

TRADING RULES, CHANGING ROLES

A growing compendium on ambiguity in rule- and role-making when designing and performing Participatory Design workshops with children by Office for Public Play during TRADERS Open School at Z33 House for Contemporary Art, Hasselt (BE).

During the TRADERS Open School, the Office for Public Play installed her office in Z33 House for Contemporary Art in Hasselt, Belgium (24–28 April 2017). During her 5-day working residency, she zoomed in on a particular moment, **The Car Wrestlers**, from one of her past Participatory Design workshop sessions with children; and perform a ‘public analysis’. Making the process and outcome of the analysis public does not only imply that the process will be made visible to ‘the

public' but also invites various publics – other artists and designers, peers, as well as citizens – to participate in reflecting on what happened. This is done by focusing on ambiguity in rule- and role-making when designing and performing Participatory Design workshops with children. *What is the role of ambiguity as enabler for the negotiation of rules and roles when designing and performing Participatory Design workshops with children?* is the main question that directed the analyse and reflections on the situations generated from The Car Wrestlers. The analysis was generated through dialogues, re-enactments, visualisations and writings. The Office for Public Play encountered and exchanged with the publics in her urban office and during walks out in the streets. The shared discussions and reflections generated new insights and knowledge for all participants involved. The outcome took the form of a growing compendium on ambiguity in rule- and role-making when designing and performing Participatory Design workshops with children.

what

Programme

24.04	10:00-17:00	Z33	Public analyse
25.04	10:00-17:00	Z33	Public analyse
26.04	10:00-17:00	Z33	Public analyse
27.04	16:00-17:00	Z33	Interactive presentation Annelies Vaneycken
28.04	10:00-12:00	Z33	Reflective discussion Sven de Visscher & Annelies Vaneycken

GROWING COMPENDIUM

what

OFFICE FOR PUBLIC PLAY

who

Office for Public Play is the research platform for Annelies Vaneycken's PhD in Design at HDK Academy of Design and Craft at the University of Gothenburg (SE). She is also a Research Fellow in the EU Marie Curie project TRADERS, responsible for the PLAY track. Her practice based research project explores the role of (role)play in reconfiguring participatory design towards designing for children's critical consciousness and emancipation. www.officeforpublicplay.org

TRADERS OPEN SCHOOL

context

The city could be otherwise is both a statement and question wrapped in one. As a statement it prompts alternatives that challenge the hegemonies, or mental blockages, that have led to accepting situations of gross economic inequality, ecological degradation and social crises. As a question, it queries our agency as citizens: to what extent can we give shape to the 'otherwise'—are we passive observers or active agents for change? For designers and artists, it prompts a reflection on the state of socially engaged theory and practice in urban contexts. The Open School aims at a creative re-thinking of the city, trading practices and ideas, peers-pushing-peers in a place of learning and experimentation through dialogue and action. Participants will be encouraged to take different roles and stances, questioning if and how the city can be otherwise.

The city has increasingly become the battleground for neoliberal forces driving the commodification of social life and the expansion of speculative instruments into all possible arenas. Urban governance has increasingly turned towards participatory means—bringing new cultural forces such as art and design within processes of decision-making under the pretext of 'deepening democracy'. However, critical perspectives stress that this expanded engagement is not fomenting radical change but rather replacing critical debate and exchange with a consensually established frame; in essence evacuating the political from urban decision making. According to Zizek [1], this ideological closure 'takes the precise form of a mental block', which impedes one's ability to imagine a fundamental social change, in the interest of 'realistic' or 'mature' attitudes. Without assuming a critical position to challenge this mental block, artists and designers, warn Palmas and von Busch [2], are very much at risk of becoming collaborators within this consensual frame in collusion with the power and political agendas of the elites, thus betraying their initial interests and those of their peers.

TRADERS Open school challenges this consensual frame and mental blockage by focusing on how the city can be 'otherwise': broad speculative thinking grounded in concrete action. We don't aim to give an answer to such questions, nor to give general solutions for the city, but rather to problematize it and, by doing so, to test different approaches. We position the school within a broad idealism, convinced that sooner or later, the city will be otherwise.

[1] Zizek, Slavoj. 2000. "Holding the place." In *Contingency, hegemony, universality*, edited by Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau and Slavoj Zizek, 309-329. London: Verso.

[2] Palmås, Karl, and Otto von Busch. 2015. "Quasi-Quisling: co-design and the

DATA

written memorisation
photo documentation
(video)

method

The Car Wrestlers

In order to get the children's attention and collaboration, I (designer-researcher and workshop-facilitator) entice them by announcing that we will perform our next activity outside, in the neighbourhood. It takes a while until the message, disturbed by children's noises and activities, has reached all the children. Slowly they assemble at the front door. I block the door so I can collect them in-group and give them information about where to go. – Note: This time, I decide where to go as it is late afternoon and there is not much time left before the parents come to pick up the children. Therefore, I choose the closest place where we would find parked cars and open space to work. -- I tell the children we will go just next-door of the building, on the square surrounding the church. I explain to them that the square functions as a parking space next to the main street; cars can leave unexpectedly or arrive at high speed so they will need to be attentive and look out for the cars. When I open the door, the children storm outside and I wonder if they have heard my message and/or if they have understood it in the way I had meant it. I intend to be extra vigilant and realise that I do not consider the children capable of taking care of themselves. On the square, I reveal our next mission. I had formulated the assignment in advance in written format (English translation):

Car Wrestler

What is the size of a car? How much space does a car take up? Take a piece of rope and delineate a piece of the street surface with the same circumference of the car size. What would you like to do with the space if there wasn't a car there? Create a 'notice' that explains to the motorist why this space is so precious for children.
– Supplies: rope / paper / pen

The children choose a car (the first and the 'best' one: a big BMW) and start unrolling the rope. I worry that the children might damage the paint of the car, if moving too wildly and too close, so I interfere with their choice, saying that they have chosen a really nice and expensive car and suggest they choose another car. They choose a big white van, a bit further away, and again I feel the need to interfere. This time, I make them aware of its large dimensions; I suggest they take a standard car, representing standard conditions. They choose a third car, I agree and finally, we have a car! Some children span the rope around the car. One child starts pulling the rope, some other children protest, then they retake. T starts pulling the rope again, followed by his friend B. Others protest and make a fuss. I decide to interfere by saying the measurement needs to be 'correct'. I spoil their free play and fun. Once the rope is put 'correctly' along the car, I help them with cutting the rope and making a knot. The children start moving the looped rope to a nearby empty spot. The rope, detached from its square shaped car, becomes a shapeless flexible form that can be manipulated in any way. The shape depends on the position and movements of the children carrying the rope. Instead of making a square car-like shape, some children start running with the rope and use the attachment of the other children on the rope to pull and move these children over the square. There's a lot of fun and screaming, and a lot of energy gets released, until the moment that the rope cuts and hurts a child. The other children and me help to release the child from the rope; then, the play continues. The children's free play with the rope continues and develops into different stages. From time to time the observers intervene when things become rough. After a while of free play I reintroduce the question "What would you like to do with the space if there was no car?", and ask them to draw and/or write their ideas with chalk inside the space determined by the contour of the rope on the tiled square. The square becomes a blank page for the children's ideas. For some reason I forgot to bring pens and paper (for the children's notices, cf. written assignment 'car wrestler') but I had brought coloured chalk.

