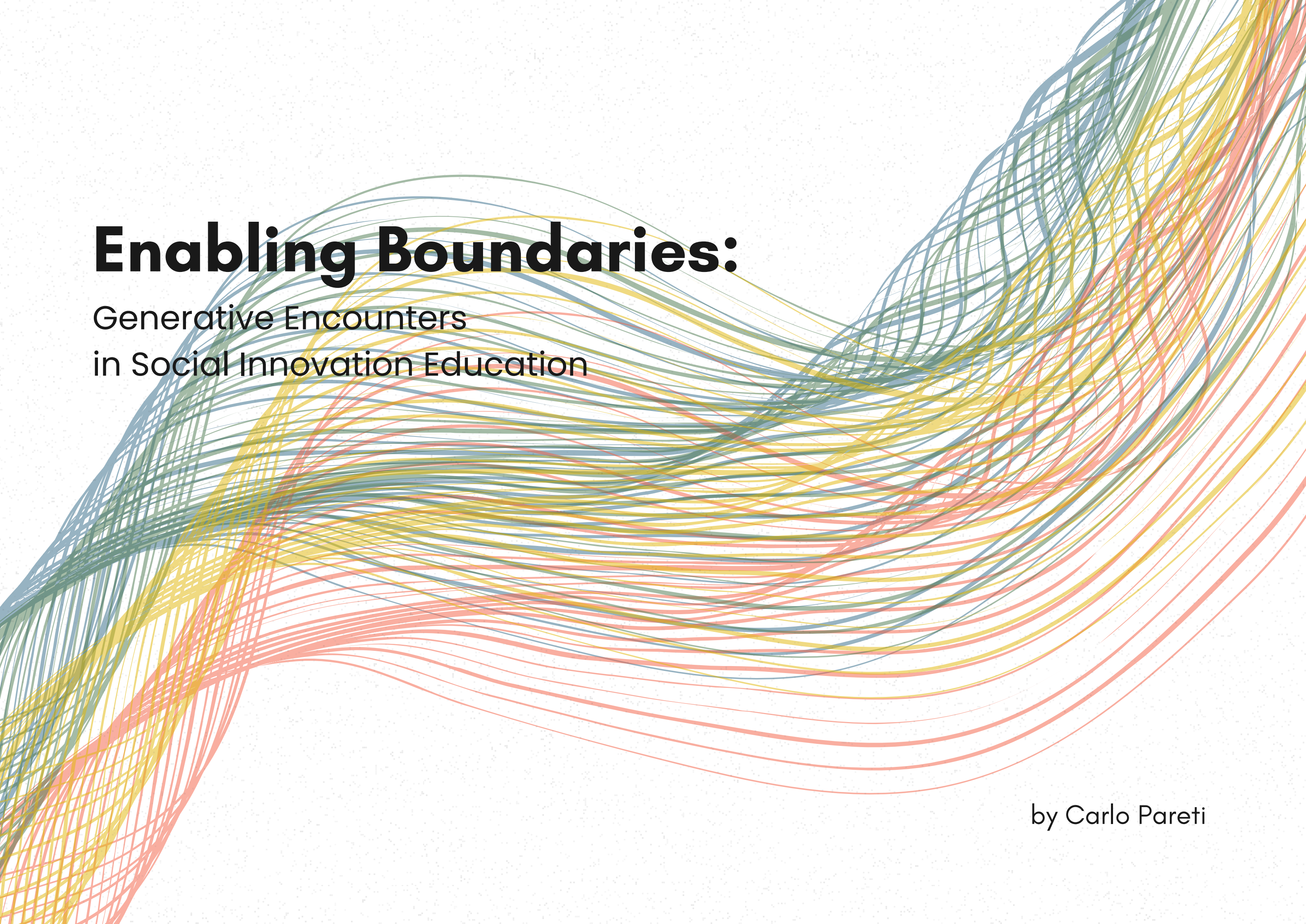




Enabling Boundaries:

Generative Encounters
in Social Innovation Education

by Carlo Pareti

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Enabling Boundaries:

Generative Encounters

in Social Innovation Education

A lot of energy in higher education today goes toward societal impact, and in the universities of applied sciences especially it sits close to the centre of what the education is for – these are programmes built on the idea that students learn most by taking what they study out into real contexts, with real people and real stakes. It is one of the more widely shared ambitions in the field at the moment, and for good reason.

What I keep noticing is that this ambition is much clearer at the level of the mission than at the level of the single student. Programmes are good at opening students to the scale of the challenges – at helping them understand complexity, trace causes and effects, see what is unjust. They are far less reliable when it comes to the smaller and harder thing that comes next: helping a particular student work out where, and in which context, their own acting might have value – for the challenge, and for what they themselves care about. Understanding a complex problem is one thing. Finding the specific place where you might step into it, with your own intentions and capabilities, is something else, and programmes rarely uncover that part, partly because it brings real difficulty with it.

This is sharpest in Social Innovation, where acting on complex social realities is the whole point of the education, and where there is an especially rich language for making sense of those realities. It is also the ground I write from. I came to the Social Innovation track at Breda University of Applied Sciences first as a

student, between 2019 and 2022, and came back this past year as a tutor. So I have met this difficulty from both sides – in students who arrive caring deeply and then struggle to find where to actually begin, and in myself, since I lived the same struggle and have not fully left it behind. Even now I find it hard, at times, to connect the systemic, meta-level understanding that Social Innovation does so well with the concrete, situated doing that comes with choosing where and how to act. This is the terrain my research departs from, and I take it up as my graduation project for the Master Education in Arts at the Piet Zwart Institute.

The main question this project settled on is: ***How can enabling boundaries support Social Innovation students in locating themselves as practitioners within the field they are entering?***

By locating themselves as practitioners I mean something specific: the move of finding a position from which to act – the space between holding an urgency about the world and developing the agency to act within it. It is close to what Lave and Wenger call legitimate peripheral participation: the way newcomers enter a practice from its edges, taking part in it before they fully belong, and learning the practice by doing so (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

The research takes shape through making: a participatory archive of Social Innovation projects made by students and alumni of the programme, co-created with them, and utilized through activations in which students meet the practice of others as a constitutive step in discovering their own. The archive's design and the protocols for its activations are documented in a companion Facilitation Guide, which accompanies this thesis as a usable resource for educators and students continuing to work with the archive. I hope this thesis – and especially the archive –

will be of relevance to the community it comes from, with whom and for whom it is being made, and to educators working in adjacent territory: socially engaged projects and other practices in which learning is held in close relation to the contexts and people it serves.

What this research keeps returning to – in the problem, in the archive, and in how the archive is facilitated – is what I have come to call *enabling boundaries*: conditions specific enough to orient practice without foreclosing what it might become. The argument the thesis develops is that locating oneself as a practitioner depends on the right kind of structure – boundaries that orient without deciding the outcome.

The field this works in – social innovation, communities of practice, how someone comes to act within them – could be studied at a distance, observed and analysed the way much social science proceeds. What makes this an art education project is how the inquiry itself takes shape: *through making*. I built things – the archive, the situated encounters through which it comes alive – together with students. It was in the building, and in being there as others used what was being made, that I came to understand what I now claim. What in the arts is called *research-creation* names this way of working, and I set out what it meant in the methodology that follows. There is a coherence in it I have come to value: the thesis argues that students come into their practice through doing, and the research that makes that argument proceeds the same way.

The Social Innovation programme

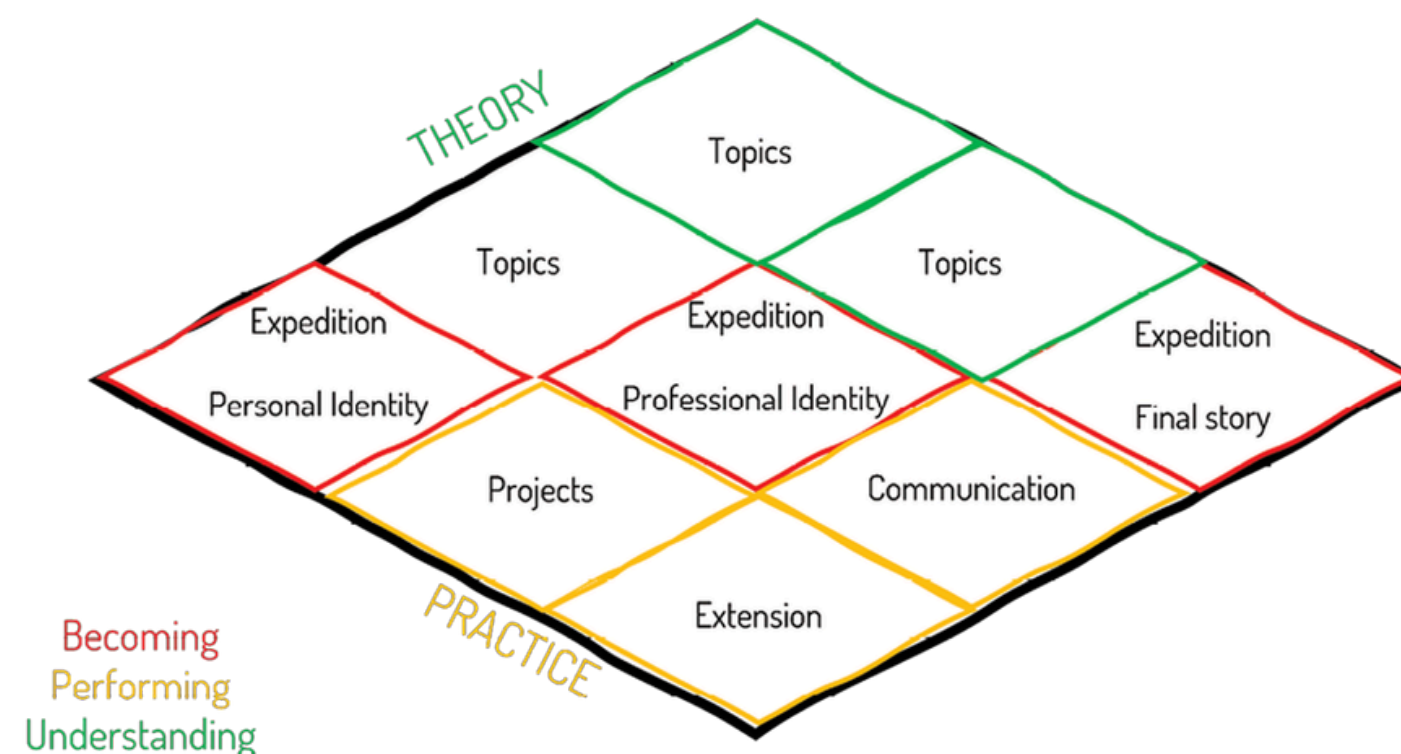
Even if you are familiar with the Dutch HBO context, this kind of programme structure probably needs some explanation. The Performatory¹ operates within Breda University of Applied Sciences as a Social Innovation specialisation across multiple bachelor programmes – Leisure and Event Management, Tourism Management, and Facility Management. It is a three-year specialisation starting in year two of the four-year bachelor structure, accredited within the standard HBO framework, and its curriculum is organised around labs and live projects rather than fixed courses with weekly lectures and timed deliverables.

Students take ownership of their own learning trajectories, accumulating credits through participation in practice-based projects, writing reflections grounded in content-driven topic labs, and following practice-based research trajectories – the Final Expedition is the graduation project itself, while the Personal and Professional Expeditions build toward students' *becoming* over the course of the programme. This is not how most Dutch HBO programmes are designed, and the freedom I have just described is unusual within the national context.

The programme's pedagogical architecture is structured around three orientations: *Becoming*, *Performing*, and *Understanding*. Theory enters through topics – content-driven sessions clustered around themes the students engage with conceptually. Practice enters through real life projects and collaborations – through embedded work students do in real contexts with real partners. The design intent of this pedagogical framework is for the three orientations to continuously feed into one-another:

¹The community is called the Performatory – a portmanteau of *performance* and *laboratory*, naming the programme as a space where social innovation practice is rehearsed, tested, and performed in live conditions (Performatory.nl).

Understanding without *Performing* remains representational; *Performing* without *Becoming* remains technical; *Becoming* without *Understanding* remains intuitive. The programme as designed is, in many ways, aligned with what this research investigates as necessary conditions – open-ended, embedded, oriented toward students becoming practitioners rather than absorbing a curriculum.



Social Innovation as we frame it at BUas leans on several meaningful frameworks – TRANSIT's Transformative Social Innovation (TSI), Systems thinking and Systems Practice (drawing on IDEO and +Acumen Academy's Systems Practice course), Theory of Change and the Two Loop Model of system change developed by Berkana Institute, and the work on energising networks done in Wageningen University. These are powerful, well-established frameworks that locate the Performatory within a wider field of socially engaged and transformative practice.

They give students a vocabulary for what is going on at scale, for identifying actors, for tracing causes, for naming the field.

Much of what Performatory students do, in practice, sits closer to socially engaged practice than to Transformative Social Innovation in the TRANSIT sense. Yet what gets named, evaluated, and made legible within the curriculum tends to be the latter. This gap – between the language available to describe Social Innovative work and the Socially engaged projects students are doing – is part of what makes Performatory interesting as a teaching context, and part of what this research investigates.

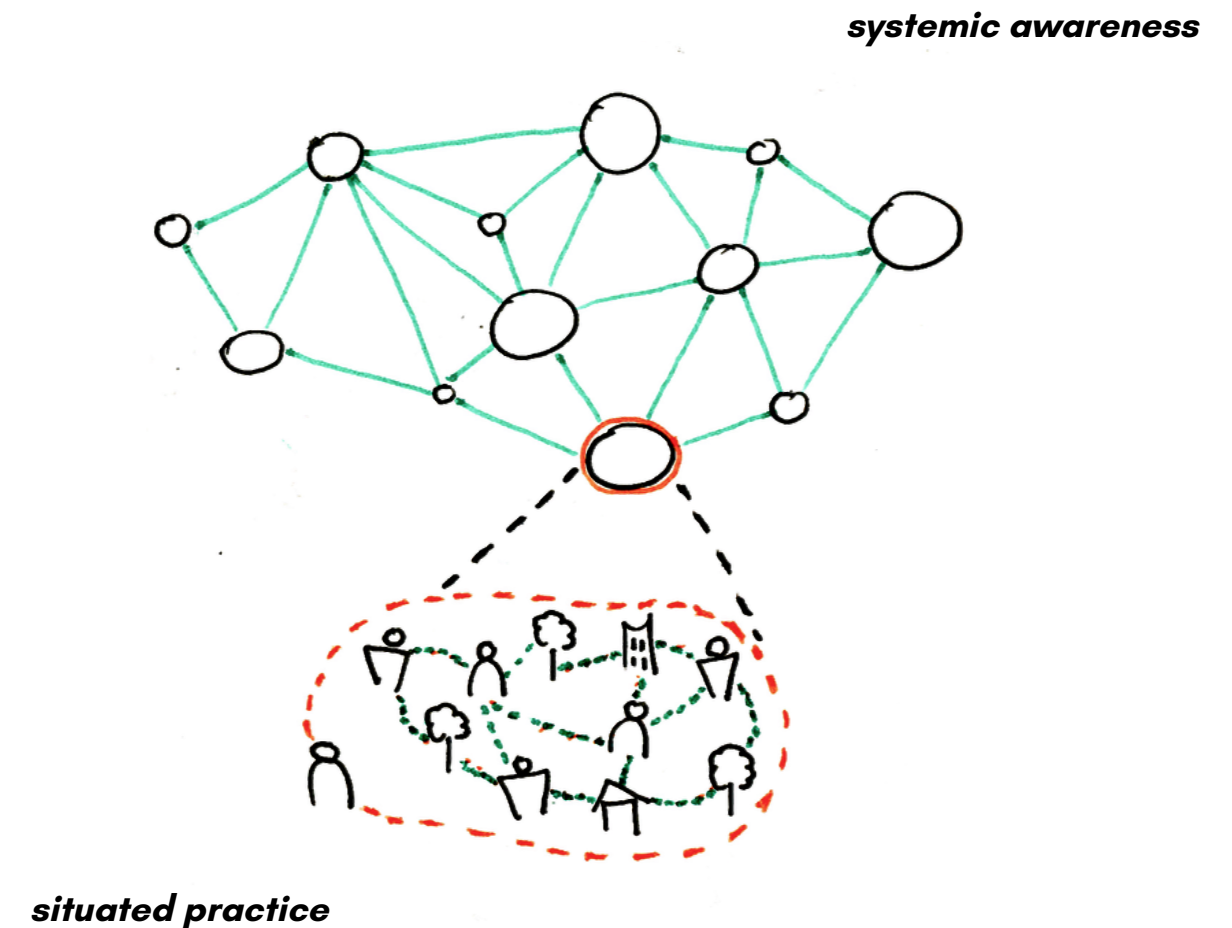
The gap between urgency and agency

One afternoon a student, reflecting on the TRANSIT framework's emphasis on upstream causes, asked: *"But shouldn't we be acting at the root of the system?"* The question was right. And it was, in that moment, paralyzing. The scale implied by "upstream" and "systemic" had crowded out any sense of where one person, in one specific context, might actually begin.

That moment names the difficulty precisely. The systemic framing the curriculum offers is intellectually necessary, but it can also, paradoxically, distance students from the situated and the actionable – the more fully someone grasps the scale and complexity of a problem, the harder it can become to locate themselves within it. The struggle is not with commitment; it is with the distance between a felt urgency and any concrete sense of where to act on it.

The more I kept noticing this – across labs, across classes, across conversations with students carrying clear urgencies and struggling to translate them into action – the more I began to read it structurally rather than individually. This was not any

specific student failing to engage. It was happening at the level of the conditions under which a student could come into contact with the field as something situated – specific people doing specific work in specific places – rather than as a generalised landscape to be analysed from the outside.



What this research investigates and its structure

It is within this context that this research takes shape. While Performatory's intentions are largely aligned with what supporting situated practice would require, what I am investigating within this graduation project is what makes the difficulty so persistent, and what conditions might support students in locating themselves within the many forms Social Innovation practice takes.

Chapter One develops an analysis of what produces the difficulty I have just introduced – drawing on Social Practice Theory and three lines of pedagogical thinking that, taken together, name the difficulty as epistemic rather than motivational.

