Mobile disruptive architecture: Tactics for generating collectivity and meaning making

Christine F. White

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By: **Christine White**

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Dr. MJ Thompson	Chair
Dr. Lorrie Blaire	Examiner
MJ Thompson	Supervisor

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Abstract

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This study looks at four cases surrounding mobile disruptive architecture. A niche method for delivering pop-up arts-based programming via bikes, bike trailers, or trollies and into public space. Using mixed-methods, qualitative interview data from practitioners are understood through thematic analyses and compared alongside auto-ethnographic accounts. Henry Lefebvre's (1991) theory of social space, Chantal Mouffe's (2007) theory of agonistic interventions and Christina Standerfer, et al.'s (2022) theory on community readiness are also applied. My research question asks, How does mobile disruptive architecture generate new meaning in relation to place, and new forms of collectivity while fostering public dialogue? The projects analyzed are: 1) Bakery of Bread and Roses and its sequel, Museum on Wheels based in Tiohtià:ke/Montreal; 2) Art Spin based in Toronto; 3) El BiciCrófono based in Los Angeles; and 4) PedalBox Gallery based in Tiohtià:ke/Montreal. This study includes an overview of each project and discusses the tactics involved in doing this work. It investigates the forms of collectivity that emerge and shows how meaning is generated in and through these projects. I advocate for further research into the experiences of those encounters from the perspective of the participant rather than the practitioner to gain better insight into the pedagogical potential of this method of social engagement.

Keywords: bikes & bike trailers, public space, new urbanism, social space, socially engaged art, pedagogy, informal-education, community engagement, tactics, temporary, pop-up, intervention, collaboration, participation, collectivity, antagonism, activism, and meaning-making.

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Introduction

I advocate for a deeper investigation into mobile disruptive architecture projects. This case study explores the experiences of those working behind such projects and addresses the often-unfamiliar role of mobile disruptive architecture (MDA). It analyzes the ways co-machines influence the construction of social space and what might emerge through these interactions. The goal of this research is to fill a gap in the literature, as well as gather and share the tactics, and outcomes behind the projects described here. It is also to archive and celebrate these projects in hopes to inspire the development and application of MDA. Through interview contributions and personal insight, I aim to demonstrate to pedagogues, educational administrators, and community-based practitioners what potential this unconventional approach can have in educating those they serve and in challenging the status-quo. The research question that grounds this exploration asks: **How does mobile disruptive architecture generate new meaning in relation to place, and new forms of collectivity while fostering public dialogue?** This master's thesis project comes from the Art Education program within the Faculty of Fine Arts at Concordia University in Tiohtià:ke/Montreal.

Definition

Mobile disruptive architecture (MDA) is a term coined by the Berlin design group ON/OFF in their book *Co-Machines: Mobile Disruptive Architecture*. It describes co-machines as projects that are designed collaboratively in response to community need and are meant to serve the commons by moving through city streets (Dorocic, et al., 2018). Their construction can be made of everyday objects and require an interface with the body in order to move, like riding bikes or pushing trollies. In doing so, co-machines confront grey areas within the rules and norms of public space. These interventions often serve to temporarily engage with those they encounter in what some might describe as 'carnivalesque', and may spark curiosity or even play (Helguera, 2011; Williamson, 2020, Wodiczko, 1999). They differ from something like a cart selling bagels in New York City because such objects are profit driven and maintain the status-quo. Co-machines exist to instigate novel encounters and exchangers between people and the spaces we share. Like Jeanne van Heeswijk's 2001 project "Casco, Coffee & Communications" which repurposed a NYC bagel

cart, transforming it into a mobile exhibition space. It featured various artists, architects, designers, and community mobilisers who presented various programming on the platform in a neighbourhood in Utrecht, Netherlands and offered free coffee to passersby.

More Questions

MDA is interdisciplinary, and so this research requires further questions within the fields of design, social justice, urbanism, and pedagogy. I want to reiterate that design and urbanism are crucial aspects of this work. Due to the scope of this research project, I chose to omit questions I initially included in my proposal related to the physical design qualities of projects and their impact on urbanism although much of the literature reviewed is oriented in new urbanism. The questions I asked interviewees focused more on describing their projects and the impact they perceived their projects have had on those they encounter. The interview guide can be found in the appendix. Based on what I found from analyzing the interview data, I identify the tactics used and how they foster participation. This includes looking at partnerships and how each project's design has been informed by community need and what need it might address. I also examine how these projects act as a beacon for community to come together and what might emerge through spontaneous social connection. This includes considering how these projects might disrupt the public's connection to place and how might these interventions be conducive to learning, visualized futures, and perhaps changing dominant cultural narratives. As this case study reveals, there is much to unpack with these questions alone.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to identify the social design principles behind mobile disruptive architecture (MDA) and how its goals intersect with political and pedagogical factors. Because the term MDA is not widely used in the literature, I consider current trends in collaboration described across urban design, socially engaged art (SEA), informal-education, and describe the political dimensions that emerge in doing this kind of work. To do so, I analyze these three themes and argue why they are relevant in understanding MDA and will lay out the theoretical framework that is applied to this research project.

Trends in Collaboration

The 'co' in co-machines is said to represent how MDA projects are built collaboratively and, in some cases, depend on participation in fulfilling specific functions. Like the "Exchange Machine", a speculative project conceived by Rachel Peachy and Paul Mosig which requires two people to pull each leaver to reveal what has been left inside (Dorocic, et al., 2018). Collaboration, in the first sense, is meant to include individuals with varying skill sets in the development and execution of a project.

Similarly, there is a growing trend within Temporary/Tactical Urbanism to adopt democratic processes in achieving project goals through various collaborative design practices (Arefi & Kickert, 2019; Bain & Landau, 2019). Temporary/Tactical Urbanism (T/T urbanism) is a term I adopt from Stevens and Dovey (2019) meant to encompass the range of practices mentioned across the literature (but not limited to): spatial agency (Awan, et al., 2011), bottom-up urbanism, DIY, pop-up, guerilla, informal, and new urbanism (Arefi & Kickert, 2019; Bain & Landau, 2019; Dorocic, et al., 2018; Lydon, 2012). Pop-up is also a collaborative tactic used in other disciplines as it is conducive to informal-learning processes (Buchczyk & Facer, 2020; Helguera, 2011; Williamson, 2020) and in artistic interventions (Helguera, 2011; Mouffe, 2007; Wodiczko, 1999). More specifically, collaborative methods or civic engagement within T/T urbanism are most commonly described as *participatory place-making* or *creative place-making*.

This is a phenomenon concerned with the meaning-making of a particular geographical location and is a fluid process contingent on the actors and hegemonies that are in relation to that place (Arefi & Kickert, 2019; Awan, et al., 2011; & Landau, 2019; Mouffe, 2007; Wodiczko, 1999). As such, T/T urbanism aims to restructure the division of labour from exclusively technocratic planning to designed-centered collaboration between experts and the public (Awan, et al., 2011; Bain, 2019). This approach may also address unmet needs and desires that go unprioritized by municipal leaders and so are able to provide new solutions from the ground up (Dorocic, et al., 2018; Stevens & Dovey 2019).

Some T/T urbanism projects have also sought out artists for their ability to foster creative place-making (Arefi & Kickert, 2019; Bain & Landau, 2019; Dorocic, et al., 2018). Similarly, artists who lead projects that bring together members of the public to participate in the process of making or doing art together is described as SEA. This work is often concerned with social values, as well as evokes critical reflection and dialogue amongst participants (Helguera, 2011; Mouffe, 2007; Wodiczko, 1999). For artists to successfully undertake such a project often involves breaking down the elitism within the art world by "directly [engaging] with the public realm—with the street, the open social space, the non-art community" (Helguera, 2011, p. 12). While both T/T urbanism and SEA include collaboration as a core element to their processes, SEA projects may not exclusively address issues related to urbanism; and T/T urbanism may not always include artists in their projects. Alternately, MDA explicitly employs aesthetic dimensions into a project as it disrupts the use of public space and by doing so inherently involves issues surrounding urbanism.

The effects on participants in collaborating on a SEA project are said to create a sense of well-being and belonging to community (Helguera, 2011; Williamson, 2020) and similarly, Bain & Landau (2019) claim that the outcome of participatory place-making can strengthen relationships amongst participants and place resulting in community building. In this way, a shift in power and agency can occur between participants and researchers from traditional research methods into one that is community driven. Overall, these trends in collaboration across disciplines are concerned with non-hierarchal forms of collaboration, learning, and knowledge exchange as

the notion of 'expert' is challenged (Arefi & Kickert, 2019; Awan, et al., 2011). This movement away from experts solving technical issues demonstrates a resistance to neoliberal ideology (Mouffe, 2007) and also represent ways of restructuring the social agency regarding who is involved in such projects and what affects this has on public space (Arefi & Kickert, 2019; Awan, et al., 2011; Dorocic, et al., 2018; Helguera, 2011; Stevens & Dovey, 2019; Wodiczko, 1999). The same can be said about MDA, yet there can arise contradictions amongst these democratic processes related to inclusivity and the privatization of public space which I consider to be the political dimensions that emerge in doing this kind of public facing socially engaged work.