The Car Wrestlers

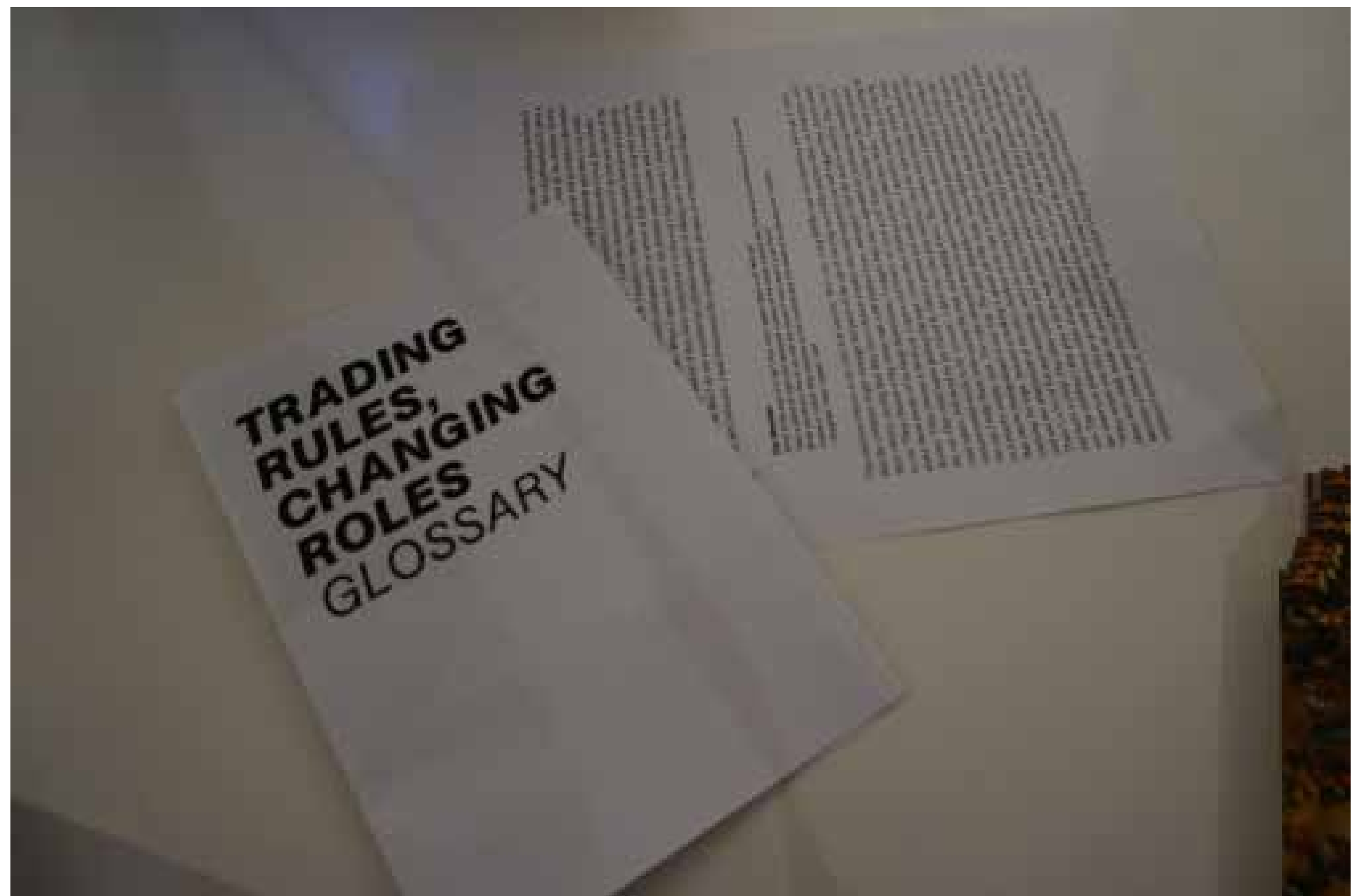


OFFICE

TRADERS Open School

Z33 House for Contemporary Art, Hasselt (BE)

method



Office for Public Play during TRADERS Open School at Z33 House for Contemporary Art, Hasselt (BE).

TOOLS

one question

story (written memorisation)

hetero-glossary

illustrations from Linda Holmer

a (reversed) role list

photos (without captions)

method

WORKSHOP

Forum Reading

Play is constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing but is also co—constructing, co—deconstructing and co—reconstructing; the prefix 'co' emphasis that the processes of constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing happen with others.

In the Forum Reading workshop, the participants were invited to 'play' with The Car Wrestlers situation and narrative through 'deconstructing and reconstructing, and rewriting' the story as to how it would fit matters of their own participatory design practice (the practice is understood as 'practice ideals': how they envision their practice as well as 'practice experience': what they encounter in their practice) with the given question: what is the role of ambiguity as enabler for the negotiation of rules and roles when designing and performing Participatory Design workshops with children?

Approaching the given narrative as an ambiguous matter allowed the participants to appropriate the given narrative towards their personal PD practice concerns and this as means to start reflecting on those concerns (by the confrontation of the given question). After the rewriting, each participant was invited to share their personal PD practice interpretations with the group, and the group, in turn, was invited to take the role of spect-actor (Boal, 2000) and react on the new narrative.

The sharing of these multiple interpretations and the reactions/suggestions/reflections on each interpretation generated an individual and collective learning process as well as generate new meaning.

The participants were allowed to rewrite the while story or choose a particular fragment of interest. Through changing one/more rule(s) on the story, it would be able to transform the situation/story into a new one.

The participants were asked to impose their own rule on the story and by doing so reconstruct te story. In addition the participants were asked to reflect on what (new) roles the new situation/story opens up for both the child-participant as the PD-workshop designer and/or facilitator.

Participants

Pablo Calderón Salazar
Michael Kaethler
Jon Geib
Sean Chester
Giuditta Vendrame
Paolo Patelli

Outcome

On next page.

The Car Wrestlers

Rewritten

what?

**freedom
of car choice**

**censured
thoughts**

**personal
issues**

**void
of emotions**

**participants'
frustrations**

**writer's
ego**

Sean Chester

The children are to play a game called "Car Wrestler" in which they move the outline of a car with a rope to understand the dimensions of the space that the car occupies. Then they are to leave a notice for the owner suggesting how this space could better be used for children. It takes a while but we find a nice struggle of road with freedom of car choice. Naturally, the children gravitate to do their familiar choice, a BMW and a large family van. But neither are too appropriate, so they use a non-descript third device instead. They measure out the car, but without pen and paper to leave a notice, coloured chalk will most unfortunately have to suffice instead.

Pablo Calderón Salazar

What would you like to do with the space if there was no car?
What would you like to do with the space if there was no?
What would you like to do with the space if there was?
What would you like to do with the space if there?
What would you like to do with the space if?
What would you like to do with the space?
What would you like to do with the?
What would you like to do with?
What would you like to do?
What would you like to?
What would you like?
What would you?
What would?
What?

Michael Kaethler

The reality of Participatory art/design.
It's the third day I wake up with a hangover. Come children there is any outside. You, stop! I raise my hands to make an "x" forcing the little balls and flesh out from the doorway. You, you and you, go find some cars, but no running in the streets and make sure to look both ways. STOP. Do this. Do this and this but also this. But not that or that or also that. I can't deal with this shit anymore. What do I care if you get hit by a car. But hé, the bright chalk will look good in the photos I can use for reporting purposes. I am too old for this shit.

Jon Geib

The children choose a car (the first and the 'best' one: a big BMW) and start unrolling the rope. I worry that the children might damage the paint of the car, if moving too wildly and too close, so I interfere with their choice, saying that they have chosen a really nice and expensive car and suggest they choose another car. They choose a big white van, a bit further away, and again I feel the need to interfere. This time, I make them aware of its large dimensions; I suggest they take a standard car, representing standard conditions. They choose a third car, I agree and finally, we have a car! Some children span the rope around the car.

REFLECTIONS

actors

monologue

dialogue

trialogue

language

written (words, captions, definitions, ideas, reflections)

visual (visualisation, photo documentation, diagram)

play

– *with written language:*

glossary construction

glossary de–construction

glossary co–construction

glossary re–construction: heteroglossary

– *with visual language:*

ambiguity

outcome

The Car Wrestlers

170424

construction
deconstruction
reconstruction
re-struction
co-construction
structure
destruction
instruction
inter-struction
intra-struction
invitation
intervention
collaborative
cooperative
compromise
confront
frictions
frustrations
disagreements
opposition
allies
negotiation



Construction (noun)

“The action of building something, typically a large structure.”

“The creation of an abstract entity.”

