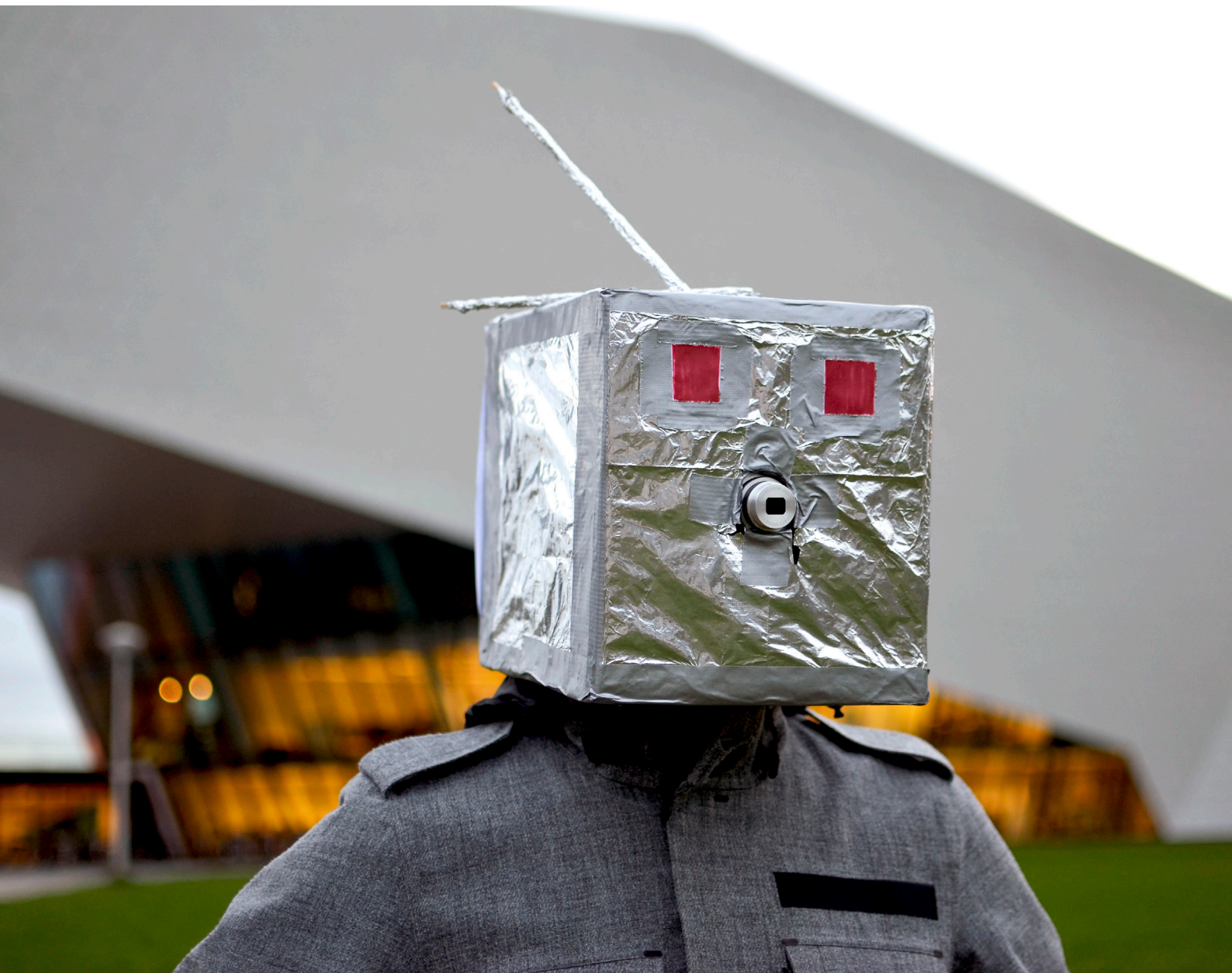




waag society

institute for art, science and technology



eclectis amsterdam research report

smart citizens: art in progress

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waag society

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Waag Society, institute for art, science & technology develops creative technology for social innovation. The foundation researches, develops concepts, pilots and prototypes and acts as an intermediate between the arts, science and the media. Waag Society cooperates with cultural, public and private parties.

waag.org/contact



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Culture

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Union

eclectis amsterdam research report

16-20 September 2013

*high school
students who
cooperated with
selected artists*



*innovative
practices to
promote social
urban innovation*

Urban laboratory

*to diagnose the
urban environment
by collecting and
interpreting data*



Public participation

*presented locally in
the form of an art
route as a public
event*



View from Overhoeks tower in North

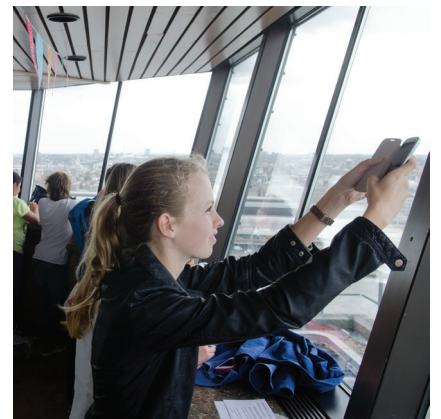


Amsterdam north area

*new urban zone
on the banks of
the IJ*



*day 2 - visiting
the 'Overhoeks'
tower*



Eclectis Amsterdam research report

The cultural sector has a main part to play in the development of new, innovative practices, to promote social urban innovation and to enhance European territories creative potential. The Eclectis project asks questions such as: How can creativity be the lever for integrated, flexible and structuring approaches? How to favor innovative re-appropriation of urban space by citizens? This report describes the learnings of the Eclectis Amsterdam project. Eclectis is a European project funded by the European Cultural Programme.

