White cover with text, saying 18 Perspectives by Laura Adèr & Ariana Rose, Galit Ariel, Rudy van Belkom, Joost Beunderman & Indy Johar, Aminata Cairo, Maurice Crul & Frans Lelie & Bernardine Walrecht, Simon Dogger, Marie van Driessche, Sennay Ghebreab, Nyasha Harper–Michon, Lyongo Juliana, OluTimehin Kukoyi, Maggi Leung, Nica Renoult, Nishant Shah, Jacquie Shaw, Rut Turró and De Voorkamer on Designing Cities for All.

Inclusive design is a process, not an outcome. There is not just one method to practice designing cities for all. Therefore, let this be a living document, a continuous search for better design practices and better design vocabulary.

PREFACE.

If one thing has become apparent in the past few years — and the current COVID-19 pandemic even amplified this — it is the existing societal problems around issues of inequality, and the resulting injustice, segregation, and exclusion. Today in The Netherlands, Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague have officially achieved the status of 'super-diverse city'. In these cities, in particular, the awareness is growing that radical changes are necessary to achieve a fair, safe and healthy living environment for everyone.

In 2021, Pakhuis de Zwijger's extensive two-year programme Designing Cities for All (DCFA) commenced with the support of the Creative Industry Fund NL. This programme focuses on the role of designers in shaping and creating cities for and by everyone. We have involved a great diversity of talent; we invited designers, scientists, experts, educational institutions, and others to participate, next to a total of six Fellows to curate part of the programme. To share their knowledge, to work together, and inspire each other to build inclusive solutions from the ground up.

Designing for inclusion starts with recognising exclusion first. Understanding design is also how to make sense of your observations in a way that isn't biased by your own world views. We need to educate ourselves on human diversity, and we need proper design tools that give voice to people whose needs are often ignored. To end this first year, we publish the first edition of the DCFA essay book, which holds 18 perspectives on designing cities for all. All authors are committed to creating cities of belonging, where everybody feels and is allowed to feel at home. These inspiring essays will help you understand how design is part of the problem, but also holds the key to the solution.

Pakhuis de Zwijger's DCFA-team,
Dymphie Braun (Head of Programme),
Egbert Fransen (Director),
Folkert Lodewijks (Partnerships) and
Jonathan Tjien Fooh (Programma Maker).

INSIGHTS.

Designing Cities for all. Inclusive design is a process, not an outcome. There is not just one method to practice designing cities for all. Let this be a living document, a continuous search for better design practices and better design vocabulary.

#1: Design is everywhere.
Everything around us is designed. Our products, services, environments, and other humanmade spaces, but also our social structures and systems. Designing for all is far more than a wheelchair ramp to access a building or accessible websites.

#2: Design shapes our sense of belonging in this world.
Design fosters our ability to access, participate in, and contribute to the world. In cities in particular, the awareness is growing that radical changes are necessary in order to achieve a fair, safe and healthy living environment for everyone.

#3: There are flaws in these designs.
Not being able to read small type on a screen as you age, soap dispensers that don't respond to black skin, health trackers that don't include the female cycles. Design bias is harmful, and can even be lethal. What applies to products and services, the same goes for places and systems — think about unsafe environments and inequalities in health and housing due to bad design.

#4: For every injustice in this world, there is an architecture built to sustain and perpetuate it.
The dominant narrative of design and design thinking is often rooted in systems of oppression and exclusion. What we tend to do in this world is design for the middle, and not for the margins. When we start designing for the people who are actually living with the failures of our designed products, spaces, and systems, we will create and build stronger structures for everyone.

#5: Inclusion happens by design or not at all.
Design can cause, but also sort out exclusion. In order to arrive at systems and living environments that everyone — regardless of age, cultural background, ethnicity, mental and physical capacities, religion, and gender — can relate to in a fair and equal manner, ask yourself: 'who am I excluding?' and allow the answer to design cities for all.

#6: Everyone is a (re)designer.
We all make, build, arrange and restructure. In that sense basically everyone can participate in design, and it also means people outside the traditional design team are making significant design choices. As designers, we have to involve the right people in the design process, and learn how to interface and interact with the current systems and power paradigms, in order to build inclusive solutions from the ground up.

CHAPTER 1: CITIES OF BELONGING.

With essays by:
Aminata Cairo.
Nishant Shah.
Nica Renoult.
Laura Adèr & Ariana Rose.
Maggi Leung.
OluTimehin Kukoyi.

'My identity and history help me to understand the world in a better way and add something to the architectural field, which maybe others cannot because they don't have my history and background. That is the beautiful thing about a diverse society — that everyone can add something out of their own experience.'

Arna Mačkić in DCFA livecast The IdenCity: Human Identity.

'The collective is something that requires mutuality. We don't stand alone. We're not individuals that somehow planet on an island, you know.'

Dr. Natalie Dixon in DCFA livecast Design from Inclusion: Spaces.

Designing cities for all, a fascinating concept.

By Aminata Cairo, Independent consultant (aminatacairo.com).

What is a city for? A crucial question, but one rarely asked by developers and city planners who dominate the debate over the future of cities. What most working-class residents actually want is overlooked. Cultural anthropologist Aminata Cairo reflects on the choices that we have to make.

Image description:
A portrait of Aminata. She is smiling. and looking straight in the camera. She is wearing a black jacket and her locs are wrapped in a colourful headband.

I was born and raised in Amsterdam in the late 1960s. I was born in De Pijp, a lower-income, working-class neighbourhood, which now, through gentrification, has become uninhabitable for those workingclass folks. From there we moved to Amsterdam-Zuid, the Olympic Stadium neighbourhood. This community was built in support of the Olympics in the 1930s. Amsterdam-Zuid was always an upper-class neighbourhood, but thanks to those Olympic housing projects there were some working-class pockets. And so I went to school with 'regular' kids alongside doctors' and lawyers' kids. We had a wide range of different backgrounds, but that was our normal. We didn't know any different.

My mother still lives there, but today I cannot afford to find housing there. Working-class community members have made way for expats, and rental units upon vacating are immediately put up for sale or the rent is raised to the allowable maximum. It feels so familiar yet distinctly different. But this is nothing new. Amsterdam in its gentrification process is no different from other major cities all over the world. Someone like musician and writer Massih Hutak writes extensively about that. I don't want this piece to be a lament or mournful account over what was lost, however. I want it to be a reflection on the choices that have been made and continue to be made.

The effects of poor planning choices.

There was a time in the Netherlands when housing was purposely mixed. Wealth lived not too far from lower incomes. I was a product of that period. There was a time when lower-income people who struggled and were deemed 'anti-social' were put in separate communities where they were supported by social workers. Now, I am not a supporter of these segregation practices, they failed anyway. But what fascinates me is the moral justification that guided those planning choices. There was some sense of communal responsibility, as misguided as it may have been.

In that same Amsterdam-Zuid today, where there is a large population of elderly people, several tram stops have been removed, paid parking has become normal and the number of public benches has been reduced. My elderly mother doesn't use public transportation anymore as the distance to get to the stop has become too far and the resting benches are gone. Paid parking has resulted in fewer people coming tovisit her. And so, I guess, I ended up lamenting anyway. Somebody made those decisions and people were deeply affected by them, not necessarily in a positive way. It fascinates me.

We have all kinds of meetings and grand ideas about designing the city for all, while these kinds of decisions are being made and pushed through without question. One of my favorite quotes is from the first Jurassic Park movie in which scientist Dr. Ian Malcolm states: 'Your scientists were so preoccupied with whether they could, they didn't stop to think if they should'. Again we are reminded of that concept of moral choice. Do we take the time to stop and care about all the people in these communities when decisions are to be made? Do we think about the impact these choices will make, other than efficiency, expediency, and profit? Do we take into consideration that our designs in fact might be pushing people out?

Calling out inequality.

I come from the world of education — thus not directly the world of design — but the issues addressed are the same. I am fascinated by an educational system that is based on a particular dominant perspective that sets a definitive tone but marginalises others. In education, people have come to that realisation and are eager to correct their patterns. But as people try to address it, the mechanisms are so ingrained that systems of inequalities persist. Instead of breakthroughs, we witness reproduction, time and time again. We use the same tools and follow the same procedures with the hope of a different outcome. Somebody makes those decisions. It is truly fascinating.

Designing our cities, similarly, is full of innovation yet reproduces inequalities. The intent is there. The passion is there. Yet decisions fall short to make a change. I remember growing up with friends in Amsterdam and us discussing how we could never live anywhere else in the Netherlands. Almost all of them are gone now and have moved to Lelystad, Almere, Hoofddorp, Uithoorn, and Zaanstad. The city of Amsterdam was no longer for them and they left.

Things change, everything changes. There is nothing wrong with that. But sometimes I wonder what it would be like to have some honest city planners and designers who would flat out tell you 'we are only interested in housing and accommodating able-bodied, young, higher-income people'. Now that would be fascinating.

The act of staying positive and finding joy.

When I visit my mother these days, I purposely try not to be bitter. In the street, I greet the mothers of early friends who have long moved on, most of them outside of Amsterdam. I admire these elderly ladies who look out for each other and swap stories about their children and grandchildren. I watch my mother as she writes postcards for children in the street who have graduated high school. She and her friends have their

community rituals, even though the community has changed. They make choices about holding on to certain morals and so colour their lives in a beautiful way.

I walk through the neighbourhood and try to appreciate the present. I look at the trees, at the familiar architecture, the stores of which some are still there albeit under different ownership, the art pieces on the Apollolaan, and how the reflection of the sun lights up certain parts of the street. I don't even have to reminisce about my youth, I just let it wash over me. I try to find the joy in being here, in spite of the fact that people with regular and lower incomes have been pushed out. In spite of the fact that elderly people are considered as burdensome. I make it a moral choice to stay positive.

If I am truly honest, I don't believe in designing for all. I don't see that all are welcome in this city. Things seem more and more out of reach for some, while enclaves are being born. It is no different in education. Yet, somehow we have to stay positive and find the joy, even in the very small things. So we can keep going. We cannot lose hope, whether it is about the cities we live in or by extension the educational system that is a reflection of our cities. Regardless of the reproductive practices, there are always outliers, those who inspire and bring hope, those who make different choices because they are brave enough to commit to a better outcome. Like my mother, who in spite of an environment that is gradually erasing her, persists and commits to letting those young community members feel that they are valued.

Perhaps that is the answer, through stepping out and living our own value, rather than waiting for designers and planners to come up with ideas to include and accommodate certain people. When we shine so brightly that we cannot be overlooked and designers and planners are forced to design for all of us from the start and not as an afterthought, then we will get better and different choices.

What if... It's fascinating to think about.

Curious for more?

Aminata Cairo speaks about belonging and giving equal voice to all in the DCFA livecast The IdenCity: Human Experience.

Booktip: Holding Space.

In Holding Space, Aminata Cairo presents her own, unique vision in the promotion of inclusion that far surpasses the standard diversity and inclusion approach.

Booktip: Jij hebt ons niet ontdekt, wij waren hier altijd al.

A research by Massih Hutak on how gentrification works and how cities can grow into places for everyone, including old and new residents.

Who do we talk about, when we talk about 'All'?

By Nishant Shah: feminist, humanist & technologist (nishantshah.online).

In 'designing for all', we ask ourselves what communities are overlooked in the design phase. Nishant Shah takes it a step further: instead of scrupulously making sure your checklist of diversity representation is covered, try reconstructing your 'all' and rephrasing your mission to 'designing OF all'.

Image description:
Portrait of Nishant. He is looking straight in the camera through his glasses, and is wearing a black jacket.

In 2008 my hometown of Ahmedabad, in the western state of Gujarat, India, underwent a massive exercise in urban design. The city was to get a new skyline on its long shore of the river Sabarmati — that in its serpentine fashion, bifurcates the city into two. Modelled around the modernist riverfront projects (the likes of which we have experienced in other Asian cities signalling wealth, ambition, and the rise of global infrastructure), the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project was the biggest urban design exercise that the city had undertaken in decades.

The proposition was to give the city a facelift by building a permanent promenade, taming the river by lifting the shores, creating spaces for private companies to grow their footprint, and making common access areas — parks, restaurants, recreation spaces — for the residents of Ahmedabad. The expensive public development project would put the city on the landscape of foreign investors and technology companies that the government was wooing to come Make in India and contribute to the India Shining campaign. It would bring international focus and a renewed lens of looking at the city and the river which runs through it.

Overlooking communities in the design phase.

In the many feasibility reports, environmental scans, consultations with architects, urban designers and policymakers, it seemed like a win-win situation for all. When the project was set in motion, it came as a surprise to many — those who were involved in making it as well as those who were excited at getting this new glorious riverfront — that there was resistance to the project. It would seem that 'all' were not happy with it.

What had been completely overlooked — deliberately rather than accidentally — was that this river shore was an entire universe of life and livelihood. On both sides of the river, informal settlements, slums, and legal settler colonies that rehabilitated refugees and

migrant workers had grown to keep up with the city for over five decades. At an estimate, more than 50% of the city's informal labour market lived in these neighbourhoods.

A large part of the invisible domestic, construction, manual, and informal labour that is the hidden lifeline of post-industrial cities, was supplied by the low income groups and communities that had called the river its home. Around their homes, other economies that followed the ebbs and flows of the river had sprung: second-hand markets, small-scale farming, raising and rearing of small domestic animals, repair shops, and small-scale entrepreneurial enterprises that thrived in the region.

It turned out when specific civil society organisations started inquiring into this, that none of the representatives of these communities were consulted during the design phases of the city. The project was very deliberate in who the 'all' were that was going to be designed for in the making of the riverfront. The resistance that was mounted by the small group of civil society actors, however, was easily quelled. The voices of the poor, the vulnerable, the weak, and the disposable, were not considered important enough, before or after the project was set into motion. The resistance was completely overridden by offering meagre and unsustainable compensation packages and rehabilitation options that did not pay any heed to local habits, customs, aspirations, or ambitions of the people who were being forcibly dislocated from the land that they called home. In state-leaning media and in public propaganda the fact that 150,000 people were being rendered homeless was considered a small price to pay for progress.

Despite the resistance and the litigation that followed, the Riverfront Development continued and was completed over a period of six years. In a cruel state of unhearing irony, a large part of the workforce that was employed for the construction work came from these very settlements that have now been erased under the heavyweight of design and designated areas of the new riverfront. Where once a thriving society existed, now stands a gentrified, cleaned-up, recreation area that boasts of big hotels, exclusive restaurants, and landscaped gardens 'open to all'. An attempt to trace the dislocated communities brings half-empty narratives of people who were uprooted from their home, and in the guise of relocation were made into migrating, precarious workforces, pushed out of the city, and made available to other construction and development projects which made them permanently dislocated, as they moved from one site to another.

Representation in times of urbanised gentrification.

The story of the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project is not unique. The rhetoric of 'designing for all' continues to ring through a variety of urban development and design projects, especially those fuelled by the growth of transnational capital and digital technological growth which designates cities as desirable for specific kinds of communities, communication, and commerce. The story, with or without the river, resonates with the urbanized gentrification in almost all major European capitals or Silicon Valley wannabes that create shared economies where only those who can afford to share are welcome. It is a story that I see re-enacted in cities as far away and distributed as San Francisco, New York, Hamburg, Berlin, Amsterdam, Johannesburg, Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Shanghai, and Jakarta. The story has become so ubiquitous and has been told so many different times in different contexts, that entire interventions have

now emerged to ensure that there is more inclusion and presence of diverse voices and vulnerable communities in the processes that can be called 'designing for all'. Policymakers and public planners take extra efforts that representatives from different communities are consulted and conversations are enacted so that their plans and projects can be in the service of the all. Look at almost any large public planning and design project right now, and you will see a checklist of diversity representation where a theatre of 'allness' is constructed in order to give the projects legitimacy and validity.

This is a good move. It does open up spaces for potentially new voices to enter into a dialogue and offer critical and alternative perspectives. However, in the creation of these 'all-inclusive' practices, is a sleight of hand that fools the eye — it is a practice powered by distinction without a difference. The 'All' that is constructed, in these performances of diversity and difference, is very often made of people who might have apparent differences but have larger affinities. These affinities, marked by class, language, privilege, life experience, education, training, affordances, and common interests are often obfuscated by amplifying their apparent difference. It is a way by which contemporary 'inclusive' and 'participatory' design practice moves, where we speak to the other, as long as the other is more or less like us. It is an opposition without authority; a sameness that underlies the difference.

Institutionally we experience this across sectors and fields. In education, this is performed by conflating diversity with internationalisation, bringing in international students and workers who share the same privilege threshold and thus have intersecting interests. In public planning, the people who are involved and given credibility are those who either have aspirational plans or have been trained to feel significantly alienated or distant from their communities of origin. In design, the limits that are set through identified demographic and social indicators, exclude those who might question the very principle of design, and instead, focus on those who help perpetuate the principles. In calls for designing for 'all', it becomes easy to find voices and positions that are complementary even when being critical or distant. Divergence is allowed as long as consensus can be produced. And thus, the status quo allows for critique to be mounted, only to cannibalise it, and continue with the original plan.

Dismantling the call for 'design for all'.

One of the things that cultural studies scholars do, is to identify patterns and excavate the question that needs to be reframed. I have been looking at the making of Information Technology (IT) cities around the world for the last fifteen years. And one of the things that I have learned, both in being a part of these design experiments as well as in critiquing them, is to dismantle the call for 'design for all'. It has been worthwhile to stop asking if 'all' have indeed been included, because the focus on 'all' allows for the design principle to get unchallenged. If the only question is whether the design works for all or not, then the design itself is considered a given — its ambitions, its logic, its limitations, and its infrastructural costs are accepted, and what begins is a curation to find the 'all' that would fit its scope; perhaps with some modifications which are glorified as iterations.

Hence, the radical proposition for us: when we set out the call for 'design for all', we need to read it slightly differently — Design Of All. In rephrasing this call, we immediately recognise that the designing is done with a specific kind of all in mind, that this is design that's designated as infallible and non-negotiable and is merely a practice in finding enough stakeholder voices who will support and legitimize its presence. The questions of justice, diversity, and inclusion are no longer fundamental to the design principles and ambitions but merely footnotes that help perpetuate the narrative of the design scope.

Designing for All, generally, is a Designing of the All, and the real challenges and questions begin by identifying and centering voices, bodies, people, and collectives that are not being catered to, in the making of this design. Or, because we live in the world of information overload, here is the TL;DR (Too Long, Didn't Read) to put onto social media. When we say 'all', we generally think of the all that are like us. 'Design for all', seems to be an answer to a question: How do we make design inclusive? However, it needs to be questioned: Who do you include in your definition of 'all'?

Curious for more?
Nishant Shah speaks about designing proper, meaningful, and inclusive solutions in the DCFA livecast Breaking it Down: Designing.

Booktip: The Ideal City.
What kind of cities do we want to live in? What do we believe is important for a good life? And what makes a good home for all of us?

Booktip: Rebel Cities.
Rebel Cities places the city at the heart of both capital and class struggles, looking at locations ranging from Johannesburg to Mumbai, from New York City to Sao Paulo.

Many miles to run.

By Nica Renoult: co-founder of Trickle & Head of financial accounts at Patta (trickle.work).

Nica Renoult is committed to equal opportunities and saying goodbye to unconscious bias. In this essay, she shares her personal experiences with people's biased perceptions and how we should educate ourselves to redesign the system.

Image description:
Portrait of Nica. She has a soft smile, and looking in the camera. Nica is wearing a white t-shirt and her hair is tied in a low bun.

'But you are actually white.' A 'well-intended' comment I receive almost monthly, made by colleagues, friends, and even strangers. A remark that is always intended as a compliment — 'you can be one of us, the good white people' — though it feels incredibly hurtful. For a long time, I have ignored people saying this to me, but nowadays I can't anymore. Simply because it causes me anger and sadness.

I grew up in the Netherlands, within the Dutch system and I live by Dutch norms and values. Why am I not allowed to do this in my own skin colour? Because when I look in the mirror, I do not see a white person. I have brown skin and I know why I have it. I hold another culture in me that I have to adjust to as well. That is what makes me 'me'.

Close relatives see me as white and although that is well-intended, it's also problematic. I know Customs at Schiphol Airport for example does not share this perspective when I am the only one chosen and taken out of my group of white friends for an interrogation. Then there is this great reminder that I don't look Dutch or white when people ask me: 'But what are you really?' or 'Where are you really from?'. These polarising questions imply that I am not really supposed to be here, or at least I am not from here. Maybe not even human? The first question is especially alienating.

I can remember sitting in an airplane flying from The Maluku Islands — the country my grandparents are from — back home to Amsterdam. A white man was sitting next to me, telling me how I differ from 'the norm'. I asked him if he realised that for the past few weeks he was the one differing from the norm as he was not in a Western society but in the country I am 'really' from. Asking about a person's race or ethnicity could be a harmless question, but this depends on the context and who's asking. In this case, it was definitely not.

The visible differences.

