

“Go Big or Go Home, Right?”

*A reflexive ethnography of exhibition co-creation at the
Teknisk Museum*

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Summary

The use of participatory projects in order to democratize museums has gained popularity. This study follows the process of a co-creation project instigated by the project team for the Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology's upcoming climate exhibition. Nine student climate activists participated in three in-house workshops over the course of a month. The researcher challenges the traditional positivist research model through using participatory action research while acting as the project's organizer and workshop facilitator to collect data during the co-creation process. Various failures and oversights later proved to yield interesting results regarding how the project was framed, the manner in which communication occurred across cultural lines, and how decisions were made in the project. The results shed light on how and why such projects deviate from their ideal intentions while recognizing the absence of blame in this heavily social process. The author also recommends several variations to museological practice along these lines in order to further strengthen the democratizing aspect of museological co-creation.

Preface

This thesis would not be possible had it not been for several groups of incredible people. I would first like to thank the Klima2+ (formerly referred to as Temporary Climate) exhibition project team: Nina Bratland, Torhild Skåtun, and Ageliki Lefkadiou for allowing me to lead and facilitate this project (extra kudos to Ageliki who first conceived the idea). I am deeply grateful to them for giving me this opportunity and supporting me in almost every way imaginable every step of the way. I know this thesis may not reflect the project in the best light, but I had so much fun because of you three and would have done it again in a heartbeat.

I would also like to thank all of the participants in the co-creation workshops – I cannot write their names due to confidentiality issues; however, they should all know that they were vital to this project in every manner and a pleasure to work with. In addition, thanks to Jason Falkenburg for his appearance in the last workshop and for all the fun we had together in this project after I closed the box on my data collection.

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1 Democratize Now: A Museological Push

1.1 Introducing Ever-More Democratic Processes

In recent years, researchers and museum professionals have pushed for the democratization of museums. Even officials in ICOM proposed shifting the “definition of a museum” to include a component for cultural democracy and “planetary wellbeing” (though this “definition” is still being contested at the time of writing; ICOM, 2019). This can relate to the need to stay “relevant” as Nina Simon (2016) suggests, and other ethico-political purposes that seek to serve humankind and a wider ecology of care.

One process by which museums attempt to fulfill these goals is via participatory projects. Though such programs go by many names – co-creations, co-productions, participatory design, co-design, etc. – all of these “inclusive” enterprises focus on the same rough goal: to engage the museum with outside parties, and potentially turn “visitors” into “users” (Black, 2012). Fiona Cameron, Bob Hodge, and Juan Francisco Salazar (2015) proclaim in their *Climate Change Engagement: A Manifesto for Museums and Science Centers* that co-creations can promote “think[ing] about audiences differently, as valued actors” (264). Yet, while participatory projects may be the new “modus operandi” (Pierroux et al., 2020: 34), outsiders’ “participation does not necessarily mean an equalizing of power relations between citizens and decision-making in organizational structures like museums.” Indeed, several studies have shown that “findings thus differ from the utopian potential for social inclusion, democratization, and participation envisioned” (33).

In this thesis I will examine how a co-creation project I organized and facilitated at the Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology (Norsk Teknisk Museum henceforth referred to as Teknisk Museum) also tried and failed to uphold the utopian ideals of this type of process. Imelda Coyne and Bernie Carter (2018) say that it is “important that researchers share their experiences and accounts of using participatory techniques so that we can learn from each other and build upon the body of knowledge and expertise in this area” (11). My hope is that the results of this experiment will shed light on some of the issues that arise in participatory projects and can therefore be a reference for future attempts.

A Very Personal Case Study

Teknisk Museum aims to be an institution that continuously pushes the boundaries in regard to democratization. For example, “The Method of Things” (Huseby & Treimo, 2018), an

exhibition research and creation method developed at the museum, highlights the idea that objects can help “open museums to other publics and new perspectives” (translated from Norwegian; 11). Furthermore, anyone with an idea or opinion concerning a new exhibition should be heard and taken seriously as knowledge is not created by a single person or group.

Climate change and ecological disaster have heavily influenced the current political climate; therefore, many museums and other cultural institutions recognize their relevance. In Oslo alone, several museums (including the Natural History Museum and Nobel Peace Center) have in the last years dedicated exhibitions to the topic and highlighted school strikes (influenced by Greta Thunberg’s activism). Many scholars have reflected on how best to produce such exhibitions in various contexts. For example, visitors seem to respond poorly to exhibitions that (intentionally or not) politicize the topic with easily recognizable facts and figures from political discourse (Cameron & Deslandes, 2011).

Late last spring (2019), Teknisk Museum chose to adopt climate change as the theme of one of its next temporary exhibitions. As the museum is also busy producing two new permanent exhibitions, the planning and production of this climate exhibition was not prioritized and therefore did not take off until late autumn 2019.¹ The original concept included a “torg” (or “public square”) in which visitors could engage in discussion. There, different cultural actors and organizations could contribute elements to add to an impression of hope in regard to the dire situation climate science has revealed in recent years.

I was an intern during the exhibition’s development. Because of the short timeline for exhibition production, I was tasked with a related project explicitly intended to tie in with my master’s thesis in museology and cultural heritage studies. Initially I planned to simply shadow one of the museum professionals as they led a co-creation with an outside group, but during a meeting in early November it was decided that I would lead this co-creation myself, which included facilitating the actual workshops. In essence I was able to create my own project; however, being a novice to the process, I was heavily influenced and guided by several of the project members. The co-creation would be performed with a group of my choosing and would culminate in some sort of content that would be used either within or in conjunction to the exhibition that was scheduled to open in late spring 2020. As it was also a part of my master’s thesis, I would be wearing “two hats” throughout the process: one as the facilitator whose motivation revolved around the project running smoothly and successfully

¹ The exhibition was initially entitled “Temporary Climate” but its title changed in March 2020 to “Klima2+”.

so that the museum would gain a quality feature for the exhibition, and the other as a museological researcher collecting data for later “impartial” analysis.

The Research Question

As co-creation is supposedly a radical process – yet now also considered an essential part of museological practice – I am interested in exploring the challenges behind this method. My research question is: what aspects of the co-creation process hinder democratization?

Specifically, which elements that might normally go unconsidered by researchers have I as a participatory leader and cultural intermediary been able to identify?

Participatory projects are oftentimes mentioned with a shudder and alluded to as a manner in which to “tick [a] box” for museum duties (Coyne & Carter, 2018: 10) or as tokenism (Wilkinson & Wilkinson, 2018: 19). Yet, as mentioned above, it is also likely to occupy an increasingly greater role in the future of museum practice. Therefore, it is worthwhile to analyze the engagement for both the benefit of the museum and its “users.”

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters. This first chapter introduces the concept behind participatory projects and a brief background to the notion of democracy in museums. Chapter 2 explores the validity of a “messy” method in the research of live developments. Chapter 3 outlines the “results” of the data via a narrative of the project from start to finish including the recruitment, planning, execution, and reflection of all three workshops. In Chapter 4, I focus on three core moments from the project and analyze them in respect to how they diverted the project from its ideal form. Chapter 5 discusses these reflections and analyses and holds them up to a larger museological perspective surrounding power and communication within museums. Finally, Chapter 6 concludes this thesis with a few thoughts on the relevance of these findings to the future of museums and a larger democratic process, especially in light of the Covid-19 crisis and future crises connected to ecological concerns.

1.2 From “All for One” to “One for All”?

Before I begin to delve into the substance of this project, it is important to review what bringing “democracy” into museums implies. The concept of democracy takes on various forms that have contrasted and “adapted” historically (Jasanoff, 2004: 229). In *Frames of War*, Judith Butler (2009) claims that “Democracy has to name the means through which

political power is achieved as well as the result of that process” (37). Yet, Yaron Ezrahi explains that democracy involves “continual pragmatic adjustments between the state and its citizens” in which the state exchanges transparency with its citizens in return for power and rule “by the few” (Jasanoff, 2004: 32). The toggle between a top-down and bottom-up version of governance demonstrates the issues that arise when the ideal is put into practice. For this thesis, I will adopt a definition of democracy that supports the “malleability of human nature, a common cultural heritage and a thoroughgoing commitment to social mobility” (202) through focusing on a paradigm that “articulat[es] public values” (100). In short, the version of democracy I refer to in this thesis revolves around the idea that all “citizens” (like “users” of museums) are valid contributors to society and should thereby all have a hand in controlling powers that affect their world.

But how does this pertain to museums? In answering this question, it helps to understand that historical shifts in governance have also changed the patronage of these institutions. While museums began as private collections and later graduated to focus on educating – and arguably domesticating (Hooper-Greenhill, 1989) – a growing public, the late twentieth century witnessed a shift of perspective towards the public duty of museums (Vergo, 1989). This new obligation introduced “radical” approaches to aspects such as exhibition creation. Palmyre Pierroux et al. (2020) emphasize how co-creation and other participatory methods within museums were initially “anchored in principles of democracy and democratization, including the beliefs that people in an organization need to be involved in decision-making that will likely affect their work, that values are intrinsic to design, and that contradictions and tensions can serve as resources” (33). Issues such as climate change might urge museums to integrate more external community action and co-creative methods. This could elevate the role of museums during what is considered a crisis, especially in light of the belief that cooperation will become the key to solving the problems that our collective humanity faces now and in the future (Cameron & Nielson, 2014; Newell, Robin, & Wehner, 2016).

Although these sentiments are touted in discourse, this paper will address how, when put in practice, unpredictable social elements can curb their effects. Applying radical method and expecting optimal results neglects the messy organic nature of bottom-up growth. As the reader will soon observe, authentic accounts of the imperfections in co-creation can, in addition to identifying the drawbacks of participatory projects, also bring their virtues to the fore. This starts by acknowledging the nature of the project’s actors and the manner in which data is collected on and by them.

2 It's Okay to F*ckitiate-Up

An argument for putting method in the madness and madness in the methodology when researching live developments

2.1 Don't Mind the Mess

The methodology of this thesis is quite different from the average museological dissertation. My process of data collection mirrored the chaotic reality of leading and facilitating a project, and therefore challenges the traditional positivist research model. This co-creation has been messy from start to finish and, I dare say, delightfully so. In this chapter, I will outline how the project's peculiar characteristics echo through the manner in which I organized and collected my data. The preparation, observation, self-reflection, and collaboration required by the method of participatory action research demonstrated how the core themes of my data evolved from relatively unexpected elements. Ultimately, I argue that this "messy" style of data collection provides richer insight into this type of research and can furthermore produce a useful, thought-provoking account for future researchers and museum professionals.

Unconventional Beginnings

This co-creation project had its beginnings in already unfamiliar territory. The core of the climate exhibition's project team (henceforth referred to as EPT) was comprised of one staff member from the education department, one curator in the climate change exhibition, and the exhibition project leader (who is a curator herself). As mentioned, I was an intern in the project at the time and the EPT assigned me to lead and facilitate this project due to the short timeline for the exhibition preparation. This decision was likely supported by the fact that they knew that I intended to write my master's thesis on the exhibition's co-creation project anyway. Also if I had not possessed previous experience in diverse museum roles and social group management (and if I was not an outspoken, outgoing American-Norwegian) I may have not been asked to do this job. Despite my perceived qualification for the task, it had not been standard practice to select an intern for a task of such complexity – "co-creation" was routinely referred to as a mentally and emotionally demanding process. Yet, in wearing my "researcher hat," I was advised that if the project did not go according to plan it might make for interesting data; therefore, I could rest assured that the quality of my facilitation work would not directly correlate with the value of this thesis.

Nevertheless, the co-creation project strongly aligned with the museum's egalitarian aspirations and fed into a few other institutional aims. For example, the museum considers the co-production of an exhibition feature to be a method of knowledge co-creation in the museum, which is associated with a research project in cooperation with Østfoldsmuseene called "Museums' Knowledge Topographies" ("Museenes Kunnskapstopografi," 2019) funded by Kulturrådet – the project is also considered a successor to "The Method of Things." While the workshops I facilitated fell under the budget for the climate exhibition, the co-creation's eventual realization would be covered by this larger research project (this thesis is an entirely separate endeavor). The EPT attended the workshops – though none of them were present for all three – and had the opportunity to collect their own data.

The museum has done co-creation projects in the past and the museum educator is currently writing her PhD thesis on the subject. Both the educator and curator also co-authored a text entitled "Participation and Dialogue: Curatorial reflexivity in participatory process" (Stuedahl et al., 2019). Thus, the pair provided me with valuable insight and assistance throughout the project. I also loosely followed a structure they recommended which took inspiration from "future workshops" (73) that include phases of "critique", "fantasy", "realization", and a final evaluation (72). With their guidance, I developed a plan to invite outside participants to three in-house workshops that would build upon each other to produce some result that would be featured in or alongside the upcoming climate exhibition.

Throughout this project, they continuously acknowledged co-creations as having an onerous nature and, recognizing my status as a student, offered me words of comfort several times. It was accepted that participatory projects in museums were difficult and this project's "tide, flux, and general unpredictability" (Law, 2004: 7) would likely affect the method of data collection. This is not to say that another more straightforward method would be any less valid, but I agree with John Law that to "monopolize" such social science oriented research with less complicated approaches overlooks how "they are badly adapted to the study of the ephemeral, the indefinite and the irregular" (4). Therefore, yielding to the process's so-called frustrations and chaos might unveil insights that speak to a more honest angle of co-creation.

Despite their acknowledgment of its demanding sedulousness, the EPT clearly wanted this project to be successful and therefore were more than helpful in providing me with support every step of the way. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that as relations between individual and institution are constantly negotiated, each member of the EPT likely had their own unique interests, views, and responsibilities in regard to this project and its

place in the museum. One manner in which they offered advice to me was to suggest I use participatory action research, or PAR, as my main method of data collection.

2.2 Social Disorder Please

Participatory research denotes “understanding from an interactive, reflexive and engaged position” (Coyne & Carter, 2018: 2) and the method has primarily been conducted in western countries with younger outside groups. The term is also closely associated with “participatory design” – as Bruce Archer notes “the natural sciences are concerned with how things are... design on the other hand is concerned with how things ought to be” (1981 quote from Archer found in Bannon & Ehn, 2012: 45). The “action” component of PAR refers to the active role the researcher plays, which is why I have chosen the term over its counterparts for this thesis.

One of the salient aspects of the method is its focus on the development of social relations. One of the first uses of participatory design in the United Kingdom emphasized “acknowledging a variety of stakeholders involved in any project” (43) and underscores how it becomes relevant to focus on their interests and understand how they can impact the enterprise. The researcher becomes a co-learner in these projects as “participatory research is about the co-construction of meanings and understandings” (Coyne & Carter, 2018: 2). Yet, as Coyne and Carter further explain, significance is found in the construction of relationships and their power dynamics:

researchers need to allow sufficient time to build rapport and relationships with children and young people in order to access deeper layers in their voices. It is about handing over the agenda to the children and young people so that they can control the pace and direction of the conversation, even if this can be discomforting to some researchers. It is an active process of communication involving listening, hearing, interpreting and constructing meaning. (7)

Although this study focuses on young adults/activists, this demonstrates how in order to create opportunities for these experiences the researchers must take care in how they approach any participants from the first interaction. One objective is “controlled enquiry: framing situations, searching, experimenting and experiencing” (Bannon & Ehn, 2012: 46). This involves incorporating hands-on activities that can visualize a prototype while practicing “human-centeredness, empathy and optimism” (56).

Understandably, such a dynamic method can quickly become chaotic as it seems to insinuate the need for rigorous data collection into every single moment of the process. One

could control this by entering the project with a specific idea of what the researcher wants to assess; however, this would also limit the scope of the analysis and may hunt for conclusions before the process even begins. Law (2004) explains that when researchers seek a certain phenomenon they are likely to find it, while “the *social* is taken to be fairly definite” (my italics; 5-6). Yet, a project such as this one cannot be replicated in the sterile manner in which a controlled experiment would aspire to be. All of the project’s actors and attributes are unique and perform an inimitable role, myself notwithstanding. The notion of the hand of science descending on entities to control and simplify their presence for the sake of “progress” can be extended to explain the oversimplification of many complex subjects from climate change to the human body itself (Neimanis & Walker, 2014; Herzig, 1999). In recent decades, opposition to positivist research approaches has spread as a result of a more holistic appreciation of how the unruliness of the data can indeed serve a purpose. For example, Elizabeth Wilson’s (2015) “gut feminism” preaches the ability of academics “to think innovatively and organically at the same time” (Introduction chapter, last para.). At several points in this project I found myself acting, responding, and proceeding based off instinctual and improvisational whims. This project can be understood as operating under a method of “poetics or interventionary narrative” (Law, 2004: 3) in which much of the empirical data is under occupation by the researcher and later findings must be written in a manner that surrenders to a wider interpretation of said data. It is beneficial to allow the process to develop organically, take good notes, and later find the meaning in what has happened.

A Note on Notes

Before I delve into more convoluted elements of the method, it is relevant to discuss the techniques behind capturing this reflective data. Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw’s *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* (1995) outlines details that a researcher should keep in mind before entering the field. John Law also emphasizes that while advocating for more generous and messy methodology, “methodical procedures and meticulous note-keeping are necessary” (Law, 2004: 30). For example, researchers should be taking regular notes during one’s fieldwork; however, for a “fully immersive” experience, or what is referred to as “participatory-to-write,” it is best to not let writing intrude into the quality of relationships (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995: 23). Instead, taking “headnotes” or “jottings” may serve best, if expanded into a more detailed account as soon as possible after the event. “Jottings,” or quick – and sometimes coded notes that can also help with protecting the confidentiality of the persons involved (35) – should be written in a manner that can later

help “evoke memories [which] requires learning what can be written about and how” (31). An hour of observation should translate to roughly an hour of writing-up a detailed entry (46). Yet, Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw also suggest that researchers should “register one’s own feelings and then try to observe others’ reactions” (24). They also remind readers to be open about the research intents without being overly sensitive to how it affects them (23). Overall, having a detailed account of what happens during a rich process such as co-creation speaks to the quality and perspective of later interpretation and analysis.