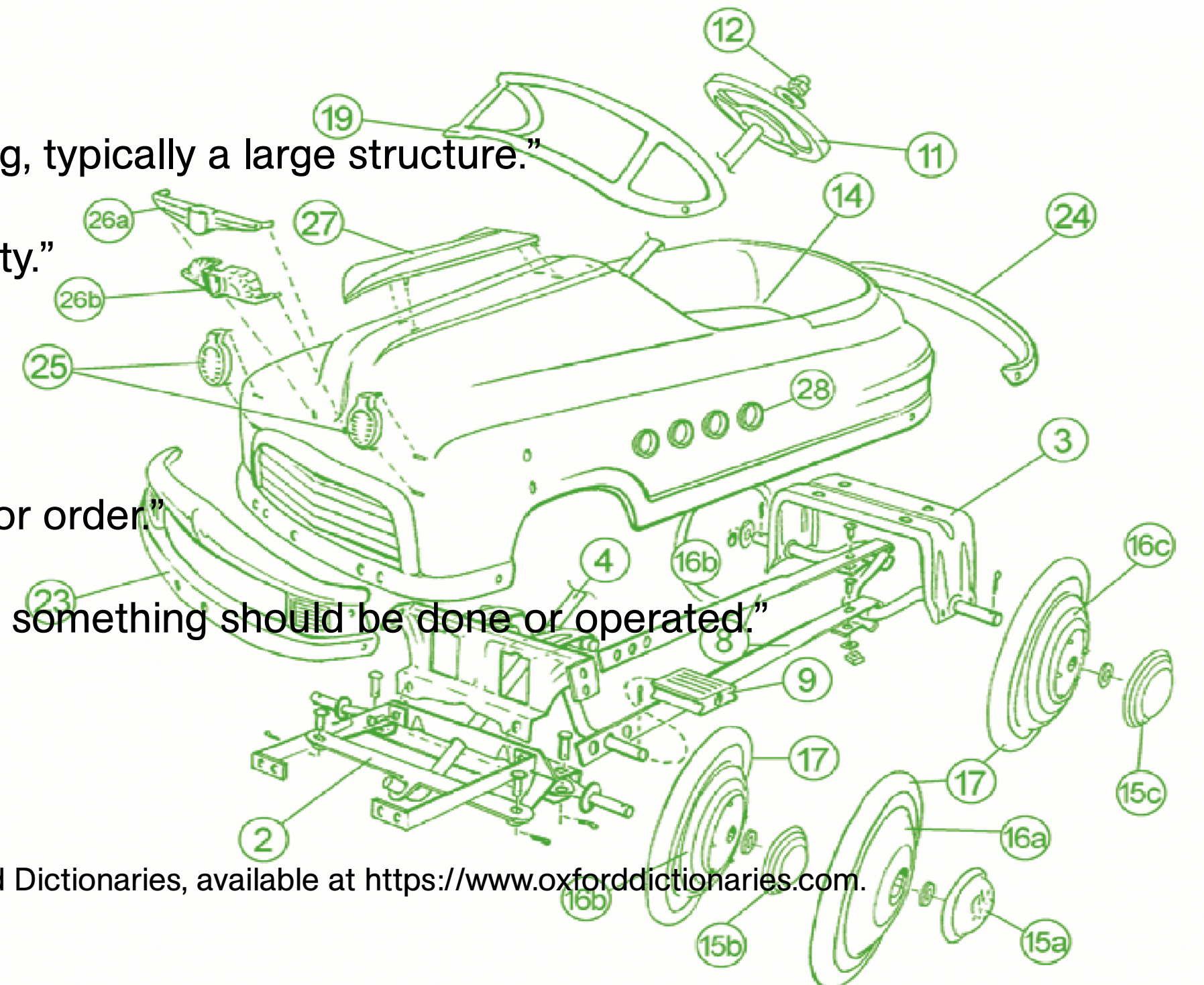
Instruction (noun)

“(often instructions) A direction or order.”

“Detailed information about how something should be done or operated.”

“Teaching; education.”

Above definitions are retrieved from Oxford Dictionaries, available at <https://www.oxforddictionaries.com>.



Con-struction

Play fundamentally consists out an iterative process of constructing and deconstructing. Here, deconstructing is not seen as an end; something that comes after the construction process but the deconstructing functions as an invitation for re-construction; to reconstruct is to construct again or to construct something else with the material that is already present.

The transition from deconstruction into construction and re-construction introduces a moment of stillness in time. This break allows for many possibilities: it can function as an opening to invite other people in a collaborative making process; a pause to reflect; a moment to reorient the making process; or a fraction that closes one chapter to start something new.

In the process of re-construction, the deconstruction can be restored to 'what was before'. Here, the 're' invites to re-peat the previous construction phase into something identical. On the other hand, deconstruction can move the what was already there into a further continuation and into the new.

When deconstructing the word 're-construction' it reads re-con-struction. Whilst the 're' emphasises the interaction in the process of giving structure, the 'con' (derived from Latin "cum") means 'together', 'as a group', 'with' when prefixed to a verb. The 'con' reminds us giving structure 'with something'; with what surround us: actors, objects and space. So, construction, deconstruction and reconstruction – activities that aim to structure – are always situated in time (re) and together with (con) its environment: actors, object and space.

In order to emphasis the explicit and initiated engagement of collaboration and cooperation in such situated structuring processes, I introduce the word co-construction, with the 'co' referring to the intended collaboration and/or co-operation.

In-struction

Whilst the words 'deconstruction' and 'reconstruction' are assembled variation of 'construction', the word 'construction' is an assembly in itself: con-struction. Seeing 'con-struction' in its deconstructed form, learns us that the making process always happens 'together with' or in cooperation or collaboration with others – other actors, objects and spaces.

When removing the togetherness in the 'making process', what remains is 'struction'. The word piece 'struction' refers to the act of bringing structure or 'structuring' but this time as an abstract operation – abstract meaning in isolation from or without interaction and influence from other actors, objects and spaces. Here we can read the word 'structure' as an abstract term whilst the 'con-structure' refers to the making of structure within the lived; within the practice of everyday life.

When adding other prefixes to the abstract 'struction' we arrive to new words and new meanings, e.g. 'in-struction' and 'de-struction'. Whilst 'destruction' would mean to take away the structure, the 'instruction' intentionally brings something into a structure. The particular prefixes tell us more about what kind of structuring activity is going on but it doesn't tell us more about who it is that brings structure, and on what base? Also what are the differences between 'in-struction', 'inter-struction' and 'intra-struction'? What does it mean when structure is put onto something/someone; when structure is put amongst something/someone; or when structure is put within something/someone?

Neither do those variants reveal more on how the structure was put into action: can instruction be an (non-binding) *invitation* or is instruction always an *intervention*? When are instructions prescribing and when are they guiding? When do they dominate and when do they support?

Re-introducing the question: What is the role of ambiguity as enabler for the negotiation of rules and roles when designing and performing Participatory Design workshops with children?

How to read activities inherent to Participatory Design workshops with children, such as its designing and performing, as a 'construction' activity? What types of 'construction' are at stake and what does this re-reading (analyse) tell us more about the 'how' or the micro politics at stake in such collaborative and cooperative structuring activities?

Who puts what into structure? Whilst the collaborative process itself aims to bring structure to a commonly defined goal, there may be other structuring processes at stake in the overall process, such as: the designers aims to structure the child-participants while the children may – intended or not – deconstruct the designer's structuring. But this also goes the other way around: the child-participants may have a particular structuring goal in mind that is disrupted by the designers' structuring intentions. So where do these intentions meet? And, how do they meet? Does one dominate the other or do they both make compromises, how much, and are those compromises hierarchical-bounded? Do both intentions become compromised or do they confront, or both? How to deal with such differences in intentions? How to transform its frictions, frustrations and disagreements into a process of negotiation? And can such negotiation processes overcome compromise (each opposition looses) through mutual exchange and learning where both parties gain?

Re-reading The Car Wrestlers

When saying, "The workshop-designer and facilitator invited/instructed the child-participants to take part in The Car Wrestlers activity", what do we actually mean? Did the workshop-designer and facilitator *invite* the child-participants or did she *instruct* them? The task was presented as an *exercise/brief/assignment* (instruction): the task was not an non-binding invitation since the child-participants already 'agreed' to take part in the overall workshop where The Car Wrestlers was a small part of. The task was not an instruction that was imposed on them – at least that was not my intention but I am not sure how they interpreted this. Whilst I had prepared the task as a written assignment that could have been read by the child-participants themselves, when the moment was there, I orally transmitted the task. What affect did that have on the child-participants? Did they (some of them) interpreted this oral transmission as a way of being informal with each other or did that very act put the workshop-designer and facilitator in the role of the school teacher that instructs the child-participants what to do. On the other hand, I would not use the word 'invitation', neither 'instruction' since what I tried to do was to make them curious so they feel engaged in doing the activity (how much is this manipulation?). Also the framework of a three-day scheduled workshop probably conditioned the child-participants to engage in all activities that were organised, no matter if they personally liked it or not. And so I wonder if they would take part in activities that they would radically disagree with?

The Car Wrestlers

170425 – in dialogue with Maria Tsaneva

Maria Tsaneva studied BA in Graphic design, Art Education and MA in Design for Children's Environment in Sofia, Bulgaria. She currently attends the Master program of Social Design at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna. Maria both participated and organized several collective art projects dealing with the topics of participation and education in the city and its public spaces. Maria has work experience as an art teacher in two high schools in Bulgaria. She is interested in investigating and experimenting, as well as in the idea of using design as a tool to present social messages.

A Conflict for Care?

Structure	Creativity
Con-flict	Re-flect
(being) Pre-sent	(being) Ab-sent
Care	Taking care
Rules	Protocols
Re-strictions	In-structions
Re-sponsibility	Re-sponse
Commun-ity	Commun-ication
Rules	Protocols
Re-strictions	In-structions
Re-sponsibility	Re-sponse
Commun-ity	Commun-ication

Care Conflict



Measuring the space with their bodies.



Inventing a new game out of the materials they have.



Creating a new layer on an existing image/pattern. (one child first creates a new layer on an existing pattern; followed by another child creating another (second) layer on the existing image layer from the first child)

Maria Tsaneva: Conflict is the beginning of something new. For me, conflict is a good starting point for cooperation between children and adults. It is not a conflict as we know it in politics but an inner conflict between the things we know and expect and what will happen when the child-participant and the adult-designer come together – It shakes you. I like the word conflict because it is 'contrast' being the super ground for doing something. If I have to make it visual it is black and white.

Contrast

Roles

when playing a game there is no hierarchy; there is a division of roles between the individuals that seem to occur in a natural way. They like each other and this seems to drive the division of roles without hierarchy. There is empathy between each other when they play/work together.

