

Social Lightscapes Workshops

Social
research in
design for
lighting
professionals

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CONFIGURING LIGHT
staging the social

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Acknowledgments

Foreword

I am very proud to have contributed to this innovative social and cultural project together with Configuring Light, the London School of Economics, King's College London and the Social Light Movement.

Back in the 1970s, iGuzzini launched an important initiative aiming to raise cultural awareness of the principle that social responsibility must be at the forefront of any project, guiding the design of each and every lighting solution within. This is because light is an extraordinary tool, able to enhance the beauty of things, but also to improve people's lives, both individually and as part of a community. Light is deeply social, having a crucial role in determining the socio-cultural dimension of places throughout past, present and future. Therefore, we enthusiastically welcomed the proposal received from *the Configuring Light / Staging the Social* team to work on the first published guide to integrating lighting design and social research. Dedicated to lighting designers, the publication conveys that the lighting plan

is not just a set of technical elements, but it is based on social science methodologies. We are likewise happy to have done this by investing in the work of a brilliant lighting designer, Elettra Bordonaro, who took care of every phase of the project with the support of our international network.

Our people in London, Muscat, Brisbane, Rome, and Paris have provided lighting solutions, technical know-how and 24/7 assistance, facilitating the integration of architecture and places with the local culture. Who could have done it better if not the locals, who live the reality of those places every day?

In conclusion, I would like to thank all of those who initiated and made this project possible, particularly as this has also allowed iGuzzini to be recognised as 'Best Partner in the Industry' at the Professional Lighting Design Conference in 2017. This publication is a step towards a better society, in line with our vision, which is innovating for people, always putting people first.



Adolfo Guzzini

Introduction

Configuring Light



Dr Don Slater

is co-director of Configuring Light and Associate Professor (Reader) in Sociology at the LSE.

An experienced qualitative researcher, he has led projects and published widely on visual culture, consumer society, digital culture, media and development, everyday material culture.



Dr Elettra Bordonaro

is iGuzzini-funded Visiting Research Fellow at the LSE. Elettra joined Configuring Light (and led the Social Lightscapes programme) as a leading lighting designer with a record of innovative and social science-oriented work focused on public realm design. She is a certified architect holding a PhD in architecture from the Politecnico di Torino, a co-founder of the Social Light Movement and principal of the lighting design practice Light Follows Behaviour.



Dr Joanne Entwistle

is co-director of Configuring Light and Reader in Sociology at King's College London. She has researched and published extensively on the sociology of fashion, dress and the body, and aesthetic markets and economies.

Configuring Light/Staging the Social research group is dedicated to the social study of light and lighting, and particularly to promoting better urban public realm lighting. Founded in 2013 at the London School of Economics, Configuring Light starts from the premise that light is a major factor in configuring social life and social space, with major impacts on social issues such as well-being, inequality, sustainability and diversity. There are therefore compelling reasons for sociologists like us to be interested in lighting, and much that a social research approach can contribute to helping lighting professionals better understand the social lives in which they are intervening so powerfully.

For the same reasons, we are committed to exploring how social research and understanding can be more closely integrated into professional lighting practices, and most of our projects involve collaboration with lighting designers, planners, architects, municipalities and developers.

This book presents a core project: the Social Lightscapes workshops. Our aim was to create a workshop structure that would enable participants to explore social research in lighting design through very hands-on and intensive engagement with real social spaces, by both carrying out social research and producing design concepts which they could prototype with on-site lighting installations. With iGuzzini's truly generous and sympathetic support, we've been able to work in different countries and continents, with participants ranging from school-kids to architecture students to established designers, and on spaces ranging from gentrifying neighbourhoods to marginalized social housing estates.

We believe we have demonstrated that serious social research and understanding can and should be integral to lighting design, that social and spatial thinking can be brought together for more creative and more responsible design. This book should not only give you an introduction to the approach we explored and to what was achieved in the workshops -- we also hope that it serves as a manual or handbook: we do hope that readers will want to explore these ideas in their own professional or teaching practices, or even take up the baton and develop workshops of their own.

Configuring Light

Configuring Light/Staging the Social is an interdisciplinary research programme based in the Sociology Department at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). It explores the role lighting plays in our everyday life to help build a better social knowledge base for lighting professionals, developers and municipalities. The team is composed by Don Slater, Elettra Bordonaro, Joanne Entwistle. Mona Sloane was a member of Configuring Light during the early days of the Social Lightscapes workshop series. We acknowledge her contribution to conceptualising and organising the first Whitecross workshop, to developing the subsequent programme and to organizing the Oman workshop.

In addition to workshops, public engagement events and seminars, we conduct academic research as well as research consultancies and collaborations with designers, developers and municipalities. We offer cutting edge social research methodologies and analytical resources to build a rich and secure understanding of social spaces for design and planning interventions.

Major projects have included:

Derby after Dark – social research for lighting masterplanning, with Speirs+Major and Derby City Council.

Achieving 'Publicness' at Elephant Park – ongoing research collaboration with Lendlease to establish a public park in Elephant & Castle, London.

Smart Everyday Nighttime Design – social research to develop a pilot lighting design in Cartagena, Colombia, with Ove Arup global lighting group, Leni Schwendinger and Colombian urban partners.

Disconnected Infrastructures - British Academy-funded research project to explore women's safety in south India, and help develop safety audit software to make lighting and other infrastructures 'smarter' and more connected.

Pathways to Smart Lighting – research project to map municipal strategies for implementing smart lighting, including detailed case studies of selected cities, in partnership with LUCI and Osram.

Social Research in Design

All lighting is 'social lighting': it participates in staging social life and social space. To light a street one way rather than another is to shape the way it feels and the way it works for all the very different people who interact with it. Lighting professionals – which includes not only lighting designers but all lighting-related professionals such as planners, architects, engineers – are therefore in the business of making social places and intervening in social lives. Of course, their lighting strategies need to work technically and aesthetically – but they also need to work *socially*, to improve the quality of people's lives and interactions, and to avoid negative impacts.

This provides the starting point for the social research in design approach we have been exploring through the Social Lightscapes Workshop Series: in order to make lighting work socially, professionals need to value the social aspects of lighting as seriously as they do the technical and aesthetic aspects of light, integrating social thinking, understanding and research into their work. Developing a fuller

social understanding of a space and its complexity, moreover, can produce more creative, innovative and sustainable design strategies.

The Social Lightscapes Workshop Series aimed to develop a learning structure to help lighting professionals and students explore what it actually means to work socially with a space: to experience how social thinking differs from spatial, technical and aesthetic thinking; to experience doing social research and engaging with people and places; and to experience how social thinking and design thinking can work together in actual lighting work. You can see what we mean by this – and why it is so important – from two examples from the workshop series. Lighting professionals are generally trained to think spatially, and to feel they can deduce the social aspect from their spatial analyses. What happens if they are asked – as in our workshops – to start their work from social rather than spatial investigation....

Whitecross: understanding a building
In our very first workshop, on the

Whitecross housing estate in London, one group of designers was tasked with understanding a site that included a row of apartment blocks. One façade faced out of the estate, the other inwards onto estate pathways and shared space. The team instinctively started their work from spatial analysis of maps of the estate and quickly decided on the 'problem' for residents: because the front of the buildings faced outwards, and onto a fragmented parking area, they assumed that residents must feel alienated, cut off from the estate and with entrances that lacked identity and coherence.

Interviewing residents immediately told a very different story: as far as they were concerned, the 'back' of the buildings was in fact the *front*, the real entrance; they rarely came in the official 'front' of the building; they didn't feel alienated at all; and were far more concerned with issues to do with the 'back': lighting should help tell people (both estate residents and 'outsiders' using the pathways) that they were approaching the entrances to their homes. →



Whitecross Estate, London

Place des Fetes, Paris



→ **Paris: Understanding a public square**

Municipal lighting designs for the Place des Fetes in Paris – our last workshop - started from spatial assumptions: firstly, that the Place was a public square and should be lit like one; secondly, that as a public square it needed to be ‘activated’ by giving it a new public shape and function. One result was the installation of extremely tall masts that were used to define a literal *square*, and to map out the centre of the Place as an activity area.

Social research showed that, at most times of day and evening, there was plenty of existing social activity, but almost all of it was located around the periphery of the square. Moreover, the activity was very diverse, involving different people with little social connection to each other. Workshop groups were therefore able to explore different meanings and uses of the Place, and whether these separate social zones could interconnect, socially and spatially. Their designs explored how to use lighting to support and develop existing social life, and to zone the space in ways that made sense to the wide range of users. The point is not that lighting

professionals need academic studies that revel in complexity. Nor we do expect the social research to tell designers what to do, or prove the designers right or wrong. Rather, these stories tell us that lighting design tends to start from working assumptions, models and spatial interpretations of what is going on socially, and that these need to be open to challenge by observing and speaking to the diversity of people that produce a social space.

Hence, the motivation for this workshop series: What kind of social research and social understanding could be most helpful to lighting design practices? And how can we foster and integrate social research into actual lighting design work?

What do we mean by ‘the social’?

The ‘social’ is one of those everyday concepts that are very difficult to define and need to be left flexible enough to be useful. ‘The social’ – as a sociologist sees it - refers to the practices, beliefs, relationships and institutions that make up collective life. It is therefore about the ways in which people organise themselves in very specific ways in different places to carry on a way of life. The social also refers to the very specific forms taken by things in particular places,

what we often describe as ‘cultural differences’: the streets we studied in Muscat and in Brisbane were seriously different because of – amongst many things – different ways of thinking about and regulating public spaces; different cultural mixes and histories of inhabitants; different social practices and relationships; different economic and political systems that visibly impacted the people and places.

The social is therefore – necessarily – a mess of disparate stuff, interrelated in complex and changing ways. Think of all the interconnected things that make up what we call a street or an office, and about the arrangements that allow a street or an office to keep its shape, more or less, over time. In doing social research in design, we tend to foreground four kinds of social complexities that lighting designers need to understand:

Diversity: we need to identify and understand the different types of social actors that make up *this* space. An urban space does not comprise ‘people’ or ‘the community’: it is made up of young mothers, old couples, dog walkers, retailers, commuters, teenagers, ethnic minorities, and so on – many of whom may well be in

some degree of conflict with each other. The social research job is to make sure that we know about all these people – especially the ones that may be hard to reach – and in as much depth and complexity as our resources and clients allow.

Practices: what are all these people *doing* – or want to do? Can we map the diverse movements, activities and events going on in this space, understand what people are trying to do here – shop, hang out, amuse children and keep them safe, walk dogs – and how these different practices intersect and conflict, and how they relate to the functionality and the identity of this place.

Places: What is the identity of this space for its different stakeholders: what does it mean, how does it feel, what do different people value about it, what atmosphere does it have, and what conflicts and commonalities do we find?

Connections: how does this place connect to the outside world? We usually want to know about how it fits into the wider neighbourhood and city, but also into a history, a politics, an economics. Can we ‘scale up’ our understanding of this space?

The aim of all this is to acknowledge the social complexity of the spaces that lighting professionals work on and to take steps to engage with it. In fact, many lighting people naturally think about these questions, and try to address them through site visits, consultations and thinking about what people are (or will be) doing in their space. However, they generally don’t have the time, money or expertise to carry this as far as they feel they need to. The aim is clearly not to turn lighting people into academic sociologists; more importantly, designers (and stakeholders) have usually benefited from asking different kinds of questions, ones that allow the lives and voices of people to challenge their assumptions about what’s going in their space.

What is distinctive about social lighting?

The past decade has seen huge shifts in the lighting professions away from their technical and engineering base towards a broader concern with improving people’s ‘quality of life’. These developments are important and progressive, and our approach aims to support them. At the same time, it is important to look at what is distinctive and necessary about taking a *social* approach:

Human-centred approaches have shifted our attention to how lighting can enhance quality of life. Above all, lighting should be focused on people rather than on cars or cost-efficiency or planning alone. Moreover, human-centred approaches want to make use of dramatic developments – largely from psychological, medical and behavioural sciences – in understanding the impacts of light on people in general (often its impacts on bodies and brains, such as circadian rhythms).

To be human-centred is to stress what people have in common as people. However, ‘the social’ is different from ‘the human’, or from researching ‘people’ in general: in designing social spaces we are dealing with many different types of people, and their social differences generally have a huge impact on how they interact with space and light. However much we know biologically about the impact of light on bodily rhythms, we *also* need to know how that impact will be different for isolated elderly people with little access to public space, for commuters with long hours, for young parents who have very different daily routines depending on their work or means. Moreover, lighting generally intervenes in how different types of people →

→ interact in public spaces rather than how it impacts on 'people': eg, how can a space be lit to minimize conflict between teenage and elderly users, or to enable both poorer and wealthier stakeholders to feel comfortable and welcome?

Social problems and issues: Lighting increasingly makes headlines as part of significant social concerns such as economic and environmental sustainability, safety and security, atmosphere and identity, health and well-being, social inclusion and access to public space.

However, lighting is not just 'social' if it raises a social problem. Lighting is *always* a social matter. Whether we are lighting a socially problematic and marginalized housing estate, an environmentally sensitive park or a prestigious city centre heritage precinct, we need to know about the different things that different people are doing, and how lighting can support the different practices and meanings that make *this* place.

To fully understand these social problems, we need a fuller account of how people use space. We are better placed to intervene and respond to these explicit, headline social problems

if we understand what social activities are generating needs for more or less light, or how conflicting social groups use and divide up the space.

Consultations and participation: The enormous increase in consultation methods and participatory design show a real concern to engage with users and communities. In fact, it is increasingly hard to imagine any lighting design that does not involve some form of consultation, some evidence that people have been given an opportunity to voice their needs and concerns.

Consultations can be valued exercises in democracy. They can also be formal exercises by which a very few articulate people speak up and claim to represent their 'community'. Social research in design is concerned to actively explore the social life of a place, to get at the hard to reach people and voices that often don't get to consultations. We also find it crucial not to start from the assumption that there is already 'a community' that can speak up; lighting may help to build a community, in the end, but social lighting needs to start from a realistic understanding of all the diverse and often conflicting people who use a space.

Social Lightscapes Workshop Series

There is certainly no simple formula for doing social research in lighting design. The Social Lightscapes Workshop Series was a way of exploring a range of issues, working methods, collaborations, debates. This book presents some of that open-ended journey, and we hope readers will want to continue it.

The series started with a collaboration between Configuring Light and the Social Light Movement. SLM had already pioneered workshops that sought to make lighting 'social' by engaging communities in lighting events that focused on socially problematic and marginal neighbourhoods. The social research approach of Configuring Light aimed to develop that social engagement and understanding by applying sociological concepts and methods. At the same time, Configuring Light had been researching how lighting professionals go about configuring light, and how social understanding enters into that process. Creating a workshop with SLM created a space to explore how design and social research could be brought together in practical work on real places. Our first workshop was in October 2014 on Peabody Trust's Whitecross housing estate. The Social Lightscapes/

Urban Nightscapes Workshop brought together 25 designers and planners from 11 different countries for an ambitious and intense five-day engagement with a social housing estate in central London. Together with SLM, we developed a workshop structure and a handbook for social research in design.

The Whitecross workshop was an eyeopener for everyone involved, including the Peabody Trust. It demonstrated firstly that the connections between social thinking, design thinking and – in Peabody's case – planning and development thinking needed much more exploration. Secondly, it demonstrated that site-based workshops were a great format to translate this exciting convergence into a practical engagement, with research and design collaborating on learning and responding to real-world places.

This was clearly just the start – and the Whitecross workshop demonstrated that a more extended series was needed. Elettra Bordonaro, a co-founder of SLM, was sponsored by iGuzzini to work with Configuring Light/Staging the Social to develop a two-year, 6-workshop programme; and LSE Sociology Department appointed her to a Visiting Research Fellowship.

As the original agreement for Social Lightscapes put it, the series aimed to...

- explore and build expertise in social research in lighting design
- by working with students, professionals and community groups in intensive workshops
- that engage participants in *both* researching and designing for actual public realm spaces
- and enables consistent reflection on how designers, planners, architects and communities can develop more knowledgeable, responsive and socially engaged approaches to social spaces.

In addition to these aims, the workshop programme has allowed us to explore another dimension that is equally central to what we mean by 'the social' in lighting and is also equally downplayed in much actual lighting practice: we were able to explore social research in design in widely and globally different places – London, Europe, Oman, Australia – and different kinds of places, from housing estates to gentrifying neighbourhoods, a secondary school and a Souq. In each case we were able to focus not only on major cross-cultural

differences (eg, what do people even mean by a 'public space' in Brisbane as opposed to Muscat?) but also on different themes that pointed out what is socially different about *this* place for *this* workshop. The uniqueness of each space further demonstrated how there is no 'one-size fits all' approach to lighting design and that social research provides a basis upon which to engage and understand each location more fully than other approaches.