2.3 Collective Data Collection

As suggested, participatory action research entails the collection of qualitative data via observations and impressions. The accumulation of data during this co-creation took an ethnographical departure as “ethnography lets us see the relative messiness of practice.” (Law, 2004: 18). Yet, my active role as a facilitator during the workshops represents a break from traditional ethnographic format. The attendance of participants, who according to PAR act as co-researchers, further complicates the issue:

Though ostensibly related to ethnographic research, participatory methods are positioned as less invasive than traditional ethnographies, as participants assume an active role in the research process. Ideally, participants not only provide, collect, analyse and interpret data gained through participatory research, but they take action on issues and problems that arise. (Wilkinson and Wilkinson, 2018:15)

PAR strives to practice a progressive attitude towards treating participants as co-researchers. As mentioned, this project included two groups of actors: the EPT and the participants.

The EPT were consulted before and after each workshop for both advice and reflection regarding the process. After each workshop, the present project member(s) and I would also “debrief.” I was able to take notes and jottings during some of these conversations, but others were more informal as they, for example, took place directly after the workshops as we cleared up stations. Therefore, I often took mental headnotes, which I then recorded in greater detail a few hours after the end of each workshop. In addition to regular planning and debriefing with the EPT, I also attended and took notes during weekly meetings for the extended exhibition project group. In some of these meetings I was asked to give a short update to the process where other staff members could also weigh in on the project with their questions and comments. Not everyone in these meetings was able to sign a consent form in the end, and therefore their input has been left out of this final paper.

The participants, on the other hand, contributed in a manner that intended to give them a voice, especially to those whom might be hesitant to speak up in the actual workshops. As suggested by the museum educator – and in line with the PAR literature (Wilkinson & Wilkinson, 2018) – small notebooks were distributed to each of the participants during the workshops. I prompted the participants to write down specific ideas, thoughts, reflections, etc. into these notebooks, which I collected at the end of each workshop. The participants were informed beforehand that the notebooks would be collected and that I would potentially be using what they wrote as part of the final thesis. They were also assured that if they were uncomfortable with this, they could abstain from recording anything in their notebooks, which one participant practiced for all three workshops.

This type of project requires a firm understanding of consent and confidentiality. Consent forms were distributed to every individual involved and in this paper I have anonymized the participants that attended the workshops (templates of the form are found in Appendix A and B). Due to the modest size of Oslo’s museum community, it will be difficult to hide the identities of the individuals of the EPT; nevertheless, despite their lack of concern in this regard, I do not refer to their names in this paper. The project proposal, statements of consent, and credentials for data collection were all approved by the Norwegian Center for Research Data in mid-December 2019 before the workshops and subsequent data collection began. Furthermore, the EPT provided feedback for this thesis preceding its final version, which coincides with a comparable ethic around participation logic.

2.4 Life of the PARty

It can be argued that all ethnography should contain a substantial element of self-awareness. Sharon Macdonald’s (2002) *Behind the Scenes at the Science Museum* is a classic example of self-reflection in ethnography as Macdonald was herself considered a member of the Food exhibition team. In it, she recognizes that “following local players and trying to understand their concerns and their ways of seeing and doing, was ... [the] traditional aim of [the] ethnography” (7). Macdonald’s ethnography greatly influenced the manner in which I approached this thesis project. I could identify myself within her overlapping of position as researcher, honorary EPT member, and a peer of the people she was studying as she would routinely interact with them in other aspects of her professional life. I realized that I should adopt the same empathetic tone in my account as crossing the bridge from academia to the intimate professional practice is best done with compassion. She also explored the process of

how a project could “end up different from original intentions” (8), which reminded me of how even the largest museums must remain flexible during the production of an exhibition.

While observation and conscientious reflection are important to this method, *autoethnography* arguably takes the process a step further by divulging hard truths and emotions that oneself as the researcher holds. Sarah Wall (2008) demonstrates these difficulties in her article “Easier Said than Done: Writing an Autoethnography”. In particular, she grappled with issues like “representation, balance, and ethics” (38) in formulating her findings. Ultimately, she “approached... autoethnography with a desire to ‘converse’ with the literature rather than just to interject [her] perspectives into identified gaps in the literature” (40) thus demonstrating the need to practice healthy distancing from the work.

Reflection in the First Degree

I began the co-creation project at Teknisk Museum knowing that I would need to account for several conflicts of interest in order to validate the work. For example, as mentioned, I was an intern at the museum in the three months prior to the beginning of this project, which made me familiar with the Exhibitions and Collections Department. I felt a sense of belonging and comradery amongst the people in this project; however, I have always been aware that I am not a key player in the larger exhibition project although my contributions were recognized.

In addition, I work as a reserve member of Teknisk Museum’s reception/shop staff, and therefore have professional ties to the museum. Nevertheless, this position is in a different department and is neither stable nor permanent. I personally feel that it did not impact my role in the project other than it assisted me via keycard entry to parts of the museum that otherwise would have been more difficult to access if I was not an employee (although I would have had the same keycard if I was only an intern at the museum).

I wanted individuals on both sides of the co-creation to view me in a favorable light as I was the figurehead of the project and therefore associated at least indirectly with its success. Ideally I would like to keep everyone in this co-creation in my professional (and perhaps even social) network after the conclusion of this project. Although Oslo is a relatively large city, it has become clear to me that the professional academic and museum/climate networks here are small and therefore influential – the fact that I personally would like to stay in this city for the coming years then influences my drive to make this project work.

Despite these conflicts, I was not paid for this project and have not received any other form of compensation for my work in it.

2.5 An Appeal for the Politics of Experience

As I entered this project with the expectation that the data collection and later analysis would be unpredictable – not to mention my apprehensions as it’s organizer and facilitator regarding the direction that project would go in general – the nature of my note-taking and the type of data collected would reveal itself as the project progressed.

The first example of this came during the recruitment phase. It was my choice and responsibility to find participants for the project. After some discussion with the EPT, I opted to reach out to an existing group of university student climate activists. The EPT seemed to approve of this as it spoke to the intention behind the timing of the exhibition and it aligned with how “community engagement is essential for museums.... [including] connecting/relating to social movements on the ground” (Cameron, Hodge, & Salazar, 2015: 261).

The participants were selected based on their involvement in a group called the Naturvernstudentene på UiO (or Student Nature Conservancy at the University of Oslo). This student group meets multiple times a semester for activities related to protecting the environment, which in the past years have involved quite a few political events and school strikes as well. I decided to recruit from this group for several reasons. Firstly, the age of the people in this club was similar to my own, which I deduced would make it easy for me to communicate with them – an assumption that will be examined in later chapters. As they were all over eighteen years of age, I avoided filing extra paperwork when registering my project with the Norwegian Center for Research Data. I also wanted to find a demographic that was particularly engaged in the climate crisis but perhaps not regular museum patrons. Finally, while researching for an appropriate group I happened upon a post in the club’s Facebook page stating that their next meeting happened to be the following day, which was very timely for my study. It was through the first encounters with the potential future participants as well as subsequent conversations with the EPT that I acquired my first taste of data collection for this project.

I attended the group’s General Meeting on the 13th of November 2019. After their own presentation, several attendees were allowed to announce special opportunities for the members. I presented the co-creation project as well and then passed around a signup sheet. Several people asked for more information including enquiring what type of “product” it would be and what dimensions that might entail. I had some trouble replying but answered that the resulting “thing” was quite open as the process called for creating it together with the museum. Some people seemed very eager to sign up while others sounded more skeptical. I

was struck by the various emotional reactions between the different members and found that these subjective elements featured heavily in the notes I wrote later that night.

After the meeting I had twelve names and emails. Still, in hopes of becoming more familiar with the group and the type of activities they hold, I attended an event the following Monday. There, the Naturvernstudentene på UiO members joined other groups of student climate activists in challenging a panel of oil company representatives in a bar in Oslo centrum. Entitled “Ut på Equinorslakt” (or “Equinor-Slaughter Outing”) the event was a reaction to the oil company Equinor’s planned youth “Dialogue Meeting” in Oslo. There several activist members posed well-articulated, hard-hitting questions to the Equinor representatives and staged a protest with signs and chants at the end of the event. The passion and emotion of these activists demonstrated to me how “agency [can be] imagined as emotive and embodied, rather than as cognitive,” and in fact “the nature of the person is shifting in social theory and practice” (Law, 2004: 3). Their words, and perhaps even more so the manner in which they articulated them, empowered their voices in the face of one of the most powerful businesses in Norway.

Unfortunately, as far as I was aware, none of the people who had signed up at the previous meeting attended this event, but I chatted with a couple of other individuals who decided to sign up as well. Thus, ultimately, I had fourteen interested persons.

The First Reaction Process

The questions the activists asked me about the co-creation during these meetings – as well as the manner in which they asked them – caused me to reflect on how we could motivate them to further commit to the project. While I was previously agnostic in terms of how to record and react to elements of this co-creation, it began to become clear that through each new interaction any situation may change the course of the project. In a reference to David Appelbaum’s book *The Stop*, John Law discusses how the generosity of a more open method can be analogous to blindness, “impl[ying] a range of sensitivities and sensibilities to that which passes the sighted person by” (Law, 2004: 10). I argue that displays of emotion and any subsequent critical illuminations in participatory projects such as these are highly relevant data. While striving to record as much “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) as possible, I found myself lingering on the emotional aspects of encounters. I also later discovered the impact of their agency in regard to the project’s progression.

For example, when I discussed with the EPT how to invite prospective participants after some of them displayed skepticism, they suggested that the participants should be

compensated. While I was initially worried about recruiting enough members, this decision was followed by the suggestion of imposing a cap on the number of participants. It seemed ideal to have at least three people attend all three workshops, but more than six participants may be a bit much to handle. Nevertheless, with fourteen interested persons, the cap became higher than just six. After some debate we decided upon a maximum of ten per workshop, although the goal was to get as close as possible to that maximum. I then created a poll on the online calendar tool Doodle that allowed everyone to respond with which dates fit them best. These dates turned out to be 14/1, 24/1, 7/2 of 2020.

Nine individuals responded and became the participant group for the co-creation. All nine attended the first workshop while eight came to the second and third. Out of the nine participants who were involved in the workshops, they came from different backgrounds. For example, only two were male, at least one was of a different ethnicity than white-European, and at least three had lived in a different country during their childhood. In addition, several of them studied diverse subjects at university (they represented three different universities), one was in full-time work, and another was still in high school.

Warning: There are No Mistakes

Earlier in this chapter, I have defended the so-called “mess” that is associated with the method of this study; yet, with great disorder comes great responsibility. This is not to say that this thesis engages in a blame paradigm. Indeed, as the reader will come to see, several blunders were made and oversights later revealed during the process of this project. Such mistakes are a normal part of everyday practice in more hands-on positions and should not be considered “failures.” Typically, more positivist methodology “hopes to limit the risks that we entertain along the way” through the researcher’s “desire and expectation for security” (Law, 2004: 9). To “fail” could be considered to be an abhorrent experience and a detriment to the data collection, but the mishaps in this co-creation eventually proved to supply the richest content for analysis and discussion. A chaotic approach is definitely “not a version of philosophical idealism” (7) but it can help determine how and why practice so often differs from the desired model in candid way.

Furthermore, the literature recommended to me at the time suggested planning the workshops with a combination of structure and reflexivity (Stuedahl et al., 2019). Much of the planning for the second and third workshops could not be done until the previous one had already taken place. The invitation, reminder emails, and information in the PowerPoint presentations also served as a form of data collection in this aspect.

In efforts to mitigate the blame factor, it helped to look at the two sides – museum and participants – as separate cultures. My goal as a facilitator was to create as comfortable, trusting, and inspiring an environment as possible for the first workshop in order to promote an atmosphere where the participants could feel safe to engage in the material, contribute to the discussions, and share their ideas. This would ideally include leaving room for mistakes.

While my role in the project included organizing and facilitating, I could also be seen as a cultural intermediary as I identified both as a student and as a museum/exhibition insider. Thus, I held several preconceived ideas of the motivations of each side. First, I recognized the practical need for the co-creation as a content contributor for the new climate exhibition. However, I also realized that the simpler the “product,” the better it would fit with its brief, as it was not intended to take center stage. Conversely, I empathized with the student activists who (like me) may be itching to break free from their pupil status to make a tangible difference in the world. This reflects in the school strikes they organize; they take action to reduce their powerlessness regarding environmental politics. Therefore, I chose to structure the co-creation workshops in a way I hoped would inspire confidence. I followed this up by continuously emphasizing how this was an opportunity to feature their ideas and opinions in the public space of a museum.

Despite an imbalance of power, there were plenty of opportunities and instances for agency to affect decisions that were made. Remarks that were either boldly declared or left unuttered all influenced the progress of the project in nuanced ways. To critically analyze them with the privilege of hindsight needs to also allow room for this understanding. While it might seem constructive to suggest that a change in anyone’s particular actions may have steered a course towards a more “successful” outcome, examining the more subtle causes of “mistakes” can uncover tensions and cultures that may prove more enlightening. Through such thinking, one can “learn less about certain kinds of things [but] we will learn a lot more about a far wider range of realities [and] we will... participate in the making of those realities” (Law, 2004: 10). That being said, it will become obvious that if anyone should be held accountable for any unfavorable outcomes it should be me – via reasoning that I held an instrumental role in this project and that I ultimately chose to write about it in this manner.

All of these considerations will now display their relevance through the account outlined in the next chapter. Following the tensions and allowing for emotional engagement can assist the reader or, perhaps, stimulate criticism for this manner of data collection.

3 Paradoxes and tensions

Perspectives on outcomes

3.1 Accounting for Authorship and Language

While I have well over a hundred pages of fieldnotes on the case, the following is my condensed account of the co-creation project. As previously mentioned, I extracted most of the material in this record from my ethnographic fieldnotes and conversations with the EPT – data from the participants’ notebooks is included in the following analysis chapter.

In addition it is important to note that in these meetings, emails, and other interactions with both participants and the EPT the primary language spoken was English; however, most people involved also spoke fluent Norwegian and so some of the communication was done in that language as well. This presents a potential issue as some individuals had varying levels of familiarity and confidence with one language or the other. Although several participants knew each other, not all were previously friends nor familiar with working together.

3.2 Recruitment

While I have outlined the recruitment process in the previous chapter, it is worthwhile to expand upon a few of the details that occurred in this part of the process. For example, some of the questions asked about the co-creation project during the General Meeting included enquiries about the size and duration of the project. I responded that I did not know for sure, but the area the entire exhibition was planned to encompass was “quite large” and it would be open for about nine months. I also said that food and drink would be provided and they would potentially be compensated with a few other “perks.” I repeated these statements to those interested at the “Ut på Equinorslakt” event.

My anxieties at that point lay in whether or not enough people would want to join the study; this manifested in my trying to “sell” the experience. It also led to me pushing the EPT to secure a few incentives. This resulted in the decision to compensate participants in the form of payment for each workshop attended (something that they have done for co-creators in the past and they were keen on doing again). I also pressed for a more concrete concept and “25 square meters” was mentioned as the maximum possible area the group could occupy if they were indeed going to create a physical installation within the exhibition. The size was meant to be a flexible potential that would be justified if the time came; nevertheless, as it was the only “tangible” framework the participant group was given, I saw

them use it as an anchoring point throughout the process. Yet, it was emphasized that the end “result” or “product,” as I often called it, could also be an activity or an event. In December, I sent an email invitation to the individuals who had expressed interest where I also introduced these new components – although, instead of “25 square meters” I wrote “25 m²” (a seemingly minor change that I will soon feature). Shortly afterward, a flurry of email exchanges ensued in the form of responses, the “Doodle poll” mentioned earlier, and questions/concerns regarding timing etc.

When the dates were finally chosen, all that could be done was to wait for January and study participatory action research. The literature I read over the holiday break definitely influenced my hopes and fears as the workshops approached.² I focused on the democratization process and committed to the idea that while I should make participants feel valued so that they would be motivated to contribute, I should also not force anyone to speak.

3.3 Workshop #1

In the week leading up to the first workshop, I focused on small details such as food choices and nametags, ensuring that everything was done with the environment in mind (as it would be hypocritical to be wasteful in a project that joined a future climate change exhibit with climate activists). The EPT and I agreed that the aims of the first workshop should include making them feel comfortable and familiar with the museum space and working with each other. This was in lieu of beginning to plan any concept ideas. The agenda (all workshop agendas and PowerPoints can be found in Appendices E-J) included introducing practical issues, asking them to critique a few existing exhibitions in the museum, and finally brainstorming around those exhibitions and their thoughts on climate change. If there was time, we would also do a post-it note exercise focusing on keywords.

In the beginning of the workshop, the entire group met up in the museum café for a late lunch. Thereafter we gathered in the “LAB” room for the introduction (the LAB – located directly adjacent to the public space of the museum but separated by a glass wall – is a relatively new, experimental space for research-driven exhibition development at the Teknisk museum). I began by providing a bit of background information regarding the

² This literature included: Paul Basu and Sharon Macdonald’s (2007) “Introduction: Experiments in Exhibition, Ethnography, Art, and Science”; Vasiliki Tzibazi’s (2013) “Participatory Action Research with young people in museums”; Catharina Thiel Sandholdt and Marianne Achiam’s (2018) “Engaging or Transmitting: Health at the Science Center”; Stuedahl et al.’s (2019) “Participation and dialogue: Curatorial reflexivity in participatory processes”; and Wayne Modest’s (2013) “Co-curating with Teenagers at the Horniman Museum.”

museum and its audiences. The museum educator continued by presenting the climate change exhibition project and how far it had been planned up until that point. When discussing the potentials of the co-creation, I emphasized how it was an opportunity for them to have their voices heard in the exhibition space, to which the museum educator reminded everyone that the outcome of these workshops need not be something that is directly a part of the new exhibition. The administrative details included handing out consent forms, collecting bank account information (the museum educator was in charge of this particular process), and introducing the notebooks.

Thereafter, we introduced the first activity – visiting a couple of exhibitions in the museum to understand the elements of an exhibition. Following advice from the EPT, I asked the participants to observe the exhibitions using the following “lenses”: crisis/community (to reflect on a sense of urgency and togetherness that the EPT had in mind with the exhibition at the time) and interactivity/emotion (to help them begin thinking about different exhibition elements). First was a smaller temporary exhibition entitled “Blind Spot” that, as I told participants, the museum created together with an external artist (see figure 1). The students seemed engaged as they took notes in their notebooks and mentioned how this exhibition felt like a puzzle or riddle that needed to be solved. Neither the museum educator nor I provided much background information about the exhibition so that participants could experience it on their own. Next, we visited the larger “Plastic” exhibition in the museum’s basement (see figure 2). We spent longer than I anticipated inside the space as the participants seemed busy trying to absorb as much of the information as possible on the many walls of the exhibition.



