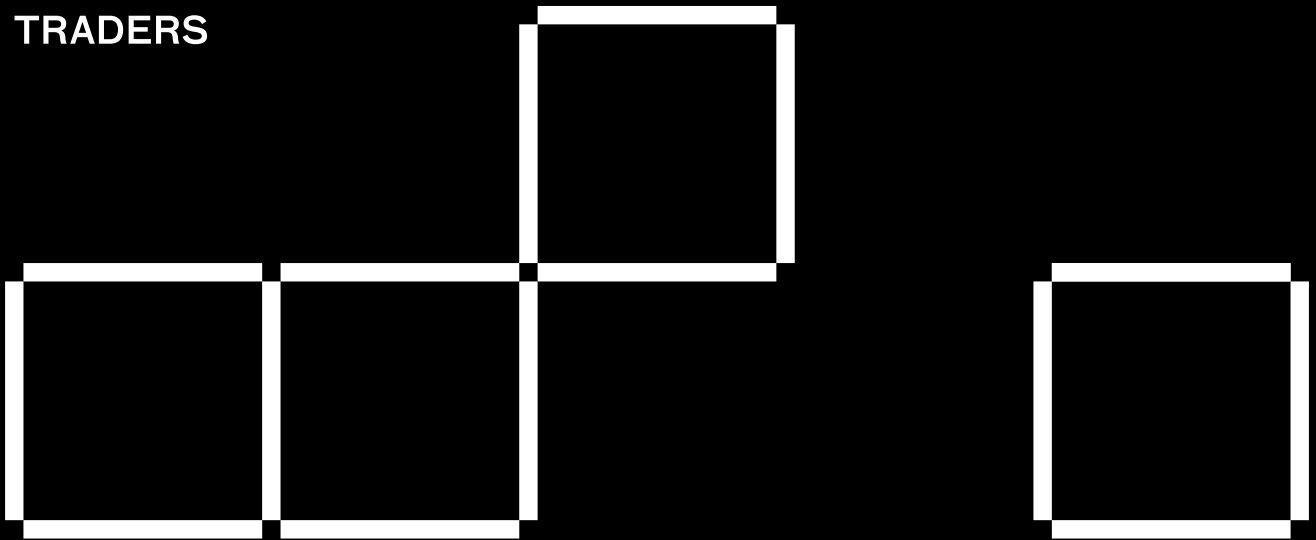


TRADERS



AUTUMN
SCHOOL
2015

ON THE ROLE OF
PARTICIPATORY ART
AND DESIGN
IN THE
RECONFIGURATION
OF WORK
(IN GENK)

10TH — 13TH OF NOVEMBER 2015
GENK, BELGIUM

PLANNING

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9

AT DE ANDERE MARKT
HOEFSTADSTRAAT 13-15, GENK

19:00 Reception / welcome to Autumn School

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10

AT PAPA CERVI
VENNESTRAAT 98, GENK

09:00 Welcome, pastries and coffee

09:30 Introduction

10:00 Post Fordism in Genk

10:30 Introduction of participants round 1

11:00 Coffee break

11:15 Jeanne van Heeswijk: Building resilient networks of people and their skills. The birth of a co-operative on the scale of a neighborhood.

12:00 Lunch

13:00 Introduction of participants round 2

13:30 Pelle Ehn: Democratic design experiments (in the small) – from "work-oriented design" to "making futures"

14:45 Coffee break

15:00 Introduction of participants round 3

15:30 Pascal Gielen: Sustainable Creativity in Repressive Liberal Times

16:45 Discussion forum

17:45 End of day 1

18:30 Diner

PLANNING

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 11

AT PAPA CERVI
VENNESTRAAT 98, GENK

- 09:00 Welcome, pastries and coffee
-
- 09:30 Carl DiSalvo: Social design, design activism, and social innovation
-
- 10:45 Coffee break
-
- 11:00 Wim Embrechts: ART2WORK & Platform Kanal
-
- 11:45 Lunch
-
- 13:00 Hilde Heynen: Work and the public sphere. Critical notes from a gender perspective
-
- 13:45 David Hamers: Cities at work
-
- 14:30 Coffee break
-
- 14:45 Introduction and visit to five local projects (location: De Andere Markt and Betty's Garden)
-
- 16:15 Discussion forum
-
- 17.15 End of day 2
-
- 18:00 Diner

* PARTICIPANTS HAVE TO CHOOSE ONE WORKING TABLE.
PLEASE SEND YOUR TWO PREFERENCES (FIRST CHOICE
AND SECOND) TO PABLO.CALDERON@LUCA-ARTS.BE
BEFORE OCTOBER 21ST.