Chapter Two takes up the practice-based response: the participatory making of the Performatory Archive, the facilitated activations through which it has been put into use, and the conceptual articulation of what the archive is doing as a pedagogical form.

Chapter Three introduces the *Performatory Archive – Facilitation Guide* that accompanies this thesis as a usable resource, situating it within the research and pointing the reader toward its content.

The Conclusion returns to the gap the introduction names, asking what the archive and its activations now allow me to say about the generative power of enabling boundaries, and where the inquiry might lead next.

The Methodology chapter ahead shares what my research approach has been, defining the methods used and the research questions that have structured this graduation project.

Methodology

Methodology

This research integrates theoretical and practice-based inquiry. The theoretical inquiry is developed in *Chapter One*, the practice-based inquiry in *Chapter Two*, and the two feed each other throughout – what I read shapes what I make, and what I make produces what the writing can then argue. What the practice-based inquiry produces is handed forward in *Chapter Three*, the Facilitation Guide, as a usable resource – the form this research takes as an artefact beyond the written argument.

Research questions

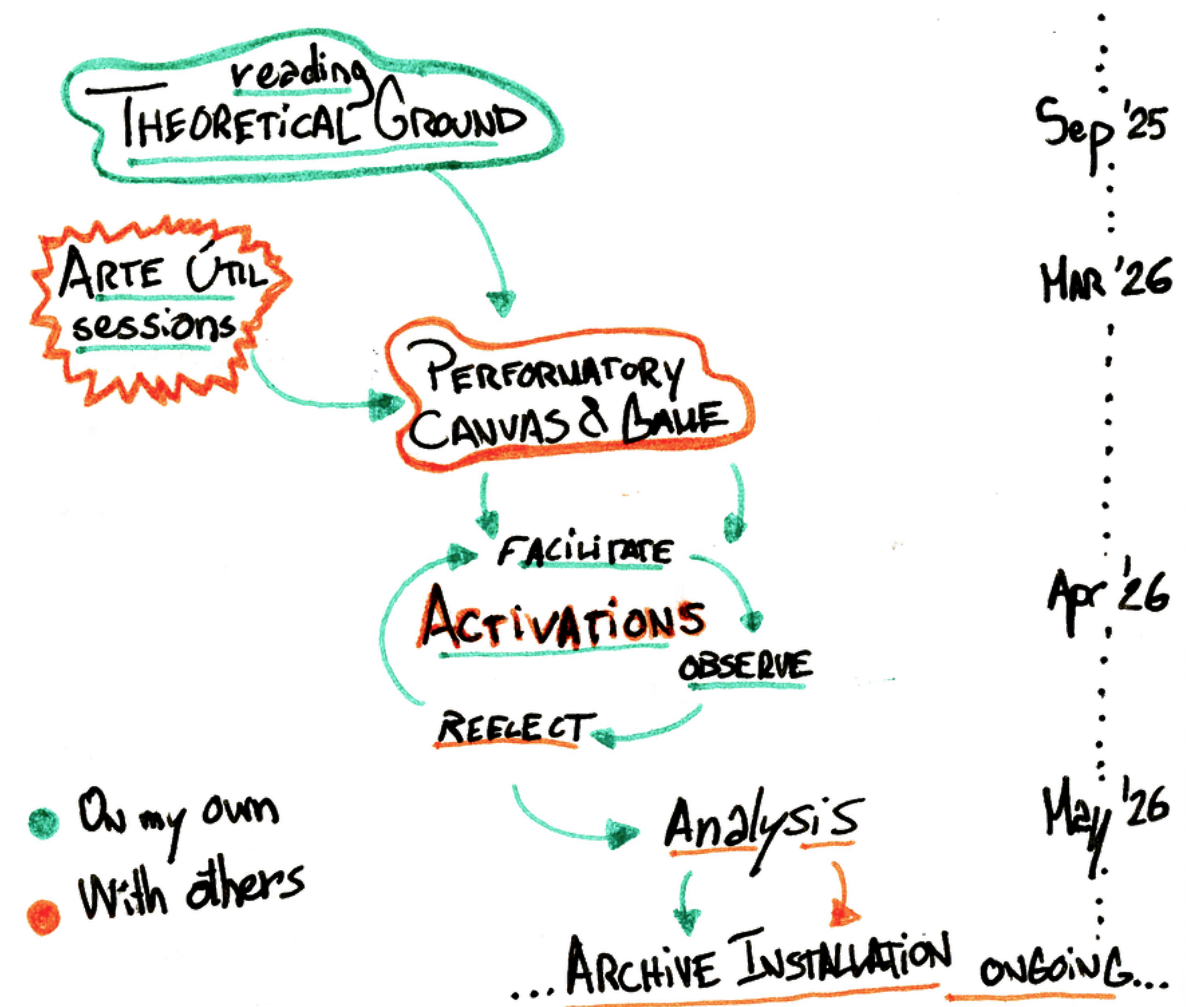
The research addresses one main question:

How can enabling boundaries support Social Innovation students in locating themselves as practitioners within the field they are entering?

By *enabling boundaries* I mean the material, relational, and facilitative arrangements that are specific enough to orient a student's encounter within the field, while remaining open enough that what emerges is not decided in advance – no pre-set outcome the encounter is steered toward.

What the research investigates is whether such boundaries – when designed and facilitated with care – can support students in finding their footing as practitioners.

Research phases over time



Three sub-questions guide the inquiry:

What makes it difficult for Social Innovation students to locate themselves as practitioners, and what produces this difficulty?

Answered analytically in Chapter One.

What role can a participatory archive of alumni practices play in creating conditions for situated encounter? Answered in Chapter Two through the making and testing of the Performatory Archive.

How do different facilitation formats shape the kind of positioning and practice-awareness that students develop?

Answered in Chapter Two through the analysis of two facilitated activations.

I use *situated encounter* here deliberately: *situated* names the *spatial* and *relational* quality the archive can create the conditions for; *generative* names what such an encounter, when it works, becomes. The chapter investigates whether the situated encounter the archive enables is also generative.

The conclusion returns to the main question, asking what making and facilitating the archive has taught me about it.

Positioning

I followed the Performatory as a student between 2019 and 2022, and have come back since 2025 as a tutor and lecturer-researcher. The alumni whose projects populate the archive are former classmates; the co-creator I am making the archive with, Arne Peters, is a current third-year student; and the students participating in the activations are ones I see weekly in classes and workshops. I am embedded, and what I bring to this research

is what these years inside the community have made me notice.

More specifically: an alumnus, a tutor, and a researcher. I came here as a student carrying urgencies the programme helped me locate, and came back as a tutor for a version of the same reason: something about how learning happens here felt worth returning to. My pedagogical drive comes from curiosity about how people become practitioners, and from an attachment to the impact that comes from collective work rather than individual. My design inclination leads me to make didactic material – canvases, games, prompts, dialogical tools – that carries pedagogical value without fixing outcomes in advance.

I am also someone whose way of working is more dialogical than systematic, more often under-structured than over-prepared. As a student and now as a tutor, I have sometimes been frustrated by the Performatory's own difficulty in scoping itself – in saying what it is for, in articulating its collective impact, in holding the kind of boundaries that would let the practice be legible to those entering from outside. That frustration is part of what brought this research into being. The archive is, among other things, my attempt to respond to it from within: to give the community a way of holding its own heritage without flattening what makes it alive.

I do not treat this proximity as a limitation to be neutralised. It is what lets me notice what students are carrying, what the difficulty of locating themselves feels like from the inside, and where the curriculum's intentions and its lived effects do not quite meet. I am also aware that proximity carries its own partialities: I am reading a community I am part of, with the affordances and the blind spots that come with that. The form the research takes – participatory, made with the community rather than about it – is partly a response to that.

Research approach

The approach draws on three frameworks, each doing a different kind of work: a stance, an epistemology, and a procedure. The first two set the conditions for the research; the third turns them into the steps it follows.

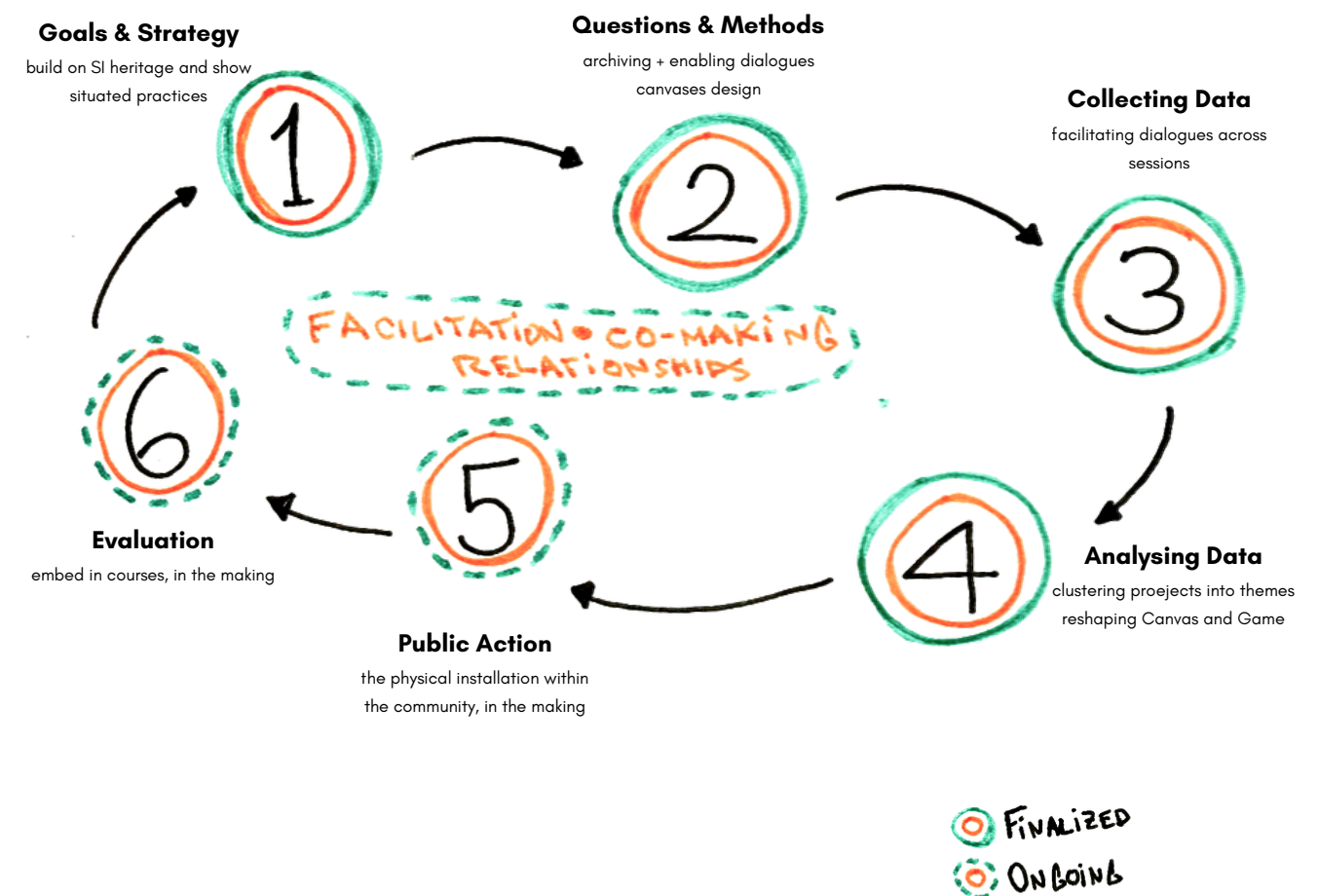
Participatory action research is the stance – it establishes where I research from. Following the Transformative Research Toolkit's own framing, it is less a method than an orientation to inquiry (Walters et al., 2021): it starts from the premise that the researcher and the community whose practice is being investigated are not separate, and that embeddedness is the condition through which knowing that practice becomes possible (Swantz, 2015). This is what makes co-making – with students, alumni, and colleagues – an appropriate way to research what the community is and does.

Research-creation is the epistemology – it establishes what counts as a finding. In Sarah Truman's articulation, making and knowing are inseparable, each unsettling and informing the other in ways that could not be specified in advance (Truman, 2022). A finding here is something that became available through making, rather than something that could have been stated before it – which is also why this thesis is written as practice, and not only about it.

The Transformative Research Toolkit (TRT) establishes how the work proceeds. It treats archiving itself as a participatory research method (Walters et al., 2021), which is what lets the Performatory Archive take shape as a method in its own right rather than as documentation alongside the research. And it lays out a research process in six phases: setting goals and overall strategy, deciding research questions and methods, collecting data, analysing data, public action, and evaluation.

data, analysing data, public action, and evaluation of impact – which is where the stance and the epistemology become a concrete plan of action.

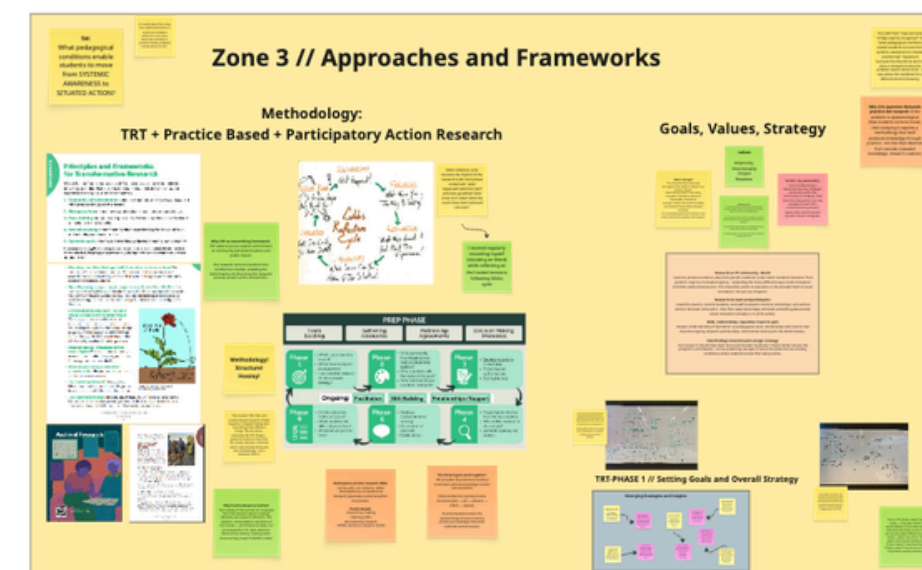
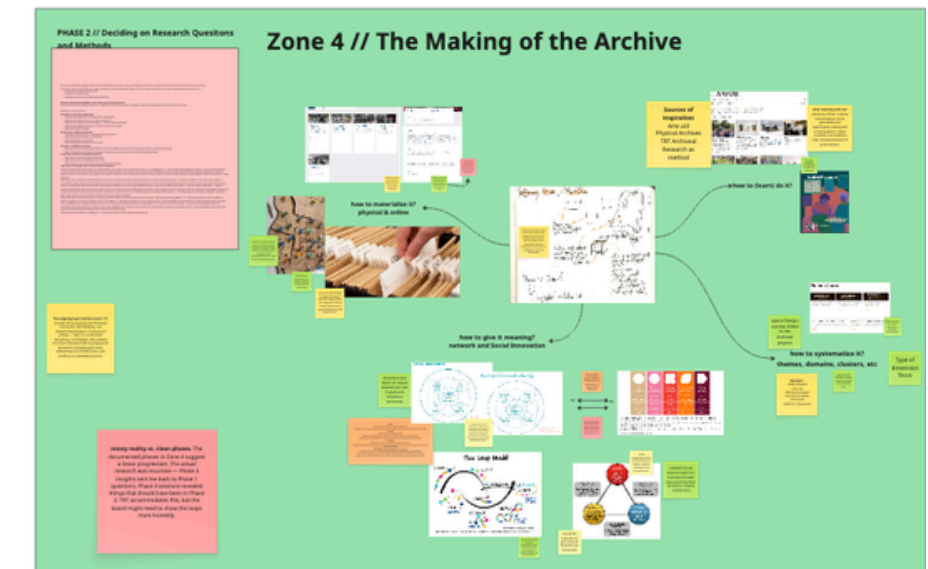
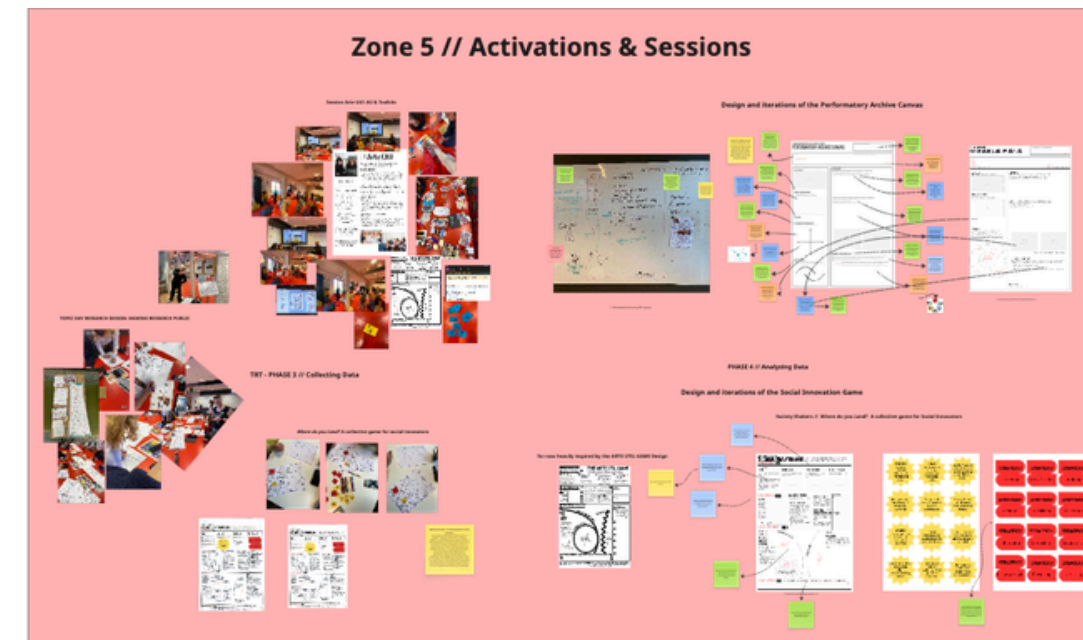
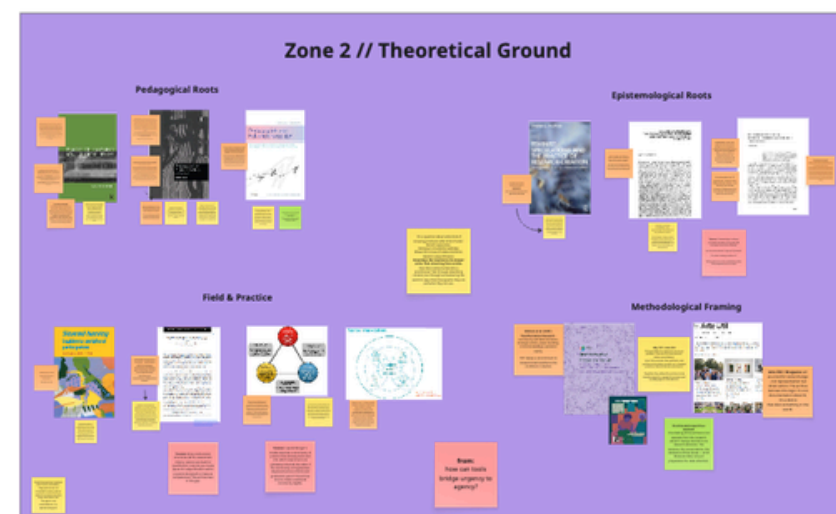
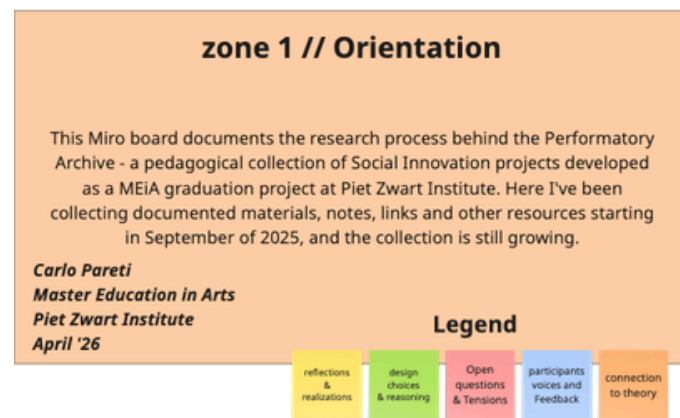
These six phases are how I intend to bring the three frameworks together in practice. Each phase is carried out participatively rather than alone: goals and methods worked through with Arne, data gathered in the activations with students, analysis done with both, and the public action – the archive's physical installation – shaped with the community. The first four phases are where the work has happened; the last two are still in motion. What each phase opened, and what it produced, is the substance of Chapter Two; here I set out only the strategy and the order in which it unfolds.