Figure 1: The Blind Spot exhibition the participants critiqued (photo by the author).



Figure 2: The entrance to the Plastic exhibition that the participants critiqued (photo by the author).

On our way back to the LAB, we stopped by the empty space which would later house the new climate exhibition. The participants seemed impressed by the size. We looped around the temporary walls in the center so they could observe the entire space, then we stopped in an area where the walls were larger due to a higher ceiling. Here I repeated that we could potentially fill up to 25 square meters and proceeded to measure it out. Unfortunately, while I was busily preparing the workshop before the participants arrived, I was not able to find any measuring tape, to which one of the EPT recommended to just “measure it out with steps” instead. However, due in part to heightened stress levels from leading the group, the memory of the email that said “25 m²”, and sheer incompetence, I began to take twenty-five large steps instead of five (let it be known that I now am overly aware of the difference between “square meters” and “meters squared” and can at present properly measure out such a space). Less than halfway through the procedure, I realized something was wrong and switched to tiny steps instead. After then walking twenty-five small steps in the perpendicular direction as well, I turned to the group with a puzzled look – several of the participants’ eyes and grins were wide with excitement – and asked, “This can’t be right, can it?” I received what I interpreted as a nod from the museum educator.

Back in the LAB, I prompted the participants to write about their impressions of the exhibitions in their notebooks. Then I asked them to exchange their feelings and thoughts on climate change – all the while, I enthusiastically wrote down keywords from their responses on the surrounding blackboards. The idea was to also pull in the aforementioned “lenses”; however, their significance seemed to fizzle and thus they were dropped.

Otherwise, the suspenseful energy near the end of the day caused the museum educator (who was the only museum representative present for the first workshop) and I to decide to open the floor for discussion and brainstorm ideas for the exhibition “product.” A plethora of ideas debuted and as we began to run out of time I asked them to write any further ideas in their notebooks so they could be taken into consideration the next week. While I was writing the suggestions on the blackboards, I maintained a positive and enthused attitude towards all of the suggestions. I decided the tone of this workshop revolved around how “the possibilities were endless.” At one point I found myself riffing off an idea that was developing amongst the group (the “screaming box”), but I quickly stopped myself.

Finally, the group was prompted to write about their thoughts regarding the workshop in one last notebook entry. Most of the entries seemed to exude excitement and anticipation around the ideas that they just brainstormed.

A Shift in Tension

During the week and a half before the second workshop, I constructed a Facebook group for the participants and the EPT. There I uploaded photos, encouraged the group to continue contemplating ideas, and told them to feel free to utilize this digital space. While no one shared, many nevertheless “liked” and some commented, including one who asked for permission to share a photo of some objects in one of the exhibitions on his Instagram.

Otherwise, I attended several project meetings with the museum, including one with the designer (which was one of her first meetings with the larger exhibition group). Some of the participants’ suggestions were discussed in this meeting, including the idea of having an aquarium with floating trash as an entrance, and a “screaming box” where visitors could express their frustrations in a soundproof structure. It is important to keep in mind that this exhibition had a very short production timeline and the co-creation workshops in fact occurred before much was decided and even the exhibition concept was in a state of flux.

However, a certain change of tone in another meeting changed my outlook and emotions towards the co-creation. While I was aware that the project was in no way central to the upcoming exhibition, a comment was made concerning “if” it was to be included in the exhibition. This caused me to want to protect the project and the subsequent expectations and feelings of the participants. It seemed that instead of upholding what I had disseminated as a sort of “promise,” the co-creation result would rather be presented as an option that could potentially be turned down if it did not fit the rest of the vision that was now coming to fruition as the designer had entered the conversations. When the EPT heard that I was uneasy about this, I was reassured that the participants’ contributions would be a part of it one way or another. In retrospect, the “if” comment likely referred to whether an event or other ephemeral concept would be the final product of the co-creation; however, due to the physical nature of most of the ideas of the previous workshop, the comment made me question the fate of the entire project. I still felt skeptical at the time and truly started to grasp my responsibility and accountability to both the museum and to the group of participants that I assembled. I started worrying that the non-verbal “contract” that I had made with the participants would be broken and they would end up disappointed.

Therefore, I decided to behave in a firm, yet gentle, manner during the next workshop. I would encourage the group to reel in the think-big spirit to decide on a single (or unified combination) of ideas that could be developed in the final workshop. I would advise them to produce a practical yet impactful result that the museum would have a hard time denying featuring in the exhibition. Of course, I had a few ideas in mind myself, but decided

to see what they would choose organically as a group. What resulted from the four hours of the second workshop was something that I could not anticipate.

3.4 Workshop #2

After a somewhat failed pizza-lunch introduction (due to the unanticipated necessity of a pizza-cutter), I stressed the desired outcomes of the day. We previously had the possibility to dream big, but the goal of the day was to choose one idea – possibly a combination – that could be produced or designed in detail during the next and final workshop. I also made sure to mention to the group that the space I had measured out in the previous week was too big – though we did not have the time to reestablish the size during this workshop.

The EPT member who was with me that day was the project leader who had neither been a part of the first workshop nor most of the planning meetings I had had with the other two EPT members. She also possessed a different creative philosophy: give people a framework to work within so creativity can flourish inside the box. Yet, this directly contradicted how I was previously advised to conduct these workshops, which was more focused on disregarding restrictions.

The activity of the day entailed using wooden stages (previously built for another co-creation project and suggested to me by the museum educator) and a box of toys to create three scenarios: 1) a scene of the overall feeling that they want visitors to receive when either inside the exhibition as a whole or when the visitor interacts with their product/thing (this was intended to be a five-minute warm-up to familiarize them with the toys and tools at their disposal); 2) to the best of their abilities, craft the idea that they want to develop; and 3) a repeat of task 2, which was supposed to prevent groups/individuals from getting too attached to one idea. After each round the groups presented their scenes and explained their choices. I attempted to maintain a very positive and humorous attitude throughout the process.

Interestingly, one of the groups chose a dystopian vibe for their warm-up scene, which contrasted with the tone from the last workshop that advocated positivity and togetherness (see figure 3). Another group with lots of dinosaur toys created a time perspective depicting the long past, the corrupt now, and a bright future (see figure 4).

Task 2 surprised me. Two of three groups seemed to create full exhibitions. They chose to combine five or more ideas (instead of the recommended one) and displayed them either in a trail format or spread throughout the space. The last group developed their timeline idea, which reflected the message of their previous scene. Admittedly, I had not contemplated



Figure 3: Group 1's warm-up scene with dystopic view. Figure 4: Group 3's warm-up scene dinosaur/time theme. (Photos by the author).

the implication behind the toys other than trying to give each group an equal amount based on storage box size; I also told them that they could exchange or “negotiate” with other groups for new/different toys. After this round, I felt nervous about the scenes of entire exhibitions being built. I suggested that when we repeated the exercise for the final time those who made full exhibitions could focus on one idea. It is possible that this point was lost over the chatter – this activity seemed at least to succeed in promoting teamwork.

Task 3 was another surprise for both the project leader and I. Now all three groups had created complete exhibition scenes (see figures 5-7). One group had even kept their previous “exhibition” and only changed out a few installations for new ones. Regardless, I maintained the good-humored attitude, though I worried that this may be an issue.



Figure 5: Group 1's final scene full 'exhibition'.
 Figure 6: Group 2's final scene full 'exhibition'.
 Figure 7: Group 3's final scene full 'exhibition'.
 (Photos by the author).

When we resumed in the LAB, I reminded the group that it was time to make some tough decisions and choose one of the ideas – though I said that it could be a combination (the example I used coupled the letter making station with a poster making station). One of the participants said that it she “could see this coming, but it was still a bit sad,” and another felt it would be a shame to get rid of any of the ideas. First they discussed their favorite ideas in groups and then shared their top pick with everyone. Almost all three groups were identical. They all basically presented a combination of the three largest ideas that incorporated several smaller ones as well. I wrote down each of these mega-combinations without much comment then circled, underlined, and boxed the elements that were similar for each and wrote them on the side (see fig 8).



Figure 8: The board following participant groups sharing their ‘favorite idea(s)’ (photo by the author).

Almost all of the participants seemed very interested in all of the elements, except one who expressed distaste for the timeline idea because “that would be boring.” This sparked a furor from the others who attempted to articulate how it could be combined with many other elements to create an experience and not just a “line on the wall.” After further discussion that supported the timeline idea, I asked if anyone wished to comment on any of the other elements. When no one spoke I requested everyone who was in favor of the timeline to raise their hands. Everyone’s hand shot up, even those whom had been skeptical just a few minutes before – they said they would be on board with it as long as it would not be boring.

Admittedly a bit stunned by the immense support for this large vague concept, I turned to the project leader for comment. She asked them to elaborate on the idea because at this point she found it rather hollow. I stressed that the plan for the next workshop was to invite museum staff who could be relevant for further discussions regarding the chosen idea's development/realization. However, and as I pointed out to them, this "timeline" idea felt too broad. I attempted to outline the daunting scope of this potential production by explaining how many other individuals would be involved, for example: carpenters, a videographer to find or make the films/photographs/sound (including someone to handle any potential copyright issues), and of course the designer whom would have to integrate it into her vision.

I found myself striving to make them realize the limitations that I felt they should have been aware of. At one point, one of the participants proclaimed, "Go big or go home, right?" to which I replied, "Yes, but are you ready to go home?" Despite my original belief that my overlap with the group's student status would allow me to communicate with them more easily, I apparently had failed somewhere at communicating how limited this project was really supposed to be. I had so emphatically tried to create a situation where they felt welcomed and encouraged to generate ideas that I ended up underestimating their ambitions.

With only ten minutes left, I asked if they wanted to use the remainder of the time to choose a Plan B. An "Alternative Map" idea (which was based on the notion of re-designing the museum's map to feature the climate activists' take on the various exhibitions – often in a very critical manner) was reintroduced, and the entire group raised their hands in support. I then gave them the opportunity to record any last thoughts in their notebooks. They had also decided amongst themselves that they would meet once on their own before the next workshop to further develop the ideas – something I initially suggested but eventually felt uneasy about due to the unbridled way their discussions could progress.

After the workshop, the project leader and I had a flustered conversation. Their "idea" was too big and complex, and also lacked ingenuity and/or a concise message. We reflected on how the toy-scenography activity may have influenced this. The scale of the scenes along with the size of the toys resembled too closely the area with the large wall in the exhibition space and therefore was potentially taken far too literally.

Forming a Reformation

My anxiety regarding safeguarding participants' emotions dissipated somewhat after the second workshop. At this point I felt disappointment was inevitable. I felt partially responsible for some failure in communication but was not quite sure where I went wrong

(other than the blasted 25 square meters). I decided that before the final workshop I needed to communicate to the EPT just how far the group's idea diverged from their own expectations. I still felt responsible for the eventual outcome of the co-creation project and worried that if any there was to be any agreement by the end of the final workshop, the museum would now need to set more concrete limitations to work from.

A few of the EPT reassured me several times that chaos, confusion, and tears (at least for the facilitator) was common for co-creations. Yet, they also said it was "obvious" that the group could not produce a miniature exhibition. My job during the final workshop would focus on facilitating dialogue between the two sides – a task that only entails so much preparation. However, when I urged for more format, the project leader suggested I use the "orange activity." This creative exercise involves using only an orange to disseminate an idea or message – the trick being to recognize the endless possibilities that lie within manipulating the peel and other inner intricacies of the fruit to create a potentially elaborate structure. Despite its potential to "reset" the participants' idea and core message, some of the members of the EPT doubted what they considered a reductive and silly activity. I decided to push forward with the plan as it would be an interesting experiment with the group, especially if their idea had evolved to an even more concrete, albeit difficult design as a result of their separate pub meeting.

3.5 Workshop #3

For the final workshop, the museum educator and the curator were the members of the EPT in attendance. In addition, an external individual who had just finished his doctorate in museology was present. He would potentially take over the realization process at the end of the workshop as he possessed experience in exhibition and installation design/creation.

After the initial late-lunch in the cafeteria, the participants began the workshop by presenting their updated design ideas for Plan A – apparently six of the nine participants met at a student pub to further develop their idea. One member drew the design on the blackboard (see figure 9) while another walked the rest of the group through a plan that included an enclosed space that would house a path that wound through several smaller rooms. Each room depicted a smaller "idea" to create an atmosphere of fear. However, the final room depicted a more positive scene of climate strikes and how they could pave the way toward a more hopeful future. Overall, the participants seemed very pleased with their presentation until the curator chuckled and mused that it appeared they had created the entire exhibition.

The mood of the room almost immediately changed when the curator, museum educator, and potential installation “realizer” then each proceeded to give their own presentations regarding their background and where the design and planning of the exhibition stood today.



Figure 9: The participants’ rough plan for their ‘Plan A’ as drawn by one of the participants during their presentation (photo by the author).

While observing the participants, I noticed several of them sat attentive with furrowed brows and serious faces while others’ eyes eventually glazed over from the sheer amount of new information. In addition, one participant seemed genuinely upset from the manner in which they tried to hide their face. After the presentations, the curator checked to see if the participants empathized with the EPT’s position – the project was (and always had been) on a short timeline and several other permanent exhibitions that were scheduled to open in the museum in the future held priority in the eyes of other museum staff. Therefore, this co-creation project could not be promised a large prerogative. To this, a few of the participants replied with nods and comments such as “that’s fair” and “understandable.”

Then, I introduced the orange activity. I attempted to express a bit of positivity and encouragement by explaining that such resets were common in creative work and how this was the opportunity to reconsider what important message they want to convey as a group. Before we began the activity, I requested the participants to brainstorm on their own via their

notebooks on how/what they could express, “through a goddamn orange.” Thereafter, the eight participants were split into groups of three (I added the installation “realizer” to the group of two) and each group received one fruit. Many interesting comments were made during the activity, but the group’s attitude remained dejected. They mumbled statements such as “I just want to throw this at the Oil exhibition” and “I just want to chuck this in a politician’s face.” One participant likened the object to Donald Trump’s visage and later contemplated opening it to resemble a vaginal “mother earth.” Meanwhile, the curator and I giggled at some of the comments but also both realized what a frivolous task this must now seem to them after having planned for what was basically a miniature exhibition.

Ultimately, none of the groups even opened their oranges. One wrote a brief narrative about a potential history of the fruit from plantation to store (see figure 10). Another drew a happy face and a sad face on opposite sides of the orange with complementing quotes (see figures 11-12). The final group carved a face and held it gingerly in their hands as they spoke of compassion (see figure 13). After each orange was presented and photo documentation taken, I suggested the words “narrative, emotion, and care” as the corresponding simplified messages created and linked them to themes of hope from the first workshop.

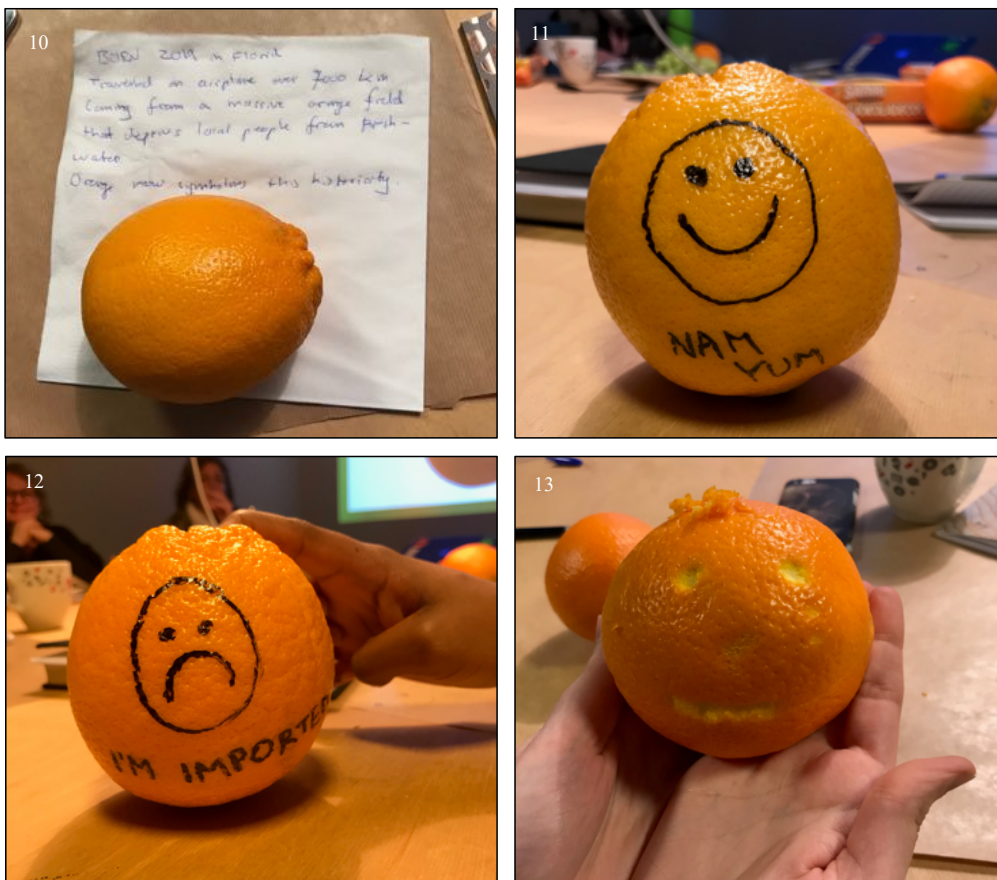


Figure 10: Group 1’s orange story. Figure 11 and 12: Opposing sides of Group 2’s orange.
Figure 13: Group 3’s carving. (Photos by the author).

After a break, we resumed with a group discussion where the two members of the EPT would participate and answer questions regarding the limitations and feasibility of different aspects surrounding the participants' idea. Very early on in the conversation, one of the participants motioned for the group to drop Plan A entirely and rather focus on what she felt was a more "doable" Plan B. While the EPT expressed that it was possible to work with their Plan A, many of the participants quickly supported their peer's idea and a collective vote was taken that killed their initial timeline-room concept.

