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MAGNIFICENT RUBBISH: AN ARTS-INFORMED RESEARCH PROJECT AS A FORM OF RESPONSE-ABLE PEDAGOGY

MAGNIFICENT RUBBISH: EEN ARTISTIEK GEÏNSPIREERD ONDERZOEKSPROJECT ALS EEN VORM VAN MAATSCHAPPELIJK GEËNGAGEERDE PEDAGOGIEK

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ABSTRACT

'Magnificent Rubbish' is an arts-informed research project conducted in a former industrial area on the outskirts of a Belgian city that is now part of a prestigious urban development project. Participating partners in the project were youngsters for whom the connection with school and work appears less evident, researchers, artists and youth workers from a local centre of expertise. The co-creative project invited youngsters to rethink their relationship with the changing city area. They walked and engaged with the many skins of the city (Howes, Morgan, Radice, & Szanto, 2013), exploring surfaces, bumps, scrapes, scars, gaps, and graffiti in this neighbourhood. Photographs, sound recordings and artefacts collected during the walks were gathered and re-assembled in upcycling art workshops. This culminated eventually in a public exhibition. In this article, we argue that promoting a human-centred ethics of research could be questioned in the context of a research experiment grounded in a dwelling with things, places, old and new artefacts. It is in the entanglement of all these elements that a new research ethos was found and formed as a response-able pedagogy.

KEYWORDS

Response-ability, arts-informed research, public pedagogy, research ethics

SAMENVATTING

'Magnificent Rubbish' is een artistiek geïnspireerd onderzoeksproject in een voormalig industriegebied in Leuven dat nu deel uitmaakt van een prestigieus stadsontwikkelingsproject. Deelnemende partners aan het project waren onderzoekers, kunstenaars en een expertisecentrum voor kinderen en jongeren in kwetsbare situaties. Het co-creatieve project nodigde jongeren uit om hun relatie met het veranderende stadsgebied heruit te vinden. Tijdens groepswandelingen in de buurt werden foto's, geluidsopnames en artefacten verzameld en opnieuw samengebracht in upcycling workshops. Dit culmineerde uiteindelijk in een publieke tentoonstelling in de buurt. In dit artikel stellen we dat het bevorderen van een onderzoeksethiek waarin louter de mens centraal staat, ter discussie kan worden gesteld in de context van een onderzoeksexperiment waar een fysiek engagement met dingen, plaatsen, oude en nieuwe artefacten zo centraal staat. Het is in de verstrengeling van al deze elementen dat een nieuw onderzoeksethos werd gevonden en vorm kreeg als een maatschappelijk geëngageerde pedagogiek.

TREFWOORDEN

Artistiek geïnspireerd onderzoek, publieke pedagogiek, onderzoeksethiek

INTRODUCTION

What happens when researchers start collaborating with youngsters and creatives to rethink the relationship with their fast changing neighbourhood? Or rather; what does not happen or how to respond when things don't happen according to the plan? This article presents a retrospective account of a research project; a joint collaboration between educational and social science researchers, artists, young people and youth workers. It was embedded in a school alternative programme for youth between 15 and 18 years old and involved the engagement of these young people in a series of collective sensorial walks throughout a changing urban landscape, in upcycling art workshops and in a public exposition. Initially set-up as a participatory research project bound in time and space, it moved beyond its project driven logic and eventually led to the recasting of our theoretical perspective on collaborative research practices.

Building on public pedagogy and arts-informed inquiry, the initial aim was twofold. First, we aimed at generating an understanding of the meanings young people ascribe to a particular Belgian neighbourhood. Second, we believed that arts-informed methodologies could have an educational value; supporting young people to become grounded in a sense of place (Powell, 2010). We further expected this could deepen youth's understanding of the complex and dynamic nature of places and empower them with tools to perform a critical reading of the world (Kayumova, McGuire, & Cardello, 2019). By giving youth a voice in the project, we wanted to investigate how they create their own space in an urban landscape that is foremost designed by adults. This focus on empowering them as equal citizens who have a right to the city, fits within an equity oriented and social justice' ethical perspective.