The workshop series is now complete and this book should give readers a taste of how they worked and what we discovered. We also hope that some readers may want to develop similar events (and we are happy for people to contact us directly to support your efforts). Perhaps more importantly we hope that lighting professionals will think about incorporating more social research and thinking into their practices. The workshop series may be complete but we are looking forward to continuing Configuring Light collaborations between social research and the world of professional lighting.



The Souk in Muscat, Oman



West End, Brisbane, Australia

From Social Lighting to Social Research

and Back Again

The Social Light Movement and the idea of social lighting
The Social Lightscapes workshops represent a step in a rather longer journey that started with the Social Light Movement. SLM started, in 2009, under the banner of 'Social Lighting'; the shifting meanings of that term tell the story of what we all went through in trying to connect social and design thinking. The six lighting designers (Elettra Bordonaro, Isabelle Corten, Joran Linder, Martin Lupton, Erik Olsson and Sharon Stammers) who came together to form SLM started from a common concern: to bring good lighting design to marginal and forgotten urban areas. The 'social' in 'social lighting' pointed to the social exclusion of people and places from design work that could make a difference to their world.

SLM was responding to the way lighting discussions were largely focused on urban beautification, exclusively highlighting heritage, place branding and tourism in city centres. Municipal budgets – other than for generic streetlighting – directed lighting at monuments, town halls and churches and historical streets and buildings. For SLM, this was not *social* lighting in that it excluded and undervalued places where people actually lived, particularly if they lived in peripheral or simply poor areas. What about the everyday streets, underpasses and parks that don't fit in the council's strategic plan? Moreover, lack of decent lighting generally mirrored a bigger picture of social deprivation. And city centre lighting, city centre lighting was not social lighting in yet another important sense:

it was top-down planning rather than design that engaged and responded to communities, that tried to understand people's needs and draw them into producing their social space.

The Social Light Movement was therefore founded as a philanthropic movement, a network enabling lighting designers and other interested parties to collaborate in addressing the issue of improving lighting for people, particularly those unlikely to have access to good quality illumination within their environment. Its manifesto summed up a vision of social lighting. SLM exists...

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- → to demonstrate and to design well-lit environments for social and underprivileged housing areas and people
- to involve the community in the actual design of their own environment
- to encourage other designers to work in similar environments and use similar methodologies
- to educate housing associations, housing management teams and social housing ownership bodies about the benefits of good lighting
- to gain the support of city administrations, urban planners, architects, landscape designers, electrical engineers, lighting designers and other associated disciplines
- to create attention, arouse public opinion, influence politicians and decision makers
- to promote responsible energy use within lighting design
- to persuade people that they have the right to expect good lighting.

The idea of the workshop

From the very start, the group adopted *workshops* as the main methodology, and some elements of the earliest workshops have carried through into the

Social Lightscares workshops. Above all, the workshop structure aims at a fast and intensive way to get to know a place, then to design for it, and finally to share ideas with residents and other stakeholders.

In many senses, SLM workshops started from the idea of understanding spaces socially and spatially, and therefore took the form of pushing participants (mainly designers and students) out of the studio and meeting rooms to analyse the space, talk to people, observe activities. Unlike most other lighting workshops, the focus was on *engaging* with place and community, and not on designing and completing ambitious lighting installations which had to be prepared in advance, without researching or experiencing the actual social site. SLM workshops started with a night walk around the area, after which participants were divided into groups, each one assigned to a specific area or theme. After that, participants were ready to go out and investigate the space and to understand the issues to be tackled through lighting.

The workshops also drew on the fact that light itself is “fast” in the sense that it is actually easy to transform a space dramatically, if temporarily, with light. Lighting mock-ups were therefore essential for two reasons: firstly, to quickly show design ideas to stakeholders and convince them to realize some of them, and to link design ideas to the social issues discovered

during the first days of the workshop. Secondly, mock-ups were dramatic ways of demonstrating just how lighting can make a difference. The reaction of the stakeholders is immediate: you just need to switch on the lights. One central achievement of every workshop is simply and symbolically for participants and residents to experience changing their environment.

This demonstration of fast transformation was extended through *guerrilla lighting* events that Sharon and Martin organized for the final day of each workshop. Aiming to celebrate the last day of the workshop and create closer connection with more residents, guerrilla lighting enlisted many stakeholders to participate in large lighting installations, transforming familiar buildings with handheld torches and gels, with photographs of the effects they created that could be shown and shared.

Finally, SLM workshops normally ended with a final presentation of participants’ ideas to a wider audience. It was always important that a workshop should feel like a *real* intervention with potential for change and for real consequences – raising awareness about lighting and space, engaging and motivating communities, involving municipalities and policy makers. The first SLM workshop took place in Belgium in the last week of September 2011, as part of the LUCI “City under the Microscope” event. The suburb

of Sclessin was chosen by the City of Liege as a location where light could help in starting a regeneration process. Twenty eight international students participated. Six groups began working and “living” in the area, designing ideas and testing them through lighting mock-ups to show how light can be a tool of regeneration. Other workshops followed in places chosen for similar reasons: eg, the Hjulsta neighbourhood (2012), an anonymous suburb at the end of a Stockholm metro line.

The shift to social research

Joining forces with the Configuring Light group at LSE in 2014 for the Whitecross workshop meant collaborating with professional social researchers rather than designers. This addressed several issues that gave new meanings to the idea of ‘social lighting’:

Doing better social research - SLM members drew on their own concepts of researching, engaging and interacting with residents, and tried to help workshop participants to work with stakeholders. Much of their approach came from traditions of community activism and engagement, consultation and participation. To go further there was a need to think more thoroughly and rigorously about what is involved in researching and understanding a community. This doesn’t mean reaching for hard social *science* but seeing how social researchers could add more methods, more structure and more analysis.

Redefining ‘the social’ – whereas SLM identified social lighting with socially excluded and problematic places, we could gain a lot by broadening this to think about lighting as a social intervention in any kind of place. This doesn’t make it less political or engaged: eg, the Social Lightscares workshop in Brisbane focused on a district that was the very opposite of ‘forgotten’, and wouldn’t have been an SLM sort of place. But it focused social lighting on a politics of gentrification and development of the widest social and political importance.

Community engagement – SLM’s commitment to engaging and mobilizing ‘communities’ could really be developed by investigating them in a more sociological way: good social research disaggregates the idea of community into the many different kinds of people that could make it up, and helps participants to look more deeply into the needs and understandings of very diverse stakeholders. This can change some of the meanings and methods of ‘engagement’.

...and back again?

What are the next steps in the journey? Workshops still offer a special space – a hothouse, laboratory and classroom – through which to explore and experiment with many more possibilities in the dialogues between social research and lighting design. Perhaps the biggest challenge, however,

is to move away from workshops back to the everyday work of designers in their studios, and the ways in which lighting design practices are organized, workflows are structured and lighting design is commissioned and funded. Having evolved through social lighting and social research in design, how can we turn back again to changing the professions of lighting themselves, to make it a normal part of professional lighting to go out into the field and understand in real depth the social life of the places we are lighting and shaping.



The six designers of the Social Light Movement



The SLM workshop in Hjulsta, Stockholm

How to do a Social Lightscapes Workshop

In this chapter, we'd like to show you the thinking behind our workshops and how we structured them, as well as some of the issues we worked through.

What are Social Lightscares Workshops?

Social Lightscares workshops aim to help lighting professionals and students *think socially* in their design work. They are asked to formulate social questions about sites they work on; to actively experience *doing* social research; and to see how design concepts can be responsive to their social research.

Our approach has three basic elements:

- 1.** Participants focus on how to **connect social research and design work**.
 - They experience doing social research (but we don't expect them to become sociologists!), and they do design work (but rarely complete schemes) – the point is to explore how to integrate the two in their work.
- 2.** Participants **engage with a real place**. They learn about the life of that space and they design a lighting strategy for it. Both the social and the spatial research are practical: both engage directly with people and place.
 - We design workshops in relation to the site we are working on, including identifying important themes, sites and stakeholders.
- 3.** Workshops include **lighting mock-ups** and demonstrations.
 - These are crucial to explore how lighting decisions can transform social spaces in relation to the social research findings. They are also crucial for community engagement and education – and these are also rich research encounters.

At the end of a workshop, particularly in participants' presentations, we are looking for their social rationale. This phrase means something simple but fundamental – that participants can give good social reasons for the design decisions they've taken. They can trace their lighting designs back to what they have learned about the diverse lives people lead on their site. The lines they draw between designs and social rationales are rarely straight and direct – as in, 'people told us they want x or prefer y'. Rather, groups will develop fine-grained understandings of how different people relate to this space; they then have to fit lighting into that ever more complex picture.

Doing Workshops

Organizing

Workshops normally involved 6+ months of advance planning. We needed to identify local partners (schools, community organizations, designers) to work with. We needed to find a suitable location to work on and do background research and scouting to identify core themes, as well as to think through how to break down the location into smaller sites that participant groups could work on.

Each workshop involved significant commitment of time and effort for both local partners and workshop participants. Partners helped us find onsite workspaces, as well as introductions to the local community. Professional participants often had to travel long-distances and arrange several days of release from their jobs. Therefore, a crucial part of organizing workshops was designing a prospectus that explained the aims and structure of the workshop clearly, advertising it widely to attract participants, and then ensuring that the participants were selected on the basis of understanding and being motivated to stay through the whole process. We were consistently impressed (sometimes amazed!) that everyone kept up the same levels of energy and commitment through four days of intense work.

Workshops normally comprised 30-35 people. We divided them into work groups of 5-6 people, and tried to make each a good mix of gender, age, design experience and knowledge, ethnic background or whatever differences seemed important.

Finally, the success of workshops often seemed to rest on the little things. For example, having a meeting and working room that was directly on the workshop site was more effective and convenient than being a drive away – people could jump in and out of the workshop meetings to do an interview, or take some photos, and keep research and design closely connected.

Designing Workshops

At the back of this book you'll find hour-by-hour schedules for the kinds of workshop we've developed through this series. Here, we want to convey the logic of each, and the kinds of stages that we work through.

The workshops in this series have usually been 4 days long, each day stretching from morning talks and seminars to research and design work in the afternoons, and lighting work in the evenings. Social research is concentrated in the first two days; lighting mock ups on the second and third evenings; and design tends to dominate the last two days.

Workshops always end with a public meeting that should bring participants together with local residents and other stakeholders, municipal and local authorities, local lighting professionals and other interested parties: each workshop group presents their design ideas, as visually as possible, and explains the social rationale that motivated their design strategy. The public meetings have been very effective in raising issues and awareness amongst stakeholders. Moreover, knowing they will have present their work keeps workshop participants thinking – from the start – about how to explain their work to residents and municipalities.

As you will see from the reports that follow, workshops have involved very different types of locations – markets, schools, squares and whole neighbourhoods. In each case, we tried hard to give participants some broad background (without directing them too specifically). We also tried to highlight some broader themes and issues that applied to the whole area, that all work groups would have to deal with to some extent.

And, above all, each group would be allocated a smaller site within the overall location: this acted as the focus for both research and design thinking, and for mock ups: eg, particular entrances to the square or market; particular segments of the main commercial road in a neighbourhood; different elements of a social housing estate (facades, walkways, gathering spaces). →

Working by Sites

→ Although we identified some overarching themes, and gave clear boundaries to sites, participants were free to develop the issues that their research showed to be important – the point was to learn about the space from the people! And participants had to take decisions about what spatial features of their site were important and which they wanted to deal with through lighting – again, this had to come out of what they learned from social research, and relate to a social rationale.

You can get a better sense of how this worked by looking at our two different types of workshop: working by sites and working by stakeholders.

Each workshop group is assigned to a specific site from the very beginning: their task is to learn about that site as a social space, and produce a lighting design response. Participants need to understand the very specific site, but also its relation to a wider context (eg, the rest of a housing estate or public square, but also connections to the wider neighbourhood or city).

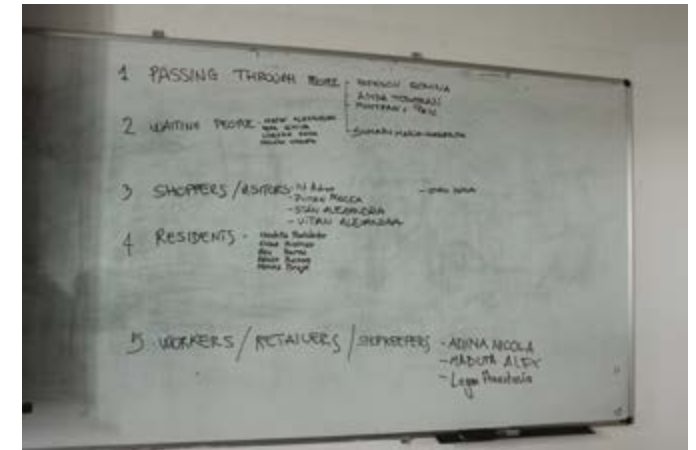
Participants generally spend the first two days observing and identifying who uses this space and how, interviewing people in the space, working outwards from their site to a wider range of stakeholders. The strength of this approach is to dig ever deeper into the space you are going to design, seeing more social complexity, diversity and richness to absorb and integrate. The weakness was to possibly reinforce the designer's bias towards the spatial so that their thinking remained focused on the physical site.



Working by Stakeholders

For the first two days of the workshop, each group is assigned to a different kind of stakeholder: their job is to understand that stakeholder in depth and to represent them (speak for them, voice their concerns, integrate them into the design thinking) within the research and design process. This worked well where the location involved very clear types of people rather than significantly different sorts of social space. For example, the history of Brisbane's West End was dominated by four different waves of migration, the last being the current incoming 'gentrifiers'; the square we worked on in Timisoara comprised very distinct kinds of users (residents, commuters, retailers and shoppers).

After two days of research, we then reform the groups. The new groups comprise one person from each stakeholder group, all now working on an allocated site. The idea is for each person to continue 'representing' their people, ensuring that their concerns and voice are reflected in design discussions and concepts. This approach had the advantage of engaging participants deeply with particular stakeholders, identifying with them and making them more creative in their research strategies for learning about 'their' people. It did not work in locations (eg, Paris Place des Fetes) with a more fragmented and wider range of stakeholders who didn't clearly fit into 4-5 social categories.



Step by step by step...

Both types of workshop were structured as a journey through similar stages. We varied the way we presented and dealt with each (eg, early workshops involved setting 'exercises', later we tended to talk about the 'brief' that we were setting), but the stages discussed below worked well in all the workshops - again, detailed schedules are included at the end of the book.

What do you (think you) know about this place...?

Starting points are crucial. Designers necessarily start jobs with assumptions and theories about the places they work on. Some of these come with the brief itself (eg, the starting assumption that this place is dead and needs activating, or that a certain atmosphere is needed); others come from background knowledge and experience (eg, a presumption that this social housing estate is problematic or dangerous). Most importantly, designers are trained in spatial analysis and professionally rely on thinking that they can understand a place by looking at maps and spatial arrangements.

What do (you think) you know about this place...?

Users and stakeholders: What kinds of people are connected to this place?

Who could use this place but doesn't?

What do we know about these different groups and how they relate to the place and each other?

Practices: How does this space fit into the things they are trying to do (get to work, occupy kids, socialise)?

How does it support or impede their social practices?

Are the different practices compatible with each other and the space?

Issues and needs: What problems or demands do different people articulate? What if anything do they think is wrong?

Which ones should you respond to?

Which ones can be dealt with by design?

Atmosphere and identity: What does this space mean to different people, and how does it feel?

What attaches them to this space, or repels them?

Connections and contexts: For diverse people, how does this space connect to their wider lives and the wider city?

Where do they place it in their mental maps?

Mapping the space: What physical features and spatial arrangements do different people notice, use and value - furniture, lighting, zoning, landscaping?

And how does all of this change - from day to night, from summer to winter, from weekdays to weekends...

No one can work without assumptions and theories. But the starting point of social understanding is trying to become aware of your assumptions so they can be challenged, tested, explored and expanded - so that other kinds of understanding can get into the design process.

We tried several different strategies for shaking up the relationship between social and spatial thinking, and to opening up participants' spatial assumptions to challenge, turning them into questions to be investigated. In some workshops we didn't even allow participants to look at a map until they had done some interviews. In others we specifically asked them to analyse maps first and then experience the gap between their spatial analysis and what interviewees told them soon after. Moreover, as we've said, some workshops were organized around sites and others started from stakeholders.

