

Designers Lab

Monday 21st to Tuesday 22nd January `

Introduction

Thank you everyone who attended the Designers Lab and made great use of the opportunity to share knowledge and inspire fellow art makers and creatives. This guide can be used as a handbook to reflect on your time in the lab and offer a reference for further thought or provide insight on topics you may not personally have explored. I hope that this can be a guide, not just reporting the fact, but an assisting document you can refer to repeatedly and use as a platform to launch potential thinking and devising for future outdoor work and discussions.

The handbook is largely split into the different mega themes that were identified by the group: *Location; Storytelling through Design; Journey; Intimacy, Scale & Detail; The Practicality of Designing for Outdoors; Practicalities and Control.*

Initially, you will find the reports that you, the participants, created and noted as you explored each issue with your group. From my experience as both observer and participant, I have offered my own personal reflections of the topics faced on day 2 where I was able to roam between the topics in discussion. This is a collection of questions, considerations, anecdotes and case studies for each mega theme, tying together and expanding on the points in the reports.

The ideal is that everyone involved in the lab is equipped to continue to share the knowledge and inspirations attained from the micro sessions with the wider community, promoting growth and awareness of outdoor art practice. We hope that within the Lab you have made contacts and enjoyed collaborative thought with individuals equally as curious about the vast potential of design for outdoors!

Tara Williams

Handbook Writer

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A word from Nick Sweeting/ Simon Chatterton

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The Participants

Nick Sweeting

Colin Nightingale

Livi Vaughan

Jess Banting

Ben Hosford

Sam Clear

Phil Edolls (Phleds)

Jackson Barnard

Sofie Layton

Alex Rigg

Mark Anderson

Alex Rigg

Myriddin Pharo (Mydd)

Simon Chatterton

Martin West

Tara Williams (Writer)

The 5 Principles & Law of Open Space

The Designers Lab took the form of an Open Space event. Within this, the agenda of topics is participant led and the onus for what issues to explore falls entirely to those present. For that reason, the outcome of the Lab centres around its attendees, which is why after each question or topic discussed you will see the name of the individual it was originally presented by. You have joint ownership of the experience as educators, enquirers and note takers in the sharing and collaboration of knowledge.

The following principles and one law demonstrate the true fashion and ethos of Open Space. It is self-governed group achievement, and completely unique.

1. Whenever it starts is the right time

No need for ready, set... just go!

2. Whoever comes are the right people

Regardless of history or experience you have the ability to bring value into the lab and you can learn off anyone.

3. Wherever it happens is the right place

Don't be afraid to take yourself away from the main space! What might you discover through taking the conversation into a different context?

4. The law of two feet

Govern and own your time. If you want to join a session you can overhear or explore something eye-catching your eye across the room, take yourself there!

5. Whatever happens is the only thing that could have

Let go of fulfilling expectations. The experience created naturally by the lab and its participants is the right one.

6. When it's over... it's over!

Make use of all the time you have, formal and informal!

**WHENEVER IT
STARTS IS
THE RIGHT
TIME**

**WHOEVER
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PEOPLE**

**WHEREVER IT
HAPPENS IS
THE RIGHT
PLACE**

**THE LAW OF
TWO
FEET** 

**WHATEVER HAPPENS
IS THE ONLY
THING THAT
COULD HAVE**

**WHEN IT'S
OVER IT'S
OVER**

Themes

- Introduction

The Lab began with Nick asking the participants to identify the key issues or questions that they were particularly driven to explore or passionate about. These were named and made into a display of thoughts and ideas on the wall. After this, the group gathered the issues into seven overarching themes that now govern the following discussions.

Each theme was explored as a session, beginning with an open circle where individuals could return to the issues posted on the wall and pluck either one of their own or someone else's to take into its own space. This is where the in depth conversation was unearthed and each report is dictated below. Not all the ideas were explored within each session frame and these questions are also highlighted at the start of each section. This is where you might want to think about how you can continue the conversation of designing for outdoors in your own creative environments.

1. Location

Session Reports

- Why outdoors?
– Jackson
- How can a landscape tell a story?
– Sofie
- What do you get for free?
– Mydd

Sessions Yet To Be Explored

- The city urban space vs the rural space
– Sofie
- Creating an alternative reality without changing anything
– Alex
- The site specific vs the outdoors: define
– Sofie
- Harnessing/ running with what the outdoors offers.
– Jackson

Why Outdoors?

21.01.2019

(Jackson)

What's the attraction of outdoors as opposed to indoor work?

- Different cross section
- Joy of being outside
- Primal link – bare storytelling
- Risk – incorporate elements of chance vs. control being dead ending – “it’s alive”
- Elements that are impossible inside – elemental work
- Inherent flexibility in arrival time – less stressful
- Democratisation of the audience
 - free tickets
 - audience size
 - more connected
- Ability to scale (no fixed capacities)
- Bigger pay off
- Different way of making work

Movement and physicality

- Standing vs sitting audience?
 - moving locations/ fixed installation/ freedom to explore
 - direction of movement: Specific areas? Small installations?
 - What's the purpose/ goal of movement?
- More aware of looking after yourself – less passive for audience and performer

Different forms of outdoor work

- Promenade
- Journey pieces
- Spectacle
- Immersive
- Installation

How Can the Landscape Help Tell a Story?