Yet, once the project gained momentum, it somehow broke with the initial expectations. First, we found out that we were not working with an anticipated fixed group of young people, but had to deal with a group of young people in flux, who stepped in and out of the project at irregular time intervals. Second, the conversations we had with these youngsters about what they had experienced during the collective walks did not generate much content and were constantly changing. Consequently, we ended up with thin, almost meaningless textual transcripts without much potential for further analysis. Third, we wanted our relationship with the young people to be

non-hierarchical and collaborative. However, the power mechanisms that we were pushing against were unintentionally re-established rather than deconstructed during the art creation process, where the voice of the artistic team gradually became more dominant.

We started to wonder whether our central assumptions on methodology, pedagogy and ethics had distracted us from seeing the real potential of our research practice. Under the influence of further readings during the analysis and writing process, we started to pay more attention to the sensuous and material environment of the research assemblage and the interactions of participants with the materiality of the neighbourhood. In doing so, we could reframe our case through the notion of response-ability (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017). A response-able perspective incorporates a relational worldview that offers the capacity to respond to what 'matters'. This capacity is not a human ability but "a relational capacity by which humans and more than humans are co-constituted through their relationships with each other" (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017, p. 64). Matter refers then to both this capacity of attentive care as to non-human agents (also frequently referred to as non-other-then or more-than-humans).

In this article we start with background information on the neighbourhood and offer an outline of the research collective and initial research design. Second, we describe the change in our ethical positioning. We then highlight critical events that initiated a shift in our thinking. We illustrate how this shift towards a responsive ethics of participation allows the interaction between a group of young people and the materiality of this neighbourhood to become the main driving force of this project.

THE MAGNIFICENT RUBBISH EXPERIMENT: A BRIEF OUTLINE OF ITS SETTING

A neighbourhood in transition

Magnificent Rubbish was set up in the Canal Bowl area, a former industrial site in the Belgian city of Leuven, that is undergoing significant transformations. For centuries the area could be seen as the economic heart of the city. It was put into service in the 18th century for transport activities and small relating industries, housing several beer breweries, salt works, storage facilities, mills, carpenter sites and, unlike now, only very few residential places. During the second World War most of the buildings were destroyed. Because of its shallow waterways, competition of road transport and changing economic activities, the area went into decline.

In 2008, the city proposed plans to transform the area into a fully renovated urban district. Whereas the many empty spacious buildings and the peripheral status of the neglected area initially caught the attention of artists and creative individuals, this zone of experimentation gradually gained the interest of a broader mainstream public, turning the area into a creative hub. As a result, more and more creative services and businesses with financial capital took an interest in the area as well.

The renovation and transformation of the city area resulted in a combination of private, social rental, owner-occupied and student homes and various commercial spaces, creating a vibrant, sustainable, environment by the water (Missotten & Desmet, 2010). Focusing mainly on the economic upgrading of the area led to the creation of a residential and service-oriented area, in which the initial free creative zone of experimentation transformed into an economically profitable environment (Dolezal, 2015).

A strong city marketing strategy –that is also recognizable in other urban renewal projects across the globe– becomes visible. Such a strategy strives towards the economic regeneration of a city area by focusing on a creative, innovative knowledge economy. This image of the creative city is part of a gentrification process; a reform of a city focusing on highly skilled and professional middle class. It reinforces the invisibility of vulnerable citizens, such as its original working class, immigrants and youth. As a reaction to this current discourse on creative cities, we aimed to work in this particular area with a forgotten creative class: youth from the surrounding areas. In line with Denmead's notion of the creative underclass (2019), it was an attempt to reimagine the creative talents of today's urban youth.

