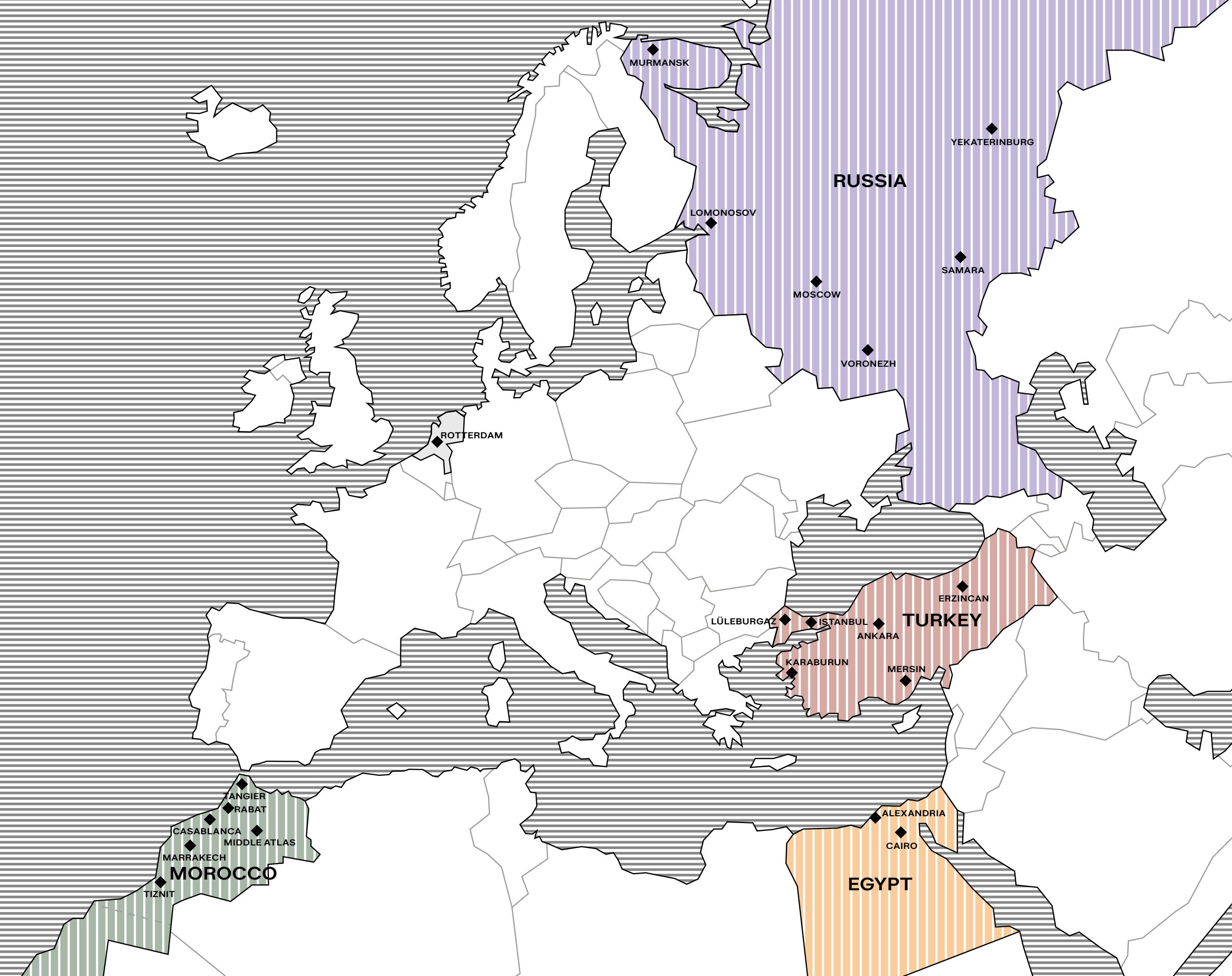


TURKEY

RUSSIA

EGYPT

MOROCCO



TURKEY

Closing the Circle	Erzincan
Inclusive Regenerative Fashion in Turkey	Istanbul
Lüleburgaz Bisiklete Biniyor	Lüleburgaz
Mersin CityLab	Mersin
No Seat at the Table	Ankara
Pomace: Learning Circularity from Olive	Karaburun
Tradition as a Making Tool	Istanbul

RUSSIA

Identity in Typical	Voronezh
Murmansk Prospekt	Murmansk
New Urban Media Centre in Yekaterinburg	Yekaterinburg
The Samarsky Yard	Samara
The Sea of Orange	Lomonosov
What do Landscapes Say? Speculating	Moscow
the Diversity of Landscapes and Identities	

EGYPT

Asil – Arabic Typographic Experiments	Cairo
in Egypt	Alexandria
Connecting Deltas	Cairo
From El Labana to Bustan	Cairo
Papyrus and New Media	Cairo
Taking Stock	Cairo
We are Data	Cairo

MOROCCO

Affordable Housing Casablanca	Casablanca
Learning with Tiznit Designing	Tiznit
'softscapes' of Care and Resilience	Middle Atlas
One Square Meter Berber	Northern Morocco
Out.of.the.blue.map	Rabat
Play City	Marrakech
Qanat – A Training for the Not Yet	Tangier
Tangier: Facets of a Mediterranean	
Intersection	



Pomace: Learning Circularity from Olive. photo: Melis Baloglu



Murmansk Prospekt. photo: Oleg Khadartsev



Papyrus and New Media. photo: Abla elBahrawy



Learning with Tiznit | Designing 'softscapes' of Care and Resilience. photo: Cocky Eek

AN ODYSSEY DIRECTED FROM THE KITCHEN TABLE

— or how to initiate and execute a global project from the safety of our own homes

The wheels of this publication were in motion, just as the world stopped still. As a result, the entire editorial team, nor the TREM participants featured, have ever been in the same place at the same time. We still managed to stay in close contact. Together but apart, all of us valiantly ploughed our way through the corona lockdown. A fascinating experience.

The format of storytelling, unlike a formal report, is a fresh approach from Creative Industries Fund NL. We were given the freedom to develop our own methodologies and

set our own targets. Basically, we created a magazine from scratch.

We decided to highlight a selection of the makers stories from their personal viewpoints as well as the perspectives of other stakeholders. Visual reports were also included, representing the projects through carefully selected images. By documenting the personal experiences of those involved, the projects came to life; the abstract became tangible.

When first approached, we caught the makers off-guard; nobody had ever asked them about their work in the way we did. Upon explaining our goals, they defrosted. Once it became clear that we aimed to use this alternative approach to appeal to a wider audience and share their learnings, they graciously accepted our invitation.

Our designated storyteller had to dive headfirst into every project to understand the essence of what the makers were trying to achieve, to interpret their words and images and to read between the lines. Once we were convinced — and only then — that the

written story did justice to our protagonists, we submitted it for their approval.

We are incredibly grateful; thankful to all involved, for the time and energy they invested. For having the courage to participate, for daring to open up. Being vulnerable yet strong enough to share both success stories and lessons learned. For trusting us and believing in our unusual approach, to share the stories that needed to be shared.

Please let it resonate, all these different perspectives and international collaborations. We invite you to keep sharing all of *your* stories and make the effort to spend time with the unknown or unfamiliar. By exchanging experiences, we keep growing, which enables us to promote mutual awareness around the globe and gain a deeper understanding of both ourselves and others.

We hope you will enjoy reading it as much as we did making it.

The editorial team

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THE TREM PROGRAM

Tales of the TREM and the 26 projects in this publication are all part of the International Program of Creative Industries Fund NL which began in 2017.

A QUICK GUIDE FOR THE UNWARY READER

“In Tales of the TREM, designers and creative minds reflect upon, respond to and provide fresh perspectives on urban challenges. It is precisely this imaginative power that is essential in bringing future solutions closer.”

Syb Groeneveld — Executive Director
Creative Industries Fund NL

Creative Industries Fund NL

Creative Industries Fund NL is the Dutch cultural fund for design, architecture and digital culture. The fund aims to make a substantial contribution to the quality of professional design practices by supporting exceptional and innovative projects and the activities of designers, makers and cultural institutions in the creative industries, both in the Netherlands and abroad. The goal of the TREM program is to stimulate the role that designers can play when it comes to creating awareness and solutions for societal issues.

Inclusive cities and societies

With this program, the fund built upon earlier international pathways where designers collaborated on

tackling social issues related to accelerated urbanization. They investigated, interviewed, questioned and visualized a nearby future and how this could become more inclusive, and how various groups and individuals could experience a true sense of belonging — of feeling at home.

Under the umbrella of the TREM program, the fund asked designers to submit proposals for projects over four different countries, Turkey, Russia, Egypt and Morocco, in which the specific themes would either directly or indirectly contribute towards a more inclusive city and society. This led to a diverse collection of themes, methods and questions centered around ownership of the city and what that means to its residents. Departing from a multidisciplinary point of view, these projects illustrate crossovers in design, digital culture, architecture and other professional fields.

Using design thinking, the project themes prioritize and research issues such as gentrification, social housing, visual identity, upcycling methods, data ownership and privacy, migration and the future of craftsmanship. All projects are context-specific and the international teams collaborate with local communities.

International cultural policy

The TREM program is part of the International Cultural Policy 2017-2020 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. One of the aims is to contribute towards a more safe, just and future-proof world from a cultural viewpoint. The focus being on relationships, on improving both the trust and understanding between the Netherlands and the

four countries involved. The fund was one of the parties commissioned by the Ministry to develop a program which, in the long-term, will contribute to these goals.

Open calls and advisory committee

From its inception up until 2019, the fund has initiated two series of open calls. No less than 94 proposals have been submitted of which 26 projects have been selected for further development and endorsement. Both open calls consisted of two phases: the start-up phase covers preliminary investigations, establishing collaborations with local partners, tightening up the research questions and approach, managing co-funding and reinforcing a solid support base. The second phase revolves around implementation; realizing the project. In the follow-up

OPEN CALL 1 – 2018
Total selected: 10
3 Turkey, 2 Russia,
2 Egypt, 3 Morocco

Total applications: 56
11 Turkey, 20 Russia,
12 Egypt, 13 Morocco

OPEN CALL 2 – 2019
Total selected: 16
4 Turkey, 4 Russia,
4 Egypt, 4 Morocco

Total applications: 38
9 Turkey, 9 Russia,
6 Egypt, 14 Morocco



Key-note speaker
May Al-Ibrashy
during meet-up
Egypt at
HipHopHuis in
Rotterdam. photo:
Khalid Amakran

phase the projects will receive additional support; a final push to increase impact or outreach.

For the selection of the proposals, the fund has carefully assembled an advisory committee consisting of professionals based in the Netherlands with an interdisciplinary practice as well as previous working experience in the TREM countries.

International meet-ups

An important and unique part of this program is the building and strengthening of networks in the design field between the Netherlands and the four countries. International bright minds are being connected in an open setting where there is space to listen to each other, to share experiences and enable new collaborations.

To facilitate these meetings, the fund organizes regular gatherings in the Netherlands, Turkey, Russia, Egypt and Morocco where international practitioners share their learnings. These meetings are always carried out in collaboration with local partners, diplomats and members of the consulate in order to get as much local expertise on board as possible. The timing of the meet-ups is always linked to both a relevant event in one of the five countries – including the Netherlands – and to an outstanding open call.

For example, in December 2018, the fund collaborated with Hivos on the occasion of the first Pan-African summit for the creative industry in Africa and the African-European diaspora. Moroccan and Egyptian teams were invited to showcase their projects in order to initiate a dialogue with the other guests, which resulted in new partnerships.

“Working together with Egyptian partners is very important for getting meaningful projects up and running. It does ask for an open attitude and not a mind or project that is set on ‘helping’. Working in Egypt also means that you need to work with legal complexities, such as ever-changing legislation and restrictive regulations for NGO’s. Working out how the collaboration between Dutch and Egyptian partners is to be arranged, in terms of content and finances, is also essential.”

May Al-Ibrashy – founder of Megawra Build Environment Collective and partner in Papyrus and New Media

Impact framework

Naming the expected and unexpected effects of these projects, requires a specific qualitative approach. Especially considering the fact that the results are often abstract, such as strengthening networks, new insights, paradigm shifts and design impact.

Throughout the program new collaborations have led to an exchange of experiences and the acquisition of new knowledge. Impact management as well as focusing on results are an intrinsic part of all activities and procedures, deeply embedded in the DNA of the TREM program; the very reason that all project teams remain closely involved in the entire program.

The fund organizes workshops based on learnings in which all teams reflect as a group on the progress made so far. Both success stories and lesser fortunate experiences are openly shared. Adaptability and learning to deal with uncertainties or unforeseen events remain essential.

Whilst making this publication all projects are still work in progress and may be subject to changes due to either external circumstances or internal adjustments.

“Great to see how a clear vision for the program allows its execution to be adaptive to changes in context and lessons learned along the way.”

Phil Compernelle – impact advisor
TREM program

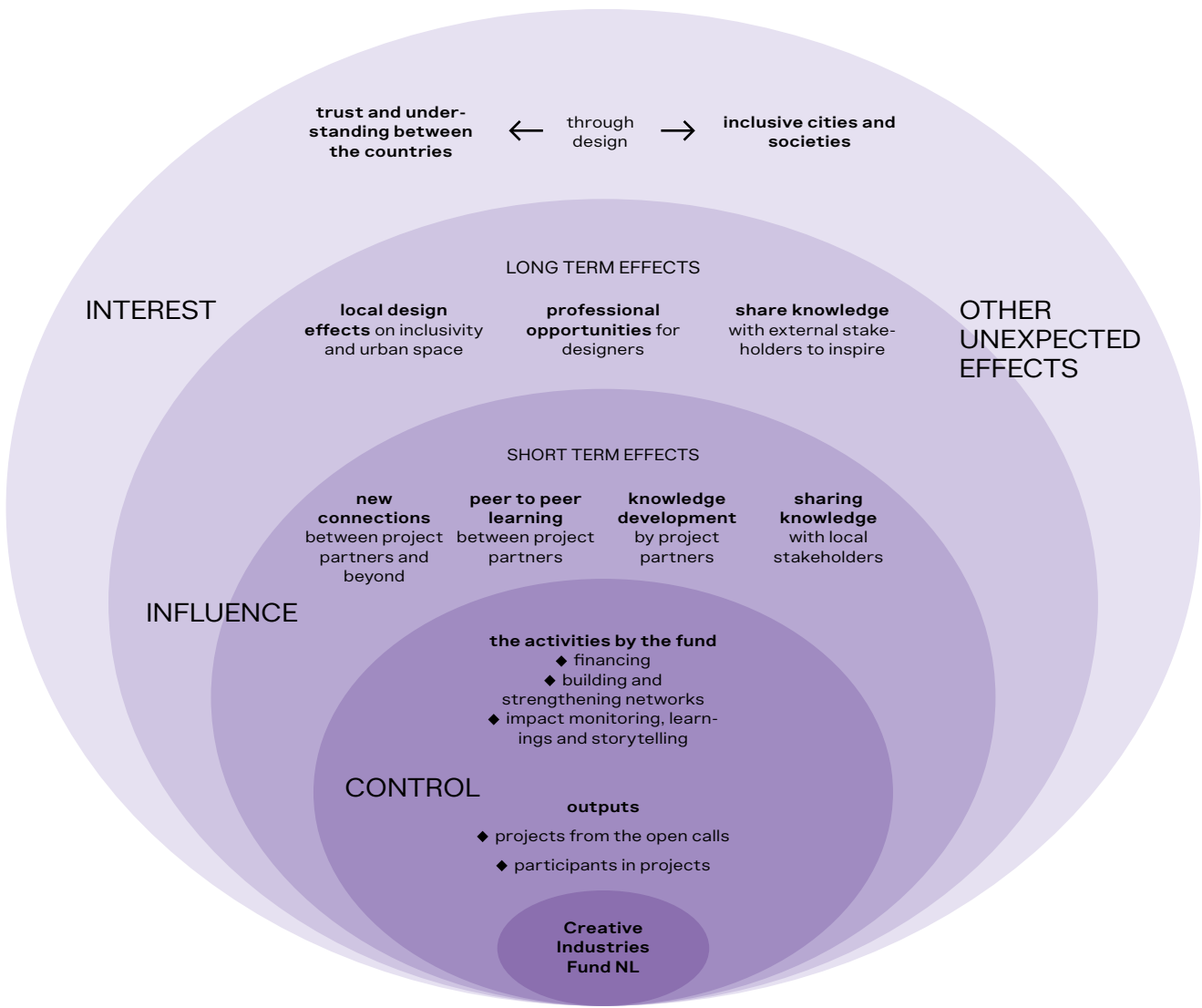
The bigger picture

In the end both the fund and all of the project teams strive to contribute to a better understanding of the cities and societies we live in, which can only be achieved by exchange and collaboration. It’s only in the long-term we can draw conclusions on whether these projects actually contributed towards more inclusive cities and societies. Furthermore, a wide range of powers and influences such as geopolitics, economics and pandemics play a part which are outside the sphere of influence of the fund and the design practice. This is why it was important in the initial phase and execution that both the long- and the short-term contributions were closely monitored.

- Accordingly, certain elements were essential:
- ◆ reinforcing projects related to inclusive cities and societies, locally embedded and based on requests from within the community
 - ◆ improvement of an inclusive and equal approach towards issues, collaboration and exchange
 - ◆ ability and professional development of designers and other partners
 - ◆ building sustainable relationships and knowledge networks between the Netherlands and Turkey, Russia, Egypt and Morocco

A few lessons learned

Just like the TREM program, the fund operates iteratively; adapting when needed based on lessons learned and changing conditions in order to improve. As a result, the second open call lasted six months instead of three and additional financial and content support was offered. All of this in order to mitigate negative influences on planning and teamwork between the countries such as the month of Ramadan and long hot summers. Also, the application procedure was adjusted based on what would be beneficial in bringing the project proposals forward. Accordingly, the possibility was created to submit a video and to meet with the advisory committee. Accountability and project reporting are of course of the utmost importance. But even more so are the learnings in the final stages of the projects and how we are able to share our knowledge with a wider audience also gives invaluable insights.



From top to bottom: the sphere of interest – which contains the *why*, the ultimate aims: more inclusive cities and societies and a better understanding and trust between the countries.
In the center: the sphere of influence – illustrating *how* the contributions towards these aims are made: through collaborations, connections, effects on the ground, learning and sharing experiences.
Finally, the sphere of control – which contains *what* tools are implemented to achieve all this, such as projects, meet-ups, open calls and financing.



Installation *Learning with Tiznit* at African Crossroads in Marrakech. photo: Nika Jazaei



photo: Mohammed Naja

REWIND / PLAY /

FAST FORWARD

by Syb Groeneveld
Executive Director
Creative Industries
Fund NL

Knock, knock... lockdown

In the last few months, the COVID-19 crisis has compelled the entire world to reconsider the most elementary parts of our individual existence: trust, work, living, love, solidarity, health and friendship. Nobody expected a global lockdown at a speed as we are experiencing right now. The globalized world returned home.

Over the past 25 years I have visited many inspiring places for work, study and out of curiosity – and I can confidently say that travelling has enriched my life. However, since the lockdown in the Netherlands in March 2020, I realize that the concept of traveling itself may need some imaginative re-thinking.

Rewind: The traveler...

In 1995, as part of my Political Science studies at the University of Amsterdam, I organized a trip to Turkey. We aimed to engage in discussions with fellow students, journalists, activists, diplomats, companies and scientists in order to gain a better understanding of Turkey's application to join the EU. This trip gave me a deeper understanding of just how important it is to look beyond your own boundaries, for different perspectives, and to become aware of the importance of other stories.

In 2003, St. Petersburg celebrated its 300th anniversary. To mark this occasion we organized, together with a group of friends, a cultural car rally from Dam Square in Amsterdam via Warsaw and Riga, finishing at the Isaac Cathedral Square in St Petersburg. With about 40 teams, we drove straight through Europe, via Germany, Poland and the Baltic States (both not part of the EU at that time). Each car was

part of a mobile cultural exhibition and exchange which was displayed in each city we passed through and provided us with a warm welcome upon arrival. This adventure resulted in many participants developing a fascination for the Eastern parts of Europe; I was most certainly one of them.

I even spent three years living and working in Moscow with my family (2007 – 2010). My wife Tanja was a diplomat at the embassy, while I campaigned for a more open copyright system and access to scientific knowledge within Russia. It is no easy task attempting to bring about change whilst collaborating with avant-gardists, in a country that is not your own. My respect for individuals who, out of total conviction and dedication, work for the common good in an environment or country where they are almost automatically at risk, grew immensely during that period.

Play: Inclusive Cities and Societies through Design

When I started as director of Creative Industries Fund NL in September 2016, one of my most rewarding challenges was to develop new plans for the Dutch international cultural policy and to establish the role of design within this context. With their powers of connection and imagination, designers play a fundamental role in the organization and reorganization of society and are able to open and extend international borders.

Eventually, with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, we were able to implement an important program during the last four years: *Inclusive Cities and Societies through Design* in Turkey, Russia, Egypt and Morocco, in which



photo: Maarten van Haaff

an integral approach to design power is central to an equal as possible collaboration between Dutch and local partners. It is precisely in these four countries, each with their own historical and current dynamics, that initiating and conducting a dialogue is essential for mutual understanding and improving relationships.

With my colleagues Zineb and Yasmin, we have carefully and methodically built a series of projects in these four countries. For each project, the intended effects of the collaboration were mapped out in advance. This led, for instance, to a textile recycling project in Turkey, new typologies for the Palaces of Culture in Russia, innovative collaboration for traditional weavers in Morocco and a project to preserve the Arabic calligraphy heritage in Egypt.

From a large number of applications, a total of 26 projects have been supported, which together have grown into an international network. It is remarkable to see how the program has created new networks between the Netherlands and these TREM countries that did not yet exist and would otherwise not have been realized. I remember, for example, the pleasantly surprised faces of the Russian project partners when ambassador Renée Jones-Bos received them at the Dutch embassy and took the time to learn about the projects. She opened many doors by bringing the participants in contact with valuable people from her network. This also occurred at countless other meetings in Marrakech, Istanbul, Rotterdam and Cairo, to give the projects the impact they deserve. On June 15th of this year, all partners involved in the projects had planned to meet in Amsterdam to

hear each other's stories, to inspire others and to create a greater depth of understanding during 'We make the city'. Unfortunately, COVID-19 made that impossible.

Particularly now, investigating new forms of international cooperation is incredibly relevant.

Forward: We love life, whenever we can

In mid-March 2020, all international activities at the fund had to be put on hold: new applications could no longer be submitted and many ongoing projects were cancelled or postponed. International travel, and inspiring each other by meeting in person, was no longer possible. However, this does not mean we have stopped looking across borders. Particularly now, investigating new forms of international cooperation is incredibly relevant. How do we bring peers and young talents across various disciplines together in international design research? How can we ensure that new design techniques and material research can be applied elsewhere? Are online residencies possible? How can we work internationally to achieve better and more sustainable commissioning?

That thought brings me back to a visit to *Disarming Design from Palestine* in January this year. At her farmstead in Flanders, Annelys de Vet talked about this inclusive design label for unusual products from Palestine, designed by contemporary artists and designers in collaboration with local craftspeople. I was touched by a set of beautiful silver earrings crafted by Ibrahim Muhtadi.

In relation to Gaza, where he lives, the earrings are an expression of his personal feelings: frustrated and limited, yet eager to live a normal and joyful life. This led him to divide the famous sentence from Mahmoud Darwish's Palestinian poem into two parts and manually carve the text 'We love life (left) whenever we can (right)' in Arabic script into the earrings which are made from a single piece of silver.

I bought a pair in the Disarming Design shop as a gift for Tanja to celebrate our 25th anniversary in May. At that time in January, I could never have imagined that our own lives in the Netherlands would become so restricted in just a couple of weeks. Almost 100 days after the start of the COVID-19 measures, it also feels as if we have returned home. By now, we are able to reconsider what we do, how we do it, and where we go from here. Without a doubt, things will be different. But one thing is for sure: the creative power of international culture remains essential. And no matter what the circumstances, we continue building new inspiring collaborations.

We love life, whenever we can!



Preparations meet-up TREM. photo: Mohamed Najah

OUT.OF. THE.BLUE. MAP

Partners: CALYPSO36°21: Manon Bachelier (NL), Sanaa Zaghoud (MA), Justine Daquin (FR), Zoé Le Voyer (FR). Mahal Art Space (MA), Manifesta 13 (FR), International Community Arts Festival (NL), Jan van Eyck Academy (NL), Kulte Gallery (MA), New South (MA), The Minority Globe (MA), National Institute of Fine Arts of Tetouan (MA), AFLAM (FR)



The benches of the cornice of Nador.
photo: Calypso36°21

Out.of.the.blue.map is an activity program and exhibition based on the liminality of the Mediterranean Sea. The focus is on the Moroccan coast, the area closest to Europe, where a considerable amount of migration takes place. The research concentrates on the idea of permanent 'liminality' in this area: a fluid situation in which new structures and practices emerge. The goal is to take a fresh look at the current structures in this region and offer alternative borderscapes by collecting different stories and perspectives. This project is an initiative by collective CALYPSO36°21.

