

LIFE AND DEATH

PROJECT TOOLKIT

*MA Creative Practice for
Narrative Environments,
Central Saint Martins
College of Art and Design,
University of the Arts
London*

| | | | |
|------|---|--|-------------|
| | | <i>Introduction.....</i> | <i>p.2</i> |
| | | <i>Project Background.....</i> | <i>p.2</i> |
| | | <i>Toolkit.....</i> | <i>p.3</i> |
| Part | ① | <i>Project Ecology Diagram.....</i> | <i>p.4</i> |
| Part | ② | <i>Life and Death Card Set.....</i> | <i>p.8</i> |
| | | <i>Life and Death Card Set Methods.....</i> | <i>p.9</i> |
| Part | ③ | <i>Use of Toolkit Case Study.....</i> | <i>p.14</i> |
| | | <i>– Life and Death Symposium</i> | |
| | | <i>Project Life and Death.....</i> | <i>p.22</i> |
| | | <i>Case Studies</i> | |
| | | <i>Appendix</i> | |
| | | <i>Life and Death Card Set to print out.....</i> | <i>p.43</i> |

1/ INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Life and Death Project Toolkit.

This kit is intended to help students consider the social, economic, ecological and cultural sustainability of their work, both during and after their studies. The kit begins with an introduction to Project Ecology, a practical framework for analysing a project's external threats and allies. We include a Project Ecology Card Set that can be used to analyse a live project, or to strategise for a future project.

Next, we highlight the key insights on social, economic, ecological and cultural sustainability that emerged from our Life and Death Symposium held in 2012. We end by using ideas from the Project Ecology Card Set to analyse the 'life and death' of four diverse and relevant case studies.

The ideas presented here can be used to select research tools, conceptual frameworks, and to plan strategies for current and future scenarios.

2/ PROJECT BACKGROUND

Students and staff from Central Saint Martin's MA in Creative Practice for Narrative Environments were awarded a grant from University of the Arts London Sustainability in the Curriculum funding stream to begin addressing, 'What is sustainability and how does it relate to our work?'

We began in 2011 by inviting sustainability experts to share their definitions of sustainability, held in-class debates, and started a blog to form our own working definition. Although no definitive conclusions were reached, we began to see the case for encouraging students to consider social, economic, ecological and cultural sustainability as ‘life-saving’ or ‘life-threatening’ forces in the success or failure of their projects.

Following this, in 2012 we developed a Life and Death Project Toolkit to further our understanding of these forces. We planned an afternoon of talks and workshops, for UAL students and staff to explore the toolkit and debate the concept of the ‘life and death’ of a project. The results of this event are presented in this book, and are intended as an open resource.

TOOLKIT

/3

The toolkit consists of two parts. First is the Project Ecology Diagram, developed by Stuart Jones as a fluid take on the traditional *S.W.O.T.* (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis emphasising sustainability. From the Ecology Diagram we extracted 12 factors that represent the key influences on the ‘life and death’ of a project, such as funding, politics, collaboration etc. These factors were developed into a set of cards that can be used to analyse projects . By understanding the full range of influences on a project, you can start to make it sustainable.

The following section provides suggestions on how to utilise the toolkit.

PART 1

4/ PROJECT ECOLOGY DIAGRAM

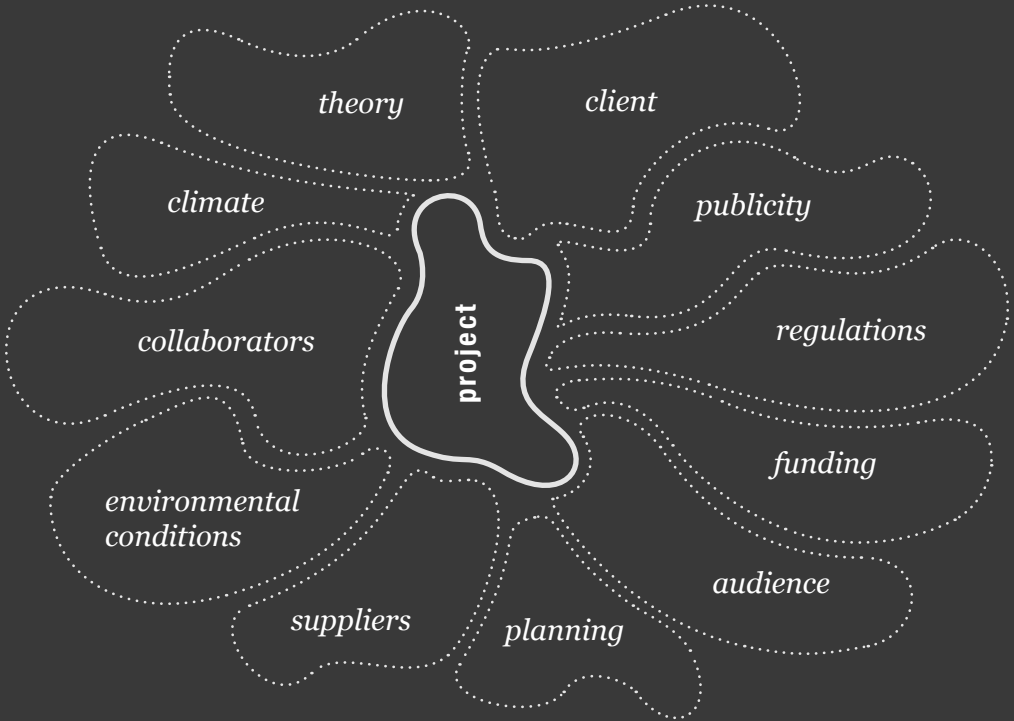
The Project Ecology Diagram provides a useful and effective tool to analyse the various factors affecting the life of a project. It helps provide an understanding of how a project can survive and thrive.

