



Beyond your Bubble

Digital Dynamic Documentation

Beyond your bubble:

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Table of Contents

1	Introduction	5
2	Insights from the development process	15
3	Further development	45



1

Introduction

1. Introduction

We define the word heritage as the buildings, objects and traditions of the present, originating in the past, which we want to preserve for the future. Often, the heritage label is invoked by a museum curator or other “expert”. There are also voices that say that heritage is made, meaning that heritage arises from emotion and that we should all have a say in what it constitutes. From this perspective, heritage is created by the people who view certain significant objects, practices, ideas, buildings and places as part of *their* heritage. In the process of creating heritage, we see cases wherein certain items do not always evoke the same emotions in people, but instead cause heated discussions or become sources of concern. For many museums and archives, it can be challenging both to listen to all these different perspectives and to make these perspective visible in collections and presentations.

The concept of “emotion networks” developed by Hester Dibbits (Reinwardt Academy) and Marlous Willemsen (Imagine IC) is one way of making these divergent perspectives transparent. Emotion networking is both a concept and a methodology. It is a way of thinking and working to improve the understanding of heritage and the dynamics surrounding it. This is done by visualising the various positions people take with regard to a heritage item, and how those positions can change during conversations with each other. This provides a more layered approach to heritage. Therefore, emotion networking is also a verb: an activity in which participants become involved in the process of creating heritage through active conversation. Over the past few years, Reinwardt Academy and Imagine IC have organised many emotion networking sessions and the methodology is being further developed iteratively.



In the Digital Dynamic Documentation (DDD) project, Imagine IC and Waag are investigating how emotion networks can be used as a concept in combination with interactive technology. The goal is to allow visitors, as part of the exhibition, to reflect on, and possibly contribute to, the story of a collection so that these emotions, opinions and associations become more accessible. In this way, we hope to allow individual exhibition visitors to enter into a different, more active relationship with their heritage. The central question is whether or not we can create a dynamic “caption” in which the diverse and dynamic feelings, associations, opinions and interests around an object become transparent. Could we allow visitors to experience that objects never have a single, fixed meaning? The project translates the dynamic, social method that emotion networking is now—relevant to those present, but difficult to transfer to others—into a fixed presentation in the Imagine IC exhibition.

In this publication, we will present the interactive installation developed, but we want to share our learning experience above all. We explored many different angles, concepts, and interaction mechanisms before making our decision. Of course, the decisions we made are not the only way to produce a layered, dynamic heritage presentation.

We investigated how different ways of presenting emotion networks could add value to the visitor experience. How can layered perspectives influence the thinking and behaviour of visitors in both an appealing and nuanced way? How do we ensure that the emotions expressed do not become overly dominant or “leading” during the visitor experience? And could we possibly capture how visitors’ emotions change under the influence of the installation and make such changes visible?

The need to increase understanding of everyday heritage interactions—among both heritage professionals and individual visitors—can be seen in the context of contemporary identity politics and polarisation, and their effects on our social fabric. While the professional heritage field often works with static ideas about communities, an approach that is sensitive to the dynamic, relational character of culture is also valuable. Additionally, we

believe that today's society would benefit greatly from becoming more "heritage literate"¹—that is, sensitive to the interplay between the interests and emotions surrounding heritage. Insight into the heritage formation process enables people to see that heritage—including the heritage they experience as "theirs"—is not something to be taken for granted. Inviting people to use their empathy and imagination and to adopt a critical attitude towards heritage is important. Cultivating an awareness of the various social dynamics that play a role within groups, and of one's own position within them, also plays a role in this.

Emotion networks

An emotion network is, in essence, a collection of everything that people think, feel and think about a thing. The term "emotion networks" was coined in 2013 by Hester Dibbits (Reinwardt Academy) and Marlous Willemsen (Imagine IC). Looking through the lens of an emotion network leads to increased "heritage literacy" and creates the possibility of investigating and defining meaning from multiple perspectives in an inclusive way. It not only enables people to see and understand multiple positions and points of view around heritage, but also to have a meaningful conversation about it. Dibbits: "Emotion networks means that everyone involved can hold up a mirror to themselves. What do I think, what does the other think, and what can or should I do with the other's point of view? [It is] an eye for the dynamics of culture²."

The role of heritage has traditionally consisted of affirming and creating a shared (local, national or international) identity. This means that heritage has frequently existed in the context of unambiguous stories, often based on a one-sided historical worldview. Yet, we increasingly see heritage as something that can continuously be reappraised, negotiated, and questioned based on fluctuating social and emotional contexts. It is, therefore, important that the field learns to tell heritage stories in a layered and inclusive way, and that it can find a balance between social cohesion and

critical reflection³. Heritage workers are well aware of this need, but are still searching for a way to deal with the complexity. How can we accommodate the different feelings people have about a certain subject? How can we involve the public in a dialogue? How can we ensure an inclusive approach to heritage?

In moderated group conversations, participants are invited to reflect on their feelings regarding a specific piece of heritage (such as a tradition, a monument or an object in a museum). What is this item and what do I think about it? What and how do others feel about it? And what can I or should I do with someone else's feelings? By mapping out the complex connections people have with heritage and with each other's feelings, we can identify and visualise the divergent feelings, insights, and interests that arise.

Emotion networking sessions can occur just about anywhere: in a classroom, in a museum or at a heritage location. They were originally developed for museum and heritage education (and are still mainly used in this field), but emotion networks also have a growing audience in other environments, like local communities, private companies and healthcare facilities.

A typical emotion networking session consists of a well-trained moderator, a group of participants, and a designated heritage item chosen either by the moderator or the participants. A session also includes certain necessary tools, like an emotion networking mind-map, various markers, and background information about the heritage item being discussed. The activities and tools are selected based on the group and the problem at hand.

During the session, participants are invited to talk about their feelings and actively listen to other participants. They are asked to keep an open mind and to set aside assumptions or judgments throughout the process. Through videos, documents, and other background information, the participants encounter varied (and occasionally contradictory) perspectives and historical or cultural contexts. Afterwards, in a process of joint reflection, participants

1 Dibbits, H. (2017). 'Uit de bubbel'. Erfgoedprofessionals in tijden van polarisatie. Boekman Extra 7, 12-17.

2 Dibbits, Hester. Erfgoed Magazine, nr 2, 2018. Blz 31-33

3 Hester Dibbits, 'Emotienetwerken: erfgoed- en burgerschapseducatie in de 21ste eeuw' Cultuur + Educatie 55.01, special Erfgoed en de omgang met emoties (gastred. P. de Bruijn en M. Huisman) (ter perse)

discuss whether or not the new knowledge has influenced the emotion network and, if so, how has it changed. During sessions with professionals, there is a period of meta-level reflection on what this says about the group and how it relates to previous sessions in different contexts and with different group compositions.

