Sticks, Ropes, Land

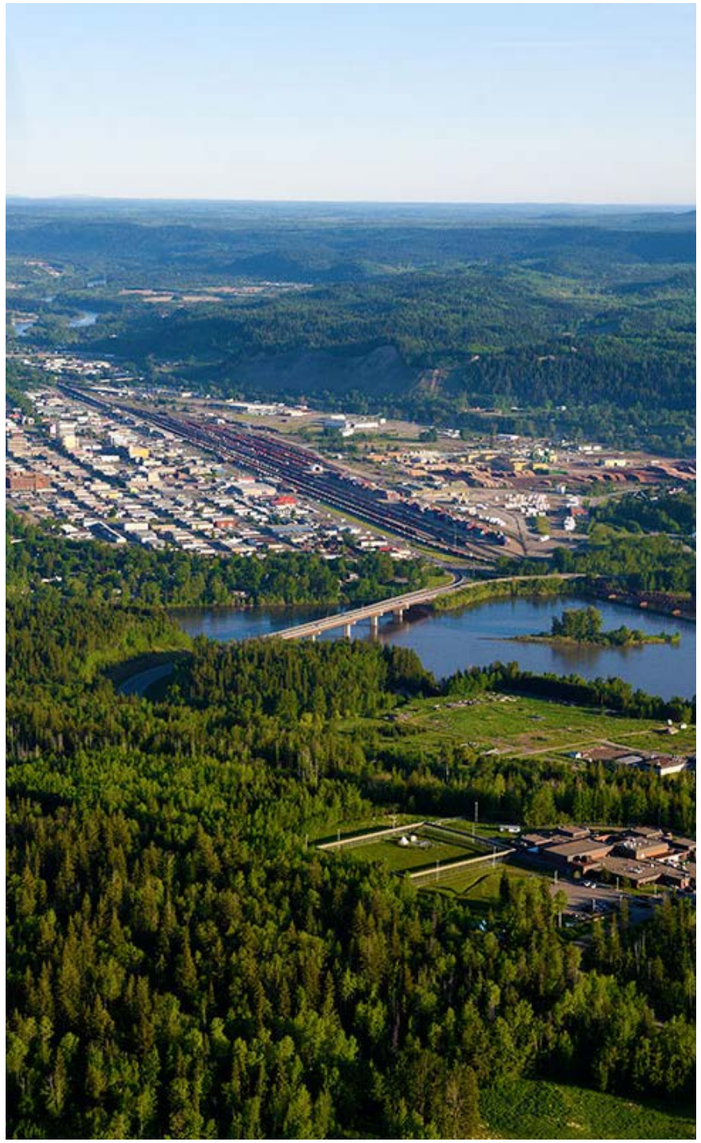
Confronting Colonial Practices in Public Space Design

Laura Kozak, Charlotte Falk, Jean Chisholm
Living Labs, Emily Carr University of Art + Design
June 2020

Designing for Public Space is an ongoing project that engages a research team of Emily Carr design faculty and senior-level students to investigate human-scale matters situated in the public realm.

Utilizing principles adapted from architecture, urban design, industrial design and community engagement practices, the project incorporates topics of context, way-finding, materiality and scale; as well as the collaborative and practical aspects of working in public space. Stewardship, care, incremental change and place-based knowledge are defining values for the project.

Table of Contents

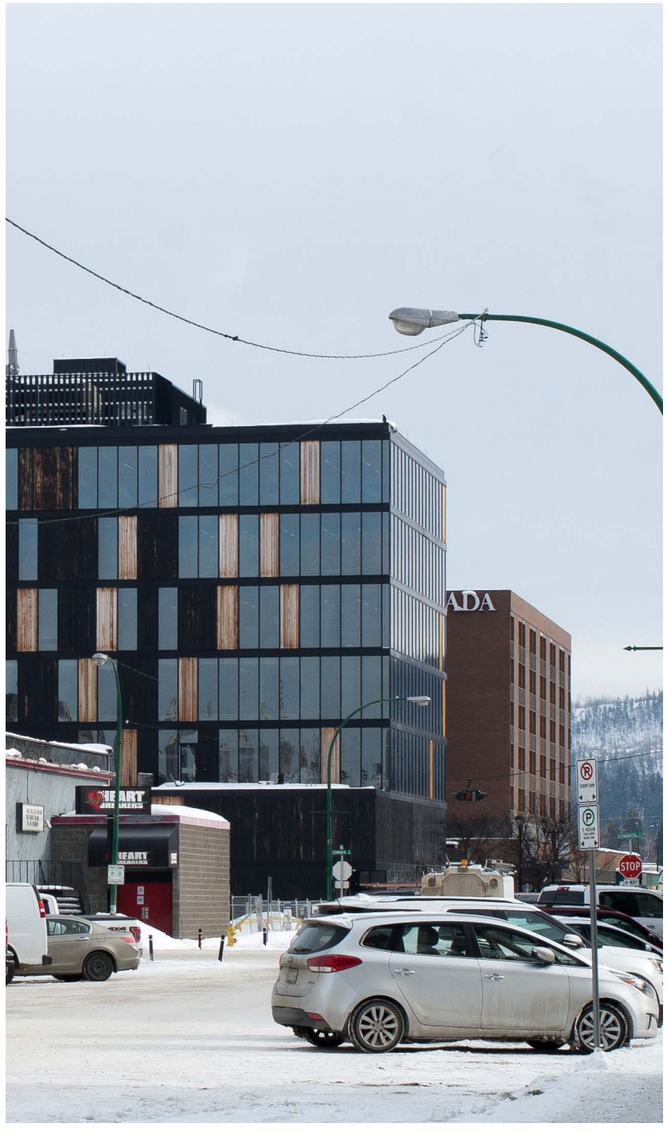


DOWNTOWN PRINCE GEORGE
Image by Eurydemus, Creative Commons

Sticks, Ropes, Land, as the 2019 focus of Designing for Public Space, is comprised of a series of investigations into alternative approaches to design research and participatory design. This project recognizes how the concept of public space is defined and supported by colonial systems, and aims to reconsider this premise through research and design methods that embed approaches of reciprocity, care and responsibility to the land into our design process.

As designers, educators and design researchers, our intent with this work is to establish processes and partnerships that may allow us to serve place-based communities and support changes of approach to designing for public space.

This work took place in city of Prince George, on the traditional territory of the Lheidli T'enneh.



DOWNTOWN PRINCE GEORGE, BRITISH COLUMBIA. A CITY OF 78 000 PEOPLE LOCATED IN NORTH-WESTERN CANADA.

Prince George

This iteration of Designing for Public Space focused on a set of place-based conditions and community needs particular to the urban core of Prince George. In collaboration with a range of partners, including Two Rivers Gallery, the Aboriginal Housing Society of Prince George, Nusdeh Yoh Elementary, Harwin Elementary and Omineca Arts Centre, a core team of design faculty and students engaged in a process of reframing our understandings of designing for public space in relation to land, ecology, and individual perspectives.

Designing for Public Space came to Prince George through a networked range of relationships between Emily Carr researchers and community organizers in the city. Past projects that created these linkages include the *Neighbourhood Time Exchange* (2016 - 17); *Float School* (2018 - 19) and *Along a North-South Axis* (2016 - 2019), as well as Emily Carr partnerships with Omineca Arts Centre, the Aboriginal Housing Society of Prince George, and Two Rivers Gallery.

Prince George, a city of approximately 78 000 people, is the largest city in northern British Columbia, and is located on the traditional territory of the Lheidli T'enneh, a subgroup of the Dakelh people. Lheidli T'enneh means "the People from the Confluence of the Rivers" (Gottschall, 2016); Prince George is situated at the meeting point of the Nechako and Fraser Rivers. Geographically, the downtown core and a concentrated industrial belt are located adjacent to the riverfront and in a 'bowl', surrounded by an elevated landmass that encircles this low-lying area.

The 20th century economy of the city was largely driven by the forestry industry: the population boomed in the 1970's and 80's, and has since remained steady (Prince George Public Library, 2018). Downtown went through a period of divestment in the 90s and early 2000s; more recently this has started to reverse with new development downtown, including 153 units of market housing adjacent to City Hall (complete 2020), UNBC's Wood Innovation Design Centre (completed 2014), and plans for the Community Arts Council to develop a site on 3rd Avenue. A concentration of health and social services that serve a local and regional community are located downtown, including low-barrier shelters; detox, overdose prevention and addictions recovery sites; immigrant social services; and mental health services.

Local media coverage suggests polarized attitudes about downtown Prince George, ranging from those who support the need for social services to those more supportive of increased police presence and economic revitalization. A number of indicators in the built environment convey a defensive, protectionist approach to public space, including rocks embedded in concrete (to prevent lying down), hardware on wall-edges (to prevent skateboarding), and classical music played into outdoor speakers through the night and early morning (to discourage lingering).

DOWNTOWN PRINCE GEORGE

Prince George's downtown core supports a concentration of mostly locally owned businesses as well as many health and social support organizations that serve the region.

Prince George

- Health and Social Service Organizations
- Industrial
- Parks/Green Space

Summary of Process

In 2019, we hosted a series of participatory, public programming workshops that engaged localized communities in using simple materials to generate prototypical responses to existing public space sites. Each workshop produced new and highly site-specific responses to local conditions, social/environmental needs, and gaps in infrastructure, conveying deep and sophisticated place-based knowledge. This paper examines the emergence of these alternative approaches and considerations through three sequential stages:

February 2019

WORKSHOP 01: STORY STICKS

Story Sticks was a set of cultural programming workshops hosted at Two Rivers Gallery that engaged 10-12 year old children from Harwin Elementary and Nusdeh Yoh Elementary in low-fidelity actions of making as a means to talk about themselves and their individual and collective relationship to land and the built environment.

