, to change oneself, one must be able to change their environment. To signify this concept Heidegger proposed the term ‘Being-in-the-World’. Arguably, for an architect aspiring to environmental sustainability through architecture, herein lay a switch that could finally ‘turn on’ an active relationship (and responsibility) between people and their environment.

In the same vein, Edward Relph’s *Place and Placelessness* in 1976, argued, through the concept of ‘place’, for the importance of meaning in the modern world and its regrettable loss. Where space might be simply defined in physical dimensions, ‘place’ signified deeper constructions such as ‘space + meaning’; ‘space + people’; ‘space + social’, or even ‘space + use’. If architecture in the city has a responsibility to make places, rather than simply to produce spaces, the philosophical question for participation in architecture may be: what is and how does one go about making places – ‘placemaking’ with others?

Direct links between this philosophy and participatory practitioners are harder to find, yet in meditation on select examples, themes and modes of practice did start to emerge. The Segal method figured out tangible means to self-build, and allowed an active form of dwelling from start to finish (and beyond) that could involve everyone. The *Byker Wall* project (1969-1975) involved the architect Ralph Erskine working on-site long term, through an open-door policy, and closely negotiating with displaced dwellers; this provided an opportunity for understanding and establishing a place rich in complex social relations. And *Mémé* (1970-76) – a student housing project at the University of Leuven – by Lucien Kroll, was designed incrementally by students, and a particular heterogeneous aesthetic emerged which was meaningful to the occupants. This

36. Ibid., 145.
37. “The Greek for ‘to bring forth or to produce’ is *tikto*. The word *technē*, technique, belongs to the verb’s root *tec*. To the Greeks *technē* means neither art nor handicraft but rather: to make something appear, within what is present, as this or that, in this way or that way. The Greeks conceive of *technē*, producing, in terms of letting appear. *Technē* thus conceived has been concealed in the tectonics of architecture since ancient times.” “Building Dwelling Thinking,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971 (1951)), 157.
38. “The real dwelling plight lies in this, that mortals ever search anew for the nature of dwelling, that they must ever learn to dwell”. Ibid., 159. Original emphasis.
40. See Awan, Schneider, and Till, “Spatial Agency”.

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resulted in the students learning how to make architecture. Kroll conceived the built environment as a landscape, and participation as something strategic within that landscape.

Translated in 1972, an important preceding exhibition and book by Philippe Boudon, *Lived in Architecture* analysed Le Corbusier’s *Quartiers Modernes Frugès* housing in Pessac, forty years later (1927-1967) altered by the inhabitants. The pictures at the end of the book show many different examples of filled-in outdoor terraces, wide strip-windows converted to regular windows, added cornices, decorative features, shutters and pot plants affixed to façades, storages converted to garages, and various extensions upwards and outwards. For these examples, Le Corbusier considered the project a failure. Yet, in introduction, visiting these changes Boudon wonders:

> It seems that everybody has now converted [their] ‘machine to live in’ into a ‘chez soi’ … This impression is sufficiently pronounced for the visitor to feel that, in addition to the normal processes of ageing, there has also been a real conflict between what the architect intended and what the occupants wanted.

> In this conflict the architect considered [themselves] to be in the wrong: ‘You know, it is always life that is right and the architect who is wrong …’, Le Corbusier once said when speaking of Pessac. And, in point of fact, one’s initial reaction is to conclude that this project actually was an architectural failure. But to speak of failure in this sense would be to assume that architecture is immutable and that architects are capable of satisfying their clients’ deepest habitation needs.

Boudon, an architect, undertook an enquiry that included spatial analysis, interviews with occupants, group discussion with experts, and liaison with sociologists. In the preface Lefebvre suggested Boudon had inaugurated a new form of – ‘toposociological’ – enquiry:

> Boudon analyses the relationship between architecture and town planning and also considers the practical ramifications of urban design …

Beyond reading a critique of Modernist approaches to architecture, the study introduced a method of listening to the voices of the inhabitants and understanding their reactions to the actions of the architect, and each other. For all the differences between what Le Corbusier said and did, the occupants consistently developed their own actions. Le Corbusier’s construction games served as “extremely fertile” ground for a conversion game by occupants, to “satisfy their needs” and “realise what those needs were”. Boudon evaluated the will of the architect, and appreciated the creative resistances of users.


44. Lefebvre, in ibid., Preface. Original emphasis.

45. Ibid., 161-3.
Planning: leading, and means towards building meaning

After working and studying in Peru (following graduation from architecture school in England), John Turner’s theories about low income housing deepened the meaning of the self-build direction in participatory architectural practice. Turner’s “Housing as Verb” in Freedom to Build argued that because housing is an action that is fundamental to being (like eating, sleeping, and sex), people should have control over their housing process; Turner referred to multiple uses and needs of housing. Turner’s key examples were informal settlements – emphasising the importance of ‘existential freedom.’ It was a seminal text for a ‘site and services’ approach to low-income housing provision. Turner offered:

...if housing is treated as a verbal entity, as a means to human ends, as an activity rather than as a manufactured and packaged product, decision-making power must, of necessity, remain in the hands of the users themselves.

Beyond a philosophical approach, Turner argued economically and practically that the dwellers, not external housing providers, were best placed to build, manage and control their own environments. Turner’s work demonstrated that architects can learn from processes in informal settlements and that dwelling necessarily includes finances and management. Turner developed tools for building communities, working with non-governmental organisations and considering social impact. Turner’s legacy was in the approach of focusing on the urban design aspects and leaving the architecture to the user.

Stemming from a critique of mass housing in the Netherlands in the same year (1972), N. John Habraken in Supports theorised a methodology of ‘the natural relationship’ via a system of ‘open building’ to achieve a back and forth process between human and environment. For Habraken, this would be a means for housing and the city to be transformed through direct participation in the design process. Habraken essentially conceived a facilitating infrastructural system (a somewhat utopia of massive engineering) in which the State would provide a super-structure for individual dwellers to infill. This infill would require a direct interface between dwellers and construction companies, freeing architects to design systems and reproducible kits of parts.

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47. Ibid., 154. Turner continues:

I will go beyond that to suggest that the ideal we should strive for is a model which conceives housing as an activity in which the users – as a matter of economic, social, and psychological common sense – are the principal actors.

48. See also Awan, Schneider, and Till, “Spatial Agency”.

Although providing a more sophisticated way to provide mass housing and allowing direct decision-making of dwellers, Habraken’s industrialised sense of participation through mass prefabrication arguably lost sight of earlier philosophical ambitions described in the ‘natural relationship’. It was different to the idea of prefabrication offered by Segal that was a means for inhabitants to become owner-builders. Beyond some of the practical morphological concerns, the outcome of Habraken’s ‘supports’ system might even be disempowering in practice: through increased dependency on top-down agencies and large-scale industries, a predefined set of choices at greater separation from the architect, and the loss of opportunities to understand dwelling in a deeper, haptic way.\(^{50}\)

In *Building the Unfinished* Lars Lerup took a philosophical position of dwelling to compare examples of a colonial Spanish town, a Swedish island village, and a North American city to argue that human environments are formed through ‘interaction’ — physical to social and political. The book was an application of Heidegger’s philosophy on the significance of building and dwelling, and, in part, this was both an exploration and critique of Habraken’s scaffolds.\(^{51}\) The ‘unfinished’ describes dwelling as an active process that incorporates building processes and cultural contexts, and continues on in unlimited typologies. Lerup emphasised a ‘dweller’, not a user — where people are active individuals rather than responding organisms.\(^{52}\) Lerup argued that architects should therefore be ‘interactionists’/‘activists’, who get involved in dwelling processes in an ‘open’ way.\(^{53}\)

Unfortunately — but for an in depth description of a landlord-led incremental development process — the book provided no meaningful examples on how to do this in actual architectural practice. It did however — by comparing examples of typologies changing in time — provide a strong framework for thinking differently about participation in the production of architecture. To do this, Lerup (re)defined everyday terms for what ‘interaction’ is;

> Human action, in the perspective of interaction, is a complicated matrix with unknown combinations — the result of which is considerable unpredictability, a marvellous unfinishedness and openness.\(^{54}\)

—and what ‘negotiation’ is,

> In the opposing duality of the social and personal lies the potential for action. ….
In settings with more than one decision-maker, the resolution is the result of negotiation. The most basic proof of the relevance of the concept of negotiation is the obvious fact of the nature of everyday social interaction, in which negotiation is a central activity of extraordinary importance. The only way out of total solipsism is through communication with significant others. This communication is done through language and gestures whose fundamental purpose is to allow individuals to confirm their humanity by sharing it with other people. This is a negotiation, in which data are compared, experience shared and reality largely agreed upon. In the process of negotiation we form concepts of others and ourselves. If a certain unique quality of negotiation is achieved, community may result.\textsuperscript{55}

Lerup argued for the constitutive value of interaction and negotiation, not only in nuancing action in the environment, but also in one forming one’s own positions, understandings and experiences – in a fundamentally positive way. An architectural project works a site, its people, and the architect. Reality is negotiated, and created in process.

Lerup’s final chapter turned to focus on seeing beyond conventional means (and arguably re-elevated the architect to a position of creator of meaning). In doing so, Lerup’s contribution was to argue for invention and adaptation of building types – to break from focusing on the individual building and seek typological innovation. Lerup emphasised the experience of ‘social space’, in terms that were simultaneously political and everyday. Lerup posited that social space is shrinking because of less ‘face-to-face’ interaction, and so, architects need to combine their skills with political thinking to make space,\textsuperscript{56} framing the importance of sharing and the common(s):

\begin{quote}
Space … can be seen as the synthesis of the personal and the social in that it includes and surpasses both. And space emerges during dwelling in both realms.\textsuperscript{57}

The idea of the common challenges, contradicts, competes with and is foreign to established modes of dwelling.\textsuperscript{58}
\end{quote}

Against Lerup’s approaches which spanned from facilitating others, to the philosophical and active participation of the architect, contributors to the Design Methods movement also sought to debate design processes, exploring design in a way that maintained the predominance of defined methods.\textsuperscript{59} The Design

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{55} Ibid., 29.
\bibitem{56} Ibid., 109, 14-16, 22.
\bibitem{57} Ibid., 118.
\bibitem{58} Ibid., 122.
\end{thebibliography}
Research Society considered ‘design participation’ in a 1971 conference, with seminal participatory and digital architectural theorists contending that new communication was needed between the architect and the user; and that the design process should be designed for people – effectively by nuancing and redefining the role of the expert through participation. Many examples of rational processes were provided, inspired from technology, systems, communications and industrial design realms. In “Here Comes Everyman” editor Nigel Cross highlighted Reyner Banham’s opening remarks that questioned participation as an opportunity to redefine the concept of professionalism and expertise. In step with maintaining the role of the expert, Banham pointed out that architects’ moral attitude to participation for the people’ was coupled with the irreconcilable motive ‘what’s in it for me’.

By the early 1970s, participation had become important in the practice of democracy and public service in North America. Architects worked in Community Design Centres, Community Technical Aid Centres, Community Action Groups, Collaborative Design Centres, and Community Development Groups. Architects were tools, advocates, and representatives – active contributors to civil rights. One of most important participatory design architects who wrote about the real practice of participation at this time was Henry Sanoff.

Sanoff compiled pages and pages of actual examples, project worksheets, games, analysis processes, glossaries and decision-making techniques in Designing with Community Participation. To Sanoff, designing participation was a form of project management – akin to the Participatory Design movement in industrial design. Although Sanoff’s compilation lacked the explicit theorisation that connected it back to the full body of debate at the time, it offered poignant advice. In introduction Sanoff pointed out: that participation required not less, but more design acumen; that participation is about increasing the awareness of the user; and, simply put, that participation is about the transfer of power from the designer to the user.


63. Ibid., 1-7. Although Sanoff’s work developed in the context of the American civil rights movement, Sanoff’s architectural methods echo industrial design approaches developed from the Scandinavian trade union movement, that arguably founded the Participatory Design / Collaborative Design / Co-Design movement.
More broadly, a theory of the practice of participation began to focus more specifically on social empowerment. Providing a useful structure for practice, social worker and sociologist Jack Rothman developed a manual, complete with log books, worksheets and template processes for practitioners designing participation processes, in *Promoting Innovation and Change in Organizations and Communities*.\(^6^4\) Rothman et al conceived that participation included ‘internal’ and ‘external target groups’, each with different purposes – arguably an approach more nuanced and practically applicable than anticipating ‘Citizen Power’ at the top of the ladder of participation. It was important that the practitioner think about the design of the engagement process, carefully assess each group, including themselves, and think about participation in terms of what limits it and what facilitates it.\(^6^5\) Rothman’s work provided a broader sense of participation as a project in itself, with inherent opportunities, challenges and designs.\(^6^6\)

Beyond the concept of transferring power, the idea of participation in and for itself remained important for planning theorists. John Friedmann and John Forester both emphasised that participation in planning and design provides opportunities for ‘social’ and ‘mutual’ learning.\(^6^7\) The participation process is explicitly about dialogue, and thereby a process of making sense together and accepting each other. Because of these means, the interaction of people and their ability to transform relationships with power; participation is potentially a fundamentally important undertaking for change in society.

However, it may be contended that the opportunity of participation in architecture as a mutual learning opportunity became hindered at this point due to the focus on ideals of ‘control’ as the definition of power; or ‘consensus’ as the goal of negotiation – of both professionals and of citizens. This manifests in the resilience and persistence of hierarchical ideals structuring participation processes, where since then ‘participation’ – at least in theory – became about facilitation and decision-making. What made this all the more difficult to unpick in professional practice, was in part the implicit coupling of participation with professional concepts of risk and conflict management.\(^6^8\) As such, Forester and Friedmann’s explicit interest was the active and political role of the practitioner – one’s own participation, with all its associated factors.

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Political: challenges and manifestations

In the 1970s, written works by Richard Sennett and Carole Pateman provided a poignant connection between the concepts explored in planning the city – architecture and urban design – and the political meaning of participation as a deep opportunity.

Sociologist and city theorist, Sennett wrote *The Uses of Disorder* framing the ordering affect of the city on the individual and their personal identity – which results in conflict avoidance in public. Sennett, arguing for understanding rather than confusion of public and private experience, in *The Fall of Public Man* described the blurring of self, and withdrawal of the individual from the public (and political) realm. Through the interaction between people under *unclear* rules of governance, and tyranny, citizens of the modern city have become passive.

> Our hunger for intimacy and ‘community’ (as opposed to the wider associations of public life) is a symptom of the malaise in our culture.

Sennett’s work offered an approach similar to Lefebvre’s insistence on use value, arguing for the potential of the city as a learning process – through disorder, change, and diversity – and that the city is a place for personal growth and formation of identity. Sennett also highlighted, as did Lefebvre, the irony of people’s desire to ideals of community and cohesion. Sennett’s concepts furthered the primacy of citizen participation as a means to meaning and *being* through the interaction of social and personal space.

Political theorist and feminist Pateman wrote *Participation and Democratic Theory* in 1970 underlining, like Arnstein, the primacy of empowerment outcomes in participation processes. Pateman’s analysis of participation was – like Arnstein – critical of less-than authentic processes. Pateman offered that participation was at once a ‘practice of liberty’, an ‘education’ process and, an ‘ideal’ of democracy. For Pateman, participation was a transformative relation of control between individual and State. Pateman and Sennett’s concepts give further purpose to participation in the public realm.


1980s: the theory of communicative action


In 1984, De Certeau in The Practice of Everyday Life, described the characteristics of another practice of power and provided a staging point from which to critique the hegemony of top-down, strategised urban environments. De Certeau’s ‘strategies and tactics’ contrasts different types of power in urban life and psycho-spatial spaces. The ‘tactic’ is fundamentally action expressed from principles vis à vis context, in contrast to the ‘strategy’, which is a suite of structures for passive occupation designated by outcome-orientated architectures. De Certeau offers the concept of ‘la perruque’ to describe the significance of the tactic. A useful example is to imagine a labourer ‘borrowing’ a hammer to build a bookshelf at home, or a secretary writing an email to a friend at work. “La perruque is the worker’s own work disguised as work for his employer.” Here, the resources of an authorised order are reused or reappropriated for private gain. The same concept can be applied to spatial situations and designs. For example, certain activities may be legitimised in certain territories through configuration of space. This concept of the tactic evokes a moral dimension because design can both ‘enable’ and ‘constrain’.

The 1980s saw the ongoing development of participatory architectural practices such as Segal, and Eilfried Huth, and also the work of feminist design collectives such as Matrix. UK-based Matrix not only focused on minorities and such ignored spaces as women’s centres and nurseries, but offered an accessible, and readily understandable architectural service and feminist approach to practice. This was supported by government funding through Community Design Centres and was cooperative, non-hierarchical and collaborative.

Bearing connections to UK-based Walter Segal, architect and academic Huth is best known for the New...
Graz Architecture. Much of Huth’s work at this time in Austria was community-orientated and grass-roots. As a community leader Huth’s practice engaged directly with committees, staff, parents and teenagers in the architectural design process, employing workshops, meetings and events that explored key design questions in participation, and allowed projects to genuinely develop through the ideas of the users. Huth focused on a role of the architect that delivered workable, buildable outcomes – in schools, community centres and housing developments – not precious forms. The architecture would become what it would.\textsuperscript{78} Matrix in the UK not only focused on minorities and such ignored spaces as women’s centres and nurseries, but offered an accessible, and readily understandable architectural service and feminist approach to practice. This was supported by government funding through Community Design Centres and was cooperative, non-hierarchical and collaborative.\textsuperscript{79}

Planning: methods and outsidedness

Jürgen Habermas’ The Theory of Communicative Action was translated in 1984, and had a major influence on deliberative planning practice and thus participation in architecture.\textsuperscript{80} The key frame for Habermas’ theory was the contention that democratic decision-making required rational communication and consensus. For Habermas, the advent of a secular society was at once an opportunity and a threat with particular regard to truth, morality, rationality and praxis. Responding to similar notions as Lefebvre and Heidegger about the loss of the primacy of everyday life – ‘lifeworld’ – to the pathological and systematic rationalisations of modern capitalism and urbanisation, Habermas sought a means for society to regain control through action based on ‘communicative discourse’. Habermas called this ‘communicative action’. Pluralism, a valuing of different experiences and points of view to bring about truth, as applied to a communicative rationalisation process, was the (missing) engine for understanding and meaningful change. Focusing on the advent and mechanisms of (participatory) processes, translator Thomas McCarthy cites Habermas in the introduction:

\begin{quote}
… consumerism and possessive individualism, motives of performance and competition gain the force to shape conduct. The communicative practice of everyday life is one-sidedly rationalised into a specialist-utilitarian lifestyle; and this media-induced shift to purposive-rational action orientations calls forth the reaction of a hedonism freed from the pressures of rationality. As the private sphere is undermined and eroded by the economic system, so is the public sphere by the administrative system. The bureaucratic disempowering and dessication [sic] of spontaneous processes of opinion – and will-formation expands the scope for mobilising mass loyalty and makes it easier to decouple political decisions from concrete, identity-forming contexts of life.\textsuperscript{81}
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{79.} See Awan, Schneider, and Till, “Spatial Agency”.

\textsuperscript{80.} Jürgen Habermas, The Theory of Communicative Action, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1984 (1981)).

\textsuperscript{81.} Cited by Thomas McCarthy, in Ibid., xxxii; 2: 580.
McCarthy explains:

Whereas ‘reification’ can be traced back to the colonisation of the lifeworld – the subversion of socially integrated spheres of symbolic reproduction and their assimilation into formally organized domains of economic and bureaucratic action – parallel phenomena of ‘cultural impoverishment’ are a consequence of the professionalisation that has increasingly separated the development of expert cultures from the communicative infrastructure of everyday life. Processes of mutual understanding are cut-off from important cultural resources, while the blind, nature like traditions upon which everyday practice still draws steadily dry up.\(^{82}\)

Habermas, and McCarthy, described the parts, mechanisms and progressive effects via the territorialisation of everyday life by ‘professionalism’, ‘consumerism and possessive individualism’. By doing so they highlighted the subsequent disintegration of practices of communication, mutual understanding, and decision-making – all relevant to participation.

Despite developments of theorisation for participation, what most prevailed at this time towards informing participatory practice, was a focus on rational processes of decision-making, control (especially of conflict), and judgemental forms of evaluation. This adolescent theory of participation lacked the nuances and exigencies of everyday life and its practical explication – when it did consider real moments, it sought to deal with conflict between participants, and focus on achieving explicit agreement. This invariably led to the ideal of ‘consensus’. The development and prevalence of rational processes of decision-making as a predominant form of participation may be best seen in the proliferation of alternative ‘ladders of participation’, continuing hierarchical or formulaic definitions of power; well into the 1990s.\(^{83}\)

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82. Thomas McCarthy, in Ibid., xxxii.

83. Selected aspects of these ladders will be picked up later: see Connor,”A New Ladder of Citizen Participation.”; Elizabeth M. Rocha, “A Ladder of Empowerment,” Journal of Planning Education and Research 17, no. 1 (1997); J. Labitzke, Mehr Partizipative Demokratie Wagen: Zum Umgang Der Europäischen Kommission Mit Online-Konsultationen (Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, 2015), 2.2.

As this point I would also hazard to argue here that the IAP2 spectrum model – although successfully taken up by many organisations in Australia more recently – is an extension of the same. See IAP2 Federation, “IAP2’s Public Participation Spectrum,” (2018).
There are many themes in Habermas’ communicative action that resonate for participation. However and although emphasising the importance of conflict, Habermas’ (re)processing of rationalisation arguably removed individual ‘passions’ from decision-making processes in an attempt to control or avoid dangerous conflict and achieve ‘the ideal speech situation’.  

In advanced Western societies conflicts have developed in the last ten to twenty years that deviate in various respects from the social-welfare-state pattern of institutionalised conflict over distribution. They do not flare up in areas of material reproduction; they are not channelled through parties and associations; and they are not allayed by compensations that conform to the system. Rather, these new conflicts arise in areas of cultural reproduction, of social integration and of socialisation; they are carried out in subinstitutional, or at least extraparliamentary, forms of protest; and the deficits that underlie them reflect a reification of communicatively structured domains of action, which cannot be gotten at via the media of money and power. It is not primarily a question of compensations that the social-welfare state can provide, but of protecting and restoring endangered ways of life or of establishing reformed ways of life. In short, the new conflicts do not flare up around problems of distribution but around questions concerning the grammar of forms of life.

There were alternatives. Somewhat compatible with Habermas’ ideal speech, communicative action approach, the advent of ‘Asset Based Community Development’ (ABCD) in social theory introduced important practical concepts to processes of participation.  

One of these was the technique of ‘appreciative inquiry’ (AI) coined by David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva in 1987, which emphasised the value of asking open questions. AI said that it mattered if people were genuinely asked questions for understanding. For practitioners it is important to ask questions in a way that makes people feel listened to, and, according to ABCD, utilised as living assets in any developmental process. An ABCD practitioner emphasises learning something from a community rather than providing a fix.

84. Habermas eventually developed a set of rules for the ideal speech situation:

1. Every subject with the competence to speak and act is allowed to take part in a discourse.
2a. Everyone is allowed to question any assertion whatever.
2b. Everyone is allowed to introduce any assertion whatever into the discourse.
2c. Everyone is allowed to express their attitudes, desires and needs without any hesitation.
3. No speaker may be prevented, by internal or external coercion, from exercising [their] rights as laid down in (1) and (2).


This approach will be critiqued later; see also Chantal Mouffe, The Democratic Paradox (New York: Verso, 2000), 95, 103-04; Till, “The Negotiation of Hope,” 34; Tim Richardson and Stephen Connelly, “Reinventing Public Participation: Planning in the Age of Consensus,” ibid., 86-7, 95.


86. Although the idea is recognised in a number of much earlier social movements, ABCD is attributed to John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight, Building Communities from the inside Out: A Path toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community’s Assets (Evanston, Ill.: Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Northwestern University, 1993).

One might stop to compare this approach in a primary way for architecture. Where ABCD offered community development a different approach to now perceive a critical methodological dichotomy – ‘need’ versus ‘asset’, a critique of normative Modernist approaches offers architecture a contrast between constrained, engineering-like, ‘expert’ problem-solving (needs based), and broad ‘participatory’ processes that interact with people and maximise their existing spatial opportunities, negotiations and design thinking (asset based). Participation becomes about asset over need; practice over ideal.

Written in 1983 (and explicitly reintroduced to participation literature in art theory by Clare Bishop in 2006)\(^88\) philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy’s *The Inoperative Community* pulled apart idealistic concepts of community development to realise the individual processes vis à vis community. Nancy’s challenging-to-read article is a vehement reactivation of the terms ‘community’ and ‘individual’ – showing that in creativity, one flows from the other. Nancy dispelled and developed what the article describes as the ‘myth of community’, exhorting that community is not made up by ideals of similarity and agreement (or consensus and harmony) but by working differences and action – that is, what it does and connects as individual life-processes, rather than what might be maintained as wholes.

This might be described in my own summary in a chapter considering creativity and how individuals and groups learn.\(^89\) Nancy’s method, to focus on the horizons of conception (birth) and destruction (death), considered that community is all about positive difference. Instead of seeing community as something fixed and tending towards similarity, Nancy argued for an immanent concept of community, that produces differences, and is made up by differences – the individual is conceived in the death of community. Nancy placed a strong emphasis on the philosophical process of the individual, constituting and being constituted by community.\(^90\) By providing a *charged* definition of community, Nancy opened the theory of participation to a much more agonistic perspective.

For participation in the context of creative work, according to Nancy, the development of a community is something that occurs through the development of individuals – or simply put, one individual against (or within) many individuals. Nancy’s conception was that creativity is realised between an *individual* and the *group*, and finding oneself is a creative process that others benefit from; community is made up by individuals. This provided some important parameters for the definitions of a participatory architect as


\(^90\) See Ibid., 260.
what is (agonistic) participation and architecture

community developer. Nancy’s suggestion that the development of community is occurring in the life and death of individuals, and, the differences between them, inferred a difficult, changing role for an individual architect in the process of community. This role must think about legacy in leadership. It sees the importance of working both individuals and groups in participation processes and learning – meaning both an interacting, and a working with.

Less seminal, yet specific to architectural theory, Johann Albrecht’s “Towards a Theory of Participation in Architecture” in 1988 noted Habermas’ theories, contending that it was time to develop a theory and method for participation in architecture based on reflection. Albrecht refreshed Friedmann’s work in contextualising the impasse between control (by architects) and consensus in achieving societal action.\(^\text{91}\) Acknowledging concerns that post-modern architecture had about social change, Albrecht attempted to recover the importance of ‘creative authority’, reading that the key to participatory process was the opportunity for mutual learning through “a fusion of technical with experience-based, or personal knowledge”\(^\text{92}\). It would seem that the active role and participation of the architect – not hands-off distance – was important. By Albrecht’s re-definition, the work of architects such as De Carlo and Kroll was less about legitimisation of decision-making process than it was about demonstrative processes of framing learning.\(^\text{93}\)

Again, this idea of framing learning, together with the leadership of the professional in a participatory process, echoed ideas from Friedmann and Forester.\(^\text{94}\) Forester’s work developed into theories of micro politics and ethics, yet continued to reiterate ideal concepts of consensus and conflict management, through concepts of dispute resolution and mediation. Despite the hands-on work of practitioners such as Matrix and Segal, theory about participation still tended from heuristics of planning the facilitation of others, to engaging the political, notably skipping over an explication of actual processes inherent in these active roles. Notwithstanding, Albrecht’s refresh of Freidmann’s work on societal action framed a window into considering the architect’s own (active) participation.

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Participating: heuristic practice and thinking in action

Philosopher and urban planning academic Donald Schön’s seminal book in 1983, *The Reflective Practitioner*, described detailed examples of how an architect works, and articulated what could be a participatory relationship between the architect and a project – or the architect and a client. An example is a long and detailed written exposé of the back and forth thinking process, watching an architect design, talk aloud, and test things – ‘if we do this, then maybe this could happen’ – and thereby discovering possibility through action. Schön called this ‘reflection-in-action’.

Our spontaneous responses to the phenomena of everyday life do not always work. Sometimes our spontaneous knowing-in-action yields unexpected outcomes and we react to the surprise by a kind of thinking what we are doing while we are doing it, a process I call reflection-in-action.95

Schön’s statement that ‘professionals think in action’ framed the design process as heuristic and reflective with ‘backtalk’. Contrasting rational, clear processes and methods, Schön highlighted to academia the value and nature of the professional thinking process – a back and forth – that finds value in messy collaboration, drawing, and considering reality.96 Although less focused on participation in architecture, Schön’s exposé, framed an ethnomethodological approach, suggesting that in architectural practice participation is an implicit everyday activity that needs further explication and understanding. Schön suggested a research of ‘indeterminate zones of practice’,97 thinking about explicit and implicit processes.

The process of reflection-in-action – and especially, the particular version of it that I call reflective conversation with the materials of the situation – is an essential part of the artistry with which some practitioners sometimes cope with uncertainty, uniqueness, and value-conflict in all domains of professional practice. But architecture, with its special tradition of practice and education, is one of the few occupations in which the process is manifest, honored, and maintained. Even here, I think, the process is still largely implicit. Architects appear to reflect very little on their own practice of reflection-in-action.98

Advocating Schön’s work, Kim Dovey considered the ethical role of the architect, in “Architectural Ethics”. In it Dovey explored political philosopher John Rawls’ concept of the ‘veil of ignorance’ in relation to architectural practice, and provided twelve examples that described the ethical grey area that is everyday

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96. Schön’s definition of a professional practitioner echoes more politically motivated theory by Antonio Gramsci about the ‘organic intellectual’ – that an expert is embedded in the world. This is picked up later. Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci; quoted in Till, “The Negotiation of Hope,” 33.


98. Ibid., 52. In Working Knowledge (2000) Thomas Davenport and Lauren Prusak highlighted that knowledge is fundamentally valuable to organisations. What was most relevant to participation in architecture in the context of community development, was what Davenport and Prusak observed about the nature of knowledge in an organisation – that knowledge is tacit too. The emphasis of participation as a means to developing social understanding continued to gain something from an exploration of what knowledge is.
practice, and questioned the concept of the professional. Recurring themes were: negotiating the role of the architect, maintaining the reputation of the profession and defining professional misconduct. Dovey invoked Rawls’ concept that fair decision-making can only be made if people ignore their particular positions in context – “race, culture, status, power, material possessions or gender”.

To whom do architects have ethical obligations and how do such obligations translate into everyday practice? Does one’s first allegiance lie with the profession, the client, the user or the community? What if they come into conflict? Whose values should be translated into built form? Can one simultaneously be both developer and professional?

Dovey offered that ‘reflection-in-action’ provides a way for architects to negotiate tricky ethical situations in practice – and address the “current disenchantment with the professions” – explicitly through a practice of ongoing communication.

Political: edges and limits of action in the space of the city

Rounding out this period and activating terms and values for practice, it is worthwhile considering ‘communicative action’, assets, heurism and action in the context of the city and urban design. These continued to activate concepts emanating from Being-in-the-World.

In “Control”, Kevin Lynch’s concepts of ‘congruence’ offered a way of thinking about negotiation – and governance – of uses, in terms of space in the city. Urban planner and designer Lynch, argued that a successful public space requires congruence between people and their environment. Lynch provided example images and highlighting key terms. Instead of something to be simply transferred, controlled, or transformed, power is (also) a shared responsibility, and a form of everyday occupation that embodies meaning. This active definition in “Control” in some ways contrasted Lynch’s better known work The Image of the City from 1960 – which has tended to be translated as defining essential (good) elements of a city, rather than highlighting the processes of perception and meaning generation.


100. Dovey, “Architectural Ethics,” 52.

101. Ibid.

102. Ibid., 56.

103. Control was one of seven criteria of good city form: Vitality, Sense, Fit, Access, Control, Efficiency and Justice. See Kevin Lynch, A Theory of Good City Form (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981).

In the same vein, political ideas about the importance of active definitions, everyday occupation, and embodying meaning as ways of being in the city can be read into Marshall Berman’s 1982 work *All that is Solid Melts into Air*. Simultaneously philosophical and political it strongly implicated participation in architecture, over abstract, removed and idealistic engagements with the city. Berman’s antagonists were Le Corbusier – obsessed with, yet fearful of the machines on the street – and urban planners Georges-Eugène Haussmann of Paris, and urban planner Robert Moses of New York, each who used top-down and violent medical metaphors to treat the city – even arguing for surgical cutting to fix it. Berman connected urban theories from protagonists of urban encounter Charles Baudelaire and Jane Jacobs into a manifesto about the modern city, proclaiming the strong need to recover the mess, flux and engagement of its people for life in the city to be meaningful. Berman quotes Marxist philosopher Max Weber:

> Not only is modern society a cage, but all the people in it are shaped by its bars; we are beings without spirit, without heart, without sexual or personal identity.

And then Herbert Marcuse’s indictment of modern society,

> hollow men … no egos, no ids, their needs, even their dreams are ‘not their own’; their inner lives are ‘totally administered’.

Berman described an urban existence in the modern city that is void of life. Poignant for architects operating in the urban realm, Berman critically highlights the opportunity afforded in the intensity of the city, wherein one learns, develops consciousness, expresses, explores and develops identity, sexuality, and dreams. Reading the emphasis for the participatory architect, an architect’s role is not about providing people what they need, but maintaining and agitating that opportunity in the making of the city, right down to the street. Drawing on Baudelaire’s concept of ‘loss of a halo’ – a description of an encounter between an ‘exalted artist’ and an ‘ordinary man’ in ‘*un mauvais lieu*’ – Berman suggests the important significance of encounter in the city beyond modernism.

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106. Berman describes Le Corbusier who feeling threatened after nearly being run over in the street, developed a sentimental desire for a new-art form. Ibid., 164-5. Berman quotes Le Corbusier (*Towards a New Architecture* 1923): “‘Cafes and places of recreation will no longer be the fungus that eats up the pavements of Paris.’ In the City of the future, the macadam will belong to the traffic alone.” Ibid., 167. On Robert Moses and his surgical treatment of New York see Ibid., 287-348.


If we learned through one modernism to construct haloes around our spaces and ourselves, we can learn from another modernism — one of the oldest but also, we can see now, one of the newest — to lose our haloes and find ourselves anew.¹¹⁰

Berman and Lynch’s theories (about control) provide philosophical and political impetus to a study of maximising participation in architectural design, precisely because of how personal meaning and responsibility in the city are derived: through the encounter with difference in action. They provide an active perspective on Arnstein’s ‘citizen control’. Usefully for an understanding of the role of the architect, these ideas about participation in the city may be conflated with participation in democracy.

1990s: occupying architecture

To providing purpose, vocabulary and radical principles for participation in architecture, and setting the groundwork for the relevance of agonism in participation in architecture, a turn in architectural theory in the 1990s towards difference and sexuality provided a rich context for advancing participation theory. Some of the more philosophical ideas approached and addressed flows of being, the everyday, and becoming through architecture, informing purpose and principles of practicing participation. A mix of both metaphors and actual analyses, of everyday bodies in space (architecture and city), proved a generative start.¹¹¹

Key participatory architectural practitioners at this time include two iconic practices: muf Art and Architecture – an all-female practice operating in the UK, and Stalker – a collective developed out of student protests in Rome, operating out of a local refugee community. The spatial outcomes of both practices were

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Due to its ongoing significance in planning practice it important to also note at this time the founding of the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2). Federation of International Association of Public Participation, “International Association of Public Participation,” http://www.iap2.org/page/a3.
more of interactive exhibitions, art installations, community events and urban design strategies, than buildings. At the same time, Huth’s work continued in Austria, and Sanoff’s work continued in North America.112

Instead of predetermining an outcome or this or that principle, the premise may be that participation is inclusive; it recognises other ways of doing things – other practices and sexualities wrapped up in identity, expression and ‘positive difference’. Feminist architectural theory, which became more mainstream through edited books such as Beatriz Colomina’s 1992 Sexuality and Space, and Katerina Rüedi, Sarah Wigglesworth and Duncan McCorquodale’s 1996 Desiring Practices: architecture gender and the interdisciplinary, and Francesca Hughes’ 1996 The Architect: reconstructing her practice – arguably cleared space for a new imperative, to develop critical architectural practice beyond binaries, including what concerns architects and how they practice with others.113 This started with fundamental concepts of a different approach to practice, emphasising difference, seeing differently, using different words and emphasising listening skills.

In introduction Hughes pointed out the link between feminist theory and deconstruction in architecture, arguing that this fact was and was not productive, and is inescapable.