In the initial phase, the team conducted theoretical and field research into the perspectives of those who travel by sea and those who explore the sea from land. Interviews were held with local NGOs, government agencies, rescue organizations, sailors, cultural organizations and artists. The team also visited and documented the Spanish enclaves Ceuta and Melilla and carried out extensive literary reviews of current migration policies.

The next step was to develop an on-going publication titled *A Lexicon on Drifting*. The lexicon makes clear that terms and instruments that are currently used, in different contexts have different meanings. The team continuously gains new perspectives through public lectures and workshops; all of these different insights will be added to the lexicon. The first version of the lexicon will be presented at MANIFESTA 13 in Marseille with additional talks, a writing workshop and the presentation of related artistic work of Randa Maroufi, Saïd Afifi and George Bajalia.

In addition, the team put out an open call for Moroccan artists to show their work on the subject at a collective exhibition at Mahal Art Space in Tangier. A multi-disciplinary jury selected six makers: Sophia Attigui, Rachid Benyaagoub, Mounia Bouchra, Ahmad Karmouni, Ziad Naitaddi and Merieme Mesfioui.



Le littoral, une autre frontière. photo: Baptiste de Ville d'Avray

INCLUSIVE
REGENERATIVE
FASHION IN
TURKEY

OF

IN TIMES CORONA

Partners: Knitwear Lab (NL), Bersa Triko (TR),
Marmara University (TR), Haksa (TR), Espima
(TR), MAISON the FAUX (NL), Amsterdam
University of Applied Sciences (NL)

Almere, March 2020

Open letter, to who it may concern. Disclaimer: stream of consciousness

Dear reader,

At the risk of sounding dramatic, we can't deny that the world is in a state of flux. We all know what I'm referring to; early spring 2020. All of us are closely watching what will happen, what the consequences will be in the near or distant future, what they will affect, who, why, what and when. So many questions, so little answers.

Let's see if we can avoid going absolutely stir crazy during this (semi?) lock-down, whilst trying to desperately figure out the next steps in this temporary 'brave new world'.

Most of us are well trained to keep going, no matter the circumstances; passionate as we are about what we do or are trying to achieve. But if the universe demands us to literally stop, we might as well take this opportunity to sit down and breathe, to reflect on what we actually do. By sharing our experiences, maybe even crack a joke or two. By the way, every cloud has a silver lining: by running this project for about a year now with teams from several places in two different countries, we are somewhat used to working remotely.

Here we go.



photo: Knitwear Lab



photo: Knitwear Lab

Let me briefly introduce myself. My name is Thijs Verhaar, born and raised in the Netherlands. After attending several art schools where I absolutely didn't learn anything, I still find myself working as a designer. Currently at Knitwear Lab, where amongst other things we work on a project called *Inclusive Regenerative Fashion in Turkey*; a design research into creative solutions for the large flow of waste produced by textile industry in Turkish cities.

It's never too late to start making a difference right. So, what can we do?

Quite a mouth full, but what I'm trying to say is: let's at least *try* to make a dent in the way textile production is organized. Does it keep me awake at night? No. I value my sleep over anything. But still, I do see the importance. Most sane people do I'd say. They envision a dark future, a grim reality if changes are not made. Personally, my point of view is perhaps a tad less gloomy. It's never too late to start making a difference right. So, what can we do?

We have to take a look at *how* goods are being produced. The textile industry is very complicated, and perhaps unexpectedly, but also strangely, emotional. I also work as a lecturer and I like to use the following example: in 2013, PETA began a petition against the use of angora wool, the production of which condones the abuse of rabbits. It didn't take long before the use of angora wool was blacklisted. However, when textile factory Rana Plaza in Bangladesh collapsed in the same year, where over 1.100 workers lost their lives and more than 2.500 people were seriously injured, it didn't have any impact whatsoever. Customers still continued to buy fast fashion. A cute little rabbit, versus a human life.

Anyway, a perfect example of how the textile industry works. Emotional, volatile. Not to mention the perception of the locals. In Western-European countries, people tend to focus a lot more on sustainability than in countries like Turkey. But there is still a lot of general ignorance, or maybe I should say *unawareness*, even among self-proclaimed highly educated and conscious consumers.

In Turkey, waste is generally just considered *garbage*. Dirt. From a western point of view, the rag-and-bone-men may be considered as recyclers, in Turkey they are perceived as semi-criminals. Far from a noble profession, let alone a craft. Call me naïve, but even though I know Turkey and the Turkish culture quite well after over 120 visits, the local general view of waste did surprise me.

One of the many, many learning moments during our project. Currently we are looking into exchanging designs by working with Turkish designers. Which was in all fairness not on top of our priority list – we consciously decided to focus on Turkish manufacturers and industry, but the Stimuleringsfonds made clear the added value was important to them. And you know what, maybe they were right. It might even support the innovation process beyond our imagination.



photo: Knitwear Lab

And there is still much more to explore. But by now I dare to say, or maybe whisper, that in the land of the blind, one-eye is king. And we have become that king in the textile producing industry.

A king likes to aim high. Hence our goals: we are trying to improve life in Turkey through a cleaner textile industry. When waste is being processed in a productive way instead of casually adding it to an ever-growing scrap mountain. Where local climate conditions will dramatically improve due to technical innovations. Where workers are earning better wages. Where the mindset has changed, from both the Turkish production side and the Western-European consumer side.

Ambitious? Why the hell not. Give me three good reasons, no wait *one, not* to aim for a fair textile world where consumers are able to buy quality goods at an honest price, without making the rich even richer and where the poor don't stay poor. There, I've said it. Right now, only 1 percent of the raw materials in the textile industry worldwide is being recycled. If we manage to raise that to 2 percent, it's a 100% increase which should be feasible. So we take it step by step, aiming for the stars yet appreciating every single move in the right direction.

One of the ways to approach such complicated issues is through good old communication. To create true understanding, regardless of one's native soil. Apart from the obvious (a basic knowledge of the language and local culture) in my experience a sense of humor travels a long way. At least, it has proven to be effective with the Turkish manufacturers.

Doing business, especially international business, can become a potential minefield. Especially if one tries to find an ally for an approach that pushes the boundaries of their comfort zone and goodwill is elementary. When their first response to one of our requests was 'difficult, difficult', we answered with 'no no, very easy Abi', which means *brother*. Something we would not dream of saying during a Western-European meeting, but it helped to break the ice. Just like jokes about the concept of time. Ten minutes? Or ten Turkish minutes?

I can fully recommend a somewhat light-hearted approach to life in general, but also at work. It can be highly effective to choose alternatives, to stay off the beaten-track. When we gave a presentation to the Dutch consulate in Istanbul, we deliberately chose to ditch the obvious keynote. Instead we wanted to create the full experience, to show the size of the issues we're facing. Hence, we decided to bring the waste to the consulate. When we explained at the factories why we needed the textile waste, eyebrows were raised and the manufacturers handed us a bag full. No, we don't need just a bag, we need a lot more. So we received a garbage bin. Then a container. Only after persisting, we finally got what we came for: a truckload full of textile waste. Which we dumped right in front of the consulate. And I have to admit, though not used to this highly unorthodox approach, they embraced it. A characteristic example of how Knitwear Lab likes to operate; very ambitious and passionate. Driven to get the job done, continuously trying to think out of the box. And having a good time while doing it. Even in times of corona. Trying to keep developing ourselves. Be flexible. Stay away from cynicism lurking around the corner. After all, without hope, everything is lost right?

The team created the new brand REALIST_ and presented the first collection of hats and scarfs, with a performance of creative studio MAISON the FAUX, at Palais de Hollande in Istanbul. photo: Knitwear Lab



INCLUSIVE
REGENERATIVE
FASHION IN
TURKEY

MEAN-
WHILE

IN
ISTANBUL

It did make sense that we became ‘partners in crime’; Thijs the veteran and me, Selman Saitoğlu, the young(er) blood. The perfectionist and the stoic, the go-getter and the strategist, embracing each other in our shared obsession with manufacturing and designing textiles.

This wasn’t the first time we had worked together; being well aware of our combined problem-solving skills and creativity, we remained optimistic. Thijs and I, like dare I say all right-minded people, also share the concerns about environmental issues. Having a career in the textile business, I saw the opportunity to take my responsibility as an individual to take action. We discovered we were not alone, more people than I realized have the same opinion on this important matter.

We made it a mutual effort; our mission to reach out to our network and try to create more awareness, to show our peers our knowledge and skills, highlighting the potential of circularity within the textile industry.

Thijs may probably disagree, but in my humble opinion he is the true hero of this story. This ambitious man, who had the courage to go

to Uşak, a province of Turkey, to pursue the impossible. Yes, we did face challenges. For example, it was virtually impossible to get certified recycled yarn for knitted accessories because most suppliers do not produce in the smaller quantities suitable for knitting; after much discussion however we managed to pull it off, a huge milestone.

Our biggest success I think would have been how the project planted a seed.

Over the course of our project, Thijs and I maintained close contact. We jokingly started calling each other our better halves. We exchanged updates, shared our opinions. Every decision, in each and every stage, we took together. My role? To focus on



photo: Knitwear Lab

the production line and my extensive list of potential clients for our project.

Our biggest success I think would have been how the project planted a seed; people who perhaps were previously not aware of it began to see the possibilities of recycling, not just as a duty but as a viable contribution to the creation of the product itself. This resulted in many more people sharing our ideas and goals, something that is very welcome in this industry.

By achieving these things, I think I can safely say our goals were reached; people became aware of just what was possible to create using what was once considered waste material. The realization that it can even be made into something highly fashionable. A changed perception and incorporating this 'new' material by not just accepting it but embracing and celebrating it; recycled economy, make it sustainable.

One thing that did surprise me, was that some of the largest retailers in Turkey, although they were definitely invited, neither attended nor supported the project; proof indeed that actions speak louder than words. Also, the project could have been promoted better, this is not a criticism, just an observation. I feel the impact of our work could have been even broader.

Speaking of challenges; although I'd like to think of myself as a calm and collected person, speaking in front of a crowd of complete strangers including stakeholders made me reach for half a milligram of Xanax every time. I suppose that shows how badly I wanted our project to succeed! Note to myself: addressing groups remains work in progress.

In general, we are not there yet. But if I look back, we have accomplished quite a bit already.

We even made it all the way to the Dutch consulate in Istanbul, where we decided to take the opportunity to turn this exceptional occasion into a pro LGBT event. Obviously, a lot of eyebrows were raised.

I was able to become a pioneer, which has been both my duty and honor. Long may this continue.

Another one of my favorite memories, something that still makes me smile, is the snapshot we took of Consulate-General Bart van Bolhuis. Imagine a very kind, sophisticated gentleman buried in a huge pile of textile waste – imperturbably sipping his wine. A beautiful, beautiful recollection and the best formal event I have ever been part of.

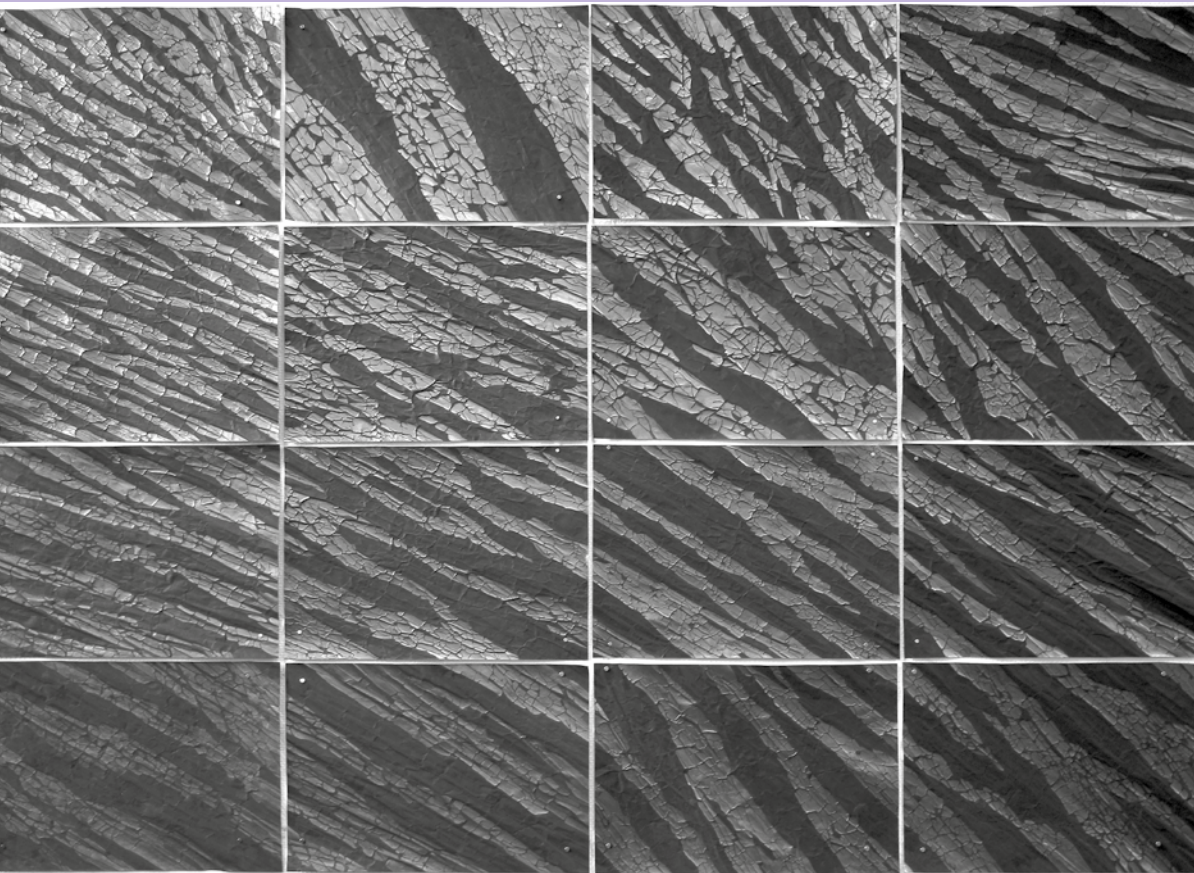
In Turkey, there is nothing that comes close to the Stimuleringsfonds. I am grateful for the privilege to have been able to join, both on a professional and personal level. I was able to become a pioneer, which has been both my duty and honor. Long may this continue.



photo: Knitwear Lab

WHAT DO LANDSCAPES SAY? SPECULATING THE DIVERSITY OF LANDSCAPES AND IDENTITIES

Partners: Yue Mao (NL), Polina Veidenbakh (RU), Ksenia Kopalova (RU), Mascha Kremer (NL), Nataly Lakhtina (RU), Rachel Bacon (NL), Radha Smith (NL), Vera Mennens (NL), Maria Malkova (RU), Na Peschanoy Gallery (RU), Het Nieuwe Instituut (NL)



Work of artist Rachel Bacon. *The Other Orebody*, graphite on paper on foil, 118cm x 166 cm, 16 drawings, each 29 x 41cm. Based on research of the diamond mine in Mirny. photo: Brian Mac Domhnaill

Nomaos is a diverse group of young Russian and Dutch makers and designers who are investigating the diversity and relationships between landscapes and identities in Russia. The focus is on rural and industrial landscapes in Moscow, Karelia, Curonian Spit and Yakutsk region, which are currently neglected and forgotten. Through design research, the team looks for distinctive, creative and practical ways to develop these areas in a sustainable and inclusive way. Exemplary projects include the Archstoyanic Festival in the village of Nikola Lenivets and the Oerol Festival on Terschelling.

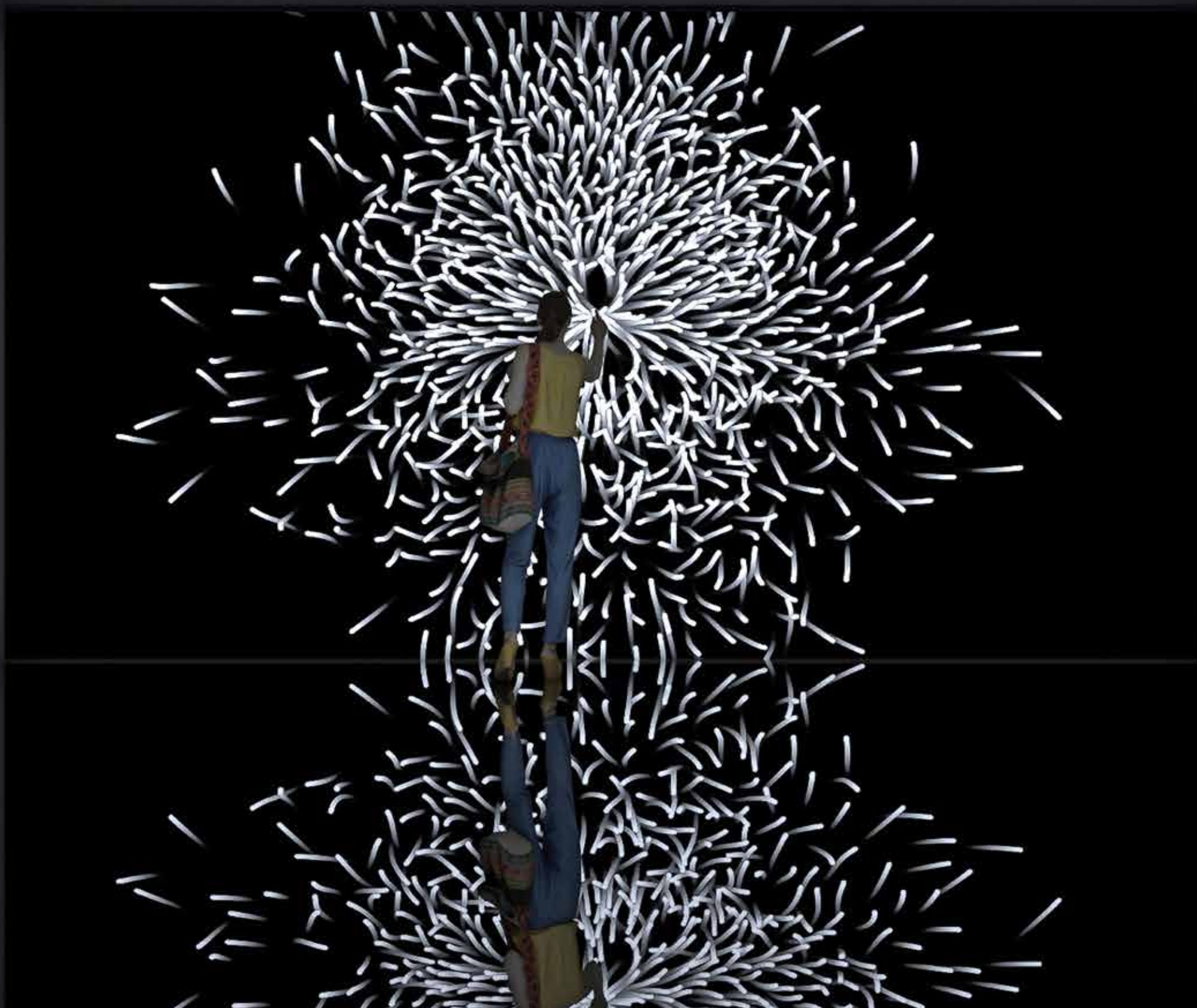
The initial phase consisted of collecting and documenting the landscape-identity relationships and stories from a number of case studies. The participants first met each other during a public launch event at design center ARTPLAY in Moscow in May 2019, and afterwards made their own plan for the creation of new work (some followed a one-month residency at the location, others did more archive research). In the follow up phase, the participants developed works in which they address the identity of a specific location in Russia, each in his/her own way.

The participants and locations are: Ksenia Kopalova (illustrator, Kizhi Island and surrounding villages, Karelia), Mascha Kremer (architect & artist, Vyborg, Karelia), Nataly Lakhtina (artist, Kizhi Island, Karelia), Polina Veidenbakh (architect, Kalyazin, Moscow region), Rachel Bacon (artist, Mirny mine, Yakutsk), Radha Smith (writer, St. Petersburg), Vera Mennens (artist, Curonian Spit National Park), Yue Mao (urbanist, Vyborg, Karelia)

Work of illustrator Ksenia Kopalova. *Planting Structures*, (work in progress), installation of a series of illustrations about various gardens in Karelia. photo: Ksenia Kopalova

and Maria Malkova (graphic designer, web design). The result will comprise of nine speculative narratives of the Russian landscape in different creative forms such as installations, films, illustration, creative writing and workshops. The exhibition will be curated by the coordinators of the project Yue Mao, Polina Veidenbakh and guest curator Naomi van Dijck. Travelling exhibitions in Russia and the Netherlands are scheduled after the summer in 2020. In the spirit of adaptability the team will share the results via exhibitions and workshops in Het Nieuwe Instituut, and Na Peschanoy Gallery. The team are also compiling a publication to be shared in a later phase.





Work of artist Nataly Lakhtina: *Who is the Creator?* (work in progress). Rendering of the interactive audio-visual installation about Kizhi Island. graphic: Nataly Lakhtina

The world is in a continuous state of transition. What seems obvious and relevant one day, can in the blink of an eye become redundant the next and one ‘new normal’ can seamlessly be replaced by another. The only thing that is constant, is change.

Q&A with Zineb Seghrouchni

PANTA RHEI



photo: Sharon Jane D

Zineb leads the International department at Creative Industries Fund NL, which the TREM program is part of. In late 2016, while working at the fund’s Architecture department, she learned about the focus of the new International Program which combined many of her interests, passions and qualities. Ranging from inclusivity, architecture and design to critical research and connecting communities. Involving countries she felt strongly connected with, she immediately knew she was the woman for the job.

Where do your drive and values stem from?

I must have inherited it from my father, who was blessed with insatiable curiosity and courage. Imagine at that time, in the sixties, taking a leap and creating a new life in a different place. My mother made it all work, using her ‘nothing is impossible’ state of mind and creativity. As one of three daughters, growing up in a male-dominated society a sense of justice and fairness always played a role in my life. Being part of a first-generation migrant household, balanced between Moroccan and Dutch cultures – taught me to constantly shift between different states of mind, to be ready to adapt to new situations before they even arise.

Later, whilst studying and working in urban design, I was always drawn to the not-so-obvious, to places and activities that were part of everyday life, but not perceived legitimate nor desirable. During my fieldwork in Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro and London, I got to know people, businesses and urban structures and documented the city in ways that would uncover their hidden value. In time, I learned to become an advocate for a process which starts from an understanding of the appropriation of space by different communities.

You don’t seem to be afraid of a challenge.

Well, I suppose this publication is the perfect example. The concept and way in which we worked on this publication are far from the usual accountability reports or formal explanations. We aimed to create something that could give an insight into the *why* and *how* of the projects involved in this, quite complex, program. So yes, I’m definitely up for a challenge; not for the sake of taking

a risk, but I never take the easy way out when it comes to the greater cause.

The greater cause...?

To me, the ultimate cause would be for humanity to move towards a fully inclusive society. One that respects different perspectives and does not hold to a singular truth, which I find limiting, often even manipulative. A good story has multiple angles so you can see – and understand – the different values within. My personal life reflects this, as it often becomes kaleidoscopic in nature, balancing and blending different elements as they come and go. I wear my sneakers to the board rooms and my dresses and heels to a block party. Multi-faceted at heart, combining diverse angles and interpretations.

It is also reflected within the layered nature of the International Program itself: being flexible and adapting to ever changing contexts. The team members at the fund continuously balance between strict procedures and creating free space for experimentation; for ourselves and for the projects and designers we support.

I wear my sneakers to the board rooms and my dresses and heels to a block party. Multi-faceted at heart, combining diverse angles and interpretations.

‘Inclusive cities and societies’. Inclusivity is a popular catch-all word.

I believe inclusivity is about dismantling power structures and the mechanisms of exclusion, about uncovering and exposing flaws in the system, then about acting upon it.

There is a growing realization that this discussion is not confined to the current North American discourse, but applicable world-wide. People are speaking up, holding themselves and each other accountable. The process of awareness seems to be accelerating and change becomes increasingly noticeable.

Are designers the ultimate change makers?

The designer’s skill set gives them an edge, they can imagine, create and connect. But one needs to be knowledgeable about other value systems and be aware of one’s position within them. For example: youngsters or elderly hanging around in groups on the streets are often seen as a nuisance. Conversely, they might offer an informal social control and thereby bring more safety to a community. Depending on which of these two perspectives you begin with, greatly impacts the way you communicate, act and even design the city. That is why we’ve magnified the role and perspective of the international partners in this program. You need those two different sides, because a one-sided approach will never lead to a truthful outcome.

How does one keep perspective and balance?

It’s one thing to create space for exchange, discourse and sharing, it’s another to build balanced relationships within international collaborations. Therein lies the main challenge of this program and where I see responsibility. It starts with the fact that both the initiative and the financing of this program come from the Netherlands and that the formal process is managed by the Dutch partner. Therefore, we should not pretend that we work from a position of equality. We must be honest if we want to build a program that is both credible and feasible, especially

given the long-term objective: to contribute to more inclusive cities and societies through design. Those involved must be aware of their privileges and of the distributions of resources and responsibilities. It is my task to imbed this into all layers of the program. Inclusivity is not a bullet point; it’s essential in every step we take.

I believe inclusivity is about dismantling power structures and the mechanisms of exclusion, about uncovering and exposing flaws in the system, then about acting upon it.

