THE BERGEN SALONS

DIGEST

This paper...

- Acknowledges and thanks all those who took part by sharing their time, experiences, thoughts and perspectives in a glorious spirit of generosity and collaborative enquiry.

- Is a working document rather than an authoritative tome.

- Is a snapshot of three moments in time complete with their unresolved, contradictory messiness.

- Distils the 'top line' contributions into a 'fertilising digest' to nourish and stimulate further discussion and planning with and between the City of Bergen and community/citizen representatives, including artists.

- Refrains from providing answers.

- Invites further exploration of the problem space.

- Does not assert any kind of ownership of, or authority over, the content.

- … and does not take sides.

Thank you all for being there, Lisa

The Experience Business

Contents

Creative Loddefjord & Olsvik

About the project

Creative Loddefjord and Olsvik (CL&O) brings residents together to explore how collective creativity can help the people of Loddefjord and Olsvik to flourish.

Funded by The City of Bergen (Norway) and delivered by Lisa Baxter, Founder of The Experience Business (UK), the programme brings together human-centredness and eco-systems thinking to encourage a deeper, more empathic understanding of people and place, one that can advance the co-creation of sustainable creative engagement fuelled by shared ambition, purpose and values.

Loddefjord and Olsvik are Bergen suburbs with a disproportionate level of low income and low educational attainment. Home to a large group of immigrants who came to Bergen in the late 1970s and 1980s, there are few social meeting places, with the shopping mall acting as the main social arena. Sport and the hyper-local music scene play an important role in what is a challenging environment for young people with a high number of school drop-outs, disabled youngsters and unemployment. This programme forms part of the City of Bergen's response, supporting cultural activity at a grassroots level to support individual wellness and community connection and cooperation.

In Autumn 2020, Lisa worked with representatives from the local community, local business and the City of Bergen to take the pulse of Loddefjord and Olsvik and imagine what 'community flourishing' could mean for them.

Our original intention was for the City of Bergen cultural workers to then engage in citizen dialogue to support the co-creation of community engagement initiatives. However, the impact of Covid together with our own emerging learning shaped a new set of questions that form the basis for the upcoming *Bergen Salons, June 2021*.

These questions centre around the understanding of what 'community' is, the role of the artist in a community context and how to address the inherent tensions between public money/power with a democratic approach to community flourishing.

In Autumn 2021 we will embark on the next phase of the programme, re-conceived as an experimental process where artist, community and the City of Bergen collaborate differently for public benefit. The ambition is to extend the experiment to other suburbs in Bergen, each one learning from the one before in service of human and community flourishing, whatever that means for the people on the ground.