Interactive installation

For the development of our interactive installation, we used the Imagine IC collection as a starting point. The collection consists of objects that tell stories about everyday life in the big city, and more specifically, in Amsterdam Zuidooost (southeastern Amsterdam). Zuidooost, a diverse district wherein many cultures live together, is in state of constant flux. This social dynamic forms an interesting starting point for our research and serves as a relevant context for a heritage sector in transition. The team that Imagine IC and Waag put together to work on this project consisted of a co-curator, an educational employee, a concept developer, a designer, a software developer, and a project manager (to ensure that everything runs smoothly). Reinwardt Academy's emotion network team was also involved in the process at various times.

Four heritage items were selected by Imagine IC. The team chose recent objects about which many discussions have already occurred. This way, we knew in advance which parties involved should be invited and which different voices had already been investigated. We decided to make the heritage item selection ourselves in order to be able to test out the tools and possibilities optimally within the timeframe.

The heritage items selected were:

- An airplane fragment that tells a story about the Bijlmer Air Disaster.
- A folder with archive documents about the Zwart Beraad political movement.
- Objects from the Kempering parking garage that has since been demolished.
- An Angisa as part of the stories surrounding Koto clothing.

Phases of the development process

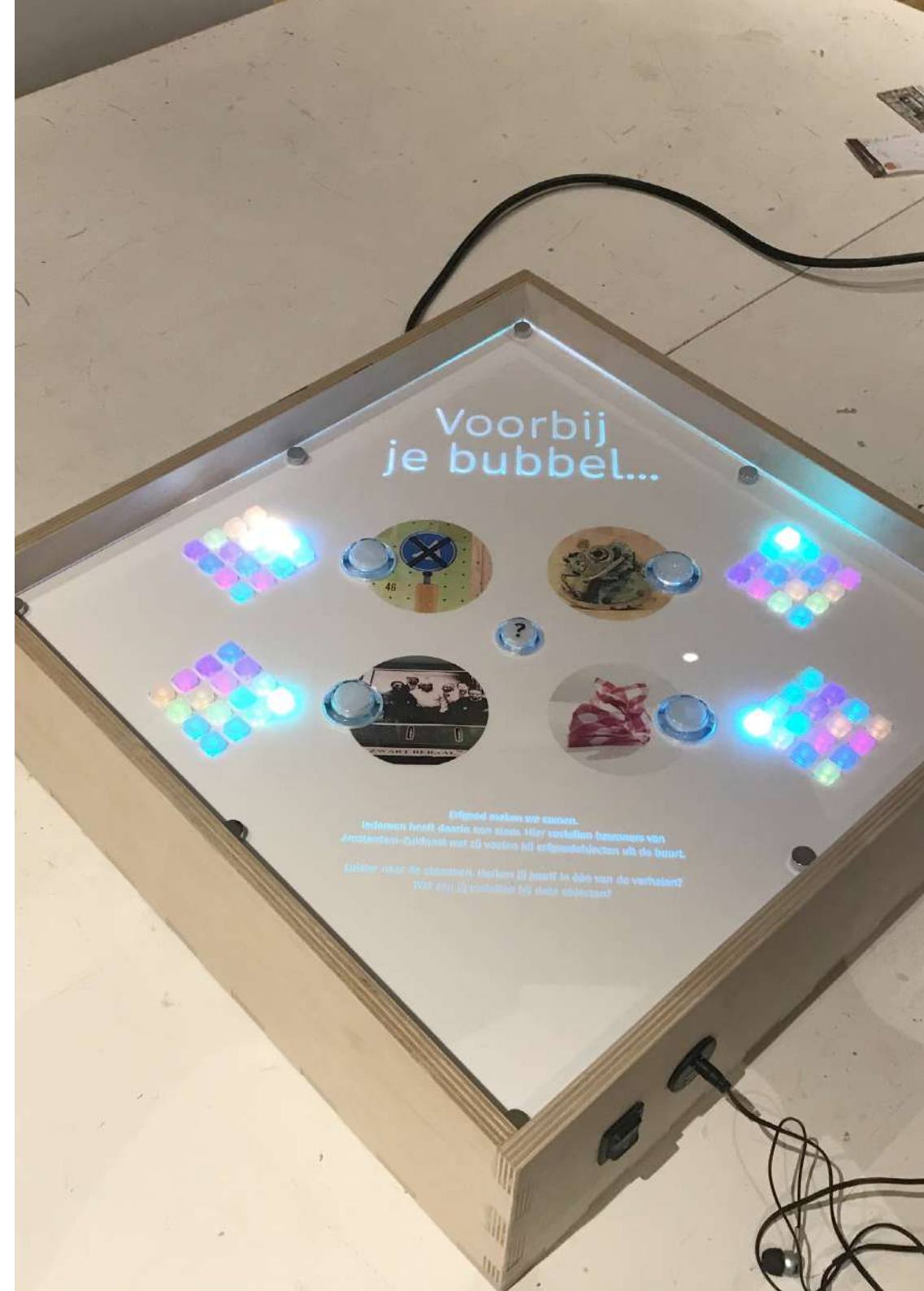
- 1** Design sessions with collection experts
setting expectations & goals; insights into storylines; desired visitor experience; exploration of concepts
- 2** Formulating and prioritising goals
Intended target groups; substantive goals; desired interaction and behaviour; physical form conditions
- 3** Designing concept directions
Playing: visitor as fellow player; Making: visitor as maker; Listening: visitor as researcher
- 4** Building and testing prototypes
Pen and paper testing; digital mock-ups; gathering insights; establishing design principles
- 5** Installation concept and design
Collect content; develop interaction & technology; develop design
- 6** Implementation
Online test phase; physical test phase; expert feedback session

In addition, relevant (external) stakeholders were approached, those who wanted to relate their story and their experience of the objects and subjects on display to the visitor. These parties discuss all four objects: they have a close relationship with some objects, while they have less of a relationship (or a different kind of relationship) with the other objects.