Great, but where do you start?

With having faith. Creating space for the full potential of a project, without over-controlling its outcome. To support makers and projects that might not get off the ground because they lack a track record. By trusting the hunch that a team has found an interesting angle, it becomes possible to support projects that wouldn’t start off naturally. This process can be positive and inspiring, but can also be filled with trials and tribulations, which teaches us valuable lessons for the future.

What results does that approach yield at the fund?

When it comes to our own workflow, I feel a growing awareness of iteration and impact, adaptable methodologies and instruments to fit an ever-changing context. Ultimately, within the program itself, I observe a strengthened sense of collaboration and learning between the Dutch team members and their international counterparts. I use my role to create connections, raise

awareness, and build an agenda. Balancing between different interests, starting points and frames of reference can sometimes be challenging.

Can you give an example?
When I started at the fund there was a need for the strengthening of networks and exchanging knowledge between practices based in the Netherlands and abroad. Because of this, I regularly organized meetings and events on topics that resonate in the design field. Most of the times these were linked to grant opportunities at the fund. When doing so, I look beyond the usual suspects in our choices of location, caterer, moderator or speakers. To give you an idea, we chose to hold a series of meet-ups at the HipHopHuis in Rotterdam, famous for stimulating creativity whilst offering a safe haven within the community. We invited the right mix of guests, inspiring speakers such as May Al-Ibrashy from Cairo and Kunle Adeyemi from Lagos and opened and closed the event with a DJ. This might not be the usual way in which a fund produces its events, but it is necessary to create a setting that is truly welcoming and stimulates collaborations. By now this way of organizing events has become common practice.

Sounds like quite an endeavor...
I dare to say we created a program in which the makers and their communities truly feel seen and heard. Each partner brings different contexts to the table, mixing disciplines, and takes the insights acquired from the project with them. Sometimes this leads to a broadening of their project, a consolidation of their practice, or even a total transition. Offering inspiration far outside of the design field, about

what these practices can mean for your community, your city and our society.

The program must mean a lot to you.
It does. TREM gives me the opportunity to support practices and learn about places most don't even know exist. From a project in Murmansk, on the North Western border of Russia to the Darb el Ahmar district in Islamic Cairo all the way to the Olive Academy in Karaburun. It has been an inspiring journey that gives me hope for the future of our cities. I see the TREM program and this publication as one of the ways to amplify voices, methods and visions that can lead to more inclusive cities and societies.

Meet-up Russia at HipHopHuis in Rotterdam. photo: Khalid Amakran



PAPYRUS AND NEW MEDIA

Partners: Ba7R - Abba el Bahrawy (NL/EG),
Megawra (EG), Khatt Foundation (NL),
Jan van Eyck Academy (NL)



Papyrus guest
book by Ouf, a
papyrus paper
maker from
Qarmoos,
Sharkeyya.
photo: Abba
elBahrawy

Abba elBahrawy, originally from Cairo, currently working in the Netherlands, focuses on the intersection between architecture, archeology and art. With this project she aims to show that papyrus not only belongs to the past but is also relevant for contemporary Egyptian design and cultural identity. By developing a graphic novel (showing the history and future possibilities of papyrus), a series of experimental material research workshops and an artistic piece, ElBahrawy wants to create more awareness of the value of this local material as a cultural product.

Since the 1960s Egypt has seen a revival in the papyrus industry. Nevertheless, this new form of papyrus is mainly produced for commercial purposes and is moving away from the original, authentic techniques. Today, the

papyrus paper making industry is stationed in Qarmoos, a small village to the north of Cairo. It is a small-scale operation consisting of family businesses where the paper is made in self-built workshops and sometimes in designated spaces at home. A significant part of the work is carried out by women, whilst the younger generation is being trained to maintain their heritage and craft. The industry is strongly dependent on tourism nowadays, and therefore the content depicted mainly serves to reinforce stereotypes of Egyptian culture.

ElBahrawy began by interviewing members of the local community who work in the papyrus industry in Qarmoos and Cairo. She also collected information through interviews with creative designers, curators, historians and cultural



Wet cardboard
– needed in the
process of papyrus
paper making –
drying in the sun.
photo: Abba
elBahrawy



First sketch. illustration: Cheb Makhloof



illustration: Tawfig

organizations, by studying artefacts and visiting relevant museums, papyrus production sites and print shops.

The history and development of papyrus was part of the research, including the drawing, coloring, printing techniques and the production, and – of equal importance – the cultural and social significance of this material. ElBahrawy wrote the storyline of the graphic novel based on her research; the protagonists were based on members of the local community who run the papyrus industry in Cairo. For the illustrations a number of talented young Egyptian illustrators and comic artists were involved: Andeel, Migo Rollz, Cheb Makhloof, Mostafa Ahmed and Tawfig.

At the same time, workshops were organized based around experimental material research. During a two-month program, Master students in architectural design at the Amsterdam University of Arts investigated new papyrus designs that are both contemporary and authentic. Additionally, the team organized paper making workshops in collaboration with Megawra in Cairo. Based on the results, an artwork consisting of 25 silk screen prints on papyrus will be created in collaboration with the Charles Nyples lab at the Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht. The final graphic novel will be published by Khatt Foundation, Center for Arabic Typography in Amsterdam.

FROM THE BORDER

OF

Partners: Fridaymilk (RU), Sonic Acts (NL), Sergey Kostyrko (RU), Philipp Guzeev (RU), Alex Timofeev (RU), Dmitry Ulmer-Morozov (RU), Andreas Kühne (NL), Gleb Glonti (RU), Polina Medvedeva (NL/RU), Murmansk Regional Universal Scientific Library (RU), Murmansk Region Culture and Arts Committee (RU)

RUSSIA LOVE

WITH

Fridaymilk and Sonic Acts have joined forces, initiating a project where they invited talented young Russian and Dutch makers to create new work, something which will help local residents and future generations to identify more closely with their city. By means of digital culture, the makers present the hidden stories and lost identity of Murmansk: a remote industrial city in the Far North of Russia.

We are Zhanna (29) and Oleg (35), founders of *Fridaymilk*: a collective that once began as a side project but now has become our fulltime occupation. In Fridaymilk, we have chosen to focus on socially relevant issues, like *Murmansk Prospekt*. We like to describe this project as 'an alternative perception of our city, from an artistic perspective'.

Murmansk is the largest city north of the Arctic circle, close to the borders of Norway and Finland. While most countries experience their warmest spring in a long time, currently it's still snowing here. Murmansk indeed still has a very strong image of a remote Soviet harbor and military city, a harsh and unforgiving place at the edge of civilization.

As locals, we are trying to redefine the perception of a post-industrial Murmansk; what happens if we dare to look under the surface, are we able to find the lost identity of this city? Different than before, it is no longer a given that everyone here will work either at the port, join the military or become a sailor. But if former functions cease to exist, and the city is slowly being left behind by its inhabitants, what is it that remains?

We decided to search for an answer to that existential question. Therefore we needed to view our city in a different way. But to do it right, we still needed the help of outsiders who were not affected by our past; artists who were capable of sharing an alternative point of view and the ability to implement a distinctive approach.



Circatidal Trails
installation by
Signe Lidén. photo:
Eduard Mikryukov

This is where our Dutch partners became invaluable. After meeting Sonic Acts in 2012 where we worked together, we remained in contact. Our shared view of life and creativity as well as our insatiable curiosity to dive under the surface made our collaboration an obvious choice.

Why start at Murmansk? Well, this is the city or the area where we were born and raised. We know it very well, but maybe not well enough. There are many cities like this in contemporary Russia; places where the present has caught up with the past. By using alternative instruments, we are looking to identify a different meaning, specifying the significance of cities like Murmansk. A new truth if you like, a perception from and for a new generation, convincing residents to stay by helping them to re-appreciate their homeland.

We aim to peel away the many layers, to uncover the true essence of Murmansk, to take time to reflect, perhaps in a more philosophical way. When you are young and born into modern Russia, it is a completely different set of circumstances than our parents experienced. We consider ourselves part of a lost generation, a generation struggling to find an identity, a generation that came of age in the shadow of the collapse of the Soviet Union, a kind of generational twilight zone if you will. Unlike our parents, we are able to see a glimpse of the outside world.

However, we don't want to appeal to just our peers. It is important that we also make the older generations see what we see. By implementing a different methodology, by using art as a tool, we try to trigger them to see the beauty that lies beneath the harbor and industrial soil.

The administration of Murmansk would never subsidize something unknown; only classic, tangible forms of the arts are considered viable. In the course of our research, we never pushed for anything. We just kept our project open, welcoming all. The more progress we made, the more the municipal institutions became intrigued; seeing how beneficial the results were for everyone, creating an actual reason to either stay, or visit Murmansk.

A new truth if you like, a perception from and for a new generation, convincing residents to stay by helping them to re-appreciate their homeland.

It was never perceived as a destination for creativity or art. Designated places to go would be Moscow or St. Petersburg, but never a historically industrial town all the way up north. But art serves a purpose anywhere, so one of our goals was to put Murmansk on the artistic map. It makes sense when artists and institutions decide to shift from the capitals to outside areas, to stay fresh and creative, literally discovering new grounds.

That is exactly what Andreas did, when he came to Murmansk for his Field Recording Improvisation residency. He extracted the sounds of the city, by researching Murmansk historically, architecturally and generationally. Andreas dug up a lot of stories from the archives, continuously looking at



photo: Oleg Khadartsev

our city through the eyes of a stranger, paying attention to details that we never noticed ourselves. His method forced us to review the city we thought we knew, discovering new aspects and different angles.

We also interviewed the older generations, questioning them about the sixties and the seventies, when the opposite movement happened: people *arrived*, instead of left. It was extremely touching how open and involved they were, sharing stories that were never told because nobody had ever asked them or expressed any interest. It resulted into an audiovisual performance, where the sounds of the residents, field recordings and drums came together with visuals created by Russian artists.

We selected the artists involved together with Sonic Acts; we chose several artistic disciplines, a mix of known and unknown talent, people who we thought would be able to make a connection with young people. We consider it one of the biggest milestones of our project, welcoming all artists and mixing locals with outsiders, observing them creating together and breaking down potential stereotypes from both sides.

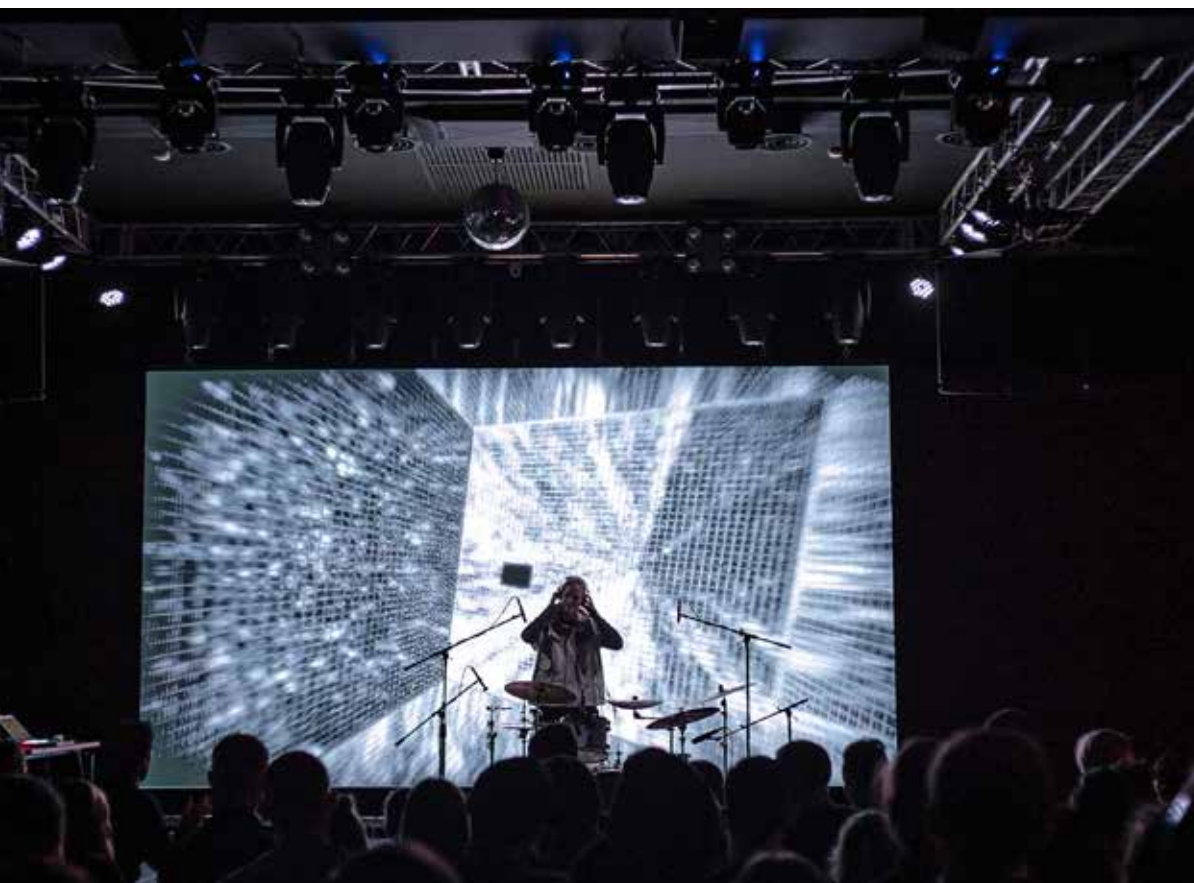
Having the courage to get off the beaten track, there is so much more to discover that can benefit all parties on many levels.

Zhanna Guzenko
and Oleg
Khadartsev.
photo: Tonya
Gorbacheva



It would be amazing if the participating artists and researchers would continue their research and work in connection with Murmansk. Or if new artistic initiatives would arise any time soon. And for a more distant future: hopefully local participants will become new decision makers, relying on their experiences to which we contributed, inspiring them to take positive action towards national development – even in remote places – as well as international collaborations.

We are deeply grateful for the opportunity we were given. To create a truly fruitful project that helps to redefine Murmansk – and hopefully other cities in a similar situation, may they be in Russia or in different places in the world. Having the courage to get off the beaten track, there is so much more to discover that can benefit all parties on many levels.



[L]MNTS live performance by Andreas Kühne. photo: Eduard Mikryukov

LEARNING
WITH TIZNIT |
DESIGNING
'SOFTSCAPES'
OF CARE AND
RESILIENCE

Partners: Slow Research Lab - Carolyn Strauss (NL/US), Association Gardiens de la Mémoire – Salima Naji (MA), David Goeury (FR/MA), Nika Jazaei (IR/NL), Marijke Annema (NL), Jana Crepon (DE/NL), Cocky Eek (NL), Amina Agueznay (MA), Maria Blaisse (NL), Nouredine Amir (MA), Association Abrinaz (MA), Cooperative Féminine Amendil (MA), École Primaire Lalla Maryem (MA), Centre El Mers (MA), Municipality of Tiznit (MA), Khatt Foundation (NL), Valiz (NL)



photo: Louise Rietvink



photo: Jana Crepon

Slow Research Lab and Gardiens de la Mémoire worked together to produce a cultural program that interweaves water, indigenous plants and forgotten local materials with the consciousness of the inhabitants of Tiznit, a city in Southern Morocco. The project offers a more sensitive urban experience by creating a series of 'softscapes': interventions that breathe new life into forgotten or neglected public spaces through the use of local materials and stories. These interventions arouse curiosity, stimulate the imagination, and encourage local citizen's involvement with the immediate environment. One of the aims of the project is to raise the profile and thereby strengthen both collective and individual voices with regard to the living environment. Multiple parties are involved in the project,

including designers, artists, government services, social organizations, researchers, and educational institutions.

Together with a wide cross-section of the local community, Moroccan and Dutch makers designed a series of 'softscapes' across different workshops, with a focus on the area surrounding Tiznit's original water source (Ain Aqdim) and the beautiful green oasis (Targua). Here they created a water observatory, an indigenous plant nursery, an educational program for children and adults, and examples of experimentation with (non) biological waste materials in the area. The team organized a public festival to showcase the results and they also developed a digital publication called *Landscape of care: A handbook for urban*

design engagement. This hand-book brings together essays by Moroccan and Dutch partners and a poetic selection of visual materials. It is a tool for urban planners/designers that presents various 'slow research' methods, including in-depth listening, trust and intuition as means to fostering connections with people and places.



graphic design: Naima Ben Ayed



photo: Louise Rietvink



photo: Cocky Eek



photo: Louise Rietvink

TRADITION AS A MAKING TOOL

Partners: Cross Change (TR), Space Crafters (NL), Sokak Bizim Association (TR), Kokopelli Sehirde (TR), Çocuk Mekan (TR), Beşiktaş Municipality Karaoğlan Youth Center (TR), STIPO (NL), Can Akat (TR), Beşiktaş Municipality (TR)

“The creative relationship of the Netherlands with nature is unique. On the other hand, the sense of unity that has become ordinary in Turkey and which we call neighborhood culture or doorstep chat, as people feel responsible for one another on a communal level by taking a bowl of soup to one’s sick neighbors, revealed to be one of the values sought by the Dutch culture.”

Tuğçe Akbulut — Cross Change

Tradition as a Making Tool, an initiative of Cross Change and Space Crafters, sheds light on new possibilities for multifunctional and shared public spaces in the densely populated city of Istanbul, to give meaning and offering alternatives to constructing new spaces and spatial elements in the already scarce public areas.

After in-depth research and visiting reference projects in the Netherlands and Turkey with partners, the team hit upon the idea of designing a series of Rollable Gardens. These mobile public space elements serve as a tool to stimulate new dialogue between inhabitants, their city and (re)connecting nature, based on culturally embedded traditions to create a more livable and inclusive city. The design has various functions and can be used for training, communal dinners, and as an edible plant garden. In addition, the team designed a guide for inhabitants to take care of their edible plants and an awareness workshop for primary school students to teach the importance of green in the city.

The aim of the project is for local communities to become more involved in urban development and to create awareness of the importance of green public spaces for social cohesion and quality of life in the city. An important Turkish tradition is eating together around a table, for instance during Ramadan (iftars) and at weddings and funerals. These events form a semi-public space where important social interaction takes place between different groups of residents. The team noted that this type of social activity has increasingly moved to places outside the city

that are no longer easily accessible for everyone. As a result, they chose to organize a first dinner event in the Beşiktaş district of Istanbul, in a poorly functioning public space surrounded by housing and a primary school. Furthermore, the team developed a guide with instructions for the rollable gardens so that everyone can make use of it. Each rollable garden has their own plant curation which is connected to traditional Turkish recipes. The project has already produced a spin-off for new partnerships, and the team has been invited to present the project, among others, within the European Placemaking Leaders Community in Rotterdam and they were interviewed by Design Unlimited Magazine to share their learnings and design approaches.



photo: Tuğçe Akbulut



photo: Can Akat

ASIL –
ARABIC
TYPQ-
GRAPHIC
EXPERI-
MENTS IN
EGYPT

TRADITION MEETS STREET INSPIRATION MEETS DIGITALISM

Partners: Tarek Atrissi Design (NL/ES),
AL-QALAM Foundation (EG),
Studio Decotype (NL)

The team is connecting the local community with professional designers and artists by setting up a hub and conducting several tracks of research, workshops and experiments that will lead to designing two new Arabic typefaces that will be fully designed and programmed as digital fonts and will be inspired by Egyptian calligraphic traditions and visual culture.

In the start-up phase, the team organized public workshops in Cairo and Amsterdam, realized two graffiti pilot interventions and made 12 short videos showing calligraphy as a craft in Egypt.

The next phase consists of three parts: research, education and design. The AL-QALAM team will select 6 local designers to conduct research with Tarek Atrissi Design on specific topics in the field of Arabic design and typography. These topics include the historic, current and future use of calligraphy in Egypt, Urban Arabic Calligraphy and street lettering in Cairo, and the Arabic script in book cover design. The papers serve as the basis for a number of public experimental workshops with graphic designers in the Netherlands and Egypt and will be the basic source of inspiration for designing the typefaces.

Tarek Atrissi

At the time of writing, circumstances are let's say challenging. The world has stopped turning; humanity finds itself midst a global epidemic. In the meantime, I am in lockdown in Barcelona trying to work on a project in Egypt that is in need of acceleration but obviously also affected by this unexpected turn of events. Some of us are used to working remotely, but still we have to reinvent ourselves to become as flexible as the current situation dictates. On that note: everybody is in the same boat, so we all understand and try to deal with the situation to the best of our abilities. It's a steep learning curve, one that hopefully won't flatten so we can continue to broaden our horizons, learn from the different approaches taken

by different cultures and remain flexible at all times, all the while keeping our eyes firmly fixed on the target.

The project *Asil* started a year and half ago. It's a program to raise awareness of the preservation of traditions and authenticity of Arabic script in the digital age. *Asil* in Arabic roughly translated means 'genuine' or 'authentic' and is an international design collaboration between Dutch and Egyptian parties.

Due to circumstances, it was only last summer that I was approached to become part of this team. As Arabic typography has been my passion as a designer and I have travelled to Egypt numerous times for the past three years, as well as having lived most of my adult life in Holland, it made a lot of sense for me get involved into this project.

My travels and work have led me all around the world, but what has been a common thread in different countries and different cities is the inspiration I found on the streets and beyond, in shops, on walls, posters, you name it; traffic signs, book or magazine covers, advertisements, graffiti, hand painted letters and symbols, calligraphy. By now I have established a huge archive of all my visual diggings, a great source for inspiration. I am forever analyzing about twenty years – and counting – of Arabic typography, translating research findings combined with creativity into fonts.

It may also be worth noting that I am a member of the advisory committee of this particular Internationalization program. To state the obvious: evidently, I was not part of the committee handling this specific application, but it did give me context and a different perspective.

It helped me to understand the purpose of this project; how to create something truly meaningful and sustainable by exchanging cross-cultural expertise in the long term. The development of local talent, incorporating design with culture in a relevant way and getting great insight on cultural projects and organizations. A huge learning experience that I can relate to and can also incorporate in my own work.

Both countries and team members are given the opportunity to reinforce each other, enhancing strengths and supporting weaknesses. Emphasizing the process, yet keeping an eye on finishing the project with tangible results.

It is all about communication; embracing different cultures and different approaches. And, very importantly, not being afraid to seek the advice of locals.

It is incredibly relevant to work with local partners; they are a great source of information because they are in touch with the community far beyond the reaches of the so-called established names, the elite. Real local talent is very hard, if not impossible, to access from the outside.

Vintage Arabic lettering samples collected from various old magazines and publications in Egypt.





Arabic lettering sample collected from old Egyptian publications.



Urban typography documented in the streets of Cairo.

Egyptian design and tech centers have been up and coming for the last couple of years and developing rapidly. It is indeed satisfying that such grants are being directed towards places where they make a substantial difference; unlocking the undeniable local potential. Younger generations are ambitious and eager to take action.

One pitfall of enthusiasm however might be the risk of losing sight of the bigger picture. To prevent fragmentation and thus sustainable impact, we need to keep our focus on the objectives we are pursuing.

Dutch efficiency can be quite an asset when it comes to getting things organized. We tend to take it for granted, how proficient the Dutch are in handling business. But in other cultures, being straightforward is not necessarily the way forward. In the Arabic world it is even regarded impolite. So, it is all about communication; embracing different cultures and different approaches. And, very importantly, not being afraid to seek the advice of locals.

If we combine our strengths, which we fully intend to on both sides, I have faith that this project will improve international collaborations which in turn will ultimately accelerate the careers of those involved, as well as future generations not to mention a fresh approach to cultural project management in general.

I for one can't wait for the future. Whatever it may bring, it will be *Asil*.

IDENTITY IN TYPICAL

Partners: Daria Naugolnova (NL), Alexey Boev (NL), Presidential Grants Foundation (RU), Union of Moscow Architects (RU), Academy of Architecture Amsterdam (NL), Department of Architecture and Urban Planning of Voronezh Region (RU), WASA Worldwide Architecture Students Association (RU)



The original function of the many cultural palaces that were constructed during the Soviet era have disappeared. Architects Alexey Boev and Daria Naugolnova are examining alternative uses for these spaces. Conceived as a social-cultural facility for the neighborhood in easily accessible places, the aim was to provide factory workers and their families with intellectual leisure activities and lessons in theatre, music and dance.

These days, the number of palaces that fulfill this function has fallen sharply but the buildings remain. The team discovered that the palaces that are still in use are only suitable for children and senior citizens. By adding new functions such as co-working spaces, studio space and areas for educational programs, the team sees an opportunity to

reach out to a wider target group, to stimulate participation in culture and education, ultimately developing an economically viable model for these buildings.

In the start-up phase, the team investigated the history, potential and challenges posed by these palaces. The team organized workshops with local residents to find out how they see the future of their local palace of culture and what social and cultural facilities they would like to see. The leading research questions were: 'How can we put together a new social and cultural program for these buildings?' and 'How can we develop an economic model to make these buildings profitable?'

The team developed an online platform to share the results. This extensive website contains photographs of 140 different





Architects Daria Naugolnova and Alexey Boev at the Architectural Forum Zodchestvo in Voronezh.

cultural palaces, complemented by study results and interviews with local residents. Based on this information, the team created the first design for the palace in Voronezh, including a parallel branding strategy for renewing other palaces of culture. Here, the team worked together with the partners of the project and various local youth centers. Currently the facade, ground floor and main hall are already under construction. The next step is the development of a book which will be exhibited throughout Russia.



