

A decorative graphic consisting of several concentric circles of varying sizes and colors (blue and grey) scattered across the page. A thick, wavy blue line flows horizontally across the lower half of the page. Dotted lines connect some of the circles, creating a network-like structure.

Giuliana Bonifati

**Architecture and *creative* transformation.  
Creative urban practices in London.**

Supervisor: prof. Carlos García Vazquez  
Coordinator PAUI: prof. Gian Luca Basso Peressut



**POLITECNICO**  
MILANO 1863

POLITECNICO DI MILANO

Department of Architecture and Urban Studies - DASTU

Ph.D. Course in Architecture, urban and interior design - PAUI

XXX cycle



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PAUI Coordinator:  
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A mia zia Barbara  
**la mia nuvola bianca che mi osserva dal cielo**

## Acknowledgements

*Man's real home is not a house,  
but the Road,  
and that life itself is a journey to be walked on foot.*

Bruce Chatwin

I like to consider the Ph.D. as a part of the road that I have traveled time to time building my person, and so it actually was: this experience in addition to having produced this research has contributed to the construction of what my professional and personal figure is and will be. Of all the people I met along the way some, I would say many, have walked side by side to me along the way, some only for some stretches, actively contributing to achieving this goal. For this reason, I want to thank particularly those whose contribution has been decisive.

The first fundamental big thank goes to the supervisor Carlos Garcia Vazquez, for having always believed in this research and guided me and encouraged along this path, for the precious and expert advice and the constant support and encouragement. Thanks also for the esteem and affection that has constantly shown me, for the interesting conversations and discussions.

Many thanks to Peter Bishop for welcoming me to Bartlett with open arms, for answering that e-mail one afternoon during the Christmas break three years ago and having made all this possible and also, thanks for always being a source of learning and growth.

And, thanks to Pablo Sendra for directing and advising in the construction of work.

Thanks to Patricia Brown for giving me the opportunity to “stay inside the process” and understand how it works. The work experience at Central has been crucial for the completeness of this work.

Thanks to the Coordinator of the PAUI Doctoral Program, Gian Luca Basso Peressut for his presence and support in moments of doubt and difficulty.

To the Board of Professors who have attended all the ‘milestones’ providing interesting comments and valuable advice.

To the XXX cycle PAUI, all female, thanks for the constant debate and support.

A big thanks to Guya Bertelli, for giving me the opportunity to get closer to the research and teach me how to love it, for having grown me up in her research lab, giving me diversified extremely formative and enriching experiences.

Thanks to Juan Carlos Dall’Asta for having believed in me from the beginning and guided me in the first part of this journey.



An endless thanks to my Big Family that encourages me, supports and endures every day, each in its role, sharing every stretch of life, happy and painful ones, with passion and involvement.

Irene, the certainty of recent years, the main source of advice and listener of anxieties and worries as well as joys and goals. A mate of adventures and misfortunes, a faithful and irreplaceable friend. There are no words to thank you.

My friends, the only ones, Giulia, Linda, Frenci and Michi, who did not understand anything of what I was saying, but they were interested in every moment of my journey encouraging me to always give my best and always believe in me.

Marti, Giulia, Bajo and Dario, a constant source of sound comparison. Thank you for walking step by step next to me during this long journey. We cried and suffered together but together we also laughed, danced and hoped that somehow everything was going well. And we are still here, reinforcing every day more this friendship born between the walls of a “slaughterhouse”<sup>1</sup>.

My London family, Giudi, Anna, Ale (Cianci), Ale (Filips), Andre and all those who have passed over. There are those who left and who remained, who will return and who has just passed. Thank you for making this English period more pleasant, for understanding what it means to “feel stuck between two worlds”, for having dreamt of winning design competitions and sharing that passion for architecture that has led us all to build a home away from home.

And finally, thank you London, for having lent you as the object of the investigation, the place of my experiments and the main source of inspiration. And thank you for welcoming me as a home for the last two years, for giving me an incredible and unforgettable experience and for being the background on which I projected my dreams.

Footnote

<sup>1</sup> The Politecnico di Milano - Piacenza Campus is located in a restored ex slaughterhouse.

## Ringraziamenti

*La vera casa dell'uomo non è una casa,  
è la Strada.  
La vita stessa è un viaggio da fare a piedi.*

Bruce Chatwin

Mi piace pensare al dottorato come ad un tratto della strada che ho percorso volta alla costruzione della mia persona; e così effettivamente è stato: questa esperienza oltre ad aver prodotto questa ricerca ha contribuito alla definizione di quella che è e sarà la mia figura professionale e personale. Di tutte le persone che ho incontrato lungo la strada alcune, anzi direi molte, hanno camminato accanto a me; chi per tutto il percorso, chi solo per alcuni tratti, contribuendo in maniera attiva al raggiungimento di questo traguardo. Per questo motivo ci tengo a ringraziare particolarmente coloro il cui contributo è stato determinante.

Il primo fondamentale grande grazie va al relatore Carlos Garcia Vazquez, per aver da sempre creduto in questa ricerca e avermi guidato, spronato e seguito lungo tutto questo percorso, per i preziosi ed esperti consigli e il costante supporto ed incoraggiamento. Grazie anche per la stima che mi ha costantemente dimostrato, per le interessanti conversazioni e discussioni.

Grazie a Peter Bishop per avermi accolto alla Bartlett a braccia aperte, per aver risposto a quella mail un pomeriggio durante le vacanze di Natale tre anni fa e aver reso tutto questo possibile, grazie per essere sempre una fonte di insegnamento e crescita.

E grazie a Pablo Sendra per avermi indirizzato, consigliato e guidato nella costruzione del lavoro.

Un grazie sentito a Patricia Brown per avermi dato l'opportunità di "stare dentro al processo" e capirne il suo funzionamento. L'esperienza lavorativa presso Central è stata determinante per la completezza di questo lavoro.

Grazie al Coordinatore del Programma di Dottorato PAUI, Gian Luca Basso Peressut per la presenza e il supporto nei momenti di dubbi e difficoltà.

Al Board dei docenti che hanno assistito ai diversi milestones fornendo interessanti commenti e preziosi consigli.

Al XXX Ciclo PAUI tutto al femminile, grazie per il costante confronto e supporto.

Un grande grazie a Guya Bertelli, per avermi dato l'opportunità di avvicinarmi alla ricerca e imparare ad amarla, per avermi cresciuta nel suo laboratorio di ricerca, regalandomi esperienze diversificate, estremamente formative e arricchenti.

Grazie a Juan Carlos Dall'Asta per aver creduto in me fin dall'inizio e avermi costantemente

guidato nella prima parte di questo percorso.

Un infinito grazie alla mia Grande Famiglia che mi sostiene, supporta e sopporta ogni giorno, ognuno nel suo ruolo, condividendo ogni tratto di vita, felice e doloroso, con passione e coinvolgimento.

Irene, la certezza di questi ultimi anni, principale fonte di consigli e ascoltatrice di ansie e preoccupazioni oltre che di gioie e traguardi. Compagna di avventure e sventure, amica fedele e insostituibile. Non esistono parole per ringraziarti.

Le mie amiche, le uniche, Giulia, Linda, Frenci e Michi, che pur non capendo niente di quello che dicevo, si sono interessate in ogni momento del mio percorso incoraggiandomi a dare sempre il meglio e credendo in me sempre.

Marti, Giulia, Bajo e Dario, costante fonte di sano confronto. Grazie per aver camminato passo dopo passo accanto a me durante questo lungo percorso. Abbiamo pianto e sofferto insieme ma insieme abbiamo anche riso, ballato e sperato che in qualche modo tutto andasse bene. E siamo ancora qua, rafforzando ogni giorno di più questa amicizia nata tra i muri di un "macello"<sup>1</sup>.

La mia famiglia Londinese, Giudi, Anna, Ale (Cianci), Ale (Filips), Andre e tutti quelli che sono passati. C'è chi è partito e chi è restato, chi tornerà e chi è solo passato. Grazie per rendere più piacevole questo periodo inglese, per aver capito cosa significa "sentirsi bloccati tra due mondi", per aver sognato di vincere concorsi e condiviso quella passione per l'architettura che ci ha portati tutti a costruirci una speranza lontano da casa.

Ed infine, grazie Londra, per esserti prestata come oggetto dell'investigazione, luogo dei miei esperimenti e principale fonte di ispirazione. E grazie per avermi accolto come una casa negli ultimi due anni, per avermi regalato un'esperienza incredibile e indimenticabile e per essere stata lo sfondo sul quale ho proiettato i miei sogni.

Nota

<sup>1</sup> Gli spazi della Facoltà di Architettura del Politecnico di Milano - Sede di Piacenza sono all'interno dell'ex macello comunale.



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## Abstract

The contemporary historical context is identified through a profound change in traditional social and economic paradigms. The economic and productive value, besides having suffered an absolute change, drastically influence the social dynamics that lead to the emergence of new social and urban classes, changing the structure of settlements and planning and control practices of the contemporary city.

Consequently this change drives a different use of the urban spaces and is modifying the design process, in terms of urban design, by shifting it from a masterplanning approach to a 'place-making' strategy. Within this panorama, we are in front of the need to adapt to changes and make it the potential for studying and developing new models and urban transformation strategies.

For a couple of decades the term creativity has become part of the most diverse professional fields, in particular, in the economic field becomes its real capital. This dramatic shift in the economic value of material goods, belonging to the Fordist period, to intangible assets, related to the digital revolution, generates a general instability of the living conditions of urban society and as a result of the traditional formal structures of the city. The term creativity assumes a crucial role in the transformation process not only economic and social but also in relation to urban spaces.