The items were chosen because they are objects that move people. They represent perspectives that do not always emerge or those that do not emerge willingly. At the same time, the goal is to reach beyond representing multiple voices, because emotion networks are more about exploring one's position on an idea and how that position might change. To move beyond presenting multiple voices, it is important that the visitors interacting with the stories can reflect on their own position and how that position might change within the emotion network.

During the first phase of the project, we explored different storylines. After that, the Waag team developed various interaction concepts that make use of different technologies and forms of media (like audio recordings or written responses from visitors). They provided insight into how the different combinations of media and technology work and whether or not they contribute to a layered experience of associations, opinions, and emotions. These concepts were visualised as paper prototypes and tested in a variety of ways.

In the final phase of the design, we created an interactive column with physical, luminous buttons that invite visitors to discover and listen to the different stories and emotions of others regarding a heritage object. In the audio clips, you hear local residents of Amsterdam Zuidoost talk about their personal feelings about the heritage items. In the following chapters, we discuss our development process and the choices we made in greater detail. The final chapter reflects on the possible follow-up steps in this research.





2

Insights from the development process

2. Insights from the development process

When you begin a journey with an ideal in mind, the path leading to it is rarely simple or straightforward—otherwise, we would be there already. The idea of transforming the results of emotion networking sessions into the material reality of an exhibition has been around for quite some time. The main challenge was in how to translate the essence of an active conversation into a “congealed” physical form, which can generate its own dynamics in turn. There was also the question of how we might place selected heritage items in a context that does justice to the different perspectives and sensitivities surrounding that specific item.

During a group conversation, you can sense the emotions of the participants (whether they are enthusiastic or upset) and can make adjustments when necessary. But in an interactive installation, you both give up control and risk that, as a heritage institution, you are guiding your choices in the message that you convey (either implicitly or explicitly) to the visitor. If we can deduce anything from the development process of this installation, it is that the user should have control over the experience. In order to foster an open and personal reflection in the user, the designer should ensure that as little as possible comes between the user and the original content. When asked about the added value of the installation, one of the experts who tested it said, “Your brain turns on. You actively connect with the subject. For instance, I can’t really remember the captions or signs right now. I remember what I heard in the installation because something was asked of me.” In the installation “Beyond your bubble” we start with the power of self-direction



and then play with curiosity and surprise to provide visitors with new perspectives of heritage items. We do this without guiding what you should think of the heritage objects. At the same time, those who tested the installation indicated they, in fact, expected a certain degree of direction from a heritage institution—an interesting dilemma.

In this chapter, we walk you through the different phases of our development process, sharing the various insights and issues we encountered along the way. Of course, this is not the only way to arrive at an inclusive heritage presentation, but one of the many possible ways to stretch (or burst) our bubbles. Experiments like these help move the discussion in the heritage sector forward and make us all a little more aware and sensitive to what is going on.

The following pages describe the selected heritage items included in the exhibition in more detail.

The design challenge

Understanding the core of emotion networks and how to translate an active conversation into a physical, interactive public installation.

Selected heritage items



Aircraft debris - Bijlmer Air Disaster

Here, we see a fragment of the cargo plane that crashed into the flats Groeneveen and Klein-Kruitberg in the Bijlmer on October 4, 1992. The disaster took the lives of many people and greatly impacted local residents. Neighbourhood worker, Toon Borst, created an archive collection so as not to forget the event. This fragment is part of that archive. Local residents recount what feelings the debris evokes in them. Which story moves you? How would you describe your feelings about the aircraft debris on display?



Records - Zwart Beraad

In front of us sits a folder containing articles about Zwart Beraad. The Zwart Beraad was created in the 1990s and was a "multicoloured" political emancipation movement. It was founded out of a dissatisfaction with the lack of diversity in important political positions. How do we feel when we look back on this period?

Selected heritage items



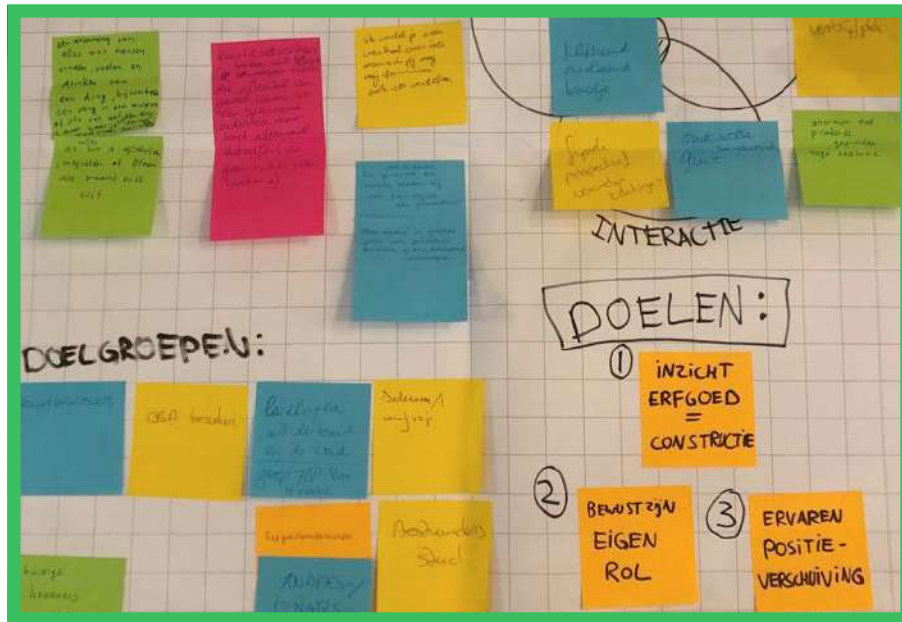
Objects from Kempering Parking Garage

Here, we see a height bar and road sign from the Kempering parking garage. The parking garage was part of the original design of the Bijlmermeer. The parking garage was built in 1971, but it was decided in 2019 that it would be torn down. On the one hand, there is a need for housing. But, on the other, there is nostalgia, outrage, and opposition to the demolition. When you take a good look at this object: what feelings does it evoke in you?



Angisa - Koto clothing

This is an angisa (created for Imagine IC by Willy Esajas in 2014). Angisas are headscarves that are folded and starched in various patterns and in various models. This model is called "Meet me at the corner". Some say that angisas have been carrying special messages as far back as the days of slavery. Today, angisas are worn on special occasions in combination with other traditional Surinamese clothes. Because of their associated colonial history, not everyone wants to wear them. What does this angisa mean to you?