21.01.2019

(Sofie)

Some of the points that emerged were about working with the landscape (whether urban or rural) rather than imposing the visual narrative on the space and bringing in design elements that perhaps don't really further the narrative.

Design as necessity rather than expectation.

Really looking and listening to the location to see what it offers and how that can be enhanced.

How much do you have to shape the landscape in order to tell the story? Work with the space rather than in opposition.

Curating and devising work with the ingredients that the landscape environment gives you.

Using the landscape/space as a stimulus for the story.

Peopling the space in order to support the narrative rather than designing the landscape space.

The importance of making the story relevant and work sit within the landscape you are working with.

Perhaps that's about choosing the right landscape to work out of!

noted by Sofie

What does landscape give you? (Differing to interior work)

- Natural weather/ light: dependant on time of year of show
- Elements of the location: What sensory story could you tell?
- Nobody actually gets anything for free!
 - Work with the environment
 - The landscape as your stage

Analysis of how group movement works outdoors

- Cohesive decisions: how much control of the movement do you give to collective audiences?
- Don't mask what's there
 - What is there waiting to be harnessed?
 - You can't compete with landscape, use it to your advantage
- Sense of being 'In it together' with community groups
- Connection on all levels

'Curating' material/ journey (design)

- Touring (so many variables)
 - Social cohesion
 - Friction if art suffers at expense of nature
 - Magical moments
 - Surprise and serendipity
 - Known landscapes
 - Landscape/ performance Belongs – (to who?)
 - Performers focus disappears – energy/ stimulation
 - Creating atmosphere outdoors
 - Robust & resilient environment and performers (show)
 - Responsibility to your audience (their landscape)
- Relationship building with community
 - It's their space before it's yours – shared experience
 - Cultivating a sense of ownership & bring in community: volunteers/ local kids
 - Reminding people of their strength/ what they have.
 - People as the landscape
 - Epic impact of the environment
 - Shift between day & night – growing with the performance
 - Community stories – how did you arrive/ invited in?
 - Organisation/ create feeling of identity
- Free audience
 - No advertising
 - Diverse – no control over who's watching
 - Audience members may not stay the whole way through

- Spontaneous experiences
- Performer's commitment level is higher? – responsibility of engaging audience
- Catching moments – you can leave without hating something
- Playing with conventions – what audiences are watching?
- Audience watching audience
- Travelling word of mouth
- What is the investment? – doesn't need to be money

Processions

- Never leave them unsupported, keeping the energy
 - International audience
 - Selfies and photos – contact and stories that cultures layer onto concept
 - History: politics – aspects – the people
-

2. Storytelling through Design

Session Reports

Story world vs real world

– Jess

Costume/ dressing your audience

– Jess

How do you define the term design?

– Sofie

Sessions yet to be explored

The visual as the/ a primary mode of communicating

– Jackson

Show title 'vs' expectations

– Phleds

How much do you need to tell the audience?

– Alex

Story World vs Real World

21.01.2019

(Jess)

How much are you trying to do this?

- Conscious choice
- Bringing in a 'vision' vs working with/ reflecting what is there
- Are the audience themselves part of the created reality or invisible spectators?*

Challenges of controlling a chosen/ new reality outdoors

- Lack of or less control of light
- Dispensing sound / noise pollution
- Uncontrollable variables
 - traffic
 - litter
 - breaks in illusion/ reality
- Consciously and realistically acknowledge potential barriers from the start.
- Be completely realistic/ worst case scenario to work cohesively with these elements, rather than against them and/ or thinking about scenarios in order to gain control

*A Case Study



Some shows in particular can be noted for their aspiration to create this public cohesion and bring all of the audience into a particular reality. For example, Piccadilly Circus Circus, 2012.

- Place de Angles (Stéphane Girard and the late Pierrot Bidon)
- Dropped 1.5 tonnes of white feathers over the audience
- Immediate change to reality and goes from spectacle to spectacle.