All had some advantages and problems - the main point was that workshop participants could experience and deal with the difference between thinking spatially and thinking socially - and then experience a process of trying to investigate and challenge their understandings of their social space.

Doing social research

Up to the end of day 2, participants are asked to focus on social research. Having identified some of their assumptions about the space in which they will work, they go out into the location to observe and engage with people; to identify the kinds of people and practices they want to learn about - and start interviewing people.

To reiterate: the aim is not to turn designers into trained sociologists in two days, or to overwhelm participants with all the intricacies of social research methods. We want participants to get an experience of social research, of the difference between social and spatial thinking, and of how social research can open up and challenge design work. So we focus on the basics, giving a practical taste of the different stages of social research.

Basic steps in social research

Identifying research focus and research questions:

What are you trying to find out?

What do you need to know about people and place?

What themes or issues or problems are you starting from?

Choosing methods: What are the best channels available to you for learning about this place?

How do you want to engage with people?

How will you fill in the knowledge gaps through more methods or by innovating research methods?

Doing research: How will you identify and engage with the people and places you want to learn about?

How will you structure interview conversations or observations?

How will you record and analyse what you experience?

Analysing fieldwork: How will you summarise and represent what you've found? How can you generate new questions, problems and fieldwork from your research?

How will you decide what social findings are important for design and how to respond to that material?

Identifying research focus and research questions

No research is comprehensive (whether in a short workshop, design job or academic project): we can't study everything, and instead identify particular issues and themes as starting points and priorities. Moreover, these change – and should change – as research and design progress. It is therefore crucial that work groups think carefully about what they are trying to find out, and follow this thread through all their different research encounters.

To take one example from many: several groups in the La Sapienza workshop started from the assumption that 'community', or lack of community, was the central issue for understanding the housing estate. This generated several different research directions – some concentrated on how particular ethnic groups built up their own sense of community by claiming and developing a building, and by creating spaces for social gatherings; another focused on asking people about divisions and tensions between social groups; while a third was more concerned with how the spatial segregation of people and activities cut down on social interaction, and therefore focused more on observation than interviews.

Doing fieldwork

We focus on two main research methods: interviews and observation. This is to keep things (relatively!) simple, and focused on experiencing the research process. At the same time, they could generate interesting enough material in a limited time so that participants could produce a dynamic dialogue between social research and lighting design.

We stress that social research is a *creative* and *inventive* design process; the aim is to develop a research strategy tailored to learning about *this* place and people. Methods are not standardized procedures: 'Interviews' are many different kinds of conversations; observation focuses on what emerges as relevant in specific places. And other methods are naturally added: participants generally moved on to integrate photography and video in various ways, as well as mapping; and tracked down statistics, published background reports and histories.

Interviews are simply different kinds of structured conversations, ranging from quite tight questionnaires to very open-ended and informal chats. We try to focus participants on the basic features: what themes do you want to cover with different sorts of people and how will you ask questions about them? What kinds of conversations do you want to have – structured, casual, informal, narrative, and so on? How will you record and analyse these interviews?

Participants asked an obvious question when sent out to do their first interviews

'What should we ask people????' We often think about interview questions by distinguishing 'themes' (the issues we are exploring in all interviews) and 'questions' (the different ways we ask about these themes with different people): The most important questions are usually the follow-up questions – how we dig deeper and deeper into what an interviewee has just told us. Sometimes it's simply a matter of asking 'why....?'

Do you come here after dark? If so, why? (if not, why not?)
What do you do here? How does it feel?

What problems or issues do you have with this place, if any?
How does it work for you?

Tell us a story: something good or bad that happened here recently (to you or others)?
Tell us about your typical day – how does this place fit into your daily life and movements?

How would you describe this place to people? What kind of place is it? Does it have a particular identity? Reputation? Atmosphere?

Who else uses this space? Tell us about the different people you share it with and how they get along: conflicts? interactions? sense of community?

We ask people to interview in pairs. This not only makes interviewing less stressful; it means that after each interview, participants can compare notes about what they've learned and about the interview process itself. They can also make notes and summaries together and filter out the main points they want to develop through further research and in the design process.

Observation means watching, listening, experiencing and sometimes participating in whatever is going on in your space. It's not just visual – people also attend to smells, sounds and atmosphere. All of this should also generate questions to ask in interviews – how does the observer's interpretation of what is going on relate to the way the people themselves understand it? How does what we observe fit into the wider lives of the people we are observing?

Doing fieldwork also requires participants to think carefully about research *ethics*: What does it mean to behave responsibly towards the people you are researching? How do you explain what you are doing and what impact it might (or might *not*) have on their lives? How to ensure that no harm can arise for people, and that their anonymity will be preserved (particularly when talking to them in public spaces)?



Engaging with light and lighting /engaging with darkness and night

This element of the workshops was normally spread over three evenings. How we did it also depended on whether there was a critical mass of lighting designers in the workshop (as opposed to, eg, architecture students or non-designers). We also included a powerpoint presentation, on Day 2, that covered the 'language of light' – covering the major parameters of light from luminance to CRI and beyond.

Typically, it went like this:

Evening 1:

A **nightwalk** through the whole location and, sometimes, environs: led by Elettra (sometimes with Isabelle), the aim was to engage deeply with both the nightlife of the space and the ways in which the existing lighting structured that space: what issues of night time life and night time design were participants faced with? And how could they better understand the material and spatial properties of light and lighting in urban public spaces?

The first nightwalk was always important not just to observe nightlife (and even carry out some interviews) but to connect it to the technical aspects of existing lighting: what kind of lights have been installed, how do they organize the space and what atmosphere do they create, are they in good repair? In most places, residents will say in interviews that 'it is too dark' – the nightwalk helps participants understand what *kind* of darkness (if any) they may be dealing with: broken lighting, excessive contrast, poor CRI, bad positioning, and so on. Finally, when participants had little lighting experience, the nightwalk might be their first direct experience of crucial parameters of light that they would need to work with for the next few days.

Evening 2:

Free style lighting mock ups: participants use lighting equipment, on their site, to get to know light and lighting equipment better, and to try out some of their ideas *in situ* and to do some sketches in the street. In many cases, participants had never placed a light before – this included many architects and planners. They had not only to deal with the technology and its interaction with their site – they also had to think about how it related to what they had learned through interviews and observation during the past two days. In this respect **it was crucial to treat the mock ups as continuing social research and social engagement.** Ideally,



mock ups could attract many interested stakeholders, and focus their attention on how lighting might transform their space. This might involve them learning more about light, engaging with the lighting process by working with our participants and/or engaging in discussions prompted by the mock ups – seeing their space change could provoke more understanding of how they saw and used their space. And having these kinds of conversations provided very rich social research opportunities so that we could learn more about how they used and understood their space, and what they wanted from it.

Evening 3:

The final mock ups: The last evening was the time to mock up a partially realised version of each group's lighting concept. Obviously, there were never sufficient lights, nor time, to do extensive (let alone) complete installations. Groups had to break down their concepts into the important components and layers so that they could produce an approximation of the effects they wanted; and then photograph them so they could be simulated with the magic of Photoshop and Powerpoint, and often very effective use of video edits.

Again, public engagement could be crucial. In this case, workshop groups were clearly interested in how stakeholders felt about their design ideas, and by engaging them in the process of setting up installations could often get a more detailed idea of what elements of the design people were responding to and how. Above all, how did the design concept relate to their own use and understanding of this space – did the social rationale (and not just the visual concept) work...

There was another sense of public engagement that often proved crucial: this was the night when we could normally get local authorities, community groups, politicians, planners and others to visit us on site and engage with the social research in design process, to demonstrate to them not only the need for informed lighting design, but the value of doing more extensive social research. This was frequently an occasion – colourful, exciting and enthused – to get authorities more interested in both social research and lighting itself.



Design concepts and Presentations

From day 3 to day 4, workshop groups focused more on lighting concepts. Day 3 is generally the point at which the rush is on to gather together the social research and the lighting experience from the first mock ups into a design concept to be mocked up on that night.

The responsibility of the workshop convenors is to make sure that this crucial day really stays on brief: the job is to produce a design response to what has been learned about the social world of the group's site, to produce a design that has an articulated *social rationale* – each group should be able to explain how their lighting relates back to what they have learned. So, we spend the day circulating from work table to work table asking each group not only, 'what are you trying to do with the lighting?', but *why?* – and the answer needs to come out of the social lives they have learned about. How did you select the themes, interpretations, issues to address? How does your creative approach relate to particular stakeholders? Are you prioritizing particular stakeholders or social issues or goals, and why?

Ideally – though it sometimes takes some prompting – this is also the point at which we ask, does your design idea throw up yet more social research issues and questions, or relate to stakeholders you don't yet understand well enough? It may be Day 3, or even Day 4, but certainly not too late to go off to do some more interviews or observations, or simply consider what further research you would do if you had more time....

Day 4 is largely spent debriefing and digesting the experience of the final lighting mock ups, and then preparing presentations for the final meeting at the end of the workshop, in which the groups present their work not only to each other but also to invited stakeholders including both community members and municipal authorities. The presentations should be true to the logic of the whole workshop: each group presents their social understanding of their site and how they arrived at it; what issues they drew from this for their design work; and then their design concept, with full social rationale. Audiences need to get a sense of the whole social research in design process and not just the final design result. Presentations need to use a range of visual techniques and composites to suggest a final installation.



Popular Problems

Sometimes it's good to be negative – particularly in a learning process. We can give a better idea of Social Lightscapes workshops by pointing out the five problems that we, and participants, have to work through in pretty much every workshop:

It's all on the map... (or, 'Please leave the studio NOW!')

Designers, planners and architects are trained in spatial analysis. Becoming a professional requires experience and confidence in reading spaces and maps of places. But your interpretation of a space is just *your* interpretation until you have left the studio to talk to people, observe them, work with them to discover *their* spatial analysis – and how they act in and understand a space their way. You simply cannot get this by reading a map or walking around a site. Our biggest job in a workshop is to kick people out of the studio and onto the street, to go out and talk to another bunch of people, knock on some doors or spend another hour observing what's going on. And then to relate what they've found out to how they read the map and the site spatially.

The designer's leap of faith... (or, 'just how did your design come from your research....?')

Workshop groups can do brilliant and sensitive social research – and then present designs with no clear connection to what they've learned *socially*, (or with only a very general or abstract or even metaphorical connection). Sometimes, more rarely, there is the opposite problem: the social research is used too crudely, directly, uncreatively so that lighting is a 'solution' to a simple social problem rather than a creative response to a complex social scene.

We try to make a bridge – rather than a leap – between social and spatial/design thinking, and the idea of the 'social rationale' (described above) has generally worked: can each group offer good, detailed reasons and logic for how they move between the two? More practically, we keep asking: how did that design approach *grow from* what you learned through social research?

And just as important: What more social research and engagement, what further social questions, would help develop and expand your design ideas?

My favourite informant....

(or, 'please go talk to some MORE people!')

There is always a community member who is particularly articulate and informed, or simply telling you exactly what you wanted to hear. Or there is a particular social group you identify with for good or bad reasons (women, youth, the aged, whatever). Consultations can feed this bias: it is so much easier when very vocal residents tell you a coherent and impassioned story. But what of all the people in the shadows, who do not speak out – in fact sometimes the people we most want to learn about are not those who use our space but actually those who don't – why not?

We always have limited time (in workshops or professional life) to talk to everyone. Workshops at least lead participants to question who else they should, if possible, engage with. They also make you think about how the people you *have* talked to relate to all those you *could* talk to: this 20something mother told me an important story, but what different story might I hear from a 20something immigrant mother, or father, or a 30 or 40 or 50 something, or from her child?

Social research always produces more questions, or a desire to pursue questions in more detail and complexity, with more stakeholders and social situations. However far we can go down this route, it is crucial for developing the ability to *think socially*.

Do you like my lights....?

(or, 'please: this is social research not market research')

The very *least* information a social researcher can get is usually in answer to questions like, 'do you like this lighting?', 'does this work?', etc. Most people know little about lighting, and most answers are standard or obvious (generally a comment on safety and brightness, or appreciation of the aesthetics). And if one or more people don't like a design, what should work groups do about it? Take a vote? Respond to the loudest voice? Ignore them because they don't understand lighting?

What we need to know is, how does this space work for different kinds of people? And how do different kinds of people use this space? And then how can lighting support different people's use of a common space? 'Do you like it?' doesn't usually tell us very much (see next point).

Life, not light

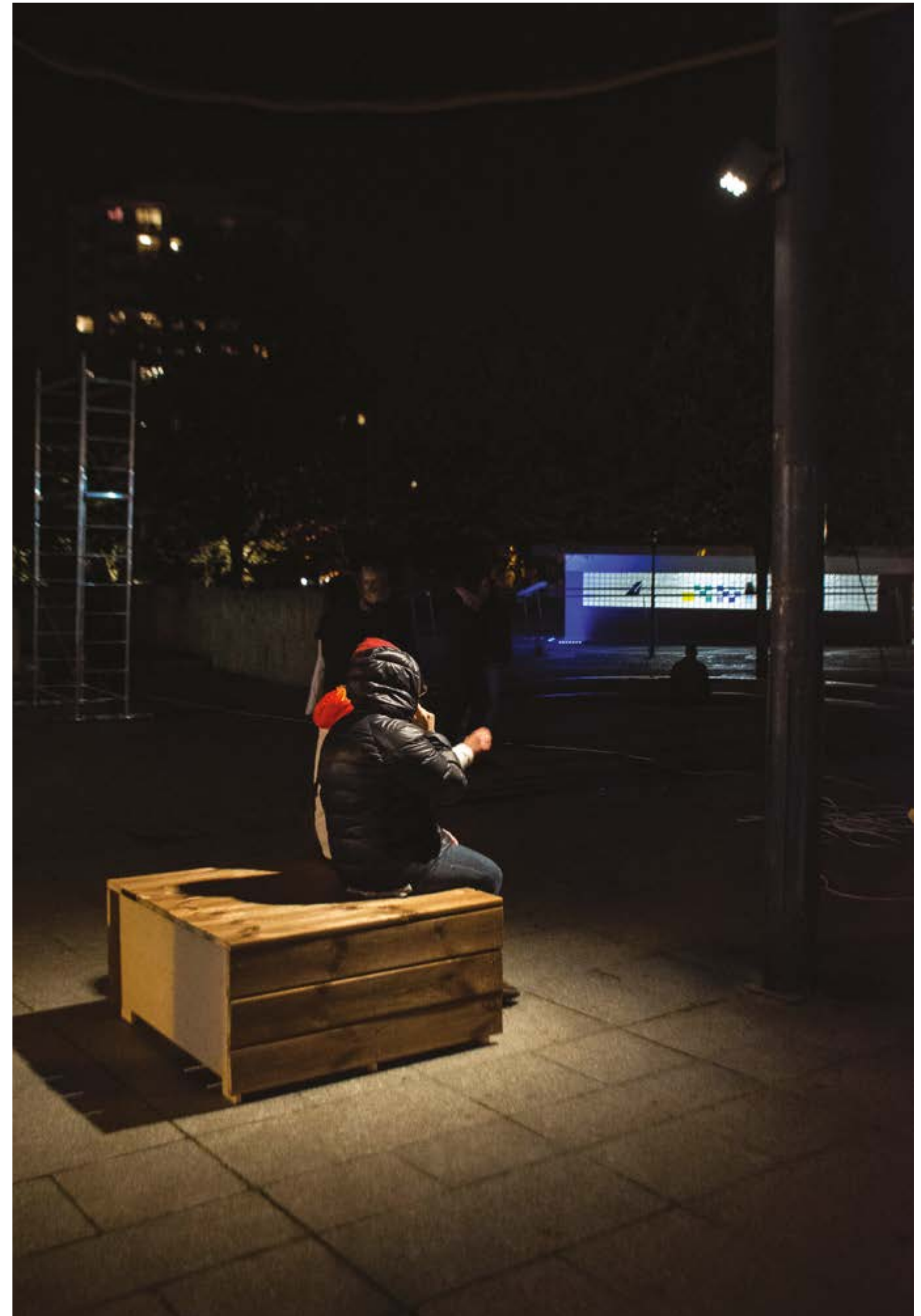
(or, 'DON'T mention the lights – yet')

We are interested in lighting urban space. Stakeholders, on the whole, are not. They are interested in using social space. And they generally know, and think, very little about lighting (the lights are working or not, they are 'bright enough' or not, they 'feel safe' or not).