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 12

AT PAPA CERVI
VENNESTRAAT 98, GENK

- 9:00 Welcome, pastries and coffee
-
- 9:30 Frank Moulaert: Urban design and social innovation. The culprit of caring neoliberal urban policy?
-
- 10:15 Rianne Makkink: A way of working. 'Work At Home', Flexible workers usually work from home
-
- 11:00 Coffee break
-
- 11:15 Working tables* by the TRADERS Researchers
- Naomi Bueno de Mesquita: Alternative futures for Genk: participatory mapping as mode of inquiry in reconfiguring work
 - Jon Geib and Michael Kaethler: Problematising Post-Fordist Instrumentalisation of Art and Design Labour
 - Pablo Calderón Salazar: To intervene or not to intervene? That is (not) the question
 - Annelies Vaneycken: Desire Lines of Genk — Exploring play as means to rethink mobility and work (in Genk)
 - Saba Golchehr: Genk's economical shift: from mining coal to mining data. Strengthening the social networks of local entrepreneurs for future economic resilience
-
- 12:30 Lunch
-
- 13:30 Continuation of working tables
-
- 16.30 Discussion forum
-
- 17:30 End of day 3

PLANNING

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 13

AT PAPA CERVI
VENNESTRAAT 98, GENK

09:00 Welcome, pastries and coffee

09:30 Continuation of working tables

12:30 Lunch

13.30 Continuation of working tables, preparing
presentations

15:00 Public moment: forum / presentations of the
results / reflections of the week
(location: De Andere Markt)

17:00 Closing of Autumn School

ABSTRACTS OF SPEAKERS

— JEANNE VAN HEESWIJK

— PELLE EHN

— PASCAL GIELEN

— CARL DISALVO

— WIM EMBRECHTS

— HILDE HEYNEN

— DAVID HAMERS

— FRANK MOULAERT

— RIANNE MAKKINK

ABSTRACTS OF SPEAKERS

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 10

JEANNE VAN HEESWIJK

BUILDING RESILIENT NETWORKS OF PEOPLE AND THEIR SKILLS.

THE BIRTH OF A CO-OPERATIVE ON THE SCALE OF A NEIGHBORHOOD



Everywhere micro urbanisms are emerging within small communities across cities, in the form of non-conforming spatial and entrepreneurial practices, which are defining a different idea of density and land use. From these practices new economical, political and social forms are emerging that set forth a counter form of urban and economic developments that thrives on social encounter, collaboration and exchange. *Freehouse, radicalizing the local* worked toward creating the conditions for collaborative production that allows individual makers to pool resources in order to pull financial flows inwards. This catalyzed the desire for a form of neighborhood organization that can extract financial capital for social, intellectual, affective values. This talk will critically examine the problematic nature of trying to create a radical form for self-governance of an area through developing local skills and self-certifications and strengthening resilient intercultural networks in order to leverage political power to shift policy and negotiate economic advantages.

Jeanne van Heeswijk is a visual artist who creates contexts for interaction in public spaces. Her projects distinguish themselves through a strong social involvement. With her work Van Heeswijk stimulates and develops cultural production and creates new public (meeting-)spaces or remodels existing ones. To achieve this she often works closely with artists, designers, architects, software developers, governments and citizens. She regularly lectures on topics such as urban renewal, participation and cultural production.

ABSTRACTS OF SPEAKERS

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 10

PELLE EHN

DEMOCRATIC DESIGN EXPERIMENTS (IN THE SMALL) – FROM "WORK-ORIENTED DESIGN" TO "MAKING FUTURES"

How does what we may call "democratic design experiments" (in the small) relate to the broader challenge of democratization of democracy, to the challenge of revitalising democracy as we know it?

In my talk I will reflect upon relations between work, design and democracy. The specific context is participatory design experiments carried out within the frames of the Scandinavian welfare states from the early 1970 'until today. I will take my point of departure from two publications: "Work-Oriented Design of Computer Artifacts" (1988) and "Making Futures – marginal notes on innovation, design and democracy" (2014),

The setting for "Work-Oriented Design" is the era of the computer entering the factory and at the same time attempts to democratize the workplace. In focus is the role of "democratic design experiments" in struggles between labour and capital, concerning strategies for rationalisation and trade union responses, in participation as co-option versus participation as real empowerment, on conflicts between automation and skill enhancement, etc.

