

TEST

Art, Design &
Architecture
summer school

2010



Cooperative City
Development
17-23rd June

UNIT

TOWARDS A NEW LANGUAGE FOR COOPERATION

... a public space can be the plateau for the occupancy of a commonhold in order that it performs multiple parasitic functions of common use without claims of property.

Aristide Antonas and Thanos Zartaloudis. Archipelago of Protocols

Beyond cultural activity, alternative use and temporary activation, the set of interventions developed in Test Unit summer school are slowly generating a new common language developed by a group of enthusiastic people with different skills and backgrounds.

These kinds of initiatives are generating an evolving vocabulary which might be a powerful tool for them to negotiate their agency among other forces and dynamics shaping our cities: which have widely accepted concepts supporting their agendas, and lobbying on power structures.

If we refuse to accept the city as a static reality ruled by a set of norms and standards, then we need to develop new flexible micro-legislative constructions with communal functions. A system of rules that could be transformed and easily re-established; because we're engaging with the

not-yet-here, and experimenting with failure and reinvention. These rules might refer to ideas to manage through unconventional appropriation, the nooks of the city falling out of the control of city managers.

We need protocols, to introduce the kind of occupancies and experiences that we have been imagining and testing, and slowly infiltrate them into the language and policies of local authority. Because institutions cannot prevent what they are not able to imagine.

dpr-barcelona
Glasgow June 2018

A GLOSSARY FOR COMMONING THE CITY.

ACTION ANXIETY: The result of extended discussions about taking specific actions. Should be avoided as it tends to diminish action.

ANTI-UNIVERSITY: A heterogeneous body of opposition to university as a bureaucratic institution. It exists in symbiotic relation with its opposite.

BALANCE: Combining a physical and intellectual language.

BUZZWORD: A piece of jargon used to unnecessarily describe complex concepts when they are not really needed.

CASHY ASSETS: Money

CIRCLE: An entity for education, a semi-permeable membrane originated from critical discussion going round and round. A space for non hierarchy learning. A school under a tree.

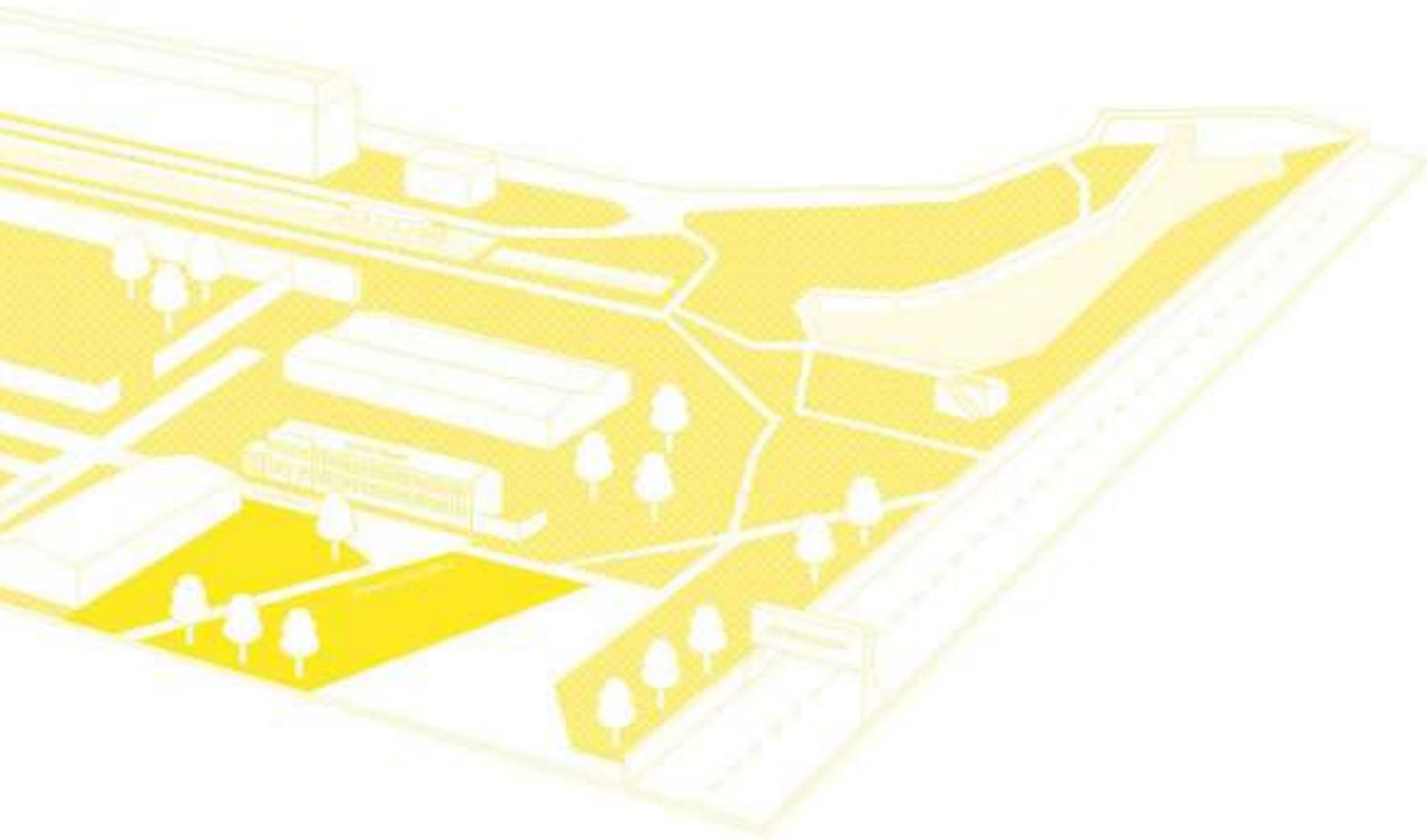
CHAIRHOLDERS: The group of people entitled to reclaim seizing of derelicted spaces. It includes spaces subjected to real-estate speculation.