When I stand up for people of colour — or even women! — people often tell me 'this (injustice) doesn't apply to you, you are different'. That got me thinking. I am not different from my family members who are non-white. I am not better behaved or kinder than my friends of colour. And I am not better or more efficient at my job than my female friends.

People just have an unconscious idea about others that gets rejected only when they actually meet them. According to Stanford neuroscientist David Eagleman, 95% of what we do and think is unconscious. The question is, what do we do with the remaining 5%?

We live in a world where white men are historically considered to be superior. Most boards of companies are predominantly filled with white men and there is still a gender gap when it comes to salaries. Let me take the Netherlands as an example for this article, but in the rest of the Western countries, it's no different. We live in a system that is built for white people. For example, primary schools even promote this verbally when the majority of the children is white. I heard from multiple friends that the schools they have been checking for their kids to go to, proudly told them that it is a high-quality school because it is a white school. In the American podcast Nice White Parents, this phenomenon is explained in detail.

The systems we know today are built on patriarchy. They are built for ablebodied people. What the media tells and shows us comes from a mostly white-dominated and for a long time only male perspective.

The books we read in school are written by white people — and yes, mostly men — so it often shows a very biased take on history and other information we teach our kids. We design for men – the Swedish brand Volvo is the only car manufacturing brand known to test its cars' safety not only on dummies that represent male bodies but also dummies that realistically represent female bodies. The Dutch governmental tax system discriminates based on people's last names. This last design flaw got exposed in 2020 as the 'Dutch child care benefits scandal', a political scandal for which the government has yet to properly apologise for.

A solid core.

Have you ever been to a paradise island? Where the weather is always good. The colours are always bright. And the mood is always positive. Have you ever snorkeled around that island? You will learn that just below the surface, there is more beauty to experience. More colours to explore. Moving around here gives your experience an extra dimension. If you go even deeper and dive further down the surface, you can discover more of the fundament of this island. It needs all the raw materials combined to make sure this island can carry you and all its biodiversity. The same goes for organisations.

When all layers of a company, any company, are solid in an inclusive and diverse way, it will flourish at its best. It will be more profitable. Employees will feel more welcome – they will be able to stay authentic and use this authenticity creatively.

A fish doesn't see the water that it swims in. It just swims. It's difficult to judge the system objectively because we're so used to living in it. A few years back, I moved to London. Like Amsterdam, it's a multicultural city in Western Europe. But the mentality there felt different towards people from different cultures. People of colour were treated differently than what I was used to. I was aware that the company I worked for was more diverse than I had ever experienced in Amsterdam. I also saw there was more diversity in City of London, the corporate and financial business areas in London. The realisation

that London was different when it comes to diversity topics, wasn't something I gave a lot of thought to while living there. Though, it did have a great effect on me when I moved back to Amsterdam. Probably because I had to experience unfriendliness and painful comments after not having to deal with this for a whole year.

That extra effort.

LGBTI+ people, people of colour, disabled people, and also women have to work harder than others to get further. We have to move around in the current system and make it work for us. Run that extra mile for a promotion. Adjust ourselves to fit in and maybe get hired or earn the same salary as our colleagues. In a world where even Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the government discriminate, it only makes sense that people do.

Now let us put that 5% I mentioned before to good use. Let us consciously eliminate unconscious bias. By acknowledging that the system we live in is set up a certain way, we might be able to change. If we want everyone to be treated equally, it is only fair to say that at this point we are not there yet.

Realising that no one is doing everything right, might make it easier to admit this about yourself as well. With this in mind, we can change the system. We can make sure the workspaces in these Western countries are for everyone. We can change the data in AI and make sure it does not discriminate anymore. We can test the safety of cars also for women, children and disabled people. We can choose to not only put diversity in the foreground as marketing assets, we can decide to put diversity in every layer of a company and create a truly inclusive workspace. If you wish to make changes in this system, educate yourself. Don't ask marginalised people to educate you, just because you think they know best because they've lived it. You should educate yourself to make this society better for others. For them. Not make it harder by asking to explain unpleasant experiences. This piece of advice is for everyone because everyone has a piece of normativity in them.

Whether it is being white, straight, cis-gender or you are a physically abled person. Find that part and inform yourself on what it's like to be different in that particular sense. You can of course put that against the points in which you might be different to get a better understanding. Run that extra mile for those who have been running.

Curious for more?

Nica Renoult speaks about designing more diverse and inclusive workspaces and creating an equal playing field for every job seeker in the DCFA livecast Design from Inclusion: Systems.

Podcast tip: Nice White Parents.

A podcast from Serial and The New York Times about building a better school system, and what gets in the way.

Booktip: Invisible Women.
By exposing data bias in a world designed for men, Caroline Criado Perez shows that much architecture and design does not work properly for non-men.

The right to feel safe in urban space.

By Laura Adèr: co-founder of Fairspace (fairspace.co) and Ariana Rose: Founder Studio in Between (studioinbetween.org).

Racism is a problem for Dutch public safety. In designing for specific problems experienced at the intersection of gender and race in Amsterdam, Laura Adèr and Ariana Rose use co-creation and urban acupuncture to amplify the voices of Black women.

Image description:
A combined portrait of Ariana, on the left, and Laura on the right. Ariana is looking in the camera with a friendly smile, and wearing a beige coat layered over a black turtleneck sweater. Laura is looking to the right and smiling. she has her hair down and wearing a black button down shirt.

Everyone has a right to feel safe in public space. When people are afraid to be themselves or feel unsafe because of unwanted attention or discriminating behaviour from others, their freedom of movement and bodily integrity are violated. Universal access to safe and inclusive public spaces is a key target of the Sustainable Development Goals. But do we universally agree on what is meant by 'safety'? The livability of a city depends on everyone feeling safe and welcome. Unfortunately for many people, especially women and girls, street harassment and other forms of violence in public spaces exist around the world, including in the Netherlands.

Designing for public safety.

Research has been done to understand safety from a gendered perspective, and the Netherlands is increasingly taking action to make its streets free from catcalling and sexual harassment. The initial response of policymakers has been to criminalise street harassment to increase safety. But who does this make the city safer for? Relying on police and the criminal justice system makes cities less safe for racial minorities. This includes minority women who are often excluded from decision-making processes regarding how and for whom to design public space.

So how do non-white women experience public space? Given the lack of intersectional data on (sexual) harassment in Amsterdam, Fairspace and Studio in Between, supported by the City of Amsterdam, led one of the Netherlands' first-ever initiatives that focus on how Black women experience street harassment and what they need to feel safe in public space.

Experiencing Dutch public spaces as a Black woman.

While most white women describe public safety as being free from physical violence and harassment, black women additionally define safety as being able to navigate a city without being confronted by racism. One woman who participated in our participatory research said: 'Black people are part of Dutch society, not apart from it'. This is critical to understand when designing for public safety.

For the women we spoke with, feeling safe would mean no longer being ignored, excluded, or problematised in ways that create emotional, psychological, or physical lack of safety. With this in mind, it is critical to use anti-racist approaches when considering how to make our cities safer — for everyone. Although there is no simple design solution to address the weight and complexity of the work that needs to be done, by understanding how racism is experienced in Amsterdam, we can thoughtfully and realistically contend with the ways Black women are routinely othered (labelled as not fitting in with Dutch norms) in public spaces and left to cope with minimal structural support. This is the first step to designing for the specific problems experienced at the intersection of gender and race.

In addition to sexual harassment, Black women experience the effects of segregation and gentrification of neighbourhoods, increased surveillance, and criminalisation. They must endure Zwarte Piet celebrations, do not have much (positive) representation in Dutch spaces, the news, media, culture, or politics, and disproportionately experience the adverse effects of COVID-19 and related policies. As if this isn't enough, they also experience racial gaslighting and lack of support from others when they speak up about how they are treated because of Dutch beliefs in colour-blindness.

'It's exhausting'.

Overt and subtle racism manifest through even the most mundane interactions and trigger feelings of invisibility and hypervisibility that leave Black women feeling unsafe in public spaces. Dealing with racism regularly results in trauma, strain on the body, and mental health issues, consequences that are overlooked in conversations about safety.

When made to feel invisible, women in our workshops said it was like people didn't find them worth acknowledging, which was different than the way they saw others interact with white people: 'When you enter a space you're almost like a non-person, invisible within spaces. It's like you're not even part of the conversation, space, or part of the community. Like you're just there passing through.'

In addition to instances of feeling invisible, Black women also felt they attracted unwanted attention for being different. They are often rudely stared at, or interrogated by others who try to figure out what they're doing in any given space. This made them feel like they were being scrutinised as others determined how much respect to give them ('Where are you from?', 'Where do you live?, 'What kind of work do you do?'). Proving their worth was a constant reminder that others perceived them as different. Navigating others' perceptions of difference sometimes antagonised them in ways that could be dangerous; situations where others viewed them as out-of-the-ordinary, criminal, or free to harass or disrespect: 'When I feel eyes on me, I feel anxious, wondering if they're going

to confront me or if I need to confront them. But if they do confront me, I just have to take some s*** and let it roll off of my back because I won't call the police. I just want to be treated equally and not stared at going places and seeing heads turn when I walk by, it's exhausting.'

Black women constantly need to manage the perceptions of others to create a safer environment for themselves. The spectrum between feeling invisible and hypervisible demonstrates that there is no room for Black women to 'just be themselves'. No matter what they did to increase their sense of personal safety (by becoming more visible, less visible, or visible in different ways), it wasn't enough since Dutch public spaces prioritise the comfort of other people.

Prioritising community-driven interventions.

To solve global problems of safety, inclusion, and racism, small, localised and communitydriven interventions can be powerful. One such tool is urban acupuncture. Instead of traditional urban planning — which is often restricted by rules and bureaucracy and usually applied in a top-down manner that upholds processes that exclude marginalised groups — urban acupuncture harnesses direct community engagement, creating sustainable neighbourhood features that are installed and cared for by the community who needs and uses them, leading to more inclusive urban planning. We used this concept, together with a co-creative approach, to guide our work.

Fairspace applies interventions that are driven by a co-creative approach, giving people whose needs are often ignored key roles in defining the problem, imagining solutions, co-designing, and evaluating interventions that increase public safety. Their output includes educational materials, workshops, and policy recommendations. Studio in Between is a social impact design space focused on research that improves the well-being of Black people in Amsterdam. Studio in Between brought anti-racist and intersectional knowledge together by embedding anti-racist ways of working into the co-creation and design processes. This ensures the status quo is not reproduced.

Tackling exclusion through inclusion.

Building inclusive public spaces means amplifying the voices of Black women who are often left out of conversations and making sure their voices continue to be represented at the levels of decision-making that affect people's everyday lives. One participant in the cocreative workshops challenged the priorities of current urban planning: 'When you have influence, wouldn't you influence safety? When you're in a position of influence and have a say in how the city looks, wouldn't safety be intrinsically involved?'.

We need to start having honest conversations about whose safety is prioritised. A step forward to making sure issues of safety are addressed for everyone is to ensure Black people and people of colour are represented in paid advisory boards and decision-making roles in the city. They have lived experience with the ways current initiatives toward increasing public safety are falling short.

One idea to improve safety that came out of the workshops was to invest in Black businesses and cultural initiatives. This could look like franchising or moving businesses

outside the city to the city centre so they can take up a larger role in Amsterdam's cultural and business sector. This could make popular districts in the city's centre safer for Black women by increasing the diversity of foot traffic and wouldn't force them to find businesses, community, comfort food, or art to support in the periphery of the city. It would also make Black culture more accessible to the public, honouring Black people's presence and contributions to Dutch society.

Secondly, local interventions should be supported by structural changes to end racism and sexism. This requires long-term investments to change societal perceptions. An undertaking of anti-racist and colonial history campaigns around the city would educate the general public to reduce discrimination to increase safety for those who experience racism. 'For us to feel safe, we have to think bigger about fixing issues around Black visibility, representation, and anti-racism. That's the reason why we don't feel comfortable in public space', one participant said.

Unfortunately, segregation, educational disparities, police brutality, and criminalization are very much alive and well in the Netherlands. Ensuring impactful diversity and inclusion efforts at organisational and institutional levels must be at the forefront of government and community agendas, which means stepping beyond performative measures in order to create a safer city for Black women. Urban planning that aims to improve safety for women can't reproduce inequalities that oppress Black women. Given the urgent need to address specifically anti-Black racism around the city, we need more radical shifts in how we approach safety moving forward to make sure cities are safe for everyone.

Curious for more?

Fairspace speaks about using co-creative approaches to building inclusive public space in the Netherlands in the DCFA Livecast Designing from Inclusion: Spaces.

Booktip: Understanding Everyday.

This book by Philomena Essed compares contemporary racism in the Netherlands and the US through in-depth interviews with fifty-five black women.

Booktip: Our City.

How can we ensure that public spaces truly represent and serve the people who live near them and use them?

Co-creating Welcoming Spaces.

By Maggi W.H. Leung: Associate Professor, Department of Human Geography and Spatial Planning at Utrecht University (uu.nl/medewerkers/WHMLeung).

When we talked about (re)creating a home in one of the Designing Cities for All livecasts, we asked our speakers to bring an object that would convey a sense of belonging. In this essay, Maggi Leung shares how her family heirloom embodies the same elements needed to create welcoming spaces.

Image description:
Portrait of Maggi. She is looking in the camera and has a bob haircut, wearing glasses and a black sweater.

Bringing an object that would convey a sense of belonging was not an easy exercise; belonging can mean so many things. I thought of very big items that I could not bring. I thought of invisible things that cannot be shown. Finally, I decided on a ring that my mother gave me. As you see in the photo in this essay, it is a simple and beautiful ring with a piece of green jade on it. This piece of jade is much other than the ring. It belonged to my grandmother.

My mother thought that I would not wear the ring as it was — with a traditional, elaborate gold mount. In Chinese culture, jade is believed to protect the wearer and bring good health. So I always carry this ring with me when I fly. And jade lives - depending on who is wearing it, its colour, hue, tone, and translucency can change. To me, the jade ring embodies many key elements of 'sense of belonging': it links to histories, openness to new experiments and changes, relational, and giving a sense of security.

Image description:
Image of Maggi's left hand. On her ring finger is grandmother's golden ring, which is decorated with a green oval jade stone.

Welcoming Spaces.

These elements echo some of the first insights we have gathered since the start of Welcoming Spaces in 2020 — the research programme I'm working on. In this project, researchers and non-academic partners in Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, and Spain collaborate to understand the role of migration in the future-making of 'shrinking regions' in Europe. We prepared our proposal at the time when migration from non-EU countries, especially refugees, was seen as a threat to Europe's future. At the same time, we received worries about the 'dying villages' in marginalised regions across Europe.

It is a paradox that billions of euros are being spent to keep migrants away (Frontex, migration deals with Turkey and other countries), while investments are needed to revitalise shrinking regions. We put the two challenges together and explore possibilities of how they can be connected in positive ways, providing solutions that will bring inclusive and just development. There are already many of such welcoming spaces across Europe and the world. In our project, we have mapped out these welcoming initiatives. Many of them are found in urban settings.

We aim to broaden our policy and practice discussion beyond the cities. In this spirit, my contribution here is less on designing cities for all, but — as important — on envisioning sustainable futures also for the rural, the depopulated, the peripheralised places. While the essence of welcoming and inclusion is shared across the urban-rural and core-periphery spectrums, the geographies (as in location, resource base, position in the broader politicaleconomic system, connectivity or lack of) of marginalised regions call for other considerations, which might not be issues in multi-cultural cities.

Think more critically.

One of the welcoming initiatives is the social farming project of Thüringer .koherz e.V. in Germany. The initiators emphasise they are 'not a migrant welcoming initiative per se', but engaging unaccompanied minor migrants as an extension of their on-going work with people of other social backgrounds. Through farming, they teach these young people skills and hands-on work, bring them closer to nature — that is found to have positive effects on (mental) health — and facilitate community-building. Since the location of this initiative is in the rural area, transportation and communication infrastructure are important factors that are in general less of consideration in metropolitan settings. In a workshop on 'learning from good practices', our colleagues from Spain and Italy underlined the challenges posed by the lack of connectivity in, for instance, mountainous and other peripherised regions in attracting newcomers.

The comment made by .koherz that their project is 'not a migrant welcoming initiative per se' pushes us to think more critically about how welcoming initiatives that are dedicated to migrants are like. Often, politics, policies, and civil initiatives welcome newcomers with the goal of integration or even assimilation — hence being one of 'us' — with a list of imagined, predefined, homogeneous, and idealized characteristics. Coming from this notion, newcomers are often seen through the lens of deficiencies (e.g. in the Netherlands not speaking Dutch, not knowing how things work).

The welcoming effect.

The Eurocoop Servizi in Italy helps illustrate one of the pathways toward building welcoming spaces. The social cooperative was established in 1999 with the aim to stimulate local development and socioprofessional enhancement in Camini, which had been affected by depopulation and abandonment for decades. The opening of a reception centre for asylum seekers in 2011 injected new energies into the community. The reception project has contributed to the renovation of the houses in an ecological way, recovery of cultural heritage, opening spaces for bridging local and new culture (e.g. Syrian cooking courses), recultivation of abandoned lands with organic oil and wine

production. Women's well-being is also in the spotlight. The Ama-La project is dedicated to supporting refugee women through training and the creation of textile handicrafts. In addition, childcare services and afterschool courses are made available for all. With this new vitality, Camini has also become a tourist destination. Through this story, we can see how welcoming is multi-directional and dynamic. Newcomers are welcome to build their new homes, and they, in turn, co-create welcoming spaces for others, from tourists to students and researchers, to new migrants, or those who have returned, perhaps because of the COVID-19 pandemic that has made life in cities more difficult.

This dynamic perspective is important. Often, welcoming initiatives are seen as failures when newcomers leave again. Our colleagues in Spain have presented us an inspiring case in Arenillas, a village in the Province of Soria. While long being a depopulated place, it has been able to maintain basic social services such as schools with medium-term stayers, of different nationalities and mobility biographies. They typically stay in Arenillas longer than two to five years but shorter than twenty years. Mobility is accepted; there is no expectation for people to stay 'forever'.

Residents' translocal identities and livelihood/lifestyle are not seen as limitations. A high level of ownership can be observed. Residents take an active role in the community. The city hall and a cultural civil organisation work together continuously to facilitate reception for newcomers, supporting them with the search for housing and work. The village also organises the Boina Fest, a summer festival regularly hosted to raise awareness about depopulation and raise funding for their activities.

Vulnerability and resilience.

We should not romanticise these initiatives and processes though. The building of welcoming spaces is challenging. It entails vision, investments (of all kinds), and commitment. One of the aims of our research is to identify factors for success and bottlenecks. Welcoming spaces can be politicised and volatile spaces. Many researchers need to consider continuously if it is ethical to reveal the location and identity of the people, place and particular initiative because such publicity might bring threat.

The story of Riace helps illustrate the vulnerability and resilience of welcoming spaces. Riace is a town in Calabria, Italy, neighbouring Camini which we 'visited' earlier in this essay. Like Camini, out-migration had characterised Riace since the postwar economic boom when many moved to the cities. At the beginning of the 2000s, the city decided to change its fate by welcoming thousands of migrants, giving them abandoned homes and work, in the hope that the newcomers would rejuvenate the community and economy. And it worked!

Together, newcomers and the locals renovated the empty houses, they worked together on communal projects. School, the grocery, other shops, and bars were opened again. Riace became a famous welcoming space and a symbol of solidarity. The 'Riace model' or 'Riace experiment' was seen as an inspiration near and far. Its Mayor Domenico 'Mimmo' Lucano (in office from 2004 to 2018) became a global celebrity. The tide turned when the interior minister of the then right-wing government put the Riace experiment to an

end. In October 2018, the police put Lucano under house arrest for allegedly assisting illegal immigration, embezzlement, and abuse of office. Funding for the project was canceled and most of the migrants moved away. As the political tide changed again, Lucano was able to return to Riace in September 2019. Since then he has been working to revive the Riace experiment, which has inspired neighboring villages and further away places.

Perhaps now you can relate more to the associations I have made between my jade ring, about (re)creating a home, and the welcoming spaces that I have come across. As we are putting this essay book together, we are confronted by reports on the many people — right now, but not only in Afghanistan for example — in search of a safe and better life. It is more timely than ever for us to connect, think and co-create welcoming spaces, in cities or villages, here and there.

Curious for more?
Maggi Leung speaks about belonging and (re)creating a home in the DCFA livecast (Making) Sense of Belonging.

Project tip: Welcoming Spaces.
The European research programme (H2020) that dives in to the world of migrants and local initiatives in European rural depopulating regions.

Project tip: Makers Unite.
Makers Unite provides equal opportunities to newcomers through the collaborative design and production of sustainable products, while shifting narratives around migration globally.

Inclusion happens by design, or not at all.

About OluTimehin Kukoyi: writer and urban justice advocate (olukukoyi.com). The essay is written by Dymphie Braun.

As an urban justice advocate, writer OluTimehin Kukoyi is known for her insightful analyses of issues relating to feminism, gender, sexualities, and propoor urbanisation. Her work focuses on love and freedom. In this essay, we talk to OluTimehin about giving shape to the world from the margins.