Rules

When working with children, there are things that you expect (framework/structure) and there are things that you don't expect; both are part of re-/de-/con-structuring of the initial framework/structure.

Opportunities – Rules for the designer (from within)

– The designer needs to give a starting point to the child-participants.
This starting point is a framework/structure for the child to interact with. By providing a framework/structure, in the form of a task, the designer creates a space of freedom for the child to set-up his/her own rules to create her/his own work/project/world. The given framework/structure from the designer invites the child-participants to respond, re-act and build upon (con-struction).
The framework/structure is not a set of strict rules (in-structions) but a structure that invite for re-/de-/con-structuring.
– The designer needs to be present during the child-participants' act.

The designer creates comfort (by being present): The children need to feel comfortable by the presence of the designer; the presence of the designer does not mean in-struction (the designer has given his/her framework/structure in advance and now it is up to the children to define how working within the given framework/structure. The designer is an observer: The designer is present and does not intervene.

The designer gives or takes care: To care does not mean to take care – meaning that the designer gives them food, warm cloths or solves their quarrels – but to 'care' about their emotional wellbeing and make sure they are part of a good working/play environment.

– The designer needs to introduce discussion after or in between the child-participants' act.
The designer needs to remind the children about the initial framework/structure.

Restrictions – Rules for the designer (from outside)

– The designer is conscious about time restricting the PD workshops with children.
– The designer takes the child-participants' capacity and availability into account.
– Is the designer consciously working with his/her ethical role in his/her practice? What is the child-participants' vulnerability?

The Car Wrestlers

170425 – in dialogue with Maria Tsaneva's Revive the park & Baseball Camp workshops

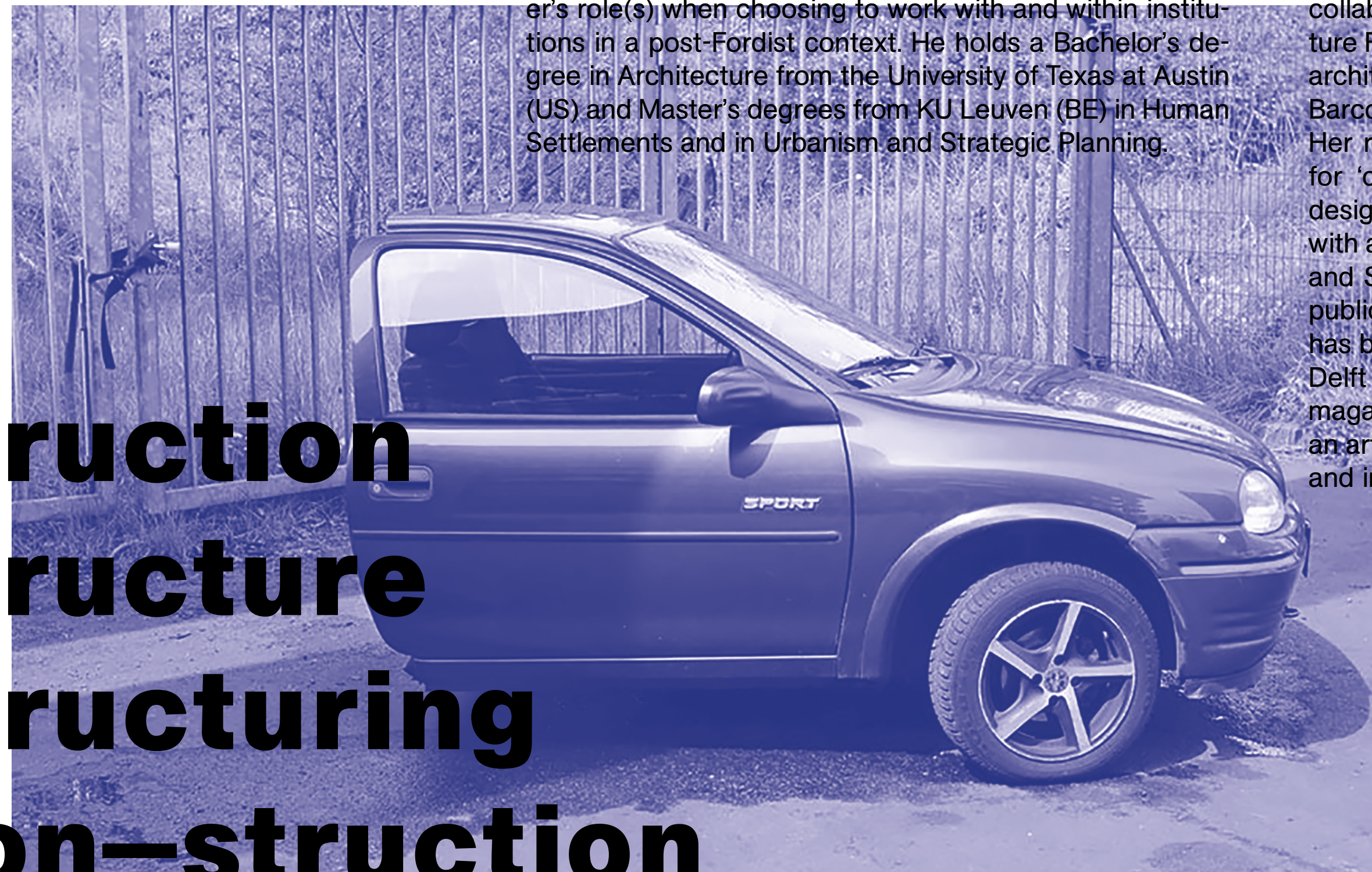


The Car Wrestlers

170427 A prefix-trade with Jon Geib and Cristina Ampatzidou

Jon Geib is a PhD candidate, urbanist and architect in the Department of Architecture at Chalmers University of Technology and a Research Fellow in the EU Marie Curie project TRADERS. Through an artistic research approach and formal collaboration with the Gothenburg Cultural Department, he explores artistic-cultural framings of dialogue and participation which foreground their dynamics and ambivalences, including those related to the designer's role(s) when choosing to work with and within institutions in a post-Fordist context. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Architecture from the University of Texas at Austin (US) and Master's degrees from KU Leuven (BE) in Human Settlements and in Urbanism and Strategic Planning.

Cristina Ampatzidou is a Rotterdam-based researcher and writer with a background in Architecture and Urbanism and a founder of Amateur Cities. Currently pursuing her PhD at the University of Groningen on the topic of gaming and urban complexity, she previously worked as an embedded researcher for the Amsterdam Hackable Metropolis project, a collaboration of the University of Amsterdam, the Mobile City and One Architecture. Cristina has been a collaborator of Play the City! Foundation and the Architecture Film Festival of Rotterdam and has worked for several architecture offices in the Netherlands, including MAK, Barcode Architects, OMA and the Powerhouse Company. Her research investigates the affordances of new media for 'citymaking' and the changing roles of professional designers, policy makers and citizens. She collaborated with artist Giuseppe Licari on the projects Mental Charlois and Swinging the Lamp and she curated the program of public events for Licari's installation Public Room. Cristina has been a guest teacher for the Urban Body studio in TU Delft and is a regular contributor in Uncube and Betterly magazines. She is also a founding member of Beforelight, an artists' collective working exclusively on lighting design and installations.



meso
meso–struction
meso–structure
meso–structuring
meso–con–struction
meso–de–struction
meso–re–struction

play
ambiguity

figure
con–figure
de–configure
re–configure
experience
re–experience
con–experience
re–experience
organise
dis–organise
con–organise
re–organise

Pre–face

My PhD study sees children as a marginalised group in public debates, in the making of society and in the design of public space in particular. Although children have recently gained rights and became a specific target group for participation in design projects, my PhD projects inquire how inclusive these processes really are by zooming in to its micro politics. Through analysing the relations and interactions between the adult-designer and child-participant in the structures, rules and roles of PD workshops with children I hope to awaken the designer's critical awareness on the influence(power) of conventional rule- and role-making. Finally I want to propose ambiguity as driving force to develop such critical awareness as well as mechanism to de–construct and re–construct; to dis– and re–organise traditional ways of how the adult-designer and child-participant relate to each other in such collaborative design processes.

Playing with Pre–fixes (part 2)

What play and design have in common is the cyclic process of con–struction, de–struction and re–struction; whilst design may have a (predefined) end in mind, play is most likely no knowing where is its going (place) neither knowing where it will end (time). Design is about planning and expecting; play is about not planning and the unexpected.

What they have in common is the making of structures but how they do it (planning and the unexpected) diverse as well as its conditions of place and time.

Maybe design is more about figuring out; to figure and re-figure and this together with other actors, objects and spaces: to con–figure, to de–configure and to re–configure.

So what does play do? to experience, re–experience, con–experience and re–experience? to organise, dis–organise, con–organise and re–organise?