Political Dimensions

These trends in collaboration within T/T urbanism have not gone unnoticed by governments, as they too begin adopting such practices but through formalized and bureaucratic ways (Arefi & Kickert, 2019; Bain & Landau, 2019; Dorocic et al., 2018). Such cases arguably play into neo-liberal agendas as the responsibility of improving a neighborhood is placed onto community members (Bain, 2005; Dorocic et al., 2018; Burton et al., 2016) and may even exploit or instrumentalize artists involvement in such urban development projects (Arefi & Kickert, 2019; Dorocic et al., 2018). This is a common critique across the literature within urbanism. Similarly, in Burton et al.'s book *Public servants: Art and the crisis of the common good* (2016) includes many chapters that come to similar conclusions about how SEA tends to fill a need not being met by governments. Arguments from the fields of urbanism and SEA put into question who is responsible for the well-being of community within the disappearance of the welfare state. Stevens & Dovey (2019) elaborate on the risk that:

> T/T urbanism can be integrated with practices of privatization, gentrification, and displacement, whereby some categories of users (consumers, creative actors, potential investors) are seen to add value to underutilized land, while others are subtly marginalized. Temporary commercial activities that are enabled by relaxed regulations can undermine the sustainability of local business as they privatize public space. New functions that emerge under the umbrella of creative innovation can disrupt the amenity of existing users and initiate subtle displacement of previous functions. (p. 326)

For example, pop-up urbanism like temporary marketplaces led by city officials can increase property value as such projects can instrumentalize creative place-making, turning this into place-marketing (Stevens & Dovey 2019). Additionally, artists are often left tackling such projects with little resources from authorities as it is generally understood that artists operate within scarcity (Bain, 2005; Bain & Landau, 2019; Burton et al., 2016; Dorocic, et al., 2018). As such, the financial support towards social and material conditions for such projects are often neglected by local governments. Including the administrative competency that is required for navigating urban spatial politics (Bain & Landau, 2019). It is further explored how the rise of the gig-economy creates conditions of volatility within labour markets which in turn impacts property value (Gourzis, et al., 2019). More specifically, artists' self-sufficient abilities to create non-financial value by improving the quality of life around them can be extracted by real estate markets, ironically changing the places they live into ones they can no longer afford (Burton, et al., 2016). While it has been shown how governments have adopted the collaborative tactics of T/T urbanism and creative-placemaking there is no evidence in the literature of governments co-opting or instrumentalizing the tactics behind MDA projects specifically.

MDA projects inherently involve participation, whether this be through community partnerships, collaboration with artists, or in the participation of those they encounter (Dorocic, et al. 2018). Therefore, it is necessary to consider the politics behind inclusion. At the beginning stages of any collaborative project there is likely a target audience meant to be invited in. Helguera (2011) explains that:

> Various sociologists have argued—David Berreby most notably—that as humans we are predisposed to express a tribal mindset of 'us' versus 'them', and each statement we make is oriented in relation to a set of preexisting social codes that include or exclude sectors of people. (p. 22)

Douglas (2019) found that those involved in unsanctioned DIY urban interventions tend to be white, as participation relates to socio-economic inequalities regarding the intersection of race, education, and wealth. It appears Douglas (2019) is the only one to consider the implications of race specifically within this work but a few other authors do consider how social privilege is

exercised through DIY projects including MDA because they require varying degrees of free-time, knowledge, tools, materials, and risk management (Arefi & Kickert, 2019; Bain & Landau, 2019; Dorocic, et al., 2018; Burton, et al., 2016). Risk relates to the possibility of encountering authority. Momeni & Sherman, (n.d.) suggest having a designated member to address these authorities who is proficient at reaching peaceful resolutions. Racialized stereotypes can put people of colour at higher risk during confrontations and therefore may be less inclined to draw attention towards themselves in public. White urban interventionists working in-formally reported having friendly encounters with police and may assume their actions are well received by the public albeit quasi-illegal (Douglas, 2019). Additionally, as DIY urban interventions and MDA projects are often small-scale, they can thus impose the social values of a project amongst a broader group not necessarily align with the same values (Dorocic, et al., 2018; Douglas, 2019). Therefore, MDA needs to consider tactics that challenge socio-economic inequalities and counter the underrepresentation of marginalized identities within this work.

As T/T urbanism aims to achieve changes to the built environment through democratic processes (Arefi & Kickert, 2019; Awan, et al., 2011), what differs from artistic intervention through MDA projects is that it may be less inclined to reaching a collective consensus. This social dynamic can be seen as a vibrant attribute to true democracy as Mouffe (2007) describes the 'agonistic' struggle of "public space [as] the battleground where different hegemonic projects are confronted, without any possibility of final reconciliation" (p.3). Without contestation, there is a homogenization of a privileged majority which implies a universality to lived experience. Wodiczko (1999) describes this as the "history of the victors", a concept conceived by Stéphan Mosès. As these dominant narratives 'win'. These perspectives elaborate on how public discourse is produced and maintained by the victors, as this becomes a symbol of privilege (Mouffe, 2007; Wodiczko, 1999). The 'winning' discourse informs how a place is used, and understood, and by whom leaving little space for diverse perspectives or differences to co-exist. Intervening on this dominant narrative through antagonism is what Wodiczko (1999) and Mouffe (2007) argue is required for true democracy within public space. Such are the pitfalls of the democratic claims of T/T urbanism's collaborative practices as there can exist social contradictions when agency and inclusivity intersect in achieving consensus about project goals (Arefi & Kickert, 2019). It is

argued that what SEA does well is provoke new questions which can create the conditions to generate meaning (Helguera, 2011; Wodiczko, 1999). It seems SEA and MDA projects are more about providing a voice to each stranger than in changing the physical infrastructure in the way that in-formal T/T urbanism interventions might. This voice is what allows the disruption of synchronic narratives. This can allow changes within collective memory by providing new cultural meaning towards place (Helguera, 2011; Wodiczko, 1999). In my opinion, social justice issues and the politics that go with it cannot be overlooked within this work. Confrontation and generating public dialogue are an intrinsic part of MDA and in the way that art is perceived and for MDA projects, they may also generate more questions than answers. As social norms are confronted and grey areas of the law are braved, MDA cradles contestation devoid of resolution, it remains in a state of flux and uncertainty, moving from one discursive battleground to the next.

The challenge for MDA projects is then to overcome its ability to effectively tap into the political consciousness of those it encounters by going beyond being a form of entertainment. Helguera (2011) explains that:

> As artists, the aspiration of an SEA project is merely to entertain the public, even though a less orthodox means, it is hard to make a case for it as a meaningful artistic exploration…it is only when play upsets, even if temporarily, the existing social values (Bakhtin's 'carnivalesque') that room is created for reflection, escaping the merely hedonistic experience of spectacle. (p. 70)

To succeed in such provocation is the essence what Mouffe (2007) theorizes as agonistic public space rather than 'neutral procedures' which omit the political dimensions or criticality from the aesthetic dimension of such work. How I understand antagonism, or social conflict within MDA, is in the ways it can be achieved through disrupting public space using a co-machine (the aesthetic dimension) because it breaks expectations (the political dimension) of how that space is used and by whom.

Pedagogy

It is not discussed in the literature the ways in which pedagogy is integrated into MDA projects. Though there are parallels between the methods and philosophies behind informal-learning which I describe next and then argue for why this approach is conducive to MDA projects in harnessing social action. Marshall (2015) describes theories about learning based on Freedman (2003) and Efland (2022) as "a situated, socially-constructed, and culturally mediated process of making meaning [Freedman and Efland] emphasize the connections between the body, context, experience, culture, emotion, and high-order thinking" (p. 227). It can then be justified that learning can be done outside of a classroom setting and arguably is an integral part of city life (Buchczyk & Facer, 2020; Wodiczko, 1999). Informal-learning is about challenging the elitism within academia by making learning more accessible. This includes eliminating fees, removing evaluation, diversifying where people are taught, and challenging the hierarchy of who has knowledge to share (Buchczyk & Facer, 2020; Chan, 2020; Helguera, 2011; Williamson, 2020). Community literacy can also be achieved as these sites become places to learn about and access a network of services amongst the city (Buchczyk & Facer, 2020; Standerfer, et al., 2022). There are a few examples like these within the literature that deploy interventionist tactics like hosting outdoor pop-up workshops throughout the city. These activities are also said to act as an ice-breaker for social interaction, can foster relationships amongst participants and attribute to one's connection with the commons (Arefi & Kickert, 2019; Buchczyk & Facer, 2020; Dorocic, et al., 2018; Helguera, 2011; Williamson, 2020). Such cases demonstrate how informal-learning is not bound to a fixed address and socializing does not require you to buy something.

Navigating antagonism is an inherent element of city life. It is further argued how this can be confronted pedagogically (Buchczyk & Facer, 2020; Helguera, 2011) as critical informal-learning can explore contentious issues that intersect with public art, colonial history, and agency (Awan, et al., 2011; Buchczyk & Facer, 2020; Helguera, 2011; Mouffe, 2007; Wodiczko, 1999). For example, there have been recent controversies over monuments in various cities which in some cases have resulted in the removal of monuments (Buchczyk & Facer, 2020; Topple the Racists, n.d.). Buchczyk & Facer (2020) explain that:

> Controversial events thus unleash eventful learning through activating negotiation, exchanges, and compromises that require developing new knowledge and ways of seeing, thinking, and acting…they distort pre-existing hierarchies and initiate revisions of one's own position. Mutual learning can thus lead to the creation of collective projects and coalitions, resulting in the short-circuiting of divisions between lay people and representative institutions. (p. 619)

Creating inclusive spaces and capacities for collective and cooperative learning is ever more challenging amongst an over privatized world. It has been mentioned how there is political potential in bringing people together who share common interests in building collectivity and social action. This combination of relationship building along with improvisational learning can be achieved through material culture, practices of care and contestation (Buchczyk & Facer, 2020; Mouffe, 2007; Talen, 2019).

Chapter 2: Methodology

Theoretical framework

To consider the implications of what MDA does in public space I apply critical spatial theory as theoretical frameworks for conducting my research. It is relevant in understanding the ways public space is used and by whom and how narratives are created related to place. Philosopher and sociologist, Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991), in his book *The Production of space*, suggests a conceptual triad to think about how space is produced and consumed, known as the 'spatial triad'. It is composed of spatial practice (how space is used by people), representations of space (what the space means to people), and representational space (the ways that space was designed and implemented and by whom) which combines to make up social space. This framework is meant to be a tool to analyze society (Lefebvre, 1991). In this way, the spatial triad can be applied to thinking about how MDA can play a role in the ways social space is created or temporarily disrupted from perceived norms. Alongside this theoretical framework, I also consider what Mouffe (2007) suggests which is how art has the potential to disrupt hegemonic practices in public space. According to Mouffe (2007), true democracy requires agonistic intervention. For conflict to be resolved requires choosing something over another, which is in essence a form of hegemony. This plays out in public space through rules and social norms, impacting the ways social space is created and consumed (Mouffe, 2007). This framework can also be applied alongside Lefebvre's spatial triad in understanding the intersection of how hegemonic narratives inform the creation and consumption of social space. Lastly, I also consider the four determinants that Standefer, et al.'s (2022) suggest are required for community readiness in considering the political potential for MDA to evoke social change. Together these theories are applied throughout my analysis to unpack how collaboration and pedagogy play out through MDA.

