

# Amplifying and Catalysing the Social through Designing

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## Abstract

The Pi Studio at Goldsmiths has been exploring designing for social engagement, transformation and change. Its academics have developed teaching on postgraduate Design programmes that apply ideas of a socially engaged design practice. The aim has been to educate designers to critically consider the social dimensions of a range of practice based projects, and to demonstrate the potential of design education in developing these skills. This paper explores the projects that emerged from a number of social design briefs, and reflects on developing approaches for social design. The aim is to share these developments with a wider community interested in the education of socially engaged designers, and the development of a discussion about design's role within in the University to contribute to a thriving society and culture.

## Keywords

Social Design, Education, Application of Designing, Empowerment, Education of Designers, Critical Practice, University, Civic Responsibility.

## Introduction

How does design relate to society? The social sphere is made up of a complex tapestry of interwoven relationships and bonds of multi-species inhabitants, comprising of its individuals, social groups, communities, organisations, collectives, governing authorities, and so on. It is important to introduce the suggestion that design has a role in creating the conditions and tools to facilitate the social, as well as contribute to the thriving of those social relationships. Design has the potential to be fully engaged with the messy complexities of the social issues we face. When design is brought to real public contexts it can transform, disrupt and challenge an existing status quo. Design can be the catalyst for the new, or an amplifier of existing practices, and has the capacity to create real change. However, when things change in society there are issues of participation, opinion and ultimately politics, that the designer must grapple with. Through the act of designing you can create possible futures proposals, which may include building a shared vision, or a new approach to engagement, enhance an existing practice or facilitate an emerging community.

The propositions or conversations that can be developed through designing may also help citizens to participate, and develop their own critical position about the changes they would like to see become reality.

## **Bringing Research and Teaching Together**

In most explorations of design at Goldsmiths the application of design practice involves the integration of both theoretical and practical knowledge. With the University sector facing pressures in the funding of research, and the increasingly limited time available for staff to undertake research, we have developed an effective approach within the MA Design Expanded Practice curriculum to facilitate staff to bring their research into the teaching context. This enables our Masters students to benefit from a closer connection between teaching and research, and also allows students to work alongside academics to explore the emerging concerns in design, and be involved in the develop within the MA Design Expanded Practice curriculum of new directions in design. This activity takes the form of a live research studio project and lasts approximately three months, an approach used in the 'Amplification' project presented in this paper. The paper will also discuss a collaborative social design research project between design and community psychologists to create community focused 'Problem Solving Booths'. This project considers the role of design in creating tools that people can use to support community wellbeing. The final project is an Arts and Humanities Research Council funded project called the 'Dewey Organ', a project that considers how to create a tool for finding questions, issues and concerns in communities that need to be addressed.



Figure 1: *Amplification Project Poster, 2017.*

## **The Amplification Project Brief**

The Amplification Project (Figure 1) is a live research project with both academic staff and masters students. Amplification is a social design and innovation project, that builds on the initial concept that design could amplify existing practices in society using its approaches and designed applications to grow, share and extend these social practices with others in a wider social context.

The project Amplification was written at Goldsmiths by Mike Waller, Duncan Fairfax, Terry Rosenberg and Liam Hinshelwood for Master Students on the MA Design Expanded Practice. The project spans 10 weeks and had 35 students working on the brief.

## **Designing in Communities**

The project explores Design practice, where it is no longer exclusively the preserve of the 'professional designer' – arguably, it has never been, but it is only recently acknowledged in the profession that a wider understanding of the application of design has been considered. If design, and this is, we admit, a simple and crude definition, is an intention to change the world, or a small part of it for the better, then designing becomes more dispersed. Design is now happening in communities, developed by individuals and groups who are not necessarily professional designers, and in most instances, they do not consider themselves to be designers at all.

## **Design as Action**

Herbert Simons definition of design, often used to show design's breadth is;

"Everyone designs who devises courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones" (Simon, 1969)

Although what is inescapable in all the critiques of Simon's attempt to create a 'Science of Design' is the issue that remains when devising 'courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones'. Who determines the courses of action, and whose preferred situations are we to design? It is in this space of action that the notion of empowerment comes into play. If we attempt to create a social design practice, we need to address the power relationships. If we give some context to Simon's biases, we cannot ignore that Herbert Simon was an expert of military strategy and decision making processes, prior to his work in the science of decision making and design process. He clearly had an interest in controlling the complexities of human behaviour. In contrast to this our motives are about how design contributes to the thriving of multiple societies and cultures in the plural.