Considering the concept of creativity as a phenomenon faced in different disciplines and analysing the various theories developed, which saw the birth and emergence of a society increasingly based on cultural value, innovative and creative as the primary source of productive capital. Considering the emergence within our cities increasingly developed creative spaces, such as cluster, milieu and entire neighbourhoods that have based their modification and regeneration of tactics and interconnected actions.

The objective of the research is therefore to redefine the concept of creativity within urban studies, in particular to understand how creativity becomes part of the transformation of the contemporary city processes? What are the actors and actions that contribute to the definition of the process and what are the effects they cause in areas in transformation? And finally, understand and redefine the role of the architect and urban designer in the process, outlining what are the essential differences from

the traditional role of design.

A corollary of case studies will be the tool through which investigate the creative transformation strategies that took place and take place in the context of the metropolitan London. The study of the case studies will allow firstly to understand through what characteristics, methods and types of the creative process takes root and develops in contemporary global city; secondly it represents the proper fieldwork on which setting up the deepest knowledge of the process in order to establish the basis on which found new strategies.

The deepening of the study of case studies will lead to a detailed understanding of the process through the identification of the actors, the actions and reactions that take part and follow on. The breakdown process will not only allow the identification of categories for building an application model, but also to the clarification and confirmation of the result to figure out what is missing and define a next possible intervention.

The knowledge of the development and spread of the creative process in the urban spaces generates the awareness to propose different strategical scenarios giving a role to creativity within the process. As well as contributing with a toolkit for designers in order to allow them to adapt their skills to the new need and find a new role into the process that seems in some way to have put them on the sidelines.





## **Introduction**





## Background

The historical period in which we are living is deeply marked by a change in the economic and production paradigm led by a radical shift in terms of the economic value system. The great recession that has affected the Western world at the end of the last century and has led to a deep-seated crisis of the production and financial systems and the search for innovative and original solutions is needed. The transition started during the last two decades of the last century and called “*post-Fordist new capitalism*” (Howkins, J., 2001), finds at the centre of its definition two important aspects: firstly, the opening of markets, which has led to a progressive process of dematerialisation and globalisation of the economy and, secondly, the emergence of cultural and creative features, symbolic-expressive and technical-scientific innovation to be the engine of a new production system (Bonomi, A., 2010, p. 23). The change in the paradigm of production has put into the middle of the trial the production of services and knowledge rather than the supply of durable goods for massive consumption.

This big transition has profoundly changed the economic value scale, the application model of the market system, the *exploitation* of human resources and the use of spaces. Precisely, within this context of transformation and due to the need to meet the increasing needs of consumers, we are faced to the emergence of new models that are based on knowledge and they lead to innovation and creativity. In this sense, creativity becomes the true economic capital (Moretti, E., 2016, p. 54). Within his writings Enrico Moretti develops very clearly the shift of the value system from a model based on the production of consumer goods to a model based on interconnection and system of knowledge in order to produce services. Human capital and its creative features to produce ideas are put at the centre of this new model of economic development and is highlighted as the fundamental resource on the centre of the new production model.

The process of transformation and the construction of the new value sees as its main aim the change of the production process based on a *cobweb* system which looks at the extension of the process steps and the actors involved in it on varying from time to time depending on the requirement end user, instead of a chain one characterised by a number of activities providing a precise sequence of industrial executions

(Bonomi, A., 2010, pp. 28). The continuous interaction and reticular exchange of information, ideas and cognitive abilities define the radical difference of the new production process rather than the Fordist one.

The economy of knowledge has changed not only the process of production as well as the whole economic order providing a new paradigm. As a harbinger, creativity transformed the organisational system of businesses, the way in which education is provided, the process through which the works are developed, the skills required from people and how cities are planned and designed (Newbiggin, J., 2016, p. 6).

The rise of a new social class is one of the big change in our society. The so-called Creative Class (Florida, R., 2002) include the people who have the ability to create new ideas, new technology and new creative contents (Florida, R., 2014, p. 8), high level of knowledge are required and the way of working is totally oriented on the built of even new and different creative processes. This radical change promotes the continue transformation in the social condition by providing cultural diversity and social inclusion.

Starting from the strong financial crisis that occurred in 2008, companies, societies and cities were called in search of a new model that would lead to the collapse of the resolution and reconstruction of markets. The new paradigm that is based on creativity, innovation, and culture changes the scale of the value and shifts the focus from a system based on the production of mass consumer goods to a system based on the production of ideas. The change involves all three disciplines considered, finding some similarities and interweaving one another. In this sense, we are in front of not only the birth of a new production / economic paradigm and to the emergence of a new social class but also to the definition and development of a new urban model, which is spreading more and more within practices and policies adopted by the contemporary cities around the world. This model is therefore based on the modification of urban spaces from the inside, from the skills of the place, from existing resources, which activates small actions to get rooted and permanent changes over time, it is a model that has already established in our thoughts and in our visions, and it is, even more, rooting within the urban transformation practices.

The research would develop the topic of creativity within the disciplinary field of the architectural and urban design, trying to understand how and by which ways the

creative process is spread in urban environments and how and how much the *urban practitioner*<sup>1</sup> is involved in the process.

## Research questions

Considering, therefore, the concept of creativity as a phenomenon that is taking place within the social and economic urban policies of the globalised world for over twenty years. Stands in front of the birth and growth of more and more societies that base their capital turnover on culture, innovation, and creativity, moving the production paradigm to the importance and value of human capital.

Considering the emergence within our cities increasingly developed creative spaces, such as cluster, milieu and entire neighbourhoods that have based their modification and regeneration of tactics and interconnected actions.

What is needed is to understand in depth the ways in which creativity is established and spreads within the city and at the same time what are its effects on the modification of the spaces of the cities and their use. In this sense, the aim is focused on the definition of application strategies for the urban change allowing the architect, urban designers, and planners to redefine its role as a director within these transformations.

Considering all those facts as the background for a change into the design approach and for the development of a creative processes, the questions to which the research wants to explore and answer are:

How and through what actions creativity constitute and contributes to being the tool for the transformation of the contemporary city?

Assuming the existence of already established creative spaces, what are the reactions they provoke within a strong altered system, how they manifest the relationships between creative action and urban reaction, is it possible to attribute these interactions the transformative power of a wider urban context than the specific place?

Considering the changes into the design process that is even more shifting from a top-down master planning approach to a bottom-up place-making strategy driven from the inside and often without the presence of urban practitioners, what is the

Footnote

<sup>1</sup>With the expression *urban practitioner* the author would collect the roles of the architect, the urban designer and the planner, who are involved into the thinking process of urban transformations.

role of architects, urban designers and planners within those processes and, how can they find a new role for planning the new vision?

## **Methodology**

The research was lead by carrying different types of methodologies out according to the development of the work itself. The mix of methods was used to achieve the goal and answer the research questions previously declined, as well as to overcome the boundaries of the traditional approach whose story is in some ways out of reach. Particularly three main methodologies were applied through the advancement of the work, such as: research based on literature review, research based on case studies and research by design. All methods were used through the different parts of the research to deepen the knowledge and collect qualitative outcomes.

Firstly, the literature review allowed in first place to give the definition and meaning to this radical shift, defining the boundaries of it and finally understanding the reasons and the ways in which it is spreading this new model. Indeed, within the first part of the research the concept of creativity is studied in different subject areas in particular: economic, social and urban policies. The birth of a new paradigm based on culture and creativity has led to the definition of different changes in the globalised world.

Secondly, further to the definition of a context background which draws the boundaries of the research and selection of disciplines in which the research is focused on, three case studies in London were selected and then analysed in order to deeply understand how the creative process is spreading into the city, what are the actors involved and through what actions are taking root. Moreover, the case studies are helpful in the understanding of what are the reaction of society and urban spaces, and the economy as well, to the changes and what are the needs that are missing yet.

Beyond describing what is happening in our cities, the analysis of case studies allowed the author to figure out how the process is leading and in this sense, following what found from the examples, the process itself is analysed by breaking it up. The elements that are composing the process are analysed separately to each other in order to better

define them and provide a toolkit for the definition of a new strategical model.

As well as, after understanding how the process is moving on and what are its components, it would be re-build up by categorising into three main categories and proposing a theoretical model which sees how creativity is leading the process itself.

Thirdly, a design process is proposed as reality checks of what previously declared. The design proposal is carried out in one of the area analysed as a case study, such as the neighbourhood of Shoreditch, and is aimed to practically apply what was theoretically studied. The working experience at Central was imperative for the development of this part since it has truly helped to touch by hands the actual dynamics occurring during the urban regeneration process.

## **Structure**

The research work is structured into four parts, each of them belonged to a specific phase of the exploration.

The first part is aimed to study the topic of creativity into the different scientific disciplines, especially the ones which are involved into urban changes that are economy, society and city. The chapters would give a theoretical background from which setting the development of the research up.

The second part analyses the case studies and is divided into two part: firstly, the Atlas of European Cities gives an overview of the creative process spread in cities in order to underline the diversity of the process as well as its spread within the European context. Secondly, the London Borough of Hackney is taken into account to explain creative process in depth.

Within the third part the author would give her personal contribute of what she found with the research by breaking down the process to deeper understand it and trying to rebuild it giving an active meaning to the creativity.

Finally, the last part belongs to the practical design experimentation, in this part a design proposal is lead as a reality check in order to conclude the research with an applied grant.