Documentation and reflection

Across all phases, the research has been documented through field notes, canvas iterations, photographs, session recordings, and participant voices – captured in conversation and on the archive cards themselves. A Miro board has held most of this material, organised over time into thematic areas; it has functioned as the folder for the thesis, holding the visual and process material that sits behind and alongside the written argument.

Reflective documentation has followed Gibbs's reflective cycle description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, action plan – applied across sessions and phases as a structured way of moving from immediate response to revised design. The cycle has worked as a discipline rather than a template: a way of keeping each iteration honest about what the phase produced, what it changed in my thinking, and what it asked of the next.



Chapter one

What produces the difficulty

This chapter takes up the first sub-question of this research: *what makes it difficult for Social Innovation students to locate themselves as practitioners in the field they are entering, and what produces this difficulty?* In the introduction I named the difficulty as it appears in the classroom – students arriving with strong urgencies, struggling to find a place from which to act.

Before turning to what produces the difficulty, it helps to name what the difficulty consists of. Social Practice Theory (SPT) offers a useful frame here. In Shove, Pantzar, and Watson's formulation, a practice is constituted by three elements held together: materials, competencies, and meanings (2012). A practice exists as one only when all three elements are bundled – when the values and aspirations that orient someone toward the practice are linked to the skills and know-how it requires, and to the objects, tools, and infrastructures through which it is materially carried out.

What I keep observing is students who arrive with strong meanings – the values and urgencies that orient them toward wanting to act – but uncertain on how to develop the full bundle. The competencies are partially developed; the material dimensions of the practice remain largely invisible. What a social innovator actually does, day to day, with specific people in specific places, using specific methods – is not yet legible to someone entering the field from the periphery. SPT names this deficit, but does not explain what produces it. The three roots of analysis that follow take up that question. They name the conditions under which the deficit Social Practice Theory describes comes into being within educational settings.

The critique of distance

There is a way of teaching – and of researching in education – that treats the social world as an object to be studied from a position of safe distance. The traditional university lecture is its clearest form: a room arranged so that students face a speaker who delivers an account of the world while the students take notes. The arrangement is so familiar it can feel natural, but it carries strong assumptions: that knowledge is something held by one party and transmitted to another, that understanding consists in receiving the transmission accurately, and that the world being described is sufficiently separate from the room to be describable from within it. Even when pedagogies are designed against this model – seminars, case studies, workshops – they often retain its underlying epistemic shape. The student is positioned as someone learning about something, from a place outside that something.

This is the arrangement that Karen Barad names *representationalism*: the assumption that knowledge practices stand outside the world and reflect it, rather than being part of how certain things come to matter and others do not (Barad, 2003). The critique is not that systems thinking is wrong, or that lectures should be abolished – I am myself a strong proponent of systematising complex societal challenges as a way of coming to better understand them. What I am arguing is a critique of what such knowledge practices enable when they are treated as sufficient on their own: a positioning of the knower as an observer who sees objectively because they are not implicated. That positioning has consequences for what is considered pedagogically relevant, and for what kinds of knowing are made available in the classroom.

Sherry Shapiro traces the arrangement deeper, through the

history of Western education. What she names is a specific political arrangement: the systematic elevation of rational, abstract knowing over *sensorial, relational, and embodied* ways of knowing (Shapiro, 1999, pp. 30–40). This is not a neutral preference – it determines which kinds of knowing count and which gaps between knowledge and action get reproduced generation after generation. The specific cut Shapiro makes that matters most here is between *seeing* and *feeling* as modes of knowing. This tradition, she argues, has structured seeing as the dominant epistemological mode: to know something is to observe it, represent it, hold it at arm's length where it can be analysed without contamination. What gets systematically devalued is a different mode – understanding that emerges through the body's contact with the world, through relationship and proximity. As Shapiro puts it: "*What we know is at all times attached to bodily knowing, whether as tacit knowing or as conscious knowing. What we know speaks with and to our bodily memories of living*" (Shapiro, 1999, p. 56).

This distinction lands directly in the Social Innovation classroom. Students learn to see social systems – to map them, name their actors, identify their dynamics. That seeing is real and necessary. But the urgency that drives the best Social Innovation projects is not primarily a cognitive event. It arrives before it can be named. It is felt in the body before it finds its way into a framework. A pedagogy that cannot receive and work with that embodied urgency is, in Shapiro's terms, producing students who are trained to analyse the world but not to inhabit a relationship with it.

Carolien Hermans articulates something adjacent from a phenomenological direction. Writing on education as sense-making, she draws a distinction between *meaning-giving* and

direction-giving: meaning-giving is the process in which living experience gets reduced to symbolic representation – to constructs of knowledge in the mind. Direction-giving, by contrast, is the process in which living experience itself orients us – “*letting things, the world, the other, but also ‘the self’ be present, giving them presence and focusing attention on them*”² (Hermans, 2023). The gap I keep observing is not a failure of meaning-giving. Students receive an impressive amount of it – frameworks, theories, systemic understandings. What is structurally harder to design for is direction-giving: the conditions under which students are genuinely touched by what they are encountering, rather than equipped with better conceptual tools for representing it from outside.

What Barad, Shapiro, and Hermans share – across very different intellectual traditions – is a refusal of the view from outside as the only legitimate epistemological mode. Each of them, in different vocabulary, argues that something is structurally lost when knowing is treated as separable from being-in-the-world. What is lost, in the Social Innovation classroom, is precisely the kind of knowing students would need to find their footing as practitioners. The more skilled they become at standing back to see, the further the act of standing-in recedes. SPT’s competencies and materials – the dimensions students do not yet have access to – are dimensions that develop through the kind of knowing this critique names as structurally devalued.

²Hermans’ *Pedagogiek van het onderweg zijn* (Pedagogy along the Way) is published in Dutch. The epilogue, in which the meaning-giving / direction-giving distinction is developed, is available in English on her website: (carolienhermans.nl)

The necessity of position

If the first root is a refusal of the view from outside, the second is an insistence on the view from somewhere. Donna Haraway argues that the only way to produce accountable knowledge is to give up the pretence of seeing from everywhere and nowhere – to acknowledge that knowing always happens from a specific position, with a specific body, shaped by a specific history (Haraway, 1988). Partial perspective, in Haraway’s argument, is not a limitation to be overcome but the condition under which genuine knowing – and therefore genuine action – becomes possible.

Lave and Wenger describe a different kind of entry into a field: one that begins at the periphery of a community of practice, gradually encountering what practitioners actually do in their specific and material ways, and moving inward as that participation develops (Lave & Wenger, 1991). What they call *legitimate peripheral participation* is the form learning takes when it is not the absorption of curricular content but the gradual entry into a community whose practice is being learned by being witnessed and progressively joined. The student at the periphery is not yet a full participant, but is also not outside the practice – they are *legitimately* there, gradually finding their way into the doing. This framing is significant because it locates the difficulty I am observing not in the student’s individual capacities but in the conditions that make peripheral participation possible or not.

Something adjacent comes from socially engaged art practice, and specifically from Arte Útil – the practice and archive developed since 2013 around the work of Tania Bruguera and the Asociación de Arte Útil (Bruguera, 2016). Navigating that archive is where I first came to feel, not just to understand, the weight of locality and situatedness in socially engaged work. Each entry

holds a project tied to a specific place, a specific community, a specific use. Pablo Helguera, writing on socially engaged art as pedagogy, names this directly: socially engaged practice *"demands an immediate response to a specific context, audience, or set of conditions"* (Helguera, 2011). What both the Arte Útil archive and Helguera's writing articulate is that position is not an idea you arrive at – it is the ground from which any meaningful action becomes possible. This is part of what gave this research its direction.

Haraway and Lave & Wenger together hold the core of this argument. Haraway names what is at stake epistemologically: knowing always happens from a position, and partial perspective – far from being a limitation – is the condition under which accountable knowing becomes possible. Lave & Wenger name the pedagogical form this takes: peripheral participation in a community of practice, where one becomes a practitioner by gradually finding one's way into the doing. Together they hold a single claim – that locating oneself as a practitioner is both an epistemic and a pedagogical event. Social Practice Theory's materials and competencies – the dimensions that remain illegible to students entering the field – become legible precisely through this kind of positioned, peripheral engagement. What this points to, educationally, is that helping students find position is not a supplementary concern – it is what the pedagogical work is for.



Much of how I came to think about an archive as pedagogical came from the practice and archive built since 2013 around the work of Tania Bruguera and the Asociación de Arte Útil. What struck me was the pedagogical value such an archive enables: projects held as material for action rather than objects of study, with the explicit intention that new practice becomes possible through engagement with what others have already done.

I came into closer contact with it through a research project my colleague Fereshteh Adi Saatlo Anzures and I set up on art and design methodologies for resilience in higher education, which brought us to collaborate with Gemma Medina and Alessandra Saviotti from the Asociación. Spending sessions with them – experimenting with their own ways of activating the archive – let us feel what a pedagogical archive can do.

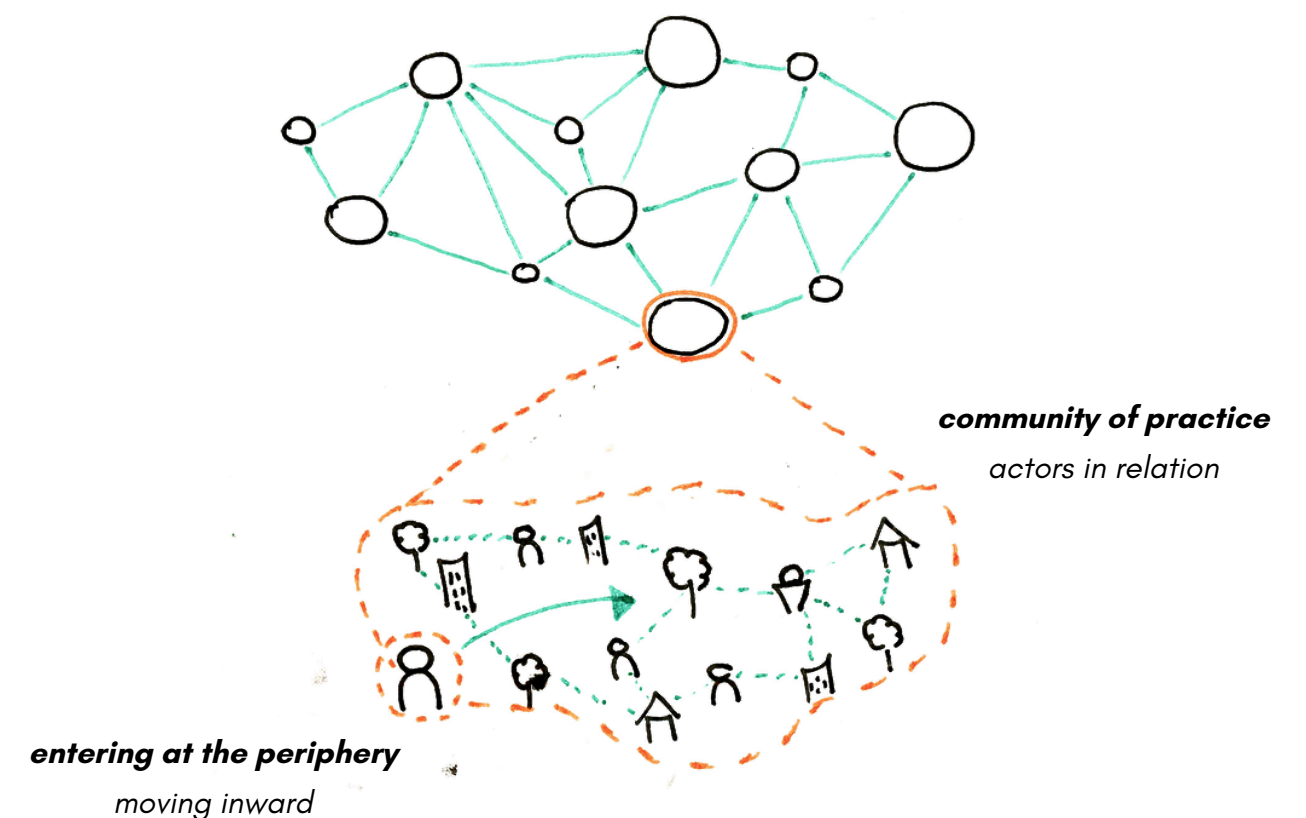
the constitutive force of doing

The third root runs through Barad's account of *performativity*, Truman's research-creation, and the wider tradition of socially engaged practice that insists on practice as constitutive rather than expressive. What these share is a claim that things – including practitioners – do not pre-exist and then get expressed or represented, but come into being through doing.

Barad's concept of the *apparatus* is relevant here. An apparatus, in her terms, is not a neutral instrument for observing a pre-existing reality. It is a constitutive arrangement – it produces the phenomena it appears to merely document (Barad, 2003, p. 816). Pedagogical arrangements work the same way. The choices embedded in how a learning encounter is set up are not descriptions of what learning is; they are arguments about what counts as learning, and what counts as a learner.

Sarah Truman describes *research-creation* as a practice in which making and knowing are inseparable – each unsettling and informing the other, in ways that could not have been specified in advance (Truman, 2022). What Truman is naming is not just a methodological commitment for researchers but a wider claim about how knowing comes into being: through the act of making, in a process that cannot be fully planned in advance because the knowledge that the making produces only becomes available through the doing. A student does not have a pre-formed identity as a social innovator that then finds expression through practice. That identity comes into being through the doing itself – through the friction of trying to find a project that fits their interest, through the question that arises in encountering things they did not anticipate, through the choice of what to continue working on and what to leave behind.

What Barad and Truman share – alongside the wider tradition of socially engaged practice, and resonating with Lave and Wenger's claim that one becomes a practitioner *by* practising at the periphery rather than *before* being admitted to the practice – is a refusal of the assumption that knowing precedes doing. Practice is not the application of knowledge held in advance; it is the means through which knowing comes to be. Becoming-a-practitioner is not the expression of an identity already held, but something constituted in the doing. SPT's bundle, in this third light, does not come together because all three elements are separately developed and then linked. It comes together *through* doing – through the specific, situated, embodied act of practising, in which materials, competencies, and meanings are produced together as the doing itself takes shape.



Conclusion

The introduction named a difficulty in the classroom: students with strong urgencies, struggling to locate themselves as practitioners. This chapter has traced where that comes from. Social Practice Theory let us describe what students are encountering as a practice not yet linked: meanings are present and articulate, while materials and competencies remain often illegible. The dominant epistemic mode privileges seeing over inhabiting, distance over position, and representation over doing. Within such an arrangement, students are trained to see the field powerfully – but the conditions under which the elements of the practice could come together for them, under which they could find their footing as practitioners, are structurally underdeveloped.