A further look:

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/gallery/2012/sep/02/piccadilly-circus-circus-pictures>

Costume/ Dressing Your Audience

22.01.2019

(Jess)

Commitment and cohesion

- Creating an impactful image
- Setting expectation
 - Provide a dress code upfront
 - Clarity of vision
- How to gain commitment?
 - By removing shoes on mass
 - Make people feel comfortable and safe to do so
 - Makes it exciting and other worldly
 - Provides a sense of ritual
 - “Casting the audience”
- Achieving full immersion
 - Give you a uniform and sense of togetherness
- Does it require money?
- Not wanting to make it exclusive
 - Who is the audience?
- Is it about the wording?
 - ‘Costume’ vs ‘Dress Code’
 - The wording has impact on audience’s mind set
- Workshop/Costume making

- 'Party Skills' Shunt; catering for all types of audience participation, all levels or engagement
- Organically generating costume to feel part of a whole

Identifier

- A practical use for costuming your audience
 - Narrative vs practicalities
 - Conceit of different identities vs practicality of monitoring the audience
 - Can costume serve an aesthetic purpose as well as a practical one?
 - Capes/ponchos as ID
- Aesthetic impact
 - Colours to consider; red is a great contrast in an outdoor landscape
 - Draws the eye on a large scale
 - Creates immediate intrigue and attention
- Alternative uses for costume on mass
 - Costume as instrument
 - Material designed to make a sound effect
 - Imbedding speakers into item(s) for music output? Instead of headphones like silent disco?
 - Monopolising on vast sea of costumes allows for planting performers
 - They can affect the atmosphere and energy
- Delivery of pre-made costume elements
 - Carnival delivery of costume; like a Christmas cracker- unexpected and exciting
 - Also encourages commitment and engagement
 - Trinidad Carnival; 'Costume market' displaying levels of costuming. Pickup in a pizza box
 - Unexpected and extraordinary
 - Options

Control & Communication

- Too much information
 - Negative affect
 - "forced fun"
 - Does not encourage individuality
 - Too contrived?
 - Not believable in the narrative world
- Holding the narrative
 - Giving parameters is reassuring to the individual
 - Fitting in/social norms
 - Feeling a part of something greater
 - Give them responsibility
 - "The more you out in the more you get out"
 - Gives you anonymity
 - Gives the art purpose
 - Sturdy narrative
- High impact/ cheap alternative to costume
 - Colour powder/Festival of Colour
 - Ponchos
 - Homogenised single item; headdress, hat, cape, badge?

- Single colour in contrast to site; mass effect
- Weather
 - How do you allow for costuming on mass for weather?
 - How practicalities of the attire affect the mood of your audience members
 - In creating costume for your congregation- think of it as an extra cast

The impact of dress code

- asking audiences to dress themselves and becoming characters in the performance in their own right
- How does stripping dress code and allowing audiences' choice of attire reflect social barriers?
- Modern Societies inherent need to conform
 - Idea of 'belonging' completely challenged
 - Audience suddenly faced with responsibility and culpability of making a decision that could affect the performance
 - alienate individuals from the mass crowd

How Do You Define the Term Design?

22.01.2019

(Sofie)

Everything brought into the site

- What is under foot?
- Position of barriers/ transition space
- Audience entry/ journey can be by design
 - *enhance the experience*
- Considering historic associations with site
- First impression for first time visit
- Advertising/ backstory - 'fake news'

What compromises do you need to make?

- Budget used on site, infrastructure
- Limitations
- What are key creative elements that are at the core of the idea?
- E.g. a video screen/ projector could be a core element integral to the design delivery - meaning a large section of the design budget
- Tech or no tech?
- Design elements are about entrances impacting expectations

- Outdoor work lends a hand to massive opportunities in relation to design
- Sharing a route through the space

The Gig up a mountain

Audience required to ascend uphill, embarking on a physical journey as a pre-requisite of accessing performing.

- Filters/ limits audience
 - Decompression of audience
 - accessibility: what types of potential audience members are excluded from being unable or unwilling to make the journey required for performance?
-

Storytelling through Design, -Tara's Reflections

A question - What story are you really trying to tell?

This underlying question has presented itself in each of the sessions discussed. Until you're completely confident in what story you really want to share with the audience you may find yourself struggling to make concrete decisions on design – this question should be considered from the offset.

A key point - Design, particularly in the outdoors environment isn't solely physical – it relates to concepts, experiences, movement etc.

A definition - Decompression, in performance design terms

Colin & Livi of Punchdrunk stated that an important part of their storytelling relates to the presence of doors and the expectation that puts on an audience. The decompression process manipulates the individual's headspace flooded with influences and chains they carry in from the real world and conforms it to the desired mood of the performance.

To consider - In the outdoors, without necessarily fixed entrances/exits you can't 'shut the door' to separate the art from reality.

Address how you might create this metaphorical door in order to impress the same state of decompression on your audience?

- e.g. could use distance/ travel between installations or "scenes" in order to create decompression affect for outdoors

A thought - Opening the door to anyone but being aware you won't engage everyone.

Highlighting the example of a performance taking place up a mountain, really consider how elements of performance design will affect the audience you attract.

How does the design of the landscape journey affect your audience? A performance involving movement and uphill journeys isn't going to attract the same vast amount of people that a stationary spectacle in a city centre would.

Think about your storytelling. Who do you want to tell your story to and how do you ensure that your design is attractive/ accessible to those people?

*A hypothetical case –
The raincoat problem*

If you're performing outside and want to clothe or impose a theme onto your audience's dress there are going to be external factors that limit the ability to remain completely authentic.