For more info email: lisa@theexperiencebusiness.co.uk
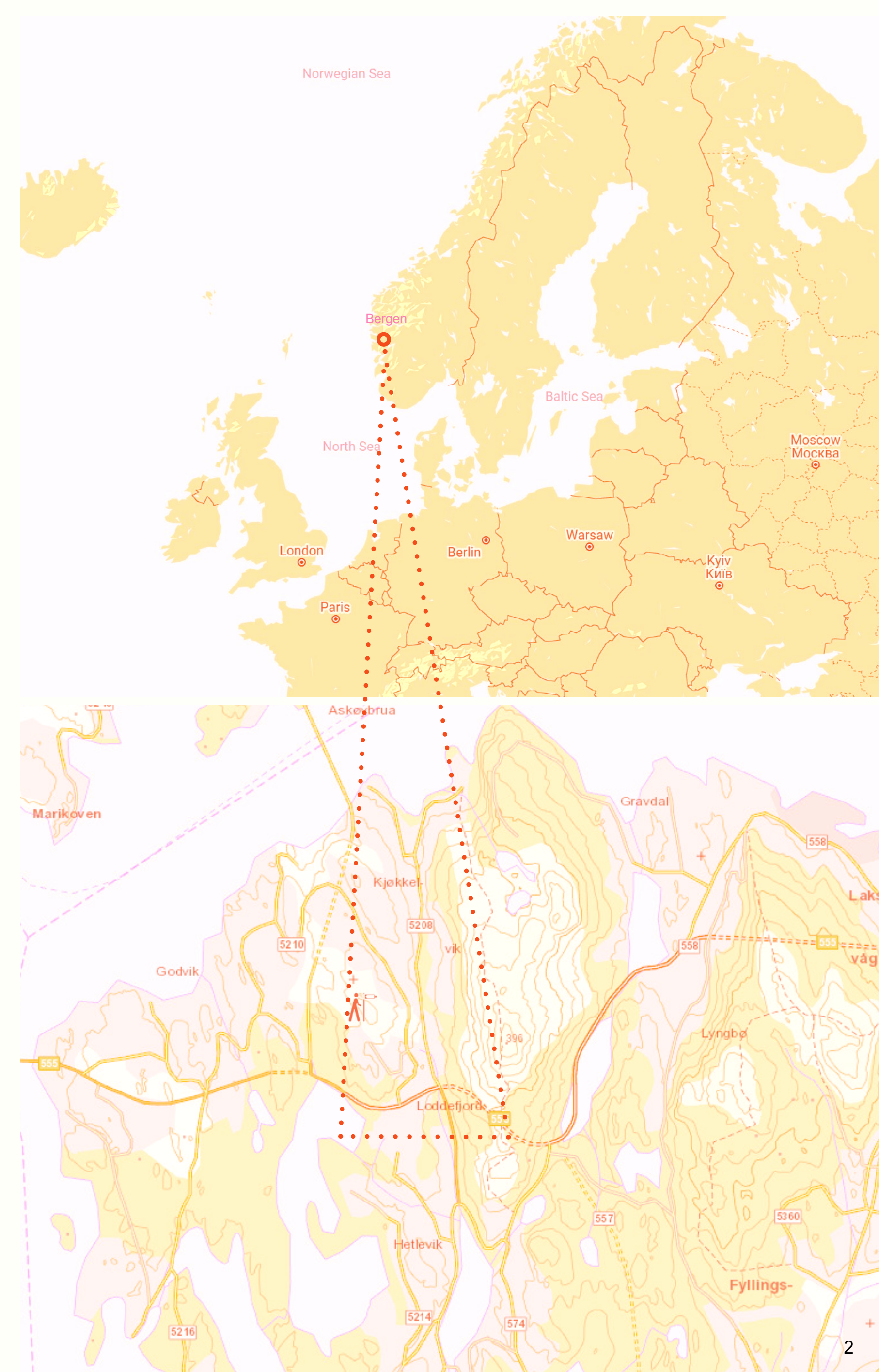
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THE BERGEN SALONS

The Fluid Human Dynamics of Place

Speaker

Diane Drubay – Community Builder, Museum Strategist, Event Curator.
dianedrubay.com

Date

Monday 14th June 2021
3pm GMT / 4pm CET
Zoom

> " The greatest voyage of our lifetimes is not the seeking of new landscapes but in seeing with new eyes. "
>
> *Marcel Proust*

What we are responding to

Institution-centric outreach is the norm, driven by their own or their funder priorities, too often operating from a position of benevolent self-interest.

The map is not the territory and that territory – the people and communities we serve together with all the social capital that resides within it – is leanly understood.

Mental models revolve around problematising people who are regarded as either deficient in some way or need improvement.

Agendas are often focused on single issues and solutions rather than taking a holistic, systemic view.

Exploitation and tokenism can and does happen.

What we want

De-centralise activity in support of greater individual and community agency, self-determination and self-organisation.

Embrace complexity and operate in a human-centred, context-responsive way that seeks to support, enhance and scale impact for local benefit.

Apply ecosystemic thinking to how we understand the dynamics of a locality.

Build empathy and multiply interconnectedness within and between communities to nourish the 'human-to-human ecosystem' in a way that supports the diversity and viability of all.

Systemic community-driven wellbeing, not whack-a-mole problem solving.

To learn and take inspiration from the existing cultural ecology, an asset based approach.

Our questions

What are the dominant mental models that inhibit arts and cultural organisations from engaging with complex systems and how can we shift perceptions?

How can systems and eco-systemic thinking be applied to how we seek to understand and engage with communities?

How might we begin to map the ecosystem of a place to understand more deeply the network dynamics within and between communities and the related existing and potential social capital?

How might we become a valued and valuable connector within these networks in the service of the community?

What are the dominant mental models that inhibit arts and cultural organisations [and civic authorities] from engaging with complex systems?

- **We Know Best:** power is held centrally, and decisions are made from the top down based on the dominant politics and pre-determined agendas.

- **Deterministic Mindset:** organisations are driven by well-intentioned, well-written strategies and plans that already have the end-point in mind, what success looks like and how to measure that success. This precludes responsive, evolutionary and emergent practice.

- **Rigid Mental Maps:** city authorities tend to see place through the lens of services and infrastructure and set their targets and strategies accordingly. Because of this they overlook the complexity and fluidity of what's going on at a human level.

- **Arm's Length:** the bureaucrats operate at one remove from their communities, in their 'comfortable chairs and offices,' out of touch with the cut and thrust of the dynamic human ecosystem they operate in.