This is what the analysis allows me to claim in answer to the first sub-question. *The difficulty is epistemic, not motivational.* It is produced by how the field is rendered available – or not – to those learning to act within it. If the diagnosis is that students need generative encounters rather than representation – encounter with specific practitioners doing specific work in specific places, rather than the field rendered as a generalised landscape – then the question that follows is what kind of pedagogical form could hold such encounter open. The three roots together suggest a particular answer. What students need access to are communities of practice in Lave and Wenger's sense: *partial, situated entries* through which the field of Social Innovation becomes navigable. That access depends on the community's heritage being held openly – on the practices of those who came before being available in a form current students can encounter, read, contest, and use to orient

themselves. And it depends on the right kind of structure to hold it: frames specific enough to make the field navigable, but open enough that the way through remains the student's to find. I have come to call these *enabling boundaries* – the kind of structure that orients students' practice without foreclosing where it might lead them. Their absence is what the chapter has named: when boundaries are missing or wrongly drawn, the field stays either invisible or pre-decided, and students are left without ground to stand on.

If their absence is the problem, then the response has to draw them – to hold the community's heritage open and give it a structure students can actually move through. This is where the participatory archive came in. Working with students on archival research looked like a way to do two things at once: to recover the many, multifaceted communities of practice that alumni had moved through in their projects, and to let current students navigate them – to see how those projects related to someone's becoming a social innovator, and to locate themselves in relation to that. The Transformative Research Toolkit names archiving itself as a participatory research method (Walters et al., 2021), which gave me a way to treat the holding of a community's practice as a legitimate way of knowing it. That is the form *Chapter Two* takes up: the making of *the Performatory Archive* as an attempt to design for exactly this kind of encounter, and the activations through which it has begun to do its pedagogical work.

Chapter



Arne in front of the first trial cards for the Archive

What the archive made possible

This chapter takes up the second and third sub-questions of this research: *What role can a participatory archive of alumni practices play in creating conditions for situated encounter?*, and *how do different facilitation formats shape the kind of positioning and practice-awareness that students develop?* The chapter is structured along the phases of the Transformative Research Toolkit (Walters et al., 2021) – the participatory research method through which the archive was made and tested. Each section makes a claim about what the practice produced, with the work itself as evidence. The detailed designs, iterations, and visual material referenced throughout are held here and in the Facilitation Guide that accompanies this written graduation project.

Phase 1 & 2: Vision, Questions and Methods

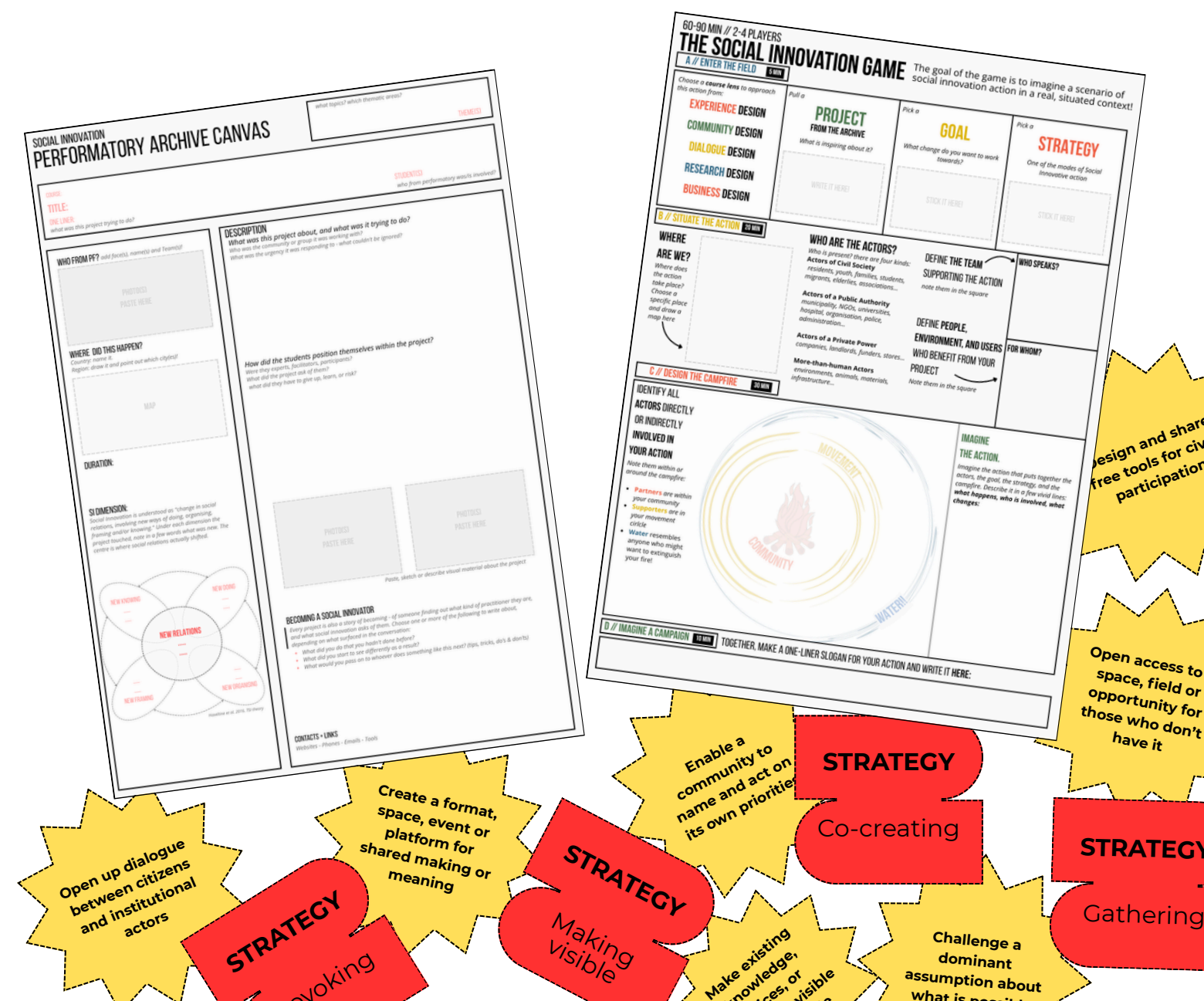
The archive came together from three intersecting conditions in the Performatory community in late 2025. Arne Peters, a third-year Social Innovation student doing his internship at the Performatory, had been tasked with archiving a set of student projects as part of a BUas-wide website rebranding – a framing that was largely promotional, and to which he was, understandably, unenthusiastic. At the same time, I had been reading into the Transformative Research Toolkit (Walters et al., 2021), initially to give my thesis a clearer structure, and finding that the toolkit treats archiving itself as a legitimate participatory research method. Simultaneously, in the Research Design course where I was teaching, a different conversation was alive: how often first-year Social Innovation students experience study delays, and how the difficulty of grasping what Social Innovation actually is in practice was named as a cause.

These three conditions sat side by side until Arne and I sat down to talk. Working through TRT's preparation phase together, we recognised that they could be answered through a single project: an archive of alumni practice, made openly with the community whose heritage it intends to portray, and oriented toward the situated positioning of students entering the field of Social Innovation. The archive would not serve as a showcase, but as a way of holding the heritage of a community of practice – the many very different ways in which students become social innovators – in a form that could be genuinely useful to current students trying to find their own legitimate entry point.

That framing did the most important work of *Phase 1*. It named the archive's purpose as *generative*, not commemorative. In this we were drawing – explicitly – on Arte Útil's understanding of what an archive can be: a holding of practice that is itself useful, enabling exploration of what has been done and imagination of what might be done next. The Transformative Research Toolkit's treatment of archiving as participatory method then carried the project across into Phase 2, where the methodological question – *how to research what an archive produces in encounter* – became the same question as the design question: *how to make an archive that the community can both add to and learn from?* Archiving became the method; the dialogical tools that would carry the archive's work became the form and the data being gathered at once.

Phase 3: the Canvas and the Game

Phase 3 took up the design of the two paired tools that carry the archive's pedagogical work: *the Performatory Archive Canvas* through which projects are documented in dialogue with their initiators, and *the Social Innovation Game*, an ideation-based activation through which archived projects become inspiration for new localised scenarios of action. The two tools were developed in parallel and in conversation with each other. The canvas holds projects in a form the game can use; the game tests what the canvas needs to make legible. Both are dialogical instruments, made to open up conversation: the canvas works from projects that have happened, the game envisions social innovation actions that could be.



The canvas asks each project to be located in specific terms: its title, its initiators, the location and duration of the work, a description of what the project was, what its urgency was, who was involved, and what the people who did the project came to learn through the doing of it. The Social Innovation dimension – adapted from Haxeltine's framing of social innovation as *new knowing, doing, framing, organising* (2016) – helps define what role the project had in enabling for new relations. Another element – a section titled Becoming a social innovator – asks the student(s) to name what shifted for them in the doing: what they tried for the first time, what they came to see differently, what they would pass on. This is where the canvas turns a project into a story of becoming, and that is what makes it useful to a student still working out who they might become in the field. They are reading not just what was done, but how it changed the person who did it.

The Social Innovation Game takes its formal lineage from the game developed by Bureau d'Études (Léonore Bonaccini and Xavier Fourt) for the Arte Útil archive, with its vocabulary translated into terms specific to the Social Innovation practice at the Performatory. Players take on course lenses, choose a goal and a strategy from sets curated to reflect the kinds of change Social Innovation practice works toward, and the modes through which action takes place. Project cards are pulled from the archive as inspiration, and these different elements are used to ideate on a social innovation action within a localised scenario: where the action happens, who the actors are, who supports it and who opposes it, what the team looks like, what the campaign slogan is. Like the canvas, the game asks players to be specific about place, role, and the kind of change being worked toward.

Both tools were designed with specific pedagogical arguments in mind. The canvas argues that a project has a place. The game argues that an act of social innovation is locatable, that goals and strategies are choosable from a defined vocabulary rather than improvised, and that imagined actions can be more generative when they commit to a specific where, who, and how. In Karen Barad's terms, both are *apparatus*: arrangements that do not just hold the conversation but shape what kind of thinking the conversation can enable (Barad, 2003, p. 816). The arguments live in the materials themselves – in what the canvas asks to be filled in, what the cards require players to draw and combine, what writing on a canvas commits, what laying out a game-design arrangement makes possible in a way a paragraph of text would not. This is where Shapiro's distinction between seeing and feeling as modes of knowing (Shapiro, 1999) lands directly: the tools are made to make a project feelable in its relational characteristics, not only legible in its outlines.

Both tools have been put to use and reshaped along the way – iterated through the sessions where students and alumni worked with them directly. The clearest finding came from the game: its requirement that players *commit to a specific place* was named by participants as one of its most *generative constraints*, pushing them to think about where to begin acting rather than staying at the level of generalised intent. Both tools, with their full design rationale and how to use them, are written up in the Facilitation Guide. What all this says about how the archive actually works pedagogically is what the next section gets into.



Phase 4: the archive's two functions

Here I turn to what the canvas and the game make possible when they meet students in facilitated encounter. Two activations carried the tools into use: a dialogic activation, in which students worked in pairs to archive an alumnus's project they had found meaningful during their time at Social Innovation with the Performatory Archive Canvas as support; and an ideation-based activation, in which a mixed audience of students, alumni, and community members played the Social Innovation Game with cards drawn from the archive. What the two activations together let me say about the archive's pedagogical function answers the third sub-question.

The dialogic activation foregrounds the archive's heritage function. Speaking with a specific alumnus about a project the student had chosen as meaningful brought students into contact with forms of social innovation they would not otherwise have come across. The prompt itself – to archive a project the alumnus found meaningful during their time at Social Innovation – placed the criterion of meaningfulness in the alumnus's hands. What got archived was what an alumnus chose to bring forward as worth holding, told to a student whose work it was to listen, ask, and document. The canvas's deliberate specificity about where the project happened, who was involved, and what the initiator's role was made the link between practice and place legible in a way the more systemic framing of Social Innovation would not. The difficulty of representing someone else's project for a future reader confronted students with questions about what to prioritise, what the essence of a project really was, and how to hold its complexity in a form they had to make. That difficulty, in my reading, is pedagogically productive: It required students to take a position in relation to the practice they were documenting – to do something with what they found, not just record it.

The ideation-based activation foregrounds the archive's direction-generation function. Where the dialogic format asks students to encounter heritage, the game asks them to depart from it. Players use a card from the archive as inspiration for a localised scenario they construct themselves, and the constraints of the game are the engine of the work. You cannot generalise. You have to commit – to a place, to a strategy drawn from the Social Innovation vocabulary, to a goal that names the kind of change being worked toward. The archive card is not optional; it has to be read, understood, and used. What participants reported, across a mix of current students, alumni, and community members, was that this commitment was itself the pedagogical event. The forcing of locality – the requirement that the scenario take place somewhere specific – was named as one of the format's most productive features. Several participants found the format would also be useful retrospectively, for thinking about how to close a project and articulate its impact – a use the game had not been designed for.

What the two activations together reveal is that the archive performs two distinct pedagogical functions, and that these functions are not given by the canvas or the game alone but are made available by different facilitation arrangements: The archive shines light on the heritage of a community of practice when facilitation and dialogue creates conditions for direct, situated encounter with the work and the people involved with it. It generates new directions for action when facilitation creates constraints that ask players to depart from heritage by committing to a specific imagined action. Neither function is more fundamental than the other. Both depend on the design of the tools – the canvas's specificity, the game's structure of goals, strategies, actors, and the requirement of locality – and on the facilitation that makes one function or the other accessible.

Arte Útil is the methodological referent I want to acknowledge here. What I learned from Gemma Medina and Alessandra Saviotti's work – and from the game format developed within the Arte Útil archive – was that an archive of socially engaged practice can be *useful* in the strong sense of that word: a way to explore what has been done and to imagine what could be done next. The double function I am naming is what their archive has long made available; what the Performatory Archive adds is to enact it inside a teaching community of practice – one that keeps reforming itself over time. And it only works because of the framing. Without its enabling boundaries – the canvas's design choices, the game's vocabulary, the forcing of locality – the archive would produce the same paralysis as the systemic framing of TSI: a field seen clearly from a distance, with no way in. It is the frame, specific enough to orient and honest about the position it takes, that makes either kind of encounter possible.

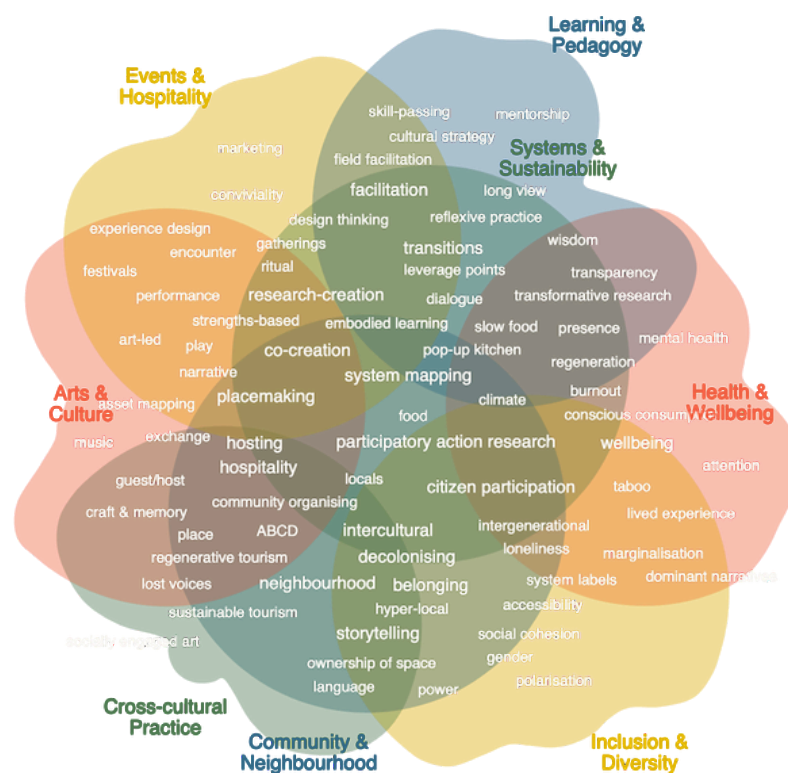
Phase 5 & 6: what is still emerging

Two things are happening, and continue to happen, in Phase 5. The first is that the activations themselves have surfaced material that the canvas and the game are integrating. Suggestions from the dialogic activation prompted a redesign of the canvas to include space for direct alumni voices – quotes, tips, commentary alongside the student-mediated description, on the conviction that a card carrying something of the alumnus's own voice would be more alive and more useful to a future reader. Playing the Social Innovation Game surfaced the question of how to scale the game's vocabulary to different points in students' trajectories; lighter framings tied to specific Performatory courses are currently being prototyped.