For example, if you plan a parade in the height of winter and decide you want your whole audience to be dressed in black, how feasible is this?

The likelihood of an external factor, rain, is high, meaning each member of your audience is going to need a raincoat. Realistically, not all of those attendees will have access to a specifically black raincoat. Your vision of a blackout procession is spoiled with flecks of brown, pink - colours of the rainbow.

There may be less control in storytelling outdoors and you should weigh up vision goals with practicality before allocating influence and responsibility on the audience.

An anecdote by Phleds -
The Man with the Trainset

A boy of 5/6 visits an adult who gives him a gift he wouldn't forget for years. An outdoor experience.

You ascend up a ladder through a hole that only your head is permitted to pass through. What you discover is a complete new reality. A train set at eye level, and behind that, an entire landscape - a reality in itself and a world that is only shared with the top of your head and the limited movement allowed by the turning of your neck.

A story world, a journey, an experience designed to perfection for a little boy untouchable by the claw of "reality".

A challenge - How will you use storytelling in your outdoor work to become 'the man with the trainset' for your future audiences and leave a lasting impression?

3. Journey

Session Reports

Processions

	<i>- Jackson</i>
The individual within a crowd	<i>- Ben</i>
How can you guide an audience outside through design?	<i>-Livi</i>

Sessions Yet to be Explored

The visual as the/ a primary mode of communicating	<i>- Jackson</i>
Show title 'vs' expectations	<i>- Phleds</i>
How much do you need to tell the audience?	<i>- Alex</i>
How to move through a crowd	<i>- Alex</i>
Physical vs Emotional Journey	<i>- Mydd</i>
Installation inside/ Performance outside?	<i>- Phleds</i>
When/ where does it begin?	<i>- Livi</i>
Appeal to Family and Individual	<i>- Phleds</i>
Agency	<i>- Ben</i>

Processions

22.01.2019

(Jackson)

What makes a processional piece? (Mobile theatre)

- Any journey with a purpose
- Visual and music
- The journey, moving the audience
- Regulating the pace
- Changing direction, shifting focus
- What's the intention?

- Do you want it to be a spectacle to be observed or a performance device intended to continue the journey from one thing to another without breaking the story world?
- Pied piper effect
- Control of environment
 - Taking over a space
 - Turning perspective around
 - Bringing an audience into a space
 - Turning the lights off in a town

Permissions

- Preparing beforehand
- Demonstrating your safety policies
- How do you win the argument?
 - art vs regulations of local councils
 - Culture of arts in towns and cities
 - We have “a right to take over our streets”
 - Holding on to the non-negotiables

Elemental/ Practical aspects

- Candles vs led for artificial light
- Elements of control
 - street lamps
 - who own street lamps, may be privately owned not council
 - led lights
 - Shop lights and sounds
 - vehicles
 - can you close roads?
- Building buffers into your route to allow for unforeseen holdups – keep to time plan
- Do you let your audience know your schedule for long processions?
 - Would need to consider how to distribute that info in advance
 - Do you have sufficient publicity to do this?
 - TV, local newspapers
 - Can you release that info via digital media etc
- Punctuation/ setting the pace
- Physical and sensory tools
 - Ceremony
 - Drumbeat
 - Flag
- Demonstrations (elements of excitement)
 - e.g. woman’s march – simple but added value in solidarity togetherness, “this is what we think” (shared goal)
- impact of media
 - extending the procession beyond using digital, video etc
 - OR the intimacy of no technology?
- Define what it is you’re doing

- Is there an ideal number of participants/ audience?
 - Could there be a negative impact on the performance if the procession isn't large enough and how can you pre-empt and avoid this?
- Passive involvement
 - forced or picked up inside the current of the procession
- When does it start?
- How do you rehearse? Fit up part of show?
- Community effort
- Fake procession? How do we create it?

Individual within A Crowd

22.01.2019

(Ben)

How is your experience individual within a crowd?

- Different nature of audience members
- Voting with your feet
- Multi point performance

e.g - Le Phun – a working farm installation popping up in towns and city centres and running as 24 hour performance – appears and disappears sporadically

- 1:1 conversations
- Casual chats
- 24hr interaction
- Rolling audiences
- Existing in a crowd but creating individuality in the interaction with each person

Individual elements to consider

- Sculpting the journey- demands
- Splinters of audience @ different sizes
- Degree of richness, immersion, degree able to read in, their position (e.g.) soundscapes
- If you are free to move within a wrapper
- Things that look/ sound different from different positions
- Disrupting audience
- Reactions will differ
- Different comfort zones
- But being able to see and hear and feel like you understand
- What do you want the audience experience to be and why and how?
- Different audience, different experience
- Different time slot equals different lights

Ticketed/ pre meditated performance vs free and open

- different audience contexts

Individuality in Reaction

- who you experience with
- Different reactions
 - are the audience allowed/ able to outwardly react to things
- The 4th wall representing non individuality
 - Same experience for audience, same performance regardless of audience presence
 - Examples of outdoor features creating a 4th wall outside
 - Pa system (one way communication)
 - projection
 - would your performance work in the same way if there was no audience?