Phase 1. Design sessions with collection experts

Mapping out types of emotions (feelings, opinions, points of view; recorded in the form of content and data) and examining how the individual visitor might explore these emotions, challenge their own position, or possibly change their position after exploring an object.

Design steps:

- Explore expectations and goals
- Gain insight into storylines within the collection
- Develop intended visitor experience
- Explore first concept directions

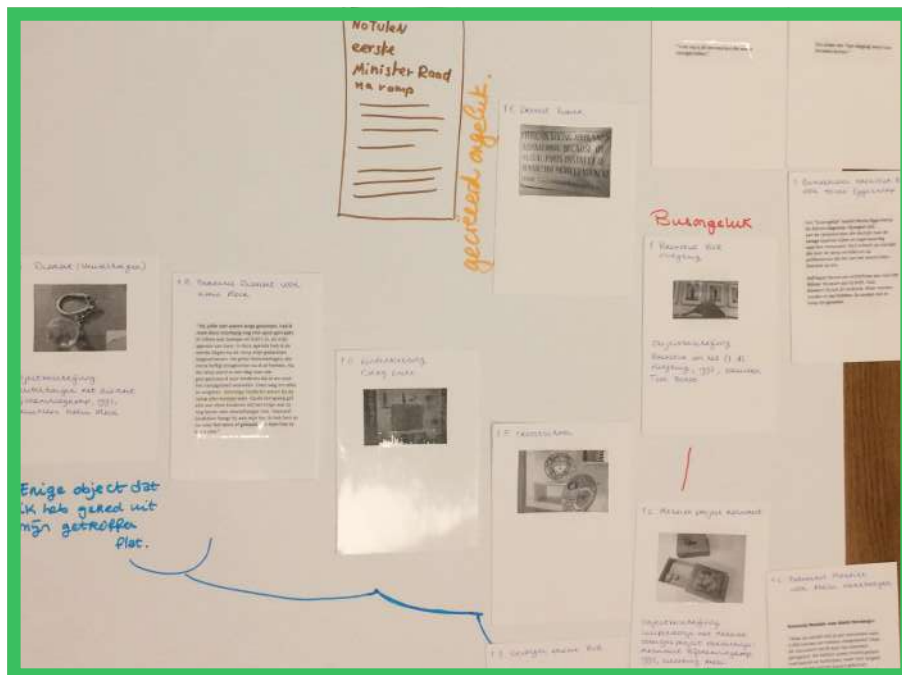
Important questions in this phase are:

How do we make emotion networks more concrete? What are they? And what do they do? Why does it all seem so abstract? How does it differ from multiple perspectives?

Emotion networks are about the interaction and activation that arises when multiple perspectives are introduced. We know that something happens—something shifts among participants during sessions. Can this same shift happen after these emotions have been recorded and become “solidified” in the form of a physical installation? Is recreating this atmosphere feasible, or does one need an actual conversation with someone for this to occur? Do you need someone looking at you, asking questions, and listening to you?

Insights

The abstract concept of emotion networks (and the passion of the experts involved) made us want a lot in the beginning. We wanted to experience, to inform, to move, to challenge, to educate. By working with concrete example storylines from the collection, we were able to drop some of our sub-goals and move forward together in the installation’s concept development. Only by working in the concrete can you feel when something does or does not work or when something is still too abstract. Eventually, the network of emotions and stories surrounding a heritage object



becomes visible. Successful targeted concept development relies on gaining insight into the collection of the various stories that you have access to. Will these stories allow people to form a complete, nuanced picture for themselves? Or do they just further confirm biases?

Phase 2. Formulating and prioritising goals

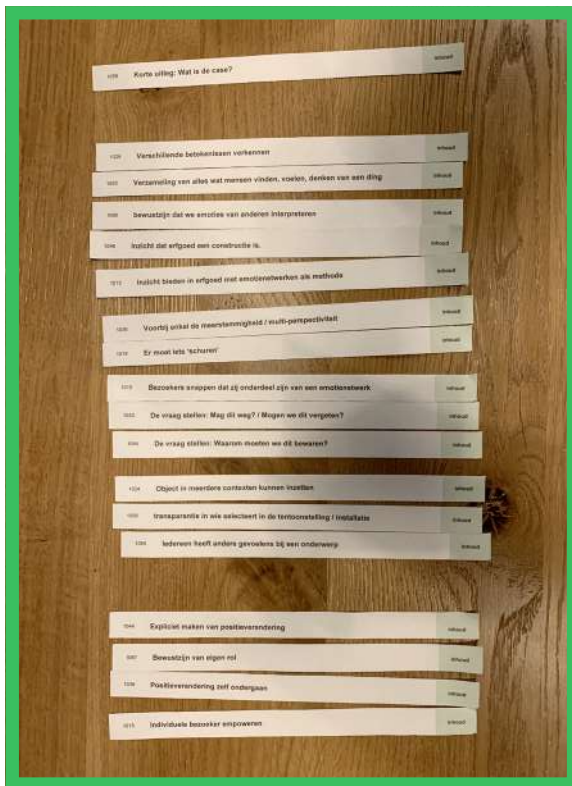
- Intended target group
- Substantive goals
- Desired interactions and behaviours
- Physical form conditions

Important questions in this phase are:

How do you translate an active conversation into an interactive presentation? What is the intended visitor experience? Do we want to recreate the experience of being in a room during an emotion networking session? Or can we focus on the deeper essence of the method, separate

Photos (left & right):

During one of the first co-creation sessions, we used a range of provocative statements on content and form of interaction in order to create a contextual baseline for the installation in terms of design values.