## **Introduction**

**Part 1** | to know. Background

*the concept of creativity*

**Part 2** | to investigate. Analysis of case studies

*creativity and city*

**Part 3** | to build. The creative process

*creativity and process*

**Part 4** | to propose. The creative process

*creativity and design*

## A new urban model

## Research questions

## Methodology

### 1.1 The Creative Economy

J. Howkins

- the economy of ideas
- making ideas and creative process
- environment and cities

### 1.2 The Creative Class

R. Florida

- the rise of a new social class
- the creative class
- critics on the creative class

### 1.3 The Creative City

C. Landry - M. Carta

- the urban change
- changing the planning paradigm
- assets and skills of the creative city

### 2.1 Overview on the EU Cities

- XXL: London, Milan, Paris
- XL: Copenhagen, Lisbon, Glasgow
- S: Edinburgh, Eindhoven

### 2.2 London creative city

- Tools
- Methodology of analysis

### 2.3 The London Borough of Hackney

- Shoreditch
- Hackney Wick and Fish Island
- Dalston

### 3.1 Theoretical background

The assemblage thinking

### 3.2 Break the process up

- Materials
- Action/ Reactions
- Re-Actions

### 3.3 Build the process up

- Creativity as a *result*
- Creativity as an *answer*
- Creativity as a *tool*

### 4.1 A reverse process in London

The case of Shoreditch High Street

#### Phase 1

Late 2018

#### Phase 2

2019

#### Phase 3

2020

The research was lead within a four years path-time, which have seen different experiences that give to the author a strong involvement in the topic. During the first two years the work has been driven from the domestically point of view of the Politecnico of Milano, where the investigation has started by understanding the origin of the concept of creativity in the urban design and to where it has belonged.

After two years of theoretical investigation in Milan, the author has moved for a one year exchange period at the UCL - The Bartlett School of Architecture in London under the supervision of Prof. Peter Bishop (The Bartlett School of Architecture) and Dr. Pablo Sendra (The Bartlett School of Planning). The UCL experience has had the aim of analysing outstanding practical samples which have become the case studies of the research content.

Afterwards, the research period at The Bartlett was followed by a more practical working experience at Central, under the direction of Patricia Brown, where the author has worked for 12 months. Central is a bespoke consultancy, led by Patricia Brown, focused on understanding the practical dynamics at play in making cities, places and economies work. Central collaborates with and connects both public and private partners to influence and build the partnerships and projects that bring about thriving places, economies and livelihoods. The experience at Central was crucial in terms of the research since it has involved the author into actual creative urban processes in London which have allowed a deeper understanding of the process from the inside and with a practical point of view. The working experience at Central has started once the scholarship gained within the Italian Institution was expired and the author was attending the additional extention period of the Ph.D.

These experiences have helped the author to drive and structure the research in order to reach completed and advanced outcomes.







**Part 1** | to know. Background



## 1.1 The creative economy

The term creative economy became to be used at the beginning of the 21st century on the basis of emerging of the creative industries. In 1998, the Creative Industries - Mapping Document was published by the Australian government, in which there were presented the 13 areas of the creative industries, which are: advertising, architecture, arts, crafts, design, fashion, film, interactive software, music, performing arts, publishing, software, television, and radio. The main common feature of those sectors is that they “...*have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and ... have a potential for wealth creation through the generation of intellectual property*” (Newbiggin, J., 2014, p. 3).

In 1998, the UK Department of Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS) has described the creative economy as “*those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploration of intellectual property*” (DCMS, 1998, p. 3).

Another definition to take into account is the one given by John Hawkins (2001) who defined the creative industries as providing “*an economic good or service that results from creativity and has economic value*” (Howkins, J., 2001).

Indeed, in 2001 John Howkins wrote the book “*The creative economy. How people make money from ideas*”, the book was revised and republished in 2013 with some changes due to the passing of the years and to the settling of a paradigm that at the beginning of the century was only into the process of affirmation. The writer, who in his life has developed his career in TV, film, digital media, and publishing, has placed at the centre of his theoretical discourse the abilities in knowledge and intelligence as a driver to support the creative economy. Howkins put the focus of the *Creative Economy* on the statement that “*every human being is creative*” (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 11) and following this assumption he develops the concept of creativity.

Starting from being a skill of individuals since they were children, creativity is up to be declined as an integral part of a production process able to build up practical models for the economic growth (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 4). For many years it was thought that creativity was the feature and the ability of people who were part of the so-called *art class* (Howkins, J., 2013, p. vii), indeed, supports Howkins, creativity

is an essential part of the growth process of any human being. In this sense, big companies demand more and more people who invest in and develop ideas (Moretti, E., 2016, p. 54). The historical context in which we are faced needs to find new solutions to marginalise the crisis of resources, energy, poverty, and finance. Creativity and innovation are considered the most attractive and successful features to world economic development. The feature of creativity applied to economy is the ability in creating and delivering cultural and intellectual heritage as a potential to generate income and jobs (Newbigin, J., 2014, p. 5). At the same time people, through their innate ability of imagination and interaction are able to develop social inclusion and cultural diversity (Newbigin, J., 2014, p. 5).

The goal that arises the creative economy is to be able to put together in a single structure the concepts of creativity, management, economic capital, well-being and welfare (Howkins, J., 2013, p. x).

John Howkins has structured his book on the creative economy on different parts starting from the general concept of creativity and its characteristics and skills, then explaining the economy of creativity by passing through market trends and finance and by developing the theory of the creative process applied to the economy. In the end, he describes how the cities become incubators of creativity and how they change in relation to job modification.

Assuming the definition of the creative economy done, the review of the topic of the creative economy will be developed critically through three parts concerns firstly, to the main essences of the new economy, secondly, to the process of making and producing ideas and in the end to the opening towards the concept which sees the city as a place that provides conditions for change.

### **1.1.1 The economy of the ideas**

To define the creative economy a double glance needs to be adopted: at first instance, the birth and development of the quaternary sector have put in evidence the market power of the knowledge, the culture, and the ideas. Secondly, simultaneously the economy of the ideas (Howkins, J, 2013, p. 45) has allowed the advancement of

a new production system. In this sense, it is not possible to define the creative economy only by considering sectors and disciplines to which is dedicated, however, is necessary to acknowledge the important change in terms of the process as well.

Looking to the historical context is possible to perceive that any time new technologies have rooted in the world, a big change in the economic system and in the social structure has triggered (Schwab, K., 2016, p. 6). At least three industrial revolutions in the evolved countries occurred which marked the “*transition from muscle power to mechanical power*” (Schwab, K., 2016, p. 6).

The birth of the steam engine and the construction of the railroads have triggered the mechanical production of goods and shifted the economic value from the agrarian production to the manufacture of durable equipment. Moreover, the advent of the electricity took roots in the production system giving the birth of the assembly line; this has fostered the development of the mass production. Even more, during the second half of the 20th century, a third industrial revolution was at the gates. Since the 1960s the so-called digital revolution occurred by the advent of computers and the development of the internet. This new technology lets people starting to produce businesses and transferred the economic power from durable goods to public and private services.

The development of even more specialised technologies within the field of computer hardware, software, and networks, as well as the advent of the mobile internet and new intangible cloud spaces has defined a new revolution throughout the global economy and the organisation of the value chain (Schwab, K., 2016, p. 7). This revolution has changed the values of the economic products but at the same time allowed people to create even new ideas and make money (Howkins, J., 2001) with those ones. The knowledge economy gives rise to the birth and development of the quaternary sector of the economy, namely that part of the economy which is based on ideas and human skills.

In the creative economy, people and their skills and ideas are the most valuable resources (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 226); the ability to produce ideas, thinking through curiosity to imagine scenarios, making even new connections between different ideas are the characteristics of the new capital power. However, the talent to create a valuable idea is not enough for building an economy of ideas: the main aim of the creative economy is the capacity to move an idea into the market (Howkins, J., 2013,



p. 226).

In this sense, managing the idea is a fundamental part of the production process within the era of the knowledge-based economy. The key point of managing the idea and move it from the “*inner mindscape*” (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 226) towards the market is the ability to manage the tension between enhancing the idea rather than muzzle it (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 45). The four values system (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 45) is the results of the process for administrating creativity: this is expressed by physical matters, their “*intangible qualities*” (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 45), the experiences through which they are perceived and “*the intellectual property rights*” (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 45) to them conferred. As a results, who is the real recipient of the creative economy are “*the providers of intellectual [...] capital - the innovators, the investors and the shareholders*” (Schwab, K., 2016, p. 12) who are the ones able to decide when, where and how the idea is ready to be defined, experienced and delivered. They estimate its present value of today and decides to produce something else in the future depending on the relative values comparison (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 226).

Due to the organisational assets of the creative economy, the world of the creative jobs is detached in two macro system: the “*knowledge workers*” (Drucker, P., 1966) and the creative workers (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 50). Within these two categories is possible to define other three sub-categories: the job thinker, the just-in-time thinker and the creative entrepreneur (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 51). The first two categories are dedicated to the real producers of ideas, whom actually create and make the idea, indeed the entrepreneur is the one able to use the idea to solve a problem and bring it to the market.

Within the creative economy, “*the job of the thinker is a full-time occupation*” (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 52) and consists in producing new ideas and new ways to solve a problem or make a change. Generally, the idea came from a trivial event: in 2009 TfL (Transport for London) has changed the Oxford Circus crossing paths by introducing the diagonal crossing. That’s because of the thought of Nate Wittasek (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 51) who by looking to the people behaviour in unlawfully diagonal crossing, has asked himself why not making a legal diagonal crossing?