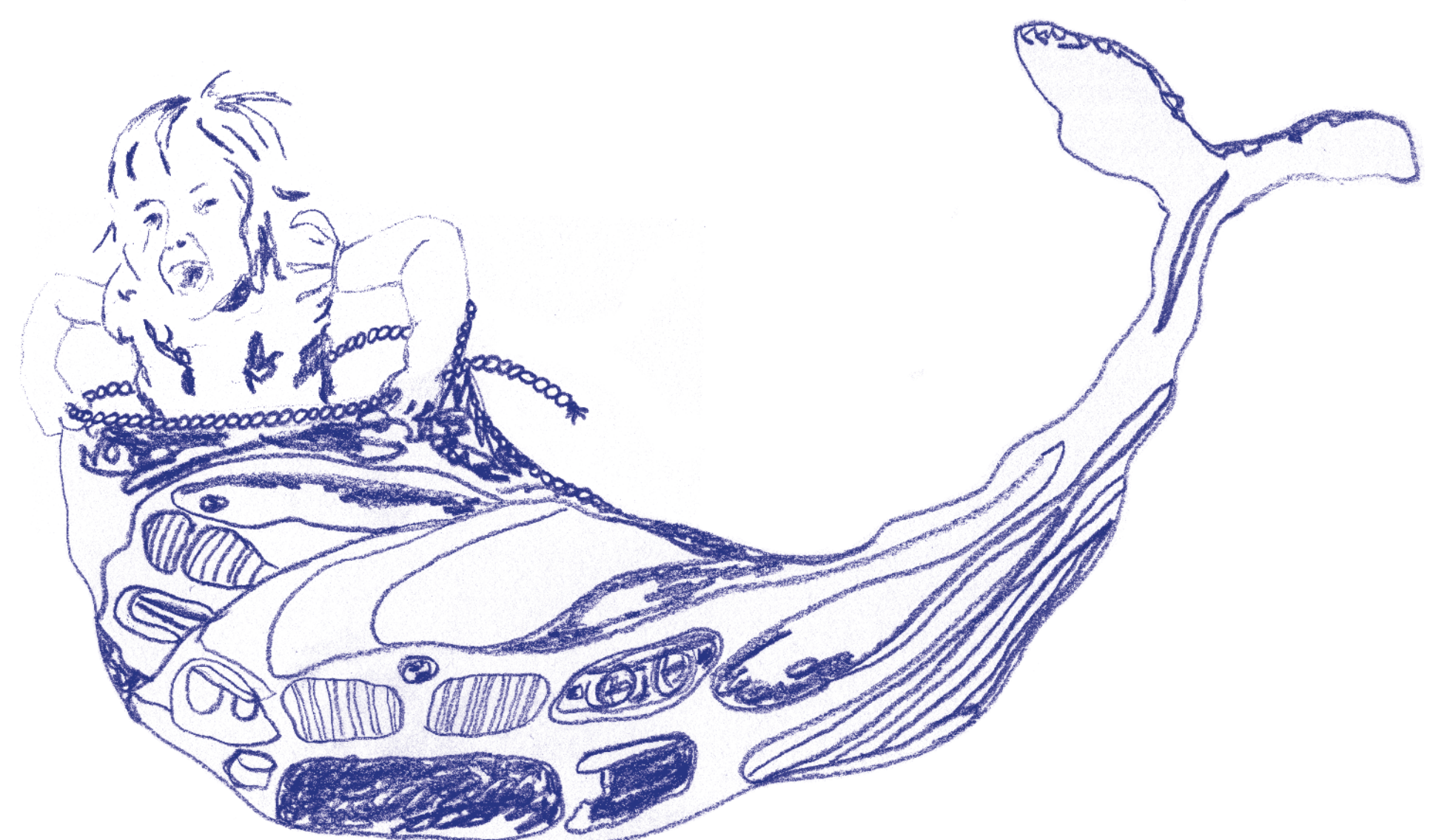
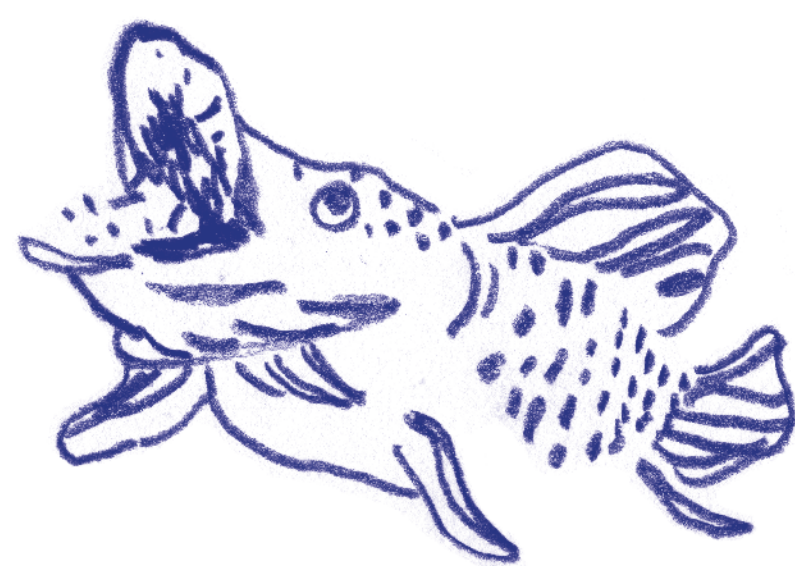
In playing with prefixes in order to find new meanings (concept) and new approaches (practice), I came across the prefix 'meso'. It was due to the presentation on 'meso-utopia' of my TRADERS colleague Jon Geib and Cristina Ampatzidou (Amateur Cities) during the TRADERS Open School in Z33. When trading prefixes, I invite Jon to re-read his concept as con–utopia, dis–utopia or re–utopia whatever that may mean of him and his PhD study. In my case, the word 'meso–struction' and 'meso–con–struction' allows me to re-introduce a previous idea of what is between a structure and the unstructured? Does chaos überhaupt exist? And what does it mean to have half a structure and how much gradient exist of this 'meso–structure'. When working with children in the context of PD workshops, such half structure or openings in a pre-defined structure (cf. Loose Parts theory from Simon Nicholson) that allows for re-interpretation and new meaning; they invite the child-participant(s) to intervene in the construction of the design process by de–constructing, re–constructing and co–construction the existing structure into a 'multi–struction' that is workable for multiple individual actors.

Meso, derived from the Ancient Greek μέσος or 'middle', does not only mean 'middle' but also 'intermediate'. Following this second meaning, we can understand a 'meso–structure' as a structure that intermediates or a structure that supports the coming between two things in time, place, character, etc. or the en–counter as a moment where defiant actors, objects, spaces meet and interact by encountering and countering; through exchange of individual values and opinions.

The Car Wrestlers

170428 in dialogue with Linda Holmer

Linda Holmer is a lecturer at HDK Academy of Design and Crafts at the university of Gothenburg (SE). Part from teaching she is as an editor, writer, illustrator, art director and quite often unsure of things. Linda is interested in the space between being personal and private and how to collaborate with others in order to make fiction in illustrated books for reader of all ages.



The Car Wrestlers 170427

Reversing Roles

What is the effect of reversing roles for the making of *The city could be otherwise*? With whom would you trade roles and what would you exchange?

Reverse (verb)

"Move backwards."

"Work in a contrary direction."

"Make (something) the opposite of what it was."

"Exchange (the position or function) of two people or things."

"Turn (something) the other way round or up or inside out"

Trade (verb)

"Buy and sell goods and services."

"Exchange (something) for something else, typically as a commercial transaction."

"Give and receive (something, typically insults or blows)"

"Transfer (a player) to another team."

Above definitions are retrieved from Oxford Dictionaries, available at <https://www.oxforddictionaries.com>.

Reversing Roles,

in dialogue with Giuditta Vendrame and Paolo Patelli

The participant plays

Giuditta Vendrame and Paolo Patelli:

We can read "the participant plays" in two ways.

1 – The participatory design designer suggest playfulness: In our design projects we often suggest playful elements (e.g. Friction Atlas, www.frictionatlas.net). In this way, the participant plays by following our suggestions.

2 – The participant plays through appropriation: The participant(s) often appropriate the artefacts we design; they came up with new rules for using the artefact in different ways; in their own way. This appropriation happened mostly spontaneous by passers by (participants that were not recruited in advance) and mostly by children. But also some of the participants that were not recruited in advance came up with such appropriation.

Also, there are different degrees of playing with what the designers have foreseen.

– Annelies, post question:

How do you experience the tension between what the designer suggests (the plan of the designer) and how the participants interpret the (predefined/planned) structure?

The participant is willing

Giuditta Vendrame and Paolo Patelli:

The participants are willing when they decide to take part. Sometimes we feel we ask the participant too much of their time but some of them made clear to us that they actually wanted to devote more of their time to the project.

– Annelies, post question:

What defines the border of your interaction? In case the participants want more – if they want to continue – do you further engage? What is your reciprocity in this? Your responsibility? What are the restrictions inside or outside yourself that block possible continuations?

