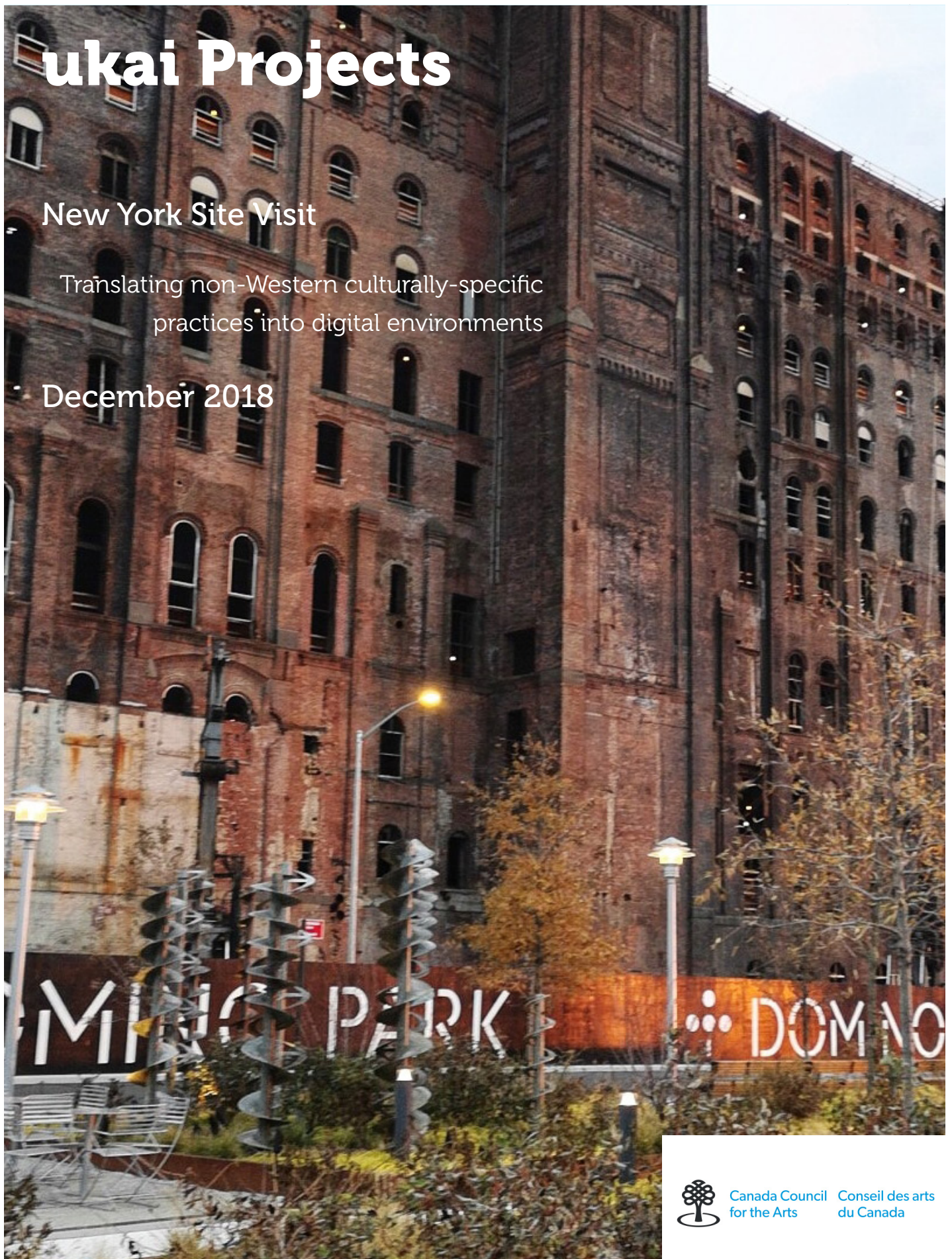


ukai Projects

New York Site Visit

Translating non-Western culturally-specific practices into digital environments

December 2018



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada

Long Walk – New York City

Between September 2018 and April 2019, ukai Projects is working with Nagata Shachu Taiko Ensemble, Music Africa (music and culture festival) and Music in the Barns (classical installation concert and event producer) to identify and analyze opportunities to translate culturally-specific performance to digital environments, and to build three digital prototypes to advance organizational objectives and community knowledge for culturally-specific music organizations in Canada. The prototypes and research related to the process will be presented and disseminated through digital platforms and relevant arts events. Our aim is to explore the use of digital technologies in the development and creation of new works while strengthening social inclusion in audience communities.