How Can You Guide an Audience Outside Through Design?

22.01.2019

(Livi)

Subconscious/ Subliminal

- Suggestion
- Derren Brown

What affects your actions and decisions?

- What can you layer in/thoughts?
- Explore the psychological side of decision making
- Impulses

Impulses

- 'Lines of desire'/a desired path that appears natural and organic alludes to mystery or the unknown
- Direct vs meandering routes
- Exit through the gift shop
- Airports- routes through

Acknowledging the entire experience

- Only one go at it
- It only happens once
- "It's all got to be good"- anticipation
- It needs to be supremely watchable
- The journey of the experience being larger than what you see

- Length of journey
- How long do things take?

Control

- No trying to control what the audience feel
- Allowing them freedom
- Knowing your audience is important
- Taking part
- What is the intention?
- Audience are part of the landscape
- Maintaining pace and presence
- Performer plants- lemmings to help move your congregation
- Ripple effect/animal mentality – have plants move your procession along

Choice

- Choose how you want to interact with the audience
- What is their purpose/role?
- Help by making waiting enjoyable
- They need to invest in the experience
- 'Trinidad- Blue Paint Festival'

How do you create a world and a sense of focus?

- 'Jackson's boat Show'
- Create boundaries through use of structures
- Eye contact/talking
- Physical contact
- Cast to help manage audience
- Rules of public places- boundaries are different to theatre
- Travel towards sound or light = brings excitement and spectacle

Offering

- Its either an investment in the community or in bought/ticketed experience
- Beltane Fire Festival- largest Iron Age Celtic ritual, continuing the spirit of our ancient forebears and connecting with nature. Including procession, fires and performances.
- Creating an environment where what they are travelling to is exciting
- Planting ideas
- Boomtown- finding audience through objectives/maps/quests and challenges
- An active not passive audience
- James McPherson - research on audience mapping, flow and movement in outdoor work
- A way of timing and understanding events

Social Norms

- Understanding the society, you are working in
- How close will your audience get to the performers?
- Will they touch? - Boundaries?
- Game mentality- see when it breaks

Respect

- Deliberate action
- Danger in a barrier (fire), going against the grain
- Respect linked to amount of available space
- Being aware of potential dangers; risks of being in a group

Risks

- For audiences in amazement/engrossed = taken out of the present
- Changing the rules of the environment especially in an urban landscape, dangerous streets
- Training your performers to be aware of these potential issues
- Scripted vs free-flowing; its harder to react to audience and interventions

Use the landscape to your advantage

- False edges and levels of missions
 - Can you cross a falsely perceived boundary? Creating intrigue and excitement
-

Journey, -Tara's Reflections

A question - How do you want to involve the audience?

What emerged through the conversations was that not only are there several different types of journey you can take your audience on, but also different types of audience that are created as a result of that journey. A moving piece requires a level of commitment from the participator, potentially offering the individual a sense of responsibility or heightened immersion in the piece. The experience is quite different to that of a stationary observer to a planted spectacle.

To consider - You can really break down the meaning and use of Journey in outdoor work.

It can be the overarching frame of the performance and moving to a goal, like a parade. However, it can also be employed as a performance device e.g. creating synergy from one particular 'scene' (installation, location etc.) to another without breaking the story world of the piece.

What about the journey of the audience as a non-physical concept? You might want to think back to your storytelling and consider how you can design the emotional/ sensory journey for the audience.

A thought - The experience may begin with the show, but the travelling to the space, the walking to their position, even getting dressed in the morning can be where the journey and audience experience begins.

A question - Who owns what? The uncontrollable stage

A big difference between indoor and outdoor work are the environmental elements that protrude onto your performance. Getting permission to perform in an outdoor location is only the beginning. You want to plunge the room into complete darkness in a theatre, a technician has total power to execute a blackout. What happens in an outdoor show where you want to draw the attention to a particular light however the town centre you're presenting in is lit up with streetlamps, shop windows etc.? The control you have over the environment is dramatically reduced.

A thought - The non-negotiables. What won't you sacrifice?

The group discussed several examples of how you might be faced with speaking to community members or local councils in order to gain permissions or control the performance environment in order to fulfil the desired conditions.

The term non-negotiables arose, what important elements of the art do you feel are absolutely quintessential to the piece?

To consider – non-negotiables may lead you to conversations with external contacts from the project.

What happens, for example, if the heavy hand of health and safety regulation becomes a threat to the performance? Can you compromise on elements of the? If you really can't its worth pre-empting these conversations with local authorities and considering how you could creatively "win the argument".

A challenge - How can you engage and challenge the mind of the individual, rather than just insisting on the necessity of particular elements?

Remember, you're taking the conversation of the work outside the artist's appreciators mind.