The setting for "Making Futures – marginal notes on innovation, design and democracy" is still Scandinavia and work, but in the era of neo-liberalism and new public management. Work is no longer confined to the workplace, but is everywhere. The public sector and civil life itself has also become arenas for production and class struggles. Focus for "democratic design experiments" has shifted from local trade union activities to the making of multiple futures in the formation of publics around controversial issues under labels such as social innovation, makers spaces, commons, design labs, public engagements, etc.

Pelle Ehn, is professor emeritus at the School of Arts and Communication, Malmö University, Sweden. He has for more than forty years been involved in the research field of collaborative and participatory design and in bridging design and information technology. Research projects include DEMOS from the seventies on information technology and workplace democracy, UTOPIA from the eighties on user participation and skill based design, ATELIER from turn of the century on architecture and technology for creative environments, and during the last decade Malmö Living Labs, an open environment for democratic design experiments. His often collaborative publications include Emancipation and the Design of Information Systems (1974), Computers and Democracy (1987), Work-Oriented Design of Computer Artifacts (1988), Manifesto for a Digital Bauhaus (1998), Design Things (2011) and Making Futures (2014).

ABSTRACTS OF SPEAKERS

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 10

PASCAL GIELEN

SUSTAINABLE CREATIVITY IN REPRESSIVE LIBERAL TIMES

The magic word these days is 'creativity'. And not just for artists: managers and policymakers alike demand creativity. Even family therapists and mediators urge us to find more creative solutions. Nowadays, creativity is all about positive morality. We expect nothing but good from it. But what remains of the meaning of the word when just about everybody is using it to death? And where does this hunger for creativity come from? Isn't it instead a sign of a creeping loss of true creativity? And, was does this do with creative workers' conditions? How do they develop sustainable practices in a highly competitive context where everybody claims to be creative?

Pascal Gielen is professor of sociology of art and politics at the Research Center Arts in Society (Groningen University - the Netherlands) and at the Antwerp Research Institute for the Arts (Antwerp University - Belgium). He is editor in-chief of the international book series 'Arts in Society'. His research focuses on the institutional context of the arts and on cultural politics. Gielen has published many books which are translated in English, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Turkish.

ABSTRACTS OF SPEAKERS

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 11

CARL DISALVO

SOCIAL DESIGN, DESIGN ACTIVISM, AND SOCIAL INNOVATION

Earlier notions of social design often positioned corporate and public work in conflict with one another — as if there were fixed distinctions between various markets and sectors. It is not clear that such distinctions ever really existed, and certainly they do not exist now. In the contemporary neoliberal condition, social design, design activism, and social innovation require new understandings of the work of design and new models of collaboration across markets and sectors. This is not a capitulation to neoliberalism, rather, it is a call for articulations of new forms of design practice and social action. In this talk I'll present a brief history of the work of social design, highlighting alternative configurations of participatory design and art practice as exemplars. I'll then draw on notions of post-capitalism (via Gibson-Graham) to frame a series of possibilities for new modes of design practice, that weave between markets and sectors to achieve the goals of social design, design activism, and social innovation.

Carl DiSalvo is an Associate Professor in the School of Literature, Media, and Communication at the Georgia Institute of Technology. At Georgia Tech he directs the Public Design Workshop: a design research studio exploring socially-engaged design practices and civic media. He is also the co-director of the Intel Science and Technology Center for Social Computing. His current research is broadly concerned with forms of collectivity and the role of design in shaping and enabling collectivity. He publishes regularly in design, science and technology studies, and human-computer interaction journals and conference proceedings. His first book, *Adversarial Design*, was published MIT Press in 2012. DiSalvo's experimental design work has been exhibited and supported by the ZKM, Grey Area Foundation for the Arts, Times Square Arts Alliance, Science Gallery Dublin, and the Walker Arts Center. DiSalvo holds a Ph.D. in Design from Carnegie Mellon University (2006).

