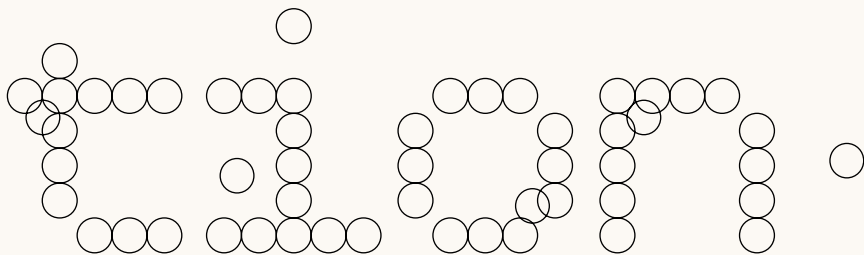
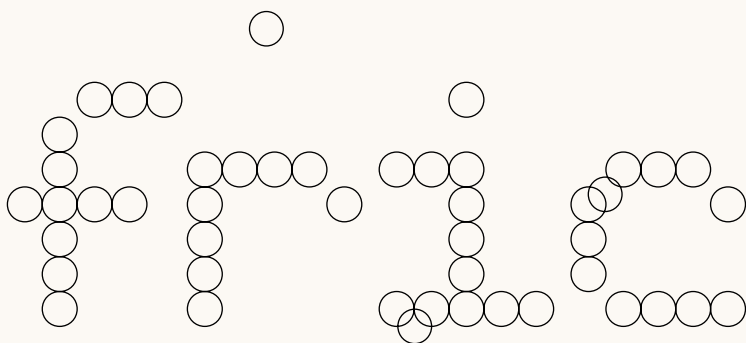



gentle friction
through temporary territories of culture



Alicia Emmy Rottke Fitzpatrick
Master of Interior Architecture, INSIDE
Royal Academy of Art The Hague, KABK
2024

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1 prologue

As a preface to this graduation research paper I would like to share with you some of my personal struggles I have faced within developing my professional practice, as this ultimately relates to the basis of this research trajectory. Bare with me, as it reads a bit like a *curriculum vitae*, but I hope that it will help you, as a reader, to understand my starting position.

In 2021, I graduated from the Willem de Kooning Academie in Rotterdam as a spatial designer with a minor in social practices. During my studies I had completed a spatial design internship in an exhibition design studio. Working on exhibition design opened my eyes to a whole new scale and sector. I became fascinated by spatial storytelling, exploring how spatial design can enhance visitors' comprehension of narratives outside of their own. Specifically, I became intrigued by the potential of designing spaces for leisure and entertainment, such as museums, as a means to create experiences that profoundly impact visitors through spatial interventions. Not only in how they understand the world around them but also interact with it post visit. Upon graduating and in need of work (and income) I struggled to find design job openings that I felt suited me, and reflected who I wanted to become in a professional sense. Either too commercial or too large of a scale and on top of that, as an Irish-German woman, with limited Dutch language skills, my options were (at least for me at the time), surprisingly narrow.

I got a job as an assistant programmer and producer of 'guided tours' for a Rotterdam music, arts and culture festival. Here I aided guides in developing tours and workshops based on a myriad of topics, from asexuality, to dancing through streets, to the right to public space. These tours and workshops were accessible and free to everyone, regardless whether they held a festival ticket. As the festival had a visible base within public space in the city

including food, drink, talks and a stage with music, many of the participants were simply curious passers by. This meant that the visitors and participants of the programme were extremely varied. During some of these tours and workshops, participants occasionally experienced a friction between one another. These disagreements stemmed from their differing perspectives on the topic being addressed. It's important to note that while these disagreements occurred, they remained non-aggressive and devoid of any violence. The programme gave space to this back and forth, a space for mitigation and understanding the other. I was amazed with how a programme like this could trigger such strong reactions in learning and understanding, while still being a casual, playful, leisurely experience.

gentle friction

prologue

fig 1 + 2 :
Museum van the Gesest
Permanent exhibition, Haarlem
my role: exhibition design intern
Telling the story of mental health by encountering other
minds from within the 'Dolhuys' a former plague, mad and
lepers house.



3



4



fig 3

Public Space Detective - Motel Mozaique Festival
Guided tour, Rotterdam
my role: programme + production
Exploring the hostility ingrained into public architecture.
Who has the right to public space? And who dictates this?

gentle friction

prologue

fig 4

Skate Symposium - Architectuur Maand
Symposium, Rotterdam
my role: location manager
Bringing together people from the skate community with
policy makers and urban designers to discuss the future
of the city.



fig 5

The City is Present - Motel Mozaique Festival
 Guided tour, Rotterdam
 my role: programme + production
 An experiment in (re)perceiving everyday beauty, and
 experiencing the city like you have not before by
 connecting to strangers.



fig 6

Landschapmakerscongress, Watersnoodmuseum
 Event, Ouwkerk
 my role: creative production
 A day long event in which participants had to assume a
 new role, either human or non-human and vote on
 speculative futures of the landscape.



gentle friction

prologue

fig 7

The ACE space - Motel Mozaique Festival
Workshop, Rotterdam
my role: programmer + producer
Making space to discuss the spectrum of sexuality
between strangers. Opening up and starting conversations
about similarities rather than differences.



fig 8

Smile with Ishmail - Motel Mozaique Festival
Workshop, Rotterdam
my role: programmer + producer
Poetry tour by Ishmail Kamara, wandering through the
streets of Rotterdam West discovering this neighbourhood
through the lens of an asylum seeker.

While this role diverged from my expertise as a designer, as it involved minimal spatial design and instead focused on facilitating narratives through emails, meetings, and spreadsheets, it greatly intensified my fascination with the potential for social change within this realm. By facilitating individuals to share their stories, I witnessed the profound impact of exchanging knowledge and experiences within this specific context.

With one foot in the door in the cultural sector, I was able to continue this line of work, assuming new roles, meeting other professionals in the field and facilitating more and more of these shifts in understanding— be it through a film, an exhibition, a workshop, a tour, a performance, a talk, or discussion. I had the opportunity to work with various organisations and institutions on different projects, events and festivals. My roles changed a lot, from location manager to creative producer. I worked in front office, box office and as an artist-handler. But the more I did, the more I became passionate about being involved in the cultural sphere, beginning to really see power in these spaces for people to share, exchange, learn and grow from one another. The main difference between working within the cultural sector on relatively short lived events, and on the permanent exhibition in my internship was this sense of experimentation, trial and error that shorter events encapsulated. This made these events feel more like a real catalyst in social change rather than simply a static matter of fact display of information. Rather they were alive and moving, ever changing keeping up with current events.

However in the midst of this newfound passion and skill-set, I began to feel myself drifting from my roots as a spatial designer, loosing a set of skills I deeply care about. I wish to define my values and my position as a spatial designer within my fascinations.

The following paper aims to bridge this gap in my professional practice by unpacking my curiosities. In order to understand the elements that make this seemingly benign friction, cloaked in festivities, leisure and fun so powerful.

therefore, this research asks;

How do cultural events facilitate moments of gentle friction as a means to open up an understanding of 'the other'?

Why is there an urgency to create spaces like this? What is gentle friction? What conditions are deployed in making these moments gentle / subtle? how can these conditions become spatial elements?

2 terminology

gentle friction

terminology

Culture ¹

noun

the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society.

/ˈkʌltʃə/

It's your bubble

It's your island

It's your reality

¹"Culture, N." Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford UP, December 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/4985345143>. Accessed: Accessed 19 Jan. 2024.

Other ²

adjective

denoting a person or thing that is different or distinct from one already mentioned or known about.

/'ʌðə/

It's unknown

It's an alternative reality

It's different

Friction ³

noun

/'frɪk.ʃən/

the force that makes it difficult for one object to slide along the surface of another

It's the point of encounter

It's disruption

It's interaction

Temporality ⁴

noun, plural

/tem.po-ral-i-ties/

temporal character or nature; temporariness. Something temporal.

It's the suspension of reality

It's a counterpoint to the everyday

It's the ability to change

² "Other, Adj., Pron., N., Adv. (2)." Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford UP, December 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/5465073921>. Accessed: Accessed: 13 Feb. 2024.

³ Friction | English Meaning - Cambridge Dictionary, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/friction. Accessed 19 Jan. 2024.

⁴ "Temporality Definition & Usage Examples." Dictionary.Com, Dictionary.com, www.dictionary.com/browse/temporality. Accessed 19 Jan. 2024.

⁵ "Conviviality | English Meaning - Cambridge Dictionary." Conviviality | English Meaning, [cambridge.org/dictionary/english/conviviality](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/conviviality). Accessed 19 Jan. 2024.

Conviviality ⁵

noun

/kən.vɪv.i'æl.ə.ti/

the quality of being friendly and making people feel happy and welcome:

It's shared experience

It's the air of playfulness

It's not just harmony, it's interaction

'design
beginning

not an
ending

ing,

ings'

© Hill, Dan. Working with
Brian Eno on Design
Principles for Streets,
Medium, 26 Mar. 2023,
[medium.com/dark-
matter-and-trojan-horses/
working-with-brian-eno-
on-design-principles-for-
streets-cf873b039c9f](https://medium.com/dark-matter-and-trojan-horses/working-with-brian-eno-on-design-principles-for-streets-cf873b039c9f).
Brian Eno, an experimental
musician with theories on
design.