- **Survival**: the institution's primary job is to ensure their own survival. This inward looking, self-preservation mindset denies a culture of cooperation and mutualism.

- **Silo Working:** each department within an organisation has its own 'bureaucratic logic' with associated competencies and responsibilities. This siloed approach results in a fragmented understanding of operating contexts and thus, fragmented solutions and approaches.

- **Reductive Thinking:** there is a reliance on conveniently aggregated data that is an oversimplification of the rich, complex, messy human reality on the ground.

- **Pre-Conceived Ideas:** around who 'audience,' 'community' and 'culture' are.

- **Circumscribing the 'Unengaged' and 'Hard to Reach':** the prevailing view that those who don't choose to engage with arts organisations are in some way 'culturally estranged' and an underestimation of the capability and potential of people to affect change themselves result in a mindset of 'doing to' and not 'doing with.'

- **Filtering:** the questions that are asked and the 'things' that are noticed operate through filters which can distort reality by removing or supressing the unwanted, the inconvenient, the seemingly irrelevant and the messy and complex.

- **Exclusionary Funding Processes:** processes that privilege those who can access the 'call', navigate the related bureaucracy and have the necessary skills and competencies to write a 'good' application. A system that supports competition rather than collaboration, pitching organisations and community groups against each other.

- **The Tyranny of Best Practice:** seeking to replicate and transplant what works well and/or efficiently elsewhere with no contextual considerations.

" Would anything really change in an ecosystem if an arts institution disappeared?"
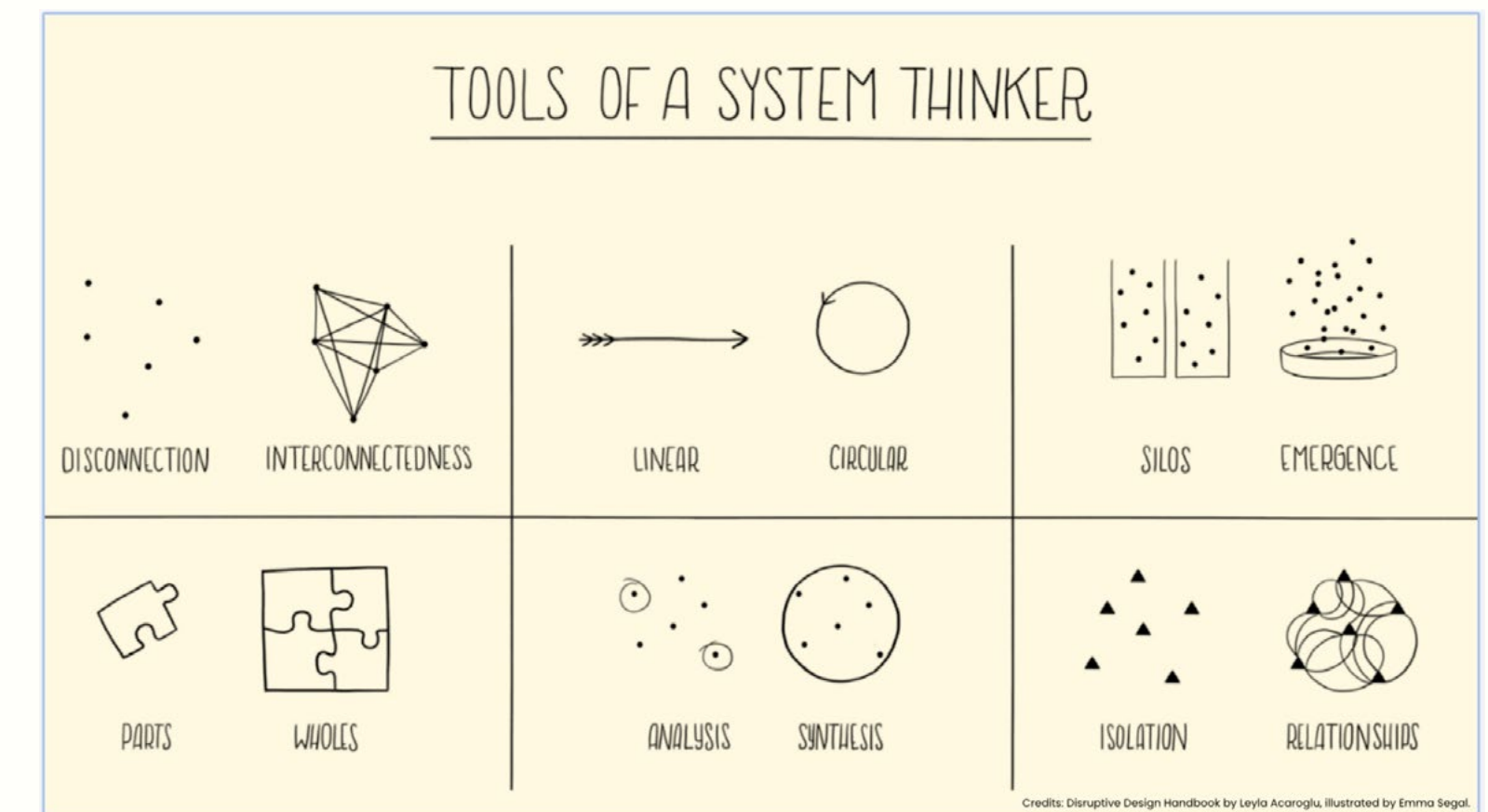
How can we shift perceptions?