The research collective

In the Magnificent Rubbish project we collaborated with two local organizations: an art organization and a center of expertise for young people. The art organization, Vizoog, specializes in experimental reuse of materials. An upcycling artist and a photographer of Vizoog were part of the research team and closely involved in designing the study. Arktos is a recognized youth association that has branches in almost all Flemish provinces. As a Flemish center of expertise, it focuses on socially vulnerable children and young people; those who are in danger of falling by the wayside in a dualized society (Warmenbol & Goossens, 2006). The association offers training and coaching programmes connected to the domains of education, leisure, well-being, work and living environments, in order to make young people more resilient (Arktos, 2019). The young people

participating in this study were between 15 and 18 years old, following part-time education in combination with a school alternative programme of their centre in Leuven that is located in the middle of this city area. The project was embedded in the center's programming as one of their scheduled activities. Participating in the study was important, as the coordinator of the center explained: "The great thing about this project is that young people get in touch, literally and figuratively, with what happens in this neighbourhood and can act upon it".

Through the use of the plural pronoun 'we', it becomes clear that this article is the result of a joined effort. It involved collaborations with many actors, including artists, youngsters, youth workers, but research colleagues as well. This paper was conceptualized by three researchers, each involved to a greater or lesser extent in the project. Sara Coemans set up different projects in the area that enfolded as part of her PhD trajectory. Her previous experience as a community worker of a non-profit organization sparked her interest in working in transitioning neighbourhoods and in searching for innovative and artistic ways to engage diverse populations in urban development practice. The doctoral study opened up the possibility to take a step back from her previous position as a community worker and engage in a systematic and critical reflection.

Joke Vandenabeele is an educational researcher with a diverse and wide-ranging experience with practice-oriented academic research and chooses to develop her research in close consultation with various stakeholders around social issues such as poverty, solidarity, living together in the diversity of a city, sustainable food. She is also engaged in the MakingLearningSpace in the old industrial area of Leuven. One of the striking spots in the skyline of Leuven is the huge silos and the adjoining mill house along this canal. These two buildings were chosen as the habitat for this MakingLearningSpace. Joke is particularly interested in how this place can be a laboratory for thinking about meaningful and sustainable work, also about the imaginative organization of vocational education from this idea of meaningful work and finally about the certification of the learning and making processes that result from this.

Karin Hannes is a pracademic who runs a research group focusing on social, methodological and theoretical innovation with a creative twist in academia as well as a free space for lateral thinkers called Townsquare13 in her home village. It hosts a circular economy project known as 'Bar Deco'. With 'Bar Deco' Townsquare13 also offers a shed to creatives, citizens, academics and other societal stakeholders to meet and exchange knowledge on local creative products and craftmanship or to exchange wild ideas in an early stage of development. The place nurtures experimentation without pre-defined commitment or specific outcome measures and fully

embraces the methodology of living labs. Townsquare13 promotes an inquisitive attitude and a critical view of people's relationship with their environment and other living creatures that co-inhabit our planet.

Consequently, the 'we' does not only refer to human agents in the consortium. It also refers to the many non-human others in this specific neighbourhood that influenced what has been materialized in the form of the written page in this paper too (Taylor, 2019). Ideas gradually arose while thinking with various people, places, artefacts, materialities and theories and carefully investigating the impact of one type of agency on another. It is in the adoption of a flattened relationship with different agents that a more appropriate and response-able pedagogical framework eventually was found.

The main principles and design of the study

Between September and December 2015, we rolled out a series of activities in the area. In short, the first author, artists and youth worker engaged together with the youth in a series of sensorial walks (including a photo walk, artefact walk and sound walk) to investigate how youth perceive the environment in which they live, play and hang around. This was followed by upcycling workshops in which all could experiment with the found objects, photographs and sounds collected during the walks. Finally, the results of the co-creative process were disseminated to a broader public, in the form of a public exposition. An evaluation of the project was planned in the beginning of 2016, by means of follow-up interviews with the involved youngsters, one of the youth workers and the artists.