Workshop participants cannot ask stakeholders to be lighting experts or do their design work. In our own research, we rarely ask people about lighting: we ask about their lives, their families and friends, their daily routines, their feelings about a space, their fears and hopes, what they like to do, and what they like to do in public spaces as day wanes into night.

After that, we can start asking about how the elements of a public space work for them – benches, bushes, lights, signage and so on. We can ask them to talk about specific materials and atmospheres. Then, maybe, we can talk about light and lighting, and even present them with some lighting options – and even that is generally better used to help people explore and learn about light rather than to judge our designs.

This is also why our mock-up evenings are so important. They don't just let the designers experiment and demonstrate. They also help stakeholders see and visualise possibilities, and experience different properties of light, usually properties (like CRI or positioning) that they had never thought about before. This is social research, public engagement and public education all at the same time.



Social Lightscapes Workshop Series

In June 2015, Dr Elettra Bordonaro joined Configuring Light with a Visiting Research Fellowship in the LSE Sociology Department. Her fellowship was funded by iGuzzini, who had already supported Configuring Light's HEIF5 project, the Urban Lightscapes/Social Nightscapes workshop in Peabody's Whitecross Estate.

The aim was to build on the core exploration of the Whitecross workshop: how can we build deeper and more productive dialogues between social research and lighting design? How can we expand the social knowledge base of designers and socio-spatial understanding of the sites that designers intervene in?

The workshops explored and built expertise in social research in lighting design by working with students, professionals and community groups in intensive workshops that engaged participants in both researching and designing for actual public realm spaces.

The cities and locations were selected to provide the widest range of case studies. Different cities, cultures and social contexts, as well as different themes. Although the Social Lightscapes Series formally included only six workshops, we include a report on the Whitecross workshop that started the programme.

0. Whitecross, London \ Social Housing
1. Acland Burghley, London \ Local Institutions
2. Muscat, Oman \ Modernization
3. Timisoara, Romania | Activation
4. Brisbane, Australia \ Development and Gentrification
5. Rome, Italy \ Centre and Periphery
6. Paris, France \ Regeneration



Social Housing

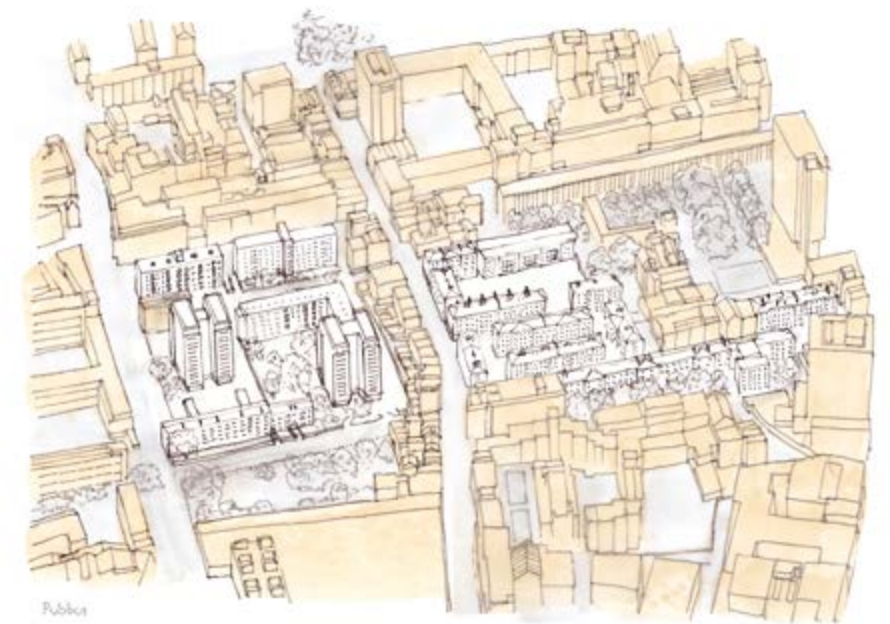
Whitecross, London, UK

0

Location
Whitecross, London, UK

Theme
Social Housing

Date
13-17 October 2014



Although the workshop in Whitecross London, UK was not part of the 6 Social Lightscapes Workshop Series, it was the crucial starting point. Therefore, Whitecross is included as the 0 workshop.

Urban Lightscapes/Social Nightscapes was a lighting design workshop that took place on Peabody's Whitecross Estate (WHX) on 13-17 October 2014. Led by Configuring Light/Staging the Social in collaboration with Peabody's IMPROVE project and the Social Light Movement and funded by LSE HEIF5 funding and iGuzzini, it brought together lighting design professionals, architects, planners and social scientists. The focus of the workshop was the creation of new lighting design interventions

to help improve the outdoor spaces on the estate. In this workshop, LSE researchers supported the design teams in their social research to help them better understand WHX and its community in order to come up with sensible public lighting ideas. Throughout the workshop, the design teams engaged in a dialogue with the WHX community to understand life on the estate, their lighting needs and try out different lighting fittings.

Peabody – one of the oldest and largest housing providers in London – provided the Social Lightscapes workshop with an exceptionally rich site for our case study: the Whitecross Estate in Islington, London. Whitecross is a fairly old estate built for the urban poor in the 1880s.

Today, the estate also encompasses a range of post-war redevelopments that were built on the other side of Whitecross street. The estate is home to about 1,200 people, with some families having lived on it for generations. At the same time, the estate is relatively open to outsiders passing through, being an inner city area and home to a daily food market on Whitecross Street (which cuts through the estate) which serves workers in the City (more than locals) at lunchtime.

The lighting on the Whitecross estate is very functional and bright, following engineering paradigms. There is currently no lighting strategy in place for the estate and new lights tend to be installed in reaction to residents →

→ complaining about 'lack of safety'. Most of the public lighting, especially newer lamps, is installed very high up to flood light the public spaces on the estate. This stark lighting not only consumes enormous amounts of energy and causes light pollution in people's flats, but also leads to very high contrast ratios – stepping out of the floodlight feels like stepping into complete darkness, even when the space 'outside' the floodlight is not actually that dark. Moreover, it does not respond to actual social activities: for example, because of the positioning of very bright lamps in some housing blocks, residents are not able to see their locks when opening their front door.

Twenty-five lighting designers, architects and urban planners came together for five days on the Whitecross Estate. For their social research and lighting design projects, they were divided into five groups each allocated a micro-site on the estate. In a lightwalk together with the Whitecross community previous to the workshop, these locations had been identified as most 'problematic' or 'interesting'. The brief for the design teams was to conduct social research on and around their micro-site and,

based on this social research, develop new lighting design interventions for that site which would be pitched to Peabody at the end of the week.

Edges and borders

Group One worked on one of the edges of the Whitecross Estate. They identified the core problem of their area as the boundary between the estate and the external public space, particularly the YMCA hostel located opposite, and a problematic corner with a reputation for 'anti-social behaviour' such as drug dealing.

Group One initially considered a design solution that would try to strengthen the Peabody boundary using trees and lighting. However, after reflections based on their research, they decided against trying to 'resolve' the problem with a design, but instead to make the boundary issue a feature of the space using a temporary light installation called 'Drop of Light'. This could function as a light 'bridge' that might prompt further discussion between stakeholders and feed into a later design once more thoughtful community engagement had been prompted.

Passing through

Group Two worked on one of the two big towers on the estate and its surrounding area. The social research the group conducted revealed that residents appreciated the location as well as the community spirit of the Whitecross Estate. This issue was important because research indicated that the area included a major thoroughfare through the estate, for both residents and outsiders passing through. Most people felt their pathway was affected by poor lighting, characterised by the stark contrasts created by flood lighting. Women were more affected than men and more likely to change their route after dusk to walk along an alternative path that was more evenly lit. The group addressed the issue of improving connections through the estate by suggesting a catenary lighting system as well as highlighting existing greenery and allotments to reflect what residents valued on the estate.

Dealing with green space

Group Three also worked on a tower block on the newer side of the estate as well as the surrounding area which included a currently fenced park. Their social research and site →



“ Peabody – one of the oldest and largest housing providers in London – provided the Social Lightscapes workshop with an exceptionally rich site for our case study: the Whitecross Estate in Islington, London.”



SOCIAL RESEARCH: Quotes by residents

DROP OF LIGHT

"You can hear whistling from dealers communicating with their punters."

"There are fights, noise and drug dealing in the area."

"The lighting is something I have never thought about before. It's not bright, it's not to dark."

"You can hear whistling from dealers communicating with their punters."

"I feel the space is dark. It's closed and its open and I like being close but I also like the fact it seen open to the alley."

"We have exterior light but we don't turn them on because we want to save money."

"We are on the boundary of the estate, the people at the YMCA are a problem, they cause noise at night."

"I don't feel safe, the youths at the YMCA create trouble."

"The lighting is something I have never thought about before. It's not bright, it's not to dark."

SOCIAL RESEARCH WORKSHOP / WHITECROSS ESTATE

Some of the social research done by one of the group.



→ engagement showed that residents had a strong sense of identity with the space and appreciated it as a peaceful and quiet area with a strong sense of community. The green spaces on the site were particularly valued as a strong ‘connecting’ element to nature, but at the same time residents articulated a need for ‘better security’ after dusk.

The group proposed emphasising the valued quietness and peacefulness of the environment and particularly the important relationship to nature by up-lighting the trees in the park as well as bringing the lighting for pathways down to a human scale in order to make the space feel less functional and ‘more safe’.

Insiders and outsiders

Group Four was given a large central space, Chequer Square, which was also the location of the community centre, gardening activity and social gathering. Research quickly focused on the fact that ‘users’ included not only residents but also the many passers-by who use the square as a short-cut, as well as visitors from the market who come in to eat their lunch. The issue here was how to make the space welcoming and friendly,

but at the same time make sure it is not too open and is clearly marked as the residents’ space: residents were happy to be hospitable but outsiders should know whose space it is. The group addressed this complexity by proposing to highlight the existing greenery provided by the gardening club, highlighting elements at the entrances as well as, the historic doorways of the blocks to ‘mark’ the experience of ‘arriving home’.

Community and belonging

Group Five worked on a series of housing blocks that – apparently – faced out of the estate, plus the public spaces ‘behind’ it. The group used social research to explore whether residents of Banner House really felt part of the estate despite being located on its edge, using the inward-facing entrance as ‘front of house’ as opposed to the ‘official’ entrance on Banner Street. Roscoe Street (running ‘behind’ the blocks) was perceived as a major thoroughfare for ‘corporate London’ and the green space here lacked opportunities for acting as a meeting space. The lighting was perceived as similar to ‘Blackpool illuminations’ and the bulkhead lights above the doors made the house ‘look like cells’. In response to that, Group Five

proposed lighting that would mark the thoroughfare on Roscoe Street through ‘human-scale’ street lighting. Further, the existing green space would be accentuated through up-lighting one of the big trees as a ‘community tree’. The block itself would get balustrade lighting and door lamps in the shape of the door numbers which would be back-lit, humanizing the residential spaces and making them more welcoming.

The Whitecross workshop comprised the highest proportion of lighting designers of the series, until the final Paris workshop. Yet, a major impact on the participants of doing social research was to emphasise that lighting is not a stand-alone issue, or a technical one, or a matter of aestheticizing a brutal space. Rather, it goes hand-in-hand with other aspects, such as landscaping (e.g. improving surfaces), furniture, layout, connections between insides and outsides (of buildings, spaces, the estate as a whole). Thus lighting design initiatives are best tied together with larger improvement programmes, as well as relating more openly to other service provision and maintenance.



“ lighting design initiatives are best tied together with larger improvement programmes ”

Lighting mock-up of human scale lighting



Local Institutions

Acland Burghley School, London, UK

1

Location

Acland Burghley School, London, UK

Theme

Local Institutions

Date

26 January 2016



The Social Lightscares workshop series kicked off with a collaboration with the Acland Burghley School, on 26th January 2016, that was unique for us: the participants were secondary school kids with little knowledge of either architecture or lighting. As a workshop project, Burghley focused us on light and lighting design as tools for social engagement and education: could we use elements of our workshop structure to involve kids directly in designing the school spaces they used every day, and in graphically 're-branding' the school as part of its revival. Much of this – including our workshop – was linked to celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of this iconic school building.

Lighting local institutions

Burghley is a mixed comprehensive school in Tufnell Park, London Borough

of Camden (north London). The school has had mixed fortunes over the years, and the building itself has been undervalued despite being a modernist treasure. Acland Burghley has an interesting architectural history. It is the only school designed by the iconic practice Howard, Killick, Partridge and Amis (HKPA), who also designed the Young Vic theatre and several colleges at Oxford and Cambridge Universities. The school was constructed in the 1960s in the Brutalist style. In March 2016, the building was given a Grade II listing and in September of the same year the school took part in London's Open House weekend, when hundreds of buildings are open to the public because they are considered to be architecturally significant. However, despite its history, the school has something of an 'image' problem not helped by the fact that it is

surrounded by a tall wall that obscures the architectural features to anyone passing by outside. The school also has many unused 'dead' spaces that would benefit from some zoning into areas of activity (play, space to 'hang out', for example).

The actual iGuzzini workshop was only one day but arose out of a longer involvement over the autumn as part of a wider redesign of the school, 'Acland Burghley Better Spaces' (ABBS), a collaboration between teachers and parents at the school. The Configuring Light team first met some of the children at a focus group meeting in October to learn how they use the exterior spaces of the school: students were helped to think about and discuss which spaces different kids used and for what activities. They effectively did social research on their own school lives. →



As a workshop project, Burghley focused us on light and lighting design as tools for social engagement and education

→ From this we also identified that the lighting was quite poor. There were a few bulkheads around the main buildings that created bright, flat pools of light, but most of the outdoor space was left in darkness. Students described how they found the lighting to be unattractive. The aim of this workshop then was to engage young people to think about the role and value of lighting to create interesting, exciting public spaces.

The focus group also allowed us to prepare some of the students for the workshop on 26th January and on the day itself, a total of 25 pupils from all ages across the school participated. The workshop culminated in a public lighting event on 27th January from 6.30-8.30pm at the school. The day of the workshop began with a

presentation from Elettra on light and urban space which encouraged the participating students to explore the power of light to change the look and feel of public spaces. This was followed by experiments with iGuzzini lighting fixtures which helped demonstrate the effectiveness of light in transforming school spaces. Students were then split into groups to 'brainstorm' ideas on how to improve the school and come up with some ideas for lighting external areas. The other member of the team, Jo, helped to organise and co-ordinate the focus group discussion and manage the groups tasked to work on specific areas of the school.