- **Champion a Truly Inclusive Culture**: by dismantling all barriers to citizen participation and actively seeking out those who, for whatever reason, are under-represented because in an ecosystem everyone has a part to play.

- **Adopt a Holistic, Integrative Mindset:** one that embraces complexity and looks at the whole rather then fragmenting things into parts.

- **Encourage Collaborative and Interdisciplinary practice:** within our own oganisation, between us and our institutional communities (the community that revolves around your institution), and between our organisation and non-institutional communities.

- **Question the Way We Make Sense of Our World:** our data, our definitions and the way we categorise things. Cease our reductivist tendencies and address our blind spots.

- **Be Open to Possibility and Emergence:** accept that the outcome doesn't always need to be pre-determined.

- **Value Alternative Viewpoints:** acknowledge and synthesise the diverse ways in which people understand and define what culture means to them.

How can systems and ecosystemic thinking be applied to how we seek to understand and engage with communities?

- Decentralise.

- Leave our ego behind.

- Reconceptualise ourselves as actors in a broader ecosystem.

- Move from a position of leadership to one of developing greater community agency and the local capacity to thrive and flourish.

- Recognise and value everyone's role, expertise, capabilities and potential within the ecosystem.

- Value and measure the degree of connectivity, the density of those connections and the vitality of mutually beneficial exchange over metrics and demographics.

- Think in terms of interconnected systems rather than individual projects.

- Don't look for repeatable solutions and processes.

- Try, learn, adapt, evolve rather than plan, deliver, measure.

- Prioritise a multiplicity of small-scale experiments over a single *'grand projet.'*

- Encourage an ecosystem of innovators who can re-inforce each other.

- Create space for emergence, surprise and failure.

- Adopt a learning, risk-taking mindset and seek to mitigate the perceived risk this new way of working surfaces.

- Respond to the particularities of people and place.

- Work slower and deeper because change takes time.

- Embrace messiness and unpredictability.

- Reject a purely outcome-oriented mindset.

- Be useful.

"If you want to go fast, go alone.
If you want to go far, go together."

REFERENCE: https://www.creativityandchange.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Disruptive-Design-Method-Handbook-by-Leyla-Acaroglu-Jan-17.pdf

How might we begin to map the ecosystem of a place to understand more deeply the network dynamics within and between communities and the related existing and potential social capital?

- Begin with curiosity.

- Go beyond the footprint of your organisation.

- Change your lens and focus on the human condition, the relational and the intersectional

- Engage with local people and see the world through their eyes.

- Go to where they are.

- Visit, talk, ask, listen, deep dive, empathise.

- Seek out those who do not usually engage or are invisible, marginal or overlooked.

- Be sensitive to your own privilege and power and its impact.

"Think about who is not participating in the choices you are making. That way, as a municipal leader, it's a choice rather than inertia. It gives you the opportunity to widen the aperture of who is part of the definition of community."

How might we become a valued and valuable connector within these networks in the service of community?

- **Connection Begins at Home**: De-silo your own practice, embrace interdisciplinarity and support communication and collaboration between departments.

- **Redress the Balance of Power:** be humble, respect everyone, acknowledge and value citizen expertise, recognise that we are all equal and have something to contribute.

- **Support the Greater Good**: not just your own.

- **Practice 'Radical Generosity':** don't be a gatekeeper, say 'yes' a lot, seek to give people what they genuinely want, hand the keys over.

- **Find Common Ground:** move from a 'participation' to a 'let's get to know each other' mindset.

- **Build Trust:** through honest conversation and 'standing in the rain' for them.

- **Foster Peer-to-Peer Relationships:** as a capacity building exercise within your external community to become more networked into the ecosystem.