CHOICE: The right to have conversation or to be hands on.

DYNAMIC LANGUAGE: A specific way of communicating unexpected variations to original plans.

GESTURE: A measuring tool.

GESTURAL: The condition of measuring with the body.



GRASSY ASSETS: Land.

KERNING WITH WOOD: Using the size of wood pieces to establish separate modules.

MOVEMENT LANGUAGE: The use of body to communicate unspoken intuitions.

MATERIALS: A Language tool.

PHYSICAL LANGUAGE: A tool for communicating building and craft skills.

PLEASING: The right to use the city for pleasure.

RECOMMONAGE: The potential of common goods to go back to the collective.

RECOMMONISATION: The act of bringing common goods back for the use of the collective.

SEIZING: The non-proprietary right to take advantage of unused spaces.

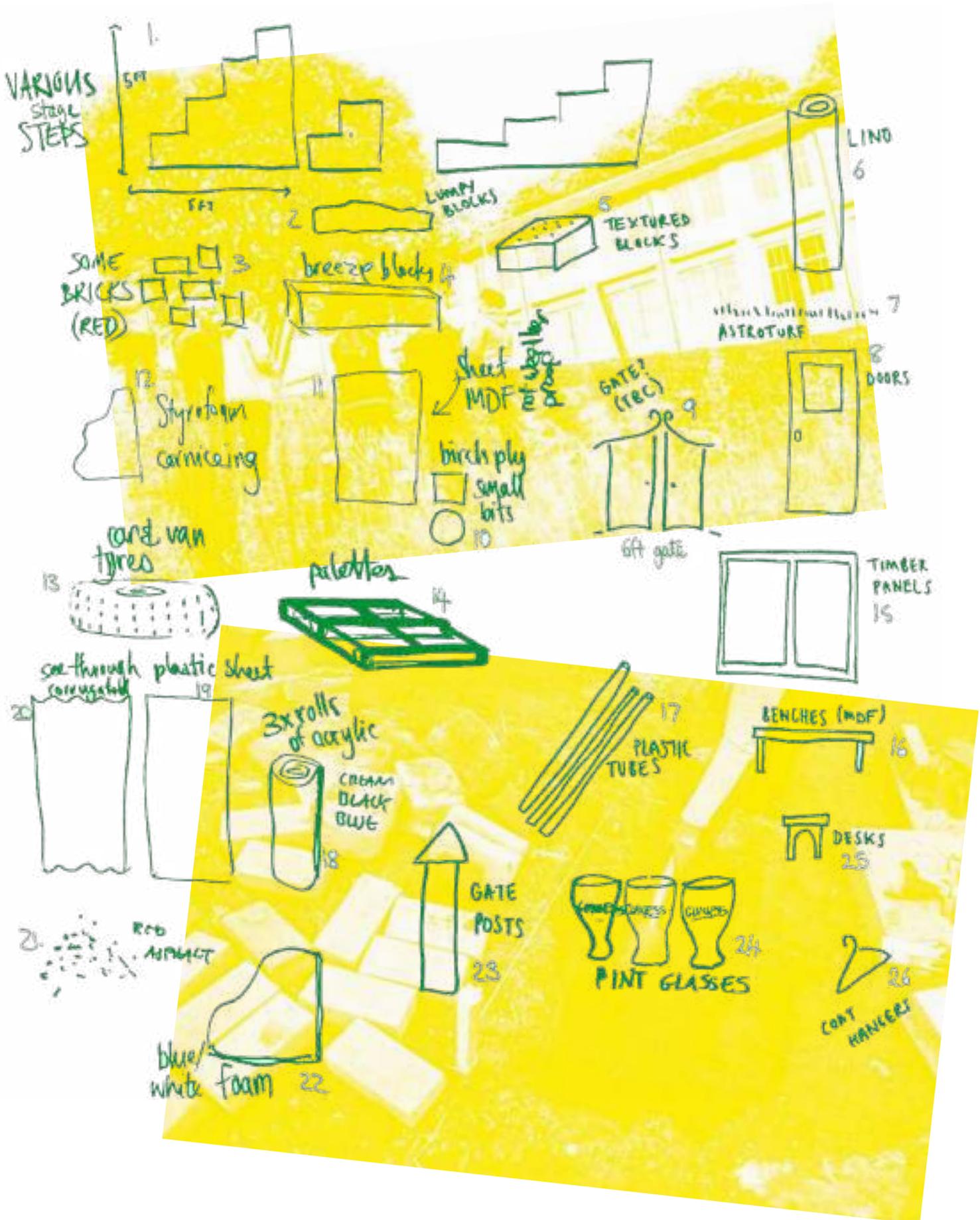
THROUGHPUT: All the things that happen by inputting to form an output.

SINGLE, DOUBLE, TRIPLE: Basic units for non drawing thinking.

UNIVERSITY: A bureaucratic body of accreditation and commodified knowledge. It also refers to some of the last places of hope for commoning at institutional level.

USEHOLDERS: The part of the collective entitled to proactively use common urban space.