Mixed-methods

This case study explores the experiences of the three interviewees who work within or around MDA projects based in North America. Mix-methods is applied in answering the research question: **How does mobile disruptive architecture generate new meaning in relation to place, and new forms of collectivity while fostering public dialogue?** Insight is gained by analyzing qualitative data based on the experiences of the interviewees, as well as reflecting on my own lived experience through auto-ethnography.

This thesis project is inspired by my own passion for MDA and over 11 years of experience running PedalBox Gallery (PB), a large bike trailer I use to host various pop-up events in public spaces. I will take an intersectional approach to critically analyzing the data as to gain a deeper understanding into this unique way of working and to uncover what social forces provide the conditions for this type of work to emerge. A list of 12 projects have been identified as those involved in the projects can be contacted as potential case studies. This list is based on my personal network and of projects I have come across online and added to a "Mobile Ecologies Database" I started in 2015. The goal is to find a minimum of 3 participants (18 years of age or older) who have been or are actively involved in an MDA project.

Timeline

I propose to look at projects that have existed since 2008 onward because I argue this period holds significance to MDA for a few reasons. First, the financial crash of 2008 has led to precarious labour markets with the uprise of gig-economy which has inevitably led to gentrification (Gourzis, et al., 2019) and the ongoing housing precarity across major cities in Canada (MacDonald, 2024; Generation Squeeze, n.d.). As new needs arise in the built environment, new trends in urbanism attempt to respond to such needs, including MDA projects. 2008 is also a period that I know intimately, especially related to my relationship with the labour market and my artist identity. Of the millennials born between 1981-96, I am within the highest percentage (of those who graduated high school and) who entered the workforce directly after the 2008 financial crash (Worth, 2019). Because the nature of MDA projects is often self-made, non-profit, or driven by what grants are secured, it is important to recognize the precarious nature of doing this work and to consider how

those involved with projects may be drawn to, normalize, accept, and respond to precarity. This includes an analysis into the artist identity, as we are understood to personally invest into our passions and are known for our ability to work from a place of scarcity by 'creating something out of nothing' (Bain, 2005). Therefore, by situating the emergence of these projects within this period can allow for a deeper understanding of the socio-economic factors that produce certain needs addressed by projects and how those might identify or connect with precarity.

I recognize the inherent biases I have in conducting this research since it is a topic I am personally connected to. First there are presumptions I have going into this, based on what I have personal witnessed this work can do which inevitably informed my research question. This study allows me to understand if this is common across projects or not. My personal experience is also an advantage, as I have an embodied understanding of what is required to do this kind of work as well as more recently, a theoretical framework to build upon critically analyzing this topic. I admit being drawn towards highlighting the successes of MDA and viewing it through a positive lens. Though I also understand the value in recognizing weaknesses or challenges within this work and have designed the research to support investigating a wide spectrum of answers. I am curious to unpack the experiences of the interviewees to better understand the phenomenon of MDA within the context of the research question.

There are limitations to this proposed research project because it does not include participants who have encountered an MDA project out in the field. Also, quantitative data is not included in this study because this research is more concerned with humanizing effects of MDA and its role in social space. From my experience, the pop-up nature of this work makes it challenging to follow-up with those you encounter because they are usually strangers and interactions can be short-lived. Also, I find it difficult to navigate the tension between socially engaged art and conducting ethical research through PB. I am for ethical research and am sensitive to my moral obligations as a researcher. At the same time, I do not find it to be an effective way to connect with those I encounter when the art I tow behind my bike becomes formalized within institutionalized knowledge creation protocols (as in—to ask participants to sign a consent form kinda kills the vibe…). Therefore, in answering the research question, I draw on the memories and

stories of those who work in this way, including my own, and consider the social interactions we have observed and what impact we perceive our projects have had.

A mixed-methods approach allows for multiple perspectives and various ways of generating meaning about the cases. One of the methods is to conduct 1-hour semi-structured interviews with participants over video chat in English. This method is suitable for gathering rich insight into interviewees personal experiences and perceptions and allows some flexibility for the conversation to deviate rather than being constrained by a rigid path. Lastly, I propose to weave auto-ethnographic components into the analyses as I write and reflect about my own experiences with PB. The semi-structured interviews are recorded, and the audio transcribed into text format to use as data in the analyses. I coded this data thematically as well as analyzed similarities and differences between participants and positioned their stories alongside my own.

Chapter 3: Interviewees

During the winter of 2025 I interviewed three people who are each involved with projects that make use of bikes, bike trailers, or trollies. Before critically analyzing what emerged from all three interviews, I first give an overview of each interviewee's project and in closing this chapter I also describe my project. These overviews provide context for the following chapters which puts the literature in conversation with all our projects in answering the research question.

Bakery of Bread and Roses & Museum on Wheels — Amélie Brindamour

I had the privilege of speaking with Amélie Brindamour, a multidisciplinary artist based in Montreal about how she integrates the use of MDA into her art practice. I first heard about Amélie's project Museum on Wheels through people I talked to about my project PB because our projects share similar characteristics. I also came across it in my research into MDA and as I began looking for participants to include in this research, a few people suggested getting in touch with Amélie. It was clear that Amélie's project was a good fit because she made use of a push-trolley structure to facilitate pop-up events in various public spaces in Montreal. It was also a way for her to engage participants on various themes explored in her socially engaged art practice.

Amélie tells me that the Museum on Wheels came about in 2019 through an art residency at McGill University hosted through the Education Department. Because McGill does not have a fine arts program or a gallery on campus, it was an important mandate for the Education Department to make art accessible to students. For this residency, Amélie repurposed her 2017 project Bakery of Bread and Roses that she originally designed and built in support by the artist-run centre DARE-DARE (figure 1). Both projects made use of the same infrastructure, and employed similar tactics although the themes explored via the platform and Amélie's approach to developing these themes were different.

Figure 1: Brindamour, A. (2017). Bakery of Bread and Roses.

The Bakery of Bread and Roses focused on considering the industrial buildings in Saint-Henri and what changes have occurred in the now post-industrial transformation of the neighbourhood. She wanted to engage with locals on the question of "how the industrial worker changed the working conditions" she told me. She was thinking about how artists are occupying those buildings now and what their working conditions are. Her approach to this form of engagement was in baking bread and cutting it into the shapes of the surrounding buildings. Giving away these edible bread artifacts to those who approached her was an ice-breaking tool for her to start conversations with passersby.

The Museum on Wheels was more collaborative, and featured McGill students' projects on topics they proposed to Amélie (figure 2). She partnered with the McGill Art Hive, attending multiple sessions as a way to connect with students. Amélie explains that "the goal of the residency was to engage with the students". As she built these relationships, she promoted her mobile exhibition trolly and invited students to participate. Amélie was also invited to present her concept in a few classroom talks and did some pop-up events with the structure to engage students to participate. She ran this project for nine months, and she would have featured more students' work

although the project was cut short due to the COVID-19 lockdowns. In the end, she collaborated and exhibited five students' projects on the Museum on Wheels at various spaces on McGill's campus.

Figure 2: Brindamour, A. (2020). Museum on Wheels.

Art Spin — Rui Pimenta

I first came across Art Spin as I researched mobile gallery spaces to see what else existed. I came across a collaboration they had done in 2015 with the "Portable Gallery Project" in Toronto, Ontario (MacDonald, et al., 2014). I reached out to Art Spin and the founder, Rui Pimenta, agreed to participate in my research. Art Spin is a non-profit organization who have been running public facing events since 2009 (Art Spin, 2024). Rui explained that Art Spin curates arts programming at sites that are visited along large group bike rides of 300-400 people. Art Spin works closely with invited artists to create site-specific artworks. In the beginning, Rui tells me their bike rides used to be free. They recognized that was not going to be a sustainable model because of the costs involved in paying artist fees, renting equipment and so on. Selling tickets to their audience members became a solution to sustain their programming. Making the arts accessible is an important mandate for Art Spin and so they aim to keep their tickets affordable, especially compared to other cultural events or group bike rides available in Toronto. They also partner with organizations to collaborate on events, and in promoting them to a range of diverse communities.

Since Art Spin has hosted numerous events, I asked Rui to describe some that stood out to him. First, he mentioned a musical performance that was curated inside a big-name grocery store. The performers were asked to appear like regular shoppers, pushing trollies around the produce section, seamlessly blending into this banal setting. Rui says, "I can't think of a more kind of like every day banal space...it's precisely for those reasons that it had the greatest potential to be, you know, transformed". Once audience members were inside, the performers broke into song. Another was a curated two-week long exhibition within a storage locker facility featuring around 20 artists who installed works in various lockers. This format also confronted the mundane, as artworks were scattered amongst clients who happened to stop by to access or store their belongings. Lastly, Rui described a slightly different approach to Art Spin's programming with their event "Public Sweat" which was a "hybrid of art programming and sauna culture", says Rui. This was a seven week-long festival featuring artists who were commissioned to build functioning saunas that also included artwork. Audiences were invited to celebrate sauna culture, experience the benefits of having a sweat, and check-out some art. While this event did not include a bike ride,

it still involved a mashup of arts programming with the embodied physical and social elements of having a sauna. In every case, Rui explains Art Spin's unconventional approach to curating experiences that blend group physical activities with site-specific artworks and the significance of this alchemy on audience members ability to connect with each other and with the art.

El BiciCrófono — William Kennedy

Allow me to tell the story of how I met William Kennedy. I had the pleasure of meeting him at the annual Open Source Hardware Summit (OSHS) that took place in Montreal in 2024 and with attendees coming from around the world. William and I first met at the gates of Grey Nunns, a historical building on Concordia University's Sir George William campus. He rolled up on a bike covered in string lights–late to a workshop I was hosting alongside Janna Frenzel, Cyrus Khalatbari and Juan Gomez called "Design the afterlife of objects". I opened the gate and welcomed this energy, as it reminded me of myself. A little unpredictable, adventurous, and friendly. Meeting him felt significant in that serendipitous way that interests and schedules collide with like-minded folks at conferences. It turns out, William is part of a weird [1] bike-trailer project called El BiciCrófono, which is a co-machine that is used to facilitate pop-up events in Los Angeles, California (figure 3). El BiciCrófono originated in 2018 by Jimmy Lizama as a way to connect and engage with folks attending Bike!Bike!, a large bicycle conference in LA (Re:Ciclos, 2024). Jimmy thought karaoke could be a fun way to bring people together and wanted to do so via bicycle. El BiciCrófono is a mobile stage towed by tandem bicycle

Figure 3: Kennedy, W. (2024). El BiciCrófono.