1. Project description

Eclectis Amsterdam was a workshop program for young people (high school students, age 13 and 14, from the Hyperion Lyceum) held in September 2013. The students cooperated with selected artists to research and give meaning to their living environment. They diagnosed the urban environment by collecting and interpreting data with new (technological) tools, they co-created urban interventions and work towards interactive pieces of art in public space in order to present their findings to their parents, families and friends, and citizens of Amsterdam.

The project encourages young people to do curiosity-driven research and experiment with art forms to express their opinion. As a result they learned to interact with their environment more consciously, and became more aware of that environment. It was also a (first) acquaintance with the combination of technology, art and science. This mix of disciplines is core to the work of project organiser Waag Society.

The sudden stop of urban development has affected the area, leaving open spaces and new forms of revitalization.

The project consists of two major parts:

URBAN LABORATORY

The Laboratory part consisted of research and workshops in and around the IJ banks and the Waag building, led by artists, and assisted by students of local art schools. The Laboratory was divided in five separate workshops and dealt with different urban topics.

The Amsterdam IJ Banks is an urban innovation area. Centred behind the Central Station and stretching east and west along the North banks of the IJ, this fast-redeveloping area includes artificial islands, old factories and industrial buildings, warehouses, and installations of Amsterdam's old harbour. A new kind of Amsterdam is taking shape on parts of this waterfront where old facilities have been demolished or re-purposed and replaced by apartments, offices and cultural institutions. A two-decade makeover of the banks of Amsterdam's IJ inlet has seen dis- and reused shipping wharfs, dockside warehouses and industrial estates replaced by a new urban zone, nestled into the city centre.

Slowing down of urban planning and development, because of the economic crisis, opens a new period of reflection. The sudden stop of urban development has affected the area, leaving open spaces and new forms of revitalization. Collecting and sharing new ideas for urban renewal offers new opportunities and is crucial for the future.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The interventions and artworks were presented locally in the form of an art route. Walking of the art route was a public event. The high school students presented their work and motivations behind it before inviting everyone to join the art route and to walk and interact with the artworks.

Eclectis Amsterdam lasted five days; the first two days were focussed on the interaction with artists and art students, enabling them to construct custom built workshops and host the groups of youngsters. Leading to three days of workshoping with youngsters. Because of the limited capacity of the event location, we organized two public events. The first event at Friday afternoon was geared towards family and friends of the youngsters and the second at night was aimed at the neighbourhood and the general public. At night, the participating artists presented their experiences of the week as well.

Artists and themes

To conduct the workshops five artists and art collectives were selected based on their work in the public realm.



#SandMapping

POLAKVANBEKKUM (NL)

#SandMapping comprises of creating and photographing circular drawings with sand, using a PET (plastic) bottle filled with sand tied to a piece of rope. The effect is magical: Any place you create a #SandMapping the entire atmosphere changes. The project fits the larger body of work of the artists but was adapted for interaction with the youngsters.

In #SandMapping, led by Dutch artists Esther Polak and Ivar van Bakkum, the students observed their fellow citizens and interviewed them. In this way, they engaged in new and interesting dialogues with strangers. Two people drew circles with sand in the public space, based on the conversation, which visualized the state of mind and feelings of the interviewed people. The co-created circles together formed intriguing patterns and acquired meaning through the dynamic input from the environment.

www.polakvanbakkum.com
www.#SandMapping.wordpress.com

iWhisper

**SIMON VAN DER LINDEN AND
JORRIT THIJN (MONOBANDA - NL)**

By using the iWhisper application the youngsters created stories in the form of audio tours. During the workshop, the students explored their environment, and the sounds that accompany that part of the city. The participants engaged in a process of exploration, concept development, scenario writing and creation of the audio tour. By focusing on the theme 'desire', the students tried to find, capture and display hidden (and forbidden) treasures in the city and incorporated these in unique audio tours. The participants of the art tour experienced the area in a new way and discovered things and stories they never knew.

www.monobanda.nl
www.iwhisper.nl

Public Laboratory

JEFFREY WARREN AND CINDY REGALADO (USA)

In this workshop students explored the area via infra-red-cameras and cameras mounted on kites. By changing their point of view, their perspective on the area changed. The youngsters mapped the 'green' areas and polluted vegetation. They participated in an exploration of what it means to perform and apply environmental science – as a non-scientist. Drawing on techniques from the global Public Lab community, the kids and Jeffrey and Cindy explored the green parts of urban spaces from new altitudes and in new wavelengths of light.

They visualized their findings through infrared pictures and offered the participants of the art tour an experience they never had before: looking at and moving through the area, wearing an infrared helmet.

www.publiclab.org



Networks

JAMES BRIDLE (UK)

In the city people are constantly surrounded by networks, both physical and virtual. These include transport and plumbing; telecommunications and surveillance; friendships and power; the street, the cable, and the Internet. Understanding the systems these networks form is the core literacy of the 21st Century; becoming literate in them the essential component of full participation in urban life and democratic society.

In this workshop the youngsters investigated and mapped networks of physical and virtual surveillance in the city, from CCTV cameras to social networks. They explored ways of mapping, representing and communicating them, in order to increase both our own, and others', agency.