3 urgency



gentle friction

urgency

To begin with, facilitating the cultural health of a city is fundamental to my practice, more precisely, I am fascinated by spaces of gentle friction. Gentle friction, to me is a moment of seeing an alternative perspective, allowing space both physically and mentally to open oneself to alternative narratives outside one's own bubble. I use the term 'bubble', but this phenomenon has also been described as 'silos' ⁷ or as 'islands' ⁸ or on our 'own tracks' ⁹. The core of this is understanding that our scope and perception of reality around us is innately linked to what and who we encounter and open up to. And in order to expand our perception of reality, to understand others, we must briefly break our bubbles, join silos or experience another island. This chapter delves into my hypothesis, that gentle friction is needed by exploring the critical urgency of such interaction.

3.1 Culture

These bubbles, silos or islands can be a means to describe the culture in which we live in. The word 'culture' derives from the Latin word 'cultura' referring to cultivation, tillage and care ¹⁰. But overtime the meaning of the term expanded metaphorically to encompass the intellectual and spiritual development of individuals and societies, such as knowledge, customs, beliefs, habits and language. One's culture is acquired through a learning process, and through embodying encountered circumstances. This culture can be cultivated through nationality, socio-economic status, religious beliefs and educational background, but also through how we eat, what we wear and how we socialise and what we do for work.

⁷ Rottke Fitzpatrick, Alicia, and Van Dinteren, Jolanda . "Interview: Culture and Business." 15 Dec. 2023.

⁸ Rottke Fitzpatrick, Alicia, and Saccucci, Claudio. "Design tutor feedback." 15 Dec. 2023.

⁹ From the idiom 'stopping in one's own tracks', implying each person is on their own track to begin with.

¹⁰ "Culture" Definition & Usage Examples, Dictionary.com, www.dictionary.com/browse/cultures. Accessed 19 Jan. 2024.

Within sociology, the notion of ‘the other’ and ‘otherness’ is used to highlight when social identities are contested ¹¹, and are a way to recognise difference between the Self and the Other ¹². Each of our individual bubbles are shaped by unique experiences and encounters, contributing to their distinctiveness. These bubbles may share overarching similarities that allow for grouping and clustering within society. However their specificities remain intact, rendering each bubble inherently individualistic. Consequently, the presence of ‘the other’ persists as a continuous and inevitable aspect of social life, that cannot be avoided or ignored. Albeit varying in the degree of difference relative to one’s own bubble, but none the less, it is always present in some form.

3.2 Insularity

Recognition of otherness “is a fundamental category of human thought.” ¹³, yet I have recently experienced a realisation of how insular my bubble had become. In November 2023, the Dutch general elections took place and the Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV), won the most initial seats in government by a landslide. To me, as a person who does not hold the ability to vote in the Netherlands, I was astonished with the electoral results. This shock was also reflected within my social circles between friends and colleagues evoking that they also could not believe this had happened. As of January 9th 2024 the PVV had 37 seats ¹⁴, meaning that about 40% ¹⁵ of the Dutch population voted in favour of them ¹⁶. I genuinely did not feel, nor realise that I am outside of the general discourse. As polarisation runs rampant and becomes more inconspicuous in contemporary society, the acknowledgment of this division and the presence of ‘otherness’ is becoming increasingly difficult to discern.

The PVV is a nationalist, right wing, populist party, which means that while still holding strong right wing political ideals they lean on anti-elitism sentiments, speaking to the everyday common people. The PVV’s manifesto ¹⁷ reflected this, by making a vast array of mighty claims, as any far-reaching party does. However, in relation

¹¹ Zevallos, Z. (2011) ‘What is Otherness?’ The Other Sociologist, 14 October 2011. Accessed: 5 Feb. 2024.

¹² *ibid*

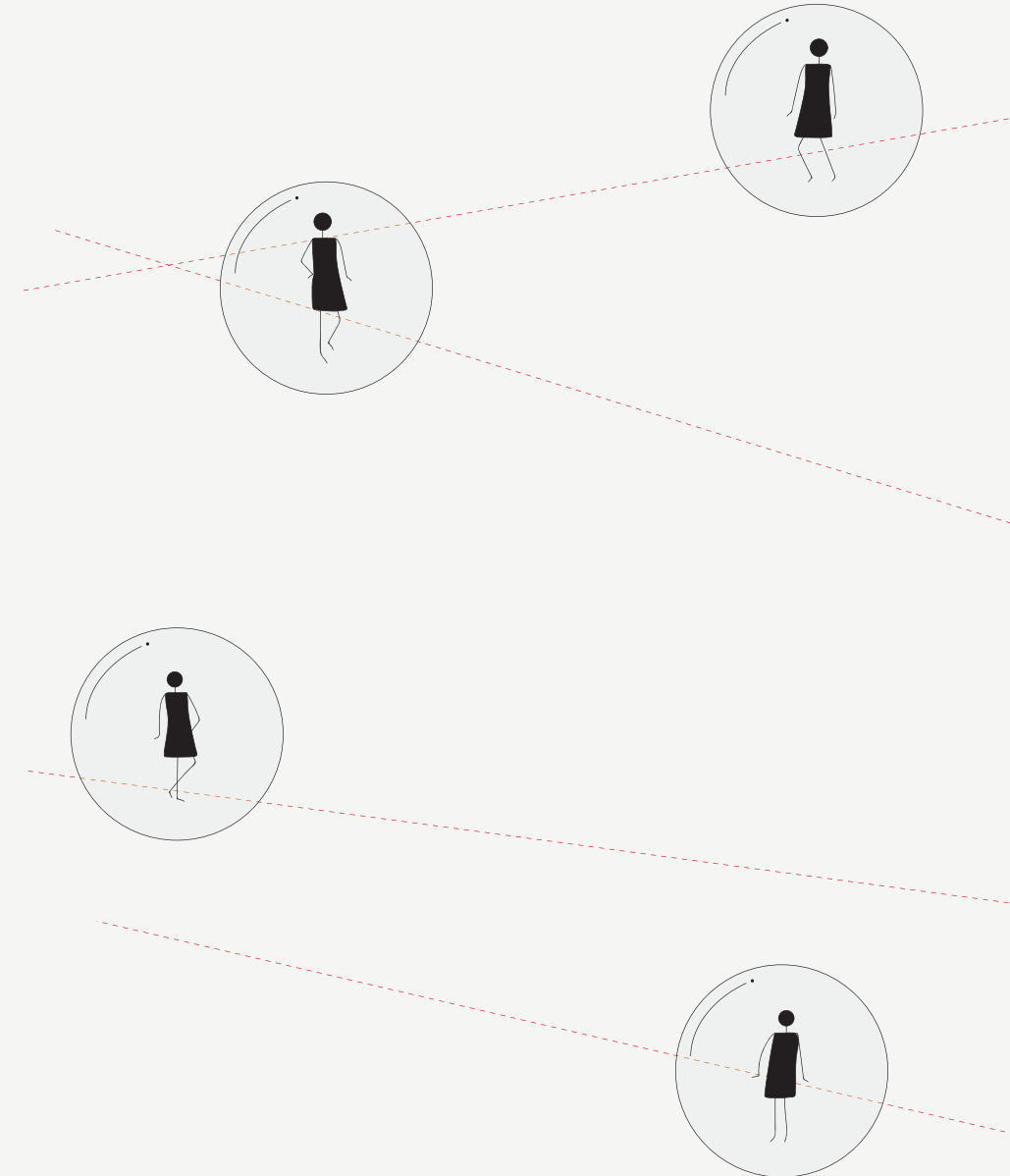
¹³ Beauvoir, Simone de. The Second Sex. Vintage Classics, 2015. Pg. 3

¹⁴ “Verkiezingen 2023.” NOS.Nl - Nieuws, Sport En Evenementen, nos.nl/collectie/13958. Accessed 19 Jan. 2024.

¹⁵ Although this is not taking into account those who did not vote.

¹⁶ Piekartz, Hessel von, and Serena Frijters. “In Grafieken: Het Hele Land Kleurt PVV, Links Is Historisch Klein.” De Volkskrant, 24 Nov. 2023, www.volkskrant.nl/politiek/in-grafieken-het-hele-land-kleurt-pvv-links-is-historisch-klein~b73ba7c8/. Accessed: 19 Jan. 2024

¹⁷ Party for Freedom (Partij voor de Vrijheid). Nederlanders Weer Op 1! Verkiezingsprogramma 2023. PVV.NL, 2023



to this research, it was their stances on arts and culture that left me utterly bewildered. The manifesto calls heavily for the protection of Dutch culture, while also bidding to “end arts and culture subsidies”¹⁸.

The PVV’s statement is a blatant paradox as the backbone of the sector is within these subsidies. In the Netherlands, the cultural sector refers to an array of different subsectors, including: visual arts and design, heritage and museums, media and literature, and performing arts²⁰. It is a multifaceted ecosystem of institutions, organisations, foundations as well as individuals whose goals lie in ultimately promoting a wider understanding of otherness, through providing platform for narratives to share their perspective. The PVV’s manifesto frequently makes a sharp distinction between ideologies of the left-liberal elites and the ideologies of all other citizens. I believe that there is a misperception of art and culture within the narrative that this sector only serving the elite. I acknowledge that portions of the sector are catered towards what can be seen as elitist circles, such as the position I, as a designer am in. Events, exhibitions, festivals and talks catering towards such specific disciplines, such as the design field I am in, can be seen as elitist. However from my position, I see these as necessary building blocks to developing better, more informed practices. What this narrative fails to observe is the myriad of events, exhibitions, and festivals that also rely on said subsidies, that act as a stage, giving space to gentle arenas of understanding other perspectives within our wider society for the general public, both within ‘elitist’ clusters of bubbles and outside of them. The distinction between more open, interactive events in the cultural sector and more ‘exclusive’ ones may not be as vastly different as this rhetoric portrays.