[1] William uses this word in a positive sense. I also enjoy using *weird* as a positive descriptor for our work, as it represents its ability to challenge the status-quo.

and equipped with loudspeakers, and microphones. It is used to host family friendly events that involve karaoke, or musical performances, and amplifies peoples' voices at protests. The project's mandate is to address social justice issues from cyclists' rights, to celebrating Latin culture, and bringing awareness to the climate crisis.

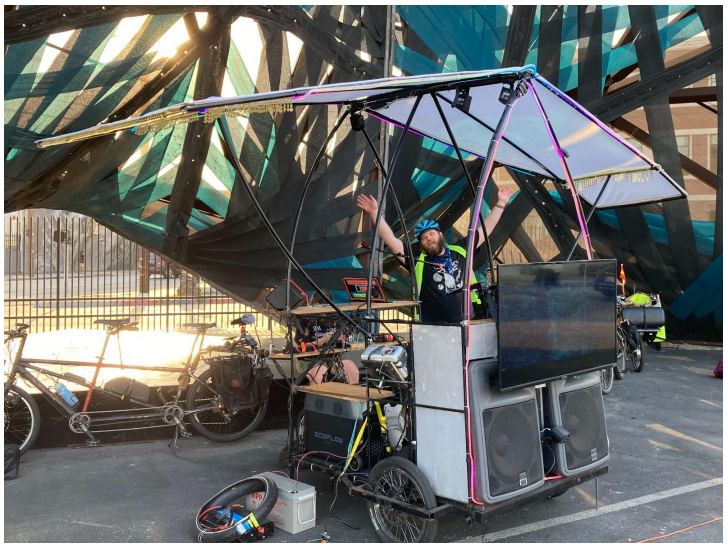

Figure 4: Kennedy, W. (2024). El BiciCrófono, Planet City.

William shared with me a variety of events El BiciCrófono has done and how partnerships with various organizations have inspired the kinds of events they collaborate on. This includes partnerships with academics, community workers, musicians, artists, and activists. Recently they collaborated on a ride along the LA river with the LA Poet Society, the LA Poet Laureates and conga Juan Flautista. Music was performed during the ride, and during stops, the poets performed spoken word in relation to the river. The poets also prompted participants to create their own poems in responding to the river. William explains that "at the end, we got to have an open mic where we could share the poems". They also collaborated with SCI-Arc, the Institution of Architecture on a large-scale event which celebrated Liam Young's 2020 immersive film *"*Planet Cit*y*" (NGV, n.d.; Young, n.d.). El BiciCrófono worked with architecture students and together they were imagining "what is this future where everything is basically salvaged? Like there's no new materials. We're building new things out of trash" says William. Responding to this, they built a pair of deployable wings attached to El BiciCrófono that functioned as a shade structure as well as a projection screen at night (figure 4). Protest is also a big part of El BiciCrófono mandate and William described their annual ride of silence which takes over the streets of LA to honor and bring awareness to all those cyclists who have been lost or injured because of cars. These are a select few examples from a longer list of events that William shared with me reflecting El BiciCrófono's ability to offer a diverse range of programming.

PedalBox Gallery — Christine White

Allow me to provide some context into my own experiences with MDA. PedalBox Gallery (PB) utilizes cycling equipment and infrastructure to deliver pop-up events at various public spaces in Tiohtiá:ke/Montreal (figure 5). By centering art within these events, it aims to foster learning opportunities and community building amongst partners and participants.

Figure 5: Browne, T. (2021). PedalBox Gallery.

PB originated in 2013 by a group of artists located on the traditional territories of the ləkwəŋən People, also known as Victoria, B.C where I am originally from. The following year, I was invited by co-founder, Jonathan Dowdall, to create an artwork for the mobile platform. I thought to myself "art and bikes?! My two favorite things". I was eager to take the trailer out myself, and I created "Tea Party on a Bike Trailer" (2014), a performative pop-up set where I served passersby hot tea in fancy teacups. Afterwards, Jonathan invited me to help run the space to which I agreed. In 2018, I moved to Montreal to finish my fine arts degree, and Jonathan encouraged me to bring this concept with me.

It took me a few years to develop partnerships and secure funding–ironically, DARE-DARE was the first group who I approached (the artist-run centre that Amélie had her 2017 residency with) who inevitably turned down the idea. Eventually I partnered with the Pointe-Saint-Charles Art School (PSCAS) and in 2021, I was the recipient of the Elspeth McConnell Fine Arts Award and the Shock Value Fellowship which financially supported the many hours I put into hosting events that summer. The Concordia Sustainable Action Fund, Living Labs helped cover the costs of building the physical infrastructure. Inspired by the first PB designed by Tony's Trailers, I designed and built this second iteration with help from Jesse Whitefield Pratt, technician at La Coulée and Brian Cooper, technician at the Core Technical Center at Concordia University.

To date in Montreal, PB has facilitated 43 public facing bilingual events like pop-up Art Hives (figure 6), projected on buildings, featured a solar web server, hosted community-art events (figure 7) and engaged with the public on concepts of home (figure 8). These interdisciplinary, multi-media works are an example of the diverse range of events PB can offer.

Figure 6: White, C. (2021). Pop-up Art Hives.

Figure 7: White, C. (2022). Wishing Wall.

Figure 8: Magnusson, Ari. (2021). Welcome Home.

In closing this description of PB, I want to share my story about what emerged between William and I at OSHS…I can barely describe the astonishment I felt in finding someone involved in projects like these, especially since the conference was not even about bikes or art. William turned to me that first night and said "Christine. Do you want to make interpretive dance shadow puppets with me?". It seems I found my summit soulmate and I agreed without hesitation. I sifted through PB's inventory in my mind's eye—those lights that I shipped from BC in 2018 which I hadn't yet used; the power system; a white sheet; posts designed to attach onto PB; and an assortment of fasteners. Turns out I had everything we needed all along (figure 9 & 10). What had been missing was the person to prompt me with the idea and motivation to create a mobile shadow puppet stage. We met the next day to assemble our set to bring to OSHS's after party at Montreal's North Star Machines À Piastres. With the help of one of William's friends, we installed his idea,

biked up St-Laurent and parked out-front of the bar. We immediately got to it, plugging in lights, the keyboard, and making shadow puppets with our hands. People started to crowd around. Maybe they were part of OSHS, maybe they weren't, and that didn't matter because anyone was welcome. We encouraged people to join us and improvise while William, on keyboard, played delightful music. Here we were on the side of the street, and like moths we conjured people towards the light as their shadows drew stories and crowds. The joy I felt watching impromptu creativity emerge from willing strangers was a reminder of why I do this work.

Figure 9: White, C. (2024). Shadow Puppets on PedalBox Gallery.

Figure 10: White, C. (2024). Shadow Puppets on PedalBox Gallery.

Prelude: Critical Analyses

There are three interconnected themes that I identified in analyzing the interviews and in considering my own experiences with PB. They are tactics, collectivity, and meaning. Tactics involve the consideration and approaches we have developed in deploying our infrastructure. Collectivity is about how our projects bring people together. As a result of gathering in public space, I close my analysis by looking at what meaning emerges through these spontaneous social connections. There are variations to the approaches we each take and the impact our events have, and yet at the core it appears that these three themes are inevitably what make an MDA project successful. What follows is my analyses of these three themes in an attempt to answer the research question.

Chapter 4: Tactics

The notion of tactics emerged repeatedly in analyzing the interview data. Tactics represent the decisions made behind the scenes that help create conditions for MDA projects to emerge. Because MDA work is about intervening on the status-quo, it becomes fundamental to consider how this is achieved. Interviewees did not directly use the term tactic, although in-general they each provided great detail about their process. In this section, I elaborate on these tactics by providing examples of our work. I compare and contrast the tactics amongst our projects and consider what impact these have. They will be described and analyzed through the following subcategories: infrastructure, resourcefulness, intervention, and partnership. For those interested in doing this kind of work, this section is the most practical as it unpacks the logistical elements of doing this work. I begin with this theme because it also nicely sets up the context to analyze more deeply how collectivity and meaning emerge by implementing these tactics.

Infrastructure

This section explores how projects' physical infrastructure is deployed and what forms of engagement can come from this. Speaking to infrastructure is significant when considering what co-machines can do. In considering the research question, it becomes foundational to first understand the tactics, such as the physical design choices of a co-machine.

Compared to the other projects in this case study, Art Spin is less focused on designing and building infrastructure. Instead, they commission artists to build temporary installations and performances in public spaces which are accessed through their group bike rides. In a sense, this approach is a less tangible infrastructure that is used to engage with their audience members. Bikes in this way become a tactic for fostering social connection and in experiencing art in unexpected and often unsanctioned ways in public. Regardless of Art Spin not technically 'being' a co-machine, I chose to include their model because I found their tactics and outcomes insightful in answering the research question. Such as how their model applies mobility and disruption as crucial components to their work. Even without having a specific piece of physical infrastructure

to analyze, understanding Art Spin's approach is still valuable in understanding this phenomenon of MDA. As my analyses continues, I reveal how it is not always necessary to build a co-machine in order to generate new meaning, public dialogue and forms of collectivity in relation to place.