## **Professional and Citizen Designers**

We are not suggesting that professional design practice becomes only a lay activity, and that all design can be produced by lay communities. There is always a place for the professional designer to design in different proximal engagements with communities. There is an expanding area of practice where the expert works with lay people designing to improve their own social situations. The training designers, which is what our students are, in this brief, are developing different roles and therefore need different kinds of methodologies, creative practice and designerly ways of knowing (Cross, 2006). A new paradigm of design is evolving where instead of merely creating, developing and producing his or her own ideas, the professional designer is becoming a catalyser, facilitator, translator, and advocate, involved in co-producing, extending, transcribing the emergent designerly ideas of communities. This marks a shift from 'making things to designing tools that aid others to produce a better society' (Manzini et al, 2015). The term for this novel practice that we adopted for our brief 'Amplification' came from Manzini's book 'Design, When Everybody Designs: An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation'. The role for designers in this novel design paradigm is to 'amplify' dispersed practices of social innovation, where design is done in communities, by communities, and for the community in different localities. Design can advocate its adoption locally and perhaps where appropriate more widely; becoming a standard bearer for a more resourceful social economy. With 'amplification' of diverse bottom-up social innovation there is the possibility to articulate new forms of collaboration between design professionals and communities, highlight new arrangements and processes for designing and identifying new areas of engagement for a design practice.

## **Design is more than Amplifying Practices**

In doing the project it came to light that design moves beyond notions of amplification, to uncovering potential, more akin to catalyzing change. Amplification suggests making louder, bigger or more of what is already there, whereas catalyzing potential suggests transformation into something new. Whilst some of the projects firmly sat in the amplification category, many moved to offer transformational opportunities beyond amplification. The openness to reimagining what design could mean has remained central to the educational approach developed at Goldsmiths, where students are part of the exploration of the unfolding of designs reach and its potential as a social practice.

## **The Unfolding Application of Social Design and Innovation**

Manzini et al (2015) attempted to reposition design in the following manifesto.

"Social innovation in the age of networks is a process of change where new ideas are generated by actors directly involved in the problem to be solved. The objective of design is to create more probable conditions to act in a collective and collaborative way. We create the conditions, not the solution."

Our Amplification project grappled with the complexities that Manzini refers to, where we consider design as a practice for changing the social conditions, or what we like to call the 'social potential'. Community projects often challenge the authorities that control or influence particular activities and practices of society, including national governments, local governments, and religious organisations. Sometimes these authorities are not always seen as supporting the betterment or interests of their constituent communities. Many social innovation projects seek this betterment and in the process challenge the social and cultural authorities, question them or outright reject them. Social innovation is therefore closely tied with activism and often political in nature. Change and transformation of society through innovation projects often happens at the local level. These smaller social projects and innovations are often reflections of bigger tensions and changes that need to take place on a larger regional, national or global social level. An example of this global to local activism are issues like climate change, where it is much easier to act in your local context to influence the global, than it is to act on a global scale to influence the local. Global change must involve multi-governmental agreements, accords, and policies that translate into local application, but are often driven by local activism to get them on a global agenda in the first place.

### **Design as Activism**

We invited Professor Alastair Fuad-Luke the author of 'Design Activism' and 'Agents of Alternatives' to join our project and to speak about what is design activism. Activism more generally is actions to change, redirect, impede, but with the aim of changing the current situation and creating improvements in society. Professor Fuad-Luke's main challenge to our students was to listen deeply to the communities they were engaging with, attempt to be on the inside, act to help change things with those communities, and not to impose your own agenda on them.

There is also an economic dimension to social innovation. It is particularly, but not exclusively, in disadvantaged (socially, politically and economically) and dis-enfranchised communities that we are witnessing 'community creativity' or social innovation. These communities are no longer content to wait for 'help' from local or national governments, and are taking control of their own destinies with innovations that challenge and circumvent the prohibitions that block improvement. These 'tactical innovations' need communities to be resourceful both in the way materials, tools and skills are utilized, but also in the way that they engage authority.