¹⁸ Party for Freedom (Partij voor de Vrijheid). Nederlanders Weer Op 1! Verkiezingsprogramma 2023. PVV.NL, 2023. Pg. 30

²⁰ Sectoren.” Raad Voor Cultuur, Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 12 Nov. 2019, www.raadvoorcultuur.nl/sectoren.

3.3 Friction

I have broadly addressed the concept of friction throughout the course of this paper thus far, but have yet to expand on this notion. Friction is in essence the point of encounter with the other, an opportunity to experience potentially sensitive or unfamiliar interactions as a means to change course.

Friction between otherness within urban contexts is not only inevitable, but also a necessity in ensuring that the multitude of narratives inhabiting a city have the ability to claim existence. In reaction to Rene Boer’s work in which he describes the smoothification of urban contexts creating frictionless environments, by hyper-focusing on the notion of clean, safe, perfect cities, non-normative, or non-conforming narratives to this perfect image get violently pushed out²¹. This destructive homogenization is not only alarming but also highlights the urgency of addressing, and facilitating friction and acknowledging otherness within urban spaces.

²¹ Boer, René. Smooth City: Against Urban Perfection, towards Collective Alternatives. Valiz, 2023. Pg. 14

Friction while necessary, can manifest in different ways resulting in vastly different outcomes. On one end of the spectrum more aggressive friction between clusters of societal bubbles create volatile, precarious and sometimes violent environments. In this form of friction it can become difficult for any bubble or culture involved to be receptive to listening to clusters of 'the other', as a sense of hostility prevails. In aggressive forms of friction polarisation is exacerbated and emotions run high as the need for immediate action is usually present, such as in active conflicts. On the other end of the spectrum, a more gentle friction, the stakes and the need for immediate action are lowered. Rather, gentle friction opens small opportunities to recognise otherness allowing stereotypes and biases to slowly shift, as bubbles merge and intersect with less intensity. On the extreme level of gentility, individuals may not even consciously perceive the friction occurring, as it can operate within the subconscious realm. This subtle yet profound process of interplay between differing perspectives within shared spaces lays the groundwork for fostering empathy and understanding of otherness and ultimately playing a pivotal role in maintaining societal cohesion.



fig 9

Riots in Dublin, Ireland which began as an anti immigration protest 2023



fig 10
Summer Carnival, Rotterdam.

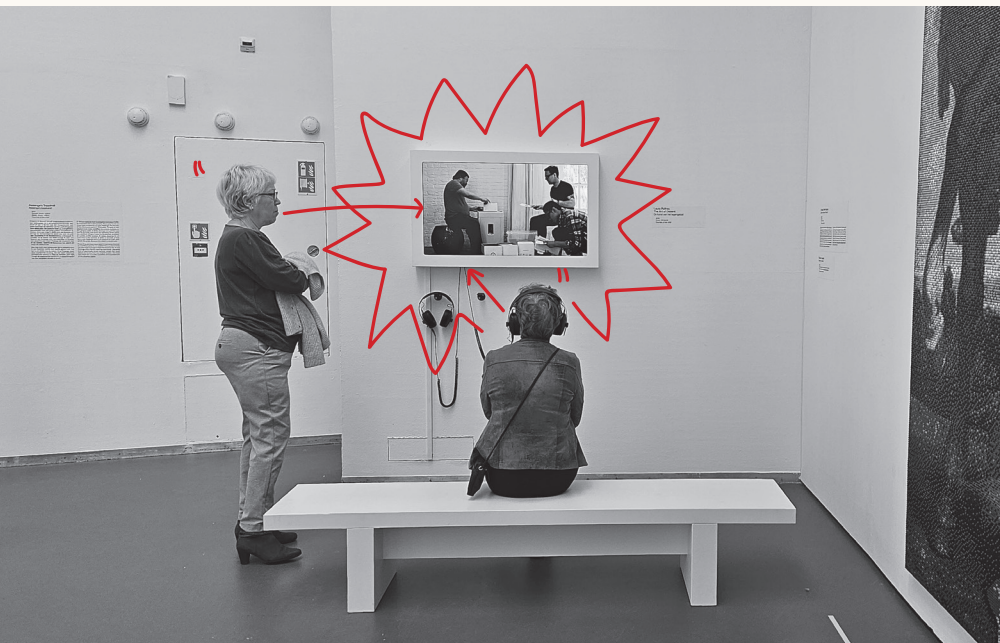


fig 11
Kunsthal, Rotterdam.

gentle friction

urgency

The cultural scene plays a major role in facilitating opportunities of gentle friction. Rotterdam Festivals, an organisation that mediates between cultural organisations and the municipality, funds cultural events and connects prospective visitors to these events. In their 2023 campaign ²² they have used the notion of 'breaking out of your bubble' and getting out of your 'comfort-zone'. However, certain instances of gentle friction may be felt more apparent than others as it is imperative to recognise that this too, is relative to the individual's own bubble. An example of this is the annual 'Zomercarnaval', an event in which thousands of Caribbean dancers and floats take to the streets of Rotterdam ²³. While the nature of it being a single day festive event is what still keeps it within the sphere of gentle friction, this event may appear to be on the higher end of gentle friction for someone who has never encountered this culture. But it could at a must lower point of friction for someone who is more familiar with the culture ²⁴. This also can be reflected in a trip to an art museum. For someone whose bubble is more involved with art exhibitions the friction is much lower than someone who has never stepped inside a museum.

3.4 Reflection

This recent electoral experience has heightened my awareness of the challenges in obtaining a true understanding of other realities. I acknowledge that a few points in a political manifesto do not necessarily reflect the beliefs of every voter, as individuals may cast their votes for a multitude of reasons. However, the rhetoric that arts and culture are solely for the leftist elite is what I truly worry about. This line of thought excludes the essential role arts and culture play in mitigating and facilitating necessary moments of gentle friction between 'the other'. While the cultural sector by nature is an extremely resilient one, and will not disappear through one election or even major cuts to funding as institutions, organisations and individuals are safeguarding their existence through alternative measures ²⁵. I believe that their capabilities and role within society must be reiterated as a means to counteract an alarming

²² "Uitagenda." XYZ Creative Agency, 7 Nov. 2023, xyzcreativeagency.com/uitagenda/.

²³ "Zomercarnaval." Rotterdamunlimited.NL, www.rotterdamunlimited.com/zomercarnaval. Accessed 13 Feb. 2024.

²⁴ "Strengere Regels Zomercarnaval: Niet Te 'vulgaire' Dansen En Beperkte Alcoholverkoop." NOS. NL - Nieuws, Sport En Evenementen, NOS Nieuws, 26 July 2023, nos.nl/artikel/2484365-strengere-regels-zomercarnaval-niet-te-vulgaire-dansen-en-beperkte-alcoholverkoop.

²⁵ Rottke Fitzpatrick, Alicia, and Jolanda Van Dinteren. "Interview: Culture and Business." 15 Dec. 2023. From a business perspective they have had to work with temporary contracts, apply for non-state funding etc.

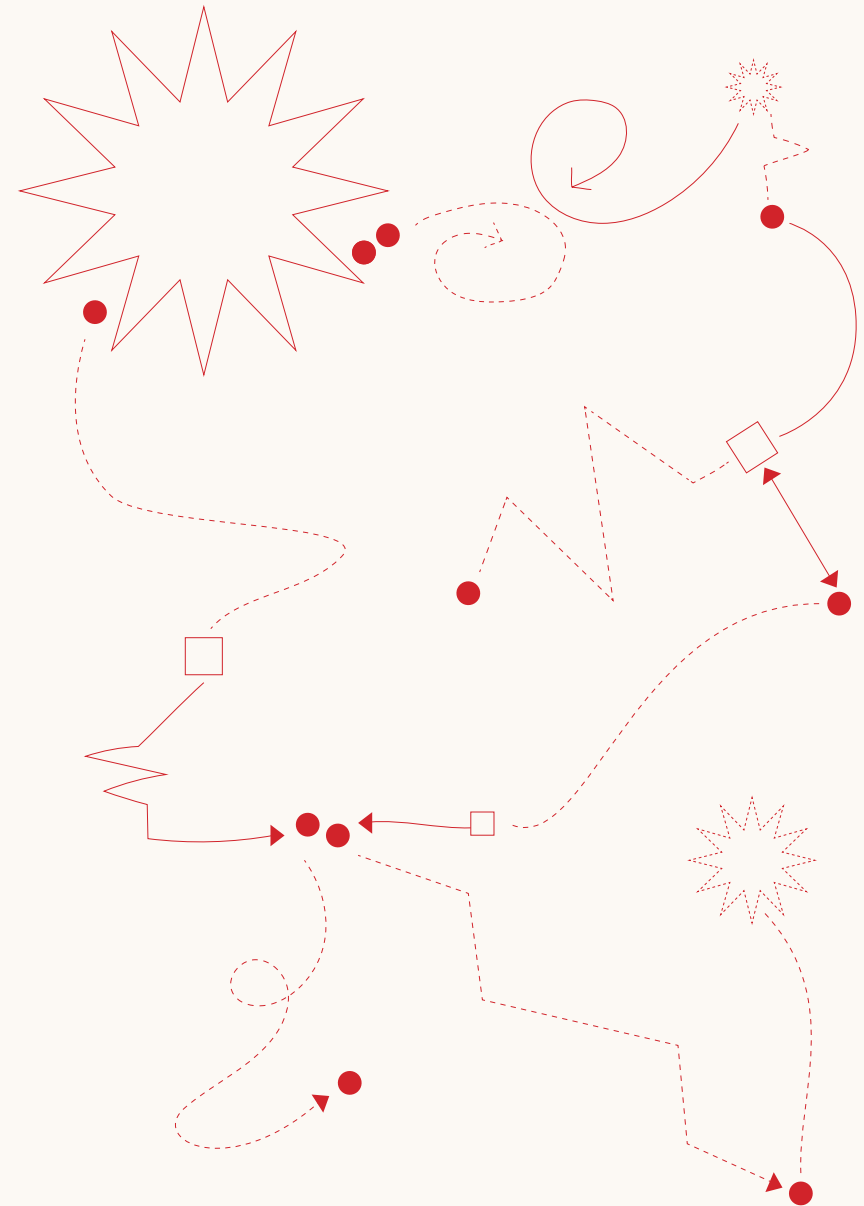
rhetoric, that can very quickly catch on and exponentially escalate, if not addressed.