October 2019

READING AND WALKING: RECOGNIZING HOW COLONIALISM DEFINES PUBLIC SPACE

Turning our attention to the vast and deeply entrenched systems that define public space in relation to problematic land ownership structures, we set aside a period of time to assemble, read and discuss an expanded range of secondary sources. Our intent in this work was to shift our own methods away from colonial understandings, methods and values associated with land ownership, public space, and community engagement practices. Discussions were held while walking, talking and working in public space, a deliberate strategy to resist academic removal from the context of our work.

October 2019

WORKSHOP 02: STORY ROPES

Story Ropes was the second iteration of a participatory process that integrated learnings from *Reading and Walking*. We engaged 13 adults, 7 based in Prince George and 6 from Emily Carr, in leading a group walk to ‘sites of care or concern’ in the urban core of Prince George. Each participant offered both individual perspectives and insights into their own networks and communities.

Design Strategies: Materials and Methods

Our approach to this work has been a hybrid of participatory design methods and explorations into the potential of unexpected materials as prompts for making and dialogue. Relational and place-based values have formed a substrate for these methods, resulting in a set of strategies that were repeated through each iteration: intuitive approaches to making through the use of rudimentary and unusual combinations of materials; making as a means for conversation; and made-objects as proxies.

Guiding participatory design principles, as summarized by Blomberg and Karasti in *Ethnography: Positioning Ethnography within Participatory Design* (2012), include:

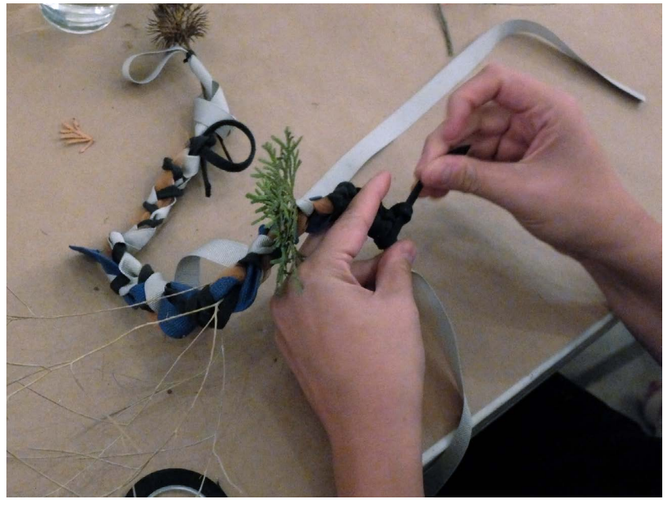
- Respect for different knowledges
- Opportunities for mutual learning
- Joint negotiation of project goals
- Tools and processes to facilitate design

Place-based ethnographic values also informed our work: we believe that those who live in place and community have site-specific expertise and deep-knowledge that is hard to access through conventional engagement processes. As such, the emphasis on connecting engagement to place was integral to the methods we established to connect with local community stewards. This methodology is consistent with ethnographic approaches:

"Ethnography's focus on everyday settings follows from the view that to understand the world you must encounter it firsthand, gathering information in the settings in which the activities of interest occur. Conducting research in everyday settings also allows study participants to have access to the people and artifacts that define the activities in which they are engaged as they respond to requests by researchers to describe those activities (note how this contrasts with laboratory settings or interviews conducted away from the locations where the activities of interest occur). Holism points to the importance of understanding activities with reference to the larger setting and array of related activities." (Blomberg & Krasaki, 2012, p. 6)

VARIATIONS IN MAKING

During our workshops, the semantics of materials like ropes and strings varied widely, with some suggestive of sports or crafts, others tied to utilitarian uses, and others ambiguous. The use of tie-able items allowed for some familiarity for participants (we've all tied a knot of some kind) without requiring the dexterity of working with typical 2D or 3D media, such as pencils, paints, cardboard or clay.



Intuitive Approaches to Making

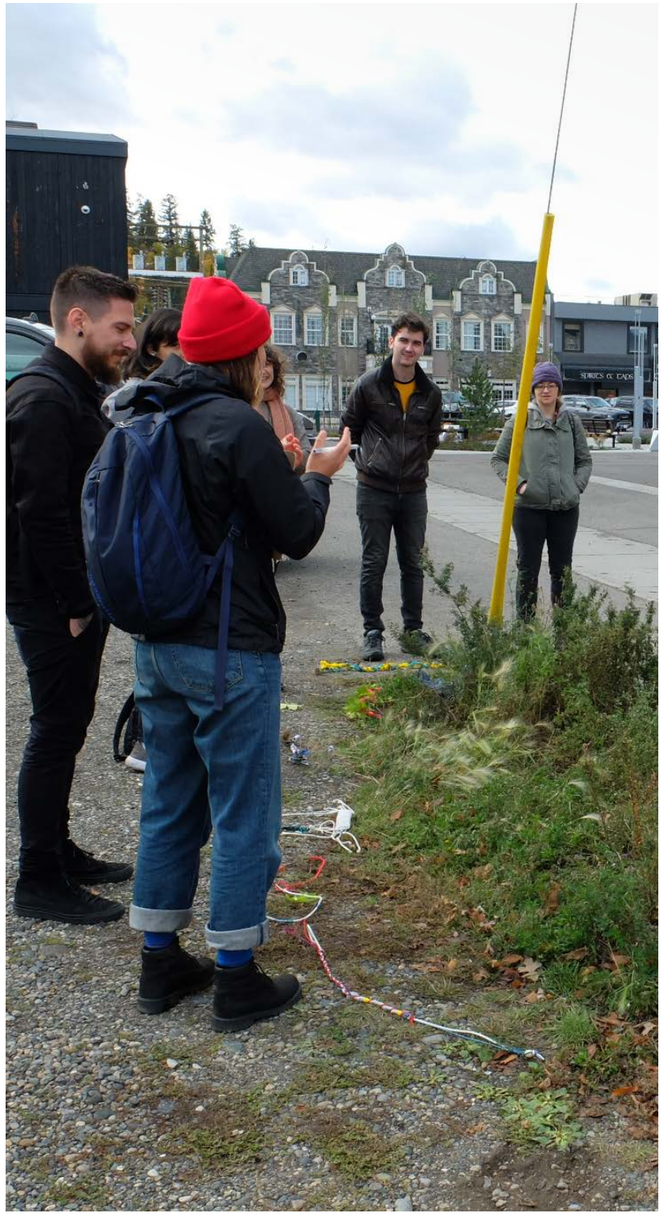
Our workshops combined participatory design methods with our own theories regarding intuitive responses to rudimentary materials. We drew from the use of cultural probes – "provocative artefacts that aim to inspire design ideas from the responses of people" – which tend to illicit one-way engagement (Calvo, 2017, p. 263). We also looked at more common engagement tools and methods (such as drawing and writing on large paper, sticky notes, etc), as these approaches tend to be "open for input and debate, and to facilitate enriched dialogues on issues close to the heart of the communities" (Calvo, 2017, p. 263). However, they often lack the depth and specificity of provocation produced through the use of cultural probes. We were interested in seeing what other kinds of materials and prompts could be provocative while also being open-ended, accessible and non-hierarchical.

We were curious whether using atypical, unexpected materials could promote more creative, or at least less-constrained, responses to a site, building upon earlier research queries (Falk, 2012 and 2018). We considered how much a familiar set of materials and tools might prompt most people to reproduce familiar outcomes. (For example, when asked to give input into a masterplan for a park, an individual might sketch something similar to a park they've been to before.) In contrast, when faced with unexpected materials, including materials that don't obviously go together, and materials that may not have been used before to visually communicate concepts, we are pushed to respond intuitively to the task at hand; to improvise.

From here – with the provocation of cultural probe artefacts, the openness of engagement tools, and the improvisational, intuitive nature brought forward by an unexpected material palette – we compiled the following materials for our workshops:

- Ropes and string of varying lengths, diameters, colors, patterns, and textures
- Tape of various colours and widths
- Sticks, branches and dimensional lumber of various sizes
- Natural items found locally, such as rocks, weeds, moss, twigs and leaves, to contrast with the industrially-produced materials and to connect more directly to land and place.

We invited participants to work with these unusual combinations of rudimentary materials in response to open-ended prompts. Activities were presented in an informal, low-pressure manner, with clear communication that there was no expectation to create a specific outcome, use a known method, or to generate something monumental, memorable or even precise. In so doing, the burden of skill and technique was further alleviated, and often replaced by improvisation and imagination. We found that participants responded intuitively to the materials set before them, in ways that de-emphasized any learned approaches to making they might have. This released pressure and expectations, while also freeing many people up to explore new outcomes in a low-stakes setting. New techniques were often developed, as participants worked-out how to consider the materials as a medium for communication.



BRINGING *STORY ROPES* INTO PUBLIC SPACES, WHILE DISCUSSING SITES OF CARE AND CONCERN.

Making as Conversation

This method of making was established both through and for dialogue. At the start of each workshop, participants were presented with a collection of materials and a series of questions. These questions initially served as prompts for making, and were later used to shape group conversations. While some prompts lent themselves to tangible, physical outcomes (make a tool that will help you now), others pulled on more abstract thinking (tell us about where you have been).