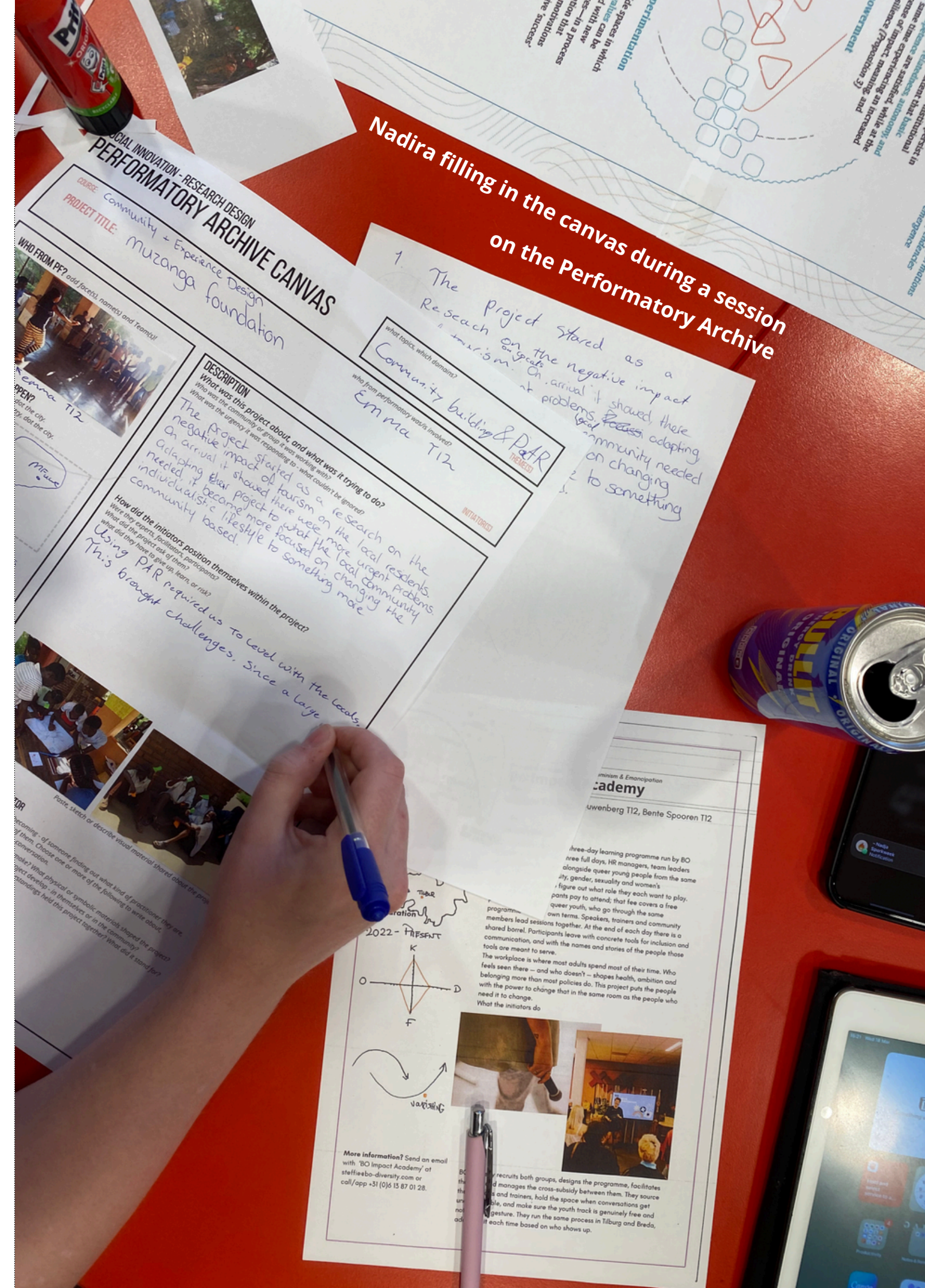
The second is that the archive has begun to generate continuations beyond this research. Students who participated in

the dialogic activation have started developing new forms of activation in their own projects – eager to give more meaning to the archive and to discover the diverse and insightful forms social innovation projects can take. This is something not anticipated, and yet it is what the participatory approach made possible. In TRT terms, Phase 5's most generative outcome has been that the archive is being picked up by students whose engagement is redirecting what the archive could become.

Phase 6 is genuinely open at the time of this writing. The archive's life beyond this graduation submission is partly already in motion – the continuations just named, and a physical installation built and developed together with the BUas MakerSpace is in its early steps of production. Several things the research has not resolved are worth coming back to in the final conclusions.



...the 20+ Projects so far archived led to 8 overall clusters, costellated with multiple topics, themes and methods – something we are currently experimenting with around the physical installation for the Archive..



Conclusion

What the research now lets me say in answer to the second sub-question is that a participatory archive of alumni practice can play a substantive role in creating conditions for situated encounter. This is the case when its design choices are brought forward as still unfinished choices, when archiving itself is treated as participatory method rather than as documentation, and when the dialogical tools that carry the archive – the canvas and the game – hold open the possibility of being rewritten through use. These are not opposing functions but two things the same archive does, depending on how a given encounter is facilitated.

Regarding the third sub-question, different facilitation formats bring out different functions of the archive. Dialogic facilitation, carried by the canvas, activates the Performatory community's heritage – the encounter students had with alumni and the actual work they did, mediated by what they themselves have chosen to bring forward as meaningful. Constraint-based facilitation, carried by the game, activates direction – the commitment to a localised scenario that departs from the heritage as material. Both depend on facilitation, not the tool alone, to do the work. The archive does not deliver pedagogy on its own; what gives the encounter its force is the enabling boundary the facilitation creates around the archive's specific, positioned, contestable form.

One tension is worth naming before closing. To make an archive is, in some legible sense, to make a representation. Chapter One developed a critique of representationalism, drawing on Karen Barad, that the archive might appear to contradict. What I want to argue is that the critique of representationalism is not a refusal of representation as such, but rather it is a refusal of

representation framed as a neutral mirror of a separable world. The Performatory Archive is a representational form, but it does not claim that neutrality. Its design is positioned, partial, and made legible as such; its making is participatory; its activations are encounters that work with the archive rather than receive it. Following Donna Haraway, knowledge is more accountable, not less rigorous, when it is honest about where it stands (Haraway, 1988). What the archive offers is not a mirror of Social Innovation at the Performatory but an apparatus through which the practice of that community becomes encounterable, contestable, and extendable – a form the practice takes when it is held openly.

Before turning to the general conclusion, Chapter Three introduces the Facilitation Guide that accompanies this thesis – a usable companion that holds the canvas, the game, and the activation protocols in a form addressed to anyone wanting to host an activation around the archive. The conclusion that follows then takes this argument back to the question the thesis began with, and asks what the Performatory Archive – and the practice of making it – now lets me say about enabling boundaries for situated encounter, and where my practice moves from here.

Chapter three

The Performatory Archive – Facilitation Guide

Everything this chapter has worked through – the canvas, the Social Innovation Game, the activation formats – comes together in a separate, hands-on companion to this thesis: *the Performatory Archive – Facilitation Guide*. It is addressed to anyone wanting to host an activation, archive a project, or extend the archive on their own, and what it ultimately hands over are the enabling boundaries themselves – made usable, ready to be drawn again in someone else's hands.

The Performatory Archive Canvas

The *Performatory Archive Canvas* asks each project to be located in specific terms: where the work happened, who was involved, what the urgency was, what the project did, what shifted for the people who did it. The decision to organise documentation around these specifics rather than around a general project description carries *Chapter One*'s argument directly. If knowing is structurally lost when it is treated as separable from being-in-the-world – as Shapiro's distinction between seeing and feeling clarifies – then a documentation form that asks only for abstraction reproduces the very deficit the thesis is naming. The canvas's specificity is the boundary that makes it generative.

The canvas content changed substantially through use. The earlier version of the SI Dimensions was structured as a numerical scale – seven gradations across four quadrants – that asked the alumnus or student to rate the project's intensity along each dimension. While evaluating with students on the archived projects, we kept running into the same difficulty: the scale flattened the work it was meant to make legible. Students struggled to navigate it and to say what kind of social innovation

a project was actually doing. We reworked the dimension into the form they now take – four quadrants holding words rather than numbers, naming the kind of change a project worked in: shifts in doing, in knowing, in framing, in organising. The shift from scale to words sharpened the canvas considerably. It gave the SI Dimensions a meaning-giving function rather than a measuring one, and made the archive's account of what kind of social innovation each project enables more useful to a future reader.

The becoming a social innovator section, rewritten through use as Chapter Two describes, asks what shifted for the person who did the work, what they came to see differently, what they would pass on to whoever does something like this next. These prompts hold the canvas's reach toward what Lave and Wenger name as legitimate peripheral participation: they invite the alumnus to position themselves as a practitioner with something to pass forward, and they make heritage available to a future reader.

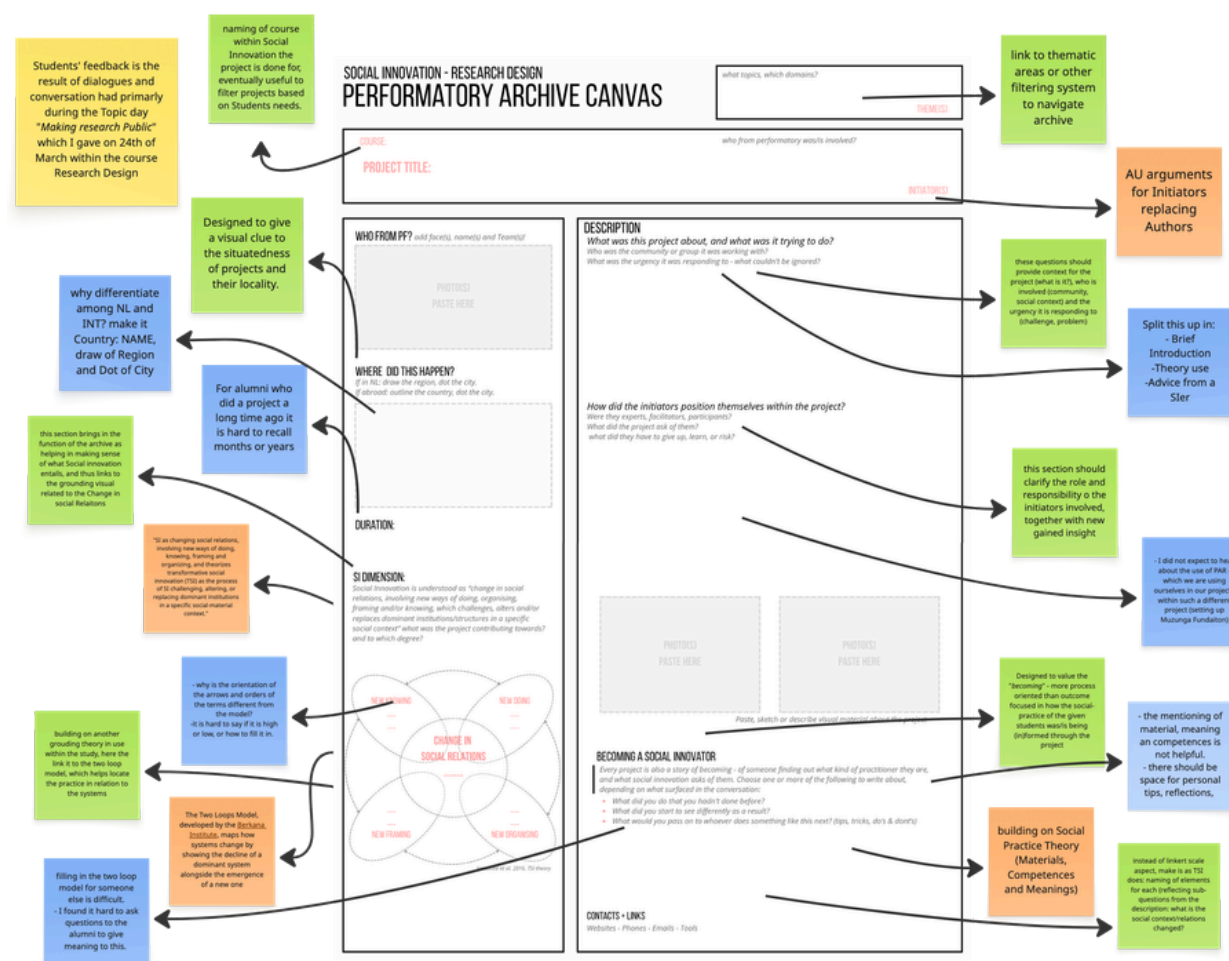
The Social Innovation Game

The Social Innovation Game asks players to construct a localised scenario from an archive card, a goal, and a strategy. The forcing of locality – the requirement that the scenario take place in a specific place, with specific actors – is what Chapter One's three roots converge on: knowing from somewhere (Haraway), entering a practice at the periphery (Lave and Wenger), the constitutive force of doing (Barad, Truman). The game does not ask players to think generally about social innovation; it asks them to commit. That commitment is what the design holds open.

The vocabulary the game offers – four strategies and seven goals – is itself an enabling boundary. The goals were drawn from looking carefully at what the archived projects have actually pursued and at the wider field of socially engaged practice the Performatory works within. The strategies were drawn the same way, from the modes of action visible across the archive, with the discipline of the Arte Útil game's single-word naming as the formal lineage. Avelino's account of social innovation gave the vocabulary a dimension it could not have held otherwise: that social innovation does not only build new alternatives, it also works against the dominant structures it is trying to change (Avelino et al., 2019). Some of the work is constructive, some of it is oppositional – and the game's strategies needed to hold both.

The activations

The two activation formats this research has tested do different work, as Chapter Two analyses in Phase 4. The dialogic activation asks a student to archive a project an alumnus found meaningful, and in doing so to handle heritage as material rather than receive it as account. The ideation-based activation asks a player to depart from heritage by committing to a localised scenario. The choice to design and protocol these two formats –

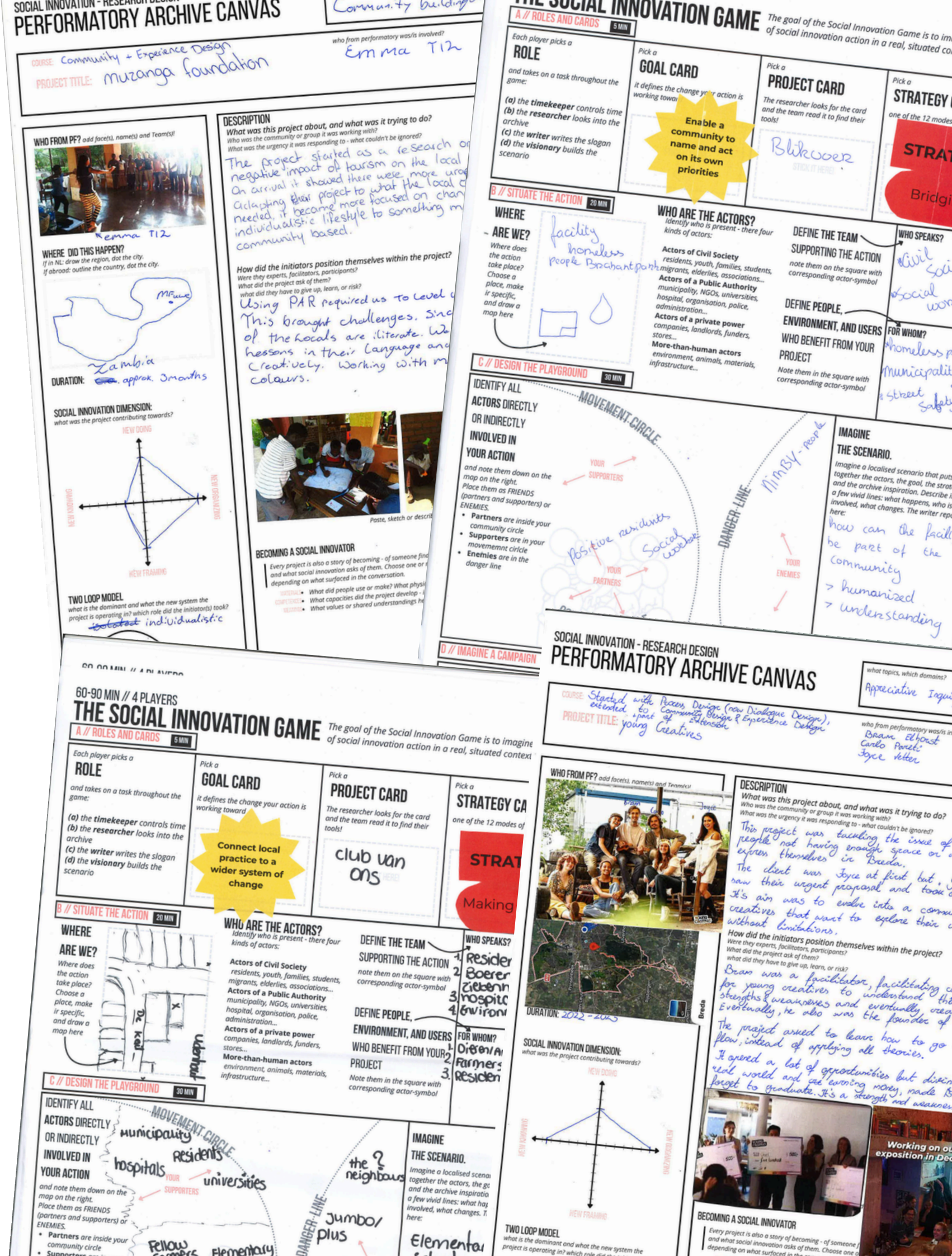


rather than one general activation – is grounded in Chapter Two's finding that the archive performs two distinct pedagogical functions, and that these functions are made available by different facilitation arrangements. The activation protocols held in the Guide are the operational form of that finding.

The archive's Enabling Boundaries

Across the canvas, the game, and the activations, what the Guide holds is a set of enabling boundaries – choices that give those who use them something to be specific about, without pre-deciding what they can do. The Guide is a continuing document. Arne is developing the online version of the archive, and together we are working on how the physical installation can take shape at Performatory in ways that make it useful. Julia and Jevon are experimenting with play-based activations and archiving further projects, extending the archive's reach beyond this research. The canvas is on its third iteration, the activations are being tested with tutors and students, and the Guide will keep changing as the practice does.

From here, feel free to set this thesis aside and take a detour through the *Performatory Archive – Facilitation Guide*. Find your way back to the final chapter for the project's conclusion.



Conclusion

Returning to the gap, and looking forward

The introduction named a gap I had been noticing for years from inside the Performatory community: students arriving with strong urgencies, struggling to locate themselves as practitioners within the field those urgencies orient them toward. *Chapter One* named what produces that difficulty as epistemic rather than motivational – a deficit in the conditions of encounter the programme enables, not a deficit in students. *Chapter Two* traced what one practice-based response to that diagnosis has made possible: the Performatory Archive, made participatorily with students and members of the wider community, carried by two paired dialogical tools – the Performatory Archive Canvas and the Social Innovation Game – activated through facilitated encounters that highlighted different pedagogical functions of the archive.

Returning to the main question the research set out to answer – ***how can enabling boundaries support Social Innovation students in locating themselves as practitioners within the field they are entering?*** – enabling boundaries support such locating when they hold open the encounter between students and the situated, specific, and embodied forms a practice takes; when those boundaries are made legible as positioned arguments rather than disguised as neutral descriptions; and when facilitation is recognised as the active pedagogical event, with the archive as the apparatus through which that encounter becomes specific, positioned, and contestable.