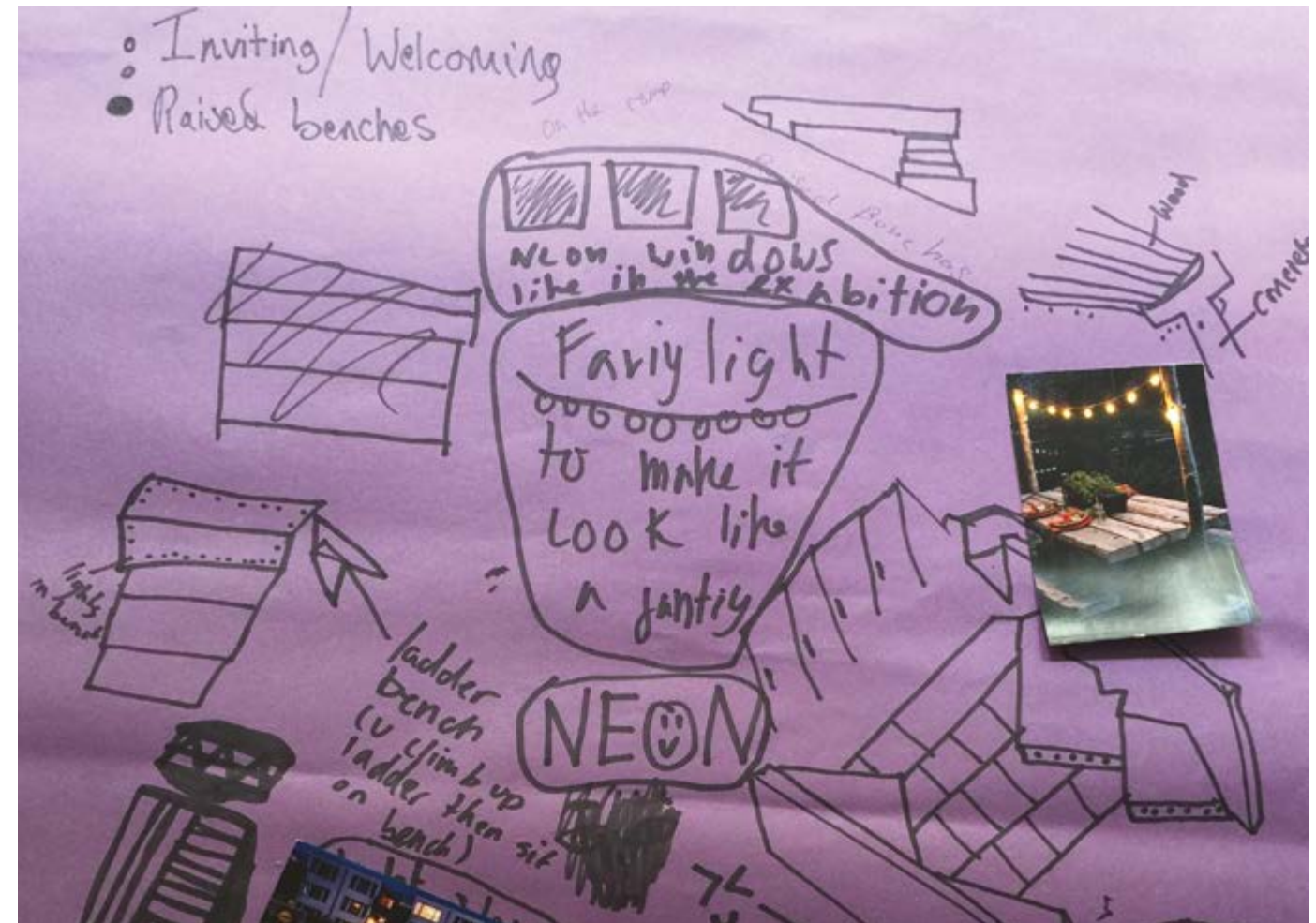
Considering that we were working with children and not with lighting designers or advanced students, we aimed to work

with the "atmosphere of light" and with activities focused on light effects. We printed cards depicting very different lighting atmospheres (playful, romantic, elegant, ect...) and words (study, play, eat, ...) and we asked the children to imagine the various spaces of the school and to pick up the cards and the words and to stick them on big posters. Each poster represented an area of the school and the children could add, beyond the cards we provided, comments, text, sketches, ideas. The results were interesting and creative beyond our expectations. We then showed the lighting fixtures, explained possible lighting effects that related to the cards -- and then started designing the space for the event.

“ Students were then split into groups to 'brainstorm' ideas on how to improve the school and come up with some ideas for lighting external areas. ”



Each poster represented an area of the school and the children could add, beyond the cards we provided, comments, text, sketches, ideas.





“ The results were interesting and creative beyond our expectations. ”





Lighting mock-up of one of the entrance of the Souq

Modernization

Muscat, Oman

2

Location
Muscat, Oman

Theme
Modernization

Date
25-28 April 2016



Our second workshop was a collaboration with the German University of Technology in Oman (GUtech), 25-28 April 2016 in Muscat. The participants were all architecture students, midway through their degree in the Faculty of Urban Planning and Architecture (UPAD), and with little or no experience of lighting design. Although a mixture of genders, class and orientation to traditions and religion, they had in common a future as architects working in the context of rapid modernization and urbanization. Moreover, they had either direct experience of western design and planning, or had experienced it through the international discourses of architecture they were being taught. At the same time, they were learning – and most likely be working – in the context of an Omani architectural modernization

that they did not always feel comfortable with. Social research in lighting design provided an interesting vantage point from which they could think through some of these issues.

Souq al Seeb: Modernization

Oman is undergoing a rapid urbanisation process as part of modernization policies that are preparing for a post oil age, as well as increased rural migration and massive infrastructural development. Spatially, Omani modernization is associated with urban sprawl along motorways that extend up and down the coast line from Muscat, flanked increasingly by single villa residential compounds allocated to families under an ‘Omanization’ policy. Ideas of public space (even in the sense of infrastructure provision between the

compounds) is not a focus for planning or using these spaces.

Our workshop location allowed us to work on some of these issues: Souq al Seeb is a traditional market located about 30 km west along the coastal sprawl from Muscat. Surrounded by motorway on the sea side, and by more modern mall-style shopping on the inland side, Souq al Seeb remains an important – but threatened – shopping destination for locals to buy food, clothes and household goods. Although there is little discourse of ‘public space’, the Souq is a crowded and popular place for a variety of populations until early evening. Moreover, because of large numbers of guest workers in the area – largely from the Indian subcontinent – there →



“ Although there is little discourse of ‘public space’, the Souq is a crowded and popular place for a variety of populations until early evening. ”

→ is both a significantly cosmopolitan ethnic mix and public use of market spaces for social gathering and activities like watching football on television. Finally, and almost symbolically, the coastal roadway simultaneously cut off Souq al Seeb from its extensive beach and harbour area and brought massive traffic and crowds, as cars stopped for the kebab stands at the roadside.

Memory and modernity

This workshop was more than usually focused on sites. The market seemed like a number of distinctive locations that participants needed to make sense of, each telling a rather different story about the kind of life it supported: internal courtyards, external entrances, meeting places at the crossing of internal pathways, inner arcades.

Location-based work was important for another reason: few of the students had seen Souq al Seeb before, and, particularly for the women participants (the majority of the workshop), this was an unusual exploration of public space. In learning the life of their location, the students were very much participant observers; as they became more familiar with their site, they also had a wealth of traders and shoppers to approach for interviews.

One other notable difference about this workshop: the groups were very adventurous in fashioning new lighting objects out of found materials like large metal olive oil cans, found lanterns, plastic and wooden packing crates and old cooking implements. It was as if the market was being recycled

to light and transform itself. The design strategies showed overlapping themes, often connected to memory, and activating spaces by connecting them to modern lives and practices:

Connectivity

'The first site deal with the road and seafront by using to light reassemble broken connections that people clearly remembered and missed. Lighting mapped out a sociable movement from the market to the kebab stands across the road, lit to make them a very present landmark, surrounded by subtly lit restaurant areas. From there, people could pick up lanterns to light their way across the beach to the old harbour area. →





“ the groups were very adventurous in fashioning new lighting objects out of found materials like large metal olive oil cans, found lanterns, plastic and wooden packing crates and old cooking implements. ”

→ Eye of the Storm

At the centre of the market was a large square lined by shops, with a few stall holders in the interior. It was clear from interviews and observations that although it was underused, visually confusing and too dark, people who knew it used it as a space to relax, to get away from the bustle. Lighting aimed to mark and support publicly the hidden value of the space to its users.

Stories and Light

The group working on the main market entrance and outward facing shops took their inspiration directly from stories told by interviewees, many of whom had visited as children as well as adults: stories about nostalgia for the sensory experience of the market and about being bored as a child waiting for

parents to finish shopping. And a story about ghosts in the trees that might be woken by up-lighting them. Each story led to a different lighting installation that addressed nostalgia, playfulness and belief.

Time Out

An inner passageway through the main market building was dense and forbidding, particularly for women customers, to the extent of not feeling like a public or accessible space. The building in fact had architectural features that vanished by night but were valued by people. Lighting was used to accentuate textures, through shadows from grills and arches, and to create a welcoming path into the corridor.

Switch Off Switch On

Group 5 dealt with an exceptionally complex path that combined several key pathways into the market (including from the parking lot), restaurants, and public spaces where guest workers routinely spent the evening watching television together. Moreover there a cut off point around 11.00 when the lights went out and the space deadened. The group created lights and positionings to map out different paths for different users before and after the 11.00 watershed.





Piata Sinaia is essentially a transit hub rather than a destination

Activation

Timișoara, Romania

3



Location
Timișoara, Romania

Theme
Activation

Date
7-9 October 2016

For our third Social Lightscapes Workshop, 7-9 October 2016, Elettra and Don were in Timisoara for the Light.edu Symposium, an international conference about lighting and lighting innovation. Our hosts – Alexandra Maier of the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism in Timisoara, and the Order of Architects in Romania, within the framework of the BETA Architecture Biennial – invited us to carry out a Social Lightscapes Workshop. We were asked to work with fourth year architecture students on (their first) urban planning course. The students had not yet been trained in urban or architectural lighting.

The plan was for us to work with them intensively while we were in Timisoara; and for the students to carry on what we started during the rest of their course over the coming term.

Piata Sinaia

The workshop site – Sinaia Square – had already been selected for the course, and has long been a focus of concern as well as planning and design initiatives. Although it is very close (10 minute walk) to the historic city centre, and contains buildings and focal points (a major church used for countless weddings, hospitals, walking routes to the city river), it is essentially a transit hub rather than a destination for most people, a place where one lands between tram rides or passes through by car or bus. At the same time, although property prices and rents are high, buildings are in bad repair and the population is aging or leaving. In London this would be a rapidly gentrifying bit of east London or Elephant, replete with young entrepreneurs and digital nomads; here, the issue was how to ‘activate’ a deadened space. This is

not natural Configuring Light territory: we’ve generally argued that social research in lighting design is about helping designers understand and work with the needs, practices and aspirations of existing social life. We are generally sceptical of claims that lighting alone can somehow activate space. This scepticism was underlined by the many night walks we took in and around Sinaia, and discussions with the students.

So the workshop site was a challenge for us and the workshop structure. The question of ‘activating spaces’ is constantly raised for us, and says something about the limits of both lighting and social research in urban planning. Could we use this opportunity to confront and work with this question directly? A new way of activating social research in design? →

→ In fact, the Timisoara workshop gave us the chance to experiment creatively with our usual workshop format. Piata Sinaia was seriously challenging for social research in lighting design because it involved diverse and non-interacting social groups during the day, and near total lack of activity after dark: after all, the issue was ‘activation’ precisely because there was little activity actually available to research. At the same time, because logistics made it too difficult to have lighting equipment on-site, we needed everyone to focus on social and spatial analysis...

The solution took the form of one big workshop exercise, over the entire 3 days, that we learned a lot from and built into subsequent workshops:

We identified five categories of social users of Piata Sinaia: residents, shoppers, retail/cafe workers and owners, people in transit, and people passing through the square (without stopping). This list was based on scoping the site, and on workshop

discussions on Day 1.

Participants were then divided into five groups, with each group focused not just on researching one of these categories but also ‘representing’ them in a broader sense: who are these people, what are their needs and issues, how do they view the other categories, how do they relate to this place, and so on.

On Days 1 and 2, groups developed strategies for researching ‘their’ people – identifying important social divisions, accessing people, developing interview questions and observation strategies, thinking about documenting and recording the life of the square. In social research terms, participants had to be methodologically very inventive: how do you map and interview such amorphous stakeholder groups as ‘people waiting at bus-stops’, how do you even access ‘people who are passing through without stopping...’?

After each day of fieldwork, each group spoke for ‘their’ people – and to some extent spoke as their people, performing

the perspective of being a resident or waiting for a tram. Group discussion created a kind of mini public forum in which both overlapping and conflicting social and spatial issues could be aired, as well as the range of methodological problems that participants encountered. On the final day, participants were re-formed into three groups, each comprising at least one member of the five original research groups: they were tasked with bringing together the interests of their different social categories to produce a joint list of planning and design priorities for Piata Sinaia by day and by night, to develop a vision of what Sinaia should become over the next five years, and then – only at the very end – some design proposals that would help realise their day-time and night-time visions...

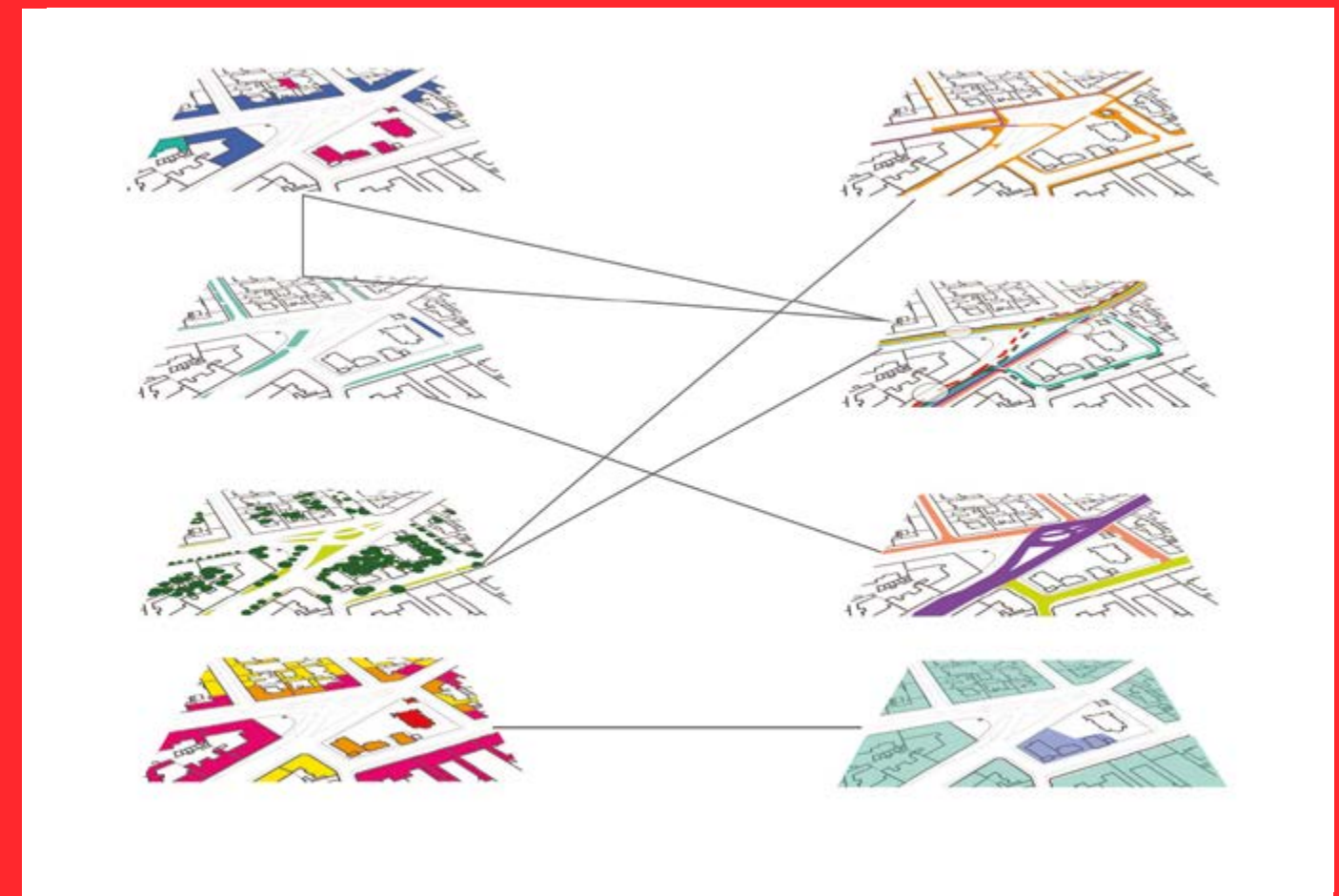
The students really rose to this considerable challenge, carrying out adventurous research and distilling complex findings into clear planning and visions. They also produced distinctively different approaches: →



“ Piata Sinaia was seriously challenging for social research in lighting design because it involved diverse and non-interacting social groups during the day, and near total lack of activity after dark ”



The nightwalk and students at work



→ **Group 1 – ‘Nostalgia’** majored on heritage and collective memory, giving the space coherence by reconnecting it to some of its original, historical spatial form and function.

Group 2 – ‘Differences’ concluded that the very different activities people pursued in Sinaia needed to be spatially separated out so that, eg, young people had spaces to hang out separate from commuters.

Group 3 – ‘Access’ focused on visual and spatial integration, ensuring that the space was transparent and open to all users, day and night, developing an entirely opposite approach to Group 2.

Light and Night: Unlike in our other Social Lightscapes workshops, Timisoara participants were not asked to produce lighting strategies or designs;

indeed because of the lack of activity in Sinaia, they could do little meaningful social research after dark. Instead, we focused on building a stronger base of social and spatial questions that they could expand into night time designs during the rest of their course. And we tried to build up a critical awareness of urban lighting through lectures and two very long night walks.

Analysis of night time lighting in Sinaia mirrored the students’ day time research: the lighting largely reflected transport systems (car and traffic lights; tram stops) rather than resident or pedestrian use, and rendered the space largely incoherent and illegible. Very little light came from residential or retail space, underlining the feeling of deadness and transient space.