## **Using Amplification as a Creative Trope**

Within the brief we deployed a creative tactic of using different readings of the word Amplification, as a way of starting to reframe the application of design action within the project. Here are some of the ways we read Amplification;

1. A way of transforming a practice or action to be larger in some way, which could be the scale of the audience, or the spatial reach of that practice.
2. The clarification of the signal, message or action, which could enable the intention to be more clearly communicated to an audience of any size.
3. As a way of amplifying the aim or intention of a group of people through introducing a new practice or new opportunity.
4. Amplifying a bigger global, national, or regional issue through the local.

The aim was to always keep our engagement with people and their communities at the core of the project. The students were required to listen and understand these communities of people, their practices, objects, and spaces that constitute their everyday lives.



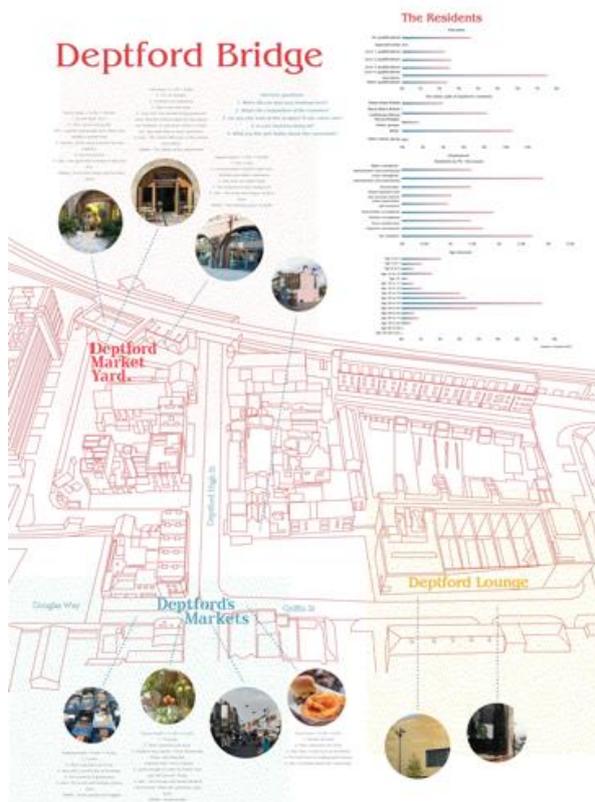


Figure 2. Posters from Amplification, 2017.

## Mapping Workshop

One of the initial activities of the project was the mapping of areas of London to uncover the communities of those particular places. Each group of designers employed creative design mapping methods, approaches inspired by taking on the role of archaeologist, anthropologist or geographer. Each group was given a location to explore in walking proximity of a number of tube stations. They were required to visit the site and only explore it on foot, no public transport was to be used, to encourage a higher level of interaction with their sites. The first trip used observational drawing methods to capture and document the communities of those places, and the second visit focused on gaining social insights from conversations with the people in their site locations. This was done in conjunction with desk-based research, to understand the histories and different aspects of their particular site. The groups were required to produce a poster of the research and exploration of their site. The aim of this exercise was to identify particular communities that they could begin to work with for the Amplification brief.

## Developing critical frameworks for your own project

As part of the project we developed a theoretical framework of social design and innovation to infuse the project work using a wide range of discourses from a variety of subject areas and disciplines. Terry Rosenberg also introduced the well known work of Manfred A. Max-Neef (1991) on 'Human Scale Development', where Neef puts forward a matrix to understand people – Being, having, doing and interacting in one axis, and subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, idleness and creation in the other axis.

### **Grand challenges Workshop**

The group also explored some of the larger social, economic, political, environmental and technological issues as a series of key words or challenges that could be explored at the local community level, by way of expanding their research, and to stimulate a connection between the various scales of community; local, civic, regional, national, continental and global. The list included general topics like wellbeing, tower-blocks, city gardening, climate change, immigration, mental health, old age, inclusion, food waste, consumerism, and health care amongst others.