What the research has produced as a working principle, more than as a finding, is what I have been calling *enabling boundaries*. The phrase names the conditions under which a frame is generative rather than restrictive: *when a frame is specific enough to orient – to give a student something locatable to stand in relation to – but open enough that what emerges from the encounter is not pre-decided*. The archive's design choices are enabling boundaries in this sense; the game's vocabulary of goals and strategies is too; so is the dialogic activation's prompt to archive a project the alumnus found meaningful. None of these foreclose what students can do. All of them give the encounter something to be specific about. In Carolien Hermans's terms, enabling boundaries are conditions for *direction-giving* – frames that let things, the world, the others, and the self be present, focusing attention on them, rather than reducing them to representations to be received from outside (Hermans, 2023). What the research suggests is that the difficulty of locating oneself as a practitioner is eased not by removing structure but by holding the right kind of structure – boundaries that signal direction without prescribing destination.

What changed

The research has changed how I read my own classroom, and how I read myself in it. When I came back to the Performatory in 2025 as a tutor, I was carrying the urgencies of an alumnus and the unstructured-by-nature tendencies of someone who works mostly dialogically and relationally. What this research has given me, beyond the archive itself, is a sharper recognition of when those tendencies serve the room and when they do not. The archive's making with Arne taught me that participatory work is, among other things, an exercise in slowing down enough to let the creation inform the thinking. The activations taught me that the pedagogical value is generative when both material and

care for holding things together come together – the canvas and the facilitation each doing part of the work. A well-designed archive still needs a room and someone holding it; but without the material element, there is nothing specific for the facilitation to work with.

What this work has changed in me as an educator is harder to summarise. I have fewer answers about how social innovation students could be supported, and a sharper sense of where to look. I see it when a session is asking students to receive something rather than position themselves toward it. I see it when a frame is too open and there is nothing for students to push against, and when a frame is too closed and the conclusions are already there. I see it when a room is being held by the facilitation, and when the materials are being asked to do that work instead. The archive, the canvas, the game – these are what taught me to look for it.

Working through making – canvases, games, dialogical objects, built and re-designed through use with students – is what made this research participatory rather than analytical. What this changed for me is my own sense of what art pedagogy is, and where it lives. The exploratory, embodied, critical registers that the gap between urgency and action sits in are not reachable through writing or analysis. They become reachable through the materials – through filling in a canvas together, through laying cards on a table, through the dialogue the objects open up.

What remains unresolved

Two questions sit close together and remain unresolved. The first is the question of criteria. Arte Útil holds a *coefficient of art* – a set of criteria by which the archive's curators judge whether a project carries the qualities – the *Shoulds* – a project needs to be defined as Arte Útil. The Performatory does not yet have an equivalent. What an equivalent of those criteria might be – what the *Shoulds* of Social Innovation at the Performatory are, what makes a project Social Innovation in the sense the community holds – remains for now open. The second is the question of scale. Arte Útil's archive holds nearly three hundred case studies; the Performatory's currently holds roughly a dozen. Whether the heritage function strengthens, or becomes qualitatively different, as the collection grows is something only continued making will show. These two questions sit together because they ask the same thing from different angles: what is this, at the scale and selectivity it grows into, an archive of – and for the students who will move through it, what will it let them find. That is something only continued making, with each new cohort archiving and activating in turn, will answer.

A further question this research has not taken up directly is what carries a student from locating to acting. Locating, as I have used it, is the move of finding a position from which to act – the space between holding an urgency about the world and developing the agency to act within it. What sits in that space, but beyond the reach of this thesis, is the work of inner conditions: resilience, critical awareness, trust in one's own judgment, the willingness to begin. The archive can make room for those inner conditions. It cannot grow them itself – that is work to be cared for and enabled alongside everything the wider Social Innovation community is doing.

What this graduation project opens

This is a logic I had come across before, and found myself returning to as I thought about what an open archive does pedagogically. Elizabeth Ellsworth calls it the *future anterior* – pedagogical address aimed not at who a student is in the moment of encounter, but at who they will have been once the encounter has done its work (Ellsworth, 2005). It preserves something now so that a future reader, in a different moment of their own formation, might find themselves differently oriented by it.

The Facilitation Guide is the most immediate move to action – a usable document that colleagues, students, and future social innovators can make their own. Two students have already begun extending this project: they are currently busy with archiving more cards through play-based dialogues, and beginning to hold conversation with the Performatory community to possibly define our *Shoulds*. A physical installation of the archive is being developed with the BUas MakerSpace, opening the archive to the community in a way the digital and printed forms cannot. These continuations – and the activations still to be run with new cohorts – are what the archive is meant for.

Beyond the Performatory, my hope is that the questions this research has opened – about heritage as material, about facilitation as the pedagogical event, about archives as positioned apparatus rather than neutral containers – stay live in the conversations I am already part of: with colleagues across the academies, with the students who keep extending the archive, and with the practitioners and partners we work alongside. These are people facing the same question, in their own way – how to support practitioners-in-formation in finding their footing. I look forward to seeing how the archive gets picked

up, adapted, and rewritten in their hands.

Still in the making

I would rather not end on a finding. Research-creation – the commitment that making and knowing come together, each unsettling the other in ways you cannot plan for – means the knowing here emerged through the making, and it feels as if the making just started. What I have are openings more than conclusions. *The Performatory Archive* is still in becoming: the activations are still being tested, the Facilitation Guide is being explored by colleagues, and I am still in the middle of making the physical installation to make the archive accessible to the community – with the implications ways of filtering, categorising and organising an Archive bring.

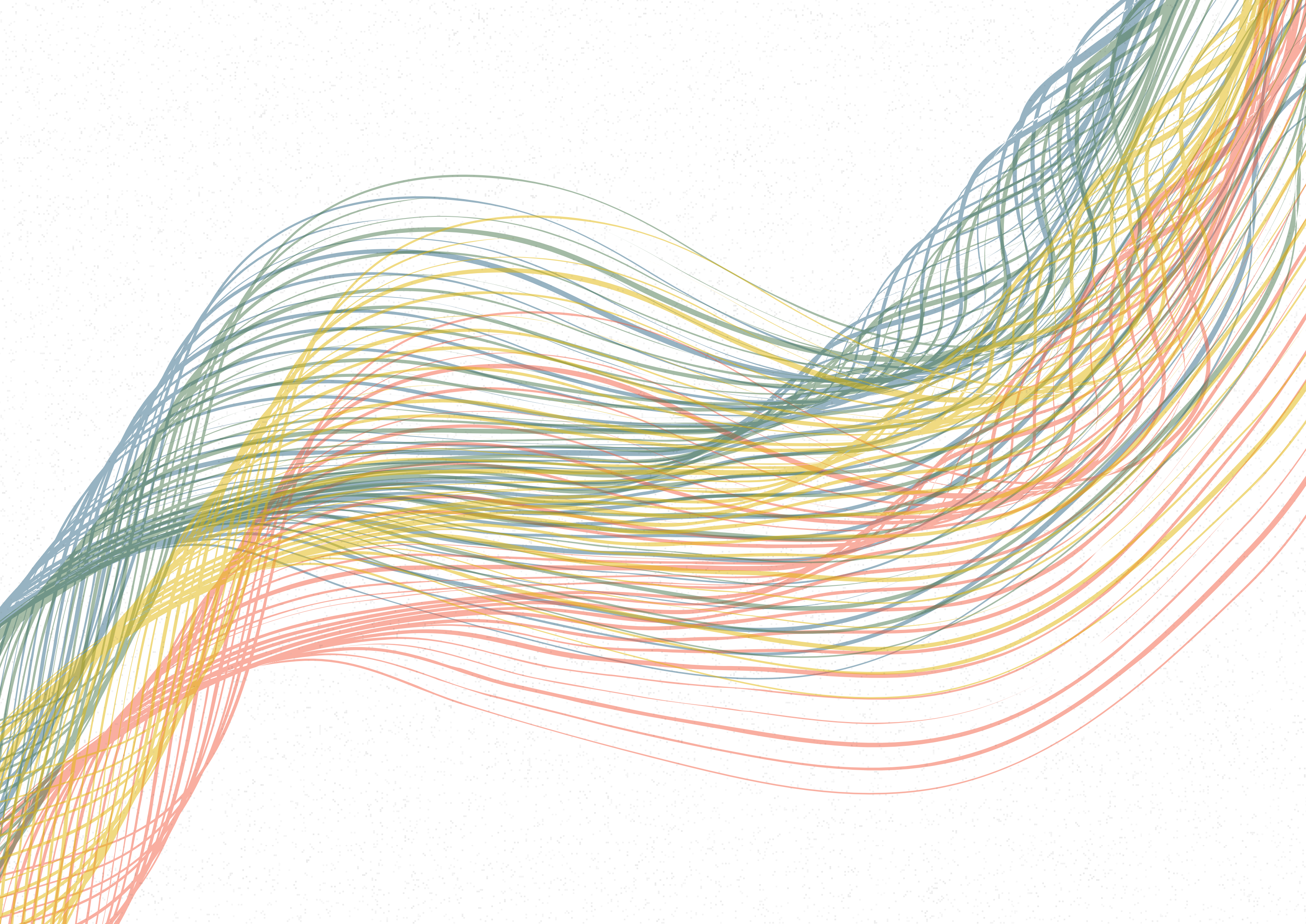
What I can say is that the question I started with – *what makes it so difficult for Social Innovation students to locate themselves as practitioners* – has become, through the doing, a different question. It is no longer a question about students. It is a question about the conditions under which a community of practice holds itself open to those entering it. The Performatory Archive is one attempt to hold the community open in such a way.

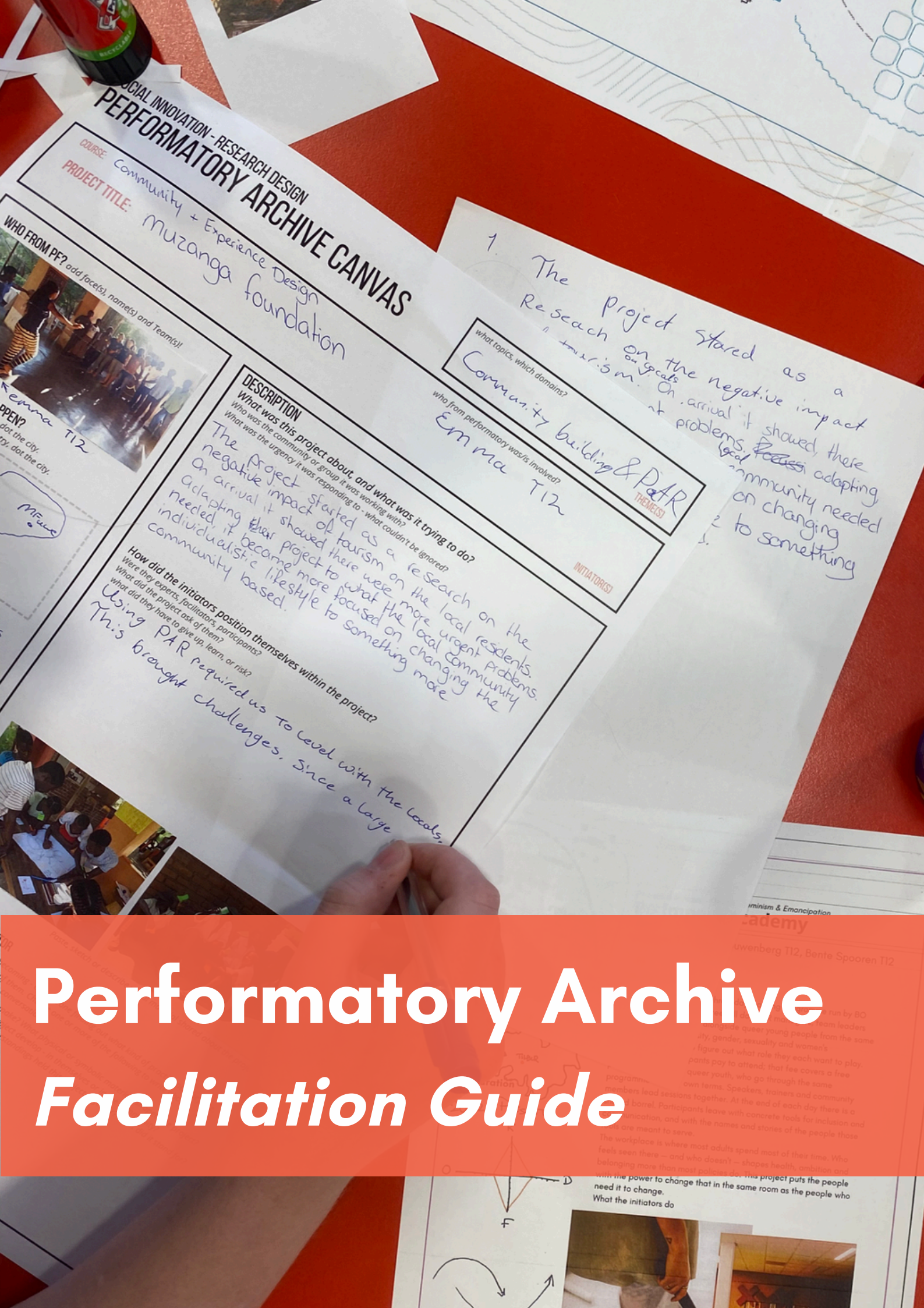
I look forward to the conversations – with students, alumni, colleagues, and educators in adjacent territory – that this work will lead to.

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Performatory Archive

Facilitation Guide

Performatory Archive

Facilitation Guide

A hands-on guide for archiving, ideating, and working with the Performatory Archive.

This guide accompanies "**Enabling Boundaries: Generative Encounters in Social Innovation Education**" a graduation project at the Master Education in Arts, Piet Zwart Institute.

Carlo Pareti — June 2026

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Part 1 // The Performatory Archive

What it is

Part 2 // Using the canvases

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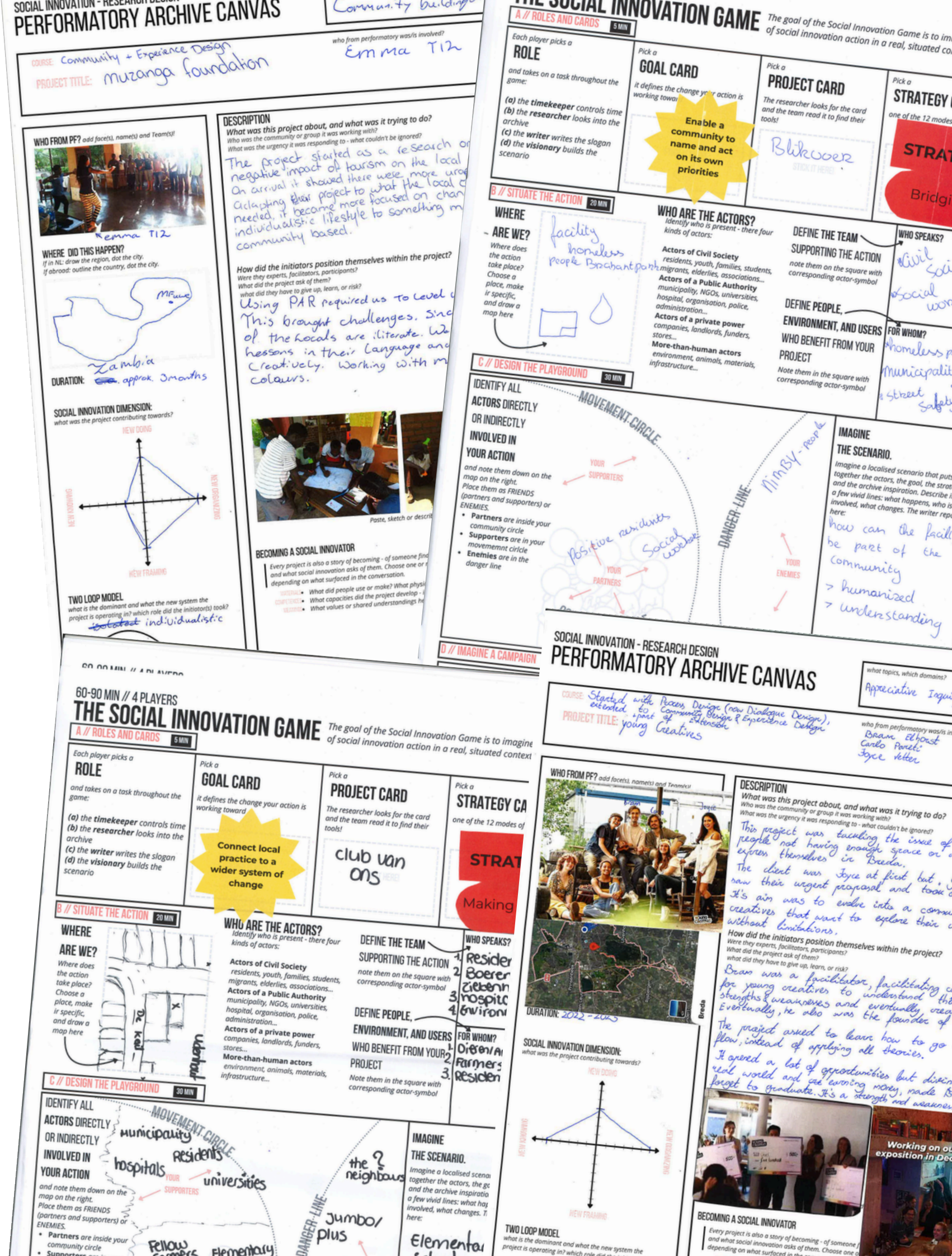
How to use the goals

Part 3 // The Materials - to print, cut, and use

Printable Performatory Archive canvas (A3)

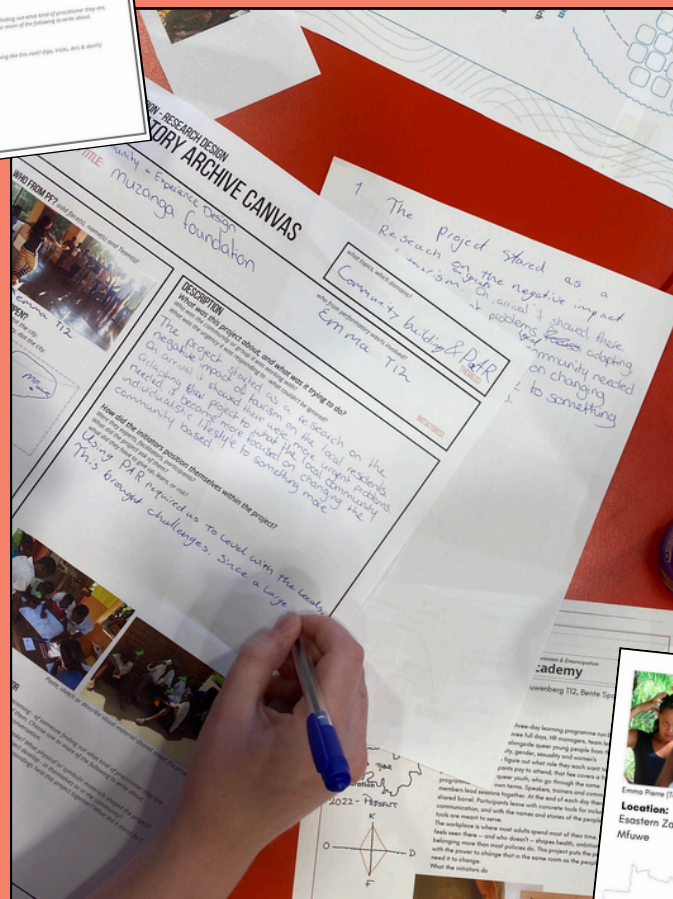
Printable Social Innovation game canvas (A3)

Printable goal & strategy cards (A4)





The Performatory



What is it?