A quick discussion followed regarding different elements that could be included in Plan B, including the material and design of the "Alternative Map." As the curator mentioned how she identified as a bit "anti-establishment," the possibility of creating smaller interventions throughout the museum, which would critique a few of the other exhibitions, was approved. Yet, it was decided that the group could only feasibly create a maximum of seven smaller interventions or potentially three to four larger installations as long as they were not complex. There was also a sixty-word limit given for any texts generated.

Towards the end of the workshop, the EPT introduced the idea of holding a fourth workshop that would take place in mid-March to further develop the idea. The participants were encouraged to visit the museum beforehand to come up with "small and practical" ideas of how they could make interventions in different parts of the museum. Unfortunately, due to the timing and scope of this master's thesis, I decided not to include the subsequent workshop in the research for this paper; however, I was invited to facilitate it along with the installation "realizer" who would now also be assuming a larger role in the project.

Favorable Failures?

Upon later reading several of the notebooks, I discovered that there was a split in the group between those who felt happy with the conclusion and those who were left confused. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, I have an extensive collection of notes regarding how this project unfolded. After writing and rewriting my account several times, I found that the issues highlighted in this chapter felt like the most important. While I could have focused on more positive or nuanced aspects of the process, I found it very interesting and enlightening to direct attention to some of the missteps of the process as there is a lot of potential to learn from failures. In the next chapter, I will focus on a few of these awkward moments to further unpack their value in light of the co-creation as a whole.

4 The Heat of the Moment

A closer analysis of three decisive junctures

4.1 Three “Moments”

Despite the “consensus” at the end, the process of this co-creation seems to represent a somewhat failed version of its ideal democratic model as the participants may not have had as strong of a hand in deciding how the project was to unfold as they once thought. I wish to now explore how a few key moments from this account directed the escalation of expectations that culminated into the final result. The three key moments are: the confusion and admitted blunder regarding the “25 square meters” measurement, the scenography activity (specifically, the period between the second and final exercise with the toys/tools), and finally the tensions surrounding the orange activity.

All three of these moments influenced how the co-creation project was framed for the participants. More specifically, they affected the emotions and expectations of what the group had in mind for their participation, which guided their subsequent behavior and choices. In addition, all three of the moments included key decisions that I as the cultural intermediary had to make and further communicate to both sides. By examining these moments using framing theory, co-creation theory, and in light of cultural considerations, we can unpack them from a democratic standpoint in terms of their value and meaning. In addition, it presents the opportunity to reflect on how things could have ended differently if other choices were made.

In this chapter, I will pull selections from the participants’ notebooks and discussions I had with the EPT before, during, and after the workshops. Yet, it is important to state that still much of this analysis will stem from my own observations regarding the project and can therefore be tainted by my position – as reviewed in Chapter 2.

4.2 Frames as Emotional Anchor Points

As there was little time to properly prepare and think through the beginning stages of this co-creation, I did not vigorously plan its organization and initial presentation. I have since come to learn that how the project was presented and understood by participants was a significant part of how they responded to every subsequent event. Media studies emphasizes the importance of frames, which are routinely referred to as “inevitable” and “powerful” (Calvert

& Warren, 2014: 205-206). According to Stephen D. Reese, frames can be erected and supported via the following levels: organization, principle, their shared nature, persistence of usage, symbolism, and structure (Reese, 2001). When considering the evolution of the manner in which the museum and I presented the project to the participants, their assumption that they were expected to make a full/miniature exhibition can be rationalized.

Reese's Elements of a Frame

In the following paragraphs, I apply Reese's six elements to underscore how the framework was unintentionally constructed around the abstract number of "25 square meters" and thereafter supported by the scenography activity. This demonstrates how "if an event is initially framed in a context, then any future information regarding that event will be understood in the way it was initially framed" (discussing Reese: Carter, 2013: 3).

Frames can effectively contribute to the *organization* of information. This can be seen in my very first encounter with the participants during the general meeting and subsequent event of the Naturvernstudentene. One person at the meeting enquired about the physical scale of the project, to which I responded that the area for the entire exhibition itself was very large (in fact 800 square meters as I have since learned) and that – if I had understood correctly – it would be possible for us to use a portion of that. They also asked how long it would be open, to which I responded not very long but approximately nine months. They were very surprised and said that was a long time (although the museum has since changed it to six months or perhaps now less due to the effects of Covid-19). Hence, queries regarding a frame followed first impressions of the project. The subsequent introduction email (after the participants replied back with their interest) included relatively little information about the project: "If the product is an installation it can be up to 25 m², but we can also play with the idea of making an activity or event instead (or anything else that you can think up!)" (Email communication, 17/12/2019; see Appendix D). Despite the latter half of the sentence, this statement is the only clue the group was provided in regard to any scaffolding in the project. By the first workshop, due to the organization of information, much of what the participants knew of the project revolved around a potential "size."

The *principle* of the frame – or abstract and potentially unspoken qualities – then cemented halfway through the first workshop. The area I measured out (albeit incorrectly) didn't seem suspicious because of the context of the frame – the entire exhibition area is quite spacious and the museum had invited them in as a group (not to mention that they were getting paid) to contribute something to what seemed like a blank canvas. Additionally, the

exhibition was clearly a response to the global influence of the student climate strikes, so it seemed believable that they would request the input of student activists like these.

Additionally, the frame gained significance as it was *shared* by the participants, the EPT, and myself. The initial email that I sent introduced the “25 m²” and was reviewed by the EPT without remark. Indeed, the area was only actively questioned late into the second workshop when the group already began solidifying their collective ideas. The absence of any issue with it beforehand thus allowed them to take the measurement for granted.

Several activities created the *persistence* of the frame, which denotes influence through “routine use over time” (Carter, 2013: 4). We asked participants to critique full exhibitions instead of smaller portions, and the space I improperly measured coincidentally resembled an area roughly the size of the first exhibition they critiqued. The scenography activity deeply solidified the frame as it also bore resemblance to the large wall the participants faced while I measured out the area in the future exhibition space.

When frames are forged within *symbolic* contexts, they can start to “exclude information that does not fit” (5). In a sense, the design of the scenography structure symbolized the false frame although it was intended to function as a tool to promote their creativity. The previous admission of my error regarding the “25 square meters” seemed forgotten; now that we had supplied them with a scene and figures that scaled almost perfectly to the aforementioned area, the frame was set. It is worth mentioning that not all of the toys scaled perfectly into the miniature exhibition space and in fact the group with larger and more random toys were also the ones who presented a more abstract idea like we were hoping for in their first attempt (see figure 14). However, the other two groups undoubtedly influenced them as their second attempt resulted in yet another miniature exhibition. In retrospect, we should have considered that these tools may be taken too literally. However, neither I nor any of the EPT considered this when they were suggested to me. They were simply what was available and previously used by museum educators in similar situations, so it seemed natural to include them.

Finally, Reese’s element of *structure* refers to how “identifiable patterns” (4) emerge throughout a process to construct the fundamental framework of the project. The “25 square meters” assumed real value for the participants when they began attaching their own agency onto the frame. This transition occurred during the scenography activity, and specifically in the crucial moments between the second and third tasks where two out of three of the groups made miniature exhibitions. During this time, I continued to praise their work instead of alerting them to how they may be going “too big.” The lack of pushback from the project



Figure 14: Group 3's second scene depicting 'one' idea of a timeline (photo by the author).

leader in attendance also contributed to their certainty. The confusion and hesitation to critique them during these brief minutes affirmed the patterns they had observed earlier, which thus led to a magnification of confidence in their work and ideas. While I suggested that the groups who made entire exhibitions could focus on just one idea in their last exercise, this request seemed to either fall on deaf ears or was deemed irrelevant as they all produced miniature exhibitions for their final task.

Frames as Creating and Elevating Reality

At this point, the participants seemed very secure in their approach to the project and their subsequent idea of how they could collaborate to design the final “product” (this term being potentially another faux pas in linguistic framing). Several participants began to immediately combine many ideas into their ideal final result after the scenography activity. In media studies, Robert Entman argues that frames “elevate the importance of that reality” (Carter, 2013: 3) that is portrayed in the context of the frame, while others like Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson proclaim that frames also have a psychological effect that take them deeper than “‘message level’ communication” (7). While this project does not overlap with media considerations, the constructed frame and the powerful ways in which it resonates with participants is apparent. Here are a few notebook entries from three of the participants, which were recorded when we returned to the LAB area after the scenography activity:

I think the ideas can work well together. The game that projects the results on the walls in a smaller room is cool! Also I like the scream room, fun idea, maybe there is also the sound of

lots of other screams there, too? The oil fountains, etc. I am afraid may become too "dooms day"-ish. It is important to include hope or lessons. 'Be the change' - what people should leave with, hope. - Participant A (translated from Norwegian)

Preferably as many installations as possible, because it attracts more attention than info on the subject; actually I still like the same installations that I first wrote down and favorited. - Participant B (translated form Norwegian)

The aquarium and timeline I'd say are a must at this point, maybe combined even? - Participant C [both of these ideas were much "grander" than the others]

These notebook excerpts speak to how several of the participants began to construct ambitious ideas that coincided with a notion of filling the space provided. However, it is worth noting that not everyone shared these views:

It was very fun to interact with the toys, useful to look at things from different perspectives; comparing the installations of my group with the others. I don't think that it directly influenced my top favorite ideas but maybe it boosted creativity a bit when I was trying to think how I can use five cats differently. - Participant D

We need to make sure it isn't overwhelming for people to... many of the ideas will be messy if we have them all; trying to combine ideas might make it clearer; combining the timeline with the maps of the museum for example; having a clear set up will give it a more positive experience of being there. - Participant E

After this notebook prompt, I reminded the entire group that the next task involved deciding which idea(s) to adopt for further production in the next workshop. During the following discussion, the "Go big or go home, right?" comment was proclaimed, and most of the participants seemed to nod in agreement to this assessment. This conglomeration of ideas can also be reflected in the following notebook entry excerpt:

... I'm envisioning black walls with video on some of the walls, little text, pictures, garbage, sound (sound showers or just regular speakers), and something interactive. - Participant F (translated from Norwegian)

The fact that most of the participants showed support for the larger Plan A demonstrates how this notion of filling a large space was accepted as the reality of the project. The elements of tension from the project leader and I during the discussion were irrelevant as they juxtaposed the truth they newly accepted. I intended my reply to the

comment “Go big or go home, right?” (“But are you ready to go home?”) to serve as a wake-up call to the group that this greatly tested the limits of the project. Yet, their resistance demonstrates how the frame penetrated deeper psychologically than message-level warnings. The mood of the group seemed to swell beyond containing as they had now flexed their agency in the discussion, also ignoring how much of it was a false consensus. However, some of the participants touched on some of the anxieties that arose during the discussion:

I think that if the timeline is done correctly it can be a great way to help people understand and believe in the climate crisis. I didn’t quite understand until today what the thought was and we should have chosen a common goal last time and not while choosing the exhibition so everyone would be on the same page from the beginning. - Participant E

I think I was looking forward to a conceptual art piece and I still don’t have a clear picture of the timeline in my head. Brainstorming was more fun than discussing the actual details and peculiarities of the thing that we’re about to make. - Participant D

The disappointment and confusion regarding the “common goal” reflects a cracking in the frame that was not true enough to support all the ideas that were now being hung upon it. Indeed, as Judith Butler (2009) states, “to call the frame into question is to show that the frame never quite contained the scene it was meant to limn” (though her text concerns war crimes and the media, I find it relevant for this thesis as it reflects the contested value of oppressed voices; 9). Perhaps at this time it would have been prudent to exercise “radical transparency” (Lynch, 2013) and shed light on some of the past mistakes that led to this point. However, as both myself and the project leader attempted to share our doubts with the group, it started to feel all too late. If the presentations from the EPT in the final workshop did not cut through the illusion, then it was the orange activity that forcibly broke the frame.

4.3 Cultural Differences and the Role of an Intermediary

Each of the moments are also steeped in cultural nuances that reflect the differences between university and museum, differing ages, and differing backgrounds of each member of the group. These points become even more conspicuous when I acted as the mitigator.

Cultural Bridges – were they crossed?

Expanding upon the measurement issue, the term “25 square meters” itself can be recognized in a cultural light as museum staff work spatially on a regular basis and thus are familiar with

thinking in these terms. The area I walked out was neither the size of 25 square meters nor 25x25; yet, this was not challenged by the participants – suggesting they were not familiar with the measurement either. By the time I corrected my mistake in the following workshop, my words became irrelevant as they already imagined a large space.

The museum's pedagogical team use the scenography sets as tools for various activities and they were recommended to me because they were used in a previous co-creation workshop. They were intended as a means to creative expression that could jog the minds of anyone collaborating creatively in a group. However, the participants seemed to experience them as part toys that were fun to play with, and part a visualization exercise that helped them understand what they would be creating. The set's purpose was mistranslated to a degree as they did not know the origins of the tools.

In addition, the orange experiment serves as a prime example of how the creative culture of the museum does not translate well or easily for more academically-minded, or at least non-museum-trained, individuals. To communicate nuanced themes through a random object seemed exceedingly conceptual, especially after handling the scenography tools, which they arguably experienced as more literal. The orange may have served its purpose for the project, but it may have also just confused and frustrated the participants more.

The cultural differences between these tools were not obvious or important during the preparations for the workshops – save the orange activity, which was referred to with some amusement from the EPT. When we presented these elements, perhaps it would have been judicious to have a conversation with the participants about how they wanted to use them and interpret their purpose. While Brenda Dervin (1989) claims that “communication cannot be conceptualized as transmission” (72), coupling more engaged dialogue with active participation might lead to better results and understandings.

Middleman Tensions

It is also important to retrospectively analyze my role as cultural intermediary via the preparation, communication, and improvisation during the project. Assumedly, a mediator simply manages constant tension between both parties. In analyzing a previous digital participatory project in Norway entitled “The University Documentation Project,” Line Esborg (2020) quotes, “ ‘A good result was dependent on the relationship between the principal, represented by the consultant [intermediaries], and the transcribers. ... and conflict might grow without a close relationship’ (Ore & Kristiansen, 1998: 41)” (Esborg, 2020: 92). Thus, as an intermediary, creating an amicable relationship towards both parties is essential.

In her work *A Theory of Middleman Minorities*, Edna Bonacich (1973) outlines the conflict between middleman and host as a tension between economic matters and solidarity, and middleman and clientele as a relationship of buyer and seller. Lynch and Alberti (2010) also address this genre of relationship: “Welcomed to the invited space, participants are subtly encouraged to assume the position of ‘beneficiaries’ or ‘clients’, which influences what people are perceived to be able to contribute, or entitled to know and decide” (14). During the recruitment phase, I tried to “sell” the concept of co-creation to potential participants. At the same time I was expected to habituate solidarity with the mission and goals of the “host” museum. This explains my sudden urge to market the project to the group at the Naturvernstudentene’s events. The one member’s vocal skepticism prompted me to present the information in an appealing way. Yet the “too good to be true” aspect may have turned some people off. Unfortunately, several participants perhaps ultimately felt some level of deception; however, despite any disappointment, the participants’ monetary compensation may have pacified them into compliance.

While an intermediary strives to maintain satisfaction and cooperation on both sides, my role in this project also required me to act as a leader. In the “The University Documentation Project” previously mentioned, the program eventually shifted criteria for hiring “consultants” (or intermediaries between the institution and volunteers) from a grades-based approach to rather seek individuals with leadership and IT skills (Esborg, 2020: 92). While the museum staff assisted with planning and rigging, I created the co-creation’s workshops, PowerPoint presentations, and agendas. As Claudia Landwehr (2014) notes in her discussions of “deliberative mini-publics”, where a goal is to be achieved, “the intermediary is under some pressure not only to enforce rules of procedure but also to keep a schedule and to structure the discourse accordingly” (81). Bonacich (1973) explains how “status gap” (590) such as that between the participants and I, may lead to scapegoating of the middleman. The fact that I myself was of similar age (albeit a few years older) than most of the participants arguably dampened the supposed “authority” I had in their eyes. On the other hand, if need be, the EPT could also attribute any unsuccessful outcome to my student status.

Before the final workshop, the curator told me that I “didn’t know how good of a job [I was] doing.” She was referring to the meetings where I advocated for the consideration of the participants’ emotional protection in light of their inflated expectations from the second workshop. Indeed, the EPT juggle the interests of many parties and ultimately have nothing but the best intentions for the exhibition and everyone involved. Yet, in a sense, I still remained responsible for safeguarding the best interests of the participant group.

Nevertheless, due to my leadership role in the process, I bore responsibility for the false hopes the “25 square meters” gave, and I also took no action during the scenography activity to warn them of the false implications of this resemblance. Even more so, the tension was palpable during the orange activity, illustrated by comments like “I just want to chuck this at the Oil exhibition” or “I just want to chuck this in a politician’s face.” The frustration from the group was accompanied by the amusement of the present EPT members (as they also realized how it could be read as a ridiculous activity); subconsciously, the group may have interpreted my bemused behavior as an expression of loyalty towards the museum.

It is evident that I impacted this project as an intermediary. The oscillating tensions between acting as a pseudo-EPT during the workshops and later advocating against the participants’ potential disappointment, embodied the cultural predicament I found myself in. The EPT took my fears into consideration but also offered consolation that such projects are always chaotic but “somehow they always work themselves out.” But shall that be the mantra for every co-creation workshop? Is the only lesson learned that it is a very tough process? While acting as an intermediary proved challenging, it also offered the opportunity for further empathetic reflection and a sense of emotional and social responsibility.

4.4 Emotions and the Role of Radical Trust in this Co-Creation

Conceivably, almost everyone in the project progressed through some sort of emotional journey. The students entered the process feeling either skeptical or excited, then their ideas and expectations ballooned, and (for at least a few participants) the initial disappointment in the third workshop shifted to understanding and contentment. Personally, my levels of anxiety regarding the success of the workshops steadily increased throughout the process. The EPT had their own concerns and priorities which were different from mine.

As previously touched upon, emotional consequences seemed important during this process, and much literature around participatory projects propose a weightier consideration for these volatile “feelings.” Therefore, analyzing the moments and rationale behind their role in the co-creation process can shed light on a difficult aspect of participation.