Finally, as in parts of Timisoara’s historic centre, fragmented street lighting

was punctuated by extremely overlit monuments (in the case of Sinaia, an important church), which disrupted wayfinding (including the square’s strategic connection to the nearby city centre).

Light and planning: Because we had no lights and a dead space, this workshop was quite different from the others. Amongst other things, the participants could be focused on generating an overall vision for the space and really took up the challenge of producing a vision of the square in five years’ time. This meant that they really integrated lighting into a much wider social development and planning context than usual, but without being able to develop the lighting strategy as far as in other workshops.



“ they really integrated lighting into a much wider social development and planning context than usual ”



Shine your light - Light up your City!" was the motto for Timisoara 2021, candidate city as European Capital of Culture





Development and Gentrification

West End, Brisbane, Australia

4

Location
West End, Brisbane, Australia

Theme
Development and Gentrification

Date
13-16 december 2016



In December 2016, the CL team flew to Brisbane for the fourth workshop, held at Queensland University of Technology (QUT), hosted by the Design Lab and Professor Margaret Petty, Dean of the School of Design. This workshop drew in students and staff from the Creative Industries Faculty. With the exception of one lighting designer, all our participants were new to lighting design. They came to the workshop with varied interests in social research, local politics and community engagement, urban design and planning.

West End: Development and gentrification

This was the only time that a workshop dealt with an entire municipal district. Brisbane's West End is an extreme case of a familiar urban story: the rapid incursion of development capital into the

last remaining inner city neighbourhood, bordering on the central business district. West End doesn't only offer commuting convenience for a rapidly expanding professional population; much of the new development is along prime river front with a lovely walkway and cycle routes, plus commuter ferry, all held back until the current Brisbane population boom because of periodic flooding, only now technically sorted.

Gentrification and development are the buzzwords here, for analysts, activists and residents alike. Walk down our workshop site – the central Boundary Street – and you walk a historical narrative into a seemingly inevitable future. The southern end, plus the dark residential streets fanning outwards east and west, is low density timber 'Queenslander' residences, mainly owned

or inhabited by an older white working class, by the large post war Greek community and by the 1980s waves of Vietnamese immigrants, plus renters who would once have been working class boarders but are now more likely to be students or digital nomads.

Further north, around Vulture Street, is the epicentre of an intense countercultural community of artists, activists and early gentrifiers, urban pioneers of the inner city, dating back several decades and incorporating independent retail, community centres, cultural groups and alternative lifestyle. From this point north, West End's quiet south gives way to a vibrant, indeed heaving, night life.

Boundary Street is topped by the enormous West Village complex, →

→ currently a large hole in the ground where the Absoe factory and market area used to be – AU\$800 million of contentious yuppification, including major commercial district and nine 15-22 storey apartment blocks that will tower over a low density neighbourhood with limited infrastructure (especially transport and schools). Beyond West Village a major programme of ‘boulevardization’ marks the transition from old hippies to new yuppies. West Village, however, is only the most visible new development: to the west, down by the river, are all the main development complexes – tens of thousands of new flats for an up-market community with little connection to Boundary Street.

And then hovering over the entire geography is the Aboriginal community. West End was the Aboriginal location,

‘Kuralpa’, with numerous gathering spaces, now largely restricted to Musgrave Park and to ‘Lizard corner’, on Boundary Street, which gathers all the diverse denizens. If any further historical memories of dispossession are necessary, the name ‘Boundary Street’ was given because this marked the surveyed early boundary of the colonial settlement. However, the name is widely understood to mark the boundary beyond which Aborigines had to retreat after the evening curfew.

Workshop: The material politics of ‘gentrification’

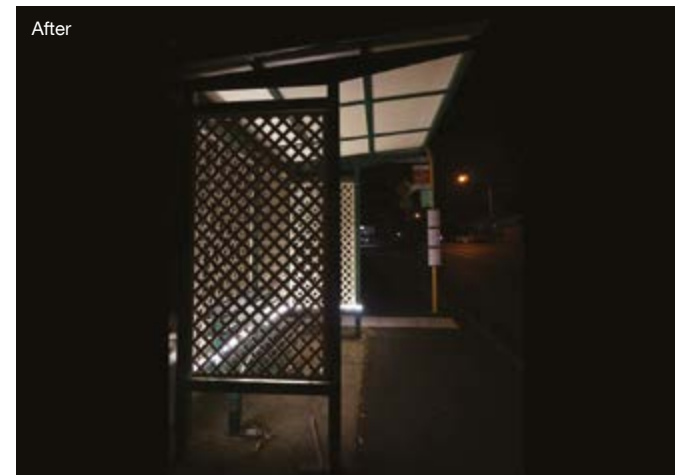
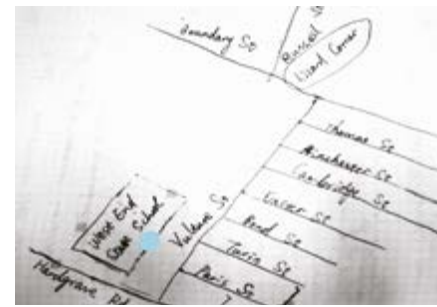
The West End workshop offered a great opportunity to explore gentrification from the perspective of material politics – could lighting give us a way into the processes that were unfolding in the area, and ways of acting on those processes

through design?

Building on the workshop structure we trialled in Timisoara in October, this workshop was split into four groups, each tasked with researching, engaging with and representing a different social stakeholder groups:

- Older resident communities (particularly Aboriginal, Greek and Vietnamese)
- ‘Early gentrifiers’ – the older alternative and counter cultural community
- ‘New gentrifiers’ – residents and consumers coming in through current development
- Retailers and business people from all stages of West End’s development →

“ Gentrification and development are the buzzwords here, for analysts, activists and residents alike. Walk down our workshop site – the central Boundary Street – and you walk a historical narrative into a seemingly inevitable future. ”



→ After two days of developing an understanding of ‘their’ stakeholders, participants were reorganized into three design groups that collected together all four perspectives. Each group then had to work on a specific site, defining needs and issues, and exploring lighting design as a material way to address them.

Above all, the process brought out the complexity and diversity that lies under the label ‘gentrification’ (hence our constant scare quotes around the word). Within and between the four stakeholder groups were differing expectations and worries around a process all experienced as inexorable. The main commonality was a widespread avoidance of an overly negative, defensive and intransigent opposition to development, and a very lucid focus on problems of planning, provision and regulation.

This came across forcefully in one of the main research themes: the new gentrifiers and the older communities live in parallel universes, able to live in the same neighbourhood without even physically encountering each other, let alone sharing

space, identity and relationships. For example, new residents of the riverside developments can shop, cycle and go to work in the CBD without passing through Boundary Street at all, unaware of and not integrated into the other lives that have long been led there.

The lighting strategies all centred on some sense of connection and connecting, of mapping out the pathways and nodes that make an urban space a place of overlapping and communicating meanings:

Boundaries and connecting corridors using lighting to literally construct corridors to link new development areas to Boundary Street, lighting up strategic bus stops and landscape features. Dead spaces, where both Boundary Street and the development areas rapidly peter out into dark and empty streets, can be activated as paths to follow and encounter others.

Going Walkabout focused on development and change as learning processes in which lighting could

help newcomers become part of the place by understanding it better. Lighting would be part of designs to make the multiple histories and ethnicities of West End visible and connected to each other. Materially, a light and sound trail would link Lizard corner (the epicentre of local diversity) through historic paths to the Aboriginal gathering spaces of Musgrave Park and the Greek Club on its perimeter.

Acknowledging Nodes connecting social groups by learning to recognise – and protect – the places where people gather, the spaces that have a critical mass in people’s daily lives. Research involved uncovering often hidden and informal spaces where people come together, and the lighting centred on one gathering space, in which even subtle changes of lighting angle could make the difference between gently supporting social gathering, making it visible but respected by passersby or endangering it through over- or misdirected lighting.

“ Lighting would be part of designs to make the multiple histories and ethnicities of West End visible and connected to each other. ”



Research involved uncovering often hidden and informal spaces where people come together.



The social house estate Giorgio Morandi in Tor Sapienza and its Cultural Centre

Centre and Periphery

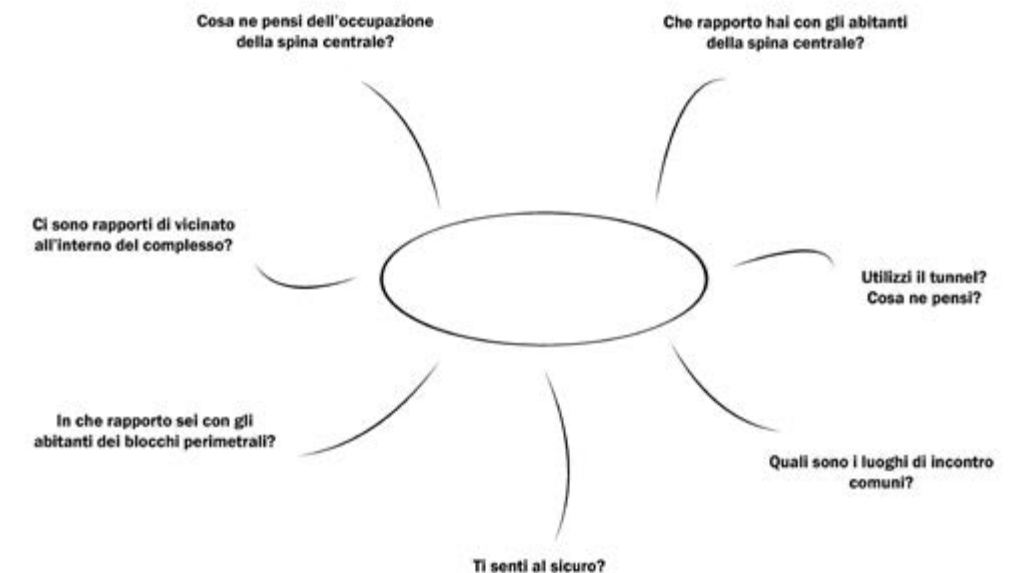
Tor Sapienza, Rome, Italy

5

Location
Tor Sapienza, Rome, Italy

Theme
Centre and Periphery

Date
4-7 April 2017



Our penultimate workshop took place in a modernist social housing estate – Giorgio Morandi – located in a suburb of Rome: Tor Sapienza has been identified by media and commentators as exemplifying social disconnection and marginality. Distant as well as disconnected from the city centre (in terms of transport, economy and social networks), Tor Sapienza has seen multiple waves of immigration, including recent refugees, from the 1950s, as well as being home to Romany settlements. As Adriana Goni Mazzitelli – who was part of the workshop team – has written: “Tor Sapienza is a periphery that is screaming disconnection. From worker district in the middle of the 20th century to squatting area at the end of it, Tor Sapienza went through the era of concrete blocks, to the Gypsy Camps, with no time to heal its deep social wounds.”

The workshop was a collaboration with Università Roma 3 and Centro Culturale Morandi, a community organization located at the very centre of the Morandi estate, that provided meeting space and logistical support. The participants in this case were largely university students drawn not only from Italy but from around Europe, the UK and Latin America. Many were studying architecture and planning, but we also had social science students, including one who was actually writing a doctoral thesis on recent ethnic riots near the estate.

Centre and Periphery

Sophisticated lighting design is generally reserved for economically and culturally valued city centres – commercial districts and heritage centres. Peripheral areas, working class residential areas and social housing are at best given purely

functional lighting (for safety); at worst, they are assumed to be spaces of incipient public disorder, to be brightly lit for policing and surveillance. Lighting therefore both reflects and reproduces social inequalities in the material fabric and spatial organization of urban public space.

The Tor Sapienza workshop focused explicitly on these issues: social housing, rendered in brutal modernism and located at the very outside border of Rome, with a reputation not only for disorder but ethnic riots. Two issues crossed over all the group work: Firstly, although it is easy to invoke ‘community’, or talk of the need for community, participants found that the word got in the way of deeper issues they had to research: division, distrust, open conflict, lack of contact between groups and significant →

→ efforts to create smaller communities (eg, amongst immigrant groups) rather than treating the estate as potentially one large community. Secondly, all groups explored disconnection, which again turned out to be a complex set of issues: there was a strong desire for Morandi to be seen as connected to the surrounding town rather than a special and problematic place; there was also a desire to make internal connections between the fragmented zones of the estate; and there was a desire to make space for diverse and unpredictable connections between the fragmented populations.

This was a site-based workshop but slightly different from the others: instead of giving the groups specific spaces to work with, they were asked to look

at *kinds* of spaces, and could choose specifically where they wanted to mock up lights: facades, entrances to the estate, play spaces, and the disused or squatted buildings.

Connections and surroundings

Group 1 worked on the ways Morandi connected to the surrounding town, which included interviewing people outside the estate as to their perceptions of it, and people inside the estate about how they felt they were perceived. This also drew out contrasts between how residents and outsiders understood the social life of the estate. Lighting, in this case, could address some of the issues very directly: main entry ways and paths through the estate could be lit to both mark them as atmospheric rather than threatening or illegible,

and to visually draw people's gaze *into* the estate.

Play of light

Group 2 examined the inner space of Morandi had a number of recreational spaces – sports pitches, playground, benches. However, they were scattered, unconnected and there was little overlap between users. This was accentuated at night, when people felt that lack of lighting made each space unusable, and few wanted to move across the estate between these spaces. The lighting strategy worked with the sports pitch both to activate it after dark, but also to make it a beacon to connect people across the estate.

Space in the city

Group 3 were asked to work with the

facades of the residential blocks, and the seating spaces at the ground level of the blocks. Although they started with an idea of unifying the atmosphere of the place through a notion of 'community', this broke down early in the research: people understood Morandi as a 'mosaic' of diverse and self-organized groups, largely happy to co-exist. What was lacking were meeting places, but ones that reflected this fragmented but acceptable diversity. The lighting strategy therefore made use of the ground floor structures to make a mosaic of intimate but public meeting places, each with a distinct atmosphere and visual structure.

Informal spaces

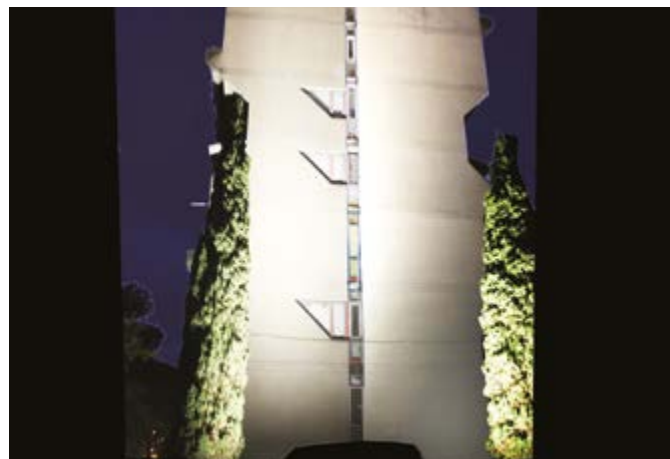
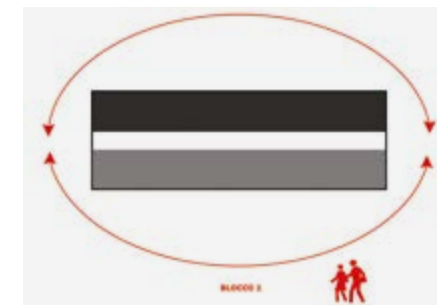
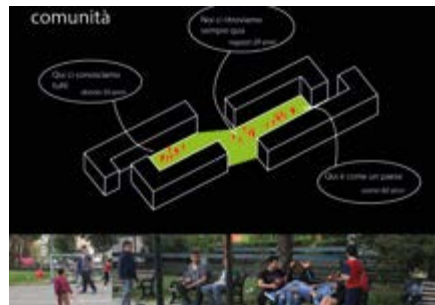
Down the centre of Morandi were long buildings ('the tunnels') designed in the

original grand plan to house shops for the estate. These quickly failed, and the tunnels have long been squatted by incoming migrants and refugees who have devoted considerable energy and ingenuity to creating liveable homes and their own public spaces. Group 4 also started from the idea of community and integration into the estate, but interviews and observation involved them more deeply into understanding what the squatting residents were trying to achieve. The lighting strategy aimed to reflect and support their way of life (eg, lighting specific spaces that are regularly used for barbecues), and to ensure that their space, and use of that space, is acknowledged and respected by their neighbours.