### **Performance Workshop**

As part of the exploration of the site we introduced story telling techniques from theatre and drama. Led by theatre director and writer Simon Aylin and we wanted the students to start from the gestural, physical, vocal rather than the normal ideation processes of design practice. We are particularly interested in embodied thinking, and the negotiation of knowledge and meaning through physical story telling. Understanding the emotional dimensions of a chosen context was an important consideration. What does it feel like to experience city gardening? The key idea in engaging design with performance is the opportunity to construct ideas and stories in a social context, where idea generation must be negotiated between individuals and the group. The narratives developed through this activity formed the basis for creating research films about the particular sites of the project.

### **Student Work**

The students identified a range of different London based communities, including Vauxhall's city farm, the retired veterans who live near Fulham Broadway and Chelsea Football Club, the community around Grenfell Tower, food banks in Deptford, Hampstead Heath health club and Shepherds Bush live music venues.

Each group created a statement about their chosen community area. Here is an example of

one of the statements.

## Fulham Broadway

[Fulham Broadway station area] This project explored how different communities efficiently utilised time and space in a specific area. Fulham Broadway in London is a popular location particularly around the football stadium, used by various communities, with differences in the time zone and the method of use depending on the characteristics of each community. For instance, within the Fulham area there are invisible social frictions between Stamford Bridge stadium and local residents because of the noise, traffic and the surging crowd problems connected to the football stadium. There are also small business opportunities for retailers who promote their services during football match days. This project explored and created opportunities for sharing the space. Our interest related to applying anthropology discourses to design practice, and in particular the temporary football community and how they affected the local community, including a home for retired war veterans. The team included Jinyoung Lee, Tristan Pete and Jinmin Kim.



Figure 3. Research Poster for Fulham Broadway in London, 2017.

The group focused on a community of war veterans living next door to the football stadium with particular needs, often housed there due to their poor mental health conditions, and coming from homeless communities. The other key community was Chelsea Football Club, a world famous football team with a huge fan base of hundreds of thousands of supporters. On a match day there would be in excess of 70,000 fans arriving to watch the football matches. The project team diligently spent weeks getting to know the war veterans and understanding their hopes for a better future. One of the biggest problems was the funding of treatment for PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), a condition often resulting from active military service in various war zones, particularly Afghanistan. The war veteran community had an art club producing a range of creative work, and the design team developed and enabled the veterans to produce a range of Chelsea football objects, for the veterans to sell to the visiting football fans, in order to raise funds for the treatment of their PTSD. Chelsea football club was engaged with creating a mental health awareness activity for the fans, mostly young men, who are the demographic least likely to seek help for mental health issues. Because the project engaged with the actual location and the context of these communities, it was possible to engage with the relational aspects of different communities and consider the synergies that could be created between them. If the project was abstracted away from the context none of this would have been discovered.



Figure Objects for the Veteran community to sell to the football supporters, 2017.

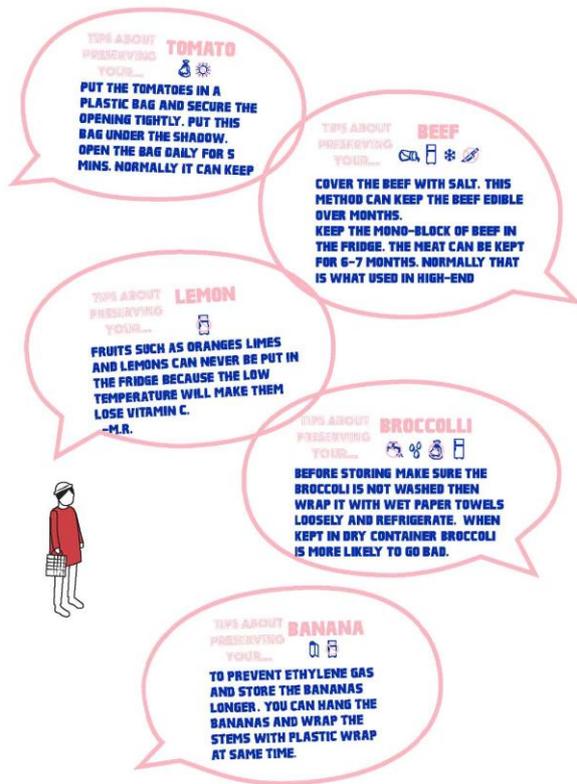


Figure 5. Food Nursery Advice, 2017.