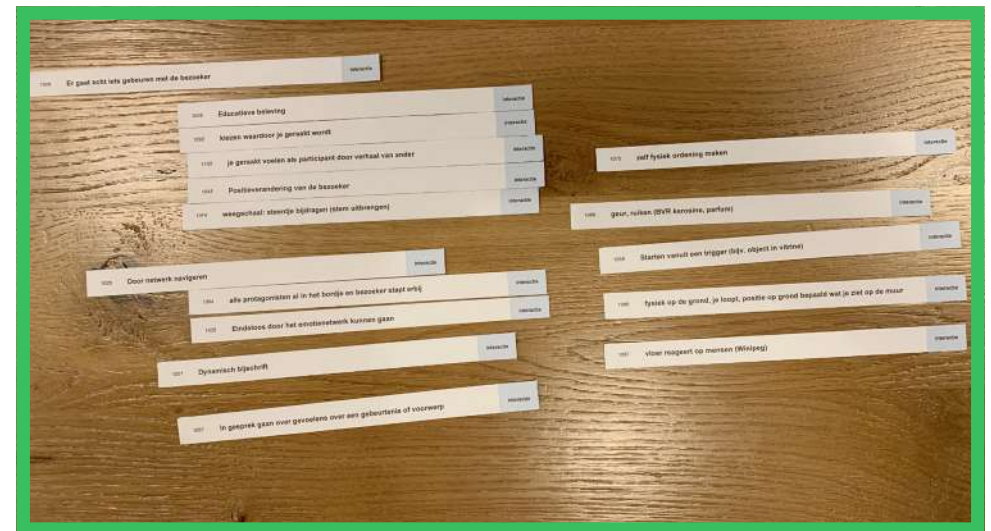
from the conversation? Do you create a linear walkthrough with the goal of changing the visitor's position on the matter? Does anyone actually need to change their position? Is it even possible within such a short visitation time? Or does it take longer?

Insights

However much you might want to achieve as a group, whatever you might come up with at the drawing board, the question remains: how will this work in practice for people? What is feasible? You can only find this out through testing assumptions as quickly as possible.

For instance, we initially wanted to measure and visualise changes in position, but we realised after a few prototype tests that this was counterproductive. This caused participants to feel that the installation was actively trying to change their opinions, so visitors either became less open-minded or just dug their heels in further.

We subsequently opted for a more open, non-linear approach to our design, one in which participants were able to explore the content freely and at their own pace. In this version, only the diversity of perspectives and questions encouraged any possible change and awareness.



Phase 3. Design concept directions

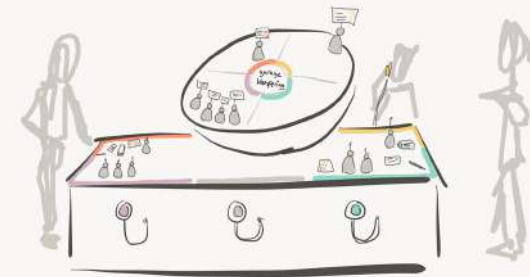
- Playing: visitor as fellow player
- Making: visitor as maker
- Listening: visitor as researcher



The other side of the story

Changing the perspective of the exhibition: distinct and dynamic. The visitor is a maker and influences the exhibition for subsequent visitors by flipping captions.

Bijlmer in Balans



Bijlmer in Balance

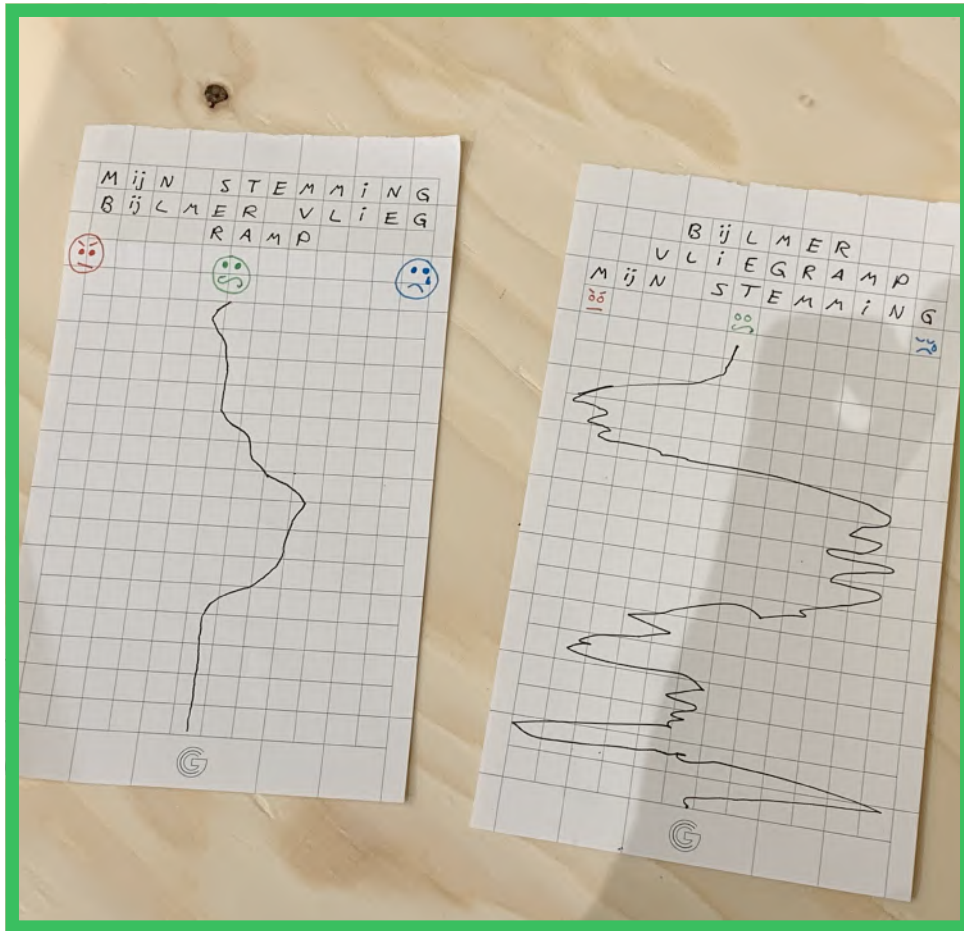
Physical visualisation of an emotion network: a positional game. Visitors are fellow players and place their own experiences on the balancing platform.

GEVOELEN ROND de Bijlmer vliegramp 1992



Feelings around

Focus on the feeling and the voice: one central question. The visitor is a researcher. By turning a radio dial, you can listen to different perspectives on the heritage object and figure out your own position.



Insights

You may experience anger for many reasons: because of a memory an object awakens in you, how something is represented in the display case, or perhaps just because you are having a bad day. For this reason, a data visualisation of emotions does not do justice to the actual feelings associated with a heritage item.

In several user tests, we found that hearing from another person actually reaches the user better than reading or looking at a diagram. It became increasingly clear that we, as makers, should interfere as little as possible the interpretation or translation of an idea into a presentation.