Depending on the dynamics of the group and range of questions, participants were asked to either respond to each prompt systematically, or to choose which ones they would like to respond to. As facilitators, we participated in these activities as well. This helped to reduce any implicit hierarchies, and brought us directly into conversations that first began during the making activity. After a short period of making (typically 20 to 60 minutes), we would gather and gave each individual a prompt to share what they had made.

Through this low-barrier approach to making, in response to personal yet open-ended prompts, participants typically yielded a range of dynamic and engaging objects. The meanings behind what they had made were revealed through both informal conversation (while making) and structured discussion (after making). This process allowed each individual to share their own perspectives, and in discussing what they have made together, the objects take on a collective meaning for the group.

Made-Objects as Proxies

When groups of strangers or acquaintances come together in conventional community engagement processes, the focus is typically on the outcome – the “thing being designed” – as opposed to the individuals involved. This is typical of most professional settings, where we are accustomed to setting aside our personal narratives and subjectivity in favour of neutrality and “professionalism”. Perhaps because of this, many of us are a little uncomfortable speaking openly about ourselves and our own needs in these settings. However, we found that it is through the personal and subjective storytelling that much more specific, genuine and important information gets shared. We wanted to look for ways to prioritize this type of dialogue.

Through exercises in making, we noticed that having materials in front of us seems to shift this dynamic: the made-objects became a kind of proxy, or “third thing”, that gave us each something to hold and look at while talking, as opposed to the attention being on us. A process that supported more subjectivity, more vulnerability and more specificity of narrative rapidly helped to establish a dynamic of empathy and understanding amongst those present.

As proxies, these objects could also be used as stand-ins for the individual participants through various spatialized actions out in the public realm. Once imbued with characteristics and meaning tied to each individual, the objects, though simple, had enhanced meaning for the entire group. When activated together through collective responses, such as ropes being laid on the ground surrounding a site of concern, the objects also became a stand-in for the collective of a group. We found that simple and ambiguous objects as proxies for individuals contributed significantly to our larger aims.

Workshop 01: Story Sticks

CONTRIBUTORS

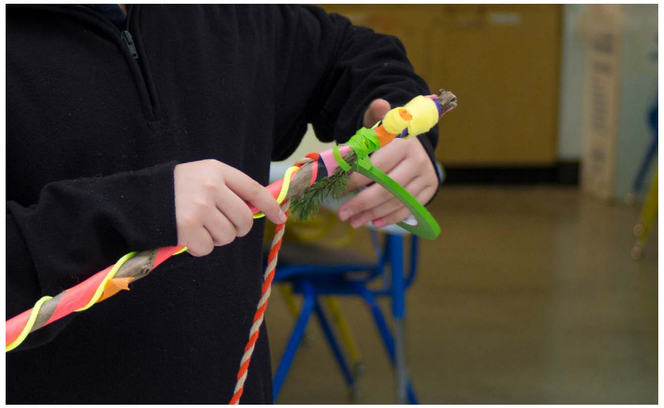
Laura Kozak, Charlotte Falk, Jean Chisholm, Augusta Lutynski, (with help from Marcus Dénommé and Celine Hong)
Designing for Public Space

Twyla Exner, Two Rivers Gallery

Vanda Forseth, Leanne Ball, Alison Thibodeau, Grades 4-6 Class, Nusdeh Yoh Elementary

Marnie Alexander, Chantel Morphey, Grade 6 Class, Harwin Elementary

In seeking a context for public space design research, we reached out to the City of Prince George in early 2019, who identified the then-partially-completed Wood Innovation Square (WIDC Park) as a possible site for our work. Working in response to a number of framing documents, including *Smart Growth on the Ground: Downtown Prince George Concept Plan* (2009); *Winter Cities Design Manual* (1990) and *WIDC Park Plan* (van der Zalm + associates, 2018), we sought an approach to designing for public space that could meaningfully give agency to children – a core audience for the park site and a stakeholder-group sometimes left out of planning processes – to learn about and contribute to a design process. This goal was informed by our position that young people have an incredibly sophisticated and unique understanding of public space, although they may lack the language or tools to share this knowledge (Millard, 2015). Through this process, we were attempting to design a method to give voice to this unique knowledge-set.



Workshop Overview

In February 2019, in partnership with Two Rivers Gallery and as part of their educational programming activities, Designing for Public Space planned and facilitated two low-fidelity hands-on workshops with grade 4 to 6 students from Harwin Elementary and Nusdeh Yoh Elementary, two central-area Prince George schools. The intent of workshops was to:

- Offer students an introductory-level conceptual understanding of public space.
- Use intuitive making and material exploration as a means to help the students express their individual and collective stories and needs.
- Consider collective interventions in the public realm using the walking sticks as proxies for each individual.

DISCUSSING PUBLIC SPACE

Each workshop was 90 minutes in length, with students arriving at Two Rivers Gallery in groups of around 20. We began the workshop by discussing questions about public space with the students, including:

- What is public space?
- What are different kinds of public space?
- How do people move through public space?
- How do you find your way around public space?
- How do people spend time in public space?
- What do people do in public space?

Our intention was to expand the students' understanding of public space beyond simply a park or library, and consider the ways they might move through or interact with public spaces. We offered this simple definition of public space: "spaces you don't have to pay to enter, and spaces you can use without needing an invitation."

Public spaces are complicated. They are used in many different ways by many different people, each with their own stories and needs. How we understand, use, share, and move through public spaces can shape our sense of agency and belonging, and impact our relationships with our community and the land.

STICK MAKING

An array of materials were laid out on tables before students arrived. After an introduction to and discussion of public space, we invited the students to create a walking stick that would help them share their own stories and navigate public space. First, each student chose a stick from a set of branches, dowels, stakes and dimensional lumber ranging from 36 - 50". Then, using an assortment of ropes, tape, fabric, glue, moss, leaves and other natural materials, each student transformed their stick in response to the following prompts:

- Using these materials, find a way for your walking stick to tell the story of who you are and where you are from.
- How could this stick be transformed into a tool for you today?
- Where do you want this stick to take you?

After 30 minutes of making, we broke into small groups and each student shared their stick and their story. We then moved outside and attempted to use our walking sticks to create, enhance or negate features of public spaces, such as pathways, gathering places, and landmarks.

STORY SHARING

Our discussion of public space generated some good, if fairly predictable, responses. However, the instant students were given the prompt to choose a stick and begin working with material was transformative. Students were highly engaged and enthusiastic to make things. The prompt that activated the most response was the first question about 'Who are you' - prompts to create a tool or think about the future seemed to fade away.

As students began sharing the stories of their sticks, it became immediately clear that these bright young people had many thoughtful insights to offer, and that the sticks provided a way for them to express their ideas to the group. The discussion was much more focussed than before, and rapidly generated a high degree of understanding and empathy that was absent in the initial conversation. When we moved outdoors, we had difficulty focusing the group: attempting to use the sticks outside to create abstract representations of public space features felt too conceptually challenging, and the dynamic shifted to active play, more about the body's response to public space than the sticks as proxy for the body or built environment.

STORY STICKS RESTING OUTSIDE THE SITE OF THE FUTURE WDIC PARK IN DOWNTOWN PRINCE GEORGE, FEB 2019

Reflections and Moving Forward

The sticks became expressive, unique stand-ins for these resourceful young people. By using materially-based making as a method of self-expression, the students were able to quickly make their stories physical and tangible (Langley, Wolstenholme & Cooke, 2018). We hope these walking sticks will help them navigate the world around them. We also hope these sticks will serve as physical reminders to better understand how the public realm – and those with power and resources to shape it – can (and should) serve these children and their community.

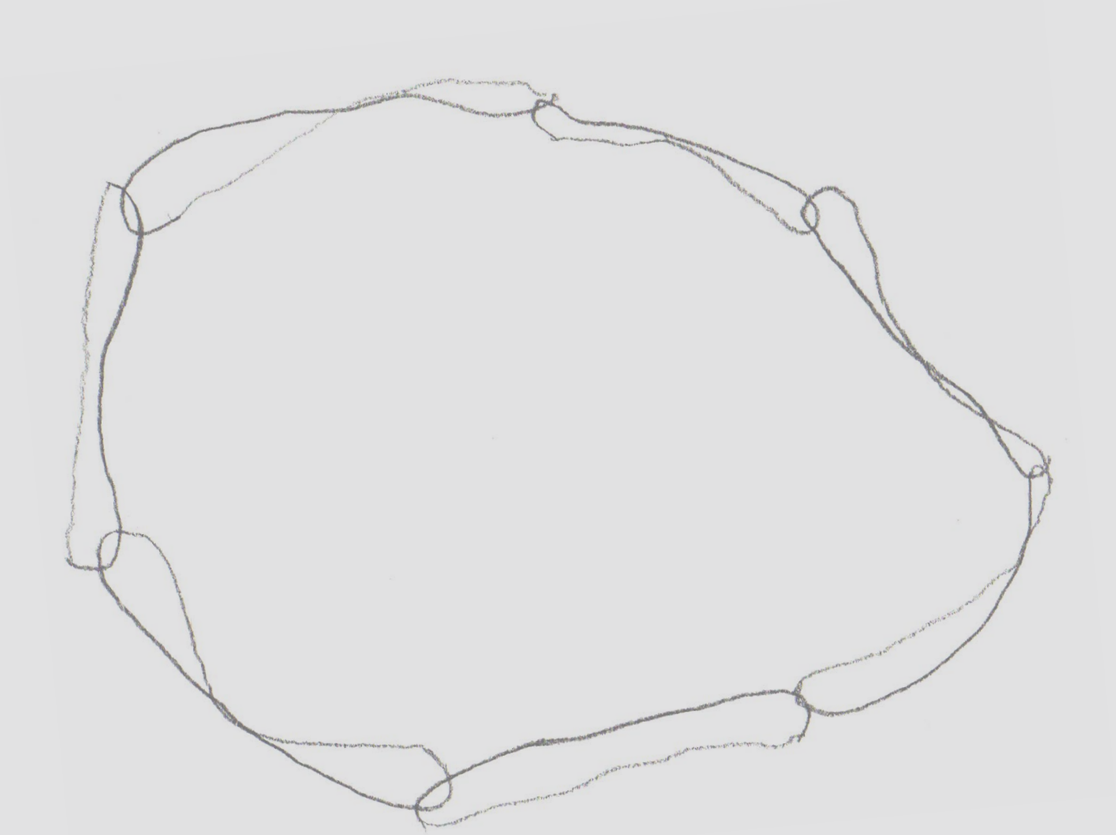
While we understood that our definition of public space within these workshops was woefully simplistic ("public space as spaces you don't have to pay to enter, and spaces you can use without needing an invitation"), our intention was to create a conceptual understanding of public space that these grade 4, 5 and 6 students could understand and discuss. After reflecting on the students' stories and makings, a growing concern emerged among us, the designers and facilitators of this workshop: How can a learning environment foster knowledge exchange and reciprocity? How do we avoid tokenizing students' voices and perspectives? And how do we compel municipalities or other institutions of power to address the place-based rights of these students in a meaningful way, that doesn't perpetuate existing power dynamics?