The Performatory Archive is a participatory collection of Social Innovation projects developed by students of the Performatory - a Social Innovation specialisation within Breda University of Applied Sciences. Each project in the archive is held on a card filled in through dialogue with the person who did the work: where it happened, what it was responding to, what role its initiators took, and what shifted for them through the doing.

The archive was made - and is still being made - for current students trying to find their own way into the field of Social Innovation. Encountering specific people doing specific work in specific places makes the field navigable in a way that systemic frameworks alone cannot. The archive's pedagogical force doesn't live in the cards themselves - it lives in the generative encounters they make possible.

This Guide is the companion to the archive. It holds the canvas through which projects are documented, the Social Innovation Game through which archived projects become inspiration for new localised scenarios, and material to run activations. It is addressed to anyone in the Performatory community who wants to host an encounter around the archive.

Archive



Two A3 sheets to fill in dialogue:

One looks back at a project that's finished..

SOCIAL INNOVATION PERFORMATORY ARCHIVE CANVAS

COURSE:
TITLE:
ONE LINER:
what was this project trying to do?

WHO FROM PP? add face(s), name(s) and Team(s)

PHOTO(S)
PASTE HERE

WHERE DID THIS HAPPEN?
Country: name it.
Region: draw it and point out which city(ies)

MAP

DURATION:

SD DIMENSION:
Social Innovation is understood as "change in social relations, involving new ways of doing, organising, framing and/or knowing." Under each dimension the project touched, note in a few words what was new. The centre is where social relations actually shifted.

NEW KNOWING
—
—
—

NEW DOING
—
—
—

NEW RELATIONS
—
—
—

NEW ORGANISING
—
—
—

NEW FRAMING
—
—
—

Hasthine et al. 2016, 72 theory

DESCRIPTION
What was this project about, and what was it trying to do?
Who was the community or group it was working with?
What was the urgency it was responding to - what couldn't be ignored?

THEME(S)
what topics? which thematic areas?

STUDENT(S)
who from performatory was/is involved?

How did the students position themselves within the project?
Were they experts, facilitators, participants?
What did the project ask of them?
What did they have to give up, learn, or risk?

PHOTO(S)
PASTE HERE

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Paste, sketch or describe visual material about the project

BECOMING A SOCIAL INNOVATOR
Every project is also a story of becoming - of someone finding out what kind of practitioner they are, and what social innovation asks of them. Choose one or more of the following to write about, depending on what surfaced in the conversation:
What did you do that you hadn't done before?
What did you start to see differently as a result?
What would you pass on to whoever does something like this next? (tips, tricks, do's & don'ts)

CONTACTS • LINKS
Websites • Phones • Emails • Tools

60-90 MIN // 2-4 PLAYERS

THE SOCIAL INNOVATION GAME

The goal of the game is to imagine a scenario of social innovation action in a real, situated context!

A // ENTER THE FIELD

5 MIN

Choose a **course lens** to approach this action from:

EXPERIENCE DESIGN
COMMUNITY DESIGN
IALOGUE DESIGN
RESEARCH DESIGN
BUSINESS DESIGN

Pull a

PROJECT FROM THE ARCHIVE

What is inspiring about it?

WRITE IT HERE!

Pick a

GOAL

What change do you want to work towards?

STICK IT HERE!

Pick a

STRATEGY

One of the modes of Social Innovative action

STICK IT HERE!

B // SITUATE THE ACTION

20 MIN

WHERE ARE WE?

Where does the action take place? Choose a specific place and draw a map here

WHO ARE THE ACTORS?

Who is present? there are four kinds:

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residents, youth, families, students, migrants, elderlies, associations...

Actors of a Public Authority
municipality, NGOs, universities, hospital, organisation, police, administration...

Actors of a Private Power
companies, landlords, funders, stores...

More-than-human Actors
environments, animals, materials, infrastructure...

DEFINE THE TEAM SUPPORTING THE ACTION

note them in the square

WHO SPEAKS?

DEFINE PEOPLE, ENVIRONMENT, AND USERS WHO BENEFIT FROM YOUR PROJECT

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FOR WHOM?

C // DESIGN THE CAMPFIRE

30 MIN

IDENTIFY ALL ACTORS DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY INVOLVED IN YOUR ACTION

Note them within or around the campfire:

- Partners are within your community
- Supporters are in your movement circle
- Water resembles anyone who might want to extinguish your fire!

IMAGINE THE ACTION.

Imagine the action that puts together the actors, the goal, the strategy, and the campfire. Describe it in a few vivid lines: what happens, who is involved, what changes:

D // IMAGINE A CAMPAIGN

10 MIN

TOGETHER, MAKE A ONE-LINER SLOGAN FOR YOUR ACTION AND WRITE IT HERE:

Open up dialogue between...

**..the other looks forward
to one you want to start!**



SOCIAL INNOVATION PERFORMATORY ARCHIVE CANVAS

what topics? which thematic areas?

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STUDENT(S)
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Haxelstine et al. 2016. TSI theory

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CONTACTS + LINKS
Websites - Phones - Emails - Tools

Archiving a project

You'll need: a printed canvas (A3), a project to archive, 45–60 min, people in pairs or small groups.

- **Set up (5 min).** One person has a finalised Performatory project.
- **Hear it first (10 min).** Let whoever did the project tell the story before anything gets written - what it was, where, who for, what they were responding to.
- **Fill the card together (25 min).** Work through the canvas. Stay specific - where it happened is part of what it was. Take time on the *one-liner*; it's the first thing a future reader sees! Not everything will fit, and that is fine.
- **Ask the *becoming* questions in conversation:** what did you do you hadn't before? what do you see differently now? what would you pass on?
- **Read it back (5 min).** The listener reads the card aloud; the person says what's missing. Fix it together. Add contacts and links if it's going into the archive.

some project cards



Hanna Myczkowska (T18)

Location:
the Netherlands,
Rotterdam.

Duration:
March - June 2025

Course:
Extension

Social Innovation:



Contact & Links
Hanna: 222515@buas.nl
Website: dokhuis.org



Community Building • Third Places • Play & Craft • Informal Education

Internship at dokhuis

Tending to a community house in Rotterdam as a form of changemaking, one forgotten craft, open playground, and unexpected concert at a time.

Description

For four months Hanna interned at Dokhuis, a culture and community house in Rotterdam. She worked under the guidance of Inge Spaander, Dokhuis' Program Leader and Maker. Her focus was event organising and community work, and she **positioned herself as a supportive connector** rather than an expert - taking initiative where she could, but staying responsive to what the community brought.

She worked on four projects. She organised a workshop on Perception and Meaning Making. She used dialogue and acting to explore how people make sense of the world around them. She launched **Forgotten Crafts**, a new monthly segment where a different slowly-disappearing skill is taught by a community member - it received external funding and is still running. She took over Playground, an open timeslot where one of Dokhuis' rooms becomes a space for neighbourhood creatives to meet, inspire one another, and just be. And she finished her internship by organising a concert with a neighbourhood musician she had connected with along the way. They met by chance, found a common language, and co-created something for the neighbourhood together - the clearest example of what becomes possible when you follow a relationship rather than a plan.

The urgency became clear once she started: Hanna hadn't realised she was missing a community house in Breda until she found one in Rotterdam. **Nurturing a community means giving people ownership over the space they occupy and creating a centre where people come to meet.** That is where you find the heart, the hands, and the head of a community. The work also asked her to let go of a corporate nine-to-five mindset, which she struggled with. Researching play, silliness, and joy was what actually helped her do it.



Becoming a Social Innovator

Hanna came in with a lot of theory and not much experience. Being in the field changed that. She used Design Thinking throughout - not as a rigid method but as a way to treat her work as something fluid rather than linear. Facilitation, event organising, and community outreach developed along the way. But the biggest shift was **learning to work with imperfection and trust relationship over structure.**

Forgotten Crafts showed her that skills passed between people carry community memory. Playground showed her that joy and play are legitimate parts of social life. And the concert showed her what becomes possible when you follow a relationship without knowing where it leads. She also **recorded a podcast as a way to reflect**, which let her be more descriptive, more emotional, and more honest than writing alone allowed.



Emma Pierre (Team 12)

Location:
Eastern Zambia,
Mfuwe

Community Building • Participatory Action Research • Sustainable Tourism

Muzanga Foundation

A foundation where the income from hosting travellers pays for the projects local people design themselves.

Description

The project started as a research brief on tourism's negative impact on residents around Mfuwe, in eastern Zambia. What made it work was the method - Participatory Action Research, which made the initial question to change once the team arrived.

The first reckoning was language. Tourism had no equivalent word in Cinyanja - literally **"people who come to see the animals"** - and the team realised they had been talking past lessons in the local language, and building facilitation around movement, colour and image rather than text. Methods were invented in the room: a "crossing the line" game so people who didn't speak English could still answer, mind maps in the village's own categories, opening and closing prayers because that was how community gatherings worked there.

Working with twelve elders from Maulidi across roughly ten sessions, the team kept handing the lead back to the community. A bean game showed how corruption took hold inside the group itself, and from that moment the community named what they wanted to **act on: corruption and development.** Two action plans emerged - a theatre play about corruption to perform in surrounding villages, and the Maulidi Village Market, with a committee, monthly savings, and a plan to register with the council. The carving, weaving and farming skills also were the foundation.

PAR is supposed to be slow - relationships outlast projects, communities outlast Emma kept coming back to Mfuwe over the next five years. In 2023 she permanently founded Muzanga Foundation, which now runs community farming, youth skills, tourism and education - all designed by the community, all campsites and tours Muzanga hosts.



Becoming a Social Innovator

Best shift was learning to take off Western glasses before facilitating anything. Being as a word in Cinyanja was the moment that made it concrete - words to travel, even when everyone is nodding along. Preparation made flexibility possible so it could be deviated from when the room shifted. And feedback from elders landed sharply too - Mitchell telling Emma that as a leader, her impact through the group whether she notices or not.

Lucy passes on: **build relations before any method.** Use movement, colour and the work. Open and close in the local rhythm, not your own. And be with the first three months were just the start of the project.



Lucy Brandt (Team 14)

Location:
the Netherlands,
Breda.

Duration:
6 months pop-up in the Food-hall
(2021)

Course:
Experience Design
Professional Expedition

Social Innovation:



Contact & Links
Instagram: servellebreda
LinkedIn: Lucy Brandt



Food as Medicine • Pop-up kitchen • Conscious Consumption

Servelle, food for thought

A pop-up kitchen that serves local, organic food alongside transparency about how each ingredient affects body and brain.

Description

After a trip to India in 2018, Lucy was prescribed a course of antibiotics that turned out to be too strong, and was left with IBS. Looking into it pulled her into the field of nutritional psychiatry - 95% of the body's serotonin is produced in the gut, and the bacteria living there are shaped directly by what you eat. What goes on the plate also reaches the brain.

In November 2020, Bank15 offered her a kitchen space in the Food Hall of Breda after a pitch. Where other applicants proposed a country cuisine, Lucy pitched a concept - **Servelle, food for thought.** Servelle rested on three pillars: **Sustainable:** second-hand equipment, ingredients sourced locally and in season, every part of an ingredient used across dishes to cut waste. **Educational:** each dish came alongside what its ingredients actually did in the body and brain - fermented foods as natural probiotics, omega-3s building cell membranes, leafy greens lifting serotonin - not as instruction but as transparency. **Fun:** deliberately kept as a filter on every decision: **this something that gives us energy and makes us happy?**

Most kitchens in the Food Hall served deep-fried fast food, and even the newer vegan kitchen served vegan junk food. Servelle was placed into that environment as a small alternative - affordable enough that price would not filter the audience and transparent enough that anyone curious could read what they were eating and why. The research behind the menu traced the food industry that the Food Hall sat inside: manipulative marketing aimed at children and minorities, food deserts and food apartheid, ultra-processed foods. The conclusion Lucy carried into the kitchen was that the consumer carries more power than they think - if there is no demand, there cannot be supply.



Becoming a Social Innovator

The biggest shift was learning to **stop being a soft-boiled egg** - agreeing because someone else in the room was confident, taking other people's opinions as instructions. About two months in, Lucy noticed she was being swept along by Bank15's culture of just-do-it and saying yes, leaving meetings exhausted and without the answers she had gone in for. She and her co-founder Emma Langerhorst reframed it as **becoming hard-boiled:** keeping their own pace, asking the question behind the question, letting other people's opinions inform decisions without making them.

What Lucy passes on: awareness, not force, changes habits. Don't lecture customers - give them the information and let them choose. Build in the conditions you actually want to work in. And know that a small kitchen inside a fast-food hall is the kind of place social innovation has to live: not a movement somewhere else, but an alternative in the room where the dominant system already runs.

Citizens Participation • Lost Voices • Neighbourhood Work

ClubvanONS

A movement that takes a bus into Breda's neighbourhoods to collect the voices policy never hears.

Description

ClubvanONS started from a question Stefanie Vermeulen's research kept returning to - the participation ladder, the model that's supposed to describe how citizens get a say in policy, is largely absent in practice. **Policies still get made about people, rather than with them.** Anne van den Broek's master's thesis on speaking truth to power from Hip-Hop culture became the second pillar: **what does it actually take for the world to hear and see people for who they are?** The movement that grew from those two questions is now powered by Urban Living Lab Breda, with Amy, Jaap and Lotta joining forces.

ClubvanONS drives a bus into Heuvel, Upelaar and Doornbos-Linie - neighbourhoods where institutional surveys would often not get to - and stays long enough for a different kind of conversation to happen: through Art, creating open space, and the slow work of being listened to. The premise **inside the bus is that everyone is equal** - no one is reduced to "the student," "the patient," "the resident with a complaint." What gets collected is what people actually miss, what they need, what nobody thought to ask them.

From those drives, things have started to take shape. Open meetings have been held across the three neighbourhoods. A clubhouse for young people has been designed with the people who'd use it. And the project is now working toward a dedicated community of 100 - a critical mass of voices that policy can no longer pretend not to hear. ClubvanONS positions itself as an intermediary: a movement that lives between institutions and the people.



ovator

been experimenting with the most effective ways to gather meetings, took the bus out to visit neighbourhoods, and people to find their voice. What this project keeps teaching us is to listen, see, and dare to do so. This is only the beginning nationwide movement towards a more coherent, united

Imagining an action

You'll need: the game board (A3), goal cards, strategy cards, a few archive cards, pens and sticky notes. 2 - 4 players, 60 - 90 min.

- **A // Enter the field (10 min).** Take a course lens, then pull a project card from the archive for inspiration. Lastly, pick a goal (the change you want) and a strategy (the mode of action), and place them on the board.
- **B // Situate the action (20 min).** Decide where this happens - a specific place - and draw a map. Name who's present across the four kinds of actors: civil society, public authority, private power, more-than-human. Define the team behind it (who speaks?) and who benefits (for whom?).
- **C // Design the campfire (30 min).** Place every actor around the fire: partners inside the community circle, supporters in the movement circle, water anyone who'd put the fire out. Then imagine the action that pulls goal, strategy, project and campfire together - a few vivid lines: what happens, who's involved, what changes.
- **D // Imagine a campaign (10 min).** Write a one-line slogan.

Where would you start to bring this scenario to life?

60-90 MIN // 2-4 PLAYERS
THE SOCIAL INNOVATION GAME

The goal of the game is to imagine a scenario of social innovation action in a real, situated context!

A // ENTER THE FIELD 5 MIN

Choose a **course lens** to approach this action from:

- EXPERIENCE DESIGN
- COMMUNITY DESIGN
- DIALOGUE DESIGN
- RESEARCH DESIGN
- BUSINESS DESIGN

Pull a **PROJECT FROM THE ARCHIVE**
What is inspiring about it?

Pick a **GOAL**
What change do you want to work towards?

Pick a **STRATEGY**
One of the modes of Social Innovative action

B // SITUATE THE ACTION 20 MIN

WHERE ARE WE?
Where does the action take place? Choose a specific place and draw a map here

WHO ARE THE ACTORS?
Who is present? there are four kinds:
Actors of Civil Society
residents, youth, families, students, migrants, elderlies, associations...
Actors of a Public Authority
municipality, NGOs, universities, hospital, organisation, police, administration...
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environments, animals, materials, infrastructure...

DEFINE THE TEAM SUPPORTING THE ACTION
note them in the square

DEFINE PEOPLE, ENVIRONMENT, AND USERS WHO BENEFIT FROM YOUR PROJECT
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WHO SPEAKS?

FOR WHOM?

C // DESIGN THE CAMPFIRE 30 MIN

IDENTIFY ALL ACTORS DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY INVOLVED IN YOUR ACTION
Note them within or around the campfire:

- **Partners** are within your community
- **Supporters** are in your movement circle
- **Water** resembles anyone who might want to extinguish your fire!