What is the attitude/position of the person you're talking to and what tools can you use to steer their thinking?

An example given was demonstrating work to authoritative figures to show its value and manageability.

4. Intimacy, Scale & Detail

This was a mega session involving the whole group and incorporating the following overlapping thoughts.

Designing work for different situations/ Intimate vs Spectacle

– Sofie

Detail in the outdoor context

– Jackson

Scale/ Audience size/ Intimacy

– Mark

The intimate in the outdoor space

– Sofie

Telling intimate stories in non-intimate spaces

– Sofie

Scale

– Ben

Geocaching

- hiding something in the world and telling a story through messages- like a family history in a tin wedged between rocks on a
 - a small detail (message in a bottle)
 - similar affect created once by wildworks
 - ‘audience’ placing tags on a tree, writing, personal message
- intimate touches could be a way of seeing an area you know through a different lens
- How can you scale that up?

How do you retain the reality?

- Realistic nature of imperfection
- Lack of intimacy somewhere like Disney
- No autonomy
 - illusion of independence
- Imperfections **are** the detail – needed in bigger builds
- Perfection of ballet performance
 - dancers may stand out by giving more/ something different within same choreography (adding textures)
- Exterior builds – looking real vs objects in own right
- Should be ‘of its own world’ rather than trying to copy
- Time to grow and plant, layering
- How much can you sculpt or allow time to help you
- Audience creating installations
 - pile of rocks, scale and intimacy

What really creates intimacy?

- Feeling of ownership
 - By carrying information forward you become an interpreter and gain ownership
 - It's about how you escape with the work that creates ownership
- What you arrive at the work with
- Empowering the individual to use their imagination and have their own story
- Expectation/ surprise and the platform you explore on
- Controlling atmosphere and mood, creating an unusual zone that allows the platform for work to happen
 - e.g. Carabosse - fire installations
- Convivial mood
- Bond
- Masks to make audience less self-conscious and more immersed in the work (what other devices might be used to achieve this?)
 - Intimacy vs Vulnerability
 - You can create intimacy through the witnessing of vulnerability
 - How do you become a group audience?
- Shaking hands, physical contact, feeling like you're in it together*

*A Case Study



HUG – Verity Standen
Blindfolded hugging of audience

“Each audience member is blindfolded. They are then individually hugged by a singer. Unable to visually gauge their surroundings, participants experience the performance through sound, breath and vibrations of the body as the choir of voices deliver the song.”

Engaging community

- People wanting to come together
- Human nature – innate – sharing experience
- Collective singing, feeling part of spectacle
- Process of becoming part of a group through action
- Ritual giving of item to an audience member – eg Olympic torch
- Desire to be individual vs part of herd
- Tapping into intimacy of commonalities
- Can give people something individual to make them feel connected
- ‘Lighters in the air’ moment (more sophisticated options?)
 - Using audience as signalling

- Brighton app company - Wiretapper: developing app for using crowd phone as sound/lighting effects
 - What is the potential (and risk) of incorporating mobile devices into performance
 - Radiohead performance at Glastonbury – limited without screens
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Intimacy and Scale,

Tara's Reflections

A thought - **The interesting thing about this particular topic was how similar and interlinked the issues raised were.**

Intimacy is often followed with connotations of privacy and being small which would be seemingly paradoxical to the concept of an open crowd or mass.

A question - **So how do we deliver intimacy to a crowd of hundreds/thousands?**

The group discussed ways of pioneering the abstract and flipping or challenging what is 'reality' in order to affect intimacy.

A key word - **Imperfections**

The group discussed the idea of imperfections and the distinct moments they create. Diverting from, or slightly challenging the energy of the performance can draw attention and creating intimacy in its comparison to the norm.

An example – **Ballet – Imperfections *within* perfection.**

An example offered was the framework of a typical ballet which is often classic and a great display of perfection and precision. However, a dancer that offers something more or different from what the rest of the chorus is doing becomes unique and this can create a sense of intimate privacy between the audience and that particular element of the performance.

A thought – **Interaction: if you can involve the audience in the performance they can become immersed in the art by their own sense of involvement.**

Intimacy is created through their personal experience, which will differ to that of the audience members around them. They have a role in the performance and can take ownership in their contribution.

Further to this if you have the opportunity to ingest your own interpretation of the piece and in turn share/ pass that on to say a child or friend you take ownership and personal value in the subject which adds to the experience and creates intimacy.

To consider - **how you might encourage an audience to participate and shape their own experience, as well as sharing moments with others?**

Physical contact was another suggestion to creating intimacy. Particularly in modern societies, where touch and physical contact is often a common barrier, physical contact can be extremely poignant to an audience's interaction with the piece. There are almost unspoken rules as to the levels of physical contact we engage in and what that represents about our relationships.

A stranger – eye contact

A colleague/ acquaintance – handshake

A friend – hug

Family/ loved ones – a kiss

A question - **What happens when a performance challenges this social construct?**

For example, in the case study the performance accelerates the level of trust between actor and participator.