Architects Daria Naugolnova and Alexey Boev with the chief architect of Moscow region and the mayor of Reutov city during the study project *the new cultural center for Russia*.





BACK TO THE FUTURE

Through the eyes of
Eva Radionova, advisory
committee member

My name is Eva Radionova. I moved to the Netherlands around twenty years ago. Apparently, by now I instinctively plan ahead, even in my private life; something unthinkable in Soviet culture.

Why make plans as the chances are you might come out disappointed for a number of reasons; people, force majeure, unstable and ever-changing circumstances; there is a long list of possible pitfalls that could derail even the best laid intentions. This does not imply any pessimism, far from it. It has more to do with our collective ideals regarding how our time should be spent and organized. This is the very reason Russians are inherently very competent *crisis managers*; dealing with unexpected situations is our specialty.

I could elaborate for hours on this subject, but if you allow me to jump to conclusions: the Dutch are all about pragmatism, structure and are very straightforward. Russians however tend to follow their intuition, their gut instinct, the heart versus the head. After all these years I now feel that I have my feet firmly planted in both cultures, allowing

a deep mutual understanding and appreciation.

On a professional level, you could call me an *unusual suspect*, I started in bio-geography, followed by botanica, ultimately leading me to work in landscape architecture. To me, this is where everything comes together: design, ecology and architecture. Being an advocate of the Dutch multidisciplinary approach, I consider myself a devoted ambassador.

In my position as a member of the advisory committee of the Internationalization department, my cultural crossover is very useful. The diversity of projects, disciplines and nationalities makes for an interesting mix, especially considering the TREM countries, each with their own, sometimes challenging, political contexts. It's fascinating to be part of this puzzle; to witness how colleagues review the projects, assess

their feasibility and how the international partners relate to each other. Interactions considered crucial by all members of the committee in order to proceed to the next round of applications.

Admittedly, some teams may have underestimated the power of the local organizations, failing to unlock their potential while success hinges on true collaboration. Don't get me wrong, it remains a challenge to work with international partners and to find the right tone of voice. In Russia, it is much preferable to do business face to face, to gain trust and use this as a steppingstone. First you become friends, or at least acquaintances, then you act.

Also, we have to keep in mind that a lot has changed since 2014. There is a huge difference between the 'before' and 'after' and an even greater difference between the



photo: Liza Yanovich



Soviet and the Dutch systems. It all became very politically sensitive shall we say. The cultural sector was censored drastically. I have noticed however that cultural heritage projects offer a greater chance of success. It seems more feasible to work around censorship within architecture than with films or theatre; unwritten rules one needs to learn and understand in order to navigate in Russia. Besides, realistically it is no longer feasible to preserve these buildings without acknowledging the fact that they must be repurposed to secure their future.

There are numerous public buildings which are either partially in use or completely derelict. With conscientious and respectful redevelopment, we can preserve history and breathe new life into these valuable testaments to our past. If we allow these buildings to become empty, they will of course slowly and inevitably

decay, ultimately vanishing, becoming just another empty plot of land. As we move into the future it is our duty to preserve the dreams and aspirations of the past, to honor those who went before us.

Preservation committees do exist. However, they tend to hold on to the past; officially no innovations are possible, but off the record it may be quite the opposite.

Creative professionals, especially the younger Russian generations, not burdened with the nation's past, seem to feel the freedom to approach projects and situations in an alternative way.

Identity in Typical is one of those projects. Young architects have been investigating the repurposing of the many cultural palaces that were built during the Soviet era. The team discovered that palaces

that are still in use today are only used by children and senior citizens. By adding new functions, such as co-working and studio spaces and educational programs, the project is an opportunity to reach out to a wider target group, to stimulate participation in culture and education and to develop an economically viable model for similar buildings. One of the outcomes will be a prototype design for the former palace in Voronezh, a city in the south of Central-Russia.

They serve as a catalyst for globalization.

The authors of the project have developed a unique strategy to reframe the use of the former palaces of culture, originally centers of Soviet propaganda that were spread around the entire country. Now, these buildings and their networks will be rehabilitated and turned into socio-cultural hubs of the district.

They aim to integrate modern culture into public life while simultaneously taking advantage of the accumulated experience and achievements of classical culture, science and education.

If cultural palaces become financially profitable, the municipalities will be relieved of sponsoring them. For private owners, this profitability will become an incentive to use these buildings for the purpose for which they were originally intended. For the local residents, having a place within walking distance to study, work, communicate and share their knowledge will mean an increase in personal growth and development. On a municipal district scale, having

an operational palace of culture with a state-of-the-art program will contribute to the appeal of the district, the socialization of its residents, and the development of dialogues and initiatives. On a citywide scale, the development of numerous palaces of culture will provide an incentive to compete for visitors. Each palace will forge its own identity and provide higher-quality services. On a nationwide scale, this will create new urban communities and initiatives, promoting the progress of culture, science, education and small business.

You now probably understand why I highly appreciate programs like this, their legitimacy becomes even more evident in a politically sensitive context. They are essential in the field of international cooperation, serving a higher purpose: design, culture, creativity as tools for *change*, forcing an opening, a dialogue that did not exist before. They serve as a catalyst for globalization.

I can't stress it enough though: finding balance is key. Both parties depend on each other and simply cannot operate alone. Carefully treading unknown grounds, employing their expertise, thinking out of the box and cross-fertilize whenever possible, it's all in the game.

MERSIN CITYLAB

“Mersin CityLab focuses on the social aspect of urban planning in Turkey. The lab priorities finding social peace in polarised setting instead of pushing large construction projects.”

Ekim Tan — Play the City

Partners: Play the City (NL), Mersin University (TR), Sokak Bizim Istanbul (TR), Amsterdam Rainproof (NL), Mediamatic (NL), Citylab Buiksloterham (NL), WeMakeThe.City (NL)



photo: Play the City

Mersin CityLab is being developed as a platform to facilitate collaborative planning. Periodic city game sessions help to open communication and bring engaged stakeholders into action. The lab supports circular initiatives that offer a viable alternative to short-term plans. Since its launch in February 2019 a wide range of events kick-started public conversations around circular development visions, discussing themes including water, mobility and urban transformation.

In order to show what Circular Urban Development could achieve in a medium sized (1 million) Mediterranean Turkish city, two neighborhoods were selected: Alsancak and Demirtaş, both of which will be transformed in the near future. Additionally, a considerable group of stakeholders involved from the beginning were invited to the city game sessions to build the backbone of the CityLab. As the city game sessions evolved, so did the community joining the conversation, sharing ideas and interests for the future transformation of these two neighborhoods along the Muftu River.

City game sessions have been complemented with hands-on workshops such as a collective biking action which followed a desired biking route, mapping out areas with both potential and possible hindrances to the planned bicycle network. Another example is an aquaponics building workshop which engaged college and university students. Aside from game workshops helping locals build visions of the future, as well as short term interventions, public debates support building the community and establishing the CityLab. Meanwhile symposia

in Mersin University, WeMakeThe.City in Amsterdam and MARUF: Cities Developing Solutions in Istanbul, help the organizers of CityLab to share their experiences with each other and with other cities who have a comparable need and urgency for taking local action.

Currently the local team is gearing up to new game sessions detailing plans, meetings with local governments towards implementations as well as a printed documentation of contributions made by local and international experts.



photo: Play the City



photo: Play the City

DOWN THE

RABBIT HOLE

Partners: Mina Abouzahra (NL), Nina Mohammad-Galbert (MA), weave cooperatives in Marmoucha, Ain Leuh and Taznakht (MA), Bertjan Pot (NL), Wieki Somers (NL), Amie Dicke (NL), Palais Bahia (MA), 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair (MA)

One Square Meter Berber is a cultural and social project which implements design as a powerful tool to protect, preserve and sustain the ancient traditions of Berber carpet making. This project highlights the threat of a disappearing cultural heritage; preliminary studies examining the entire carpet production chain – from shepherds to traders – reveal very little appreciation for the centuries-old traditions and the skill of the weavers.

In collaboration with four Dutch designers, a collective of weavers has been creating artistic carpets in different regions, each with their own stories, motifs and techniques, exchanging skills and knowledge. This international team has presented their results at a number of prestigious events including African Modern Art fair at Bahia Palace in Marrakech.

Who in the world am I?
Ah, that's the great puzzle

I have been studying the traditions and skills of the weaving Amazigh community for over eight years and I would like to share my life changing story with you. My name is Mina Abouzahra, initiator of *One Square Meter Berber*. My parents left Morocco and moved to Holland and a week later, I was born. I grew up navigating between two worlds; indoors with traditional Moroccan standards and values, outdoors adapting to Dutch society. At an early age, I came to the realization there is also a *third* sphere; the best of both worlds – where any truth is legitimate, all depending on the point of view. It made me inquisitive, always curious to see the other side.

Curiouser and curiouser!

My hunger for inquisitiveness has never been stilled. When I began to travel regularly to my family's homeland, it was an unbelievably eye-opening experience. I learned about the abundance of distinctive local cultures, communities and traditions. It was no less than a revelation, the start of another chapter in my life. With this project, everything fell into place; the ultimate

opportunity to bring two worlds together, enhancing their strengths and attempting to address their challenges. Exchanging knowledge between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’; the past with its beautiful ancient traditions – and the future with innovations that may be able to preserve their heritage.

It takes all the running you can do, to keep
in the same place. If you want to get
somewhere else, you must run at least
twice as fast

Both sides can learn a lot from each other, knowledge has no value until it’s shared. In the bigger picture, this is about acknowledging origins and revaluating the significance of resources and crafts, establishing a sustainable partnership between both countries. Creating transparency in the manufacturing process, exposing existing structures and addressing them by the search for equality: adequate financial compensation for the female weavers, a revision of their crafts(wo)manship and their position in a male dominated industry.

We’re all mad here. I’m mad. You’re mad.
How do you know I’m mad? You must be,
or you wouldn’t have come here

Basically, an ambitious plan. Even though I tend to get very excited, especially when a project potentially ticks so many boxes, I wouldn’t consider myself naïve. With over 20 years of experience working in various international industries, I am fully aware of the potential pitfalls; the precarious balance between empowering women, motivating them and inspiring them, meanwhile trying not to push any buttons too soon as they may not be ready to be pushed. Also, how to achieve a valuable and equal exchange between two different cultures.

So, I needed to pick my battles. When I first started, I felt like Alice in Wonderland. Behind every door I opened, there were a million other doors. No white rabbits in top hats though to guide me, but what gave me an incredible amount of hope and confidence is that from the moment I approached the weavers, there was no doubt that they were eager to tell their stories, to be seen and to be heard, sharing what they had been doing for generations.

It’s no use going back to yesterday, because I was
a different person then

Back in the days, their skills and therefore their position was considered sacred. To this very day, the Moroccan carpet is one of the country’s strongest and most lucrative export products. Yet the female weavers, the artists behind the creations, are one of the lowest paid in the supply chain which is causing this wonderful craft to disappear. Younger women are no longer interested in following in the footsteps of their mothers and their grandmothers; the compensation is not worth the effort. Many of the weavers we spoke to believe if women were to receive better wages, the

Mina Abouzahra
with a bridal
carpet draped
over her shoulders,
Khenifra, Middle
Atlas. photo:
Lizzy Ann





Women from Taznahkt dyeing wool with colors based on naturally sourced ingredients, from left to right Naima Ouagga, Rahma Ifakkiren, Amie Dicke, Latifa Ait Sidimansour, Souhaila.

tradition would have a greater chance of surviving into the coming decades and beyond. By adding new trends and methods through contemporary Dutch designers to the collective voice of the traditional weavers' ancestors, we hoped to find a way to reassess their position.

The best way to explain it is to do it

When the Dutch designers met the Berber women, they fully embraced each other; there is no other way to describe it. The designers were taken into the local community where they experienced a true sense of togetherness and solidarity. Both parties were in awe of each other's talents and skills, united in a common objective, prepared to open up and craving to learn from one another. Connecting people and cultures, facilitating a safe environment and challenging everyone involved to dare to step out of their comfort zone, leaving them inspired and motivated to implement the acquired knowledge in their daily practices. I love it when a plan comes together.

The weavers were asked to make a self-portrait using a one square meter of carpet, teaching the Dutch designers their skills. In return, the designers created a piece incorporating ancient Berber knotting techniques. The designers learned the value of tradition, going back to basic principles, embracing all the beauty that nature has to offer. Additionally, the weavers learned new perspectives which they can apply to their own design practices and gained more insight in how to market their carpets. A two-way process, changing narratives and approaches on both sides.

Why, sometimes I've believed as many
as six impossible things before breakfast

Obviously it wasn't all polka dots and moonbeams; things didn't happen as fast as the Dutchie in me desired, I learned the hard way that one should be very careful mixing business and pleasure and sometimes it was hard to manage expectations – in spite of great intentions, Mina is *not* a knight in shining armor who will save the world. However, overall it felt like nothing but green lights along the way, which was obviously very encouraging. The timing was right, and I experienced an incredible amount of goodwill that far outweighed the struggle.

The amount of people I met who tirelessly put their time and effort into this project was truly heartwarming. The Dutch designers even claimed that it was a life changing experience for them; an alteration of their perception of Moroccan carpets and the carpet industry, something they will happily share across their widely spread networks within the industry. That realization is to me one of the many milestones of this project. The same goes for the confidence the Berber women gained, they have broadened their horizon beyond their own beliefs and a shift in the awareness that changes are not just possible, they are entitled to them.

Begin at the beginning, and go on
till you come to the end

Our biggest achievement so far? We have basically met all of our objectives. The highlight was our contribution to an exhibition at the Contemporary

African Art Fair, in the royal Bahia Palace in Marrakech. Seeing nothing but pride beaming from the faces of all the teams; priceless. Which, just like my own journey, is something that I am incredibly grateful for. Being the initiator, I had no choice but to take up tasks that I had never done before. Being creative is one thing, but also handling the financial side, writing reports, keeping track of progress, in short: managing the entire project is a completely different story.

But, unlike Alice in Wonderland, I consider this project merely the beginning of a joyful odyssey. I have a vision: in ten years from now, *One Square Meter Berber* is a sustainable professional organization, promoting a fruitful collaboration between contemporary design and traditional craftsmanship and contributing to a balanced carpet industry in which everyone involved receives what they truly deserve.



Open Letter,
a carpet designed
by Wieki Somers
and hand-knotted
by Zahra Taklit
from Marmoucha.

ONE
SQUARE
METER
BERBER

NAIMA
OUAGGA

TEFAOUT
N'TAKDIFT

My name is Naima Ouagga, I am 52 years old and I have two brothers and seven sisters, and I take care of my parents. I live in the countryside, just outside Taznakht, a city in the south of Morocco in the province of Ouarzazate. Traditionally a center of carpet crafts.

We all belong to the Amazigh tribe. In the ancient times we were primarily nomadic and known for our tradition of animal husbandry, particularly that of sheep. Sheep are among the first animals to be domesticated by humans; they have been part of our lives for thousands of years. Which helps to understand the symbiotic relationship between a herder and his flock and between the weaver and her wool. It is no wonder that the very act of weaving is considered a sacred one. Mother Earth has gifted us with the *baraka* of sheep and their wool; a blessing power, a kind of continuity of spiritual presence and revelation. Hence a thanksgiving ritual is performed before the very first knot is made and also before a completed rug is freed from the loom. The weaver has to become one with the wool; touch it, feel it and understand its properties.

Nasaja

Once we were queens; *nasaja's* (which means weavers) were highly revered. She held the status of someone of high importance. Someone who was entrusted with the sacred wool, brought to her by a woman who had washed, arded and lovingly spooled it, counting on the *nasaja* to transform the fibres into something new, a continuation of its life in another form. During the weaving period, the *nasaja* would be provided with food and drink daily by her client in order to ensure she was in the utmost comfort. Anyone entering the room where the weaver was at work, would take their shoes off prior to entering. A show of respect usually reserved for mosques. Wool was so imbedded with 'baraka' that within some tribes a wool thread would be wrapped around a bride's finger for protection and as a blessing; the groom would unravel it on the wedding night.

Tefaout n'takdift

So much for the history, we live in the here and the now. Where I am the chairperson of a cooperative called Tefaout n'takdift which was established in 2007 and now has 32 female members. Carpets are my life. Weaving the carpets is our main source of income. We support our families financially, because we have to. To me, weaving carpets has many facets aside from the historical and the practical. The act of weaving transports me to another place where I can forget about my frustrations and sorrow and reflect, where there is time and space for my dreams, my most personal feelings, my hopes. Whatever weighs on my mind, the carpet is there for me. We belong together.

When Mina contacted me, I was excited. People from outside our community are always more than



Naima Ouagga.



Amie Dicke sitting at her loom whilst learning how to knot a rug in Taznakht with Cooperative Tefaout n'takdift with Naima Ouagga, Rahma Ifakkiren and Latifa Ait Sidimansour.

welcome, sometimes they stay with us for a couple of days, sometimes for years. We are always glad to meet new people who show an interest in our community and our work. It makes me proud to share our craft with the outside world; it gives me hope for the future. Expanding our network will generate more work, meaning more revenue. We are realistic; working women who need to put food on the table.

One Square Meter Berber

With Rahma Ifakkiren and Latifa Ait Sidimansour, two other members of our weaving cooperative, I became involved with *One Square Meter Berber*. Our team worked with Dutch designer Amie Dicke, who lived with us for a while during the project. Here she experienced what it means to be a woman who is fully connected to nature and her environments. A lesson learned; how rewarding it is to stay close to the source. And how strong women can be, yet invisible at the same time.

The designers challenged us to create a self-portrait on one square meter of Berber. These are important dimensions as 1 by 1 meter is usually how the price of a Berber rug is calculated.

We were asked to exploit the concept of free expression, something we are not used to. Usually we rely on our intuition and the routines in our DNA. But these days consumers are looking for more contemporary designs and we are very willing to meet their demands.

The future is ours

During this project we learned how to work with technical drawings and different patterns and had the opportunity to travel to Marrakech.

We learned about trends, about innovative designs and alternative use of colour. I for one am thirsty for more knowledge, I would like to learn more about managing projects, sales and marketing and pricing structures. Not to mention the technical side of things such as industrial equipment and dyeing machines, about pricing structures and gain knowledge of practical work-related matters that we can implement immediately which will be beneficial for all of us.

I for one am thirsty for more knowledge, I would like to learn more about managing projects, sales and marketing and pricing structures.

Furthermore, I would love to master languages such as French and English. I wish for more educated women. This is a delicate topic considering most women do not feel the space nor time to even think about it. Because they do carry the responsibility of financially supporting their families, stuck between two generations they look after being children and parents, plus the household. Which I can relate to. But it all starts with opening up, broadening your horizon. With education. Learning how to read and write is only the start. Just like the collaboration with the Dutch designers. The future is ours. We may be invisible, but we are still nasaja's.

TAKING STOCK

“It is sort of a little bit nostalgic, but it is also a bit sad, because I feel like I am in a place that is gone, even though it is not gone. But it feels like the community isn’t there, and that is what I’m missing the most. I feel like I lost my identity without this community actually. Or I’m worried about losing my identity without it. I am trying to get back into any kind of artistic activity, so that I have access to people that think critically about images and arts.”

workshop participant

Partners: Mariam Elnozahy (EG),
Townhouse Gallery (EG), Elke Uitentuis (NL),
Wouter Osterholt (NL)



Overview installation and drawing session. photo: Wouter Osterholt

Taking Stock or درج و درس is an artistic work which commemorated the closure and consequent transformation of the Townhouse Gallery through a series of interactive still-life drawing sessions. The Townhouse Gallery is an arts institution founded in 1998 and located in downtown Cairo. Due to economic, political and institutional shifts, it could no longer continue in its existing form. Initiated by artists/designers Elke Uitentuis, Wouter Osterholt and curator Mariam Elnozahy, the project brought together members of the neighborhood and the arts community of Cairo. Participating in drawing sessions, they collectively drew the material objects that remained. These sessions took place early 2020.

Through these drawing sessions, participants took stock of a

multilayered situation, using Townhouse as a lens to examine a nexus of events in downtown Cairo and the cultural scene in Egypt at large. The sessions were open, intimate and slow, allowing room for informal discussions and reflection. This project was set in the former Townhouse Factory Space, which now belongs to the Al Ismaelia Company for Real Estate. A large scale installation was built to store all of the remaining objects from the Townhouse Gallery and to serve as a backdrop for the sessions and conversations. In this space, individuals gathered to think, process, and take stock alongside the members of the Townhouse community who wanted to seize an opportunity for reflection, to create a kinetic force from this transitional period.



The Townhouse Gallery.

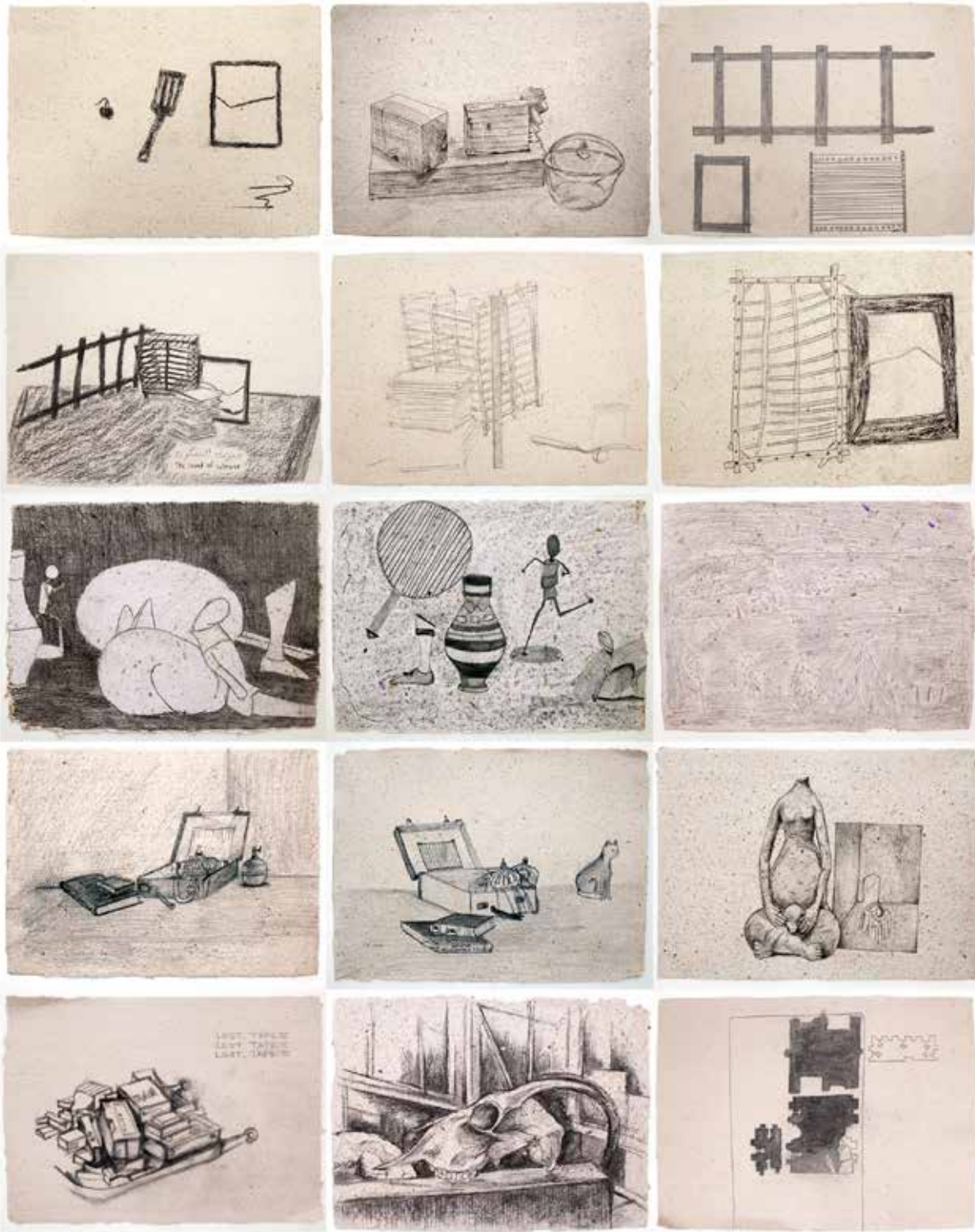
Each session was recorded and transcribed anonymously. These were then archived online together with accompanying drawings. The website was designed specifically to capture the ‘rite of passage’ that was initiated. Also included is an invitation to keep on taking stock in order to add to, and nuance the critical reflections that were collected thus far.

Taking Stock proposes a method to analyze the function and position of a cultural institution using multiple voices and sensitive rituals. The aim is to develop this method further and work towards an institutional critique that could lay out a blueprint for the institutions of the future. Currently the team is working on an online platform to share

the results of their pilot at the Townhouse Gallery; the launch of the online platform is scheduled for later this year.



Said participating in the drawing session. photo: Elke Uitentuis



Selection of drawings.