They created participants' awareness of these invisible networks by making them visible through performances and games.

www.shorttermmemoryloss.com



Hortus Electricus

PIETER VAN BOHEEMEN (NL)

The Hortus Electricus workshop was all about soil. The main goal of the workshop was to find out if the area, which is surrounded by water, is also 'energetic'.

By building small bioreactors, using mud from the area, the students tried to light up an area with their DIY 'lightworks' - artworks with LED-light. They explored their environment, experimenting with different varieties of mud and their energy-levels. And yes, some parts of the area were more 'energetic' than others.

www.pietervanboheemen.nl



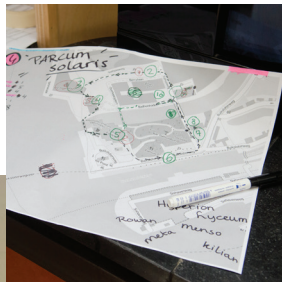
Communication

SUSANNE AFMAN (NL)

Throughout the whole project a Communications team covered all activities. The team was in charge of the promotion of the event, as well as its documentation in words and pictures. The team did flash mobs on the ferry to Amsterdam North, took care of the stage setting, did interviews, made a newspaper and developed a Facebook page and short promotional video. The group was very enthusiastic. The fact that they engaged in short specific assignments with direct feedback, was very motivating for them.

2. Most important findings

Eclectis Amsterdam was an incredibly rich, creative and inspiring project. The project was guided and carried by five teams of extremely enthusiastic and passionate artists, without whose knowledge, experience, professionalism and tremendous hard work the project would not have been the same. And the participating assistants and high school students shined in creativity and were a constant source of positive energy. They gave the project its bright colours.



PROCESS; RESEARCH, DIAGNOSIS AND ARTISTIC INTERVENTION

Eclectis Amsterdam was framed and organized around smart citizenship and citizen science. Citizen science is about developing new (technological) tools that enable and empower citizens to research their environment to be able to perform science by themselves and to contribute to science.

The (technical) tools or workshop formats that were being used in the laboratory project were clearly innovative. Youngsters opened up digital camera's to assemble infrared lenses in it, build their own spectrometers and bioreactors, mapped virtual networks, worked with a low tech tool for drawing sand circles and created a mobile audio tour. These tools and workshop formats proved to be very effective to involve people in participatory processes since they offer various participants different activities and forms of engagement and are aimed at actually doing and creating something instead of only talking and discussing.

In general the process, or methodology of research, diagnosis and intervention worked very well. The Eclectis Amsterdam project proved that the DIY nature of the project, constructing knowledge by researching and learning by doing, is a powerful means of education and participation. If you find out something for yourself, you give meaning to it. By diagnosing it and eventually making something out of it or doing something about it to present your findings, you form new ties or connections to that particular topic or area and develop a form of ownership.



Although the fixed format of the end event (art tour) was pressuring, and the available equipment did not always meet expectations, the fact that the students were working towards an art work in public space, or urban intervention, offered them a concrete end goal. Presenting their work first to their family and friends and then to the general public, reinforced them in their feeling of having an action perspective and empowered them.

At night, after the second art tour, artists presented their work and experiences with the project and the children to the greater audience. The event took place in an intimate sphere and the stories of the artists were personal, authentic and special. At that time, however, not all children and their family and friends were present anymore, since 'their' end event had already taken place in the afternoon. Therefore, many children and their parents missed these stories of the artists and after all that was a pity since the artist reflection on the process within the project, would have given the children new insights. Children tend to have a very concrete approach and perspective towards learning, education and projects like these, whereas adults focus more on the process. Hearing the artists reflect on the week could have been an eye-opener and given valuable insights and feedback to the children.

COMPLEX NATURE

The project was quite complex, being a pressure cooker and a public event in one. This challenged both the participants (artists, assistants, teachers and students) and the organization. There were five different thematic workshops, handling difficult (scientific) topics (building bioreactors and measuring electricity generation by bacteria) and quite abstract concepts (virtual networks). Besides the different topics, there was the process of research, diagnosis and intervention that forced participants to switch between different activities and skills. And there was the language barrier and the young age of the participating students to take into account. Underlying the project and its structure were the overall Eclectis research goals and questions, dealing with re-appropriation of urban space and ownership. Within the process of the workshops, naturally, artists



responded to the interests of the youngsters and therefore, the overall EU Eclectis research goals that focussed specifically on the establishing other and/or deeper connections to the urban area, sometimes gained less attention or drifted out of sight.

But interestingly, despite the complex nature of the project, the language barriers and the young age of the participants, the kids could articulate the aims and objects of the project and the process they were engaged in very well, both during evaluation meetings of the laboratory project and at the two public events (the art tours).

MEETING OF WORLDS

The project was multidisciplinary and operated at the crossover between art, science and technology and entailed a meeting of worlds. Worlds that are essentially different in nature and style. The most striking was the difference between the free, liberal and experimental approach of the artists and the more structured, clear and goal oriented approach that the high school teachers practice in their daily work. Artists needed help from teachers in structuring their lessons, taking breaks, giving concrete time

limits for assignments and balancing between theory and practice. And teachers learned from artists that a somewhat more loose structure and letting go can work as well, and in fact can be quite motivating for students, and that inspirational learning can take place outside the classroom as well. The organization learned that this meeting and collaboration of worlds needed taking (more specific) care of. Attention and concrete and open dialogue are necessary to actually facilitate the process of getting to know one another. When working with kids this young of age, a valuable and concrete tip would be to formulate more sub-assignments and make these SMART. By doing so, children become more aware of their own learning process and are able to evaluate and test themselves, their progression and achievements. Teachers' experience learns that by doing so, children start to cooperate and help more proactively.