Of course, you cannot avoid making choices. How do you choose the display cases? Why do you choose these specific objects? We had to make choices about how to cut the interviews (which might range from 30 minutes to more than an hour) and which clips to include. In our attempt to provide the widest possible selection of voices with a variety of perspectives, we had to make choices about who gets to speak. It is important to be transparent about these choices as a designer (both in the development process as well as to the end user).

Important questions in this phase are:

Do we choose to interpret and visualise the layering that we have identified ourselves?

The goal of the installation is to provide people with the opportunity to listen to perspectives outside of their bubble. Can we visualise the emotions someone in the network is experiencing? Do we put a "label" on someone's expression? Could feelings be indicated by a single word or an emoji? The explanation of why someone feels the way they do is perhaps more valuable than identifying the emotion itself.



Phase 4. Building and testing prototypes

- Pen and paper tests
- Digital mock-ups
- Collect insights
- Establish design principles

Important questions in this phase are:

Should we choose an analog or digital interface?

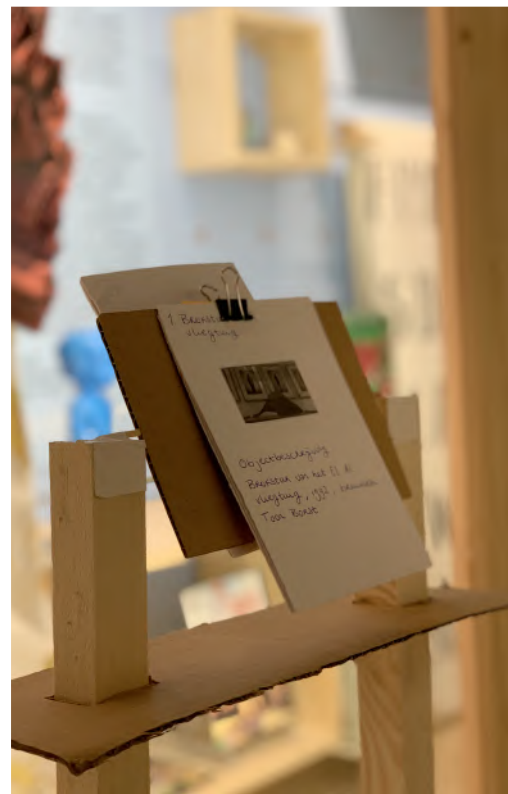
Often, it is the interface you interact with that hinders you from allowing yourself to be moved. How you receive information is important. How do we want the user to move through the exhibit? Do we want people to navigate an emotion network on a screen? Or do we want to ask them questions and present choices in a quiz format? The emphasis might then be placed on understanding or learning to see things differently.

Insights

After a few simple tests, we realised that people don't connect well with their feelings when they are interacting with a screen. They have, of course, already been on their smartphone all day. Putting a screen in the exhibition space seems to distract from what really matters. We chose to allow the actual voices from interviews with local residents be heard via pressing buttons or turning dials (clear, tactile interfaces). As an audience, you can view the physical object in the display case (not at a screen) while listening to the interviews. This leaves more room for really listening, really seeing, and really feeling what the experience does to you.

Form and interpretation

The form you choose can very quickly imply an interpretation. For example, let's imagine a sign with two sides that you can flip to hear or read "the other side of the story". In this example, we indicate not only that there are two or more sides, but also that these sides appear to be in opposition to each other. But we want to prevent polarisation.





Which fragments do you put side by side? Which do you place opposite each other? How do you label them? Which colour? What is the ratio of voices that you allow to speak? How do you arrive at a representative balance of gender, age, and background? Do you do justice to the interviewee's story with your selection? Or do you select certain parts because they may have an effect on the listener (while the actual story is more nuanced)? These are all things you should not lose sight of during the design process.

Phase 5. Installation concept and design

- Collect content
- Develop interaction and technology
- Create design

The final design is an interactive listening installation that can be placed at the entrance of an exhibition or near a specific display case. The installation can be operated by several people at the same time and can be listened to via headphones. It can also be used in a workshop setting and can easily be packed to bring along to emotion networking sessions on location.

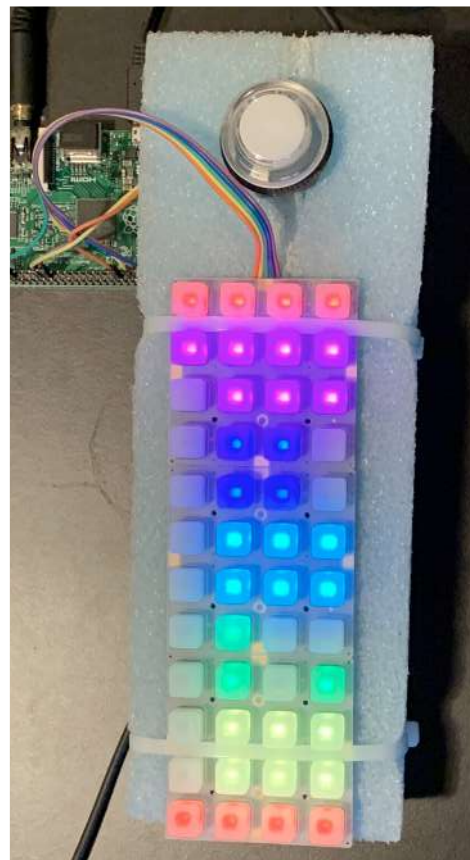
Beyond your bubble

Heritage is something we create together. And everyone has a say in it. Here, residents of Amsterdam-Zuidoost explain how they feel about heritage objects from their neighbourhood.

Listen to the voices

- Press the round button next to a photo to hear about what we are looking at.
- Press the small square buttons to hear how local residents feel about this heritage object.
- Do you recognise yourself in one of these stories? What might you say about these objects? Write it on a post-it and share it on the board opposite.





Important questions in this phase are:

What does participating in emotion networks do to participants? And to what aim? Is it the change in position that you as a participant might undergo? Why might you, as someone listening to the installation, change your position if you're not a member of the other group? During an actual emotion networking session, you occasionally witness other participants' shifting emotions and positions firsthand, which makes you reconsider your own position. Are the makers' choices and perspectives also clear and transparent for the end users of the installation?