Unit 1. Source Material

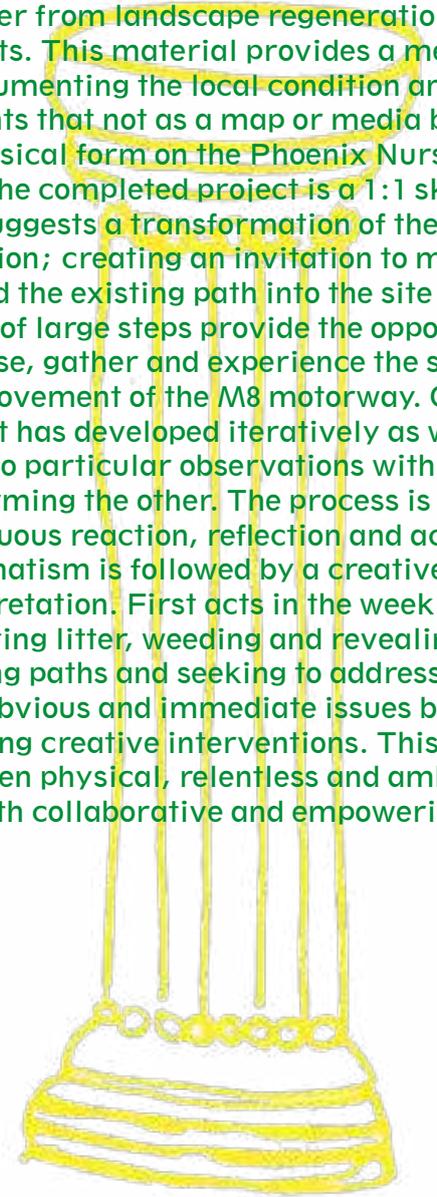


FACILITATED BY:
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BAXENDALE

GROUP MEMBERS:
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MAKE IT SHOW

Over the course of this week the Source Material Unit has been exploring and determining the context of Speirs Locks through the acquisition of objects and material. These objects contain memories of existing and former activity in this location; being redundant props from cultural institutions or stone or slabs left over from landscape regeneration projects. This material provides a means of documenting the local condition and then presents that not as a map or media but as physical form on the Phoenix Nursery site. The completed project is a 1:1 sketch that suggests a transformation of the edge condition; creating an invitation to move beyond the existing path into the site where a series of large steps provide the opportunity to pause, gather and experience the sound and movement of the M8 motorway. Our project has developed iteratively as we react to particular observations with each act forming the other. The process is one of continuous reaction, reflection and action. Pragmatism is followed by a creative interpretation. First acts in the week involved collecting litter, weeding and revealing existing paths and seeking to address very obvious and immediate issues before applying creative interventions. This project has been physical, relentless and ambitious but both collaborative and empowering.



Unit 2. Learning Platforms

MEDITATIONS ON A CIRCLE

GIO: Our text, our analysis, and the emergence of the circle.

I think that it's a representation of the concept of the – of sharing that should be the main theme of education like that there is not a sort of a central chief or something like that but all of the same – all at the same level.

The process of getting there. I don't know if I can really agree with the process of getting there just because I think we could design or could have designed before in my mind, a sort of game and designed the circle in a way that can resolve a sort of a need – a task – to have an activity attached to it. But also I really like the random balance we found for – or to arrive to this – it is very cool – so I am in the middle.

BRIANA: I don't know either. It was very random. I like the atmosphere, this sort of process or way of doing – creativity/creative.

It's great because before two days ago/four days ago I had no idea what we were doing here. It was so fast and so cooperative and yeah, definitely. And poor tree. But I think if we, if I am a plant looking at that circle would be a symmetry of friends. It is quite creepy. A code of plants. A forest of plants (looking up at me).

ROSALIND: I think less of the circle and more of the process we went through to get to the circle, in a way is the outcome. I want to keep it as simple and not post-rationalise it. There was a moment we all turned our paper around and had the same idea. It was incredibly gentle and incredibly violent at the same time. You know we have moved a lot of earth.

BRIANA: I think of the circle as a process and I think this has come out of our natural instinct more than anything else. It's really symbolic but it's also contrived and designed. We've created it. But it's strange how we've disrupted this natural space to create something natural and put artificial things in it like the chicken wire you know and the concrete. So it's weird.

GIO: It's an illusion of nature. You know.

BRIANA: And what does it say about education?

GIO: Maybe...

BRIANA: Maybe that education is an illusion.

GIO: I think it is a sort of an anti-education way of doing.

BRIANA: It is, but then it is also reinforcing the institution because it's a circle.

GIO: It is contradictory.

BRIANA: It isn't formless.

GIO: The circle can be both, I think because the circle is also one of the natural shapes you mostly find in nature.

BRIANA: That's true.

GIO: But the fact that we drew it and not found it is sort of an imposition

BRIANA: In nature

GIO: Another or a last thing, digging I realised how the man destroyed his lands, his soil, his ground because we found a lot of shit inside – and I didn't imagine it because – I don't know why. It's soil. It's not plastic.

BRIANA: To find all of this is shocking.

GIO: This could be one of the educational parameters I found in doing this activity.