Working with artists was one of the key features within this project. Without their knowledge and expertise, disruptive nature of their work and their strong commitment, this project could not have been executed. The downside of working with artists however, is that the project also depends on them and



therefore is not always sustainable or replicable. Some of the artists however are actually extremely innovative in opening up and transferring their knowledge and tools. Public Laboratory for instance developed kits for areal photography and making spectrometers. And PolakvanBekkum published an instruction of #SandMapping at their website.

ORGANIZATION

Eclectis Amsterdam did experience some organizational issues. There was a constant balancing between overall project goals and specific issues within each thematic group, freedom to experiment and holding on to the underlying 'methodology' of research, diagnosis and intervention, the somewhat fixed format of the end event (art tour, open for the public) and dosing information and giving clear instructions. And the organization did not always master that balancing process.

Overall, the programme was too intensive and packed. The pressure of working towards an art tour that actually was interesting for the general public was demanding. The results however, were excellent. The actual art works varied from performative games about avoiding camera registration in the area and the working of satellites, infrared helmets that visualize the health of the local vegetation, light works generated by bacteria of fertile soil, audio tours with stories of the area and a sand circle visualisation of peoples feelings and state of mind that had a real aesthetic quality to it. And the stories the children told to accompany their work were outstanding.

CURIOSITY, AWARENESS AND CONNECTING TO ENVIRONMENT

The major strength of the project was that artists offered participants a new and fresh look on their daily living environment. It all started with triggering curiosity: the curiosity to research, observe, test, measure and visualize. And to actually question objects, people, stories etc. that one would normally take for granted.

Via either participating in the laboratory project or visiting the participatory event, one viewed the area through a different lens, a view on natural energy present in the area, on polluted vegetation, on hidden stories, on invisible digital networks and camera's and on people's feelings and state of mind. And that new view, in combination with actually doing and making something, raised awareness and very likely caused new forms of connectedness.

The concrete connection towards the urban research area remained a bit underexposed though. The stories within iWhisper for instance originated from observation of the urban space, but ended up being mostly fictional, born from the imagination of the students. And the circles of the #SandMapping project were a concrete data-visualisation of citizens' feelings and attitudes, but not merely feelings and

attitudes towards (the experience of) public space.

This was a natural result of the creative process that the artists and participants engaged in and driven by the interest of the youngsters, but viewed from a meta-perspective, these results contribute less towards the development of public space and therefore the overall EU Eclectis goals.

OWNERSHIP

Ownership within the execution of this project is perhaps not necessarily defined as ownership over the environment as a whole. Ownership in this case is to be understood as ownership over that part of the environment that you actually engaged with and intervened in. It is not certain that the participating youngsters feel as if the public space surrounding them is more 'theirs' than before they engaged in the Eclectis project, or they really feel long-term responsibility for that environment.

It is for sure however that they got attached to certain parts of that area in a new way. Some of the youngsters that build bioreactors for instance, got attached to nurturing it and wanted to take it home and continue taking care of it like some sort of pet. Students that participated in an audio tour discovered a stone with images of pink elephants on it and create a beautiful story about it and they really got to love that part of urban street art. The creation of the art route and walking it somehow became part of the collective memory of the participants related to that particular area and that given fact is a valuable intervention.

LONG-TERM EFFECT

New forms of dialogue and collaboration emerged. As described before, between artists and teachers, between students and artists and youngsters, but also between youngsters and the people (strangers) they interviewed and presented their work to as well.

Perhaps the most significant long-term effect of Eclectis Amsterdam is not so much on the development of the area the project took place in, but on the people that participated in it. Every participant, from teacher, student, artist, youngster to organization, stated that they learned a lot:

Scientist Pieter van Boheemen: "Since some of the bioreactors were not producing enough electricity to power LEDs, we gave a few students batteries to power their art work. While playing around with the batteries, a youngster all of a sudden noticed that he could actually charge the mud using the batteries, so effectively reversing the electricity production. This was totally unexpected, and offered a new parameter that could be diagnosed. It also shows that actual discoveries normally occur as an artefact of a study, instead of the subject. This event empowered not only the youngster that discovered this, but the whole group."

Artists Esther Polak and Ivar van Bekkum: "We were interviewed by one of the children of the 'communications group'. She said: "Did the children come up with all these strange questions in the #SandMapping project themselves? I ask that because I saw one of my fellow schoolmates who is notoriously shy, asking people these strange questions in a way I never thought she could, really open and not shy at all". Our goal was to arise curiosity in order to be able to do research. This anecdote underlined the fact that we succeeded."

Youngster (girl): "In this project you learn things you normally would not learn at school".

3. Questionnaire sent to participating artists and assistants

After the project week, Waag Society sent the participating artists and students a questionnaire. Below you will find a compilation of their answers.

Could you reflect on the nature of the process: the 'methodology' and steps of DIY research, diagnosis and artistic intervention? What worked and what did not?

Angelina Bakker (student): "I liked it very much. In a way it's learning and researching by doing. The first couple of days I think it was difficult for all to find a balance of not talking too much and letting the youngsters go outside and do 'hands on' stuff. I think the week as a whole was great, introducing the youngsters to new ways of research, new views and ways of using technology as a tool to get to know their environment and the people in it."