ABSTRACTS OF SPEAKERS

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 11

WIM EMBRECHTS

ART2WORK & PLATFORM KANAL

ART2WORK started in 2007 with the aim to contribute to developing a creative city in Brussels, where people are given opportunities and extensive cooperation can instigate innovative dynamics. Between 2007 and 2011 ART2WORK set up about 40 workspaces for 'creatives' in the old BelleVue-brewery. Actually, the goal was to transform the entire 15.000 m²-site into a creative brewery in the heart of Brussels – a post industrial city. Instead, the building was sold and a private investor developed it into a hotel, apartments, a restaurant and 'urban art' museum. A part of the brewery was bought by the municipality of Molenbeek and is now being turned into a center for social-economic and cultural organisations. In January 2010 ART2WORK launched the Team Technical Assistance that provides workforce for cultural and event organisations. This work experience program for young low-schooled motivated jobseekers focusses on work attitudes and personal leadership. Between 2009 and 2015 the citizens movement Platform Kanal was initiated in the central urban canal zone in Brussels. Its aim was to collaboratively work towards a broad integrated vision and an inspired urban project. In 6 years, Festival Kanal was organised 3 times together with a series of other events, a.o. Café Kanal, Foto Kanal, Journal Kanal, Kanal Play Ground. In 2016 ART2WORK will open a new 700 m²-space on the 4th floor of the old renewed brewery. A new place for young starters, for new ways of coaching people to become leaders, to develop their own business and find their way onto the labor market. A place for exchange, for interaction, for « learning from each other », ...
A new place for post-fordist labour concepts.

Wim Embrechts is founder and coordinator of Platform Kanal and ART2WORK. For the TRADERS Autumn School he will share his experiences and lessons learned from these two socio-cultural projects in the city of Brussels.

ABSTRACTS OF SPEAKERS

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 11

HILDE HEYNEN

WORK AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE. CRITICAL NOTES FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

In dealing with work and public space, we should not forget that both these concepts are heavily gendered. Although we no longer believe in the 'ideology of the two spheres' – which relegates man to the outside world of work, prestige and power, while containing women within the domestic world of labour, home and children – we still live very much in a world where gender is one of the main differences affecting people's life experiences. On average, men and women conduct their lives in ways which are still surprisingly consistent with the two-spheres ideology, with men working longer hours in salaried jobs, and women performing more than their equal share of domestic chores. This situation also affects cities: in many ways public space is a place where the effects of male domination still linger: in the names of streets and squares, in the sculptures of famous people adorning street corners or other urban spaces, in the way girls are – much more than boys – warned off from being on their own on the streets in certain neighbourhoods or after certain hours.

The engagement of women with public spaces is therefore not completely the same as that of men. One can even argue that the struggle for emancipation and feminism is still very much a struggle for equal rights in and to the city. Feminist artists remind us of how women's rights to public spaces cannot be taken for granted, but still need to be claimed. Public space is in that sense not inclusive, but rather part of contested territory. Since similar issues play out for LGBT people or people of color, we cannot simply address public space as if it has the same meaning and value for everyone. In dealing with participatory art and design in public space, it is therefore crucial to be aware of these issues, and to challenge gender, sexual and ethnic hierarchies that are implicitly always already inscribed in specific public spaces.

Hilde Heynen is Full Professor and Chair of the department Architecture, Urbanism and Planning at the University of Leuven. Her research focuses on issues of modernity, modernism and gender in architecture. She is the author of *Architecture and Modernity. A Critique* (MIT Press, 1999) and the co-editor of *Back from Utopia. The Challenge of the Modern Movement* (with Hubert-Jan Henket, O10, 2001), *Negotiating Domesticity. Spatial productions of gender in modern architecture* (with Gulsum Baydar, Routledge, 2005) and *The SAGE Handbook Architectural Theory* (with Greig Crysler and Stephen Cairns, Sage, 2012). She regularly publishes in journals such as *The Journal of Architecture and Home Cultures*. She is a supervisor in the TRADERS project.

ABSTRACTS OF SPEAKERS

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 11

DAVID HAMERS

CITIES AT WORK

In his lecture David Hamers will explain how different types of work result in different types of urban development. And, vice versa, how different types of urban development create favorable conditions for different types of work. He will give examples from spatial research approaches (such as urban planning and design) and approaches from the humanities (such as cultural theory and history).