The troping of gender in architecture, through the figure of the feminine, is complex. Chameleonlike, the question of gender very quickly hides itself in the shifting territory of metaphor, reification, and the real that makes up architecture. The muse, the ideology, the icon-object that is vessel, and the law all provide safe houses for the furtive category of gender (and, by the same turn, sexuality). A tracing of this thread draws a convoluted line, full of loops and false knots, that become particularly entangled around the question of architectural practice and gender, always already made pointed by the metaphorical relations between architecture and gender that are the (undesirable) legacy of every architect.114

Although Hughes’ book (and feminist architectural theory) was not directly about participation in architecture it was a critique of how architecture embodies power and patriarchy. It provided prompts to actively and critically develop other practices and approaches to practice starting with recognising and questioning the chronic absence of women in the profession.115


115. Ibid.
Hughes’ contribution is an emphasis on the value of multiple differences, and distinguishing the terms women/woman – arguing that women are best placed to develop new practices and expand architecture, precisely because of both the existence of the metaphorical territory around feminist architectural theory and also the real experience of being a woman in architecture.

A meditation on this is worthwhile in the context of agonism, and participation in architecture. First, Hughes points to the replacement of fixity of gender (by multiple genders) as a way out of metaphors – and to allow discussion of the lack of females in architecture. Second, Hughes argues for the development of architecture through understanding practice – ‘critical practice’. Third, Hughes argues for multiple practices and purposes of architectural production.

… the site with which to grapple, the site that will allow and ultimately best effect the insertion of difference into architecture, is not the space of architecture per se, but the space of the practice of architecture. Practice as the niggle daily activity, the mundane, the bodily, the aspect that always disappoints the metaphoric purity of capital-A architecture. Practice as constructed and bounded by all of the (multiple) coordinates that bind us: sexual, cultural, economic, technological, racial, social, and physical.

…

It is an image that attends well to the action of critical practice. That, as critical theory shatters the centrality of the text, so too must critical practice shatter the singular purpose and nature of architectural production into multiple practices for multiple architectures, pertinent to multiple genders.

Some precedent examples of feminist theory underpinning principles for an approach to participation include writings of architectural theorist Catherine Ingraham in 1991, who in “Burdens of Linearity” and “Animals 2” critiques the psychoanalytical lack and (negative) desire model of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan – Ingraham proposes other consciousnesses and practices of meandering in contrast to single straight-lines of Modernism – such as was the approach of Le Corbusier. Notably, Ingraham’s later book

116. Ibid.
117. Ibid., xii.
118. Ibid., xiii.
in *Architecture, Animal, Human* was founded upon Gilles Deleuze's philosophy of positive difference;\(^\text{120}\) that working architecture with the other, means coming into contact with a set of strange (positively different) exchanges, languages and beings – all communing in a synthesis of sorts – a temporary and contextual *agencement*.\(^\text{121}\)

**Planning: working between outsidedness, groups and individuals**

In planning literature, established approaches to practises of participation bore little reference to the context of radical ideas of otherness, sexuality, identity, meaning making and the everyday – as expanded by critical feminist theory. These approaches in planning remained statically within a frame of explicating how to facilitate and how to manage people. A gap opened up between theory and practice – or one might say, between planning participatory theory and radical theory.

For example and in continuation of the 1980s (against this context of radical theory) rational frameworks tended to figure out methodological steps between Arnstein’s ‘ladder’ as means to manage conflict and mediate – rather than activate – power. Planning theorists Peter Wiedermann and Susanne Femers contended that those facilitating participation needed to think through a risk management approach, considering open and closed conflicts.\(^\text{122}\) And, planning theorist Elizabeth Rocha argued that where participation offers various opportunities for empowerment, working the space between the individual and the group, participation was difficult for professionals.\(^\text{123}\) It may nevertheless be stated that further understanding of the ladder of participation was emerging.

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121. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s “agencement” is typically translated into English as ‘assemblage’. Communicating this otherness as an ‘agency’ has been explored in landscape architecture design theory Howett, “Systems, Signs, Sensibilities: Sources for a New Landscape Aesthetic,” or in architectural projects such as Rem Koolhaas / OMA’s *Casa da Música* (2005) M. Wigley et al., *Casa Da Música, Porto* (Fundação Casa da Música, 2008), 167-210.


123. Rocha, “A Ladder of Empowerment.”
In a continuation of work highlighting the role life in the city has on pacifying people, Sennett in *Flesh and Stone*, wrote a history of the body in the city. Acknowledging the preceding work of Foucault on sexuality and power, Sennett compared different cities in time to tell a story about the pacifying of the body:

*Flesh and Stone* is a history of the city told through people's bodily experience: how women and men moved, what they saw and hear; the smells that assaults their noses, where they are, how they dressed, when they bathed, how they made love in cities from ancient Athens to modern New York. I was prompted to write this history out of bafflement with a contemporary problem: the sensory deprivation which seems to curse most modern buildings; the dullness, the monotony, and the tactile sterility which afflicts the urban environment.

Sennett paints a picture of a confluence of engineers that make bodies in the city more capable of moving and bumping into one another; and urban planners that assure these bodies do not touch. The result is a city of increasing complexity, containing inhabitants which exert lesser effort in their lives. Sennett exhibited a history of art images, stories and text to critique the will(s) exerted over bodies in time, towards human domination and a 'master image' of the ideal body – and its (urban) behaviour:

... this short summary more urgently prompts the question of whose body is explored – 'the human body' covers, after all, a kaleidoscope of ages, a division of genders and races, each of these diverse bodies having its own distinctive spaces in cities of the past, as in cities today. Instead of cataloguing these, I have sought to understand the uses made in the past of collective, genetic images of 'the human body.' Master images of 'the body' tend to repress mutual, sensate awareness, especially among those whose bodies differ. When a society or political order speaks genetically about 'the body,' it can deny the needs of bodies which do not fit the masterplan.

The master images of the body which have ruled in our history would deny us knowledge of the body outside the Garden. For them to attempt to convey the completeness of the body as system, and its unity with the environment it dominates. Wholeness, oneness, coherence: these are key words in the vocabulary of power.

In conclusion, Sennett – framing a Judeo-Christian (negative difference) belief system – considered the relationship between pleasure, pain and compassion. To counter a passive experience of life in the city, Sennett posits Sigmund Freud's concept of cognitive dissonance as a means of overcoming and beginning a will to explore. This bore carnal links to the import of agonism. Sennett cites Freud who considered that ‘Pleasure, is invariably set in motion by unpleasurable tension’ ... ‘Protection against stimuli ... is an almost


127. See also Daphne Spain, review of *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization*, Richard Sennett, *Contemporary Sociology* 23, no. 6 (1994).


129. Ibid., 25.
more important function for the living organism than reception of stimuli," **130** The result is the body feeling at war with itself – and therein for Sennett, lies an opportunity evoking a colonisation of the Garden of Eden. **131** Awareness of this experience, rather than defeat of pleasure (and pain) with discipline, becomes a means to reclaim the city. Sennett called for the acceptance of pain, and moving towards engagement with others, care, and empathy. Design should not just be for pleasure.

Lurking in the civic problem of a multi-cultural city is the moral difficulty of arousing sympathy for those who are Other. And this can only occur, I believe, by understanding why bodily pain requires a place in which it can be acknowledged, and in which its transcendent origins become visible. Such pain has a trajectory in human experience. It disorients and makes incomplete the self; defeats the desire for coherence; the body accepting pain is ready to become a civic body, sensible to the pain of another person, pains present together on the street, at last endurable – even though, in a diverse world, each person cannot explain what he or she is feeling, who he or she is, to the other. **132**

These ideas were not foreign to architectural practice. In 1990, Sanoff compiled some (limited) theory specific to architecture and participation in *Participatory Design: Theory and Techniques* that began to describe practical approaches to participation in architecture practised in Sanoff’s own practice. **133** Sanoff framed the architectural process as a setting of activities (games) for learning about architecture, and noted that participation in architecture was fundamentally a form of action research in society. **134** To Sanoff, users bring variety, and participation is a redefinition of the architect’s norms. Justifying why participation should be adopted in practice, Sanoff pointed out three outcomes of participation, contending that via better information between the designer and participants the outcomes might be:

– that the architect be made more aware, so that the design might fit the context better;
– that participants would be able to influence the design; and
– that participants would feel like they have influenced the design. **135**

Perhaps some of the more explorative approaches for practice were found in social work programmes – such as Jim Diers’ projects in Seattle. **136** Diers, a social worker; used a pluralist, ABCD approach as a point of departure. Best known anecdotes describe how Diers reorganised community development

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**References:**


131. Ibid., 370-72.

132. Ibid., 376.

133. Sanoff, *Participatory Design*.

134. Sanoff refers to the action research work of Kurt Lewin. See Kurt Lewin, “Action Research and Minority Problems,” *Journal of Social Issues* 2, no. 4 (1946). Notably the participatory design approach developed extensively in other design disciplines, such as product and software design.


grant programmes in local government, to emphasise trust and directly empower community participants. Shortcutting bureaucratic, top-down application and acquittal processes which ostensibly excluded diverse voices, intentions and knowhow in community-led projects, Diers’ team handed out money to local groups and individuals directly, a few hundred dollars at a time, requiring participants simply to return with a good story. Instead of continuing the predominance of institutionalised and governmental power, Diers’ work emphasised that community development is measured through listening to and celebrating narratives – multiple narratives. That it should be for a community understanding itself, in itself, working itself. The outcomes were diversity, creativity, and, ongoing bottom-up community empowerment.

Notably, planning theorist Forester’s work at this time posed the idea of the ‘deliberative practitioner’, whose role it was to frame the participatory process.\(^\text{137}\)

**Participating: occupation and narrative**

Slipping in and out of participation, starting with the concepts of relationship and identity and the architect themselves participating in *space*, in a process of making *place* – despite a lack of practice examples – a variation of theories about architecture, landscape architecture and planning practice were emerging at this time.

Landscape architecture theorist Deborah Rose’s *Nourishing Terrains* in 1996 set a scene of the deeply indigenous relationships one can have with a place, knowing and interacting with stories of land, trees and animals through songs. Architecture arguably could learn from the discipline of landscape architecture in this regard.

> From my studies with Aboriginal people I have developed a definition of country which starts with the idea that country, to use the philosopher’s term, is a nourishing terrain. Country is a place that gives and receives life. Not just imagined or represented, it is lived in and lived with.\(^\text{138}\)

In “Landscape Architecture as Modern Other” Elizabeth Meyer contended that architecture has largely treated landscape architecture as an other, and something to (mis)use. Meyer argued for ‘letting the landscape speak’, seeing a rich source of new themes for architecture, through exploring binary terms of modernism/postmodernism, masculine/feminine and subject/object.\(^\text{139}\)


Explicitly contributing to concepts of feminist ways of relating and practising in the edited book *Desiring Practices*, Andrea Kahn, in “Overlooking” argued critically that for architects, ‘site’ has been (mis)treated as a ‘discrete object’ of desire. Architects typically overlook a site, treating it as something to be manipulated, made into a preconceived vision, rather than as something to have a back and forth relationship with. Kahn offered the concept of ‘occupation’ as an active way to participate in a site, relate to it, understand it, and listen to it.

This was a different yet compatible approach to ‘spiritual’ concepts of place such as those described in George Seddon’s “Genius Loci and the Australian Landscape” in which a location might be suggested to be living in some way. One may relate this dialogue to how an architect might approach clients and users in a traditional architectural project. How might an architect come into a back and forth relationship with a site and its people? – by listening, and occupying? This critique of architectural relationship, and prevalence of the image, might be imagined in Ben Godber’s “The Knowing and Subverting Reader” which described a picture of Carolyn Butterworth licking the Barcelona Pavilion. This type of critical, live, participating occupation was also present in the work of muf, as it was in the work of Stalker.

There was an image emerging of critical participatory architectural practice being about actually stepping forward (rather than back) to actually explore. To be inside as it were, a part of ‘it’.

Architectural and art theorist Jane Rendell has written extensively on ‘critical spatial practice’ and ‘site-writing’ in personal, psychological ways – mobilising the term parresia. Rendell’s terms provide a strong contrast to normative architectural practice. In “Doing it, (Un)Doing it, (Over)Doing it Yourself”, Rendell explored the fact that involving one’s self in architecture too, is a creative and radical proposition. With this Rendell means both writing and practice. In the text it seemed that the architect’s own occupation is participation.


143. These will be picked up in more detail later. See Muf, This Is What We Do; Stalker, Careri, and Romito, “Stalker and the Big Game of Campo Boario.”

itself, almost as if engagement in the project is a temporary squat, drawing on the experiences, sensations, emotions, psychologies and preferences of the architect themselves, risking, in their own skin.

Political: manifesting edges and limits

In 1998 Jonathan Hill’s edited book, *Occupying Architecture* brought together a number of architectural theorists and practitioners associated with Sheffield University and The Bartlett schools of architecture around working the space ‘between the architect and the user’.145 It identified numerous opportunities to research participation in architecture, largely exposing different angles and perspectives, politics, gender, race, post-modernism, economics and popular culture, in three approaches. The first considered broad concepts of reception, audience and consumption of architecture; the second, gathered a loose collection of applied examples; and third, provided an exploration of key terms for architecture such as home, identity and love. Jeremy Till’s “Architecture of the Impure Community” and muf’s “Shared Ground” offered the only explicit treatments of the term ‘participation’. In muf’s chapter, double pages are spread with images interrupting text, and snippets of user quotes make up the majority content. Till’s chapter describes the architect in a ‘permanent state of tension’, between myths of community, ideals of a-political architecture, and the power architects possess in knowledge.146

The book spoke to Hill’s body of research about the role of the architect.147 Hill’s chapter in *Occupying Architecture*, “An Other Architect” argued that Modernism brought an instrumental focus on function, form and technology, in which an object-orientated outcome was valued above all else. Somewhat philosophically, Hill’s counterpoint to the Modern architect was the artist Yves Klein. Klein’s live work showed that the artist could use their own life as art, questioning how we see the world through their own performances – that is, their own participation.

Yet, by another, less abstract definition, what was mobilised in this exploration of questioning normative, albeit ‘modernist’ and ‘masculine’, ways of practicing was a recognition of what architecture has typically left out – the political.148 The authors of *Occupying Architecture* were explicitly political, pointing out that a normative approach to architecture leaves out other untapped themes, and, marginalised people. The book

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148. See also Chantal Mouffe et al., “Every Form of Art Has a Political Dimension;” *Grey Room*, no. 2 (2001).
pointed to other perspectives which at this time were not prevalent to participation literature. Arguably, literature about participation in architecture was starting to come to terms with Arnstein’s ladder; and the significance of forms and definitions of power; the higher up the ladder; the more that difference is exposed and the agonistic condition becomes apparent. Yet, where Arnstein’s ladder dealt explicitly with difference in terms of minorities and class, what the 1990s started to offer was an explicit treatment of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, age and ability towards positive difference.

At the end of the 1990s, in *Framing Places* Kim Dovey discussed the role of power in built form. Dovey described different definitions of power – ‘power over’, ‘power to’ – inferring that place holds different versions of power, and ‘mediating’ it is among the many things that architecture and urban design does. Explicitly to participation in architecture, Dovey only addressed themes about participation theory and practice in the final pages in terms of ‘liberty and complicity’ within a frame of deconstruction. Dovey’s first (1999) and second edition (2008) can be compared, the first noting unresolved tensions around terms of public interest, consensus and *ideal* forms of community; the second emphasising space for negotiating desires.

At the point of defining roles, mediating conflict, and, what power means in a process of participation, social theorist Bent Flyvbjerg offered an important distinction to the concept of facilitation and the role of the planner in *Rationality and Power* and “The Dark Side of Planning”. Flyvbjerg considered conflict as more important than consensus. In “The Significance of Conflict and Power to Social Science”, Flyvbjerg critically contrasted a reading of Foucault’s approach to power; with Habermas’ rational, communicative process. Social theorist and philosopher Foucault’s original work on power in *Discipline and Punish* (1975) provided a foundation for a critique of power in architecture – via space. Rationality, Flyvbjerg critically warned, is defeated by power – through tactics and strategies of both the participants and the expert facilitator. This approach established that although rationality can be used to gain power; rationality is defined in context.
Flyvbjerg contended that stable power and rationality is endemic in the definition of an institution. Therefore, challenging rationality is a key principle of a meaningful participation process. Flyvbjerg argued that instead of an ideal of consensus built on the rational processes of Habermas, practitioners needed the more active, conflictual model of Foucault, who analysed contradictions in power and its administration.

These observations by Flyvbjerg proposed an approach to facilitation that was aware that facilitation is always in relation to power — and never neutral. It implied that a professional must take an active role in participation. In light of this thinking there were further lessons for the role of the architect specific to social science. In Making Social Science Matter Flyvbjerg describes another form of knowledge called ‘phronesis’, evoking the concept of wisdom. Phronesis is a knowledge of both facts and techniques, combined with judgement. In the book, Flyvbjerg contended that knowing when and how to do something matters. Although Flyvbjerg was predominantly describing the role of the planner, or social scientist, the potential lessons for the participatory architect, as a practitioner that is concerned with social issues and planning around them, made this work especially relevant.

Flyvbjerg’s chapter “The significance of conflict and power in social science” provided an opportunity to connect the dots for an architect considering participation and agonism. Flyvbjerg aligned conflict and power as the work of participation, and agonism – not consensus – as the informed way forward for social practice. The book advocated a critical approach — called phronesis; which emphasises an intelligence simultaneously aware of ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘why’. Arguably, in doing so it empowered the architect to act. Indeed, in this context, the power (and agency) of the architect is an important factor to be embraced, and not avoided.

154. See also Richardson and Connelly, “Reinventing Public Participation.” 80. This will be expanded later.


156. Flyvbjerg does not specifically refer to architecture.

157. At this point of shunning consensus, and a valuation of conflict, Deleuze’s concept of desire becomes even more relevant. See Colebrook, Understanding Deleuze. Instead of a negative concept that calls for resolution, management or avoidance, Deleuze’s positive difference is a philosophy of inclusion, desire and sexuality.
2000-2006: architecture and participation

In the middle of the first decade of the new century, participation theory was boosted by a surge of interest. Three books emerged from 2005-6, two of which specifically concerned architecture and participation.\(^{158}\)

The theories spanned across planning, participating and the political: *Architecture and Participation* (2005), *Did Someone Say Participate?* (2006), and *Participation* (2006). The first, provided histories, architectural theory and a few examples of participation in practice; the second, a variety of themes of architecture and participation mobilised in a mix of theory and projects; and the third, revived the work of Jacques Rancière, Félix Guattari and Nicholas Bourriaud as foundational philosophers for a theory and practice of participation in art. Just prior to these publications, and introducing the concept of agonism, Chantal Mouffe published *The Democratic Paradox* in 2000.\(^{159}\)

Planning: facilitating, leading and working participation


By way of setting the scene for this moment against the history that has been explicated (and implied) thus far in this theory review chapter, the book’s introduction by De Carlo, which emphasised the hypothetical, open-questioning role of architects, is poignant to restate; De Carlo wrote about the value of consensus, but not as a fixed outcome:

> When we plan ‘for’ people – even if we overcome the alienation due to deciding and operating externally – we tend, once consensus is reached, to freeze it into permanent fact.\(^{161}\)

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\(^{159}\) Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*.

\(^{160}\) Blundell Jones, Petrescu, and Till, *Architecture and Participation*.

\(^{161}\) De Carlo, “Architecture’s Public,” 15.
Similarly, in the preface to Markus Miessen and Shumon Basar’s edited book *Did Someone Say Participate?*, art critic Hans Ulrich Obrist engaged De Carlo’s (and Yona Friedman’s) work, refreshing it to project that where once ‘starting’ participation in architecture was a ‘goal’ in itself, the focus is now about ‘sustaining it’. By engaging De Carlo, Obrist highlighted the current state of the field of participation in architecture.  

In the “History” section of *Architecture and Participation*, Blundell Jones summarised a history of participatory practice in architecture since the 1950s, introducing associations with The Bartlett school of architecture through Cedric Price, Walter Segal and Eilfried Huth. This section included chapters by Huth and architectural teachers Peter Sulzer and Peter Hübner – who, like Kroll, developed real examples explored by students for their own student housing. Sulzer contended that an important aspect of participation is that the responsibilities of the architect and the user may change at any time. Suggesting a tangible way of thinking about histories and measuring the value of the work, the section ended with chapters by Hübner and Blundell Jones hypothesising a character and story of a person’s life – “Kemal Özcül’s Acceptance Speech” and “Özcül Post-Script” – lastingly and meaningfully improved by a participatory design project.

Jon Broome’s chapter “Mass housing cannot be sustained” – against preceding authors that explored the role of the architect in terms of traditional practice, and subsequent authors that explored the role of the architect in terms of sociology and politics – provided a tangible contrast with a short survey of seminal approaches to participatory design practice in housing. Broome referred to the work of Turner, Habraken and Segal. What Broome offered that tied together the book’s ‘Politics’ section was an introductory description of sustainable development, as defined by the 1987 *Brundtland Report*, and a reflection about Broome’s own practical use of architectural theorist Christopher Alexander’s *A Pattern Language*. Broome, a practicing architect, described the purpose of participation as the development and maintenance of three assets: natural capital, human-made capital and social capital. To this, Broome’s participatory process, via the use of Alexander’s work, was about “introducing people to ideas about what makes good cities, neighbourhoods and dwellings”. Simple, yet immensely important to research about the role of the architect in participation and how to do it, Broome emphasised a political purpose (sustainability) and an approach (pedagogy) to the theory of participation.

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162. Miessen and Basar, *Did Someone Say Participate?*, 18.


165. Broome, “Mass Housing Cannot be Sustained,” 68.

166. Ibid., 69.
Providing further emphasis on the significance of participation in architecture and the value of process, art theorist Brian Holmes in 2006 “The Artistic Device, or; the Articulation of Collective Speech,” argued that an art object can only be used in a process, not an outcome. Holmes referred to Foucault’s concept of ‘dispositif’, conjuring a sense of architecture itself and the intrinsic participatory process in which it is made, linking concepts of the ‘assemblage’ and ‘apparatus’. It was compatible with Broome’s ideas of a pedagogical approach:

The device is the ‘system of relations’ that can be discovered between a set of apparently very different elements: ‘a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical and moral propositions’. Holmes also drew on Guattari’s Chaosmosis to emphasise the concept of ‘meta-models’:

‘meta-models’ of the self-overcoming process … [are] diagrams showing how people on a given existential territory come to mobilise the rhythmic consciousness of poetic, artistic, visual or affective fragments — [and] the refrains of … ‘universes of reference (or of value)’ — in order to deterritorialise themselves, so as to leave the familiar territory behind and engage themselves in new articulations. These would take the form of energetic flows, involving economic, libidinal, and technological components (flows of money, signifiers, sexual desires, machines, architectures, etc.).

Holmes painted a picture of architecture as a complex thing; a system, a process, in which many things interact. To this, participation is simply a way of describing how actors such as the client, the user, the architect – are perpetually involved. The architect, situated, participates in a strategic and tactical way, curating these flows.

Leading to the heuristic of the architect’s own participation, Jeremy Till’s chapter “The Negotiation of Hope” followed De Carlo’s, and framed participation as the act of asking questions and increasing the possibility of a project – both in and for a community. Engaging past debates about productive participation, the role of the architect, and impure community, Till provided a different perspective to consensus, instead emphasising the exploration of ‘common hope’, ‘making sense’ and meaning generation through ‘mutual learning’ in the process of participation. Till drew on various approaches for the architect including Schön’s reflective practitioner, Friedmann’s and Forester’s active planner, and more generally a facilitator who might work to the purpose and process described in Lefebvre’s production of space. Till offered this summation:

169. Ibid., 421.
170. Till, “The Negotiation of Hope.”
If form giving is understood more deeply as an activity of making sense together, designing may then be situated in a social world where meaning, though often multiple, ambiguous and conflicting, is nevertheless a perpetual practical accomplishment.\footnote{171}

Architectural practice requires the development of another language for the participatory role of the architect. Arguing that participation could work the gap between roles which previously have been problematised in architecture, Till conjured the term ‘expert-citizen/citizen-expert’, reactivating past debates and definitions about expertise, including those of Reyner Banham, and Antonio Gramsci.\footnote{172} Till drew on Antonio Gramsci’s concept of the ‘organic intellectual’, suggesting:

\begin{quote}
Crucially, intellectuals should not remain as eloquent outsiders but must become active participators in practical life.\footnote{173}
\end{quote}

Till argued that architects cannot know and speak absolutely, they are only able to involve themselves in processes of ‘making sense’ and ‘forming hypotheses’ with others. In this frame, the gap between the skills an architect possesses and a lay person’s understanding may actually be beneficial.\footnote{174} For Till, participation was particularly relevant to architecture due to necessary negotiations of different roles, and therefore participation was creative. Drawing references to the 1972 Design Research Society’s Conference, Till argued:

\begin{quote}
… participation demands that the process is two-way – that the user should have the opportunity to actively transform the knowledge of the architect.\footnote{175}
\end{quote}

The shift in emphasis to ‘negotiation’, from confrontation, consensus and rational decision-making processes to ‘making sense’ was significant, and framed the following chapters. Till’s chapter connected Arstein’s 1969 intentions for participation, to Friedmann’s 1969 call to leadership by reviewing definitions of ‘real’, ‘authentic’, and ‘meaningful’ participation. And, Till pointed out that participation should increase possibility and be ‘transformative’.\footnote{176}
Although *Architecture and Participation* provided a reactivation of themes of participation, both through an historical and political lens, and provided some practice examples, it stopped short of unpacking what it tangibly means to practice participation, or providing a significant critical examination of participatory projects.

**Participating: the amateur and agency in narratives**

The second specific book about architecture and participation in this period was the predominantly project-led publication *Did Someone Say Participate?*, edited by architectural theorists and practitioners Markus Miessen and Shuman Basar. Conceived by Miessen in 2004, it highlighted the diversity of participatory art and architectural practices, and the purposes of participation. Its various chapters provided many different examples of participation in architecture with limited theorisation, and as a whole demonstrated that the purpose of participation is not always political, yet is an activity that is always definitely political.

The theory that most directly addressed previous debates regarding the role of the architect was “The Professional Amateur”. In it Basar, in short simple words, argued that experts needed to know when to hand over to others. At once downplaying skill and commending naïvety, Basar provided the example of pop-singer Robbie Williams at a large concert, starting a song yet leaving it for the audience to sing themselves. (Granted, a pop-singer is no architect.) Basar effectively argued for an approach to participation in architecture that values the ‘amateur architect’, claiming that participation is ‘tactical’, and requires a fluency with everyday popular language. Basar’s argument resonated with De Certeau’s concept of strategies and tactics – in particular the space, methods and power in everyday creative resistance; and *la perruque* – tactical repurposing despite an existing strategy.

Basar’s text in some ways echoed earlier ideas from Hertzberger and Turner about the architect designing the stage for others to play. However, what Basar emphasised was the power of the participant *despite* the architect; “Professional Amateur” suggests that others’ empowerment may even be enhanced and more meaningful in response to an unskilled architect who lacks everyday fluency. Architects should therefore seek to remain *amateur*, both in terms of practising heuristically and affording other (everyday) knowledges.

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177. Miessen and Basar, *Did Someone Say Participate?*, inside cover.


The final section of Architecture and Participation was titled “Practices of Participation”. Including limited examples, it drew some theoretical links but stopped short of mobilising anything more substantial that could form a theory for participatory practice and its critical evaluation. Instead, the examples stood as contrasts toward and against the body of preceding theory. Two examples were from muf Art and Architecture. In “We Need Artists’ Ways of Doing Things” Katherine Vaughan Williams contended that the artist plays valuable role in urban design because they critique and do not not ‘fit in’. In “Rights of Common” muf contended the importance of exhibiting and practising the reality of what participation actually is and means. A hand-drawn diagram of a tree by muf, “Outcomes of Participation”, provided a simple, contemporary contrast to Arnstein’s “Ladder of Participation”. [See Figure 4] What muf exposed was that the benefits of participation are decidedly human and theoretically banal. Through their own ‘tree’, muf diagrammed that the outcomes of participation are often stories and realisations of deeper values.

180. This idea may also be compared with Jonathan Metzger, “Strange Spaces: A Rationale for Bringing Art and Artists into the Planning Process,” Planning theory 10, no. 3 (2011).


182. See also Ibid.
In comparison, in their chapter, Stalker demonstrated that participation can be about strategically involving people in activities, art and games as part of the process of making meaning.\(^{183}\)

By direct and indirect means, the literature in this period made evident that there are contrasting approaches to participation – tangible and abstract – which gain something from art practice and its metaphors. A number of architectural theorists, and practices, often outside of the literature, provide examples of this, and will be explored in the next chapter.

Political: liberty, space, and manifesting the edge

Before considering the role of the architect further, it is important to consider the advent of agonism in this decade. Parallel to literature on participatory design and planning, contemporary debates concerning deliberative democracy have emphasised decision-making processes over outcomes. Chantal Mouffe’s key essays about agonism were collected in 2000 in *The Democratic Paradox*.\(^{184}\) Agonism – from *agon*, in sport is contest or struggle, and in drama, the root of protagonist versus antagonist. Instead of antagonism, in which one sees enemies to destroy, agonism sees adversaries that help to define us. Agonism, explained by Mouffe to respond to deliberative democracy and its processes, may be a way of rethinking participation, by virtue of its primary relevance to the political philosophy of pluralism which underpins democratic processes today.\(^{185}\) Of particular note, Mouffe’s agonism seeks to harness rather than annul the paradox of democracy: ‘liberal institution’ – the right to make free decisions for oneself; versus ‘democratic sovereignty’ – making decisions collectively for the good of the whole.\(^{186}\) Mouffe explained that agonism works to progress from rational decision-making processes, and the domination of consensus – as established by the influence of Habermas and ensuing conflict management approaches as the normative principles of engagement. Mouffe’s model of agonistic pluralism responded to the impasse of key thinkers in deliberative democracy – a nexus of Rawls and Habermas.\(^{187}\)

Rawls, like Habermas, was concerned with democracy and how people make decisions in it.\(^{188}\) Mouffe argued that both these political thinkers established a strong separation between ‘mere agreement’ or ‘rational consensus’, and the exchange of arguments in politics. However, instead of ‘communicative

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184. Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*.


186. *The Democratic Paradox*, see Ch. 4; “For an Agonistic Model of Democracy”.

187. Ibid., 83-93.

188. Rawls’ seminal work: was *A Theory of Justice*. See also Dovey, “Architectural Ethics.”
rationality’, Rawls emphasised the ‘reasonable’, identifying that people needed to put aside their particularities, and interests – their private concerns – in order to deliberate. Rawls called this the ‘veil of ignorance’. Rawls’ key device was the ‘original position’ – contrasting Habermas’‘ideal speech situation’.

Mouffe contended that both models are foundational, yet problematic.  

A well-functioning democracy calls for a vibrant clash of democratic political positions.  

The potential here for architecture, and urban design in particular, is that agonism reinvigorates private and public passions, and the differences in these. What was key to Mouffe is that agonism continues to see value in the processes of democracy and pluralism, yet necessarily incorporates conflict in an active way rather than manages it out. I argue that participation can be read into Mouffe’s ‘radical’ democracy, with the implication that the focus of a participatory (design) processes should be to engage with, to recognise, and to work agonism – including tension, conflict, and different voices – rather than to form mere agreement, to provide a solution, or to create some harmonious (utopian) object. Mouffe’s key contribution at this and, frankly, any decision-making impasse was that action matters. Importantly for Mouffe, agonism is therefore (radically) political, rather than neutral, because, in contrast to consensus, it has the opportunity to change the means to power. Learning from the practice of democracy and pluralism for architecture, ‘agonistic’ might thus describe and renovate an architect’s approach to participation, and the process of building ethical-political social capital.

Perhaps it then fits that the most fundamental function of power in participation is action. Because participation contemplates the moment the principal (architect) employs other people to construct something from meaning to outcome, agonistic participation has the potential to productively open up the moment of manifestation to various definitions of power. As a bottom-up apotheosis, Mouffe’s model of agonistic pluralism ascribes authority to this very moment – the switch of legitimacy from understanding to acting. Mouffe refers to Wittgenstein to offer this key inflection:

Giving grounds, however, justifying the evidence, comes to an end – but the end is not certain propositions striking us immediately as true, i.e. it is not a kind of seeing on our part; it is our acting, which lies at the bottom of the language-game.  

Planning theorists Tim Richardson and Steven Connelly’s “Reinventing Public Participation” threw development about the role of the participatory architect into direct relief with discussions regarding conflict and facilitation, framing a role for an architect as a ‘critically’ engaged rather than neutral facilitator.

190. Ibid., 104.
who consciously excludes conflict. Their chapter argued for more than just an embrace of conflict, it argued that the concept of power in participation in architecture needs to be liberated, to consider different forms and expressions. Richardson and Connelly explained that the rational, communicative turn in theory via Habermas – summarised in the term ‘consensus’, had dominated participation and this had been problematic. Instead, participation should include conflict, not only because that is the reality of decision-making, but also because other forms and practices of power such as resistance, and non-verbal communication are ignored by ideals of neutral facilitation. What Richardson and Connelly highlighted was that power in participation should not be treated as something outside of the facilitator – nor the architect/planner:

When it comes to portraying planners and planning, the quest of planning theorists could be called the escape from power. But if there is one thing we should have learned today from students of power, it is that there is no escape from it.

Richardson and Connelly's theory in Architecture and Participation mobilised Flyvbjerg's argument privileging Foucault over Habermas, that conflict and power were important aspects of social practice, not to be avoided in the pursuit of rational ideals.

French theory was an important foundation for many of the chapters in the “Politics” section of Architecture and Participation. Linking Till's chapter to Hoskyns and Querrien, Doina Petrescu’s “Losing control, keeping desire” drew heavily on Gilles Deleuze's and Félix Guattari's philosophy of desire to explicate the practice work of (Petrescu's) atelier d'architecture autogérée in Paris. Petrescu's chapter was thick with complex theory yet offered simple, fundamental concepts about everyday participation with people. Participation is about working towards 'other horizons' with other people; it was a liberation, imagination and engagement with otherness. Petrescu, like Till, created further terms for the approach of the architect: architect-user/user-architect', and even ‘architect-resident’, situating the architect not so top-down or bottom-up, but 'in the middle'. The main purpose of a professional in participation, Petrescu offered, is about encouraging expression of different desires. It is not about being a hands-off architect, but getting involved instead.

192. Richardson and Connelly, “Reinventing Public Participation.”

193. See also Flyvbjerg, “The Dark Side of Planning,” 383-94; Rationality and Power.


196. Comparatively, the first chapter of the “Practices of Participation” section starts with Lucien Kroll's reminder that people are more complex than architecture. Kroll starts from the position that diversity and complexity is the purpose of participation in architecture, see Lucien Kroll, “Animal Town Planning and Homeopathic Architecture,” ibid., 183-86. See also Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus; Colebrook, Understanding Deleuze.

The final chapters in this section, by social theorist and planner Anne Querrien, and architectural theorist Theresa Hoskyns, underline further notions of possibility and social-political melioration via participation in architecture. Querrien drew on experience and research in France in the 1960s, arguing philosophically, that participation came out of a realisation that the State (and its institutions) ‘cannot know’. Architecture is about showing what is possible, and therefore is deeply political when activated by participation. Following Querrien, Hoskyns related to the 2003 World Social Forum, and described participation as an opportunity to ‘retrieve’ meaningful citizenship.

Critics of participatory democracy say that this form of decision-making is very time-consuming and inefficient, whereas with ‘representative democracy’ it is possible to make quick decisions; they also say that it is practically impossible for all decisions made by leaders to be popular and agreed by everybody and that a more participatory democracy would consequently lead to what is known as ‘tyranny of the masses’. But as far as the city is concerned, participatory democracy creates a vibrant, cared-for and political public realm.

Here reiterated in participation, is an ethical and potentially effective political practice. Following much of the work from the 1990s, such as that of Mouffe and Rosalyn Deutsche regarding the political dimension of public (art) works, a series of questions can be asked about which politics are expressed in the work, and, how effective the work actually is.

Focusing these considerations, art critic Claire Bishop become a prominent figure in the theorisation of participation in art practice with a seminal paper in 2006 titled “The Social Turn”. Bishop drew on Rancière’s work to contest that collaborative work should be approached critically in terms of its aesthetic, instead of an ethical-political lens. This is explored in the next chapter – Practice Review. Bishop’s ensuing debate with art theorist Grant Kester framed different perspectives for the evaluation of participatory projects: Bishop advocated for ‘antinomous’ judgement – reading in and between projects as art critic; where Kester reiterated the importance of ‘autonomous’ understanding(s) – focusing on the (political/moral) purpose of the work and practice of the artist. It meant that the value of a participatory project was either critically

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199. Working with Félix Guattari.