An organic take on the conventional S.W.O.T. analysis, the Project Ecology Diagram provides a holistic method to consider projects with a view to sustaining and extending their lifespan.

No project exists in isolation. The Ecology Diagram provides a succinct overview of the various forces, and their relationships, influencing a project. It can highlight potential threats and weaknesses that need to be addressed, or simply raise awareness of the 'bigger picture' that is the networked eco-system in which a project exists. A project can in turn be adapted to increase its survival chances and to allow it to flourish in its milieu.

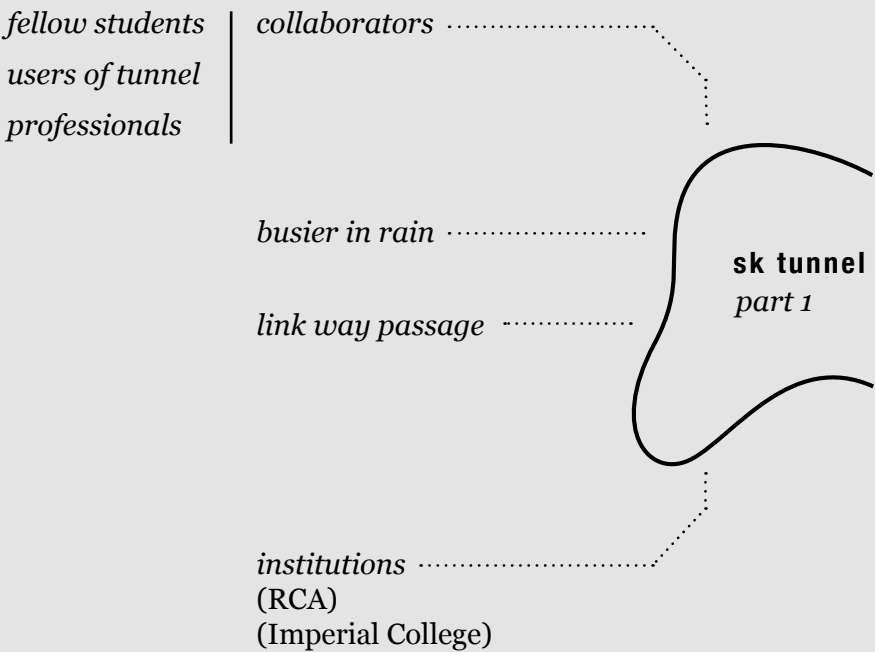
Starting with the project in the centre, the mind map format of the diagram allows one to branch out, and to add and consider different forces in the milieu that impact the project. These forces can be tangible and intangible, visible and invisible. Forces can include the usual suspects such as funding, publicity, and regulations. However, they can extend also to less immediately obvious influences such as environmental conditions and climate.