Esther Polak and Ivar van Bakkum (#SandMapping): "Worked very well for us, since it is the way we work too, although we added a step before the research, becoming "curious" or "interested", which is the answer to the question: "What can we research?". But how do you get curious or interested? That might seem obvious but it is not."

Susanne Afman (communications group): "I think it gave the kids the opportunity to look at their environment with different eyes. Searching for specific things. Or asking themselves and each other questions about the public space. And about what you can or can't do in it."

Joran Koster (student): "The youngsters really enjoyed the practical side of the process; doing and making stuff. The research part was more difficult for them, because it was less concrete and the results were less tangible."

Reineke Hesselt van Dinter (teacher): "It would be better to formulate not only the end goal of the project, but split the project up in several sub-goals and formulate these SMART. By doing so, children become more aware of their own process and learning, are able to test themselves and will start cooperating and helping. Besides, it is

important to differentiate. Some kids think they are ready after 5 minutes and they have to wait to continue. Offer something they can continuously work on, something that never ends."

James Bridle (Networks): "We used a range of techniques for engaging the kids' curiosity about their surroundings, and about the Internet. Foremost amongst these was mapping: asking the kids to seek out specific objects in the environment and draw these on maps. The same exercise was then carried out in the virtual environment – mapping the physical location of websites. The second method was that of creating games which the kids could play, and invite others to play, which were based on the issues we explored, and would lead to explanations of these issues to those who played them. Both of these techniques were successful, but they required quite clear instructions and expected outcomes. The kids were a bit young to explore ideas very far independently, and needed to be guided along each step of the process."

How did the process in your opinion raise awareness about public space / the environment?

Angelina Bakker (student): "The project #SandMapping was focussed on observation. Going into the public space, observing people and imagining what to ask these people. I think the youngsters were forced to look at the environment and approach people in the public space. Reflecting on prejudices you can have, putting yourself in someone else's shoes instead of just relying on their own perception. I think all the other projects did very well in this too. Awareness of the networks we don't see, or hidden stories behind places or the bacteria in the environment as a tool to create electricity. I was fascinated myself and was given new insights!"

James Bridle (Networks): "The kids became curious about the objects in the landscape around them, which did lead them to ask questions about them."

Reineke Hesselt van Dinter (teacher): "I don't know if the childrens' perspective on their environment has permanently changed. The topics of the project were

"It's learning and researching by doing."



quite abstract and the children young, it might take some time to sink in."

Jeffrey Warren (Public Laboratory): "We asked the students to research and learn about the contamination neighbouring the school, and talked about what kinds of contaminants were there, and how we might try to detect them. It would have been nice to have someone who could tell a bit more about the environmental history of the site, however. What did it used to look like? What processes released such contaminants and how were they covered up?"

Pieter van Boheemen (Hortus Electricus): "Absolutely. Most of the student never took a closer look at the soil surrounding their school before, especially on a bacterial level. Nor did they imagine that it might contain electricity-producing bacteria. Also, it raised awareness about the characteristics of biological habitats."

Lisa Vork (student): "The children learned to look around, they saw new things in the environment that they already knew for 2 years. By doing research, and talking about what they saw with other children, they got to know more about the history of the public space as well. It raised curiosity about why certain things are there."

Simon van der Linden and Jorrit Thijn (iWhisper): "Because we did encourage them to think of new ways of looking at the surrounding areas, they became more aware of it, more aware of their own creativity and more aware of the environment where they walk around daily."

Do you consider the process innovative? In what way is it a new method of participation, how did it gather expertise from different fields, was it inclusive?

Angelina Bakker (student): "Yes, I think it is. All the projects had their own twist of innovation. Although I really liked working on the #SandMapping project, the way to approach this 'new ownership' was different if you compare it to James Bridles Networks or Pieter van Boheemens bacteria for example. The field research we did (going out, observing, asking questions) wasn't something new, but the artistic intervention that came out of it was, using a person's leg to draw a sandcircle. This project was innovative in its aesthetics."

Susanne Afman (communications group): "I would definitely consider it innovative: because during the week, a lot of different views and backgrounds were mixed."

Esther Polak and Ivar van Bekkum (#SandMapping): "In an educational way the process was surely innovative as it was a crossover of all kinds of fields, from language to internet usage and from privacy to math. And we think our approach is innovative for children and their teachers: making clear that every awareness is preceded by attention and curiosity, and that those two skills do not come natural."

In what way do you think the project stimulated new creative ways of collaboration?

Angelina Bakker (student): "The most interesting collaboration was the combination of artists, teachers, youngsters and the assistants. Especially seeing the different approach between the artists, very liberal, and the teachers, search for structure. But also not forgetting that even the artists and assistants can learn from the youngsters. The way they see things."

Mik Langhout (student): "To be honest I think there could have been much more collaboration / crossovers between the different workshops, although this would have cost an extra day. Within the workshop pupils did collaborate but I don't know if this is new for them."

Pieter van Boheemen (Hortus Electricus): "The project bridged science and art, which resulted in a new creative approach."

Jeffrey Warren (Public Laboratory): "The students were able to focus on exploration of the area, kite flying and photography, camera "hacking", processing images with computers, and designing an activity for visitors -- and each student found different parts of the process to be engaging. They had to rely on one another to pull the whole thing off. They were also asked to formulate questions of their own, and think about how they might be answered. In addition, the invitation to literally deconstruct a camera or build a spectrometer challenged their assumptions about who is a creator vs. a consumer."