The Amazon birth is coming from an idea of Jeff Bezos, who while was working in a bank, has thought “*how to exploit internet’s capacity to sell things*” (Howkins, J.,



2013, p. 52). There are a lot of examples like those ones which see the development of big changes in places or the birth to the actual big companies such as Amazon, Facebook, Spotify etc. coming from trivial incidents.

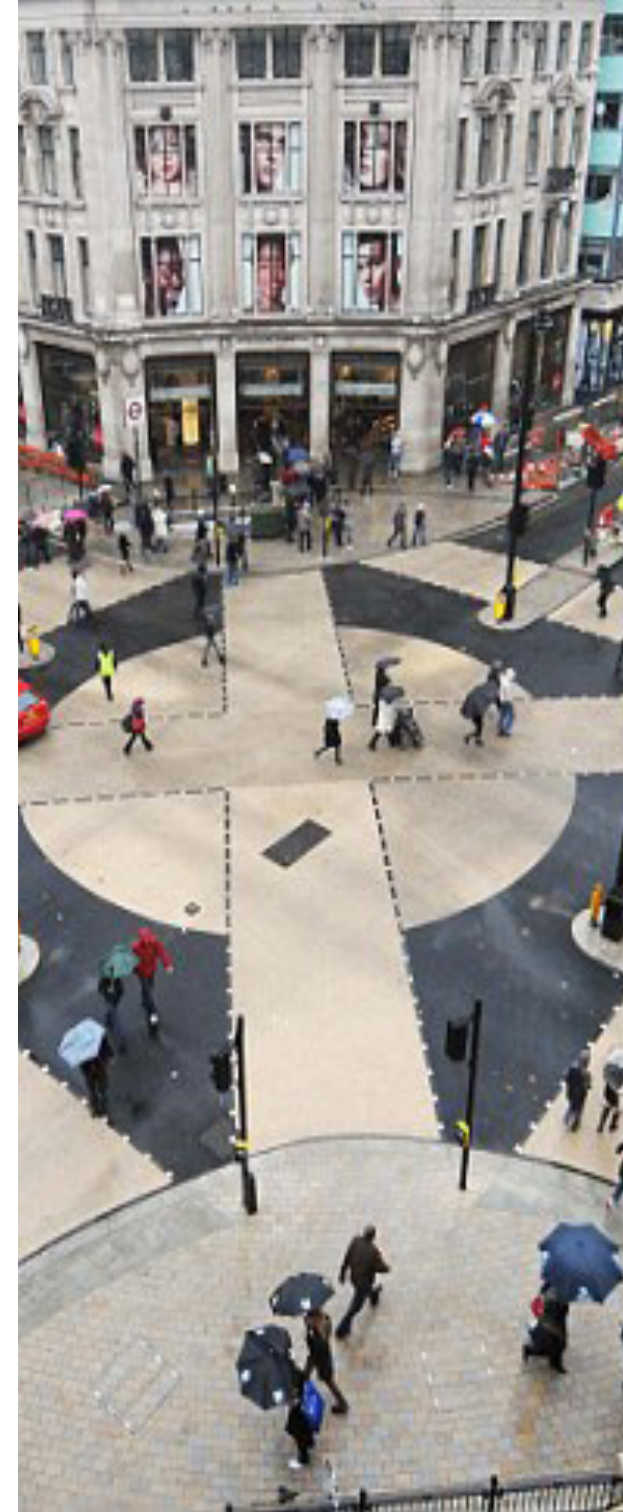
However, the Oxford Circus actual arrangement exists because the Nate idea was correctly located to the market which makes the change possible. Indeed the real change in the economic system is the capacity to give a market value to ideas and make it possible in the reality. The “*creative entrepreneur*” (Howkins, J.) has the role and the skill to place the idea into the market by finding the right location of it to be launched (Jaoui, H., 2000, p. 82).

According to Howkins people who are working as a *creative entrepreneur* need to share specific characteristics: they need to have a vision, which gave them the drive to realise their dream; they need to be focused on the success the idea will be having; they need to have financial knowledge to measure the financial terms; they need to be pride in themselves and of their idea; they need to have urgency in bringing the idea into the reality (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 56).

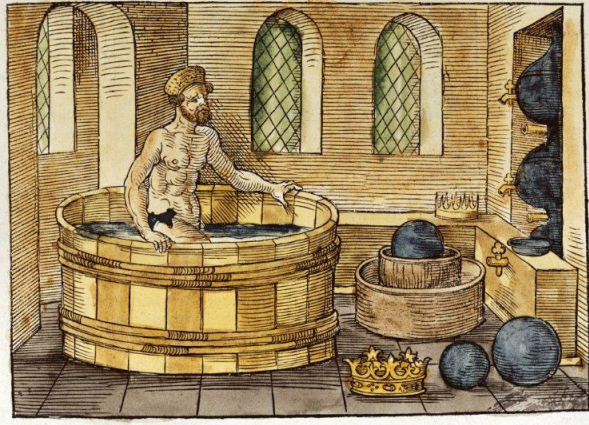
Sometimes could happen that the *thinker* and the *creative entrepreneur* are coinciding in a unique person, however, most of the thinkers have not the pragmatism and the ability, or frequently the right environment, to give to their idea an economic value and they leave it without developing. In this sense, to make an idea successful is important not only the moment of creating the idea itself but the whole process from the thinking to the delivery into the market. What makes the process an achievement are the people who are involved in, whit their own skills and roles, as well as the environment in which it will be developed.

### 1.1.2 Making ideas and creative process

Within the creative economy and the economy of ideas, particular attention should be addressed to the process of how an idea takes root and how it becomes the driving force for the development of the creative process. Understanding the concept of making ideas and the characteristics of the creative process within the economic field would be useful to outline this concept also in terms the urban design.



ARCHIMEDES erster erfinder scharfsinniger vergleichung/  
Wag vnd Gewichte/durch auffluß des Wassers.



On the top of the topics argued by Howkins (2001) is the approach to bring an idea from a given context and apply it somewhere else (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 3) and “*test how it might be used*” (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 18).

The decisive turning point for the construction of a creative process is the sequence of actions, voluntary and involuntary, that allows for the idea within the individual and private thought and use it to solve a problem or improve something in the collective sphere. Build the connection between what you want and what can be achieved. In this sense, the point is focused on “*what you do with*” your idea and not from where you get it (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 22).

The process of creating an idea is based on two aspects which are each other opposed: the personal inclination and spontaneity on one hand, and the rationality and focus on the other. This two aspect are fundamental to bring the idea into a field of forces able to solve a problem or get a value. Indeed in the creative process we can recognise two main stages in a first instance: a “*divergent*” one, sees as an *opened phase*, that let the ability for producing even more ideas and a “*convergent*” one, as a “*closed phase*”, which let the ability to select the idea to apply (Jaoui, H., 2000, p. 63). Phases that Howkins would call *focus* and *drift* (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 23) wherewith drift he means that moment someone let its mind “*wander unconsciously*” (Howkins, J., 2013, pp. 23). Even more, those two phases are not enough to explain how the creative process takes root and would be applied. Indeed it is a complex process composed by a combination of processes (Howkins, J., 2013, pp. 24) and to be completed needs at least five phases (Jaoui, H., 2000, p. 63).

To have a whole glance on the creative process itself, there will be taken the Howkins method into account and the PAPSA approach by Jaoui as well. Both methods are composed of five phases that “*mix dreams and analysis, intuitive jumps and cool-blooded calculation*” (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 24).

To explain the Howkins method, the introduction of a specific field of conditions for developing an idea is needed. In this sense three main conditions, each relating to a different sphere of life of an individual are evaluated. First the “*brain*” and the “*sphere of private life*”, in fact, according to Howkins, any normal child is born with an innate imagination and the instinct to use it; after which everyone will enter into what is the public sphere, or the ability to exercise the imagination and make its ideas public; and finally the economic sphere that provides the opportunity to build up the

capital value through its ideas (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 11-12).

Each of these statements is in some ways connected to the others: the primordial creative power inherent in the human being, the need for adequate freedom to be expressed and exercised in order to construct the ideas at the same time the freedom of the market needs to be established. In this sense, creativity, freedom, and market become the 'trilogy' on which is based the paradigm of creative economy (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 11).

From these three basic conditions, a complex process of mechanisms and actions that vary each time, and depending on the actors involved and which constitute the so-called creative process is set out. The Howkins model consists of a five actions approach that appears to be a mix of imagination, analysis, insight, and verification (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 24). Those phases are called from the written "*review, incubation, dreams, excitement and reality checks*" (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 25).

The first phase is the one in which someone asks the question, "what? and why?", understanding it as a conscious *evaluation* of what you think. Secondly, it has to face a period of incubation in which let the mind float and allow the idea to move to the next phase, one of the dreams, which leaves room for the imagination and unconscious. The last two phases are one of the excitations in which various possibilities intuitive leap to our minds, imagining the possible answer. This phase could also be compared to the *Eureka moment* which is coming from the Greek expression "Eureka!" that means 'I have it!', and is carried out by a person who has discovered something (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 24). Finally, the last phase of the Howkins method is identified by the *reality checks* where what imagined would be possible, will be verified into reality.

The composition of all those phases gives place to the so-called creative process, a process, as already said, that appears to be discontinuous and contrasting. Indeed, according to Howkins, "*creativity is given and take, push and pull, opening and closing, hold back and let go*" (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 26), and finally any creative process is different from the other, draws on different schedules and it takes place with more and different practices.