Besides Art Spin, taking an iterative approach to the design of co-machines is tactical in addressing the needs of various event goals. Such as how the iterative design of El BiciCrófono responds to community seems to be most significant compared to Amélie's co-machine. I can relate to this with PB as we are both adapting our infrastructure in response to the partnerships we have formed and the needs they have towards a specific kind of event. PB has variations to how the infrastructure can be adapted to either facilitate pop-up projections, or in becoming a mobile stage, or in presenting an interactive installation. El BiciCrófono also has variations on the kinds of karaoke they facilitate, such as "Chaireoke", singing while riding, puppet karaoke, or hosting karaoke in a temporary public place. Partners often approach them in need of their mobile stage and PA system, and they often host protest rides. They even collaborated with students from PSY-Arc (Institute of Architecture) to design and build an artistic extension of the trailer as described earlier. Amélie also alludes to this sentiment as her goal with Museum on Wheels was to "have this structure kind of frame the topic that [students] want to talk about". This iterative approach is tactical as the infrastructure can change, depending on the partnership. I argue that the modularity of these co-machines also contributes to how MDA is able to generate collectivity and meaning in relation to place.

Resourcefulness

All interviewees allude to how their capacities to facilitate this work is informed by what resources they are able to access in achieving their project goals which is the same for PB. Working under conditions of precarity is understood as common within the cultural sector as this has been internalized by artists and normalized (Worth, 2019). In this context, resourcefulness is a tactical way of adapting materials, and labour in the development and implementation of these projects. This often requires adapting and working within our limited means. Limitations in this sense, can become a parameter to exercise problem solving. Therefore, the tactics involved in managing resources are fundamental in the sustainability of MDA projects.

Tactics related to material resourcefulness were most commonly described by William and Amélie, likely because their projects revolve around the use of a co-machine in the way I work, as compared to Art Spin. One resourceful tactic for Amélie was in lowering the barrier to entry in building her co-machine. Like me, she had never built something like this before. She opted to follow an open access design that she described as being easy to follow. Amélie also talked about how she was able to 'recycle' this structure for her second residency. Like William and I, she demonstrates resourcefulness because this was an affordable way to iterate on her existing infrastructure by repurposing the project into a new one. It also demonstrates how these co-machines can take on a new meaning depending on the intention behind the form of engagement. I wanted to include a way to offer mobile projections on PB and was gifted an old projection mount from Benoit Chaussé, the technician who runs in the Intermedia Depot at Concordia University. I was able to base the rest of my design off this mount and so I bought a piece of pipe and had the vendor thread it at both ends, to match the threading of the projection mount, and the flange (the piece of hardware that screws into the base of the platform). Being able to adapt and design around the materials we find is tactical. William elaborates that, when adapting the El BiciCrófono, they are "creating stuff out of junk, you know? That's a big thing is we're salvaging things...'bespokely' fixing the El BiciCrófono for each performer…[a] bespoke need that's being filled by the performer". Addressing community need is a fundamental concept described by Dorocic, et al. (2018). William gives the sentiment that working with reclaimed materials is a practical way of saving money and it aligns with sustainability values which is part of El BiciCrófono's mission. Working within our means and values is a tactic that informs the adaptability and outcome of the co-machines we build. Since Art Spin is less focused on building co-machines their tactics are more about intervention which is described next.

Intervention

All projects involve intervening on public space which relates to how their projects are perceived and experienced. Intervention refers to the 'disruptive' aspect within MDA. It can be tactical to get permission, or not, and for MDA projects it is often the latter (Dorocic, et al., 2018). There are some risks when conducting interventions, mainly in navigating social conflict or in confrontations with authority figures (Arefi & Kickert, 2019; Douglas, 2019; Momeni & Sherman, n.d.; Stevens & Dovey, 2019).

Temporary intervention is a tactic that can help MDA projects be successful in going unnoticed by authority. Rui says that "with some exceptions, these are events that happen without any permitting…it's very much a guerrilla type—of ethos, that inspires [Art Spin's] interventions". To consider these constraints is tactical for Rui as he describes how "the duration of a stop on an Art Spin tour is 15 to 20 minutes…in and out of that location before you draw any significant attention to yourself, especially from police or security guards". I can relate to this as there was a time that PB was exhibiting "Concrete Capital" by Thomas Heinrich at Place des Arts in Montreal. We were projecting informative inquisitions into a profit-driven condo development project entitled "Maestria". I do not recall exactly how long, maybe 30-45 minutes, until a security guard approached us to ask us to leave. We had a designated liaison for that interaction, attempting to drag the conversation out for as long as possible so that the work can continue to be visible until absolutely necessary. This is a tactic described in *A Manual for Urban Projects* (Momeni & Sherman, n.d.)[2] and how being charming–and in the case of Montreal, being bilingual–are admirable characteristics for those to take on this role in mediating with authority. The mobile aspect of projects also contributes to their ability to temporarily engage with place as projects can easily pick-up and go as needed. Later, I elaborate on what meaning can emerge from these subversive encounters.

[2] I highly recommend this manual as it provides a clear and thorough overview of various tactics for facilitating public mobile projects. Open access download here: https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/39709669/a-manual-urban-projection

Partnerships

All projects demonstrate how partnerships are a fundamental tactic to the success of our projects. Partnerships are often created prior to hosting an event and can inform the capacity of how and what we are able to do. Specifically, partnerships can help with accessing funding, inspire the content of an event, and help with promotion. In this way, partnerships become strategic in the initial stages of creation and application of MDA projects.

William and Rui demonstrate that partnering with other organizations can help in accessing funds and distributing resources. Rui explains how being a small non-profit means working with a limited budget and so developing partnerships is a tactic that helps Art Spin overcome these challenges. This is especially relevant to MDA projects that are offering experiences to the public for free and so having that funding support can increase the capacity of what can be offered. William also mentions partnership as tactical, such as how El BiciCrófono works with "organizations that are in line with what we do, so we can get money to fund things that, you know, the things that don't have any money…and we can redistribute these resources". William is referring to a moral compass that guides El BiciCrófono's decision on who to partner with as they sometimes partner with larger organizations to do 'more corporate' events as William suggests. Such as their partnership with SCI-Arc for the "Planet City" event mentioned previously. I interpret his sentiment as an attempt to avoid 'selling out' or falling susceptible to exploitation in the ways that Stevens & Dovey (2019) describe as the instrumentalization of creative-placemaking towards market driven or neo-liberal agendas. Since El BiciCrófono is operating from a grassroots and activist mentality it is in their best interest to be cautious about the types of corporate partnerships they form and for what cause. I can relate, as PB has primarily been funding through CU, which is a corporate entity, although is vested in public interest. Although the majority of PBs partnerships have been with non-profit organizations.

Amélie does not describe seeking out partnerships as a tactic to fund her project, although it can be assumed that having her projects supported within two artist residencies is a kind of partnership that provided financial and in-kind support. Amélie does emphasize how the affordability of designing and building Bakery of Bread and Roses helped in her process as it "was

a very cheap way and effective way to build something that could be movable with wheels and with the handles". It is possible that because her projects had a limited timeline within the residencies, meant that she was less concerned about finding tactics to sustain her project long term in the way that Rui, William, and myself have. Building partnerships in this sense is a tactic for expanding the longevity of MDA projects.

Capacities can also be increased by sharing resources in the form of materials. For example, PB collaborated with the Concordia Centre for Creative Reuse (CUCCR) during the COVID-19 pandemic. CUCCR diverts waste from Concordia University by sorting it and making it available to members for free and because of the lockdown, CUCCR's doors were closed. Its founders Anna Timm-Bottos and Arrien Weeks launched an initiative where they assembled 'care packages' full of materials from their centre and mailed it to participants. I participated in this initiative and was inspired by it so proposed to Anna and Arrien that I make more care packages to be distributed outside in parks via PB. I collaborated with Art Hive facilitator, Mohammed Abdolreza Zadeh to replicate Art Hive's model of an open access art studio, but pop-up style on PB. This also informed the design of PB in the creation of a lid that transforms into a tabletop. As we handed out care packages, we also invited people to stay and make art with us. Inside the care packages included contact information for the PSCAS who offer subsidized art classes, another partner of this project iteration. In this way, PB's initiative aimed to foster new forms of collectivity by sharing resources and encouraging people to get creative while also addressing the needs of our partners and the community they serve.

These partnerships have informed the kinds of events we have offered, especially in the context of place. Amélie strategically chose parks near DARE-DARE's headquarters which at the time was in Saint-Henri. This spatial context dovetailed her project's inquisition of the buildings in that neighbourhood. Amélie mentions how her partnership with the Art Hive at McGill during her residency helped her recruit students to participate as curators for the Museum on Wheels. One student in particular intervened on a second-floor hallway and engaged students to question and reimagine how that space might be used differently. Reimagining space has also been approached by Rui through partnerships. He explained how Art Spin collaborated with a developer who owned

a storage locker. They featured around 20 artists who exhibited their work inside lockers, amongst everyday clients using the space. El BiciCrófono and PB have also put on events that respond to place. William describes a partnership with the LA Poet Laureates on organizing a poetry ride along the LA River. They made stops along the way to perform spoken word poetry in relation to the river. Partnerships and place in this sense become tactical in the creation of events and the shaping of the work. Later I will examine what kind of meaning can arise as a result of this tactic.

Another tactic expressed by each of us is in how we implement promotion through our partnerships. Amélie and Rui both talk about how their projects have benefited from the promotion their partners have contributed. Amélie describes how DARE-DARE helped create promotional material for her pop-up events with the Bakery of Bread and how they invited their network to attend these planned pop-up events. McGill also helped circulate promotional material for Amélie to recruit students to participate in the Museum on Wheels. This is similar to Rui as he describes how partnering with organizations "whose mandate is to address the needs of priority groups" helps Art Spin's capacity to reach a wider audience. El BiciCrófono has also partnered with organizations who serve specific communities, although Wiliam does not talk about promotion in the formal sense that Amélie and Rui described. El BiciCrófono partnered with The Freedom Singers, an organization engaged in homelessness activism in LA's Skid Row. Their partnership was focused on promoting a single that Freedom Singers has had just released. El BiciCrófono's approach seems more focused on the act of disruption, in the sense that promotion became the content for the event itself. "We got the singers on [El BiciCrófono] and we did a ride with them where it was kind of like a promo…[singing] up and down Skid Row", says William. Similarly, Landscaping the City was a 2021 exhibition I collaborated on with PSCAS instructor, David LeRue. This was a strategic partnership during the COVID-19 pandemic as the school had to "re-thinking the role of art in the lives of our students" (LeRue, 2023). These works were displayed on PB and brought around the neighbourhood, similar to how El BiciCrófono featured the Freedom Singers in LA. There were no routes, or stops determined in advance, which defies the kind of formal promotion of hosting something at a specific time and place. Like Amélie and Rui I also worked with David and the PSCAS to plan and promote a finissage of this exhibition (figure 9).