There is an urgency to create, maintain and sustain opportunities for gentle cultural friction. Spaces to be receptive to seeing, feeling and hearing other perspectives. Facilitated moments to step off one's own track, come out of one's own world and peer into 'the other'. The presence of 'the other' is constant ²⁶, as in essence we are all 'the other' in relation to one another. It is within the more sinister practices of 'othering' ²⁷ that can and has created polarised 'us vs them' mentalities within society. 'Othering' categorises individuals or groups as fundamentally different from oneself or the dominant societal norms at extreme lengths. This 'us vs them' mentality appears in the more aggressive friction, whereas I see an urgency to build small bridges, open up doors between 'otherness' on a gentle, subtle and even subconscious level. Gentle friction is what allows stereotypes and biases to slowly shift, in turn dissolving, morphing and blending the boundaries between otherness.

There is a need to create spaces that gently challenge preconceptions, encourage dialogue, and enhance public understanding of otherness. In the absence of these spaces, differences may only become apparent when situations have escalated too far resulting in harsh, aggressive forms of friction. In preserving this essential process, there is a pressing need to continuously emphasise the potential of these spaces for public awareness.

²⁶ Excluding individuals who solely live in such reclusiveness (hermit).

²⁷ A. Powel, John. "US vs Them: The Sinister Techniques of 'othering' – and How to Avoid Them." The Guardian, Guardian News and Media, 8 Nov. 2017, www.theguardian.com/inequality/2017/nov/08/us-vs-them-the-sinister-techniques-of-othering-and-how-to-avoid-them.



4 conditions



²⁸ As 'otherness' refers to the state of being different or distinct from something else, and in this context the presence of 'the other' from ones self. Therefore 'between otherness' refers to an interaction involving two or more 'others'.

²⁹ Žižek, Slavoj. Event: Philosophy in Transit. Penguin, 2014.

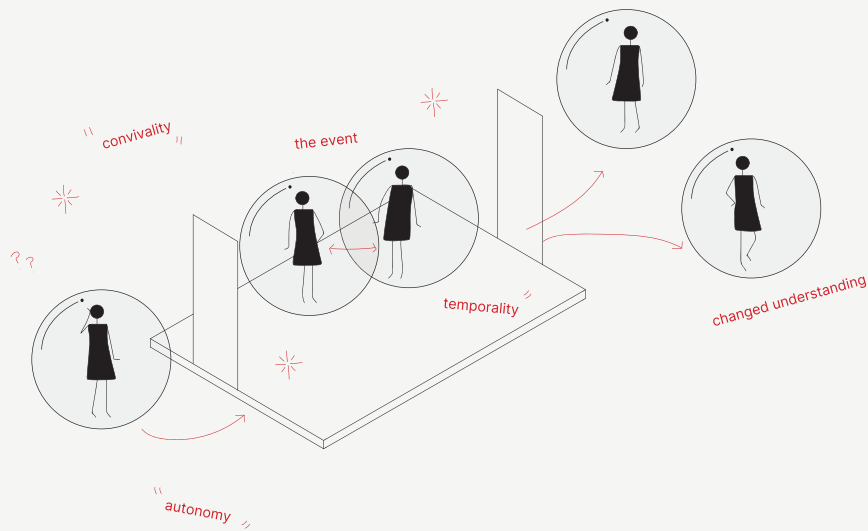
²⁹ "Events and Encounters Explain Our Fear of Falling in Love | Big Think." Performance by Slavoj Žižek, YouTube, YouTube, 30 Nov. 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXqPIYWJSII>. Accessed 19 Jan. 2024. (0.14)

³¹ *idib*

But this still questions, how can these spaces of friction be perceived in a gentle manner? In order to explore this question, this chapter dives deeper into the conditions which can be deployed in facilitating this form of intersection of bubbles. Examining the fundamental elements that play a role in setting the scene of a successful cultural event which, in turn mobilise gentle friction between otherness ²⁸.

To begin, by describing the various contexts of gentle friction merely as an 'event' highlights their catalytic power in any given context. The work of Slavoj Žižek, philosopher and cultural theorist, clarifies this ²⁹. He boils down the event as a space in which "something extraordinary takes place" ³⁰, he goes on to describe the event as "within a certain field of phenomena where things go on the normal flow of things, from time to time something happens which as it were retroactively changes the rules of what is possible in the sense that something happens. It is generated by that situation. Of course it's causally produced by that situation but in a way it changes interactively the whole situation. It's a miracle in the sense of the event would have been an effect which is stronger than its own causes" ³¹. Relating this notion to cultural events, the event is the moment in time when the visitors experience a change in frame, by opening up another perspective or worlds. The event provides opportunities for uncertainty to take place, allowing for friction to occur. Which then has a knock on effect to how they continue to see and perceive the world around them. The concept implies that through participation in a cultural event, visitors can acquire knowledge and understanding of alternative bubbles and cultures which they coexist with.

I characterise and simplify the gentle friction experienced in an event as an almost chemical reaction a reaction. In which conditions such as conviviality, autonomy and temporality catalyse the experience contributing to the felt experience of the friction to remain gentle. This chapter delves into the necessity and rationale behind these conditions within the context of an event, exemplifying their pivotal role. Additionally, it investigates the spatial translation of these conditions, as a means to discern their potential as tangible manifestations.



gentle friction

conditions

4.1 Space as programme

It is crucial to clarify, that the programme of specific cultural events is what is at the core of this friction I speak of, be it the subject of an exhibition, the theme of a tour, or the type of performance. And the spatial potential of these moments of cultural friction within the cultural sector are highly relative to the programme. Some have more defined spatial potential for example a cinema or a theatre. In an exhibition the spatial potential is relative to the works on show and the spatial potential of a workshop is relative to the group size and activities planned. A tour may need much less spatial intervention than a panel discussion. The spatial aspects tend to come secondary, as a means to facilitate the interactions and relationship between the programme, participants and visitors. But does this always need to be the case?

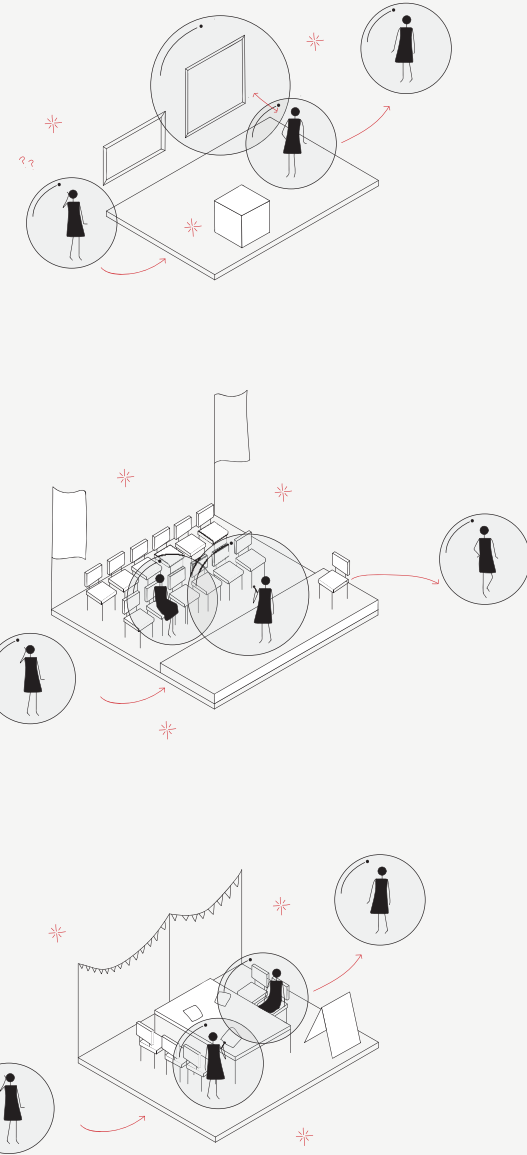




fig 12 + 13
Peter Greenaway - Stairs 1 Geneva, 1994

gentle friction

conditions

Space becoming the programme can be a rather literal shift, as seen in Peter Greenaway's "Stairs 1 Geneva"³². Greenaway took film out of darkened theatres, and into everyday life by building a series of stairs for visitors to approach³³. These stairs each had a small 'peephole', which framed a particular 'scene' of Geneva, spanning from bustling main streets to tranquil residential areas. Greenaway did this as an attempt to push the medium of film forward, away from just film enthusiasts and into the general public. By simplifying the core of what film does, making the existence of the everyday the plot, the gap between urban life and ambiguous, perhaps even elitist cinema becomes smaller. Inspired by this work I am eager to explore how space itself can play a role in programing moments of gentle friction, and to do so I explore how the conditions of conviviality, autonomy and temporality, which are key in successful cultural events can be spatially materialised.