- **Become a Multiplier:** support social labs that encourage multiple small scale activities that add richness, connection and diversity to the ecosystem.

- **Place a Premium on Process:** focus less on the outcome and more on the 'how.'

- **Open Your Spaces**: use your 'convening authority' to hold the space for relationship building and/or offer it as a 'container' for experiments.

- **Collaborate, Co-create, Co-develop:** just 'co-' it!

- **Value the Small:** together they create a critical mass.

- **Adopt an Outside-in Perspective**: tune into the local spirit, explore what people are actively interested in and what is already happening, and then look for your value-add.

"Being a connector is actually really hard because you need to have the power to bring people together, but you have to let go of that power to let people thrive."

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The Unrecognised Role of the Artist in a Social Setting

Speaker

R.M. Sanchez-Camus – Artistic Director, Applied Live Art Studio
appliedliveart.com

Date

Tuesday 15th June 2021
3pm GMT / 4pm CET
Zoom

What we are responding to

Power and decision making lies largely with the funders and institutions leaving artists at the mercy of agendas and policies they have little input into or influence over.

The funding system supports community engagement on a project-by-project basis, exacerbating the predominant gig-economy which is further undermining artist's financial stability and security .

Covid has grimly revealed the precarity of artists and the inadequacies of the system they operate in.

Socially engaged projects are asked to justify themselves in a way that 'high art' is not.

Socially engaged artists are the least funded, and yet are the highest burdened in relation to their degree of accountability.

What we want

Surface, acknowledge and value the roles artists play as investors in society and recognise alternative models of value generation.

Expand community/civic understanding and imagination around a) the role of artists beyond 'hired talent' and b) how artistic practice might be used in the service of a specific community and their challenges/aspirations.

Create sustainable work for artists as change-agents and creative catalysts.

Develop the conditions for new futures to emerge through news forms of training, support and investment for artists.

Our questions

What is the value artists bring to a community setting and what related qualities do we need to look for when seeking artists for the programme?

How might an artist introduce themselves to, build trust and meaningfully engage with a city suburb in which they are 'embedded'?

How can artists in social contexts be best supported and developed?

What is the value artists bring to a community setting?

- **We Create a Safe Space:** or a reckoning space or a nurturing space where people come and explore their individual and shared humanity.

- **We Bring People Together:** to inspire, to amplify their voices and sometimes to challenge.

- **We Create Affective Durational Experiences:** that elicit powerful feelings and emotions.

- **We Have Tools No-One Else Has:** to bring out the strengths in people, to take them on a journey that empowers, encourages, activates, makes connections, builds relationships.

- **We Are Process Driven:** to ensure everyone has a strong, collaborative meaningful experience of the journey.

- **We Give Voice:** to those who are less represented or remain unheard.

- **We Include:** those who are known to suffer most from, or who are side-lined within, existing systems. We play an equaliser role.

- **We Have Healing Powers:** that impact on individual and community wellbeing.

- **We Use our Art as a Force for Positive Change:** facing social problems and striving for social/systemic change is at the heart of our work.

- **We See the World Differently:** we bring a different mindset and see opportunities others don't and

because of this we can have different kinds of conversations because we are not an 'authority'.

- **We Care:** we are interested in others, we listen deeply and attentively, we explore people's truths, we give acceptance.

- **We 'Whisper Loudly':** and in doing so, encourage people to come closer and share their stories.

"I've seen first-hand how social art is a force for positive change amongst communities, but also how those communities can lose out badly when commissioning organisations deliver inadequate or badly planned strategies that side-line the community with the creative process instead of inviting them to be central players."

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What related qualities do we need to look for when seeking artists for the programme?

- **Bravery:** to go into to an unknown community and into the realm of uncertainty, unafraid of failure.

- **Openness:** to people, possibility, surprise.

- **Curiosity:** about people and communities, powered by deep active listening skills.

- **Humility:** understand your own position of privilege, regard the people you work with as experts in their own right, put your ego to one side.

- **Process Driven:** recognising how process is just as, if not more, important than outcome. Resist the temptation to create 'a happy celebration moment' if it cheats that process.

- **Naivety:** come to each project as if it is the first and recognise each project is unique.

- **Collaborative:** driven by participatory practice and co-authorship.

- **Communication Skills:** including beyond language.

- **Value Trust:** as the means to earn your place in their world.

- **Empathy:** seek to understand and genuinely care about how others are feeling, and act in their best interest.

- **Patience:** to wait, to move at the appropriate pace for people, to take a step back if necessary.