Our physical environment has always reflected the dominant type of labour in the economy. For centuries, outside our cities this was agriculture, as farmlands show until this day. In the 16th and 17th century, trade became more important, resulting in growing markets within walled cities. During the 18th and 19th century, cities industrialised, some rapidly, others steadily. Most town-walls were demolished to allow for urban expansion plans that were needed to accommodate increasing numbers of workers. With the rise of the factory, in urban areas the number of slums grew, while in more rural areas coal and iron ore mines and accompanying company towns were built. In some of these (carefully designed) towns the established labor hierarchy was displayed in both the urban layout and the architecture of the buildings.

The 20th century has seen rapid changes in both our economy and the corresponding urban development. In the 1950s-1970s the rise of the white-collar service sector resulted in the demand for office space in Central Business Districts, huge numbers of middle-class homes in (sprawling) suburban neighbourhoods and the vast infrastructure network to connect them. More recently, in the so-called creative city former (abandoned) industrial and harbour districts have been transformed and cities have started competing for high potentials on a global scale. In this lecture Hamers will focus on western cities. To connect with the Genk context he will pay particular attention to the transformation of former mining areas and the rise of suburban neighbourhoods.

Dr. David Hamers PhD is a spatial researcher. He was trained as a cultural theorist and economist. In 2003, he obtained his doctorate at Maastricht University's department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences with a research into representations of the American suburb. Since then, Hamers has been working as a researcher in the field of urbanisation. He is a senior researcher for Urban Areas at PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving) in The Hague. His publications mainly deal with the development, design, and use of space within and around the city. In addition to his work as a researcher, Hamers works with spatial designers and artists. Since 2009 he has been a reader (lector) for Places and Traces at Design Academy Eindhoven. He is a supervisor in the TRADERS project.

ABSTRACTS OF SPEAKERS

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 12

FRANK MOULAERT

URBAN DESIGN AND SOCIAL INNOVATION. THE CULPRIT OF CARING NEOLIBERAL URBAN POLICY?

Since the start of the proclaimed socio-economic crisis and the many faces it has adopted since its onset, social innovation has been put forward as a lead strategy to (re) produce social cohesion in Western societies.

As the concept spread geographically and across sectors of private and collective action and knowledge, it took on many different meanings. These meanings substantially differ in their connections to social change and social transformation.

Over the last decade or design research and practice has taken on board a social innovation turn (see e.g. Manzini's work). How have these various meanings influenced urban design initiatives? Should socially innovative urban design be situated under the umbrella of caring neoliberalism? Or does it hold potential for transformative impact on urban life and society?

These are the questions this presentation will address.

Frank Moulaert is Professor of Spatial Planning, Head of the Planning and Development Unit ASRO, and Chairman of the Leuven Research Centre on Space and Society, Faculty of Engineering, KU Leuven, Belgium. He is a supervisor in the TRADERS project.