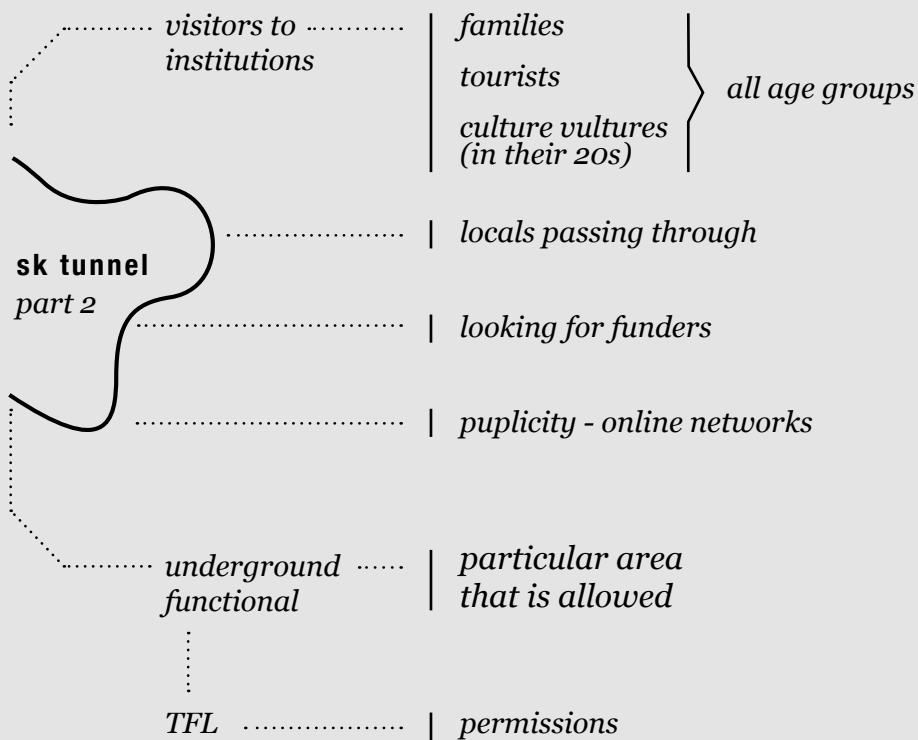
General Project Ecology Diagram Template:



Example of the Project Ecology Diagram is shown below:

Project Title: From Ordinary to Extraordinary:
The Threshold Experience of Cultural Institutions
by Crona Connolly
Project Site: South Kensington Tunnel





PART 2

5/ LIFE AND DEATH CARD SET



LIFE AND DEATH CARD SET METHODS

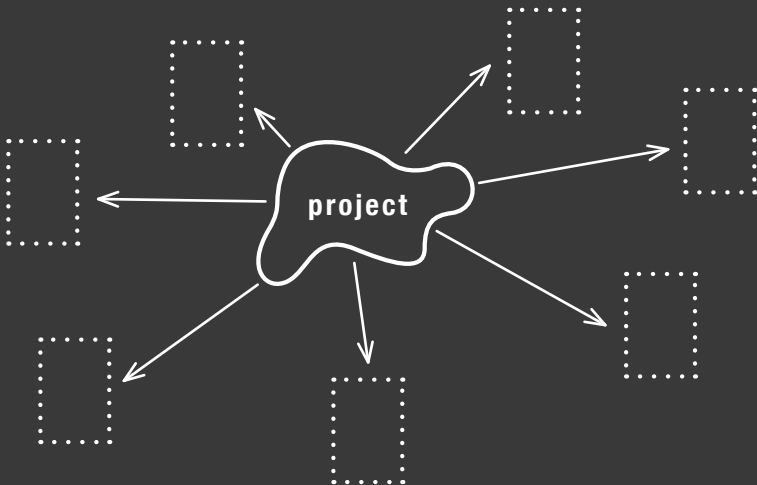
/6

The card set can be used in a variety of ways working individually, in pairs, and/or in groups. A selection of suggested activities is outlined below:

METHODS FOR USE AS INDIVIDUALS

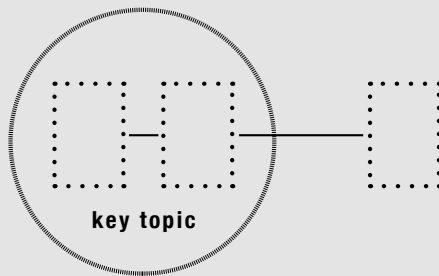
Scenario Analysis

Choose a project that you have worked on - this may be either a current project or a previous one. Using the card set, analyse how different card categories will impact the project to create several alternative future developments and paths that lead to possible outcomes of the project.



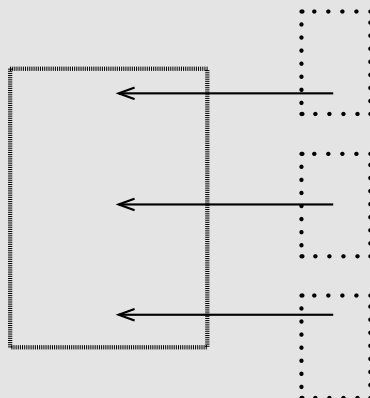
Prompt for Presentation

The card set can be used to create and clarify sections and topics within a project in order to prepare presentations. The cards can help both identify key strengths(lifesavers) and prepare answers to questions that may be raised regarding any shortcomings(killers) of the project.