The Acrid Aftertaste of the Unsavory Orange Activity

I would venture to say that emotions culminated during the orange activity as the two parties’ differing expectations came to fruition. The activity was meant to be a creative “reset” – something that is quite common in creative communities such as museum project groups

– but perhaps came across as a patronizing reassignment. Preceding the activity (and directly after the presentations from the EPT), I asked the group to write what they felt was the most important message or essence of their idea and brainstorm on how they could make this come across using just an orange. Most of the responses resembled the following tone:

To be honest, I am very confused, it sounds like the idea we came up with is not gonna be a part of the exhibition or that just a small part of it will be included or something. I just didn't get it... I'm just very confused right now. Lots of information. - Participant G

Now we got a lot of new information. I don't quite understand how we co-creators are supposed to be used, a little confused. Are we starting from scratch? New ideas? Seems like the exhibition has already been planned, so I don't quite understand our role. I really liked the installation we had planned. I don't understand why we used the whole workshop #1 to brainstorm themes when the exhibition has themes from before. - Participant A (translated from Norwegian)

Lots of information, I don't quite know what the assignment [“oppgave”] is here. I thought our exhibition was going to be “the main thing”. So I'm a little unsure how we are going to do it now. But I'm sure that I want visitors to have a “total” experience. I'll try to make it with the oranges but I don't know how. - Participant F (translated from Norwegian)

This frustration was reflected in the dispirited manner in which they approached the orange activity. Afterwards, some accepted the slow unraveling of the grand Plan A in lieu of beginning to work on the more suitable Plan B. Others seemed to remain confused throughout the process. In theory, “arts-based techniques can enable dialogue with children and young people about complex issues... [and] provide [them] with a sense of ownership of their contributions [and] ideas” (Coyne & Carter, 2018: 6). This may have applied to the scenography activity but had questionable success with the orange. Lynch and Alberti (2010) claim, “In practicing radical trust, the museum may control neither the product nor the process... and Consensus is not the aim; rather, projects may generate ‘discensus’ – multiple and contested perspectives that invite participants and visitors into further dialogue” (15). In one of the debriefing meetings with the EPT, the museum educator expressed that she felt the participants were pushed towards dropping their Plan A for Plan B. While they had made the decision as a group at the suggestion of one member, the educator believed our actions (mine as the facilitator and that of the EPT) cornered the group and, in essence, manipulated the outcome. The “coerced consensus” (Lynch, 2013: 2) also created a situation where

participants felt if they did not “finish the assignment,” the entire project may be jeopardized – but this perhaps also affected their sense of ownership to the outcome. Power relations fell back into place and indirectly silenced any opposition.

Another EPT member felt that the group came to those decisions on their own after processing the new information from the museum and reassessing their core messages by using the oranges. Though the participants did make these decisions as a group, there was a definite readjustment of agency that came into effect during the workshop. From confidently presenting their ideas to quickly scrapping Plan A in hopes of fitting something into the much smaller frame now presented, it became clear that between “going big” or “going home”, they pivoted instead to appease the museum. It could be said that this third workshop represented the first time the “co” was present in the “co”-creation as the museum actively worked together with participants to devise a plan that would suit everyone, but then the purpose of the first workshops seemed to vanish. While some of the notebooks ended with feelings of affirmation and understanding, the other half were less positive and reflected that the purpose of the project had previously been poorly articulated, especially in light of defining their role and agency in this process. In effect, at least how I experienced it, they left feeling dis-empowered and, in short, disappointed.

Power and Empowerment-lite

What also seemed to vanish was the project’s perceived democracy. Lynch (2013) writes that false consensus actually jeopardizes democracy (4). This is because it creates a phenomenon she refers to as “empowerment-lite” where participants are given a sense of agency and chance to produce change, which is either meticulously coordinated by the museum or, as in this case, veered to fit into the museum’s vision of what is considered feasible.

What does this have to say about radical trust and radical transparency? It was never anyone’s intention to fool the participants or hide information from them. If examples were not shown and specifics of the project felt “hidden” it is either due to the limited progress of the larger exhibition project as a whole, or that we resisted framing too much so participants’ imaginations could run free. In some respects if disappointment is intrinsic to the co-creation process, “dreaming big” will likely never result in realization. Thus, in exhibition co-production projects like this, it becomes more relevant to later conceptualize participants’ input and shape it into something that could actually potentially be used. However, is that just practicing empowerment-lite? These two notebook entries are from the same participant, one from the first workshop and the other before the orange activity in the third:

What I think of the day: very interesting, I'm happy to be involved in a project like this when I am so involved in climate and the environment. I hope the idea of the aquarium can be included. Physical art objects are remembered better and have a greater influence on people than the facts often have. - Participant B (translated From Norwegian)

If you strip off the peel, you come to the truth and the fruit, the truth about the climate that can save us and make us activate ourselves and do something about the situation ... this is bullshit, I don't know what I am talking about. - Participant B (translated From Norwegian)

The deflation of confidence and empowerment is palpable when comparing these two accounts. In essence, it seems that they were the ones who were radically trusting us as the museum side and not the other way around. I first suspected this during the recruitment process as I quickly found that what I considered a golden opportunity in fact needed to be “sold” to these students who likely are all too familiar with opportunities that seem “too good to be true.” Perhaps the introduction of monetary compensation convinced several of them to join (though there is no way of confirming this). One participant actually expressed her displeasure when she found out they were getting paid, saying that she would have gladly participated in a project she felt was exciting and worthwhile without the allure of money. Reflecting on the anxieties revolving around the museum's relinquishment of power, “There may be unanticipated consequences in relinquishing authority in this way but... there are unanticipated consequences even when the museum does not” (Lynch & Alberti, 2010: 30).

4.5 Success-lite?

The museum may interpret this project as a successful co-creation that produced an interesting “Alternative Map and Interventions” proposal that complements (and does not directly affect) the upcoming exhibition space. The idea allows for the student climate activists to criticize and offer scholarly input into the museum with the help of a (potentially interactive) map while not overpowering other messages featured in the climate exhibition.

However, the co-creation process could also be construed as an example of coerced consensus, empowerment-lite, and a failed democratization effort that provided false promises and tough emotions for those involved, and only really strengthened the museum and perhaps the pocketbooks of the participants. The framing, my role as an intermediary, and the radical re-adjustment of the participants' role all influenced how the expectations and emotions of the participants (and the EPT) were handled during this project.

However, the difficulty of such projects highlights the necessity for their repeated attempts in museums and other cultural institutions. Everyone involved in the co-creation hoped for its success and acted accordingly. Subsequent analysis may portray a more catastrophic picture than was experienced in reality. Indeed, this chapter at worst “frames” the power of the institution as being corrupt and conniving when it could not be farther from the truth. Undeniably, there needs to be friction between two halves to spark a fire. As Lynch and Alberti (2010) quote from one of their project’s participants:

We’re here to challenge and I fear that others may not challenge us back. It’s not for you to just listen to us being angry and just listen. The point is the dialogue. The point is that we could be totally wrong. I don’t personally believe I am wrong but I am willing to listen to somebody who totally disagrees with me. (28)

Perhaps this co-creation at Teknisk Museum grew to become too museological in nature. From critiquing exhibitions, to feeling as though they were going to create one, it cannot be denied that the participants/environmental activists learned about the role of a curator and how to incorporate different senses and media into conveying a message. Perhaps these will be the most valuable skills to evolve from these workshops.

5 Shaping, Crying, Deciding Together

A discussion on collaboration in co-creations

5.1 Accelerated Apprehension?

As suggested in the previous chapters, conducting a successful co-creation is much easier said than done. Nevertheless, the literature tends to support a push for their normalization in regular museum activity (Lynch & Alberti, 2010; Lynch, 2013; Cameron, Hodge, & Salazar, 2015; Pierroux et al., 2020; among others). However, “museums have shifted *timorously* in recent decades toward [these] more participatory perspectives” (my italics; Salazar, 2015: 100). It is important to discuss the implications of studies such as these to demystify the processes in order to improve them while remaining true to their core purposes.

In this chapter I will explore how planning, communicating, and making decisions in such participatory projects relate to a larger museological perspective. I will first consider the importance of frames in co-creation and discern how and when they are best constructed or ignored in order to enhance a democratic process. Next, I will assess how collaborating with vulnerable parties accentuates the role of emotions in museums in order to establish trust and lasting relationships. Finally, I will discuss the role of power relations and how they are either reinforced or dismantled in order to make fair and just decisions in co-creations.

5.2 Forging Frames of False Pretenses?

Planning co-creation workshops can be a tricky yet integral process that contributes to the project’s overall success. Dagny Stuedahl et al. (2019) advocate for a balance between structure and reflexivity in participatory projects, which thus limits the extent to which one can plan out workshops and meetings. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, framing is inescapable and necessary for participants to make sense of the task that lies ahead (Calvert & Warren, 2014). In this case, the co-creation was surrounded by an unintentional frame that quickly caused participants to develop ideas in a direction that stretched outside both the scope of the project and their own capabilities. Judith Butler (2009) proclaims that frames “are themselves operations of power” because “their aim is... to delimit the sphere of appearance itself” (1). In this project, the weakness of the frame caused massive confusion, which later led to a breakdown of trust and outbreak of emotions. Thus, while structure and reflexivity are necessary for success, I will argue that these traits need be shared and practiced by the entire group and not just the facilitator or museum representatives.

Process as Progress – Livable Frames / Let’s Make this together

Co-creations are intended to be processes by which museums and outside groups work together – they are not commissions from an artist nor an addition of members to the exhibition project team (or any other internal museum team), despite the fact that the participants may receive monetary compensation. As the principle behind it is to collaborate, I argue that this process of cooperation should take place from the very beginning. Christine Hine (2020) argues for the increased attention on both the development of design for participatory processes and the importance of “involving citizens not simply in filling an already-defined container of knowledge but in scoping out both what the container is to be and the processes by which it might be filled” (80). Despite how this quotation pertains to knowledge construction rather than for example a more concrete co-creation, it still defends the idea that if the intent is to invite in others to create something together, then they must have a hand in what is to be created from the beginning.

In terms of the project at Teknisk Museum, this, too, was the intention. While, it may have been more prudent to emphasize the elements needed to construct an end “product” if we had more often called the project a “co-design,” it was nominally referred to as a “co-creation,” which potentially allows for a broader scope of interpretation (despite how these terms are becoming vernacular, their precise meanings are in rapid semantic transformation and thus often used interchangeably). However, my anxieties regarding what I felt to be “marketing” the project during its recruitment phase also caused a false (and potentially more design inspired) frame to be erected. Details such as the “potential 25 square meters” may be deemed insignificant to museum coordinators but take center stage for participants who enter with no other preconceived ideas; therefore, “some way[s] of organizing and presenting a deed leads to an interpretive conclusion about the deed itself” (Butler, 2009: 8–9).

It is also important to note that when a co-creation is first framed or merely planned by the institution, it could easily be “tailoring [the participants’] activities toward producing outputs that fit the needs of science... [which] may have to impose a structure on knowledge contributions that is unfamiliar to lay participants” (Hine, 2020: 73). “25 square meters” can seem an abstract measurement to people who do not usually work with spaces like museum curators (unless for example they have recently been apartment hunting). Furthermore, filling this space – while potentially a very exciting prospect – can be even more of a foreign concept. When they attempted to fill the space with their Plan A in the third workshop, everyone gradually realized the misunderstanding. It demonstrated how “when a frame breaks with itself... a taken-for-granted reality is called into question, exposing the

orchestrating designs of the authority who sought to control the frame” (Butler, 2009: 12). The revelation that their production was not as key of a feature in the exhibition as they had anticipated was coupled with a feeling that they never had as much agency as they thought.

Rather than creating a haphazard frame which sets participants up to fail – or need to suddenly and without warning “murder [their] darlings” (i.e. Plan A; Quiller-Couch, 1916) – it might be prudent to approach framing from a completely different perspective. Inviting participants to structure the processes in ways that work well for them can be of interest as “Sanderson and Kindon warn that ‘participatory processes produce knowledge *specific to their processes and participants* rather than “uncover” “local knowledge” ’ ” (Sanderson and Kindon’s original emphasis; Pain, 2004: 653). Constructing a frame together could help organize the project in a way that resembles a commissioned piece less. As Andrea Cornwall and Vera Schattan Coelho (2007) state, “the institutions of the participatory sphere are framed by those who create them, and infused with power relations and cultures of interaction carried into them from other spaces” (11). This aligns with what Butler (2009) refers to as Trinh Minh-ha’s concept of “‘fram[ing] the frame’ or, indeed, the ‘framer’” (8–9), which demonstrates the importance of context and reflection. Looking at the museum from an outside perspective instead of as a vulnerable party on the inside could shift power structures and allow participants to think about the museum more critically instead of being confined in it. For example, redirecting attention to how the museum focuses on the new exhibition could allow this group of activists to consider other options outside a traditional concept of frame. Dropping the institution as the central object – or indeed dropping the “inviting in” aspect – can potentially help strip the museum of some of its immense power.

A “middle-out” framing method (Minh-ha, 2009) of beginning with what or whom is in focus for a project and deciding on a frame/frame-creation-process together chimes well with the desired democratic values. As Butler (2009) mentions, “In such moments we have to ask what democracy means if it is not based on popular decision and majority rule” (36). Thus, if co-creations are supposed to represent a democratizing process for museums, that should imply a thoroughly inclusive process – again something that was intended in our project but not done in the purest way, which led to subsequent issues.

In the end, despite the faulty frame, this co-creation project was able to frame the museum via their Plan B of critiquing other exhibitions. Arguably the goal was achieved and the corresponding process necessary; however, I maintain that had the “25 square meters” frame not been present, there might have been less “wasted” time and emotions.

The “Co” in Co-Creation

Having now advocated for the involvement of participants in co-creations from the very beginning, it is fitting to consider the involvement of the other side of the equation, namely the museum staff. I would like to begin by saying that the EPT were lovely to work with throughout this process. The primary reason different members attended the different workshops related mostly to my tight schedule for completing this project (for thesis purposes). Yet, by the final workshop, it became evident that building dialogue and relations with the EPT was invaluable for the participants and the progress of the project as a whole.

Both participants and museum representatives can construct a frame together through visualizations, discussions, and conceptual activities. I argue that individuals from both (or all) sides of the project should partake in these together so as to demonstrate to either party what exactly they are envisioning. In this way, activities might not err on the side of pedagogical assignments nor that of a “guessing game” for participants who continuously re-interpret signals to try to determine what the museum wants. In a similar albeit more concrete vein, Butler challenges Susan Sontag on the role of narratives and photographs in framing by saying “although narratives might mobilize us, photographs are needed as evidence for war crimes” (69) – thereby underscoring how visualizations can trump stories because they are more concrete and easier to work with. In the previous chapter I revealed how, despite the verbal confirmation and eventual confession regarding the “25 square meters”, the different ways in which the spatial area was reinforced caused participants to hold onto it as a central aspect of the project. Obliging the EPT to participate in activities grants participants new perspectives and an opportunity for the group as a whole to be “on the same page” – though it should not be done competitively, but rather for visualization and collaborative purposes.

Building a frame together can introduce ways to visualize benefits for both parties. For example, as climate activists, the participants could have pulled museum representation out of the institutional walls and into the strikes and rallies that they themselves organize. Thus, the project could develop “middle-out” around discussions of what it means to have a powerful presence in these political matters. This challenges the notion of the “framer” in that it takes the end-result out of the hands of the museum almost entirely. Perhaps there is more to be gained from the museum “helping” the climate activists over the activists “helping” the museum with their exhibition. Thus:

It may be concluded that exhibitions are not suitable outcomes for projects like this, yet to exclude exhibitions would be to retreat from the most public terrain of contestation the

museum has to offer and, furthermore, to deny participant citizens the right to negotiate the authority with which exhibitions are created. Museums may therefore benefit from setting out not to develop a particular outcome, but rather a set of relations and skills. (Lynch and Alberti, 2010: 30).

The “set of relations and skills” mentioned should not be confined to the participants, but also something potentially worthwhile for the museum. Discovering this together signifies how “Interpretation does not emerge as the spontaneous act of a single mind, but as a consequence of a certain field of intelligibility that helps to form and frame our responsiveness to the impinging world” (Butler, 2009: 34).

5.3 Communicating Emotionally and Effectively

After considering how museums should *plan* to tackle co-creation with outside groups, they need to consider the manner in which they are to *work* with individuals of such groups. Cornwall and Coelho (2007) write that “Participation is a process over time, animated by actors with their own social and political projects” (10). As participatory projects tend to include groups that have a lot less power than museological institutions, considering the emotional aspects of co-creation can be a vital role in communication.

Yet, again, such a process is not always easy. Discussing participants with a history of poverty, Cornwall and Coelho further address that “How [the participants] talk and what they talk about may be perceived by professionals as scarcely coherent or relevant; their participation may be viewed by the powerful as chaotic, disruptive and unproductive” (13). In another example, Lynch and Alberti (2010) quoted Mulhearn who spoke of a researcher who admitted they “were surprised by how passionate people are”, and how “it’s difficult to get it right and to manage expectations” (28). Building trust and lasting relations can be difficult when working with outside individuals, yet their incorporation is crucial if the participatory process is to be done fairly.

Can I Trust You?

Lynch and Alberti (2010) “suggest that radical trust is necessary in order for museums to genuinely collaborate with visitors” and this “trust is based on the idea that shared authority is more effective at creating and guiding culture than institutional control” (Ross, 2014: 68). But how can museum representatives convey their trust to participants? Knowing that an institution holds them to a certain set of expectations while also expressing faith in their

abilities is one way to demonstrate this. For a while in this project – perhaps in no small part because the frame was accidental – the participants lacked an understanding of their “duties” while they were also being filled with false hope in their ability to execute them.

Thus, conversely, in order for there to be honest communication and collaboration, the participants must also trust the museum. In her doctoral thesis, Claire Stephanie Ross (2014) describes “radical trust” in the following manner: “The ‘radical’ [in ‘radical trust’] is ultimately a belief in the prevalence of a calm community of participants as opposed to malevolent vandals who will misuse the opportunity” (168). Is it also possible for museums to misuse an opportunity with participants or come off as exploitative, such as in the example Wayne Modest (2013) faced in his co-creation with teenagers at the Horniman Museum, “You’re all just using us right, to do your work for you?” (99). When one of our participants wrote that she was uncertain of their role in the project, this is arguably an example of broken trust. While it could be chalked up to misunderstanding, a sense of having been deceived remains, which makes it difficult to continue building a trusting relationship.