ABSTRACTS OF SPEAKERS

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 12
RIANNE MAKKINK

A WAY OF WORKING. 'WORK AT HOME', FLEXIBLE WORKERS USUALLY WORK FROM HOME

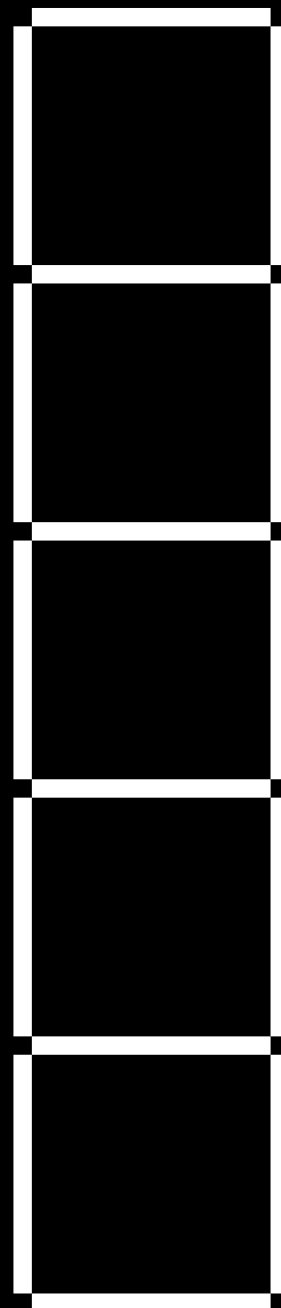


The mobile work dormer is a spatial investigation into the correlation between the home and the office. It has led to a hybrid typologie, a rooftop dormer in which assembled functions either apply to working or living. Each special 'Work At Home series' departs from a specific function segment of an archetypical house. In this case an extended roof and window; a dormer, is the basis for a hybrid work unit. It's an extra compartment which can be added to the roof of a house. Inside, it has a desk, shelving and even a small heater and chimney, and a large window overlooking the vicinity around the house. When you work you sit high up at your roof desk, away from the home. In this workspace, the independent worker with headquarters at home, has lots of light and a great vista in front of him. The light and space generate a sense of freedom. Work At Home is an extra limb to a domestic, or other building. Proportions that stay well within official building codes. In fact, the dimensions of the components of the 'Work At Home' series are based on official residential setback requirements. The research project is commissioned by Proofflab

Studio Makkink & Bey is led by architect Rianne Makkink and designer Jurgen Bey. The studio works in various domains of applied art and includes public space projects, product design, architecture, exhibition design and applied arts. Supported by a design team, they have been operating their design practice since 2002.

WORKING TABLES

- NAOMI BUENO DE MESQUITA
- JON GEIB & MICHAEL KAETHLER
- PABLO CALDERÓN SALAZAR
- ANNELIES VANEYCKEN
- SABA GOLCHEHR



WORKING TABLES

NAOMI BUENO DE MESQUITA

ALTERNATIVE FUTURES FOR GENK: PARTICIPATORY MAPPING AS MODE OF INQUIRY IN RECONFIGURING WORK

How does the third industrial revolution - where labour is increasingly digitised - relate to our capitalist system that links labour to income? A growing number of people argue that the Unconditional Basic Income (www.basicincome.org) could be a solution for the increased unemployment as consequence of digital manufacturing as well as many other work related concerns of today. This model is currently being tested throughout Europe; only this year 30 Dutch municipalities have shown interest in experimenting with it. How does the city of Genk, with its high unemployment-rate feel about this societal model? What do people in Genk fear or feel passionate about when it comes to work? Under this framework we will discuss the value of art and design practices as a potentially interesting mode of inquiry - one that is more interested in the underlying and hidden data, than data derived from sterile inquiries in which a rational response is given. We will do this by sharing our own practices in participatory and performative mapping, and apply it to the context of Genk.

Participants who are interested in joining this workgroup are asked to prepare a short informal presentation in which they share their own participatory (mapping) practices or ones that they are particularly interested in. We will discuss their value for data collection as a mode of inquiry that allows for a 'thick description' and we will look at the role that visual/ new forms of representations can play in it. Traditional maps and diagrams are often limited to the researcher for him/her to make sense of the data. In order to uncover people's underlying and evolving moods and emotions a different approach and other representations are needed. The ease of use of today's digital mapping tools have the potential to allow new voices in and different representation techniques can be used as incentive for participation. In this workgroup we will discuss these potentials in participatory mapping and we will explore the virtue of digital technologies to unleash the more emotional side of data.



WORKING TABLES

JON GEIB &
MICHAEL KAETHLER

*PROBLEMATISING POST-FORDIST
INSTRUMENTALISATION OF ART
AND DESIGN LABOUR*

“The ‘rational’ public sphere, as a more-or-less universal realm transcending particulars, including singular identity, is perhaps the beneficent ‘global’, uprooting strong social ties and calcifying parochialisms.” Nick Crossley

Concurrent and at times competing streams of global and local knowledge and practice give form to peculiar economic-social bindings that have come to represent the Post-Fordist experience, which [schizophrenically] demands the generation of new social, artistic and cultural value while pursuing robotization, increased efficiency and [usually] greater economic inequalities. Art and design are no strangers to this condition, acting as possible conduits for both power and resistance. Questions as to the importance of global knowledge exchange on one hand and the implications of local application on the other receive general nods of approval without questioning how these two unique modus operandi inter-relate and identifying where frictions lie. For designers and artists, what is the role of materiality as a mediator between strong and weak social ties, between local and global knowledge and practice and how is power made manifest and shaped through labour roles and processes, transferable instruments and artifacts(products)?

The workshop problematizes questions surrounding the role of art and design labour which works both locally and globally. It does so through engaging with an existing problem faced by a local gardening initiative, Betty’s Garden. Participants will be asked to work together to provide (design/art) and reflect on appropriate solutions. The sessions will include site-specific exploration, collaborative design and an intense but open platform for discursive reflection.