Design tool → public life becoming program / content

³² Greenaway, Peter, director. Stairs 1 Geneva. Actua-Films, 1994.

³³ "Peter Greenaway—the Stairs: Geneva, the Location." George Eastman Museum, george eastman museum, 6 June 2015, www.eastman.org/peter-greenaway-stairs-geneva-location.

4.2 Conviviality

Firstly, what differentiates festivals, exhibitions, and events from mundane daily routine, is in their embodiment of leisure and entertainment. A key aspect that I believe to be imperative in facilitating these moments of gentle friction is a binder that not only attracts visitors, but also eases them into engagement. Looking closer at what happens within these spaces, I describe this link as a sense of conviviality. A somewhat ambiguous and intangible notion, that has the ability to encapsulate this crucial component. Many definitions and variations of the word have come about, from meaning “friendly and happy”³⁴, to “feasting, drinking, and merry company”³⁵. But it is much more than that. It is an inviting atmosphere, a buzz in the air, a sense of togetherness. I propose a more nuanced definition of the word, a definition with embodies the intricate relationship and interactions between people within the context of gentle cultural friction.

In their research into intercultural communities, sociologists Amanda Wise and Greg Noble³⁶ explore nuances often missed by English definitions of the word. The Spanish translation ‘convivencia’ touches upon these complexities, referring to ‘shared life’ or ‘living together’ by incorporating the inherent reality of negotiation and tensions in such communities where an interplay between complex social bubbles or cultures is present. ‘Convivencia’ refers to the time in mediaeval Spain where Muslims, Jews and Christians lived in non-violent coexistence³⁷. This was not an easy feat, rather required active negotiation between all realities in order to keep this sense of peace. Broadening the definition acknowledges that convivial spaces are not only ‘fun,’ ‘merry,’ and ‘happy,’ with people in harmony with one another. Instead, for a space to become convivial and to be recognised as such, while remaining a playful, fun, and leisurely space, there is a need for underlying elements of negotiation, friction, and tension to be actively participated.

³⁴ “Conviviality | English Meaning - Cambridge Dictionary.” Conviviality | English Meaning, cambridge dictionary, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/conviviality. Accessed 19 Jan. 2024.

³⁵ “Conviviality Definition & Usage Examples.” Dictionary.Com, Dictionary.com, www.dictionary.com/browse/conviviality. Accessed 19 Jan. 2024.

³⁶ Noble, Greg. Wise Amanda “Everyday cosmopolitanism and the labour of intercultural community.” Everyday multiculturalism. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2009. Pg 46-65.

³⁷ Wolf, Kenneth Baxter. “Convivencia in medieval Spain: A brief history of an idea.” Religion Compass 3.1 (2009): 72-85.



fig 14 + 15

Exhibition opening, buzz + chatter in the air, drinks, Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam 2023





fig 16
MOMO festival Playground, Rotterdam, 2023

gentle friction

conditions

Conviviality has the ability to spark curiosity, an air of playfulness, and acts as the glue that can create sociability between strangers from diverse bubbles or cultures. Conviviality is not determined by singular place, nor a single person rather an atmosphere that connects people in a place. It is important to recognise that conviviality, a purely felt experience can be extremely subjective. In any translation of this intangible entity, this sensation can be greatly dependent on one's culture or bubble. However, there are some 'universal' characteristics that can generate this sense of conviviality.

Firstly, conviviality as it is connected with the notion of friction and negotiation is highly dependent on active participation and interaction. This can occur through a shared experience, on a basic level this can be achieved through a shared experience of food or music, but also through being an active part of the same discussion. The 'fun', 'playful' and 'merry' aspect to conviviality can be materialised through a change in scenery, indicating a novel experience and within the context of cultural events, conviviality can be materialised through a festival format³⁸ through varied venues, unlocking new spaces. Or on a more literal level, through openings of exhibitions or closing parties.

³⁸ A festival format can include; multiple venues at the same time, tickets, flags, decoration, banners & dense packed programme. Non-everyday scenarios and thus, non-everyday actions.

4.3 Spatializing Conviviality Part 1

Conviviality begins with a sense of intrigue, a curiosity luring a visitor into engagement. This initial reaction is vital as it is the hook within the catalytic reaction. Its the light, festive, novel lure. One spatial aspect that can act as this hook is obscurities within the familiar. Slight differences that can trigger a double take, be it in scale, colour or form. Take the work of Benedetto Bufalino, an artist who is familiar with this kind of hook. Bufalino combines everyday objects in amusing ways ³⁹, creating a sense of lightness unlocking new possibilities, diverting from what is understood as a fixed norm.

Design tool → obscurities in the familiar

This hook can also manifest itself in a 'benign-parasitic' ⁴⁰ manner, as an extension, an add on to a known context. Haus-Rucker-Co, a creative collective which begun in the late 1960's in Austria were well acquainted with this methodology. They did not steer away from using lightness and optimism as a way to propel the need to change the preception of the environment in the late 1960s and early 1970s ⁴¹, a time which was facing grave change and crisis. Their work 'Mind Expanders' and 'Environment Transformers' ⁴² utilised inflatables and wearables as a way to "create new regions of perception, connected with the intention to promote relations between individuals and their correlation to society" ⁴³. These objects and spaces, coupled with performances or 'happenings' gave space to retreat from everyday life, facilitating profound change of preception through "leisuretime" ⁴⁴.

Design tool → benign parasite

gentle friction

conditions



fig 17
Benedetto Bufalino - La bus piscine, 2019

fig 18
Benedetto Bufalino - La bétonnière boule à facettes, 2017



³⁹ Bufalino, Benedetto.
"Benedetto Bufalino –
En Bref." Alpes, dda-
auvergnerhonealpes.org/fr/
artistes/benedetto-bufalino/
en-bref. Accessed 19 Jan.
2024.

⁴⁰ This is a paradox, as
parasites are by nature not
benign. However I use this
term as a means to illustrate
a non-violent form of spatial
parasite, as has been used
within spatial discourse
in relation to parasitic
architecture.

⁴¹ Rasker, Thomas, et al.
"De Optimistische Visie
van Haus-Rucker-Co
in Een Tijd Van Crisis."
Archined, 11 July 2023,
www.archined.nl/2023/07/
de-optimistische-visie-van-
haus-rucker-co-in-een-tijd-
van-crisis/.

⁴² "Mindexpanding
Programme." Go Back
to Project Overview.,
www.zamp-kelp.com/
mindexpanding-program/.
Accessed 13 Feb. 2024.

⁴³ *ibid*

⁴⁴ *ibid*



fig 19
Haus-Rucker-Co - Environment Transformer, 1967 - 1968

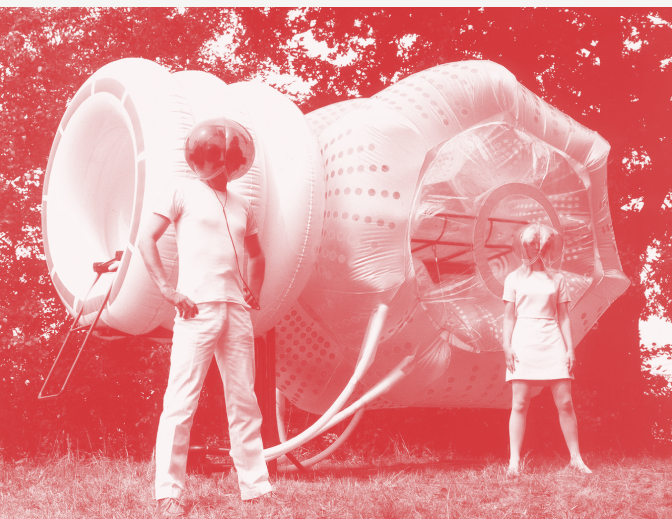


fig 20
Haus-Rucker-Co - Yellow Heart, 1968



fig 21
Haus-Rucker-Co - Balloon for 2, 1967 - 1968

4.4 Spatializing Conviviality Part 2

Usually, the portion of friction and negotiation found in conviviality arises within the programme of cultural events. But looking at this closer, this portion of conviviality stems from a basic degree of active participation. This is key in understanding how to spatially manifest this intangible sense. When speaking to Herman Verkerk, designer and writer of event-architectuur ⁴⁵, he describes this as a visitor taking a non-voyeuristic approach to a space. For a space to allow for active participation and interaction, it must speak for itself without the need for over-explanation. In order to achieve this, the movements of the visitor need to be a carefully curated, selected and encouraged.

Hans Hollein choreographed these playful movements in the Austrian Pavilion as part of the Milan Architecture Triennale in 1968. Navigating a labyrinth of spaces, Hollein skillfully guides visitors through the pavilion. He prompts them to engage in a dialogue with the space by presenting doors leading to dead ends and doors with handles, where only one unsuspecting handle functions ⁴⁶. The glasses visitors were offered did not have folding legs, meaning they either had to wear them or throw them away ⁴⁷. All of these factors contributed to the visitors assuming a new role, transforming them simply from a spectator to an active participant. Not only this, but the playful, almost comic display of spaces initiate the the first stage of conviviality. In terms of negotiation and friction the visitors irritation through the misleading or 'non-working' spaces, urges them to make discoveries along the way.

Design tool → deviating from standards from visitor to active participant

⁴⁵ Rottke Fitzpatrick, Alicia, and Herman Verkerk. "Interview: Event Architecture." 16 Nov. 2023.

