

# **Participatory Practice in Space, Place, and Service Design**

Questions of Access, Engagement and Creative Experience

Edited by

**Kelly L. Anderson**

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Series editor

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AMPS (Architecture, Media, Politics, Society)

**The Interdisciplinary Built Environment**



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**Donna Milani Luther** has been the visionary force of the Inly School since 1996 shepherding its growth from 160 to 250 students; expanding its Children's House and Elementary programs; increasing fundraising; achieving dual accreditation from AISNE and AMS; and building the Meehan Family Artsbarn and the DaVinci Studio building. Donna teaches facilitation and the integration of creativity, leadership, and team building to educators and business professionals worldwide, most recently visiting Japan to both learn and teach. Donna is an adjunct faculty member at Lesley University in the national and international M.Ed. program for creative arts in learning. She also serves as an adjunct faculty member at Suffolk University, where she facilitates seminars in creativity and creative problem-solving. In addition, she designed and directs Camp Summer Stars, a performing arts program for inner-city youth. Donna holds a B.A. in speech and theatre from Bridgewater State University and an M.Ed. from Lesley University

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Interior Design Magazine and Ada Louise Huxtable's book *The Tall Building Artistically Reconsidered*.

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**Taylor Kuhn** founded Design for Agency with the belief we can design more agency in our lives and help others to do so too. She has an MFA in transdisciplinary design from Parsons, The New School, and a BFA in communication and packaging design from the Fashion Institute of Technology. She is passionate about contributing to the awareness and practice of the commons as a resource for community resilience, and using creativity as a tool to bring people together around those shared civic issues. She is the director of Building Blocks, a program that leads participatory design projects that enhance our ownership of our shared public spaces.

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# Acronyms

4Cs	Creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration
ADA	Americans Disabilities Act
AOC	Agents of Change (Architecture)
ANT	Actor-Network Theory
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AR	Augmented Reality
ATTA	Abbreviated Torrance Test for Adults
AV	Audio Visual
BIM	Building Information Modelling
C3P	Citizen-Public-Private Partnership
CDD	Communicative Disorders Department
CenterState CEO	CenterState Corporation for Economic Opportunity
CE	Circular Economy
CI	Creative Index
CP	Community Psychology
CRC	Collections Research Centre
DLT	Distributed-Ledger-Technology
GTF	Graphic Thought Facility
HVAC	Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning
ID	Industrial Design
IRB	International Review Board
JPI	Joint Programming Initiative
LBM	Living Building Material
MoC	Museum of Childhood
MoC	Matters of Concern
MoF	Matters of Fact
NCARB	National Council of Architectural Registration
NIH	National Institutes of Health

ODPHP	Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
PPPP	Public-Private-People Partnerships
PODPHP	The Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
R&D	Research and Development
RWL	Real-World Laboratory
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDOH	Social Determinants of Health
ULL	Urban Living Lab
V&A	Victoria and Albert Museum
VR	Virtual Reality
WHO	The World Health Organization



# Introduction

Kelly L. Anderson

*Monash University, Australia*

This book is rooted in the belief that participatory practices are key to finding creative solutions to the many problems we face every day. It argues that engaging practitioners with the general public in mutual exploration, analysis and creative thinking is essential. It not only ensures better quality products and services, and a greater sense of civic agency, it facilitates fuller access to them, and the life opportunities they can unleash. On this basis, the book suggests that participatory practices are multi-disciplinary and relevant in fields as diverse as design, architecture, education, health care, sustainability and community activism, to name a few of those discussed across chapters. It asks questions such as *how do designed objects and environments affect wellness, creativity, learning and a sense of belonging? How do products and services affect everyday experience and attitudes towards issues such as sustainability? How does giving people a creative voice in their own education, services and built environments open up their potential and strengthen identity and civic agency?* Addressing these questions requires a rethinking of relations between people, objects and environments; it demands attention to space, place, and services.