WORKING TABLES

PABLO CALDERÓN SALAZAR

*TO INTERVENE OR NOT TO
INTERVENE? THAT IS (NOT) THE
QUESTION.*

*“There are never perfect conditions for an act—every act by definition comes too early. But one has to begin somewhere, with a particular **intervention**; one just has to bear in mind the further complications that such an act will lead to” –Slavoj Žizek*

This working group starts with a position statement on design interventions – and interventionism in design—to feed an exchange about and reflection on design practices. This process could lead to an intervention (or a series of them), a critique, a reflection, a text, a poster and/or any necessary medium to reflect on the content of the Autumn School and the context of (work in) Genk through an interventionist lens. The starting point for such a discussion will be the series of interventions we have been organizing in Genk, namely De Andere Markt. These actions are carried out with the use of a low-tech printing press mounted on a cargo bike, which is taken to the different neighbourhoods of the city to trigger dialogues about skills (and their relation to work) and visualised via posters.

We will reflect on the following questions: *what are the –ethical– implications of intervening in a context not our own? And how can we balance between disruption and long-term participation when working on ‘on site’ projects?* These questions will be addressed with the specific focus on work. Art and design (practice and research) have a historical relation to work and have great potential to debate about -and give form to- work in alternative ways. At the same time, we problematize how artists and designers often tend to impose ways of organizing society from their (semi) privileged position on participants. This makes us question what the role of designers can be in addressing work in participatory projects and what role can interventions play in this process.



WORKING TABLES

ANNELIES VANEYCKEN

*DESIRE LINES OF GENK —
EXPLORING PLAY AS MEANS TO
RETHINK MOBILITY AND WORK
(IN GENK)*



This working table aims to collectively generate knowledge on play as an approach for participatory art and design (in/on public space) through collective study (concept), practice (testing) and analyses (reflection). Starting from Caillois' study on play types – a continuum between the 'ludus' type, representing the structured games, and the 'paidia' type or the unstructured playfulness – this working table aims to explore possible variations and interactions between these types of play and also in relation to the participants' individual approaches to play. The aim is to generate 'new' concepts for approaching play in participatory art and design projects (in/on public space). A variation of these play concepts will be tested within a participatory design context in Genk. In particular, this design-by-doing phase addresses the rethinking and re-activation new purposes and perspectives of Genk's Kolenspoor – a former railway track that was used by the mines. These experiments will be used to discuss the value of play as an approach in art and design practices that aims to disrupt – through critique, imagination and reforming – conventional thinking and activate a public debate on these issues in order to create new perspectives and possibilities for collective and collaborative meaning-making.

WORKING TABLES

SABA GOLCHEHR

GENK'S ECONOMICAL SHIFT: FROM MINING COAL TO MINING DATA. STRENGTHENING THE SOCIAL NETWORKS OF LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS FOR FUTURE ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

Can Genk's economy shift from a centric and top-down industrial model of labour to a network of bottom-up local enterprises? And can strengthening the local economy in Genk's neighbourhoods achieve greater economic resilience in the town's future? How can data collection and analysis support this shift?

In this workshop we will work on the Kolenspoor project, which is an initiative for re-using the mining railway tracks as an infrastructure for local mini-(food)markets located in different neighbourhoods in Genk. We will explore how data collection and analysis can support the Kolenspoor proposal and increase its potentials for strengthening local businesses by analysing social networks of entrepreneurs. A strategy for the implementation of the Kolenspoor project is proposed, which seeks to increase the social (and therefore economic) capital of smaller entrepreneurs by facilitating the establishment of new connections with entrepreneurs who have more ties and reach different circles in their networks. We will focus on two neighbourhoods to explore if we can differentiate between small and large social networks of entrepreneurs and map if and how they overlap. Comparing the data of two different neighbourhoods will furthermore show whether Genk's local economy reflects the town's morphological and cultural fragmentation.

Autumn School participants will collect and analyse data of local entrepreneurs in order to explore the scale of their social networks, the resources available through their connections and the geographic location of the members in their networks. By analysing this data we will be able to start identifying the nature of the entrepreneurs' networks and classify them according to the networks' strength and geographic range.

Next to this hands-on approach we will reflect on the use of data as an empowering tool within the context of labour, and we will problematize the ethical considerations that are involved in the gathering and use of (personal) data in art and design research and practice.



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