BRIANA: I felt the same way. It is kind of disgusting.

GIO: Yeah, disgusting.

BRIANA: We didn't take it out. We left it there. You know? We know we kind of put it back in.

GIO: Yeah.

MAEVE: It is about letting go like not needing to know what it is until you get there incrementally. I guess about the whole week, not necessarily the circle, incremental innovation. Like just, eye on bigger picture but don't try to prescribe the end point.

Great. Beautiful. Marvellous. Absolutely fabulous. Is my name going to go next to it? Then I need to be serious about it. No humour...

BILL It is great because it's open. It introduces some kind of openness but then some kind of enclosure. Which creates some kind of opportunity for open conversation – at the same time each opinion will be sheltered between the cohort and whatever somebody says will be taken as part of the conversation not like as like something extreme. It feels like it is an inviting, it's a place that is inviting for conversation and for a lot of different opinions to be heard. And then we have a great salmon in the middle as well.

ROB: The circle. I think it's interesting that we ended up making a circle when I noticed everyone in our group's critique, seemed to be that our conversation this week went round and round. And because we were speaking about university, it is – the word is – a substitute for anything – any institution you can discuss or whatever institution you want it to represent. Going round and round can be frustrating. I guess it's just interesting that we've made a circle as one of our end goals, when going round and round was one of our critiques of our process this week. It is nice to go back to the beginning and re-evaluate our initial critique. It is a visual metaphor for the week in general.

CHARLIE: I honestly don't know what to say just yet. I'm not sure where to begin. I'm not sure where to go with this – the personal and what the circle has done for me. I came into this with a very, I usually work quite autonomously and don't often develop ideas within a group. It's only when, I only collaborate when I get to a stage when I need help in deciding something that is already presupposed and this is changing more and more because being in a group of people with such varied

skills and their own pace and their own knowledge and experience has been I feel uh just umm... (laughter) amazing. And the way that we've moved through this constantly acknowledging each other's ideas without a definitive goal but knowing that we all have to come together to get anywhere has – is I suppose the point – if there is any point of the circle.

I think the, the material of the circle or the form of the circle is kind of like sub-par to the journey it's taken us on. I mean physically working on quite a lot, I'm quite direct in the way I do things. I work very practically and to step back from that – I understand that everyone has their way of doing things and I understand it might not be right to say 'this is the way things should be done' because there are 100 ways of doing things.

Thank you to everyone.

ROB: I guess that was what I thought. I guess as well if we use the circle as a metaphor it's good because it can represent anything. It is not for or against the institution. It gives people a choice. We are not for or against anything. We are giving anyone, any person the tools to decide what they want to learn and how they want to learn it. There is something about the anti and the institution. They can exist in a symbiotic relationship. Instead of thinking of the best ways for us to learn. It would be better to think about what the institution and the anti-institution can learn from each other. That sums up my version of the week because it has been mentally draining, physically draining and sometimes not stimulating enough or laying in the sun. So it has been a nice way to have all of those experiences and somehow this sums it up.

MIRANDA: A circle needs to keep moving for it not to become rigid.

A circle needs to have ways in and ways out (that act as both) for its inner space to be temporary and non-oppressive:
neither full nor empty
but leaky...

...leaking in and leaking out.

What in biology we learnt was called: A Semi-Permeable Membrane.

Sometimes I find circles frightening
I'm not sure why sitting in a group circle and having a discussion is something I find so difficult - I think it's partly school's fault and some other things, a kind of stage-fright.

How do you grow something organic as a group?

In the dance workshop there was a point where we split into pairs (like cells dividing) and face-to-face mirrored each other, changing the movement in unison without one person leading in the other.

But sometimes one person would prompt a movement or a body part or a direction.

You have to read the other person reacting in the present the most present kind of reacting that dissolves as soon as the next but its traces are still there?

LAUREN: I'm really proud of our hole.

So much emotional and intellectual strength went into both the development and design of our circle Through the process of doing we proved that cooperation is not self evident but a political act, one that takes generosity, care and intention. At first, the displaced earth mirrored the destruction of the M8. It seemed moving earth for our personal gain was harmful to the tree shading us, but the final product gives back to the space in a sustainable way as it will hopefully grow and flower overtime.