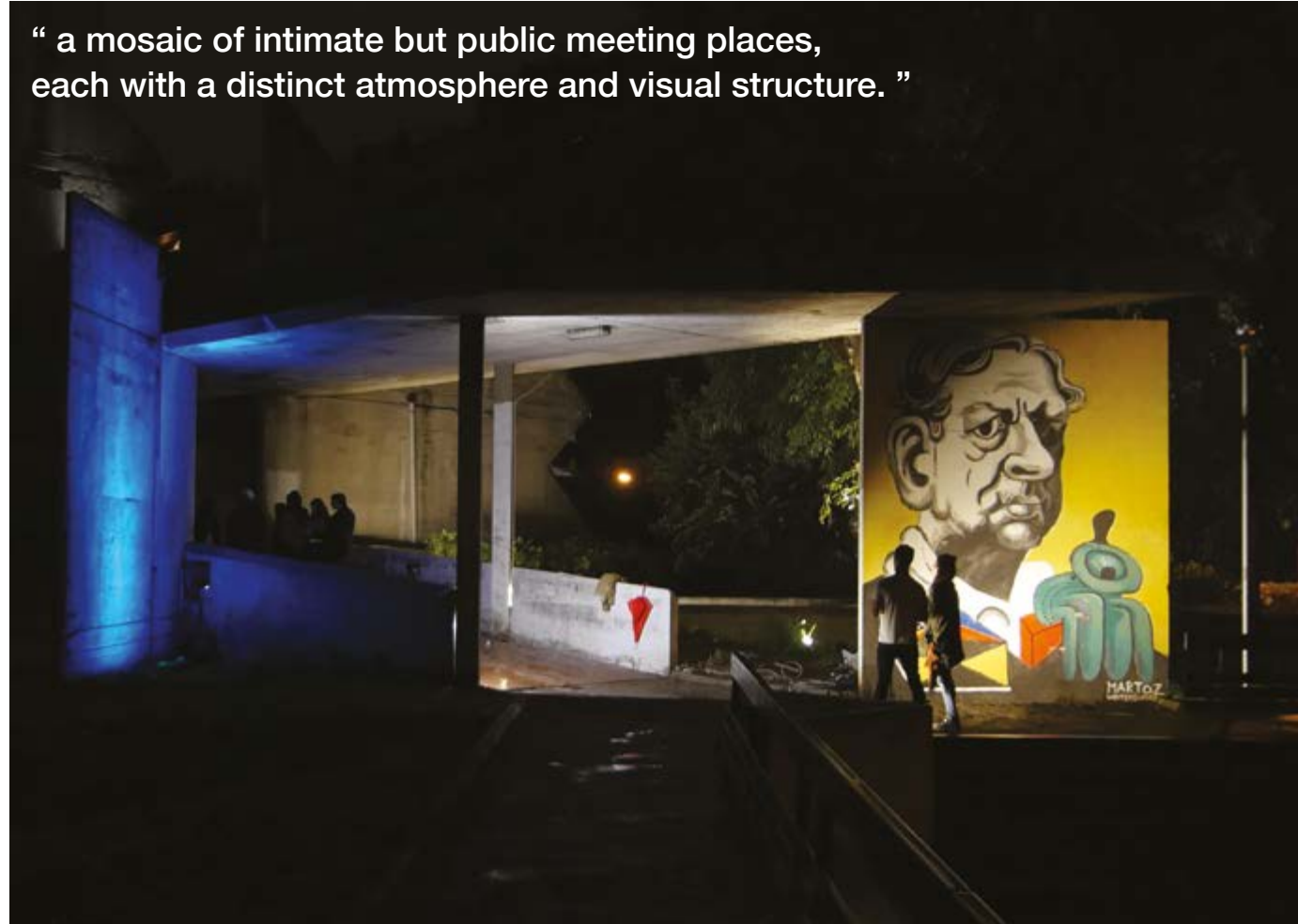
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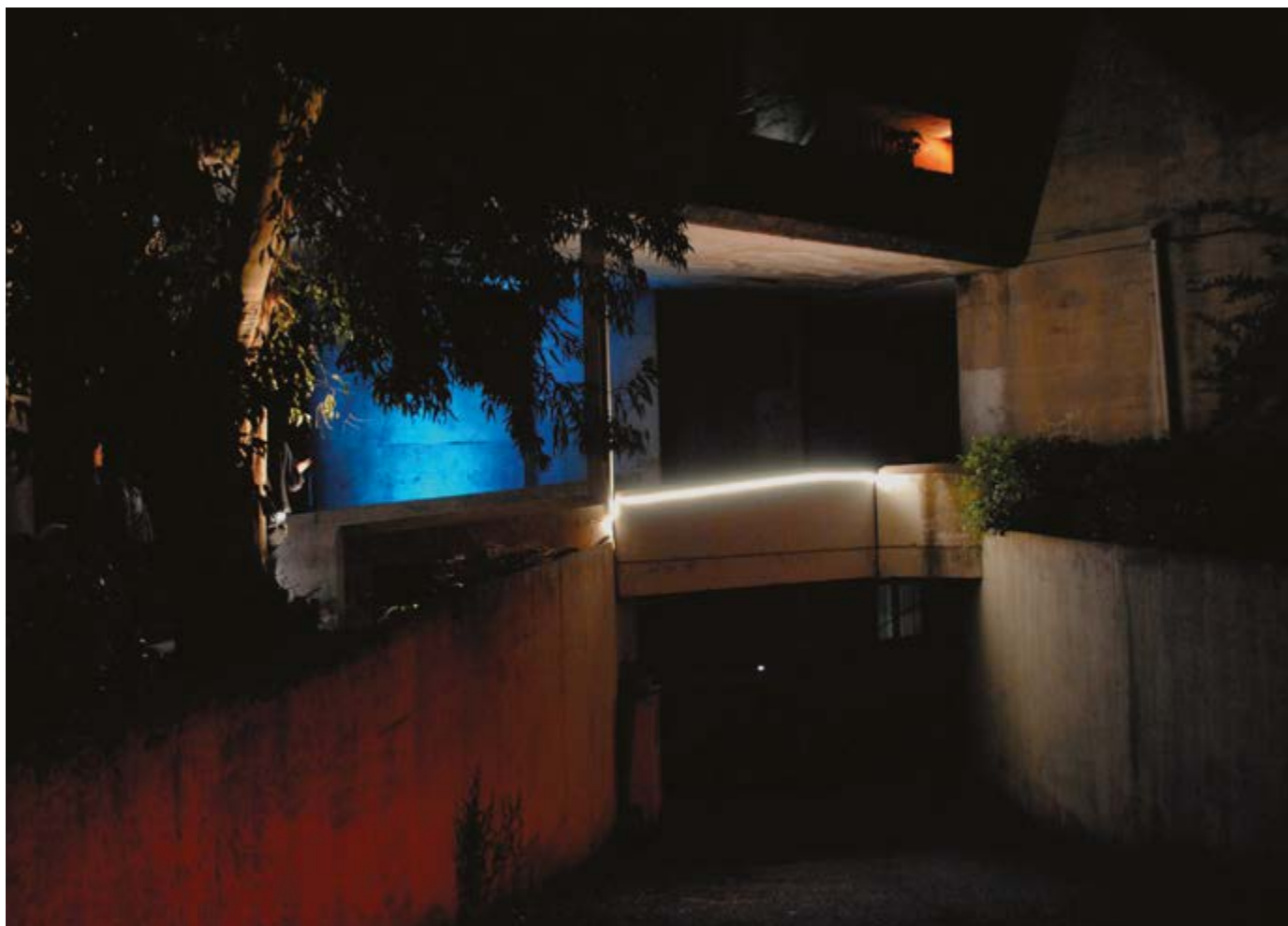


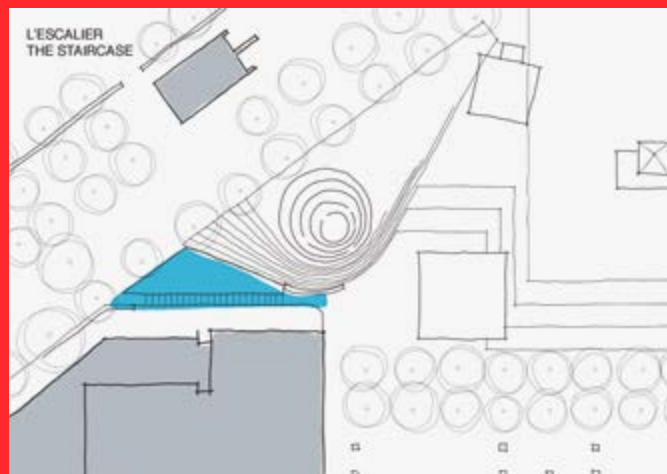
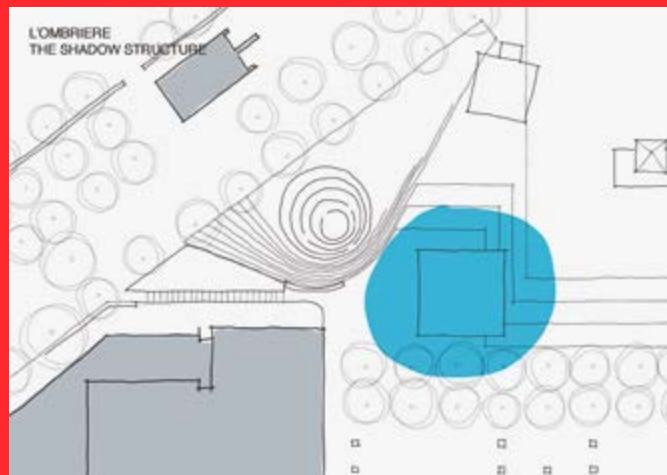
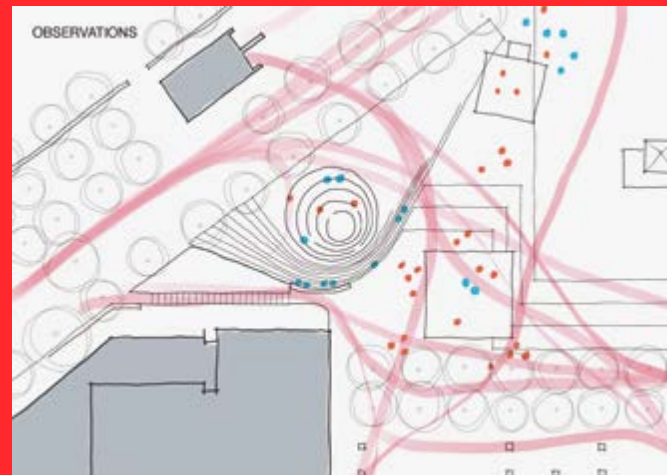
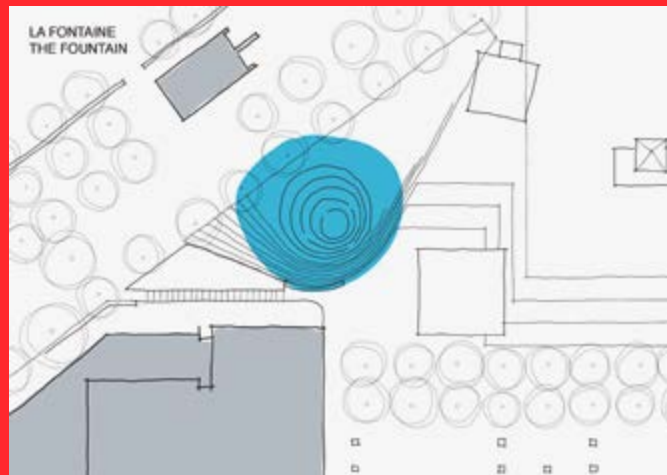
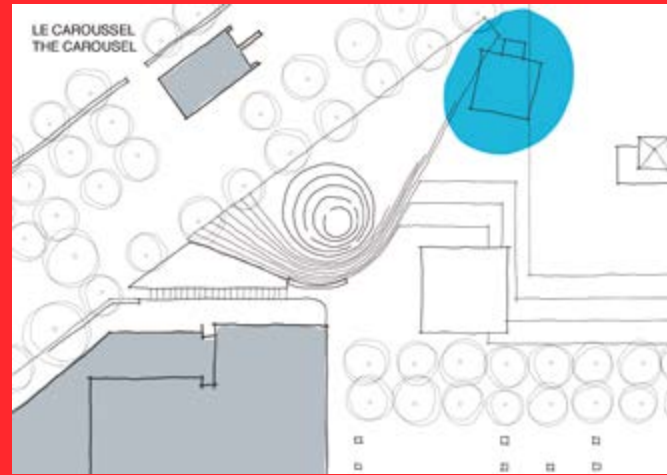
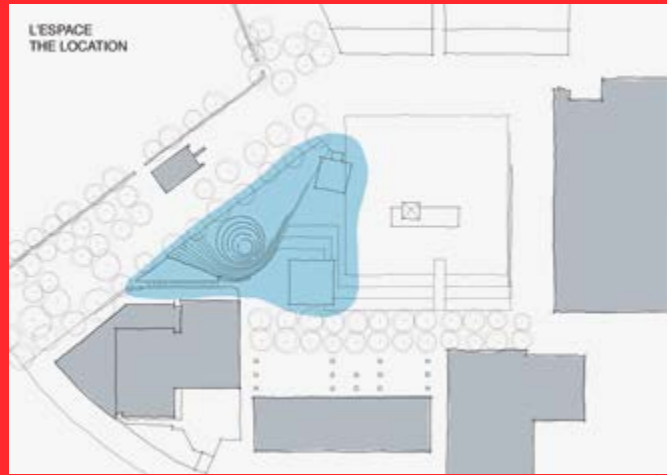
Main entry ways and paths through the estate could be lit to both mark them as atmospheric and to visually draw people's gaze into the estate.

The lighting strategy aimed to ensure that the space, and use of that space, is acknowledged and respected by their neighbours.



“ a mosaic of intimate but public meeting places, each with a distinct atmosphere and visual structure. ”





Analysis of the area of the Fountain and connection with the other structures

Regeneration

Place des Fetes, Paris, France

6

Location
Place des Fetes, Paris, France

Theme
Regeneration

Date
27-30 October 2017

Our final Social Lightscares workshop in Paris (27-30 October 2017) was a collaboration with a range of institutions involved in the regeneration and redesign of the Places des Fetes, 19th arrondissement, in the quartier of Belleville. These included the Mairie de Paris, Dido and ACE, and was timed to coincide with the biennial PLDC conference, this year located in Paris. The 35 workshop participants therefore were almost entirely lighting professionals drawn from around the world, from Melbourne to Bogota, plus several Parisian art and design students. Unusually, for this workshop Elettra and Don had the advantage of being commissioned by the Mairie to carry out several days of social research on the Place des Fetes in July 2017, and therefore had field experience and considerable primary research material to work from.



Place des Fetes: Regeneration

Although one of 11 public squares currently being regenerated by the Mairie de Paris, Place des Fetes is unique and exceptionally complex. The square was the heart of a working class neighbourhood, once the last bastion of the 1871 communards. It was demolished and reformed in the 1970s in a brutally modernist mould, including tower blocks of social housing rising from within the square itself and in the surrounding streets to the north. The southern environs, as well as the Buttes-Chaumont area further north, survived as a traditional Parisian quartier, but are now increasingly desirable as one of the remaining affordable areas for younger professional Parisians. Finally, this is an intensely multicultural area, defined by many waves of immigration.

The theme for this workshop was 'regeneration': there was a clear need to rescue a valued space from dilapidation and spatial incoherence, and yet there was also a long term failure to find a concept or strategy. There had previously been a high profile redesign by the 'postmodern' architect Bernard Huet in the 1990s that left behind some bewildering structures and ground plans. There have been many consultations and studies over the past few years to the point that residents clearly let us know that someone should do something, anything, rather than ask them again for their views... On top of this, the city realised that they had focused entirely on Place des Fetes by day, with virtually no attention to its very active early evening and very dead night-time. →

→ The relation between social life and social space was complex, fragmented, illegible and to some extent simply mismatched: Although officially a 'public square', Place des Fetes doesn't necessarily work as one. The vast majority of footfall is commuters using the Metro station, scarcely aware that they are skirting a large public space. The main users of that space are diverse, and not entirely using it as a public space – eg, the residents of the tower blocks within its perimeter see it as part of their private space (that should be kept quiet and clear); many ethnic residents use it as an extension of their homes (looking after kids, hanging out in the evening). There are children of various ages, all occupying different zones (playground, central square), in complex interaction with other users.