In bringing together a range of projects and questions, *Participatory Practice in Space, Place and Service Design* offers a uniquely varied perspective of the myriad ways in which participatory practices operate across disciplines, and how they impact the communities and worlds we create and inhabit. Whether implemented in classrooms, communities or cities, the collected works herein operate across a diversity of fields: architecture, urban studies, education, public health, urban design, co-design, service design, industrial design and landscape architecture. The authors of these works range from academics, educators, scholars, researchers, designers, and architects. As such, the chapters are presented through the lens of these identities, intentionally not conforming to a homogenous structure in practice and presentation. This diversity across practitioners offers readers a variety of approaches and methods. Each chapter is presented with a distinct position and voice, exploring a wide range of case studies, projects, and emerging research interests from a global perspective. Case studies are presented throughout the

chapters, and the reader is encouraged to attune to the challenges, pitfalls, and the application of participatory methods.

While three distinct themes have emerged to assist in the organisation of chapters, the collection presented in this book is not intended to be a prescribed way of thinking or doing for its readers. Much like the practitioners and researchers invited to take part in this publication, we invite readers across space, place, and discipline to explore and interrogate the case studies presented throughout. With each chapter comes an opportunity to examine one's own practice through investigating positions, approaches, and mindsets. Grounded in practice, pragmatism and education, contributing authors present possibilities, potentialities, and stimulations for future projects. Tethering each chapter to the next is a desire to redefine what it means to access, engage, and experience through participatory spaces, places, and services. Rather than an inventory of methods or tools, this collection is a reflexive examination of how participatory practices play a part in space, place, and services that are seen and felt in the everyday lives of people.

The first section, *Access*, focuses on how participatory practices can improve things like the *accessible* design of buildings, and *access* to services such as inclusive adult education programs. The following concepts and ideas are all explored in distinct ways to challenge, demand, and encapsulate participatory practices for issues of *access*: access to emotional, mental, intellectual, and psychological wellness (Lee, Ch. 1); access to everyday tasks (Feld, Ch. 2); access to a creative agency (Nyboer, Ch. 3); and access to equitable belonging (Bonnell et al., Ch. 4). Space, place, and services are redefined and re-examined across chapters, offering varying accounts of what often is not accessible among the people we design for.

The second section, *Engagement*, focuses on how to engage people in the design and uptake of new ideas, such as user prototyping initiatives for interactive museums and workshops to introduce play in the workplace. Whether it's engaging with one's own lived experiences (Anderson, Ch. 5); engaging with material culture in museums (Coward, Ch. 6); engaging with play in the workplace (Heljakka and Blomberg, Ch. 7); engaging with sustainable models of livability (Klautzer et al., Ch. 8); or engaging with uncertainty (Kenniff, Ch. 9), the authors here present modes and contexts that reimagine what engagement can be within space, place, and services.

The third and last section, *Creative Experience*, focuses on processes of co-creation and co-design such as students and teachers co-setting projects, or communities designing neighbourhood gardens with landscape architects. Here, authors record case studies of how participatory practices can achieve their goals by allowing people to creatively experience: one's own potential

(Belferman et al., Ch. 10); linking identity to place (Musfy, Ch. 11); learning in schools (Foucar-Szocki et al., Ch. 12); civic agency in communities (Kuhn, Ch. 13); and sensoriality of technologies (Chyon, Ch. 14).

The three sections critically examine and question issues of access, engagement and creative experience through participatory practices among space, place and services.

### **Practice-Led Participatory Research**

*"[Practice-led researchers] tend to 'dive in', to commence practising to see what emerges...This is not to say these researchers work without larger agendas or emancipatory aspirations, but they eschew the constraints of narrow problem setting and rigid methodological requirements at the outset of a project".<sup>1</sup>*

- Haseman 2006

While research may be considered the articulation of knowledge, and practice the embodiment of knowledge,<sup>2</sup> practice-led participatory research focuses not on defending the creative artefact as a research outcome, but more on acknowledging the project itself as the frame of inquiry by which we can advance knowing with others, where the research is grounded by the project, and the theory emerges from the applied project experience<sup>3</sup> and of its participants. Practice-led research is often generative, explorative, and iterative. Moreover, it offers space for everyday people themselves to examine and question issues of access, engagement and creative experience they themselves see in their own lives. Participatory practice centres people in its inquiry, allowing space for research to emerge and evolve with people's needs, wants and desires.