According to CAPACOA, “the Canadian performing arts presenting ecosystem has been strongly oriented toward touring opportunities and its related infrastructures and processes”. Recent reports by CAPACOA, Canadian Heritage, and the Canada Council all emphasize the need for arts organizations to shift or expand this focus by integrating digital technologies into various dimensions of their work.

They also ask, “How can we, and should we, as a free, vibrant society assure a broad diversity of voices that reflect all of Canada is heard in digital spaces as well as live performance spaces?” Furthermore, a report from the Canada Council in 2016 argues that, “excluded or marginalized communities, when offered the resources to use digital technologies creatively, can bring new perspectives on the creative process and audiences. These communities need, however, to be involved collaboratively in the design and delivery of the programs that support them”.

The shift to digital has privileged commercially successful and Western disciplines. There is a need to translate hybrid, diasporic and non-Western traditions into digital business models. We believe that this project will advance our understanding of how



Long Walk – New York City

Research by CAPACOA warns of a potential homogenization of the digital world toward “fewer voices, rather than more, and more diverse, voices”. They argue that, “ensuring equitable access and cultural diversity is critical to fostering a strong, resilient democracy and a more just society. It is important to guard against systemic exclusions or barriers that disproportionately affect specific populations.”

Canada’s numerous, culturally diverse arts organizations play a valuable role in reflecting and supporting the diverse fabric of Canadian society. They frequently have passionate and committed audiences. Many also serve harder-to-reach audiences outside of traditional presenting opportunities, both domestically and internationally. Arts participation can be dramatically increased by building the capacity of numerous smaller organizations to achieve wider and more diverse reach through digital production and dissemination. However, little is known about the opportunities and challenges for culturally-diverse forms in their translation to digital environments.

We are developing content and expressions that will meet local needs of Music Africa, Music in the Barns and Nagata Shachu Taiko Ensemble while demonstrating how regional exchange networks can support, and be supported by, culturally diverse Canadian arts organizations. The diversity of the collective members allow us to identify the common challenges as well as the idiosyncratic needs involved with translating culturally-specific work to digital environments.

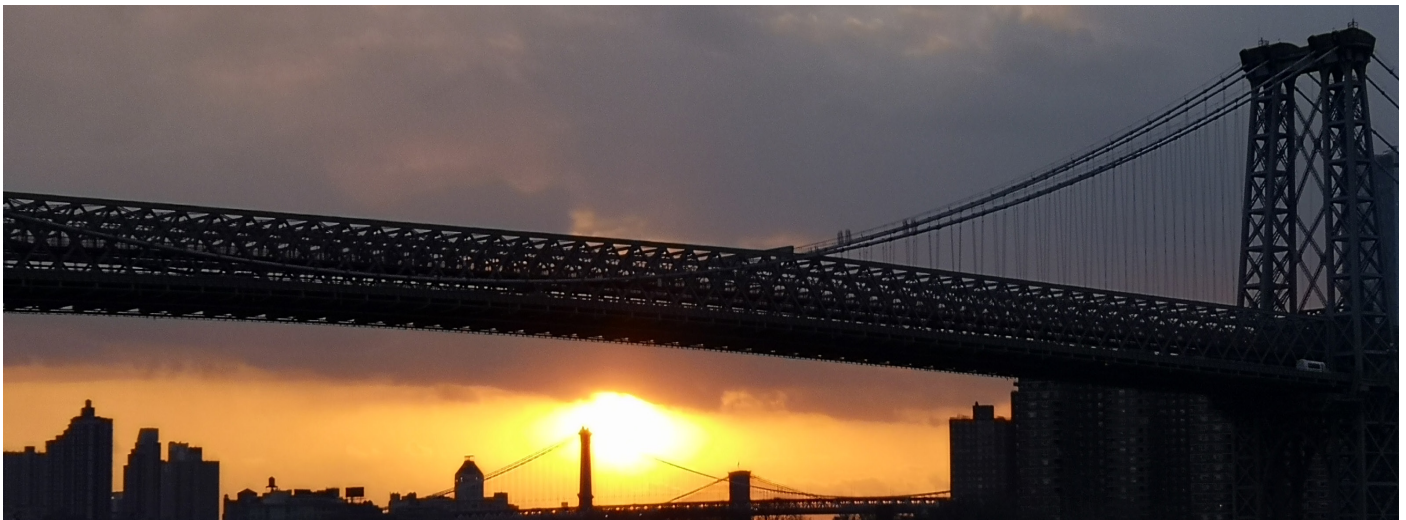
We believe that most small and mid-sized arts organizations, particularly those serving specific cultural communities, can make a successful move to digital environments. They are often limited by ongoing precarity that can be addressed through intentional capacity building and resourced, collective initiatives that distribute risk and commitment across a broader community. This structure also allows organizations to focus limited resources on delivering outstanding creative work rather than on raising the money for individual projects and experiments.