Research Guidance

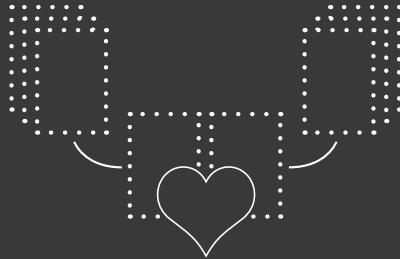
Referring to the card set can help to more clearly define the scope of research, breaking down the wider subject, moving from general to specific.



METHODS FOR USE IN PAIRS

Speed-dating

Both look through the pack of cards at the different categories. Each chooses one card that represents the biggest lifesaver of their project and one card the biggest killer. Once each person has chosen, reveal your lifesaver and killer cards to your partner and explain why you have chosen those cards.



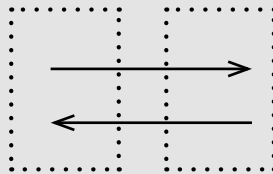
Pick a Card

To help prepare for presentations or exams. In pairs, take turns to each pick a card from the pack, and then ask your partner questions relating to the card category about a current or recent project. Your partner has to answer as best he/she can. This is a good opportunity to play devil's advocate in relation to one another's projects in order to help constructively analyse and consider aspects impacting the life of the project.



Compare and Contrast

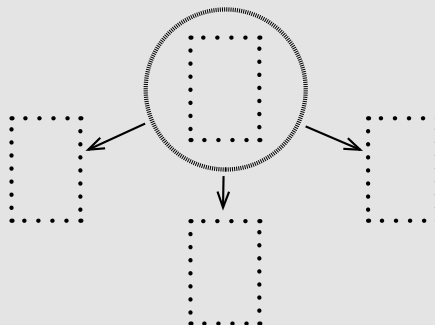
Each choose a random card from the pack. Place both cards side by side and compare and contrast the two factors as they relate to your project, or how they have effected past projects differently. Repeat with different cards randomly chosen from the pack. The aim is to broaden and strengthen awareness of connections between different factors and the extent of their compatibility, influencing the life or death of projects.



METHODS FOR USE IN A GROUP

One Element, Many Elements

Start with one card category - it could be the keystone of your project or it may be an aspect that has been sidelined. Discuss its part in the project. Then start adding more card categories and discuss how these relate to the original card.



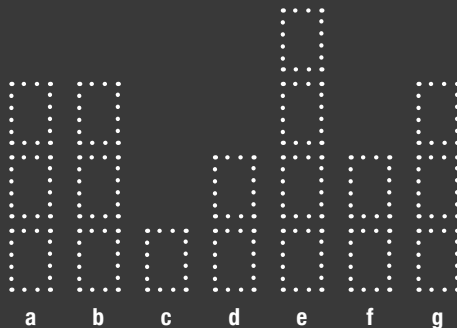
Role-play

A good icebreaker when starting a new project.
Pick a card or get the project manager to distribute them.
Whatever card you are given, you then have to relay its importance in the project.



Data Visualisation

These qualitative factors on cards can be displayed in quantitative ways. Pooling votes on the biggest issues in a project or visualising the balance of parties involved in a project can help find the gaps within the working group. Using the cards to create graphs or charts can be a great way to visualise progress and motivate the team.



PART 3

7/ USE OF TOOLKIT CASE STUDY – LIFE AND DEATH SYMPOSIUM

The Project Ecology Diagram and Life and Death Project Card Set have been used in the Life and Death Symposium. Here are some results from the workshop:



Use card to reflect on one's project



Project Life and Death Speed-dating



Voting



Top 5 Project Lifesavers and Killers as voted by the 50 participants:

Lifesavers

No. 1 - Collaborators (19)

No. 2 - User (6)

No. 3 - Technology (6)

No. 4 - Ethics (5)

No. 5 - Client (4)