Image description:
Portrait of Olutimehin, who is wearing a light grey turtleneck sweater, funky glasses, and has short curly hair. She is looking straight in the camera.

OluTimehin's TED talk on urban inclusion *Who belongs in a City?,* delivered at TEDGlobal 2017, was acclaimed as one of the most notable talks of 2017. OluTimehin explores our cities through the lens of belonging, cities in which everyone feels and is allowed to feel at home. She holds our governments — and ourselves — accountable for keeping our cities safe and liveable for every resident, regardless of the power and wealth they hold. Although in her talk she draws from experiences in her hometown Lagos, Nigeria, her message applies to the rest of the world as well. What does it mean to build cities that are inclusive? Who decides who belongs and who doesn't?

How inclusion happens.

In order to arrive at systems and living environments that everyone — regardless of age, cultural background, ethnicity, capacities, religion, and gender – can relate to in a fair and equal manner, it is desirable to gain more awareness, knowledge, and expertise with inclusive design of public spaces, products, and processes. That's why we invited OluTimehin to one of our first Designing Cities for All livecasts. One of the things OluTimehin considers most important to emphasise in these conversations is that inclusion happens by design, or not at all. 'Inclusion and belonging have become buzzwords. In modern times, everybody is talking about what it means to be diverse, and what it means to be inclusive. But the truth of the matter is unless deliberate strategic action is taken to foster inclusion, it doesn't happen', she tells us. 'Human beings are both self-centred and tribalistic, which means that on the individual and the social level it is not our natural inclination to keep our social spaces inclusive.'

If we think about what urban spaces — which are shared by default — mean for the people

in them, then we have to think about what it means to translate a shared space into an inclusive space. 'In doing that, we have to think about what the culture we are trying to foster is', OluTimehin explains. 'What kind of message are we sending to the people who already exist in the space? What kind of people are we trying to invite to the space? What kind of work are we willing to do to make sure that the people we want in the space are cared for, have their needs met, and can access resources, opportunities, and power at equitable levels?'

We can admit that the concept of equality is very appealing in theory, but very difficult to execute in real life. 'We need to move away from thinking about equal access, and start thinking about equitable access', OluTimehin continues. 'Because we don't experience shared spaces in the same way. Just as human identity is subjective, human experiences are too. It depends on our social location, our economic location, class, race — there are so many attributes that determine our experience of the world.' We have to start thinking about meeting people's actual needs. If we want our cities to be safe for women for instance then we have to think about the threats of sexual violence in public spaces. If we want our cities to be accessible for people living with disabilities, then we have to think intentionally about mobility.

Outside-in approach.

When we start making these deliberate efforts towards inclusion, it's easy to make the mistake that we can take existing systems and processes, and expand them outwards to include people. 'That rarely works,' OluTimehin explains, 'because the systems that are exclusionary already, are exclusionary by design. To take that design and pretend that if it is malfunctioning, that's a disservice to the communities that we claim we want to serve. Streets are inaccessible to people with mobility aids not because streets are malfunctioning, but because streets were designed to be accessible for a specific subset of public users. If we then want to make these spaces inclusive, we have to start thinking not in terms of expanding street access, but in terms of making sure the end-user is able to perceive the streets as accessible.' So what OluTimehin suggests is not taking an inside-out approach towards inclusion, but rather an outsidein approach is what makes inclusive design most effective. The flaws in the designs we live with today are the result of narrow design thinking. 'In the decision-making process of building and creating shared spaces, there are usually specific types of people who are represented. Instead of going withtraditional exclusionary models that have worked so far, we have to go beyond what the norm is,' she adds.

Design from the margins.

A good example of this is the Nike FlyEase, a sneaker without laces in which you quite literally step into and out of without the need to use your hands. 'I love that shoe, cause I know the number of times I had to take off a pair of sneakers without bending down. I thought: this is so brilliant and obvious, why hasn't this been done before?It turned out that this shoe was designed for people that live with disabilities. The design thinking that went into the productionof this product was that there are people who do not use their hands to put their shoes on and off. Running shoes have been designed with the assumption that everybody can use their hands. Nike took a different starting point and that resulted in a shoe for people that can not use their hands, but here is the great thing.

Even people who can use their hands love the shoe anyways.' Whether or not you have that ability, there are times when you are carrying things, running after your children, want to save time, all kinds of circumstances that make that shoe valuable for people that it was not even designed for.

Image description:
A pair of Nike GO FlyEase. The sneakers have green, pink and blue colours, and a white sole. There are no laces, but the sneakers are ewuipped with a patent-pending bi-stable hinge and midsole tensioner that allow for hands-free entry.

To end with a quote from the Nike Explore Team: 'You always design for the most extreme case, and that is the hardest thing to do.' But in the end, everyone can benefit from that. 'In thinking about the margins first — in this case, athletes with disabilities — Nike automatically catered to everyone. Who already has alternatives, we already had access to sneakers when we don't have disabilities. But now we have this other option, that allows us to have access to sneakers, without excluding people who had to live with the only option that existed up until now,' OluTimehin says.

Connecting with others.

In designing cities, we can do the same, but we have to understand the social structures. 'We can be in shared spaces with other people, without being in community with them. Think about bus stops, grocery stores, parking lots, or even the hallway of your apartment building. People can spend decades in such shared spaces without ever connecting with other human beings. If you are not connecting with other human beings, then you can never experience the city as they would. That creates tunnel vision, it reinforces your natural tribalistic instinct that the city revolves around you, as opposed to being a space that is actually shared.'

Before The Correspondent discontinued publishing its journalism beginning of 2021, OluTimehin wrote many articles about the concept of Othering. It is the idea that there are social processes that produce the Other. It's not something accidental, that's produced. 'If people are allowed to remain in their tribalistic silos, then they are allowed to both consciously as unconsciously, reinforce the borders that exist between 'us' and 'them',' she explains. 'If you are not interacting across the divide, you will hold certain stereotypical beliefs around people, and continue to nurture biasses you are not even aware of.' A good example can be found in language. We use words like 'hear' or 'see' to talk about perception, and we are not thinking about how that applies to people who don't have the ability to hear or see. Unless you encounter people that are doing disability activism, that might not be brought into your sphere of thinking. 'Overcoming that tendency to isolate you from the Other, is the only thing that allows us to experience life outside of our bubble, of what we already know.'

Who's responsible?

In designing an inclusive city, whose responsibility is it to do that? 'It is the responsibility of everyone with power', OluTimehin answers. 'And what that means is everyone, but the degree to which you have responsibility is the degree to which you have power. We don't have the same amount of power. I don't have the same power as my state's governor, but

in the spaces that I share with other people, I have the power to speak up for people who I see are being excluded, either by design or by neglect. I have the power to demonstrate what inclusion actually looks like. I have the power to teach people around me to pay attention to these tribalistic tendencies that we have. So we can all take responsibility in a certain way, we all have some degree of power in designing, building, and maintaining inclusive cities. Although the ones that do have the most power should be held to greater account.'

'If governments and authorities are actually interested in implementing diversity and building inclusion, then they have to set forth the processes by which the target groups they say they are interested in can ask them questions and track the implementation. They have to take the initiative to be accountable. Because people's power is real, and people can organise to hold authorities to account. But what is even more inspiring, and more effective, is when authorities themselves make themselves available to be held to account.'

So we have to hold our governments and ourselves accountable for keeping our shared cities safe for everyone in them. For those who haven't noticed OluTimehin's five-yearold TEDtalk before, let us repeat the words she ended it with: 'The only cities worth building, indeed, the only futures worth dreaming of, are those that include all of us. No matter who we are or how we make homes for ourselves.' And remember; inclusion happens by design, or not at all.

Curious for more?
OluTimehin Kukoyi speaks about designing from the margins in the DCFA Livecast Breaking it Down: For All.

Podcast tip: Pakhuis de Zwijger.
OluTimehin Kukoyi about the difference between equal and equitable design, designing from the margins, and her ways of navigating an unjust world.

Video tip: Tedtalk Who Belongs in a City?
Underneath every shiny new megacity, there's often a story of communities displaced.

Chapter 2: Everything is Design.

With essays by:
Rudy van Belkom.
Nyasha Harper-Michon.
Lyongo Juliana.
Dark Matter Labs.
Galit Ariel.
Sennay Ghebreab.

'If you can build relationships and use design as a tool to build those relationships, the better off we're all going to be. Building and organising allows us to advocate with authority, and with the collective knowledge that actually allows us to be a little bit more precise about the solutions we want to built into the world.'

Bryan C. Lee in DCFA livecast Design from Inclusion: Spaces.

'In many architectural renders worldwide, it's all white, slim, energetic people in their thirties. No, those designs are for all. So we should also express that.'

Francine Houben in DCFA livecast The IdenCity: Human Experience.

We need designers to solve social issues.

By Rudy van Belkom: Futures Researcher (designfortransition.com).

The world faces major societal challenges. We seem to forget that fundamental change requires a holistic approach. Designers can play an important role in this, argues futures researcher Rudy van Belkom.

Image description:
Portrait of Rudy. He is wearing a black t-shirt and glasses. Rudy is portrayed in profile looking to the left, and he has short curly hair and a beard.

Climate change, rising inequality, and financial crises. We often point fingers at each other for solutions. Politicians, citizens, and the market all place the responsibility on each other, which means that we do not really get any further. The current corona pandemic reflects not only the need but also the challenge of change. When the crisis really kicked off in 2020, the newspapers were full of it: now is the time for a new, more sustainable course. Trendwatchers and other visionaries were convinced: corona is going to save the world, from now on we will do everything differently. Even the World Economic Forum saw the pandemic as a trigger for 'the great reset' of capitalism.

This sentiment did not come out of the blue. The airspace over China was virtually empty, which greatly improved the air quality. The canals in Venice suddenly turned bright blue due to the absence of tourists. And even the white dolphin returned to Chinese waters when ferry traffic was suspended. There was a euphoric atmosphere of 'together we can do it'. We clapped enthusiastically for care professionals and worked from home en masse. At least for a while.

Within a few months, euphoria turned into pessimism. Civilian protests got out of hand and journalists were threatened by activists for allegedly spreading propaganda about the virus. Governments introduced questionable emergency laws and the market continued to push vaccine prices up. Our ability to change seems to be short-lived. Air traffic has largely resumed and traffic jams have returned. We seem to take 'back to the old normal' very literally. Of course, things have also changed. For example, working from home and digital education are (largely) here to stay. But those are not the fundamental changes we need for a better future.

Change is hard.

We must conclude that humans as a species are extremely good at adapting, but not very strong at changing. We often choose convenience over change. That's not to blame, that's

just how we are programmed. To survive, we need to use as little energy as possible. Adjusting yourself and deviating from your daily structure, therefore requires considerable effort and that is not easy. Certainly not when you put the responsibility on the people themselves. That is why many people often revert to their old eating patterns after a crash diet. Long-term thinking is not our first nature. Many people are mainly concerned about the short term. Especially in times of crisis. The well-being of yourself and your family (logically) comes first. But we are an empathetic species, right?

True, empathy is great, but it also has its limitations. It mainly focuses on people 'who are like ourselves'. Empathy is extremely selective and unequivocal. We often even view people who fall outside our own group as opponents. This is particularly evident during political elections. Many people are more motivated to vote out of hate for the other than out of love for their own party. Collectivity is not part of our culture. In Western countries, in particular, the individual often stands above the collective. Most people are good, but when it comes down to it we choose for ourselves.

And so the big finger-pointing begins. Citizens point to politicians, politicians point to the market, and the market points to citizens. What we seem to be overlooking here is that bad behaviour is ultimately caused by a bad system, not by bad people. We should therefore set up the system in such a way that it is easier to make good choices, instead of putting things down on each other. If people choose convenience over change, we need to make it easier for people to change.

Everything is designed.

For this, it is important to realise that everything around us was once invented by people. Not only the tables and chairs but also our social structures and systems. From our electoral system to our pension system and education system. Everything around us was once designed and can therefore be redesigned. This approach is also known as Transition Design. Transition Design is a transdisciplinary approach that is used to tackle major societal challenges. The premise of this emerging design discipline is that the so-called 'wicked problems' are interconnected on a social, economic, and ecological level. Solutions, therefore, require a change at the system level in order to contribute to the transition to a more sustainable, equal, and desirable future.

The terms transition and transformation are often used interchangeably. This seems like a semantic discussion, but it isn't. Although in both cases it is about change, the approach and outcome are fundamentally different. A transition is about the changes within a system, while transformation is about the change of the system itself. I consciously choose the concept of transition in my approach, because I believe that change is a form of evolution. You need the 'old system' to make the desired change.

Design for Transition.

Under the banner of 'Design for Transition', I am committed to the transition to a new political electoral system. In the current system, in which party politics is central, politics has become too much like showbiz. Whoever yells the loudest gets the most attention. This magnifies the differences and drives the extremes further apart, leading to division and polarisation.

As a solution, I considered several designs. For example, a more radical transformation in which we throw political parties overboard would probably generate a lot of commotion. But the question is, how feasible is this actually? Political parties will probably never vote themselves out. That is why I opted for a friendlier revolution: The New Vote. A modular electoral system, in which you can vote per theme for the party that suits you best.

In this system, you no longer vote for the person, but for the content. Besides the fact that this concept contributes to more freedom of choice (you no longer have to vote for just one party, which you often do not fully support), this concept contributes to a culture change. Political parties should actually campaign on the content, instead of setting up a popularity contest between politicians.

And citizens should also base their vote on the content, instead of a gut feeling. Because they vote better informed, parties no longer get away with empty promises and polarising statements. In this way, you can understand that by retaining political parties, more involvement from citizens and more unity in society can be achieved. This could be the first step in the transformation to a completely new system, in which political parties play a smaller or even non-existent role.

In order to realise this transition, a change at various levels is necessary. In the transition literature, a distinction is generally made between three levels: niche innovations, sociotechnical regime, and sociotechnical landscape. The first level, the niche innovation, consists of various innovations that are released as test balloons. Think of initiatives for citizens' councils and citizens' budgets.

In this way, bottom-up pressure is exerted on the second level, the regime. This often refers to the 'classic' system, which is a combination of industry, politics, science, technology, and culture. Pressure is also exerted on the system top-down by sociotechnological developments, or social trends. Consider, for example, a global rise of distrust in institutions. This creates windows of opportunity in the regime so that certain elements from the niche innovations can be included in the current system. When there is a sense of urgency and excitement for change within the system, the system can be propelled in a new direction.

Architects wanted.

Such transitions are complex and time-consuming. For example, to enable a new electoral system we have to redesign different elements in the system, on different levels. But it's not impossible. It requires architects who can design and steer the change. Personality test 16 Personalities describes people with the 'Architect' personality type (INTJ) as follows: 'Rules, restrictions, and traditions are a horror to the Architect - everything should be open to questioning and reappraisal, and when the Architect finds a

way, they spring into action.' According to their website, someone like Elon Musk is a well-known Architect.

But Architects cannot do it alone. They need Campaigners (ENFP) who can make people enthusiastic about the change, Executives (ESTJ) who can manage communities, etcetera. So for desirable transitions, we have to work together, through all levels. We have to accept that it is not just politics, the market, or citizens alone that should bring about the change. We have to do it together. We have to plot different transition paths to arrive at the desired result. And we have to accept that there are no quick fixes. Transitions take time and hurt a little here and there. As the saying goes, a gem cannot be polished without friction.

Curious for more?
Rudy van Belkom speaks about the impact of design in our DCFA livecast Breaking it Down: Designing.

Tooltip: 16 Personalities.
Take the Personality Test and get a 'freakishly accurate' description of who you are and why you do things the way you do.

Booktip: The Politics of Design.
Are we as creative professionals really aware of the political meaning and impact of our work in today's network society?

The city of Archtivists.

By Nyasha Harper-Michon: Architvist, business developer & writer (nyasha-harpermichon.com).

To tackle the main challenges of this globalisation era, homogeneity, and the climate crisis, architect Nyasha Harper-Michon makes a plea for Archtivists. A term she coined for architecture and design professionals driving economic, environmental, and social reform to foster positive changes in society and within the profession.

Image description:
Portrait of Nyasha. She is smiling and looking to the right. Nyasha is dressed in a white sweater and wearing her hair in braids. Her right arm is up, and she is holding a microphone in her hand.

Paris, Brussels, Port-of-Spain, Washington DC, Amsterdam. I've called many a city my home. If you're an urbanite like I am, I'm sure you have a deep sense of love for your city — or cities. Cities go well beyond the function of simple density. They are vibrant places of social interaction, stimulation, and innovation. Places where people, infrastructure, culture, and history come together in one busy and complex system. In a few words, cities are truly aweinspiring places.

On the flip side, each one of us has been confronted with the uncomfortable fact that today's greatest global challenges are omnipresent within our cities. In fact, they're actually built into them. Our cities' designs are plagued with wide-ranging dysfunctions and inequalities that negatively affect urban populations every single day. And yet, we continue to propagate these inequalities in the way that we think, design and build our cities. A tide of change is upon us.

I'd like to invite you to dream with me. Sit back, take a deep breath, and envision the future city. What do you envision? I dream of a city for all. A sustainable and inclusive city. One of togetherness. One of resilience. One of prosperity. For the sake of equity, our well-being, and that of the planet — there couldn't be a greater or more urgent need for us to rethink how we design our cities. A necessary action to make our dream of an inclusive and sustainable future a reality.

From Architecture to Archtivism.

That's where Archtivism comesin. Pronounced Arch-ti-vism. It's a term I coined for the delightful blend of Architecture and Activism: Archtivism. If architecture is about building up, then Archtivism is about breaking down. Breaking down the status quo. Breaking down the industry's walls and barriers. Breaking down the existing systems that govern the architecture profession and its stakeholders in order to build back better — towards a more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient future. Essentially, Archtivism is a movement of architecture and building industry stakeholders who drive and inspire reform to foster positive changes in society and within the field.

To rethink the design of our cities, we need a wide variety of approaches and disciplines tackling the issue from different perspectives. I'd like to put forward four different forms of Archtivism. Each form features a unique avenue to designing the city of tomorrow. Combining and interweaving these four types of Archtivism is the starting point we need to design and realise sustainable and inclusive cities for all.

Social Archtivism: Design with empathy.

Historically our cities have been designed by and for the 'Reference man' or Le Corbusier's Le Modulor — an anthropometric scale of proportions based on the so-called average man. And it's a wonder that we continue to design space based on this 6ft-tall heterosexual able-bodied white man, as it completely disregards women, children, the elderly, people of colour, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities, as well as most men — just about anyone who doesn't fit into this 'ideal'. So more or less all of us!

Social Archtivism is about allowing everyone's voice to be represented and designing with empathy. When designing our cities, we need to practice curiosity. How does a mother encumbered by a stroller and groceries navigate the city? How can we make sure a young woman can commute safely without fear of being harassed or assaulted? How can we ensure elderly people have shaded places to rest along their way to the market on a hot summer's day?

For an inclusive and sustainable city, we need to seek out, listen to and address people's lived experiences through observation, participation, codesign, and citizen advocacy groups. We need to draw on the full range of human diversity. That means diversity in end-user groups and design teams as well as decisionmaking parties. I dream of a city shaped around the plurality of people's needs and perspectives. Social Archtivism calls for designing with, as opposed to for people. ALL people, that is. And taking into account the full array of human uniqueness by designing with empathy.

Environmental Archtivism: Design with nature.

Since the advent of industrialisation and urbanisation, we've distancedourselves greatly from nature. As a result, buildings and construction together account for nearly 40% of energy-related carbon emissions today and we're knee-deep in a climate emergency.

Environmental Archtivism is about the reconciliation of humanity with nature. As designers that means reconnecting and harmoniously synchronising the natural processes with how we live, work and play in our cities. Nature need not stop at the city gates but rather should penetrate deep into our urban living environments.

I dream of a city where smogeating facades clean the air, where rewilded spaces with

native grasses and critters offer kids neighbourhood 'safaris', and where otherwise untapped surfaces are home to energyproducing solar cells. Every last corner of our cities needs to be energy-savvy, biodiverse, and healthy. For our planet, for our well-being and that of future generations, we need to make a habit of designing with nature.

Economic Archtivism: Design for disassembly.

For far too long, our economy has been based on an exploitative 'takemake-consume-waste model'. As we make the necessary shift to a circular economy, we need to find ways to decouple economic activity from the consumption of finite resources. When it comes to our cities' built structures, that translates to keeping building materials in use indefinitely.

Economic Archtivism is about designing out waste and focusing on long-term value creation. As designers, we thus need to design for disassembly and connect building components through dry connections like screws, rivets and bolts; fasteners that are reversible without damaging components. By documenting building products through material passports and considering buildings as material banks, we ensure future uses that extend far beyond the original building's lifetime whilst preventing asset depreciation. I dream of a city where building parts migrate throughout the city over the years, just as people do. The parts are disassembled, traded, and reassembled creating new structures to meet the city's forever evolving needs. If we want to achieve the carbon reduction goals outlined in the European Union's European Green Deal, we need to fundamentally change how building materials are designed and used in the built environment. It's none other than a call to action to design for disassembly accounting for future scenarios.