To move forward in answering these questions, we needed to interrogate our own understandings of public space. Public space, and all its virtues, is still defined within a premise of private land ownership, all part of a sweeping history of colonial dispossession (Land, 2015, p. 229). Failures in participatory planning processes that cause tokenistic engagement or instrumentalizing further exacerbate these systemic issues (Bratteteig & Wagner, 2014).

This was a critical moment for our team, and informed what felt like a needed course-correction. Our next phase of work sought opportunities to learn approaches of collective responsibility, reciprocity and care with the land, and explored processes and partnerships in Prince George that support the unsettling of colonial practices in relation to land and space.

Reading and Walking: Recognizing How Colonialism Defines Public Space

Turns in Methodology and Practice



One of our core values as a research team has been to explore ways to increase agency for a broad range of perspectives in the design of public space, particularly the perspectives of those who are often marginalized by universalized approaches to participatory design. These universalized approaches continue to perpetuate the hierarchies and dominant power structures of their Euro-centric origins, continuing colonial acts of epistemological displacement and erasure (Akama et al., 2019). As a design team made up of three white, educated settler women, confronting the ways our own biases and privileges inform our understanding of public space and its ethics, nested within systems of white privilege and Euro-centric approaches to land use and urban design, emerged as a vitally important step toward enacting this value.

Through the summer and fall of 2019, we paused our generative mode of design-production for a period of slow research, discussion and critical self-reflection. Our intent was to broaden and reshape our own understandings of ethics and methods appropriate to designing for public space by learning from those who have been engaged with these questions much longer, and with more personal urgency, than we have.

UNIST'OT'EN HEALING CENTRE,
IN UNIST'OT'EN VILLAGE, 2019.

We identified that our work lacked substantive understanding of Indigenous perspectives in relation to designing for public space, and structured our reading list around this deficit. We also drew from our individual experiences engaging with and supporting Indigenous activist movements (Spice, 2018). Our reading began with texts foundational to Canada's history such as *Citizens Plus* (1970) (commonly known and the Red Paper), and *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future* (2015) from the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. We also looked to sources such as *Decolonizing Solidarity: Dilemmas and Directions for Supporters of Indigenous Struggles* (2015) to help us recognize and shift our own complicity in power systems at play in public space design. (See References for full reading list.)

Grounding Theory Through Action

Our discussions were held while walking, talking and working in public space, a deliberate strategy to resist academic removal from the context for our work (Horton & Friere, 1990). Rather than sheltering ourselves from the environments we were talking about, we worked while inhabiting public space in an embodied way.

One member of our team, Jean Chisholm, had the opportunity to visit Unist'ot'en Village with a small group of professors and students from the University of Northern British Columbia. Unist'ot'en, located approximately 350km south-west of Prince George, sits within unceded Wet'suwet'en territory. The village protests and prevents the construction of the Coastal GasLink pipeline, currently planned to run through Wet'suwet'en territory, and is a site of expression and practice of traditional Wet'suwet'en knowledges. Unist'ot'en embodies an "alternative way of living, a way of re-orienting our lives to repair our connections to the world beyond human relations, a more socially and ecologically sustainable way of being" (Spice, 2019). The opportunity to support the work of Unist'ot'en and participate in their community grounded our theoretical understanding of decoloniality, rooting it in Indigenous land-based leadership, methodologies and actions of resistance.

Before entering Unist'ot'en territory, all visitors must go through traditional protocol, and state how their stay will benefit the Unist'ot'en people. By affirming and abiding by protocol, we are forced to consider the implications of our work as guests on this land, and who or what causes we may be serving: Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination, environmental justice; our own research agendas; or the agendas of the institutions we may work for. Chisholm and her companions quickly realized the limits of their academic practices and networks at Unist'ot'en; no design research or graphics were needed. But they found they could help with the day-to-day activities of the camp, including cooking, cleaning, gardening, digging fire lines, preparing materials for construction. By contributing in this way, they could support the Unist'ot'en community by reducing at least some of the daily load from permanent and dedicated residences.

Asking "how can our work benefit the community" and "what can we offer the community" at the beginning of a project gives us the opportunity to recognize and search out the multitude of ways we can show up, support and design with a community. These questions also demand an engagement with people and place, and an understanding the communities and causes our work is serving. These questions of support and alignment were in many ways the core themes of Designing for Public Space's methodological research and discussions.

Complicity, Complacency

We felt that our critique of colonial biases in public space design had to start with ourselves. This work involved investigating the frameworks that inform our worldviews, the lenses through which we filter what we learn, hear and make, and the privilege of time and funding to do this work.

As three white, middle-class, cisgender, educated women working on a funded research project within an academic institution in Vancouver, we hold a number of implicit biases both individually and as a group. Even amongst our team, made up of two faculty and one student, an institutionally-imposed hierarchy exists, both in terms of power and pay structure. We worked to be mindful of these dynamics, as well as the blindspots that come with them. Early on, we committed to being honest and open with each other and asked for each others' permission to stumble in trying to do this work together and with others. We discussed the emotions, including confusion, guilt and hesitation, we felt in relation to our privilege and complicity in colonialism. We were conscious to keep the labour of this critical self-reflection amongst ourselves, and not to transpose further labour on those we sought to support (Gunderson, 2019).

In *Decolonizing Solidarity*, Clare Land prompts three modes of action toward this goal: critical self-reflection; public political action; and personal-material work. Through Designing for Public Space we felt we could begin to work at the first two of these in particular. This reading also prompted us to think about what we – as individuals or as a society – would be willing to risk or give up to enact changes to the systems of land ownership at play in the definition of public space (Land, 2015, p. 229-231). This is important, because the systems of racism that "put some people at a disadvantage, [their] corollary is to put white people at an advantage" (Land from McIntosh, 2015, p. 238), and in acknowledging this, it felt vital to be personally willing to give up this advantage in order to participate in larger-scale change.

Some readings shifted our language. For example, Sajek Ward's lecture Decolonizing the Colonizer (2015) problematizes the use of the term "guest" to describe occupation of Indigenous land:

"Guests don't invade your land, guests don't declare sovereignty, absolute control over your land. Guests don't come in with guns, armed persons. Guests don't settle the land for the sake of gaining your resources, displace you from your territories. Guests don't bring friends, families, slaves, to take over your lands. Guests don't disrupt or destabilize your society, guests don't force you to change your religion."

A central question that emerged for us was "What are ways we can use our privilege as settlers/designers/academics to support acts of Indigenous self-determination?" This seemed integral, both within our academic positioning and in relation to land (a key attribute of public space):

"If the academy is concerned about not only protecting and maintaining Indigenous intelligence, but revitalizing it on Indigenous terms as a form of restitution for its historic and contemporary role as a colonizing force... then the academy must make a conscious decision to become a decolonizing force in the intellectual lives of Indigenous peoples by joining us in dismantling settler colonialism and actively protecting the source of our knowledge – Indigenous land" (Simpson, 2014, p. 22).