⁴⁶ Obrist, Hans Ulrich, and Hans Hollein. "In Conversation with Hans Hollein." Journal #66 - Hans Hollein Born 1934 in Vienna, e-flex, Oct. 2015, www.e-flex.com/journal/66/60777/in-conversation-with-hans-hollein/.

⁴⁷ *ibid*

gentle friction

conditions



fig 22
Hans Hollein - Austrian Pavilion, Milan Triennale - entryway, 1968



fig 23
Hans Hollein - Austrian Pavilion, Milan Triennale - passage, 1968



fig 24
Hans Hollein - Austrian Pavilion, Milan Triennale - glasses, 1968

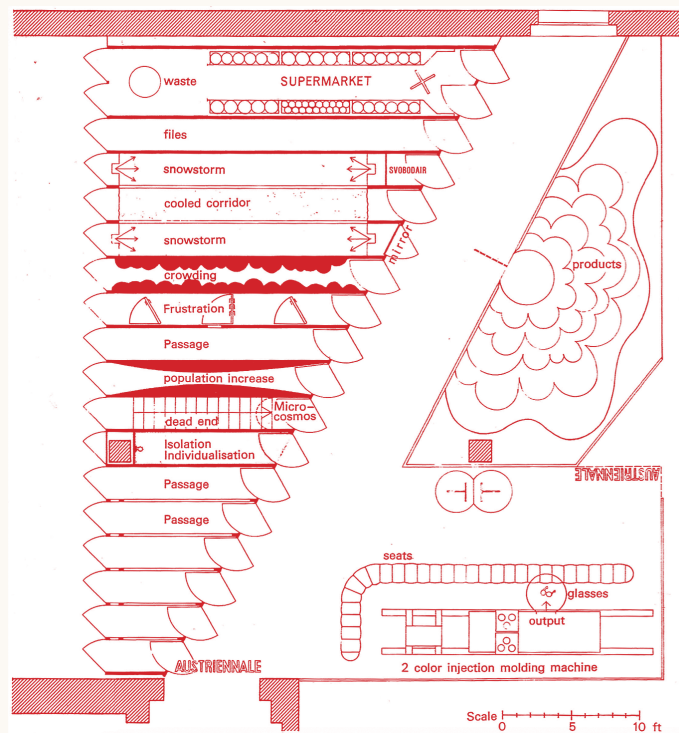


fig 25
Hans Hollein - Austrian Pavilion, Milan Triennale - floorplan, 1968

gentle friction

conditions



fig 26
Hans Hollein - Austrian Pavilion, Milan Triennale - doors, 1968

4.5 Autonomy

Although a sense of conviviality can entice a visitor to interact and engage, it does not ensure that they will. This is in fact a necessary stage in the chain of events, as in order for this friction to be felt as gentle there needs to be a genuine and voluntary effort from the visitor. This willingness and choice of whether or not to engage is vital. I describe this as a sense of autonomy. Autonomy has been described as “to be directed by considerations, desires, conditions, and characteristics that are not simply imposed externally upon one, but are part of what can somehow be considered one’s authentic self.”⁴⁸ Autonomy on a personal scope is the ability to connect desires, values and emotions to actions⁴⁹, to select choices and make decisions based on authentic emotions and genuine sentiments. This allows for the boundaries of the visitor to be respected, while also providing opportunities for a shift in perspective. The sense of personalisation within the experience, due to a sense of autonomy also provides the visitors with a sense of ownership or investment in an event.

If this sense of autonomy is not present and ripped away, the hostile atmosphere found in more aggressive forms of friction can be almost immediately felt, as a moment of friction becomes forced on the visitor rather than being an option or an opportunity. It is of course difficult to ensure full autonomy to all parties at all times, and like mentioned before in this paper, extremely subjective and relative to one’s own bubble or culture. However, it is crucial to be aware of this condition and implement it as much as possible as a means to ensure the friction experienced remains as gentle as possible for visitors.

The power of choice in respect to the visitor within cultural events can come in a form of simply booking a ticket, showing up to a certain place or reserving a seat or a timeslot. But I believe that this power of choice, this ability to step in and out at one’s own will must be present throughout the experience as a whole. This can occur through the choice to put on headphones in an exhibition or stepping closer to reading a description.

⁴⁸ Christman, John. “Autonomy in Moral and Political Philosophy.” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Stanford University, 29 June 2020, plato.stanford.edu/entries/autonomy-moral/. Accessed: 7 Feb. 2024.

⁴⁹ *ibid*

As for the friction to remain gentle, autonomy must lay in the hands of the visitor. And these stages in choice must be continuously presented and offered to the visitor.



fig 27
ticket, Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, 2023



fig 28
Kunsthal, Rotterdam, 2023



fig 29
DEAD exhibition, Goethe Institute Dublin, 2023

gentle friction

conditions

4.6 Spatalising Autonomy

Architect Jane Clossick and philosopher Ben Colburn explore some of the precepts in translating autonomy into architectural form ⁵⁰. They underpin the importance of clarity in allowing for a sense of self-directedness in space and the ability for the person to make informed decisions. They also note the importance of a range in choice for the individual in space, rather than complete maximal freedom. What is important here is range of choice must be significant and distinct from one another. This also means that for a sense of autonomy to be experienced in space, there is a level of withholding of information, that can be uncovered at the will of the individual in space. Spatially this can be in the form of doors, openings, layers or multiple routings.

⁵⁰ Clossick, Jane, and Ben Colburn . "Chapter 18 - Design Precepts for Autonomy." Routledge, 2021.

As seen with Robert Sweere's "HEADS"⁵² installation, he deploys a physical ladder the visitor needs to climb up in order to fully engage with the work. This demonstrates that the experience inside of the installation is not forced upon the visitor, rather a choice to look and explore further is fully in the hands of the visitor. However, this portrayal, while literal, confines autonomy to able-bodied individuals, thus failing to encompass the full spectrum of bodily autonomy within this specific context. But what can be learned from this work is the need for threshold space wherein individuals navigate the transition between being 'in' and engaged or 'out' and carrying on about their life, actively choosing a direction.

Design tool → threshold space



fig 30
Robert Sweere - HEADS, interior, 2014

⁵² "Heads at Beach Hoek van Holland." Rob Sweere, Rob Sweere.com, 14 Sept. 1970, robsweere.com/2014/09/14/heads-at-beach-hoek-van-holland/.

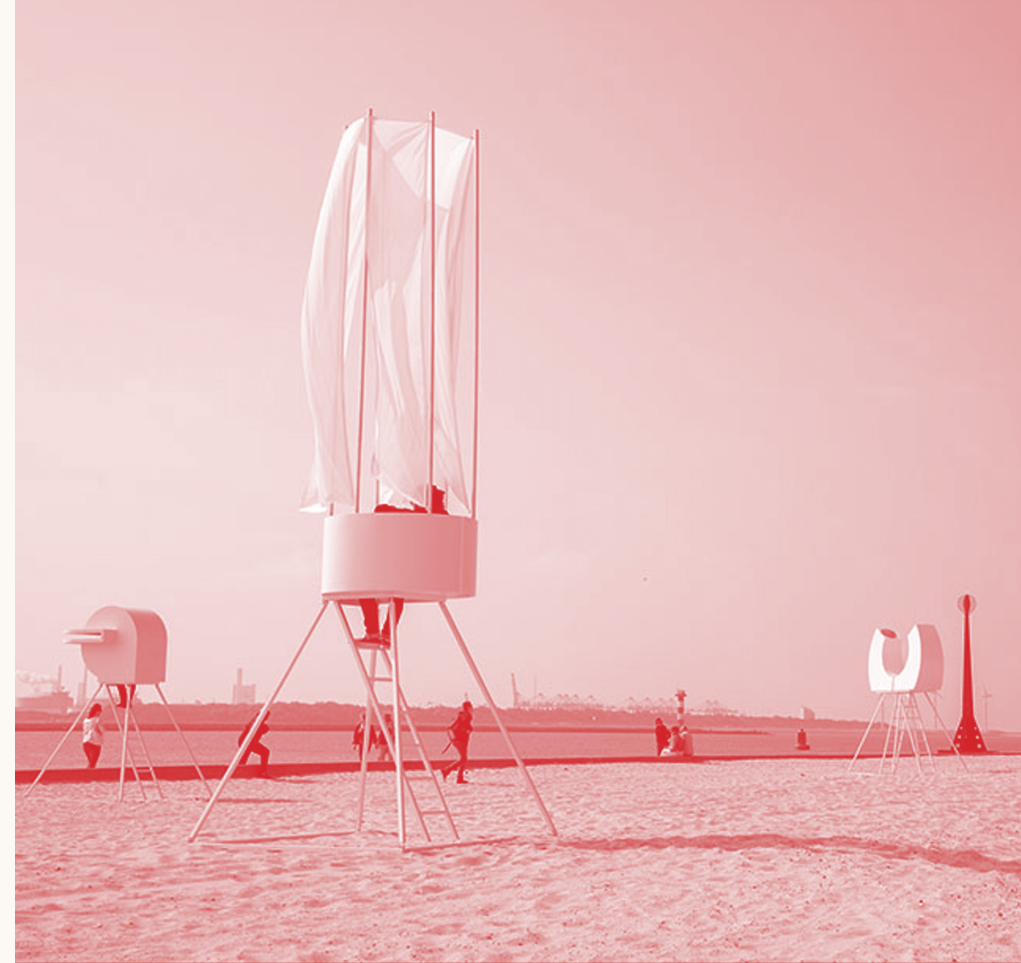


fig 31
Robert Sweere - HEADS, exterior, 2014



fig 32 - 35
Robert Morris - Bodyspacemotionthings, 1971

In terms of inviting visitors to transform from passive spectator to active participant, and the notion of autonomy in respects to visitor actions the work of Robert Morris must be discussed. His exhibition "Bodyspacemotionthings" was the Tate Gallery's first interactive exhibition in 1971, an event so sought after, that just four days into opening it was forced to close⁵³. Visitors, come participants, interacted with the space and objects so much that according to the gallery, it was just becoming too dangerous as visitors injured themselves in the process⁵⁴. Here although the series of movements were fairly choreographed by Morris through the objects, and the goal of the exhibition was for the visitors to take full autonomy in how the objects should be used. The visitors pushed the boundaries so far, appropriating the space far beyond the intention of Morris. This resulted in the experience of the space being diminished for those who were not first in line. Here full autonomy in the appropriation of the space, a maximal freedom is what denied the experience for others.