Figure 9: White, C. (2021). Landsacping the City.

From a tactical point of view, I argue there are advantages and disadvantages to either approach to promotion through partnerships. In the first sense, partners can formally implement outreach strategies to help promote pop-up events to audiences who might not otherwise have been reached. No matter the outreach strategy, attendance is never guaranteed. Amélie describes how "not all the time was successful, and I spent a big amount of time being by myself". I can relate, as PB once collaborated on an event with POP Montréal, a well-established and longstanding non-profit organization who put on large scale cultural events (POP Montréal, 2025). As part of their event "ART POP", I coordinated two bilingual events featuring nine artists to facilitate family friendly art activities at the outdoor location, Entrepôt 77. POP Montréal offered a generous budget, and I was able to offer honorariums to these artists that were align with the minimum recommended annual fee schedule declared by the Canadian Artist Representation | Le Front des Artistes

Canadiens (CARFAC, 2025)[3]. My expectation was that through POP Montréal's promotion, our event would bring a large audience, including francophones, who are a group that I am less tapped into. In the end, not many francophones attended and most of those who showed up were friends of the artists. Nevertheless, it is still tactical to partner with an organization who can help promote an event which can contribute to the success of generating collectivity. This is certainly apparent for Art Spin, as they manage to bring out 300 plus audience members which is formalized by promoting ticket sales.

The disadvantage of formally establishing a time and place means that there is less room for error or adaptation because of the need to fulfill pre-established expectations to those who may attend. This requires enough time to arrive on-site and may even require permits to legally sanction the event. Whereas implementing interventionist tactics in-formally, leaves room for flexibility and alleviates the need to fulfill expectations already advertised. From personal experience, this can alleviate a lot of stress especially when having to navigate the unexpected, like technical difficulties with equipment, or in encountering contestation and authority. Moreover, I argue that in-formality contributes to what Helguera (2011) refers to as 'carnivalesque' and how surprise might have a more significant impact in what meaning is generated which I analyze further in chapter 5.

These events described in this section are examples of how our work has significantly benefited from strategically aligning with partners in the creation of events. I argue that this tactic plays a key role in the sustainability of projects and in responding to community need. Keep these events in mind, as I will elaborate in the following sections about the forms of collectivity and meaning that have emerged from these events, as a result of these tactics.

[3] Referencing this fee schedule is a tactic I use when presenting budgets to potential funders. I advocate for paying artists fairly and CARFAC sets a standard rate of pay for Canadian artists, that can be pointed to when justifying artist fees within a proposed budget.

Chapter 5: Collectivity

All interviewees expressed how their projects prompt forms of collectivity as all of our work aims to engage people and bring them together. Simply put, one of the primary aspects of our work is to create conditions for social interaction. Rui described this as creating social experiments. In this sense, collectivity can be understood through the types of collaboration and participation that our projects achieve which varies in outcome and scale. The term collectivity is not referenced directly in the literature I reviewed and instead focused on collaboration which is theorized across disciplines in T/T urbanism (Arefi & Kickert, 2019; Awan, et al., 2011 Bain & Landau, 2019; Dorocic, et al., 2018; Lyndon, 2012; Stevens & Dovey, 2019) SEA (Helguera, 2011; Mouffe, 2007; Wodiczko, 1999), and pedagogy (Buchczyk & Facer, 2020; Helguera, 2011; Williamson, 2020). In chapter 4 I wrote about how forming partnerships is a tactic that all our projects employ. While this is inherently collaborative, it is worth distinguishing how collectivity is consequential, rather than tactical. As in, tactics speak more to the things we can control or aim to do with our projects, such as developing partnerships as tactical. Whereas collectivity seems to be a result of these tactics. What follows are examples of the kinds of collectivity our projects have achieved.

Social Space

There are nuances worth distinguishing between the types of involvement that I describe as *collaborators, participants*, and *bystanders*. These delineations are not necessarily described in the literature in this way, nor was it specifically described in these words by interviewees. Social configurations are discussed in the literature surrounding the politics of inclusion (Arefi & Kickert, 2019; Awan, et al., 2011; Buchczyk & Facer, 2020; Burton, et al., 2016; Chan, 2020; Dorocic, et al., 2019; Douglas, 2019; Helguera, 2011; Momeni & Sherman, n.d.; Mouffe, 2007; Stevens & Dovey, 2019; Williamson, 2020; Wodiczko, 1999). Based on my experiences with PB and what I can extrapolate from interviewees, I argue that these three social groups are relevant to define because it represents the level of social interactions our work can achieve. In fact, I tactically track a number for each of these per event which helps me quantify the impact PB has which can be

useful insight for potential funders. For me, collaboration refers to those who are directly involved in the creation or facilitation of an event. In the case of Amélie this would be the students she worked with in the creation of exhibitions on Museum on Wheels. For Rui, collaborators would be the artists Art Spin commission to create site-specific artworks and performances. For William, this would include the PSY-Arc students, poets, and singers he's worked with. Different from collaborators, I consider participants as those who directly engage with our projects, whether the exchange was planned or spontaneous. Some examples of planned participation are those who have joined along bike rides Rui and William have facilitated. For Amélie and myself, participants are those who have approached our co-machine and had conversations with us which are examples of spontaneous encounters. Bystanders are those who experience work from afar and are an inherent aspect of doing this work in the public realm. Bystanders are those inside cars being disrupted by El BiciCrófono's protest rides, or members of the public who walked past Amélie's Bakery of Bread and Roses and did not stop to engage, or those clients simply accessing their storage lockers during Rui's exhibition. What I propose is worth distinguishing between these groups is how collaborators are those who produce the content that can foster collectivity. As participants gather to experience this content, there arises a social space (Lefebvre, 1991), where new forms of meaning can arise because of the disruptive quality of MDA in relation to place (Mouffe, 2007; Wodiczko, 1999), including what meaning might be installed in participants and bystanders.

Participation

It is worth analyzing how collectivity emerges between those who were planning to be there, and those who happen upon the work as witnessed by interviewees and myself. Helguera (2011) talks about this dynamic in the context of SEA as certain projects are often designed with a specific audience and how sociologists like David Berreby claim that humans have a tendency to group themselves. As a result, people perceive themselves as either part of the group, or outside that group. In some ways, this is the basis for antagonism (Mouffe 2009), as topics are brought forward into the public realm via MDA that people may feel a connection to or have no interest. This is the case for most of our projects, especially those with a specific social agenda, like El

BiciCrófono's protest rides or Amélie's student exhibition about the Hong Kong Crisis will likely foster participation from those whose interests and values align with the topic presented.

Interviewees elaborate on the group dynamic that comes as a result of their events. William describes what arises from El BiciCrófono's group rides. "People are going, passing us, people are riding behind us…it feels very kind of like, an easy access, easy entry point to participation and expression, which is kind of one of the things I really like about it". William appreciates that El BiciCrófono offers an inclusive space for people to participate because he believes karaoke is something that anyone can do. This is similar to the collaborative tactics mentioned in the literature, as the idea of expert is challenged, and offers participants social agency (Arefi & Kickert, 2019; Awan, et al., 2011; Bain, 2019). I perceive that fun is likely an ingredient that helps shape the collectivity that William describes. He adds that "I like to play. I like to be silly and get other people to also feel that way. And I think this is a great platform where people can do that". Many project examples in the book *Co-Machines: Mobile disruptive architecture* (2018) also involve playful elements. Amélie observed how the exhibition with Aaron Rosenberg drew in participants because "people thought it was really fun. Like it attracted people's attention. It was less visceral than the exhibition about Hong Kong, but it was fun". In this sense, it seems that triggering an emotional response in participants whether that is through a playful encounter, or through one that touches someone on a personal level could contribute to what motivates people to come together.

Rui described the transformative effects he perceived these rides have had on audience members as "there is something that's really special about just bringing people together in public space…and that group dynamic, you know, becomes this very special ingredient". As a result, "people were just in a really positive frame of mind. I think there was just something about the rush and the reward of the physical activity that they were engaged in" says Rui. This sense of collectivity is something I have felt and witnessed during Critical Mass–a large group bike ride that celebrates and advocates for urban cycling worldwide (Critical Mass Montreal, n.d.). Rui mentioned how Art Spin took inspiration from Critical Mass which he tells me is currently prohibited in Toronto. Perhaps this sense of connection amongst strangers emerges from the idea of being amongst like-minded people, all present for similar reasons. Even if I do not personally

know every single participant at Critical Mass, there is a sense of trust, warmth, and belonging that comes during this large public street take over. Rui reflects on the interactions he has had and observed at Art Spin's event "Public Sweat". It fostered a sense of collectivity because the installations themselves brought people into proximity with one another. Rui says:

> I think for people to be given this opportunity to share space and to come together, it provided them with something that I don't think they were anticipating–that perhaps they didn't even think they needed until they, you know, sort of were in its grasp…there was just something really special about–the sense of appreciation that folks were sharing and this constant request for us to bring it back…making space for social connection in a way they weren't expecting…due to the pandemic and since the pandemic…[these] very kind of like, very embodied, you know, group activities have taken on a whole new level of urgency and significance.

I replied by recognizing that perhaps it was less about what might have been shared verbally and more about the effects of what that social interaction had on participants. This reflects what is found in the literature about how participating in SEA projects can bring participants a sense of well-being (Arefi & Kickert, 2019; Buchczyk & Facer, 2020; Dorocic, et al., 2018; Helguera, 2011; Williamson, 2020) and how participatory place-making can strengthen relationships (Bain, 2019). Overall, interviewees express how their projects generate forms of collectivity as a result of their MDA projects.