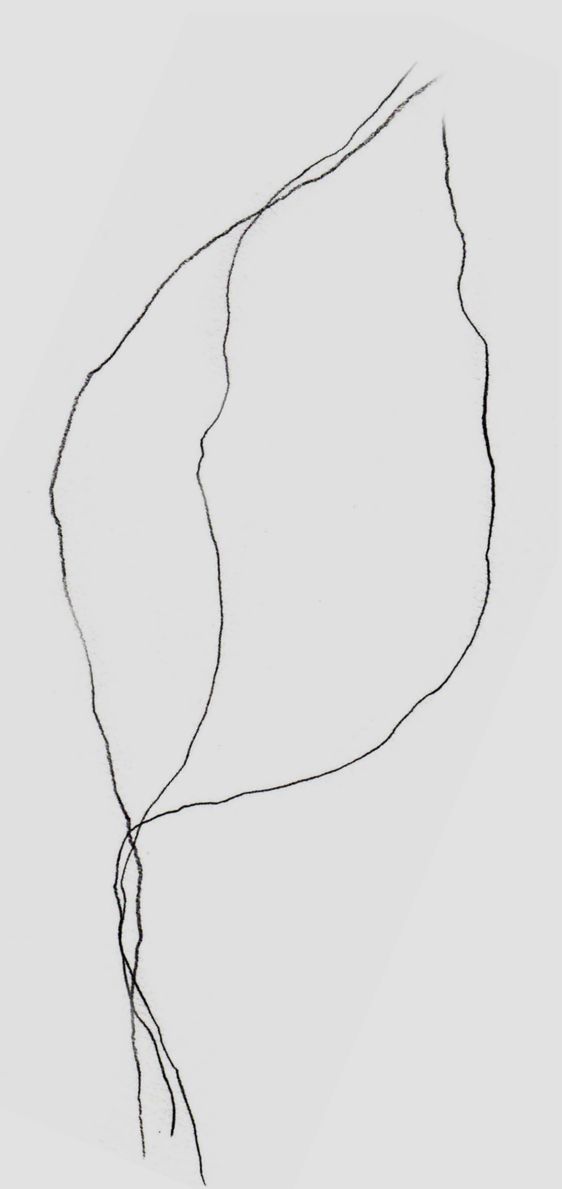
To acknowledge that learning and land are fundamentally tied together gave new meaning to the work we set out to do, and also opened new pathways toward supporting the movement of land-based pedagogy. The revitalization of land-based pedagogy is at the heart of self-determination and decolonization, that is practices and "forms of education that reconnect Indigenous peoples to land and the social relations, knowledge and languages that arise from the land" (Wildcat, 2014, p. 1).

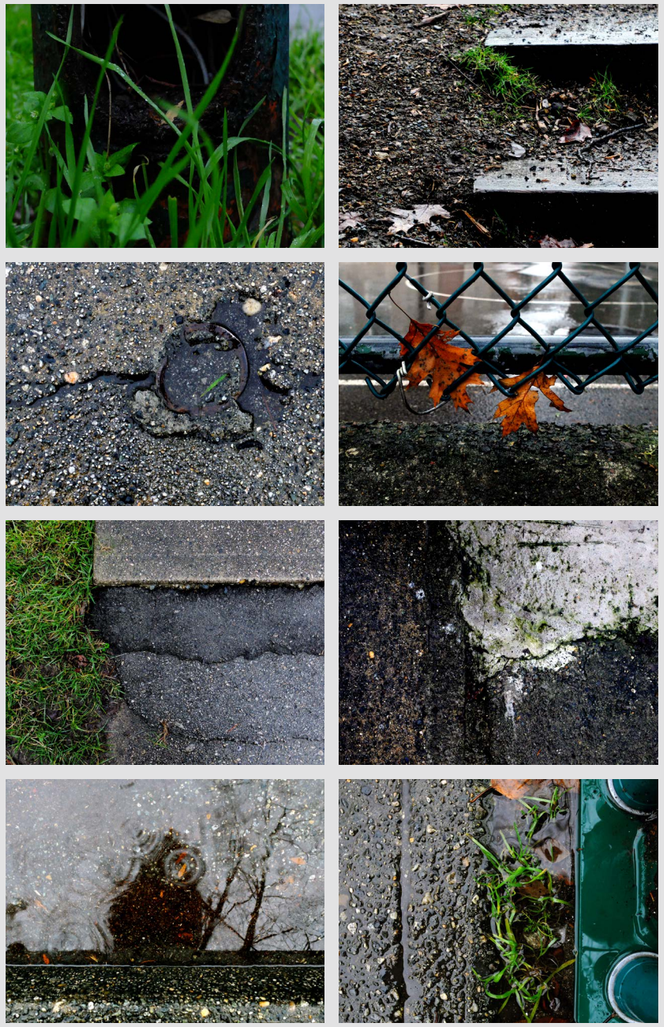
Consent

We wanted to resist replicating the failures we see in participatory planning and community engagement processes, such as investing a lot of energy into soliciting input from a reluctant group of citizens; putting participants into situations where they're asked to spend time and energy giving input on issues they have no expertise or knowledge-base; and asking planners and designers to solicit and utilize this poor-quality input to inform design approaches simply to satisfy a consultation requirement, resulting in a tokenization of participants' ideas and a waste of time for all involved.

At the heart of these problems there seems to be an issue of consent: so much about these processes oblige participation for an abstract and far-off reward. *Land Back* reminds us that consultation is not the same as consent (Pasternak and King, 2019, p. 9). Instead, we wanted to ask what kind of processes we could create that people might actively want to opt into. We also became more aware of the ways that participatory or community-based methodologies still "to some degree privilege western theories, epistemologies, or knowledge systems" (Simpson, 2014, p. 13). How could we find ways to help participants share what is truly their expertise: their knowledge of place from their own perspectives and ways of living? How could we open up processes to not only tolerate but invite differing knowledge systems and worldviews? And how could we do this in a way that everyone would enthusiastically want to participate?

At a larger scale, we were also trying to answer "what can we offer?" or "how will our work be of benefit?" In searching for relational partnerships, we were attempting to centre the process of learning who to work with and how to work with them (or vice versa) as more important than the outcome (Simpson, 2017). Partnerships and collaborators emerged differently as we came to understand land-based pedagogy as an ethic we could bring into this work.





SMALL OBSERVATIONS OF BUILT INFRASTRUCTURES AND NATURAL RESILIENCY WHILE WALKING.

The Hard Work of Being Present

Many of the consultative processes we set out to critique are structured around extractive methods where design professionals parachute into a community for a short period of time, ask for a required amount of local input, and then leave with the obtained data. We understand that there are some efficiencies and practical reasons for this approach, and in fact we felt subject to it ourselves as visitors to Prince George from Vancouver. However, we also know that the kind of knowledge and ways of knowing that come from spending a long period of time in a place do not translate readily to this type of process.

Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson talks about "the hard work of being present" in reference to both time and space. From a social perspective, "being present, face-to-face, is essential in building trust and accountability, empathy, and the ability to give each other the benefit of the doubt" (Simpson, 2017, p. 221). Durational time spent in a place, as opposed to rushing though, lends itself to much more complex and nuanced understandings. For example, an embodied awareness of changes in weather patterns over decades, and the stories that confirm this awareness, might provide a completely different understanding of climate change than analysis of weather statistics across the same temporal period. Through place-based knowledge,

"meaning is derived not through content or data, or even theory in a western context, which by nature is decontextualized knowledge, but through a compassionate web of interdependent relationships that are different and valuable because of that difference" (Simpson, 2014, p. 11).

Thoughts from Reading and Walking

The immersive experience of reading, walking, and discussing was a significantly different mode of work for us as designers. We recognized how oriented we were towards productivity and generating tangible deliverables. It was transformative to be liberated from these metrics and instead focus on a process of slow learning and evolution of approach.

From this phase, we shifted our focus toward opportunities to learn approaches of collective responsibility, reciprocity and care with the land (Land, 2015, p. 229-247), and to explore processes and partnerships in Prince George that could interrupt colonial practices in relation to land and space. Placing consent and collaborative relationships at the foundation of our process forced us to ask "what can we offer?" and consider the ways we could be of service to the community (which may or may not include our design expertise). We also sought to shift away from the "problem-solving" tropes and extractive research methods often found within design and participatory practices (Brattageig & Wagner, 2014, p. ?).

The action of slowing down and not forcing a deliverable to emerge too soon also allowed a gradual synching of our work with the work of the Aboriginal Housing Society of Prince George (see Learning, Reflections and Future Work). Reading and Walking allowed us both to see the opportunity in this partnership differently, and to reframe our approach toward "being led by" and front-loading the question "what can we offer" as opposed to arriving with a set of goals and presumed deliverables.

Workshop 02:
Story Ropes

Building from the learnings from both *Story Sticks* and *Reading and Walking, Story Ropes* is the second iteration of a participatory process for informing public space design took place in Prince George in October 2019. This workshop brought together a group of 13 adults; 6 faculty and master-level students from Emily Carr University and 7 place-based knowledge holders, or "community stewards," from Prince George, working in educational, public art, and social services sectors. Over the course of a weekend, the group crafted, collaged, and assembled rope segments representing our personal stories and values, and collaboratively led a walking tour to 'sites of care' throughout downtown Prince George.

Our intent was to explore processes that aimed to share power and flatten hierarchies within the group, subverting conventional participatory design facilitator/user relationships. We aimed to design a process that allowed each participant to offer individual practices and perspectives from their own networks and communities in order to develop a more pluralistic understanding of downtown Prince George.

Some of the key principles that informed how we designed this process included:

- Enthusiastic consent to participate – "opting in"
- Considering the setting for our meeting
- Establishing trust and creating empathy
- Materials as proxies
- Equality in time to speak and listen
- "Being led by"
- Structural flattening

How We Reached Out

The way we reached out to people we didn't know, and how we framed the prospective activities, were important parts of how *Story Ropes* came together. In making contact, we attempted to be friendly, direct, and informal. Without knowing exactly how the weekend would unfold, we wanted to convey clear information and to invite without putting pressure or expectations on the participants.

We travelled to Prince George with one other group from Emily Carr, engaged in a project called Float School. Early on, we recognized there was overlap in the people that both projects hoped to work with, so it made sense to bring the groups together across one weekend.

MAKING COMFORTABLE SPACES

It was important for our team to spend a significant amount of time in Prince George with the community stewards. Our time together was spread out over a weekend, with many informal opportunities to gather amidst structured group activities. The size of our group was intentionally small, to give adequate space to share everyone's stories and foster connections. Everyone within the group was well-acquainted with at least one other person, which helped create a comfortable and conversational space almost instantly. We recognize the exclusionary quality of this particular social configuration, but we also believe these prior relationships created spaces for vulnerability and reciprocity, helping to shift hierarchies within the group. If we had hosted the workshop with an open invitation to a much larger group, the research and objectives would have begun to feel much more extractive, rather than grounded in building relationships with a community and a place.