Technological Archtivism: Design by harnessing new technologies.

The 21st century has brought about unprecedented technological advances and disruptions. The building sector, slower than other industries to catch on, also has a lot to gain in this digital era. Technological Archtivism is about harnessing new technologies to uncover original design solutions to today's greatest challenges. How can we leverage 4D printing to help our buildings withstand natural disasters? How can Artificial Intelligence and machine learning help to increase health and wellbeing in our cities? How can smart objects and building sensors enable a safer city?

Beyond the technologies themselves, data offers cities immense opportunities. Today's explosion of data empowers designers to make informed design decisions. Coupled with experimentation-enhanced testing and modelling, it can contribute greatly to the optimisation and future-proofing of the building and construction experience.

I dream of a city whose built environment is continuously evolving like software, constantly being updated and optimised with technology and data to meet and adapt to changing conditions and demands of our cities. The new digital world calls for us to draw from the innovations of our time and harness new technologies to drive and accelerate positive change.

City of Archtivists.

Designing cities for all requires a shift in how we think, design, and build our cities. It calls for us to bring together different disciplines and approaches to tackle solutions to our cities' and society's greatest challenges.

The city of the future calls for us to embrace Social Archtivism and design with empathy. It requires practicing Environmental Archtivism and designing with nature. We will also have to make a habit of designing for disassembly exemplifying Economic Archtivism. And last but not least, we will need to practice Technological Architivism and harness new technologies. It is precisely by cutting across disciplines that we will create inclusive and sustainable cities and communities.

I dream of the city of the future as a city of Archtivists. That means Archtivist designers, Archtivist policymakers, Archtivist developers, Archtivist citizens, and so on. The challenges we face globally call for a community of changemakers all taking an active role in shaping our cities we all dream of and turning that dream into a built reality. The city for all is thus none other than the city of Archtivists.

Curious for more?

Nyasha Harper-Michon speaks about Archtivism and creating cities for all in the DCFA livecast Breaking it Down: Designing.

Movie + book tip: Planet City.

How centuries of colonisation, globalisation, and never-ending economic extraction and expansionism could be reversed to solve climate change and the exploitation of both natural and human resources.

Podcast tip: Pakhuis de Zwijger.

Nyasha Harper-Michon about how to become an Archtivist.

The New Amsterdam Style.

By Lyongo Juliana: Architect & DCFA Fellow (lyongo.net).

If we want Amsterdam to remain a city for all its residents, it will take a great effort of all of us because this does not come naturally, states Designing Cities for All fellow Lyongo Juliana. In his DCFA Fellowship, Lyongo takes us along in his research on identity, architecture, and design.

Image description:
Portrait of Lyongo. He has a bright smile and is looking to the right. He is wearing a black v-neck t-shirt. In the left corner, there is a pink star-shaped text balloon with white letters: 'DCFA Fellow'.

In our (Western) society, exclusive thinking is evident and inclusive thinking has to be taught. During my Fellowship at Pakhuis de Zwijger as part of the DCFA programme. I explored with different experts like architects, sociologists, anthropologists, and musicians the playing field in which inclusive urban design and architecture can emerge. An inclusive architecture and urban design do not exclude anyone, neither consciously nor unconsciously. To be able to not exclude, you must first recognise and acknowledge the presence of the other.

A city made of people.

A first step in the process to ensure a city for all people is the realisation that a city is made by people and not by buildings, squares, and parks. A city without people is not a city. How do you, as a designer, ensure that you create spaces where people want to be? Danish architect Jan Gehl and his office have been researching this for more than fifty years. As designers, we should ask ourselves how it is possible that something that should be self-evident has to be relearned.

The book *Soft City* written by David Sim, former Creative Director at Gehl Architects, provides a very pragmatic overview of tools and tips on how to design cities for people. In a conversation we had with David, he said that the initial working title for his book was The Shit That Works. Although this might not have been commercially viable, it's a much better title in my opinion. When reading the actual title of the book, Soft City, one might associate the book as being a soft alternative, not for hardcore mainstream city development. This is a misconception since the book gives tools to be able to deal with the challenges we have within our cities. More and more people will be living in cities. UNESCO expects that by 2050, two-thirds of the world population will be living in cities. Besides that, the demography of our cities is changing at a rapid pace. Furthermore, we

are dealing with an obesity pandemic, especially in our cities. So, how do we design and redesign our cities in a way that people can live there in a healthy way and that complies with their desires?

Quote from Soft City by David Sim: 'We know from life that a strong relationship is not a rigid one. Sensitivity and responsiveness are vital components of a good relationship. Being in control doesn't mean never changing your position. In fact, quite the opposite is true. Being in control means being able to respond appropriately at a particular moment and in a particular situation, and that response is not always going to be the same… Soft relationships, because of their sensitivity and responsiveness, can do much more and last longer than hard ones. In this way, we might say that soft is hard to break.'

Super-divers neighbourhoods.

If we are designing for people, we have to know who these people are. The future of many Western cities is that they will be superdiverse cities, meaning that the city only comprises minorities. In the Netherlands, cities like Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague are already labeled as super-diverse. Since the world of architects and urban designers, but for that atter also policymakers and developers, is predominantly white and male, many are not aware of this demographic change in society. The demographic changes are not only based on ethnicity, but we also have more and more people that live alone or in another constellation than your standard family of father, mother, and two kids. According to Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 18% of the Dutch population runs a one-person household (2021).

Professor of Sociology Maurice Crul has been doing research in super-diverse European cities and has also researched their living environment. His comparative research on the neighbourhoods of IJburg and the van Lennep neighbourhood (How the Architecture of Housing Blocks Amplifies or Dampens Interethnic Tensions in Ethnically Diverse Neighbourhoods, 2020), but also his research on the desire for bigger houses within both people with a migration background and without (The effect of Covid-19 on diversity and inclusion on the superdiverse neighbourhoods in Amsterdam, 2021), show that through design one can enhance social tension. But if we are aware of the reality we live in, we can mitigate social tension and even better create inclusion through design. For example, the narrow galleries of the building blocks in IJburg force people to move through each other's space, hence pushing them away from each other instead of connecting. This combined with poor acoustics in the courtyards results in tension between neighbours.

The New Amsterdam Style.

We can conclude that — to design for all — architects and urban designers must be aware of the spatial human necessities and be sensible for the (small) differences within the society they design for. In short, urban designers and architects need more anthropological and sociological skills to be able to answer the design questions of our super-diverse cities. Once you realise that your city's identity is a mix of different identities, how do you design spaces in such a way that people can co-live in a harmonious way and all feel at home?

Very often, my quest for more diverse and inclusive architecture is mistaken as a desire to have different cultural representations within our cities based on ethnicity. For instance; a Moroccan quarter, a Surinamese quarter, a Turkisch quarter etcetera. Examples of these expressions of ethnic architecture are Le Midi in Rotterdam and Kortewoudepad in Amsterdam. I must admit that these neighbourhoods have certain qualities but I dare question if this is the result of the ethnic references like Arabic arches on the one hand and wooden structures in historical and colonial colours on the other hand. Both projects are characterised by a high level of detailing and have spatial qualities that can also be reached in a more contemporary design - I am referring to the courtyards at Le Medi and the erandas at Kortewoudepad. To me, the challenge ahead is how do we come to a new architecture in which people do not feel excluded and the majority of the people have a sense of belonging: The New Amsterdam style.

Image description:
An image from Lyongo's personal archive of the houses at Kortewoudepad in Amsterdam. The houses have white walls and pointed roofs with red roof tiles with a veranda on the ground floor. Between the housing blocks is public green space, surrounded by a small wooden fence.

The IdenCity: Human Identity.

In the DCFA livecasts I curated, a triptych I called The IdenCity, I used music as a metaphor to show what I mean. In music we know many crossovers which have become a genre on their own, like Arabic Andalusian Jazz, Cura.ao Jazz, and Kaseko Jazz. The jazz elements are clearly heard but you also feel the Surinamese, Cura.aon, and Arabic vibes. In the livecasts we not only talked, but also listened to music from Marmoucha Collective, composer and lyricist Izaline Calister, and flutist and ethnomusicologist Ronald Snijders.

A great build example of inclusive architecture is the North Harrow Community Centre designed by Ali Mangera of Mangera & Yvars Architects. It's a mixeduse complex with a library, creative hub, kindergarten, sports facilities, prayer room, and a Mosque. Ali shared how the architects did not use strong religious expressions but maintained the necessary serenity for a place of worship and in the meantime being inviting to people of all walks of life. The complex also houses a caf., creating the possibility for people to meet and connect with different beliefs. To me, this is a mosque in a new Modern British style, but it is also referring back to the historical mosques where the place of worship was often combined with the Madrasa (college). In that same conversation, in a very different way, architect Arna Mačkić of Studio L A talked about her campaign Srebrenica is Dutch History, a project that demands attention for the Srebrenica genocide, the role of the Netherlands, and its 25th anniversary in the Netherlands. Arna worked on a temporary national monument accessible to the whole Dutch community and for both refugees of Srebrenica as Dutch batters, giving them the possibility to connect to humanise their common past. Both Ali's as Arna's example show that we can create inclusiveness, but we have to use conscious design.

To be able to create architecture in which society can identify itself, you have to be consciously aware of the society you are going to design in, not just your own bubble but

the whole reality. In other words: how do the citizens of a city experience their city and, on the other hand, what kind of experience do you want to create as architects so that the people get a sense of belonging?

The book *Mijn Ontelbare Identiteiten* written by cultural anthropologist Sinan Çankaya describes the experience of the son of migrants growing up, studying, and working in the Netherlands. Sinan shows us parts of the Netherlands that many (white) Dutch people still have difficulty accepting. Just one out of many examples in the book, is about racial profiling by the police — a phenomenon that frustrates your sense of belonging as a Dutch citizen with a migration background. Likewise, Maar waar kom je écht vandaan? written by Robert Vuijsje gives you an overview of hundred Dutch people on how they experience their ethnicity in the Netherlands. To be able to register the experience of others, you must be aware of their reality. This requires a much more humble standpoint than the convincing Dutch narrative of being an open tolerant and welcoming society.

The IdenCity: Human Experience.

Even though Francine Houben has been an internationally acclaimed architect for quite some time, it was the design process of the Library of Birmingham (2008-2009) that made her realise how important it really is to investigate who your end-user is going to be and to be sensitive towards the differences between your endusers. Her client made her aware of the different ethnic groups, but also the less literate that find a home in the library. The new building had to be inviting to all of them. Once you acknowledge and embrace all the different people your city comprises, you will not be able to hold on to the one-dimensional perspective anymore. In the third DCFA livecast, Francine explained livecast that she applied the lessons learned in Birmingham to all of her subsequent projects. It made her more sensitive for the differences in needs between inhabitants of Washington DC and New York City — the first being a predominantly Black community and the latter very diverse — during the design process for their libraries. By recognising and acknowledging the differences (even if they were small), she was able to design the libraries that gave their users a sense of belonging.

Anthropologist Aminata Cairo, who also joined the conversation, made us aware of the impact of dominant culture and its narrative. 'A lot of times, people are invited just so we can say they were there, but do they have equal amounts of power, or say so, are their needs taken into consideration... Does everybody's voice count the same?', she adds. We should be keen to also listen to the other stories and — even more important — value them equally. It is not about the one or the other but it is about both.

Designing Cities for All.

If we want our city to be a place for all, we as architects and urban designers must design for all. We are just at the beginning of a process in which we are thinking more inclusive in the design process. When you are designing for urban areas in a city like Amsterdam, you have to realise you are designing for a very diverse group of people. For instance, 56 percent of the people of Amsterdam have a migration background, representing more than 180 nationalities. As a designer, you have to find out what the specific needs are of certain groups within society and cater towards that, while maintaining the design accessible for the 'average' person.

I am convinced that through design you can enhance inclusion but also fortify exclusion. Inclusion does not just happen, it is a conscious process that requires dedication and conviction. During this Fellowship, I discovered that many of us — as individuals — are working on this topic. We need to know about each other's existence and know where to find each other.

Designing Cities for All is a process we do together, in which none of us carry the whole truth, we all carry a little bit.

Curious for more?
If you want to know more about the DCFA Fellowship of Lyongo Juliana, you can follow his work and the livecasts in the DCFA online research file, in which he takes you along in his research on architecture, gentrification and design.

Booktip: Soft City.
Soft City by David Sim is the story of how to build denser and more diverse places that enhances the everyday life of people.

Podcast tip: Pakhuis de Zwijger.
Lyongo Juliana about resolving contradictions in architecture, and looking at the big picture when it comes topics such as sustainability and justice (Dutch spoken).

Code RED: transitioning together.

By Joost Beunderman: Director Dark Matter Laboratories and Indy Johar: Architect & co-founder Dark Matter Laboratories (darkmatterlabs.org).

In their Designing Cities for All Fellowship, Joost Beunderman and Indy Johar explored the challenges of transitioning together. As part of their research, they organised a triptych of meetups for which they invited guest speakers. They all agreed: the reality of the rapidly escalating climate crisis and how it impacts our cities is fundamentally a question of social justice and democracy.

Image description:
Combined portrait of Indy on the left and Joost on the right. Indy is wearing a white shirt with a jacket and a black turban. He has a beard, wears glasses, and is smiling while looking to the right. Joost is smiling too. He has short curly hair and looks directly in the camera. Joost is wearing a white shirt with small stripes and a black jacket. In the left corner, there is a brown star-shaped text balloon with white letters: 'DCFA Fellow'.

A transition towards a climate just future has to be deeply inclusive — that is the big challenge for our democracies. As the risk of a destructive 3+Åã Celsius temperature rise keeps growing, transitioning together is about the institutional infrastructures that enable systemic change: after all, climate change is not an isolated crisis, but a symptom of a system deeply out of balance. How can we imagine and mobilise legitimate and equitable pathways towards a climateresilient and thriving future? Our aim through our DCFA fellowship was to explore what this means for our cities, and for us as individuals and communities — and to identify some of the core features of a more hopeful future.

Code RED: the path we're on.

A disclaimer: the two and a half or so pages are mostly an overview of heartbreaking facts. If you'd like to move straight to what that might mean for what humankind and cities could do, please move to page 92. As we started to write this essay in mid-July 2021, the west coast of the United States and Canada were on fire, with an extraordinary loss of life both through the fires and the heatwave that caused it. Worse than ever smog caused by these fires was hitting east coast cities like New York and Montreal. Siberia was also smouldering.

Then came the floods caused by extreme rainfall across Northwest and Central Europe, later followed by China — again with loss of life and deep impact on cities, towns, infrastructure, and landscapes.

A few weeks later and the out-of-control fires in Siberia have sent smoke all the way to the — melting — North Pole and the eastern Mediterranean has also been on fire for weeks, again with destruction of the natural world coupled with loss of life as well as livelihoods. Ironically, Turkey is facing fire and floods at the same time, destructive in different ways in different parts of the country. As the southern European heatwave moves west, Italy has also been badly affected, and Spain and Algeria seem next. Last year, it was Australia — now it seems pretty much anywhere else.

The world is being scarred in extreme ways as we speak. Less reported, but by no means less severe, are impacts across the Majority World, whether increasing floods right across Asia, the greater than ever incidence of storms in the Caribbean or landslides in Africa, disappearing nations in the Pacific, the endless droughts in the Sahel region, disappearing lakes in the Andes, or sheer murderous heat in countries like India. By and large, developing nations face greater risk than the (believe it or not) comparatively mild impact on, say, most of Europe — and in many cases, they simply can't keep up in terms of investment in recovery and adaptation.

Beyond the immediate disasters, of course, there are the slowerunfolding emergencies. The Amazon is close to a tipping point, at which carbon-storing forest is replaced by savannah, researchers have warned — and almost unimaginably, the rapidly shrinking rainforest is now emitting more carbon than it absorbs. The ocean currents of the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC), of which the Gulf Stream is an important part and which keeps Western Europe mild, are at their weakest in more than a millennium and may indeed be on a road to collapse, the consequences of which would be so vast that we'll leave them out of this already painful charge sheet.

Let's move to colder regions instead, where researchers have found that sea ice across much of the Arctic is thinning twice as fast as previously thought. And let us not speak of disappearing glaciers — you've got the point. To make matters worse, it may well be the case that such tipping points between the polar regions, oceans, and Amazon are connected, leading to cascading runaway effects.

Code Red: climate change in an unequal world.

The news, in sum, is bad. And clearly, it is not just newspaper headlines or indeed campaign groups — the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) report from mid-August 2021 unequivocally lays out the pathway we are on and the lack of time left to generate transformative change. Code red indeed. But whilst the IPCC report lays out the facts through an all-global governmentally mandated methodology, we are not so much sleepwalking, but shrugging into disaster. The pictures of holidaymakers swimming or playing golf against the background of flames and reddened skies tell us about the resistance to changing our ways. Meanwhile, you don't have to look to extremist climate laggards like the Australian or Brazilian governments to understand how accelerated climate action is still controversial. In Milan for example, the package of measures long in the making through the city's Air Quality and Climate Plan is currently being slowed down or even torpedoed by the city's right-wing opposition. In particular, alongside powerful remnants of climate scepticism or pretend-to care obstructionism

from deeply vested business-as-usual interests, there is still widespread resistance against the idea that lifestyle changes are necessary as well as (and this is key) instinctive hesitations amongst centrist players — including the Biden administration in the US — to do anything that may drive up the cost of living for the majority of households. Even though solutions for such income and living cost pressures should be found amongst policy fields, not through abstaining from climate action. But, in a world where inequality is on the rise, any simplistic or populist posturing to suggest that ambitious climate action makes life more expensive or kills jobs (even though, particularly on jobs, the opposite is true), seems to bias 'decision-makers' outlook away from radically transforming our economies and societies in response to the climate emergency. There is some good news. Despite a post-pandemic string of coal investments in China, in many other places in the world coal seams definitively on the way out, with exit plans being in place and often even being cautiously accelerated across most of Europe, whereas scores of new projects are being cancelled in countries like Bangladesh, Turkey or across Africa. And there are reports that the rapid growth in electric vehicles across ever more economies, alongside fuel efficiency gains, may lead to global road fuel demand falling as early as 2027. Campaigners are also scoring more and more victories in the courts against governments and fossil fuel companies — a legal novelty in the face of failing democratic politics, the powerful implications of which should not be underestimated.

But, and that is the real point — such cautious gains are simply not enough, and many post-COVID-19 recovery investments are driving further lock-ins towards high emissions. The International Energy Agency's Sustainable Recovery Tracker states in July 2021 that 'with only 2% of governments' recovery spending going to clean energy transitions, global emissions are set to surge to an all-time high'. We are very close to a 'too little, too late' scenario where we are making some but not all the changes needed, and making them too slowly and too late, bound as we are by deep fossil fuel addiction and investment lock-ins, political cowardice, and of critical capabilities across the board whether on sense-making, decision making, financing or implementation.

Why this rather lengthy introduction? All the calamities of this year have happened at global warming levels of around 1° Celsius so far, whereas even if countries meet their commitments made under the 2015 Paris Agreement (which they are not), the world is heading for a 3.2° Celsius global temperature rise over pre-industrial levels. In fact, the World Meteorological Organization (the United Nation's weather agency) warns that the world is now likely to hit a 1.5° Celsius rise in the next five years, with a 40% chance of the watershed global warming mark being met during that time frame.

Code RED: what this means.

The consequences of these climate disasters are not just increasingly visceral and heartbreaking in the everyday. They are also increasingly calamitous at a systemic level. Beyond the heartbreak, the loss of life, and sheer destruction, there are cascading impacts on how our societies function. For example, in the first evening of our Designing Cities for All triptych, together with Utrecht University researcher Agni Kalfagianni we explored the impact of global escalation in temperatures and weather extremes on food systems, which is to exacerbate inequalities globally as crop failures, price rises and even decreasing nutrition levels of staple foods take their toll — first of all on the global poor.

And in both developed and developing nations, sea level rises puts cities and coastal regions at risk (affecting 100s of millions of urban dwellers by 2050, mostly in Asia). Which apart from evident human and natural world tragedies will lead to coastal real estate being harder to insure, in turn leading to those who can move to safer ground (of the factors causing climate gentrification), whereas workingclass or struggling middle-class communities will have to live with ever greater insecurity, financial as well as in terms of sheer risk to life. Similarly, regions at risk of disasters like wildfire or storms are also getting harder to insure — which may sound trivial but isn't: the insurance industry may in effect give up on greater parts of the world, leaving people to bear the brunt of deep risk.