Killers

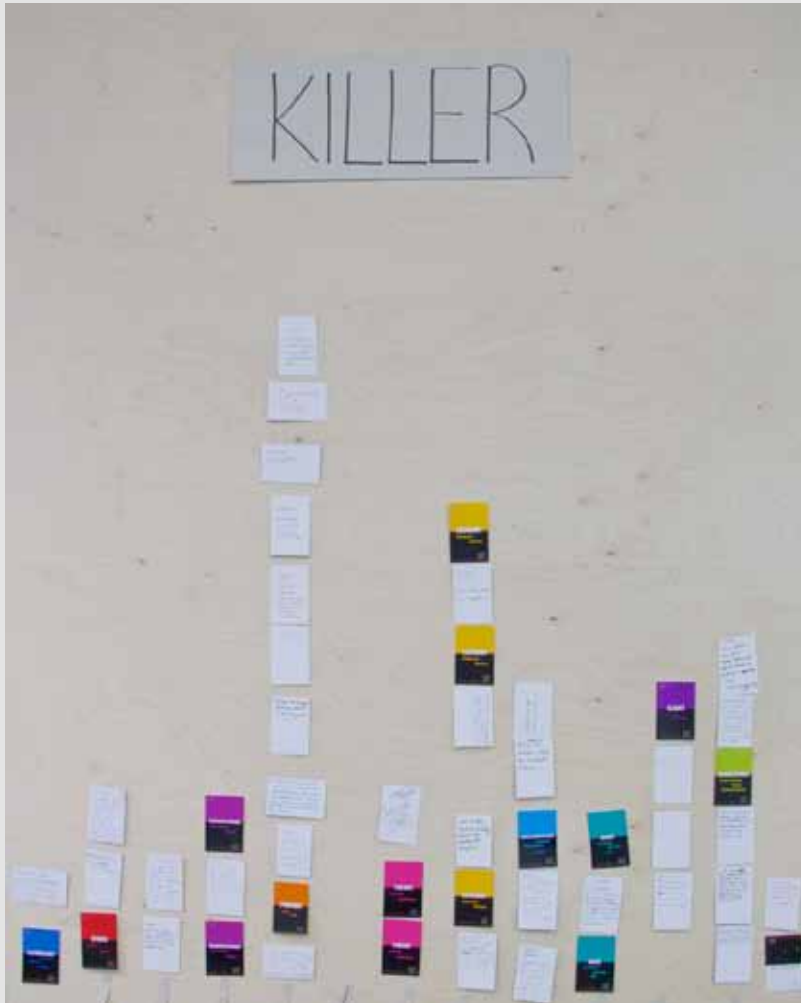
No. 1 - Funding (11)

No. 2 - Economy (8)

No. 3 - Regulations (6)

No. 4 - Collaborators (5)

No. 5 - Client (4)



Participants were asked to turn over the cards and write a reason for choosing it as a lifesaver or killer. These were collected and displayed as a visual graph to allow others to read and compare.

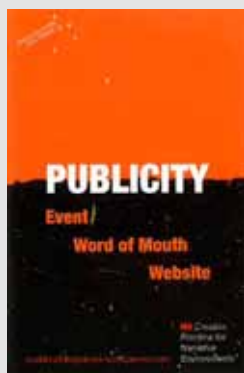
Comments on the Cards:

Lifesavers:



People working in the group have different skillsets & network contacts that helped resolved problems. specialised tasks were passed onto whoever had the skills & sped up production

- helps ^{to} sustain funding & publicity
- networking / find supporters
- share project specific ideas
- critical feedback
- inspiration / new ideas



For me publicity,
(even just the enthusiasm
of friends, tutors &
fellow students) has had
the most positive effect
on my recent projects
- Word of Mouth -
(good word of mouth)
has been invaluable
in prolonging the
shelf life of a project
(unlucky crm is very good
at this)
A KEY COMPONENT

Killers:



Killer

It's difficult to
persuade other people
to give money to
you to produce your
idea.



working in public space - we put up prototypes. but if we had wanted to put things up permanently it would have been an issue - health and safety.



KILLER

IF THE PRODUCT DOES NOT APPEAL TO THE USER/ENGAGE THE USER/ENCOURAGE THE USER POTENTIALLY IT WON'T HAVE THE SUPPORT IT NEEDS TO BE OF USE.

8/ PROJECT LIFE AND DEATH CASE STUDIES

1

Andreas Lang - Public Works

www.publicworksgroup.net





Andreas studied at CSM and at the Architectural Association, London. He taught in the intermediate school at the AA from 2000 to 2007 and was a curator of the '*Alternative Practice Research Cluster*'. He has lectured and run workshops in Europe, South Africa and Iran. He is co-founder and director of *Public Works*.

His graduation project at the AA 'Office for Informal Contact' can be seen as a first 'prototype' of the type of projects which, with his practice *Public Works*, he has continued to work on for nearly fifteen years. In the process of working on his thesis project, Andreas met the artist Kathrin Bohm with whom he went on to found *Public Works* along with Stefan Saffer, Troange Khonsari and Sandra Denicke-Polcher.

Public Works, is an art and architecture practice concerned with public space. Their projects address the question of how the public realm is shaped by its users and how existing dynamics can inform further proposals. Projects span across scales and address the relation between the informal and formal aspects of a site. Outputs include socio-spatial and physical structures, public events and publications.