Do you think new dialogue or meaningful encounters originated from this project? Could you describe how and when?

Esther Polak and Ivar van Bekkum (#SandMapping): "Absolutely. Although working together with the artists was not really possible, working within the same focus made us more aware of the work of the others. Another meaningful encounter was when the children were explaining the artwork for the visitors. They were really capable of explaining the process and the importance of that process, whilst the audience was only looking at our rather abstract artwork that came out of it."

Susanne Afman (communications group): "Yes, for instance between teachers and artists. Where artists need chaos to create, teachers need structure to teach. However, I've noticed that some teachers found out that a certain level of chaos at times works very well."

James Bridle (Networks): "The kids addressed issues which they hadn't before. They became very aware of

surveillance in particular. For example, they researched the law around CCTV cameras, and found that the government was not following its own laws around signage and communication. They also approached the school about using its CCTV cameras, and learned that they could not, because of the school's use of hidden cameras, which they did not know about previously."

Was there a crucial moment in the process; some sort of tipping point? Could you describe it?

Susanne Afman (communications group): "A crucial moment was the evaluation on Thursday with the artists and teachers. There were some misunderstandings that were cleared out, and it gave me the energy that I needed for the final day."

Simon van der Linden and Jorrit Thijn (iWhisper): "The first tipping point was right at the start when we asked the children to look at their familiar surroundings with new eyes, and when they did, they discovered new layers of fantasy in their own mind and by this also new layers of fantasy on the streets, in a way of transforming the streets and objects into something new. The second tipping point was at day three in the process, when the children discovered that their isolated new fantasies about the objects in the street could connect different locations into one story. They were able to really 'see' a new layer in their own familiar neighbourhood."

Esther Polak and Ivar van Bekkum (#SandMapping): "For us it was the moment we first feared for: will the children have the courage to go out on the street and ask passers-by questions, draw sand circles around them and photograph them. To our surprise the "curiosity-crash-course" had worked. We planned to go out on the streets Thursday, but they worked very hard

because they all wanted to go out on the streets already on Wednesday."

Angelina Bakker (student): "Finding the right balance between theory and practice. Getting every youngster involved in the project and not overloading them with too much theoretical stuff. And of course the balance between the freedom to explore and structure."

Joran Koster (student): "For me, it was the moment when the youngsters presented their work during the art tour and they could perfectly explain what and why they did what they did."

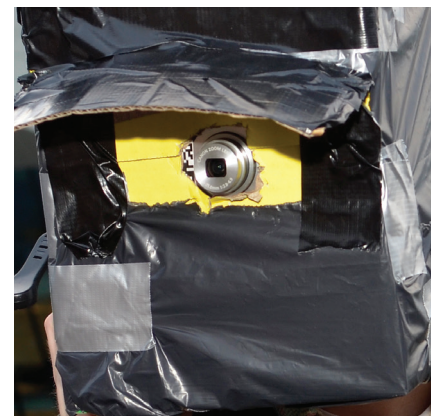
Do you think participants look at their environment differently by engaging in the project or experience new ownership over this environment?

Simon van der Linden and Jorrit Thijn (iWhisper): "Absolutely! By creating new stories about their own neighbourhood, they did create a new understanding of this surrounding. The stories they invented gave new meaning to the objects in the neighbourhood and by this they claimed ownership of this neighbourhood."

Pieter van Boheemen (Hortus Electricus): "Their vision was changed, because they did not regard their environment as a source of energy before. I am not so sure about the sense of ownership..."

James Bridle (Networks): "Yes, they became more observant of it, and more curious about the things in it."

Jeffrey Warren (Public Laboratory): "Yes; I believe they consider different ways to understand a place that involve intermediating tools and technologies, and perhaps see new ways to think quantitatively and qualitatively about their surroundings. I hope they feel



a sense of accomplishment over having been able to interrogate their environment in a novel way."

Lisa Vork: "Yes, I believe so. I believe the participants learned to look at their environment better, but mostly that they allow themselves to be more curious and to use their imagination."

What do you consider the most valuable output of the week?

Mik Langhout (student): "Once the pupils presented their work to their parents and other visitors they could really explain every step of the process and add their own experience as well. This was of course what we hoped, but wow... what a reward!"

Lisa Vork (student): "I find it amazing that the children managed to collaborate to combine all kinds of ideas and associations together in one coherent story, in such short time notice."

Simon van der Linden and Jorrit Thijn (iWhisper): "We valid the most that we were able to teach the children that our understanding of and giving meaning to our surroundings is occupied by our common agreement about what these surroundings 'normally' are, but that they do have the power to shift this meaning and create a new one, evenly valid as the common understanding. Both in the beginning and at the end of this week, the children surprised us with their points of view and connecting stories."

James Bridle (Networks): "The kids started to develop a way of thinking and talking about the interconnectedness of things, and the networked nature of their lives and experiences, which they had not previously had."

Susanne Afman: "We've all learned a lot I think. From practical stuff (how to give out clear instructions) to scientific information, for instance in the group of Pieter. For me personally, the most valuable output is that kids are very creative and problem solving in their thinking. We should involve them and ask them questions more often."

Jeffrey Warren (Public Laboratory): "Exposing the kids to a new, less organized but more evidence-based way to engage with the world, and giving them the sense that science is not only deeply applicable to their own lives and environment, but also a fascinating and fun way to explore."



Could you describe a nice anecdote or quote of one of the participants?