Art Spin's approach to selling tickets does inherently imply an inside and an outside group. Although Rui mentions how their events are meant to cater to a broader audience who are "interested in art and culture [and] aren't necessarily your hardcore art goers" and they do-so by programming multidisciplinary artwork. This objective emerged because of what himself and his colleague Layne Hinton observed within the art scene in Toronto. Rui goes on to say:

> We go to a lot of, you know, art events. And oftentimes what you see is that if you go to a visual art show, it's a lot of people from that community. You go to a dance performance and it's a lot of people specifically from that community. And so you just, you have all of these silos that exist within the art sector…we just kind of kept [our target audience] as

> deliberately broad and vague as possible in order to also hopefully, you know, create these opportunities for overlap between the different silos.

I can relate to this sentiment and have experienced this phenomenon of silos within the art scene in Victoria, BC. I often describe the intent behind PB is to have people experience art who were not planning to go to a gallery that day. This is also Rui's intention behind Art Spin, although my approach to engagement is more spontaneous than in Art Spin's ticketed model. Regardless of our approach, collectivity implies that a particular social group emerges from those who chose to participate in all of our MDA projects in various scales and places.

I argue that the disruptive nature of MDA projects challenges the status-quo and what is expected in the public because of their ability to create social space. This space becomes an opportunity for someone on the 'outside' to join in, or not. Mouffe (2007) describes this social dynamic as an agonistic struggle and arguably, as a result of this conflict, dominant narratives can be challenged where new meaning can emerge as social forces are confronted and contested. In this next chapter, I analyze what interviewees perceive has transpired because of collectivity.

Chapter 6: Meaning

I argue that meaning is closely related to learning, and collectivity, as the act of gathering through these projects is what allows meaning to emerge. I also want to emphasize that learning or even un-learning are fundamental in generating meaning. For this section, I provide examples of the kinds of public dialogue our projects have fostered and how these represent MDA's potential for generating new meaning.

Place

It is suggested that all projects have the potential of generating new meaning in relation to place. Of course, as facilitators, we cannot know for sure and in Amélie's words "I don't know about [what is] happening in their [heads]". The following analysis is therefore inherently skewed, because we as facilitators are sharing our perception into what we have observed in those we have encountered through our projects. Because our projects pop-up in places temporarily, place becomes a significant element because it can frame the context of the work as discussed in Chapter 3. This is discussed in the literature as *creative place-making* has the ability to generate meaning in relation to place for participants and foster a connection to place (Arefi & Kickert, 2019; Awan, et al., 2011; Bain & Landau, 2019; Buchczyk & Facer, 2020; Burton, et al., 2016; Dorocic, et al., 2019; Williamson, 2020). For example, it was important for Amélie to bring her project to various places in Saint-Henri because her Bakery of Bread and Roses speaks specifically to that neighbourhood. Amélie believes that without being prompted to reflect "a lot of people [don't] pay attention necessarily to the industrial buildings in the neighborhood. And some people [don't] think about who [is] occupying them. And so we talked about that". She provides evidence that her project was able to prompt people to think about the neighborhood in new ways. This connection to place is similar to what I observed during the exhibition Landscaping the City that I brought to various locations around the Pointe-Saint-Charles neighbourhood. I stumbled across a group of children at Le Ber park who felt a connection with the artwork as they recognized certain places that were being represented (figure 10 & 11). They shared stories with one another about their experiences in those places. This may not have necessarily generated new meaning about that

place for themselves but may have deepened the children's understanding of one another in relation to that place.

Figure 11: White, C. (2021). Landscaping the City.

Figure 10: White, C. (2021). Landscaping the City.

Place is also significant for Art Spin, El BiciCrófono, and my work with PB because we curate site specific artworks and performances. These kinds of interventions allow us to take a banal situation or an overlooked space and transform it temporarily. Rui reminisced about the exhibition he curated inside a storage locker facility. This idea of transforming a mundane, everyday place for Rui is quite exciting and he believes this element adds to audiences' ability to connect to the art by experiencing it in an unexpected place. He argues that traditional galleries are not able to offer audience members that element of surprise because there are too many preconceived notions that come with that social setting. Rui emphasizes how the blurring of mundane with art as everyday people continued to make use of the facilities added to the absurdity of the storage locker exhibition. Rui explains that for audience members, it became unclear

whether or not a stack of snow tires inside an open locker was someone accessing their stored stuff, or an art installation. Rui elaborates on the value of this:

> [The arts] need to leave space for encounters with the absurd, right?--You're going to experience something that is not going to have an obvious meaning, right? That's not going to have any clear value to it. That is going to, you know, perhaps, kind of indulge in the absurd. And that is its value. And when things get too transactional, particularly in the arts, and you sort of squeeze out the possibility for absurdity to be present, you get into a really, really sad space. You know, you lose something really precious…I think once that happens, it's almost impossible to brush aside those expectations and to really experience, whatever it is, whatever work you're about to encounter with a genuine sense of novelty or of surprise...and there is a kind of a commodifying of that experience in the process unfortunately. I think within that spirit there is less imagination. Right? There's less room for improvising, for error, or for willingness for error.

I agree with Rui's sentiment as encountering the unexpected, I argue, contributes to people's ability to learn as they experience something novel. This absurdity or transformation of the everyday I argue is a way of generating new meaning within those that encounter our work, and it becomes important to consider where this takes place so that expectations can be disrupted.

Rui describes his inquisitive approach to scouting out locations for Art Spin's tours. "How [are we] going to use them, right? How [are we] going to reimagine them through our programming?". For Rui, this is a necessary part of curating because they want to "rethinking or [push] the boundaries of what defines space or how public space is defined". Audience members are invited into this process of reimagining and using public space in a different way. This is reflected in the literature *as creative-place making*, as community members are invited into processes for reimagining place (Arefi & Kickert, 2019; Awan, et al., 2011; Bain & Landau, 2019; Dorocic, et al., 2018; Lyndon, 2012; Stevens & Dovey, 2019). This is also evident in my work with Gabriel Townsend-Darriau. He designed and built "Le Pavillon" to fit on PB and is a pop-up installation that takes the shape of the frame of a house (figure 12). We set it up at various empty lots in Montreal and engaged with passersby on the question of land value. Similarly, William

described how El BiciCrófono's Poetry Ride along the LA River prompted participants to reflect on their connection to that place. First through listening to Poets' performances related to the climate crises. Followed by prompting participants to write their own poems about the river and share their creations among one another. As such, it is evident that all our projects have the ability to bring people together and generate dialogue in relation to place through the act of disruption and arts programming.

Figure 12: White, C. (2021). Le Pavillon.

Influence

Interviewees were asked to describe what they perceived people gained from encountering their project. All of them refer to the illusive, transformative or magical qualities they have witnessed participants experiencing during their events. I argue this is possible because of the disruptive qualities behind MDA. Our projects often confront what might normally be a liminal space–an architectural term for spaces of passage or transition (Heft, 2021)–and subvert this by offering an alternative, a moment to pause, gather, and reflect. I understand this by expanding on Lefebvre's (1991) social triad and what is perhaps understood as an (anti)-social space. Our projects have the ability to shift perceptions of space from one of passage to one of gathering, via the disruption of familiar patterns of use and visual representation. These encounters challenge the social norms and expectations of the liminal spaces our projects temporarily inhabit. As a result, we have all witnessed to some degree how our work has had an influence on people.

As people move from A to B, our projects prompt the question whether or not those passing by have the time to stop. And if not, why not? Amélie speaks to this when she imagines bystanders might think to themselves that "maybe…they shouldn't stop because they need to be somewhere but then they're like, oh, now that I know I shouldn't stop, I want to stop". I extrapolate that this innate sense of curiosity is what opens people up to renegotiating a familiar social space into something unknown. This process inherently requires collectivity in order to be influential. Rui explained witnessing how Art Spin's rides might even influence the way audience members experience art. He elaborates that:

> [One] of the really special things that we noticed happening as a result of using the bicycle as a way of moving people through the city…is that in the process, that movement from–location A to location B also took on a very special significance…the journey is as important as the destination…people were really, I think, engaging with their city…those parts of the city that they were moving through in a new way. And I think appreciating their city, precisely because it was being presented to them in a way that allowed them to maybe sort of re-see it or reimagine it, right? In a way that maybe they wouldn't if they were on their own.

He and the artists that Art Spin work with have observed time and time again how audience members seem more open and engaged with the artwork compared to how viewers might be in an indoor gallery setting or performance venue. He speculates that this is because of the combination of physical exertion elicited by the bike-riding and by being part of a group which fosters in Art Spin's audiences an openness to experiencing the art. It is a reshaping of the city, of the urban social space and the way art is consumed. Rui calls this an alchemy of art and bikes:

> [Art Spin] creates these qualities in our audiences that made them just really amazing audiences to work with, and for the artists to share their work with…I think there was just something about the rush and the reward of the physical activity that they were engaged in…people were just more open, more receptive, more keen to engage in an interpretive way with what they were experiencing than what they typically are when they're, you know, going to a show–or an exhibition that I think has a more implied transactional quality to it…And I think this is another reason why, as [audiences], they behave in a way and engage with artwork in a way that's very different from more kind of traditional art spaces and settings.

Rui was describes the influence Art Spin has had on audience members and how experiencing art in unconventional ways can bring a sense of wonder.

William goes on to explain how generally when El BiciCrófono takes over the streets, their message is inherently anti-car and for him it can be "a fun weird thing that draws people's attention…you're literally just like disrupting traffic and you're putting bicycles at the forefront in kind of a fun way…people in cars are disarmed". He imagines them thinking to themselves "whoa, weird, big thing [being] towed by a bicycle. I'm not even mad anymore. I would have been mad if you were a bike, because I hate bikes and they take up a lot of car [space] but this is different, and I think this is kind of cool". He is talking about how even though people driving might be inconvenienced briefly by a protest ride, the astonishment of seeing El BiciCrófono for the first time is enough to transform road rage into wonder. Rui describes a similar sentiment, as audience members are on display during their group rides. He explains how audience members are positively received by bystanders, "supported or egged on by people who are on the sidewalk looking at them

and clapping, or people [who] are on their porch. And you know, kind of like yell out asking what's going on, what the event is about". This is likely because of that agonistic struggle Mouffe (2017) describes because the size of Art Spin's group rides or the scale of El BiciCrófono as an artifact confronts what is normally expected in the streets. I understand Mouffe's theory of antagonism means to bring an alternative imaginary into what is normally expected. Antagonism does not necessarily imply a negative social exchange or foster contestation between two opposing groups (although it can). It seems that our interventions more often bring on surprise and joy in bystanders and participants because their perception of what normally is expected has been disrupted. Antagonism provides an opportunity to rupture the social space where new meaning can arise, new possibilities of how that space is used, and understood even if temporarily. In doing so, wonder and curiosity seems to emerge when those hegemonic narratives are confronted and challenged through our MDA projects.