"I've had people peer out their curtains and think I'm from the government, checking in on them. I've had people talking to me openly about racism, sexism, anger over political debates. Sometimes I'm on the other side of the argument, but I have to put my personal ego to one side, discover compassion, solidarity and active listening."

"I've sat on park benches and walked into second-hand shops and just started chatting to people. I've knocked on 250 doors on a housing estate."

How might an artist introduce themselves, to build trust and meaningfully engage with a city suburb in which they are 'embedded'?

- **Presence:** be there, be present, be seen, be 'in' the community, engage.

- **Go to Where the People Are:** libraries, launderettes, charity shops etc.

- **Build Trust:** be transparent, engage in dialogue, listen well, make people feel valued and heard.

- **Openness:** open up your processes and let people in.

- **Live There:** be a tenant there, be a person who, for a while, belongs to that place.

- **Take Your Time:** don't rush, 'move at the speed of trust,' resist being thrown in at the deep end.

- **'Stand in the Rain':** deliver on your promises, no matter how hard that might be, even if it involves standing in the rain.

- **Be In Service:** attend meetings, volunteer, help, join in, think beyond the art.

- **Play with People:** humour breaks down barriers and is a great leveller.

- **Find the Community Connectors:** work with them to open doors for you and introduce you to their community

How can artists in social contexts be better supported?

- **Work with Artists:** don't' just regard artists as a supplier of services. Invite them in, see them as a collaborator and team member.

- **Value Process:** renegotiate what value is beyond 'critical reception' and 'aesthetic appreciation,' the 'virtuous artist' and the 'polished outcome.' Instead, place value on a 'strong, collaborative and meaningful process' and not just on the end result.

- **Care**: socially engaged practitioners often work with vulnerable people in challenging situations. They can find themselves in contentious situations without any support which has an emotional toll. Artists need to feel safe. Their wellbeing needs to be supported, just as the wellbeing of other professions in similarly challenging situations.

- **Community Support Budget:** socially engaged artists find themselves working with people with high needs and yet the work is leanly resourced. Provide additional resource to support and dissolve the barriers that prevent people from participating. Factor in the costs of translators, access needs, transport, childcare etc. This requires a different way of 'costing up' socially engaged practice beyond studio, materials and making time.

- **Pay Special Attention to EDI:** sufficient time, resource and thinking needs to be invested in the many and specific considerations around EDI to ensure they are fully embedded in all areas of practice.

- **Adequate Time and Fair Pay:** develop clear guidelines which acknowledge the 'real' time and skills required to engage in high quality, durational socially engaged practice - to allow artists to 'anchor themselves in the territory,' meet people, build relationships and trust, support 'deep local ownership' and develop process.

- **Support the Necessary Balance between Pragmatism and Idealism:** Artist's practical needs need to be supported as much as possible to release their time and energy for the work in hand. Some of the pragmatic elements may come from the demands of the funders or the commissioners and these need to be realistic and proportionate.

- **Flexibility**: Funders and commissioners need to steer clear of imposing too many boundaries and parameters on the work and avoid being overly prescriptive when it comes to outputs, timescales, targets and KPIs. Avoid tokenism at all costs.

- **Trust the Artist:** believe in the process and remain open minded about the outcomes.

- **Expect Failure as Part of the Process:** 'Take a leaf out of the scientist's book' and see experimentation and failure as essential to learning. Support the artist and community's right to take risks.

- **Support Artists Networks and Development:** create opportunities for socially engaged artists to share practice, develop a new language for their work and learn from each other. Create opportunities for training and development. Survey the field and so everyone knows who is out there. Share relevant information to support artists in finding opportunities, writing strong applications and navigating the system.

"... we shouldn't measure value or link value exclusively to the materiality of an art object or the productivity of an artist or how much the artist produces or how large or big the project is."

"In the same way a construction engineer is surrounded by many other experts that will make a house stand, the work of the artists ... could be more centrally placed as part of the city development teams. Then the risk management would have to give some way to the unexpected and unchartered territory."

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THE BERGEN SALONS

Public Money, Decision Making and Power

Speaker

Deborah Cullinan – Chief Executive Officer, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (US) & Co-Founder of CultureBank
ybca.org

Date

Wednesday 16th June 2021
3pm GMT / 4pm CET
Zoom

> " We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used to create them. "
>
> *Albert Einstein*

What we are responding to

The balance of power favours the funder and priorities are largely determined by them.

The tendency is towards hierarchy and control which inhibits innovation.

The finance is held in departmental siloes, attributed to one-off single-issue projects that are reliant on specific funding streams.

The resulting investment is often fragmented and transactional.