INCOMPLETE GLOSSARY:

PURPLE
THROUGH PUT
LEAKY VESSEL
MICROENEMIES
ANTI MACHINES
ANIMISM
AESTHETIC STRATEGY



FACILITATED BY:
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A FERAL STUDIO

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Giovanni Sambo

Unit 3. The Co-op Protocol

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RECOMMONAGE

and may be gifted back to you when that you demonstrate an active use of the site, which should be documented and presented appropriately at the above cited meeting for cooperation.

When we registered the land, we will undertake regular inspections to ensure that it is being used in accordance with the cooperative's common use protocol.

June 2018

Dear _____

It has been brought to our attention that you are no longer an active user of _____ and may be participating in land banking. This practice is no longer tenable in this area.

In accordance with protocol 3.2 of the Land and Water Cooperative (LAWC), as agreed at the AGM held on Monday, 18th June 2018, it has been decided that action will be taken to seize and subsequently recommon freeholds which are not being actively used by their current owners. Your current freehold falls within this jurisdiction. Please note that this will not affect any use of property on the site by current active users (eg. tenants). These users may continue to occupy the site as useholders, in line with the LAWC protocol 3.3.

This is in keeping with the objective of the LAWC, which is to **institute an economy of land, as commons, in favour of those who actively use it.** The LAWC defines commons as land that the cooperative **locks and retains for individual and collective benefit.** The area in question, in which the above address falls, includes all land within 300m of the Glasgow Canal between Firhill and Pinkston Watersports.

As you may be aware, the practice of land banking, whereby absent landlords retain control of derelict or underused land with the aim of making considerable financial gains in a future market, is prohibited by the cooperative. This is to ensure that the land asset in the area is used for the benefit of the community.

Unit 3. The Co-op Protocol



The below provides a summary of the powers and responsibilities of the Land and Water Cooperative ('The Co-operative') established under the Land and Water Cooperative Act 2018 ('the Act') in relation to land within 300 m of the Forth and Clyde Canal, Glasgow ('the Land') (when referred to as 'the Land-shares' when referring to individual plots).

A PROTOCOL FOR THE COMMONS (June 2018)

Objectives:

- > To institute an economy of land in the area of the Forth and Clyde canal from Pinkston to Fernhill in favour of those who actively use it.
- > To seize unused land-assets through acts of recombinance.
- > To lock & retain this land as a commons for individual and collective benefit according to community-defined rules.
- > To improve collaboration between local communities by utilizing skills and assets located in the area.
- > To provide for localised forms of governance.



Unit 4. The Severed Hand



FACILITATED BY:

Amica Dall, James Binning
& Joe Halligan | ASSEMBLE

ASSISTED BY:

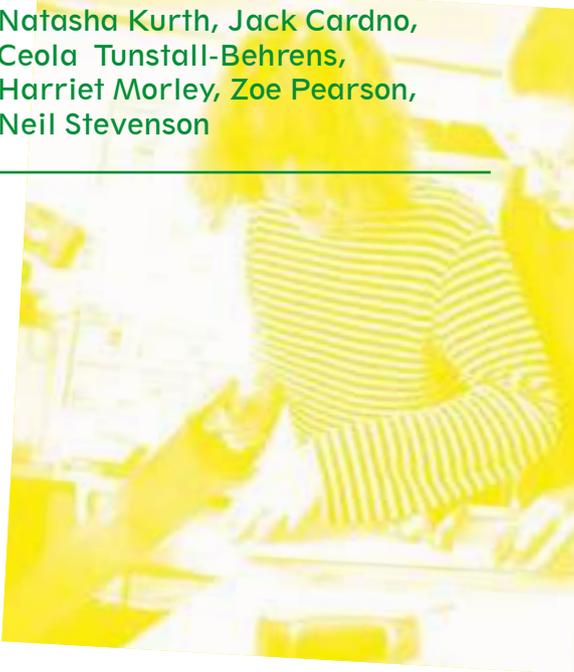
Lauren Coleman

GROUP MEMBERS:

Erin McQuarrie, Teodor Hadirca,
Natasha Kurth, Jack Cardno,
Ceola Tunstall-Behrens,
Harriet Morley, Zoe Pearson,
Neil Stevenson

The Severed Hand developed our construction skills through a collective process of making - using hand tools only (hammers, saws, nails, an unmarked 'measure' stick, some masking tape, pencils, and a set square) without making or referencing drawings or models.