One way for Canada to highlight our diverse culture is by sharing creative, diverse work to a world hungry for examples of tolerance and peaceful co-existence. Opportunities to tell these stories best rests with those embodying the diverse and intersecting cultural map of Canada. Building the capacity to tell those stories (and many others) is the intended outcome of this project.

Participants

- Omer Ismael (representing Music Africa)
- Kiyoshi Nagata (representing Nagata Shachu)
- Jerrold McGrath (representing Music in the Barns/ukai Projects)

Dates: December 6th – 9th, 2018



Thursday, December 6th, 2018

PM / 13:15 – 15:15

Institute for Public Knowledge, 20 Cooper Square, New York City

The Institute for Public Knowledge (IPK) brings theoretically serious scholarship to bear on major public issues. Located at NYU, it nurtures collaboration among social researchers in New York and around the world. It builds bridges between university-based researchers and organizations pursuing practical action. It supports communication between researchers and broader publics. And it examines transformations in the public sphere, social science, and the university as a social institution as these change the conditions for public knowledge.

Marco Castro Cosío (ITP'10) is a curator and innovation consultant of art exhibitions in New York and Mexico. He was MediaLab director at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. His project as an artist, Bus Roots, has gained recognition worldwide. Marco contributed to the Rio +20 series and spoke at TED as a TED Resident and is a member of the Climate and Urban Systems Partnership and a Philips Innovation Fellow. He is currently a Research Fellow at the Brown Institute for Media Innovation and currently an artist in Residence at the NYU Digital Future Labs.

PM / 15:30 – 17:30

Jigsaw Films

Jigsaw Productions is helmed by Academy Award®-winning filmmaker Alex Gibney, considered one of the most prolific and thought-provoking documentary filmmakers of our generation. Founding Jigsaw Educational Productions in 1978, Gibney set out to make the company an incubator for diverse filmmakers, giving each the opportunity as part of the Jigsaw team to explore and refine their talent in the art of producing documentary films. In 2012, Gibney founded Jigsaw Productions and partnered with Kew Media (formerly Content), a global entertainment corporation, allowing Jigsaw to further expand into feature films and the scripted and unscripted television series arena.

For a decade **Josh Adler** has worked to tell stories that create common ground, while exploring our world's most inspiring questions. Along the way he's developed and produced dynamic projects for major networks, news publications, conferences, arts programs, music festivals, cultural and educational institutions, academia, online platforms, public programs, and more. Recent highlights include projects for Netflix, Vice, and National Geographic Television, and documenting Brooklyn Raga Massive. Past credits include directing at La MaMa ETC, joining arts and meditation at NYC's Interdependence Project, producing for National Geographic Channel's Emmy-nominated series "Brain Games," presenting at SAND 2017 and Science of Consciousness in 2016.

Friday, December 7th, 2018

AM / 09:30 – 10:45

Prime Produce Site Visit / 424 W 54th St, New York, NY 10019, USA

The Prime Produce Apprentice Cooperative operates 424 w 54 Street as a legally incorporated and wholeheartedly organized co-op supporting entrepreneurs, educators, and artists who share values of service and hospitality. Here, they work to design experiences, build companies and organizations, practice crafts, cultivate relationships, and grow as people.