Public Works creative approach to the way they work can be seen in that many potential ‘killers’ are transformed into ‘lifesavers’.

Collaborators

Public Works projects are collaborative in nature. The focus is on the production and extension of a particular public space through participation and collaboration with local stakeholders.

Since 2006, *Public Works* have run Friday sessions (<http://www.publicworksgroup.net/fridaysessions/>), inviting practitioners and theorists to speak about their work and engage in informal and practitioner led discussions. Through these sessions they build informal networks, that feed into their projects, on which they collaborate alongside clients and users with friends, experts and specialists.

Client / User

See Collaborations

Economy

The set up of *Public Works* as a collective has allowed them to ‘weather’ economic ups and downs. Collective members have undertaken various small commissions alongside the main work of *Public Works*. Members also hold various academic positions in art or architecture at a variety of institutions to maintain a consistent income.

Economy / Theory

In recent projects *Public Works* have been exploring ‘alternative economic systems’, such as, the idea of an informal economy as a generator for a new social space (*Park Products* -<http://www.publicworksgroup.net/projects/park-products>), or trade as a methodology to exchange and network cultural knowledge, goods, producers and users (*International Village Shop* -<http://www.publicworksgroup.net/projects/InternationalVillageShop>).

Ecological Environment

Ecological and environmental concerns within projects have recently increased, especially with respect to the local environment in which members live and work, termed by Andreas “Citizens First, Architects After”. The practice’s current project WICK ON WHEELS (<http://www.publicworksgroup.net/fromthewick/>) is a roaming production unit, which will travel across East London. It will engage with local communities to reuse, recycle, repair and re-make. The production will focus on direct interventions on vacant sites and harvest maps that can benefit the local community.

Funding

The majority of *Public Works* projects to date have been commissioned through arts funding. The 'art world' is receptive and supportive of projects with open briefs. This enabled *Public Works* to pursue their approach, where the outcome is not predefined but a result of the process.

With a recent focus on acting in their local communities or nearby context, *Public Works* have transferred their status from sole trader partnership to a social enterprise. This has enabled them to access a wider range of funding opportunities. The idea for the social enterprise was to become more financially sustainable, and to become their own client and self-initiate their own projects.

Publicity

Publicity is integral to *Publics Works* approach. They create individual websites for most projects. The websites map out the process of the project showing the different actors involved, their relationships and how the design evolved. Alongside the websites, *Public Works* self-publish fanzines to accompany the projects. They have developed a representational language, DIY aesthetic, which uses sketches and diagrams. It enables them to emphasise the importance of encounter and informal exchange in their projects and record these important aspects quickly and clearly.

Technology / Manufacturing

Public Works employ playful methods to involve local

users, residents and passers-by in their projects, often making interventions on site in order to inform and expand a brief. The small scale and ad-hoc nature of the projects mean that they can be constructed on site, with users, often using DIY techniques.

Claire Healy / Yookyeong Hong -

Edible Forest Garden

www.facebook.com/edibleforestgarden

www.facebook.com/#!/edible.urbangarden

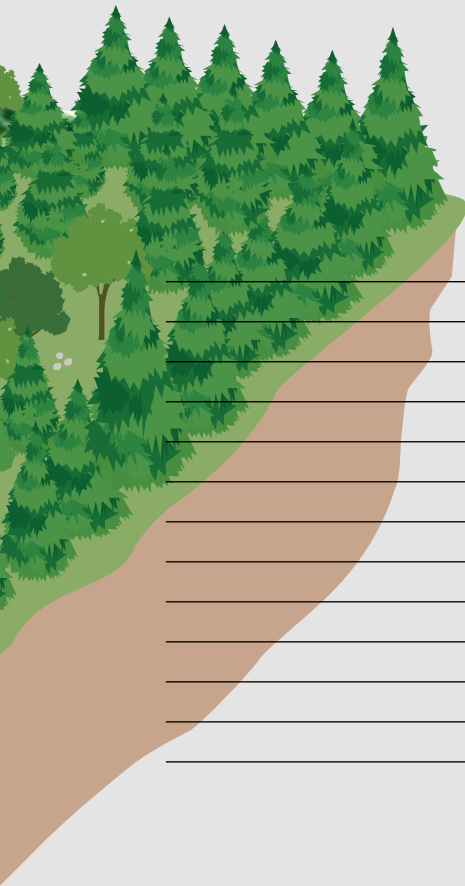
2



Claire studied BA Arts, Design & Environment

(Architecture Pathway) and MA Creative Practice for Narrative Environments at Central Saint Martins. For her MA major project, she designed and implemented the *Edible Forest Garden*, an immersive visitor experience located near Dublin. Visitors become hunter-gatherers through experiences based around foraging for food in a forest environment.