The participatory design designer manipulates

When working with others, we inform what the project is about. If the participants would not be aware, we would have the feeling of exploiting them. So in a way we do not want to make our manipulation hidden but be transparent of our aims. On the other hand, we sometimes work on the threshold between the participants' consciousness and unconsciousness. We use the given situation to explore new things that are unplanned and unexpected for ourselves and thus also unexpected and unclear for the participants. As designer we like turning existing conditions of a specific situation into new opportunities but I am not sure if we should call this 'manipulation'.

– Annelies, post note:

Reverse (verb)

"Handle or control (a tool, mechanism, information, etc.) in a skillful manner."

"Control or influence (a person or situation) cleverly or unscrupulously."

Above definitions are retrieved from Oxford Dictionaries, available at <https://www.oxforddictionaries.com>.

Manipulation comes from Latin 'manipulus' (handful). The meaning of manipulation as a sense of 'skillful handling of objects' was first recorded 1826 and extended 1828 to 'handling of persons' in addition to objects. (from www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=manipulation). This means that the original meaning of manipulation was directed to controlling objects rather than people. Understanding this, we can extend 'manipulation' to the controlling of other elements that are given: object, people (participants or passers-by) space and other elements that are part of a particular situation.

The participatory design designer is an amateur

Giuditta Vendrame and Paolo Patelli:

As designers we are amateurs since we like trying something new. We like to test and experiment without having a fixed framework/end goal. In this way, we are amateurs within our own profession. On the other hand when putting ourselves in dialogues with other disciplines (e.g. choreography in Friction Atlas, www.frictionatlas.net) we become amateur in choreography. We become amateur when making cross-roads with other disciplines.

– Annelies, post note:

When encountering and collaborating other disciplines, does it mean that that we, designers, loose our professionalism? Isn't it exactly about keeping your individual qualities and make the encounter other qualities?

Giuditta Vendrame is a designer and researcher based in the Netherlands. She explores the intersections between design, art practice, and legal systems. To question the opaque nature of the latter, to make them debatable, she uses different media (film, performance, installations). She researched the notion of citizenship and its paradoxes and she is currently interested in exploring ways to open political spaces through playful and poetical interventions.

Her work has been exhibited and presented at Maunula House, Helsinki (2017), Bureau for Public Insecurities, São Paulo (2016), Today'sArt, Den Haag (2016), Media Atmospheres, Taipei (2016), Marrés Currents #3 Maastricht (2015-2016), Thing Nothing at Van Abbemuseum Eindhoven (2015), Adhocracy Athens (2015), Performing Mobilities Melbourne (2015), BIO50 Design Biennial Ljubljana (2014), Weekend Specials part of Monditalia at the 14th International Architecture Exhibition of la Biennale di Venezia (2014), Grey Cube Galleriat, Helsinki (2014).

Some of her works have been featured in international publications and platforms: Amateur Cities (2017), Future Architecture Platform (2017), Migrant Journal (2016), Icon Design (2016), The Politics, Practices and Poetics of Openness (2016), Continent (2015), Professional Dreamers (2015), Zivot Umjetnosti (2015), We Make Money Not Art (2014). Together with Paolo Patelli she is part of La Jetée.

Paolo Patelli is an architect and a researcher, currently based in the Netherlands Europe. Through his practice and collaborative inquiries, he engages critically and by design with space, society and technology. He is Associate Reader at the Design Academy Eindhoven and a 2017/18 resident at the Van Eyck in Maastricht. He also teaches at The New School's Parsons Paris and collaborates with the Programme d'Expérimentation en Arts et Politique (SPEAP) at Sciences Po. Together with Giuditta Vendrame, he is part of La Jetée.

A Role-list with footnotes

the child-participant is willing

the child-participant is disobedient

the child-participant is naive

the child-participant is spontaneous

the child-participant plays

the child-participant participates

the child-participant disorganises

the child-participant is childish

the child-participant is an amateur

the child-participant is commissioned

the participatory design designer designs

the participatory design designer educates

the participatory design designer provokes

the participatory design designer is a professional

the participatory design designer forces

the participatory design designer instructs

the participatory design designer mediates

the participatory design designer is a commissioner

the participatory design designer facilitates

the participatory design designer manipulates

the participatory design designer empowers

the participatory design designer supports

and,

the child-participant facilitates

the child-participant manipulates

the child-participant mediates

the child-participant instructs

the child-participant forces

the child-participant provokes

the child-participant educates

the child-participant designs

the child-participant is a professional

the child-participant is a commissioner

the child-participant empowers

the child-participant supports

the participatory design designer is willing

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the participatory design designer is childish

the participatory design designer is an amateur

the participatory design designer is commissioned

The Car Wrestlers

170428 in dialogue with Priscilla SuárezBock

Priscilla Suarez Bock is an illustrator based in Brussels. She likes to draw straight lines and angles, chases on sloped lands, flat hills and rounded people.
www.lasuarez.tk

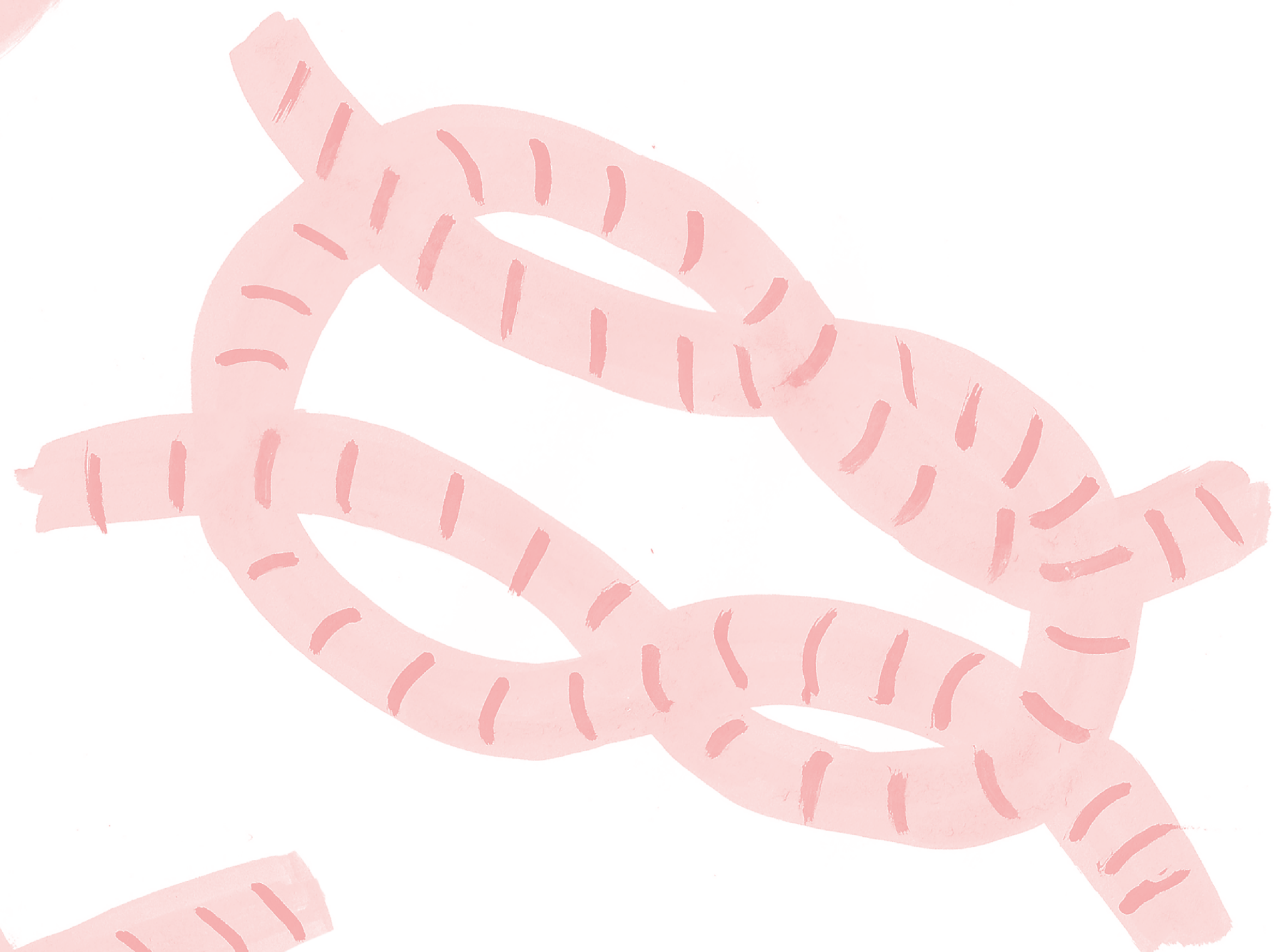


Overhand Knot.