Quite apart from that, parts of the world risk become uninhabitable. Already, more than a third of all heat-related deaths around the world between 1991 and 2018 can be attributed to human-induced global heating, within some regions this reaching over 50%: Asia (Iran and Kuwait), Southeast Asia (the Philippines and Thailand), and Central and South America seem particularly vulnerable. And, as HuffPost pointed out in 2021, extreme heat as one of the most pernicious consequences of climate change 'doesn't just kill people — its rippling effects wreak havoc across society, straining health services, causing power outages, buckling railways, decreasing worker productivity, and causing intimate partner violence to spike'. Finally, there is growing acknowledgement of the complex links between climate change and involuntary migration, which will have political reverberations in an age of polarisation, chronic refugee crisis, and the rise in populist politics it foments.

In summary, the climate emergency means whole cities and settlements will be at continuous risk or even displaced. No-where will be unaffected. To adapt, let alone prevent this, whole cities will need to be deeply retrofitted — and we are just not ready. The scale and scope of the transition required are simply breathtaking, and unprecedented. It is worth pointing out that, even in the domain of the energy transition, which is one of the domains where the pathway to large-scale transformation to net zero is clearest in terms of technology or business models level, experts say the speed of transition required will be hard to achieve. So what does this mean for the huge shifts required in transport systems, food systems, or reversal of ecological systems breakdown?

Code RED: timid responses, cognitive dissonance, and articulating new mandates.

One of the more remarkable aspects of this time is the huge cognitive dissonance between what we know about this slowmotion disaster — which of course does not feel like slow motion once your house is flooded or on fire — and the tepid responses of most politicians and policymakers. Decarbonising our society and adapting to this future will require fundamental transitions in our way of life, our economic model and geography, and in our designing of cities — in an integrated manner.

Many have remarked upon the difference between the drastic COVID-19 response and our leaders' unwillingness to consider something of similar scope and ambition for what is after all a much greater if longer-term threat. Despite the acceleration of rhetoric on

climate targets, the pathways outlined are nowhere ambitious enough — particularly when it comes to the more under-explored issues like methane or scope 3 emissions. Regarding the latter, such urban consumption-based emissions are often much greater than direct sector-based emissions, but barely any cities, albeit with some notable exceptions, have made credible plans to address them.

On the whole, we seem condemned to incrementalism, held back by legacy interest and bad faith players, but also locked into our deep addiction to fossil fuels and a deeper inability to imagine what a better world may look like. Because, in many ways, the climate crisis is a symptom of deeper issues just as much as it is a disaster on its own. It has convincingly been argued that environmental and social abuses have a remarkable tendency to go hand in hand — and with a mental health crisis across the world, the increases in inequality already alluded to, the rise in corporate monopoly power and surveillance capitalism, and reversals in democratic practices across the world, it's hard to escape the perception of a deeper crisis. Beyond our mental lock-ins, one of the defining features behind our all-too slow progress seems to be the lack of a clearly articulated mandate for deep change. Even though opinion polls increasingly show how the public is both aware and concerned, we do not see this being translated into clear political mandates for further, deeper action. As we already noticed, in many cases the courts are stepping in where politicians are failing, but clearly, more is needed.

In the second episode of our triptych, historian Eva Rovers argued for the role of climate assemblies to articulate new frameworks for legitimacy and political mandates for ambitious action. Having seen how citizens, selected through sortation and facilitated by diverse sources of relevant information and perspectives as well as a transparent process support, can go where politicians dared not (e.g. on such a complex and divisive issue as abortion), we are already seeing climate assemblies at national or city level. Though experiences on the ground are mixed, they can provide a critical, complementary democratic tool to enable politicians to be bolder. We believe such tools are just part of a new set of instruments and settings needed to, as Giulio Quaggiotto from the United Nations Development Programme put it in our first episode: 'empower good people to go further in imagining and articulating possible pathways and more radical scenarios, and experiments to test them'.

At the end of the day, in a democratic society as well as in terms of planetary justice inclusion is not a choice but a deep need. There cannot be a just transition without a shared mandate, and sortation-based deliberations are just one amongst a series of new instruments needed to enable and activate this broadly shared sensemaking, decision-making, and collaborative action. Designing cities for all, in that sense, means designing cities with all. We are on the cusp of seeing such instruments becoming more and more real, such as in Viable Cities' climate contracts, participatory climate budgets, and Milan's bold ambition to create a Permanent Civic Body in a civic advisory role. Which we think should be positioned as an assembly for the future, systemically incorporating the interests and voices of future generations along with investing in new societal sense-making capacities for the present generation, financed and positioned to enable long-termism in decision making in a way that elected (party) politicians currently struggle to achieve.

Transitioning together: breakthrough or breakdown.

There is no escaping the fact that this transition will be most significant for cities in industrial and post-industrial societies — which have become most systemically addicted to carbon. This is, as Zack Walsh from the One Project in our second episode convincingly argued, a time for deciding between breakthrough or breakdown. Where stabilisation in 'our current state' is a dangerous fiction given the cumulative and irreversible impacts already happening, but where the right choices can achieve a restabilisation of sorts in a future that — despite the damage done — can still be desirable. Particularly if addressing the climate challenge leads to also addressing the adjacent risks of the mental health, structural inequality, job insecurity, and surveillance capitalism crises — establishing new forms of distributed agency and economic democracy with broad co-benefits both socially and in terms of rebuilding bio-integrity.

In this, cities will need to work systemically and collaboratively both inside and outside the 'red line' of their administrative boundaries. Within cities, we need to foster new hybrid transition institutions that bring together actors and investment capacity across municipal departments, economic sectors, and sections of society — mobilising broader ecosystems for transition whether at district or city level and creating new settings for sensemaking and deep collaboration. But equally, it is critical that we re-perceive cities as systems beyond their municipal or regional boundaries — systems which operate and are entangled simultaneously at local, regional and global levels.

There is no such thing as 'sustainability within the gates'; reducing local car use or supporting urban bees is critical and important, but with equal urgency we have to address the entangled supply chains or waste streams inherent to our consumption patterns that drive ecological destruction — and, inevitably, human misery — in faraway places. Like with COVID-19, no one is safe unless everyone is safe, apart from in a deeply exclusionary scenario where the wealthy pull up the drawbridge, protecting their existence but losing their humanity. Practically, this means that a city like London needs to innovate and invest across its value and supply chains and not just within its M25 ring road, and that Amsterdam's inhabitants learn to truly 'live within the doughnut' (Kate Raworth's tool for transformative action) of planetary boundaries. This poses evident challenges for cross-boundary governance and indeed for the fostering of collaborative approaches to mass behavior change through supportive institutions. Along with such new instruments for democratic transitions, and an operationalized recognition of how our cities are entangled systems with deep cross-boundary interdependency, we will need to recode our financial system to enable the deep infrastructure investments required. This involves both incorporating historical liabilities and future costs and making sure that capital investments in decarbonising cities, such as neighbourhoods energy retrofits and city-wide green infrastructure enhancements, genuinely make life better for communities — and are planned and collaboratively financed with them.

New ways of raising capital are equally critical — government and international multilateral investment capacity, though significant, will never be enough, and impact investment or private sector 'Environmental, Social, and Governance' investment are nowhere close to what they need to be — in terms of speed, scope, behaviour, terms, and impact. Our exploratory work in Birmingham on Transformation Capital shows the depth of distrust amongst communities around extractive behaviours of capital investment

when not done on the terms of, and with active participation throughout, of residents through collaborative and distributed sense-making as well as new ways of raising funds.

Transitioning together: foundational transformations.

This, then, is the nature of transitioning together: deeply investing in a series of institutional infrastructures, collaborative settings and governance, and finance mechanisms in ways that build our democratic transition, capabilities, in turn driving mandates and capacity for distributed sets of actors to innovate faster and at pace and scale — right across technology, value chains, and behaviour change. This is critical, as over the next decade the question is not whether we can, say, install a fair number of domestic heat pumps to replace gas boilers whilst better insulating homes. We know we can do that both technologically, financially (albeit at a small scale), and organisationally. But to do such things citywide, across a huge diversity of dwelling typologies, with varying context-specific technologicalorganisational approaches, democratically without imposing it top-down on residents, including tangible co-benefits whether socially or economically, at a genuinely ambitious pace? By and large, currently we are not on a pathway towards achieving that yet, which is one of the many factors that make the European Commission's Mission to achieve 100 climate-neutral cities by 2030 seem so aspirational.

And to go one step further, we recognize that a wholesale transition can never be achieved without a level of foundational everyday economic security for households — as a bedrock safety net to give people the confidence to navigate uncertain times as well as to enable and democratise a level of taking care — whether in deliberations about the future, visioning about neighbourhood based change, making wise decisions in behaviour change, or maintaining what we have. It is no coincidence that US president Biden's trillion-dollar infrastructure package, currently making its way through US Congress, is meant to be accompanied by a much larger social infrastructure and welfareinvestment plan. Unless families feel more secure in their month-tomonth existence, asking or inviting them to be part of a transition is guaranteed to be ignored by many.

Designing Cities for All.

These three institutional transitions together form the deep code systemic backdrop for designing cities for all:

- Democratic reformation to enable better articulation of climate action mandates.
- Welfare innovation that creates frameworks for new freedom to care.
- Financial and monetary innovation to unlock decentralised and distributed resources for transition.

All three of them are to be backed by new civic institutional instruments, for outcomes-focused many-to-many contracting, open data & APIs, transparent multiple-value accounting, and permissive licensing. Such instruments need to enable the deep physical transitions that our cities need to undergo over the next decades. From systemic rewilding in order to re-build the bio-integrity of the places we inhabit (as well as adapting to and mitigating carbon emissions) to wholestreet and whole-city retrofitting

of buildings to be less wasteful and more resilient, to the re-thinking of transport favouring distributed and carbon-neutral systems (such as e-bikes even for logistics, which are even increasingly competitive commercially as well as being cleaner) alongside mass transit.

And such physical transformations need to be backed up by investments in a whole range of systems and infrastructures to support everyday life. Firstly, the full decarbonisation of energy grid and heating systems, for which a plethora of technological options exist and where municipalities have the opportunity to enable distributed solutions that link energy communities to private sector innovators and supply. Secondly, food systems, where decarbonisation of diets needs to go hand in hand with ensuring nutrition density, ecological regeneration and sustainable livelihoods. And thirdly, investments in mental health and human development, where we in the aftermath of the pandemic lockdowns and behaviour changes we have the opportunity – and duty - to radically revision our city and district centres. This could include using newly (and probably structurally) vacant commercial real estate as sites for demonstrating fundamental shifts in our material, bio-material and intangibles economy for a post-carbon economy, to support human flourishing.

We are seeing more and more examples of how real estate and even heritage can be (re-used as one of the building blocks of an inclusive, meaningful economy by civic city makers who foster shared experiences, experimentation, and an open and diverse culture of doing, making and caring, as well as truthful conversations in a time of climate anxiety. The settings and infrastructures of which we spoke before, which enable the contextual articulating of possible pathways and experiments, therefore include the re-purposing of old and new spaces across our city.

As nations and cities face up to a stark reality of having to achieve carbon reductions at a dazzling speed at the same time as having to heal the economic and social fabric of places and the social contract with citizens, none of these investments can be made in silos. Clearly, the foundational transformations outlined here (institutional transitions, civic instruments, physical shifts, and transformations in our everyday systems) hinted at here are all interrelated — each of them is integral to the fundamental transition that future generations demand us to make.

Therefore we need to demonstrate that systemic transition across these domains is possible, which will require a next class of innovation demonstrator programmes, backed by multiple funding sources, both for the orchestration of such cross-silo innovation processes and for portfolios of tangible experiments — as well as the capital funding that enables real follow-through at pace and scale. Institutional innovation is critical to all of this: as we have argued before, much of this revolution by its very nature seems rather boring. Work already underway that Dark Matter Labs and many others are part of shows that it is anything but. The articulation of hybrid, collaborative, digital-by-default yet low-threshold institutional mechanisms for change at neighbourhood, district, city, and ultimately systems scale is where it is at. And if we want to take seriously our duty to be good ancestors, we have no choice.

Curious for more?

Learn more about the DCFA Fellowship of Dark Matter Labs in the DCFA online research file, in which they take you along in their research on transition together towards a climate just future.

Book tip: The Precipice.

Protecting humanity's future is the central challenge of our time. If we do not act fast to reach a place of safety, it will soon be too late.

Book tip: Palaces for the people.

Social infrastructure can solve some of our most pressing societal challenges - the future of democratic societies rests not simply on shared values but on shared spaces: the libraries, childcare centers, churches, and parks.

Hacking the City: towards a digitally equitable urban habitat.

By Galit Ariel: TechnoFuturist & DCFA Fellow (futurememoryinc.com).

Inequality and exclusion are also affected by how we define our digital world. In her Designing Cities for All Fellowship, technoFuturist Galit Ariel explores the impact of tech-infused urban environments on agency, representation, and self-expression, evoking new ways to hack the city (for good).

Image description:
Portrait of Galit, who is wearing black sparkly sunglasses and a black hat. She looking straight in the camera and is wearing a turquoise t-shirt with a print showing flowers and fantasy animals. In the left corner, there is a turquoise star-shaped text balloon with white letters: 'DCFA Fellow'.

In fourth grade, I told my mother I was going to study at a friend's house. But instead, I secretly took a 45-minute bus ride to the big city. I, a small kid in a school uniform and a ponytail, spent my afternoon wandering around the bustling, noisy streets, full of pedestrians rushing to somewhere that seemed extremely important, crossing and dancing around each other's paths. There were mixed sounds of conversations, laughter, and arguments, and the scent of the salty ocean mixed with car exhaust, perfumes, and body odours. I was hooked and kept sneaking out whenever I could. Only one bus ride away from me, a world bursting with mysteries to be explored.

Smart Cities.

Cities will always represent for me a 'sum that is bigger than its part', more than geographic and architectural landscapes that one can chart and visit, an intricate tapestry of histories, communities, and stories. Cities are formed and can only be truly experienced by unmediated shared and intimate experiences, attitudes, and etiquettes. Such qualities can only be comprehended by unmediated engagement.

With the incredible real-time computational and spatial technological abilities we hone today, urban environments quickly become a perfect petri dish for identifying, targeting, and implementing mass behaviours and trends. An ideal condition to champion the integration of digitally-infused urban systems to create Smart Cities, berating the

innovation value that large-scale data analysis can produce such as its contribution to deploy effective policies and efficiently respond to citizens' needs.

This approach might be well-intentioned but echoes a narrow perspective of technological means as the core (and only) path for progress. Some automation paths can lead to experiential hell. Think about outsourcing customer service to automated bot systems and virtual assistants. Service bots might be generally efficient, but they force users to communicate with algorithms that fail to provide a real sense of interpersonal attention or offer solutions for unique problems. At times, such mechanisms are deliberately designed to deter users from receiving hands-on assistance, such as discouraging users from terminating a service agreement or subscription. Imagine such 'joy' integrated into a city-wide environment.

Smart Cities propagate efficiency, digital coherency, and information streamline as the ideal future vision of urban environments. But algorithmic success or digital connectivity can — as we witnessed in the 2016 United States election and during the recent COVID-19 pandemic — also stream the opposite of knowledge, truth, or representation. Even when the bodies promoting them are elected and perhaps progressive officials, they ultimately aim to produce an all-knowing digital authoritarianism. The public weariness of digital surveillance is not just a product of 'misunderstanding' technology and the benefits it carries, but a genuine and valid signal for municipalities and urban developers to reconfigure the way tech-infused environments are concepted, designed, and applied.

Sidewalk Surveillance.

A big concern related to Smart Cities is that their computational systems are ultimately developed and operated by private, commercial companies — namely tech or automotive conglomerates. Such forprofit entities naturally have fiscal and business priorities, especially in the current state of information monetisation. They're aimed to further profit from the access such projects provide to the public, personal, and intimate data pools. Despite attempts to anonymise individual data sets, even encrypted data pools can be leaked or hacked by superior hacking techniques or mere negligence for those with skills and will.

Data gathering and analytics also enable commercial and political entities to map and predict behaviours of groups and individuals, giving them the power to bake 'dark' interaction mechanisms into digital systems that will encourage or nudge specific behaviours. You might recognise it from the gnarly sensation of FOMO (fear of missing out) you get from your smart devices push notification, and the oddly relevant swimsuits and holiday package ads that pop up in your feed after you mentioned to a friend you need a vacation. What might commence with wanting to improve pedestrian or traffic flow in city centres, can easily be subverted into walking or driving patterns that enhance commercial consumption patterns or even adhere with political agendas.

A recent (and perhaps most cringe-worthy) example to deploy mass data mining in urban space was the attempt of Sidewalk Labs to form a trendy tech-infused neighbourhood in Toronto, Canada. Behind the idyllic and future-facing initiative — that used glossy brochures and videos with kids flying kites and all — was the Alphabet Inc., the mighty

mothership of Google that holds several wearable tech, robotic, and drone technology companies. Known for its sophisticated algorithmic capabilities, Sidewalk Labs ultimate objective was to form an open space data-mining lab. Buildings and public areas were designed with embedded data capturing devices, combined with the intention to access ANY portable devices within the neighbourhood (be it resident or casual visitors), enabling the system developers to retrieve and triangulate device-based, as well as biometric and behavioural data within the space — forming the ultimate spatial data X-ray machine. When constant concerns regarding privacy rose by local groups, the developers proudly presented the ultimate solution to protect citizens and visitors: designated street signs indicating it is a data capturing area. A group of local activists demanded 'under-the-hood transparency' for all mining tactics, applications, and the tracking of monetization systems of civic data, as well as robust regulatory guidelines by local authorities. Unwilling to comply with that demand (hey, they did put all that work into creating a street sign), Alphabet's Sidewalk Labs eventually withdrew from the Toronto development project.

Digital Gentrification and the loss of ConnectHood.

Urban algorithmic aspirations that are only created as a topdown vision, versus an actual desire and need by citizens, are simply unsustainable. A recent example is Colombus, Ohio. Beating 77 US cities, Colombus gained a hefty $50 million investment grant in 2016 and aimed to transform into a beacon for urban innovation. Yet the 'Smart Columbus' promise failed to deliver. With only 1100 autonomous mobility service app downloads and a handful of trips planned by the new smart mobility kiosks, citizens' complete disinterest was evident and eventually caused the cancellation of multiple urban tech initiatives and programmes in the city.

Designing top-down tech solutions carries more than financial loss, it encapsulates deeper harm to cities' organic cultural and civic interactions. Some potential risks such systems can enhance or deploy:

- *Demographic algorithmic biases:*
  Determined even before they are created, algorithms are often impacted by the inherited biases of their creators. Recent examples include facial recognition systems that exclude dark skin individuals, as they were created by (and for) Caucasian features, and financial algorithms that discriminate on the basis of gender. Such flaws don't only exclude entire demographics from civic and economic participation but had caused more severe discrimination within law enforcement and judicial systems. Yes, people have been wrongfully accused of crimes because systems misidentified them. Guess what? Tech ain't perfect.
- *Forced participation or exclusion:*
  Digital urban systems condition our ability to participate in urban life, forcing citizens to participate in online digital means to have access to public facilities. Such practices ultimately attach citizenhood with one's 'algorithmic value creation'—rendering individuals, communities, and cultures, either more relevant or invisible, as a result of their level of digital fluency and connectivity.
- *Digital Gentrification:*
  Computational and automated environments encourage and reward the

standardised, predictable, and 'acceptable' input and. output, as well as dismissing and ignoring interactions that are unquantifiable or irrelevant to their function. Urban algorithmic systems can intentionally and unintentionally form behavioural feedback loops that will accelerate the gentrification process that is already taking over cities and neighborhoods. Altering more than the housing prices and demographics, but urban behaviours and cultures.

- *Losing ConnectHood:*
  which is the organic and uncoordinated intimacies between people, spaces, and places. Successful applications of 'urban efficiency', will also facilitate streamlined and docile behaviours, and inevitably reduce the ability to form a real sense of ConnectHood that occurs when we wander, explore, and casually encounter people and places. Even science needs to acknowledge the value of casualty and error. From Archimedes' overflowing bath that was fundamental to physics' fluid mechanics principles to Fleming's careless lab-cleaning practices that led to the discovery of Penicillin — in a 'perfect' computational world, neither would be discovered.

Before we merrily hand out city keys to tech corporations, we should pause and acknowledge the personal and cultural cost of digital gentrification and whether the benefits of system thinking are worth it if we hollow cities' non-computational value.

Painting Future Cities with Digital Graffiti

Without excluding the benefits technology can provide to urban living, the future of cities depends on factors that go beyond predictable computational abilities. Suppose we enuinely envision the future of cities as livable, equitable, and diverse cultural hubs. In that case, we need to be more intentional about the purpose and application of technological tools within them. Our compliance with technological advancement or individual digital lifestyles should not be perceived as our willingness to give our agency over our social and public environments. We need to be able to freely express joy, spontaneity, or discontent in public without being concerned with a watchful digital eye, a guiding algorithmic nudge, or a 'Ka-Ching' sound attached to our actions.

Exploring urban futures means reaching beyond tech-infused urban environments or a gentrified ideal of complacent citizenship. Technology should create (genuinely) inclusive tools that serve and increase citizens' agency, enhance authentic interactions, and support unique urban cultures – rather than overwriting them.