By comparison with the Howkins method, the PAPSA (Perception Analysis Production Selection and Application) approach, developed by Hubert Jaoui (1994),

Figure

### **Eureka Moment**

source:

<http://www.aspekt-magazin.de/wp-content/>

visited on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018

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### **Oxford Circus, London**

Before and after the new crossing development

source:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1224693/>

visited on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2017

is composed of five phases as well, which are, as assumable: “*perception, analysis, production, selection and application*” (Jaoui, H., 2000, p. 63). However in contrast to Howkins, each stage of the PAPSA approach is considered by Jaoui from the two divergent and convergent phases, as he argued that creativity allows to each step of the process an “*opened phase*” to the new idea, which is related to the excitement of the *creation*, as well as a “*closed one*” which allows the selection of the idea itself (Jaoui, H., 2000, p. 63).

As an initial stage, the PAPSA approach admits the individual imagination and perception to take root in the mind. In this phase would be very important that the person involved in the process would be free from conditioning that doesn't allow the feeling of unconsciousness to be totally felt (Jaoui, H., 2000, p. 65). And, in this sense, the convergent phase of this stage is considered as an *old idea* (Jaoui, H., 2000, p. 65) that is something related to an already acquired scheme, and more the divergent phase is represented by *the new* (Jaoui, H., 2000, p. 65) which keeps the mind free from previous conditioning.

The second stage consists of the “*deep analysis of the situation*” in order to understand “*its structure*” (Jaoui, H., 2000, p. 66) for selecting the main direction the research will go through. In this case, the *divergent phase* coincides with a confused and wandered examination of different possibilities, instead the *convergent phase* takes in account recorded materials which are organised and classified to identify the problem (Jaoui, H., 2000, p. 66). The so-called *brainstorming* is that phase Jaoui argues to be the *divergent phase* of the third stage of his PAPSA approach and consists of the moment where saying everything someone has in mind. As per contrast, the *convergent phase* allows the identification of categories in which schedule each idea and make an order for the disorder of the brainstorming (Jaoui, H., 2000, p. 68). Moreover, the last two stages are the one of the *selection* that is the moment where the idea would be chosen and where occur the two possibilities of “*well accommodate the idea or value all the proposals*” (Jaoui, H., 2000, p. 69). In this sense the opened phase let the idea to be well accommodated with the context, otherwise, all the other options would be taken into a deeper consideration.

The creative process coming from the PAPSA approach goes to an end with the application of the idea by selling it into a hypothetical market. To make this stage sufficiently efficient, it would be necessary to take the right tools on and in this

regard, they would be the “*rational and relational dimension*” (Jaoui, H., 2000, p. 71). The *rational dimension* takes into account all the characteristics of the idea and organises them in the clearest way to be presented and delivered (Jaoui, H., 2000, p. 71). Even more, the *relational dimension* provides the condition for a quality market research in order to evaluate and pinpoint the best delivery canals (Jaoui, H., 2000, p. 71). This stage goes a little ahead compared to the Howkins method, as it anticipated the phase of the delivery of the idea into the market, that Hawkins confers to the *creative entrepreneur*.

Considering these two methods as a basis for understanding how the creative process takes root, the identification of an environment which provides the right conditions to allow it would be absolutely necessary for terms of economic value as well as social and spatial. The next paragraph will consider the city as the environment where the creative process takes root and its characteristics.

### **1.1.3 Environment and cities**

Considering the period of time that allows the production of goods, services, and ideas everywhere; the digital revolution has provided all the devices to work remotely and to be connected all over the world, the importance of the place would still be primary? Are countries and, above all cities, the needed environment to address jobs and processes that mostly belong to a digital, intangible and online platform (Schwab, K., 2016, p. 74)?

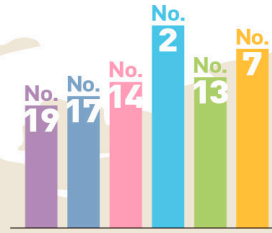
Despite such assumable scenario, “*cities and ideas feed off each other*” (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 209). Indeed cities have the engine force to grow the economy and the social progress (Schwab, K., 2016, p. 76) as they provide “*conditions for change and diversity, generating fashion, entertainments, and glamour*” (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 209). Moreover, the transition to a brain-scale thinking (Howkins, 2001) production enables cities to be the hub where culture is produced (Pratt, A., 2008, p.3).

As a place where more than a half of the world’s population live, the city has the ability to absorb even new technologies and this contributes to give it the power to attract talents (Schwab, K., 2016, p. 76). In this sense, “*cities become both sites of*

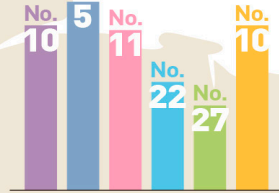
# 1 London



# 7 Amsterdam



# 6 Seoul



# 8 Berlin



# 9 Hong Kong



# 5 Singapore



# 10 Sydney



# 4 Paris



44 Johannesburg

41 Jakarta

31 Kuala Lumpur

33 Bangkok

42 Mumbai

43 Cairo

23 Dubai

36 Taipei

26 Osaka

15 Shanghai

37 Fukuoka

13 Beijing

30 Istanbul

34 Geneva

32 Milan

18 Zurich

12 Frankfurt

14 Vienna

20 Copenhagen

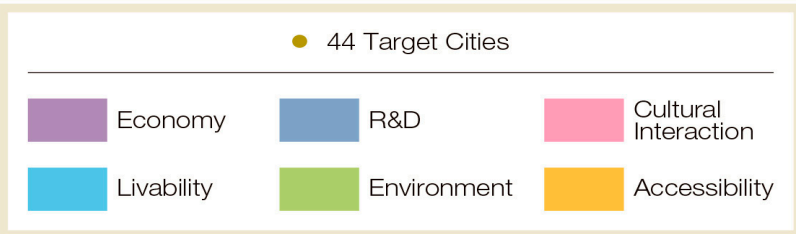
35 Moscow

16 Stockholm

21 Brussels

27 Madrid

24 Barcelona



# 3 Tokyo



28 Vancouver

17 San Francisco

11 Los Angeles

19 Toronto

22 Chicago

29 Washington, D.C.

25 Boston

38 Mexico City



# 2 New York



39 Sao Paulo

40 Buenos Aires

*experimentation and powerful hubs for turning new ideas into real value for the local and global economies” (Schwab, K., 2016, p. 78).*

As Jane Jacobs (1969) argued great cities are the driving force behind innovation, because so many people are closed in there and with the cities are housing different tastes, skills, needs and supplies, as well as they “*are characterised by an extraordinary*” energy and “*dynamism*” (Jacobs, J., 1969, p. 13). For this reason, “*cities have always been important engines of economic growth but they are assuming an even greater importance in today’s knowledge-driven innovation economy, in which place-based ecosystem are critical to economic growth*” (Florida, R., 2014, p. 188).

That’s because the access to human and non-human resources is simultaneously connected to the growth of the economy of the city itself (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 213). And the city provides all kind of social (tangible) networks, expressed by the large opportunity to establish relationships within “*like-minded people*” (Howkins, J., 2013, p. 214 and 216) by “*enabling infrastructure where connections take place and networks are built*” (Florida, R., 2014, p. 189). All those reasons would consider the cityscape as the best environment for the developing and growing of the creative economy.

Places that are changing through continuous transformations which admit both top down and bottom up strategies within the urban regeneration. The concept of the creative city would be taken into account in chapter 1.4 and would deepen explain the main objectives through which the cities are developing and moving throughout.

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### **Power of cities**

Graphic map which represent the influence of city in the world in terms of activity success

source:

<http://mori-m-foundation.or.jp/english/ius2/gpci2/index.shtml>

visited on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2018



## 1.2 The creative class

### 1.2.1 The crisis of capitalism and the rise of a new social class

Richard Florida has spread for the first time the term *creative class* (2002) defining *creatives* those people who work within the function to “*create meaningful new forms*” (Florida, R., 2014, p. 38). In 2002 Florida wrote the book “*The rise of the creative class*” where he describes the rise of this new social class coming from the radical economic change and the crisis of capitalism; within the book the author defines the concept and characteristics of creative people and explain his thoughts about the opportunity creatives give to the city and the urban regeneration.

At the basis of thought and Richard Florida’s analysis, a detailed study of the economic and social changes are placed; Florida’s interpretation is accorded with the mind of the philosopher, economist, and sociologist Karl Marx. In fact, the birth of a new social class takes place as a consequence of the economic value and economic stability crisis. Reading Marx leads Florida to support the idea that the crisis of capitalism is “*the power to the rise of new social classes and the eclipse of the previous ones and the economic system to which they were tied*” (Florida, R., 2014, p. 49). As already mentioned in the previous chapter, the history learns the succession of a string of industrial revolutions which have radically changed the world society during the ages. The first and the second industrial revolutions led to the emergence of the working class, at the expense of the population engaged in agricultural work, therefore the employment rate of the population has radically moved from farms to factories. In the same way in the 60s of the last century, the crisis of the manufacture production sector has led to the closure of factories in favour to the development of the service production, such as health and wellness, community and social services, administrative support, etc.

The post-industrial society - “*the service class - has shifted from making goods to delivering services*” (Florida, R., 2014, p. 9). The digital revolution and the rise of the creative and knowledge economy have triggered another moment of crisis which

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gives birth to a new social change with the emerging of the so-called *creative class*. Between 2001 and 2010 the rise of the creative class has expanded with a growth of about 7.2 percent (Florida, R., 2014, p. 49).