Contact is thrust upon the audience in the form of a hug- forcing the trust of the interaction to that of a friend level. If this is used effectively it could be a really organic way to create intimacy for the audience, but can it be scaled to audience of masses?

A review – A Guardian article in response to Hug expressed “The transaction between performer and audience does not have to be purely financial”

To consider – **How might you interpret this term “transaction” in designing outdoor performance and what intimate transactions can you create for your audience?**

Can other type of contact like holding hands be used to connect an audience and create intimacy in the performance community?

An anecdote - **Where intimacy failed**

Colin shared an experience of a large scale gig where he saw, or perhaps didn't see, Radiohead perform. The screens often utilised to live feed the band on stage had been instead used to display abstract imagery during the entirety of the performance. This may well have been an artistic decision from the director however it meant that for Colin's experience of the show being near the back he felt completely disconnected him from the performance. What do you want to highlight and demonstrate to the audience in your own work and how can you ensure that it's effective?

To consider – **Really try to be aware of reaction and the experience of the audience**

Evaluate carefully the concept you've decided to present and the manner in which you offer that experience. Your intentions may become lost if what you're trying to communicate isn't accessible and doesn't consider intimacy. What is the perspective of the audience?

5. The Practicality of Designing for Outdoors

Session Report

Art vs Practicality?

– Martin

Sessions Yet To Be Explored

Sitting indoors designing an outdoor show

– Phleds

Technology as part of the design process

– Sofie

The material limitations of the outdoors

– Sofie

Art vs Practicality

22.01.2019

(Martin)

When does practicality get in the way of the art?

- The triangle; time vs people vs scale
- Can be frustrating back and forth
- Prompts constant re-evaluation
- Can you compromise?
- When to negotiate?

Art first

- Evolving the art without practicality taking over too soon
- Important that the art prevails or else re-evaluate the purpose
- When does the practicalities *need* to take over?
- Keeping a constant analytical brain
- Not let the art disappear through the practicalities; flattens and dilutes the narrative

Parameters

- Give yourself self-imposed parameters
- Can be positive way of processing the scale of the work
- “Creativity out of limitations”
- Gives focus
- Ownership over ideas
- Gives integrity to the art

Practicalities

- Promoting investing in people and skills vs stuff/kit/materials
- Use the landscape as a resource
- Negotiating with the site; when do you compromise with the landscape or build upon it for the art?
- Work out and spend time with the site- find the space that services the art
- Fight for its integrity

Vision

- Vision vs reality
- You need sensitivity to the reality as much as the vision?
- Too much change or alteration to the site; dilutes the artistic vision
- It alters the connection you had with the site
- How can the vision harness the site?
- Consider the suitability and flexibility of the art to the space
- Curating the work to suit and choosing how far to place it

Site

- 'Site Generic'; what is the effect the audience will have on the site?
- The future and long-lasting impact they have on the landscape
- What are the practical and show infrastructure needs of the piece?
- When does the infrastructure spoil the site and the concept?
- We have a collective responsibility to address the presence of the site and the infrastructure we employ within it
- How to disguise loos, dressing cabins, security infrastructure?
- Don't design in a vacuum- be in/on your site to consider the 'whole picture'

Invention/ Creativity

- Disney strategy; DREAMER|REALIST|CRITIC
- It gives equal weight to each aspect of the creative process
- Depicting the importance of the art first
- You can oscillate between the factors
- Sometime 'no justification' is needed; it's a instinctive process
- Is it worth the effort?
- Helps maintain a sturdy vision

Appointed Antagonist

- There are merits in appointing someone to challenge the art
- Is that still a Dramaturgical role?
- Good exercise in subverting your assumptions
- Maintains a constant
- Always ensuring we are creating in the realm of possibility

- Intricate analysis to strengthen and hold the narrative/world

Creative Solving

- Constraints can grow into a fruitful design
- Design born out of necessity
- Not always a battle- can harmonise the different show elements

Knowing when to stop

- Observing clarity of vision
- Vision does not always abide by or obey logic or perspective
- Observe your parameters

6. Practicalities

Session Report

Time: How long do you have?

Sessions Yet to be Explored

I can't see anything!

– Phleds

Giving the space and all in view to your audience

– Phleds

Where can I go to get warm? (or cool)

– Phleds

Technical Risk (health and safety)

– Ben

A "Plan A"/ "Plan B" show?

– Phleds

Safety

– Jess

I can't hear them!

– Phleds

Time: How Long Do You Have?

22.01.2019

What impact does working outdoors have on your schedule/time?

- More flexibility indoors
- Weather, light/dark, reveal
- The dialogue of what the show is begins when people see it
- It is the show the moment you start on site
- You are always an audience during the build
- Seal site off- create secrets and word of mouth
- The build of the show can be good publicity
- Farm in the city centre that appears and becomes part of the life of the city/square
- You believe because you want to believe

What are your core objectives?