The very concept of practice provides a powerful way to re-conceptualise what the world is made up of. It links people's behaviours with the materials and technologies they engage with, underlying infrastructures, and the

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<sup>1</sup> Brad Haseman, "A Manifesto for Performative Research," *Media International Australia incorporating Culture and Policy* 118, no. 118 (2006): 98-106. Accessed on October 3, 2020, 3.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Pierre Johnson, Jen Ballie, Tine Thorup, Elizabeth Brooks and Emma Brooks, "CO/DEsign: building a shared dialogue around analysis within co-design," *The Design Journal* 20, sup1 (2017): S4241-S4252. Accessed June 6, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Lisa Grocott, and Ricardo Sosa, "The Contribution of Design in Interdisciplinary Collaborations: A Framework for Amplifying Project-Grounded Research," in *Associations: Creative practice and research*. Ed. Oliver, J. (Australia: Melbourne University Publishing, 2016): 1-294.

meanings associated with them.<sup>4</sup> Practice allows space and place to re-imagine the systems and structures that affect and surround our daily lives. Moreover, participatory practices involve everyday people in the creation of services, technology, and resources.<sup>5</sup> They seek to represent otherwise silent voices in a range of projects and policies, creating a shift from people being the object of research to a research partner.<sup>6</sup> Participatory practices and research are seen as a way for the public sector to respond to societal challenges and to address marginalisation and disillusionment<sup>7</sup> within space, place and services.

While more traditional design<sup>8</sup> practices focus on physical and visual outputs, such as: visual communication design, interior space design, product design, information design, architecture, and planning; emerging participatory practices focus on: experiencing, emotion, interacting, sustainability, serving, and transforming, challenging what we design, how we design, and who designs.<sup>9</sup> Participatory practices not only challenge the marginalisation found in systems and structures, but also implicit in some other research methodologies.<sup>10</sup> Participatory practices and researchers offer powerful alternatives in their creative and visual methods:<sup>11</sup> modifying existing research methods to generate new ways of looking, interpreting and

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<sup>4</sup> Lucy Kimbell, "Chapter 3 Behaving and experiencing," in *The Service Innovation Handbook: Action-oriented creative thinking toolkit for service organizations*. 64-94. (Amsterdam: BIS Publishers, 2014), 66.

<sup>5</sup> Eleanor Mattern, Wei Jeng, Daqing He, Liz Lyon, and Aaron Brenner, "Using participatory design and visual narrative inquiry to investigate researchers' data challenges and recommendations for library research data services," *Program electronic library and information systems* 49, no. 4 (2015): 408-423. Accessed June 6, 2019, 410.

<sup>6</sup> Charlotte L. Clarke, Heather Wilkinson, Julie Watson, Jane Wilcockson, Lindsay Kinnaird, and Toby Williamson, "A Seat Around the Table: Participatory Data Analysis With People Living with Dementia," *Qualitative Health Research* 28, no. 9 (2018): 1421-1433. Accessed December 12, 2019, 1421.

<sup>7</sup> Jenny L. Davis, *How Artifacts Afford: The Power and Politics of Everyday Things* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2020), 233.

<sup>8</sup> Everybody designs who devises courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones (Herbert Simon, 1969). <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/news-opinion/what-do-we-mean-design>

<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth B. N. Sanders, and Pieter Jan Stappers, "Co-creation and the new landscapes of design," *CoDesign* 4, no. 1 (2008): 5-18. Accessed May 27, 2019, 11.

<sup>10</sup> Phil Cotterell, "Exploring the value of service user involvement in data analysis: 'Our interpretation is about what lies below the surface,'" *Educational Action Research* 16, no. 1 (2008): 5-17. Accessed on November 12, 2020, 7.

<sup>11</sup> David Gauntlett, "Chapter 1: Introduction," in *Creative Explorations: New Approaches to Identities and Audiences* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 182.

representing knowledge claims, often creating their own methods to probe the phenomena of practice.<sup>12</sup> Oftentimes these new ways of researching are emerging through engagement with the very people it seeks to serve.