FROM DESIGN TO DIPLOMACY

Q&A with Arjen Uijterlinde –
Ambassador for International
Cultural Cooperation at the
Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

All-round diplomat, dedicated to the public cause, serving and promoting the interests of the Netherlands, its citizens, institutions and companies. Wide experience in international political, economic and cultural field, specialized in multilateral, European and Eastern European affairs.



photo: Nereu Jr.

What does it take to become an Ambassador for International Cultural Cooperation at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs?

I'd almost say: it's not just a job, it's a way of life. From an early age I have been fascinated by language and literature. The power of creative expression, the significance behind it and how communication creates understanding in spite of different backgrounds – simply by starting a dialogue. The very reason why I decided to study a foreign language; Russian in my case.

Exactly 101 minutes with the ambassador who brings a healthy dose of optimism and determination.

Those years of study helped shape who I am today. It was an incredibly fascinating period in my life, back in the days when Eastern Europe was still behind the Iron Curtain. I discovered how the lack of freedom of speech gave new meaning to individual expression, to creativity.

Traveling and living abroad made me grow aware of the value of fundamental human rights in our society.

All of these personal experiences combined forged my drive to become a diplomat, stemming perhaps from my idealistic ambitions to contribute to society and to make a difference to the bigger social issues humanity faces. Searching for connections, showing that Foreign Affairs are relevant to people – and maybe even more importantly: that people are relevant to Foreign Affairs.

This position allows me to bring together everything that I have learned. My leverage is dictated by politics and the social-political consensus. Being an ambassador, I consider it a part of my duty to bring a healthy dose of optimism and determination to the proceedings.

How would you describe the goals of the TREM program?

The objectives of foreign policy are large and wide-ranging. Among other things it's about building and maintaining good relationships with other countries; asking the pertinent social questions, prioritizing them, seeking collaboration and addressing them. From a ministerial point of view, this time the focus is on the cultural sector; we have invited the design field to use their specific strengths to make a contribution to our international agenda.

With policy rotating every four years, this gives us the chance to look back and evaluate our previous policies. The ministry then engages with various stakeholders and other relevant parties, on both a national and international level. We saw that in the last years there has been an exponential growth in the design sector; various initiatives that we

felt we needed to involve, making our policy implementation stronger when addressing social-cultural questions.

The creative industry by its very nature is particularly solution oriented. If you look at what happened during the pandemic of 2020; in many different areas initiatives began to spring up, many of which had practical applications beyond their humble beginnings. No matter how challenging the circumstances, you will always find the creative thinkers at the front line. The power and ingenuity of the creative industry should always be taken into consideration: from a design standpoint, taking the reins which gives a new perspective on addressing socio-political issues. This is a great opportunity to connect with international policy areas and networks. Due to this more structured approach in the TREM program, partnerships grow stronger and are able to contribute towards significant global topics such as social cohesion, sustainability, climate-change adaptation, urban inclusion, youth participation and protecting cultural heritage.

No matter how challenging the circumstances, you will always find the creative thinkers at the front line.

Especially these unusual suspects on the ground, the creative partners, are unparalleled in their ability and readiness to initiate a dialogue. They are able to create positive energy on an individual level, using creativity and inventiveness, yielding unexpected rewards that in time will become politically meaningful.

Economic relationships can for example be reinforced or become a stronger premise for other collaborative projects. We are able to tap into new networks in lesser known areas to gain a foothold, for example in the region of Murmansk in Russia. Or if we look at the projects in Morocco, with a strong community-driven approach and of great social relevance. *One Square Meter Berber* focuses on the preservation of local heritage, but also addresses gender issues.

One thing these 26 projects have in common, apart from their evolution from a design standpoint, is how they show that via exploration and learning about each other, connections can be made on the basis of common goals. Indeed, it is possible to implement substantial and structural pathways where new parties work together, where they both can bring new strengths to their respective positions.

An important question for the years to come: how are we able, despite any physical, economic or political limitations, to continue to invest in such projects?

Why is the design field so firmly rooted in the Netherlands?

Good question. I guess it has to do with the way our society has been organized throughout the centuries. A small yet densely populated country, where we have always worked together to address major logistical challenges with a pragmatic approach. Water management, urban development, decentralized authorities; one might say that on an administrative, systematic, social and urban level design is in our genes, which also reflects in our educational practice with numerous design studies resulting in renowned

designers and architects gaining international recognition.

Presumably, in other countries there is more focus on depth and specialization; in the Netherlands there has always been an exchange between disciplines. As we are a small country, we have always looked outwards, pioneering, searching for connections. A partnership rests on the power of its ideas, the seeds of possibilities and mutual importance. Additionally, a pragmatic approach, whereby hierarchy, status and dogmas are subordinate to the quality of the outcome.

A partnership rests on the power of its ideas, the seeds of possibilities and mutual importance.

What criteria were used in selecting the four TREM countries?

When the framework was written in 2014, progressive European issues such as migration, radicalization and climate change became more evident; complex material in our bilateral relationships. The countries bordering the EU received priority in our foreign policies. The current programs were evaluated on a cultural, social and economic level and new tools were developed for existing historic partnerships, with equal importance in the field of the available capacity. Taking all of these factors into consideration led us to select these four neighboring countries.

Via the TREM program, Foreign Affairs have opened up new channels that are not affected by politics, herein lies the power of the projects. Opportunities arise, albeit within

certain parameters but still allowing plenty of room to maneuver. Within the cultural guidelines the emphasis is less on assessing quality; at arm's length we facilitate without interfering at the core of the projects themselves. From these creative processes we take away valuable insights and lessons for both the Netherlands and the partnering countries.

These projects overlook the idea of a higher purpose; instead the focus being on pragmatism and meeting their targets. In even the most complex situations and environments creativity always shines through, regardless of any political considerations. Which is hopeful, offering opportunities for the future; the very reason why this publication is so essential. We have to share the experiences of the makers, tell their stories and bring them to life. Learn to appreciate their efforts and internalize their lessons; to value their inspiring interpretation of topics that deserve to be addressed. In this way an understanding is gained which gives a broad foundation for this form of exchange, in both politics and society as a whole.

By sharing the experiences of the TREM program, I hope to internalize the power of design, creativity and culture not only here at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but also at other departments and organizations, both national and international.

How would you describe your specific role, how far does your involvement stretch?
In my role I wear several hats. For instance, I am in charge of the department responsible for setting

policy and performance monitoring. I also advise the government on international cultural policies. This role requires the ability to provide guidance and to suggest approaches for the political agenda. As an ambassador I need to be able to share my story with a wide audience in order to consolidate the international significance of culture and the creative sector.

Part of this program stems from my previous experiences. When I lived and worked in Brazil, in the time leading up to the Olympics, I was involved in a rich variety of projects. It was interesting to notice the mix between the Dutch design power as well as their perspective – and the inclusive, improvisational thinking of the Brazilians. Our structural and technical knowledge combined with their passion, flexibility and intuitive style; a truly enlightening experience. In general, when referring to design, there is little awareness of just how much community power it can wield; social design thinking is an instrument that transcends its purpose.

In conclusion; what are your take-aways from the TREM program?
As stated previously, if we mention the creative industry, especially the design sector, this can be difficult for people to visualize. Therefore the power of design and the innate problem-solving mindset cannot be emphasized enough. We need to make it more tangible, prove its legitimacy by sharing stories of success, learnings and knowledge gained. By showing the power of these programs, we can create awareness so that it hopefully becomes second nature, in turn becoming part of the policy. The very reason why I continue to point out: by working together, we open a door to developing solutions.

We need to make an effort to achieve dialogue and mutual understanding, to lay a foundation upon which we can build. By sharing the experiences of the TREM program, I hope to internalize the power of design, creativity and culture not only here at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but also at other departments and organizations, both national and international. Obviously, I remain realistic, but more than anything this approach gives me confidence that we are on the right track.

LESSONS LEARNED

AND & TIPS TRICKS

Partners: Shift Works (NL), Abdalla Daif (EG), Art of Co-creation (NL), NieuwplaatZ (NL), ICEALEX innovation hub (EG), Delft University of Technology (NL), Alexandria University (EG), Hoogheemraadschap van Rijnland (NL), Platform 31 (NL), Global Shapers Alexandria (EG), Goethe-Institut Alexandria (EG), French Consulate General Alexandria (EG)

Living with water in the Egyptian Delta; designing and implementing bottom-up models for resilient and adaptable communities.

Not prepared for global warming

In October 2016, Alexandria's streets flooded to knee-high levels. Heavy rainfall killed 22 people.

According to team *Connecting Deltas*, Egypt in general is a country with a low level of environmental awareness. Not only this, but its drainage, sewage and water systems suffer from lack of maintenance. Egypt's infrastructure is not only ill prepared for the climate crisis, it actually contributes to global warming. Buildings are constructed of materials that absorb heat during the day and release it at night, which leads to an overuse of air conditioning. Also, public transport is considered to be inadequate, so people tend to use cars, which in turn produces more carbon emissions. And, rather than adding to the much-needed green spaces in urban areas, trees are being cut down.

What citizens can do

"After that day in October 2016, I was thinking about what we as citizens could do to tackle the climate change effects in Alexandria and the Egyptian delta. A couple of days later, my neighbor told me the story of the 1953 floods in the Netherlands – a country below sea level – and so the idea of this project was born: to gain knowledge about the best practices focused on the water cycle and how to allow the creative industry to play a role in developing bottom up initiatives. It was clear that we needed to get in touch with Dutch partners, since they have extensive experience in water management which stretches back over generations." – Abdalla Daif

As a result, the *Connecting Deltas* team has had an interesting journey. Practitioners Abdalla Daif, Daria Ofman, Lot Vegter, Sven Meijers, Ahmed Bastawy and Diego Sepulveda made an inventory of their findings that they would like to share. Let's take a look at their challenges, the lessons learned and listen to their advice.

Sometimes you expect the worst

One of the biggest challenges we expected at the start of this project was how to create a space, both literally and metaphorically, where all of the Egyptian partners could collaborate. In general, it is not easy for public organizations or entrepreneurs to meet with governmental partners and to exchange thoughts in a non-political setting.

We succeeded in building a bond of trust in which 'the officials' would also feel comfortable to speak freely. The Goethe Institute provided the venue, which created more of a 'neutral' meeting ground which definitely helped. In spite of our expectations we were pleasantly surprised at how relatively easy it was to facilitate this dialogue.

How to amaze stakeholders

The facilitation methods we used played a significant role in allowing all parties to listen to each other and make the sessions energetic. By this time, we knew most of the learning lab community, who in turn were aware



photo: Yasmine Hussein

that we are impartial and genuine when inviting government entities to join. Once again, we were pleased that all parties recognized the water problem immediately. They also agreed that having more multi-stakeholder gatherings beyond only government entities, and involving more citizens in the future is imperative. The civil society participants were surprised that government officials were so constructive and willing to listen. Conversely, the government officials were amazed that so many citizens and initiatives cared and wanted to get involved in policy making.

Lost in translation

At times, we struggled as a team; communicating between the Netherlands and Egypt, ensuring that we were on the same page, that actions were aligned, and everyone stuck to their agreements. The preparation of the lab sessions in particular took time because of the shifting group dynamics, the changing of dates and the fact that it was sometimes a difficult conceptual puzzle to piece together.

Due to heightened political tensions, we had to run the project during challenging times. We were advised to be careful about the timing of our events and we had to postpone one of the activities – the training for facilitators – which should have taken place in April but was moved forward to July.

All in all, we are happy about the project. For us as collaborating partners, the project also personally helped us through some difficult times and created many connections and spin-offs. It also inspired new projects and collaborations both in Egypt and the Netherlands.

Tips & tricks

Regarding some factors that helped us to set up a project, we have some practical tips which can hopefully be applied to other projects:

- ◆ we found it helpful to *create momentum*, to have several organizations addressing the topic (of water in this case, but it could apply to any other topic) simultaneously. This creates a buzz and gives it extra weight which in turn draws-in audiences and helps facilitate collaborations. However, although this works in a smaller city, such as Alexandria, where most initiatives are local and people know each other, we imagine that this may be more difficult to carry out in a city such as Cairo.
- ◆ *make it an annual event* and attach it to something international (as we did with the International Water Week and Water Day). Knowing that a topic returns, is a way to keep a discussion, topic or collaboration alive between projects. A good example of this is the school program in which we developed a water curriculum. The children are already brainstorming together with the creatives involved about next years project.
- ◆ *make sure people can adopt the topic and make it their own*, including their own branding and organization. The most ineffective thing is to want to own the process and pretend everything is already set in stone. By being open and vulnerable in the process, it is easier for people to step up and take initiative. Besides, you want people to own it to such

an extent that it can also make them grow, allowing them to find their own business models within the framework of the project itself.

- ◆ *connect it to an international story*, this can help local initiatives to make things both tangible and legitimate, especially when in the local context that topic isn't yet well known. International examples help a lot. We used examples of Dutch B Corps such as Dopper and Plastic Whale, which led to one entrepreneur adopting this model himself and importing water filter bottles to Egypt. In general, the fact that the Dutch team reflected on the outcome of the Egyptian sessions and gave input each time, gave a sense of reciprocity and kept the sessions interesting.
- ◆ it is better to *aim for many smaller initiatives* than one big one, especially when it comes to sustainability and creating a ripple effect. We are often pushed, also by donor objectives to quantify impact in size and numbers, sometimes also in scalability. We see that many smaller initiatives operating under their own brand, doing things their own way, are much more sustainable and impactful than larger projects. These may create a hype and then slow down because they lack genuine local ownership. Without people who connect their personal and professional mission to a project, it will never survive.

The team brought together more than 450 participants, including local residents, farmers, entrepreneurs, water experts, researchers, engineers, designers and artists. photo: Yasmine Hussein



LÜLEBURGAZ BİSİKLETE BİNİYOR

Partners: Artgineering (BE), Novusens (TR), Sustainable Solutions (NL), Lüleburgaz Municipality (TR), Ring-Ring® (NL), Farplas (TR), Accell Group (TR), Hedef Nature Sports Club (TR), Lüleburgaz Motorcycle and Bicycle Club Association (TR)



The team of designers, local and regional representatives, politicians, cycling associations; as well as police, public transport and taxi representatives at the Bicycle Academy in Lüleburgaz.

Artgineering, Novusens and Sustainable Solutions developed an integral cycling master plan for the Turkish city of Lüleburgaz. The plan, released as a book (in both English and Turkish), shows how cycling can be used as a catalyst for a more sustainable, inclusive and democratic urban community. The project takes a holistic approach consisting of three elements: hardware, software and orgware. The city of Lüleburgaz is an extraordinary case. Instead of immediately investing in physical infrastructure, as cities mostly do, they prioritized raising awareness and creating a positive view on cycling among residents (e.g. with '2017 Bicycle Year') and into setting up the necessary organizational structures. As a result, the residents are now asking for cycle paths.

The team conducted in-depth research and organized workshops, informal dinners and cycling tours with various stakeholders in Lüleburgaz. Presentations of team members were given to Turkish delegations when visiting the Netherlands. To involve the residents, the team worked intensively with the Municipality's 'Bicycle Academy', cycling associations, 'role model' cyclists and (creative) entrepreneurs. Eventually, the project aims to serve as an example for some 200 other medium-sized cities in Turkey. Although many Turkish cities have already started to invest in cycling projects such as bike sharing systems and the construction of cycle paths, the team noticed that during the previous phases there was little knowledge available on proper implementation.



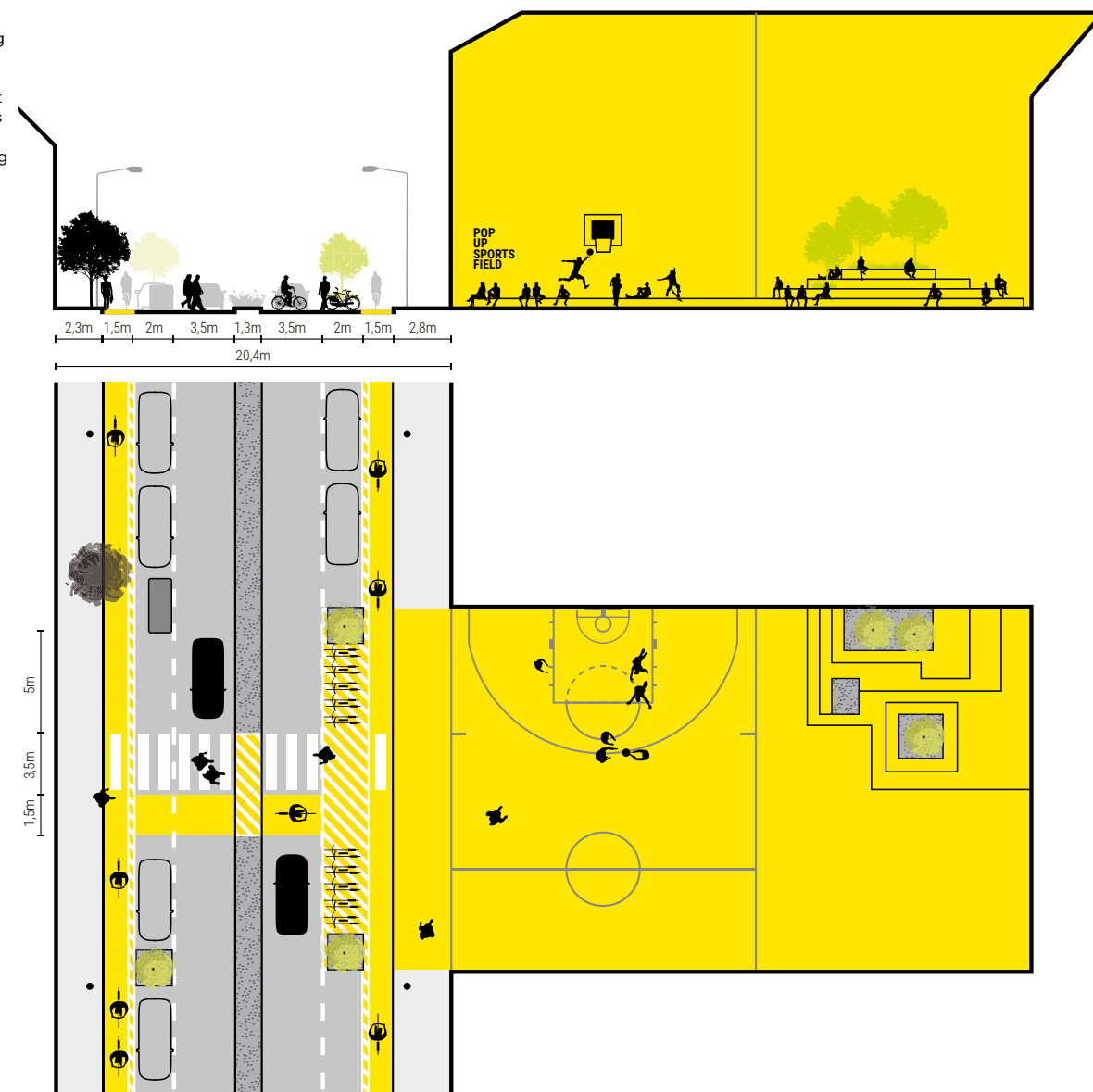
Testing the proposed bicycle-friendly profile on Istasyon Caddesi Güney Aksi in Lüleburgaz. design: Artgineering



After this summer, they will begin with a 'Tour de Turquie' a bicycle road show campaign, where the team will visit four cities in the course of a week: Istanbul (opening), Bursa, Eskisehir and finally Ankara. During this tour, the team will organize meetings, workshops and seminars with municipalities and other stakeholders. Recently introduced new Turkish legislation encourages investment in cycling networks and the team therefore believes that this is a good time to further spread the knowledge that has been acquired.

No. 3 of 25 post-cards with hints on how to turn Lüleburgaz into a more inclusive, cycling-friendly town. design: Artgineering

Pop-up bike lane with bicycle parking connected with the refurbishment of a vacant building plot into outdoor sports and play facilities. design: Artgineering



Partners: Network of Research & Architecture – Kaveh Dabiri, Keigo Kobayashi, Selma Maaroufi, Bojana Rankovic (NL), Rabat National School of Architecture – Prof. Khadija Karibi, Younes Talibi, Kenza Jazouli, Abdo El Yacoubi (MA), Ester van de Wiel (NL), Kulte Gallery (MA), Jet Contractors (MA), PAN Landscape (MA)

HOW TO EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

The installation *Food for Thought* at the African Crossroads Summit held in Marrakech: an original snails stall transplanted from Jemaa el-Fnaa, sampling this iconic ever bustling square in the polished garden of the seminar's venue.
photo: Hivos



Play City is a design & build initiative investigating the possibility of introducing a transformation of public spaces in Rabat; one that would opportunistically colonize left-over spaces, anonymous pockets across the city, offering small-scale open areas for recreation and everyday urban life, right in the heart of the communities.

Let me share my journey with you. My name is Selma Maaroufi. An eternal optimist by nature. Somebody who feels the need to contemplate on a regular basis. Calmly taking my time, to produce a narrative whilst developing arguments strong enough to convince myself – before I am ready to share my assumptions with the outside world. In other words: to create a blueprint. An attitude intrinsically linked to the nature of my profession as an architect. We create from scratch, envisioning the final product long before we are able to establish it. A sketch, a spatial master plan if you like, that results in a structure, a facility, a building.

Based on over fifteen years of experience as an architect, this is exactly how I approached *Play City*. The only way to describe the beginning would be an unknown territory – even though I divide my time between Rabat and Rotterdam – an unknown context and an unknown team; calling it an ambitious challenge would be an understatement. But more importantly; a unique opportunity to create something meaningful for the residents of Rabat, in collaboration with local parties.

Indeed, before long I realized I had become a player in a very complicated game of chess. Contrary to this beautiful game of strategy I couldn't help but sense that the rules kept changing. Yet every setback was an opportunity to re-assess and adjust the team's strategy and was counterbalanced by all the lessons learned; about experimenting, about dealing with adversity, working from a distance, the importance of understanding different cultures and local contexts, perceptions of priorities, redeeming myself and so on, the list is endless. An unforgettable experience in which determi-



Selma presenting *Play City* at l'École Nationale d'Architecture of Rabat.

nation, inquisitiveness, dedication, despair and stubbornness struggle for prominence.

The timing, due to Ramadan, followed by the holidays, was not particularly ideal. While we were in a hurry to meet our deadlines, society had, shall I say, other priorities. By persevering, we did manage to assemble a local team who were equipped with the desired dual knowledge of context. However, one usually selects people within one's own network, people who come recommended or we have worked with before. In this case, it was a bit of a gamble whether they would actually fit the project. We had interesting meetings and great conversations, but no guarantee whatsoever they would bring the added value our project required. Meanwhile, the clock was ticking.

A unique opportunity to create something meaningful for the residents of Rabat, a city I dearly love, in collaboration with local parties. It almost sounded too good to be true.

Regardless, virtually everybody in Rabat we shared our project with, was excited about *Play City*. 'Exactly what this city needs!' 'Why did no one do this before!'; obviously very encouraging. However, their enthusiasm was followed surprisingly quickly by a torrent of reservations, which at the time we filed as fear of the unknown. After all, pioneering is not for the faint of heart. Besides, it had become more than just a project. It had become our mission.

At the beginning of last year, we organized a kick-off workshop in Rabat with our local team members. After analyzing locations and thorough research, we selected a pilot site. Now all that was left was the mission to convince the local governor, the Wali. That one person whose formal consent was crucial, but also the one whom we had personal access to, through one of our local partners. The government however, unexpectedly decided to relocate the Wali from Rabat to Tangier.

For a period of well over half a year, regular meetings took place. And every single time, in our perception the authorities of the local district assured us, honestly, seriously, genuinely, that we were on the right track. We 'just' had to inform 'some other parties' as well. Meanwhile, it proved impossible to get a signature, or any kind of formal authorization. But when in Rome, do as the Romans do. So we went with the flow, indefatigably building our network and slowly working our way up towards the newly appointed Wali.

We created an alternative support structure. In this process, we encountered people who had no formal involvement with our project, but they turned out to be extremely supportive and helpful in a way we could never have foreseen; outsiders stepping up and pull the wagon for a bit which helped immensely. Apparently both our enthusiasm and vision turned out to be contagious.

It has been a fascinating process; I feel that in a way we have become politicians or diplomats ourselves. I have gained a deeper understanding of the



The team is currently working towards publishing a bilingual Arabic/English manifesto to share their research and design strategy. design: NoRA

Many hours were spent on the pilot site in Yacoub el Mansour, becoming acquainted with the end-users such as the craftsmen and witnessing first-hand the residents' every day experience. photo: NoRA

local context and was able to identify some of the key actors in the cultural and political scene, in a city that I thought I knew rather well. Where I witnessed first-hand the evolution of spaces, which strengthened my belief in the legitimacy and added value of *Play City*. The overwhelmingly heartwarming positive response we received from the residents during the process of scouting for sights; the mothers, the children, the elderly, only encouraged us more in our beliefs and vision.

Essentially, we just need more time. To adapt to a new context, to shake rigidity, find the balance between surrendering and keeping control and between anticipation and realism. Indeed: how to expect the unexpected.