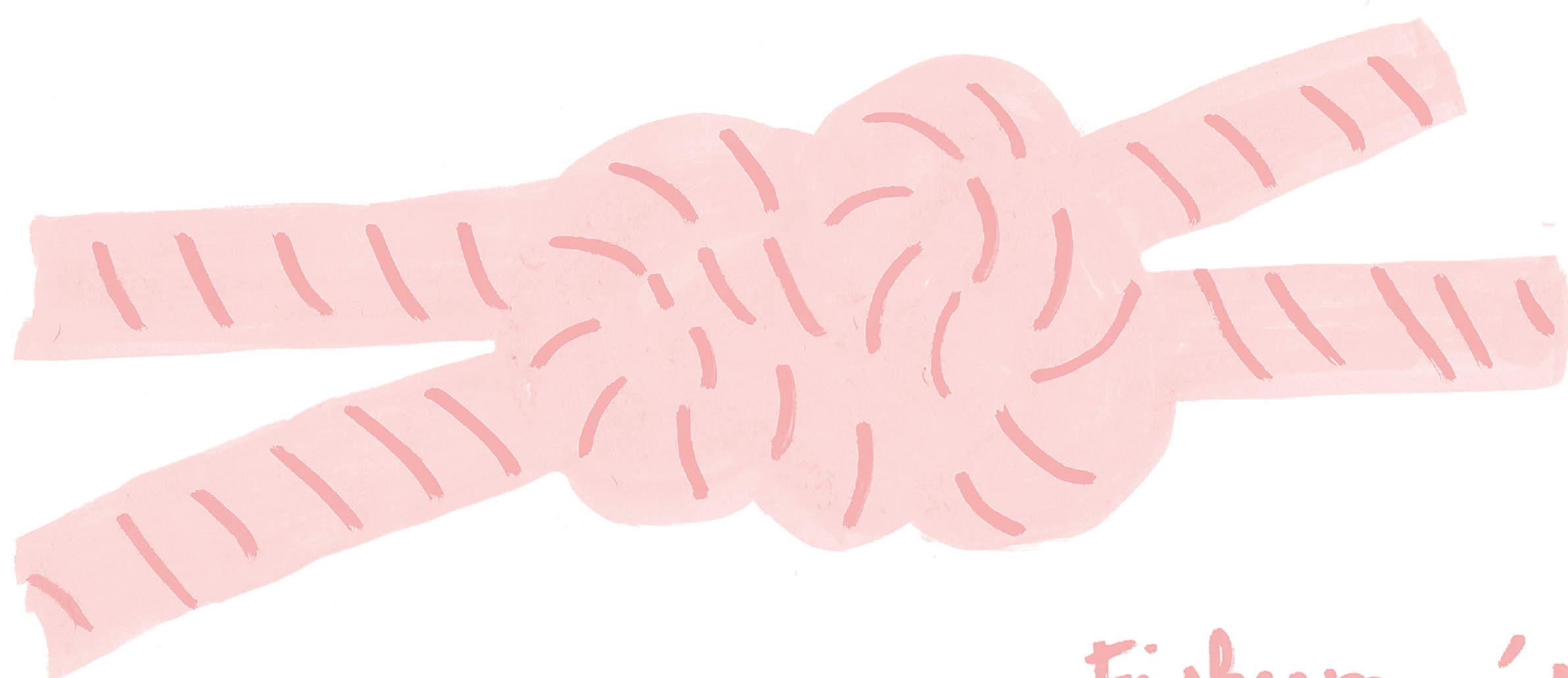
Running Knot.



eight Knot.



Square Knot.



Fisherman's Knot

The Car Wrestlers

170428 Reflection with Sven De Visscher

Game
external control
imposing control

Play
& Game

Play
control from within
sharing control

Agency
& Mindset



Cheating
= Inter-vention
Negotiating
= Inter-acting

Sven De Visscher is postdoctoral researcher in educational sciences and lector social work at University College Ghent, Faculty of Education, Health and Social Work. He is related to the department of social work and is contact person for the research group on urban education. This group focuses on teaching and research projects about processes of urbanisation and community development, linking the perspectives of urban residents and dwellers, urban social work practices and municipalities and policy makers. Sven De Visscher's main research interests include the child friendly city, urban renewal and social change, community-based social work, citizenship and urbanisation. He approaches these topics from a social pedagogical and sociospatial perspective. In his PhD dissertation (2008) he analysed the social pedagogical meaning of the neighbourhood for children.

Samuel Reshevsky, age 8, defeating several chess masters at once in France, 1920

Samuel Reshevsky learned chess when he was 4 years old. He became known as a child chess prodigy and was playing simultaneous games of chess against adults when he was 6 years of age. At age 8 he was playing chess against strong players. Following the events of World War 1, Reshevsky immigrated to the United States (1920). As a 9-year old, his first American simultaneous exhibition was with 20 officers and cadets at the Military Academy at West Point. He won 19 games and drew one. He toured the country and played over 1,500 games as a 9-year old in simultaneous exhibitions and only lost 8 games. In his early years he did not go to school and his parents ended up in Manhattan Children's Court on charges of improper guardianship.

Play and game: different strategies in rule-(re)making

There is a difference in agency between game and play; the agency of the gamer is different than the agency of the player. In games, the gamer engages with rules that are predefined by an external actor. When getting engaged in playing a game, the gamer knows that the rules have been externally pre-defined and by agreeing to play the game, the gamer thus agrees on the rules that frame/define/(pre-)script the game. However, agreeing on the rules does not mean that the gamer cannot change the rules of the game – cheating is part of the game. The child will always transform existing rules or invents new rules for the game in order to win; in order to fit in his/her own agenda, goals and interest. Cheating, as strategy for changing the rules of the game, means that the gamer changes the rules without discussing them; he/she may even hide his/her change of rules. In cheating, the gamer intervenes in the existing system and disrupts. Engaging in play or in game happens with a different mindset. In play, you do not cheat since the player is anyhow allowed to invent his/own rules. In play, the player is expected to take suggestions, proposals and initiatives of the other players into account; the rules are negotiated amongst each other and with the players' environment as a whole (not only its surrounding actors but also its objects and spaces). To play is to discover new opportunities with what surrounds you. However, the negotiation in play does not mean there is no hierarchy in decision making amongst the players.

When engaging in participatory design workshops, you can engage as gamer or as player. Because of the differences in mindset between the gamer and the player it is important to know – and be aware – of the player/gamer's intentions and the expectation of his/her co-player/gamer(s).

Intentions – Will the player/gamer (the person who engages in the play/game) make his/her own rules in negotiation with what has been set, or does the change in rules happen in an isolated/parallel/hidden cheating process?

Intentions – Will player/gamer take his/her co-player/gamer(s) into account when constructing an activity? Will they be engaged in enacting a predefined activity or will the activity be performed as co-construction?

Expectation – Can the player/gamer (the person who engages in the play/game) make his/her own rules in negotiation with what has been set, or does the change in rules happen in an isolated/parallel/hidden cheating process?

Expectation – Can the player/gamer (the person who engages in the play/game) make his/her own rules in negotiation with what has been set, or is he/she not allowed and does the change in rules need to happen in an isolated/parallel/hidden cheating process?

Play occurs outside of the boundaries that have been defined by game

We could compare the difference in interaction between different mobility actors when taking part in designed traffic circulation (pedestrian zone are separated from bike lane and separated from street with car traffic) or in 'shared space' (there is no separation between different zones; the interaction is not prescribed by certain traffic rules but the actors themselves need to be aware and consider what the rules are). The 'shared space' approach demands more active thinking off all actors involved as well as it make the users reflect on how they interact because they interaction is less predefined (it is not predefined by the traffic rules but still there are other social, cultural, moral rules that define how they will interact).

When translating the difference between game and play as "game is external control (imposing control)" and "play is control from within (sharing control)" into the design and performance of PD workshops with children, there are PD workshops which are more defined (orchestrated) by external control (imposing control) and PD workshops which are more constructed (operating) through controlling from within (sharing control). however this difference do not represent two opposing types but both forces are part of the same PD workshop; creating tension – a tension that is may opening up for negotiation.

When you share control in a PD workshop you shift to a playful mindset and approach where you recognise the environment (people, objects, space) you are with.

Shared space is an urban design approach which seeks to minimise the segregation of pedestrians and vehicles. This is done by removing features such as kerbs, road surface markings, traffic signs, and traffic lights. It has been suggested that, [by whom?] by creating a greater sense of uncertainty and making it unclear who has priority, drivers will reduce their speed. This is conducive to a safer environment for both pedestrians and vehicles. Shared space schemes are often motivated by a desire to reduce the dominance of vehicles, vehicle speeds, and road casualty rates. Shared space design can take many different forms depending on the level of demarcation and segregation between different transportation modes.