200. In introduction, Hoskyns contrasts participation to Lefebvre’s concept of the museumification of the city.

201. Ibid., 122.

202. See also Mouffe et al., “Every Form of Art Has a Political Dimension.”

in an analysis of and between projects or only within projects themselves.\textsuperscript{204}

As an important exploration of participation, Bishop's work challenged the status quo in art and community development practice by starting with a dismissive position. Bishop questioned the seemingly recent popularisation of participation, its idealistic motives and normative forms of critique. Arguably debate has since increased about how to discuss and evaluate participation. This debate not only focuses on the authorship of the practitioner \textit{vis à vis} their various works, but the reception and production of the work by other people in a two way process.\textsuperscript{205}

[See Figure 5] In reflection, Boudon’s 1967 study for \textit{Lived in Architecture} was an early example of evaluating creative work (post-occupancy) in a way that includes the ‘collaboration’ of users, another elaboration on the theme was Hill’s 1998 edited book \textit{Occupying Architecture: Between the architect and the user}.\textsuperscript{206}

This debate simultaneously creates, questions and maintains ambiguities about the importance of an ethical-political dimension in participatory practice. Collaborative art was political and decidedly had a political purpose, yet it might not always be treated as such in theory. It is an area that required further work, and for architecture, highlighted a similar gap between traditional critique of projects in themselves, between themselves, or, against actual ethical-political constructs such as environmental sustainability and community development. This critical approach to evaluation stood at odds with the prevailing view about the fundamental, political importance of participation that simply demands ‘do it!’ This debate highlighted troubling ambiguities surrounding ideals of participation, and, that the device of ‘participation’ is not new in art practice. In terms of politics, Bishop’s arguments might even suggest that participation in itself does not matter.

\textsuperscript{204}. A variation on this theme has been explored in a special journal issue considering ‘reception theory’ and architecture. Reception theory is well researched in media studies and cultural studies, and, is either under-theorised or already implicit to architecture practice. Tim Gough, “Reception Theory of Architecture: Its Pre-History and Afterlife,” Architectural Theory Review 18, no. 3 (2013); Naomi Stead and Cristina Garduño Freeman, “Architecture and ‘the Act of Receiving, or the Fact of Being Received’: Introduction to a Special Issue on Reception,” ibid.: 167-8. See also Justine Clark and Paul Walker, “Negotiating the Intention of the Work,” Volume #36: Ways to be critical (2013).


\textsuperscript{206}. Boudon and Lefebvre, \textit{Lived-in Architecture}; Hill, \textit{Occupying Architecture}. 
Participation has been a long-established concept in art theory and practice because it can be used as a device for many purposes. Bishop evoked Nicholas Bourriaud's 2002 concept of ‘Relational Aesthetics’ as a key departure point. Bishop's edited book, Participation brought together excerpts from seminal artists and theorists of participation in art practice including French social and political philosophers such as Roland Barthes, Félix Guattari, Jacques Rancière, and Jean-Luc Nancy: in three sections: theoretical frameworks, artist writings, and recent curatorial and critical positions. In the introduction to the book framing these theorists, Bishop suggested that “…activation; authorship; community – are the most frequently cited motivations for almost all artistic attempts to encourage participation in art since the 1960s.”

‘Relational aesthetics’ or ‘relational art’, was termed by Bourriaud to explain various art practices in the 1990s (such as Rirkrit Tiravanija) which focused on ‘social relations’, in which the art itself is a ‘catalyst’ for activity. Bourriaud drew on Guattari’s Chaosmosis. Bishop’s excerpt captured the purpose, the methodology and role of the artist in relational art practice:

The possibility of a relational art (an art that takes as its theoretical horizon the sphere of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an autonomous and private symbolic space) is testimony to the radical upheaval in aesthetic, cultural and political objectives brought about by modern art.

Bishop argued that the proliferation of work emphasising collaboration in the 1990s is not new, and draws from precedent examples such as the 1921 Paris ‘Dada-Season’ and writing by Walter Benjamin in 1934 regarding Bertolt Brecht’s theatre:

Benjamin maintained that the work of art should actively intervene in and provide a model for allowing viewers to be involved in the processes of production [Brecht’s] “apparatus is better, the more consumers it is able to turn into producers – that is, the more readers or spectators into collaborators”

Although Brecht’s concept of participation – developing spectators into collaborators – was deeply influential, Bishop suggests that today, Rancière’s work, offers more to the discussion of participation (including to architecture).
[Rancière] argues that the opposition of ‘active’ and ‘passive’ is riddled with presuppositions about looking and knowing, watching and acting, appearance and reality. This is because the binary of active/passive always ends up dividing a population into those with capacity on one side, and those with incapacity on the other.\(^{212}\)

Seeking an explicit link for agonism in participation this position may be compared to Bishop’s “Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics”, in which Bishop quotes Deutsche who draws on Mouffe:

Conflict, division, and instability, then, do not ruin the democratic public sphere; they are conditions of its existence.\(^{213}\)

Amongst the richness of concepts that were mobilised by participatory practices, one conclusion to Bishop’s Participation is that participation is deeply and philosophically significant to the world today in terms that are fundamental to society’s way of being. According to Guattari, this politic is what a participatory practitioner takes on in themselves in their practice:

‘The only acceptable goal of human activities,’ writes Guattari, ‘is the production of a subjectivity that constantly self-enriches its relationship with the world’. [Guattari’s] definition is ideally applicable to the practices of the contemporary artists who create and stage life-structures that include working methods and ways of life, rather than the concrete objects that once defined the field of art. They use time as a raw material. Form takes priority over things, and flows over categories: the production of gestures is more important than the production of material things. Today’s viewers are invited to cross the threshold of ‘catalysing temporal modules’, rather than to contemplate immanent objects that do not open on to the world to which they refer. The artists go so far as to present themselves as worlds of ongoing subjectivation, or as the models of their own subjectivity. They become the terrain for privileged experiences and for the synthetic principle behind their work. This development prefigures the entire history of modernity. In this behavioural economy, the art object acquires a deceptive aura, an agent that resists its commodified distribution or becomes its mimetic parasite.\(^{214}\)

Preceding these themes of collaboration with users for creative work, and deepening Hill’s earlier engagement with themes around participation and occupation, Hill published Actions of Architecture: architects and creative users in 2003.\(^{215}\) In it Hill presented in two sections, a discussion about the role of the user; and, a broader discussion about the production and reception of creative work, through a mix of art and architectural projects, and Hill’s own thesis work. Comparing exemplar participatory practices including Hertzberger, Till and Wigglesworth, and Kroll,\(^{216}\) the first section spans from the passive user to the reactive user; to finally the creative user. In conclusion Hill offered a set of practical approaches to participation for user creativity:

I identify five types of user creativity, which can be accidental or intentional, and occur singly or in combination: mental, a change in understanding, such as renaming a space or associating it with a particular memory; bodily, a movement or series of movements, independent of or in juxtaposition to a space, such as a picnic in a bathroom; physical, a

\(^{212}\) Ibid., 16.

\(^{213}\) “Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics,” 65.


\(^{215}\) Hill, Actions of Architecture. See also Occupying Architecture: Between the Architect and the User.

\(^{216}\) Actions of Architecture: Architects and Creative Users, 44-8, 58, 62.
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rearrangement of a space or the objects within it, such as locking a door; constructional, a fabrication of a new space or a physical modification of an existing form, space or object, such as removing the lock from a door; conceptual, a use, form, space or object intended to be constructed, such as a door. Creative use can either be a reaction to habit, result from the knowledge acquired through habit, or be based on habit, as a conscious, evolving, deviation from familiar behaviour.\textsuperscript{117}

In \textit{Did Someone Say Participate?}, 'participation' was and was not an explicit topic of conversation by the authors.\textsuperscript{218} Yet, even when it was not explicit, the presence of participatory themes was pervasive. The book included numerous examples over twenty chapters, including projects that worked with the concepts of participation to produce an outcome; others that worked to generate participation; and others that by relief or specific purpose, questioned the definition, role and value of participation. The examples of conflict zones by Eyal Weizman “Architecture, Power Unplugged: Gaza Evacuations” and Stephen Graham’s “Remember Fallujah: Demonising Place, Constructing Atrocity” were telling, and confronted a naïve, positive reading of what participation is and the reasons and means for exploring how to do it.\textsuperscript{219} As a whole, the book called for a diverse, critical approach to participation, which should necessarily be through practice.

Theoretically relevant to understanding the very political advent of participation, philosopher Michael Hirsch in “The Space of Community” harked back to Paris in May 1968 and a resultant history of (Left) political theory, to argue that the resistance movement was an ‘expression’ in itself. Although participation was not a key word in Hirsch’s text, its juxtaposition in the book was poignant. Effectively, Hirsch contended that participation was not ‘political’, but a space. Its expression was a combination of the ‘negative’ space of resistance, contestation and activism which aim for nothing but the occupation of public space itself.\textsuperscript{220} Participation therefore, might not be to gain power for a use – such as might be the case in Arnstein’s 1969 definition, but to exercise it. (In architecture, think about the difference between Hertzberger’s focus on the unfinished and polyvalence.)\textsuperscript{221} Thus, with a reflection on Lefebvre’s 1969 arguments against Basar’s statement, the ‘tactical’ and ‘everyday’ definitions of both participatory practice and the process of making the city are possibly one and the same. Yet, this was not enough, Hirsch – echoing similar themes to

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 88.

\textsuperscript{218} Miessen and Basar, \textit{Did Someone Say Participate?}.


\textsuperscript{220} Michael Hirsch, “The Space of Community: Between Culture and Politics,” ibid., 290-93.

\textsuperscript{221} As described in the 1970s.
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Bishop and Kester – worried about the aestheticisation of conflict via ethics, and the march towards de-territorialisation in radical practices of resistance, without recognising the importance of re-territorialisation.222

2007-2011: spatial agency

Concepts of participation operating at the scale of the city and urban design may be applied to architect and urban theorist Jan Gehl's book Cities for People and Richard Sennett's paper “The Open City”.223 Gehl contended that cities need to be redesigned for people, not cars nor top-town designers. Gehl – who came to prominence with Life Between Buildings in 1987 highlighting encounters within in-between public spaces, argued that designer-led city-making has caused many of the problems we see in inhumane cities today. Sennett, whose work up to this date had implicitly treated themes around participation, explicitly contended that participation matters to urban design today. And, Sennett specified the import of participation with regard to conflict:

Rather than a lock-step mark towards achieving a single end, we look at the different and conflicting possibilities at each stage. Keeping these possibilities intact and leaving conflict in place opens up the design system.

... When the city operates as an open system – incorporating porosity of territory, narrative indeterminacy and incomplete form – it becomes democratic not in a legal sense, but as physical experience. In the past, thinking about democracy focused on issues of formal governance; today it focuses on citizenship and issues of participation which have everything to do with the physical city and its design.224

Sennett proposed that participation and governance have everything to do with the future of (open) cities, and the production of the urban realm. Whereas the participation of the designer is – in careful terms – key to developing the city, it may also be problematic to consider it in isolation from the participation of other people. Echoing concepts of agonism, Sennett pointed out that it is important the designer sees the opportunities in participation and conflict – rather than designs a solution. The purpose, it would seem, is in participation of people in the urban realm, not only the principle of participation in design and (ideal) decision-making.

Coinciding with the commencement of this PhD research project through my practice Urban Village Melbourne (2009-2011) this period in history featured emerging practices, influenced by ‘collaborative’ / ‘cooperative’ / ‘co-design’ examples (developed by communications, industrial, product, software, graphic and


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systems design disciplines), and working with urban renewal – such as Civic Studio in New Orleans (founded by Candy Chang and James Reeves in 2010) and Crimson Architectural Historians in Rotterdam (founded in 1994). Civic Studio, in projects such as Before I die (2014) demonstrated participatory forms of placemaking and activation of public space. For WiMBY! (2001-2008) Crimson Architectural Historians demonstrated long-term engagement and the creative processes of getting citizens to participate in their projects.

PLANNING: LEADERSHIP AND LEGACY

In the 2008 book Opportunistic Architecture Paul Lewis, Marc Tsurumaki and David Lewis showed that architecture can be procured in many different ways, that mobilise different architectural knowledges and skills. Some of these skills and knowledges included communication, negotiation and participation with clients and users in innovative ways. The book demonstrated that architects could be developers too. In this work, Lewis, Tsurumaki and Lewis presented diverse examples at various scales and organisations, showing in one way or another the role the architect takes on includes ownership of the project. In a traditional sense of architectural practice this has been about the action of authorship – yet what was emphasised in Opportunistic Architecture, were aspects of leadership, responsibility and opportunity which flow through the architect.

This definition of the role of the architect provided a critical link to discussions regarding a neutral role of facilitation within participation, and may even have provided a counterpoint to Lefebvre’s 1969 notion that architects should not synthesise the city – architects are always active participants. In some ways, a leadership role in city development is an architect’s purpose and an architect has the ethical and political responsibility to hold and have a ‘right to the city’ too. The architect’s participation is critical, in many senses.

PARTICIPATING: LEARNING RESPONSIBILITY AND AGENDA

The contention of architectural theorists Paul Jenkins and Leslie Forsyth in Architecture, Participation and Society was that given the expanding role of the architect, as both participant and as a developer in the production of societies, communities and social spaces, there is a need to educate architects in participation. Jenkins and Forsyth’s book focused on the education of architecture and participation beyond ‘élite’ professional values, considering a number of schools that teach differently, suggesting that it is possible...
to identify some of the challenges and opportunities to teach participation. Effectively, Jenkins and Forsyth contended that architects needed to learn social skills. The examples of live projects and self-build showed locations for learning about participation – location matters. Jenkins and Forsyth argued that it is important to teach the role of the architect, and this is best done if academic teaching and research is carried out through live projects. Indeed, architecture is a ‘social art’.230

Where does authorship lie if the focus is on others deciding and creating through negotiation? The critical agency of the architect came to the forefront via a number of books and publications at this time that treated the concept of agency.231 In 2010, in the edited book by Florian Kossac, Doina Petrescu, Tatjana Schneider, Renata Tyszczuk and Stephen Walker, Agency: Working with Uncertain Architectures, the editors contended that the agency of the architect can be mobilised to open the possibility of making space, which is space for others’ agency.

While the potential of agency is most frequently taken to be the power and freedom to act for oneself, for the architectural community this also involves the power and responsibility to act as intermediaries on behalf of others.232

In this literature, the architect had begun to take on the mantle of social practitioner and community developer, critically working with conflicts, and, instead of looking to simply manage participation (and conflict), treating participation in a diverse and generative way. This direction brought the development of the concept of participation and architecture full circle – back to themes touched on by early theorists. The question returns to ‘how?’ – how to facilitate participation. Where the term ‘architect as developer’ was an amalgam of different threads from history, in this period, ‘architect’ had a less neutral, less paternalistic, and more empowered meaning, evoking deep leadership, and, the political.

The introduction to Agency highlights similar notions to participation as Forester and Friedmann, that agency opens space for mutual learning about difference. Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider and Jeremy Till published a 2011 book Spatial Agency, building upon their 2009 website www.spatialagency.net, exhibiting many of the different examples of spatial practice. These two publications not only opened the potential history for

230. Ibid., xv.
233. Awan, Schneider, and Till, Spatial Agency.
a popular reading of participation in architecture, but provided a compendium of works that called for a critical approach to the agency of architecture.\footnote{Unsolicited architecture is another term for this work, in the context of the 2008 global financial crisis and the need of architects to invent new ways to work. This is discussed in Arjen Oosterman, “Editorial: A Profession Apart,” Volume #14: Unsolicited Architecture (2008); Rory Hyde, “Unsolicited Architecture,” https://web.archive.org/web/20130501045906/http://roryhyde.com/blog/?p=294; Ole Bouman, “Office for Unsolicited Architecture (Oua),” Volume #14: Unsolicited Architecture (2018). Hyde, in considering the participatory architectural practice Bavo, offers the extreme yet practical example that in Bavo’s work for Hooglevied, the architects found themselves knocking on doors and rounding people up with a bus to get people to participate in the project.}

Less specifically about participation yet progressing this discussion of agency and leadership, art theorist Martha Rosler’s three-piece essay in Art Forum “Culture Class” provided theory and practice examples for a critical theory of participatory practice. The essay tied together Lefebvre’s works, with Harvey’s and also Berman’s, as well as broader philosophical and economic considerations of the role of creativity in making a city. Echoing Deutsche, Rosler concluded that practice is always political, and so the artist must decide which politics. Rosler demonstrated that art can produce the same urban injustices, whether it considers participation or not. And so, it must be concluded that critical participation is paramount. These participations inevitably become political manifestations.

**Political: agonism and action**

Literature regarding participation in architecture fostered discussion of the role of difference and governance in architectural practice. It suggests that the leadership of the architect in a project needs to be as ethical-political participant, and an active part of society – separation is a mistake.

Following on from this valuation of transitional,\footnote{Compare ‘transactional’.

\footnote{Unsolicited architecture is another term for this work, in the context of the 2008 global financial crisis and the need of architects to invent new ways to work. This is discussed in Arjen Oosterman, “Editorial: A Profession Apart,” Volume #14: Unsolicited Architecture (2008); Rory Hyde, “Unsolicited Architecture,” https://web.archive.org/web/20130501045906/http://roryhyde.com/blog/?p=294; Ole Bouman, “Office for Unsolicited Architecture (Oua),” Volume #14: Unsolicited Architecture (2018). Hyde, in considering the participatory architectural practice Bavo, offers the extreme yet practical example that in Bavo’s work for Hooglevied, the architects found themselves knocking on doors and rounding people up with a bus to get people to participate in the project.} ‘loose space’ and the value of its negotiation as a means to learning about and using space as a right of passage, agonism was explicitly introduced to architecture. In Mario Ballesteros’ edited book Verb Crisis, Ballestros sought to tackle “the conflict between the physical limits of architectural design and the demands on the practice for an updated social relevance.”\footnote{Mario Ballesteros, ed. Verb Crisis (Barcelona: ACTAR, 2008), dust jacket.} With interviews, articles and images that mobilised the themes of architecture and participation, the book included chapters by American architects Teddy Cruz and Alejandro Aravena working in places of poverty, and Markus Miessen framing the political theory of ‘agonism’.\footnote{Ibid., 150-67. Cruz and Aravena’s work will be picked up in the next chapter.}

Miessen’s interview with political theorist Chantal Mouffe, “Violating Consensus” recognised conflicts as creative points. Mouffe expanded these notions by explicating key terms of a philosophy in relation to political theory and the anti-globalisation movement, contending – at least obliquely – that architecture has
been complicit and problematically tied up in the rational politics of consensus, and would be empowered through agonism and working frictions. Because of the past mistake of practice having such a focus on agreement and rational separation between (experts and) participants in order to avoid conflict, meaningful (agonistic) participation becomes more and more relevant to critical architectural practice.

In the creation of what I call an agonistic public space, there are many different voices and kinds of people that all play a role. For instance, I think that this is definitely an area where artists, architects, or people who are engaged in the entire field of culture at large, play an incredibly important role, because they provide different forms of subjectivities from the ones that exist at the moment.238

Speaking to the question of ethical-political considerations, and in part continuing a vein similar to John Friedmann, Mouffe pointed out that development of society and change is found in many small examples.239 These examples – this reference to political interactions, engagements and community processes – might be described as participations. Participations are plural, different and diverse. ‘Agonism’, Miessen and Mouffe pointed out, is directly relevant to new critical modes of architectural practice precisely because the concept of consensus has been so unsustainable. Mouffe posited agonism – a political theory of democracy and pluralism – in a way that mobilised many of the same debates highlighted previously by Richardson and Connelly vis à vis consensus. By extension it reiterated, like De Carlo, the fundamental relevance, responsibility and role of participation in architecture working with a diverse public.

Some of the emerging themes – to be researched in practice – framed new roles for architects, their goals and evaluations of architecture. In “Architecture Without Architects” Marion von Osten considered anarchistic approaches to architecture, reasoning that architects have been a colonial force.240 Somewhat optimistically and, redemptively, von Osten offered that Modernism may have simply been a naïve state for architecture. In a tangible demonstration of the value of participation in architecture, von Osten argued that indigenous, non-architectural knowledge is what produces architecture.

This statement might be compared to David Harvey’s work on “the freedom / right to the city”.241 Although the architect might be a participant too, evaluating the right to the city depends on whose ethics are being considered. As well as refreshing Lefebvre’s 1969 work of the same title, Harvey contended that


239. With regard to urban design see also Darko Radović, Heide Jager, and Ammon Beyerle, eds., Another Tokyo: Nezu and Yanaka, Places and Practices of Urban Resistance (Tokyo: Centre for Sustainable Urban Regeneration, University of Tokyo, 2008). – being different in a different place may be valuable, and from there, small observations matter. From this standpoint urban design is about generating desires, and sustainability is about generating and maintaining differences, physical and urbane.


PARTICIPATION IN ARCHITECTURE: AGONISM IN PRACTICE / Ammon Beyerle

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participation as a (free) right is not enough. The colonialising force of that participation must be considered in a critical way, for architecture not to have done so, warned von Osten, has been naïve.

It provides grounding and significance to this theory review for architecture, to link ideas here from Hertzberger’s approach to ‘space’ and ‘social space’. Hertzberger described – and demonstrated – an architecture of possibility which is activated by its uses and social interactions. It would seem that participation in space through architecture and urban design is not ethical-political in itself, but as Hirsch or Hertzberger contended, a space is an opportunity. It is power.

Describing the predominance of space and its availability – or the significance of the ambiguity of space – resonated with Karen Franck and Quentin Stevens’ title Loose Space. Like Lefebvre’s “Production of Space”, the theory of ‘loose space’ and its metaphors are revealing to explore when considering practical approaches to architecture providing participation. Franck and Stevens emphasised that interstitial space matters. In-between, transitional, or ambiguously-defined ‘loose’ space works to engage physical and social life experiences, (theoretically,) and therefore, the provision of space in urban life is important in itself. The idea echoed Querrien’s and Hoskyns’ sense of political space and possibility afforded by participation, and the metaphors spanned both the theoretical and physical.

Although Franck and Stevens did not treat participation extensively, what Loose Space offered to participation is that, by virtue of its providing the necessity to navigate and negotiate different and changing proxemics, participation must play a vital part in urban life. A final observation stems from the fact that the ‘loose space’ concept was written in a way that could be designated as both a spatial outcome and a spatial process. This observation is that participation in architecture provides the settings (read: opportunities) to slip between physical and social experiences.

Conclusion

Theory about participation in architecture and urban design was founded around 1968-1969 in a few seminal texts that began to describe what is participation and how to do it. These texts reproached the role of the expert and contended that citizen control is fundamentally important to making the city. To architects this reproach was especially poignant because architects had traditionally procured architecture through the patronage of the elite, rather than the general public, and would therefore have to reconsider their role. Notably, a number of seminal participatory practitioners became active at this time. Focusing on aspects of the heuristics of planning and participating, the advent of participation in architecture asked philosophical

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242. See Hertzberger, Space and the Architect, Ch. 1, Ch. 5.

questions about power, called for different approaches, and inspired new everyday modes of practice and political responsibility.

The 1970s developed an early practice of architecture and participation through facilitation. This approach to the role of the architect stirred arguments about the expertise of the architect, with a number of theorists and practitioners becoming interested in the methodology of including people, framing community development processes, and even identifying methodologies and opportunities to keep professionals’ hands off – encouraging do-it-yourself architecture without architects. Theorists explored the deeper meanings and benefits of participation, as a process of power, dwelling, and being, and therefore how to conceive the role of the architect beyond simply coordinating a built design outcome. Challenges around mass housing were a key driver for these developments, as were evaluations of active inhabitant occupation. Architectural theorists and practitioners argued that people should be tangibly involved in designing and making their own environments. Call it self-build, the natural process, do-it-yourself architecture, interaction or simply a letting go, this was demonstrated on a spectrum from full control by others, to systematic involvement.

Although seminal theory in participation in architecture in the 1970s tended to focus on the planning aspects – facilitating others, some theorists started to suggest the architect’s own participation and the political role of participation was moving from decision-orientated to taking action(s).

The 1980s continued to develop a dominant practice of participatory processes through facilitation and rational decision-making processes, emphasising planning and political aspects. These processes spanned various design disciplines, beyond architecture and urban design. A number of exemplar theoretical works provided foundations for an open and engaged form of practice, however it is difficult to track their impact on practice at that time. These theories suggested the active involvement of the architect as an agent activating power (and encounter) through leadership. Schön’s reflective practitioner stood apart as a means of tangibly understanding participation in architecture as a practice. Schön highlighted everyday heuristic approaches to design processes. Community development discourse and political theory offered philosophy which could positively rethink architectural approaches to people and cities, and focus on active processes.

A nuanced approach participation is required, that is both reflective and critical. This stands in contrast to a history which has focused on propagating a rational ideology of fixed roles and entities. As Nancy pointed out, the interaction of individuals and groups is a fundamentally productive process that is realised through expressions of creative difference and death. What better way to model this in practice, than through a positive embrace of the assets of all participants and the tensions between them? And, what better way for an architect to contribute to this social process than to recognise the role of the architect to work different knowledges and develop tangible aspects into (or out of) spaces for occupation?
Akin to Schöns ‘reflective practitioner’ or Gramsci’s ‘organic intellectual’, an architectural practitioner might thus consider their role as being enhanced by tangibly engaging in participation, to explicitly work knowledge and therefore develop its tacit aspects. This might especially be the case for the development of a community or public building, where the urban design role of an architect comes to the fore thinking about relationships, time, and an urban realm. It might too be about leading a community to engage in the craft of making.

As an aware, ethical-political participant and leader that considers governance and development when participating in the city, an approach to the role of the architect may be understood and refined in the Classical Greece concept of ‘parresia’. Parresia, defined as a practice of speaking truth to power to make change, provides material to understand critical participation itself.

Foucault’s (1982-3) lectures at the College de France, republished in 2010 as The Government of Self and Others provide an interesting development in the concept of ‘parresia’ that is worth exploring as to the role of the architect in the city at this moment. At once via parresia, Foucault may have provided a discussion of the critical and practical participation of a philosopher in early democracy that resolves Lefebvre’s call for philosophers (not architects) to be involved in the synthesis of the city. Foucault’s investigation of parresia highlighted an engaged approach to practice that requires four important parts:

- courage and taking risks;
- communication and rhetoric to convince others;
- the game of ascendency, or, political empowerment and the freedom to speak; and,
- a practitioner that speaks truth from their self.

Arguably the philosophical challenge for the participatory architect, and key question of leadership is how to instate a legacy of empowerment, rather than reinstate a tutelage.

Reading for architecture, parresia’s direct relevance to architecture, participation and leadership was evident in Foucault’s account of Pericles’ speech to the people regarding the Peloponnisian war, and whether the people of Athens should continue their campaign by heeding Pericles’ advice. Foucault highlighted this example to explain the nuances of parresia, and leadership. Pericles was at once the people’s agent, a citizen-participant, and a skilled leader.

Pericles warns the people that by asking Pericles to provide advice, the people are actively participating when listening and carrying out that advice. Foucault’s parresia, and
description of the philosopher that engages with the city, is both a discourse from the heuristics of the political, to heuristic processes of planning and participating.

For the practice and theory of participation in architecture today, the 1990s were a rich source of themes and inspiration, in particular through a general framing of difference itself as the central content of architecture. Encounter with these themes by architectural theorists and some architectural practices came to the forefront, emphasising other people and mobilisation of their rights, political spaces and sexualities. Architecture looked for new sources of inspiration and purpose; understanding power – it would seem – and working with it, was an important component of the role of the engaged architect. At this time, a few practitioners edged into the the realm of participating themselves, as a key step towards a critical spatial practice. It may be argued that literature at this time was finally coming to terms with the higher rungs of Arnstein’s ladder; reading power in different, and other ways.

Key themes for participation in architecture and urban design developed in the 1980s were deeply philosophical, these included themes of meaning and being; control and letting go; power and empowerment; encounter; otherness and sexuality; mutual learning, social development and politics; and agency and leadership. What is interesting to note is a pattern of refining and redefining the changing role of the architect in practice, in developing these themes.

Guattari’s final philosophical work on creativity is worth mentioning here, because it further activates fundamental terms that elucidate participatory design practice. In Chaosmosis, Guattari described creativity as a process of chaos in its field, always on the verge of failure.\footnote{Guattari, \textit{Chaosmosis}. Also quoted in “Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm.”} When one does something, it is either a conscious preparation, or a making do/with – think De Certeau’s tactics, think Schön’s reflection-in-action, think heurism. Creativity, or in general terms, the aesthetic, is an ethical (social) attempt to combine things.

A more abstract sense of political power that an architect might take on when considering other forms of practice was described for architecture in the work of architectural theorist Ignasi De Solà-Morales and Gianni Vattimo, who referred to Heidegger’s terms.\footnote{Gianni Vattimo, “The End of Modernity, the End of the Project?,” in \textit{Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory}, ed. Neil Leach (London: Routledge, 1997), 158-60.} Morales and Vattimo theorise ‘weak architecture’ – as marginalised practices. “Weak architecture” suggested new approaches to participation in architecture, which possess a different sexuality of practice, laden with a sense of weak, becoming, tangential power – meaning to be defined. A resistance so to speak:

\begin{quote}
This is the strength of weakness; that strength which art and architecture are capable of producing precisely when they adopt a posture that is not aggressive and dominating, but tangential and weak.\footnote{Ignasi De Solà-Morales, “Weak Architecture,” in \textit{Differences: Topographies of Contemporary Architecture} (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 71.}
\end{quote}
Urban art theorist Rosalyn Deutsche in 1996 *Evictions*, considered that which is marginalised, hidden, left out and excluded, as the defining characteristics of a place. Deutsche, considering an art exhibition about homelessness and urban renewal in New York, argued that public space is political by its very nature. Providing a contrasting angle to the debate about conflict in participation in the city and democracy as something to be managed Deutsche contended:

> … conflict, far from the ruin of democratic public space, is the condition of its existence.\(^{250}\)

For an architect, participating then in the construction of public space, these themes take on a necessarily political dimension, opening up and critiquing the power neutral, conflict-managed, facilitating role of participatory practitioners,

> … the question of the meaning of the public is not settled by equating public space with political space. Rather, a new question arises: Which politics?\(^{251}\)

These politics do not always have to be for the radical. In 1997, Richard Sennett in “A Search for a Place in the World” echoed the early work of Hannah Arendt, to describe challenges of the modern city similar to Berman, that it had propagated a loss of connection between people. Sennett explained that people wanted to feel worthwhile, by transcending the economy, and working through the complexity on their own.\(^{252}\)

The period of 2000-6, produced three books dedicated to the field of participation, two about architecture and urban design, the other, on art theory and practice. In this period, participation became popularised in architectural theory, and, encompassed numerous themes introduced in the 1990s, especially focused on social and political issues. Knowledge of a number of experiments about participation and architecture emerged, influenced by art practice, which framed new and tangible approaches for considering the role of the architect in participation, and, participation as a device in itself. Challenging past models which managed out conflict, political theorist Chantal Mouffe outlined a theory of agonism that specifically valued conflict as part of the democratic process, potentially unlocking participatory architecture from the dominance of consensus.

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An agonistic approach offered something powerful by making architecture inclusive: it stepped out of the rational, communicative framework (which may be typical of normative architectural practice). Because agonism seeks to recognise and work difference (rather than avoid and exclude it), the tendency is to value arguments and conflict at the core, rather than focus on achieving consensus and mere agreement. This begets a real and vital inclusion, not only as a designating space-for, but inclusion as a generative undertaking to produce space. Potentially and poignantly, this step offers and includes other forms and languages of power: namely resistances – as constitutive parts in the shift from argument to action. Self-realisation and self-knowledge are all forms of empowerment. Through agonistic, participatory architectural practice, other voices, practices and powers become built in.

The preceding discussion of time periods, 1968-9s, 1970s and 1980s, 1990s, 2000-6, 2007-11 describes the development of theories about participation in architecture and its practice. It also describes a relatively limited depth of theory in architecture, yet a necessarily broad, interdisciplinary field of information. What this theory review outlined was a sociological engagement with participation that engages with the tools and means of architecture. Architecture learns something from its mistakes and defences against the advent of participation, and arguably gains something from its own exploration of difference. By one lens the profession of architecture is lacking, and needs participation. Through difference and ‘otherness’, the profession’s participation is critically productive.

Interdisciplinary thinking, and multi-disciplinary practice presents architects with a dynamic interpretation of an active role – an agency, that is not static, nor neutral. Indeed, the practice of participation is ethnographic. It is action, and must be free from consensus and fixation on the ideal so that the participatory process may be creative. This might also suggest how participation should be researched in practice – an embedded and ethnomethodological approach: a landscape for personal and political exploration with others.

Tracing the pattern across the heuristics of planning, participating and the political showed a particular tension that has existed between planning and participating. This in time has opened up as theory in participation has fleshed out concepts around the political dimensions of space as something in flux. Many of the approaches to participation promote moving across different heuristics in different directions. Arguably, in the latter period, the divide between the architect participating and the political, dissolves into the concept of agency. What this journey recognises is a cross-disciplinary unpacking of broader concepts of everyday being and synthesis, and how spatially skilled and empowered agents – architects – might or might not interact.

There are many important themes of participation to draw upon in the production of Creative Works through participation. These themes differ in context, yet resonate heuristically with the history of participation in architecture. And, as framed in this review, critically agonism unlocks these themes of
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participation so that they are active. When designing participation and forming a vocabulary for practice, ‘themes’ offer communicable concepts for (critical) development, alike a ‘design concept’ or ‘parti diagram’ for design development. The critical difference of participation is that this design development may be with different participants, within the opportunity of participation itself. For my Creative Works I developed four of these themes upon reflection of theory and the specific contexts of each project: site/space; making/materialisation; practice/place and leadership/facilitation. Recognising the value and necessity of tension, each theme frames a dynamic couple ready for negotiation. My methods towards these themes may be seen to unfold as design actions in the projects themselves.

Where design can provide visions of possible futures, the role of the architect becomes about participating too, and developing their own leadership. The question remains how might participation be conceptualised, designed, enacted, critiqued and described?

This theory review identified an important gap in understanding architecture and participation. It is located in the nexus of research through practice, and, agonism as a productive approach. This gap embraces conflict as a productive part of the participation process, activating topics and themes of difference and tension, that underpin processes of social-spatial change and learning. It unlocks other questions and means to expand architectural capabilities and action in ethical and political ways. (It may even open architecture to other design disciplines that further participatory design.) Taking the perspective of difference, an architect does not define tensions and problems in design and decision-making processes as points to avoid or resolve, instead an architect recognises these points as challenges and assets, which may be worked and valued. Because architects are experts at thinking and working with space, in negotiation of that space (political, ethical, physical, emotional, or psychological) – architects are well-positioned to facilitate meaningful participation.

Beyond the dynamic and fixed roles, or recognition of the ideologies that have dominated architecture and reasons to change, what has been lacking in the literature is a close understanding of what participation tangibly means in architecture and urban design, and how to do it – an embedded, ethnographic understanding – reflective, nuanced, descriptive and critical. Given the agency of the architect, we might then ask through a practice review, what are the principles for the critical participation of the architect? What does participation mean in practice, and how does that develop for myself as architect, and in relationship to others? What are some typological design methods that other practitioners have drawn upon?

My theory review investigated the role of the architecture through participation – and tied together a discussion starting with Arnstein’s 1969 focus on citizen power; De Carlo’s hypotheses, and Lefebvre’s 1969 philosopher as the sole expert who should make the city – with Foucault’s 1982-3 emphasis on conflict, and the practical role of the philosopher. Participation only comes into being through practice. Indeed, a fundamental aspect of approaching parresia, was with the philosopher who works in action on and in the
city, directly working in ethics, politics and leadership. Participation is a key to urban design. It is this type of involvement – participation – which creates spaces that require and generate intentional moments in which the architect might lead individuals, teach them, and impart processes of thinking, both for themselves and towards others.

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As well as connecting a variety of disciplines – philosophy, planning, architecture, and politics – participation in architecture has developed around ideals of consensus and avoiding conflict. This has changed in the last decade to embrace differences and the tensions, in changing approaches. A particularly helpful concept ‘agonism’ – valuing conflict and engaging in arguments, and then taking action – makes particular sense in architecture, because architecture has recently turned to difference, and it is recognising that its real import is in engaging with the challenges of everyday life in the city.
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**Practice Review**

*how to do (agonistic) participation in architecture*

To learn from and connect to precedent practice examples, this chapter undertakes a short review of projects and practices. It explores themes and approaches that will be explicated in my Creative Works research.