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CLOSING THE CIRCLE

Partners: IND [Inter.National.Design] - Arman Akdoğan, Felix Madrazo (NL), Palanga – Kutluğ Ataman (TR), Wageningen University - Jan Eelco Jansma, Kees van Reenen (NL), Mimar Sinan University (TR), Özgür Şahin (TR), Barış Samir (TR), Onur Can Tepe (NL), Gülfem Akdoğan (TR), Studio Ossidiana – Giovanni Bellotti (NL), Melis Eryiğit Samir (TR), Goldsmith Company – Klaas van der Molen, Wesley Leeman (NL)



photo: IND [Inter.National.Design]

This project consists of three stages: *Closing the Circle*, *Farm to Fork* and *Harvesting Optimism*, in which design, art and science aim to make a contribution to the improvement of the quality of animal welfare and reduce the environmental impacts of agriculture. In this project, Arman Akdoğan and Felix Madrazo – founders of IND [Inter.National.Design] – teamed up with a diverse group of Turkish and Dutch scientists, architects, innovative farmers, artists, and energy consultants.

In the first stage, *Closing the Circle*, the team developed new design guidelines for a closed-loop farming system at the experimental agricultural project of Palanga. This project focused on the development of a sustainable and innovative design for an open cattle barn in Palanga, an art and agriculture experiment conceived by artist Kutluğ Ataman in Erzincan, a city in Northeast Turkey. This pioneering project in Turkey shows how through design and circularity, farmers can combine optimal conditions to improve animal welfare and reduce the impact of food production on the environment. The design takes into account climate conditions, inherent soil qualities, winds, cattle bedding, the production of compost and the potential use of manure to produce fertilizers and biogas. The project is scheduled to begin construction this year.

In the second stage, *Farm to Fork*, the project went public and aimed to steer a debate through an international conference in Istanbul in February 2020, on how farming can change following innovative practices from Turkey and the Netherlands. The confer-

ence focused on the relationship between rural food production and urban food consumption, as well as on the potential links between urban farming and circularity. The conference brought together a panel consisting of architects, sociologists, scientists and artists from both Turkey and the Netherlands and aimed to build bridges between them through exemplary practices of sustainable design.

Currently, the team is in the process of creating a short documentary titled *Harvesting Optimism* in which they work together with experienced film makers. Through this documentary the results of the research will be shared with a wider audience. Featuring both Turkish and Dutch experts discussing on-site experiments regarding agricultural design in Erzincan, Istanbul, Silivri, Rotterdam and Almere. The aim of the film is to show new practices that are a positive driving force in the agricultural sector today, such as Dutch and Turkish sustainable farming projects that take a responsible approach to the environment, the city, animal welfare and sustainable use of resources.



Aerial view of the barn as part of the agricultural landscape of Erzincan. photo: IND [Inter.National.Design]

THE SEA OF ORANGE

“My first memory of the seashore is of my grandmother’s story. She told me how after the lifting of the blockade it took her all day to get from the city center to Oranienbaum. Here in the coastal bushes there were battle boats on which her husband (my grandfather) served as an officer during the war.”

Tatiana K. – local resident

Partners: Observatorium (NL), Street Art Research Instituut (RU), Oranienbaum Maritime Festival Lomonosov (RU), Higher School of Economy St. Petersburg (RU), Municipality of Rotterdam (NL)



Collecting stories on the beach of Lomonosov. photo: Il'a Davydov

Street Art Research Institute in St. Petersburg and Observatorium from Rotterdam are conducting research into how they can transform the shoreline of the city of Lomonosov in collaboration with the local community into an attractive, inclusive and sustainable public space. The coast at Lomonosov, a city near St. Petersburg, is an isolated area that lacks a sense of ownership. The actively involved local community however would like to change this. This research is centered around the methodology of place-making and storytelling. By showing different perspectives on the region and stimulating the imagination, the team shows how the shoreline can be transformed. Observatorium describes their work as *arti-tecture*; a combination of art, the language of imagination and the function of architecture.

During the start-up phase the team made a preliminary assessment of the location. In the follow-up phase, the team asked the local residents to share their memories and dreams for the future of this region by means of workshops and a walking conference. The workshops still continue via online platforms despite the current Covid-19 challenges. The results of which will be collected and displayed on a website together with short stories and illustrations. In one of these stories, the team will develop a design for a location-specific object to serve as a base for a public activities program. As part of this program, the team will connect the coastal shoreline with the cultural heritage of the city nearby (the Menchikov Palace and park), the urban ecology and climate adaption. The team aims

to involve the local community more in the urban planning of this area through placemaking and the design of a site-specific cultural object acting as a communication platform. The object will stimulate the imagination of the local residents and open a dialogue based around themes such as climate change, pollution, bio-diversity and the interaction between the city and the river.

The team aims to attract more cultural projects to the region, eventually resulting in the creation of an imaginative waterfront park. Therefore they are organizing an event in Lomonosov and Rotterdam to share the results, as part of the Rotterdam – St Petersburg twin cities program. The team connects these twin cities on the basis of a shared interest in developing the public space along the riverbank. Other major local partners are the Oranienbaum Maritime Festival Lomonosov and the Higher School of Economy, St. Petersburg. This project is part of a wider program called Waterfront, focusing on the shoreline by the Street Art Research Institute in cooperation with the Danish Cultural Institute.



Sketch for the *Dune of Orange*. The first placemaking object of the project.

“The beach is a great potential for the further development of the city.”

Tatiana K. – local resident

“Oranienbaum is a city-warrior, city of fortitude and victory, of sea and parks, of sailors, palaces, silence and fresh wind.”

Maria Z. – local resident



photo: Il'a Davydov

“There was a holiday in the Lower garden. It was summertime, the sun was shining, and my grandparents and I were walking along the alleys. I remember the park and palaces quite abandoned, they have not been restored for a long time, but in this form they seemed more alive and close to their past, and this had its charm.”

Olga S. – local resident

BEHIND THE SCENES AT CREATIVE INDUSTRIES FUND NL

Yasmin Kurşun is Grants Officer Internationalization. She is responsible for the implementation of the TREM program and contributes to policy thinking. She has lived, studied and worked in Rotterdam, Antwerp and Istanbul.

Morning buzz

As a rule, I can't wake up without the combination of good coffee and a quick scan of the news. There are always external factors that can affect our programs one way or another; obviously I want to stay informed. In 2018, for example, we had the fall of the lira and exciting local elections in Turkey, there was a period of tension between Morocco and the Netherlands – and now the COVID-19 situation.

What do we really know about each other...?

I started at the fund in February 2018. Growing up with a Turkish father and a Dutch mother, I have always felt an intrinsic drive to connect different cultures. I frequently notice that 'we' don't know each other as well as we should yet. In the Netherlands, for example, people

are often surprised when I tell them about a festival such as Cairotronica in Egypt, where makers take a critical look at data and privacy. Or city labs in a Turkish town – with a larger population than Amsterdam – where professionals and locals have been brought together to improve livability. In these countries too, creative designers and makers are working on important social issues; something I would like to see receive more international exposure.

The art of perseverance

My mailbox is never empty; unsurprisingly, given that there are 26 different teams. The ambitions and perseverance of experienced designers, as well as those just beginning, spark my enthusiasm – even in times when life knocks you down. Sadly, my father passed away recently. It's only since then that I've realized just how much I learned

from him. As a young boy of 15, he travelled into the unknown, the Netherlands, to help his family and others build a better future.

In this program, I recognize the complexity of setting up a project in another country, with a different language, a different culture and within a different context. But “great things never came from comfort zones” (Roy. T. Bennett). Working with reliable local partners and a supportive environment is incredibly important, and I’m grateful that the fund plays a pivotal role.

A dating agency for designers

In my own way, I like to follow in my father’s footsteps; by contributing something meaningful. For instance, I help designers and makers to turn their ideas into a project plan, search for funding or find suitable project partners. At the fund we have an extensive database of applicants; internally we love to call it ‘a kind of dating agency for designers’.

An example is *Lüleburgaz Bisiklete Biniyor*, which was initiated by the Turkish partner. They saw our open call in Turkey but were still looking for a relevant partner in the Netherlands. At that time, Turkey was not high on the list of Artgineering – an office for research and design at the intersection between urban planning and mobility. Due to the great enthusiasm of Berrin Benli and Melih Gezer, Stefan Bendiks was convinced. They have been working together for about 1,5 years now and have become good friends. Currently they are planning to expand the cycling project to other cities. In another project – I won’t mention any names – a love affair has even blossomed...

Strength in differences

I would also like to mention how proud I am of the diversity of the designers we have managed to appeal to with the open calls, including many inspiring women. Lada Hršak, for instance, who does not speak Arabic but by now knows her way around Cairo where she has created a beautiful community garden. And Ekim Tan, who has now been asked to develop a game for the area development in the Marmara region, an area with approximately 26 million inhabitants. Or Anastassia Smirnova; who wants to bring about changes to the enormous library system throughout Russia with her contemporary design for a library in Yekaterinburg.

In addition to more established designers, there are also young makers who had the courage to set up a major project for the first time; like Minem Sezgin, Yue Mao and the Calypso36°21 team to name but a few. Obviously, there is something special to say about all participants: remarkable achievements, uncertainties or fears that have been overcome, unexpected connections that have been made or lessons learned that we all benefit from.

They never cease to amaze me

By mid-morning, after the first batch of emails it’s time to call one of the teams. Of course, not everything always runs smoothly; sometimes partners need help or cultural misunderstandings can arise. It’s important that they are able to share their story, to be seen and heard in a safe, neutral environment. I listen, give feedback and advice, meanwhile getting a clear impression of how things are progressing.



photo: Melanie van Zweeden

Incidentally, clashes between participants in this program are few and far between. At the moment, questions are mainly related to how the teams can and may adjust their project in view of the pandemic. This requires collective problem solving between the partners, involving the fund when needed. For *The Sea of Orange*, where they are building a site-specific object based on storytelling and placemaking, the cold winter weather in Russia makes it difficult to move the event to after the summer. However, for *Tangier: Facets of a Mediterranean Intersection*, postponing the exhibitions in Morocco until after Ramadan and the inevitable long, hot summer, does seem like a feasible option. Field research for *From El Labana to Bustan* is more challenging to execute digitally, but with trusted local partners on the ground, work

can still proceed. The teams send me a plan B with alternatives which possibly yield even better results. I should be used to it by now, but the unparalleled inventiveness of the makers surprises me every time.

Never a dull moment

Something that is also part of my daily work: catching up with program manager Zineb; the two of us have a never-ending to-do list. In the initial phase, we received no fewer than 94 project proposals, from which we were able to select a total of 32 projects (maximum 8 per country) for a starting phase. Forming the advisory committees was also quite a puzzle; not only did all of the disciplines have to be represented, but there also had to be sufficient knowledge of the four countries as well as the Dutch design field. After these sessions,

the applicants heard whether their project plans were approved.

Currently we are in the process of finalizing and monitoring all of the phase 2 projects and setting up the procedure for a follow-up round. Another intensive period with deadlines, meetings and paperwork such as monitoring the progress and drawing up reports. Personal contact remains essential, not only with the makers, but also with the cultural attachés in the four countries and other stakeholders.

Zineb and I are also brainstorming about our next project: organizing an international launch related to this publication, an extra opportunity to create an even stronger connection with each other and to delve further into various projects, themes and topics. Which forms of social, sustainable and affordable housing have been designed for Casablanca? How can designers, together with local residents, increase the sense of ownership? In short, more than enough content to discuss.

Matchmaker for
a better world

After all these international considerations, I find myself seated behind my desk at the fund’s office, with a breathtaking view of the Rotterdam skyline. The largest port city in Europe, connecting virtually the whole world. Maybe that’s why I feel so at home here.

At a time when ‘the new normal’ and the ‘one-and-a-half-meter society’ seem to dominate our daily life, I am even more resolved to stay connected in any way I can. Just like the teams in this program, who haven proven time and again that no matter how great the differences sometimes seem to be, they have demonstrated that any challenges can be overcome. A common objective, shared love for the project and a good ‘match’ can bridge any distance. A matchmaker for a better world, I couldn’t have wished for a better career.

—

Editor’s note: Yasmin and Zineb have been mentioned quite a few times by participants of the TREM program. One of the quotes:

“This program has been an excellent opportunity for true cross-cultural exchanges of knowledge and experience. Also, what a pack Zineb and Yasmin are! More funds need people like them. Protect these heroes at all costs, I would say. Their progressive, helpful and supportive approach definitely elevated how our project developed.”

Minem Sezgin – *No Seat at the Table*



Yasmin with Serdar Aşut of project *Pomace* at the International Clinic of Het Nieuwe Instituut in Rotterdam. photo: Almicheal Fraay

TANGIER:
FACETS OF A
MEDITERRANEAN
INTERSECTION

Partners: Stichting Amsterdams Andalusisch Orkest (NL), Mahal Art Space (MA), Guus Dubbelman (NL), Hicham Gardaf (MA), Karima Maruan (NL/MA), Think Tanger (MA), École Nationale d'Architecture (MA), Ian Skirvin & Bo Stokkermans (NL), Rodney Bolt (NL), Rose Stories (NL), Meervaart (NL), No Man's Art Gallery (NL)

“It perches on the top tip of Africa, its soul in the Maghreb, its eyes set on Europe, for centuries a cultural crossroads. Four photographers encounter differing facets of an ever-moving city, capturing moments in the Medina, the seaside forests, in stark new suburbs. They tell the story of a city steeped in the past, tossed by change, and reaching uncertainly for the future, but most of all of a city that somehow, in a way you can never quite define, gets a hold of you.”

Rodney Bolt – writer

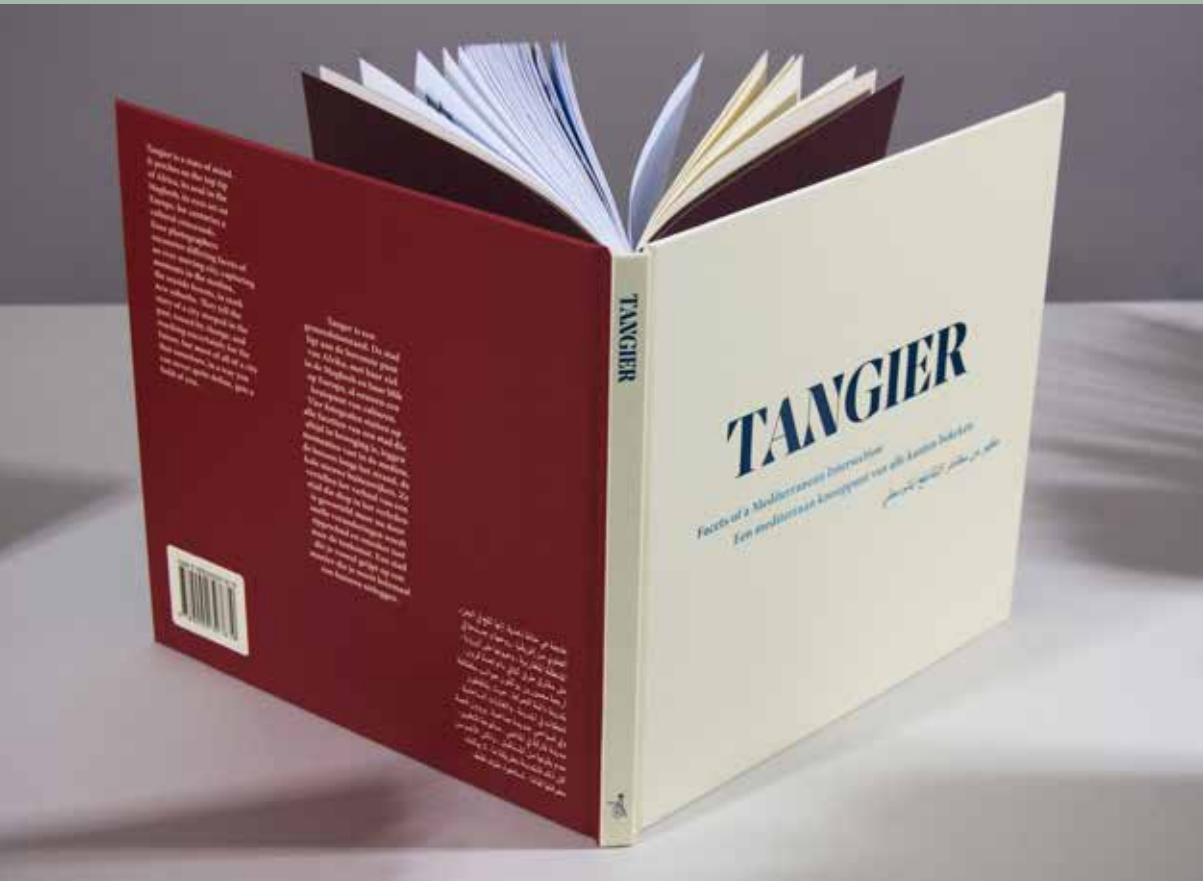


photo: Anna Theunissen

This visual research project highlights the rapid urban developments in Tangier with regards to the culture and identity of the city's population. The project is initiated by Yassine Boussaid and Robin Vermeulen from Stichting Amsterdams Andalusisch Orkest. The purpose of this project is to stimulate reflection on the changes occurring in the daily lives of the people of Tangier and to establish a dialogue focusing on the similarities and differences compared to Amsterdam.

The team carried out research in Tangier and developed the first version of an online interactive map of the city. This map visualizes the formal and informal structures in the city based on data collected with local partners. The photographers Robin Vermeulen, Guus Dubbelman, Hicham Gardaf and Karima

Maruan wandered the streets with their cameras, capturing this dynamic city from their own perspective. The images were collected in a published photo book with accompanying stories written by Rodney Bolt. The team also translated the map into an exhibition, which was premiered at No Man's Art Gallery in Amsterdam. After the summer, the exhibition will travel to the Mahal Art Space in Tangier and other locations across Morocco. Additionally, the team organizes supplementary city mapping and photography workshops for local residents, students of architecture and in schools in both countries.



photo: Max van Boxel



Living rooms

A living room is the heart of any house. It is a place of gathering, a place of exchange of ideas, a place of peace. It is a place where people spend their time, where they relax, where they talk, where they laugh, where they cry. It is a place where people live, where they love, where they hope, where they dream. It is a place where people are, where they are, where they are.

Living rooms

Living rooms are the heart of any house. They are the places where people spend their time, where they relax, where they talk, where they laugh, where they cry. They are the places where people live, where they love, where they hope, where they dream. They are the places where people are, where they are, where they are.

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The Moroccan scene

The Moroccan scene is a vibrant and colorful one, reflecting the rich cultural heritage of the country. It is a scene of life, of joy, of hope, of dream. It is a scene where people are, where they are, where they are.

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FROM EL LABANA TO BUSTAN

“Given the complexities of the locations we adopted the ‘tea observation’ strategy, allowing the capacity to recognize and see different values than your own.”

Lada Hršak – Bureau LADA

Partners: Bureau LADA (NL), Beit Yakan – Dr. Alaa El Habashi, Ola Said, Yassmen Hesham, Rawan Darwa (EG), CILAS Cairo Institute of Liberal Arts and Sciences (EG), Sarah Radi Ahmed (EG), Doha Ibrahim Eweiss (EG), Aghaton Mories (EG), Nermin Elsherif (EG/NL), Holger Gladys (DE/EG), Dr. Dalia Wahdan (EG)



Planting workshop with Ahmad El Sayd and the Beit Yakan community. photo: Bureau LADA

Bureau LADA, Beit Yakan, CILAS and DAS Architects joined together to create a series of spatial interventions that are linked to a cultural program which includes events and workshops focusing on living heritage and social ecology. Additionally, they planted the *Bustan* community garden in the Darb el Ahmar district in Islamic Cairo. Based on an exchange between the diverse range of stakeholders present in the area, the project hopes to provide a fresh view on Cairo's heritage and existing preconceptions of its physical state, the diversity of its communities and the potential for restoration.

The project takes place in the Darb el Labannah and Darb el Ahmar neighborhoods. The hidden garden is planted within Beit Yakan, a privately renovated 17th century house, which is

also the headquarters of Turath Conservation Group and NGO Center for Revitalization of the City. This garden became the first pocket of the ecological network of Heritage Cairo, connecting the knowledge and intelligence of growing with the invisible flows of social ecology within the community. The dry garden contains drought resistant herbs and plants, both edible and medicinal, an integral part of the design of the storytelling area surrounding the Moringa tree.

The teams researched various themes together with experts on subjects such as the invisible ecology flows, magic for resilience, planting for biodiversity and alternative energy production. As they progress, the team is investigating which (alternative) forms of public space and public life are possible and how these



Collage of the Bustan pocket garden. design: Bureau LADA



1:1 plant layout in Beit Yakan courtyard, ready to be planted as arranged.
photo: Bureau LADA

can be part of the redevelopment of the neighborhood.

In order to share their knowledge, the team is developing an online publication; a visual representation of the observations made during the project, including the tensions around property, heritage and the pressure on public spaces. This publication consists of (street) photography, the mapping of invisible flows resulting in a narrative district guide titled *The Tea of Social Ecology*. The digital publication also contains reflective essays on the decolonization of heritage and living heritage.

Additionally, the team aims to share the Tea Ceremony with the community; a public Tree Storytelling Event exploring ecology, science and art that is scheduled for later this year.

During tea drinking courtesies, a parallel form of communication takes place, including intuitive observations and realizations sometimes hard to put into words. The carefully designed circular area around the tree will serve as an ideal backdrop for the event, where community members and scholars will share and exchange scientific and artistic tree stories. These events will include discussions with grassroots organizations about the various ways living heritage can be protected, particularly in regard to Fatimid, UNESCO's most densely populated heritage location.



Dr. Alaa el Habashi and his students discussing the drought resistant Bustan garden.
photo: Yassmen Hesham

POMACE:
LEARNING
CIRCULARITY
FROM OLIVE

OUR FRIENDS THE GOATS

A STORY IN ONE CHAPTER

— according to
Serdar Aşut

Partners: Serdar Aşut (NL), Iris Jönsthövel (NL),
Melis Baloğlu (NL), Friso Gouwetor (NL), Emre
Gönlügür (TR), Betül Hafızoğlu (TR), Yaman Umut
Bilir (TR), Olive Academy Karaburun - Funda
Barbaros, Özge Erdölek Kozal, Sururi Uras,
Alırza Arıbaş, Işıkcan Barbaros (TR), Karaburun
Municipality (TR)

Project *Pomace* is an endeavor to understand and propagate the idea of circular design by learning from the ongoing practices of olive harvesting in Karaburun, Izmir, Turkey.

Pomace features a series of design experiments with bio-based materials towards a creative circular practice, a collaborative design research between the Netherlands and Turkey, involving designers and makers from both countries. The project is inspired by the intrinsic circular qualities of ancient olive cultivation practices in Karaburun. It suggests that understanding the inherent qualities of these practices and culture will help to develop a thorough understanding of circular design. The project documents and presents them through different forms of media. Moreover, the production of olive and its by-products outputs biological residues still to be examined from a design perspective. Project *Pomace* does so through hands-on design research by involving the local designers and producers and by utilizing the local production systems.

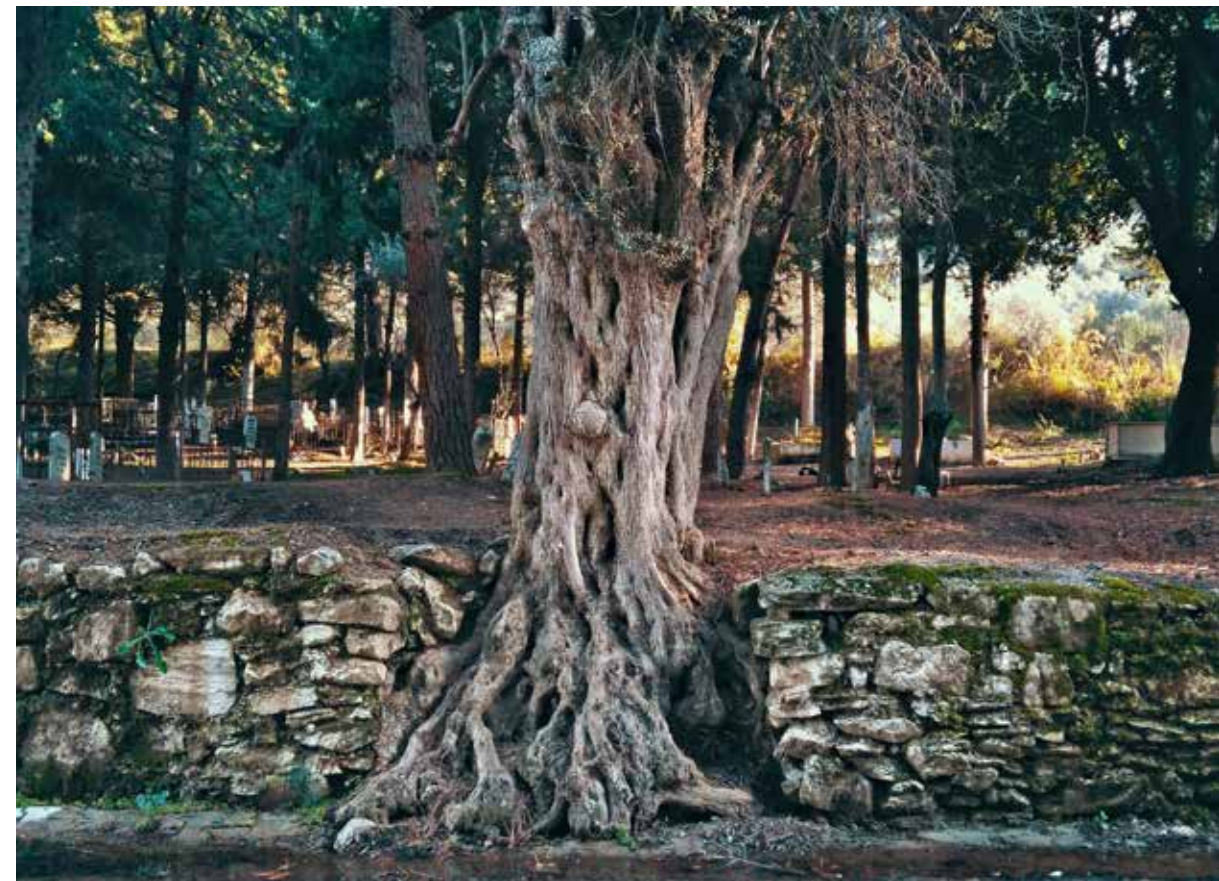


photo: Melis Baloğlu

Olives are an intrinsic part of Turkish life. These magnificent trees have been part of our culture since time immemorial. The Aegean coast with its perfect combination of hard soil and clement weather allows these hardy trees to live and flourish for anywhere up to 1500 years. These trees however, need help to grow and that help comes in the shape of the legendary Karaburun goats. These noble beasts spend their time grazing among the rugged rocks of the peninsula, gnawing on the low-hanging branches and leaves, effectively managing their growth and fruition.