Finally, there were some very public debates about the identity of the Place des Fetes that centred (not entirely helpfully) on two symbols: Firstly, the square is widely known for its three day a week market that draws buyers and sellers from a wide area. However it is to be moved to the perimeter of the

square, leaving the whole space to be redefined and 'activated'. Secondly, the 'postmodern' redevelopment left behind – in its centre – a pyramid structure on a platform that lights up as a beacon at night; despite falling into horrendous disrepair, and despite a decision to remove it, the structure is popular amongst some stakeholders.

Workshop: Designing coherence?

We structured this workshop spatially, each group being assigned a site to focus on. This was partly because the square was so socially fragmented that we couldn't isolate 4-5 significant stakeholder groups; a spatial approach meant that each workshop group had to map the many different overlapping and interacting stakeholders using their site. One positive consequence was that we could see a convergence between groups – with a longer workshop, we could easily imagine a design for the whole square emerging.

Although each site had very different dynamics, a common dilemma recurred: in each case, there were spatial and architectural structures left behind by

previous interventions, only some of which had earned a meaningful place in peoples' use of the square. Each group had to decide whether these design elements could be 'redeemed', building on stakeholders' social practices, or whether they needed to abandon them and find coherence in some other way. Our groups engaged with different versions of these issues:

Strolling through light

Group 1 dealt with the pathways that led from the Metro, along the west side of the Place. Stakeholders followed clear 'desire lines'; there was no reason to interfere with these, only to make them more pleasant, legible and acknowledged after dark, and perhaps to indicate other social and spatial opportunities. For example, to light some alternative pathways or link up with social activities in the central square, giving commuters a sense of moving through and around a wider social experience – the rest of the life of Place des Fetes.

Our place, our playground

The north of the square involved →



“ The relation between social life and social space was complex, fragmented, illegible and to some extent simply mismatched ”





Lighting mock-ups to engage the residents and the children of the area.

→ intricate informal zoning - a wall people sat on to socialise, sell food and watch their children, who either played in an area just in front of the wall (if about 6-10 years old) or who hung out in the centre of the square (as they hit their teens). Lighting was used to map social rather than spatial structures: eg, task lighting to acknowledge how people hung out on the wall, helping them to sell goods or chat quietly; blades of light that simultaneously created a game for skateboarders and a way of marking out the distribution of social gathering on the wall.

Heart of the square

Group 3 focused on the large centre of the square itself. Previous lighting plans sought to impose a literally square-shaped structure that was unrelated to any social uses of the space. Working with stakeholders brought out diverse styles of use that lighting could support such as spaces for small intimate gathering, and lighting of the central stage for more spectacular fun. Both emerged from existing patterns of use rather than a coherent spatial design vision.

Taking Place

Group 4 dealt with a part of the square that was dominated by two inherited structures. A fountain in the shape of a labyrinth, although not functional, was valued as a space that was not 'owned' by any particular stakeholders, a quiet space that could be shared by everyone; the lighting could support its value - which wasn't the value intended by the original grand postmodern design - as a quiet, contemplative stopping point for everyone. By contrast a giant 'ombriere' structure was widely regarded as irredeemably meaningless. The strategy was not to attempt to give it coherence, but to go around it, using lighting to support other spatial zones and to spatially extend the shared quality and quietness of the fountain through other means.

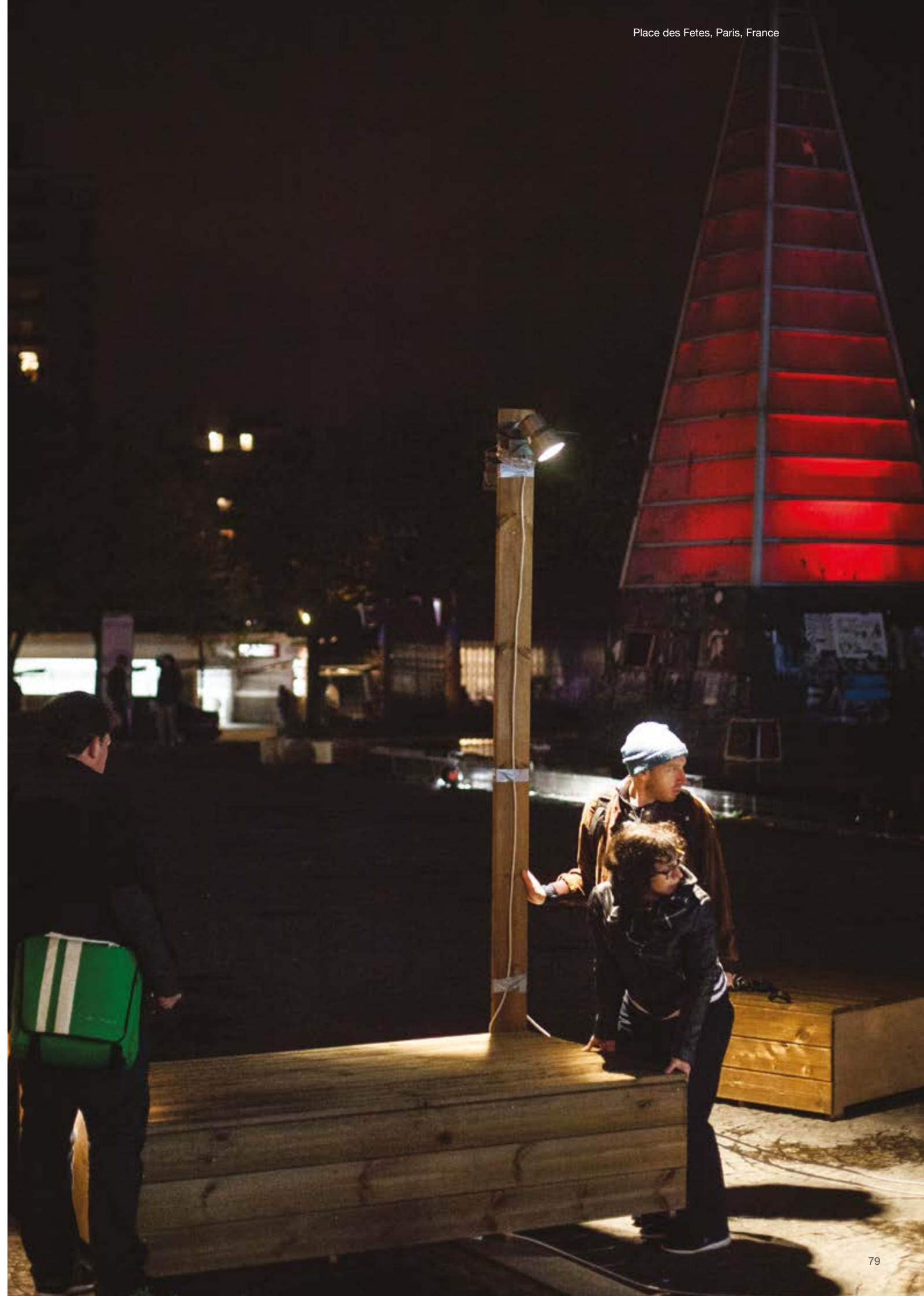
Approaches

At the far northeast, a small square led to an almost invisible yet major entrance to Place des Fetes. It was one of the main through routes for commuters en route to the Metro, and anyone going

shopping. The little square itself had a bar and shops but was dead after dark, plus the area had a 'disreputable' reputation. Group 5's lighting design addressed a very widely and clearly articulated desire simply to socially value and upgrade this space (including potentially very attractive features), and to include aesthetically rich wayfinding into the design.

Entrances and exits

Group 6 were tasked with studying three passageways into the southern edges of Place des Fetes. These were little used in evening or night, and research turned up concerns about legibility and safety; all three were considered obscure. At the same time, the social research also showed up a range of very site specific problems, down to the level of particular retail signage and specific trees. They responded by developing a different approach to each passageway (either more formal or more playful), and a toolkit of lighting considerations for each.



Workshop Schedules

“Working by Stakeholders”

Brisbane

This is an example of ‘working by stakeholders’: For the first two days of the workshop, each group is assigned to a different kind of stakeholder: the group’s job is to understand ‘their’ people in depth and to represent them within the research and design process. After two days of research, we then reform the groups. The new groups comprise one person from each stakeholder group, all now working on an allocated site. The idea is for each person to continue ‘representing’ their people, ensuring that their concerns and voice are reflected in design discussions and concepts.

Day 01

This is the day to discover the area by day and by night. We first give an introduction to social research in design and social research methods. Participants are given some background and context for the location, as far as possible presented by local stakeholders and experts, as well as local residents and community groups. Participants need information but also the opportunity to understand the place in a deeper way and to ask questions. We then explain how we have chosen the stakeholder groups, and how they relate to the theme of the workshop. The participants are then formed into groups to research their stakeholders.

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 9.30am | Meeting at Design Lab QUT – J-214 block |
| 9.30am-1.00pm | Welcome by Configuring Light team Introduction to social research in design Introduction to the area, and Brisbane lighting, by Scott Chaseling, Specialist Urban Design Delivery, City of Brisbane (12.00pm) Walking tour and discovery of the area |
| 2.00pm-4.00pm | Sorting groups by stakeholders Stakeholders categories were selected previously by Don and Elettra, based on academic literature and discussions: older resident communities, ‘early gentrifiers’, ‘new gentrifiers’, retailers. Presentation on social research methods - What we mean by social research, how to do interviews, setting up tasks for rest of the day |
| 4.30pm-6.00pm | Meeting at Lizard Corner in West End Iguana meeting point Guided walk through the area hosted by Streetwalkers (a community history and information collective). Social research on site by day – each group to access and interview members of their stakeholder group. Meeting with Dr. Erin Evans, West End Community Association, and Sam Watson, Activist. |
| 6.00pm-9.00pm | Night walk Social research on site by dark by groups |

Day 02

Groups are asked to focus on investigating the space in social terms and getting input and findings for the design. They should be clearer about who they want to learn about and what questions are most important for their site. They are also introduced to observational methods. Day 2 is also the start of lighting mock-ups. We normally give a presentation on basic lighting principles (unless the workshop is mainly professional lighting designers). In the afternoon, groups plan the lighting mock up for the evening, with CL guidance.

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 9.30am | Meeting at Design Lab QUT |
| 9.30am-1.00pm | Debrief research teams by groups – it is important for the groups to share their experiences (as well as questions, doubts and worries) with the whole workshop. Social Research Designing (group coaching) Principles of lighting: Light vocabulary Lighting Fixtures presentation (11.30am@ Storage Room) |
| 2.00pm-6.00pm | Meeting at Lizard Corner in West End Social Research Designing (group coaching) |
| 6.00pm-7.00pm | Preparation of lighting mock-ups |
| 7.00pm-9.00pm | Testing lighting Mock-Ups / Social research |

Day 03

On day three, groups are reformed. The new groups comprise one person from each stakeholder group, all now working on an allocated site. The idea is for each person to continue ‘representing’ their people, ensuring that their concerns and voice are reflected in design discussions and concepts. Groups are asked to do more social research on site and to finalise their design ideas and to plan the final lighting mock-up for the evening.

| | |
|---------------|---|
| 9.30am | Meeting at Design Lab QUT |
| 9.30am-1.00pm | Re-organization of participants into 3 design groups to collect all four perspectives. Assign each new group to a specific site. Each group needs discussion, and CL support, to develop a shared understanding of how the different stakeholders relate to their site, and how to respond to this with a single design strategy. |
| 2.00pm-6.00pm | Meeting at Design Lab QUT Focus on developing design ideas for the evening lighting mock-ups. Participants are encouraged to do more social research, including walkabouts in their area, to develop a shared strategy. |
| 6.00pm-7.00pm | Preparation of lighting mock-ups |
| 7.00pm-9.00pm | Testing lighting Mock-Ups / Social research |

Day 04

On day four, groups are mainly focused on working on the final presentation. The workshop always ends with a public meeting to bring participants together with local residents and other stakeholders, municipal and local authorities, local lighting professionals and other interested parties: each workshop group presents their design ideas, as visually as possible, and explains the social rationale that motivated their design strategy.

| | |
|---------------|---|
| 9.30am | Meeting at Design Lab QUT |
| 9.30am-1.00pm | Finalising presentations |
| 2.00pm-4.00pm | Public presentations @ Kelvin Grove QUT Creative Industries |
| 4.00pm-5.00pm | Networking Reception |

“Working by sites”

Paris

Places des Fetes is an example of “working by sites”. Each workshop group is assigned to a specific site from the very beginning: their task is to learn about that site as a social space, and produce a lighting design response. Participants need to understand the very specific site, but also its relation to a wider context.

Day 01

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>This is the day to discover the area by day and by night. We first give an introduction to social research in design and social research methods. Participants are given some background and context for the location, as far</p> | <p>as possible presented by local stakeholders and experts, as well as local residents and community groups. Participants need information but also the opportunity to understand the place in a deeper way and to ask questions.</p> | <p>Each group is assigned to a specific site, each previously selected by the CL team, based on previous social and spatial research.</p> |
|--|---|---|

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| 10.00am | Meeting at Théâtre de Verre |
| 10.00am-10.15am | Welcome by Configuring Light team |
| 10.00am-10.15am | Introduction to social research in design |
| 11.00am-12.00am | ‘Le projet de cœur de place’ by Méhand Meziani, Architecte du Projet, City of Paris |
| 12.00am-1.00pm | ‘Faites la place, an ongoing process’ by Nancy Ottaviano and Ruben Torrens, Collective Dido! and Quatorze |
| 2.00pm-4.00pm | Sorting groups and assignment of the sites Presentation on Social Research Methods – What we mean by social research, how to do interviews, setting up tasks for rest of the day. |
| 4.30pm-6.00pm | Exploring the area by day, identify types of people using each site, and carrying out a few interviews |
| 6.30pm-7.30pm | Social research by participants and quick dinner |
| 7.30pm-8.30pm | Night walk |
| 8.30pm-9.30pm | Social research on site by dark, by groups |

Day 02

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Groups are asked to focus on investigating the space in social terms and getting input and findings for the design. They should be clearer about who they want to learn about and what questions are most important</p> | <p>for their site. They are also introduced to observational methods. Day 2 is also the start of lighting mock-ups, and we usually present an introduction to lighting. However, in Paris the participants were</p> | <p>lighting professionals; therefore more advanced examples of lighting urbanism and interventions were shared. In the afternoon, groups plan the lighting mock up for the evening, with CL guidance.</p> |
|--|---|---|

| | |
|----------------|--|
| 9.30am | Meeting at Maison de la Place des Fêtes |
| 9.30am-10.30am | Debrief research teams by groups – it is important for the groups to share their experiences (as well as questions, doubts and worries) with the whole workshop. |

| | |
|------------------|--|
| 10.30am- 12.00am | Some examples to share’ by Isabelle Corten <i>‘Night urbanism’</i> by Isabelle Corten |
| 2.00pm-6.00pm | Social Research Designing (group coaching) |
| 6.00pm-7.00pm | Preparation of lighting mock-ups |
| 7.00pm-9.00pm | Testing lighting Mock-Ups / Social research |

Day 03

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Groups can now focus on developing a design approach that is clearly related to what they have learned from social research; and can carry out more research to fill in some gaps. On Day</p> | <p>3 they need to plan their final lighting mock-up for the evening. The CL team’s role on Day 3 and 4 is to work with each group individually, helping them develop their research and design</p> | <p>strategy, and then supporting them in developing a final presentation.</p> |
|--|--|---|

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 9.30am | Meeting at Maison de la Place des Fêtes |
| 9.30am-1.00pm | Debrief research teams by groups Social Research Designing (group coaching) |
| 2.00pm-6.00pm | Social Research Designing (plus more social research if needed) |
| 6.00pm-7.00pm | Preparation of lighting mock-ups |
| 7.00pm-9.00pm | Testing lighting Mock-Ups / Social research |

Day 04

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>On day four, groups are mainly focused on working on the final presentation. The workshop always ends with a public meeting to bring participants</p> | <p>together with local residents and other stakeholders, municipal and local authorities, local lighting professionals and other interested parties: each</p> | <p>workshop group presents their design ideas, as visually as possible, and explains the social rationale that motivated their design strategy.</p> |
|--|---|---|

| | |
|---------------|---|
| 9.30am | Meeting at Maison de la Place des Fêtes |
| 9.30am-1.00pm | Working on final presentations |
| 2.00pm-4.00pm | Finalising presentations |
| 4.00pm-5.00pm | Public presentation |

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Social Lightscapes Workshops

**Social
research in
design for
lighting
professionals**