To design the activities, we initially departed from two main principles: emancipatory pedagogy and arts-informed research. The study was rooted in a critical emancipatory approach connecting the pedagogical aim of the study with programmatic interventions occurring outside of formal schooling practices (Biesta, 2012). Educators are in this view considered to be facilitators of a process that allure citizens to apprehend knowledge and engage in striving for critical democracy, equity, and social justice (Biesta, 2012). The very central idea of this liberative view on pedagogy is giving a voice to the silenced and making their voices heard.

Second, the intervention was influenced by arts-informed inquiry; a mode and form of qualitative research that is influenced by, but not based in the arts (Wang, Coemans, Siegesmund, & Hannes, 2017). In this inquiry approach, the expressive qualities of form are used to convey meaning.

It offers opportunities for reciprocal relationships with participants as co-researchers and disrupts dominant discourses in research that are often "abstract, reductive, cognitive and verbalized" (Leavy, 2015, p. 20). The research approach is particularly appealing to study the multisensory dimension of everyday life in a fast changing neighbourhood.

THE SHIFT TOWARDS A RESPONSE-ABLE PEDAGOGY

As we moved along in the interventions, we noticed that our planned research experience, started to deviate from our lived research experience (Smythe, Hill, MacDonald, Dagenais, Sinclair, & Toohey, 2017). We frequently experienced moments of research stuckness (Kuby, 2019).

Inspiration was found in a body of literature from the new materialism scholarly tradition (Barad, 2007; Haraway, 2016). It implies decentering some of the traps of the humanist way of thinking participative methodologies into existence. Our humanist way of thinking promoted a fixed understanding of (groups of) individuals, a linear understanding of time and a belief in pre-formed methods and pre-set goals in research. As we experienced, this has the risk of replicating certain oppressive structures, normalizing deficit discourses about certain groups and further stigmatizing vulnerable communities, by representing them as 'others'. New materialism on the other hand, offers an ethical framework for staying with the trouble and fostering a praxis of response-ability, that is a "praxis of care and response… in ongoing multispecies worlding on a wounded Terra" (Haraway, 2016, p. 105). This praxis of response-ability offered us a guiding concept through which the pedagogy and the participatory process of the research case could be reconfigured.

Building on Haraway (2016) and others, Bozalek and Zembylas (2017) argue that a relational understanding of the posthuman notion of response-ability can open up new pedagogical possibilities: "Response-able pedagogies are not "new" forms of critical pedagogies. […] What distinguishes [them] is their emphasis on materiality (i.e. embodied self-expression, the use of multiple media) that creates pedagogical opportunities for enriching response-ability" (p. 81).

Hence, a response-able pedagogy has a particular interest in the way the publicness of participatory methodologies and its pedagogy can incorporate a relational worldview that acknowledges the agency and entanglement of bodies, matter and discourse in the public domain. Response-ability foregrounds recognition, openness and responsiveness to what matters in our daily entanglements in the messy worlds we inhabit: "to sense, feel, listen; to enable and to

welcome response" (Pihkala, 2018, p. 68). This is no easy task for researchers. While a humanist emancipatory research presuppose that the world can be known, ordered and improved, response-ability rather foregrounds an ethics of not-knowing.

In what follows we work with this concept of response-ability and return to our initial research practice. Response-ability is defined as becoming worldly, even in situations of disruptive changes to living environments, and developing the ability to respond accordingly. Central to our inquiry is the question: How can we move from a rather humanist ethical notion of responsibility to response-ability as an ethic of participation that acknowledges the agency and entanglement of bodies and matter in the public domain in our participatory research projects? Through a number of vignettes, we present moments of potentiality identified in our case study. We articulate where we missed opportunities to bring a relational and material way of thinking into account.