Community assets are rarely recognised or leveraged and community engagement can descend into tokenism.

What we want

A more equitable balance of power that successfully navigates the tensions between civic and civil society.

Alternative structures and financial solutions that support self-determination, cultural democracy and distributed leadership.

A move away from instrumentalism to the holistic health of a community.

An asset-based approach to community engagement that supports enterprise and innovation from the ground up.

A solution that supports on-going, sustainable activity that takes on a life of its own.

A system of investment, decision-making and accountability that is transparent and proportionate.

Our questions

How might we move from funding community 'interventions' to sustainable community investment?

What kind of financing and budgeting arrangements might support an equitable balance of power?

What happens to accountability in an experiment with no predefined measurable targets or outcomes?

What opportunities/challenges does all this present for the City of Bergen and how might we address them?

How might we move from funding 'community interventions' to 'sustainable community investment'?

- **De-Politicise Decision Making:** avoid short-term political bandwagons at a City level where priorities shift from election to election, and instead, introduce sustainable initiatives that offer stability and continuity.

- **Long term commitment**: shift the structures towards 'deep, long-term, game-changing relationships' because change takes time.

- **Level the Playing Field:** dispense with the word 'artist' and accept that we are all creative in our own right.

- **Address Systemic Inequality:** by developing new models of investment that circumvent the established power structures and strive for real representation rather than represent those who have most interest in a particular issue.

- **Operate at Multiple levels:** avoid the *'grand projet'* and seek to simultaneously engage with people where they are at, whether that's dropping-in, attending, participating or committing more fulsomely to community cultural engagement.

- **Encourage Creative Entrepreneurialism:** by communities and in partnership with others.

- **Dispense with Competitive Practices:** support more equitable and inclusive practice in the process of accessing financial 'investment'.

- **Consider alternative perspectives:**
  – from 'providers' to '*supporters*'
  – from 'funders' to '*investors*'
  – from 'intervention' to '*commitment*'
  – from 'transactional' to '*transformational*'
  – from 'product' to '*process*'
  – from 'instrumental value' to '*intrinsic value*'
  – from 'object-based practice' to '*relational practice*'
  – from 'making something' to '*building communities*'
  – from a 'deficit mentality' to an '*asset-based approach*'
  – from 'problem' to '*possibility*'
  – from 'top down' to '*bottom up*'
  – from 'to and for' to '*of, by and with*'
  – from 'co-creation' to '*self-determination*'
  – from a 'welfare mindset' to a '*capabilities mindset*'
  – from 'consultation fatigue' to '*participatory budgeting*'
  – from 'delegation' to '*representation*'
  – from 'competition for resource' to '*the right to resource*'.

Communities

- **Transfer Cultural Power to Communities:** engage with communities on their terms, encourage them to take the lead because 'they are the best builders of models for themselves'.

- **Community Panels and Representation:** people decide for themselves what kind of creative activity they want and are supported in selecting the artists to work with.

- **Grow the Local Creative Economy:** offer seed commissions to nurture existing, emergent and latent creativity from local artists and people who may not self-define as an artist.

- **Organically Develop the Creative Ecosystem from Within:** Reframe people as 'creators' support their creative confidence, invest in skills development, reduce bureaucracy, encourage participation, prioritise self-determination, trust them and in doing so grow capacity and build demand.

- **Multiplier Effect:** support multiple small scale citizen-initiated and citizen-led activities.

- **Leverage Existing Capabilities:** locate what capabilities exist and allow people to use these to self-determine what it is they value, want and how.

Artists

- **Guaranteed Artist Income:** re-imagine the role and value of arts, culture and creativity in the life of a community and provide guaranteed income for artists, no strings attached.

- **Artist as Change-Maker:** champion their role as change agents, early stage investors and demand builders rather than project deliverers.

- **Artist-in-Service:** Shift power to, and build capacity for, artists and artist-driven enterprises that are working 'in the service of their community'.

- **Residencies:** encourage artists to live in a community/locality and creatively inhabit its existing infrastructure – shops, restaurants, cafes etc.

" As a politician, what counts is what you communicate about how you're creating value for society and for the voters to elect you again … there's a tendency sometimes for political reasons to favour the short-term projects that have something new about them … that's a problem because what you need sometimes is funding that is stable."

" I think we come very much from an asset based approach, that your communities have in-built assets, that we recognise our communities as creative from the outset, and our job is to shine a light on the creativity that already exists."

" We are … on the road to really re-imagining the role of an arts organisation in the life its community, in the life of its city. The way in which we're doing that is by shifting power to the artists and artist-driven enterprises that are working in service of their communities to advance equity, health and well-being."