- Risk of 'flat pack world'
- Too Disney-like
- Importance of layering

- Feeling the space
- Give yourself time to adjust
- How many nights is the experience?
- You need the audience/and yourselves to know how the space works

Outdoor work: you get only one chance

- Use crew to test so you can have more first experiences and reactions
- The more site specific a show is, the less transferable it is
- How can you tweak things live?
- Stewarding perspective; things changing during the show as required
- Danger with outdoors; You need to problem solve; don't have the slack

When time is sparse

- It's what the core elements that are needed
- Understanding what is needed
- Acknowledge and consider what is really happening and why?
- Cast and crew; how do you introduce people to the project?
- Belief

What gives things meaning?

- "This is something that is touching me in the real world"
 - That is the power
-

Practicalities, -Tara's Reflections

A question - How dependant is your schedule on external factors?

When you're working outdoors you can't 'shut the door', as discussed earlier in Storytelling and Design. This doesn't just impact the performance itself but the build up towards it.

A point raised was that the performance begins as soon as work on site commences. Outdoor work is unique in that there's a possibility you won't be able to conceal the build before the performance and the more site specific your design process is the more likely it may become exposed to the public.

In Practice

To consider - You might want to think about how important the reveal element is your performance. How might you preserve this and how would you need to approach your schedule in order to achieve that?

Evaluate whether you need to conceal the build. There are pros and cons of both. You might be able to execute a way of building parts of your installations for example and then moving it to the site.

A question - do you need to be cautious of creating a 'flat pack world', or is that irrelevant to your concept?

A public build/ rehearsal may have positive consequences, like publicity. Are there ways you can utilise the idea of public rehearsal to encourage word of mouth and awareness of the piece without detracting from its authenticity?

The group discussed the practical elements of planning your time and allowing proper consider of time, movement, performance etc. when you are faced with the unpredictability of outdoors. There was a real concern surrounding the ability to control the time and schedule in order to realise the concept with the awareness that you may realistically only have one night, one chance to bring the final product to life.

A suggestion - Testing your performance.

In offering solutions to this it became apparent that there are ways you can be creative about testing your art. In addition to potential public rehearsal could you do intentional sharing(s) in to showcase the work and see what elements need adjusting? Are there cast/crew/ partners that can step out and experience the show to provide feedback?

To consider - With testing, it's important to allow sufficient to make those adjustments if needed.

Ultimately, there's no way to predict what elements might unfold on the day of the performance but scheduling time to practise and adjust allows you forecast and feel prepared for different circumstances.

A thought – It's all about problem solving.

It was discussed right near the beginning of (see 1. Location) that a major benefit of outdoor work was the elemental and sensory aspect, what can the audience feel & experience from the landscape. This can be applied to design process when you're creating the work.

To consider – Think about all elements of the piece – Spacing, levels, visuals etc. What feels right?

The instinctive nature of human beings was highlighted, if you can't foresee an issue, testing allows you to get a sense of what's wrong and from there it becomes far more achievable to find the source of that problem and find a solution.

But remember – give yourself that time to let it happen naturally.

7. Control

In the words of principle no.6 - when it's over it's over! The group didn't reach the issues and themes raised under the topic Control. However, you may already have noticed themes and influences of 'control' and managing the outdoors emerge heavily throughout all the other points discussed. It's essential to regard control as an ongoing consideration in the realisation of outdoor work and particularly in areas concerning design and landscape elements.

You might want to take some time off the back of the inspiration of the lab to discuss with your peers potential issues posed by the element Control. Has the lab better equipped you to explore this idea in your own design context?

Further areas for thought

The wow factor

– Phleds

Risk

– Phleds

What was your best & worst outdoor experience and why?

– Ben

Taking the conversation outdoors

After lunch the group decided to tackle head on the issues surrounding outdoors - literally outdoors. Responding perfectly to the key point and law of the lab 'Anywhere it happens is the Right Place', the context of the participants embarked on a journey in order to stimulate their thinking within the environmental landscape. 101 is lucky to be situated on the **former USAF missile base and the group walked** up to the historic Greenham Common.

Practically no time into the journey it began to rain heavily, quickly transgressing into thick, billowy tufts snow which began to settle over the open landscape. The mini expedition became the perfect metaphor for the quintessential nature of outdoor work: unpredictable, wild & ultimately magical.

A few final statements from some of our participants

Great opportunity to be around individuals who are like minded. *Phleds*

I feel invigorated about the scope of outdoor work and discovering other approaches to the work. *Jackson*

These topics are only the beginning - scratching the surface. *Martin*

The conversations informed indoor work as well. It was amazing having dedicated time to literally focus on the process. *Sam*

The lab was an invigorating environment – the anecdotes of outdoor were greatly inspiring! I want to educate myself by experiencing more outdoor work first hand. *Jess*

Feeling excited and rejuvenated by the process – it can be so easy to get stuck in your own process. *Mydd*