### Food Nursery Deptford London - Jinjin Wang, Mengting Lu, Jiaoyenan Zhu

The Deptford bridge group focused in on food wisdom and the local food shopping culture of London's famous Deptford High Street. The group engaged in capturing local food wisdom around extending the lifespan and caring for food to reduce food waste. They interviewed local shop owners and customers to find out how they cared for the food they buy, and collected tips on food care to share with the wider community. The final outcome were small cards that were put on the shelving units and with the produce to communicate these useful tips, and amplify their researched food knowledge into the community.



Figure 6. DJ Workshop for the Volume Project, 2017.



Figure 7. Web site for the Volume project 2017

### Exploring Community dialogue with the Volume project

The Volume project focused on using music and setting up DJ workshops at various cafes in the vicinity of Ladbrook Grove's tragic tower block fire. The aim of the DJ workshops was to use music to open discussions about difficult topics, and produce monthly music albums on vinyl records. Each track represented a particular issue and an online site captured some of the discussions played out in the café workshops. The whole project produced a creative way to look at dialogue within communities. The project team was Jungmin Ha, Minkoung Kim, Kawisara Anansaringkan and Hyerim Ju.

## Problem solving booth Project

### Owls Champions Problem Solving Booths Prep and Setup Guide



#### BASICS LIST FOR A NON - FREESTANDING BOOTH (in front of a wall or similar place where you can fix your signs etc.)

- 2x chairs (folding camping type or borrowed from local shops/businesses).
- 3x flat square pieces of cardboard box card
- 1x good pair of scissors
- 1x Thick Black Sharpie or similar black marker pen
- \*a thick square or chisel ended one\*
- 1x Roll of gaffa tape and/or 1x roll clear selftape

#### FOR FREESTANDING BOOTHS IN ADDITION TO THOSE THINGS YOU WILL NEED:

- 2x 6ft/2meter poles (broom handles or bamboo canes - see below)
- 1x pack B&Q garden bamboo canes, but any around 6 feet / 2 meters in length available at B&Q here - <http://bit.ly/2iF9mpC> (length: 1.84 metres, price = £3.97 for roll)
- 2x Metro or similar free paper to pack the sign stands into water pack bases (see below).
- 2x Aquas 12 bottles total of 1.5/2 litre bottles of water (still wrapped in their plastic ideally).
- 1x Champion Kit PDF printed on standard A4 paper, ideally printed in colour. We can email the PDF to you
- 1x roll of household string
- 1x pack of wooden clothes pegs
- 1x fruit cage netting - at least 2x4m (available eBay <https://ebay.eu/28E2n2a> £5.75 for 2meters sheet)
- Also B&Q at [www.DIY.com/Green/HDPE-wire-mesh](http://www.DIY.com/Green/HDPE-wire-mesh) (width 2m, length 3meters- code 5397007145687 price = £01.08)

#### Freestanding Booth Setup Guide:

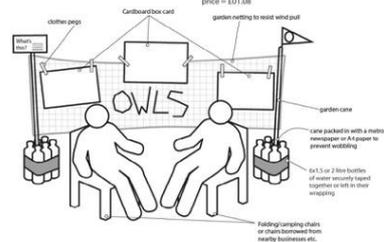


Figure 8. Instructions for Problem Solving Booth Edd Bagenal and Mike Waller and BBC news, 2017.

## Making tools to empower others

The problem solving booth project was a collaboration between clinical psychologist Dr Charlie Howard, community psychologists at Camden Council, the mental health charity OWLs, the Mayor of London's mental health campaign THRIVE London, and Goldsmiths Pi Studio. Our design role within the project was to explore the development of a scalable mental health activity. The problem solving booth is a community facilitated booth that enables the public to help others with advice, or seek help from others in the form of conversation. It is not a professional therapy booth, but a conversational opportunity to talk about any problems people in a community may face, from unruly children, difficulties with local street violence, or anxiety about something at home. The booth was developed in response to the value of talking therapies, and the empowerment of sharing your own concerns with others in your community. London is facing a mental health crisis, and this project was an effort to start to address how local citizens within communities could talk more to each other about their worries or concerns. The design focused on communicating how to set up and run these booths, and created instructions to help people build them out of junk and readymade objects, like cardboard, beach chairs, and water bottles. The outcome was so successful that it was covered on national TV news, and is now globally implemented, championed by a new not for profit organisation called street-to-scale. Goldsmiths is still involved with the group which explores ideas emerging from communities,

and looks to scale them to a wider audience. The image below shows a booth being set up on the London Underground for the Metropolitan Police to talk and get advice from the general public. The website can be accessed at [www.problemsolvingbooths.org](http://www.problemsolvingbooths.org)