Where in the previous chapter I explored what is agonistic participation in architecture through theory, a literature review and a history — in this chapter I consider how to undertake agonistic participation in architecture through practice, by reviewing precedent projects and practices which suggest approaches and methods.1 These two chapters provide a base against which to practise agonistic participation in my Creative Works.2 One direction speaks to a philosophical process of what architecture should be, the other speaks to a political practice of what architecture should do.3

The purpose of this chapter is to explore what architecture (and participatory architects) should do — and how to do it. It is not a history. Nor does it provide background for a design manual. With an emphasis on understanding techniques in the context of political purpose, this chapter recognises various principles for practicing architecture — agonistically and participatorially. It is pluralistic. Rather than providing deep analyses of precedent projects, the chapter names these various (technical) principles, connects them to possible research questions for (heuristic) testing, and, aligns my chosen research methods — embedded ethnography (thick description), reflective practice (reflection in action) and Creative Works (my own case studies) — with the (theoretical) field. Think phronesis:4 “What are the principles for doing architecture in an agonistic and participatory way?” “Why are they important?” “If I do undertake these principles, what should happen?”

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1. This chapter is developed from an earlier paper Ammon Beyerle, “Agonistic Participation: A Political and Architectural Opportunity,” *Journal of Arts and Communities* 5, no. 2/3 (2013).

2. This also describes the sense of how I purposefully explore the use of the different spellings of practice / practise, practicing / practising throughout the thesis.


The chapter is structured in three parts followed by a short conclusion. Where the last chapter worked to build a theoretical foundation for agonistic participation in architecture drawing on relevant disciplinary areas of planning, social theory and art theory, this chapter considers architectural design practice— and, in response, I have chosen to look across approaches in architecture, urban design, and art praxis (with respective diminishing emphasis). Again, both review chapters emphasise written work, and highlight some important built examples. This chapter is kept short for a reason; it summarises key practises in the literature— extending the Theory Review towards practice— and leaves considerable room for the research to focus in-depth analysis on the production and critique of my own Creative Works. This framing is due, in part, to finding a lack of exposition and analysis of practice in the literature, which led to a decision to develop practical knowledge heuristically— by doing it. Notably, my experience and awareness of the local context, including other practices and projects was assumed— and is not the purpose of this chapter (nor this thesis).

Considering the material that has been important to my research, and towards formulating both a context and an argument for my research methodologies, I have roughly arranged each disciplinary review section in three parts:

1. a concise background of what is (and why practise) agonistic participation
2. design methods and concepts for other people (i.e. client, community, public)
3. design methods and concepts for oneself (i.e. for the architect— ‘what techniques do I need to take on?’)

The art praxis section, although short, poses some useful questions through the debate of social practice that finally allows me to further distinguish and evaluate my critical approach in the Creative Works.

This chapter notes that the field of agonistic participation has a rich set of developing words and principles that bring about different outcomes, then respond to different ontological imperatives. How an architect decides to practice in a given situation/context is a negotiation between the political opportunity and the projected constitution (desire) of the architect themselves— that is, their relative empowerment (how to practice) and who they want to be (what to be); think *parresia.* This tension generates a space for methods of exploration, yet critically suggests a gap for the architect to design principles for.

The residual question is about where design of agonistic participation occurs; is it with others in the public realm or internally within oneself?— and then is this occurrence undertaken emotionally, professionally or psychologically? To answer this question, this chapter argues that the research requires a methodology combining ethnography, reflective practice and to get ‘real’ depth: Creative Works.

5. As introduced in Theory Review. Foucault’s parrhesian philosopher (Plato) works closely with the Prince (Dionysus) to train the Prince to take on a philosophical practice, so that the Prince may be someone who can govern others. Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others.* in particular Ch: 12.
Principles for Architecture

In this section, when I say architecture, I refer to what an architect does. Broad definitions are typical of the field of participatory design because a practitioner might get involved in all manner of subjects. It is the architectural approach – the process – that is particular, not necessarily the outcomes of that approach. So for many instances, it may be that architecture is buildings, but also – particularly important to any study of participation – a process to make spaces. Here, architecture starts with the intention of a mostly-defined space with specific dimensions (brief/scope/site), a design process (concept, development, documentation, construction), and professional relationships (architect, client, user).

Background: what, why participatory architecture

One important concept for participation in architecture is self-build – that others (clients, users) might have the opportunity (freedom) to shape/make their environments using their own hands and minds. The first approach here is that architects might simply be facilitators, only providing expertise, suggestions and guidance where needed – such as negotiating planning, engineering and costing.

Seminal examples in the 1960-80s include Walter Segal’s ‘Frame and infill’, Lucien Kroll’s on-site open studio, Nicholas Habraken’s ‘Supports’, Herman Hertzberger’s ‘unfinished’, and in the 2000s Teddy Cruz’s projects that focus on crossing borders, shifting territories and economic empowerment.

Somewhat formalising the self-build concept is the second approach wherein an architect designs and provides the physical infrastructure – a kit of parts’ or ‘bits and pieces’ left over – for others to finish. In the 2000s, Alejandro Aravena’s Quinta Monroy Housing (2003-5) is a demonstrative formal example that draws (positive) comparisons to Philippe Boudon’s 1969 evaluation of inhabitant alterations in Le Corbusier’s

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Quartiers Modernes Frugès (1925). Those designs provide key infrastructures to support resident livelihood and opportunity, and leave future decisions available to the advantage of owners.

The third approach critically recognises the psychological and social importance of self-build processes, and focuses on bringing the most difficult architectural problems forward for communities to negotiate. See for example Eilfried Huth running workshops with youth or inhabitants to model density arrangements and forms, or John Turner’s work emphasising the deeper meaning of ‘dwelling’ for a site and services approach in the 1970s, or that again of Teddy Cruz’s comprehensive architecture and urban policy work from the 2000s. The architect designs collaboration.

A contrasting approach may be called parametria – that multiple measures might be employed (often through the use of digital technology) to shape complex decisions. Arguably the link to community participation is more tenuous; translating opinions to attributes, through a specialised filter, removes the hands on experience, DIY-imperatives of self-build. However, many of the same purposes are fulfilled – in particular a recession of the absolute role for a genius architect. Some of the promises of this approach are for a more democratic decision-making process, in which hundreds, if not thousands of people – data points – might be integrated. The holy grail of parametria is design that generates itself automatically from perfect data (and well-crafted algorithms).

Participatory architecture produces mixed outcomes, styles and narratives. Stereotypically, self-build architecture produces an everyday-vernacular aesthetic where parametric architecture produces alien high-tech aesthetics. Experimenting with the politic of self-build yet avoiding the social mess, architects may originate design concepts from everyday processes, or replicate everyday imagery and techtonics in the final

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Design. Alternatively, the architect can choose to ‘get their hands dirty’, wherein the imperative is to ‘get it done’ using whatever resources and skills are available.

**Design methods for others**

The first precedent approach that frames my Creative Works is by Stalker/Osservatorionomade (Stalker). Stalker is a collaborative art/architecture practice that formed in the wake of a student occupation of The University of Rome in the late 1990s, and set up within a squat of a migrant Kurdish community at *Campo Boario*. From 1999 they held events with that local community – talking, drinking tea, drawing, workshopping, walking and building interpretive maps and urban art that expressed migrant traditions and minority political struggles. The series of projects at *Faux-la-Montagne* (2002-2006) are also indicative of their participatory approach. In a small diminishing rural community in Limousin, France, Stalker created a ‘children’s laboratory’ at the primary school for children to draw masterplans, events and paths of the town. An exhibition of the drawings culminated in a walking event connecting the villagers to play games, make conversations and talk about the future. Stalker’s work employs events with collaborative physical activities and their approach is embedded, tactical, and playful.

The second precedent approach is by muf Art and Architecture (muf). The practice muf is a group of female architects/artists that was founded in England in 1994. The cover of their book *This is What We Do* in 2001, features bright pink text and a picture of five white sheep eating green grass in front of a red-brick housing tenement under a hazy-blue sky. For their project for *Barking Town Centre* (2010), muf constructed a relic-like 7m high brick wall art folly, like a theatre backdrop, imagining a lost past. Their work privileges multiple interpretations. Indicatively in a 1998 chapter ‘Shared Ground’ about a public artwork and urban...
design project preceding the urban renewal of Southwark Street (1997), images are spread over the page boundaries and margins. The text is populated by quotes and narratives from residents, and snippets of ‘this and that’. The broader approach of muf profiles events and memories (old and new); placemaking, stories and creating shared meanings, are the key features of their architecture.

Inspired by the Situationists, the third approach describes the recent emergence of numerous (trendy) entrepreneurial practices that undertake ‘urban art’, ‘activation’ and ‘placemaking’. Of the past decade, one popular collection from this movement includes projects by Candy Chang. For Before I Die (2011) in New Orleans, Chang’s team covered a derelict building in blackboards and stencils, inviting passersby to write their dreams for the future with coloured chalk. Over five hundred ‘Before I die walls’ have been created in over sixty countries (!) and playful graphic design sensibilities are obligatory. In Career Path (2011), for the University of Turku, Finland, Chang’s footpath asks “What made you come alive as a child and why?” One of Chang’s early works in New Orleans – bearing reference to Archigram supergraphics – Hypothetical Development (2010), is a collage for a derelict shopfront depicting a food truck, fruits and vegetables. Often morphing into pop-up shops, street festivals, markets and community gardens, this activation approach is fun and asks for temporary artistic public interaction; it embeds rhetorical statements about urban development into the aesthetics.

Design methods for oneself

As much as any participatory project is a creative proposal for others, each proposal is a critical provocation made by an architect/artist in context. Each provocation manifests a political position. At times a participatory action is intended as part of a strategy – to attain some new power for action as part of a greater narrative – others tactical – to heuristically explore another way of doing or seeing something. Mapping possibilities and simply expressing liberal notions, they proclaim ‘I/we can do this!’.


In a three-part review of various art practices in the context of urbanism and capitalism, Marta Rosler reiterates how important it is to recognise one’s political standpoint, especially because most projects end up provoking different outcomes than what was intended.\textsuperscript{22} Conversely, in Did Someone Say Participate?, Shumon Basar poses that the participatory architect’s role is a ‘professional amateur’, who sees differently and provokes other people to recognise themselves.\textsuperscript{23} Subsequently one may ask, ‘what do I want to participate in?’, yet struggles to remain cognisant of the limits to one’s affect.

At first reading, opaque, verbose and peppered with Deleuzian philosophy, Doina Petrescu’s “Losing Control, Keeping Desire” describes the mode of participation practiced by \textit{atelier d’architecture autogérée} (aaa); Petrescu’s text leaves space for questions.\textsuperscript{24} The work of aaa is deeply embedded, indeed, the directors Petrescu and Dominique Petcou spend six to eight years focused on a single community project, working in the community in the week and on the weekend in numerous capacities.\textsuperscript{25} The proposition of aaa is that an architect does not impose participation, but participates themselves, acting more as curator to liberate desire, posing questions and practicing principles, rather than simply disciplining or controlling.

For aaa, aesthetics are not separate from use; they are contiguous with heterogenous structures and processes, co-produced, stop/start, architect-user/user-architect, a series of collages on collages, informal meetings, cooking and laughing together; such that one leaves space for others.\textsuperscript{26} The question to ask over and over is: ‘How should an architect get involved with this (rhizomatic) activity?’ As a philosophical practice this approach demands more sophisticated governance, and internally, challenges how an architectural practice might practice.

What appears from these precedents is the suggestion that practicing participation includes internal processes that the architect must take on themselves. Therefore, one asks not only if one wants to participate (cognisant of one’s own political motivations), but how one should be. This recognises that one’s


\textsuperscript{25} Petrescu and Petcou shared this insight of a single-focused and durable project approach over long French-English conversation in Melbourne, 11 July, 2013.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 51; 46-55.
own participation and practice affects others, and — by nature of the very principles employed — one’s own practice.

In a somewhat poignant approach to recognising one’s own relationship to architectural production, Jane Rendell in “Doing it, (Un)doing it, (Over)doing it yourself: Rhetorics of Architectural Abuse”, retells of Rendell’s self, and a messy, nostalgic love in a do-it-yourself Clapham squat in London.\(^{27}\) As an architect, one’s own feelings, memories and relationships construct one’s subjective value systems, and, occupying a site can include who one interacts with, speaks with and listens to, and what one reads. Inscribing the architect’s self into the story, Rendell recognises the precarious relationship of the ‘occupying architect’. Where desire is provoked through personal and emotional transgression, it follows that danger can be seductive.

Reflecting on architectural practice

It seems that one should constantly question ‘what is appropriate for an architect to participate in?’; in particular ‘where is it best for me to step forward/backwards?’; and more politically and intimately ‘do I want to participate?’; and ‘how can I get involved in this?’. This section has considered approaches for participation in architecture, providing a background of what, why and how to do it, and how to do it in relation to others and oneself. It is notable that with the purpose of affording opportunities for others to participate, the architectural precedents focus on attracting participation through events and stories and embedding oneself.

Principles for Urban Design

In this section, referring now to urban design, I am gathering broader themes that design and construct the city and its experience. These overlap with architectural practice yet focus on less-tangible urban concepts that have less-definite boundaries: public, space, society, and power. This urban design theory provides a context for participatory architectural practice.

Background: what, why participatory urban design

Urban design has been significantly influenced by theory that is fundamentally participatory and political in its concern. Jane Jacob’s 1961 *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* revalued the bottom-up, diverse, everyday patterns and structures of the street, rather than the products of top-down homogenous ideals.\(^{28}\)


Similarly, Henri Lefebvre’s Right to the City in 1968 proclaimed that the city is produced by everyday synthesis and use, not exchange value; Lefebvre seeks to re-establish the rights of everyday people.\textsuperscript{29}

Looking to locate themes of democracy, Richard Sennett’s “Open City” argues that issues of citizenship and participation are key to the design of the city.\textsuperscript{30} Jacobs, Lefebvre and Sennett’s paradigm of urban design is bottom-up, everyday and participatory urbanism.

The instrumentalisation of the city by capitalism and Modernism is a recurrent theme for urban design theory, leading to propositions for more engaged and diverse design processes involving people. As explored in the previous chapter, Theory Review, where Modernism rationalised urban life and human energy “relieved from the burdens […] of subjective interpretation”, \textsuperscript{31} Max Weber and Herbert Marcuse argued that specialisation led to ‘society in a cage’, of ‘totally administered’ ‘hollow men’ and the destruction of vitality, sexuality and identity.\textsuperscript{32} In urban space individuals find and generate energy through negotiating complexity.


\textsuperscript{30} “In the past, thinking about democracy focused on issue of formal governance; today it focuses on citizenship and issues of participation which have everything to do with the physical city and its design.” Richard Sennett, “The Open City,” in The Endless City, ed. Richard Burdett, et al. (London: Phaidon Press, 2007), 296.


\textsuperscript{32} Marshall Berman quotes Herbert Marcuse, “… no egos, no ids, their souls are devoid of inner tension or dynamism; their ideas, their needs, even their dreams are not their own; their inner lives are ‘totally administered’, programmed to produce exactly those desires that the social system can satisfy, and no more.” Original in Herbert Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society (Beacon Press, 1964), 9, quoted in Berman, All That Is Solid Melts into Air, 28-29.
and tracing new paths, forming their own subjective interactions, desires and meanings. As a proposition, urban designers could encourage processes of discovery, tension, multiple expression, and therefore vitality in society. This could be done through methods that set and invite agonistic participatory processes in design conceptualisation, development, execution and occupation.

**Design methods for others**

To focus on participatory processes, the principal urban design approach that directs my Creative Works, is an emphasis on place-making over place. Place starts by recognising philosophically, the inseparable connection between being and the world – ‘Being-in-the-World’. The approach is that fundamentally connecting one’s experience and process of subjectivity and consciousness, with one’s physical objects and environments, place – a development from space – provides meaning amidst an industrialised and commodified city. Place is recognisable, imbued with memory and social value; placemaking emphasises the activity of ‘getting there’.

One argument is that in emphasising place in urban design, designers seek objects and static physical outcomes which leads to the proliferation of iconography designed to communicate in the global marketplace rather than engage as an experience with the heterogenous nature and processes of people. Emphasising instead the process of meaning production, the term ‘placemaking’ appreciates ‘space’ – a more imperceptible concept – from/in/with which people may actualise themselves and their own subjective

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senses of place. Through agonistic participation one can (pro)claim and mobilise space. Place then becomes not only a material outcome, but also a product of social interaction, experiment, argument and tension. Here, participatory design processes invariably produce stories. The thought is that these stories can be narrated by the subjective experiences of a participant, and, indeed, can afford the negotiation of differences and ways of being in an active way.

The second approach I wish to draw upon to describe a participatory approach to urban design, considers the capacity for people to leave a mark in their environment – a ‘trace’. This at once describes a method for placemaking, emphasising physical space and its capacity to be adapted and show evidence of occupation. The concept is akin to nesting, or making a home; a person is able to make recognisable changes to a space so that it might function fit-for-use, reflect and communicate to others and oneself. Typical corresponding design manifestations could be in the form of loose parts and opportunistic changes: furniture, decorations, paint, storage of personal effects, or simply material patina.

In shared and interstitial public spaces the ‘trace’ principle presents a challenge relevant to agonistic participation. In the context of an urban environment that severely limits, or prohibits traces, unfamiliar forms of public negotiation may be required to incorporate both practical and theoretical tensions. This negotiation includes processes of maintenance and territorialisation: cost, schedules of conflicting or overlapping uses, disagreement over expression and customs, formal and informal ownerships, risk management, tenure and opportunity. Agonistic, participatory architecture aims to both afford different traces, and negotiate them.

Design methods for oneself

Is it possible to consider that the same principles of place, placemaking and leaving a trace include participation of the architect too? To make this point, I could coin ‘Being-in-the-same-World’, wherein an architect fundamentally values their own connection to the site, client and community. Instead of


42. Beyerle, “Agnostic Participation: A Political and Architectural Opportunity.”
objectifying or problematising a circumstance, an agonistic participatory architect might recognise their own arguments and situated power as assets and reality. In this philosophical frame of positive desire one exercises agency to one’s own ends, either employing vested power to strategically shape a project, or, attaining power through tactical moves: to create and take opportunities, and to transform and or subvert existing resources.\(^43\)

An agonistic process may be more open to explore this strategic/tactical tension such that experiences, disciplinary advantages (biases) and perceived conflicts of interest are critically recognised, challenged, and mobilised. Subsequently, an architect may attempt to participate as a citizen too – rather than step back to an ideal concept or neutrality – so that participation becomes an open exchange, constructing a site or community through back and forth, non-linear and congruent relationships.\(^44\)

With a self-participative approach, the role and responsibility of an architect is significant.\(^45\) One’s agency to work in one project or another, with one concept, another method, or engage with this or that stakeholder, opens as a space for critical reflection, self development and politics. As art theorist Rosalyn Deutsche asks, ‘What conflicts produce and structure this (social) space?’; ‘Which concepts of public (politics) are constructed and practiced here?’; ‘What is my concept of public and my role (responsibility)?’\(^46\) Political action is a looking for where to participate, how, when and with whom.

Agonistically, through participation the architect can bring, see and excavate particular politics in the design process, facilitate hidden things to reveal themselves, and, leave their own inscriptions in situation. It’s not conceiving ‘the community’ as a static thing, but an inside-outside immanent process that can be intervened

\(^43\) De Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life.


\(^46\) Rosalyn Deutsche defines public space as what is left out – or excluded. Deutsche poses two poignant contentions. The first: “Social space is produced and structured by conflicts. With this recognition, a democratic spatial politics begins.” Deutsche, Evictions, xxiv; and the second: “But the question of the meaning of the public is not settled by equating public space with political space. Rather, a new question arises:Which politics?” Ibid., xvi-iii.

\(^47\) Hill, Actions of Architecture.
in (designed) at multiple levels in many ways.\textsuperscript{48} In this immersive and tactical approach, Lefebvre’s principle of the city through the synthesis of everyday life is (theoretically) possible; perhaps by critically expressing one’s own desires, in-situ and in exchange, an architect may demonstrate a philosophical process for others.\textsuperscript{49}

Reflecting on urban design

The emphasis of this section has been on the significance, forms and processes of connecting people to (urban) spaces. Agonistic participatory urban design in public spaces — social and physical — may afford opportunities for deep negotiation that mobilise subjective, social and political processes, including one’s own process as an architect.

Art Praxis: social practice and antinomous value

Background: what, why participation in art praxis

By embracing a particularly critical conversation about participation in art praxis, Claire Bishop’s spectre of ‘social practice’ affords further critical definition of a methodology for practice and research of agonistic participatory design in architecture.\textsuperscript{50} As noted in the previous chapter, this starts with Nicholas Bourriaud’s seminal definition of ‘relational aesthetics’.\textsuperscript{51} Bourriaud offered an art practice that “takes as its theoretical horizon the sphere of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an autonomous and private symbolic space”.\textsuperscript{52} Emerging in a urbanised society, relational-aesthetic artists reject modern styles and representations, and work to construct micro-utopias. Each work of this art acts as an ‘interstice’

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\textsuperscript{49} Kahn, “Overlooking: A Look at How We Look at Site Or...Site as ‘Discrete Object of Desire.’”; Foucault, The Government of Self and Others.
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\textsuperscript{51} Nicolas Bourriaud, Relational Aesthetics (Dijon: Les presses du réel, 2002).
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\textsuperscript{52} Bourriaud in Bishop, Participation, 160.
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– an insertion in a social context that achieves something and provides an everyday example, effectively constructing another situation. Each creates a concrete space in which community may ask questions.53

Bishop and Bourriaud draw a participatory lineage through the Situationists and Marcel Duchamp to artists from the 1990s and 2000s, including Rirkrit Tiravanija, Gonzalez-Torres, Matthew Barney, and Thomas Hirschhorn. They differ slightly in their emphasis. Bishop – employing Jacques Rancère’s philosophy and seeking to redeem a role for the aesthetic – argues for aesthetic evaluation that is ‘antinomous’. Therein and furthermore, Bishop rejects either autonomous (wholly internal and ethically-motivated) or heteronomous (external, comparative) positions that diminish authorship. Bourriaud acknowledges a personal concern for democracy and – as an example of Félix Guattari’s post-capitalist philosophy – values the subjective praxis of the embedded artist. Bishop focuses on a location, Bourriaud on process.

As introduced in my previous chapter Theory Review, the exchange between Grant Kester’s critique of Bishop’s seminal paper, “The Social Turn” and Bishop’s rebuttal is a poignant case for this critical definition.54 Exploring authorship and a more ‘substantive analysis’ of the terms ‘ethics’, ‘activism’, ‘political engagement’ and ‘aesthetics’, Kester recognises pluralist intentions in creative work. Kester’s critique offers an important perspective when considering agonistic and participatory principles: that an artist may constitute ‘value’ and ‘aesthetic’ autonomously. Where Bishop’s (antinomous) evaluation seems reasonable because it synthetically considers the artwork itself and its position in life against other artworks, what the evaluation also emphasises is a policing of boundaries, effectively ignoring the emergence of both the nuanced (political) meaning and the contextual practice it exhibits/implies. Bishop defines value from a disengaged standpoint – the critic, somewhat devoid of the specific project context, using a deconstructive method from without. It follows that instead of the aesthetic, what is at stake in social practice is depth of political and moral contents and evaluation in art (and life).55 This is a stinging indictment.

53. See Nicolas Bourriaud, “Relational Aesthetics,” in Participation, ed. Claire Bishop, Documents of Contemporary Art (London, Cambridge, Mass.: Whitechapel:MIT Press, 2006 (1998)), 160-62. Bishop quotes Bourriaud: “Does it allow me to exist as I look at it or does it, on the contrary, deny my existence as a subject and does its structure refuse to consider the Other? Does the space-time suggested or described by this artwork, together with the laws that govern it, correspond to my real-life aspirations? Does it form a critique of what needs critique? If there was a corresponding space-time in reality, could I live in it?” Bishop, Participation, 167.


Looking for further definition, one may reiterate and appreciate the fundamental character of collaborative, participatory art work by considering the synthesis of two principal notions from Chantal Mouffe. First, the art work recognises that it has a political dimension – the artist constructs a meaningful reality that proposes something specific in context: a what. Second, the artist defines the politics of the work, a how to construct this reality, with whom, and using which principles (participation and agonism). Somewhat parallel to Bishop’s antinomy, Mouffe’s definition poses an artist who mobilises, nuances and intersects two terms – ‘the political’ and ‘politics’.

Why (agonistic) participation is (still) difficult

By implication, the preceding discussion poses two problems for participatory practice. The first is that a creative practitioner has a responsibility to engage, not only with the formal aesthetics of their craft, but to engage others in becoming expert in a situation, such that participation produces social interstices (political dimensions) and typological practices (politics). Recognising the tension between these interstices and practices is the space of agonism. A proliferation of this responsibility sees artists (and architects) leading community cultural development (social work). The second implied problem involves the everyday praxis dimension that this work requires and thus a question: if the subjectivity of the artist is a key site (too) for art work, where is the place (and limits) for self-care? Through agonistic participation, the artist may also be consumed, fought and affected.

Conclusion

Words, politics, explorations and ethnographic methods in architecture

At first reflection, this Practice Review reveals that there are many ‘thick’ words available in the rich field of participation and an architect can create a whole new vocabulary for practice that is meaningful, in the context of others and for oneself. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz’s methodology of ‘thick description’ resonates here – that everyday stories accumulated through the researcher’s own involvement in the


57. University of Melbourne Centre of Cultural Partnerships; Spectres of Evaluation: Rethinking: Art Community Value; ibid.

context generates the understanding, and language. This vocabulary uses known words but new nuances for the attention and intention of participatory architecture, specific to the situation. Furthermore and characteristically, the field of participation is developing meanings, approaches and methods in practice – and will continue to do so in different contexts and by different practitioners.

And, because agonism allows and encourages a pluralism of meanings – through a sensitivity to context that actively engages with difference, rather than generalises – participation is activated by radical involvement, project by project, in an heuristic way. Designing participation is thus a process negotiating both for others and for oneself. Where agonism in participation means including one’s own politics, experiences and words, it also means engaging with others and arguing through creative action.

It may therefore be useful to consider a taxonomy of methodological questions and applications. Each term must be able to be adapted to enhance an aspect of participation and agonism, or attract people to take part. Thus there are designed ‘modes of practice’. These function as design actions, multi-modal perspectives and creative ‘propositions’ to the broad field and the specific situations. And there are real ‘occupations’ that serve as opportunities for reflection. The modes draw from precedent participatory practices. Through my Creative Works, I identified a set of common ‘modes of practice’ towards negotiating a specific project theme. These specific modes were: communication, event, governance, making, material, process, and space (occupation). Recognising these layers, there is a lot left to be negotiated in the design process – and thus, space for the quality of the architecture to emerge, heuristically.

Second reflection: I explored how an architect may do this work (or act). One aspect I articulated across my Practice Review of architecture and urban design is the politics of how people relate to one another, and therein, what is included and excluded, privileged or diminished. I named this exploration ‘design methods for others’, because it considered frameworks for working with other people, and, ways of conceiving how people work with each other. Here is where principles for professional practice necessarily come forward.

One can suggest employing a suite of particular tones; different emphases for skill-sharing and interpersonal development; and nuanced techniques. Yet what consistently emerges from any implied awareness is the critical decision – ‘which politics?’ Decidedly, in practice an architect brings themselves forward to critically participate, and, opens or closes to others. Control is implied. My review brought forward some of the

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challenges with this paradigm, and a redefinition of some key architectural terms in normative practice – such as brief/scope/site; concept, development, documentation, construction; and architect, client, and user.

Third: what I am describing is space for exploration. This is an existing space permeating all architectural and urban design projects, that can be activated through participation for one power or another: Agonism, in this case, is another way of tactically repurposing space. Learning through doing. By situating my Creative Works within the context of this Practice Review, I also aim to provide an opportunity for strategic thinking across the discipline of architecture, and the contexts of contemporary creative practice.

This framing within and across projects may be closer to achieving both an antinomous evaluation of participatory work, and, simultaneously, an autonomous evaluation. Here, I am recognising the particular focus and opportunity of the subjective – my own praxis so to speak. This is not so much about understanding reception of participatory work per se – although my booklets are structured to provide a lens into the intentions and outcomes of my actions (distinguishing aim and proposition from occupation), the focus of my research is on developing a practice. One, in (research) practice I am revealing that an architect’s own learning process may be shared for the benefit of others’ understanding: I am asking what is participation? And, two, through demonstrating the construction of my own interstitial world example(s) in context, I share my practical experience in a project and provide an example for others to follow: I am asking how to participate agonistically? Another term for this sense of participation may be ‘heuristic practice’. An heuristic approach is common in precedent participatory practices, because it provides spaces for new words, for learning, and new understanding(s) which are nuanced, and which serve as foundations of change and creativity in participatory projects.

To research this set of interpersonal and subjective mode–proposition–landscapes requires explication by doing it. To understand what participation is, what it means, and how to do it, I have undertaken a series of Creative Works, in which I am embedded as an architect. How the Creative Works will be explored analytically is through ethnographic methods of reflective practice and thick description; using my own case studies I will work to think across a project timeline and deeply in a project situation.

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To be able to consider broader themes of agonistic participation for the discipline, I practice across different contexts, modes, and scopes (time periods and stages). I am also focusing my research on smaller scale projects which are conceivably more hands on. This chapter noted different, multi-modal methods and tools for engaging in participation in architecture. It suggested that principles and methods for practice need to be developed heuristically – in the projects themselves, through politics and, as a reflective body of practice – between numerous projects.
Research Methods

The following is a short chapter that explains the methodologies applied in this research. It is written as a statement as opposed to a rationale, because the Creative Works approach, and the nature of my research questions exist to develop both methods and a methodology respectively.

It was a deliberate decision that I undertake this research through Creative Works and it flows from that decision that my research methods needed to be constantly informed by multiple methodologies – picked and chosen from an evolving toolkit, moment to moment – thinking laterally. This multiplicity is because in Creative Works the researcher must be at once sensitive – to context and situation, planning and deciding beforehand or changing tools on the spot, testing and experimenting, in an intuitive fashion with regard to what has been used before – and, analytical – reflecting back on the creative process through a defined lens (and set of research methods) that extracts learning. It is important to note that critical thinking applies to both of these spaces of research.1

In Creative Works the necessity is research through the carrying out of the work. My approach to this was deliberatively heuristic, through reflection in action – projecting and planning based on what is going on and what I can project, and then engaging in the ‘thickness’ of the situation itself to make something happen. This means that the methodology values nuances, stories, and direct experiences within each project itself, and, through personal involvement, crafting a narrative of participation responding to the immediate context (rather than application of precedent research or historical research). The reality of my research is that I started many of the projects well before I formally started the research, and so I am looking for a succinct window to study, and also what to exclude. The projects in my architectural practice flow in parallel and from one to another, and gather momentum to become meaningful as a practice through a lot of hard work, and at times, accidents.

While the relationship between the (theoretical) review chapters and the (practical) Creative Works is both direct and indirect, it is also agonistic, and embodied – each part provides positively different perspectives on the same questions, which are later synthesised in the two discussion chapters.

So first, a word about the Creative Work projects and how they came about. The projects originate from my own practice work developing in parallel to this research project on architecture and participation through agonism.2 The opportunity to research the Creative Works projects was implicit in my taking them on for my practice, and I looked early on for scope to explore participation in them – or more accurately as I present in the Creative Works booklets themselves – how participation might be key to each project’s development. This in some ways is the main question that a practice of architecture and participation considers. The agonism bit makes this all the more vital a discussion because it willingly engages the tensions in the project.

To attempt to find fruitful opportunities for research learning, the projects I chose were at a manageable scale, in periods of a few months to a year. This was to keep the intensity of focus high enough to realise the role of my own participation and recognise the methods that are developed throughout the work. This was also to find tangible projects that are meaningful to people, and could have real outcomes. As this work is deeply challenging to undertake (for the architect and the participants both), in some ways the meaning of the project really matters: it has to ‘be worth it’. The limitations of that pre-judgement come out in my case by case Discussion chapter: ‘Commitment’ is one word to describe this.

Often in participatory work the terms of authorship prove difficult to define and may change, especially in terms of attribution in partnered and collaborative teams. Tension arises. Participating as an architectural practice, with colleagues, and also participating myself as an architect within a project, and person to person within a community, there was also the opportunity for me to identify and develop patterns across projects; – for example: ‘we did this last time and this happened…’, ‘what if we do that again, but alter it in this way?’ A continuing set of words function as a toolbox of tactics and strategies. The more I have worked on projects with my colleagues, the more shorthand conversation and critical thinking we developed so that we could design the next steps or respond to a particular moment in a project situation. I led this inquiry as a researcher. (Yet, knowledge of the local context outside of each project was assumed by all the participants.)

In order to present the work in an exegesis I devised a way of looking at the work called ‘modes’ of practice. Recognising that I needed a distance from which to analyse the work, I initially sought a ‘mixed-method’, ‘multi-modal’ framework. The modes are typological ways of working – methods, tools, tactics, actions, steps

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RESEARCH METHODS

– to be applied, nuanced and expanded in a project towards its ongoing success. Modes are propositions for each project, that are employed to purposefully structure the participation and interaction. The way the architect critically employs and develops these modes forms part of a strategy, or broader concept exploration throughout the project. Modes are also nuanced in the moment – they are tactical, design actions. Despite the fact that the booklets can be read as deliberate applications of multi-modal thinking, I did not predetermine the modes at the start of the projects. Rather, they emerged upon reflection of the rhythms and patterns, recurrent words and deliberate actions that I designed into the projects, through responding to my question of what is participation and how to do it – through agonism. This is but one approach I draw upon.

Within this process, upon reflection it is clear that my deeper methodology is heurism – an approach of each time starting-from-the-start, without too many assumptions, projecting a little forward and then back, but at each moment realising a (sort of) first moment of discovering by doing. I see as valuable and diffuse, the accumulation of the series of different experiences from a variety of case studies and situations. Meanings shift. The vocabulary for participation that I employ in this thesis is pivotal, because it holds together respective meanings of participation (and agonism) that evolve when engaging with the nuances presented in each of the Creative Works.

My methodology is about how I approach the research to develop understanding of the what and how of architecture, participation and agonism. The purpose of framing the research through Creative Works is to discover and develop practical methods. This purpose runs simultaneous with the need for outcomes in the projects themselves and development of an architectural practice. Considering this dynamic that the Creative Works generate over a research project, this chapter attempts to explicate the research specifically towards definitions in my written exegesis. Although helpful to generate my understanding, these methodological definitions are more about what I do to frame and analyse my work in an academic sense, rather than how I go about work as a practitioner within the ensuing projects. Nevertheless, this framing and analysis provides a lien for other researchers and practitioners intent on developing their own experiences of and in participatory architecture.

In short, this chapter aims to frame and structure the presentation and analysis of the Creative Works part of the research; the four Creative Work booklets, and my corresponding two Discussion chapters.

The key methodologies I present in this chapter are three:

3. Out of the projects I developed the modes of communication, event, governance, making, material, process, and space (occupation).
RESEARCH METHODS

- Reflection in action;
- Thick description; and
- Case studies.

Three Methods
Reflection in action

The first method has a number of different terms familiar to geography and the social sciences. As such the measures, questions and answers are more qualitative than quantitative. Arguably, in unpacking Harold Garfinkel’s ethnomethodological approach to research, Donald Schön’s work on the reflective practitioner becomes poignant here. Schön described how an architect thinks – in broader terms, how a professional thinks and researches through practice, and more specifically, assembles a type of heuristic, iterative process. ‘If I do this, what happens?’ – ‘oh, I see – that would mean this and might allow that to happen’, ‘but if I do that, this occurs’. Schön called this ‘reflection in action’. Each time I talk, write, draw, and make physical things to tangibly test these directions, they are explicated, not just thought about. One way to understand it, is to think of the prototype.

To do this as a researcher and architect, I keep a diary, draw diagrams, collect photographs, read, discuss with others and write things. These are shared, critiqued, built upon and sometimes discarded. It means focusing on both the brief at hand, and learning how to develop the project real-time. In the research I write journal entries, sometimes regularly, sometimes rarely, and record pictures to remember. The parallel processes of reading and writing, with making are key. Sometimes the investigation and critique is in the design work itself, other times it is in the reading, and challenging the theory. There is a clear sense of looking for what works and what comes up by proposing this way forward (or that).