From a dis-engaged procedural ethics to an entangled relational ethics

> **Vignette 1**
>
> During one of our first meetings in the youth center, we engage in the daily morning routine. Youth gather in the lounge room and settle in the sofas. 'The question of the day' is as follows: what are you passionate about? Youth talk about their passion for cooking, electronics, free running and the researcher also joins the conversation. After this informal chat to get to know one another, the research project is further described. Many youth appear to be genuinely interested in the project and further practicalities are discussed, including the informed consent procedure. The atmosphere of the group conversation changes. This talk about informed consent appears to be off-putting to some of the young people, reminding them of their school context in which they are often buried under such papers, as one of the youth, Charlie, replies during this session: "Here, look at my bag, it is full of these kind of documents I still have to sign, I always forget to turn them in or I find them back several months later or it just gets lost". Some of them therefore choose to just sign the paper immediately, without paying a lot of attention to the meaning or value of the document. Others are more hesitant and postpone the signing of the document multiple times. In the following weeks, getting the consent from parents or legal guardians doesn't run smoothly.

What does it mean to become response-able? Trapped within a logic of regulating and legitimating their research practice, we initially aligned responsibility in the first place with procedural concerns (Kuntz, 2016). With a growing emphasis on the formal governance of educational research, seeking a written consent of young people is nowadays common practice (Goodyear-Smith, Jackson, & Greenhalgh, 2015). However, what these signatures really do, is displacing our response-ability in the project, resulting in a dis-engaged ethics (Greenhough & Roe, 2010). It does little more than formalizing the research project. Moreover, it illustrates a linear view on doing research that suggests researchers and participants will know in advance what the process will be like.

A response-able practice, however, can never be determined prior to the pedagogical event. Moving from a dis-engaged ethics to an entangled relational ethics (Taylor, 2018) suggests that responsibility cannot be confined to procedural concerns or to individuals but needs a mode of thinking that cannot be "abstracted from its situatedness" (Puig de La Bellacasa, 2017, p. 6). What is at stake is not informing participants about their rights at the beginning of a study but a shared responsibility that "is ongoing and also never solely located inside disembodied subjects" (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017, p. 68). It suggests a hands-on ethics that needs to emerge from modes of thinking, perceiving and feeling. It requires an attentive engagement to becoming involved in relationships including more than human partners (Puig de La Bellacasa, 2017). The following vignettes describe but problematize as well some minor events that moved the inquiry further towards such an ethical praxis.

An attentiveness to the urban skins of the city through photo walks

> **Vignette 2**
>
> Artists guide the first collective walk with the young people, youth workers and first author of this paper. In this walk, cameras and photo frames are used to look carefully at the public space and to portray youths' view on the city (see Figure 1).
>
> A week after this walk the first author shows the printed results in the local youth center and opens up a group conversation to discuss the meaning behind the taken pictures. During this gathering, only some of the participating youth show up, while new people also join the conversation. Many of the young people speak a different native language and find it difficult

to express themselves in front of the group. As one of them eloquently describes while showing his chosen image: *"This photo of graffiti appeals to me. For some people and I can relate to that, graffiti can help express themselves because they don't know how to do it in words. I don't know the exact meaning behind this graffiti art, but I think it was made by someone who is a bit tired of society."*

Figure 1: Photo frames and cameras as activation devices.

Initially we saw little potential in analyzing these short narratives behind the pictures. It was only afterwards, when we decided to take a closer look at the hundreds of pictures that were made during the walk, that we noticed what the photo frames and cameras as activation devices (Springgay & Truman, 2018) produced in the pedagogical event itself. Instead of trying to accurately uncover what exactly happened during the walk and what the pictures portrayed according to youth, we decided to select some pictures that changed our reading of these photos.

Looking at the pictures again, we noticed that the devices initiated a gradual shift; from shooting merely representational images that captured the experience of the city whilst walking, towards images that suggest a different relationship (see Figure 2) to cracks and surfaces that normally go unseen or unnoticed (Tronto, 1993, in Bozalek, Braidotti, Shefer, & Zembylas, 2018).

Many pictures made by the participants focused on the urban skins of the city (Howes et al., 2013) and depicted fissures, textures, bumps, scars, graffiti and so on. A door without opening showed

Figure 2: Urban skins.

traces of what once was. Pictures like the one of an old railway line that ended abruptly in the city landscape and that led the participants to an old factory, demonstrated the industrial history of the area.