We need to ensure we deploy digital tools that support social and individual agency via:
- A shared understanding of the role of technology in individual and collective social spheres.
- A critical gaze into the source and quality of algorithmic applications and tools
- Ensuring a broad representation of urban stakeholders within the design and implementation process of digital tools in public spaces.
- Addressing hard problems and developing tech-fuelled opportunities to develop culturally rich, genuinely inclusive, and empathetic cities.

- Granting citizens the right to participate, disengage and even 'hack' urban digital systems, without harming their status and their civic access to the public and knowledge domain.

The future of cities commences with shifting our perspectives of cities as merely an economic hub or a system that needs to be optimised. Instead, we need to value cities as rich ecosystems, composed of qualities that can't be quantified and optimised, but carry a deep value. Cities are ultimately living organisms, and deserve the same respect and awe all living things should hone.

Curious for more?

If you want to know more about the DCFA Fellowship of Galit Ariel, you can follow her work in the DCFA online research file, where she takes you along in her research on digital gentrification and hacking the city.

Book tip: Glitch Feminism.

In this thought-provoking book, curator and thinker Legacy Russell challenges ideas of body, representation, and agency within tech frameworks.

Podcast tip: Pakhuis de Zwijger.

Galit Ariel about the value of the unquantifiable, about unlearning to carelessly give up our data for convenience, and about her DCFA fellowship.

Artificial Inclusion is the problem, not Artificial Intelligence.

By Sennay Ghebreab: Out-of-the-box AI thinker, educator & founder Civic AI Lab (sennay.net).

We live in a world with increasing human diversity, technological complexity, and social inequality. Sennay Ghebreab believes Artificial Intelligence (AI) can help, engage and empower people and communities, to advance society. But for that, we must develop AI in a socially inclusive manner, which is not happening now.

Image description:
A portrait of Sennay. He has short curly hair and is looking straight in the camera. He is wearing a white shirt with buttons. Sennay is wearing glasses, and has his right arm up, holding his glasses with his hand.

AI is changing our society at an ever-increasing pace. Data has become one of the most valuable resources of our society, and AI technologies reveal patterns in data that offer new insights and new creative solutions. Smartphones, smart cars, smart homes and smart cities determine what we do and how we interact with each other. And AI is increasingly helping governments, hospitals, courts and companies to make decisions for and about us. How will AI further influence our society?

Many experts predict that AI will change society for the better. They point, for example, to AI's enormous potential for the global economy, and to how AI is already helping farmers improve crops, doctors for faster diagnosis of diseases, and the elderly to combat loneliness. However, some experts predict that AI will lead to massive unemployment, growing economic disparities and social unrest, including populist uprisings. There is even fear of losing human autonomy, freedom of choice, and free will.

Developing ethical and inclusive AI.

Regardless of their utopian or dystopian vision, most AI experts agree on one thing. The answer to the question of how AI will affect our society depends very much on how well AI will be able to embrace, anchor, and enrich human values and diversity. Human values such as equality, justice, and dignity. The call by experts around the world to develop ethical and inclusive AI deserves our full attention and collective action.

Take the growing concern that AI reinforces exclusion and discrimination in society. Severalexamples of this have recently attracted a lot of media attention. Amazon's algorithm for recruiting staff that discriminates against women, the COMPASS system in the United States that gives Black people a higher risk of recidivism than white people with the same criminal history, and the medical risk profiling system that gives millions of black people, who are as ill as white people, less access to healthcare. An example closer to home is SyRi, the Dutch AI system for detecting social security fraud, which mainly picks out poor people and people with a migration background because they happen to live in certain neighbourhoods.

All these examples concern algorithms that recognize patterns in large amounts of data and learn from them without human supervision. If these data contain historical or contemporary social biases and inequalities, then these will surely be adopted and reproduced by these algorithms. For example, if algorithms are trained on historical police data, then conscious or unconscious biases in arrests are adopted in current predictive policing systems. Or if in the past Black people had to be sicker than white people to be admitted to health care, algorithms trained based on historical health data will also discriminate against Black people.

National and international institutions and companies respond to the emergence of biased algorithms with measures aimed at controlling and regulating them as if they were aliens that need to be tamed. For example, the Ethics Directive published by the European Commission in 2019 recommends that when data is collected, it may contain social prejudices, inaccuracies, errors, and mistakes, which must be removed before an algorithm is trained on these data. The Dutch parliament even wants to go a step further and install an 'algorithm watchdog', which screens public domain algorithms for bias and inequality.

The root causes of biased algorithms.

However well-intended, these measures are not sufficient for creating AI with human values and respect for diversity. For one, it sometimes is impossible to ensure that datasets on which algorithms are trained are truthful and unbiased. Or to develop algorithms that detect and eliminate harmful biases and inequalities. More importantly, however, the emphasis on controlling and regulating data and algorithms and thus on technical problems diverts from the root causes of biased algorithms, namely historical and contemporary inequalities in society and the lack of diversity in private and public organisations.

According to the AI NOW Institute in New York (Discriminating Systems: Gender, Race, and Power in AI, 2019), more than 80% of the university professors in AI worldwide are men. For Facebook just 15% of AI experts are women and for Google only 10% is. There is no public data on trans workers or other gender minorities. Ethnic diversity is even worse. For example, 2.5% of Google's employees are black, while Facebook and Microsoft each employ 4% black AI experts. The state of AI diversity in the Netherlands is not clear: there is little data available about it. But there is no reason to assume that the diversity of AI experts in Dutch organisations differs much from these statistics.

A lack of diversity is problematic for any organisation that operates in a diverse society. For organisations dealing with AI, however, this lack is much more consequential because of the boundless reach and rapid impact of AI technologies. Billions of people use platforms like Facebook, Google, and Twitter, most of which do not resemble the white male developers of these technologies. The risk that large groups of people face discrimination, exclusion, or unfair treatment is real and widespread. And so are the algorithmic rise of white nationalism, Holocaust denial, and conspiracy theories such as the great replacement. These phenomena will not only adversely affect certain population groups, but complete societies.

The lack of diversity of people in AI and the problem of biased algorithms have largely been dealt with separately. These, however, are two sides of the same coin: lack of diversity in the workplace is interwoven with biased algorithms. One thing leads to another. But it also means that a workplace of people with different backgrounds and expertise enables tackling or preventing biased algorithms.

The illusion of inclusion.

Government agencies, universities, and technology companies recognise the problem of biased algorithms and the importance of diversity in AI. They continuously emphasise the importance of diversity of data, diversity of people and perspectives, diversity of processes and platforms. And yet diversity in AI does not seem to work out so far, like in many other fields. It is as if all the emphasis on and attention to diversity is there to create an illusion of involvement, commitment, and inclusion.

For example, Google would implement seven principles for ethical AI through internal education and the development of responsible AI. It set up an external advisory board of various people to guarantee the responsible development of AI. Only a few weeks after the establishment of the board, it was abolished. And Google is still confronted with protests and strikes because of the way the company deals with sexual discrimination and harassment. Women do not feel safe in their male-dominated company.

Another example is Standford University's renowned Human AI Institute, which was launched in 2019 with the aim of having a diverse group of people researching the impact and potential of AI. The President of Stanford said at the inauguration: 'Now is our chance to shape that future by bringing humanists and social scientists together with people who develop artificial intelligence'. Shortly after its inception, the institute got embroiled in diversity concerns: out of 120 staff members, the vast majority are male, and none are black.

Organisations often state that they are unable to find diverse talent that meets preset job requirements. Time and again, however, the problem turns out not to be the absence of diverse talent, but the inability to create an environment in which diverse talent can be recognised, attracted, and retained. After their appointment, talents with a migration background often say that they are treated as tokens of diversity and that their talents remain underused, undervalued, and underpaid. This artificial inclusion is the real problem that needs attention and action if we are to develop ethical and inclusive AI systems.

The way to make AI ethical and inclusive.

True ethical and inclusive AI understands, values and builds on differences between people in terms of socio-cultural values, knowledge, skills and lifestyle. Tech companies such as Facebook, Google and Twitter cannot be expected to work on ethical and inclusive AI because they put their own business model first. No ethical and inclusive AI can be expected through control and regulation of AI either, as long as public organisations, such as governments, municipalities and universities, and their elected representatives, laws and regulations are not sufficiently divers and inclusive to start with. If we want to make AI ethical and inclusive, at least two things are needed. First AI should be taught to citizens from all walks of life, including and perhaps especially those at the margins of society. This increases and enriches the talent pool. Initiatives such as Amsterdam-based code school Codam understand this and take bold steps towards free and fundamentally new forms of peer-to-peer education.

Secondly, public AI should be created by diverse and interdisciplinary AI teams in collaboration with citizens, communities and civil society. This enables grassroots AI technologies that serve citizens and communities better and more honestly. Initiatives such as my own Civic AI Lab, a research lab for civic-centered and community-minded design, development and deployment of AI technology, are trying to pursue this.

Note: This essay is a transcript of Sennay's keynote at the VSNU's Digital Society Conference, 2019.

Curious for more?

Sennay Ghebreab speaks about developing AI technology to increase equal opportunity in the fields of education, welfare, environment, mobility, and health in the DCFA livecast Designing from Inclusion: Systems.

Project tip: CODAM Coding College.

Codam works with no preadmission requirements and no tuition fees, to become a software engineer from scratch, preparing the next generation for the future.

Book tip: Race after Technology.

Ruha Benjamin cuts through tech-industry hype to understand how emerging technologies can reinforce White supremacy and deepen social inequity.

Chapter 3: Making it Work.

With essays by:
Jacquie Shah.
Simon Dogger.
De Voorkamer.
Rut Turro.
Maurice Crul & Bernardine Walrecht & Frans Lelie.
Marie van Driessche.

'I always start by saying, be a person — not your role. Don't show up as the architect, don't show up as the transition designer, don't show up as the CFO, the CEO, the human-centred designer. Just show up as a person.'

Melis Senova in DCFA livecast Breaking it Down: Designing.

'It's dualistic, but through exclusion, we work towards inclusion. We're excluding straight cis guys to our indoor skate sessions, to prioritise queer people and women who are not given the same chances and space in these environments. Think about it as an in-between step, something that's needed now, but later ideally isn't. The sessions boost our community to go to a skatepark by themselves without this socially safe space built by us. That way, we are working towards skate parks where anyone feels safe and welcome, with a more diverse group of people.'

Nanja van Rijsse in DCFA livecast Equity x Design: Tools and Opportunities.

'But what can we do now?'

By Jacquie Shaw: alchemist of Ancestral Services, Future Ancestors Services (jacqieshaw.com).

In Designing Cities for All, we support critical explorations of designs and designers' roles in creating equitable futures. In this essay, design anthropologist and strategic futurist Jacquie Shaw explains their criticism towards the 'what can we do now' question and makes a plea for self-reflection and ancestral accountability.

Image description:
A portrait of Jacquie, who is wearing a grey hoodie. The hood of the sweater is covering their hair, which is blowing in the wind.

As I'm writing this I'm sitting on the coast of S,D.YES in the Salish Sea (currently/colonially known as 'Pender Island, British Columbia, Canada'). This is the ancestral and shared territory of many Coast Salish Nations, and as I sit here I think about the lives and legacies of the WS.NEĆ people's relationships to this place through time. I am thankful for the history of this Land; that there are still people alive today who hold the history of these lands. I have such deep and complex gratitude for being here, to write this work while sitting on a beach and listening to the ocean lap at the shore. It is grounding, it is humanizing, it is what I am doing right now in space and time (or as you read this, in the past, but know that it has been done).

In participating in the DCFA episode Equity X Design: Intentional Intersectionality, I was honoured to be asked to join in this conversation. When I first started to which considers Intersectional Feminist thought and practice within design through my work, the topics felt so niche. There was — and continues to be — so much seeking to find similar thinkers and conversations to engage with. Now not only is the broader conversation emerging; but there has been such rapid growth in the recognition of the importance of intersectional practice within design. Being invited to participate in conversations relating to building and designing more inclusive futures, I am so thankful to the people who find resonance in the work I have to offer, remembering the times this work felt much lonelier. Since being part of that DCFA livecast, my brain has continued to house a bouncing ball of thought that is the question I get so often in my work as an educator, consultant, facilitator and designer; the 'what can we do now?' question*.

*Note: This essay uses the repetition of the phrase 'what can we do now?'As a reflection of urgency, it follows the colloquial understanding of the impatience of asking the same question over and over again, whilst never being satisfied with an answer that is still in process or ever changing. If you're unfamiliar with this trope the reference that is most

prominent as this piece is written can be found in Season 2, Episode 15 of The Simpsons "Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?" around the 8 minute 33 second mark.

Design skills and processes.

This is not the first time I am reflecting upon 'what we can do now?'. As an institutionally educated designer in westernglobal-north academia, it is held that my role is a problem solver. I am to seek and destroy problems by offering well-considered solutions. Talking about design in this way can come off as esoteric, but perhaps it too broadens the experience of design and the designer. Throughout my previous and continuous/ongoing design education, this same idea regarding design comes up: how do we define design? Within my role, it is expected to present the answers to 'what can we do now?'. Though often, the answers which I (and many others) have to offer are followed with 'but is that enough?'. Reflecting on the panel conversation, as panelists we answered the 'what can we do now?' question with many paths. In my work as an educator as a part of the team of Future Ancestors Services, we talk about in particular how anti-racism skills can be taught and practiced, and how one of those skills is critical self-reflection. This is not an answer people seem to take seriously or with deep consideration. I argue that without investing in the work of critical self-reflection, your work is not well-considered but can cause deep harm because of the unknown and unexamined values and biases.

Previous to my current career I was in a more 'traditional' design job. I worked in a Vancouver design studio that focused primarily on branding and packaging for consumer goods. In this job, I practiced what I had learned in my institutional and practical understanding of design. To solve the problem we must engage with the design thinking process which follows these steps: empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test.

Throughout this process, we ask questions (empathize and define), and then synthesize that information into communications into touchpoints (ideate, prototype, and test). We ask clients 'what are your values?', 'what makes you stick out from the competition?', 'how do you want your audience to interact with you?'. We facilitated the means for clients to critically selfreflect, and in turn, that critical self-reflection informs all the design outputs. The values which have been defined by the client are embedded and ripple outward into the world in the form of packages, websites, and advertising.

Critical self-reflection is a practice many designers are already deeply engaged in, in relationship to building with and for others. When we facilitate critical self-reflection for clients, we glean from those conversations insight into their unique value and contributions to the world in order to market those contributions and values. Knowing how informative these reflections are to the design processes, what is it to engage in this reflective practice with the self and deeply investigate what values and contributions we might offer?

The question we should ask instead.

We live in urgent times; the last few years have seen rapid, unprecedented, and unplanned change. Moving through the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increasingly warped perception of the passage of time. While circumstance has led to lacking many of the comforts and joy of life, we have been left within shells of a society

that was not built ready for change. We are noticing the old ways fight to maintain power. We have also experienced immense and previously unimaginable progress and development. All of this adds to a sense of urgency, the urgency that feeds the 'what can we do now?'. When it comes to change, in my role, in the work done to educate informed by decolonial practices, I ask folks to readjust their expectations, to examine their urgency. 'Urgency is one of the characteristics of white supremacy culture that show up in our organizations (Tema Okun / Dismantling Racism Works, 2021). Continued sense of urgency makes it difficult to become inclusive. In an unpredictable world, it is important not only to ask the question 'what can we do now?', but to seek, for yourself, what is the answer.

So how do we seek and develop the answer(s) of creating change? According to the 'formula for change' — a model from the field of leadership and management consulting — dissatisfaction x vision x first steps > resistance. I would also like to add to this equation: power. Consider what power and values we have as individuals, communities, collectives, societies, etcetera, to enter the first steps of 'what can we do now?'. The work of critical self-reflection, as designers responsible for creating and designing (hopefully) with and (likely) for other people and communities, is a relationship and a conversation between our capacities (skills, knowledge, resources, insight) and the needs of our collaborators (clients, communities, other people).

Using the lens of ancestral accountability.

In responding to/with urgency, we can often forget the consequences and/or legacies of what is being done right now in the moment; how our work relates to the work that has been done and will continue to be done. Innovation culture, capitalism, individualism, novelty and planned obsolescence, discovery doctrine, and colonialism have embedded a value in a mythological level* of society that being 'the first is the best'. In response to 'what can we do now?', I remind folks that the work of equitable and liberatory change, inclusion, design, and futuremaking is not done in our lifetimes. This can be a challenging thought often met with doubt. Folks find that statement disempowering and discouraging, hopelessness arises, feelings of 'Well, if I can't have it done now, why do it at all?'.

Note: The lineage of thinking of values embedded within a mythological level of society stems from futurist Sohail Inayatullah's Causal Layered Analysis framework.

I do not remind folks that this work is long and that we will not experience every solution in our lifetime to negate the agency of everyone, but rather to remove the pressure. To give room for deeper agency, and intergenerational solidarity. I wish to invite people in this discomfort to turn and face urgency with ancestral accountability. Through many years of witnessing and participating in the community in response to local and global flashpoints which call for change, I have become even further skeptical of urgency.

Urgency leads to burnout, skipped processes, assumptions, misinformation, and carelessness. Seeing our work within the frame of generations — or even years — is helped by reframing 'delayed gratification' to 'witnessing and nourishing emergence'.

Design, critical self-reflection, critically turning to face urgency — these are all career and lifelong practices. These are practices in sustaining, relating to, and growing out-and-amongst. It requires committing to working deeply, committing to ourselves as humans who design with and for others. Others that we cannot know because they are not with us here at this time. There is so much that can be done; there is no one answer to 'what can we do now?', there is no checklist or one way.

Don't ask me what we can do right now. Ask yourself, what can you do right now, and what do you want to do in/with/for the future.

Curious for more?

Jacquie Shaw speaks designing with intentional intersectionality in the DCFA livecast Equity x Design: Intentional Intersectionality.

Video tip: Using a lens of ancestral accountability.

How to support clients and community in honouring our responsibilities as future ancestors to shape the just and sustainable futures our next generations will inherit.

Book tip: Emergent Strategy.

The world is in a continual state of flux. Emergent Strategy by Adrienne Maree Brown is radical self-help, society-help, and planet-help designed to shape the futures we want to live.

An inclusive design field.

By Simon Dogger: Designer (simondogger.nl).

Research into creating societies for and by everyone provides valuable information about how designers can contribute to this, but how realistic is achieving inclusion in Dutch society? In this essay, designer Simon Dogger looks at personal background, opportunities, and vulnerabilities from a critical perspective, and focuses on the importance of inclusion in the design field.

Image description:
Portrait of Simon. He is wearing an blue t-shirt with a black jacket and black glasses. Simon is holding a white cane with red stripes between his arms. In his right hand he holds a mobile phone, and in his left hand The Emotion Whisperer wearable..

As a blind designer, I defend my opinion, based on empirical research, that the design field and design education are inaccessible to the visually impaired target group.

Equality principles are guidelines that are implemented on a large scale in the Netherlands. Museums are actively working on the accessibility and diversity of their collections. A variety of gender and genetics is increasingly visible on television. And universities and institutions increasingly have codes that monitor the level of inclusion and diversity. Compared to other European countries, however, the Netherlands is late with this movement. I think the Netherlands would score low if a European inclusion test was held. In such a test you can, for example, look at the number of accessible toilets per square kilometer, the level of loneliness among the elderly, and the degree of labour participation among the visually impaired.

This suspicion is based on my travels through Europe and the conversations I have had with journalists, filmmakers, historians, and the chair of disability studies. This is strange to say the least because the Netherlands has a high level of prosperity, freethinking, and liberal views, for example on gender identity, euthanasia, and drug tolerance. Are there facts and shifts in Dutch society that support my opinion and can they tell something about the chances of achieving inclusion?

Design is rooted in context.

The Netherlands has been a prosperous country due to the extraction and sale of gas from the Groningen gas bubble. This can be found in the infrastructure, health care system, school system, and social system that is offered to its residents at high quality. Since the depillarisation — a typical Dutch phenomenon — in early 1950, social cohesion has diminished. In the period of pillarisation, there were grouped people of the same faith who had stronger social connections with each other. The pillarisation certainly had a

disadvantage: there was a high rate of social control. However, it also had a positive effect: the care for the people within the own group.

It should be clear that the level of inclusion during the pillarisation was low, but this had to do with an undeveloped social awareness of equality. The rise of prosperity in combination with developments in society such as increasing mobility (the moped has had a major influence on this), increasing the supply of information (introduction of television), and depillarisation have promoted individualism. Neoliberalist thinking from the 1980s onwards, with examples such as Reagan and Thatcher, has ensured that the labour market has become more focused on efficiency and competition.

You can clearly notice this in the last fifteen years: employees no longer stay with the same boss until their retirement, employers offer flex contracts and the government has reviewed and adjusted unemployment benefits. The education system follows the labour market with a delay of about ten years and it now focuses more on individual competence and independent efficiency.