Jeffrey Warren (Public Laboratory): "Yes, one student said, upon putting on the 'camera helmet' -- 'It's like seeing another world.' -- I have to agree! It was a very exciting moment."

Susanne Afman (communications group): "The thing that will stick in my mind, is that for some kids, this week really pushed them to do things they normally would not try. Talk to people they don't know, to interview, to create. And that they really enjoyed it."

Mik Langhout: "The fact that they thanked us for the week and even asked me my email address to communicate about future education/work..."

James Bridle (Networks): "'The government is breaking their own laws!' is my favourite direct quote (on the CCTV signage issue described above), but more generally the conversations with the kids which showed that they were thinking through the issues in their own time was the best indicator of their involvement."

Is there anything else you would like to share?

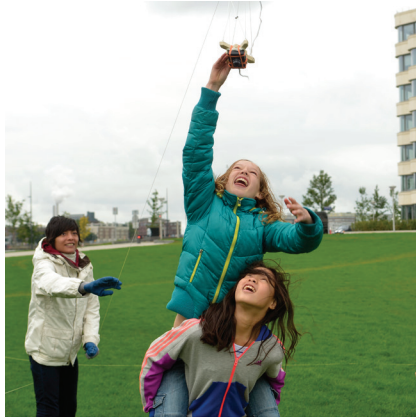
Esther Polak and Ivar van Bakkum (#SandMapping): "We would have liked to have some kind of discussion or talks with the teachers beforehand about how to structure the days. It is really intensive

to work with youngsters for such long timespans, for 4 days in a row."

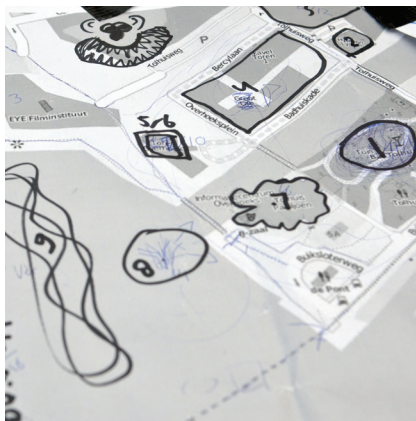
Lisa Vork (student): "I think the project overall was really nice. I like the activities, the learning goals, the final outcome and the work the children did. However I believe the structure could use some improvement in order to keep the kids more motivated throughout the whole process. In order to do this, I think earlier collaboration between the organization, artists and kid-professionals (teachers) can be very helpful. The programme can then be adjusted fully to kids behaviour, and thereby the children can be more productive and probably feel even more involved."

Simon van der Linden and Jorrit Thijn: "The nature of the project was complex, because of all the different groups that participated: Waag Society, artists, students, teachers and youngsters. We would have preferred to be able to discuss the project better beforehand. Time was wasted by briefings to these different groups."

Jeffrey Warren (Public Laboratory): "I wish there had been a way to work more closely with a longer-term Amsterdam-based group or project, to situate the work in an ongoing process or project, so that it was not simply a short experiment, but a new chapter in something bigger and longer-lasting."



Final presentations
by the students during the art route on day 5



4. Reflection on Eclectis EU objectives

In the context of growing urbanization and digital shift, cities have to face an acceleration of urban, social, cultural and economic fragmentations, reinforced by the economic crisis. When dealing with urban fragmentations reduction, the traditional top-down process is showing its limits. There is a real demand from citizens, professionals and political stakeholders for new processes to make the city, bottom-up and participatory, favouring innovative answers, adapted to new uses. Through the Eclectis project, project partners aim at implementing an innovative structuring European process to favour citizens' integration in the urban making, put in perspective at European level.

The objectives of Eclectis are:

- To enhance European urban space diversity | For a connected and transverse approach
- To encourage creativity and new appropriation of urban space | For participatory experimentation
- To empower citizens to drive local change | For long-term impacts

Eclectis Amsterdam most definitely provides valuable contributions to the second objective.

Working with artists, the thematic approach, (technological) tools, educational workshops, process of research, diagnosis and intervention, stimulated incredible creativity and offers concrete formats for future participatory experimentation.

Here is a list of 'principles' that proved successful in our project:

WORKING WITH ARTISTS

Disruptive nature of work, innovative approach, questioning what we take for granted, stimulating new dialogue

DIY APPROACH

Learning by doing, making instead of only talking, empowering, ownership over what one makes

THEMATIC APPROACH

Offering a new lens or vision, stimulating curiosity and raising awareness and connectedness

3-STEP PROCESS

Research: discovering things yourself, stimulating curiosity

Diagnosis: giving meaning to findings, interpretation and debate

Intervention: translating meaning into concrete action (perspective)

MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

Meeting of worlds, questioning daily practices, mutual learning, dialogue and ratifying expertise

Additionally, some of the workshop formats are already available for re-use, the results are and will be communicated on relevant channels (for instance during presentations at the Amsterdam Urban Innovation Week). And the learnings are embedded in related projects, such as the Smart Citizens Manifesto and Smart Citizens Kit (see Related projects).

The first objective will be the result of cooperation between project partners

and needs to be discussed and tackled in upcoming collaboration meetings.

Eclectis Amsterdam partially achieved to meet the third objective. As described above, the project definitely empowered citizens to engage with their environment in a new way. And we do feel that participating in the project impacted the stakeholders in a long-term manner, since everyone learned so much and the level of personal growth to be achieved in one week is huge. But at this point in their lives, the students perhaps are just a bit too young, to feel that strong about something as slippery as their living environment to actually become drivers of local change. However the fact that they were able to experience the power of an action based intervention might be something useful later in their lives.