One way for museums to gain the trust of their co-creation participants is to allow for emotions to play out in these workshops. When inviting individuals in to partake in projects with themes they are passionate about, it is fair to assume that they will want to demonstrate their emotions on the subject as it serves as an aspect of the power they bring (as I also witnessed in the Naturvernstudentene’s own events). However, Lynch and Alberti (2010) again note that participants may be influenced in regard to what they believe they can contribute with when they are invited into spaces as “beneficiaries” or “clients” (14). Participants can find themselves confused about how much emotion to show if they are unsure of their role. How museum staff respond to emotion can help make them more comfortable and engaged. Instead of having museum “staff meet anger [or emotion] with cool, managerial or academic responses... Perhaps something more honest and human is required of museums” (28). This type of banter occurred for a few moments in our co-creation, once during the heated discussion of Plan A in the second workshop, and again in the third when staff tried to level with the participants by expressing their own difficulties with the exhibition timeline – as well as the audible amusement surrounding the orange activity.

In regard to museum professionals being faced with resistance, Bernadette Lynch (2013) asks, “Is there room for emotion?” (1). In a discussion with one of the curators after the third workshop, she noted that one or more of the participants seemed “angry” and frustrated. Indeed, as climate activists, most of the participants were emotionally charged

especially when the conversation would revolve around environmental issues. As emotions are not always so easily compartmentalized, appointing an intermediary to be responsible for any such sentiments can help. In our project I felt very quickly that I needed to fill this role of protecting emotions as I began to see the expectations of both sides diverge. While the end result could still be seen as positive, I acknowledge that there was room for more honesty, pushback, and vulnerability from myself and the EPT earlier in the process. In the absence of a mediator role, a strong leader with a specific set of values could also work, such as how Knutson calls for “a need for greater activism and a stronger leadership role in museums ... [to promote] thinking about the core values and beliefs that ought to characterize future directions in museums” (Pierroux, 2020: 230). Thus, museums can more easily enable the bond of trust by allowing for its prioritization both through the means of an active duty and via an open discussion and understanding of purpose.

Lasting Relationships – The Other Other Purpose

As mentioned, in this project I felt the need to protect the emotions of the participants and came to believe they were just as important as the co-creation’s final “product.” This is partially in line with Vasiliki Tzibazi’s (2013) conclusion that co-creations should be “not a shift in rhetoric, but a meaningful experience for all involved” (154). Recalling Coyne and Carter’s (2018) explanation, another key aspect of these participatory projects concerns listening and drawing out “deeper layers in [participants’] voices” by allowing them to steer the conversation (7).

However, Cornwall (2004) notes that “resisting discursive closure, reframing what counts as knowledge and articulating alternatives, especially in the face of apparently incommensurable knowledge systems, requires more than simply seeking to allow everyone to speak and asserting the need to listen” (84). Reading the room and checking in with each of the participants is important. I attempted to tackle this by giving them notebooks as to encourage participation through writing in addition to speaking and otherwise break them in groups. In some cases a few notebook entries sparked further dialogue. For example, I would include any extra ideas that were written but not articulated in the discussion during the first workshop into the second workshop’s PowerPoint presentation. In addition, one participant’s notebook comments prompted the introduction of raising hands when anyone wished to contribute.

Utilizing activities properly can also help the process of creating relationships. For example, using what Mary Ann Steiner, Mandela Lyon, and Kevin Crowley (2020) refer to as

“boundary objects” can “when their presence, along with a commitment to critique and revision, [open] up conversation and meaning-making across members” (179). Had more active participation and more honest discussions taken place during the scenography activity, for example, this too could have strengthened the trust and furthermore the relationships between museum representatives and participants.

Creating bonds with participants also opens up the possibility for future collaboration, but if negative emotions and apathy cloud the experience, this opportunity may cease to exist.

5.4 Who Gets to Decide in the End?

Deciding who makes decisions in any project group can be fraught with tension. However, facing a powerful institution as a handful of outsiders creates a very unbalanced situation indeed. In terms of our co-creation, one member of the EPT believed that the participants were pressured into making their final decision of choosing Plan B over Plan A. Yet, another believed that it was the best outcome citing that they had thoughtfully come to the decision themselves. It is extremely important in projects like these that the process “does not become a ‘means to an end’ to meet the requirements of the prevailing service user engagement paradigm”, or as “tokenistic research” that only reinforces “hierarchical power relations” (Coyne & Carter, 2018: 10). Recognizing problematic ways of thinking in terms of power and decision making in participatory models can be invaluable in preventing the corruption of the democratic process.

Museums as Historical Institutions of Power

While allowing emotion into museums and trusting participants is promising, “the practice of radical trust in gallery spaces is not without its problems, as it raise[s] challenges to traditional forms of authority and authenticity” (Ross, 2014: 68). To several members of the museums staff it was “obvious” that a large and obtrusive spatial area exceeded the limits for the co-creation participants’ impact within the museum. Curators, designers, and other museum staff take precedence long before an external group when it comes to constructing a new temporary exhibition. As the intermediary, I was aware of the building mismatch of expectations and prepared to mitigate the fallout as “the process of radical trust is inevitably going to create new spheres of conflict and potential resistance” and while it is “an ultimate goal for museums... it ‘remains somewhat out of reach, however, as resistance to change continues to be entrenched in the museum institution’” (Lynch 2013: 222; quoted in Ross,

2014: 68). Tineke Water cites Gallagher when she says that “For Foucault, power is not good or bad, it just exists.... [and] power is not something that is handed over in participatory methods” (Water, 2018: 41). A pitfall in these practices occurs when institutions extend the *illusion* of power to groups. This devises a faux-power phenomenon like “empowerment-lite” or “participation-lite” (Lynch and Alberti, 2010), when really “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house” (Lorde, 1984: 110). This ultimately disadvantages participants and undermines the purpose behind the democratizing prospect of the co-creation model.

Yet, there are subtle ways in which participants can push back. In our co-creation the participants were taken through a critique phase and scenography exercise that set the focus on a large exhibition-sized space. The disruption in the final workshop of the orange activity was meant as an introduction to another thinking tool that museum creatives occasionally use. However, instead of being interpreted as a clever way in which to develop ideas, the activity came across as another “highly managed encounter between adult researchers and children and young people that is driven by adult research agendas, time frames, and priorities” (Coyne & Carter, 2018: 9). The manner in which the participants reacted during the activity – i.e. discussing but resisting to engage with the possibilities of the task fully – can potentially be assessed as a way of them “exercise[ing] power by ‘resisting, redirecting, and subverting these very techniques’ ” which may reveal that they “may not be as powerless as initially thought” (Water, 2018: 41). While they might be able to defy the powers to an extent, it is still necessary to avoid controlling them.

In the third workshop, some common ground was established between the participants and the EPT as the museum staff vulnerably demonstrated that they identified as quite anti-establishment as well. This also led to the encouragement behind the critical aspects of the exhibition interventions of Plan B. Rachel Pain (2004) says that “power and empowerment are central concepts in PR [participatory research], both in attempts to minimize the ‘us’ and ‘them’ ... and in reversing conventional assumptions about who owns and benefits from research” (again referring to Kindon; 656-657). She goes on to unpack how these intentions can also backfire and indeed end up “strengthen[ing] rather than revers[ing] traditional relations” and in fact can “subordinate [participants] rather than increasing their power” (657). I do not wish to argue that that was the case in the project at Teknisk Museum. One can claim that the end result of the “Alternative Map with Interventions” is a direct way in which the participants can publicly challenge the museum authority. However, it took a process to get there and the false consensus that happened in the third workshop could have halted the progress of empowerment. This is perhaps an example of how Rachel Pain yet

again points out the tendency to believe that power is transferred in these projects (often in a hierarchical way) when in fact “people can self-empower” (in reference to Leyshon; 657).

The literature seems to suggest that this push and pull of power between institution and outside group is inherent to these types of projects and perhaps the most difficult to control fully – at least when they are framed and executed inside of the museum. However, I maintain that it is essential to be aware of the imbalance while also encouraging cooperation and wanting the best result for both parties. Then again, knowing “what is best” for the other party is another issue that requires consideration.

Compensation – “Tit for Tat”

Power resonates in the final results of co-creations as well. Per Hetland (2020) demonstrates that “individual and collective outcomes are perceived as equally important, and the capacity of boundary infrastructure to facilitate reciprocity is paramount to building participatory science communication” (215). The issue of reciprocity can be interpreted in several ways, such as the case with monetary compensation – a tactic used in this co-creation as inspired by some of the museum’s previous participatory projects where youth were regarded as “experts” in their own right (Stuedahl & Skåtun, 2018: 22).

Rachel Pain (2004) notes that in such participatory projects “ethical codes have tended to be about having no negative impacts, not about the need to have positive impacts” (657). She also says that participatory research often obsesses about “knowing what is best for participants” with “a tone of moralism and ‘near religious fervour’” (last quote from Mohan; 660). For example, Teknisk Museum’s willingness to pay the participants for each workshop was supposed to be a positive impact. While reciprocation is key, it can be troublesome when “material is never validated” (Hetland, 2020: 214). While the EPT shared the judgment that somehow *something* should come out of the co-creation, creating a result that group could celebrate ownership in seemed to be of less concern than acknowledging the participants were compensated and therefore “their time not wasted.” Perhaps this is a case of what Pain also mentions as a “failure to engage in self-critique” (2004: 660) in assuming monetary value trumps, or at least diminishes the need for constructed value.

This is of course a dramatic take on the issue; however, one can argue that democratic practices cannot be bought and therefore a more nuanced contract may be more appropriate for such circumstances. As mentioned in the introduction, Judith Butler (2009) claims citizens must choose democracy if their system is to be truly democratic. In this vein of “purity”, Butler also says that democracy can never really be chosen or done in a purely

democratic way, and indeed it may be dangerous to believe in a responsibility to spread democracy (37). Yet, as this project proves, this does not mean that museums should organize participatory projects in a lackadaisical manner. Instead, they should check and recheck themselves to ensure participants are part of the project's frame development.

At this point it would be irresponsible not to discuss Sherry Arnstein's (1969) "Ladder of Participation" (19). In the ladder, the hierarchy of levels differentiates the eight various "rungs" of participation that can occur between institutions like museums and outside groups. The bottom five rungs are designated as varying degrees of manipulating and tokenizing participants. Then, as the levels increase they adjust structure (or framing) for more reflexivity (or agency on behalf of the participants). Roger Hart's (1992) version of the "Ladder of Participation" states different rungs can be chosen for co-productions/creations with respects to how appropriate they are for the age and ability of the individuals in the outside groups. Indeed, "It is argued that not providing children and young people with training, yet expecting them to fulfil a role, is unethical" (Water, 2018: 40). Yet, while this "ladder" can help break-down the levels of challenge for museums when choosing to begin co-creation projects, I believe that practicing anything less than the top rung ("young people and adults share decision making": Wilkinson & Wilkinson, 2018: 19) unfairly serves the museum more than the participants. As Jenny Kidd explains, it is important to "position museums and cultural institutions at the heart of more dynamic and reflexive participatory practices that really are focused on the human rather than the utilitarian... Bottom-up, open, socially responsible, and just" (Kidd, 2020: 68). While the participants may have gained new perspectives, skills, and relations from these projects, if a true collaboration is not executed, what is the difference between co-creating with a group and commissioning a collection of individuals to complete a specific project for the museum?

5.5 Let's Struggle Together

In the words of Lynch and Alberti (2010), "Museums could and should be... spaces of contestation as well as collaboration, in which participants might bring diverse interpretations of participation, democracy and divergent agendas" (20). Allowing participants to be a part of planning the project, while an intermediary facilitates emotional conversation between both parties can set up a process that – if checked properly – can lead to better cooperation.

6 A Sign of the Times

Concluding remarks on a practice that needs continuation

6.1 The Illusion of Space

I want to reiterate how the EPT drew several of these conclusions before me. They stressed that the final “result” of these co-creations could be ephemeral, as in an event or activity used in conjunction with the exhibition. In the third workshop, the curator and museum educator also specified that an activity, or indeed “Alternative Map” could be more impactful than a large installation. They explained how a map and accompanying activity could be distributed to every museum visitor or integrated into an educational program that could reach hundreds of school children every week – as opposed to an installation that could be easily overlooked in the actual exhibition space. However, these participants enquired about the physical space early on and seemed eager to create a “large installation”/miniature exhibition; this demonstrates how to the layperson museums are still closely associated with their spatial characteristics. This also resonates in how museum leaders give so much attention to new exhibitions over “unfamiliar practice[s]” like participatory projects, which otherwise lack understanding and support within some institutions (Stuedahl et al., 2019: 79).

6.2 An Ideal New World

At the time of writing, COVID-19 lockdowns have prevented the public from visiting museums, which once again raises the question of their purpose in society (Kahn, 2020). Naturally, they are still responsible for safeguarding collections for future generations as well as providing educational and dissemination programs to the public (“Museums facing COVID-19 challenges remain engaged with communities”, 2020); however, this does not address how they can better serve their communities and society at large as per the late 1980s shift following Peter Vergo’s (1989) *The New Museology*. While this pandemic has encouraged many museums to transfer focus from physical spaces to the digital, I believe that a deeper meaning can evolve through connecting and collaborating with outside communities. This requires a brave leap into the spirit that “museums are not neutral territory” (Smith, 1989). The portrayal of museums as a “negotiated ‘contact zone’ [could be expanded] into a zone of real collaboration and supportive engagement across boundaries” in order to “start to think and work together in the ways the world needs us to” (Newell, 2017: 49).

This need not transpire within the walls of the exhibitions, but perhaps “inside” the communities that the museum wishes to support. While I dislike appropriating a commercial metaphor, many museums have made a “brand” for themselves amongst at least their local communities (Caldwell, 2000) – sometimes after decades of having ontological power bestowed upon them. Co-creating with museums, as mentioned earlier in this thesis, can and perhaps should imply simply representing that brand while discussing with others how they can help one another. Additionally, as the museum is likely to be the more powerful organization of the two, its representatives could be more accommodating to their partners – though obviously this is a discussion onto its own. One predominant obstacle to this is that many museums are often relatively commercial and profit-based organizations and have adopted a marketing approach (McLean, 1997). As I mentioned in my critique of compensation, the introduction of payment into otherwise ideal projects can potentially corrupt the process. Yet, again, this discussion is best continued at another time.

The processes of change suggested here are obviously not uncomplicated and resemble ideal student-pontification to its fullest; however, if utopias are left unimagined then we will never be able to reach them. Allowing for and learning from mistakes while traveling this idealistic road “paved with good intentions” can help us reconfigure and readjust for next time so to perhaps not end up in “hell” after all. The appeal I have made for the politics of experience also serves to demonstrate how inviting emotions and failures into the “scientific” analysis can create knowledge equally as valid as if this project could be replicated continuously with lab mice. Emotions can be instruments of agency and power can be benevolent if it does not cease its generosity once one steps outside the boundaries of the predefined box.

I am optimistic for the future of co-creations as an invaluable tool for museums’ role in society. In this thesis I have bared my failings and frustrations in pursuit of learning from them. What I have found is that communication, empathy, and compassion are all pivotal when married with proactive engagement from all sides. I stand by the concluding advice of Bernadette Lynch and Samuel Alberti (2010), “It is not time to become dispirited by the difficulties of participatory democracy in museums, but to try again, and again, despite the difficulties – in fact, because of them” (30-31). Working together with people can be difficult – especially with new groups from different “cultures” than your own – but it remains the only method by which we can practically solve larger issues together as a humanity and as a biosphere. Just do not neglect to practice humility and laugh at fruit every once in a while.

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APPENDIX A - Consent form template: Participants

Would you like to participate in the research project: Stop, Collaborate, and Listen Performing Co-Creation in Teknisk Museum’s Exhibition “Temporary Climate”?

This is a request for you to participate in a research project where the purpose is to study how co-creation with outside groups can enrich museum exhibition production. In this form we will provide you with information regarding the aims of this project and what your participation will entail.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to analyze how the museum can collaborate with outside groups to create parts of an exhibition, especially with relevant topics such as climate change.

This is for a master’s thesis. The master’s student will research issues regarding how to best plan and design workshops for co-creation and analyze the challenges that may present themselves along the way.

Who is responsible for the research project?

The University in Oslo: Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages is responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

You expressed interest in this project when it was presented by the master’s student at the Naturvernstudentene på UiO’s General Meeting on the 13th of November 2019.

What does your participation involve?

This project uses primarily “participatory action research” as its research method. This means that the master’s student will gather ethnographic data through her observations and participation in the workshops. This data can be taken in the form of notes, pictures, or video recordings.

If you choose to participate in this project, you will be agreeing to that things that you say or do in the workshops can be used as data for the research project. This can include special information such as your political beliefs, philosophical beliefs, or/and your racial/ethnic background.

It is optional to participate

It is optional to participate in this project. If you choose to participate, you can withdraw your consent without having to give any explanation. All personal information about you will be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you choose to not participate or later withdraw your consent.

It will not influence your treatment or involvement in the co-creation group for Teknisk Museum's "Temporary Climate" exhibition.

Your privacy – how we store and use your information

We will only use information about you for the purposes that we have outlined in this consent form. We treat your personal information as confidential and in accordance with the Privacy Policy.

- The student and the project supervisor are the only ones who will have access to your personal information.
- We will replace your name and contact information with a code that will be stored in its own list that is separate from other data.

It is not likely that your personal information will be identifiable in publication, but if it is then it will most likely be in terms of your age, political beliefs, philosophical beliefs, and/or your racial/ethnic background.

What happens to your information when we complete the research project?

The project is scheduled to conclude the 1st of June 2020. All of your personal data will be anonymized and locked away after the end of the project. In addition, the coded name-list will be destroyed. Any recordings or photos will be deleted and any other forms of identification anonymized.

Your rights

As long as you are identifiable in the data material, you have the right to:

- insight into what personal data is registered about you,
- to have your personal information corrected,
- have any personal information about you deleted,
- get a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- to submit a complaint to the Privacy Ombudsman or the Data Inspectorate regarding the processing of your personal data.

What gives us the right to process personal information about you?

We process information about you based on your willing consent.

On behalf of the University of Oslo: Institute for Cultural Studies and Oriental Languages, NSD - Norwegian Center for Research Data AS has considered that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with the privacy regulations.

How can I find out more?

If you have questions about the study, or if you wish to exercise your rights, please contact:

- The University in Oslo: Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages with Christopher Whitehead [REDACTED]
- Our personal safety representative: Maren Magnus Voll
- NSD – Norwegian Center for Research Data, via email (personvern@nsd.no) or phone 55 58 21 17.