Insights

After observation and feedback from participants from the user tests (and participating in emotion networking sessions ourselves), we gained more and more insight. Perhaps you are not necessarily undergoing a change in position, but simply gaining more awareness? This awareness feeds into the position you might take regarding a heritage object. Prior to gaining this awareness, you might not have had the knowledge to form a clear opinion about a certain heritage object. Now you can hear others talk about what that object means to them. The important thing isn't suddenly feeling like you must radically change your position (or feeling like you've been proven right), but in enriching how you look at something. Grey areas take on colour when you are willing to listen.

Listen with an open mind

The buttons in the installation are deliberately not labeled with the person's name or background. Instead, the luminous buttons have a specific colour attached to a specific voice, so you can hear what the same person has to say about multiple objects. The colour red was deliberately avoided because it is often associated with angry or negative emotions. Some fragments are short while others are long. And you can't see how much longer you have to listen before you reach the end of the fragment.

The element of surprise this creates in the installation ensures that the listener steps into it with fewer inhibitions. It gives rise to the possibility that you might suddenly be listening to someone you wouldn't have otherwise bothered listening to. This is the built-in randomness that helps visitors step out of their bubbles.

Phase 6. Implementation

- Online test phase
- Physical test phase
- Expert feedback session

Important questions in this phase are:

What role do you play as an exhibition maker or curator? How do you present factual information about a heritage item? What are the facts? When should you take a standpoint as a curator? How do we put people in motion? What questions should you ask? Does it make sense to remain “detached” or leave things “unsaid”, and is it even possible? When we ask people with whom they agree or disagree, are we encouraging polarisation and compartmentalisation? That isn't the purpose of the installation. What is your responsibility as a heritage institution and when should you take a step back to create space for other perspectives? Iteratively testing and questioning the visitor experience can provide direction for further development.

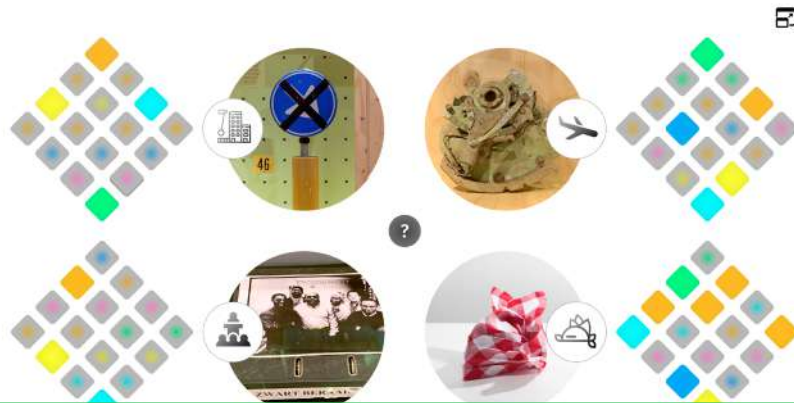
The realities of 2020 seriously interfered with our design process. Due to COVID-19, it was impossible for several months to continue testing out our ideas. Nevertheless, this intermediate phase provided us with a lot of insight. We decided to translate the installation into a digital test environment so we could collect feedback from a large group of users from a safe distance. While this could not account for all aspects of the installation, it provided feedback on how the content of the installation was used. We supplemented this with “observational tests” wherein we observed remotely (via video) while the visitor interacted with the online installation. We tested the prototype in its physical form throughout the month of September.





Gemengde gevoelens

Erfgoed maken we samen. Iedereen heeft daarin een stem. Hier vertellen buurtbewoners van Amsterdam Zuidoost wat zij voelen bij (beladen) erfgoedobjecten. Luister naar de stemmen uit de buurt. Door wie word jij geraakt?



Gemengde gevoelens

Erfgoed maken we samen. Iedereen heeft daarin een stem. Hier vertellen buurtbewoners van de Bijlmer wat zij voelen bij (beladen) erfgoedobjecten. Luister naar de stemmen uit de buurt. Door wie word jij geraakt?

Wat zegt jouw gevoel?

Wat vind jij dat er verteld moet worden bij deze objecten? Wie geef jij het woord?

- Zet een stem aan of uit door erop te klikken.
- Dubbelklik om een fragment individueel te beluisteren.
- Klik op de ronde knop om je selectie van stemmen af te spelen.



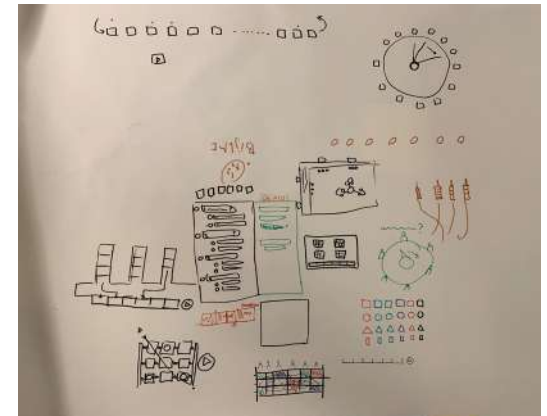
Insights

We opted for a neutral, factual description of the objects. This description allows enough space for differing positions within the emotion network without pushing the reader towards seeing the heritage object with a one-sided view.

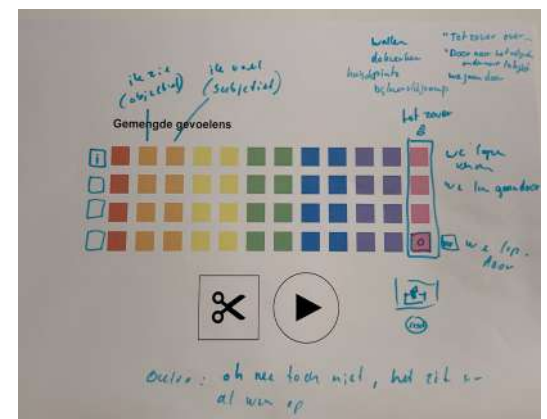
An accessible way to open visitors up to the realisation that everyone sees things differently is simply asking the question we posed during the interviews: what do you see? First, we let visitors hear short excerpts from the different speakers from the installation, in which they describe the heritage object. Afterwards, we present factual information about the object. Then visitors can hear the interviewees' stories about how the object makes them feel.

Asking too much

In an earlier concept (one we did not complete), the idea was to frame all of the audio fragments in a podcast format (called "Mixed Feelings"). In this concept, the user selects which audio fragments will be heard in the podcast.