What kind of financing and budgeting arrangements might support an equitable balance of power?

- **Simplify the Structure and Bureaucracy:** to make accessing and managing the process easier for all.

- **Distributed Leadership Model:** to share decision making power across more citizen/community representatives.

- **Adopt a 'Shared Futures' Approach:** where decision making is decentralised and cooperative, resources are fairly distributed for the common good and everyone acts to advance 'common wealth', however that is defined.

- **Participatory Budgeting:** communities have the power of choice and can determine what investment is required - and how – through deliberation.

- **Lived Experience Leadership Model:** create and support the right conditions to allow people to do what they do best, recognise and use their experiences, strengths and capabilities to drive decision-making, planning, management and delivery.

- **Panels and Commissioning Funds:** panels of community/citizen representatives are provided with the support to put together a brief based on what they want to commission, assess submissions and make awards.

- **Integrative Approach:** move away from the binary position of artist-community to one where the artist is part of and from the community.

"If you come from a poor background, if you're a refugee, you've had to manage more complicated things than some of us have had to manage in our lives."

" How do we support you and your definition of success so that it's the community deciding and it's the residents deciding what they want these resources to do for them."

What happens to accountability in an experiment with no predefined measurable targets or outcomes?

- **Let Go:** avoid being prescriptive about the 'how', forgo the necessary pre-determined goals, targets and KPIs, don't fixate over governance and frameworks, allow people to develop their own definition of what success is.

- **Grassroots Accountability:** allow people to be accountable to themselves and their community rather than to the funder/authority.

- **Give People Room for Manoeuvre:** don't put people and programmes in straight jackets.

- **Embrace Failure:** encourage people to give it a go, encourage reflective practice and learning from small pilots and experiments, grow and develop skills and confidence.

- **Small Open Funds:** invite 'bidders' to determine what they want to do and achieve and how they will hold themselves accountable for that.

What opportunities/challenges does all this present for the City of Bergen?

Challenges

- **The Swinging Political Pendulum**: the short political timeframe and inevitable shift in political power and agendas.

- **Dismantling Paternalism:** unravelling prevailing hierarchies, relinquishing the bureaucratic impetus to control and measure, ceding power and supporting communities and citizen groups to self-determine.

- **City Silos:** how to de-silo practice at a City level to embrace a more holistic, ecosystemic approach to community flourishing and a pooling of resource over and above the 'culture budget' to meet shared goals.

- **Citizen as Beneficiary:** shifting mindsets from a deficit to an asset-based mentality and acknowledging the vast untapped potential of citizen-led activity.

Opportunities

- **The Long Game:** locating durational investment in arts, culture and creativity as a desirable, viable and sustainable means of achieving strategic goals at a grassroots level. A move from 'project funding' to 'operational funding'.

- **Embrace Multiple Experiments:** acknowledge the value of failing well in building more creative, resilient and thriving communities for the long term

by supporting a mutually reinforcing ecosystem of innovation and experimentation.

- **Democratisation**: acknowledge and value other people's definitions of what culture and creativity is to them and support the ways in which this manifests itself in a locality, neighbourhood, community.

- **The Journey is the Destination:** value the intrinsic process-based and relational aspects of creative community engagement as much as the 'instrumental' outcomes.

" Of course, you're not telling them 'Oh, you can just fail and waste money'. No. What you're saying is, 'Do what you need to do according to the tenets that you yourselves have written down. You will define what is successful and what is not, and you will decide when to stop this, when it doesn't work and go to the next thing'."

A huge thank you to everyone who took part and shared their time, wisdom and experiences.

Our participants in alphabetical order:

Adam Jay Coleman
Head of Strategic Development and Partnerships Eden Court Highlands

Airan Berg
Artistic Director, Festival der Regionen and Artistic Director of various Projects: Orfeo & Majnun, Floods of Fire, Occupy Culture

Alan Lane
Artistic Director, Slung Low

Alex Sarian
President & CEO, Arts Commons

Benjamin Hogstad
Department Manager Fylllingsdalen and Laksevåg culture unit

Birgitta Ralston
Designer / co-founder Ralston Bau, Idealist Institute and Bioregion Institute

Carmen Salas
Independent Curator and Cultural Producer. Founder and Artistic Director of Connecting the Dots (Mexico City)

Cecilie Krohn
Community Development Coordinator for Loddefjord and Olsvik

Charles Landry
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Katrine Nødtvedt
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Creative
Loddefjord
& Olsvik

In partnership with the City of Bergen and Lisa Baxter, The Experience Business.

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