Hi Antonia,

I'm writing to you from Emily Carr University - a group of us (faculty and grad students) have been working on various projects in Prince George for some time. In the summer, I believe you met one of our students, Jean Chisholm, at Unist'ot'en, who is also involved in my invitation below.

We are working to bring two project groups to Prince George in October for some gatherings, meals, walks and discussions with some of the folks we know, and wondered if you would be interested in joining us in some way. (And if so, what your time is like the weekend of October 4-6?) There are funds available to support your participation.

I've included a short description of each project below, and very much hope we have an opportunity to see you in person. If anyone comes to mind who you think would be great to reach out to, please let me know.

My best,
Laura

Designing for Public Space is an ongoing research project at Emily Carr that works with various sites and partners to investigate human-scale matters situated in the public realm. This fall, we're interrogating how the concept of public space is defined and supported by colonial systems, and seeking opportunities to learn approaches of reciprocity, care and responsibility to the land. Our intent with this work is to establish processes and partnerships that may allow us to serve communities and support changes of approach to designing for public space.

Float School explores the form of a School through an examination of the earliest understanding of the word, drawing from the etymological base of skholē, which translates as spare time, leisure, rest, or ease. Float School aims to undermine and interrogate the dominant narratives of public and private western education, instead looking to notions of leisure, retreat, slowness, and play as sites of productive resistance and forms through which to develop new capacity for political and social action. It embarks on collectively imagining and enacting multiple futures for the role that art, public engagement, and learning can play in Canadian society through inquiry, activity, and slow action. Float School will help us to spark the next phase of dialogue around socially engaged art, one that draws from Canada's specific history of artist-run-culture, and generates an innovative new approach to locating art in rich and complex proximities to public, commons, the natural environment, and learning.

SAMPLE EMAIL INVITATION

WHO WAS THERE

Dawn Agno, Indigenous Support Worker, Aboriginal Housing Society of Prince George

Rob Budde, UNBC Professor of English, founding board member of Omineca

Annie Canto, Emily Carr University MFA Candidate, Float School Research Assistant

Jean Chisholm, Emily Carr University MDES Candidate, DPS Research Assistant

Twyla Exner, Director of Public Programs, Two Rivers Gallery, Artist

Charlotte Falk, Emily Carr University Sessional Faculty, DPS Lead

Laura Kozak, Emily Carr University Sessional Faculty, DPS Lead

Justin Langlois, Associate Dean, Graduate Studies, Emily Carr University, Float School Lead

Antonia Mills, UNBC Professor Emeritus, Indigenous Studies

Sebastian Nicholson, Artist, Community Worker, Positive Living North

Noelle Pepin, District Aboriginal Resource Teacher, Learning Innovations Team, SD 57

Joanne Sale, Artist in Residence, Island Mountain Arts

Holly Schmidt, Artist, Float School Lead

AFTER SELECTING THEIR MATERIALS,
THE GROUP CRAFTED THEIR ROPE SEGMENTS AND
ATE DINNER TOGETHER.

Making as a Means for Conversation

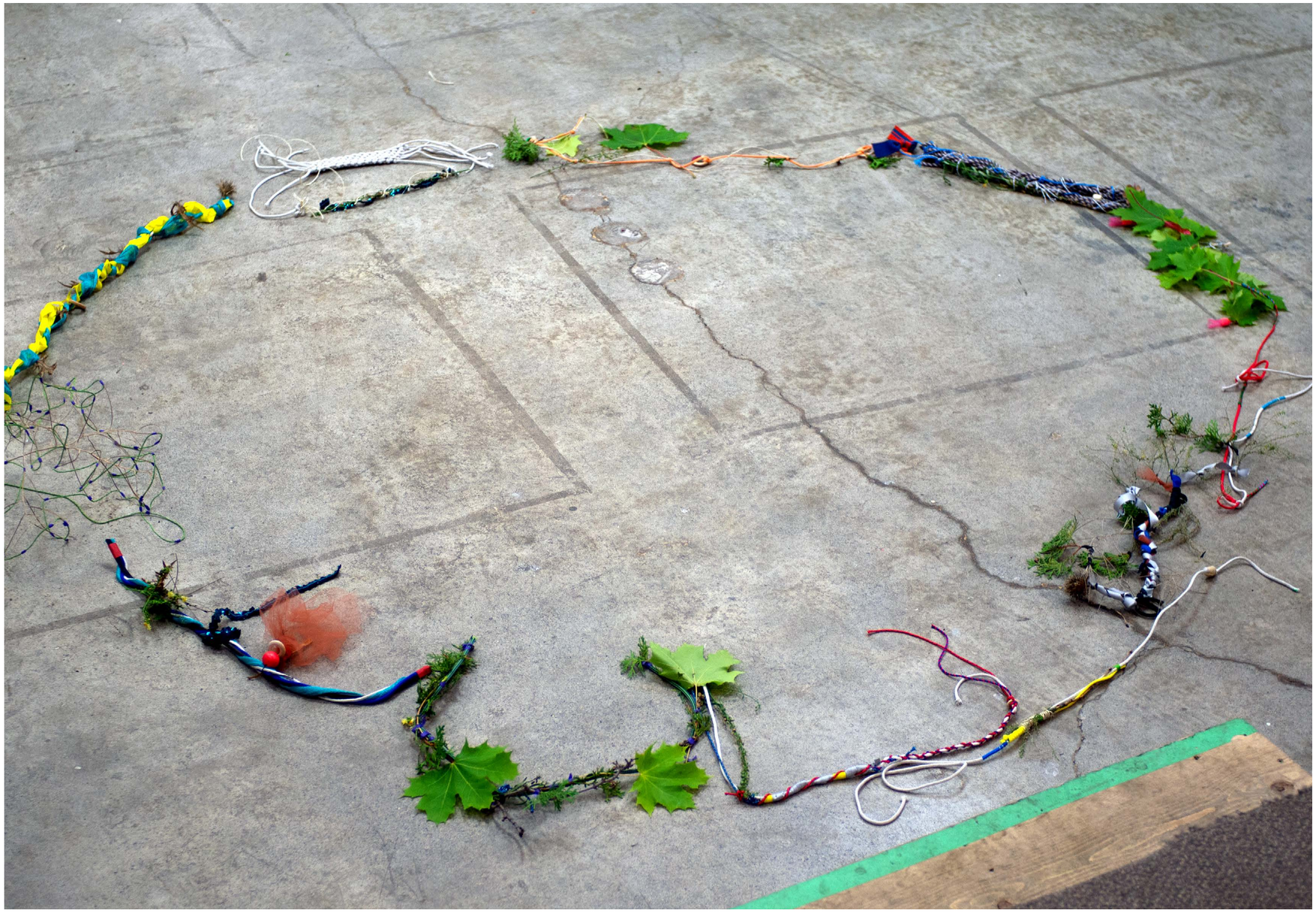
Our first evening together was spent eating dinner and rope making. We offered the group a series of prompts, and invited them to use simple materials - ropes, string, leaves and twigs - to create a section of rope. We asked:

- Where are you from?
- When has someone or something really helped you out?
- What is a space where you felt really welcome or comfortable?
- What is something no one here knows about you?
- What is something/somewhere/someone you are concerned about?

Each person selected their chosen materials and sat down with each other at the dining table. As facilitators, we participated as well, attempting to reduce any implicit hierarchies and contribute to the conversations. We spent the next hour eating dinner and crafting our ropes together, some of us quietly focused on materials and making, others loosely forming ropes while sharing stories and laughing with their neighbours. The activity was intended to be low-pressure, with no expectation to create a specific outcome, use a known method, or generate something monumental, memorable or even precise.

After we had eaten and everyone felt like they had reached a point of completion with their making, we gathered in a circle and shared the stories behind our ropes. For some, the ropes represented places and experiences; for others, they were based on aesthetic preferences. We shared stories about our past, our current practices, and changes we hoped to see in the future, showing deep care for loved ones, community, and environments. The openness and willingness of the group helped create a space where many felt safe to be vulnerable and share our worries and concerns with one another.

In using material making as a prompt for conversations, we were attempting to “make conversation” (Janssens, 2017, p. 153), facilitating a shared process “has the capacity to allow for many possible, evolving and improving experiences” (p. 156.) Our prompts, materials, and subsequent rope segments created certain kinds of conversational boundaries, but also offer new opportunities to generate forms of collective meaning and understanding of experience (p. 154.) Our ropes became the means to share the kind of specific, vulnerable, genuine and contextually important information that rarely gets exposed during more formal networking or consultation events.



RESTING ROPES

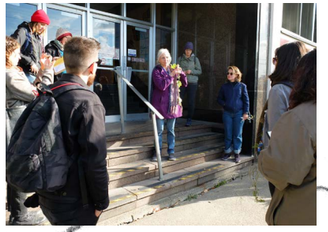
After each person told their story, we placed our sections of rope on the ground in front of our feet, creating an untethered wreath. We had originally planned to tie the rope together, creating one long, connected piece, but after we had finished sharing our stories we all felt compelled to let our ropes rest in place until the next morning.