The origin of term is generally linked with the work of Dutch traffic engineer Hans Monderman, who pioneered the method in the Dutch province of Friesland. [1] Prior to the adoption of the term, street design projects carried out in Chambéry, France, by Michel Deronzier from the 1980s used the term "pedestrian priority". The term was used by Tim Pharoah to describe informal street layouts with no traffic demarcation (for example "Traffic Calming Guidelines", Devon County Council, 1991).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shared_space#cite_note-uwe-1, retrieved 5 May 2017

Moody, S. & Melia, S., (2011) Shared space - implications of recent research for transport policy. Project Report. University of the West of England, retrieved 22 February 2013

Types and levels of rules

There are two levels of rules, operating on different levels. There are the rules of a particular game, e.g. "count till ten with your eyes closed", and the general rules of playing games, e.g. "cheating is part of the game", or, "do not hurt others". Whilst the 'game rules' shape/design the game, the 'gaming rules' relate to the morality of the game practice; to the codes that define what is good and bad behaviour whilst gaming.

When designing and performing participatory design workshops with children there is a certain morality that defines what is good and bad behaviour of the child-participants and what is good and bad behaviour of the designer. However changing perspectives and new concepts on childhood – such as John Wall's ideas on 'childism' (2010) – disrupt conventional morality codes and reveal blind spots that need to be addressed through ethical reflection. The change in perspective on childhood emerges a new role of the designer as one that is responsible to ethically reflect on his/her design framework/structure (the workshop) and how this support putting those new perspective on childhood into practice. We notice that a lot of cultural and educational institutions and designers that work with children agree on the (new) values put forward in the UNCROC and agree to give more agency (participation) to children. However, to question and evaluate if and how these ideals are put into practice is not yet happening to its full potential but is highly necessary. The designer should not only confirms certain ideas (the designer as idealist) or put them into practice (the designer as practitioner) but the designer need to confront him/herself with the agency he/she has to be self-critical in how this ideals are put into practice. In other words, the role of the designer is to take his/her responsibility and be self-critical on how he/she realises this ideals in his/her participatory design practice. Knowing that ideals are abstract elements it is already a complex process to 'translate' these ideas into a material form that is situated within the constraint a particular context in 'reality'. The designer is trained to translate ideas into shape/material/form but it is also crucial for the designer to constantly ask him/herself how this shaping process is confirming a 'childism' perspective.

continues on next page

The Car Wrestlers

170428 Reflection with Sven De Visscher

continuation

Adult power

Child power

De-structive

power

Con-structive

power

Power vs. coordination

Power vs. organisation

Power vs. structure

Power vs. equality

Play as cultural element

Play as a cultural element (Huizinga) can be read in two ways: One way learn us that culture is not pre-existing but happens in play, in play settings and while playing. Culture arises from and **trans-forms** by playing; by imagining and testing out new ideas (that have emerged from interacting with our environment). Besides play producing culture (through creating and recreating culture), it also re-produces culture. Through play existing cultural norms are **trans-mitted**.

Play produces Culture
Play re-produces Culture

When reading and analysing children's play, with the rope in The car Wrestlers, we can read in two ways:

1 – What does children's play tell us about the making of new culture? What are new values that they create in their interaction with their environment?

2 – What does children's play tell us about what our culture currently is about? What are the values they use (and transmit) through the interaction with their environment?

Play is a medium for deconstructing our culture; understanding the current values of our culture as well as understanding what is currently emerging as new values in our ever-changing culture? It allows us to create awareness on how we conserve our culture and how we direct/change it.

Types and Levels of power

(my adult struggle with power)

There is a difference between power and power.

There is a difference between:

constructive power and destructive power.

power oppressing the participant(s) and power necessary to organise change.

power and em-power.

powering participant(s) and coordinating the participant(s).

Adult power

Child power

If there is adult power, there also exist children's. If there is adult-designer power, there also exist child-participants' power. The adult-designer does not only explicit and implicit control the child-participant but the child-participant also controls the adult-designer

De-structive power

Con-structive power

To move from destructive power to constructive power is done when rules are made explicit and discussed. By doing so, the power differences are shared. But, what is this shared? what is this togetherness? How many (types/levels) togethernesses are there.

there. There is a cause and argument for your (constructive) power. The difference between cause and argument is that the argument takes 'the other' into account.

Power vs. coordination

Power vs. organisation

Power vs. structure

If the the PD workshop designer do not give the child-participants a predefined structure, then the child-participants cannot reform that structure; The child-participants can only take part in the making of a dialogical structure (adapt a structure) when a structure exist; when it is given by the other. If the 'other' does not provide any structure to interact with, there may not be any interaction at all.

Power vs. equality

We need to get rid of the ideal of equality. How is equality practiced? What are ways to practice "equality" in its different contexts and individual situations?

We need to get rid of the ideal of equality. There are differences and it wouldn't be realistic, neither honest to not admit that there exist differences.

The child does not exist

There is not such a thing as the child; or what is the child?

The child can be used to describe many child 'forms'. The child as a subject – represents an individual child that has his/her own needs/wishes/opinions that are different than other children and may be similar to adults situated in similar contexts.

The child as a group – is an 'image' of the child that is common for and represents a temporary group formation an individual child is part of, e.g. child as pupil, the child as family member, the child as street-child, the refugee child, ...

The child as a culture – is an 'image' of the child that is common for and represents an enduring group formation (long term) an individual child is part of, e.g. the middle-class child, the white child.

When we work with material from PD workshops with children (information and experiences gained from our interaction), we need to be careful not to generalise; be aware and make differences between the child as subject, group or culture and that when a child performs (behaviour via observation) and speaks (information via designed tools) he or she may do this from expressing his/her subjective values; and/or what he: she things is expected to be done/said as a representer of a certain group; and is embedded with social-cultural norms that are unconsciously shaping behaviour and thoughts. We cannot know from what mindset the child operates or expresses. When we address 'the child' there is a need to name and specify the child/children: their age, class, origin, gender but also their background and the context in which they operate.

PD can be seen as data mining or PD as shared culture reproduction and culture production

PD can be seen as a data collection and categorising of this data collection for design purpose 'what do the children want' or PD can be seen as a negotiation / discussion / shared learning (SAMEN-LEVEN) in the context of time / space / others.

From what is the problem here (negative) to what do you need/want (constructive) and bring the 'utopia' pitfall in PD back in 'place' (topia); to de-utopia is to remove the 'u' in utopia and to 'top': the here an now... what is going on not as an action or single activity but a practice of a specific culture (people/place/time).

It is about the visible material and invisible structure and relations and how they are ordered and normalised? How much are these regulations naturalised?

From what is the problem?

to

what do you want

what do you think you need

what do you think that other people need

what do you think that you and other people need;

what people in general need (samen-leven)

what do you do

to

what do you do here and now; what is this place about? what is going on?

A short note on rules & Ambiguity

The PD workshop as a shared learning moment:

The designer learns.

The children learns (they may all learn different things as well as something communal)

The child learns from the other children and the child learns from the designer – the designer as adults / the designer as parent / the designer as mother / the designer as woman / the designer as researcher / designer as academic.

the designer learns; the designer learns as adult / the designer learns as parent / the designer learns as mother / the designer learns as woman / the designer learns as researcher / the designer learns as academic.

Roles: the educator, the pedagogue, the PD-workshop designer and the PD-workshop facilitator.

Pedagogue (noun)

"A teacher, especially a strict or pedantic one."

Educator (noun)

"A person who provides instruction or education; a teacher."

Teacher (noun)

"A person who teaches, especially in a school."

The verbs teach and learn do not have the same meaning and should not be used interchangeably.

Teach (verb)

"Impart knowledge to or instruct (someone) as to how to do something."

"Cause (someone) to learn or understand something by example or experience."

Learn (verb)

"Gain or acquire knowledge of or skill in (something) by study, experience, or being taught."

"Become aware of (something) by information or from observation."

Above definitions are retrieved from Oxford Dictionaries, available at <https://www.oxforddictionaries.com>.

Whilst current definitions of educator and pedagogue both point into the direction of teaching – the activity that imparts knowledge onto somebody else – these terms had different meanings in the past. In Ancient Greece, the educator was a public person that educates the child in matters of public concern and the pedagogue was a private caretaker inside the household of a family. The pedagogue had much more emotional and personal ties than the educator, operating in public institutions such as schools.

In PD workshops, there is no focus on educating the child in matters of public concerns through the transfer of knowledge by an educator/teacher but through the child-participants exchanging experience and knowledge in dialogue – and as such generate new knowledge on both an individual level as well as collective knowledge. Even though the PD-workshop designer and PD-workshop facilitator do not directly take the roles of educator or pedagogue in their tradition meaning, we cannot deny that there are elements of cultural transmission and reproduction (educating) and care (pedagogy) present in his/her role. In his/her role as PD-workshop designer and PD-workshop facilitator it is important to it's a matter of create a balance between cultural transmission/reproduction and care and with other tasks such as motivating and facilitating the process of dialogic exchange amongst the child-participants and between the child-participants and their public environment.

Transform produce Culture

Transmit re-produce Culture