Many participatory practices and research methods allow time for participants to reflect; which gets them doing or making something; and do not expect that responses to a research topic can necessarily be articulated in verbal or written language.<sup>13</sup> Practice-led research is intrinsically experiential<sup>14</sup> and researchers acknowledge that what emerges is individualistic and idiosyncratic.<sup>15</sup> Some methods, as seen throughout this book, may be performative, embodied, imaginative, reflexive and material-based. These emergent practices are not meant to lay antithetical to other research methods, but offer participants various ways to access, engage and creatively experience space, place and services.

As participatory practices expand their field of application<sup>16</sup> into new, emergent spaces, various challenges drive the convergence in practice and research, including: increasingly ambiguous boundaries between artefacts, structures, and processes; increasingly large-scale social, economic, and systemic issues; and an increasingly complex environment of needs, requirements and constraints.<sup>17</sup> Whether making interfaces, objects, systems, services or experiences—participatory practices are as much about understanding intangible factors such as behaviour, culture, value systems and relationships<sup>18</sup> as it is about questioning issues of access, engagement and creative experience.

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<sup>12</sup> Brad Haseman, "A Manifesto for Performative Research," *Media International Australia incorporating Culture and Policy* 118, no. 118 (2006): 98-106. Accessed on October 3, 2020, 104.

<sup>13</sup> David Gauntlett, "Chapter 1: Introduction," in *Creative Explorations: New Approaches to Identities and Audiences* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 6.

<sup>14</sup> Brad Haseman, "A Manifesto for Performative Research," in *Media International Australia incorporating Culture and Policy* 118, no. 118 (2006): 98-106. Accessed on October 3, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X0611800113>, 100.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Lisa Grocott, Kate McEntee, Kathryn Coleman, and Roger Manix, "The becoming of a designer: An affective pedagogical approach to modelling and scaffolding risk-taking," *Art, Design & Communication in Higher Education*. 18 (2019): 99-112.

<sup>17</sup> Jenny L. Davis, *How Artifacts Afford: The Power and Politics of Everyday Things* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2020), 2.

<sup>18</sup> Lisa Grocott, Kate McEntee, Kathryn Coleman, and Roger Manix, "The becoming of a designer: An affective pedagogical approach to modelling and scaffolding risk-taking," *Art, Design & Communication in Higher Education*. 1 (2019): 99-112.

### Access

Within the first section, issues of access critically examine aspects of who actually benefits from things and through what processes they are able to do so - focusing on issues of who does, and who does not, get to use *what*, in *what ways*, and *when*.<sup>19</sup> Access extends past physically entering a space, it is about *all* possible means by which a person is able to benefit from things.<sup>20</sup> Issues arise and demand inquiry when a person is refused benefit from those very spaces, places, and services designed to improve their lives. The complexity around issues of access is seen throughout the scales of products, processes, systems and structures that surround our daily lives. Through participatory practices, researchers themselves can access the rich information needed about how the people they seek to improve through design are affected by such issues of access.

### Engagement

Through more embodied and concrete connections with materials in physical processes of making,<sup>21</sup> participatory practices begin to shift methods from things being an 'object' of study to being part of the empirical process of engagement.<sup>22</sup> The chapters presented in this section focus on projects that showcase engagement of people in their own design process.

Space, place and services all encourage some line of action, which are designed to be obvious, expected, and seamless to execute.<sup>23</sup> So what happens when a person cannot engage as intended? What does it mean to be discouraged, refused, or not allowed engagement in space, place and service? As practitioners, these questions demand examination of our own practice and participation. The participatory practices highlighted in this section exemplify the possibilities that can be realised through the design process,

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<sup>19</sup> Jesse C. Ribot, and Nancy Lee Peluso, "A Theory of Access," *Rural Sociology* 68, no. 2 (2003): 153-181. Accessed February 12, 2020, 154

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>21</sup> Rachel Luck, "Inclusive design and making in practice: Bringing bodily experience into closer contact with making," *Design Studies* 54 (2018): 96-119. Accessed May 27, 2019, 112.