Sites of Care and Concern

The next morning, each member of the group was invited to pick a site of interest, care or concern, and we embarked on a walking tour of downtown Prince George. Together, we visited sites of creativity (galleries and public art), care (social services and harm reduction centres), unseen potential (locked campus buildings, poorly considered parks), history (Indigenous memorials), and grassroots efforts (shuttered arts centres, sites of protest). We placed our ropes down at each site, responded to built and natural conditions, and engaged in conversations about the contextual complexities of these public spaces and how our personal values have shaped our understanding of them. The ropes here worked as a kind of proxy of self, and were reminders of the open and vulnerable conversations we had started the previous evening. As a group, walking through the community, placing our story ropes within these sites of concern and care, we were able to root broad systemic struggles to place and to our own lived experiences. We were able to witness and consider some of the layers of complexity specific to downtown Prince George.

Prince George

Route for Story Ropes
Industrial
Parks/Green Space



ANTONIA / PRINCE GEORGE NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE / 1600 3RD AVE

The Native Friendship Centre is a non-profit, non-sectarian organization dedicated to servicing the needs of Aboriginal people residing in Prince George and improving the quality of life in the community. Antonia shared her memories of when the building used to be the courthouse 25 years ago, when she worked with the Wet'suwet'en Nation on the landmark Delgamuukw v British Columbia case. When the courthouse moved and the Native Friendship Centre took over the space, Antonia noted that "they had to smudge the hell out of it."

ROB + JUSTIN / ORIGINAL OMINECA SITE / 1119 3RD AVE

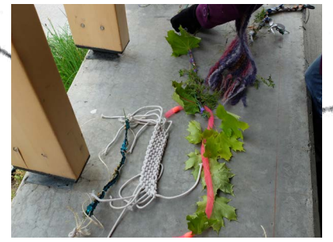
Omineca began as The Neighbourhood Time Exchange, a collaborative project between Emily Carr University, artists, and numerous community partners in Prince George. After the original project completed, a dedicated group of volunteers continued to run the space as Omineca Art Centre, putting in numerous hours towards restoration and establishing itself as a welcoming site for the neighbourhood. Ultimately, Omineca was forced to move to its present day location on Victoria Avenue, because their original landlord (who resides outside of Prince George in Vancouver) increased the rent and refused to reimburse them for their restoration work. While the new location's landlord lives in Prince George and is much more supportive of Omineca's mission and contributions to the community, the space lacks the lively and diverse foot traffic of the original location. The site at 1119 3rd Ave. has remained vacant since Omineca moved out over a year ago.

SEBASTIAN / THE FIRE PIT CULTURAL DROP-IN CENTRE / 1120 3RD AVE

The Fire Pit was developed in response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Northern BC communities, targeting the root causes of the epidemic: colonization, racism, poverty, homelessness, lack of education and the displacement many Indigenous peoples experience. Sebastian described the Fire Pit as "the most important building in Prince George." The Fire Pit often hosts impromptu activities: Dawn shared stories of butchering a moose in the back alley. Sebastian described the Fire Pit as "the most important building in Prince George." While many city officials and organizations may also recognize the important and essential services the Fire Pit offers downtown Prince George, the centre is chronically underfunded and in search of new funding streams. With the limited and precarious nature of homeless shelters in downtown Prince George, small unofficial tent encampments can also be found near the Fire Pit. These encampments are usually aggressively dismantled by the local RCMP, and belongings are often thrown away.

CHARLOTTE / GRASSY PATCH IN THE ALLEY BEHIND WIDC

We observed the resiliency of plants, and looked for evidence of flourishing growth in small, ignored spaces.



HOLLY / LAURA / WIDC PARK / GEORGE STREET + 5TH AVE

It is unclear who this park is for; the city has tried to activate the space by bringing out food trucks, but that takes business away from nearby restaurants. The park is surrounded by closed, private buildings. Our group discussed how often cities are willing to spend money and time on master-planned projects like this park, but less willing to take the time to let things grow and develop organically. We talked about the ways the ground is scraped clear for new developments, and how we lose all the growth and nutrients in the ground in the process.

JEAN / WIDC BUILDING / 499 GEORGE STREET

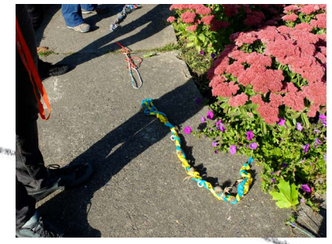
The WIDC building was meant to house collaborative, or at least mutually informed, academic programming from UNBC and Emily Carr University around design and wood innovation. This joint programming failed to materialize, and the relationship between Emily Carr and UNBC appeared to disintegrate. This felt especially frustrating considering how transformative the kind of money, time, and energy that went into WIDC would be to spaces like Omineca or the Fire Pit. What opportunities are missed when the community is completely shut out of such a prominent and potentially innovative space in the heart of downtown Prince George?

TWYLA / TWO RIVERS GALLERY / 725 CANADA GAMES WAY

We discussed the role of art galleries in smaller, northern cities. How can and should galleries serve their communities: by offering challenging and provoking work, and/or meeting people where they are at by offering popular and accessible programming?

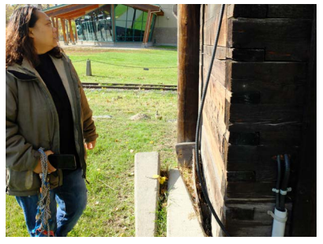
ROB / CANADA GAMES PLAZA / CANADA GAMES WAY

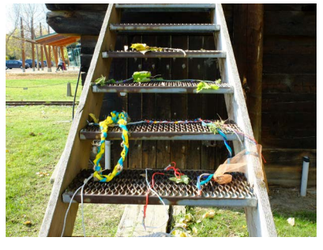
Rob shared a story of how he was removed from Canada Games Plaza for protesting a conference prompting natural gas and pipeline expansion projects. He was told the open, public space had been “rented out” by the conference, and was forced to move to the staircase of the nearby Public Library building



DAWN / FORT IN LHEIDLI T'ENNEH MEMORIAL PARK / 17TH AVE

Dawn shared the history of Lheidli T'enneh Memorial Park, and how people used to smoke fish inside the fort that still stands in the park.





JOANNE / LHEIDLI T'ENNEH CEMETERY IN LHEIDLI T'ENNEH MEMORIAL PARK / 17TH AVE

We talked about how language holds other ways of understanding the world, and what is lost when a language is endangered or dies.

NOELLE / SHORTCUT BETWEEN LHEIDLI T'ENNEH MEMORIAL PARK AND DOWNTOWN

Noelle told us about a worn-in pathway she used to take with her family from her home near Lheidli T'enneh Memorial Park to downtown. We talked about desire paths: paths that are determined by how people actually move through space, rather than prescribed routes.

FLOAT SCHOOL: POINTING, WALKING, AND DANCING

Float School guided the group through a few short activities that engaged our bodies and explored how we move and gather in space: we turned our bodies into compass by linking arms and huddling closely together, rotating to point in different directions; we walked alone through the park, while keeping at least one other member of group in our line of sight; we learned to line-dance together.

GATHERING AT LHEIDLI T'ENNEH
MEMORIAL PARK

Conditions and Considerations

Like *Story Sticks*, the *Story Ropes* workshop was intended to invite alternative methods of sharing our own stories and values with one another. Many factors went into creating a space that felt comfortable and safe, allowing the group to be open and vulnerable with each other.

SPACE

Omineca Arts Centre offered the ideal location to host our workshops. Operated by a volunteer board, including Rob Budde, and familiar to most of the Prince George members of our group, it was also a space that we were welcome to access and set up. Unlike a more formal public or private space, access to Omineca was granted to us visitors by simply meeting with another board member earlier in the afternoon and handing off the keys. And although DPS were the acting hosts of the workshop events, all the members of the group contributed to creating the space by adding lighting, playing music, or bringing in fresh-grown produce from their gardens. The ways we were able to access and use the space together demonstrated our willingness to trust each other and share with one another.

MATERIALS

We do recognize the surprise and unexpected pressure the group might have felt walking into the space and seeing the table of materials. Although we referenced a "making activity" in the itinerary, we believe many guests were expecting a casual dinner together rather than a workshop. We didn't want the workshop to feel overly planned or dictated, but we could have been clearer about the activity leading up to the event, or curated the room to feel like a dinner space more immediately, rather than a workshop space.

PROMPTS

Our prompt questions were intended to create a useful jumping off point for the group, and loosely centre our conversations around our relationships to each other and spaces of concern or care. While we believe the prompts were useful in this regard, it did feel like there was a pressure to answer all the questions (rather than picking two or three), and many guests would read through the questions in order while sharing their rope/stories. In the future, we would like to format the questions to feel more flexible.

Through our collaborators, we came to recognize the problematic nature of the question "where are you from?" What seemed like a relatively benign question to us (white "Canadian" women) is much more loaded to a person of colour, where the question implied is "where are you really from?" demanding an explanation of race, skin colour, and ethnicity. While our intention was to create a safe space where everyone felt comfortable to be vulnerable and discuss issues important to them (including racism), we must do a better job reviewing our prompts through lens of experience different than our own.

WILLINGNESS TO BE TOGETHER

The rope making workshop helped support the open, trusting conversations we shared with each other during the walk. The progression of the weekend feels important to note, and the slow pace of activities (spread over a day and a half, rather than crammed into one afternoon), allowed everyone to be present in place and with each other, rather than feeling rushed to run through workshop objectives. We found it remarkable that this group of relative strangers would willingly give up their weekend to spend so much time together participating in unknown activities. Almost as soon as we began both the rope making and the walking tour, the workshops were driven and owned by the group itself, and it felt like we (DPS) merely provided the scaffolding and the initial prompts.