Design tool → affordance limit (scope of affordance)



fig 36
Robert Morris - Bodyspacemotionthings, 1971

⁵³ Tate. "Robert Morris: Bodyspacemotionthings: Tate Modern." Tate, www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/robert-morris-bodyspacemotionthings. Accessed 19 Jan. 2024.

⁵⁴ BBC. "#OnThisDay 1971: The Tate Gallery Closed Robert Morris' Participation Art Exhibition - Bodyspacemotionthings - for Repairs, after Art Fans Participated a Little More Boisterously than Anticipated. 3 May 2016, Accessed 16 Jan. 2024.

4.7 Temporality

Another important aspect that I have yet to dive into, is the importance of time in creates successful cultural events that embody gentle friction. A restriction in time is what create the novel aspects needed in convivial atmospheres, allowing bubbles to momentarily break from their own everyday experience, and briefly intersect with one another. This short lived nature that temporality allows for is what keeps the felt experience of friction gentle. The ability to know that the situation the visitor is in is only a temporal break from their own track, keeps the feelings of aggression and hostility at bay. When a clear restriction in time is defined, be it a festival that only runs for three days, an event which is on for an afternoon, or a temporary exhibition, lasting anywhere from a few days to a few months the finality and intimidation of permanence is removed.

I briefly mentioned earlier, that from my experience the more temporary an event the more the event had the ability to feel like a true catalyst in the change in perception of visitors, rather than a static matter of fact display of information. Consider the difference between a permanent intervention in a space that you know, and contrast this with a temporary intervention. The one that only exists in a physical sense for a short amount of time, in a 'benign-parasitic' manner, has far more ability to stay up to date with current narratives as each iteration has the ability to metamorphose. This ability to change and remain up to date is imperative when facilitating gentle friction between otherness, as friction between otherness is far from static. This also provides more agency to more narratives, allowing more cultures of bubbles to be able to claim space to share their perspective.

Roger Paez, architectural designer and researcher ⁵⁵ highlights the concept of ephemeral architecture within spatial discourse. As opposed to the traditional notion of architecture which is often interlinked to the notion of permanence; ephemeral architecture has the ability to be in dialogue with the current world, and can design conditions for novel situations to happen. Paez goes on to relay that ephemeral architecture prompts, irrigates, and suggests in

⁵⁵ Manzini, Ezio, et al. "Authors/ Roger Paez." Actar Publishers, 19 Dec. 2023, actar.com/product-category/author/roger-paez/.

⁵⁶ "Lecture 5: Roger Paez on Ephemeral Architecture and Social Purpose." Performance by Roger Paez, YouTube, YouTube, 17 Dec. 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzbCa-IFRDI>. Accessed 19 Jan. 2024. (6.15)

which way the visitor then formulates their own experience ⁵⁶. Temporality allows for both, the social and spatial rules to be bent as a new reality, or a suspension of reality is fabricated.

The annual Architecture Maand, an architecture festival in Rotterdam, created this suspension of reality through their festival heart. In 2022, along with Studio Marco Vermeulen the festival heart was positioned on three long floating barges ⁵⁷, serving as a test site, for developing a new city park. This festival heart provided a unique space for current and future stakeholders to not only convene but also collectively envision alternative possible futures. In this context, where diverse bubbles coexist within the same space, it is the defined temporality that facilitated a space of mitigation, as space to discuss possible futures in a malleable manner. This also comes through the fact that this temporary space becomes a neutral ground between parties involved, a space that is fabricated purely for the intersection of different bubbles and narratives.



fig 37
Studio Marco Vermeulen - Rotterdam Architectuurmaand, 2023

⁵⁷ "Festivalhart Rotterdam Architectuurmaand." SMV | Studio Marco Vermeulen, marcovermeulen.eu/nl/projecten/festivalhart+rotterdam+architectuurmaand/. Accessed 13 Feb. 2024.

Temporality also allows for standard rules to be broken. Museum Nacht Den Haag 2023, a one night event in which the visitor can access almost all of the city's museums outside of normal hours. Here, the ground floor of the municipal building was transformed into a skating rink, while during regular operating office hours this space is off limits to those on skates. The proposition that conventional norms are subject to deviation stimulates a palpable sense of potential change within these norms and standards.

4.8 Spatializing Temporality

Throughout this process often I questioned whether new spatial interventions were justifiable, and if the role of a spatial designer is even necessary within this context of facilitating gentle friction between otherness. I could not help but contemplate about the sheer amount of waste and the negative environmental impact of building new walls for exhibitions, printing new flags for a festival or creating new podiums for performances. However, the significant role of temporality in facilitating gentle friction demands acknowledgment and cannot be disregarded. After quite some deliberation with myself and through conversations with others on this topic, I have come to the conclusion that visually different, although not necessarily new spatial interventions can further ignite and catalyse this intersection of bubbles. Materialising these new spaces comes first and foremost in clearly displaying that care⁵⁸ has been taken in giving platform to narratives of bubbles that coexist in our society. Essentially, claiming temporary territories of culture.

⁵⁸ Rottke Fitzpatrick, Alicia, and Hanna Rudner. "Interview: Architecture and Exhibition." 11 Dec. 2023.

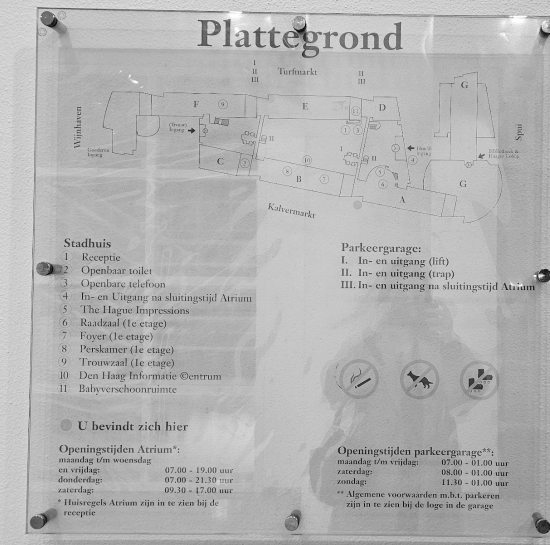


fig 38 + 39
Museum Nacht, Den Hague, skating in a skate free space,
2023



gentle friction

conditions

fig 40 + 41
Raumlabor - #Empowerment, 2023

With this in mind, there are still ways in which temporality and physical space can converge in a less wasteful manner. As exhibitions in the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Germany are temporary, the museum has developed a frame system to allow for this flexibility of space, a spatial framework for each new exhibition and thus each new narrative. The experimental architectural practice, Raumlabor utilised this system in the exhibition design of #Empowerment⁵⁹. They purposely left most of the frames uncovered, as a means to give moments of compression and closures only where needed, filtering the space. The open spaces become spaces of encounter between visitors, allowing them to stop and rest. The use of soft curtains in contrast to the rigid frames, are giving a more intimate feel. Curtains, unlike solid walls, offer greater ease in movement and transportation post-installation.

Design tool → systems + modularity

⁵⁹ "Raumlaborberlin."
Raumlabor "
#empowerment, raumlabor.
net/empowerment/.
Accessed 19 Jan. 2024.

On the note of transportation, I have come to realise that the physical experience of space that host moments of gentle friction only needs to be experienced as temporary. The structure itself does not need to be demolished. Rather it can come in in form of transient spaces or structure, as seen with the “Mobile Porch” by Public Works ⁶⁰, an art and architectural practice. This mobile structure rolled through public space, hosting public readings, spontaneous concerts, exhibitions, dinners, and workshops, providing a dynamic space for various activities. The amorphous form of this structure not only added an element of intrigue, but also allowed for the structure to remain intact while moving between Utrecht/ Netherlands, and London/United Kingdom, from 2000 to 2020, continuously appearing as temporary experiences while remaining physically intact.