The increase of the degrees and the educational level of the world population has led to a radical increase in employment sectors based on knowledge, creativity, intuition, imagination, and innovation, shifting thus also the economic paradigm on these issues. “*Creativity comes from people*” (Florida, R., 2014, p. 6), and that is why the new economy based on creativity always requires even more creative individualities.

The new economy based on knowledge and creativity has put people at the core of its growth, in this sense the human capital is considered the most important resource to achieve economic power. Companies have started to invest in people and in their high-level skills, degrees and capacity in produce innovative ideas (Moretti, E., 2016, p. 54; Landry, C., 2008, p. xxxviii). The people who have ideas became the most valued and demanded from agencies; Impressive is the comparison between Kodak and Facebook. In the 80s Kodak was a high-tech company with the largest turnover in the US and employed a diverse workforce including engineers, technicians, and workers.

Nowadays Facebook, considered one of the largest high-tech companies in the world, hires only young people with high levels of education (Moretti, E., 2016, p. 55). Moreover, the growth of the quaternary and quinary sectors of the economy underlined the need of people who work in those disciplines and has caused an increasingly less demand for *workers*. This new demand has driven the rise of the creative class, who has affected consequently the structure of the world society and the environments where it lives and works.

The creative class represents the 40% of the workforce in larger areas of the world (Florida, R., 2014, p. 11) and gives birth to a new model of economic development which Florida argues to be shaped around the “*3Ts: technology, talent and tolerance*” (Florida, R., 2014, p. 11). The first T is *technology* which is for most of the economists’s thoughts the “*key to growth*” (Florida, R., 2014, p. 229) and what earns the efficiency and productivity of economies and societies (Florida, R., 2014, p. 229; Schumpeter, J., 1942, p. 81-86). The *talent* is connected to the ability to produce ideas; it represents the people’s skills, ambitious and education which are the focus in economic power (Florida, R., 2014, p. 231). Finally, the tolerance is meant as

openness to diversity which “*provides an additional source of economic advantage that works alongside technology and talent*” (Florida, R., 2014, p. 233).

As Jane Jacobs already argued the diversity plays an important role within the economic power and city growth (Jacobs, J., 1969, p. 135). Diversity leads the production of new ideas and makes them be generated, for this reason, “*the places that are most open to diversity and that attract talented and creative people broaden both their technology and talent capabilities, gaining a substantial economic edge*” (Florida, R., 2014, p. 233).

According to Florida a place to be successful and to be able to attract the creative class needs to get all the 3Ts (Florida, R., 2014, p. 228).

The real goal is to unleash the creative energies, talents, and potential of each in order to build a society that recognises and nourish the innate creativity of each individual (Florida, R., 2016, p. 3). If the rise of this new order poses enormous challenges, at the same time deposit the seeds for the resolution of the same. The big challenge introduced by Florida is the ability of the creative class to be the engine for reshaping the world’s geography (Florida, R., 2014, p. 11), this idea received a very strong critic about (that would be deepened presented in the chapter 1.3.3).

## 1.2.2 The creative class: meaning and skills

To define the *creative class* Richard Florida has taken into account the occupations of people; at first instance the members of the creative class work on the creation of new ideas and forms of production (Florida, R., 2014, p. 38). Indeed is considered *creatives* all those people that are “*paid to use their own minds*” (Florida, R., 2014, p. 9) and for this reason the attention is paid to individual skills and ability.

Additionally, Florida divided the big group of creatives into two main categories: the “*super creative core*” and the “*creative professionals*” (Florida, R., 2014, p. 38). The *super creative core* is considered the highest level of creative work that is characterised by the production of new ideas that can be immediately transferred to the use and/or become a method or strategy applicable in different fields. The problem solving is part of the role addressed to the super creative core as well as the searching for

Figure  
**The Give & Take**  
exhibition by Tim Etchells at the Tate Modern  
source:  
*shot by Irene Manzini Ceinar on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2016*

problems to be solved. To be part of this category Florida fits scientists and engineers, university professors, poets and writers, artists, actors, designers and architects, as well as all of modern society leadership professions, such as editors, cultural figures, researchers, analysts and columnist (Florida, R., 2014, p. 38-39).

What Florida calls *creative professionals*, instead is represented by those who work in the cultural industries based on a high and intensive level of knowledge. These people work specifically on solving problems by defining and designing complex structures in order to solve a specific problem, in this sense to be part of this category requires high levels of education. Within this category are part of high turnover level managerial occupations, economic and financial operators, legal and medical professions and health technicians (Florida, R., 2014, p. 39).

The rise of the creative class is identified in the significant change of values, attitudes, and orders, these changes are still in progress and many key developments still have to take place and be properly identified. In this sense, Richard Florida tries to identify three lines of features found at the base of the attitudes of the creative class identified until now. These three lines identify the main characteristics of the creative class, beyond the high education degree, and are: “*individually, meritocracy and diversity and openness*” (Florida, R., 2014, p. 56).

*Individuality.* The members of the creative class are identified with a high degree of individuality and self-expression. The creative people tend to develop a strong individual identity which is reflected in its creativity. This does not mean that creative people do not live in groups and not addressing moments of confrontation, rather the group exists but is not approved and is made up of a multiplicity of creative identity (Florida, R., 2014, p. 56).

*Meritocracy.* Merit is a very strong value within the creative class, which promotes personality prone to hard work, challenges and continuous stimulation towards ever higher goals. Members of the creative class are always motivated and encouraged by the respect and esteem of their comrades, they are ambitious and always looking for ways to improve and increase their capacity.

*Diversity and openness.* The concept of diversity has become a key theme for the creative class, for some, it is an ideal to which we must always strive, for others, it is considered to be the *Trojan horse* that to release allowing the society to establish

Figure  
**The Edinburgh Fringe Festival**  
Street artists  
source:

<https://www.twoscotsabroad.com/wp-content/>  
visited on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2018



PROD: DIAMOND  
DICK  
7:30 CSOC

DICK STARRED BY

DICK STARRED BY

itself (Florida, R., 2014, p. 57). Moreover, the diversity is also considered a sign of meritocracy within the creative group and is a prerogative that may require a fundamental requirement within the company policies. An emblematic example of this concept is verifiable in the fact that several creative clusters like Silicon Valley, have shifted from traditional corporate party at Christmas time on Halloween while respecting the diversity of different cultures, some of which are not devoted to the festivities (Florida, R., 2014, p. 58).

The concept of diversity is closely linked to the concept of openness: you have to be open enough to be able to accept and value the difference. In this sense, the rise of the creative class has led to a level up to women and apparent members of ethnic minorities, as well as to diverse races and trends (Florida, R., 2014, p. 58).

With these categories, Florida has underlined the main characteristics belonged to the new social class and at the same time he pointed out how much the creative class has the force to drive the urban regeneration. Indeed one of the most criticised points of Florida's thought is the certainty that economy and society needs to strive for a creative society that led towards a creative city. The importance of the place is really important to the growth of a society based on creativity and according to Florida cities need to aim to be a place attracting creative people.

### **1.2.3 Critiques on the creative class theory**

The thesis of Florida about the creative class has received a lot of critiques and concerns from the academical world and not, particularly the way of writing things and assume conclusions in terms of future actions was the main topic disapproved. The role of the creative city as a place to spread culture by focusing the goal on the "*cultural production rather than on culture policy that focuses on consumption*" (Pratt, A., 2008, p. 109). In the same ways, the critics of Florida were moving from the idea he would give to creativity the fashionable and marketing force to be the magnet for attracting people to a place.

A post published on Forbes titled "*Richard Florida is wrong about creative cities*" is one of the most popular posts where Florida is criticised, the post, written by Adam

Ozimek, took into account some arguments expressed by Enrico Moretti in his book “*The new geography of jobs*”. As Ozimek said in the post, Moretti moved a critique to Florida arguing that there is not a correlation in a city between the ability to attract creative people and the economic power of the city itself (Ozimek, A., 2012).

The idea of “*attracting the creative class*” (Florida, 2002) to survive to the global change (Peck, J., 2005, p. 740) is a restricted view for a society based on consumption (Pratt, A., 2008, p. 109). Both Peck and Pratt argued that Florida uses the creative class as a slogan to endorse cities to achieve a determined aim and to endorse the urban policy to invest in creativity. In this sense, the production of culture is not the focus for a city to be addressed anymore (Pratt, A., 2008, p. 109) and the creativity itself becomes a characteristic to be marketed (Peck, J., 2005, p. 742) rather than the force to regenerate the urban-scape.

## 1.3 The creative city

### 1.3.1 The urban change

In the previous chapters, the role of the place was deeply underlined, the city represents the environment within creativity and culture are spread and has the engine force to drive the economic and social development. Indeed cities are the scenario in which even more forms of energy, human resources, collective knowledge, and creativity are widespread (Carta, M., 2007, p. 7). Furthermore, over an half of the world's population lives in cities (Landry, C., 2008, p. xii) and this fact bestows the title of the “*age of cities*” (Carta, M., 2007, p.7) to the period of time we are faced.

The great change that has seen at the head of the transformation the born and growth of trans-national economies, para-state institutions, communications technology, global production systems began to spread around the world totally upsetting the hierarchical structure of the city (Landry, C., 2008, p. xvii). In this context of global transformation of the city, small or large size, have found themselves to reassess and rethink their role within regional contexts, national and global. The redefinition of the structure and the reorganisation of roles has placed at the centre of the debate the question to what future the city wants to stretch and how and with what conditions it is possible to build a structural system based on thought, knowledge, and imagination.