Figure 9. *Problem solving booth, London Underground, 2018*

## Dewey Organ Project



Figure 10. *By Dr Kat Jungnickel, Dr. Alex Wilkie, Duncan Fairfax all from Goldsmiths, University of London and Dr Jennifer Ballie from the University of Dundee, 2016*

## Enquiry machines

This project explored the question of adjusting individuals and groups to one another by finding out their problems, in an effort to form better social relationships. This was set out in John Dewey's work below;

*"Because an individual can be disassociated from this (a society), that and other (social) grouping, since he need not be married, or be a church-member or a voter, or belong to a club or scientific organization, there grows up in the mind an image of residual individual who is not a member of any association at all. From this premise, and from this only, there develops the unreal question of how individuals come to be united in societies and groups: the individual and the social are now opposed to each other, and there is the problem of "reconciling" them. Meanwhile, the genuine problem is that of adjusting groups and individuals to one another."* John Dewey, *The Public and It's Problems*, 1927

This particular multidisciplinary project developed by academics at Goldsmiths and the University of Dundee, and sponsored by the AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council-Research England) sought to think about how to reveal the questions and issues from within community groups through this enquiry tool, the Dewey Organ. The reason they made the tool as a machine was because defining and finding problems is not simple but requires work or social labour. They wanted to make visible this act of uncovering problems through an interactive problem finding device. The very act of defining and uncovering the problems became a performative interaction between citizens, and the final questions were aired on a washing line to share with others. The project team created a series of categories to help citizens group and organise their questions, and also to see similar questions presented by other community members.



Figure 11. *Dewey Organ Categories Glasgow, 2017*



Figure 12 *The Dewey Organ in Action*, 2016

## Changing Social Behaviour

The work of designer Orit Militscher, a graduate from the MA Design at Goldsmiths, explored dolls that represent 'old people'. The project aim was to transform and challenge the social assumptions of contemporary culture and support a more inclusive engagement of the old in the tools and props that form the stories young people make at school. The dolls were experimental prototypes and deployed in schools for young children to play with. The interaction with these doll props effected the narratives the children built together, often about the older people in their own lives like grandparents or older members of their communities. If the props are just glamorous fashion dolls, the narratives are shaped by those objects, and these outcomes are constrained to a limited view of a consumer world.



Figure 13. *Good Old Betty and Albert: Toys for New Narratives*, 2007

## **Teaching Design as a critical social practice**

Through projects like Amplification and the problem solving booths we have developed design practice that is critically engaged and contextually located through a series of social programmes, and these projects have generated a practice that is inherently social. However, educating designers to have the ability to engage with the understanding of the socio-political, we need to move beyond the traditional design curriculum seen in many design programmes that confines design to the service of a commercial practice and consumer culture. There is a division between the professional practice and the discipline of design, where the span of purpose ranges from social empowerment, as seen in social design to the economics of business and wealth generation. Who does design serve? Not a simple question, but clearly a spectrum. An ambition we have is to try to educate our designers to be critically and politically engaged with the societies and cultures they belong to. Studying design at Goldsmiths is considered as a complete form of education, delivered through a broad post-disciplinary framework that spans the wider issues of social and political change, developed through our project based curricula. It is not a new idea that design is actually an education in its own right, originally proposed by Papanek in the 70s, where education could be divided into the Sciences, Humanities and Design.

The briefs developed within our programmes at Goldsmiths over the last 20 years provide evidence of this approach, of developing the critical skills of the design student through a social, cultural, ecological, political and economic situated practice of the design project. Design studio projects like 'Disrupting the Proper -Propre by Rosenberg, Temporary Autonomous Zones by Ward and Sprake, and Design as Politics by Fairfax and Waller, explore how design engages with politics and the cultural construction of place, drawing on a range of discourses outside design including philosophy, anthropology, geography, cultural studies, visual cultures, sociology, amongst others. As a situated design practice that can begin with any part of a broader network of concerns including, people, places, practices, things, the projects are able to draw on discourses with a focus on particular concerns, thereby infusing and extending the scope of the design project and generating new forms of knowledge through design practice. Because design as a discipline and practice has the particular capacity to iterate ideas, and create prototypes that communicate new narratives of possible futures, it is inherently a powerful force for change. It is good for design to have wider access to the general public as a form of education at all levels.