How can I view/change my personal information

If you would like to review the information in the thesis about you before it is submitted, you can contact the master's student to request to have parts of the draft sent to you. This can only be done from the 4th to the 10th of May 2020. During this time, you may respond with comments pertaining to the information written about you or notify me that you would like to be removed from the thesis. Unfortunately, a complete draft of the thesis cannot be sent to you during that time as it will still be a live document.

Sincerely,

Project Supervisor

Master's Student

Statement of Consent

I have received and understood the information about the project "Stop, Collaborate, and Listen: Performing Co-Creation in Teknisk Museum's Exhibition 'Temporary Climate'" and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I agree to the following:

- To participate in observational and participatory methodology
- (*while highly unlikely*) that information about me can be published in a manner that may make me identifiable through either my age, political views, philosophical views, and/or my racial/ethnic background

I agree that my information will be processed until the project is completed, approx. 1st of June 2020.

(Signed by participant, date)

APPENDIX B - Consent form template: EPT

Would you like to participate in the research project: Stop, Collaborate, and Listen Performing Co-Creation in Teknisk Museum's Exhibition "Temporary Climate"?

This is a request for you to participate in a research project where the purpose is to study how co-creation with outside groups can enrich museum exhibition production. In this form we will provide you with information regarding the aims of this project and what your participation will entail.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to analyze how the museum can collaborate with outside groups to create parts of an exhibition, especially with relevant topics such as climate change.

This is for a master's thesis. The master's student will research issues regarding how to best plan and design workshops for co-creation and analyze the challenges that may present themselves along the way.

Who is responsible for the research project?

The University in Oslo: Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages is responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

You are on the project team for the "Temporary Climate" exhibition at the Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology.

What does your participation involve?

This project uses primarily "participatory action research" as its research method. This means that the master's student will gather ethnographic data through her observations and participation in the workshops and/or team meetings. This data can be taken in the form of notes, pictures, or video recordings.

If you choose to participate in this project, you will be agreeing to that things that you say or do in the workshops can be used as data for the research project. This can include special information such as your political beliefs, philosophical beliefs, or/and your racial/ethnic background.

It is optional to participate

It is optional to participate in this project. If you choose to participate, you can withdraw your consent without having to give any explanation. All personal information about you will be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you choose to not participate or later withdraw your consent.

Your privacy – how we store and use your information

We will only use information about you for the purposes that we have outlined in this consent form. We treat your personal information as confidential and in accordance with the Privacy Policy.

- The student and the project supervisor are the only ones who will have access to your personal information.
- We will replace your name and contact information with a code that will be stored in its own list that is separate from other data.

It is possible that your personal information may be identifiable in publication. If it is then it will most likely be in terms of your name and workplace/position.

What happens to your information when we complete the research project?

The project is scheduled to conclude the 1st of June 2020. All of your personal data will be anonymized and locked away after the end of the project. In addition, the coded name-list will be destroyed. Any recordings or photos will be deleted and any other forms of identification anonymized.

Your rights

As long as you are identifiable in the data material, you have the right to:

- insight into what personal data is registered about you,
- to have your personal information corrected,
- have any personal information about you deleted,
- get a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- to submit a complaint to the Privacy Ombudsman or the Data Inspectorate regarding the processing of your personal data.

What gives us the right to process personal information about you?

We process information about you based on your willing consent.

On behalf of the University of Oslo: Institute for Cultural Studies and Oriental Languages, NSD - Norwegian Center for Research Data AS has considered that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with the privacy regulations.

How can I find out more?

If you have questions about the study, or if you wish to exercise your rights, please contact:

- The University in Oslo: Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages with Christopher Whitehead [\[redacted\]](#)
- Our personal safety representative: Maren Magnus Voll
- NSD – Norwegian Center for Research Data, via email (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or phone 55 58 21 17.

How can I view/change my personal information

If you would like to review the information in the thesis about you before it is submitted, you can contact the master's student to request to have parts of the draft sent to you. This can only be done from the 4th to the 10th of May 2020. During this time, you may respond with comments pertaining to the information written about you or notify me that you would like to be removed from the thesis. Unfortunately, a complete draft of the thesis cannot be sent to you during that time as it will still be a live document.

Sincerely,

Project Supervisor

Master's Student

Statement of Consent

I have received and understood the information about the project "Stop, Collaborate, and Listen: Performing Co-Creation in Teknisk Museum's Exhibition 'Temporary Climate'" and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I agree to the following:

- To participate in observational and participatory methodology
- that information about me can be published in a manner that may make me identifiable through my name and workplace/position

I agree that my information will be processed until the project is completed, approx. 1st of June 2020.

(Signed by participant, date)

APPENDIX C – Email Correspondence: Invitation



Solveig Siem >

Invitation to Participate in Co-Creation Project for Teknisk Museum's "Temporary Climate" Exhibition

Solveig Siem < > Fri, Nov 29, 2019 at 1:06 PM

To:

Hello Naturvernstudent and possible participant!

You are receiving this email because you expressed interest in **Teknisk Museum's "Temporary Climate" exhibition** project either at the Naturvernstudentene på UiO General Meeting (Wednesday 13/11) or at the "Ut på Equinorslakt" event at Mesh (Monday 25/11).

We hereby formally invite you to participate in co-creation workshops with the museum for the upcoming climate exhibition!

As a participant in this project you will be asked to attend **3 workshops in January and February 2020**. Each workshop will include activities and discussions that will build upon each other to create a final product that will be used/displayed in the "Temporary Climate" exhibition (opening in May 2020).

As compensation for your participation, you will receive **750 kr for each workshop attended**, a certificate of completion, the opportunity to receive letters of recommendations from the coordinators, and – of course – plenty of food and refreshments at the workshops!

Unfortunately, due to a few practical constraints, **we must limit the project to only 10 participants**. The selection will be done on a first-come-first-serve basis as well as with consideration to scheduling. If necessary we will also create a waiting-list in case the same 10 people are not able to meet up for every workshop.

If you wish to participate [please reply to this email](#) to confirm your interest. In addition, **please fill out the following doodle poll by TUESDAY 10/12-19** indicating the dates you are available during January/February. The workshops

will occur in the late afternoon-evening (approx. 15:00-19:00 each time). <https://doodle.com/poll/██████████>

Shortly after the poll deadline has passed, you will receive another email regarding the chosen times and places for the workshops. In addition, a facebook group will be created for this group to log pictures, ideas, etc. that may be useful for when the workshops begin (please let us know if you do not have facebook).

Thank you for your interest and we look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,

Solveig Marie Siem and the "Temporary Climate" Project Team
Norsk Teknisk Museum
Kjelsåsveien 143, 0491 Oslo, Norway
Tel.: (██████████)



APPENDIX D - Email Correspondence: “Welcome”



Solveig Siem <[redacted]>

Welcome to the Co-Creation Project!

Solveig Siem [redacted] Tue, Dec 17, 2019 at 11:35 AM
To [redacted]

Hello Co-Creation Participants!

We would like to officially welcome you all to the Teknisk Museum's co-creation project for the "Temporary Climate" exhibition!

After looking at your responses from the doodle poll, and taking into consideration some participants' other commitments, the best dates for the group to meet seem to be: **Tuesday 14.01, Friday 24.01, and Friday 07.02.**

Tentatively, we will plan to meet as scheduled from **15:00-19:00** on each of these days. I know several of you have mentioned that you will not be available until after 16:00 on weekdays, but please join us as soon as you can!

Here is a rough overview of what each of the workshops will entail:

For the **first workshop** we will be brainstorming themes that may be relevant to the climate crisis and/or our final product. We will also use some time to explore (and critique!) the museum to gain an understanding of what it means to be an exhibition and what role the museum has/can have in society—especially in light of this climate crisis.

The **second workshop** will be dedicated to the development of ideas into a more tangible design. We will play with a few ideas to gain some inspiration and work in groups.

By the end of the **third workshop** we will hopefully finish the final product (or design for the final product/event/activity!).

If the product is an installation it can be up to 25 m², but we can also play with the idea of making an activity or event instead (or anything else that you can think up!).

Please **mark your calendars** and do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or comments! We will send reminder emails before each of the workshops to gain a better sense of whom can show up/ when.

Otherwise we are very much looking forward to working with you all! :D

See you next year!

Solveig Marie Siem and the "Temporary Climate" Project Team
Norsk Teknisk Museum
Kjelsåsveien 143, 0491 Oslo, Norway
Tel.: [REDACTED]

P.S. We've decided to wait to make the facebook group until after the first workshop so we can all get a chance to meet each other :)



APPENDIX E - Workshop #1 Agenda

Workshop #1 Agenda 14/01/2020

Tekno Café

- Give out nametags as they come in
- When everyone is seated - Presentation round
- Food (ready at 15.30??)
- When finished up, gather food and things to bring to room

LAB

- Ppt presentation up
 - o Tell them that we will talk a bit first, but it is about getting to know each other
- Welcome
 - o Re-introduce selves
 - o Agenda
 - o Background info on Teknisk Museum
 - Very big museum, 4 floors (open map)
 - Also includes National Medical Museum and the Science Center in the basement
 - Audiences
 - Schools during the week
 - Families during the weekends
 - All sorts of the other
 - Many events during the year as well that can attract different types of audiences
 - Established brand
 - Ask who has been here when in school/ parents?
 - o EPT member introduces the Temporary Climate exhibition
 - Example: Open in May/June, 1 year long, “living” exhibition, goal of positive engagement and community
- “Now for a bit of admin”
 - o My master’s thesis and consent forms
 - Explain how it is standard in research projects
 - Go through page by page (mention how this is from a template that the Norwegian Center for Research Data gives)
 - Tell them that you need it back by the end of the day, can look at it closer in the break and ask any questions, also there are 2 copies so take the one with home and if you later decide against anything then you can let me know
 - Explain what personal data is (in the legal sense) and how it is not... (notebooks)
 - o Hand out notebooks
 - I will be asking you to write in these as we go along
 - Pick your favorite and please write your name in them because I will collect them at the end of today and you will get them back next time

- Then you know that I will be looking at what you write in there
 - This is what is involved in participatory action research which is my method, and also in creating these installations, we will be creating “knowledge” together
 - BUT don’t feel pressured when you write or what you write, there are no “correct answers” to anything this is just all your thoughts and feedback, your opinions if you will, that are extremely valuable to us, even if you decide that you don’t want to write much
 - Remember that everything in my paper will be anonymous
 - EPT member explains the payment portion
 - passes out things to write their info on
- Explain that we are going around soon to look at 2 exhibits
 - Explain why (in order to get to be a bit familiar with the concept of an exhibit and what elements they can contain) and how it will not be a tour (because it is important that they get to interpret the exhibits themselves as most of the visitors who come to the museum would, because tours put a different spin on things)
 - Explain lenses
 - Will help look at things in the exhibits in a more specific view
 - Not all will fit logically with the themes of the 2 exhibitions so it might be tricky, but any types of association, even ones that feel completely absurd will be valid
 - Crisis, community
 - Interactive, emotion
 - Make them write down the lenses and tell them they can see if they can come up with their own and in our discussions later we will incorporate their new ones

Visit Exhibitions

- Walk to Blind Spot
 - (point out where toilets are for them to know for later break)
- Walk down to Plastic
- Walk back up and stop at the Klima exhibition space
 - “walk” out 25 meters
- When back in LAB
 - Ask them to write for **3 minutes** before break about their overall impressions and any thoughts

Break

- Check to see if I need to refill anything etc
- Put rolls of paper and markers out

Brainstorm and Discussion

- Explain why there are the paper rolls on the table and markers
 - Sometimes is nice to have something bigger to write on or draw, and when we get to the bigger discussions if you don’t feel like saying an idea or something out loud you can write it on there, just use it and abuse it as you’d like
- Group them in pairs or three’s

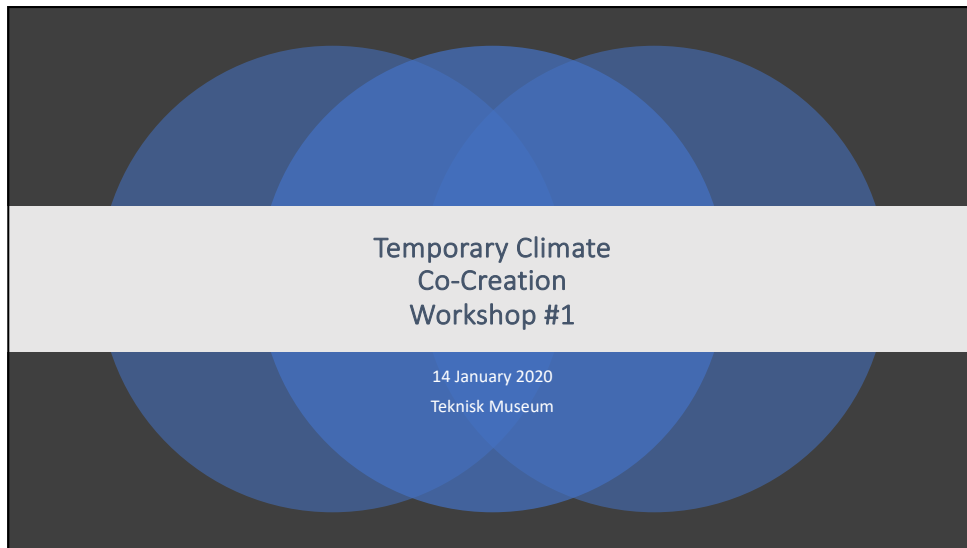
- Ask them to discuss with their partner what they found in terms of the lenses or any other thoughts that they had about the exhibitions
- Ask them to share 3 main points such as where they overlapped or talked about most
- Write them on the blackboard
- Summarize what they say at the end
 - Highlight/underline the new lenses
- Ask if they have a sense of what it means to be an exhibition now
- Ask if they have any questions or something further to add
- Now Brainstorm about Climate Change
 - Take **3 minutes** to write your thoughts or any ideas out about climate change, and if you'd like you can incorporate the lenses into your writing since cc is such a big theme, but don't have to
 - Write on Blackboard Associations, Or just all things in general
 - Ask them to shout things out
 - Write terms on the board
 - Stop in between to discuss a term or ask questions
- Post-it Exercise
 - 4-6 big papers with the lens headers and now people can go around putting post-it of words we have gone over (or anything new) into these categories
 - Give them 5-10 minutes, discuss with them and encourage discussion around how some can be in more than one category...
 - Start Summarizing

Summing up

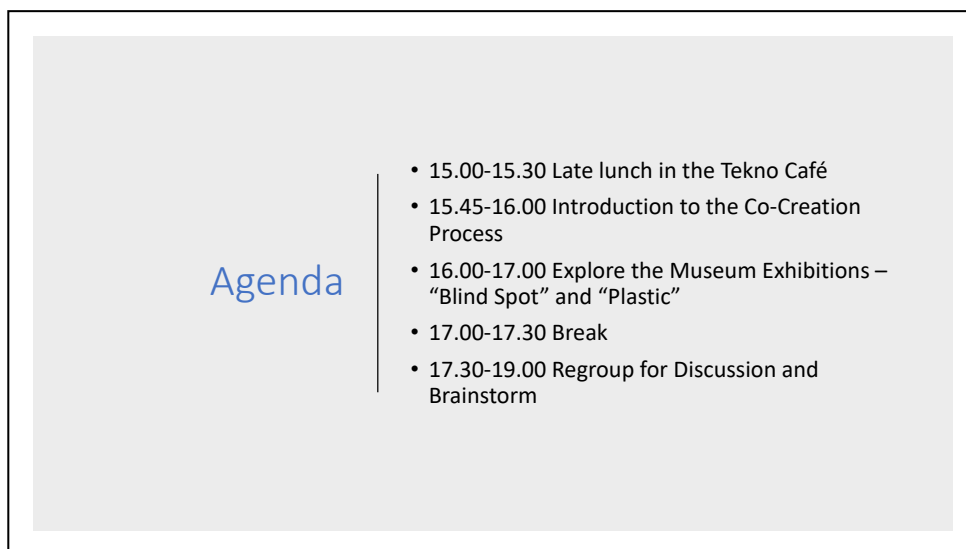
- Go over what we have done today in terms of
 - the broader ideas that were discussed
 - the lenses
- As if there any final questions or things that they would like to discuss/share ideas wise or anything
 - Remind them that the next workshop is next week
 - But not everyone can be there
 - Which is why create the facebook group
 - Ask people to add me as a friend so I can add them
 - Explain that you will add pictures of what happened today and other materials so they can have it handy to look at until next time
 - Feel free to post anything in group, inspirational news articles or anything they find, or even new ideas that they may have that can be taken into consideration the next time (because this is a short process and sad that not everyone can be a part of each time)
- Ask them to write a final **3 minutes** about their thoughts on today
 - When they are done hand me their notebook
 - Feel free to ask any last questions
 - Have to let them out side entrance(?) – go in groups

APPENDIX F - Workshop #1 PowerPoint Slides

2020



1

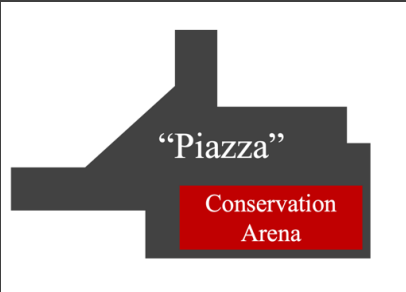



2

1



3



Temporary Climate Exhibition

- The goal of the exhibition “Temporary Climate” is to give the visitors at Teknisk Museum a positive experience engaging with the most important issue of our time – the climate crisis. The basic concept is to create a square or “piazza” that will facilitate discussion, emotional engagement, learning, and motivation amongst visitors.

4

³ This slide contained photos taken from the Norsk Teknisk Museum’s website.

⁴ This slide contains a photo from the Nobel Peace Center’s exhibition KLIMALAB. Photo taken by the author.

APPENDIX G - Workshop #2 Agenda

Workshop #2 Agenda 24/01/2020

Gather and pizza in LAB

- Hand out nametags and notebooks again
- Pizza arrives at 15:15?
- If they seem very interested in getting started early then start the ppt presentation while they are eating
- Share any new ideas for the board that they may have come up with
 - o Share any ideas that were in the notebooks and not on the board/fill it out
 - o Any new ideas etc from the facebook group
 - o HS's pic in the paper
- Put stars next to ones that they like extra much(?)