The images did not give us information about personal stories concerning this neighbourhood. However, they did demonstrate how through the scars of the urban space the youth configure and reconfigure the relation between themselves and the objects surrounding them. These surfaces of the walk demonstrated the everyday material implications that are often overlooked, since articulating these feelings or impressions through words are difficult (Puig de La Bellacasa, 2017). Instead of exploring merely the discursive events, the various skins of the city encountered during the walk revealed vital matter to the researchers, (Taylor, 2018) that act as players in the transitioning city area. It urges the need for a situational 'ethicalities' that understands humans' relationships with their environment as one of "becoming *of* the world instead of *in* or *on* the world" (Ringrose, Warfield, & Zarabadi, 2019, p. 10).

Another picture that caught our attention showed how youth connected with the materialities of their surroundings by climbing on the walls and touching the stones. It brings to the foreground how the public space–its buildings, playgrounds, streets and walls–are not passive stages in which young people live, play and hang around. They are not simply things "but a doing, a congealing of agency" (Barad, 2003, p. 822) where young people's sense of the world but also of themselves are continuously configured.

The open space under the viaduct (see Figure 3), with its many tags and graffiti, is one of the remaining so-called 'blind zones' of the area (Dolezal, 2015). It is one of these rare vacant spaces that doesn't have a clear function and therefore not surprisingly a place where youth often meet, to smoke or just to hang out with friends. As in many creative cities, a lot of other public places
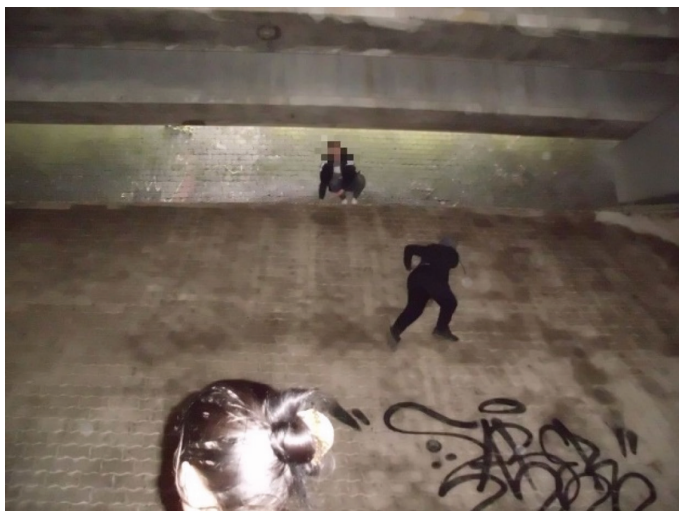
Figure 3: Climbing the walls.

in this area were repurposed or right in the middle of this process, to optimally play out the city's marketing strategy. This is reflected in car free public zones, the development of the necessary green spaces to attract young families, the creation of parks that are structured and defined by the surrounding buildings with a deliberate pattern of trees to intensify the public experience of its users. It seems merely focused on the profile of the new White, middle class residents, while this might not necessarily align with all users of the public space. Materialities are thus always infused with power issues.

Experimenting with 'disposable bodies' or looking at things a-new

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Vignette 3

The week after, the collective continues with an artefact walk in the area to find repurposing items that were left behind by others. A few days before, there were some tensions between participants, which impacts on the groups' enthusiasm for today's walk. Two young people are clearly not in the mood for a walk. During the walk, one of them makes its disapproval very clear:

"Can't we just make pictures? I'm not gonna pick that up, I'm not gonna touch that. It's dirt, it's mess that people no longer need." Farik, who initially was not a fan of searching for repurposing items, suddenly becomes enthusiastic when the group encounters some wooden industrial pallets that were left behind nearby construction works in the area. They trigger his imagination to make something new out of this: "I could transform it into a very nice table or chair", he says.