In contrast to the Netherlands, there is greater social cohesion in southern European countries. The social cohesion as a result of pillarisation is still there. Northern European countries such as Germany and the Scandinavian countries, with a similar level of prosperity as the Netherlands, have had a more left-oriented political regime for several decades. This has ensured that inclusion is incorporated into laws and government policies. This has resulted in a more inclusive culture and greater social awareness. Despite the fact that there has been PVDA and CDA political leadership in the Netherlands at the end of the last century and the beginning of this century, their direction has been influenced by Anglo-Saxon and neoliberal tendencies. This has not led to inclusive government policy and legislation. The Netherlands has a unique 'polderculture' that makes compromises to increase the chances for an outcome that is acceptable to all parties. However, equality does not benefit from compromise.

Changing society.

In my opinion, a lower level of inclusive thinking has arisen due to the compromise culture, the depillarisation, and the neoliberalist ideology. Symbolic is the fact that the Netherlands is one of the last European countries to ratify the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Disabled. The cause of this lies in deeply rooted patterns and is interwoven in — among other things, government, legislation, infrastructure, education system, and economy. These are not separate parts, but all have a direct or indirect relationship with each other. For example; public opinion influences politics, politics influences legislation and the labour market, the labour market influences the education system, and this, in turn, influences social consciousness. In order to design a different society, you at least need to know how complex it is to change systems.

In addition, you are not building a new one, but you are changing an existing society. When you compare this with, for example, a house: it is not that difficult to change a facility. But it becomes more complicated to build in an elevator for a resident in a wheelchair: 'Is there a budget for the elevator? If not then we can not go on holiday', 'Why should there be an elevator anyway?', and 'Does anyone know how to build one?'. This

metaphor is illustrative of how change is viewed from different perspectives. Changing a society is not only very complex, it also has to do with different interests and the priorities of a country.

Designers are ideally suited to discuss these kinds of difficult themes and initiate change. They can research, provide insight, present and develop concrete solutions. Designers, however, always float with the flow of social consciousness. In my opinion, their strength lies not so much in steering, but in integrating, stimulating, and simplifying starting processes.

Changing the design field.

I myself am an example of how I, as a designer, connect with a shift in social consciousness. In 2020, I was the first blind designer to win the Dutch Design Award, with my project The Emotion Whisperer. This is a tool that recognises the facial expressions of conversation partners via Artificial Intelligence and converts them into vibration. Very useful for a visually impaired person to sense when someone nods or smiles. That I won has, among other hings, to do with technological innovation, but also certainly with the importance of the design field and their attention to social and equality projects. Fifty years ago, or even fifteen years ago, my project would have been less imaginative. The character of the era in which we live and the public opinion that creates also had an influence.

If cities are designed for and by everyone, it is necessary that the design field itself must be inclusive and diverse. It is interesting to investigate to what extent designers, design agencies, and design teams — in addition to having intentions — are also practically and concretely involved in this. In addition, designing FOR everyone is just an intermediate solution to design BY everyone in my opinion, in which the cities designed come from completely diverse and inclusive design teams. Making the design field inclusive is a radical change because its source, design education, needs to be considered. My suspicion is that the design educations only give access to 'average' students. The chance that, for example, students with a disability will be hired is small, but also that students with a mental disorder will graduate. The type of students indirectly influences the curriculum and education plan, but it is especially important that they determine the design field after their studies. When various students become part of this, they intertwine their interests and above all their unique interpretation of the world in their designs.

Make design education inclusive.

My design education and graduation as a blind designer give a picture of accessibility and also show that the design field cannot become fully inclusive. I became blind during my studies, had to rehabilitate for four years, and then resumed training. Coming up with ideas and making associations, abilities that I had learned in my seeing study time, I could use on my return. So, as a blind student I was able to adapt to a visually oriented education because my design skills were already developed before I went blind. However, getting students to study design after becoming blind or visually impaired is more difficult.

Children over the age of five all have the same level of associative thinking. This applies to both sighted and visually impaired children. Toward adulthood, however, the abilities of associative and creative thinking within the visually impaired are less developed compared to sighted people. The cause of this is not entirely clear — is vision important for this development or can the current education system not facilitate this development? — but it is clear that this makes people with a visual impairment from birth less able to connect with the design field.

Based on the above shifts and ways of thinking, I believe that there is a low level of inclusive thinking in Dutch society. Changing society towards equality is complex and cannot be done without looking at the relationship of all parts. The accessibility of the design field for the visually impaired does not determine the inclusion of the discipline, but I think it highlights one of the vulnerable parts. This is because visually impaired people do not join the training, as they are not taught to think creatively.

My belief is that changing the education system and the level of inclusive thinking are essential parts of designing cities FOR all. The current education system excludes at least one target group. And it is likely that there are more.

Curious for more?
Simon Dogger speaks about inclusive design and accessible education in the DCFA livecast Breaking it Down: For All.

Livecast tip: Designing education for All
How is (design) education organised at the moment and is there enough awareness in the curriculum for exclusion by design and attention given to designing for inclusion?

Book tip: The fast Guide to Accessibility Design.
For those who design everyday spaces we live in: we are not alone and as long as we take this into consideration, we will design welcoming, inclusive and functional spaces.

The process of designing an inclusive space.

De Voorkamer: Shay Raviv, co-founder of De Voorkamer, in conversation with
Saba Akbari, Ana Bajt, Eldon Cruz, Salma Fayad, Lotte Kosterman,
Pim van der Mijl, Esther Smeenk, Fleur de Thouars & Merel Zwarts (devoorkamer.org).

What makes an inclusive space, and how do we develop it as such? Social designer and researcher Shay Raviv invited community members to reflect on these questions by looking back on everyday life stories from De Voorkamer. This essay presents an exploration of their fascinating group dialogue.

Image description:
Group photo of nine community members of De Voorkamer, of which four are standing, one is sitting and four are kneeling. Everyone is looking at the camera and showing their brightest smile.

On a summer Thursday afternoon I arrive at De Voorkamer, a groundfloorlocation at the corner of Kanaalstraat and Soendastraat in Utrecht. Open since 2016, De Voorkamer is an open space to meet people from other cultures: a place to belong and a safe place for new experiences. By focussing on creativity and talent, we connect people within our community with diverse cultural backgrounds on a personal level. Since day one, we have strived to ensure the initiative is not only for our community but also created by them.

Entering De Voorkamer.

This afternoon, the space is hectic and vibrant; people are talking, walking around, and working. Parallel interactions are taking place. While we gather around to sing Happy Birthday for a community member from Iran, a video artwork is being installed on one of the rear windows*. Later on, during our dialogue, I will learn that people perceive the large windows of De Voorkamer as one of its iconic features, which signal it as a welcoming space — along with the portrait photos, colourful furniture, and texts written on the walls in various languages. The windows allow passers-by and team members to communicate with each other through hand gestures and smiles. This transparency triggers people's curiosity to know more about the place, so people often come in for a coffee and a chat. Our open-door approach is one of the features of De Voorkamer as a welcoming space.

*Note: From 15 July until 15 August 2021, the work Oil and Sugar #2 (2007) by Kader Attia was on view at De Voorkamer, as part of Fragments of Repair, a multi-part project convened by BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht with artist Kader Attia and decolonial forum La Colonie.

Culture as a binding element, not a commodity.

Around four o'clock I invite the group — Ana, Eldon, Esther, Fleur, Merel, Pim, Salma, Lotte, and Saba — to gather around for the dialogue that will form the basis of this essay. We start thinking about stories, moments in which we felt De Voorkamer managed to function as an inclusive space. Ana, active volunteer and temporary Community Coordinator, offers a straightforward answer to what makes De Voorkamer an inclusive space: it's a place where people can meet for free. 'Where else in the city can you meet other people without spending money?', she asks. 'Not everyone can invite other people to their home and Dutch weather makes it tricky to meet outside.' In most places in the city, meetings necessitate ordering food, getting a ticket for a movie, or having a membership (for a sports club for example) — all of which cost money. But at De Voorkamer, the activities are either free of charge or very affordable.

Image description:
The nine community members are sitting on chairs, that are arranged in a circle. They are smiling and turning their faces towards the camera. On the small tables are drinks served, and the space is bright and colourful, and with plants.

We position De Voorkamer somewhere between a community centre and a cultural space. While cultural practices shape the content of De Voorkamer — design, food, music, crafts, photography, storytelling — culture on its own is not the end goal. To give an example, people may come here for a concert, but before, during, and after the concert, time and energy will be spent on introducing people from different cultures to each other. The cultural programme is thus a binding element that connects the public who comes here. It shapes the content of the space and makes it vibrant.

While public and private funding is surely required for the creation of such space, which some may perceive as the 'easy way' to sustain it, we strongly believe that places like De Voorkamer do an important job of transforming monetary capital into a social one. According to various researches (Lancee, 2010; Woolcock, 2001), in the long run, social capital can contribute to positive economic outcomes for individuals as well as the state.

A platform for communities who do not have one.

This brings us to the events series Africa's Calling, a project that highlights different aspects from an African country. Each time we connect with community members of a certain African ethnicity and co-create an event with them.

In the past, we hosted evenings with communities from Uganda, Sudan and Senegal. Esther, our Communication & Network Coordinator, highlights: 'With Africa's Calling we created space for communities to share their culture with other people. It made us realise there is no real platform for these communities elsewhere in the city. We always say De Voorkamer is for everyone, but some communities are harder to reach. This project helped us engage with more groups than before.'

During these gatherings, people share stories, traditions, food, and outfits. They talk about what is happening in their country at the moment. However, this sharing of culture

is not a performance or an 'exotic' experience to be consumed by others. Rather, it is co-organised by the community itself, and members of the community design and decide how they want the event to look like. Participants of the events get to know the culture from the perspective of the community. This way of working is essential for us as an inclusive space. Pim, the initiative's coordinator, adds to this point: 'It is about experiencing a culture together, not from a distance. Together we celebrate a culture that may or may not be your own.'

Saba, a community member, adds her personal experience: 'I haven't been here for a while, but I really feel like I'm coming home... I think it's because I can shape what happens here. There is so much freedom to do something here.' Esther continues: 'When people are offered the agency and space to share their culture, they become involved, engaged, and proud'. Our community coordinator Salma adds: 'It is not about helping people but about enabling them.'

Space for quality interactions as well as weak ties.

While investing in a platform for different groups and hosting large gatherings are crucial elements of an inclusive space, we should balance it with attention and care for individual needs, Salma thinks. She finds it particularly important that those who are not naturally comfortable in a group setting can also feel at home. 'It is not that easy for everyone to express themselves. We need to take time to acknowledge people who normally feel unrecognized, make them feel welcome and included', she says. 'We need to recognise the different needs different people have, and respond to them.'

Paying attention to individual and personal connection requires investing time in quality activities — gathering with small groups, frequently, and spending quality time listening to each other. We all agree that we don't need to have an elaborate programme for it to be a quality activity. We create a setting for spontaneous interactions to take place while making sure people feel comfortable sharing time together. 'Connections happen when you really take time for people', Salma concludes.

Jointly identifying and addressing the different needs of different people is a guiding principle in the way we design our programme. We seek to design different levels of engagement among community members, and between the community and the initiative itself. Some activities are aimed at building long-lasting, strong interpersonal relationships, others lead to short-term interactions and somewhat weaker ties. While those may not turn into a relationship, they are as important for forming the way people experience their belonging to the initiative and the city.

Where the 'common' of a heterogeneous community is established.

For our Design Coordinator Merel, De Voorkamer's ability to form a community of different backgrounds, age groups, interests, perspectives, is something to acknowledge. 'In Dutch, we have the word eenheidsworst (literally translated: 'monotonous sausage') which refers to something that is the same all the way through. This place is the opposite of that.' Saba agrees: 'It feels super diverse. Everyone is different, and it makes me feel like I am not the only Other.' While it's a given that Utrecht is home to a diverse

population, achieving a diverse community in which people feel connected to each other, is an ongoing effort we work towards as an inclusive space.

This raises an interesting, ongoing discussion about the relationship between community, commonalities, and otherness. People that come to De Voorkamer do not always have a lot in common, at least not at first glance. Sometimes, that commonality needs to be found, which we do through designing shared experiences and working on a shared goal: co-creating the space and its content. 'We create the space to meet someone who you think you have nothing in common with', Esther says. 'Through the design of this encounter, you always find commonalities.'

When a few people share a lot in common or create something in common, they find it easier to connect and form a group or community. Consequently, ties within such a group become stronger, which leads to a sense of belonging. However, when a group gets very tight, embracing the dynamic of a 'click', they might become very inward-focused. This could make it harder for new people to enter or feel welcomed, challenging its inclusivity. 'I remember one beautiful barbecue event, which I thought was a huge success', Pim mentions. 'Later on a few people told me they felt they were not part of it, since they didn't know anyone. Something we are still working on is keeping the balance between creating a strong community — a group of people who feel connected to each other — while maintaining openness to new people.'

The key to De Voorkamer.

According to community member and active volunteer Eldon, having the key to the front door of De Voorkamer is both a symbolic and a practical enabler of inclusivity. 'The mere fact that I was entrusted with that, gave me the feeling that it is my space too. I can come and go as I please, which gives me an included feeling. I do not have to leave when 'the boss' leaves, this act completely removes the hierarchy.'

After this afternoon, it is clear to me that the search for inclusiveness is an ongoing, dynamic process. De Voorkamer's way of navigating this process is through an accumulation of small, simple (inter)actions and attention.

Curious for more?

Shay Raviv speaks about bringing different perspectives to the centre of a creation process in the DCFA livecast Breaking it Down: For All.

Book tip: By & For.

If you want to know more about De Voorkamer and inclusive spaces, check the book BY & FOR: Designing Inclusive Spaces written by Pim van der Mijl, Shay Raviv and Jamie Woods.

Book tip: Blind Spot.

Blindspot explores hidden biases that we all carry from a lifetime of experiences with social groups – age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, social class, sexuality, disability status, or nationality.

All abilities fashion.

By Rut Turró: Founder and CEO Movingmood (movingmood.com).

Rut Turró creates inclusive solutions for the fashion industry. Accessibility is the basis of any inclusive solution, she states. Products and services must be accessible to all, otherwise they are not well designed.

Image description:
Portrait of Rut. She is smiling and looking at the camera. Rut is wearing a blouse with a black and white graphic print. Her medium long hair parts on the left, covering her forehead with a lock of hair.

People with disabilities have been key to innovating solutions that have later been used by the entire population. This is the challenge for designers in the 21st century, to design accessibility to create inclusion. In fact, we all use accessibility daily, but most people don't know about it. Could you tell me an accessible item that you use in your daily life? Your answer is probably no if you do not have a disability, so here are some examples that will surprise you!

Innovative design.

Ramps and stairs were initially designed to create access for wheelchair users in buildings and public spaces. But in reality, which ones do you prefer to use? Unconsciously people prefer ramps because they are more comfortable: you don't strain your legs and knees, you can use them without a handrail, and they have more stability which means more balance and safety. As a result, ramps go beyond wheelchair users, they were soon used by mums with baby trolleys, elderly people with walking frames or crutches, travelers with wheeled suitcases, skateboarders, and — in general — the whole population.

Other examples are the telephone, SMS, and internet, which were invented because of deafness. Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in 1876. His mother and wife were both deaf, and this greatly influenced his research into speech and listening. Vinton Cerf, Google's Chief Internet Evangelist and one of the key figures responsible for designing the architecture of the Internet, was hard of hearing. This forced him to share documents with text instead of talking on the phone. The first IP-based network was created in 1981 and has evolved into today's sophisticated telecommunications networks. Agostino Fantoni invented the typewriter in 1802 so that his blind sister could write. Today, 220 years later, it is a key innovation in our day-to-day lives. The design has evolved so much that it has become our current smartphone, computer, or tablet keyboards. And finally, the remote control, designed for people with reduced mobility to increase their independence. Today it has endless applications and can be used for drones, video games, home automation, television, etc.

Are these inventions only used by people with disabilities or by the majority of the population? We can affirm that by focusing on solving the problems of people with disabilities, we achieve useful innovations for the majority of us.

How is it possible that by meeting the challenges faced by people with disabilities, almost the entire population benefits? Simple, accessibility is universal because disability is the only common value that affects all people equally. Disability has no gender, no race, no geographical area, no social status, no culture, no age. Disability affects us all to a greater or lesser degree. It can be permanent, 100% of the time, temporary when you break an arm for example, or circumstantial (a small period of time): when you wear headphones you do not hear what's happening around you. This is the reason why accessibility is the basis of any inclusive solution. Because it affects all humans.

Inclusive solutions.

How can we design accessibility and create inclusive solutions? To understand it we need to look at the exclusion process of designers and organisations. Let's use an example with fashion and people with disabilities for this.

Exclusion happens when a group — in this case, people with disabilities — is excluded from the attention of designers and brands. Fashion collections are made without considering the needs of this group, and obviously, they are not represented. An example of separation is specific fashion brands aimed at the disability market, commonly called Adapted Clothing. They remain outside the traditional fashion channels, and these specific brands are not regularly seen in the commercial axes of the cities, nor fashion shows and fashion magazines.

Integration is when adding an adapted clothing line to their fashion brand. It is also separated from the rest of the collection, and sometimes there is a label to identify it ('Adaptive') as is being done with large sizes (which are often called 'Curvy').

Finally, inclusion means that the garment can be worn by anyone, with or without a disability. Accessibility is part of the collection and forms part of the brand's DNA. There is no need to add labels or segregate a product to increase the market. The biggest advantage is that the customer doesn't even identify accessibility in the clothes.

Clients don't know whether it is designed to make life easier for people with disabilities, clients only see fashion. This is inclusion. When the exact same product can be used by as many people as possible, without the need to alter, modify or adapt to our needs.

Making accessibility a common practice.

So, if we know that accessibility and inclusion go hand in hand and improve the lives of people and organisations, why is it not a common practice? In my opinion, there are three main reasons for this. The first is the lack of education in accessibility and inclusive design. It is necessary to incorporate university training and to add specialised masters in Accessibility and Inclusion in all design disciplines — the same as sustainability became mainstream.

The second reason is the lack of knowledge about the benefits of using accessibility and working with people with disabilities. People with disabilities are not the source of inspiration, they are the basis of product development. If a person with a disability — sensory, cognitive, or physical — cannot use a product or service, then the product is not well designed. Applying accessibility to your products multiplies the potential of your sales by four. Making your product accessible adds an additional multitude of people to your potential market.

The third is empathy, a soft skill that is increasingly valued. Are we truly fair and equal for all people, or are we prejudiced by default? Whether it's because of cultural differences, ideologies, stereotypes, etcetera. Having the ability to have conversations with different people outside your core group will make you more empathetic, have a broader vision, and better understand the needs of others.

Redesigning fashion.

Today, inclusion and diversity are gradually gaining ground within companies and organisations. Designing inclusive products is fast becoming an essential skill. But what about inclusive fashion? How can it be possible that in the 21st century there are so many new clothes, so many new trends, but fashion garments have hardly innovated? We still dress in the same way, but the needs of the population have changed. Either because seniors are turning the population pyramid, or because people with disabilities are more present and demand designers and companies to take them into account. They should not be forgotten, they consume fashion, every day! What is missing?

In reality, all brands and designers have inclusive garments, but they are unaware of it. Accessibility and inclusivity are done unconsciously, depending on trends and seasons. If for example, a wide-leg trouser is in fashion, this makes it easier to pass my feet, to wear it with a prosthesis, or to control my urine bag. Designers are not aware of the effect of their choices, they don't know what accessibility looks like in the garment, and they don't know which audience it benefits. The needs of people with reduced mobility are different from the needs of people with sensory (sight, hearing, touch) or cognitive (mental, intellectual) limitations.

Fashion design is extremely adaptable. It includes many processes, pattern making, tailoring, materials, fastenings, colours, and embellishments. The possibilities of designing a garment are almost infinite and the decisions we make hugely influence the accessibility of the garment. The challenge is to make fashion without the need to make an adaptive line for people with disabilities.

Fashion for All.

We want Inclusive Fashion, and we need to work on Fashion for All. To do this, it is necessary to understand the needs of people with disabilities and establish a generic basis for the accessibility of clothing. The continuous study of my company Movingmood has taken years of work with different entities and companies to validate some parameters. As a result, we defined nine functionalities to consider when designing inclusive fashion:

1) **Usability:** Clothes should be easy to put on and take off. The aim is to speed up the process of dressing and undressing, to do so without physical effort or stress.
2) **Autonomy**: It is essential to feel useful and increase our self-esteem. In general, we don't like to ask for help, especially when it is a task we do every day.
3) **Fastenings**: this is the second most demanded need. We want to close and secure our garments ourselves.
4) **Attractiveness**: Accessibility is not opposed to aesthetics. We are looking for functionality and fashion.
5) **Fitting**: Do we think about different body shapes when we design? If the design can adapt to our body, we manage to improve the fitting and the look of the person wearing it.
6) **Rubbing, friction and pressure**: We must avoid all the irritations of the clothes on our skin, caused by seams, labels, rivets, wrinkles, etc. If we are not comfortable with the clothes we wear, we will not wear them.
7) **Fabrics**: Sensitivity and thermal comfort need to be considered. The types of fabrics, dyes, and finishes used in a garment directly influence skin irritation and body thermal control.
8) **Restriction of movement**: Clothes should not restrict our movements when carrying out daily activities, especially if we use support elements such as crutches or a wheelchair.
9) **Safety**: This is the consequence when we have covered all of the above.