AM / 11:15 – 12:45

C24 Gallery / 560 W 24th St, New York, NY 10011, USA

C24 Gallery was established in 2011 in Chelsea, New York, and is committed to showcasing contemporary art with an emphasis on a plural program exhibiting established artists. C24 Gallery artists regularly participate in museum exhibitions and biennials and are included in leading institutional collections worldwide. In addition to an ambitious exhibition program, which includes collaborations with renowned curators, C24 Gallery regularly hosts artist talks and lectures, and produces catalogues and artist books. Each year the gallery participates in major art fairs all around the world.

PM / 15:30 – 17:00

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts is a 16.3-acre (6.6-hectare) complex of buildings in the Lincoln Square neighborhood of the borough of Manhattan in New York City. It hosts many notable performing arts organizations, which are nationally and internationally renowned, including the New York Philharmonic, the Metropolitan Opera, the New York City Ballet and the New York City Opera.

Jennifer Edwards is a creative, a holistic process designer and an entrepreneur focused on how good work gets done and how healthy, successful projects / businesses / programs are made. Her past experiences include facilitation and design of programming at New INC. She is passionate about the intersections of the future of work, the future of learning, and the future of living, as they pertain to and engage with the larger social and economic ecosystems at play and in flux.

Jennifer also knows what it takes to keep the hustle going and turn dreams into reality, through intuitive and calculated decisions. When her interests shifted from 'woman preaching to the choir' to 'woman working to shift culture' - she went back to school to study organizational development and change management. Over the last ten years, she has built two consulting practices, an app, a large community building and storytelling initiative, and several courses in entrepreneurial practice.

PM / 17:30 – 19:30

Noah Levenson is a writer, director, software engineer and former TV executive. Noah researches and develops big ideas for the future of entertainment. In 2018, he was awarded Mozilla's \$50,000 grant for art and advocacy exploring artificial intelligence. His proposal, Stealing Ur Feelings, is a forthcoming interactive film that uses augmented reality to reveal the scary science of facial emotion recognition. In 2017, he made Weird Box, a viral interactive film that was called "delightfully disturbing" by Fast Company, "strangely fascinating" by SFist and "awesome" by Boing Boing. Before that, he created Chillr, a Vimeo Staff Pick-awarded transmedia prank about an imaginary iPhone app. He won a PromaxBDA Gold Award for directing Key & Peele's Social Influencers sketches for the MTV Video Music Awards. Previously, he served as Editorial Director of MTV2, where he oversaw the reinvention of the channel and helped break records for ratings, revenue and growth.

Mridu Chandra is a New York based producer of award-winning documentaries and independent feature films. An alum of the CPB/WGBH Producers Academy and the Tribeca Film Institute's All Access Program, her films have premiered at the Sundance, SXSW & Hot Docs Film Festivals, aired on PBS and HBO, screened for members of US Congress & the United Nations, and showcased at Museums & film festivals worldwide. Specialties include story development and grant writing, line producing, editorial and archival research, rights and clearances, and post production supervising.

Saturday, December 8th, 2018

AM / 09:30 – 12:00

A/D/O / 29 Norman Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11222

A/D/O is a creative hub that is built for designers but open for all. It is part of the Innovation practice at MINI and represents the company's core belief that designers hold the keys to progress.

EVENT: Slow Factory's Holiday Pop Up Experience: Beirut > NYC invited 5 Lebanese designers to showcase their work at A/D/O as part of their holiday pop up and share their perspective from their city. Featured were traditional dress, cool t-shirt designs, design journals, handmade purses that empower women in prison, cool street-modest apparel freeing the modern day Muslim teen, and Slow Factory #fashionactivism classics. Slow Factory will also be soft launching their latest collaboration with Iranian artist **Taravat Talepasand**, their collection is titled "Decolonize". Slow Factory is a Fashion Activism design studio based in Brooklyn, the founder and designer **Céline Semaan** is Lebanese-Canadian advocate who's work focusses on Human Rights and the Environment.