In this process, the city becomes the hub for the construction of well-being defining itself as an organ of international competitiveness (Landry, C., 2008, p. xviii); this through the creation of research centres and development of knowledge, headquarters of major institutions, manufacturing centres for advanced creative and artistic culture. In this sense, the city is committed to building their own competitive image, leveraging their tangible basic structure and planning a “*drawing power*” (Landry, C., 2008, p. xviii) that the ports in the spotlight. Attracting attention to the city, through the definition of associative richness and reconnaissance in order to create the conditions to generate a global impact on other contexts.

In relation to this, the great change that has taken place in the context of urban policy



has been focusing on three specific conditions: a new globalised and interconnected system, the imperative of environmental protection, inter-culturalism (Landry, C., 2008, p. xix).

With interconnected and globalised system Landry means the birth and existence of cultural areas that make up the groups of cultures and sub-cultures that have similar characteristics through which it expresses the world and through which we are allowed to understand cultural differences. In parallel, the importance of the environmental paradigm becomes crucial: the cities that do not develop their sustainability difficult to stabilise and become competitive, because most of the people may require a sensitivity and responsibility towards the health of the planet.

Finally, the inter-culturalism becomes a fundamental property in a world characterised by considerable movements of people; multiculturalism becomes the key to the recognition of differences, understanding how other cultures work and look at the world. In this context, the idea of the creative city becomes a new way to look at the urban development went from being based on an engineered and constructive approach to an “*approach to make the place*” (Landry, C., 2008, pp. xix-xx).

“*Cities are conceived as dynamics systems where the variables are constantly interacting and changing*” (Amin, A., Thrift, N., 2017, p. 23) enabling people to think and act (Amin, A., Thrift, N., 2017, p. 17). At the same time, the cities are in a post-crisis conditions, perceived as places difficult to recognise, full of degradation, pollution and crime which need a look upon them as places that generate wealth and prosperity, providing opportunities to solve their own problems, improving the quality of life (Landry, C., 2008, pp. xi-xii). In this sense, as a complex system of resources and problem as well, the city becomes a laboratory for developing solutions to problems (Landry, C., 2008, p. xii). In this sense, creativity constitutes a new strategic approach to urban planning that sees to the centre of the process the ideas and knowledge of people. That’s why cities are addressed even more to be placed able to generate new forms of culture (Carta, M., 2007, p. 7) as a mighty organisational structure in terms of “*spatial location, natural resources and market access*” (Carta, M., 2007, p.7-8).

The rise of the creative class is changing the living and working conditions by reshaping places and activities (Florida, R., 2014, p. 37). Within these conditions of change “*understanding how cities are changing becomes vital, recognising not only the role played by agents of creativity in the development of cities but also that commitment*

*to this urban creativity constitutes an essential factor in the evolution of communities and economic development”* (Carta, M., 2007, p. 9).

This concept of “*culture production*” (Carta, M., 2007) has led a shift in urban regeneration approach, enable all the people to ‘make’ their own city, by thinking and acting creatively within it (Landry, C., 2008, p. xiii). Planning the city has become even more an act that involves citizens into the design process and people are asked to imagine and create new ideas to improve the city quality of life. Moreover, as will show in the second part of the work, we are even more faced with a condition that attributes to human behaviours the force to modify a place. The creative class is generally concentrating in an area - neighbourhoods, clusters, part of the city - establishing the so-called “*creative milieu*” (Landry, C., 2008, p. xiv). To define a *creative milieu*, a first attention to the term milieu needs to be taken in account: indeed a milieu is a *local system* means as a place where a critical crowd might operate (Carta, M., 2007, p. 15) “*possessing the requirements for global interactions and where spatial intercourse creates new ideas, products, and services [...] contributing to the city’s regeneration*” (Carta, M., 2007, p. 15). Therefore, the *creative milieu* is a place that has the needed conditions to generate streams of ideas and innovations (Landry, C., 2008, p. 133) to the urban dynamics generated by the creative class (Carta, M., 2007, p. 15). The network capacity that characterises the creative milieu is one of the most important attributes for the creative city and includes “*the willingness to share and to contribute to the success of the network for the greater good*” (Landry, C., 2008, p. 134).

The occupation and colonisation of that area from the creative class, which is going to use the space in different ways according to its imagination, even new ideas and behaviour, and the *concept of sharing* that requires a high level of flexibility (Landry, C., 2008, p. 134), trig particular urban transformation dynamics. In this sense, by understanding these dynamics, the concept of the creative city would be not only a given conditions of some cities, rather a strategic opportunity for the urban regeneration process.

### 1.3.2 Changing planning paradigm: from urban engineering to city-making

The change of economic and social paradigms started around the late 80's has put the cities into a continuous and really fast transformation process as well as has given them the goal of responding to these new challenges with the aspiration to encourage the imagination and openness. This has caused and is still causing a dramatic impact on the organisation of the city. In fact, the goal of the creative city is to push people to think, plan and take advantage of the imagination to develop opportunities for solutions to urban health, economic and social problems.

A main point of the creative city concept is the fact that “*any ordinary person can do extraordinary modifications*” (Landry, C., 2008, p. xxi), using the imagination, intelligence, creativity and continuous learning. In this sense, cities must redefine the priorities shifting the thought to experimentation and creativity which can encourage and enable future profits (Landry, C., 2008, p. xxii). With this concept in mind is possible to identify three main characteristics that a creative city must have: “*flexibility to change*” in terms of building the necessary resilience to the different stages of modification; “*good governance*” that encourages creativity and legitimate the use of the imagination as a structure for generating capital and well-being; the “*development of cultural industries*” as unique and special potential (Landry, C., 2008, p. xxi).

Considering all those facts we are faced on which are driving a different use of the urban spaces and are modifying the design process, the main challenge for the city is the way of looking at the city itself. The modification of the design process is one of the main issues to take into account and to think about since it shifts the process from a *master planning approach* to a *place-making strategy*. The engineering constructive approach, characterised by the development and the construction of architectural goods as big infrastructure projects leaves the room to an approach based on “*hard*” and “*soft infrastructure*” (Landry, C., 2008, p. xxiii) which place attention to the interaction between people, the so-called city-making.

The idea of place-making comes from the concept of an intrinsic link between public space and people (Whyte, W., 2013, p. 5) and in this sense where and how





people can meet, exchange ideas and enable connections. The creation of bottom-up processes giving to the communities even more new goals for allowing the identities sharing and to form a network (Carta, M., 2007, p. 27). Even more, the place-making strategy has rejected the top-down urban design approach and empowers bottom-up actions made by the community, in this sense the core of the place-making philosophy is mirrored in the Christopher Alexander's "*ethos of community-centred design*" (Whyte, W., 2013, p. 6). Placing the human being and its skills at the centre of the economic power has fostered, at the same time, each human being to be proactive in shaping the place they live (Kent, F., 2013, p. 9).

The social capital is placed at the centre of a design strategy that increases the importance of the process despite the product (Kent, F., 2013, p. 10). Process that "*would emphasise flexibility, embrace impermanence, share information and draws on unorthodox sources for influence; it empowers everyday users to become makers, to share ideas and to form alliance*" (Kent, F., 2013, p. 10) in order to build "*innovative processes of engagement delivered by a wider range of actors*" (Carmona, M., 2017, p. 4).

The reformulation of urban planning paradigm puts its horizons towards the ability to understand the 'experience' of living the city: "making the city" is the definition of broad interdisciplinary groups expected to schedule the city rather than draw up a use plan soil. In this sense, people and citizens become the active component and the crucial resource of the new approach. The talent, inventiveness, and creativity of those who live in cities have the ability to reconfigure the sites of the city itself; but as you can create the conditions to make people curious and imaginative? Landry asks, what is the atmosphere that encourages to give their best? (Landry, C., 2008, p. xxiii)

The creative city would be a response to Landry's questions as it provides places which promote communication and interaction between people, generating a good atmosphere for its "*sensitivity to the cultures*", to be oriented towards the globalised world but that acts locally (Landry, C., 2008, p. xxiv). Moreover, the development of a new thinking in culture, education, and learning that enable the actors to produce ideas and improve their own intellectual abilities and personal skills. For this reason, the rethink of the university mission and teaching places would be very important for the developing of a vision that looks to many different types of learning empowering the construction of more informal and free intellectual and cultural exchange places (Landry, C., 2008, p. xxiv).

The city would be giving more open spaces to different personalities to operate, work, have fun and live with creative organisations, “*by re-assessing the urban model [...] converting it into the framework of a city which might be self-sustaining and capable of generating, developing and redesigning forms of creative energy*” (Carta, M., 2007, p. 29). The aimed action for the creative city, indeed, is the capability to enable the relationships between actors that interact within the cityscape, in this sense the goal is not to increase the creative economy but rather to “*produce*” even “*new creative economies*” (Carta, M., 2007, p. 30). The recasting of the planning paradigm means to “*encourage people to be curious, inventive*” (Landry, C., 2008, p. xxxii) and proactive in understanding how to experience the city and how maximising urban assets (Landry, C., 2008, pp. xxxii-xxxiii) and empower the city to be an incubator of creativity and innovation.