1 berry bed

2 edible grow bed

3 compost toilet

4 pig enclosure

5 herb spiral

6 the vegetable patch

7 apothecary tea house

8 lunar classroom

9 treetop walkway & edible canopy

10 temple

11 tipi

12 the circle

13 the laboratree

Yookyeong studied painting and product design in Seoul and worked as an artist on spatial installations for major companies and institutions before undertaking an MA in Narrative Environments at CSM. For her graduation project she collaborated with Claire on designing workshops and contributed an art installation for the *Edible Forest Garden*.

Since graduating, Claire has worked as a curator and spatial designer with Punchdrunk, RAA, Wayward Plants and Greenbelt Festival and will be taking her *Edible Forest Garden* experience to Ethiopia, where she will work with ‘Connect Ethiopia’ and the local community to create agricultural visitor experiences.

Yookyeong is currently working on an *Edible Forest Garden* project in Korea. The project was won through a competition, ‘Creating Art Town’. Prior to winning the competition Yookyeong approached various organisations, but was unsuccessful. She realised that she needed to have a local team and clearer plan tailored to local conditions to get funding.

Collaborators

The idea of collaboration is central to the ethos of the *Edible Forest Garden*. Workshops to clear the forest area and undertake the initial planting were done with the help of a network of volunteers. Claire also collaborated with artists, including Yookyeong, to construct the art installations and run the workshops and events. Whilst working on the *Edible Forest Garden* the team linked up with a variety of people that were engaged in similar activities in the area. Through

these collaborations the project has created ‘spinoffs’, such as, a composting company in Dublin.

The current project in Korea is a collaboration between 10 key members - artists, designers, workshop facilitators and an engineer, and a changing group of community volunteers.

Client

The *Edible Forest Garden* was constructed on private land with a private client. After the completion of construction and planting, the client decided not to sponsor the project further due to issues with the landowner. However, as the project was successful and the business model well developed, it has been possible to transport to a new contexts.

Ecological Environment / Theory

The *Edible Forest Garden* works on the principle of permaculture. Thus gardens in different locations differ / react to local ecological and environmental conditions.

Economy

The project was in many ways a reaction to the current economic situation. It offers an alternative economy for those affected. Volunteers share their time and skills to set up the garden and in return get food and other natural products, such as firewood. The permaculture concept ensures that in the long term the garden is self-sustaining.

Funding

The *Edible Forest Garden* requires initial funding to set up the project, after which it is self-sustaining and managed by the community created through the project. The initial project was funded by a private client. The *Edible Forest Garden* in Korea is funded by ‘The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism’ and the local government of ‘Su-won City’.

Publicity

A Facebook page was set up as part of the project. Despite the original garden not being active, the page has around 3000 followers who continue to communicate about ideas of edible landscapes and permaculture. The project in Korea also has a Facebook page and a Blog.

As a community project the *Edible Forest Garden* relies largely on publicity through local ‘word of mouth’ and face to face meetings.

An online documentation of the project was part of the original plan but never happened. Such documentation would have been useful to explain the project to potential funders/ collaborators.

User

The user in *Edible Forest Garden* is producer as well as ‘consumer’. At the end of the forest clearing workshop, volunteers (users) could take firewood home. They could also ‘clear their home’ and bring unwanted burnable objects for the workshop bonfire event. At the end of the planting workshop, which took place on Valentine’s Day volunteers (users) took home a plant with a love-related meaning.





Raya Tueny studied graphics in Paris and Beirut and worked in retail and cultural development in Europe, the Middle East and the USA creating brand experiences; before undertaking an MA in Creative Practice for Narrative Environments at Central Saint Martins.

Raya's major project *Made for Beirut* is a fashion movement aimed at repositioning Beirut (Lebanon), as a sustainable and creative city. Fashion is used as the medium, as it employs a wide variety of creative industries, such as, traditional crafts, music, graphic design, spatial design, architecture and photography.

For her graduation project Raya staged the first *Made for Beirut* event, entitled *Fashion Daze*. For the September 2010 event, international and local fashion designers were paired with local photographers. Each photographer was asked to photograph the twin collections in Beirut, making a

statement about the city and dialogs within it. The photographic installations along with the designers' collections were exhibited in a raw space in Beirut's central district. During the exhibition, daily events, fashion films, performances and live music took place in the space. Following the event, Raya won the UK Best Entrepreneur Award for the Arts. Raya is currently collaborating with creative Beirut locals on *Fashion Daze* the second *Made for Beirut* event.