Saturday, December 8th, 2018

PM / 13:30 – 16:00

The Recurse Center is a self-directed, community-driven educational retreat for programmers in New York City. They believe people learn best when they take control of their own education and are free to explore what they're interested in. RC is heavily influenced by unschooling. RC doesn't end after you leave. They have a diverse, active, and engaged alumni community of over 1,300 smart, enthusiastic, helpful programmers all over the world.

Sonali Sridhar is the cofounder of the Recurse Center. Over the past ten years, Sonali has worked on several hardware and software projects. Her past work includes interaction and user experience design for sites like Charlie Rose, Panasonic, and Nike. She also spent two years with OpenPlans, an open source organization, building mapping tools for the Department of Transportation of New York City and the bike advocacy network, Transportation Alternatives.

Sonali was the recipient of the Art Matters grant for a wearable technology piece called "Odhni," a garment worn by South Asian women when they go on long walks to gather water, which gathers energy through solar panels and a battery pack. She has also served on the board of directors for the South Asian Women's Creative Collective (SAWCC), an NYC-based art non-profit. Sonali received her bachelor's in fine art from Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD), followed by a master's in professional studies from the Interactive Telecommunications Program (ITP) at NYU. She is interested in designing interactions and environments that are immersive, playful, and ubiquitous and that explore the connectivity and psychology of learning.





After the Long Walk

Sometimes there are themes in your life that take a long time to see and then even longer to do something about. You imagine how you or your company can contribute something great to the world but you get stuck. The words don't come out. Then you realize it's you - you're in your own way. At [Mighty Jungle](#), [Mark Pollard](#) helps leaders, marketers, and agencies get out of their heads and into the wild using a combination of training, strategy, and writing. And he's done this with The Economist, Decoded, Mozilla, Poo-Pourri, Dreampad, McCann, Havas, Vaynermedia, TBWA/ Media Arts Lab, and more. In a prior life, he ran strategy teams at McCann, Leo Burnett, and Big Spaceship, judged the Jay Chiat Awards and the Webby's, and sat on the Australian Account Planning Group (APG) committee. He also founded Australia's first full-colour hip hop magazine Stealth in 1998 and he was listed as one of Sydney's top 100 Creative Catalysts in a government initiative because of it. He's written for Vice, Quartz, Wharton's Future of Advertising program, and he's spoken at TEDx, Miami Ad School, and the Cannes Festival of Creativity.

[BEAT Global](#)'s mission is to transform the lives of youth by empowering artists to build community through creative self-expression rooted in advancing Hip Hop culture. They bridge the gap between arts and education by working with youth to create a culture of respect, collaboration, and freedom of expression. BEAT Global cultivates alternate spaces for youth voices and provides a platform for expression without judgment or fear. By utilizing a cypher-based pedagogy, BEAT Global provides leadership training via the arts and community building by ensuring students are offered attention, mentorship, and opportunities for growth.

[John Fass](#) is a designer, researcher and teacher, and is the Course Leader MA User Experience Design at [London College of Communication](#). John has a background in photography, shooting architecture globally for editorial and advertising. He has been working as an interaction and interface designer for ten years for clients including The Wikipedia Foundation, Universal Music, Exxon, Global eHealth Foundation and a range of Silicon Valley start-ups including Scanadu, TED and Index. John has lived and worked as a designer and art director in London, Berlin, Milan and Brussels and exhibited his work at Moderna Museet Stockholm, Bauhaus Dessau, FACT Liverpool, Transmediale Berlin and Bozar, Brussels. John's work as an interaction designer covers diverse fields such as healthcare, engineering and music, but consistently emphasises narrative legibility and clarity of purpose. A guiding principle is the ethical and moral responsibilities of designers of digital technologies and careful consideration of how they intersect with human behaviour. He is currently a design consultant for two major global and national web application projects, each with up to 60,000 users. John's research interests include the nature of digital experiences and how they may be externalized in physical forms, urban rights and open technologies, interface ethics, and data activism. He has presented research at conferences internationally including: CHI, NordiCHI, DIS, INCITI Recife, and sits on the Program Committee for Research Through Design.