The intrinsic motivation for long-term ownership, engagement and participation, is diverse and personal. It is probably at its strongest when it originates from an urgent real life problem connected to the area or space that you live in or feel connected to. And it is a matter of personal character (activism) as well. Reflecting on the overall objectives, Eclectis Amsterdam offers many interesting mechanisms and principles for future engagement and activation towards ownership and re-appropriation of urban space, but lacked the strong combination of problem-based stakeholder engagement and activism for long-term impact. An interesting next step might be to implement the participation and engagement principles and mechanisms found in more specific cases.



5. Next steps and related projects

This report serves as input from the Amsterdam project towards the overall EU Eclectis research. Input, experiences and findings from all European project partners will result in recommendations. We will cooperate on these matters the rest of the project period. Meanwhile, Waag Society undertakes related activities.



MANIFESTO FOR SMART CITIZENS

Waag Society's research director Frank Kresin drafted a Manifesto for Smart Citizens in September 2013 and published it during the Amsterdam Urban Innovation Week / Eclectis week. Since then it has been read over 5,000 times.

waag.org/nl/blog/manifesto-smart-citizens

SMART CITIZEN KIT

In October, Waag Society launched the Smart Citizen Kit. In cooperation with FabLab Barcelona and local newspaper 'Het Parool', we will distribute 100 Smart Citizen Kits, stimulating and empowering people to research the quality of their living environment.

The low-cost sensors in the kit, developed in Barcelona, measures air composition (CO and NO²), temperature, light intensity, sound levels, and humidity. The kit looks like a 'house' that you can place near your window, for instance. The kit consists of a hardware device, a website where data is collected, an online API and a mobile app. In this project, Waag Society, Amsterdam Smart City and the Amsterdam Economic Board want to create a network of sensors around the city.

By giving individuals the tools to conduct research for themselves, we expect an increased involvement in the immediate environment based on real data. There might rise new, dynamic relationships between citizens, scientists and policy makers. And urban issues can be proposed, argued and substantiated from different perspectives. The project Smart Citizen Kit Amsterdam studies how this works in practice, and we examine the results and impact. And how we can go from 'Smart Cities' towards 'Smart Citizens'.

waag.org/smartcitizenkit

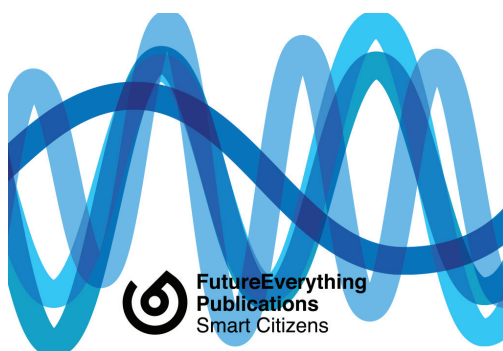
FUTURE EVERYTHING SMART CITIZENS PUBLICATION

FutureEverything Publications has published a new booklet titled 'Smart Citizens'.

This publication aims to shift the debate on the future of cities towards the central place of citizens, and of decentralised, open urban infrastructures. It provides a global perspective on how cities can create the policies, structures and tools to engender a more innovative and participatory society. The publication contains a series of 23 short essays representing some of the key voices developing an emerging discourse around Smart Citizens.

The publication contains two articles by Frank Kresin, research director at Waag Society: 'Design Rules for Smarter Cities' (p. 51) and his 'Manifesto for Smart Citizens' (p. 91). Editors are Drew Hemment and Anthony Townsend. This publication is available under a Creative Commons license 'Contribution-NonCommercial'.

Download a copy (pdf) here:
futureeverything.org/publications/smart-citizens/



6. Links

PROJECT

www.eclectis.eu

SCHOOL

www.hyperionlyceum.nl

ARTISTS

www.polakvanbekkum.com
www.sandmapping.wordpress.com
www.monobanda.nl
www.iwhisper.nl
www.publiclab.org
www.pietervanboheemen.nl
www.shorttermmemoryloss.com

WAAG SOCIETY

waag.org
waag.org/eclectis

STUDENTS

eclectisproject.wordpress.com
www.facebook.com/pages/Eclectis/238076966344066



We thank the Hyperion Lyceum in Amsterdam North for their cooperation and commitment. The school provided a superb location for this research project. We enjoyed the enthusiasm of their teachers and students to participate in this week.



Documents and communication materials



Prepared documents by Waag Society included:

- Miniposters A3/A4
- Folded programme booklet for visitors A6
- Event press description onepager A4
- Signing on A3
- Lasercut wooden life-sized letters
- QR codes for artist information links
- Instruction brochure for students A5
- Template 'daily' for students
- Example communication materials for students
- Presentation slideshow at final event
- Website pages (project, event, news)

Created documents by students in the communication team included:

- Wordpress blog
- Facebook page
- Photographs
- Videos
- Daily magazines 'the smart citizen explorer' (see examples below)



eclectis amsterdam research report



The cultural sector has a main part to play in the development of new, innovative practices, to promote social urban innovation and to enhance European territories creative potential. The Eclectis project asks questions such as: How can creativity be the lever for integrated, flexible and structuring approaches? How to favor innovative re-appropriation of urban space by citizens? This report describes the learnings of the Eclectis Amsterdam project. Eclectis is a European project funded by the European Cultural Programme.