My interest in the process of olive cultivation as an important part of my cultural heritage is something that has been building for several years, the culmination of which is the *Pomace* project. I imagined that if we could refract this age-old tradition and distill its essence, we could then perhaps gain a deeper understanding of the entire process. By utilizing modern design thinking, we would be able to implement a circular process.

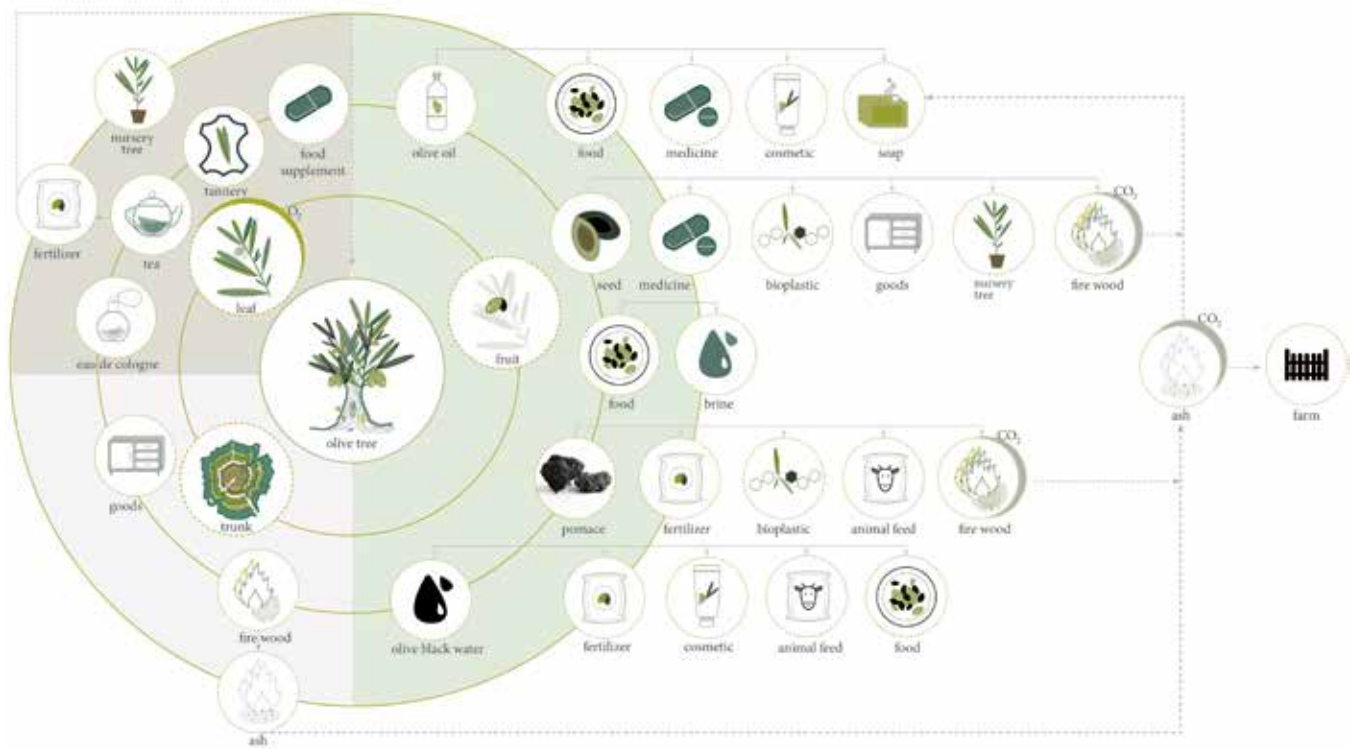
Taking a leap of faith, when there were so many variables and questions that needed to be answered. To what extent, if any, would our design-based approach be accepted by the olive farmers? Would they be willing to share their knowledge with the team? What can be learned from existing local practices relating to circularity by exploring the culture and material artifacts? How can existing practices be improved within the context of circularity by applying design thinking? Like any process of refinement, there is waste produced. In the case of olives this so called ‘waste’ is obviously biodegradable but surely there was a way in which we could process it and give it a new purpose?

Such an undertaking however is something that I could never manage by myself; I would need to identify the key players who not only shared my enthusiasm but also had the required skills to turn this idea into a reality. My years as working as a researcher and educator in architecture in the Netherlands added to my experiences in Turkey, Denmark and Switzerland coupled with my expertise in both computational design and product production stood me in good stead, but I still needed more accomplices.

Zeytince Association/The Olive Academy in Karaburun, an education, counseling and solidarity center aimed at preserving natural and cultural assets, as well as Karaburun Municipality, became our designated local partners in *Pomace*. They welcomed us in into their world, explaining the ins & outs, the processes and procedures.

The team was composed of Turkish and Dutch designers and artists with a wide variety of backgrounds and perspectives. This allowed a broad overview of the tasks at hand, varying from the more technical aspects to creative insights. The diverse yet related output of the project, ranging from materials to product design to film was only made possible by the active collaboration of our team.

One of the more striking things that became apparent in the process was the realization that we had started a bit too ambitiously. We planned to produce a film, a book as well as a series of product designs. I am convinced that all of these will happen eventually, but to make it more manageable we would suggest trying to minimize the expected outputs.



The olive cycle.
content: Serdar Aşut
graphic design: Melis Baloglu

Bio-based plastic sample with olive pomace. designers: Serdar Aşut, Iris Jonsthoel, Betul Hafizoğlu





Yaman Umut Bilir during the footage at the olive pomace factory. photo: Melis Baloğlu

Furthermore, we noticed local farmers, designers, institutions and even the municipality do not have, nor aspire to follow the same pace of life as someone based in the Netherlands. Being Turkish myself gave me a definite advantage in this situation but sometimes the planning and communication ran shall we say, a bit less rushed than the team and I might have wished for. Anything of value takes time to build and create and of course this situation was no different.

By utilizing modern design thinking, we would be able to implement a circular process.

Meetings in person, face to face, are definitely preferable – especially in the start-up phase of a new project with new partners – but not always possible. Now we continuously jump between emails, WhatsApp groups, phone calls and video conferences. Scheduling well in advance does not really work; spontaneous actions turn out to be more productive in the end. Indeed, under these circumstances an agile and flexible method of communication is needed.

However, once the project was up and running it was incredible to witness this international team truly bonding and working together as one synergistic whole.

So the traditional process produces waste, something that to western European sensitivities should be addressed, whereas conversely, something so deeply enshrined in tradition can be overlooked and as such never be considered useful. In this case this waste product would be the jigsaw piece which would complete the cycle, thus delivering our goal; circular design.

The remaining olive pomace (please let's not call it waste anymore) would be the focus of our combined efforts: here we would make something useful, something tangible. By doing so not only would we be reaching our goal; circular design, but we could also celebrate with the traditional side of our team, the olive farmers, that our endeavor was a success. Something that we could never have done without them, without each other, nor our friends: the goats.



photo: Serdar Aşut

WE ARE DATA

Partners: IMPAKT (NL), Cairotronica (EG), Haytham Nawar (EG), Ghalia Elsarkbi (EG), Nada Bakr (EG) Sabrina Verhage (NL), Coralie Vogelaar (NL), Jeroen van Loon (NL), Ahmed Aiuby (EG), Ahmed Soleman (EG), Imane Ibrahim (EG), Mona Makhoulf (EG), Sabah El Hadid (EG), Shadwa Ali (EG), Arab Digital Expression Foundation (EG), NextARCH Lab (EG), Wiki-Gender (EG), A2K4D knowledge centre and transport (EG)



Ahmed Aiuby's project on privacy in the *Age of Mass Surveillance*. photo: Rana Magdy

We are Data is an activity program focusing on how the current data-driven society is impacting our world. With this project the partners aim to establish a durable interdisciplinary platform of designers, creative makers, technology experts, engineers and researchers. The team connects entrepreneurs, engineers and academics with artistic makers and designers to generate more attention to the question of why we use new technologies rather than the more traditional and technical *how* approach.

Initially, for research purposes, the team organized different expert meetings with Dutch and Egyptian makers in Utrecht, the Netherlands. One of the findings of the research was that people in Egypt are predominantly concerned about data collection and access to reliable data, while in the Netherlands the discussion focuses more on the power of large technology companies and privacy issues.

After this research, a group of young, talented Egyptian makers was selected via an open call for a 7-months fellowship. During this period three Dutch makers conducted six workshops over a period of six months, covering the following subjects: *Introduction to Machine Learning for Artists*, *Computer Vision / Data Scraping*, *Speculative Design* and *Tactical Embodiment*. Each workshop included mentorship and a monthly meet-up.

After the workshops, the participants had one more month to develop new work which will be presented in the form of a publication as well as an exhibition at the third edition of Cairotronica,

Cairo Electronic & New Media Arts Festival. The festival was initially scheduled for June 2020 but has been postponed due to Covid-19. Consequently, the Egyptian participants are invited to join the upcoming IMPAKT Festival in Utrecht.



TALK AN EGYPTIAN LIKE

Q&A with Dalia Dawoud

Today we spent a couple of hours talking online with Dalia Dawoud: Policy Officer Culture and Development, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Cairo, Egypt.

Could you describe to us your role within the TREM program?

I am responsible for executing the Culture and Development portfolio of the Dutch embassy in Egypt. Together with Creative Industries Fund NL, we brainstormed Dutch Policy for 2017-2020. My role is to give more insight into local context and to contribute to the program by utilizing my network. I reviewed all of the applications for Egypt and gave my feedback to the advisory committee, who then made the final selection.

Once the projects have begun, my involvement changes. Depending on individual cases and potential challenges the project teams are facing, I provide assistance upon request. At the same time, I remain cautious since I don't want to impose, especially since the fund takes the lead in monitoring and following up the projects. As a member of the embassy, our goal is to facilitate a smooth process. I do keep track though and happily accept any invitation to the events or exhibitions they organize.

For the readers who are less familiar, please enlighten us on the local context.

Well, the situation in Egypt is quite complex. It's the biggest country in the Middle East, blessed with an incredible wealth of cultural heritage and diversity. To such an extent, that some people are unaware of just how rich this heritage and diversity is.

Since the revolution, or uprising – depending on how you see it – in 2011, there are continuous political and socio-economical changes and new restrictions on the art and culture scene. Combined with the constantly evolving characteristics of the creative sector this brings its own set of challenges.

Due to these dynamics, we have to constantly look for new ways to make things happen. This makes the sector even more resilient. Moreover, due to the intrinsically creative nature of many Egyptians there is so much potential, especially among the youth. Many emerging ideas and talents, however there is ample room for further development and experimentation.

Here in Egypt, a cultural governmental support system such as those in Europe, or more specifically the Netherlands, does not exist. However, throughout history Egypt has a rich legacy of artistic and cultural makers. Egypt has been the Arabic capitol for cinema, music and television, amongst other things. In recent years neighboring countries have rapidly caught up, so positions have shifted slightly. Mainstream media, predominantly organized by the government and private companies, are still productive. The independent sector however, while still evolving and productive, has been struggling for various external and internal reasons since 2011.

Townhouse Gallery, featured in the *Taking Stock* project, was one of those independent spaces that had to close its doors. Being a landmark for over 20 years, it had a symbolic connotation. *Taking Stock* turned out to be a successful project though; the partnership worked, they managed to reinvent themselves in a way that made sense in the current context of Town House.

These projects are a collaboration between Egypt and the Netherlands. How does that partnership take shape?

Partnerships were shaped in various ways. Some were initiated by Egyptian practitioners, who clearly knew who they wanted to work with



photo: Ramses Nossbi

from the Netherlands and vice versa. In other cases, the partnership was based on mutual interest based on previous work experience. There were also partners without a shared history, or collaborations as a result of personal search or peer recommendations. In some instances, partnerships were brokered by the embassy, who assisted the Dutch teams by connecting them with potentially relevant Egyptian partners.

In any event, when it comes to internalization and partnerships, local practitioners are the best source of local know-how; they are the ones who have to take the lead, embedding the projects within local circumstances.

One thing that was quite striking from the beginning was how the open call was interpreted. This led to

a wide range of different projects, a fascinating outcome I didn't necessarily foresee but definitely appreciate. The projects in Egypt were so diverse, from water management to developing a new typeface to cultural preservation or spatial interventions.

Papyrus and New Media for example, a project in which an ancient tradition is being brought to the attention of an audience other than tourists, by creating a contemporary comic made by young Egyptian illustrators. A beautiful initiative materializing with the support of the TREM program.

What makes an international partnership successful?

The call from the fund was interesting; it targeted Dutch organizations as lead applicants, which is the opposite of how the embassy usually operates: projects are primarily

locally initiated. As a result, the dynamics are different. No matter how the project teams found each other, it is of utmost importance that both partners communicate well, trust each other, be open to explore differences and are dedicated to a common objective. From what I have witnessed, those are the key ingredients of a successful collaboration.

Connecting Deltas is one of those fruitful partnerships, merging very well through clear communication. The Dutch practitioners clearly bring their expertise when it comes to water management and design, while the Egyptian partners offer a wealth of working experience in Alexandria as well as plenty of room for experimenting and testing. Additionally, over 450 participants were involved, including University of Alexandria and TU Delft and many other local organizations in both formal and independent sectors.

Or *We are Data*, a collaboration highlighting how the current data-driven society is impacting our world. A very relevant topic, in both the European and Middle Eastern countries. Aiming to establish a durable, interdisciplinary platform of designers, creative makers, technology experts, engineers and researchers IMPAKT and Cairotronica keep exploring and researching; they discovered that they have really found each other in an equal mindset.

The same goes for *From El Labana to Bustan*, consisting of four spatial interventions in and around a historical house in Cairo, linking a cultural program on social ecology, energy production and living heritage. In this project, mutual trust in each other's capacities and appreciation for their respective visions led to new insights, different from what they were used to; they complimented each other.

Obviously we wouldn't want to jump to conclusions, but is it possible to narrow down the 'typical' Egyptian and 'typical' Dutch approach...?

Ha, we are two completely different countries with different realities. Feedback I always get from Dutch people spending a longer period of time in Egypt is that our mindset is so... *different*. The Dutch are very pragmatic; they just get on with it as long as it makes sense to them. They think and subsequently act, a very practical spontaneous, experimental approach. The Egyptians however, we think, we contemplate, we process, we reflect some more... and then act. A different pace, where there is more emphasis on reflection, what works or doesn't work and why and how – which is considered just as important as the actual execution – or is even rather a fundamental part of the execution.

Thus, a different angle. Exactly why it is so important for different cultures to collaborate. Two countries, both rich in distinctive ways. Exchanging views and methods, creating a dialogue, complementing each other, building on each other's strengths, that is where the added value lies. How we interpret our differences influences the collaboration and its success. An equal partnership is about sharing responsibility, being flexible and not imposing. Giving each other space and taking the opportunity to learn, to be surprised and to enjoy exploring our differences.

Did you perhaps encounter any specific learnings during this program?

Of course I did! There is always room for improvement and learning. In general: how to identify the right partners from the start, which turned out to be quite a challenge for some projects. We could look

into a way to set the stage for more Dutch and Egyptians to connect. A potential approach, as suggested by Dr. El-Habashy of *From El Labana to Bustan*, could be to create a certain platform where international practitioners browse for certain topics, find each other in common interests and look for their counterpart, even before launching the open call. By browsing beforehand, diving into specific disciplines, both sides would be able to develop a plan together based on mutual interest. The call itself could be announced on a wider scale or for a longer period. This would perhaps create more opportunities and more matching partners.

Then there is the issue of ownership, a question raised during a discussion with the Creative Industries Fund NL: in a joint venture, how do we define ownership of the project? Should there be a party that is in the lead, or that has more say in the project implementation, considering the intended outcome? Or is this not relevant in case of good communication, clear division of roles and mutual agreement? Definitely something to ponder on.

There is also the question of how to provide sufficient and needed support to sustain partnerships, especially in intercultural collaboration. As well as how to respond to and accommodate changes in the projects and context; how to remain flexible without jeopardizing quality and outcomes.

Is there anything else you'd like to add about yourself and in general, before we bid you goodbye?

I have been in this job for four years now and I still love it. These days I am housebound, like everyone else, but usually I like to travel a lot. I like to believe that I am making a difference in what I do, or at least I am

trying to. To me that means examining new grounds and taking up challenges, trying to make the best out of any given situation and always look for creative ways to add value.

The experience, the process itself, is as important as the outcome.

The Dutch government supports various modalities for international collaboration. By stimulating these collaborations where people with different nationalities, experiences and backgrounds are involved, people tend to be open and enthusiastic, researching new contexts and celebrating differences. By creating together, connecting in a meaningful way, we learn from each other. In that sense, the experience, the process itself, is as important as the outcome. The TREM program is a very good example of how projects are a practical tool for such an encounter.

Meet-up Egypt
at HipHopHuis
in Rotterdam.
photo: Khalid
Amakran



NEW URBAN MEDIA CENTRE IN YEKATERINBURG

Partners: SVESMI Experimental Architectural Office (NL), Municipal Association of Libraries (RU), The July 16 Agency (RU) and with support of Yekaterinburg Municipality (RU)



Workshops with students and young professionals discussing the role the district library plays in city life. photo: Anna Marchenkova

Experimental Architectural Office SVESMI worked together with the Municipal Association of Libraries, Yekaterinburg Municipality and The July 16 Agency to design a new type of social center in the city of Yekaterinburg, Russia. The project builds on the existing physical structure of municipal libraries which were constructed in the Soviet period as part of the socialist welfare system. The libraries continue to have an important social role and reputation however, the team feels that renewal is necessary in order to better reflect the needs of contemporary society.

The developed prototype combines design, new technology and cultural programming to create a new public space. Parallel to the development of a spatial design, the team built a new collection of books based around urban-related topics. They also organized a cultural program in which speakers from Dutch libraries and Russian cultural centers engaged one another in discussion and shared experiences.

The team is currently working on strengthening support among various parties and to financially realize the spatial interventions both in- and outside the library. Therefore, they continue the cultural program via a series of special lectures called 'Stars in the Library'. By actively involving the press, a debate centered on the strategic repurposing of the library system is being instigated, which in turn generates more attention for the project and the vision.

The team also writes articles detailing the contemporary role and meaning of libraries as meeting places for strategic publication, thus framing the project in an international context. At the same time, the design will be developed further into an album, becoming a manual for transformation. With this, the team and the Municipal Association of Libraries aim to inspire influential stakeholders.

“Everyone looks so much better on Instagram with a bookshelf as a background.”

Anastassia Smirnova – SVESMI



Design for the reconstruction of Library 17 in Yekaterinburg. Large windows allow for a clear visual connection between the main street and the library. design: SVESMI

Design for the reconstruction of Library 17 in Yekaterinburg. View of the reception and the green living room. design: SVESMI



“SVESMI team loves libraries and has faith in their future potential. We are also interested in working with systemic transformation. We believe that it is possible to use even the most conservative and obsolete networks to revolutionize societies from within through intelligent design.”

Anastassia Smirnova – SVESMI

QANAT – A TRAINING FOR THE NOT YET

Partners: LE 18 – Francesca Masoero (MA), Jeanne van Heeswijk (NL), Dar Bellarj Foundation (MA), L'Ecole Supérieure des Arts visuels de Marrakech (MA), GDF - Global Diversity Foundation (MA), Afrikaanderwijk Coöperatie (NL), BAK basis for art and knowledge (NL), Het Nieuwe Instituut (NL), Bureau Postweijk (NL), Abdellah Hassak (MA), Amine Lahrach (MA), Edouard Sors (FR), A. George Bajalia (US/MA), Jerome Giller (BE), Louisa Aarrass (FR/MA), Nassim Azarzar (MA), Noureddine Ezzaraf (MA), Rim Mejdî (MA), Sara Frikech (NL), Shayma Nader (PL), Soumeia Ait Ahmed (MA), Anna Raimondo (IT/BE), Callum Copley (UK), Faiq Mari (PL), Francois Cadoux (FR/MA), Heidi Vogels (NL), Laila Hida (MA), Maha el Madi (MA), Mamans Douées of Dar Bellarj (MA), Nadir Bouhmouch (MA) and Thierry Ruf (FR/MA)



Concluding the Training for the Underwater(ed) Land, part of *Training for the Not Yet* - BAK, (Utrecht), *The Scene of the Crime* is an invitation to act out and to play with the relationships between nature and nurture, culture and capitalism. Nassim Azarzar, A. George Bajalia and Jerome Giller. photo: Jerome Giller

Qanat – a Training for the Not Yet is a platform addressing the politics and poetry of water, part of the multi-year collective research project *QANAT* initiated by LE 18. As an independent cultural platform LE 18 joined forces with Jeanne van Heeswijk and her ongoing research 'Preparing for the not yet' which develops trainings in civic engagement, radical collectivity and active empowerment, to create and practice alternative imaginings of being together.

Working with different communities in Marrakech, the team is seeking ideas on how to rethink water and other collective infrastructures in the city, inspired by inhabitants' memories and desires. Central questions include: 'How can we jointly shape our living environment and stimulate cultural exchanges between

communities?' and 'How do we take responsibility for this?'.

An interdisciplinary group of artists, designers, architects and researchers are mapping out the local dynamics through participative methodologies, combined with archival research, interviews and the creation of meeting spaces. The activities included a year-long series of workshops, research residencies, exhibitions and public programs in Marrakech exploring topics related to urban politics, collective memory, agroecology and hydro feminism. Additionally, a five-day training took place at BAK in 2019, focusing on power structures and relationships that determine the form and function of water in the urban environment and beyond. During Covid-19 times, the collective research also continues digitally.



Radio Dar Bellarj comprises of a series of workshops developed by sound artist Abdellah Hassak together with different communities and citizens of the medina in Marrakech. The aim is to offer radio as a collective platform to share memories and imaginings of the city. photo: Francesca Masoero



Developed during Training for the Underwater(ed) Land, part of *Training for the Not Yet* - BAK (Utrecht), this workshop unlocked imaginaries related to 'rootedness and uprootedness', exploring the relationship between food cultures and landscape making. *Entangled Ecologies: Rooted & Uprooted*. Louisa Aarrass, Sara Frikech and Francesca Masoero. photo: Louisa Aarrass

In Marrakech, the project focuses on the Medina, the khettara Ain Taher, the historic palm grove and the Zaraba channel. Action-research in Marrakech has been taking place via the 'Collective Workshops' co-developed with the Dar Bellarj Foundation and various other proposals and collaborations emerged through local partnerships. The team also connects with other relevant areas inside and outside Morocco.

In addition to the locally embedded work, framed as a 'school of water', the team is also developing an open archive, a series of publications and a web/radio platform. Combined, these forms aim at outlining an integrated infrastructure as a way to develop shared imaginaries on water and communal infrastructures in the city. The results of the project will be presented

amongst others at the cultural platform LE 18 in Marrakech and BAK in Utrecht and via Sculpture International Rotterdam, an organization for arts and culture in open public spaces.



A collective mapping of qanats led by geographer and professor Thierry Ruf in the Marrakech palm grove, one of the remaining urban sites where this millennial underground system of water management remains visible. photo: Heidi Vogels

NO SEAT AT THE TABLE

Partners: Minem Sezgin (NL), Rajab Eryiğit (TR),
Jasmijn de Nood (NL), Erhan Muratoğlu (TR),
Bob Mollema (NL), Murat Ötünç (NL), Vincent
de Boer (NL), NIT-Netherlands Institute in
Turkey (TR), Bond Precaire Woonvormen (NL),
Stüdyo 501 Mimarlık (TR), Zıtlar Mecmuası (TR),
RAUM (NL), De Voorkamer (NL), Bant. Mag. (TR)

A LETTER FROM

MY FUTURE SELF

No Seat at the Table
is a fictional graphic
novel, based on
real life experiences
of residential dis-
placement and
gentrification in the
cities of Turkey and
the Netherlands.