Analysis

Long Walk

Insight Generation >> December 2018

Hypotheses

Hypotheses are based on insights generated from the broad cross-section of conversations available during the 3-day trip to New York City and debriefing conversations following the trip. Evidence was also included from the 'Future Walks' referred to us from meetings during the time in New York

Hybrid Spaces

Digital solutions increasingly involve hybridity of function or location and embody values that underpin artistic practices rather than extensions of current practice. Examples include digital as an augment to community, hospitality, narrative, exploration, curiosity, mobility, and so on. Digital solutions must intentionally extend from the values of the work being created rather than as a means of sharing existing work more completely.

Market Pays

Many of the conversations centered on market demand as a driver for digital innovation. Recurse Center receives no public money, Jigsaw Productions is growing to meet platform demands for high-quality documentary content, the Institute for Public Knowledge generates solutions through active listening to affected communities and so on. While public support is important, digital solutions must generate evidence of market demand during prototyping phases

Creativity Broadly

Digital solutions encompassed a broad understanding of creativity that invites open participation from the public. Barriers to creative input in many fields are high (AI, art making, computer programming) and digital solutions can serve to reduce those barriers. Doing so requires that creativity be understood as available to all people. Digital solutions can bring human imagination into the field (whatever that field may be).

Relationships Among Parts

Most initiatives we explored explicitly bridged divisions among related parts. John Fass develops solutions for designers to engage with artificial intelligence. Marco Castro Cosio designs digital solutions to connect different activities addressing food scarcity in urban environments. Jennifer Edwards, Mridu Chandra and others connect artistic practice, technology, presenting opportunities, and cultural communities. Beat Global connects research bodies, underfunded public schools and the hip hop community.

Perverse Systems

Digital becomes a cost-effective way of drawing attention to perverse incentives in real-world systems. Digital platforms create space for high-quality, intelligent content at low cost. The corporatization of AI is being examined through Noah Levenson and John Fass' work. The anonymization of local businesses is being addressed through Prime Produce and their hyper-local analog and digital activity. When resources are pointed toward a limited number of ends, digital offers affordable ways to present a critique or alternative set of ends embodied in a practice.

Human Problems

The models explored rarely focused on overcoming disciplinary or artistic challenges. By centering on wider human problems, larger audiences can be engaged and introduced to the creative practice underpinning the work. For Beat Global (hip hop culture), Jennifer Edwards (feelings of safety), Prime Produce (community), Jigsaw (storytelling), IPK (food), Recurse Center (access for women of colour), and others the human problem shapes the digital solution, with the analog organizational activity being another reflection of approaches to the problem.

Summary

1. Observation of Human Problem (Human Problems)

2. Insights on alternative approaches (Perverse Systems) and means of connecting analog practice to the larger conversation (Relationship Among Parts)

3. Prototyping to Support:

- Hybridization (Hybrid Spaces)
- Low Barriers to Participation (Creativity Broadly)
- Evidence of Market Demand (Market Pays)

Other Themes

1. Key use of digital solutions is to support prediction, personalization or recommendation around shared themes of interest.
2. When we design technology, we design behaviours, so we need to be careful about the technologies we embrace and use.
3. There is no need to invent the wheel. Data portage involves taking data, lessons, and approaches from a seemingly unrelated field and applying it to our own.
4. Opportunities for designers in residence for arts organizations.
5. Role of science fiction in documenting futures.
6. Need for on-boarding and off-boarding tools.
7. There is incredible demand of high-quality video and audio content for digital platforms. Emphasis in the US is more on international than domestic productions. Package sizes vary considerably (10 minutes for YouTube for example)
8. For storytelling, need to be clear what big question a story is explaining and be comfortable putting the character up front.
9. Innovative collaborators are valued, and more voices are needed in the content field
10. The primary competitive pressure is for attention
11. Structured sorting processes are empathy builders
12. Need to engage publics in the design of processes of communication
13. Structure enables human interactions not other way around
14. Podcasts are great low cost, low resource intensity instrument (free form, various lengths) and growth of podcast platforms will accelerate this (Quibi / www.quibi.com/ Luminary / www.luminary.app/)
15. Build media around substance
16. Live streaming is a good entry (even for archival and audience reach)
17. Create a high-quality sample and share to promote additional investment
18. Hire a producer, work with a professional videographer
19. Can't hawk community as a commodity
20. Communities exist for a purpose / how to care for each other
21. Accommodate users by making resources available
22. Show up for real
23. Easiest way to get attention is to give generously to existing communities
24. Consistent cadence to interactions to ensure regularity
25. Core activity is not centered "Somehow it drifted in"

Future Walks

Research Imaginings: Travels in Design Research (www.researchimaginings.com / John Fass)

Work related to Digital Public. More specifically, interested in how storytelling forms can help people to make sense of the often fragmented way that digital media communicate.