After the artefact walk, all the materials are gathered in a workshop venue in the local youth centre. Some of these materials were found in the neighbourhood streets, such as industrial pallets, rubbish and sand. Others were donated by residents during the walk, including stuffed animals, brackets, door handles and old furniture, giving the participants a glimpse into the lives behind doors in this area.

Youth workers and the upcycling artist start to work together with the young people on creating collective pieces out of these materials. In the meanwhile one of the researchers engages in informal chats with the participants and captures the process by taking pictures.

The favorite pallets are transformed from industrial leftovers to one of the central art works. Additional objects gathered during the artefact walk, such as a painting made by one of the residents, brackets and worn stuffed animals, find their way into the construction process (see Figure 4).

Louis tells the artist a story about how these brackets that we got from a local resident remind him of door handles (see left side of Figure 4). He talks about how it looks a bit like the new apartment blocks that are being placed in the neighbourhood. The white dots painted on the pallet remind him of the windows. He says: "When it gets dark, you only see those white dots; the light that is visible in the rooms of people who are still wide awake and cannot sleep. The white spots have a specific meaning. Sometimes things look depressed, but there is still hope. You should be able to see those bright spots in the darkness". Later on, during a group conversation, Louis does not confirm his previous statement, stating "I just did something, it doesn't mean a thing".
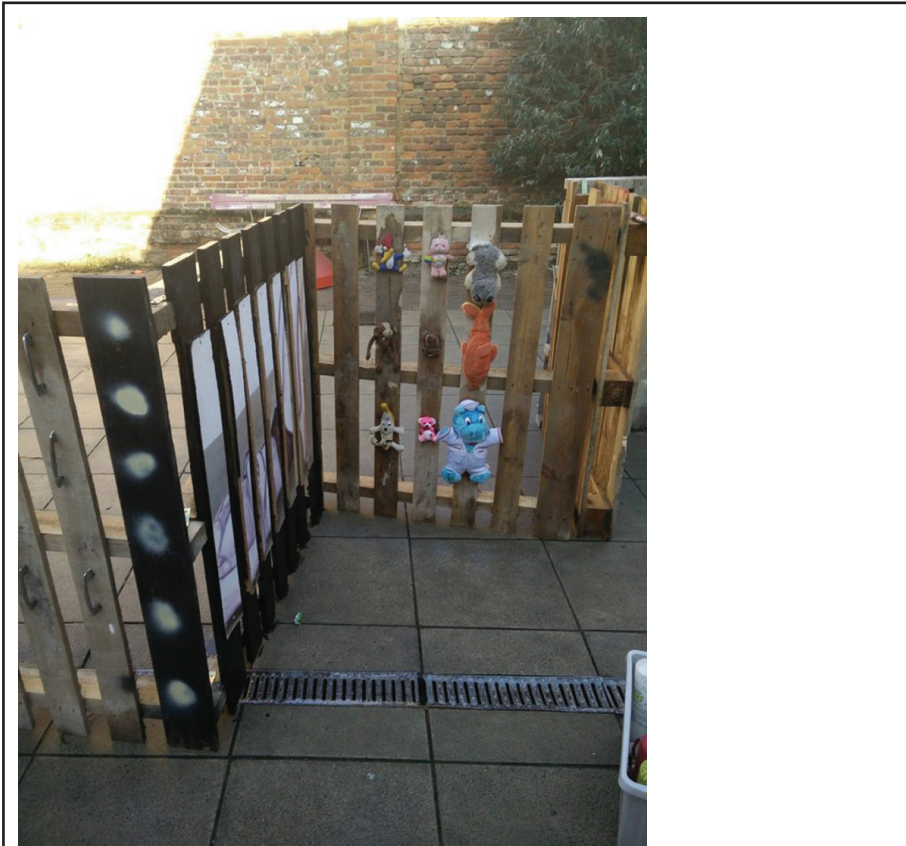
Figure 4: Upcycled works out of industrial pallets.