## **Alison Clarke and the Social Shift in Design**

Alison Clarke suggests there has been a seismic shift in design to the social. It is important to look at Papanek idea of 'Autonomous self-realisation' in the 1970s, spawning out of the immigration of displaced people from wartime persecution from Europe to America. This displacement of Europeans into an American culture shaped their new engagement with American culture and hence the formation of the role of designer in empathising with the other, but also empowerment to act with, for the other. Problematic is who is empowered,

in which context, and to change what. Anthropology has had a rich discourse about transformation of cultures from the inside or outside, which is the same issues emerging in social design, who is acting in who's interest. Is the designer part of the community that wants to change from the inside? Design must be progressive and critically foster in a newly honed version of the inclusive humanism, and develop new ways to talk about design, that is about empowerment of people and their imaginative capacity to change things within their own social contexts, which includes the standing-up against the status quo.

## **Good Citizens**

Katherine McCoy in her essay on good citizenship (McCoy 2019) frames some of the concerns of a contemporary culture that has few ties and is bound together by consumer culture, with a design community mostly educated to support and encourage this narrow view of society as wealth generators through consumerism. This view is not particularly optimistic, and Katherine McCoy stresses that young designers are just not interested in social issues, which is not our experience at Goldsmiths and many other institutions. Our student designers on the contrary are very engaged in society and culture and want to act to change things. There is clearly still a division at University design school level, where some institutions are maintaining a narrow focus on the application of design for consumerism, and not wider social concerns. However, there is also a general shift of the role of the University to regain the founding ambition of civic improvement. Similarly, in emerging design organisations we have seen the rise of the social enterprise, and community interest companies, where consumerism has been harnessed to serve the community in organisations like Toms Shoes (Toms 2019), where profits from the sales of shoes in developed countries contribute to social development projects in places of need, from clean water to coffee farming. In South Korea social enterprises are also being championed through the setting up of the 'Korea Social Enterprise Promotion Agency' in 2012. In the UK the agenda of Universities to serve the civic needs of the community is being developed through initiatives like the Universities Partnership Programme's Civic University Commission. This commission funds Universities to engage with local businesses, SMEs, organisations, schools, local government, central government and community projects to aid the University to fulfil its engagement with its local context, through contribution to research and education, and also to raise aspirations and widen the participation to more disadvantaged members of society. The UK Government body, Research England, are also in the process of introducing a Knowledge Exchange Framework that measures how each university engages with its community (6). As you can see in the graph below there is new emphasis on the public and community engagement, as well as third sector organisations including associations, non-governmental, and non-profit-making organisations like charities, voluntary organisations, community groups, and cooperatives. This is a positive development in the acknowledgement of a social political shift in the strategic agenda of UK based institutions to serve the wider community.