Mike Monteiro, Mule Design (www.muledesign.com) / John Fass)

Strategic Design that approaches design and technology as goal-oriented humanists. Lessons include:

- value must precede experience
- artifacts aren't enough
- designing is a conversation

Josh Clark, Frozen Rockets Academy (www.academy.frozenrockets.com) / John Fass)

A studio for inclusive design based in beautiful The Hague, right on the coast in the Netherlands. They strive to provide everyone with the proper tools and skills to design more inclusively, to achieve that goal, they organise workshops about human-centered, inclusive and ethical design.

The Shed (opens April 2019 / www.theshed.org) / Marco Castro Cosio

Today, artists and audiences share a hunger for original new work, silos between disciplines are dissolving, and institutions can connect with audiences more directly and personally than ever before. The Shed is made to help artists and audiences thrive in this new context.

Met Media Lab (www.metmuseum.org/blogs/digital-underground/posts/2013/introducing-the-media-lab) / Marco Castro Cosio

The Met's Media Lab explored ways that new technology could affect the museum experience for staff and visitors, in galleries, classrooms, and online. As digitally mediated experiences play an ever-greater role in our lives, it's important that museums—the great repositories of the world's cultural expression—stay abreast of these developments.

Pioneer Works (www.pioneerworks.org) / Marco Castro Cosio

Pioneer Works is a cultural center dedicated to experimentation, education, and production across disciplines. Through a broad range of educational programs, performances, residencies, and exhibitions, Pioneer Works transcends disciplinary boundaries to foster a community where alternative modes of thought are activated and supported. They strive to make culture accessible to all.

Cadillac House (Experience Center - www.cadillac.com/world-of-cadillac/cadillac-house) / Marco Castro Cosio

A permanent space from Cadillac dedicated to what's new and next in the arts, culture, fashion and culinary world. Inside you'll discover everything from cutting-edge contemporary art to a retail pop-up showcasing up-and-coming designers, as well as a café hosted by local roaster JOE Coffee.

Brown Institute (www.brown.columbia.edu/) / Marco Castro Cosio

Established in 2012, the David and Helen Gurley Brown Institute is a collaboration between Columbia University and Stanford University, designed to encourage and support new endeavors in media innovation. At Stanford, the primary focus is on media technology, and the Institute is anchored in the School of Engineering. At Columbia, the primary focus is on content, and the Institute is anchored in the Graduate School of Journalism.

The Watershed (www.watershed.co.uk/) / Marco Castro Cosio

Watershed champions engagement, imagination and ingenuity, working locally, nationally and globally from their home in Bristol, UK. The location has three cinemas, the Pervasive Media Studio and a café & bar. They present a diverse programme of films, events, festivals, artist commissions, workshops and conferences with audiences and participation at its heart. Playfulness, relevance and care are key to their approach across all areas.

[Raga Massive \(www.brooklynragamassive.org\)](http://www.brooklynragamassive.org) / Josh Adler

Brooklyn Raga Massive (BRM) is an artist collective dedicated to creating cross-cultural understanding through the lens of Indian classical and Raga inspired music. Brooklyn Raga Massive is a 501c3 charitable organization and a platform for all lovers of Raga music, both listeners and artists, to feel the pulse of NYC's live Indian Classical music scene. The inclusive and spontaneous nature of BRM's weekly jam session has not only built a strong community but has also become an incubator of new music collaborations and genres of music indigenous to Brooklyn.

[Koresh Dance Company \(www.koreshdance.org\)](http://www.koreshdance.org) / Jennifer Edwards

Koresh Dance Company was founded in 1991 by Israeli-born choreographer and artistic director Ronen (Roni) Koresch. Known for its engaging performance and technically superb dancers, the company performs critically acclaimed works at its biannual Philadelphia seasons, as well as in touring performances around the country. The dancers and the company are also deeply embedded in community through programming and lessons.