In our search for a representation of experiences portrayed in the upcycled work, we were initially tempted to see Louis as an active meaning-maker and the counter-narrative warned us to be careful to not overinterpret the intentions or meaning behind the upcycled work. However, when looking at this event from a response-able perspective, what emerged was not a fragmented voice attached to a singular individual, but multiple stories continuously configured and reconfigured in the intra-activity between the discursive and material (Barad, 2007).

As an ethics of participation, this performative agential account pushed against any fixed categorization that can be represented. Instead, it provoked a dynamism not limited to one particular agent (in this case Louis), but one that included the multiple agencies of the workshop event; the small, informal, conversations the artist had with Louis while making the art work together, the element of working side by side, holding the pallet while attaching the brackets, the music playing loud in the background while everyone is busy painting, cutting, sawing, stitching,…. : all distributed agency for the first story to happen. It was also the research apparatus afterwards—the more formal character of a group discussion in which each of the youth was asked to share something to the group—that provoked the cancellation of the initial story.

Hence, thinking about voice according to a response-ability framework requires seeing the story as not properly Louis 'his story'. Instead, it requires giving credit to different things as being agential: the workshop venue, the music, the pallets, the brackets, the upcycled artist, the position of the researcher and the youth, all making part of this configuration. It demonstrates how voice is not merely a human quality but occurs within a more-than-human apparatus.

WHAT A RESPONSE-ABLE PEDAGOGY DOES: SOME IMPLICATIONS

Our research efforts targeted young people, a group that is often neglected or overlooked in neighborhood transitions. We wanted to explore the pedagogical relevance of including the participation of young people in discussions of place in urban regeneration contexts. Our intention was to see the city through their eyes and to focus on how they create their own space in an urban landscape that is still first and foremost planned and designed by adults.

The area where the Magnificent Rubbish case took place, is in a state of full transition to becoming a viable, green, ecologically sustainable neighbourhood, which goes back to a particular city planning strategy that we can observe in other cities around the world. Sustainability is in this kind of strategy explicitly associated with a comfortable way of living, but at the very same time it is an attempt to regulate life itself, as it is based on a certain notion of 'liveability', such as the use of smart meters, compact building and acoustic comfort.

Revisiting the case we could articulate a way of doing participatory research that urges us, both as researchers and practitioners, to consider a neigbourhood as a dynamic and interactive assemblage, constituted by a soil of very different human and more-than-human actors. What our research has shown is that stimulating participation cannot be reduced to procedural concerns or planned according

to a duty ethics logic. A relational ethics, instead, cultivates curiosity through unanticipated encounters and an engagement with a neighbourhood's differential becoming. What becomes possible is that the walks change into a tactile sensing of the cityscape, in which youth intra-act with a transitional neighbourhood, with its (partly unfinished) building sites and how the urban skins and mobile cues redirected the walks. The public space can thereby work as a space with its own force: "as a responsive participant that acts as a live wire, a tangle of nerve pathways, touching and being touched by the bodies that congregate in it" (Niccolini & Pindyck, 2015, p. 8). It is in facilitating such intra-actions that the role of a professional practitioner also become very crucial and valuable.

The response-able pedagogy that is at the core of this relational ethics, implies looking at things a-new. Our initial expectation, for example, that removing waste materials from their context would spark youth's imagination and would enable them to repurpose materials and develop storylines was only partially filled in. In this paper, we gradually shifted the focus from what participants were saying to what participants were doing. This opened up a perspective for inviting non-human agencies into the shared research space and considering them as part of the process, precisely because they make us act and relate to each other differently.

To conclude, this lens of a response-able pedagogy offers a way of seeing ethics not in terms of relationships between educators and young people, between researchers and researched, between those who enable voice and those who need to be given a voice to gain power. Here, the focus is on an ethos beyond ethics; on an ethos grounded in a dwelling with things where a concern for the public quality of human and more-than-human togetherness can be responded to in unexpected ways.

DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST AND FUNDING

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