Dear Minem,

I am writing you this letter, as you are about to reach a milestone this year:
your 30th birthday. A perfect moment to reflect and evaluate, wouldn't you
agree?

Being a bit of a soul searcher, I thought it might be interesting to look back in
years to come and reminisce about what kept me occupied professionally as
my twenties drew to a close.

Let's start at the beginning, a quick recap before we go any further, who
am I: in brief, a first-generation immigrant woman from Turkey, living in the
Netherlands.

I wouldn't necessarily consider myself a role model — after all I am not
famous (yet) — but I have always felt it as my duty as a decent human being
to strive to be someone who can inspire. Somebody who encourages others
to believe that the sky is the limit once they put their hearts and minds to it.

So far, it looks like you have somehow always reached the goals you set for
yourself, right? Your motivation and drive are paying off. You may not be
aware of it, but you have grown into a creative, determined and ambitious
adult, relentlessly trying to contribute to a better world.

I'd like to remind you, in case you forgot, that didn't happen overnight.
But you always gave it your best shot. Remember *No Seat at the Table*?



photo: Minem Sezgin



These drawings are made for character developments and are sketches for the stories. Illustration: Bob Mollema

That graphic novel we made, about the impact of gentrification in both Turkey and Holland. To be more specific: Ankara, Istanbul, Amsterdam and Utrecht. All cities you held dearly – and you reluctantly witnessed firsthand how this seemingly unstoppable process painfully affected local residents.

Somehow you intrinsically felt the need to address it, but sometimes, you just need that little nudge in the back. And there it was, opportunity came a-knocking.

The open call from the Stimuleringsfonds was the perfect opportunity to get personally involved on a larger scale; to put all of your combined knowledge and passion into action and actually try to make a difference. And yes, you instigated this project. Found an artistic and gentle way to address such a complicated matter: through the eyes of a dove, observing urban life taking its course.

You became the manager, the curator of the illustrators, the co-creator of the story, the spider in the web. But above all, you assembled the team. A group of passionate people, combining their forces, turning an idea into something tangible.

We attempted to document the frustrating and inevitable developments in these cities. In both countries we found many similar examples of spatial segregation and residential displacement, changes related to the enhancement of a neoliberal approach to urban planning policies.

With four different cities, each with their own illustrator, a message to be shared, a narrator and local partners, stories to be collected, this was a lot to tie together. The initial phase consisted of both written and photographic research, field assessments and interviews with local residents, all of this combined to make the first draft.

Overall, inclusivity was implemented in the approach of the project, the countries, the cities, the residents and the team members. This made you more aware than ever of the relevance and beauty it can bring to the outcome of a project.

With a great idea and teamwork, and with the support of an organization that is willing to take a risk, anything is possible.

Together we managed to create something beautiful and powerful, where previously there was nothing: the essence of creation and collaboration. Using art and design as a tool to address social global issues; a true joint effort made possible by an amazing team.

It was the first time you had to take care of a large international partnership. Although it was an incredible experience it wasn't without its share of ups and downs, something that a wise person should always learn from. Let's not forget the tears of joy shed when Rajab Eryigit delivered the first uncolored

illustrations of the city of Istanbul. Or the smiles and laughter, after eight months of working remotely with countless amounts of group chats, conference calls and online brainstorms, finally we actually met in person during our team residency week in Utrecht. Or the frustration when the corona virus became a real threat to our daily lives, causing the project to be placed on hold.

All these memories though should be treasured, dear Minem. Sometimes it is difficult to see beyond the moment but whether it's good or bad, time always gives us a new perspective on past experiences.

Without perhaps even realizing it, all of us learned so much from this project, for example a re-evaluation of our leadership skills. Or how about: we actually created a book! Being open to feedback, remaining grounded and solution-orientated when needed, all of these things we managed to implement and take in our stride as the days threw up their challenges. Let's not forget the value of working in an international and multidisciplinary environment, something that elevated your perspectives both professionally and personally.

Inclusivity was the bridge between two cultures, between four cities and between many individuals. The relevance and beauty it can bring to a team and the outcome of a project is immeasurable. The level of dedication, belief, hope and creativity has been remarkable.



illustration: Rajab Eryigit

As I am writing this, I can reflect with pride: pride in being part of something bigger than I ever could have dreamed of, something tangible, something real, something that matters. I hope you look back on these days fondly Minem, for they showed all of us involved that not only is a dream something to be cherished, it also shows that with a great idea and teamwork, and with the support of an organization that is willing to take a risk, anything is possible.

To make sure *No Seat at the Table* would keep the dialogue going, you also created an online platform where the team shared their anecdotes on a weekly basis. Open for everyone to join, stimulating a hopefully ongoing conversation on such a relevant social urban topic.

Back in the days, I overheard you dreaming out loud: your wish for the future, to be part of more projects like this: curious, creative, openminded, cross-cultural and supporting a relevant cause. Dear Minem, don't ever stop dreaming.

—



illustration: Erhan Muratoğlu

LEARNINGS, CHALLENGES

&

ACHIEVE- MENTS

Partners: Schiemann Weyers Architects -
Jörn Schiemann, Otto Weyers, Larissa Araripe
Rand (NL), Samara State University - Evgenia
Repina, Sergei Malakhov, Alexander Gnilomedov
(RU), Joost Grootens (NL), Irma Gross (NL),
Arjan Hebly (NL), Vitaly Stadnikov (RU), Helmut
Thöle (NL), Tatlin Publishing House (RU)

In this project in the city of Samara, the Dutch-Russian team is investigating how to bring activists, concerned citizens, developers and authorities together. The contacts that have been established with different stakeholders and professionals revealed different perceptions and provided essential data for this research. There is a mutual awareness of the value of the historical city center, although the current building activity is based on an instant profit philosophy rather than on a long-term vision.

The Samarsky Yard is the urban module the historical city of Samara is composed of. It evolved during the Soviet period, when the primary housing estates were transformed into multiple family residences. It potentially offers a model for sustainable collective housing, based on citizen participation and diversity in the design of the living environment. In the final phase of the research project, all parties supported the idea of an 'Atlas', a publication that reveals the complexity of the urban condition and provides a mutual basis for further dialogue: a holistic shared vision for the area. The 'Atlas' has become an extensive reference work, spanning four hundred pages of interviews, research, drawings, plans, photos and much more, all of which will be published in both Russian and English.

We asked the partners from both countries the following questions,

which they responded to independently.

What were your biggest learnings?
What was your biggest challenge?
What was your biggest achievement?

First with their answers, the Russian team members:

Biggest challenge

The severity of the threat to the city's historical heritage, its loss – accelerated by the developers, the corruption of the authorities, a lack of professional methodologies and tools, a lack of consolidated opinion in the community about the actual value of their heritage, colonial policy, nepotism, a lack of subjectivity in part of the residents of the historical center, the lack of reliable data – all these things combined to made it a challenge to preserve a neutral posi-



Samarsky Yard excursion. photo: Jörn Schiemann

tion; essential when working on such a sensitive and important project.

Biggest learnings

The real possibility of consolidating the views of the international expert community, regarding the value of the Samara Courtyard and the preservation of an objective view.

Biggest achievement

A new objective view of the value of the historical heritage, new methods of data representation, the publication of a book, which hopefully will be widely shown in Russia and will also help gain recognition of the value of Samara's historical fabric throughout the world.

Next up, the Dutch:

Biggest challenge

It was a challenge to maintain the team spirit whilst operating in an almost vacuum of information, communication and a diffusion of individual interests and intentions. This vacuum was eventually filled by producing essential base-drawings covering diverse topics which were combined with online research and an examination of the urban fabric of Samara. Presenting this information in an appealing format (designed by SJG), led to the mutual agreement on the chosen approach and convinced most of the team members to intensify their commitment.



Samarsky Yard excursion. photo: Jörn Schiemann

Biggest learnings

A neutral approach – withholding any neo-colonial intentions – is absolutely the right approach. It was more difficult than we expected to communicate this to a Russian counterpart who expects support for their activist goals. The same is applicable when positioning the topic 'The Yard' in a broader context instead of exclusively highlighting the yard interiors. Still, in the end, we think that the biggest learning for all parties involved was to discover just how valuable it is to contribute a neutral perspective to a discussion that could otherwise be dominated by strong and diverging interests and opinions.

Biggest achievement

During the introduction of the project in Samara and numerous in-between presentations and on-site investigations, we succeeded in raising the interest of stakeholders in diverse positions. This broad, mutual interest in the project and in particular to the specific approach, validated our efforts and motivated us to take the project further in form of a publication, a book. This final step will hopefully increase the general awareness of the topic.



Samarsky Yard excursion. photo: Arjan Hebly

A VISUAL STORY OF OUR METHODOLOGY

Partners: bureau SLA – Peter van Assche, Abdessamed Azarfane, Ninja Zurheide, Pol Vermeulen, Kaj Nieuwenhoff (NL), Idmaj Sakan (MA), Imane Barhmi (MA), Marieke Berkens (NL), Jerryt Krombeen (NL), Youssef Lehkim (MA), Mahfoud Laasri (MA)

This project is a collaboration in which the partners attempt to find solutions for urban expansion in Casablanca. Due to rapid urbanization, many rural migrants now live in 'informal housing'. Since 2004, the 'Villes sans Bidonvilles' program has been relocating inhabitants of informal housing into new apartments. This has resulted in an impressive amount of new housing districts, often consisting of thousands of apartments. The team has observed a lack of meaningful public spaces, of connections with the city and of social cohesion. The design research aims to offer an innovative perspective and generate more attention to quality and sustainability.

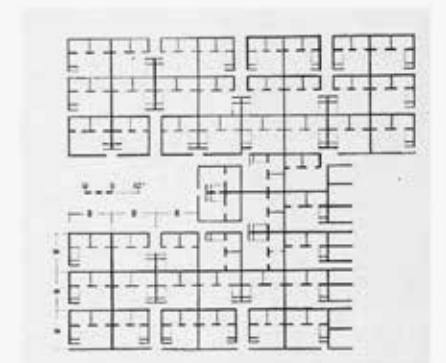
The team began with an initial study consisting of two parts: a quantitative analysis of urban phenomena and data and a qualitative analysis based on interviews, photography and descriptions. The approach of the team was holistic: they combined typological and morphological studies with studies of social practices. A suitable location to test the research results was allocated to the team: a 15-hectare empty site at Tit Mellil, just outside Casablanca. Moroccan architects and developers visited the Netherlands to research Dutch social housing strategies and Dutch architects consulted with local experts in Casablanca on the social housing systems.

Based on extensive research, the team developed a strategy and a detailed prototype for the designated pilot site. The strategy is suitable for use at other sites and provides a long-term strategy for new relocation projects in Casablanca. It gives an innovative view on rapid urban expansion from spatial, social, cultural and economic perspectives. The design focuses on the connection with the economic center, the quality of public space

and safety. The project will serve as inspiration, but also as a tangible recommendation for the current 'Villes Nouvelles'.

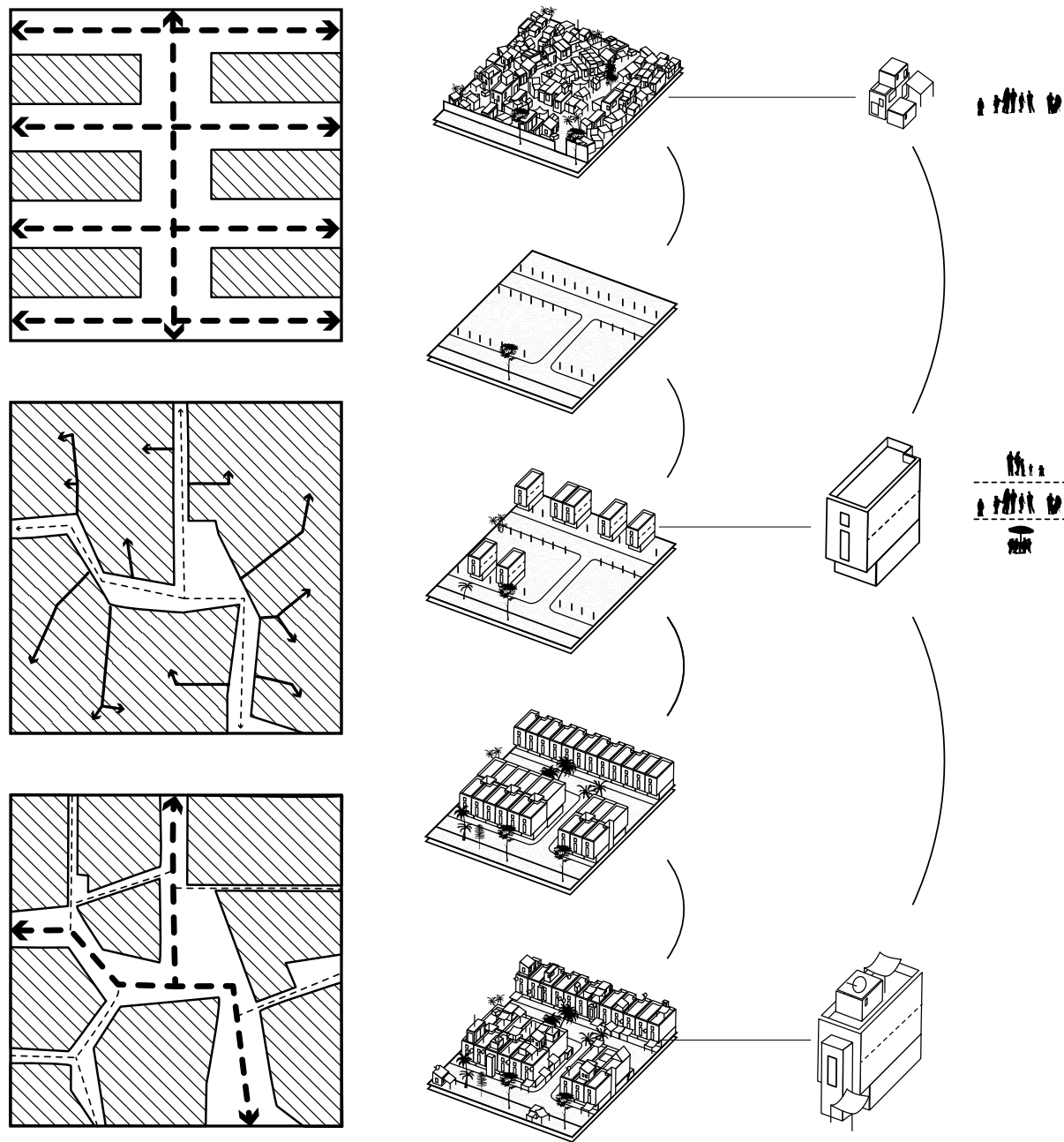
The following step includes the partners sharing the model they developed with academics, urban planners and decision makers in Morocco. The team wants to stimulate a dialogue on the topic of affordable social housing, in order to create a more socially and economically inclusive and sustainable way of life for people previously living in slums. The digital report will be translated into a book, including possible scenarios for the future, supplemented with drawings and maps.

We breathed new life into the survey research method devised by the architect and urban planner Michel Ecohard (1905-1985). In the early 1950s, he developed the 'survey' as an urban planning tool, an elaborate method of examining urban and cultural phenomena.



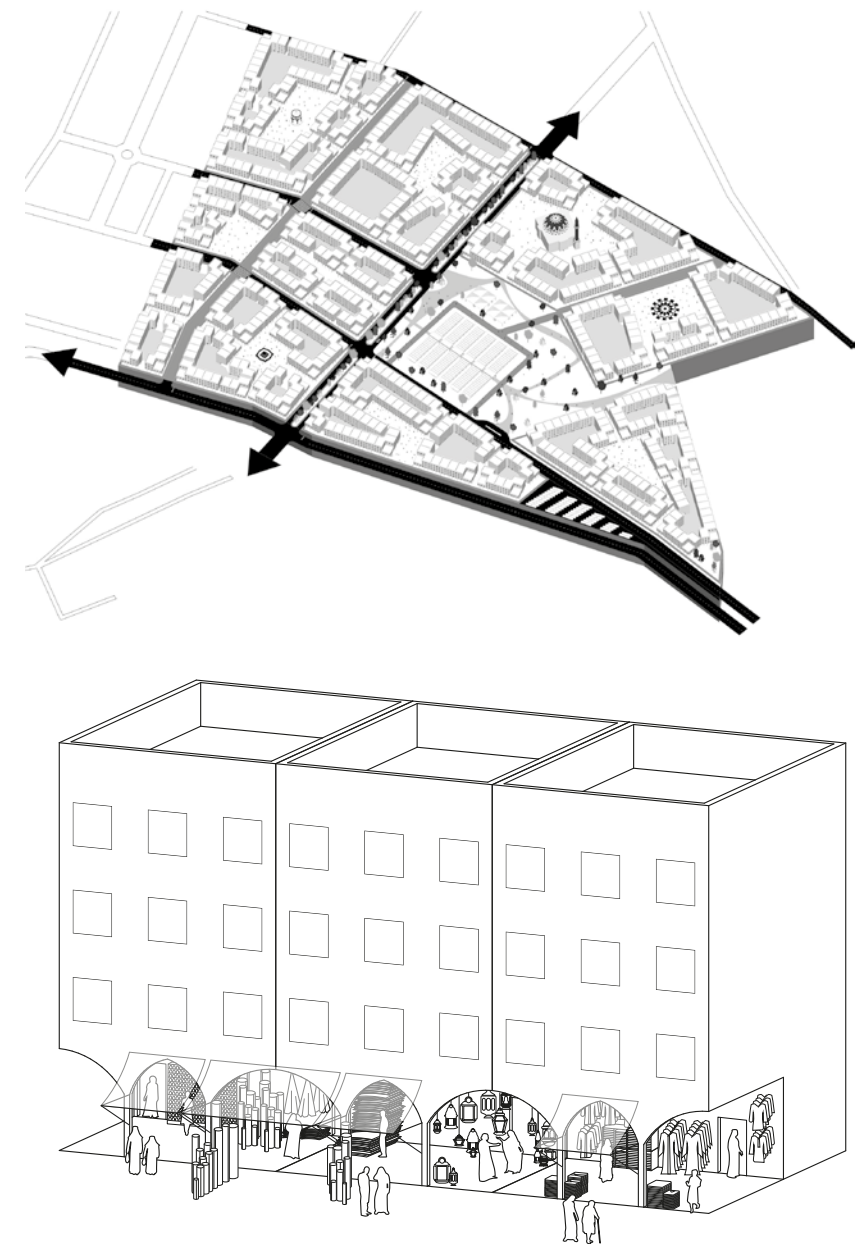
The overall plan of the district displays a mix between traditional and modern urban structures

8 x 8 GRID



There's a variety in types of roads – rear ways, entryways, car roads. In a conventional urban plan for the relocation program roads are more formally set up, vary in width and serve all modes of transport. In a traditional medina there is a wide variety of transport routes: formal, informal, for cars, for pedestrians, public and semi-public. We intend to use the same building method as is used for the relocation program to design a more layered urban fabric.

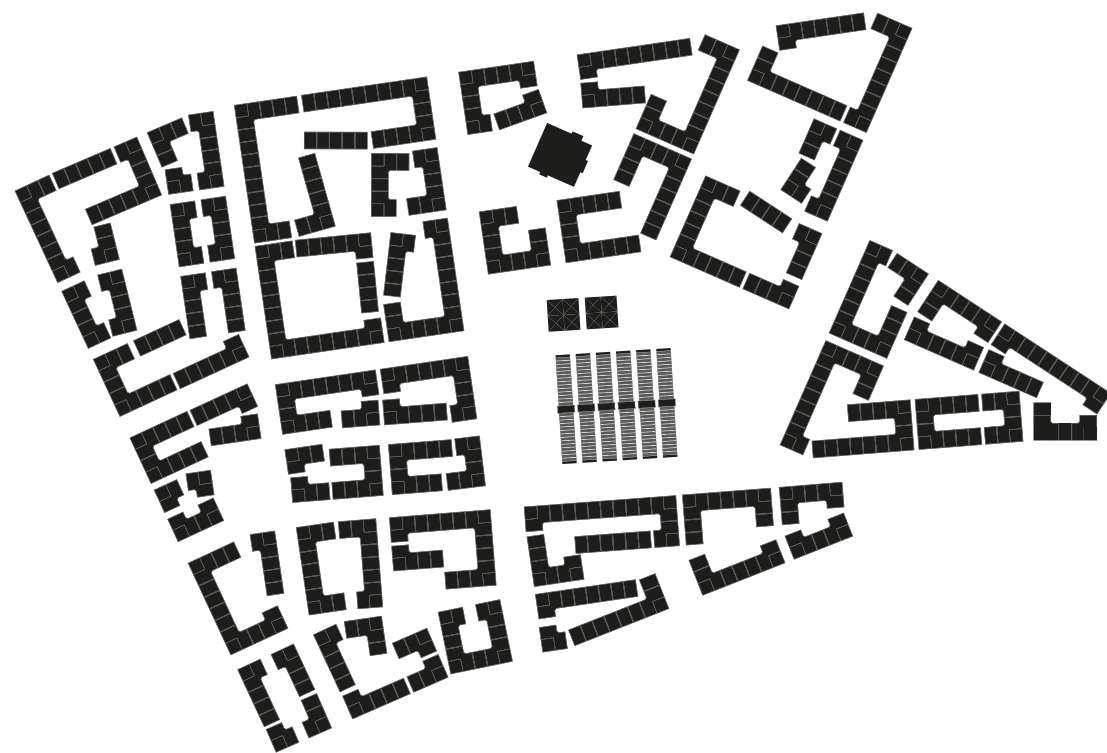
The program *Villes sans Bidonvilles* that started in 2014 has been very succesful. It has produced an incredible amount of new neighborhoods for people that previously lived in slums. The diagram shows the typical sequence from slum to new development.



design: bureau SLA

The proposal shows layered spatial relationships and facilitates different modes of use. There is a variety in types of roads – rear ways, entryways, commercial areas covered with columns – entrances between several parts of the quarter are marked by different type of gates and roads curve at every turn. This offers the wanderer a continuous shift of perspective and the user a sense of place: identity.

The commercial areas are surrounded by columns allowing street life to flourish. The arcade gives shade and allows shops to display their goods. This arcade area is privately owned with a public function. Each square has its own distinctive type of column.



Top view of the proposal for a new urban plan. Using the same ingredients as in the typical new villages a wider variety of spatial configurations can be obtained. The plan shows different routes for cars, scooters and pedestrians. Formal and informal routes can be distinguished. Every cluster of housing blocks has its own identity, although the housing block itself is almost the same. design: bureau SLA

Social housing project El Hank. Realised in the 1950's it is still a popular neighborhood to live in. Collapsing balconies are supported by temporary structures. photo: bureau SLA



The site for the relocation. The concrete structure in the middle is a covered open air market. In the proposal for the urban plan the structure is maintained. photo: bureau SLA



Our project is one in a long tradition of relocation programs. We studied projects like the old medina, Habous: the new Medina 1916-1930 and modernistic projects from the 1950's. This image is taken in the Habous quartier. photo: bureau SLA

Informal route in Casablanca, opening up to a small square. It is these configurations that make public life interesting. photo: bureau SLA



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Is a storyteller, writer and all round creative powerhouse who is deeply rooted in both the cultural and commercial scene thus very well connected. For Tales of the TREM she went up close and personal with the makers and other stakeholders.

Production

NANNA KASSENAAR

Is a cultural producer and gallery owner specialized in urban contemporary art, operating world wide. Due to her vigorous yet calm approach, it became possible to create Tales of the TREM in the most challenging and unforeseen circumstances.

Design & layout

TEAM THURSDAY

Is a graphic design studio founded by Loes van Esch and Simone Trum. They design visual identities and books varying in scale and complexity, such as Tales of the TREM. Next to that they irregularly host exhibitions and events in their studiospace TTHQ in Rotterdam.

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Has been working behind the scenes of the international creative industry for many years. With his unparalleled eye for detail not to mention being a native English speaker, he was responsible for translating and proofreading this publication.

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ANNELOES VAN DER LEUN

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About the fund

Creative Industries Fund NL, the Dutch cultural fund for design, architecture and digital culture, strives to make a substantial contribution to the quality of professional design practice. Part of this endeavor is the interdisciplinary interplay between the cultural, social and economic domains. The fund supports exceptional and innovative projects and activities of designers, makers and cultural institutions in the creative industries, both in the Netherlands and abroad.

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fund NL**

TALES OF THE TREM

TREM: Turkey, Russia, Egypt and Morocco. Four countries, twenty-six creative projects. In *Tales of the TREM* designers and makers share their international collaboration experiences involving numerous organizations, institutions, teams and individuals.

By taking us on their journey, we gain a deeper insight into their projects and an understanding of the significance of intercultural initiatives from a design standpoint. Specific methodologies, different topics, various time spans, from hyperlocal to super global, a multitude of disciplines, all working towards the same goal: more inclusive cities & societies through design.

By exchanging creative knowledge, experience and working together with designated partners from different countries, cultures are being connected in a meaningful way, building a solid foundation for international collaboration and understanding. Design thinking being a means to connect, address and imagine common futures and values.

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