[Prospect Park VR Concert \(www.timeout.com/newyork/blog/first-ever-virtual-reality-concert-coming-to-prospect-park-072016\)](http://www.timeout.com/newyork/blog/first-ever-virtual-reality-concert-coming-to-prospect-park-072016) / Jennifer Edwards

As a part of the BRIC Celebrate Brooklyn! Festival, the Prospect Park Bandshell venue was surrounded by a series of strategically placed speakers. On stage, a 100-person choir, a 20-piece ensemble, and two Metropolitan Opera stars performed a space-themed cantata. In the audience, roughly 6,000 people in Google Cardboard headsets went on a journey through space scored by the musicians onstage.

[Stephanie Dinkins, Project Al Khwarizmi \(www.stephaniedinkins.com/project-al-khwarizmi.html\)](http://www.stephaniedinkins.com/project-al-khwarizmi.html) / Jennifer Edwards

Project al-Khwarizmi (PAK) uses art and aesthetics as the common language to help citizens, particularly communities of color conceptually understand what algorithms and artificial intelligent systems are as well as how and where these systems intersect their lives. Everyone who uses computers has applied for credit or job, etc. has encountered subject to algorithmic systems in ways they may or may not be aware of and have a stake in how artificial intelligence (AI) is designed, developed, trained, tested, and proliferated. Participants combine this new information with knowledge(s) they already possess to collaboratively design conceptual algorithms for combating and/or interrupting biased artificially intelligent systems. When intervention is not possible, methods of pre-empting biases built into algorithmic systems to support, rather than hinder, communities of color are explored.

[Jennifer Edwards, I Feel Safe \(www.arts.gatech.edu/i-feel-safe-when\)](http://www.arts.gatech.edu/i-feel-safe-when) / Jennifer Edward

This collective storytelling project uses digital and analog tools to explore critical questions about safety. I FEEL SAFE WHEN seeks to understand and amplify the human experience of what 'safe' feels like. The creator of this project, writer and choreographer, Jennifer Edwards, believes that if we want to build a more just, more 'safe' world, we need to unpack the various elements necessary to create truly 'safe space'. To do this, we need to invite as many people and perspectives into this conversation as possible.

[Marc Bamuthi, Life is Living Festival \(www.dancemagazine.com/the-most-influential-people-in-dance-today-marc-bamuthi-joseph-2441745668.html\)](http://www.dancemagazine.com/the-most-influential-people-in-dance-today-marc-bamuthi-joseph-2441745668.html) / Jennifer Edwards

LIFE is LIVING establishes a new model for partnerships between diverse and under-resourced communities, green action agencies, and the contemporary arts world. Since 2008, under the artistic direction of Marc Bamuthi Joseph, LIFE is LIVING has grown from a festival that uses art to foster environmental justice to a mobilized campaign much larger in scope. Currently led by Youth Speaks National Program Director Hodari Davis, and Director of Production Joan Osato, Life is Living serves as an incubator for a multigenerational community of local and national artists including Brett Cook, Theaster Gates, Estria Miyashiro, and a host of others. The campaign has included a traveling environmental caucus & concert, an invitational Graffiti Battle, live action sports, sustainable materials construction projects, live poetry events, free breakfast program, science and technology fair, multiple stages, and a variety of other activities. As we reflect the voices of an emerging cultural majority, we recognize that our arts practices must echo and sustain the lives of the communities we engage.

Alice Sheppard, Kinetic Light (www.kineticlight.org/about) / Jennifer Edwards

An evening-length dance work choreographed by Alice Sheppard in collaboration with disabled dancer Laurel Lawson and disabled lighting and video artist Michael Maag. Featuring a unique, architectural stage that acts as a partner in the choreography and storytelling, Descent asks new questions about social justice, movement and embodiment, and art and architecture.

Afripedia (<http://www.afripedia.com>) / Jennifer Edwards

A platform and a visual guide to art, film, photography, fashion, design, music and contemporary culture from African creatives worldwide.