Mini discussion of Goals for today

- Ppt presentation
- Explain how it is the real deal now
 - o Last week was the fun free thinking
 - o Now we will continue a bit of that but also begin to think practically in terms of what is actually achievable in these last 2 workshops
 - For example we also have to write text(?)
 - o There is a potential that (especially if it is big) it will not be accepted by the designer
 - By the end of today it would be amazing if we had a final idea/some bit of a design so I can present it to her before the next workshop and get the greenlight, however, there is still some chance that they might reject it
 - That is why smaller the "better"
 - Ask if EPT member has anything to add/her frameworks for what can be made and if some of the ideas speak more to what they were already thinking of having in the exhibition or not
- Agenda
 - o Explain how/why we are doing the Scene-creations
 - Think of it as a warmup for creativity, working together, and making decisions, and visualizing things, and working with your hands and different parts of your brain
- **3 minute** writing of their favorite ideas and/or what they feel is important for today and/ or how they want people to feel when interacting or etc with whatever we are going to make
 - o EMPHASIZE that they can do so in Norwegian or English – whatever is most comfortable to them
- WASH HANDS

Scene work in Tekno Lab

- 3 scenarios/scenes (5-10) min each 8 people so 2 3 3?

- The atmosphere they want the audience to feel when they are in the exhibit/use engage with whatever we make
- A scene of the idea (as to the best of their ability)
- A scene of another idea
- Between each one have them present their ideas to the group
 - *****REMEMBER TO TAKE PICTURES OF EACH ONE******
- Clean up the scenography things and put them back
- Regroup in LAB and write **3 minutes** of impressions of what just happened, and/or if it changed their perspectives at all as to what they want to make/ their favorite idea

Break

- More pizza

Discussion and Decision Making

- Get people to write down their favorite idea combinations
- Condense the ideas down to a few
- Voting process
- Make sure everyone is in consensus with this idea
 - Should there be a top 3? Ideas just in case as A says we can “fix” it during the last workshop and ie. scratch one if it is not reasonable

Idea development

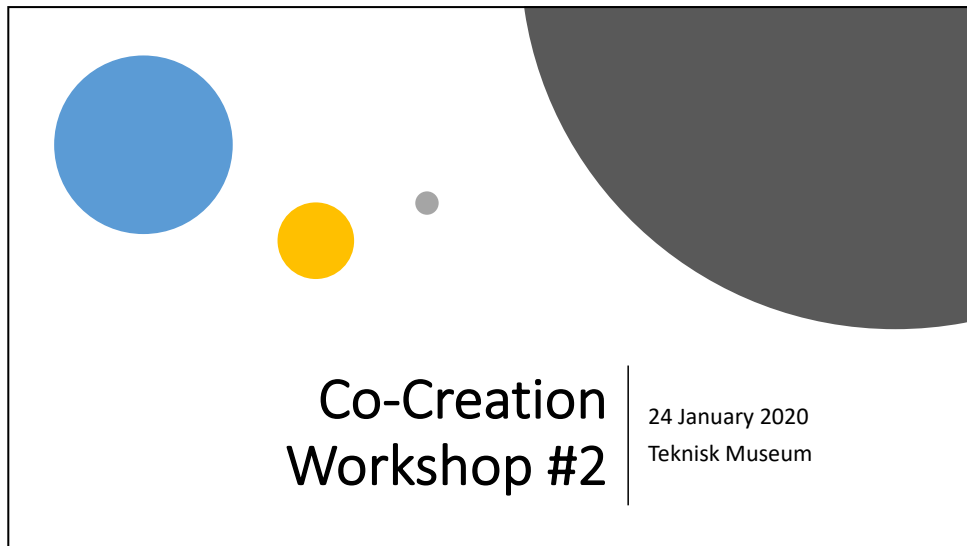
- As far as we can get on how we are going to do this, because I have to in the meantime before the next workshop figure out who I need to contact and if we are going to use materials etc
- Basically how do we make this happen and what do we need? (might be easy to figure out or not)

Summing up

- Any last thoughts today?
- Again I will post things in the facebook group and feel free again to use it to write anything you desire
- **3 minutes** writing sum up of the day, how feeling: excited/like we made a good choice, or disappointed?
- Collect notebooks and nametags

APPENDIX H - Workshop #2 PowerPoint Slides

2020

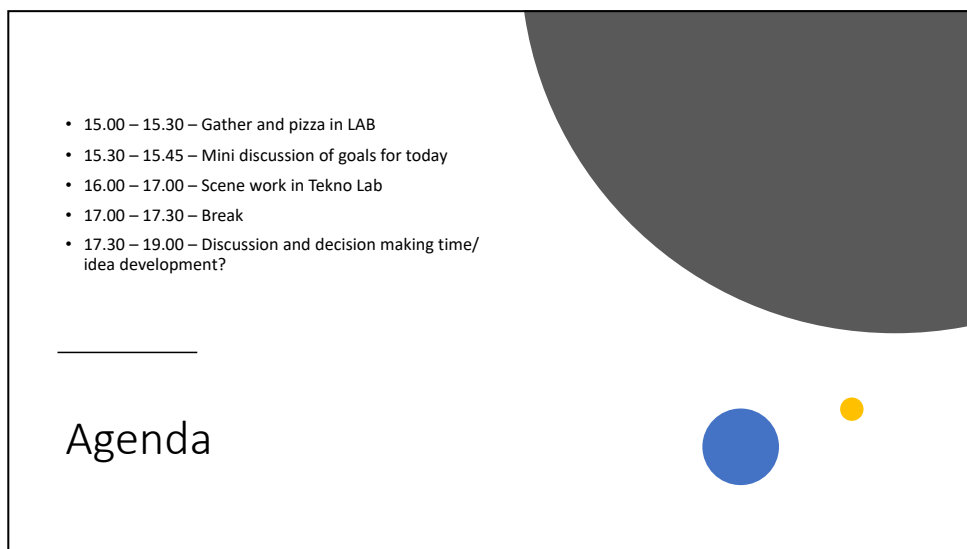


The slide features a large blue circle on the left, a smaller yellow circle in the center, and a tiny grey circle to its right. A dark grey curved shape is in the top right corner. The text is centered in the lower half.

Co-Creation
Workshop #2

24 January 2020
Teknisk Museum

1



The slide features a dark grey curved shape in the top right corner. A blue circle and a yellow circle are in the bottom right corner. The text is on the left side.

- 15.00 – 15.30 – Gather and pizza in LAB
- 15.30 – 15.45 – Mini discussion of goals for today
- 16.00 – 17.00 – Scene work in Tekno Lab
- 17.00 – 17.30 – Break
- 17.30 – 19.00 – Discussion and decision making time/
idea development?

Agenda

2

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3



4

Ideas so far....

- Huge Collage
 - With pictures and quotes from the climate strikes
- Game
 - Text based
 - Make decisions for alternative futures
 - With Scientific facts
 - Or simulator
 - Or "How to be an activist" game
- Interactive timeline
- Poster making station
- Oil Spill Activity
- "How you can help" station
- Sound showers
- Small Rooms
 - Climate War
 - Fire
 - Positive Outcome
- People screaming/roaring every 15 minutes
- Letter station
- Alternative map
 - Or trail/stations throughout museum
- Aquarium
 - Clean water to dirty water
- Oil fountain
 - Colored water
- Scream box/ cry corner
- Safe space, tent
- Display of academic consensus
- Historical perspective on the environmental movement

"Loud Together"

"Local"

"Hope"

5

APPENDIX I - Workshop #3 Agenda

Workshop #3 Agenda 07/02/2020

Tekno Café 15-1530

- Give out nametags as they come in
- When everyone is seated - Presentation round
- Food (ready at 15.00??)
- When finished up, gather food and things to bring to room

LAB 1530-

- Ppt presentation up
 - o Agenda
 - o Ask them to introduce/present any new ideas or thoughts of what they have come up with since the last workshop/ their idea as a whole
 - Do they all agree?
 - o EPT members present the newest design versions from the designer
 - Suggestion of any way their idea can fit into that
 - (emergency way of doing the exhibition)
 - Different examples and possibilities
 - Present PhD 'realizer'
- Ok now let's forget everything -> Reboot

Orange example 16-1645

- o **3 minute exercise** write how they would make a small version
 - In groups of 3
 - Give out oranges , give them 20 minutes, suggest that they talk first about what they want to say in the group, then maybe use some time to plan what they want to do and then do it
 - 10-15 min presenting their orange concepts
 - What it is the essence of it?
 - Diamond metaphor
 - As if what they make with this orange is going to be what is displayed, no longer just a tool like the scenes last week, we are now imagining that this is the final product..... the orange will be exhibited
- o When finished **3 min** exercise about their core ideas with the orange, if anything has changed, what they feel is the essence of their projects now

Break (15 min?)

Concept (30 min – starting at 17.00)

- Facilitate convo between the 2 sides
- What is the most important message?
- How do you want people to feel?
- (In terms of the timeline/ "time perspectives"...) why is that important to you?

Design (30 min)

- Digital or physical space?
- One station in the exhibit or a few points scattered around the exhibit(/museum)?

Content (30 min)

- Videos? Sounds? Pictures? Installations? (where can these be found/made?)
- What/ whose story do you want to tell?

Evaluation/Summing up (15-20 min?)

3 minute exercise on their final thoughts did this project meet their expectations, do they wish they could be a part of it further? Are they excited? Do they feel like there is an open channel of communication with the museum now? Overall thoughts

APPENDIX J - Workshop #3 PowerPoint Slides

2020

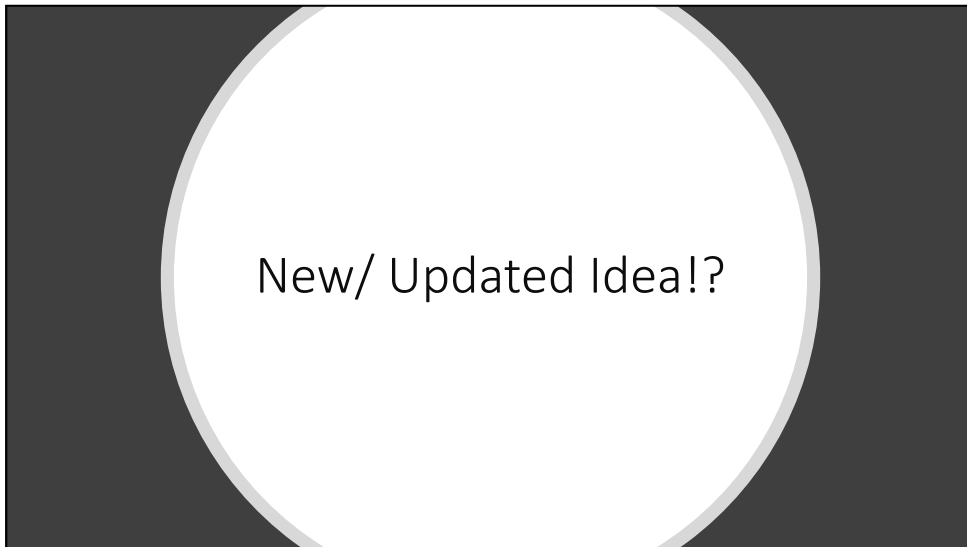


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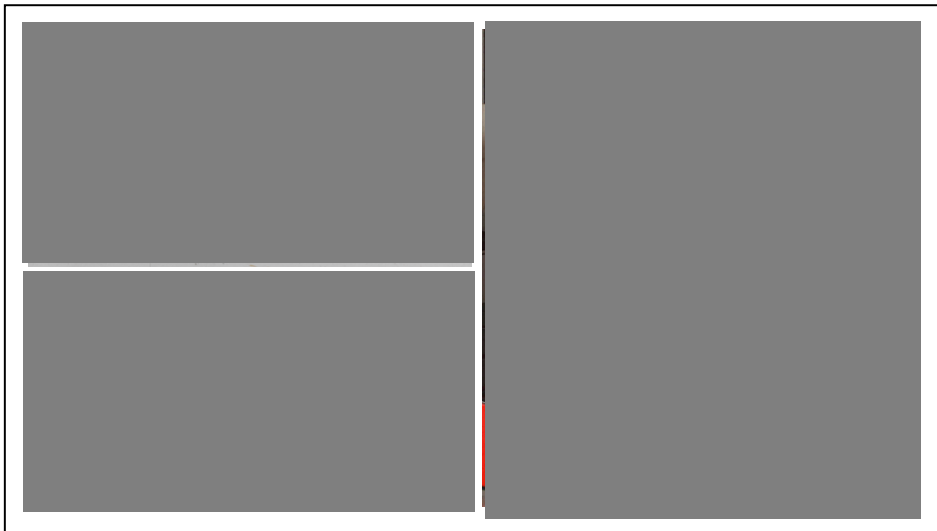
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⁴ This slide contained design sketches from the Teknisk climate exhibition's designer.



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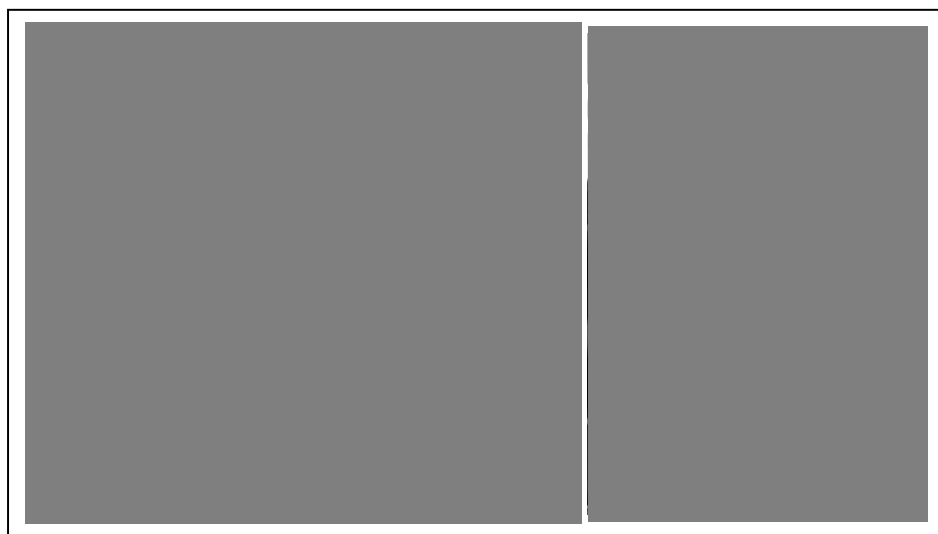
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⁵ This slide contained design sketches from the Teknisk climate exhibition's designer.

⁶ This slide contained photos of objects/images that were intended to be used in the upcoming climate exhibition.



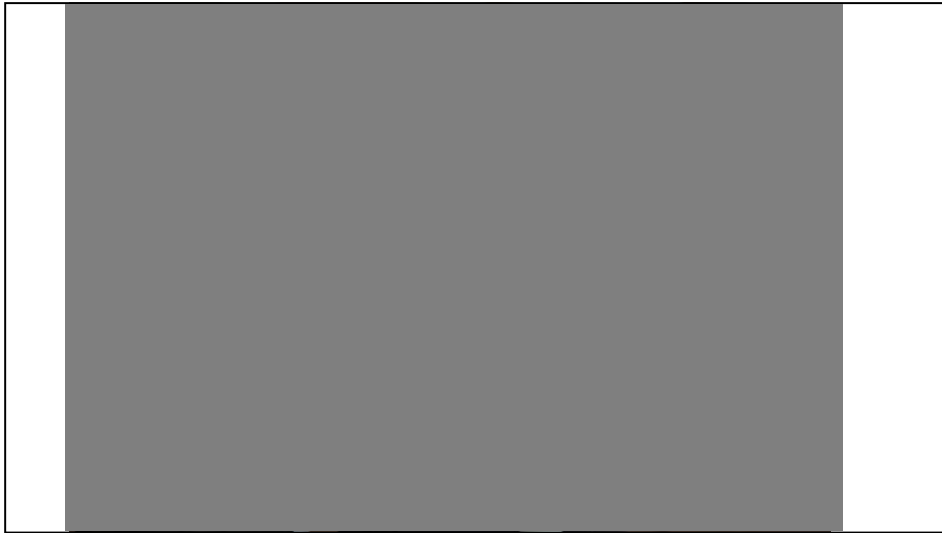
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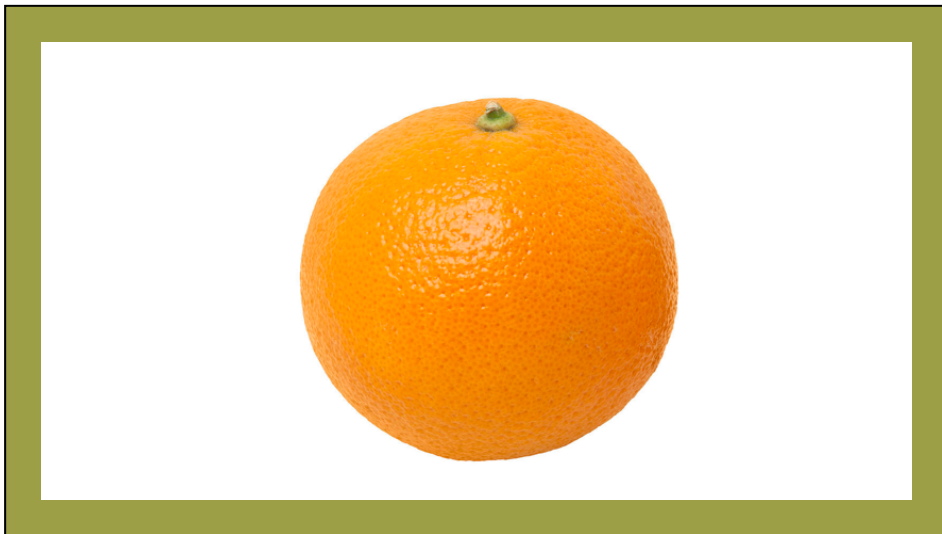
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⁷ This slide contains photos from the Nobel Peace Center’s exhibition KLIMALAB. Photos taken by the author.
⁸ This slide contained photographs of previous co-creations that were completed at the museum..



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⁹ This slide contained a photograph from a previous co-creation that was completed at the museum.