Design tool → mobility + unfolding

gentle friction

conditions



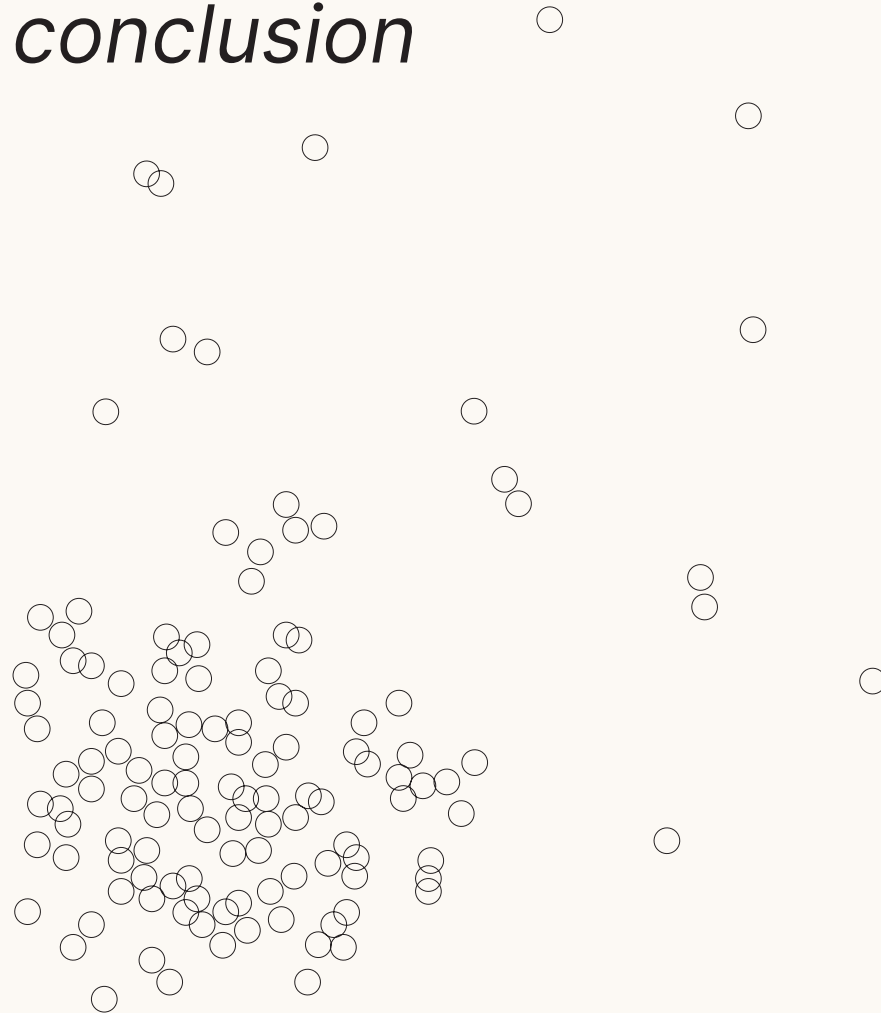
⁶⁰ “Public Works .”
Public Works Projects
- Mobile Porch, [www.
publicworksgroup.net/
projects/mobile.porch/](http://www.publicworksgroup.net/projects/mobile.porch/).
Accessed 19 Jan. 2024.



fig 42 + 43
Public Works - Mobile Porch, 2000 - 2020

5

conclusion



The cultural complexities of contemporary society are vast and polarisation between societal bubbles is only becoming more apparent. Moreover, obtaining the ability to recognise the undeniable presence of otherness within society is becoming more difficult to discern as bubbles become more insular. Disregarding the presence of otherness is also not an option, as what this does is strive for not only unattainable, but potentially violent friction-free homogeneous environments. Our environments are, and will always be heterogeneous in nature as individual bubbles and cultures are shaped by unique experiences and encounters. These individual bubbles merge, intersect and develop through inevitable and necessary moments of friction with one another.

The spectrum of friction can occur anywhere on the scale from aggressive, characterised by forceful confrontation or domination, to gentle, marked by a sense of understanding and receptiveness. Gentle friction opens small opportunities to recognise otherness allowing stereotypes and biases to slowly shift, and can also be so subtle that the friction felt is subconscious. Moments of gentle friction act as counterpoints to everyday life, providing opportunities to momentarily deviate from one's own reality, bubble, track or world and peer into 'the other'.

Opportunities of facilitated gentle friction already exist through a vast array of cultural events and programmes, offering spaces of mitigation between

narratives. They occur through cultural exhibitions, events and festivals, by creating openings to other perspectives and realities, in a light and subtle manner under the guise of leisure or entertainment. After the recent electoral events I came to realise that the general discourse of the catalytic power of the arts and culture sector may be in jeopardy. If these spaces are only seen to be catering to certain bubbles in society, this can only further exacerbate the existing polarisation.

I have personally witnessed the catalytic potential of cultural events, which mobilise this very particular form of friction between otherness and I was eager to understand this for myself, so that I could gain the tools to reiterate this to others. But throughout this process I struggled quite a bit with positioning myself within this context when not working with specific programme. What I mean by this is choosing not to work with a specific urban urgency, be it working with a particular group of people or working with a particular topic. Through Peter Greenaways 'Stairs 1 Geneva' I realised that our environment, **urban everyday life can in fact be the programme**, so that I could focus this research on understanding the mechanics behind these events. This step back has allowed me to truly understand why I am so fascinated with working within cultural events, and thus to define the conditions universally used within these events to further define how these conditions could be spatially manifested.

It's important to note that while I've categorised conviviality, autonomy, and temporality separately to structure my findings, they are all interconnected, influencing and affecting each other by working in tandem.

The first condition, a sense of conviviality is split into two phases. The first draws visitors curiosity in through a sense of festive, merry and fun atmospheres. Within cultural events this can be made visible through objects such as flags or banners, and through shared experiences of food or music. This first stage is the lure, the hook. From the work of Benedetto Bufalino, I've gathered that this can be translated into a design tool by implementing **obscurities within familiar objects**, which encourage a double take. This double take and sense of lightness can also be achieved by implementing **benign-parasitic** objects into a known context, as Haus-Rucker-Co have done.

But a sense of conviviality also demands the presence of friction and negotiation, which in cultural events is usually achieved through the programme. For this sense of friction and negotiation to be felt, there is a need for active participation. What I've learned is that spatially, this can occur by transforming the visitor from being simply a spectator to an active participant. The work of Hans Hollein's exhibition at the Milan Architecture Triennale does this by **choreographing the movements** of the visitors through spaces which are intentionally left to be discovered by the visitor, through openings and closings, props and misleading spaces. Different heights or widths are hereby a

means to activate bodily movement in space.

The condition of autonomy is crucial in ensuring the friction felt remains on the gentle end of the spectrum. Within cultural events this condition is materialised through booking a ticket, putting on headphones or choosing to read the more detailed descriptions in exhibitions. These are all points of choice for the visitor, to voluntarily decide whether or not to engage. On a spatial design level this allows the visitor to make choices through incorporating **threshold spaces**, that create boundaries between engaging or not. Robert Sweere's demonstrates this by incorporating physical ladders between his installations and the ground, but this can also happen through doors or curtains concealing information.

However, when thinking about autonomy in a space, there needs to be a **limit to the affordance** a space offers. A variety of choices is far better than full fledged freedom in ensuring that the space can be experienced by as many people as possible. As seen with Robert Morris's exhibition, the lifespan of a space can be cut short, if those who are first appropriate the space or objects too far.

Finally, the condition of temporality plays a crucial role in fabricating a suspension of reality between bubbles. Single day events, weekend long festivals or exhibitions running for a couple of weeks. This defined period of time take away the finality and hostility that permanence can carry. Temporary events allow visitors to momentarily get off their own track, while being secure in knowing they

can return to their own world. Along with this, temporality allows for events to stay up to date with current narratives, adapting and changing with society. This is also true within spatial discourse in terms of ephemeral architecture, having the ability to be reactive and current prompting and irrigating reactions. However, when deliberating over the notion of temporality and the built environment I struggled with finding ways to justify the negative ecological impact of short term constructions. That is until, that I came to the realisation the the physical structure does not need to be finite after a temporary event, rather the physical experience of a structure in a particular context is what needs to be temporary. As seen how the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg utilises **systems and modularity** to enable their exhibitions to change visual appearance while structurally remaining the same. Another example is how Public Works implemented **mobility and unfolding** as a means to move the "Mobile Porch" from space to space.

Overall, this research has allowed me to acquire a set of design tools that connect with the conditions which facilitate gentle friction. Understanding these conditions and their spatial potential is not only important for me and this project, but also for my future practice. And beyond that, recognising and spatializing the conditions in successful spaces is a methodology that inform wider spatial discourse. Opening avenues for interactions that may not be inherently spatial to take on spatial qualities as a method of increasing effectiveness when applicable.



6

design brief

As a result of this research I have been able to gather some design questions which can mobilise me into the next stages of this graduation process. To begin with, "how to reiterate the basic catalytic power arts and cultural spaces provide, aka spaces of gentle friction, by spatially activating spaces through the design tools found in the conditions; conviviality, autonomy and temporality?"

Further question to consider include:

How do I see myself facilitating gentle friction between otherness? And where should this occur?

- Is this just about seeing or feeling and or hearing other perspectives?
- How to do this?
- Or is it more than this?
- Is there more programmed to it?
- Is this though two active participants?
- Or can it be experienced alone?
- Perhaps this needs to occur in public space, as a means to move away from the more enclosed institutions who usually facilitate this friction.
- Should I create space, claim territory, to enable friction between otherness?
- Could this be through appropriating public space?
- Perhaps in areas where different bubbles coexist and inhabit?
- Or in areas where different bubbles move through?

From this research I imagine designing some sort of objects, or installation or pavilion in which I can translate my learnings from. And should incorporate the design tools discovered; everyday public life becoming the program, obscurities in the familiar, benign-parasites, active participation, threshold space, accordance limit, systems + modularity and mobility + unfolding.

7

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gentle friction

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Fig 3: Huck Sim - Motel Mozaïque

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Fig 9: Extra.ie
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Fig 19 + 20 + 21: Zamp Kelp
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Fig 22: Christian Skrein
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Gentle Friction

Through temporary territories of culture

Alicia Rottke Fitzpatrick
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**ALICIA
ROTTKE
FITZPATRICK**