Collaborations

Made for Beirut, as a non- profit enterprise, is founded on the idea of the collaboration of creative people, working together to re-brand Beirut - "MFB is a collaboration amongst people who love Beirut. It is a call for action. It is the platform that will allow change to happen". MFB consists of a core of creative people and a large network of both local and global collaborators that come together for specific events/actions.

Economy

The economic timing of the project was appropriate as companies are interested in encouraging tourism and economic activity (see funding). The initiative was successful as it identified a gap in the market in Beirut for fashion based interventions aimed at a young/creative audience.

Funding

Made for Beirut was successful in gaining funding and support from a variety of companies that wanted to be associated with young and creative Beirut. The event was

sponsored by one of Beirut's largest property owners, a luxury fashion department stores, hotels, a bank, and an airline.

To allow Raya to continue to be engaged in MFB, which is a non profit activity, she set up 'Made for Brands' a commercial spin off of MFB, creating narratives for brands. Such as a recent Mother's day event for a fashion shopping complex that wanted to change it's image from a centre geared solely at wealthy clients. The event included free makeovers and a photography session for mothers and daughters.

Publicity

The widespread and positive publicity that the first MFB event received in the local and global press has been crucial to the continued success of the initiative. MFB also has a website that is updated regularly with events, and uses Facebook and Twitter to continuously expand the network of collaborators and participants.

Regulations

Regulations are less constrained in Beirut, things can happen faster. Putting together a project of such scale in many other places around the world would have taken longer.

User

MFB sees the user as more than a passive receiver. The user is a collaborator - maker and agent -and as such key to the success of the initiative.





Mariana lives and works in London. She's a founding member of the art & architecture collective *The Decorators* and the editor of Design Exchange Magazine. She holds a degree in Architecture from FAUP (Porto), and an MA in Creative Practice for Narrative Environments from CSM.

Mariana's major project at MA Creative Practice for Narrative Environments was concerned with developing an experimental format reading architecture architecture based on literature. The thesis took the form of a book "Built Speculations: an alternative vocabulary to depict architectural narratives".

Mariana is continuing to pursue some of the ideas developed in the MA through practice and theory. Recent projects include the Auction Room (<http://www.iusedtobeanarchitect.com/index.php?/writing/the-auction-room/Auction>) and Ridley's (<http://iusedtobeanarchitect.com/index.php?/writing/>)

ridleys/) developed in collaboration with *The Decorators*. Mariana is now curating the exhibition ‘The Real and Other Fictions’ for the 2013 Lisbon Architecture Triennial and developing the theory side of her work through a PhD at The Bartlett School of Architecture.

Collaborators

Mariana’s projects are collaborative in nature. In her curatorial projects she collaborates with a changing group of artists, theorists and designers. Mariana collaborates regularly on projects with *The Decorators* and these projects feed both directly (such as the recent *The Croydon Club*) and indirectly her curatorial and theoretical work.

Client / User

Clients and users are also collaborators. The playful nature of most of the projects that Mariana and *The Decorators* develop, and the active role that users play in them means that they are accessible and engaging for a wide variety of audiences and users. The projects are not aimed at specific groups, but rather they consist of different layers making them accessible to both an informed, educated art and design audience, but also to the general public.

Economy / Funding


The recent economic downturn has made it harder to obtain funding for projects. Mariana supports her ‘experimental projects’ through writing and editorial work.

Economy / Theory

In her recent project *The Auction Room* Mariana explored the idea of an 'alternative economy'. Artifacts in *The Auction Room* could not be bought, only swapped or exchanged, Mariana explains - "swapping services is a common practice amongst designers, architects and artists, so exchange became the adopted currency". The same principle defined the nature of Ridley's, a temporary restaurant in Ridley Road Market that exchanged food for food.

Publicity

Communication is critical to keep projects alive. Mariana met her first collaborators 'Designersblock' with whom she worked on the Auction Room at the CSM's MA interim show. Mariana maintains a website for her own work, a website for her work with *The Decorators* and regularly sends out her projects and writing to art and design magazines.



the end

Editors:

Rachel Mikulsky
Eva(Dan) Xie
Katie Russell
Claire Whetton
Shibboleth Shechter

Graphic Designers:

Alexander Goller
Sumedha Garg (Life and Death Card Set)

Advisors:

Patricia Austin
Shibboleth Shechter
Stuart Jones

Sustainability Team:

Rachel Mikulsky
Beverley White
Eva (Dan) Xie
Katie Russell
Zajzon Noemi
Crona Connolly
Sumedha Garg
Claire Whetton
Jeffrey Jianhua Zhang
Alexander Goller
Yukie Nagasawa
Yue Yu

sustainablespaces.wordpress.com

9/ APPENDIX
LIFE AND DEATH CARD SET
TO PRINT OUT