Influencing how space is being used can also offer educational value. This sense of novelty and play that we perceive people experience when they encounter our work I argue contributes to people's ability to learn and form new meaning because of curiosity. This requires a deeper engagement that goes beyond spectacle into a more reflexive exchange as social values or hegemonic narratives are confronted (Helguera, 2011; Mouffe, 2007; Wodiczko, 1999). William explained that "you have that initial, like, wow factor where people are interested. They get the dopamine hit of something they've never seen before". I have experienced similar things stopped at traffic lights where people in cars roll down their window and ask "what is this?" with genuine curiosity. Amélie also describes how there is "a sense of surprise, a sense of maybe a little bit [of] magic, like you've caught it. It's not there all the time and you know it because you're around the building a lot and then suddenly [it's] there". They are both alluding to the ability for these projects to bring new meaning in the context of space because of their novelty. Amélie goes on to explain that "routine makes us more distracted. While surprises and novelty make us more alert for sure". Both interviewees are describing how their work fosters curiosity in people and how this can open peoples' minds to seeing things in a different way, similar to what Rui was describing. I argue that this curiosity not only draws people in, but it also makes it possible for people to learn.

Learning

Most of these projects do not have educational agendas. Although when asked about what they felt those who have interacted with their projects might have learned, each interviewee reflected on these possibilities. Rui elaborates how Art Spin:

> [Has] never really gone into any of our programming with a sense of what its educational impact will be…the hope is that in those social dynamics, there is a kind of impact and hopefully the sort of educational consequences are that people come away with a greater appreciation for their civic identities.

I adore this idea of *educational consequences* that Rui adds to the conversation because it helps to understand the outcome MDA can have on those who encounter the work. Rui goes on to speculate on the benefits these group activities might have:

> What their civic identity is depends on having healthy social interactions, you know, open the world. And so if we can create scenarios where there are these, real time, real life, social experiments that we set in motion that give people an opportunity to interact with one another, to learn with one another, but more importantly, to define a sense of civic responsibility as a result of coming into contact with others, then that for me, I think, is a huge educational outcome…when there's that unexpected, emerges the curiosity. And I feel that it's that curious space that allows people to open up their minds and see things in a different way. Which, for me, is learning. That is a process of learning.

Rui explains eloquently what I am arguing, which is that through that sense of collectivity, and curiosity, new meaning can arise because of our work. This is because our activities dislodge the expectations of how people interact in public. Erving Goffman (1963) theorizes how face engagements are fundamental to social interaction. He describes how interactions vary in public space versus private space. In public, civil inattention is a ritual of minimally acknowledging a stranger yet not fully engaging with each other. This is especially common in larger cities, and Georg Simmel (1950) theorizes that individuals have developed anti-social behaviors as a form of self-preservation in response to metropolitan life. All our projects are based in large cities and so

have the potential to disrupt these rituals. William adds to how MDA can create new forms of social space because of the unexpected:

> [El BiciCrófono is] an alternative place of learning…being on the street at an intersection of two large roads or something is not like a place that you would typically expect to learn something or express something. So even just the fact that it is outside on public land, on places that these cars are–[passing] through a million times a day…[if] this street wasn't here, this could be a place to gather…we're always bringing some kind of new perspective.

Rui and William both believe in these *educational consequences* our work can bring about to participants.

Learning is also an important aspect for us who are conducting this work. I often describe PB as an iterative process, constantly adapting based on the more experience I gain. Amélie reflects on the different outcomes of putting Museum on Wheels in the atrium at McGill versus the second-floor hallway:

> I learned that the space where you put the [project], the mobile platform is important…the atrium was a bigger space. It was more open with light. So people automatically felt more comfortable…people were passing by like it was a place for circulation so automatically I would get more people, and more people would attract more people.

This suggests the value of experiential learning for practitioners and how experimentation can be a tactic behind doing this work.

Social change & the four determinants

If social change is a goal behind MDA projects, then we practitioners need to consider what is required for our participants to be able to sustain taking action towards a particular issue. Which is why I am so intrigued by Standerfer's, et al. (2022) theory on community readiness because it flips the narrative of simply encouraging those to take action and instead asks 'are we

ready to act?' and if not, 'what do we need to be ready?'. These are relevant factors I believe MDA has the potential for addressing with the communities it aims to serve.

I argue that the tactics described through our MDA projects prove to be an effective strategy in addressing social change because of their ability to generate meaning and foster social connection. Standerfer, et al. (2022) analyzed what communities need to take action and discovered there are four determinants that need to be present. They are: 1) issue alignment; 2) issue literacy; 3) community literacy; and 4) visualized futures. Standerfer, et al. (2022) came to these determinants from a public health perspective, and I add to this theory by considering the role of art education in impacting the four determinants. Especially for those MDA projects with justice-oriented agendas. I argue that this framework can be an exceptional way to inform how MDA can have meaningful and educational outcomes for participants. For example, mobility justice is something El BiciCrófono aims to promote in inspiring social change in LA. In approaching this, William asks "what can we do to bring awareness to alternative forms of transportation?...this seems like [El BiciCrófono] could address a need or bring awareness to a problem". This relates to community readiness, as this question can be answered by improving issue alignment by educating people about cyclists' presence, their safety, and their right to the street like El BiciCrófono does during their "Silent Ride". The impact of seeing a mass of cyclists take over the street has the potential to foster in bystanders and participants the ability to imagine an alternative future to mobility justice in LA. Another example of how issue literacy can be improved is with Amélie's collaborative exhibition about the Hong Kong Crisis. She says, "I think that [displaying protest art] would be a nice way to talk about it with students...because there [was] a lot of tension among inland Chinese students and Hong Kong students". She explained how this exhibition was one of the most successful and drew the attention of 75 students and the news division Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC news). Featuring this exhibition helped educate those about the Hong Kong Crisis, perhaps improving their issue literacy. My work with PB, in hosting pop-up Art Hives, was centered on promoting CUCCR and the PCSAS. This is a form of improving community literacy by educating people about the resources that are available to them, like free reuse materials and subsidized art classes. Finally, in addressing the fourth determinant, El BiciCrófono's "Planet City" project offered audiences the possibility of

visualizing a future where everything is recycled. For these reasons, learning is a crucial element in addressing the four determinants which I argue MDA has the potential to do as pointed out in these case studies through their ability to foster collectivity and generate new meaning. In this way, MDA projects with social agendas can consider the ways their work can address the four determinants to foster social change.

Conclusion

Unanswered questions

There are some questions that remain unanswered, and I encourage further investigation into distinctive approaches to developing MDA projects and their potential impact in serving communities. There is much to explore about the design elements behind co-machines as they are so varied. I encourage investigations into these and in sharing open access design concepts, in the way that Amélie benefited from. "I looked online and at one point…I got inspiration from this design team in Europe", she says. Further questions regarding design would be to consider the impact of the physical qualities of a co-machine on and in response to the built environment, to the body, and to learning. As design and urbanism intersect, I also propose to evaluate how might MDA projects escape the marketization of creative-placemaking through their mobile and temporary nature. How can MDA avoid the financialization of land and contribute to the non-financial value of the spaces we share? As it has been assessed the intersection of labour market precarity and gentrification (Gourzis, et al., 2019) and the romanization of artist identities (Bain, 2005; Burton, et al., 2016; Worth, 2019), what are the socio-economic conditions that inspire and support MDA practitioners to do this work? This includes a deeper investigation into the skills and labour required for this work and to consider how do practitioners afford doing so. Moreover, all interviewees admitted that it is challenging to know exactly how their projects have impacted participants and bystanders, without asking them directly. Therefore, I advocate for more research into the impact of these projects on participants, including further analyses of the strengths and limitations of providing informal-learning opportunities in public spaces through MDA. I also advocate for institutions to provide non-bureaucratic solutions for socially engaged artists to receive in-formal consent from participants so that our work can contribute to research-creation while maintaining ethical research standards.

It is clear that the four MDA projects analyzed here involve a range of tactics which as a result foster collectivity and generate meaning in relation to place. A tactic that seems the most significant throughout all our projects is in the development of partnerships and how this contributes to the content generated. Intervention is another tactic that is necessary in achieving

the reconfiguration of social place and in bringing people together. By confronting the social forces of public space, this work has the potential to influence how people use space and socially interact in public; more, it has the potential to provide learning opportunities and to generate new ways of thinking about various political projects. Since this work often addresses social issues, it is also relevant to consider Standefer, et al.'s theory of community readiness and how this work can impact the four determinants. Such as helping improve literacy on a topic including the potential for aligning those with the topic, sharing resources, and provoking future imaginaries on alternatives related to that topic. I encourage those interested in doing this work to follow their instincts, build connections, be scrappy and ruthless in managing and securing resources, and bring new ideas into the public realm. It is possible to challenge the privatization of public space, dominant narratives like car-culture, and so many more social justice and environmental issues can be brought forth through MDA as described here. In doing so, I am convinced that those who participate in MDA can experience the inexplicable joy that interviewees and I shared in doing this rewarding work of bringing art outside of gallery walls and learning outside the classroom.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide

Questions:

1. Describe your project. How does it move through the city?
    a. What does it help you accomplish in public space?
2. What form of collaboration is included in your project?
    a. How has your project been informed by community?
    b. What needs does your project address?
3. What are some memorable experiences you have had by encountering those through your project?
    a. What kind of conversations have emerged through these spontaneous social connections?
4. What do you perceive those who have encountered your project might learn from engaging with your project? (Or what is it you would like for them to learn?)
    a. In your opinion, how might the place of the encounter effect this learning?
    b. In your opinion, how does intervention and novelty contribute to the learning of those you encounter, versus a planned, or formal setting?
5. Anything else you wish to share?