Another term for this is ‘action research’, that develops cycles of proposition, action, reflection, and iteration. Action research is a typical participatory research method in other design disciplines. This cycle I modelled in the Theory Review, recognising the importance of processes, time, development, change and progress.

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Thick description

The second method is ‘thick description’, or (embedded) ethnography more generally. The concept of thick description originates from philosopher Gilbert Ryle, and was developed by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz. The term is anthropological, its selection says some things about an overarching way of seeing the ‘other’ side of architecture. Through action-research it delves into everyday life, the relationships between people, and the relationships between people and space with deeper – ‘thick’ – understanding of the contexts that surround moments and string them together.

What the ethnographer is in fact faced with … is a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and which [the researcher] must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render. … Doing ethnography is like trying to read (in the sense of ‘construct a reading of’) a manuscript-foreign, faded, full of ellipses, incoherencies, suspicious emendations, and tendentious commentaries, but written not in conventionalised graphs of sound but in transient examples of shaped behaviour.

Our double task is to uncover the conceptual structures that inform our subjects’ acts, the ‘said’ of social discourse, and to construct a system of analysis in whose terms what is generic to those structures, what belongs to them because they are what they are, will stand out against the other determinants of human behaviour. In ethnography, the office of theory is to provide a vocabulary in which what symbolic action has to say about itself – that is, about the role of culture in human life – can be expressed.

I selected this as a way to present the work and build practical understanding about it. This understanding seems to be lacking in the literature. Architectural projects in themselves are particularly complex and nuanced, and against this much of the theoretical approaches in the literature to thinking about architecture and participation have been abstract, idealistic and disconnected. What I have decided to do in my research is to become deeply embedded in the work – to actually participate myself and use my own misunderstanding, lack of understanding, or developing understanding as an asset. And, through this ‘thickness’ develop a language.

As such I will structure my case study presentations by stating what is happening in the context when I begin each time, explain what I propose to do, and then reflect on what the subsequent occupation of that proposition for participation was: context, before and after. However, looking closer, within the case studies I consider and connect the processes that participants are undertaking in a deep way, including myself, and think about others’ experiences – asking where they are at and where they are going. To do this I implicitly focus on a series of lived situations – scenes – that demonstrate instrumental concepts of architecture, participation and agonism. Instrumental, because they effect change towards the goal(s) of the project from one moment to another.

8. Geertz, “Thick Description Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture.”
9. Ibid., 10.
10. Ibid., 27.
RESEARCH METHODS

In the booklets I presented actual moments which will allow readers, researchers and practitioners to understand intimately what it means to undertake this kind of architectural work. This is enhanced by pictures and captions. Instead of trying to describe the whole project, the emphasis is on deep moments – acts and scenes – that demonstrate a variety of issues and turning points in the work. The focus of my exposition is on turning points (scenes). This focus reveals agonism as a tool, and demonstrates the complexity of participatory practice – and in someways – the mastery that is required.

Ethically, my approach seeks to include the excluded, and speak to the hidden, implicit parts of the architectural process, whilst still producing architecture ‘in the meantime’. It is my experience that much is made to exclude things that are not architecture, subsequently disempowering and disconnecting the significance of the architectural process. My research seeks to avoid these must/mis-definitions of architecture that arguably are emphasised through Modernism and paternalistic approaches of separation. Instead, I try to listen to difference. By taking an agonistic approach against and within myself as architect – that is, embracing the tensions and conflicts that arise, some of the normative parts of architecture provide me signposts of where not to focus lest my actions propagate the same lack of (critical) participation.

Thick description recognises the importance of narrative and storytelling. First, ‘narrative’, recognises the role of the architectural process to string together a rationale – a logic that develops from brief to concept design, to design development and documentation, and to construction and occupation. This process has its own nuance (and perhaps everyday words) when it comes to ‘acts’ and ‘scenes’ in a participatory project. Next, ‘storytelling’, recognises the engagement of the reader in the process of explicating the project – as that might be the reader of this thesis, another researcher, or indeed other members of the general public reading about the project. The story works to communicate and connect the reader to an understanding of a specific project, expecting their own engagement and exchange, and uses rhetoric and relation to do so. A sense of start, middle, end; plot, characters, and character development, and locations, here and there; as well as morals belongs to each story. Each architectural project has an arc of transformation, from aims, through concepts and propositions, to results and occupations; or put another way: context > idea of change > outcome. In participation especially, these terms are not only spatial, they also activate people and their stories.

A ‘thick description’, through text and images, recognition of storytelling, and manipulations of tense (present perfect, present, future, past and past perfect) works to facilitate understanding of my Creative Work and share the learnings I experienced in a tangible way.
Case studies

Finally, the third key method of structuring and performing the research is through case studies. My own projects rather than studying precedents. I undertook over two dozen projects, however I choose to present four of them in depth, and in a way that relates as a linear and iterative progression. There is a semi-lattice of issues in the case studies, different groupings that work to build connections between them – ideas, coworking, sequential stages, a whole city, a succinct location, no location, commercial, semi-public, public, solicited, unsolicited. To assure depth in the projects, I only selected projects for the research that could be considered ‘little’, ‘local’, and in some ways ‘public’; ‘semi-’ versions of the same are interesting and included. The minor case studies, that did not make it to the major booklets, are recognised as a context of my ‘learning to’ and I collate them as fiches – parallel image and text ‘moments’ – as a fifth booklet.

As already introduced in my background, one important step I made into considering how to present participation in my case studies, occurred in reading Claire Bishop’s seminal argument with Grant Kester in the area of collaborative art – “The Social Turn”, framing a methodology of critique. This reading introduced antinomous critique, but also a reminder to consider the work in its specific context. Following, I look at my case studies in depth one at a time, and, I also look at my case studies across one another. Where the booklets in themselves exhibit the work and start to critically show what occurs in the project, in the first Discussion chapter I go into more depth and analyse, case by case, what happened and what I did in each project as a creative and critical series of actions. The first Discussion chapter ends with a comparison of themes and modalities across case studies.

Bishop’s point is to look across projects both autonomously and heteronomously; what she calls ‘antinomous’ critique. There is also an inference here of a critical creative method. In my reflective reading, what Grant Kester’s counter-argument does is to (re)turn focus to the depth of the autonomous critique as foundation, notably including the intent of the creative (artistic) work that comes out of an intimate understanding – not only of how the project sits in the world, but with an emphasis on how the project unfolds in itself. To my research, this seems like a neat way of describing architecture and participation. The significance of this approach to research in architecture (criticism) may be suggested in the conclusion to Justine Clark and Paul Walker’s “Negotiating the Intention of the Work”:

To locate the intention of the work as the outcome of negotiation and interaction implies that architecture is neither subordinate to its worldly context nor separate from it. Thinking about architecture from this position does not vanquish the architect as authorial subject, but it does complicate what the architect might be. It acknowledges that architecture


What I extract from this debate when I also meditate on agonism is an intent to excavate meanings, politics, questions and values from the project itself, and then look across projects through different perspectives to develop methods and understanding about the practice of participation in architecture. Notably, it is my own perspectives – and those of ‘our Studio’ – that are privileged. My research is thus not a direct response to this debate but it does treat the question of emphasis – antinomous-autonomous-heterogenous – in a conscious way, thus the presentation of separate booklets highlighting specific contexts, multiple modes and themes, and case by case critique, and the ontological framework for my second Discussion chapter.

In the second Discussion chapter I bring forward works to look across the case studies and the broader research in a comprehensive, integrative way. It does not seek to provide overarching terms that can re-analyse the value of each project – for my research that would seem incongruous with an intently antinomous approach that recognises Kester’s contribution. The purpose of my second Discussion chapter – a synthesis – is much more outward facing, looking to reconnect my learning to the broader field, the processes and themes from my Theory Review and Practice Review chapters, and to reflect on the set of approaches I employed in the Creative Works – not as typologies or instructions, but means of consideration.

Because this research is by Creative Works, I value the projects in themselves. The question becomes what each of these projects contributes to their participants and the brief that came out of each interaction, and the intentions that I developed out of (and within) the projects themselves. Both for the autonomous content of the project in its own terms, and how it might contribute and explore the global terms of participation and the research antinomously, it is important to judge the critical quality of the design and execution of the participation in architecture – the participatory design process. The fine grain in this is not to be ignored as hard as it might be to grasp for a reader, especially because this research field recognises humans, and the social spaces of humans as deeply and differently nuanced.

A key aspect of my case study approach – and my selection of major case studies – is the use of different media and situations. These foster a multivalent understanding. Although I am using my own work I am also comparing different instances across different situations and times, usually involving many different people and timeframes. Modes of practice is one example of doing this. By comparing the works, and specific learnings in context, I try to recognise emergent methods for practice. I also provide a means to recognise an holistic approach for architecture that engages people.

Creative Works

[Please refer to the booklets of case studies:]

Booklet 1: Cathedral Place: site/space
Key modes in RED:
Communication; Event; Governance; Making; Material; Process; Space (occupation)

Booklet 2: Pop-up Hub Melbourne: making/materialisation
Key modes in RED:
Communication; Event; Governance; Making; Material; Process; Space (occupation)

Booklet 3: Hub Melbourne: practice/place
Key modes in RED:
Communication; Event; Governance; Making; Material; Process; Space (occupation)

Booklet 4: Ballarat Civic Hall / Coworking Space: facilitation/leadership
Key modes in RED:
Communication; Event; Governance; Making; Material; Process; Space (occupation)

[and, to the booklet of compiled project fiches:]

Booklet 5: Other projects [online: http://www.herestudio.net/phd-participation-in-architecture]
Figure 6: Sketch structure of the Creative Works booklets.
List of Creative Works

All of my Creative Works were carried out with other people. This included design, planning, and production. In all of the projects that I have listed as my Creative Works, I carried or shared ultimate responsibility for their creative direction from the perspective of an architect/artist. It follows that I have excluded numerous other projects and collaborations, which had an impact on the learning in this research project, and to which I made a contribution.

The full chronology of Creative Works and summary of authorship details is provided below. In this, authorship is considered in the academic sense and places more emphasis on individual privacy than attribution, which is notably different to the everyday sense in participatory practice. For the purposes of simplicity in the thesis chapters, I have substituted the various entities with the term ‘our Studio’.

The majority of projects were carried out as the architectural practice entity Here Studio to which my role was (co)director (with Michelle Emma James until the end of 2015) – all of this work was supported by staff and volunteers. Other major entities I represented include Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning / Melbourne School of Design, The University of Melbourne – including staff and students, and Urban Village Melbourne (UVM) – including associates, members and volunteers.

Invariably, all of the projects included clients, stakeholders, and community members, whose contribution was important, and immeasurable.

Representation of the projects

Four Creative Work booklets collapse a number of projects to exhibit practical development of the research in images and text:

- St Paul’s Cathedral Close + The Community of Chapter House Lane
- Pop-Up Hub Melbourne
- Hub Melbourne
- Ballarat Coworking Space + Ballarat Civic Hall

Other projects have been turned into project fiches compiled chronologically in a separate, fifth booklet [online only].

The following is a select list of projects from my practice, that were explicitly treated as part of the PhD research. This list is described from the perspective of the architect/artist.
Public events, competitions and installations

1. Active Creatives, event series, Melbourne, 2009-2011
   - ENTITIES: Bindarri, Urban Village Melbourne, Here Studio, Hub Melbourne
   - LEADERS: Glenn Todd, Ammon Beyerle

2. “here” PECHAKUCHA: Ayiti / Melbourne, Pecha Kucha Melbourne Volume 11, public talks event, Melbourne, 20 February 2010
   - ENTITY: Urban Village Melbourne
   - PARTNERS: Architecture for Humanity, WeLovePT, Klein Dytham Architecture, Architects for Peace, Fitt De Felice, Supermarkart, The AustraHaiti Foundation, and other individuals
   - SPONSORS: Monash University (Art and Design: Architecture), Visionary Design Development, Auspicious Arts Projects, Penny Rose Boutique
   - LEADERS: Ammon Beyerle, Michelle Emma James, Andrew Reynolds

3. Holes in the Wall (the backyard), art installation, Carlton, 25 March 2010
   - ENTITY: Urban Village Melbourne
   - PARTNER: City of Yarra
   - CURATORS: Theresa Harrison, Sonya Parton, Anga’aefonu Bain-Vete, Peta Glenn
   - SPECIFIC ARTISTS: Ammon Beyerle, Andrew Reynolds, Michelle Emma James

4. Rendezvous Wrongtown (the living room), art installation, Toorak, 7 August 2010
   - ENTITY: Urban Village Melbourne
   - CURATORS: Theresa Harrison, Tai Snaith, Vexta
   - SPECIFIC ARTISTS: Ammon Beyerle, Andrew Reynolds, Michelle Emma James, Andrew Beyerle

   - ENTITY: Here Studio, and other individuals
   - ORGANISER: Office of Urban Transformations Research, RMIT University
   - LEADERS: Ammon Beyerle, Michelle Emma James, Tim Derham

6. Design For an Active City, design competition, Melbourne, June – July 2011
   - ENTITY: Here Studio
   - ORGANISER: State of Design Festival
   - LEADERS: Michelle Emma James, Ammon Beyerle, Peter Spence

7. Flinders Street Station, design competition, Melbourne, June – September 2011
   - ENTITY: Here Studio
   - PARTNERS: CE Ingeniere, Chantilly Studio, Richard Falkinger Cathedral Architect and other individuals
   - ORGANISER: Office of the Victorian Government Architect
   - LEADERS: Ammon Beyerle, Michelle Emma James, Tim Derham
8. **CAPTheticAL** – design competition, events and exhibition, Melbourne, Canberra, Currumbin, November 2011 – March 2013
   - **ENTITIES:** The Engagement Studio, Here Studio
   - **PARTNERS:** David Lock Associates, ARUP, and other individuals
   - **ORGANISER:** Gallery of Australian Design, Centenary of Canberra
   - **LEADERS:** Ammon Beyerle, Michelle Emma James

   - **ENTITY:** Here Studio
   - **PARTNERS:** Connected Community HackerSpace, and other individuals
   - **SPONSOR:** Swinburne University of Technology
   - **LEADER:** Ammon Beyerle

10. **Beyond Zero Emissions – Live Retrofit**, set design and sequencing, Sustainable Living Festival, BMW Edge, Federation Square, 19 February 2012
    - **ENTITY:** Here Studio
    - **PARTNER:** Beyond Zero Emissions, and other individuals
    - **LEADERS:** Ammon Beyerle

    - **ENTITIES:** Here Studio, CivicCommunityProcessGroup, and other individuals
    - **POTENTIAL CLIENT:** City of Ballarat
    - **LEADERS:** Ammon Beyerle, Michelle Emma James

12. **Emotional Shelter; Emergency Shelter Competition**, Kensington, Federation Square, Melbourne and The Venny, Kensington December 2012 – May 2013
    - **ENTITY:** Here Studio
    - **PARTNERS:** Visionary Design Development, Giant Grass, ARUP, and other individuals
    - **SPONSORS:** GHG Home & Building Recycling, Bowens North Melbourne, Paarhammer
    - **LEADERS:** Michelle Emma James, Ammon Beyerle

    - **ENTITY:** Here Studio
    - **CURATOR:** Zanny Begg
    - **SPECIFIC ARTISTS:** Ammon Beyerle, Michelle Emma James
   - **ENTITIES:** Here Studio
   - **PARTNER:** Openfair Events
   - **SPONSOR:** Melbourne Knowledge Week, City of Melbourne, and other individuals
   - **LEADER:** Ammon Beyerle

   - **ENTITY:** Here Studio
   - **PARTNER:** Change Media
   - **CURATORS:** Centre for Cultural Partnerships
   - **LEADER:** Ammon Beyerle

Public architecture and urban design commissions

1. St Paul’s Cathedral Stakeholder Mapping, public open space, Melbourne, 2009-2010 [*See Creative Works – Booklet #1*]
   - **ENTITY:** Urban Village Melbourne – UVM Sustainable Urban Ecologies
   - **CLIENT:** Schloss Group, St Paul’s Cathedral, City of Melbourne
   - **LEADERS:** Ammon Beyerle, Richard Bruch

2. Hub Melbourne – Incubator, coworking space, Melbourne, 2010 [*See Creative Works – Booklet #2*]
   - **ENTITIES:** Here Studio, Hub Melbourne, and other individuals
   - **CLIENT:** Hub Melbourne
   - **LEADERS:** Ammon Beyerle, Michelle Emma James

3. Hub Melbourne – coworking space, Melbourne, 2010 [*See Creative Works – Booklet #3*]
   - **ENTITIES:** Here Studio, Hub Melbourne, and other individuals
   - **CLIENT:** Hub Melbourne
   - **LEADERS:** Ammon Beyerle, Michelle Emma James

4. STREAT Melbourne – The University of Melbourne, design and build café, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, 2011
   - **ENTITY:** Here Studio
   - **CLIENT:** STREAT
   - **LEADERS:** Ammon Beyerle, Peter Spence
5. Tudor St – Burnley Backyard, feasibility study and concept design, Burnley, 2011-2012
   - ENTITY: Here Studio
   - CLIENT: City of Yarra
   - PARTNERS: Richmond Community Learning Centre, Richmond Toy Library, Richmond Community Garden Group, and other individuals
   - LEADERS: Ammon Beyerle, Michelle Emma James

6. STREAT Melbourne – Racecourse Road, design and build café fitout, Flemington, 2011-2012
   - ENTITY: Here Studio, and other individuals
   - CLIENT: STREAT
   - LEADERS: Tim Derham, Ammon Beyerle, Michelle Emma James

7. Chantilly Studio, design and build office fitout, Melbourne 2011-2013
   - ENTITIES: Here Studio, Chantilly Studio, and other individuals
   - CLIENT: Chantilly Studio
   - LEADERS: Ammon Beyerle, Michelle Emma James, Katherine Sampson

   - ENTITY: Here Studio
   - PARTNERS: Creswick Ward Community Committee, Hepburn Shire Council, and other individuals
   - LEADERS: Michelle Emma James, Ammon Beyerle

9. Smith Street Dreaming, streetscape for annual event, Collingwood April-July 2013
   - ENTITY: Here Studio
   - PARTNERS: Community Arts, City of Yarra, Smith Street Working Group, Neighbourhood Justice Centre, Smith Street Business Association, Urban Bush Carpenters, Circus Oz, and other individuals
   - LEADERS: Michelle Emma James, Ammon Beyerle

    [See Creative Works – Booklet #4]
    - ENTITY: Here Studio, and other individuals
    - CLIENT: City of Ballarat
    - LEADERS: Ammon Beyerle, Michelle Emma James
Studio teaching in architecture and urban design

   - ENTITY: Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning / Melbourne School of Design, The University of Melbourne
   - SPONSOR: Lord Mayor’s Charitable Trust
   - PARTNER: St Paul’s Cathedral
   - STUDIO LEADERS: Ammon Beyerle, Tim Derham, Richard Falkinger
   - STUDENTS: Melissa Spencer, Kathleen Turner, Laura Osborne, Olga Fox, Ming Ern Marc Cheeng, Lauren Wheaton, Mun Chun Lee (Richard), Francis van Oss, Ryan Basel Hajeb, Klara Graszkiewicz, Mohamad Khairil bin Khalid, Davin Tanasa, Julie Gallegos, Stanislaus Onu

2. Close Over(p)lay: St Paul’s Cathedral, Master of Architecture Studio CDE, 2011 [See Creative Works – Booklet #1]
   - ENTITY: Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning / Melbourne School of Design, The University of Melbourne
   - SPONSOR: Lord Mayor’s Charitable Trust
   - PARTNER: St Paul’s Cathedral
   - STUDIO LEADERS: Ammon Beyerle, Tim Derham, Richard Falkinger
   - STUDENTS: Scott Butler, Jessie Legge, Rivkah Stanton, Emma Snaddon, Ben Shields, Euric Thor, Han Zhang, Jade Yew, Ben Schmideg, Tom Nelson, Jessie Chow, Madeline Sewall, Chu (Queenie) HiuChing, Jack Carolane, Ng Jack Kim Fui, Heather Mitcheltree

   - ENTITY: Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning / Melbourne School of Design, The University of Melbourne
   - SPONSOR: Lord Mayor’s Charitable Trust
   - PARTNERS: Circus Oz, Arts Victoria, and other individuals
   - STUDIO LEADERS: Ammon Beyerle, Tim Derham, Richard Falkinger
   - STUDENTS: Anton Hicks, Kristin Hamer, Frances Atkinson, Caitlyn Conley, Katherine Buchanan, Bronwyn Chong, Andrew Dal Pozzo, Keely Malady, Alex Lake, Robert Smith, Brian Ha Wing Bong, Angela Tanujaya, Mikhel Rodricks

   - ENTITY: Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning / Melbourne School of Design, The University of Melbourne
   - PARTNER: Victorian Eco-Innovation Lab
   - STUDIO LEADERS: Ammon Beyerle, Peter Spence
   - STUDENTS: Jake Taylor, Diana Pardo, Emma Seeley, Qi Li, Supika Sukjamsai, Saumya Kaushik, Yujie Liu
5. **S(C)ensory Renewal: Footscray, Master of Architecture Studio CDE, 2013**
   - **ENTITY:** Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning / Melbourne School of Design, The University of Melbourne
   - **STUDIO LEADERS:** Ammon Beyerle, Kelum Palipane
   - **STUDENTS:** Douglas Wan, Lana Blazanin, Mei Ting Ng, Jonathan Russell, Julie Tran, Stacie Chea Yin Ng, Tessa Williamson, Emma Lombardi

**Explicating the Creative Works**

I undertook numerous projects to test and develop key terms, methods and communication techniques. Each had their own specific set of constraints and opportunities to be encouraged and managed. The connecting idea was a focus on participation that is open to conflicts inherent in each situation. Each project was described as a specific occupation, in a specific ‘ecology’ – occupations and ecologies that are embodied, social and material. Themes in the local context were treated explicitly and implicitly. Beyond developing a sense of the value of specificity, the projects revealed limitations in the literature that I addressed with (extremely) everyday methods in project situations – in particular, the gap between maintaining the ideals of participation and what it means in reality to advance an architectural project. Working heuristically, the relationship between drawing/building and writing was both direct and indirect, both confirming and contradicting. The key terms and questions in the literature are abundantly relevant yet quite often belie the problematics of practicing. Instead these terms and questions highlight barriers within the theorised discipline of architecture – such as the absolute role of the expert *vis à vis* the client/user; the ideal of participation leading to consensus where the purpose of engagement is for agreement; the solution as professional goal; and the predominance of space/form as the expected content and ultimate outcome of an architectural project.

As described in my Research Methods chapter, the focus of more concerted design intent and analysis is using the organisation of the design and making process to explore participation. Each project required an approach that was ethnographic and immersed. The intricacies of conversations, conflicts and socialising, as well as standard practicalities of procuring the project become the site for developing participative design methods, and translating theoretical ideas tacitly. Explicit communication techniques, especially as a contribution to an emerging field of research outside of each project, needed development. Symposia and various public talks, face to face relationships with local practitioners, presentation of precedents, online blogs both individual and shared by project participants were early attempts to do this.

As a body of work, the Creative Works intend to demonstrate the development of my learning in practice. I am effectively putting forward a suite of selected work for examination within a thesis related to architecture, participation, agonism and practice. Across the four case studies, this learning extends from learning by mistakes, through developing principles, means of implementation and finally expertise.
Structuring the Creative Works for an exegesis

After I had already completed most of the projects, I set about considering how to represent – and then (re)analyse – the projects, for the purposes of a written exegesis. At first, it was evident that the purpose of representation was different again from the exegesis and the practice.

The purpose of the Creative Works as represented in practice was not to develop a general thesis, but multiple, specific theses. These can be summarised as:
- Procurement: to make the project and achieve an outcome;
- Exploration: to develop methods, test hypotheses, prototype, learn through doing; and
- Experience: to develop skills, refine questions, develop understanding, and learn through doing

The purpose of the Creative Works as represented in my exegesis (in five booklets) was not to analyse the projects, but to lay them out for analysis and understanding – to provide:
- Description: to explain the projects, tell the story, give significance to what was done;
- Illustration: to support text visually, give a deeper sense of the architectural qualities of the argument, provide evidence; and
- Exhibition: to show the projects, provide a record

Based on examples of precedent Creative Works theses, I elected to create a set of booklets, each describing a project. I selected four projects. My goal was to find a way to represent the depth of the projects in all their complexity, and, the specific moves that I made – ‘actions’, responsive to a local context. I intended to evaluate these actions, as the critical (participatory) architectural propositions of my Creative Works. [See Figure 6]

Exploring concepts of agonism and storytelling, and reading broadly, I borrowed from elements of Greek tragedy to consider Acts and Scenes as windows to read into my Creative Works.\(^1\) These also provided a relevant underlying structure of chorus, protagonist and antagonist, and an explicit sense of tension or conflict as the content of the story.

Simultaneously considering these projects as architectural undertakings, I determined to separate each booklet in three Acts:
- Aim of participation in the project (the brief);
- Propositions for participatory design in the project (the concepts); and
- Occupations and reflections in the project (the outcome – post occupation).

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And, then, focus on specific Scenes in each Act using photos and captions. Each Scene highlights an important turning in the project, with regard to an agonistic narrative. In participation, there are many turning points in the duration of the project, especially when tension and communication of differences are embraced to encourage passionate engagement between individuals and groups.

To develop a means to compare and contrast methods of practice – within projects that had different contexts and different briefs – I explored patterns across projects by highlighting multi-modal examples. As noted in my Research Methods chapter; these developed out of the specific case studies, and are therefore not definitive. I responded to the opportunities and constraints flowing out of an ethnographic and immersed lens – starting with and within context, and, as per my Practice Review, this was to move between, and critically value, autonomous, heterogenous and antinomous readings.2 Across the projects I developed seven specific modes of practice in alphabetical order:

- Communication
- Event
- Governance
- Making
- Material
- Process
- Space (occupation)

Analysis of all the projects – a matrix

Providing an overview, the matrix in my Appendix 1 compares various aspects of the projects against each other. It includes a description of my role, and basics of location, scale and type, as well as outcomes and timelines. The actual participatory outcomes are indexed, followed by the financial resources of the projects, and different actors in the projects – participations in categories, and their number. Finally I created an inventory of collaboration formats, and communication tools.

The matrix demonstrates the complexity of contexts project to project and, a suite of common (yet changing) tools and approaches for practice. The impact of this work is synthesised in the selection of the four case studies, and, more broadly my second Discussion chapter – a synthesis, and Conclusion.

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Discussion – Part 1

*a case by case critique*

Framing my Creative Works projects through the concept of project-specific approaches to participation, this chapter discusses the fine-grain knowledge gained in the projects, and critically analyses what I did in each project, and, between projects. The chapter is organised as a chronological story of my practical learning.

Aim, purpose and structure

Aiming to undertake a critical analysis of my Creative Works, case by case, I have structured this chapter to draw out the method inherent across my projects; wherein each project develops a single theme and demonstrates a series of modes of participatory practice. My Research Methods chapter described how these modes emerged from reflection. My critical analysis of each case study will rely on considering the duration of each project in itself – the before and after, specifically how each project theme changed over time due to my creative application of key modes of (participatory) practice. I will take a fine-grain look at my reading of the project context in itself, my propositions for each project and the resulting outcomes. This chapter explicates a way of critically analysing the design of participation in architecture.

The reflections and projections of knowledge from my Theory and Practice Reviews are applied heuristically, and so appear both directly and indirectly, explicitly and implicitly in the projects and this chapter.

To achieve this aim and purpose, I will:

1. Identify the ‘theme’ of each project: what was the broader context of the project and the methodological frame that was utilised to develop each project? This is the design brief, or the deeper design agenda for participation – notably via an agonistic approach.

2. Name the key ‘modes’ for each project: what are the main actions that were undertaken and developed towards the theme of each project? These are the design principles, or the structural elements to lead participation – again in an agonistic way.

3. Reveal the narrative of each project: what happened; what worked; what didn’t work – and why? This is a critical discussion of the project trajectory through the modes, and towards development of each project theme.

At the end of the chapter I will juxtapose the four case study themes to prepare a final synthesis.
Through this ordering I will work to understand the deeper dynamics of each mode in itself, how it works and what might be some of its limits. The emphasis here is looking at what a proposed action does in a project case, thereby explicating fine-grain aspects of consciously undertaking participation in architecture through agonism: my ‘how to do it’. It helps to think of the themes as nouns – the concept; and the modes as verbs – the activities.

Through a sequential structure that frames themes as wholes in themselves, I will work to exhibit some of the broader themes of participation in architecture more generally. I will do this with reference to real examples, and by comparison to my suite of themes (with embedded modes). My hypothesis is that just as architectural design can critically recognise an organising logic for physical form, participatory design can critically recognise an organising logic for process. Although the artefacts are revealing, the design emphasis is on process rather than thing. The theme is as a parti diagram for the participation process – the treatment. I am attempting to establish the value of looking in this manner as an area of architectural thought, that could justify a commensurate level of critique and recognition in pedagogy and practice as a built building does.

Describing how to practice participation in architecture through valuing agonism

Through the research I have been questioning how to practice participation in architecture through valuing agonism, and I have divided and structured my critical reflections in various formats to provide different readings from different depths and angles. The Creative Work booklets treat single projects in themselves, in a way that provides both chronological and spatial depth – each telling a story of a project (before-middle-end), through illustrating key moments of participation. This chapter packages each project as a single theme developed over time through critical moments – revealing my critical praxis from project to project. These themes are the underlying ‘concepts’ for participatory design.

Each booklet has a specific theme. These are:

- site/space [See Booklet 1]: Cathedral Place;
- making/materialisation [See Booklet 2]: Pop-Up Hub Melbourne;
- practice/place [See Booklet 3]: Hub Melbourne; and
- facilitation/leadership [See Booklet 4]: Ballarat Civic Hall / Coworking.

I have chosen to focus my reflections on critical moments and tendencies – the opportunities and tension points – which make up the themes. One way to describe this might be dramatic arenas. Although I have not included a broader analysis of context in the thesis, each case references the importance of social, geographic and cultural contexts in formulating my (embedded) approaches to participation. A more situated tone and narrative is best discovered in the Creative Works booklets and as such this chapter is best read after perusing the Creative Works booklets, and noting the respective contexts, actions and outcomes of each themed project.
Themes organise each project – they are the broad conceptual approach, within which I draw on seven ‘modes’ of practice, or ‘design actions’. These modes of practice may be defined as:

- **communication**: how things are broadcast, published and exchanged through words and images. It is typically designed so that information is included in a deliberate rhetorical way;
- **event**: how to curate a programmed gathering of people for a short period of time (typically 1-2 hours). This typically includes specific invitations, agenda/activities, decoration, room setting, a chairperson/facilitator; entertainment and refreshments. It may be a special meeting;
- **governance**: how decisions are made – this has a structure and practice that is invariably different according to each situation. It can be formal and informal. Typically governance includes a board/committee for strategy and an executive for operations (tactics);
- **making**: how an activity of physically putting things together – usually with hands – creates an object or physical space, such as knitting, hammering, cutting, sanding, drilling, painting;
- **materialisation**: how an abstract creative process develops, in the moment of turning ideas into practice or physical things, typically through a prototype, testing, iteration, role play, publishing, communicating;
- **process**: when referring to a strategic map of events, the sequence of how things interact, or are staged in time, such as over the course of six months to deliver a project; and
- **space (occupation)**: how to emphasise and understand the real experience of a site, spending time in it, getting to know its dimensions, sense of volume, constraints, light and shade, physical qualities, feel, and how people interact with it when doing things.

These modes were the constituent major and minor ‘participatory interventions’ utilised to develop the theme of each project: site/space, making materialisation, practice/place, and facilitation/leadership.

A secondary purpose of this discussion is simply to demonstrate the complex nature of participation when it is intersected with architecture and agonism, in practice. By doing this I imply that participation must be nuanced, is not controllable into a singular pattern, and is messy. I attempt to find ways forward in praxis by emphasising the complexity. This chapter will unpack and identify new patterns and critically reconnect some of the more theoretical ideas from the field into praxis.

Participation can be situated as a sociological and political device that creatively employs (and produces) ethics, and examines (and redistributes) power. In my Theory Review, I outlined different philosophical processes, exploring ‘what is’ (and ‘why’) – meanings and purposes of participation in architecture, accumulated through different disciplines. I also described participation as an ‘artistic device’.

1. For example, as a device of planning, it may be used across a stepped ladder of citizen manipulation to control, to

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a case by case critique

reproduce rationality and ongoing disempowerment. Alternatively as a device in urban design, it may be used as a tree that grows many-leaf outcomes, rooted in multiple stakeholder relations.

In my Practice Review, I outlined a diversity of methods and examples for doing participatory design in architecture and urban design, proposed or enacted by other practitioners and theorists. I also considered significant methods for analysis and critique from art praxis. In the precedent projects, such as in the work of Stalker, designing methods of participation was the creative focus of each project. Similarly, in the work of muf, a variety of different performances and interactions were integral to generating meaning and value, and were the syntax for a narrative to each project.

Due to my heuristic approach to the Creative Works, knowledge and questions from my Theory and Practice Reviews are embodied in the work through action. The links between text and image, writing and making, and indeed theory and practice, are rarely linear; sometimes confirming, others contradicting, and often agonistic. Reading and practising at the same time I tried to challenge my perception of normative practices of architecture and participation, and instead discover and document a criticality. Instead of undertaking a deeper analysis of precedent case studies, I chose to develop my own case studies and analyse them.

This Discussion chapter seeks to analyse – case by case – how I designed participation for myself and others, the variety of activities I developed and undertook, and critically, what happened and what it meant for each project. Finally I compare across projects.

When adopting a participatory tone with purpose in a manner that critically navigates various meanings and uses of participation as a device for architectural praxis, there are numerous challenges, so, this chapter works towards some practical learnings. However, to avoid interpretation of a how-to-anywhere manual (which would be critically counter-productive), it is important to conceive this chapter as an exploration of layers, as opposed to a synthesis of reflections. It facilitates different touch points for understanding participatory, agonistic, architectural praxis.

In the actual projects, (these agonistic projects!) the main challenge is how to get it done. ‘Getting in and doing it’, setting example and heurism – indeed sharing *practise* experiences – is the critical spatial practice of the architect. From the perspective of an architect, ‘Getting it done’ is just as important a dimension of participation, as the design of the process that develops the engagement of other participants to build a project.

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Case Study 1 – Cathedral Place: site/space

August 2009 – December 2011

Cathedral Place concerns a site in tension over its current and possible uses. Rather than accepting the status quo, my focus on site/space through participation aimed to encourage people to have a shared focus and build awareness for the site, for an action-orientated intervention to change the space itself, and to have an appreciation for the facts and qualities of the actual site. It is just a carpark when it really could be something better. I led the project throughout different stages, and different entities.\(^5\)

[Booklet 1 presents a summary of my Cathedral Place project with images and descriptions.]

The main modes of participatory practice I undertook to develop the theme of site/space were: process, event and governance.

The concern for site/space was to negotiate the physical dimensions of the site, how it is used, and how the space could include rather than ‘exclude’.\(^6\) Elevating site/space as a theme offered my team the opportunity to adopt methodologies that derive wisdom from on-site research and ‘occupation’.\(^7\) This translated to us actively spending time on-site and observing the qualities that exist there (– and what was missing); and listening for what the site might ‘say back’ to our interactions.

One theoretical contention is that each design action – each mode of practice – functions as a ‘conceptual horizon’ for the theme of site/space to develop towards. This is a kind of ‘ephemeral utopia’, a direction in which participants might develop.\(^8\) In the project this meant a role for the architect in leading and structuring. It meant strategically turning participant interactions towards one mode of practice or another. In the project, the application of the site/space theme effectively offers origin and destination for community development – including that of the architect. The theme of site/space is important because it worked as both linking and organising device to suggest and nuance the modes and bring about a favourable altered state for the project.

5. These were Urban Village Melbourne, UVM – Sustainable Urban Ecologies, The University of Melbourne and Here Studio.
Process

Considering process as important as outcome, I began to design process consciously throughout the Cathedral Place project. Process meant what happens when and who is engaged when, why, and for how long. Due to our relative inexperience this strategy had varying successes and failures. I designed the project to increase participation over time, including numbers of different stakeholders and complexity over time, and interspersed with planned events. Sometimes participation came easily, at other times hard – and my team found it challenging to determine why. Our implicit expectations for particular outcomes and happenings, were often met with frustration or simply low levels of participation. Sometimes participants (both internal and external)\(^9\) did not show up, did not deliver, or continually found ways to avoid work or our efforts to change. This seemed to require ever clearer project plans, explanations, lists, diagrams, emails and meetings.