After conducting online user testing and observational tests, we determined that this was a step too far. People aren't ready to choose which stories make the cut. They need time to take in the audio fragments first. To immediately push the user into the role of curator was too much to ask within the context of this installation.



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Expert feedback session

Due to the safety measures surrounding COVID-19, the installation (which is equipped with headphones and physical buttons to press) is not yet available to the public. During individual test sessions, however, we asked six experts from the heritage sector to conduct a critical assessment of the physical installation, “Beyond Your Bubble” and provide their feedback and the possibilities they see for this installation. The following is a selection of their feedback.

Caroline, educational advisor for heritage education:

“Very nice! I like the diversity of the Bijlmer. And the fact that the collection was put together by people from the neighbourhood. And that you hear from those people! I really could have listened to it for another hour!”

“I think the goal is to turn your brain on and actively engage with the subject. I really can’t remember the captions right now. I remember what I heard in the installation, because something was asked of me.”

“I liked hearing opinions I didn’t expect, things that I wouldn’t have come up with myself.”

“I would play this in the classroom. First, I would ask the students to think about what they think of the object. Then, after listening to the fragments, I would ask if their opinion has changed.”

Mirjam, Amsterdam City Archives:

“I imagine it would work well to start a conversation. But then you should do it with someone else. That’s more fun than listening by yourself.”

“I think it’s exciting that you have to look at things in a completely different way. But it is still very passive. I’d rather say something aloud than write it on a post-it note. There really needs to be a clearer follow-up action for this installation.”

Dorien, educational advisor for heritage education:

"Having to engage with it yourself adds a lot of value. You have to relate to it that way. The question after each introduction works. You are put in motion. You are moved beyond your own initial assumptions."

Eline, Imagine IC Education:

"The installation mainly raises more questions, but also piques interest. It asks you to investigate the various layers of an object. It attempts to connect that directly to your own feelings and point of view, so that you can look at your own feelings in the mirror."

Jule, Heritage Lab Coordinator at Reinwardt Academy

"The installation enriches the objects and makes them feel more tangible. I can understand the stories better and view them through other perspectives. This was especially the case with the debris from the Bijlmer Air Disaster."

"You wouldn't be reading these stories if it were presented in text. And an audio tour is often only from one perspective."

"I would really like it if you, as a visitor, could record and add your own story."



"I think it really provides greater insight into this specific neighbourhood. The fact that you are working with these different perspectives forces you to confront them. You are forced to hear different voices."

Paul Knevel, historian, University of Amsterdam

"You can feel the collision with the museum experience."

"As a visitor, I want to understand things myself. This is kind of a research tool now. I would expect this sort of thing in more of a lab setting than in the context of a museum."

"Because you don't know what you're going to hear, the installation gives you the opportunity to hear multiple voices, which is a strength. But I would edit the audio even more. People don't get to see a face, which gives them the opportunity to listen without prejudice."

"I would make a clearer link to questions from your own life, in order to connect with younger generations or people living outside the Bijlmer who might not know about these objects. Then the installation would better fulfil the function of generating involvement and meaning-making."



The background is a solid green color. It features several white circles of different sizes. Some circles are solid, while others are defined by a dotted line. A large solid white circle is in the center-left, containing the text 'Further development'. Above it and to the left is a dotted circle containing the number '3'. There are also other dotted circles and solid white circles scattered around the page.

3

Further development

3. Further development

Harvesting emotions

The primary purpose of this installation is to offer the different perspectives of a heritage object. In the installation you are allowed to choose what you listen to, for how long, and in what order. We know that this setup affects people in some way, and we know that it's valuable for others to see how it affects other visitors. How can we better understand this impact? How can we create space for visitors' stories and not just for the "chosen" voices already in the installation?

For this project, we ultimately opted for allowing visitors to write on post-it notes. But we also see this as a bit of a style break between the two forms of interaction (digital and analog). It could be interesting to offer the possibility of allowing people to record their own audio fragments for other visitors to hear. This, however, wasn't feasible within the technical and editorial scope of this project. As an institution, you also want to keep in mind the responsibility you have to keep an eye on the content you're offering and be able to edit it. In this way, you can create space for multiple voices without damaging yourself unnecessarily with raw expressions. Having the post-it notes visible on a public board means that it's easier to filter out the serious comments from the "spam" comments.

The audio clip collection could also be expanded by interviewing visitors during planned "collective meetings" over the course of the exhibition. In this way, the heritage discussion keeps moving.

Multiple users at the same time?

The question of how one can translate the emotion networks method into an installation for multiple users simultaneously, or into a form that facilitates conversations between visitors, remains an interesting one. While this is certainly possible in its current form, this concept has not yet been cast in a fixed form. You can certainly listen to the excerpts with another person and talk about what you write on the post-it notes, but if these interactions remain open-ended.

In the concept development phase, we also considered presentations wherein multiple users could operate the installation around a table. This creates opportunities for negotiation about what users will listen to, or what might be included in a podcast, for example, by working with physical blocks that you then place on a “timeline” of the podcast. Because the installation for this project is located in a public space with an entrance and an exit, adding these kinds of separate interactions wasn’t an option. In a different context, however, this might encourage visitors to build together, construct a network of emotions, and be more playful with heritage.

Generic usability

The installation was designed in such a way that one can easily swap out heritage objects, so it could be used in multiple contexts and exhibitions. There is space for four objects (four photos) and sixteen audio clips per object. These photos can be swapped out, as can the audio fragments. The rest of the installation is kept as neutral as possible.

Installation or tool?

The use of the installation in emotion networking sessions can provide participants with new knowledge. Stakeholders who cannot be there, for instance, can make their voices heard. It is, therefore, also a tool that the moderator can bring along and use on location, either inside or outside (e.g. an onsite conversation, outdoors, at market square, near a statue, etc.). The installation was already designed to be “mobile” with this purpose in mind, but we have not yet investigated this avenue.

In time, one might also think of introducing images, smells, and other information. For now, it’s only voices.

Voice or conversation?

An emotion networking session is a form of active conversation. In the installation, interview fragments have been distilled from these sessions to clarify the participants’ emotions, opinions, and points of view. These distillations are then linked to the exhibition. In the long run, the installation could make all of the data collected during emotion networking sessions available. Provided participants agree, this could mean sharing the conversation conducted, the associated interactions, and creating a visualisation of any shifts in position.

We intend to further investigate these and other questions in various upcoming national and international collaborations.