Most accessibility solutions are familiar and simple to use, for example making trousers with elastic waistbands, or seams that do not rub against the skin, or considering colours suitable for people with colour blindness. Applying accessibility is simple, all designers can do it.

The most efficient way is to incorporate accessibility from the beginning of the design process by working directly with people from the excluded communities — this is a fundamental part. By doing so, designers and brands avoid having two lines of clothing, the adapted and the traditional, there is only the inclusive one. It has proven that inclusive fashion generates great additional value for companies and organisations: it brings competitiveness, innovation, increased revenue and customers, and improves brand image. Considering the needs of people with disabilities multiplies the potential of products by four because inclusive design incorporates the largest possible number of people who can use the offered product or service, without the need to alter or modify it — which is definitely a great advantage.

The future is accessible.
The future is sustainable.
The future is inclusive.

The new global trend is to make fewer but better-designed products.

Curious for more?
Rut Turró speaks about Fashion for All in our DCFA livecast Design from Inclusion: Products and Services.

Tool tip: Inclusive Fashion Courses.

If you want to learn more about All Abilities Fashion, check out the Movingmood (online) fashion professional training programmes, workshops and lectures on inclusive fashion.

Book tip: Mismatch.

A must-read for anyone who aspires to build great products for the greatest number of people. Designing for inclusion is not a feel-good sideline, it can be a source of innovation and growth.

Design thinking in a superdiverse city context.

By Maurice Crul: Distinguished Professor of Sociology, Diversity & Inclusion (research.vu.nl/en/persons/maurice-crul), Bernardine Walrecht: Design consultant & teacher-coach (walrecht.com), and Frans Lelie: Project manager Becoming a Minority (bamproject.eu/cities/amsterdam).

In the Netherlands; The Hague, Rotterdam, and Amsterdam have officially achieved the status of 'superdiverse city'. Why are we still not including that diversity of voices in imagining our cities? In this essay, Bernardine Walrecht, Maurice Crul, and Frans Lelie make a plea for resetting the norms and practice design doing instead of design thinking.

Image description:
Combined portraits of Bernardine on the left, Maurice in the middle, and Frans on the right. Bernardine is looking in the camera, has wavy hair which rests on her shoulders and is wearing a black vest and brown glasses. Maurice is also looking in the camera. He has short hair and a small beard with mustache, and wearing a black collared shirt. Frans has curly medium long hair and is wearing a brown jacket and a black scarf. She is smiling and looking to her left.

'This is just the way we do things here.' Maybe people don't even say it, but, implicitly, it is considered understood that this certain way of doing things is the norm. In the meantime, in many large cities in North-Western Europe, more than half of the population has a migration background. They have become majority-minority cities, where all ethnic groups — including the group that is still a majority on the national level —form a numerical minority.

Demographic changes ask for a changed mindset, new ways of thinking and doing in the context of growing heterogeneity and complexity. We are standing on the brink of one of the most profound social changes of our times. A psychological change, because in these super-diverse cities the old majority group, people without migration background, will lose their power to determine 'how things are done'. A cultural change, because the cities will increasingly be characterised by their diversity of cultures and norms. There will be a switch from the old dominant culture being the norm, to diversity being the norm.

Superdiversity.

The term superdiversity is used to characterise such cities (Crul, Schneider & Lelie, Super-diversity. A New Vision on Integration, 2013). We see three main indicators for a superdiverse city. First, superdiversity refers to a new complexity. Rather than only looking through one lens (for instance ethnicity) we need to look through different lenses simultaneously. People have different identities, some chosen, some ascribed to them.

Let's look at 'the migrant'. It is quite a difference whether you are a professional who came as a legal migrant to the city, or as an undocumented migrant. Gender identity, sexual orientation, education, class background, preferred way of working, being a parent or not, being an introvert or an extravert; the combinations of different identities matter and we should not look through one lens, like the lens of migration, only.

The second indicator for superdiversity is when cities do not have a numerical majority group anymore. Passing this tipping point, like Amsterdam did in 2011, slowly erodes the power position of the former majority group and requires new ways of thinking about living in diversity. The old notion of integration (newcomers integrating into a majority group), for instance, is outdated when newcomers primarily grow up with other migrants and their children or grandchildren. Thirdly, the term superdiversity doesn't imply a new 'majority of migrants'. Not only are migrant groups very different from each other, they are also very diverse within (Crul, Super-diversity vs assimilation, 2016).

We argue for a new paradigm in which superdiversity is the norm and where all people are able to function to their best in the superdiverse context. To determine the overall living conditions in the superdiverse context, 'the way things are done' has to be newly composed with all people involved. For this, people of the dominant national group need to start sharing power with the other half of the city. This is, we want to emphasise, in the end also in the interest of people of the former majority group, because to be successful in such superdiverse places, everybody needs to be able to function with the many differences in the city (Crul & Lelie, The 'Integration' of people of Dutch descent in superdiverse neighbourhood, 2019). If a supervisor or a colleague in a diverse (regarding ethnicity, religion, gender, ability, and sexual orientation to name a few) team cannot cope with the different norms, values, and practices people bring to their work, they will not be able to function in that team.

From Design Thinking to Design Doing.

Often, policymakers are delivering what is believed to be 'neutral' expertise, which is, however, aligning with the norms and values of the former majority group. Moving away from the traditional way of policymaking, and instead including a superdiverse community of voices means to omit existing biases and assumptions and unsettle existing power relations. Do it together, rather than 'this is how we do things here', means including the diversity of voices in imagining the city. This applies to how houses, squares, and public places are designed. But also to teaching in schools, to how we come to policy decisions, and to what is considered 'the work culture' in different workplaces. The first thing a person of colour or a non-heterosexual person will tell you is that though there are no written rules, white heterosexual norms are the norm. What is divergent is not considered normal, or is not considered at all. This is so deeply ingrained into habits and ways of working that it is hard to pin down. To disturb the processes, we need to change the habitual grooves with deliberate interventions that bring a more diverse group of people to the table. We suggest using some of the tools developed in the world of arts and design to explore new avenues. We are arguing to create a more equal playing field, and design-thinking could play a role in this.

Design thinking is used in the corporate world to trigger people to think out of the box and prompt their creativity. Art and design offer relevant tools, both as a universal language and as tools to involve people regardless of their background. A kind of thinking that relies less on the language of words alone. Design is merely a term for making ideas visual, tangible, and applicable. There are lots of languages you can use in design-land. One could make physical models, create experiences or build something together. This is not necessarily a rational track. It can also be rather intuitive, active, and passionate. Therefore we would like to propose an additional term: design doing.

The process of Design Doing.

Whereas our world is increasingly a lingual environment, we as people sometimes lack words. Imagine you want to comfort somebody. Maybe you make soup or risotto. Or you sing a song to show your empathy. You wrap your arm around them, bake cakes, recover their clothes, stick a bandaid. All physical actions, choices, gifts. As applicable or even more relevant as words sometimes can be. Words are the main human way to communicate, but they are not our only language.

What if we would allow, or even encourage, to use more languages than only words? To use really near, personal languages in order to harvest a diversity of perspectives? The way we dress is a language, our music is, our poetry, our cooking, our dancing, our tattoos. Ways of expressing ourselves are too many to enumerate. Expressions close to our identity, our talents, our preferences. Our engagement. Why not address and use all these skills? Design doing as an intervention to unlock the agency of the array of people that form today's city, to 'talk' together, all in our own suited manner. Borders can be crossed, borders of language delay for example. When we create a more equal playing field, we can tailor the city so it is best suited to its population. Involving not just the usual people, but instead access the diversity of participants' skills and knowledge, practices, and needs, develop actions together, make and evaluate, do.

Let's take the example of redesigning a neighbourhood square. Now, such a common project often brings the usual suspects around the table who discuss how the square should be designed. Most people in the neighbourhood will not be involved, never expressing what they would want the square to be. Besides, speaking allows only one to speak at the time. Design-doing on the other hand allows for thinking together.

The process of design-doing uses four steps to find out what the square would need to become:

- **Involve**: Invite the people living around the square to really become involved and engaged with the feelings/emotions about this place and what is happening there, from their point of view. The invitation should come from people representative of the neighbourhood population.
- **Create a level playing field**: for the first meeting, the playing field can be levelled by choosing a 'language' that participants (usually) don't know well, like working in clay, or singing and rapping, or painting. This way, people are triggered to do and more intuitively show feelings/ideas about the project (Walbrecht, Het onwetend weten - een pleidooi voor intuitie, 2019). At the basis of this activating way of

communicating together, lies our fundamental right to fail. Failing implies trying, attempting, endeavoring. This should be led by a 'design conductor', experienced in looking closely and asking the right questions.

- **Make**: Next, people will be asked to make. Everybody will be asked to make or find something for the next meeting about the use of the square, using their own strength/quality. They can express themselves from bringing an item, bringing food and by rapping, to bringing a picture signifying their negative and/or positive feelings about the square, a video from their cell phone sitting with their friends on the square, or a meme they think is illustrating.
- **Observe and reflect**: In that next meeting everyone, including all the citizen makers, takes a little (physical or not) distance in order to really understand all things you see: observe well. Then, talk together (the design-conductor should mediate this), and reflect on ideas and expressions. Doing this together will open up all sorts of (neglected) perspectives to the subject. All expressions together form the inventory, the starting point for the real design question.

Education is the key.

The big challenge for the years to come is exactly this, to be able to think and express in diverse ways. We need Superdiversity Skills (paraphrasing the 21st Century Skills). We should be educating to (re)learn these skills. They almost disappeared in our educational system. We are educated with the idea of wrong or right and nothing in between. The big difference with art- or design education is that in that particular field everyone learns there is no such thing as the right or wrong way to do things, no single way of doing things. There is a multitude of views, different perspectives, and different solutions. Art and design have a superdiverse disposition. The attitude that goes with this disposition should be celebrated, cherished and nurtured. Just like we try to educate abstract thinking by teaching school children math or science and they are taught the language of words in all sorts of ways, the language of design-doing could be key to the interconnectedness in the superdiverse city and fitting the city's changing power dynamics. A flexible and open mindset and attitude that can work with diverse perspectives is essential in this day and age to adjust to the superdiverse society and to come up with superdiverse answers and solutions for — and by — all. This will be the challenge for cities like Amsterdam. But as history has shown, if we can make it work, creativity and prosperity will thrive.

Curious for more?

Maurice Crul speaks about superdiversity and the degree of diversity and inclusiveness in architecture in the DCFA livecast The IdenCity:Human Cities.

Project tip: Becoming a Minority.

How do people engage with each other in a neighbourhood where everybody is a minority? The BaM project consists of research in six cities in five European countries.

Book tip: This Human.
There are books about the design process, tools, and methods, but one missing aspect according to Melis Senova is what it takes to be the person who is actually doing the designing.

Assumption is the mother of all fuckups.

By Marie van Driessche: Interaction Designer & Accessibility Specialist (marievandriessche.com).

Interaction designer Marie van Driessche is a strong advocate for co-design instead of being posed as a persona all the time. To design products and services that are truly inclusive, we have to go beyond empathy and asking questions, she states.

Image description:
Portrait of Marie. She is looking in the camera and has a bright smile. Marie is wearing a black shirt and she has a pixie cut hairstyle.

We, designers, often generate and evaluate ideas based on what we know. We strive to make experiences that solve needs, work well with the human body, and improve lives. But here's the problem: If we use our own abilities and dis-abilities as a baseline, we make things that are easy for some people to use, but difficult for everyone else.

The pitfalls of design thinking.

Designing mostly starts with design thinking. From the Interaction Design Foundation: 'Design Thinking is a design methodology that provides a solution-based approach to solving problems. It's extremely useful in tackling complex problems that are ill-defined or unknown, by understanding the human needs involved, by re-framing the problem in human-centric ways, by creating many ideas in brainstorming sessions, and by adopting a hands-on approach in prototyping and testing.'

There are five steps in the Design Thinking methodology. The first is to Empathise, to gain an empathic understanding of the problem that you are trying to solve. The next is to Define the problem. During this process, you define the problem from the insights of the Empathise phase. In the Ideate phase, designers start to generate ideas. You have grown to understand your users and their needs from the Empathise stage. You analyse and synthesise your observations from the Define stage, and end up with a human-centred problem statement. In the Prototype phase, you create a prototype of your product that you will test in the final step, the Test phase. It is important to note that the five stages are not always sequential, and iterating is essential here.

For me, the first three steps of the Design Thinking methodology are quite dangerous. Design thinking is a system built on empathy to fill in the diversity gaps of including everyone. The problem and the danger here lie in those gaps and the Empathy, Define, and Ideate phases. Designers tend to take the average user and design solutions for that average persona by using design thinking and empathy.

As a Deaf designer and user, I'm quite allergic to the word 'empathy'. Be careful with empathising — can you really empathise with being deaf, blind, or disabled? Simulating disability promotes distress and fails to improve attitudes towards disabled people. Of course, there are workshops or sessions where you can experience what it is like being deaf or blind and experience the barriers of being disabled. But most people only experience the bad things of being disabled, they will merely focus on the problems and issues.

Stimulating being Deaf for a few hours doesn't compare to a lifelong experience of being Deaf. Where people have to pretend to be disabled and encounter problems, I have a lifelong experience of being creative, seeing possibilities and solutions. You do not know what it's like to grow up Deaf and use sign language, not being able to hear, dealing with prejudice, discrimination, language deprivation, abuse, and a constant urge to prove.

We, the disabled and Deaf people, we're the experts in dealing with ignorant people, situations, and the inaccessible world, products, and websites. We are the champions of being creative and have amazing problem-solving skills. Where other people note impregnable walls, we always find a way to beat them. I do not see myself as disabled, society imposes a disability upon me.

Able-bodied people stimulating disability experience stress because now they are not being able to hear the cashier, read the text on the Web, or find the right button of the coffee machine, to name some examples. But what is happening here is that WE are being defined as the problem, and that happens when we're not getting space to lead. The focus is on what we can or can't do, rather than how something does or doesn't work for us.

Note: You might have noticed that I'm using different formats for the word Deaf. Sometimes I use the word Deaf with a capital 'D' and sometimes I don't. When I use the lowercase deaf, I refer to the audiological condition of not hearing, and the uppercase Deaf when referring to a particular group of deaf people who share a language – for example Dutch Sign Language (NGT) – and a culture. NOTE, there's an ongoing discussion about this distinction in the D/deaf community, the use of D/deaf might change.

Most people are not interested in talking to disabled people — they prefer to stimulate and to empathise. Most people and designers are afraid to ask questions, to ask 'stupid' questions, so they prefer to assume. But learn from people who've experienced great degrees of exclusion in their lives, you're never able to assume what it's like to grow up Deaf like me.

By asking us the right questions, and listening to us, you'll be able to reframe your work, to balance your bias, to consider the opposite, and embrace a new mindset. To get insights whether it is really necessary what you're designing from your ideation, and assumptions. Try to view your product and mindset through other lenses, from people who don't look like you. The next questions are derived for Another Lens, a research tool for conscientious creatives from Airbnb Design. Ask them yourself as well. For example:

- What's here that I designed for me? What's here that I designed for other people?

- Who might be impacted by what I'm designing?
- What are my lenses?
- What details here are unfair, unverified and unused?
- Am I just confirming my assumptions, or am I challenging them?
- Who might disagree with what I'm designing?
- And: Consider the opposite.

But, even better: don't ask us, ask with us.

Designing for, not with people can lead to exclusion. Designers need to go beyond empathy and asking questions to include the disabled community as participants in design solutions. Disabled people are often subject to extractive allyship — being asked to give their time and resources, without being properly paid for their time and knowledge or offered sustainable career paths. Include them in your team. The more diverse your team, the better outcome of your product and/or design. It is rare to find organisations and people that seek out users who have real challenges accessing content, yet the insights they gain from us can benefit all users.

Considering human diversity.

There are 7.4 billion people in the world. Our ambition is to create products that are physically, cognitively, and emotionally appropriate for each of them. It starts with considering human diversity as a resource for better designs, including your users in your process to deliver great designs and products. Don't assume, and don't use empathy. Many of us, if we are lucky enough to live well in old age, will experience one or more types of disabilities related to the aging process. As we get older, we tend to lose our sight, our hearing, our mobility, and our cognition. Our abilities diminish, and that too is normal. It's part of what it means to be human.

I prefer co-design instead of being posed as a persona all the time. Ask me, invite those people to your table while designing, reward them correctly for their knowledge and time. Make them be a part of your team, idea, product. There are enough skilled disabled designers and experts. Learn from people who've experienced great degrees of exclusion in their lives. Give them space, resources, and time to lead.

Curious for more?

Marie van Driessche speaks about designing proper, meaningful, and inclusive solutions in the DCFA livecast Designing from Inclusion: Products & Services.

Video tip: How designing for the Deaf helps everyone.

Keynote by Marie van Driessche at the awwwards conference Amsterdam.

Tool tip: Another Lens.

A research tool for conscientious creatives to help you balance your bias, consider the opposite, and embrace a growth mindset.

Tools & Skills.

Designing Cities for all. Inclusive design is a process, not an outcome. There is not just one method to practice designing cities for all. Let this be a living document, a continuous search for better design practices and better design vocabulary.

#1: Adopt a flexible mindset.
Explore the unfamiliar, and accept that the world is in a continual state of flux. Taking up an 'anti-expert mindset' leads you to fresh ideas, and helps you learn, evolve, and expand your thinking and awareness.

#2: Build self-awareness.
We all have intersecting privileges and disadvantages. While it can be uncomfortable to recognize your privileges, work through your discomfort and utilise them in a way that promotes more equitable outcomes for others in society.

#3: Acknowledge your bias.
Messages of bias are omnipresent. Learn to actively recognise and unlearn bias and prejudice while simultaneously learning inclusive behaviours.

#4: Practice critical self-reflection.
Ask why you are creating something in the first place. Deeply investigate what values and contributions you might offer and know when you are taking up too much space.

#5: Design by listening.
Design thinking is a system built on empathy. Go beyond empathy; ask questions, learn from people whose insights come from lived experience, and give them space, resources and time to lead.

#6: Put together diverse teams.
Inequality in design is a consequence of having limited voices represented in the design and development process. Drive broader engagement and inclusion of cross-cultural, multigenerational, and diverse voices throughout in designing for the diversity of the human spectrum.

#7: Create sense of community.
Bringing people together is a first step, but not enough. Take the time to invite a wide range of people to the table, and facilitate a culture that creates a safe space which enables authentic engagement from all participants.

#8: Start with education.
Designing a more equitable society is complex and cannot be done without looking at education. A more diverse design profession starts by fostering inclusion and awareness around multicultural design education, or — even better — in primary school.

COLOFON

ACCESSIBILITY.

From the perspective of Designing Cities for All, we aim to create accessible content and equal access to information for everyone. With gathered knowledge from our own (lived) experience, those of our community, and the resources you can find online that help designers create accessible print materials, we made this publication. The following is not intended and should not be regarded as a sole and comprehensive resource for accessibility, but hopefully, it inspires you to apply this as well to your (print) design.

First of all, we consider language also as design. As a society, we still use ableist, colonial, transphobic, homophobic, and gender-unequal language in our daily speech. To avoid using euphemisms and callous idioms, we tried to use more straightforward and literal language instead. When it comes to the graphic design, we used a readable typeface with a font size of 12 point for body text and 9 point for footnotes, because smaller fonts may be illegible for some audiences. To help you find your way through the body text, we used headers. We made sure each line didn't exceed 60 characters to not tire the eyes (what also helps is the use of paper with a matte finish) and all texts are aligned left to make it easier to read. The distance between each word is kept the same, to make it readable for those with for example dyslexia. And for the ones among us with low vision and cognitive disabilities, we used white space throughout the design to improve the visual layout.

Did you know that the most sustainable book size is 170x240 mm? That's because you can print 16 pages on one sheet of paper and have zero paper waste. We not only chose this option because it's a better choice for our future generations, but also because it's user-friendly for people with fine motor disabilities. We also paid attention to the binding and used a method that makes it easy to flatten the document when using screen magnifiers, and that you can read it without using your hands. The result? A book that works better for all!

If you like to read 18 Perspectives on Designing Cities for All with audio, you can download a PDF of this book. Use your prefered text-to-speech audio reader to create your own DCFA listening experience.

Throughout this essay book, you will find several book tips. Via Athenaeum Bookstore you get a 10% discount code on non-Dutch publications with discount code 'DCFA2021'!

If you want to stay updated on Designing Cities for All, you can visit our online Research File and subscribe to the DCFA newsletter.