The challenge concerning process as a mode of practice was the authority to design (and manage) it. Even if agreed in meetings and developed collaboratively, often my team did not follow internal project plans, and stakeholders chose to disengage or carry out their own plans without consultation. My authority in the project was tenuous because I was not given a brief, nor did we build enough legitimacy into our process. (That meant both actively legitimising the process as a key tool, and legitimacy as something to be attained step-by-step with stakeholders.) Notably, the same conservative mechanisms manifested in the community internally and externally. Process largely remained an ideal example that elicited concepts rather than effecting action and follow-through.

Because of the tension we held around our authority to manage the process, the mode of governance came to the fore. In our naiveté, increased shared stakeholder awareness of the barriers and deficiencies in existing governance of the site may have been a positive strategic outcome of process. However, this outcome was not without reproduction of the original blockages to change. Participants avoided decision-making and any agonistic participations. Despite recognition of the need to change, we noticed people developing more and more arguments against change. Participants offered examples of why they were powerless either personally or institutionally, and focused on their existing personal relationships at the exclusion of others. It became clearer why things should stay the same, and discussion about obvious physical changes gave way to discussion about who decides. Although the participants may have gained more critical awareness, this came hand in hand with more sophisticated methods on their part to avoid conflict.

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Event

The mode event meant a planned and programmed activity, in a space, that involves people coming together. I employed event as a participatory mode of practice to imagine and embody a momentary, yet real space of exchange for exploring the possibilities for Cathedral Place. I critically used this mode throughout the project, designing where to locate it, who to involve and what to include. Notwithstanding, the explicit and implicit failures and successes of the project produced both intended and un-intended participatory outcomes and associated mixed messages. Some of these were momentary, others lasting.

For example, one ‘failed’ incarnation of the project was the desire to run a shared lunch event. In the process of trying to run the event, our Studio effectively brought awareness to the site/space and its challenges. Nevertheless, the fact that the pinnacle event – the shared lunch between stakeholders – never actually occurred can be seen as a fundamental failure. Furthermore, because by shared lunch we meant participation by everyone, we effectively reproduced the same exclusions of the status quo: critically the participation of the homeless and indigenous stakeholders was relatively cursory. These mixed failures and successes, sent mix messages that undermined the confidence of participants yet provoked more critical thinking by everyone.

The designed, face-to-face nature of event was intended to tactically open up more awareness and engagement with human aspects of site/space; however this also produced conflicting outcomes such as obscuring issues and inaction. Where one outcome of the two student exhibition events was an externalised conversation about another architectural and programmatic future for the site, the other was that the implicit problems of the site – the underuse of such a prominent public space, the exclusion of homeless people, the poor physical repair due to neglect, and the sense of lack of safety – remained largely sidelined because they were too uncomfortable to air in the space of a public event, and in addition, the students had been given a limited degree of access within which to engage. Notwithstanding these outcomes, purposeful participation in event developed a sense of connection and relationships, especially in the internal communities – between individuals in each stakeholder group itself – and it socialised the conversation about the site – even if it was limited. By connecting people around the theme of site/space, event spread the sense of responsibility, increased conversation and awareness of common consternation at the current situation; it provoked into everyday life what was largely being ignored.

The experience of event may suggest that at times participation is inappropriate to overly define, and instead may be best understood as a self-evolving fit of exchanges – events towards an emergent horizon. The failures and successes of the mode of event reiterate that developed participation of all stakeholders is a goal, rather than a method, and it brings challenges.
In retrospect our form of event needed to more explicitly consider the relationship to the actual site and space. Although we located the staged events visibly in the Cathedral buildings, the actual Cathedral Place carpark site – outside, at the mercy of the weather; between the cars and gathering on broken asphalt – could have been more prominent and therefore made the difficult issues of the site more visceral.

Our reification of particular events – through design, food, invitations, prizes and formalities – may have also had the effect of diminishing the importance of everyday experiences of the site. These everyday experiences include the very events that have a place in the conflicting, collective and living memory of the site – car parking over public gathering, (homeless) people eating, sleeping and fighting, ambulance visits and police arrests, and (drunk) people smashing bottles. More abstractly, the explicit practice of event may send a message that architecture solves, rather than facilitates, participants having to deal with tensions themselves.

Change requires action. This includes social actions that are individual to individual. Institutions, communities and situations are made up of participants and their recognitions, agitations and avoidances. The design focus of event – as a mode of participatory practice – may even reproduce an affinity for comfort, formality and avoidance. This point is important to consider; because it is this very affinity that produces the everyday occupation of the site/space. This affinity to comfort produces a conservative, less-critical synthesis of divergent desires for Cathedral Place than would be the case if participants had to sit with discomfort and engage in disagreements. Here, architecture leading participation through the use of aesthetics is a double-edged sword; it works to remediate but also to cover up and take away.

Governance

Throughout the various incarnations of Cathedral Place, there were shifting applications of governance and different situations which affected the architecture. Through different scopes and patronages, the architect had different roles – as researcher, negotiator, designer, leader, and planner – and the stakeholders themselves interacted with the architect in different ways according to different levels of decision-making structures they were part of – as staff person, a Council, a board, a Dean, homeless person, officer, and a student. Some participants had more power than others. Some established powers changed over time. Numerous political dimensions dictated the effectiveness of our actions, and necessitated my explicit focus on governance more generally to untangle and create power towards a different site/space. To handle this, I specially characterised my involvement in the project through shifting roles of participation. Shifting roles allowed and disallowed me to take on various engagements with governance structures and practices, to varying degrees in a tactical manner.

Although I recognised the importance of designing it, taking clear leadership or developing concepts for governance, either as an architect or a participant was fraught. Poignantly, this was because developing inter-organisational or personal legitimacy in the project was not in our scope of works, nor did we have the
resources to grapple with it. It seemed that both internal and external participants were happy to explore ideas and discover, but when it came to implementing challenging ideas on the site/space itself, participants had a tendency to externalise the process and ideas as examples of an independent perspective (the architect’s) – and pejoratively idealistic.

Furthermore, my own capacity to provide independent leadership was diminished, because as an outsider (particularly of stakeholder groups and communities I was not a part of – such as ‘the church’), I remained perpetually occupied with gaining trust, legitimacy and insidedness, and, un-contracted, risked losing valuable social connections at any time. Our Studio’s underdeveloped internal governance of volunteer participation, also impacted this conflict – we had to navigate the ins and outs of our own participation which was exacerbated by the fact that some work could be remunerated. At a simple level I learnt about governance first hand and the importance of developing different systems for participation such as risk management, ethics, induction and training, planning and evaluation, and hierarchy.

Opportunistically, I turned the reality of having to shift roles into a tactic. I characterised this by a mixture of testing of and pragmatism towards the tensions in play. With the purpose of changing the site/space in mind, this tactic effectively allowed my team to momentarily destabilise the implicit regime for the site – a status quo stuck between a wealthy business neighbour, a poor religious organisation and a ‘hands off’ local government. Here, shifting roles questioned and explored other ways of doing things, wherein particular decision-making frameworks and roles were rendered as more or less effective for the participants. Apparently, individual actions were crucial; who? – could organise a meeting, a communication, a compromise, a cost, open doors for an activity, provide presence to an event – mattered most. The way decisions were and would be made for the current site/space was critically at stake. Any steps, risk-takings or compromises that acted towards the direction of recognising site/space, became more apparent, and therefore positively different to the current governance. How to do this or that differently, outside of the usual norms, was what mattered.

There were advantages and disadvantages to the tension between my fraught independence and the established governance that had produced the current site/space. My independent and somewhat unsolicited commission facilitated shortcuts to the heart of the issues at stake; one tells stories mouth to ear over a cup of tea, and shares silences; at other times, unsolicited commissions grossly fail to achieve follow-through. The Cathedral possessed a well-established peculiar governance structure and practice which was opaque to the outside. On entry it was at times a pessimistic mess of ‘warm openness’ to outsiders and ‘clunky restraint’ by internal participants – “it’s not up to me”, “we have to check with the ‘x’ / with everyone else”, “it’s OK with me if ‘x’ agrees” / “we’ve always done it this way”.
In recognising the messy impasses in governance, I also uncovered the fact of relative social (in)cohesion of each group (our Studio and the Cathedral) and new working models. For us, this launched a structured way of working through concentric circles of communication and decision-making and developing clarity for our own organisational structure including how the committee ran. For the Cathedral, a small community needed to ‘tip toe’ around tensions to avoid conflict and social ramifications, squashing opportunities for leadership or openness to new participants. It spelled out the limits to change, particularly by way of governance, yet charted new territories.

Case Study 2 – Pop-up Hub Melbourne: making/materialisation

March 2010 – October 2010

This case study focuses on our Studio’s commission to design a coworking space in a heritage building amidst high expectations and conflicting intentions. Four months long, the project ended with the opening of a ‘pop-up’ space. The next project ‘Hub Melbourne’ follows after the ‘pop-up’ period.

I chose making/materialisation as the main theme-concept for Pop-up Hub Melbourne, in order to shift and embed ideas into action. At commencement, interactions in the project tended to be characterised by ample talk (and tension) around getting started. The community’s emphasis was on ideas, excitement and intentions and so the main purpose of introducing the theme making/materialisation was to substantially shift conversations to action through embodied engagements. This shift propagated a variety of philosophical transformations: loose intention to actual commitment; visions of sustainability and innovation to know-how and heurism; and low-cost procurement through community labour to a quality and meaningful aesthetic. Each of which offered an opportunity for community catharsis and iconic physical form. Some applications of making/materialisation brought about this shift, other applications sent the project in unexpected directions.

[Booklet 2 presents a summary of the my Pop-up Hub Melbourne project with images and descriptions.]

The main modes of participatory practice I undertook to develop the theme of making/materialisation were: process, event, making and space (occupation).

One contention for how to practice participation through valuing agonism is that each mode of practice can simultaneously work as a story-telling and a map of how to make it happen. In Pop-up Hub Melbourne, the application and unfolding of making/materialisation bridged the gap between words and outcome.
Process

Over the first two months, I established process as the incremental, structural backbone to fit making/materialisation, in time, on budget, and with input from the community. Building upon the experience of Cathedral Place, my start of Pop-up Hub Melbourne exemplified the challenge of gaining authority for both a process and roles. Our Studio needed to wrest a clear mandate for ‘design and placemaking’ – meaning the architect possessing effective authority for the process and scope to design and procure the whole project.

My desire to gain authority for a process and a clear role required long negotiations with the client and the Core Team, and we effectively established a set of prejudicial principles. These long negotiations became fundamentally productive. In coming to synthesis – from words to outcome, participants generated a variety of applicable ideas and exposed implicit tensions surrounding community governance and communication – thereby sketching the actual context and aspirations of the project. Implicit tensions during the open negotiations between people required us to develop political tact.

At one critical juncture, to move process forward we synthesised the past ideas and stories into a set of common images and words, and presented a one-page, ‘aspirational design brief’ consisting of three headings: ‘process’, ‘construction’ and ‘environment’. Through two engaging meetings and an effective handover for others to re-present it at meetings without us, participants accorded the brief meaning and legitimacy – and we effectively procured a nod to progress to the next stage of the project.

Perhaps the most important feature of the treatment of process encapsulated by the architects was the concept that the space would be made at the same time as the community. This was not without challenges. Because the actual membership signup procedure was somewhat independent of the architect’s role, we felt the need to get involved in the enrolment and marketing aspects to keep the project together. This was an obstacle. Another obstacle was that other Core Team members responsible for member signup became consumed with participation in the making activities, especially because we portrayed the two parts of the process – signup and space design – as integral to each other. Consequently, the first incarnations of process featured a tense divide between community development and the technical process of making. Arguably, this caused a myriad of difficulties later in the process, including an urgent focus on manifesting the space itself, which our design practice needed to execute top-down at the last minute – or so we thought.

One key tension subsequent to the authority we gained, was that participants perceived our process as a black box. At times the whole responsibility to deliver participation and the project in time and budget befell us as architects instead of being shared between all stakeholders as a team. Participants externalised responsibility for the process to our Studio and at the same time expected the process to be accessible. Subsequently, striving to involve maximum participation reduced a shared sense of urgency and threatened
our concept of *making/materialisation* throughout the participatory process. When pressure mounted near the first opening date, our sudden shift to a more dictatorial role to manage process jarred with our own principles, however it was also an effective jolt to suddenly get things done on time and founded solidarity in the Core Team. Conversely, this sudden shift may have undermined self-emerging principles of a broader participatory community and thereby postponed resolution of implicit issues of *governance* and *communication*. This is a critical reflection on the effectiveness of the concept of *making/materialisation* with the process of participation, and consequent limits which seem to readily return to actions typical to the province of a traditional architect.

**Event**

Our Studio utilised event as a mode of practice to teach all participants (and learn) implementation skills towards *making/materialisation*. Notably, many of the community members were starting up small businesses so this was particularly prevalent. Some of the positive affects of event as a mode, was that it invited and delimited a palatable opportunity for less – or not-yet-engaged community members to get involved, to meet new people, and exchange with each other in another context. The relatively bracketed period of time in an event, allowed more social and substantial ways of connecting with others as active community members. Practically, to carry out the events, the many logistical considerations — theme, budget, equipment, date, invitation, advertising, clean-up — encouraged participants to learn for themselves and with others about how to get things done *together*.

We developed events to become fundamentally important and diverse. The practical mode of event, was such an important part of the design process that it eventually transformed Hub Melbourne’s core tenet — that is, the core business offering, from abstract ideas: “people, places, ideas” to a sense of embodied things: “events, space, community”. Due to this elevation, at times participants confused event with the bigger outcome of the project — as an end in itself, rather than a strategically-delimited forging of ideas towards *making/materialisation*. This mattered because enrolling participants towards a shared sense of a greater outcome requires everyone’s energy and focus; the architect cannot be the only agent to drive the project, and community participation must take on its own life and effective direction. One critical reflection is, that this transferral — from event as a function of participatory expedience (progress) to gathering (socialising) — could be the very conceptual switch that undermined the eventual actualisation of a clear project purpose: it diversified rather than focused and synthesised.

The main limit to the mode of event *vis à vis* the theme of *making/materialisation*, may be that it oversimplifies. Similar to the Cathedral Place project, the focus on event had a counter-intuitive outcome — designing events for satisfaction, celebration and invitation, worked to either dress or disembody the contentious parts of the project so that they were easy to grasp. In terms of *making/materialisation* this translated to the fact that making events known as ‘make days’ were rare instances for broader community
members to interact, thereby externalising the sense of urgency and responsibility to finish on time and budget into activities that are not ‘events’ – an effective crisis of legitimacy. Substantially, the mode event was effective at sparking participation, but it was counterproductive at establishing vital, expansive and ‘ongoing participation’. 10

Making

In a project as exciting as Hub Melbourne, many participants had the tendency to engage through words and social exchanges rather than interacting with ‘stuff’ – losing the tangible sense of developing, building, forming and working with artefacts. This tendency was a challenge that linked neatly with our Studio’s intentions for the theme of making/materialisation – as an ethic of making through everyday use rather than the exchange of value. 11

I designed the mode of making as a means to motivate and feed back a sense of quick achievement, offer prototyping methods, and also provide proofs of progress. However, similar to event, and similar to Cathedral Place, Pop-up Hub Melbourne participants reproduced a tension with the architectural process by over-simplifying making in order to avoid actual resolution, avoid negotiation, and prolong their social exchanges rather than materialising a final outcome. Participants readily talked about outcomes and principles but they rarely worked them out in a material sense. This enlarged the scope and hands-on participation on the part of the architect. Consequently, to make making more accessible, the architects had to completely administer the labour, divorcing action from social complexity, and with it (problematically so) broader participant appreciation for the practicalities of getting things done as a community. Poor participation in the making/materialisation meant that the community squandered key opportunities to learn about management, costs, and limits to volunteerism. This manifested in the lack of shared responsibility later in Hub Melbourne, and challenges around the need for the architect to carry the project (so it seemed), including volunteering our Studio to build things because it was ‘time critical’.

Some of the positive aspects of making as a mode of participatory practice employed the concept of ‘triangulation’ – where new connections and practical learnings are forged when two (or more) people connect at interaction around a third object. 12 Abstractly, this concept facilitated a typical architectural practice of instrumentalising discussions in their nature – through the requirement to make. It meant that


11. It also imbues and suggests a participatory definition of ‘historicité’ – concept from Lefebvre, ‘Right to the City.’

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the Core Team hierarchized social and philosophical issues in the community to relate to the context of making, thereby allowing everyone to gain a sense of tangible familiarity for the issues at hand. And practically, a participatory making process encouraged the architects to develop know-how, especially for working with one’s hands, and the personal nuances of working with people. Because the architects realized their participation as a transformative learning experience (at least for the architect themselves), by virtue of bearing witness to the process, the other participants also benefited. This was evident in a number of members participating in each other’s practices in an ongoing fashion after the project, and some individuals shifting their everyday practices professionally or personally to incorporate the mode of making.

Critically, the participatory ideal of making, created practical difficulties. Due to the architect’s enforcing push towards making coupled with our Studio retaining responsibility, any productive tensions concerning making/materialisation tended to cease after everything was ‘made’. It followed that once the making was complete, people had little reason to come into negotiation and synthesis of differences; participants went back to talk and ideals (and avoidance), rather than working tensions out through practise.

Another difficulty was that because all parts of the process – including technical aspects of making – endeavoured to establish an ethic of maximum participation, it was hard to ‘just’ get things done. Another difficulty included our Studio’s exercise of authority to contract out work to tradesman at a lower social and physical cost to the core participants – including the architects. It increased the relative level of risk on the architect’s part. As a consequence through participation, where the reduction of financial costs through voluntary labour worked, it also worked to undermine Hub Melbourne’s implicit equity structure at a fundamental level. In the end many participants (including the architect) believed they should share substantial ownership in the business given the physical contributions they were making; and this further exacerbated unresolved governance issues – that participants lacked clear paths to steer the organizational decisions in a meaningful and considered way.

Space (occupation)

Despite limitations to governance, the treatment of space (occupation) developed our Studio’s tangible familiarity with the Pop-up Hub Melbourne site. My approach to making/materialisation led towards important concepts of placemaking becoming tangible – such as nesting or a sense of ‘home-making’.

Effectively the approach I developed conceived a strong sense of place for Pop-up Hub Melbourne which connected the membership to the space itself, and through events, forged a sense that environment was

important for producing ‘atmospheres’ conducive to social interaction.\textsuperscript{14} There were limitations to this approach: the production of a sense of place was not integrated with the production of more abstract structures such as governance and equity, and thus, in later stages when top-down management redesigned or rearranged the space, many of the members became disgruntled or left the community, citing differences of opinion over practices of decision-making, commercial return and organisational control.

We learnt that changes in governance do materially threaten spatial decisions if those changes are not connected with the mode of space (occupation). Focusing on space (occupation) meant a strong sense of spatialised relationships were established, even if the intricacies of less-spatial ideas remained relatively simplistic and un-robust. It may be that some of the arguments around making/materialisation were not given enough locations for actualisation in our participation – such as in governance structures, decision-making practices or commercial equity – both embodied and monetary – to become part of the ongoing reality. This points to an expanded sense of making/materialisation in participation, which implies the need for the participatory architect to explicitly design and materialise good governance.

In Hub Melbourne this need ran deep. When ‘Pop-up Hub Melbourne’, was complete and a wave of new members came into the mix, they seemed unaware of the stories and meanings of spatialised artefacts, and were confronted with an established home of someone else controlled by implicit forces. For any participant of a community, this initiation experience undermines the capacity to question the complex foundations constituted through an agonistic process, and thus undermines their ability to actually and actively participate. In Pop-up Hub Melbourne, the legitimacy of deep foundations was therefore tenuous because the negotiations had been embedded in the process of making/materialisation, not so much in everyday life. Therefore, the ability for members to actualise principles of participation was implicitly limited. Although concepts of prototyping, triangulation and material discussion were well-understood and practised by the participants, the possibility for expansive, ongoing participation was stunted because the remit of our Studio’s participation was critically spatial and material, not governmental. Arguably, materialisation of a better governance structure and practices would facilitate an ongoing agonistic process, explicit recognition of decision-making, and effective pathways for new members to participate. This in turn could have helped to make the organisation more successful – inclusive, better managed, and fulfilling according to the goals and working principles people expressed to one another.

Case Study 3 – Hub Melbourne: practice/place

November 2010 – March 2011

Following Pop-up Hub Melbourne, and during the design and build process to establish Hub Melbourne, our Studio juggled to calibrate the first months of occupation with the current space. This entailed the process of establishing a sustainable business and community model, and further development of the space itself. Notably through leading the participatory process, our Studio became more enmeshed in the community and vice-versa. Practice/place emerged as the key theme to work through the many tensions implicit within this phase of the Hub Melbourne project.

As well as ongoing tensions in the Core Team developing out of the Pop-Up version of Hub Melbourne, tensions in the broader community were more pronounced around different ways of valuing contributions, and preferences for decision-making practices. These values and preferences tended to fall into a difference between ‘activist artists’ and ‘social entrepreneurs’, which had the potential to be worked by the architectural process.

The principal way to work within these tensions was to develop a more nuanced and complex understanding of place with the community, namely by focusing on the practice dimensions of place. With Pop-up Hub Melbourne complete, and the first half of the project past, there was an opportunity for the architect to reflect and improve upon the past methods, and work critically to satisfy any deficiencies. The making/materialisation process was underway in the community, however a more critical capacity to manage operations in the space – the very day-to-day practice of governance and community, was wanting – and this want often felt more pronounced during construction work interruptions.

[Booklet 3 presents a summary of my Hub Melbourne project with images and descriptions.]

All the modes of participatory practice were present, however the main modes of participatory practice I undertook to develop the theme of practice/place were event, process, material, and communication. In Hub Melbourne, the modes of making and space (occupation) featured yet were integrated into event, and similarly governance became much more explicit a mode of participatory practice than in the Pop-up stage, arguably permeating all activities and thinking.

For each of the main modes – event, process, material and communication – our Studio employed repetition and further re-contextualisation as tactics in Hub Melbourne to build more substantive participation.

In particular, these modes worked strategically towards the conceptual theme of practice/place to build
community principles of heurism and asset appreciation. I contend that through these modes, the architects in turn developed concepts of leadership and ‘practices of community’.  

Event

During this second part of the Hub Melbourne project, the community used event in a ubiquitous way – as one of the most successful means to connect people and get things done. The architects and the Core Team integrated event into the organisational structure, weekly rhythms of the community, and the business offering. Largely, as a whole community carrying on the experience of Pop-up Hub Melbourne, we began to fold the concept of making/materialisation into event, such that there was a shared realisation that when something needed to come to a head and resolution before the next step, we would organise an event to decide, test and work out how to keep going. In Hub Melbourne, our Studio led this to the inclusion of difficult decisions, unfinished building works, aesthetic preferences, and even new member initiation, as constituents of practice/place.

The prevalence of event as a participatory mode however, may have accumulated too much focus. Because event functioned as a regularly-employed way of doing and structuring activities, it made the project particularly vulnerable to conflicts that were not explicitly integrated with a specific event. As seen before in both Cathedral Place and Pop-up Hub Melbourne, event – with its focus on attraction and satisfaction – tended to avoid or simplify tensions in the community that were much more substantive than the space of a single event, thereby pushing conflicts further into the background and arguably ignoring them. Event had a tendency to erase everyday life, and with it, its lived sense of difficulties and differences.

In the absence of an event, life is in limbo. For us as architects, having established many of the events and in the final stage stepping in to coordinate the programme of events, the very success of this mode meant that a disastrous dependency on that mode was created. What had become an explicit form of governance through its elevated practice, the strong concept of a designed event created a sense of dependency in the community towards those that organised events, and fostered belief that the community needs facilitators to sort out problems and get things done. This sense may have on one hand worked against the concept of practice/place, yet on the other; it framed a means to turn agonistic argument into action and therefore help the community learn other skills. Event has the ability to prototype a situation.

The participatory mode of event is relevant insofar as it is legitimate to the participants. In Hub Melbourne, it was only effective below the ceiling dictated by equity arrangements underpinning governance. Who actually owned the business, controlled the end direction of Hub Melbourne through their decisions. One

advantage of this disintegration of legitimacy – by way of inadequately-realised governance in Pop-up Hub Melbourne – is that because of the ongoing conflict between the architect and the client over equity, lesser-order conflicts were allowed to play out to benefit the vitality of the project. Some of these included more one-to-one disagreements between people, particular members figuring out their own personal issues in the process of developing Hub Melbourne, and the shared realisation that day-to-day contradictions simply need time to calibrate themselves. However, it can be seen that when the architect’s contract ended, all previous legitimations fell into jeopardy.

One clear reflection is that responsible architects need ongoing authority to resource the dependencies participatory design can create on them, so that the newly formed status quo founded on any sophisticated mode of practice can be maintained. This need is caused by the client and participants as much as the architect. Likewise, this is not just about the architects holding onto power, but timing how they hand over power to leave meaningful empowerment rather than dependency or misconceptions. Throughout the Hub Melbourne experience this sophisticated mode of practice manifested as a particular mix of event-governance.

**Process**

In comparison to Pop-up Hub Melbourne, the participatory mode of process was also more sophisticated in Hub Melbourne. In some ways process was so much more difficult to articulate – and communicate or govern – because it was so complex and integrated into everyday practice. Process gained legitimacy through use. Process still meant the programme of how and when things happened and in what sequence, however in Hub Melbourne process was much more layered and iterative with many actors and foci, rather than projecting a simple linear progression.

Process was thus difficult to control. A broader effect of its sophistication and layering was that the outcomes were broader and embodied. Instead of being projections as per Pop-up Hub Melbourne, process was something that had a life (lives) of its own, and would therefore need encouraging, pruning, and at times controlling to get towards an outcome within the margins of commercial expectations (time and money). Through our Studio, the Core Team drew process diagrams to strategically push actual tendencies into shape, affirm particular development (and disband others) and communicate to less involved participants what was happening so that they could either get involved or avoid interfering. We displayed the process diagrams on the wall, in newsletters and when introducing presentations – predominately as communication tools rather than guides for workflow.

Process implicitly became both a shared and separated mode of practice in the community; and therefore much more difficult to maintain; not least because there were so many actors interacting with it, but also because of its communication purpose (arguably) above all else. As participation increased – in depth of
engagement and number of participants – process became less relevant as a decision-making tool for participatory design. Instead, it worked as a communication tool to help various participants situate their questions and considerations with a common sense of timing and language.

To the architects process became more obvious and strategic – the overall ordering of activities was clear from practice, and big decisions about process seemed important to make from a separate position of expertise. For example, I established a sequence of making difficult and more permanent decisions towards the end, with gradual decisions along the way – from temporary signage and loose furniture to permanent definition of privacy and wall colour paint. This facilitated opportunities for participants to design and build items according to tactical decisions – “let’s build this piece of furniture”, “buy this” and “develop this element” now – with regard to live personal interests, what was at hand, or just needed to be done. Process helped to sort things out. Being an architect, and possessing responsibility towards the outcome, process forced relevant resolutions and development; whatever debate was drawn into the process, was in turn calcified into an outcome dictated by the development of the space adhering to time and budget. This resolution was particularly prevalent in terms of social : spatial relationships. In Hub Melbourne, process was a deep contributor to the community’s constitution of practice/place.

Conversely, the lack of anyone’s real ability to control, created practical difficulties. When it came to how the process impacted production of the space itself, it was difficult for our Studio to limit a much more layered, messy and emergent process. Evidence of these difficulties during the design and build process, was characterised by the high level of Core Team and member distress, burnout and discontinuation. One critical reading of process is that too much scope and too many ideas can be overwhelming – through participation the architect’s role was not only design and design management, but leading the startup more generally. Read another way, the participants of the architectural process had to grapple with an abstract scope. Another difficulty was that in the participatory process our Studio struggled to administer contractors; when we required particular contractors from outside of the community process, community expectations and cost seemed disproportionate – causing conflict between participants and the principal – our Studio. This conflict may have proved immaterial at a project-wide level, yet it was pointedly difficult in the moment, and it gravely impacted us as architects to get our job done in a sustainable way. Traditional procurement processes subsequently had less legitimacy with the client and the community participants, even when people agreed that these processes were necessary.

One contention can be that a particular problem with maintaining tensions around process – through implicit, iterative, layered, strategic and tactical forms – is that because the tensions were so difficult to handle, the Core Team abandoned them after we left, subsequently undermining other important social and philosophical constructions we had set in place together to connect various forms of capital. Abstractly,
once the time-consuming and calcifying architectural process was no longer necessary and also no longer facilitated by the architect, the importance of the mode of process subsided such that it was at odds with the dominant economic and governmental demands of the next phases: day-to-day capital recovery and growth for the financial investor.\textsuperscript{16} Instead of process as a mode to stage and communicate works and decisions with many people, the exigency of business without an architectural process – a business owned by one person – meant decisions were increasingly dictated by numbers and predefined performance indicators, or made top-down and in a way that had a disempowering effect.

Critically, Hub Melbourne as a business kept social capital separate from financial capital – and finally separate from political capital. The context of building within very constrained dimensions, was in some ways at a stark contrast to the business expectations after it was built. What worked and was required as an economy for start-up was not the same as what was required for investment recovery or ongoing sustainability in full operation. It was therefore likely that many of the intentions for process introduced by the architects in the participatory process, would be abandoned. The missing piece – a marriage between shared governance and financial equity to ensure an ongoing participatory community, was invariably denied when negotiations between myself and the sole business owner broke down. More abstractly, what was really at stake was the constitution of agonistic participation, and therein a substantively shared recognition of the important and productive tension between resolution of conflicts through an ongoing participatory process (shared governance), and our timely exit strategy as \textit{just} design architects.

\textbf{Material}

Similar to the pattern in process – where time and budget calcified outcomes and the sophistication of the mode eventually subsided – history may be written through the mode of material but may also be requestioned in a new context. During the development of Hub Melbourne material had a strong role in reinforcing the legitimacy of decisions in the past to go forward – there may have been many ideas, words and discussions, but in the end only one thing is built.

The practice mode of material also necessitated the architects carrying out synthesis – working out final proposals and decisions when things were complicated, from many different participants and at different times. That the process of materialisation was so complex meant that objects carried so much weight for the agonistic participatory design process, and subsequently it was almost impossible to adequately explain their genesis or make new objects without facilitation, or at least hesitation. One reading of this could be that the meaning that is imbued through a participatory process often fails to stay explicit for new and ongoing

\textsuperscript{16} There was a third phase for Hub Melbourne a year later, which included the expansion into the ballroom, increasing the space by 200% – it was facilitated by practices Hassell and Village Well.
participations, because it could be too (exclusively) sophisticated – or simply because it is too ephemeral, since meaning cannot be wholly lodged in material things.

Deep meaning can be built into objects. Conversely, some material objects – and meanings – became obsolete when the process changed. Few objects that were produced through participation in Hub Melbourne continued to facilitate participation as the practice/place continued. That the history was starkly written into the materials, telling a story of labour, participation, time, radical sustainable values and respect, it could be argued that this maintained the values invested into the project and thus the original intention. However, from another perspective, this cast any ongoing changes to embodied values and intentions into critical relief. If the use of the new environment jars with – or the practice of community does not continue along – the same narrative, then that meaning may be rendered irrelevant. Where, as architects, we tried to embed meanings and ongoing participatory principles into the practice/place through the mode of material, we were unable to control the future readings and changes. This in some ways is an especially critical reflection because it was explicitly our intended scope to leave traces of a sense of place.

In terms of the most difficult issues in the project, the value of material is in the moment of making, but this value is not able to control the future political landscape. This is a challenge to traditional architectural thinking. When participants of Hub Melbourne could explain how something was materialised, material things were much more meaningful. One example was the production and underlying story of the individually knitted communal chairs, another was the bolted joints on the movable screens to maintain their original function as flat patterned walls, and another was the indoor plants which the landscape architect prepared instructions for watering. Especially within a culture of innovation, those that were not part of the participatory process may see material artefacts as relics standing in the way of their new participation, and may opt against their maintenance – it is notable that once our Studio left the project no more knitting continued, new items were bought from on-line catalogues, and most of the plants died, once our Studio left the project.

Fittingly, the political aspects and capital embodied in material can transform with political and social changes. People can only maintain socially-produced space inasmuch as each part – social and space – remains relevant. By the same token, this can be an argument for the value of ongoing participation. We often perceived that the most controllable or lasting outcome of material was in the moment of making by the participants themselves, many of whom returned home and continued making with a new found appreciation of aesthetic and ethical intent.

In terms of placemaking, and the community definition of place – the prevalent positive outcomes were stories of what participants had integrated into their own lives, organisations and business entities outside of the Hub Melbourne space. Participants picked up new hobbies, built furniture at home, and started
enterprises founded on their passions and new skills. Many used the same modes in the production of their own practices. The transition and delivery process of material became a shared language to those that participated in it directly, even if they did not continue as participants of the place itself. There is a learning here for architects about place, that place is difficult to simply define or materialise, and its measures are numerous stories rather than singular objects and spaces.

Communication

The principles of participatory architecture that value agonism have ramifications for communication. The treatment of communication in Hub Melbourne did act as a particularly important mode of practice that assisted in linking different parts together and articulating progress. Communication between an architect and others is often difficult, yet an opportunity for participation presents itself in the gap of translation. Some of the tensions around communication were often related to disciplinary boundaries and contrasting expertises. As architects that were trying to establish and work through (agonistic) participation, we deemed principles of transparency, immediacy, diversity, discourse and dissonance as most important. Nevertheless, it is easy to articulate that there was tension around the aesthetic elements of communication because different participants expected different forms of communication. A key tension was between participants with marketing and communications backgrounds and members of our Studio with an architectural background, because we both had very different principles.

Different foci for communication caused a clash between participants. Those participants that were more familiar with communication than process – or with materialisation and development more generally – were much more inclined to present positivity, singularity and polish. In newsletters and invitations our Studio wanted to communicate and participate in the actual debates, learnings, mistakes, tests and stimulate a multiplicity of ideas, where others wanted communications to simplify and satisfy expectations or create hype. This tendency judged the quality of communication on whether or not messages were transmitted accurately – on message, and within their singular perspective.

Difficulties were thus ignored or hidden in the community when it wasn’t the architect speaking, and if something was not yet clear some participants would avoid featuring it. This became more the case when new participants came on board to contribute to facilitating this role. This translated to lack of participation in the design of the space itself when it was developing most; participants lost opportunities for tangible debate and dialogue of material outcomes when communications facilitators focused communication on generalised aspects such as broader dreams of the coworking movement – almost as a distraction. Critically, the community legitimised the messy qualities of participation for placemaking, but not for communication.
In terms of our Studio's architectural intentions and a disciplinary devotion to the abstract, it became obvious that we needed a level of control in communication in order to maintain agonistic participatory principles for the sake of the building project and despite the conflicting desires of some participants. In these instances when we needed control, we developed a lighter touch by aestheticising communication – through careful prose and appealing graphic design, and making points of change memorable and attractive for participants. We often integrated crucial points of change into a milestone event or celebration, but it was quite time-consuming to produce what was effectively propaganda for a participatory process that had tenuous legitimacy.

Some of the more structural forms of communication were more lasting, such as repetitive cycles of regular publication, colour palettes and updatable diagrams. On reflection, it seems that through communication the content and debate was less important than the processes and the experience. Our Studio worked to lead the fine balance between messiness and accessibility of communication, to try to encourage members to participate. This was despite the fact that as participatory architects we measured participation by the limits to the effective power of the participants. Therefore, governance was again a difficult subject but not so uncomfortable as to overturn the project whilst the architects were there to facilitate participation.

Case Study 4 – Ballarat Civic Hall / Coworking Space: facilitation/leadership

May 2012 – June 2014

In Ballarat I contributed participatory design principles, modes, and governance practices through two projects: Ballarat Civic Hall and Ballarat Coworking Space. Attempting to investigate how to make an effective contribution using architecture and participation, the theme of facilitation/leadership worked as another example of unsolicited and agonistic architecture, in which the design process is a valuable and transformative opportunity for all participants. As the final case study after Cathedral Place, Pop-up Hub Melbourne and Hub Melbourne, focusing on facilitation/leadership was a means to test, demonstrate and mobilise the learnings from the previous case studies.