IMAGINE THE ACTION.
Imagine the action that puts together the actors, the goal, the strategy, and the campfire. Describe it in a few vivid lines: **what happens, who is involved, what changes:**

D // IMAGINE A CAMPAIGN 10 MIN TOGETHER, MAKE A ONE-LINER SLOGAN FOR YOUR ACTION AND WRITE IT HERE:

Open up dialogue between citizens and institutional actors

STRATEGY

Invoking

Meaning or

STRATEGY

Making visible

Make existing knowledge, practices, or visible

Challenge a dominant assumption about what is possible

STRATEGY

Gathering

How to use the strategies

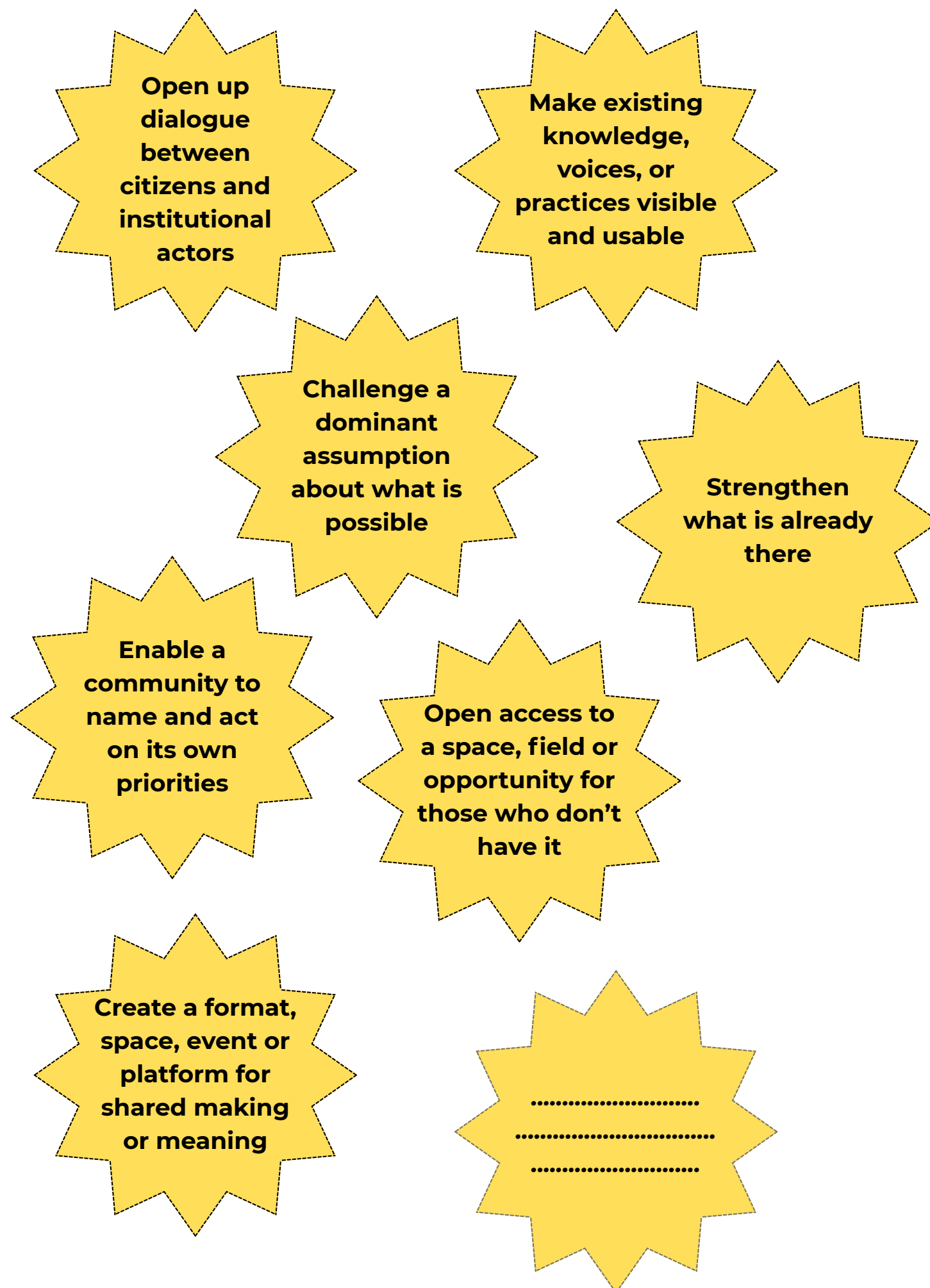
The four strategies work as prompts. Most Social Innovation projects combine several - **gathering** opens into **co-creating**, **making visible** can be its own form of **provocation**, **co-creating** often requires holding the space for **gathering** first. The card you draw in the game is meant to focus the imagination, not narrow it.

When the strategy on the card feels like the wrong fit for the scenario, that is part of the work. The friction between what the group is imagining and what the strategy asks them to do is often where the most interesting moves come from. Hold the strategy as a question rather than a constraint:

What would this scenario look like if gatherings were its main move?

What if provokings were?





How to use the goals

A goal is the change you want to work towards - the shift the action is reaching for. If the strategy is how you act, the goal is what you're acting toward. The seven on the cards are directions Social Innovation projects often take.

Most projects hold more than one: ***Opening access to a space*** can be how a community comes to name its own priorities; ***making something visible*** can itself challenge an assumption about what's possible. Pick the goal that you feel the most connection to, or sit with the tension between two - that's often where the scenario gets specific.

When none of them quite fits what the group is imagining, that's worth noticing. Use the blank card: naming your own goal, in your own words, can be part of the work.

*What would this scenario look like if strengthening
what's already there were its main aim?
What if challenging an assumption were?*

Part 3

the materials

to print, cut, and use

These are the working parts of the archive - made to be printed and used as you may find valuable. None of them works on its own: A canvas does nothing until it holds a real conversation; a board is just printed lines until a group plays a scenario across it. So print what you need, as many times as you need, and let each session be a generative encounter with the field of Social Innovation.

- **The Archive Canvas (A3)** print and fill. The fields explain themselves on the sheet.
- **The Social Innovation Game board (A3)** print and play on.
- **Goal cards & Strategy cards (A4)** print on sticky paper and cut around the edges. Seven goals plus a blank, four strategies plus a blank - the blanks let a group name their own.

SOCIAL INNOVATION

PERFORMATORY ARCHIVE CANVAS

what topics? which thematic areas?

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TITLE:

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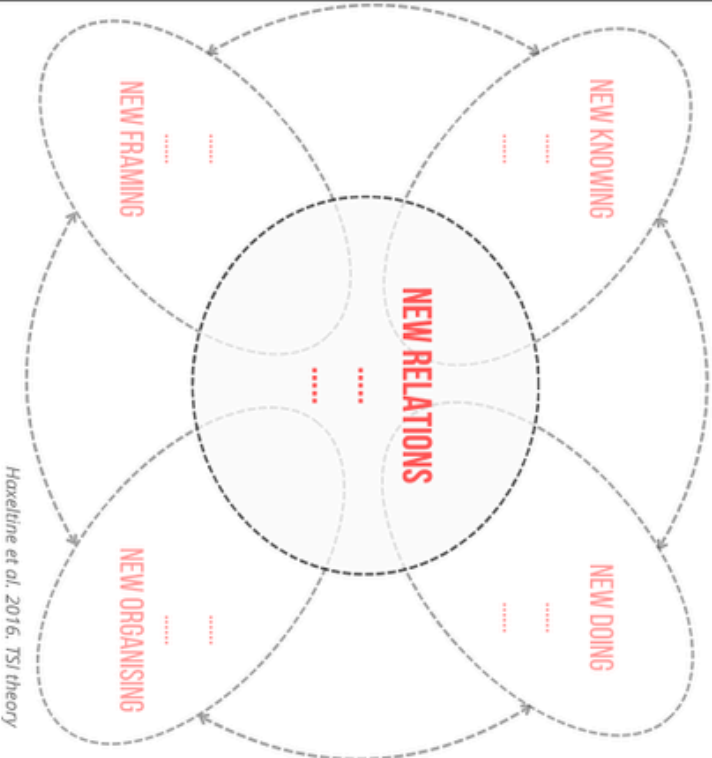
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Choose a specific place and draw a map here

WHO ARE THE ACTORS?

Who is present? there are four kinds:

Actors of Civil Society

residents, youth, families, students, migrants, elderlies, associations...

Actors of a Public Authority

municipality, NGOs, universities, hospital, organisation, police, administration...

Actors of a Private Power

companies, landlords, funders, stores...

More-than-human Actors

environments, animals, materials, infrastructure...

DEFINE THE TEAM

SUPPORTING THE ACTION

note them in the square

DEFINE PEOPLE,

ENVIRONMENT, AND USERS

WHO BENEFIT FROM YOUR

PROJECT

Note them in the square

WHO SPEAKS?

FOR WHOM?

C // DESIGN THE CAMPFIRE 30 MIN

IDENTIFY ALL

ACTORS DIRECTLY

OR INDIRECTLY

INVOLVED IN

YOUR ACTION

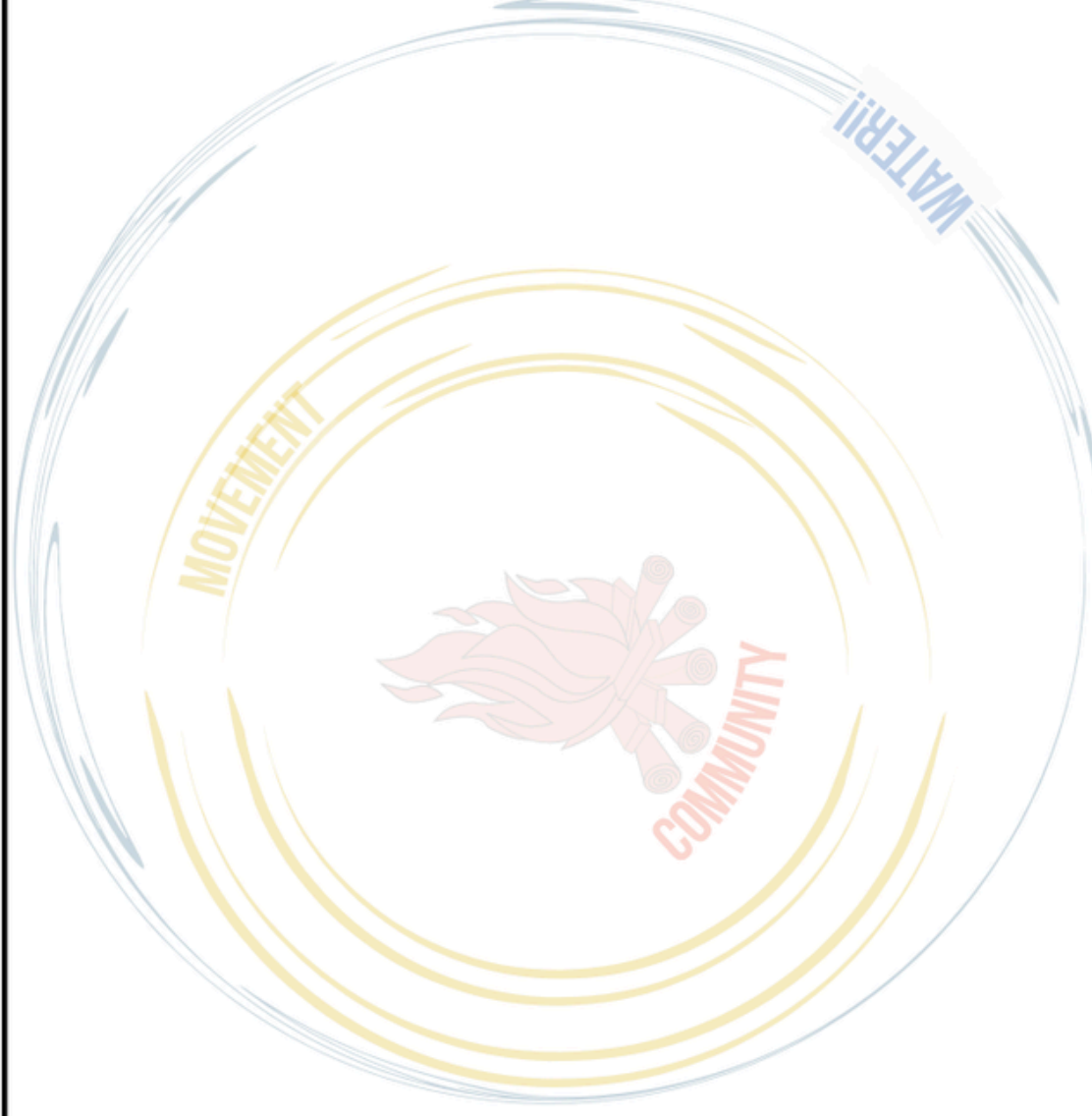
Note them within or around the campfire:

- **Partners** are within your community
- **Supporters** are in your movement circle
- **Water** resembles anyone who might want to extinguish your fire!

IMAGINE

THE ACTION.

Imagine the action that puts together the actors, the goal, the strategy, and the campfire. Describe it in a few vivid lines: **what happens, who is involved, what changes:**



D // IMAGINE A CAMPAIGN 10 MIN

TOGETHER, MAKE A ONE-LINER SLOGAN FOR YOUR ACTION AND WRITE IT HERE:

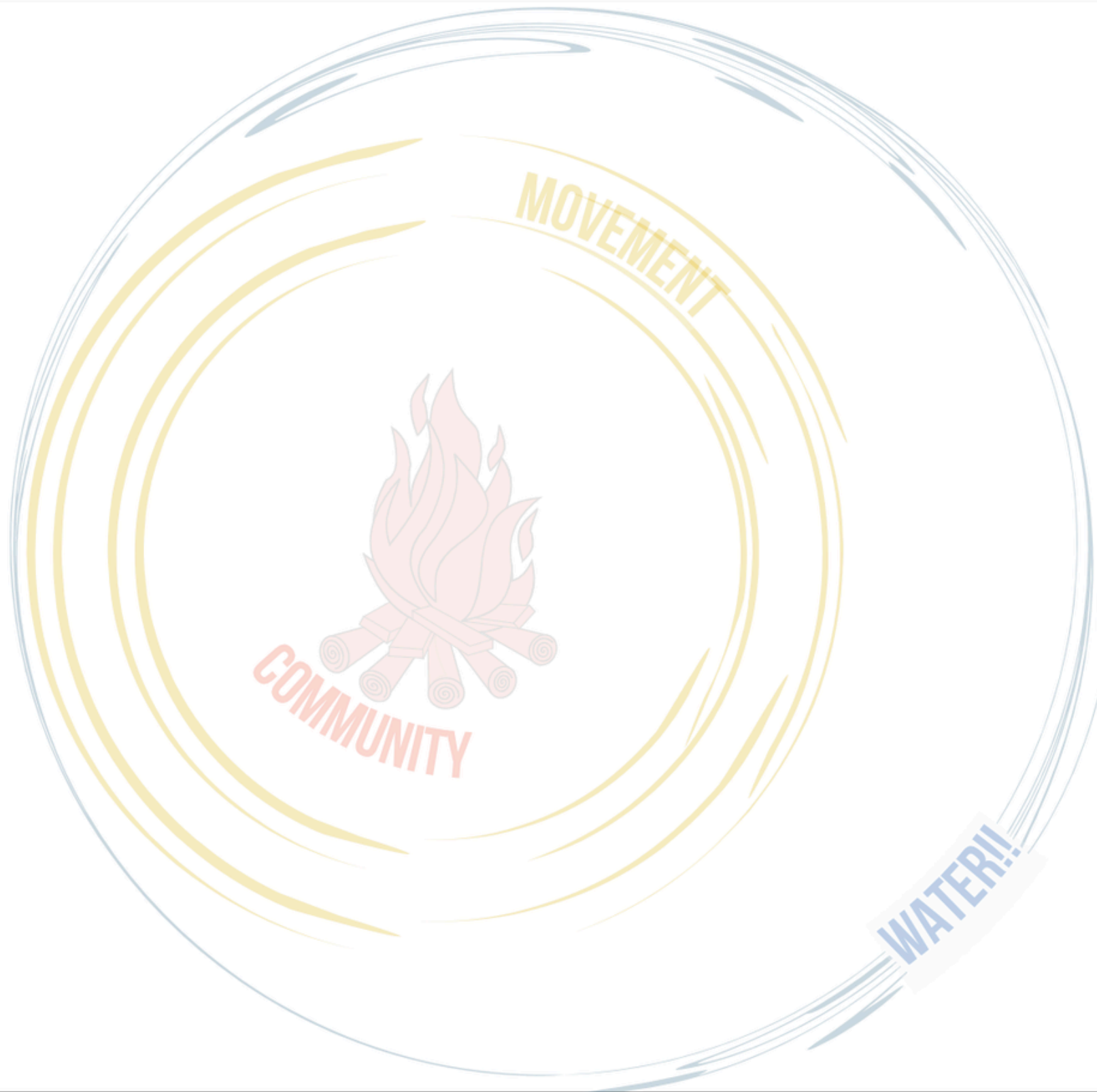
C // DESIGN THE CAMPFIRE

30 MIN

IDENTIFY ALL ACTORS DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY INVOLVED IN YOUR ACTION

*Note them within or
around the campfire:*

- **Partners** are within your community
- **Supporters** are in your movement circle
- **Water** resembles anyone who might want to extinguish your fire!



IMAGINE THE SCENARIO.

*Imagine a localised scenario that puts together the actors, the goal, the strategy, and the campfire. Describe it in a few vivid lines: **what happens, who is involved, what changes:***

D // IMAGINE A CAMPAIGN

10 MIN

TOGETHER, MAKE A ONE-LINER SLOGAN FOR YOUR ACTION AND WRITE IT **HERE:**

Open up dialogue
between citizens and
institutional actors

Make existing
knowledge, voices, or
practices visible and
usable

STRATEGY

Gathering

Challenge a dominant
assumption about what
is possible

Strengthen what is
already there

Co-creating

STRATEGY

Enable a community to
name and act on its
own priorities

Open access to a space,
field or opportunity for
those who don't have it

STRATEGY

Provoking

Create a format, space,
event or platform for
shared making or
meaning

.....
.....
.....

STRATEGY

Making visible

STRATEGY

.....

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Education in Arts at Piet Zwart Institute,
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