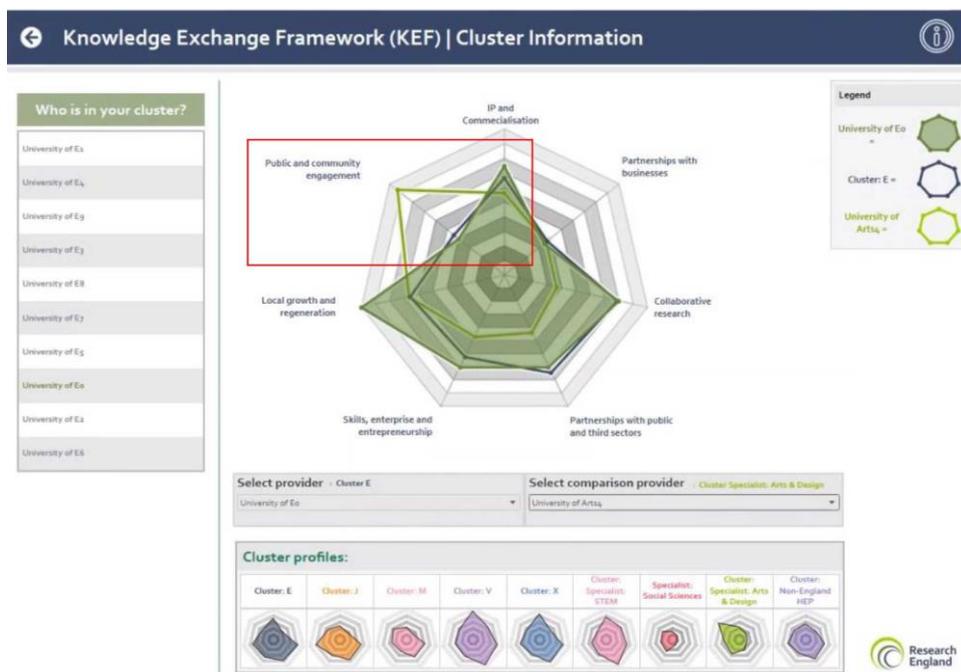


Figure 14. Research England – Knowledge Exchange Framework, 2019.

## Concluding points

One of the problems we face is how design engages in worlding, creating potential futures, and narratives of those futures. Isabelle Stengers makes an important observation about empowerment and decision making, that “we cannot denounce the world in the name of an ideal world”. We have a responsibility to work with the existing realities of the social context we find ourselves in, like sending the students from the University into the communities that surround it. We cannot violently discard the existing interrelationships and entanglements of our existing communities and wider world. This position is more akin to the fixing, caring for what we have and the repair of things, suggesting a less violent form of design practice than the constant striving for a solution focused on the new and unobtainable ‘ideal world’. To add a further consideration to the idea of community we have to consider not just humans in this context, but reimagine and reconfigure our relationship to the world and all species that dwell in it, as a multispecies interaction. Donna Haraway, Professor in the History of Consciousness, at the University of California, introduces us to the idea of speculative fabulation, and the notion of staying with the trouble, referring to embracing the messy and entangled interspecies worlds we inhabit, and not falling into the trap of thinking that we can defer responsibility to a human centric technological fix whilst hoping for a technological saviour to rescue us, thereby negating true responsibility to live and act in the steaming rich ‘compost’ of the here and now. It is this layering of complex interspecies interactions that holds the key to thriving and the potential of a good future. Haraway (2016) rejects the dominant cultural naming of the ‘Anthropocene’ and suggests an alternative ‘Chthulucene’ with a focus on sym-poiesis, or a ‘making-with’, where human and non-human are joined in

entangled practices of building more livable practices. Stengers draws us to consider and build a position from the work of philosopher Whitehead suggesting that “decisions must take place somehow in the presence of those who will bear their consequences”. (Haraway quoting Stengers p12) This is key to how design must attempt to think differently about most forms of social innovation, that the benefits of design must take place in the context of those whom they effect, and in those communities they wish to transform.

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**Abstract(200 or less words)**

The Pi Studio at Goldsmiths has been exploring designing for social engagement,

transformation and change. Its academics have developed teaching on postgraduate Design programmes that apply ideas of a socially engaged design practice. The aim has been to educate designers to critically consider the social dimensions of a range of practice based projects, and to demonstrate the potential of design education in developing these skills. This paper explores the projects that emerged from a number of social design briefs, and reflects on developing approaches for social design. The aim is to share these developments with a wider community interested in the education of socially engaged designers, and the development of a discussion about design's role within in the University to contribute to a thriving society and culture.

**Bio (50-80 words) with your photo (You can send your photo file separately.)**

<p><b>Photo</b></p>  A portrait photograph of Professor Mike Waller, a middle-aged man with short, light-colored hair and a beard, wearing a checkered shirt. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera.	<p><b>Bio</b></p> <p>Professor Mike Waller has been involved in innovation for more than 25 years, starting as an industrial designer and working for NCR's international R&amp;D knowledge lab in London as the leader of its intelligent objects groups, exploring the potential of emerging technologies like IoT, pervasive computing, location-based services and wearable technologies. Mike is currently the head of design at Goldsmiths University of London, where he is the founder and co-director of the prospecting and innovation research studio (Pi). Further details: <a href="https://www.gold.ac.uk/research/">https://www.gold.ac.uk/research/</a></p>
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