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17. Through my architectural practice Here Studio, the Civic Hall project had four later phases extending into 2016: including tender and opening event, and on-site participatory visioning, masterplanning, feasibility, concept design and town planning – ending abruptly in March 2016. Notably, this practise fell outside the formal PhD ethics framework. See http://www.civichallsite.org, and http://www.herestudio.net.
The purpose then of applying the theme facilitation/leadership in Ballarat Civic Hall / Coworking Space was politically motivated – in some ways – to proselytise agonistic participatory principles and modes of practice into my own lived community.18 The two projects interacted and progressed through my participation. The broad aim was to improve public processes in major projects, by incorporating a participatory mode of governance. With this aim in mind, the case study incorporates two projects into one brief.

(Booklet 4 presents a summary of my Ballarat Civic Hall / Ballarat Coworking Space projects with images and descriptions.)

All the modes of participatory practice were present, however the main modes of participatory practice I undertook towards the theme of facilitation/leadership were governance, event and communication. It was critical that I held the mode of materialisation in implicit relief.

My contention is that these modes provided me with an early landscape to develop a tone of practice between facilitation and leadership in Ballarat. This tone walks a tightrope enmeshed between leadership, control, letting go, encouraging, enabling, garnering resources and handing over (exiting). We might call this a flexible leadership mode.

Governance

Focusing on governance from the beginning helped to publicly establish my commitment to the value of principles – that ‘how’ something is done matters. Roughly, these principles were: an asset-based approach, decision-making through participation, valuing diversity and difference, and connecting people and place-making. Working with many different people and without a clear patron from the start, governance was a foundational mode of participatory practice for our Studio, and to build a strong foundation our focus was towards developing tone. Our practice mode of governance included words of intention, typical principles for engaging with people, and agonistic participation. This propagated two outcomes, the first, deliberation and rationality in decision-making, and the second, personal-emotional relationships and a hopeful sense of community.

In the beginning, our tone shied away from material or design outcomes. As the project shifted to different contexts, the same tone – vocabulary and syntax of discourse – worked like a repère for participants, simultaneously signifying and establishing the project as part of an ongoing narrative of participatory governance. In practice, the principles of this governance were: a keen transparency; inclusion of arguments, desire and sociality; inclusion of expertise – not neutrality; and a sense of iteration, experiment and exploration with an awareness of timing in respect to other people.

18. I moved to Ballarat for personal reasons but found opportunities to develop the contribution of my research there, and develop from valuable exchanges with community members.
A tension with the principal mode of governance was in the hesitation to enact and the eventual lack of materialisation. Our Studio’s incremental governance may have eventuated in a slow process – due to the lack of material outcomes, for some participants it may have also led to anxiety about the future. Notwithstanding this anxiety, the lack of materialisation – for both projects with no built outcome, and enduring for more than six months both before the CivicCommunityProcessGroup agreed to incorporate, and before the Ballarat Coworking community formed a Board – may in turn have facilitated socially-beneficial outcomes, and an interest for people to stay involved, lest other participants suddenly materialise an unexpected direction. For some participants this meant a push towards tangible outcomes. A particular challenge here for our Studio as an architect, was in achieving affirmation of the progress – ‘glimmers of pride’, so that we could reinforce the community successes of ‘synthesis through valuing conflict’. Architecture often takes many years.

My focus on the mode of governance contributed to a difficult political practice in the Ballarat community. Where at times community members saw the mode pejoratively, especially in relation to Council and at times each other; participants recognised our Studio as one of the main agents for progressing Ballarat Civic Hall and Ballarat Coworking Space. This produced a tension at times, with participants viewing our role as architect as controlling, or conversely, that there was a conflict of interest for us to be involved in a process of establishing governance and then step outside to facilitate it, lead it, or even be remunerated. Exercising the implicit mode of process, was thus limited to both a place of relative authority of the architects – established slowly through governance, or then without the architects – showing evidence that legitimacy in decision-making was tenuous and in extreme times, that it was too hard.

We established our authority as the architects to make decisions through process, because we tried every step of the way to integrate progress with the mode of governance. It followed that without us, the legitimacy of past and new decisions was tenuous, because many of the participants had tended to accede to the authority of the ideas and actions; not the process itself. In both projects, without the architectural leadership/facilitation to advocate the mode of process, participants behaved differently, and attempted to undo what had been progressed, or avoided the evident explorations through project uncertainties, and the next logical points of negotiation. Although our Studio had engaged the political aspects of community development in both Ballarat Civic Hall / Coworking Space, a significant number of influential participants focused on internal divisions between people, and between people and institutions. It is interesting and somewhat symptomatic to note that when established institutions participated, either as funding agents or potential partners, their relationships to the existing participants and vice-versa started with tones of scepticism, defensiveness and blame.
Such a fraught focus on governance meant that the community displayed problematic degrees of hesitation and many participants displayed an inability to negotiate with ambiguous boundaries — such as being inside or outside of the group, and recognising the opportunity and presence of a moment together. In many examples it was difficult for participants to finish when it came to formalisation and realisation of a group entity, in both CivicCommunityProcessGroup and Ballarat Coworking, community members created more and more impasses when materialising a Statement of Purpose\(^{19}\) — opting instead to come to disagreement and bring out unresolved conflicts — rather than trusting the process.

It is poignant to understand that because the tone of hesitant and deliberative forms of governance I developed were characteristically emergent, participants found it difficult to move to the next step where solid structures and hierarchy might feature. It followed that participants struggled to find confidence in the actions they did take and new tones they developed without our Studio. The blame could be levelled with the facilitators not making it more difficult earlier — ‘an early shot across the bows’ — such that the challenges of transitioning from one incarnation to another would become more familiar.\(^{20}\) In attempting to help people transition, we may have shielded the participants too much. It is interesting to observe that established institutions, external to the core group, were more capable of moving quickly, in response to governance and their relationship with the less-formed and less-realised community groups was perceived by many participants as dictatorial by default.

The relative difference in senses of organisation — emerging or established — was a strong factor in how people manifested participation. This resonates with theoretical principles which state that emergent processes from individual-to-group and group-to-individual are fundamentally important to participation.\(^{21}\) Where an organisation was forming — such as the cases of CivicCommunityProcessGroup Inc or Ballarat Coworking Inc — this impasse was predominantly located in arguing between different individuals to formulate a norm, as opposed to an established organisation — such as the City of Ballarat — stuck with an inability to transparently consider change by listening to individuals.

**Event**

Event was the most iconic mode of participatory practice in the both the Ballarat Civic Hall and Coworking Space projects. This included curated workshops, dinners, celebrations, seminars and other specially advertised gatherings. The prevalence of the mode event was established early on and was an important foundation of participatory practice within the community. Similar to the experience for Hub Melbourne,

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19. Writing a Statement of Purpose was one of the few legal requirements in the process of officially incorporating an association.

20. I think this is a common pitfall of participation processes.

the main function of event was practising tones of connecting, celebrating and communicating, rather than developing process or governance. Nevertheless the community quickly adopted the mode event as their own, and when the Core Team(s) reflected on progress, event served as a measure of the health of the community: ‘are there events?’; ‘how well are they attended?’; and ‘how engaging are they?’.

The mode of event brings people together to define a sense of inside and outside, showing that there are differences that constitute learning a ‘sense of community’ and ‘self’ which are formed in a communal context.22 In both Ballarat projects, event gave a sense of action, and because many people attended events — and for most of the participants, participation was passive — it created opportunities for many people to congregate and witness action. That community members instigated and organised events from within, independent of external relationships to institutions such as the City of Ballarat, event served to develop solidarity and identity in the community — ‘we did this’ — and the community formed a stronger edge between it and others outside of it. It is notable that in both projects, a number of the community members left citing scepticism and an intention to re-engage later. Those that observably maintained a scepticism, or held broader goals than those of the group or our Studio — either sat on the margins or stepped out of the group.22 Those participants whose tone identified with the solidarity of the group, flourished.

Abstractly, resourcing event brought out tensions between differing exigencies of individual and group. As primary participatory actions, particular tension existed around which events were resourced — including (hu)manpower, time, catering and general support of participants. One reading could be that those participants that were more sceptical and less-focused on the solidarity of the group welcomed mixed modes of resourcing different activities. Other participants more fundamentally attached to internal ideals, saw anything other than voluntarism as evidence of a conflict of interest. The various situations displayed the many conflicting ethical workings of individuals to self, other and group, not always in a productive manner. By reflecting on this experience, it was obvious to our Studio that community members were sometimes at very different developmental stages to each other. The examples show a community in process and flux rather than a cohesive/coherent entity.

Event stood somewhat in strong contrast to messy and complex issues of governance, as a tangible action through which anyone can build a clear narrative. Looking at the quality and clarity of event critically leads me to recognise that it may have also had the adverse effect of divorcing more abstract, emerging


23. Our Studio also found itself on the margins from time to time.
and sprawling back-and-forth discourse surrounding governance. Yet, to consider the mode of event as a participatory mode that we proselytised, is to appreciate that it was actually replicated in many forms owned by the community. Event when recognised in each of its forms as curated moments in time, foregrounds an abstract sense of context which is fundamentally part of processing a change process — event contributes positively to process. Perhaps event has the function of embedding process and participatory governance into graspable milestones, and these milestones — event(s), can eventually form pieces of a narrative — ‘proofs’ down the track. These proofs and outcomes are for both ourselves as architects — leaders and facilitators, and the end participants themselves. Actively and socially formed, events reflect back the intentions of those that participate.

Communication

In Ballarat Civic Hall / Coworking Space, our Studio used communication as an active structure and form of governance through reinforcing a strategic tone. This meant that even in the most simple communications we worked to encourage active and agonistic participation — highlighting difference and conflict — with a view to strict principles and community development. We treated communication as a mode of participatory practice integrating it into the scope of governance in some contexts, and event and process in others. Communication connects participants together and focusing on its tone presents the difference between more and less participatory architecture.  

Beyond the tone offered through sensitive vocabulary and syntax, technology played a strong role in both Ballarat Civic Hall and Ballarat Coworking Space. Particular systems — such as cloud-computing, real-time shared documents, automated mailing lists and social media encouraged participants to communicate easily and transparently.

In this vein and with a variety of tools, I employed communication to structure the implicit behaviour of the participating groups — for all groups this meant a quality of behaviour that is simultaneously internalised in some instances, and concentrically open in others. For example, in a workshop or meeting a group would practice a very high level of internal transparency yet the participants would protect each other from without through a veil of confidentiality; or, groups would only communicate using particular forums and outputs, whilst individual participants practised frankness, a sense of iteration and immediacy with each other when they did.

Our Studio worked to facilitate a mode of communication that was shared, administered by hierarchy and organised by linear control steps. These designs were sometimes sharp (prominent and painful) for participants when not delicately applied. An example of this in both Ballarat Civic Hall and Coworking Space were the regular newsletters or emails we wrote with updates that were candid, even if the news was inherently critical of a participant’s action or a process. When it came to the need for the architect to exit particular stages of a project, these intricate qualities of communication became difficult to maintain. Without our Studio facilitating communication in an agonistic way – bringing difference to the fore, participants tended to return to avoiding conflict, publishing when strategically necessary, speaking through commercial transactions and only reporting positive stories.

On many occasions, when participants struggled to achieve agreement and instead seemed to stall indefinitely, our Studio wondered about leadership/facilitation, and whether as architects we needed to abandon participatory principles of communication and take control. In many examples and especially when close to moments of critical agreement it seems that communication is limited as a mode of action. Perhaps this actually outlines the limits to a principles-led approach. A critical example of the limits to the effectiveness of the mode of communication in both Ballarat Civic Hall and Coworking Space was the example of writing a Statement of Purpose through established forms and practices of communication and governance. When new cycles of governance emerged, participants got stuck politicking and on how to write and commit a new Statement of Purpose. Or alternatively, when a select few participants came to preside over governance at the exclusion of our Studio, they determined the need to write a group purpose anew without consulting or communicating with the original participants.

The shared sense of a (high) degree of legitimacy stemming from the process and implicating clear actions moving forward, may have in fact threatened fresh participation in the next stages and developments of each project. It would seem that to achieve next steps in an architectural project, effective power is tactical and contextual – not overarching. There is a tension then between the legitimacy and embedded structure of the form of communication-governance in some situations, and in other situations the desire for participants to enjoy a tabula rasa from which they can realise their own power. In hindsight, and considering leadership/facilitation, the architect’s work may not have adequately suggested nor identified sufficient tangible conflicts for participants to resolve to exercise their power. Perhaps we could have established a more significant process of materialisation, or space (occupation) to rub against the abstract ‘strategic’ processes and powers inherent in governance, so that the overall vision our Studio led and facilitated could be meaningful (and tangible) for more participants. Without this realisation, communication was no longer a connecting device for participants, but became the most divisive form to scapegoat and to blame others.
In both projects Ballarat Civic Hall and Ballarat Coworking Space, it is notable that there was tension when new forms of authority needed to reproduce a strategic form of communication. In a particularly conflictual break with participants, new governance preferred new communication — in structure and practice. Undoubtedly, for the participants involved, this was due to the project reaching another plateau of evolution. However, because it was the architects that designed and embedded a high degree of sophistication into the communication system, the tendency of the new authority was to abandon or redesign the mode of communication entirely — power desired control. Part of this was invariably a desire of participants to break with the ‘tutelage’ of the architect and create governance that gained its identity through new psychological creation (catharsis) rather than action.25

Conclusion

Reflecting on the case studies, themes (site/space making/materialisation, practice/place, and facilitation/leadership) and modes of participatory (agonistic) practice

There are a number of threads to draw out to describe my practices of participation — with an emphasis on the process rather than the outcome. I will do this by condensing the organising theme for each case study with succinct critique of how I developed it.

Site/Space: recognising and imagining

For Cathedral Place, site/space is about triangulation. This theme considers how a site or space is important for participation, to encourage discourse about ‘horizons’ for — the possibilities and usefulness of — process, event and governance. For example, a carpark could be a different place, and embody different activities, people, and ways of making decisions through other foci. The modes of participatory practice provided other (objective) dimensions — places — for the resolution of power regimes and social paradigms, where through the site and space itself, I offered locations and containers for gathering, dialogue and occupation. Site/space is both physical and abstract, it allows and clarifies limits to empowerment which people constitute socially through conversations, tension and exclusion. Consequently, it is useful to critically consider the moments where people avoided conflict. These moment-limits highlight the relative impact of the participatory process, and identify steps on the way to a different site/space horizon. This horizon can be characterised by participatory— process, events and governance.

**Making/Materialisation: realising and reflecting**

There are limitations to the value of *making/materialisation* if it is not integrated and legitimated into participation. This goes for all participants. For Pop-up Hub Melbourne – through process, event, making and space (occupation) – I considered how the theme of *making/materialisation* is important to participation. A coworking space can be a physical environment and actual communion that demonstrates and reflects the ideals its participants. Where through the participatory architectural process ‘talk is cheap’ – arguments and meanings pass when in an event something must be ‘made’ on time with available resources – the opposite effect appears when *making/materialisation* occurs outside of that process. Different contexts produce different meanings. Indeed, I found ‘making is cheap’ – literally because we produced Pop-up Hub Melbourne with minimal financial and material resources.

The principle of ‘learning through doing’ has a particular way of intersecting with the architectural process (and embodied outcomes) – in Pop-up Hub Melbourne it is in tension. A community process effectively educated participants in ‘how-to make it happen’, providing participants an understanding of steps and processes despite their ability to control or have a significant contribution towards any ongoing tangible improvements. The ongoing practice of community did not have space for the same participatory processes. This eventually undermined the intended aesthetic quality (and consistency) of the space. Conversely, many participants took the shared practice and learnings they embodied into their activities beyond Pop-up Hub Melbourne – into their own creative enterprises. The definitions and theories of place-making/materialisation are not only stories and narrative-making, they are elements we can structure into calcification processes, and embed into artefacts (that change). Placemaking does not stop, it can be an ongoing (learned) *practice* of participation.

**Practice/Place: exercising and remembering**

To develop the theme of *practice/place* to follow on from Pop-up Hub Melbourne, Hub Melbourne offers a consideration of the extents of process, that is, how to embed ongoing participation (that values agonism) as an environment. I considered the modes of *event, process, material* and *communication*. We improved the first fit-out of a coworking space at the same time as the community occupied it and established everyday work habits. A key learning for architects managing participatory practice is to build exit strategies, lest any legitimacy, which is embodied in the preceding process, becomes undermined and disembodied by ongoing processes without the architect. Participation cannot guarantee ongoing *practice/place*. Material participatory *practice/place* might not be enough, precisely because of the power of the architect, that *enters* into the situation. Critically, the explicit inclusion of an *exit strategy* – exercised through little conversations, written agreements, training and a kind of hand-over, and although fraught with tensions over *governance* – is important to embody complex forms of occupation, evaluation, renegotiation, and recalibration.
During the process, the architect curated a vocabulary for the practice/place. We used this vocabulary to educate participants to help them (and us) develop purpose for the project. Participation and placemaking should serve the intention of the project, and establish legitimacy of its decision systems. However, the limitations of real governance and equity in Hub Melbourne undermined any maintenance of a lived culture of ‘practise makes perfect’. Due to all of these limitations, some aspects of practice/place were static, and others radically different after the completion of the participatory process we led, and so the role of architect became a lynchpin where exit strategy became even more fraught. The outcome of practice/place eroded the effective possibility of heurism in the organisation, despite offering this to the participants in each moment of their involvement and over the long term during the process.

Facilitation/Leadership: demonstrating and stepping-back

The Ballarat Civic Hall and Coworking Space case study was an opportunity to learn how to start, lead and handle the inevitable breakages, as a result of fractures in the group or gaps that occur, between phases of a participatory project. The theme of facilitation/leadership was therefore an opportunity to consider how facilitation is actually carried out and what it does. Facilitation can teach, encourage tension, argument and working through conflict, and seed ideas (not just harvest them). The application of the modes of governance, event and communication, also worked to contribute practices of decision-making and participatory process.

Architectural leadership occurs in a facilitation/leadership process, through exchange and limiting control over the project. Calibrating this facilitation/leadership may be summarised by considering tone, through a flexibility of emotional position and flexible tactics. This tone requires vulnerability, patience, strategic mess, explicit purpose and iterative principles. It may also require that architects accept and even expect breakage – divisions of purpose, losses and waste and even things falling apart from time to time. Managing the tensions between different roles of the architects and stages of the project, inevitably shapes the narrative of the participation.

Outword

In this chapter I have discussed the case studies one at a time and explained and reflected upon how specific modes of participatory practice were applied. With the booklets, each case offers examples to describe what is participation and bring forward difficult concerns as part of, and or resultant from, a participatory process which consciously values agonism. The application of different modes, are both actions and propositions for participation. What they also sketch is some realms in which to design and practice: ‘horizons’, ‘steps’, ‘entries’, ‘exits’ and ‘tones’.

This chapter undertook a case by case analysis of each Creative Work, looking in fine-grain, including through each mode selected and enacted in a project. My analysis attempts to apply a criticality to the way participation is designed in the project through the different modes. This design is analysed against the
purpose of the project – the background that generates the project brief more holistically – and the design agenda of the architect that each mode was trying to achieve (the theme). I make here an assumption that there are many spaces of participation that can be designed, and the elements of those spaces that can be worked are based in ‘power’, ‘location’, ‘communication’ and ‘time’.

To undertake the fine grain analysis of each mode, the chapter has considered each mode as a progression, from proposition to occupation – cause to effect. Although this seems a somewhat linear, simplistic view, the reality of the deeper role of the architect as being instrumental through design skill, is an important primary assumption.26

Although the goals of each project may be defined loosely by a combination of participants – including the architect – to both find an academic and a professional criticality I have chosen to stake a value judgement on the process of intention > concept > development > documentation > delivery – and looked to see how integrated each step is. Broader, more disconnected judgements of ‘is this good architecture?’ from an outsider’s summary perspective are avoided. Instead, the chapter has endeavoured to develop terms for critical judgement from the projects themselves – and through the research as a whole (both autonomously and antinomously). The projects and the critical review of their modes that show how to do (or not do) participation in architecture through agonism, do interconnect and suggest how a general and lived knowledge can be accumulated.

The four themes I developed in my Creative Works were site/space (Cathedral Place), making/materialisation (Pop-Up Hub Melbourne), practice/place (Hub Melbourne), and facilitation/leadership (Ballarat Civic Hall / Coworking). The seven modes I employed to constitute my participatory architecture were communication, event, governance, making, material, process, and space (occupation).

Now that my case by case discussion has considered both modes and the themes of projects which inform participation, I can state that it is possible to develop a critical approach to how to design participation – albeit in a complex and integrated way with the key terms of the project. Although there are some possible linkages that emerge between different themes that can suggest a critical approach to follow, it is clear that successes and failures are common to moments of care and also moments of letting go.

What perhaps has been less direct, is an investigation of the terms of agonism through the analysis. What I have chosen to do, is to recognise the value of agonism, and seek to understand what it does by looking at particular moments of conflict and tension, project foundations of tension and how they played out or were responded to, and the tension between project outcomes and goals. The discovery is that each project develops its own terms and deeper understanding – rather than providing the solution in itself. In this way I

realise agonism as a generative tool, a place to look, a moment to treat and a trajectory to follow. For the most part revealing this conflict/tension is one key contribution that an architectural processes can bring about and manifest.

Wrapping up the research, and working towards a more translatable methodology or contribution for other people practicing architecture in other projects, the next chapter seeks to make a synthesis of this finer grain practice as one. I will state some of the overarching ways of approaching this work – and critical moments to consider – that come out of my Creative Works approach. The intention is that these might help guide a critical approach to participation in architecture – which is underpinned by project-specific goals and values.

As an academic researcher, there is a question here about how my overarching methods might connect to, generate and explore possibilities of the philosophical and practical terms that came out of my Theory Review and Practice Review. For example, subsequent research might analyse precedent cases in similar ways or seek to define themes and modes when undertaking interviews of other practitioners or project stakeholders. A critical approach engages nuance in how the terms are played-out in an architectural project. The outcome is practical. That is the opportunity of participation through agonism.

*   *   *

There may be a common logic of themes specific to participatory design projects. Architects employ strategies and tactics to find ways through each project towards both implicit and explicit aims, these have important influences on how participation is mobilised, modally and chronologically. To this, the architect recognises a tone, critically brought to bear in a project, and between projects as a practice.
Discussion – Part 2

*a synthesis*

This is a synthetic chapter that can assist the reader to understand how to approach participation and critically develop its application. I contextualise and explicate four ontological questions, that simultaneously expose the heart of architecture and participation when taking on agonism.

This chapter provides a synthetic statement of the various learnings in my research. It replies to the research questions which are explored theoretically in the background chapters and practically in the Creative Works – what is agonistic participation in architecture, and how to undertake agonistic participation in architecture through practice.

The outputs of my Theory Review were descriptive adjective and noun words, that give purpose to participation and agonism in architecture. They set up my Practice Review which produced adverbs and verbs, namely through focusing on principles, practices and methods. The underlying structure of the theoretical foundation of the research stems from collecting and reading the key ideas across the research as a series of explorations, organised into four distinct disciplines: social theory, political theory, planning and architecture. Approaches and methods from precedent participatory practices, frame my specific themes and modes of participatory practice for the Creative Works, and subsequent analysis.

In order to suggest a theoretical outcome of the research, the first part of this chapter presents a summary of theoretical positions – a series of thinking or action-research processes, or heuristics, observed in the world of making architecture and urban design – which integrate across distinct disciplines to structure active, interdisciplinary positions. Participation is cross disciplinary. Each process describes different yet similar geographies. I have named these four ‘philosophical processes’ which a participatory architect may start understanding from, and, critically design with through an agonistic approach.
These philosophical processes describe four philosophical dimensions pertaining to participation and agonism in architecture and human experience of it. They are heuristic. They are circles that loop back on themselves mimicking an action-research / design process involving others.¹

Finally, the second part of this chapter, importantly proposes a series of questions. These questions are a practical outcome of the research. The questions incorporate the perspective of philosophical process unearthed in the Theory Review and they lead a practitioner or theorist in how to respond to the spectra of: being and synthesis; decisions and actions; facilitation of others; and value of the amateur architect. To do so I mobilise the vocabulary demonstrated between my exegesis and Creative Works – including the modes of (participatory) practice which appeared in my case studies.

In the previous chapter I employed a layered framework to discuss each case study separately in its own context. The initial layer, established the conceptual purpose theme for participation of each of the four case studies: 1. site/space; 2. making/materialisation; 3. practice/place; and 4. facilitation/leadership. The second layer, surveyed the case studies and recognised the common set of propositional modes of participatory practice: communication; event; governance; making; material; process; and space (occupation). Finally the third layer, considered each project in a sequence of three parts: 1. aim; 2. proposition; and 3. occupation. It is important to emphasise this here, because the previous chapter’s (fine grain) case by case critique of my Creative Works sits as one outcome of the research running parallel to the purpose of this chapter.

Through the preceding chapter, a case by case analysis, I critically explained the failures and success of my different participatory and agonistic approaches. There are characteristics of the space of (agonistic) participation in architecture that suggest some typological issues and situations, however my research avoids correlations of cause and effect. I recognise instead that the nature of the outcomes emerge from the nature of the brief for each project, and therefore I state the significance of participation in participation in architecture through agonism in practical terms. Again, an heuristic approach is key.

What then the progression from the first discussion chapter to this final discussion chapter cautions is a deep reading of context when mobilising the questions that I am proposing.

As a synthesis — and not a fine-grain critique — this chapter will describe my broad themes-propositions-approaches for agonistic participation in architecture. To undertake this I have structured this second part of the discussion in four sections outlining ontological questions defining critical practice:

1. what/who?
2. where/when?
3. how/why?; and
4. how/when?

Philosophical processes framing (critical) participation in architecture

The following — derived from unpacking learnings in the Background through the Creative Works — are four philosophical processes that a participatory agonistic architect might consider when engaging with participation. [See Figure 7] These are action-research heuristics mapping similar processes at play from different perspectives and disciplines that informed my practice of participation. Namely: philosophy, political theory, planning, art theory, architecture and urban design. Each process nominates within itself a suite of steps in a creative cycle. A (participatory) strategy. Milestones of understanding. Nouns. The themes for participation that organised each of the case study projects (site/space; making/materialisation; practice/place; and facilitation/leadership) are endeavours to map against these nouns. The suggestion is that in designing the participation process — towards developing chosen themes of participatory practice — a participatory agonistic architect seeks to critically support, agitate, keep alive, and respond to the philosophical processes in/between participants. Referring to these an architect might be made more aware of where participation in a project is at. These serve as scaffolds for framing the methodology of (agonistic) participation, and the application of methods.

(Everyday) being and synthesis

> Principles > Tacit Power > Emergence > (Re)Connection >

The first philosophical process considers broader ideas concerning being and becoming, particularly with reference to the philosophical concept of the Everyday. In lay terms for architecture, the process could be described as follows: an architect (or indeed any practitioner-participant) might have prescribed ways of working, might try to realise outcomes through day-to-day negotiation, might come to results, and then in turn must carefully consider how to approach the next piece of work against the initial brief.
Figure 7: Four heuristics – Philosophical processes framing (critical) participation in architecture
This cycle starts with **Principles** – a critical approach to **how** something is done – which in turn develops into the manifestation of **Tacit Power**, tactical, tangible, action-focused and in the moment (different to strategic power). From **Principles** and **Tacit Power** an outcome ‘comes into being’ – this is **Emergence** – not preconceived, it is gradual and appears through a process of many parts in an ecology. Finally, a practitioner (or any participant) – who is working towards better outcomes, that are sustainable and liveable in themselves must critically consider how to make this outcome work – undertakes a critical (Re)connection of what has emerged from the starting **Principles**, reviewing where to go next and how to be, and so the cycle continues anew.

*(Everyday) Being and synthesis* considers: “I am what I do, and what I do changes the environment I am in and thus who I am and how I **could** be.” The emphasis of participation is from one’s self outwards, in contrast to the social other inwards. The implication is that there is a realisation process of knowing oneself, turning that to principles and working-it-out in/on the world through the expression of power and seeing how that fits. Being is brought into experience through embodiment. It is a sense of knowing oneself in a minor way, realising and expressing power; then receiving (environmental) feedback.

**Political** decisions and actions

> **Challenges** > **Methods** > **Manifestation** > **Edges and Limits** >

The second philosophical process takes an active step back from the previous meditation on being and becoming in the everyday; it considers the **Political** – how decision-making occurs, particularly in the realm of democracy, change and power. The implication is, that an architect (or any participant) evokes a political dimension when applying **how** to go about making a decision. By extension this is critically important when working in the public realm.

Through participation, **Political** Decisions and actions forge particular tangents within the **Challenges** inherent to democracy, critically one takes on **Methods** that control (both include and exclude) political realities. **Manifestation** is the moment this process becomes poignant for participation in architecture – when something is turned from intentions into action/object; it is a key dynamic for power. **Edges and limits** takes that dynamic and measures how actions do or do not forge meaningful change – the liminal points – in systems, other people or subsequent decision-making and action processes; it recognises new questions and opportunities for political leadership.

What the philosophical process of **Political** Decisions and actions says to participation, is that a departure from normative methods of top-down control to open inclusion may lead towards different changes, questions and **Challenges** anew.
(Planning) facilitation of others

> Facilitation > Working individuals and groups > Leadership and legacy > Methods and outsidedness >

The third philosophical process flows from the second, honing in on a practical space of facilitating other people to make changes through mental spaces – Planning. It is interested in the psychological aspects of architecture, what experiencing an environment is, and what making an environment means to someone's mental state. For an architect, the process is a recognition of how to work with other people to get to an embodied outcome.

(Planning) Facilitation of others identifies key issues of facilitating creativity which is important to participatory design. It describes the individual and group process, what it takes to practically get something going, and the mental spaces one might take on to grasp concepts and take on new problems. Because there is an inherent context of power, shifting roles, and relationships in any participatory process, the implication is that an architect might critically realise their own participation vis à vis others, in a way that can bring about holistic and sustainable outcomes – in physical and social infrastructure.

The cycle starts with Facilitation – ('make easy') helping others to realise (decide, design or build) something.
To do so, collective efforts are brought together through the particular and effective action and interaction of individuals – Working individuals and groups. Subsequently, Leadership and legacy recognises the interaction (and tension) between the architectural process and its participants, and the role that an architect takes on to direct a project yet somehow leave it empowered. Methods and outsidedness is then a two-fold step about setting up systems and processes that others could sustain, and also recognising the limits to one's participation, both as an asset for critical reflection, and as a burden of dependency that must be divulged.

The amateur (participating) architect

> Occupation (of space) > Critical heuristics > Agency and responsibility > An (aesthetic) narrative >

The final philosophical process draws closer from architectural theory than previous sections to frame a contemporary and deep concept of Participating in architecture. What this fourth philosophical process considers is that various approaches to participation come from the fact of an architect participating with others, and that the unknown, amateur nature of those approaches have benefits in themselves for learning, creativity and politics. It reuses and draws together the previous processes leading to an understanding of 'how to'.

The amateur (participating) architect presents a critical analysis of problems of (poor) participation in architecture today, how to conceive this problem, how to revalue it, and how to communicate it. In some ways this flips normative concepts of expert and professionalism over to valorise a radical openness in architectural practice.
The cycle starts with considering what active opportunities *Occupation* (of space) provides to participation. Through this tacit action – occupying, participation can take a critical position that is based on what is at hand, where one learns through doing – *Critical heuristics*. Recognising the power of action from a situated place, *Agency and responsibility* explores empowerment through participation in architecture, which reframes participation as a political and ethical device. Finally, through the expertise and the intent of an architect, *An (aesthetic) narrative* can be formulated that ties together what learning and critical action process has occurred – this has an aesthetic manifestation. As a loop, that spatialised aesthetic is available for *Occupation* anew.

Questions describing what is (and how to do) participation in architecture

The following – responding to themes introduced in the Background and derived from synthesising learnings in the Creative Works – are four ontological questions that a participatory agonistic architect might consider when seeking to critically engage with participation. These questions describe the participatory actions that one might undertake and their quality: a set of (participatory) tactics. Verbs. The key modes of participatory practice that were mobilised in each case study project – *communication, event, governance, making, material, process, and space (occupation)* – describe these verbs. The suggestion is that within the participation process – towards developing chosen themes of participatory practice – a participatory agonistic architect considers these questions and critically adjusts, shifts, nuances and enacts their approach to participants. Referring to these an architect might be more able to reflect in action about participation. These questions serve as the constant prompts to describe the methods of (agonistic) participation.

1. What/who

Significance of power – what does an architect do?

In contemporary literature and projects, participatory design is argued as being both a threat and opportunity towards the established role of the architect. This threat and opportunity is explored in diverse fields in architecture including feminism, everyday life, power and post-modernism. Two key books that underpin this are *Sexuality and Space* and *Occupying Architecture*. These pose ontological questions about the role of the architect which are also in some preliminary way posed and developed in *Architecture and Participation*.

In short, the established role of the architect is one that assumes top-down power, typically (and actually) dominated by paternal mindsets and founded on a rational-modernist, neo-liberal politic. Some practical symptoms of this are the predominance of methodologies that use dichotomous terms like ‘problem-solution’ and ‘lack-need’. Here, architecture is often a singular concept, a static thing that fixes a situation and is then occupied according to its function. The practical approach of the established role is that the architect receives a brief, responds with a building concept, seeks client approval, documents the proposal, then administers a builder to build it. The architect is the expert, the client is not the expert, the builder provides a service and the end-user (through the client) consumes the building after it is built, as intended.

There are advantages and disadvantages to the established role of the architect. Perhaps the first advantage is that it provides clarity through a separation of roles that allow for a quantifiable commercial exchange, and delegation of responsibility. It follows that the key disadvantage – especially in public architecture – is that it separates roles and reproduces quantifiable and commercial exchange and responsibility. Read risk. Read the economic dynamo of limits. Although closed, the (conservative) political dimension is entirely implied at the expense of developing and implementing desired change concepts. Thus spaces, building and cities are arguably devoid of discovery and processes that negotiate power, and use-value. (Agonistic) Participatory design opens this up.

Themes and opportunities to think about when asking what/who

There are many opportunities if an architect opens the question of role to participation. Some key terms I have identified include: ‘amateur’, ‘expert’, ‘professional’, ‘client’, ‘user’, and ‘citizen’. These terms require creative renegotiation when undertaking a participatory design process and thus participation engages in a thematic conversation about change – changes to concepts of public-private space or broader concepts of power and space.

- Who is included? Who is not excluded? – and to what degree?
- What is my involvement? – and what is your involvement in the project? Is it a lot or a little?
- What are you giving to the project? – what can I give to the project?
- What is your position? – what is mine? Who has power to decide and do this or that?
- Do I hold separate responsibility from you? – do we share this together?

In an agonistic questioning of role is a negotiation of relationships – connection and disconnection, which are spatial terms that inevitably describe an experience and afford interactions. It is also a negotiation of mindsets – what ways of being are required to occupy and use the (new) space that imply organisational and governance structures, sustainability and resilience; and changes to everyday habits, working practices and lifestyles? Towards the process it asks what do I have to be and do to make this happen. Towards the outcome it asks what do I have to be and do to best fit in. Participatory design recognises that changing the infrastructural setting (the architecture) has a big impact on everyday life and both individual and public
identities. Instead of eroding user identities by force or objectification, it seeks—positively—to explore and express different sexualities in an active way. This implies real shifts in power.

Practical approaches and typologies that come out of asking what/who

An agonistic, participatory process typically exhibits redistributions of power. It sees more sharing of responsibility (and risk), and a greater awareness of who makes decisions. An architect typically takes on roles of facilitator, coordinator and teacher, and narrows their focus on technical delivery such as measuring and drafting, managing regulations, and managing overall time and budget. A participatory approach implies listening for others’ expertise and hearing what different participants have to offer to the project and each other.

In the case studies, some models to achieve this were more structured—such as layering decision-making through position descriptions or terms of reference, architects embedded in a core team, or architects formally interacting with control groups, partnership groups, reference groups, and the broader community. Some other models were loose—in informal use of working groups, project ambassadors/champions overlapping defined portfolios of work, and employing community members directly as volunteers or paid staff. Critically, a participant will typically take on numerous roles, learn or change roles and wear different hats. The language used here implies that participation is not only an outward-facing activity, but that the internal modelling of the participation (that of the architect’s team to procure the project) must project quality modes of management and work through complex interrelationships of staff and volunteers.

Architecture might learn from other disciplines, such as management, education, government, community development and social work in this regard.

2. Where/when

Significance of location—where is the participatory moment?