Firstly we worked in pairs to copy a saw horse. We used the existing object as a blueprint: holding our wood against it to gauge the height and width of our version; and observing it's construction to deduce the order in which to build our own. Through action our muscles began to know our tools.



Next we were presented with images of two tables from Enzo Mari's book "Autoprogettazione". We had to make these tables without the accompanying design plans. Through discussion, gesture, risking actions without being able to predict their outcomes, then learning from the physical results of this, we felt our way through the process of building these tables. We started to build a common material language. As we were pushed to make without a tangible set of instructions and reconcile our different minds-eye plans, we began to liberate ourselves from the anticipation anxiety of taking action.

Our final task was to create 'bleachers' (tiered seating) to seat 15 people, using our tables for reference and extrapolating key elements to create our yet unseen structures. We had to listen hard, explain slowly, and exercise patience, and work through miscommunication and frustration. We had to place trust in our actions and the materials to bring forth mutual understanding, surprising ourselves with the results.



Opening Symposium:

What are the challenges of working cooperatively?

What are the models for inclusive city development that link strategic city vision with grass-roots activity?

Speakers:

Neil McGuire, A Feral Studio
Amica Dall & James Binning, Assemble
Lee Ivett & Ambrose Gillick, BAXENDALE
Ana Džokić and Marc Neelen, STEALTH.
unlimited

Chaired by:

Ellis Woodman, Director, Architecture
Foundation

Pecha Kucha: Community Consultation Fatigue?

To create inclusive cities it is important to seek involvement from people who will be affected by design decisions, strategic thinking and processes of 'regeneration'. This has led to community consultation becoming central to the development of urban projects.

However, as new business models have arisen around community consultation have we now reached a point of saturation whereby engagement, consultation and participation is used to produce activity, without producing change?

What are the key power dynamics currently at play, and how can we better support the agency of communities?

Does design through collective or consensual decision making undermine the design process? Can we no longer trust the instinct of design professionals? Are these things mutually exclusive?

What is the quality and utility of knowledge obtained through consultation and engagement? Do these processes extract resource (time, energy, commitment) from local communities – instead of empower them?

Speakers:

Louise Nolan - New Rhythms for Glasgow
Jane Lamont - Beith Community Trust
Francis Thorburn - artist
Mark Langdon - Botanic Concrete
Jonathan Clarkson - Urbantu Design
Daniele Sambo - artist
Lynn Molleson - Development Trust
Association Scotland
Neil McGuire & Lee Ivett - Test Unit 2018

Turncoats Debate: THE ART SCHOOL

Speakers:

Lewis Prosser, School of the Damned
Ethel Baraona Pohl, dpr-barcelona
Neil McGuire, A Feral Studio
Susannah E Haslam, Creative Exchange research programme at the Royal College of Art

Chaired by:

Ambrose Gillick, Baxendale

Creativity is what makes us human. Learning how to be creative = big business. It's time to cash in for art schools.

As education becomes the product, the objectives of HE institutions have silently shifted - to focus on business growth, efficiency and remaining competitive in the open marketplace of higher education.

Arts education is a process enhanced through generosity, experimentation and critique - fundamentally underpinned by the relationship between creativity and the taking of risks. This is at direct odds with the business model it exists within.

Is it time for new models of arts education to emerge?



TASTE UNIT

FRESH FROM TEST UNIT KITCHEN

Eating together is one of the basic forms of commonality.

During this week several side discussions and ideas were shared around Civic House tables. Here you might have a taste of them.