Learnings, Reflections, and Future Work

Sticks, Ropes, Land prototyped methods that allowed people with a broad range of perspectives to meaningfully contribute to public space design processes, particularly those who are typically marginalized through status quo approaches. The work of confronting our own biases and how privilege informs our understanding of public space and its ethics – nested within systems of white privilege and Euro-centric approaches to land use and urban design – emerged as a vitally important aspect of this work. We see this concern amplified at various levels of planning and design processes, through which individuals (who often hold highly relevant place-based knowledge and also have the most at stake in the manifestation of public space design) get left-out or tokenized through conventional methods of community engagement and participatory design.

Reciprocal relationships are something we feel should be the foundation of our work in public spaces, using processes that support designing and caring with a community, rather than for a community. Caring for creates a separation between the caregiver and the care-receiver, leading to extractive research and paternalistic relationships; caring with demands an understanding of context and our role within it, recognizing that we are part of the community, place, and land we act in (Bellacasa, 2017).

Through activities like *Story Sticks* and *Story Ropes*, contributions of place-based knowledge can deeply enrich the meaning and effectiveness of a design-research process (Iverson and Dindler, 2014). A story shared by a local individual about seasonal weather, localized cultural habits or invisible history might take a non-local planner or designer ages to discover. Establishing conditions not just for knowledge-transfer, but for human empathy, is critical.

A kind of place-based accountability disappears when designers and those making design decisions are removed from the place and the people they are intending to serve (Brattageig & Wagner, 2017 and Simpson, 2017). Our methods explore how collaborative relationships between locals and design experts can be supported and generative. Empathy and shared understandings are pollinated between locals and design experts, inviting a pluralistic understanding of a place. Through these explorations, we aim to develop responsible methods to support and participate in public space design, rooted in reciprocity and place-based practices.

Exploring methods of designing and caring *with* a community felt needed for our work in Prince George, not only because it was necessary for us to reevaluate our values around and understanding of public spaces with the context of a colonial state, but because we already had numerous connections to people in Prince George, relationships and partnerships that we wanted to continue to foster. Through these explorations of methods, we aimed to find appropriate ways to support and participate in local projects and to integrate a methodology of best-practices for working in communities and public space.

Rooted in the reciprocity, place-based practices and trust established through *Story Ropes*, our next phase of work will shift to supporting the Aborginal Housing Society of Prince George in the development of a multi-unit housing development. Our role will be to collaborate with staff, elders, youth, future residents and other stakeholders in designing a Community Workshare, both as a social/cooperative model and as built infrastructure to support collective knowledge-sharing, gardening, socializing and intergenerational learning.

References

Akama, Y., Hagen, P., & Whaanga-Schollum, D. (2019). Problematizing replicable design to practice respectful, reciprocal, and relational co-designing with indigenous people. *Design and Culture, 11*(1), 59–84. https://doi.org/10.1080/17547075.2019.1571306

Albarracin, I. (2019, Oct 9). Another take on downtown. *Prince George Citizen*. Retrieved from https://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/opinion/editorial/another-take-on-downtown-1.23966311

Bratteteig, T. & Wagner, I. (2014). *Disentangling Participation: Power and Decision-Making in Participatory Design*. Switzerland: Springer.

Fior, L., Krasny, E. & da Mosto, J. (2017). Making time for conversations of resistance. In *Feminist Futures of Spatial Practice: Materialisms, Activisms, Dialogues, Pedagogies, Projections*, Meike Schalk et al. (Eds.). Baunach, Germany: AADR, 151-156.

Fortier, C. (2017). Unsettling methodologies/decolonizing movements. *Journal of Indigenous Social Development* (6, 1, pp. 20-36).

Horton, M. and Friere, P. (1990). *We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on Education and Social Change*, Brenda Bell, John Gaventa, and John Peters (Eds.). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Gallant, D. (2019, Sept 24). The sad reality of our downtown. *Prince George Citizen*. Retrieved from https://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/opinion/editorial/the-sad-reality-of-our-downtown-1.23956295

Gonzales, J. (2019, April 28). How One District Learned to Talk About Race. Podcast. Retrieved from https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/courageous-conversations-about-race

Gottschall, W.P. (2016). *Lheidli T'enneh: Research Ethics and Protocol*. Lheidli T'enneh First Nation. Retrieved from http://www.lheidli.ca/Documents/LT_ResearchEthicsAndProtocol.pdf

Indian Chiefs of Alberta. 1970. *Citizens Plus*. Retrieved from http://caid.ca/RedPaper1970.pdf

Iversen, O. & Dindler, C. (2014, Oct). Sustaining participatory design initiatives. *CoDesign* (10, 3-4 pp. 153-170). DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/15710882.2014.963124

Janssens, N. (2017). Collective sense-making for change: About conversations and instructs. In *Feminist Futures of Spatial Practice: Materialisms, Activisms, Dialogues, Pedagogies, Projections*, Meike Schalk et al. (eds.). (pp. 151-156). Baunach, Germany: AADR.

King, H, & Pasternak, S. (2019). The Spectrum of Consent. In *Land Back: A Yellowhead Institute Red Paper*. (pp. 15-22). Retrieved from https://redpaper.yellowheadinstitute.org/ Toronto: Yellowhead Institute.

Kornelsen, D. (2017, Nov 17). Decolonizing community engagement. Blog Post. Retrieved from https://medium.com/knowledgenudge/decolonizing-community-engagement-85ee3ad5369d

Land, C. (2015). Reckoning with complicity. In *Decolonizing Solidarity: Dilemmas and Directions for Supporters of Indigenous Struggles*. (pp. 229-247). London: Zed Books.

Langley, J., Wolstenholme, D., & Cooke, J. (2018, Dec). 'Collective making' as knowledge mobilisation: the contribution of participatory design in the co-creation of knowledge in healthcare. *BMC Health Services Research* (18, 585) . DOI: https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-018-3397-y

Meyer, M. (2014). Indigenous Epistemology: Spirit Revealed. In *Enhancing Mātauranga Māori and Global Indigenous Knowledge*, Taiarahia Black (Ed.). (pp. 151-164). New Zealand: NZQA.

Millard, C. (2015, June 1). Young People and Placemaking: Engaging Youth to Create Community Places. Blog Post. (Retrieved from https://www.pps.org/article/young-people-and-placemaking-engaging-youth-to-create-community-places

Puig de la Bellacasa, M. (2017). *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More than Human Worlds*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Simpson, L.B. (2017). *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Free Through Radical Resistance*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Simpson, L.B. (2014). Land as pedagogy: Nishnaabeg Intelligence and Rebellious Transformation. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*. (3, 3, pp. 1-25).

Smith, L. (2012). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (2nd ed.). New York: Zed Books.

Spice, A. (2018, Sept). Fighting Invasive Infrastructures. *Environment and Society* (9, 1, pp. 40-56).

Spice, A. (2018, July 23). The Wetsuwet'en Aren't Just Protecting "the Environment". *Asparagus*. Retrieved from https://medium.com/asparagus-magazine/wetsuweten-gidimten-unistoten-pipeline-land-defenders-protectors-protest-arrest-4c5613f809c5.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *The survivors speak: A report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. Retrieved from http://www.trc.ca/assets/pdf/Survivors_Speak_English_Web.pdf

Tuck, E. and K. Yang. 2012. Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* (1, 1, pp. 1-40).

Ward, S. (2015, July 2). Decolonizing the Colonizer. Video. Retrieved from https://vimeo.com/132494644

Project Team

Laura Kozak (BFA, MASArch) is a design researcher and organizer. She has built partnerships and collaborated on projects with local and international artists, designers and cultural organizations for 15 years. Recent publications include Open Source City (Routledge), Infinite Mappings (Access) and Superimpositions (SFU). She teaches in the Jake Kerr Faculty of Graduate Studies at Emily Carr University of Art + Design. A core interest in collaborative design of the urban environment informs her research and teaching practice.

Charlotte Falk (BDes, MArch) is an interdisciplinary designer and educator working in public art, industrial design, communication design, and architecture. Her work considers how materiality and technique impact design processes. Since 2011, Falk has worked as a project designer supporting artists in the realization of permanent public art projects across Canada. In 2018, she ran a series of participatory workshops that explored how intuitive responses to site and materials.

Jean Chisholm (MDes) is from Prince George, BC, and lives and works in Vancouver as a communication designer and researcher. Her research explores community engagement, local identities, and transitions towards sustainable ways of living, often with a focus on her hometown and other northern Canadian communities.

Acknowledgements

This work took place on the unceded Indigenous territories of the Musqueam, Skxwú7mesh-ulh Úxwumixw (Squamish) and Tsleil- Waututh peoples and the traditional territory of the Lheidli T'enneh peoples.

Designing for Public Space is supported by Living Labs, one of four research centres at Emily Carr University. Living Labs supports creative projects, social venture and entrepreneurship driven by art and design, and builds projects and partnership models that use art and design as a mechanism for innovation and community building.

Images and Drawings by Jean Chisholm and Charlotte Falk

Special thanks to Kate Armstrong and Cemre Demiralp, Living Labs, Emily Carr University of Art + Design; Twyla Exner, Two Rivers Gallery; and Omineca Arts Centre.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Living Labs, Emily Carr University of Art + Design livinglabs@ecuad.ca | 604 630 4573

Laura Kozak, Lead Design Researcher, kozak@ecuad.ca
Charlotte Falk, Lead Design Researcher, cfalk@ecuad.ca

EMILY CARR UNIVERSITY OF ART + DESIGN LIVING LABS TwoRivers Gallery OMINECA ARTS CENTRE