Where and when are inextricably linked in the concept of location. In contemporary literature and practice, alternative ways of considering the site/location that form a foundation for participation in architecture include key creative concepts such as ‘occupation’,¹ ‘site-constructions’,² and ‘place/placemaking’.³ Art praxis also offers discussion around ‘antinomous critique’.⁴ These approaches involve a closer relationship to a site:

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back and forth, iteration, discovery, interaction and dialogue, up-close, across sites, or far away. Context, a key concern for architecture, is even more important in (agonistic) participatory design.

For architecture, answering the question of location is typically a given – a client has already purchased a site and has a desired delivery date; the architect then works to design something and manage to build it on that site in time. A normative approach to architecture assumes the site as a static object, something that is visited, measured-up and analysed. Design then happens in the architect’s office or in the ether of meetings and correspondence, emails and phone calls. Finally, in construction, a builder returns to the site with accurate plans, puts up a fence, digs holes, and makes a building to a strict plan ground-up, checked along the way in discrete site visits by the architect. Ideally, after this is complete people move in; often never having been to the site before. There is an expectation they will then make it their own.

For (conservative) economic reasons, site is something that is dealt with at as far a distance as possible (at the architect’s office) and time to interact is reduced to the bare minimum; less-participatory approaches eschew engaging with location. Adversaries of participatory design may claim that it takes too long to interact in this way, and is potentially riskier and too expensive. Advocates for participatory design might argue that these approaches bring forward social value and, where participation is high, can reduce workloads for the architect, increase shared motivation between different individuals and avoid objections later in the process.7 As two contrasting alternatives these sketch decision-making, people and architecture that is either a perfunctory, neutral/generic, disembodied, efficient, abstract and an impersonal experience; or an experience that is involved, personal/social, sensorial, meaningful, specific/detailed and gradually interconnected over time.8 One is distanced, the other close.

Themes and opportunities to think about when asking where/when

Opening architectural design to think more about location presents new and nuanced opportunities to enhance participation and its outcomes. Some terms for design that I have explored include timing, settings, speed, number/frequency and scale. Instead of simply assuming that participation is ‘always-everywhere good’, a critical design approach considers where and when participation is best suited (and how). In the context of design where change is the concern, considering location carefully emphasises particular values,
frames the importance of a setting – which eventually leads to new architectural concepts – and engages particular negotiations.

- When should this decision be made – now or later? Are people ready? Is it time yet?
- Where should this decision occur? What experience is required to engage with this in a meaningful way?
- What must come first, what comes next, what would come after that?
- How much time is needed? Does it need to be repeated? Is once enough to make it ‘stick’?
- How many people should make this decision now? Should I work this out internally or is it important to get other people involved in this?

An agonistic questioning of location requires a critical negotiation of the moment, steps, duration and pressure points. This maps both strategies and tactics to bring about an outcome, where and when energy is expended, and how something might be unpacked to bring about change that involves or excludes participants or particular informations. It is strategic in the overall design sequence of a process and tactical in the moment. Designing location recognises the various dimensions of situations for decision-making: discovering, siting, framing and revealing particular conflicts, or creating opportunities for new moments for/of activity.

Practical approaches and typologies that come out of asking where / when

A typical participatory design process has multiple engagements, is often on-site, stops, starts, goes slowly at times and at other times very quickly. This applies to agonism too. To enable different people to participate, the programme and pace is important. The case studies suggest that typically and strategically, the architect starts a participatory process by designing the programme/timeline then agreeing on the programme with the client and various stakeholders. The process will invariably adapt over time in structured and unstructured ways, hidden and transparent with review depending on the progress and moment in the project. Because making a programme engages personal and professional dimensions, participation needs to be consciously organised, built and shaped to carry out the aims of the project.

A typical programme will include milestones, stages and rhythms that form a sequence. There will be big events, medium events, and little events, one-off and repeated activities. The sense of meanings and complexity of decision-making typically increase over the course of the process; where negotiation about the ambition of the project and level of sophistication of participation unfolds over the process, it may increase in some aspects or decrease in others. The regular working sequence is in three parts: the first part of the process establishes foundation to work from – a meaningful appraisal of the situation, working principles, and the architect gathering authority to coordinate the project; the second part sets-up, tests and develops working practices, systems and habits that involve many people; and the third part continues and bolsters successful modes of practice that have a working, back and forth between delivery and evaluation.
In addition to a broad programme of events, an architect carrying out participatory architecture may consciously focus on designing environments for meetings and events as part of the process. This includes setting up the room for learning and exchange, carefully planning meetings and curating an environment for participants to connect or separate from one another, open up their minds or close them, and remember or forget (move on). The force of design is implied. In a community setting, typical props include name-tags, convivial round tables, chairs arranged in a circle, and food and drink.

3. How/why
Significance of communication – why say that?

Communication is a challenge for researching participation in architecture, and it is a challenge for practicing participatory design as an architect. What is more, agonism regards ‘argument’ as one of two key ingredients to successful political life in democracy; the other ingredient is ‘action’. As such, communication is the backbone of any participatory project, it informs, it provides forums for interaction, it is a tool of decision-making, and it is inextricably linked to the development or destruction of legitimacy for a design outcome. The ‘ideal speech situation’⁹ that underpins ‘deliberative democracy’ is a key example of the importance of communication in decision-making processes. One asks why say this or that, and how? Tension is key.

Regular forms of architectural practice rely on architectural drawings, perspectives and written documentation to both communicate how the project is developing, and provide authority for decisions-made. Notably, the most complex design decisions are made and represented on drafted two-dimensional drawings by the expert architect, where it is difficult for non-experts to control, let alone read and understand. These forms of communication propagate clear lines between communication as information (such as specifications, plans, and sections), and communication as rhetoric (such as perspectives, diagrams and branding). Some forms, such as a physical model might cross these lines, as may the author.

Problematic for (agonistic) participatory design, the impasse between expert-architect and everyday-user is only exacerbated by normative mindsets that separate responsibility and rely on hierarchy to make decisions. What spins out of these mindsets are particularly problematic tones of control and direction, a ‘branding’ propensity to provide a ‘happy face’ (and avoid conflict) and settings of ‘commercial-in-confidence’ or ‘in-camera’. These tones, brandings and settings, work against participatory goals and may lead to non-participatory outcomes. Furthermore, for public projects, through communication, whether participant engagement is more or less managed impacts understanding, trust and future participation in public space. Nuance is important in power shifts. Is someone spoken at or listened to?

Themes and opportunities to think about when asking how/why

For architects to consider how or why they connect to others when producing work, opens the possibility for more purposeful communication in both directions, between the architect and the users. There is an opportunity to create forums that allow for exchange between multiple forms of expertise, and different levels or reasons for motivation. To bring about a design that feels owned by its users, communication in the design process is integral. Some key terms surrounding the design of communication are transparency (open and closed); frequency (regular, repeated); vocabulary (technical, shared and unshared); voice (formal, informal, critical, appreciative and didactic); and visualisation (clear, iconic, diagrammatic and descriptive).

- How can I explain this? How would a lay person describe this? Why is this vocabulary important to use here? What language can people (re)use?
- What do people want to see or hear? What would make this memorable? Do I need to say it again so it resonates?
- Why am I drawing this? What is this meant to say? What is the best way to show or say this?
- Should someone else say this? Does my tone work? Should more people speak – not just me?
- What are we hearing? Why are they saying that this way? Who have we not listened to yet?

In participation in architecture there is an opportunity to involve others in informing, designing and developing communication. Employing an agonistic approach, there is an opportunity to build shared conversations and debate that allows people to connect, feel heard, be persuaded and belong (be a part of something). The established role of an architect has an effect to shape communication to productive ends. Architects are well-placed and skilled to think about and design communication, and this offers further opportunities to feed into the aesthetic and occupation of designed spaces, as artefacts that both build the space and signify the (social) occupation in the space.

Practical approaches and typologies that come out of asking how/why

A critical approach to communication will produce many different props and artefacts to engage with agonism and participation. It can include many of the same outputs, however the emphasis and bulk of the work will be socially-focused. High expertise technical drawing and specification tasks are only used momentarily, as early resources, or held off until they become absolutely critical. The architect spends the majority of the process working to communicate with participants through events, documents and images, and may only undertake the (contracted) drafting at the end.

Typical participatory processes include a variety of communication tools: websites, blogs, social media, community updates, ‘one-pagers’, regular digital and print newsletters, exhibitions and slideshow presentations. Participants are informed of what is happening through these means, and also through signage, flyers, direct invitations, media releases and many face-to-face meetings. Similarly participants are invited and encouraged to contribute to various publications, or conduct their own conversations and debates with or
without the architect – such as in their own community groups, on social media or at home. The voice of the architect is not always first, last, nor always included.

Design-wise, it is important to include careful and consistent graphic design – a clear, fresh and positive/seductive palette of colours and layout, and use of key words and messages. To tie the social process and the design/built outcomes into one project, typically means including the use of tropes across different areas of the design, a mixture of storytelling and narrative, a sequence of broad themes, memorable titles and ritual activities, and an inclusive tone of voice that involves and empowers people in different ways. For agonistic participation to work many different people need to be attracted to the project, and have the sense that people can share information or experience the freedom to debate together.

4. How/when

Significance of end and beginnings – how to make it happen?

Returning full circle to many of the foundational aims that underpin participatory design – namely ‘liberation’, ‘community development’, ‘rights’, ‘learning’ and ‘placemaking’ – this question explores how an architect can design a process to achieve developmental aims. Early literature was dominated by a focus arguing for the need and importance of participation in design – a ‘just do it’ approach. What is different about this contemporary research is that it focuses on the ‘how’: how to start it, how to continue it, and (for the architect) how to leave it so that it lasts.

At the beginning, participation was very ‘authentic’ … Then it became politically instrumentalised and often degraded … Participation is something that you should start – and this is something that you should not forget – it lasts forever.¹⁰

Architecture is not everything; it is temporary. It is only a small part of a long continuum, it ‘depends’.¹¹

Thus, the challenge for an architect is to work around the inception and completion of the participatory architectural project so that it links into an existing ecology of relationships. Leadership matters. Who instigates and indeed leads a particular process (or the perception of this) impacts on the take up and extent of participation both in the project and beyond it. It needs sensitivity, political awareness, and courage.

The established practice of architecture chooses to assume clear, definitive positions (roles), durations and responsibilities. An architect receives a brief, develops a concept, documents it, delivers it and then leaves. End of story. In this frame the architect’s profession is as neutral expert, handing over either an architectural ‘thing’ or ‘expertise’. The ‘ethical’ approach to public planning requires that the architect leave their politics ‘at


home’, and the client maintains control. The alternative is to employ the ‘starchitect’ to deliver a bold vision, entirely their own way (top down).

The framing of expertise and the ability for people to get involved in making decisions about their environments impacts power relations, empowerment, and positionalities in the public realm. Within this there must be a consideration of when, a sense of the past, now and tomorrow that requires negotiation and a process. It is important to impart understanding or develop community capacity and ongoing systems in order to make a project and its future occupation sustainable. Politics come into play in all of these spaces, and in a true definition of negotiation and collaboration, the exchange of expertise, wisdom, and conviction requires particular thinking on the part of the architect managing a process, spending large amounts of capital, and building a long-lasting, fixed (infra)structure; quickly, slowly or perhaps never.

Themes and opportunities to think about when asking how/when

Actually establishing participation is often a challenge that requires hard work and well-designed entries and exits. As people get involved, the project becomes more complex and meaningful. At the same time as achieving broader philosophical aims of participation, there are some instrumental benefits in community projects, such as motivation, in-kind support, voluntary labour; lower overheads, and shared financing. At a more interpersonal level, as trust develops, work can be more efficient and enjoyable. Building a shared sense of direction allows for shorthand communication and parallel workflows of many hands, or sophisticated political strategies that engage people and authorities on many layers and in many directions. Ongoing participation takes on a life of its own.

Some of the key terms of designing endings and beginnings are strategies versus tactics, leadership, inside and outside, diversity, trust, capacity building, control versus letting go or stepping back, exit strategies and introductions, opening and closing debate.

- How do we do what we want to do? Can we get the power we need to do this? What power do we have? Should more people be involved?
- What do people need to know to be able to do this next activity or make this decision? Where is people’s participation at now? Where do we want to them to get to next?
- Is someone else better suited to lead this? Are we taking on too much?
- Is it time for us to step back? Will the participants be able to handle things without us?
- What do we have consensus on? (Is that consensus too early?) What do people need to debate next so that we can all (differently) get there in time?

Agonistic participatory architecture embraces the political dimension of design processes and decision-making. Instead of assuming a neutral position, there is an opportunity to critically realise the power that the architect holds, distributes, takes and imparts in a project. Awareness about the best way to start-to-end – to lead, to leave – not only supports the well-being of the people involved (including the architect) but also
of the project itself and the building and the organisation that occupies it. In a public project this has further ramifications as to broader citizen engagement, and developing or dismantling systems of governance that underpin culture and everyday life.

Practical approaches and typologies that come out of asking how/when

The most basic tool that comes out of thinking about ending and beginnings in participatory architecture, is the process map. The architect designs a process for the duration of the project that assumes power, gradually builds participation, establishes frameworks and systems, disperses power and then gradually leaves a legacy. A more fundamental approach is in the structure of a conversation: greeting, listening, connecting, speaking, cooperating, then leading to the next step and leaving. Participants (including the architect) review the process together regularly and over time, and frequently make adjustments, changes and additions. The process of review and revision is a participatory process in itself, and often develops important systems of governance or working practices as a spin-off: evaluation, checklists, minutes, roles, induction processes and milestones.

The predominance of listening before speaking is fundamental, for it reverses control and consultation. It signifies an openness to participate. In a typical workshop or meeting situation this translates to starting activities for participants immediately and recognising the importance of people getting an early chance to speak and introduce themselves, and finally people leaving with homework and self-stating what their next steps will be. The running order of a meeting is a useful simile for other parts of the project as a whole: (invite people in,) listen, build trust, speak, build tools, encourage next steps, meet again. In the tactical scale of a moment, this might mean opening a conversation, dwelling in a conflict or consensus, or closing discussion depending on the moment.

Conclusion

The challenges of agonism and participation in architecture bring forward particular opportunities. Through an appreciative lens, the established, normative practice of architecture sets up productive tensions and potentials to be worked into participation, and design more generally. Where many of the discipline-specific skills and advantages of an architect might be steeped in problematic power relations, these skills and advantages can be turned into other means through analysis to critique. Participation is not necessarily an all-good situation, its critical consideration – when and where it should be translated, opened–closed, and stopped–started – will bring about different architecture, be it physical, mental, social or environmental.\(^\text{12}\)

Notwithstanding, it is notable that the same words, tropes, means and tools of normative architecture can be applied to alternative critical practices such as agonistic participatory design.\textsuperscript{13}

In the context of agonistic participation that values creative conflict, community development and design of process, key questions are: what should architecture \textit{be} and what should architecture \textit{do};\textsuperscript{14} and how might one develop wisdom (\textit{phronesis}: principles and understanding)?\textsuperscript{15} are key questions.

Reflecting on this chapter the words and questions provide openings for thinking about participation. The assumption here is that the opportunity for critical thinking about participation is not always immediate – and it was my own experience to have to discover not only how it worked, but my role, where it was located, how to explain it and how to manipulate it. From this heuristic, embedded method, we have a set of primers to find opportunities for participation, or recognise what is happening in practice. With that opening, there is then the inference that an architect may apply a design mentality to how those opportunities can be taken or altered.

The modes of practice as presented in the Creative Works also exhibit ways that these opportunities for participation can be produced, or more accurately, be given the best chance of being available. I am describing an expanding role for architecture that wonders about how to participate with this or that decision, what leads up to it and what follows it, every step of the way. The specific modes of practice not only generate opportunities for participation (particularly through agonism), but become ways of occupying the spaces that are being produced, ever-gradually from idea through to action.

What then might be the best behaviour or structures, habits and ways of being, that people can express, which would occupy the vision that the architecture is trying to respond to in physical form? It is one thing for an individual and-or a group to want a new or modified environment of some type, but will that individual and-or group fit that vision they are projecting? Will it be sustained? And is there a deeper opportunity here that architectural practice can support, that regards the change process – of being and becoming in the urban realm – as the deeper purpose?

\textsuperscript{13} Compare also Markus Miessen, \textit{Crossbenching Toward Participation as Critical Spatial Practice} (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016).


Architecture is charged, because it engages great capital – for many people, many orders of magnitude greater than they presently have or will manage in their lifetimes. It follows that new architectural spaces must be able to handle people’s ongoing lives, especially if these lives are for limited periods of time, and varying degrees of participation and their conflicts.

The (conservative) economic (mind) settings of architecture create serious hindrances to participation, and as such this discussion is as much an exploration of other ways of doing things as it is a statement about how important it is for architects to be critically reflexive in their practice. Some key propositions that are less understood in architectural practice reside in the emotional and psychological-developmental role of architecture. They are also deeply political. Herein architectural design processes need to be designed if the synthetic participation of architecture is to be recognised as an opportunity.

What this chapter has attempted to present is a participatory space that can be understood more tangibly, so that eventually it can become a critical space of creative work. The tools are theoretical and practical. The space here, is fiercely social, and out of the control of architecture. The questions that arise in this realm suggest many of the limitations of power, location, communication and strategy; for architects it requires a grasping of new materials, but also a letting go.
Conclusion

Reflecting back to my initial premise and intentions, this final chapter attempts to recognise my research understanding of participation in everyday practice. Much of this as an outcome is offered though the development of everyday vocabulary incorporating nuanced definitions of participation in practice.

This chapter attempts to draw a line under the research in a written form, by summarising the research activities (outputs) and discussing some of the key research outcomes.

Research Outputs

The notable research outputs are:

– this exegesis;
– the five Creative Works booklets which exhibit practical development in the four case studies, and twenty-six other projects;
– academic conference papers and journal articles about the research learnings;
– more than thirty informal presentations in the public realm;
– integrating the research with teaching Masters of Architecture, Urban Design and Landscape Architecture Design Studios; and
– the Creative Works projects in the public realm cooperating with the research.

What basic contributions does this research make?

This research offers a number of key contributions. In the background chapters it links theory about agonism and participation through architecture across disciplines and projects. The Creative Works are demonstrations in themselves and learning opportunities about putting theory into praxis – they are accounts of micro-practices of participation. The key methodology of taking a fundamentally embedded, heuristic, action-research approach to participatory design is also unique. The challenge that the research took up was to extend philosophical concepts and processes through practice and in doing so, attempt to find ways to strengthen the philosophical, in practice. The relationship (and links) between the literature and Creative Works was pluralistic – explicit and implicit, direct and indirect, confirming, contrasting and often agonistic. Finally, for architecture more generally, the Creative Works and the booklets offer a practical methodology for architects thinking about participation to work through themes and modes of participatory practice from the first concepts about design and process, right through to the end of a project, its occupation, and leaving a legacy.
CONCLUSION

Answers to the research question(s)

What is agonism in participation in architecture

Participation in architecture is about specifically recognising the opportunity of involving people in a design process. This opportunity is inherent in all architectural projects, and thus to think about participation requires a new degree of criticality to be applied to design on the part of the architect and architectural theorist. In particular, this is to also consider the process of design as something that (also) needs careful design. Participation in architecture is not a focus on decision-making, but a space in which many things occur, one of which is decision-making – others include social exchange, inclusion, testing and practising activities, learning and enjoyment.

Participation creates tension in architecture. As case studies, my Creative Works demonstrated that the potential for participation in architecture is positively exacerbated by inherent tensions in the discipline. Namely, this is the imperative for architecture to contribute formed infrastructure to society – spaces, buildings, processes, and the semiotics of imposing architectural interventions using power and definition – to a brief, on time and on budget. Just how fruitful and energetic these tensions can be has not been measured in this research, but has been qualitatively explored, felt, played with, and discussed at length with subsequent impacts linked to describing the ‘how’ dimensions of practising participation in architecture. How is a constructive question.

In participation, agonism is the inclusion and valuation of conflict and tension in decision-making processes. It means embracing and working through conflict and tension rather than avoiding it – through this, participants learn about themselves and each other in the process. Although subtle, this is an important inclusion to personal and social experience in the public realm, both interpersonally and physically. In addition to this, embracing and working through conflict and tension requires change – negotiation, compromise, engagement with complexity, responsibility and understanding are implied. What this means in architecture is that the outcome is not merely a response to a situation, but that people and organisations will change too; they are founded, formed, and altered with design.

Agonism is an action-orientated alternative to consultation and earlier participatory design models which are focused on consensus. It opens participation to risk, passion, change and recognition and expression of difference. This research attempts and affords further practical investigations beyond the theoretical. It extends what is a rich literature into the nuance of practising. My approaches developed in the Creative Works are somewhat particular to architecture; they are characterised by a mix of both structuring and messing things up; where the emphases are flow, capacity-building, discovery and connection.
CONCLUSION

Agonism is especially challenging for architecture because it requires alternative means of evaluation and risk-management. To note and embrace conflict and tension, through involving other people, is often at odds with the people that architects have typically sought as patrons and formed power bases with – not least of all explicit contractual arrangements, institutional policies and established business models. Amongst these settings, agonism is as anathema to the ‘professional’. Thus agonism in architecture today implies (and requires) adherence to a fierce and unsolicited political activism (i.e. resistance).

How to practice agonism in participation in architecture

Perhaps the most significant shift in the practice of architecture through participation is the shift in tone. This tone places more emphasis on listening, appreciating and asking questions – especially on the part of the architect. This tone recognises that all participants are important, and have expertise, power and knowledge which are important to the project. With this tone is also a degree of humility – the architect cannot know the whole project, the project is not wholly conceived, and heuristic methods may be the best way forward. Here, agonism plays a part too. Any tension or conflict is valued as it is (rather than avoided) and work proceeds in a way that includes, connects and engages with it. In my case studies, the emphasis was in finding a sensitivity and connection to other participants. The most telling indication of the opposite tone was ‘control’.

The practicing agonistic participatory architect takes on different roles to carry out a project. These roles change over time, situation and are not always explicit. The roles can be seen as both an enrichment and a diversion of core architectural practice. As well as designer, across my case studies the role of architect was a facilitator, teacher, project manager, politician, builder, volunteer, entrepreneur, counsellor, events planner, graphic designer and community member. It would seem fundamental that an architect must collaborate. An architect contracts and cooperates with these roles and may even take on specialists into a team to fulfil these roles. Because tension and vulnerability are critical, shifting roles at specific moments affects a project (and its participants) in strategic and tactical ways.

There are many ways in which design can be applied to an agonistic participatory process. The key modes of practice particular to describing and critiquing the small participatory public architectural processes in the case studies were communication, event, governance, making, material, process and space (occupation). Each mode embodies an opportunity for design input. Over the duration of a typical project, the architect applied different design concepts to different modes that shape the participatory process and (architectural) outcomes. These modes are project specific, and new ones may be developed, specific to each project. Through a lens of participatory design – that inquires, listens, and applies critical thinking (and creativity), in my second Discussion chapter I put forward a framework for an architect to constantly ask a series of genuine questions: who?, when?, where?, how? and why?.
Finally, a simple yet poignant realisation throughout this work is the importance of self in participation – and that includes the architect. A key term was the professional amateur. This research proposes participation to be quite different to a normative stance implicit in Modernist-capitalist paradigms that distance professional expertise from their clients and products to set up potential for value exchange. The proposal is that throughout participatory theory and practice that emphasises how other people should become more involved in design, it is similarly important to deeply consider how the practitioner – the architect – becomes more involved in design themselves. Indeed, this implies subjective, personal, social and emotional engagement with the matters of the project – which are material, intellectual and social. The constructive ramifications of this that I explored in my case studies, stemmed from the process of how (as a learning architect in the project myself), I shared (and imparted) my own philosophical process with (and onto) other people. Participation makes the most of the opportunity of architecture for valuable inter-personal exchange, including in a public setting. The methodology is fundamentally embedded. To maintain this closeness one suggestion is that an architect must find a way of being as a professional amateur that has the space and availability to learn, to connect, and to share learning and leadership.

Ramifications of the research
What is the scope of this research?

The particular limitations of this research result from the deeply embedded approach I undertook and the political nature of my inquiry grounded in Western urban design and political theory. In some ways the closeness of the design as research methodology can be seen to be a limitation. Other than the short literature and practice reviews in the background chapters, the focus of my study remained with my own architectural work as case studies, rather than that of different architects. Furthermore, the focus of the case studies was my own, or our Studio’s perspective, of public and semi-public projects (and not private and commercial projects). It is therefore difficult to extrapolate learnings to direct expectations for other projects in other places or by other architectural practices, or feign to make objective conclusions about the reception of the work. Although they suggest implicit questions about the role of the architect for future reading, traditional case study analysis and everyday practice, the conclusions one may draw from the Creative Works analysis do have a tendency to be inseparable from my specific context(s).

What the research did was to focus deeply on understanding processes of agonism and participation (in architecture) – that is, what is practice and how (might) it be done. This means that the key learnings from the research can be brought to bear in philosophical thinking about praxis in this field. Hence my research begins with the contention that more understanding is required expressly in the synthesis of philosophical and practical realms of participatory design. My hypothesis remains that the value of this work is particularly in that philosophical-practical space for the architect and the participants. Understanding this research offers
CONCLUSION

paths to think about agonistic and participatory processes, and what might be some of the key questions, contexts and patterns that one may encounter in practice.

Rigour in my research was achieved principally through a multi-modal, multi-scalar approach to both selection and analysis. The paths to think were collected across comparatively different projects with varying lengths of time, and, compared three stages and multiple modalities in each instance. Given this, my research aims to start to (antinomously) traverse a semi-uncharted territory, using a theoretical map of literature and practice for orientation. It thus does not definitively answer a question once and for all – ‘is agonism and participation the way to go (good or bad)?’ – but better understands the philosophical questions in the field (what/who?, where/when?, how/why?, and how/when?), engages with their practical ramifications and figures ways forward that have opportunities for design thinking in architecture. It reframes the value of being embedded and deep listening, not only as a research method, but a method for practice that implies a focus on consciously designing processes one is involved in, and asking close, ontological questions to understand how to work in the public realm. It suggests further research should be philosophical and practical.

What might this research mean to architecture theory and practice?

This research in participation in architectural design continues a longtime minor field in architecture that is re-emerging over the last decade in a major way. This stands somewhat in contrast to the study of Participatory Design in communication and industrial design, or in planning where it is already incorporated into the foundations of the discipline, if we include concepts of consultation, deliberative democracy and collaboration. Architectural theorists such as Giancarlo De Carlo, Reyner Banham and Jeremy Till contend that it is (precisely) participation that has been excluded in architecture’s embedded relationship to Modernism, academic aristocracy, and the patrons of capitalism. Thus, to architectural theory and practice, this thesis argues that the minor position of participation presents the ‘philosophy of participation’ as one major opportunity for a holistic paradigm shift. Agonism is suggested as one way to unlock this shift.

My research advocates a way forward that works to upset past paradigms. It embraces the broader tensions and conflict in-situ through agonism (thereby appreciating the past), and, it investigates my own agency as an architectural practitioner. It posits tension and conflict as productive spaces for the design process and for innovation. What the Creative Works projects mean to architecture theory and practice more fundamentally is that this work is possible. Thus, as contributions to the field, the Creative Works are philosophical proofs; they also seek to leave a legacy in their own contexts.

CONCLUSION

The audience for this research is offered to theorists and practitioners who are considering and developing ways out of past paradigms that have dominated architecture and urban design in a complex confluence. Some common words for these paradigms are Modernism, late capitalism, neo-liberalism and the (rational) communicative turn. The key theories and principles that have underpinned the direction of my research – and what the research seeks to explicate in practice – are post-structuralism, inter-exchange of social capital and community capacity-building, share economy and the commons, asset-based approaches, radical democracy and inclusion (notably of different communications, emotions, psychologies and values). At odds with a Modernist-capitalist economy of rationally-separable exchanges of measurable value, a philosophy of (agonistic) participation blurs boundaries – including a clear role for the architect, or a client – and suggests that experts are also political entities that must critically consider their own agency through their own participation and power to manage the participation of other people.

My mind-map [Figure 8], which explores the conclusion to this research, drew the current paradigm of architecture and participation on the left, behind a red line of the discipline, the further left heading to introspection. I then drew a series of membranes as steps out of that discipline forming new ramifications for the contribution of architecture as found in my research. The diagram of words about this suggested professional direction, showing early steps outside of the discipline of architecture as lines and structure – with ‘consensus’ a key (anti-)reflection of that first step.

The next step considers the performative power of architecture and its words, and thus takes-up the study of designing process more intimately wherein the implications are a rethinking and abandonment of architecture (-and society)’s preconceived (and perhaps ideological) structures. My research suggests

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**Figure 8: Mind-map exploring the development of participation in architecture [read left to right, top to bottom].**
this next step is through the agency of the principle of agonism – first for architects in the public realm to take on the political dimension of work. In particular today this looks like the revaluation of democratic sovereignty in a constructively-adversarial relationship with liberal institutions.

The third step that agonism heralds, is thinking akin to a more sensitive approach to context and otherness. In grammar it uses interrogative clauses to make things happen (who, what, where, when, why) and does this with an appreciative tone (how). A philosophical Being-in-the-World, is thus reserved and implicitly available for individuals to negotiate themselves, yet engaged with, in an explicit manner in the public realm when making social space. Along this line, architectural design was about making things together; collaborating, networking, engaging in argument and a bigger idea about social authorship. (Inter-)participation is privileged over individual expression. In some ways this refreshes some of the humanistic premises of modernity, reposing them in an open rather than deterministic manner: The loose hypothesis is, that this approach leaves ground in the urban realm for the occupation of actively thinking and empowered human beings who may claim the ‘right to the city’ through the ‘synthesis of everyday life’.2 Architects are participants in this world too.

In the final step of my diagram, I am suggesting that the direction of architecture through these membranes could be a-liked to post structural theories from the 1980s, such as Félix Guattari’s ‘three ecologies’, and Michel Foucault’s ‘parresia’.3 Both are anti-capitalist, anti-Modernist advocates for radical democracy, and are critical thinkers.

The Three Ecologies argues that the failings of our world – in particular the social and environmental problems we face, are due to the (poor) interactions of the three ecologies: the natural, the personal psychological, and the societal. As ‘wicked’ interventions, remediations and designs humans have made in the world (and here I am inferring of architects too), often cause problematic escalations because they do not consider the interaction of the three ecologies. For example, an architecture might be visually appealing, but detrimentally alter how the organisation that uses it functions and therefore that organisation’s sustainability, or similarly, a design might be quick and inexpensive to build, but the process of decision-making disenfranchises participants and sets up new relationships that disintegrate functioning cultural systems.

Participation intends to consider the three ecologies and their interplay.

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The study of *parresia* – speaking truth to power to incite change – describes a suite of important philosophical tenets of early democracy that can be seen to be lacking in today’s political principles. The point offers something to Lefebvre’s “Right to the City” which sanctioned the role of the philosopher – not the planner nor architect. In Foucault’s discussion, the *parrhesiast* philosopher is as agent – that takes risks, that works with power, that uses words, and puts into practice. Foucault sketches a being and philosophical process in which the philosopher is a participant too. This is something that the architect might take up too, and in particular when thinking of agency, to recognise the interchained task of risk-taking, power working, rhetoric, and praxis. Architecture is all about involvement, yet there are tensions when an architect works to make something happen through design procurement. The confines of the normative discipline of architecture, leaning towards no – or quasi-participation and hindered by the next structure of consensus are thus problematic when working in the urban realm. Notwithstanding, my conclusion is something represented by the bold purple arrow of architecture becoming something else, that through many steps, participation in architecture is a valuable (philosophical) process to share with others. It is an opportunity.

Agonistic Participation is another tone. A design process needs design. Beyond agonistic participation as ‘the solution’ or a ‘perfect way’, the blue-sky line I have drawn for agonistic participation is simply that this might be another way of doing architecture.

Where to now for further research?

Throughout the research some other fields and concepts have been important although they have not explicitly formed into the final conclusion. In particular gender in architecture – feminism and sexuality and how an architect might critically practice in a fundamentally different way has been important. Throughout the Creative Works, time and time again the topic of gender was raised by our Studio and project stakeholders. It was raised in the building of new paradigms for practice, and noted in the gender (in)balances of participants. I regularly found myself at a collaborative table as one or two of the only men amongst a dozen women. Similarly, a quick analysis of gender and power in different project roles often noted a top-down / bottom-up pattern – of men holding more formal, authoritative, strategic positions, versus women working in the team, filling support roles, getting things done, tactically, day-to-day. Notwithstanding the reassurance these (back of envelope) quantitative observations made at the time toward the directions the research took, further investigation of this gendered practice phenomenon was not the focus of my research.

I would suggest that the next steps for further research remain in the realm of practice. To build upon this research I would propose collating case studies from like participatory architectural practices and comparing their philosophical concepts and modalities. In my own professional practice I am continuing to develop the scale and scope of my (amateur) participatory projects, with some first steps of drawing experiences and processes for private and commercial projects. I am also undertaking more teaching.
Epilogue

Reflecting on the research, agonism emerges as an indication of one direction which participation in which architecture may head as a field of research.

Where initially I used a concept of ‘conflict of desires’ to discuss how a site (Cathedral Place) might be conceived and therefore unlocked, it is now clear to me that focusing on conflicts is key to transformative change. To design – be it for human, inhumane, group, public, or private desires – one needs to be intimately involved in their environment to affect and be affected by it positively. This extends to budding architects.

Focusing on themes of citizen participation, via modes of occupation, awareness, understanding and action, is one way people might be brought to care about and become actively involved in their environment. My thesis is that this includes architects. It follows that working with creative difference and tension, and embracing conflict in the design process is key to unlocking participation in architecture on many levels. By my own practice experience, and, offering something back to the discipline of architecture, I can see that an agonistic approach is crucial to understanding the successes, failures, and perhaps, lack of development about participation in the literature as meaning and practice. Participation is an embedded practice, nuanced, messy, and creative – not rationalised, idealised and abstracted.

More challenging to incorporate as part of a PhD, are some of the battle scars gained from engaging so directly in this practice. The personal and financial tolls of working in this way were and continue to be significant. Some of my early sense of enthusiasm for the power of participation, has subsided to a wisdom and scepticism about what it can do. I now have an awareness of what participation may do and its mechanics (with special regard to agonism) yet am more willing to remind peers that participation is agnostic – it depends on willingness, on intent, and on scale. I therefore feel even more adamant that participation must be designed – not to control outcomes, but to critically engage in the processes of people and place with open eyes (rather than idealism).

In some ways the experiences I have had about the failures of participation, make abundantly clear the limitations of participation as a tool for legitimacy. When it comes to decision-making, participation may be more of a veil separating what feels like decision-making processes from the rooms in which real decision-makers operate (these are random, vested, unenlightened or unaffected by the process), than it is a means to transparency and bottom-up power. Change may not be able to be realised in autonomous projects, at least not in explicit ways that one architect can realise.
Theoretically, there is an opportunity here to explore other conceptions of how projects, people and places interrelate, and form. In my thesis I mentioned a promiscuity, a multiplicity, that tried to work towards the active interplay between forming things, and how something is always formed amidst a maelstrom of flows – fundamentally inside, and at once outside an ecology. [See Figure 9] Think relating, think realising and manifesting needs, think expressing and repressing. To this I wonder about the role of an architect, or the architectural project, both for its limitations and lack of limitations in context.

In my future research I hope to be able to muster the confidence to focus on conflict more explicitly, yet what this PhD experience has also given me is a wisdom to see exigencies between explicit and implicit modes of practice and everyday life that have their own mechanics. Different definitions (and practices) of participation are built into processes of academic research, professional practice, business, cultural norms, and of course: architecture and urban design. Thus ‘agonism in practice’ describes both a suggestion for how to do it, and the experiential quality – what it is – to undertake participation in architecture.
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BIBLIOGRAPHY


BIBLIOGRAPHY


BIBLIOGRAPHY


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Appendix I – Matrix of Projects

The following is a matrix comparing various aspects of all the Creative Works projects undertaken in the PhD.

[Please read the following as two-page spreads]
## Public Events, Competitions and Installations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>My role</th>
<th>Date</th>
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## Public Architecture and Urban Design Commissions

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<th>Competition</th>
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## Studio Teaching in Architecture and Urban Design

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**Note:** The table includes information on various events, competitions, and installations related to architecture and urban design, including names, roles, dates, locations, and types of spaces involved.
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## Public Events, Competitions and Installations

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<th>Costs (of my team)</th>
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## Public Architecture and Urban Design Commissions

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## Studio Teaching in Architecture and Urban Design

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### Creative Work

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### Public Events, Competitions and Installations

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### Public Architecture and Urban Design Commissions

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### Studio Teaching in Architecture and Urban Design

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Date: 2018

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