DRIED LIME SOUP WITH TAHINI

Ingredients:



Olive oil
2 red chillis, finely diced
6 garlic cloves, finely diced
3 tablespoons tomato purée
1 tbsp paprika
2 tsp turmeric
2 tsp cinnamon
3 dried lime, pierced
3 tbsp dried herbs
(dill, tarragon, mint)
Handful of chopped dill
Handful of chopped parsley
4 spring onions, finely chopped
200g spinach fresh or frozen
2 cans of either chickpeas/white
beans/kidney beans
A couple of handfuls of broken
Iranian noodles/ small pasta or
noddles
4 tbsp pomegranate molasses
Juice from 1 lemon

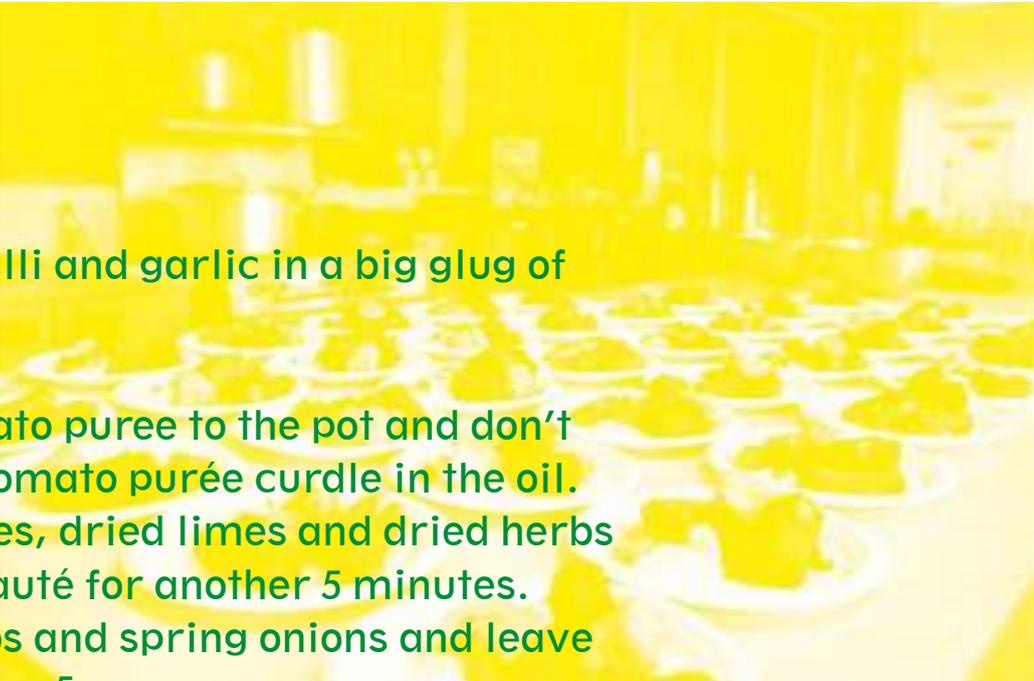
LUNCH

DRIED LIME
NOODLE

SOUP

WITH

TAHINI.



Sauté chilli and garlic in a big glug of olive oil.

Add tomato puree to the pot and don't stir- let tomato purée curdle in the oil. Add spices, dried limes and dried herbs and let sauté for another 5 minutes. Add herbs and spring onions and leave for another 5.

Next add beans, spinach and around 1 and a half litres of water, give or take. Let bubble for around an hour. Season with pomegranate molasses, lemon juice and salt.



Add noodles and let cook. You want it to taste strong in flavour so add more of anything if necessary.

Use a hand blender to blitz a couple of garlic cloves, a cup of tahini, 1 tbsp pomegranate molasses, juice from half a lemon, salt and 1 or 2 cups water. Serve soup and top with tahini sauce, crispy fried onions and dried mint.

TASTE UNIT

UNIT

COLOPHON

Title: Test Unit
Civic House & Phoenix Nursery conceived
and developed by Agile City

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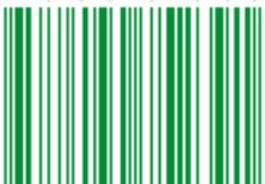
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