<sup>22</sup> Sophie Woodward, "Object interviews, material imaginings and 'unsettling' methods: interdisciplinary approaches to understanding materials and material culture," *Qualitative Research* 16, no. 4 (2016): 359-374. Accessed July 3, 2020, 362.

<sup>23</sup> Jenny L. Davis, *How Artifacts Afford: The Power and Politics of Everyday Things* 1-208. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2020), 43.

enabling people to engage in the activities necessary to achieve what they want, rather than to give them what they want.<sup>24</sup>

When the body engages with the physical and cultural world, it must be studied in terms of the dynamic interaction between people and the environment.<sup>25</sup> How do we, as practitioners, employ participatory methods to explore these embodied engagements, affording our participants avenues for non-verbal, sensory, kinesthetic, material and imaginary ways of knowing? Employing methods that just elicit the verbal fails to explore a large area of human engagement and understanding.<sup>26</sup> Participatory practices can be seen as a mechanism by which people themselves engage with improving space, place and services.

### Creative Experience

Creative and visual research methods give people the opportunity to communicate different kinds of information.<sup>27</sup> Through processes and experiences of co-creation and co-design, participants can jointly explore and articulate their latent needs and jointly explore and 'make' solutions.<sup>28</sup> The process of material making is a process unto itself and can be critically explored as experiences practitioners undertake. Creative material methods can offer new insights and ways of thinking about the whole spectrum of social lives.<sup>29</sup> If people can express their experiences in a playful and creative way their focus will shift from their current needs to dreams and wishes that are inspirational for future designs.<sup>30</sup> Participatory practices can offer people an avenue for creatively experiencing space, place and services, in an effort to improve systems and structures through design.

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<sup>24</sup> Natasha N. Jones, "Narrative Inquiry in Human-Centered Design: Examining Silence and Voice to Promote Social Justice in Design Scenarios," *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication* 46, no. 4 (2016): 471-492. Accessed June 4, 2019, 474.

<sup>25</sup> Raymond W. Gibbs Jr., "Embodied experience and linguistic meaning," *Brain and Language* 84, no. 1 (2001): 1-15. Accessed October 7, 2019, 2.

<sup>26</sup> Sophie Woodward, "Object interviews, material imaginings and 'unsettling' methods: interdisciplinary approaches to understanding materials and material culture," in *Qualitative Research* 16, no. 4 (2016): 359-374. Accessed July 3, 2020, 76.

<sup>27</sup> David Gauntlett, "Chapter 1: Introduction," in *Creative Explorations: New Approaches to Identities and Audiences* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 182.

<sup>28</sup> Marc Steen, Menno Manschot, and Nicole De Koning, "Benefits of Co-design in Service Design Projects," *International Journal of Design* 5, no. 2 (2011): 53-60, 54.

<sup>29</sup> Sophie Woodward, "Object interviews, material imaginings and 'unsettling' methods: interdisciplinary approaches to understanding materials and material culture," *Qualitative Research* 16, no. 4 (2016): 359-374. Accessed July 3, 2020, 372.

<sup>30</sup> Stephen A. G. Wensveen, "Probing experiences," *Design & Emotion 1999, Delft*. Accessed June 6, 2019, 24.

## Closing Thoughts

What follows is neither traditional nor inventive. It is not about the end-product, the end-user, or outcomes. The authors ask more questions than they answer, and the reader is encouraged to explore issues of access, engagement and creative experience in their own practice. What are the capacities and capabilities of participatory practices? How might they improve space, place, and service within complex systems? Each chapter is distinct in its own voice, identity, and culture. The diversity of practices presented here hopefully stimulates those reading to try out, build upon, and challenge the boundaries of their own practice. The chapters presented in this book do not offer a single dimension of participatory practice. Nor do they attempt to resolve or reconcile tensions within practice. Instead, the book speaks to the way that practitioners might hold these tensions, questioning issues of access, engagement, and creative experience over solutions.

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