### 1.3.3 Assets and skills of the creative city

To define a creative city would be necessary to consider all its components, actors and assets and their characteristic which define the boundaries within which a city could be called creative. So much author has spoken about the creative city in the recent years, however, the concept of the creative city was introduced for the first time by Charles Landry (2001) who explained how the city has changed to empower the economy of knowledge by giving such an economic glance to build a toolkit for urban practitioners. In 2007 Maurizio Carta pointed out the concept of the creative city through a much more social and spatial point of view, explaining with practical examples how creativity is spreading in cities. The widespread of the primordial notion of the creative city is based mainly on the thoughts of these two authors.

According to Charles Landry, the structures of the creative city may have different characteristics; the creative city, indeed, should be: *hard*, material and tangible, and *soft*, immaterial and intangible; real and symbolic; visible and/or invisible; quantifiable and calculable and/or imaginary and perceptual. “*In the ‘50s the city was composed of 80% of assets and tangible elements, such as settlement, real estates and infrastructure*” (Landry, C., 2008, pp. xxxiv); nowadays, however, the percentage

# THIS IS NOT A GAME

THE WORLD I LIVE IN

## THE GOVERNMENT

I.M.I. OF THE 8000 HOMELESS ON THE STREETS OF LONDON I ASK THE HOME MINISTER, THERESA MAY AND THE MINISTER OF HOUSING, SHIRAZ JAVID WHY IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY (IN THE UK) PEOPLE ARE STILL LIVING LIKE THIS?

HOW MANY OF THEM COULD SURVIVE FOR A WEEK ON THE STREETS OF LONDON!!!!

THE AVERAGE LIFE SPAN FOR A HOMELESS MAN OR WOMAN IS 47

THE UK HAS 4.5M PEOPLE IN AVERAGE 82

HOW MANY OF THEM SHOULD BE IN JAIL FOR EVERY 100

OPEN YOUR EYES

LOOK AT THE MONOPOLY BOARD AGAIN!

IT ONLY TAKES A LITTLE FROM EVERYONE TO START SOMETHING THAT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND CHANGE THE WORLD

COMMUNITY CHEST HAS BEEN REPLACED WITH "COMMUNITY HELP"

HOMELESS EDITION ©

but London has so many homeless



YOU ARE HERE

IF YOU TURN AROUND, THE SHELTER IS NEXT TO THE CHURCH

READ ME

STATIONS HAVE BEEN REPLACED WITH

NIGHT SHELTERS

THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH NIGHT SHELTERS TO DEAL WITH NUMBERS OF HOMELESS ON THE STREETS THE BIGGEST SHELTERS ARE THE DOOR WAYS OF SHOPS IF WE ARE NOT ASKED TO MOVE ON

OPEN YOUR EYES





of tangible structures of a city has been greatly reduced, the city is composed by a balanced mix of material and immaterial infrastructure facilities, where within the decision-making process, the soft component performs a significant role (Landry, C., 2008, p. xxxiv).

The Landry creative city sees a number of urban amenities that he grouped into four categories, which are connected to what would be interpreted in the third part of the research. The first group that represents the actors and that could be called *materials*, includes the sites and natural scenery; natural resources; history, heritage, and urban fabric; infrastructure, transport, housing, services, and connections. The second group consists of all those *actions* played daily by the actors, such as maintenance, “collection” of waste, social care; traditions, both tangible and intangible; different levels of ability and talent; different activities such as sports, cultural and art festivals, events. A third group includes the attitudes and attributes of tolerance, open-mindedness, ways of thinking and approach to ‘doing’; the perception that the city developed both internally and externally; the presence of a culture of curiosity, creativity, and competence. The fourth group includes the management category, namely: organisation, management and implementation/deployment individual and group (Landry, C., 2008, pp. xxxiv-xxxv).

According to Landry the first creative action that a city can implement is to fix these categories of assets as a basis for solving the obstacles and the problems of an older city and the construction of new future initiatives (Landry, C., 2008, p. xxxv). In fact, the cities of today are facing several problems including the impermeability of the soil degradation, to be reclaimed former industrial contexts, low quality and fragmentation of the urban fabric, insufficient accessibility, over-engineered connection systems, scarce public transport options, inadequacy to the new creative economy, high levels of social stress, low educational level and low level of cultural commission and urban planning (Landry, C., 2008, p. xxxv).

For this reason, it becomes very important to better manage each structure and the interactions and connections between one category and another, in this way becomes extremely important the urban leadership component, based on personal qualities and groups who identify themselves in the imagination levels, hard work, thought and specific risk acceptance. Organisational capacity and leadership turn out to be a fundamental potential by allowing people to drag and inspire others towards a

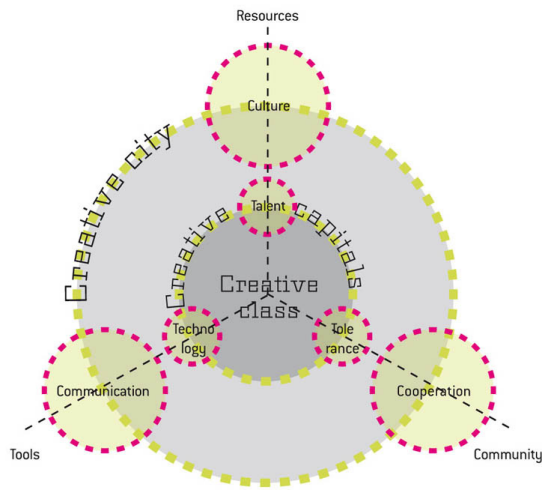
Figure

**Street Monopoli**

Street art in Trafalgar Square

source:

shot by Irene Manzini Ceinar on 30th January 2018



vision are not at all clear to the most yet. Landry outlines six characteristics that good urban leadership must have: “*foresight and forecasting; long-term strategic goal; understanding of urban dynamics in a holistic vision; develop a culture of openness and curiosity; organisational skills and a certain and specific objective of transmission and distribution*” (Landry, C., 2008, p. xxxvii).

There are, according to the thought of Landry, some assets which are definitely needed for a city to be a creative city, in this sense some things of the traditional asset of a city need to be redefined. First of all the transport system and mobility accessibility which need to be encouraged towards the development of pedestrian paths and slow mobility routes. Secondly, *the idea of waste* and pre-existence as a resource to be reused, reactivate and regenerate. Thirdly, putting the people at the centre of the urban design empowering the place-making approach and focusing the attention to the process rather than to the product (Landry, C., 2008, p. xlii).

The big problem of the management of urban development today is that the process is still organised according to traditional guidelines, related to land use: residence, services, parks, connections, etc. Therefore becomes important in the leadership of a creative city to move his glance to an urban development that takes into account new key concepts, which are identified in: icon; design consciousness; environmental awareness; artistic thinking; atmosphere and experience; association with topics known to exert resonance; cultural importance; connection capacity and interrelationships; ability of expression and language (Landry, C., 2008, pp. xlii-xliii). In this sense, the creative city according to the author is not a static concept but becomes the challenge, for the organisation of existing structures, the usual way of doing and for the configuration of power, thinking horizontally and laterally developing the capacity to give look at things according to different and simultaneous points of view, such as “*the wood and the tree simultaneously*” (Landry, C., 2008, p. l).

The creative city explained by Maurizio Carta is a city where creativity can be the engine force to generate new economies in cities and as a result the capacity to achieve not only quality and innovation but also a “*reputation associated with the process*” (Carta, M., 2007, p. 11). As also Landry argued, the respond to city changes is addressed to the rethink of the town planning and urban design in order to build new processes. The first objective of Carta is to add a fourth T within the Florida 3Ts (Technology, Talent, and Tolerance), indeed great importance is conferred to the

*“Territory as an important resource supplying the soft economy and acting as a producer of value”* (Carta, M., 2007, p. 12).

Moreover, with the same logic of Florida’s 3Ts, Carta attributes his “3Cs” to the creative city, which underline what are the main skills a creative city needs to get; in this sense, the “3Cs are Culture, Communication, and Cooperation” (Carta, M., 2007, p. 12). In culture are grouped all those characteristics of the city’s identity and talent, in terms of competitive resources, cultural character, and diversity. As well, “communication” is the ability of a city to “inform, divulge information and involve people”; the technology in this sense helps the communication skills of the city in delivering his idea. Indeed, “communication provides the means for the processes of innovation and diffusion” (Carta, M., 2007, p. 13).

In the end, with the term *cooperation* Carta means the capacity to accept the diversity that enables the cooperation between all the parts and components of the city itself. Moreover, cooperation implies the act to *assemble* and build relationships and network to produce common goals and outcomes (Carta, M., 2008, p. 13). In this sense, according to with both the theories of the creative city, the places of the contemporary city might be human focused and might establish a network of relationships between actors and places. As a result, rethinking the design and planning process might be the strategy to adopt for empowering the existing resources and enable people to be part of the transformation and build their own place.

As an outcome of the first idea of the creative city, there is the birth of different trends that develop a new urban design approach which strongly modifies the asset and the shape of the city. Those trends, such as *Tactical Urbanism* (Lyndon, M., 2012) and *Urban Acupuncture* (Lerner, J., 2014) are strategies by which soft and spontaneous interventions are spread around the city or part of it and consist of a series of bottom-up actions generally led by the people who live the place. In this sense, the whole process would acquire the role to be the objective of the creative city and at the same time earns the power of modifying radically the image of the place.

Figure

### **The 3Cs**

Maurizio Carta, Creative City

source:

<http://www1.unipa.it/mcarta/CREATIVECITY/3C.jpg>

visited on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2018

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**Part 2** | to investigate. *Analysis of case studies*



## 2.1 Creative Cities. An overview of European cities

The Atlas of the Creative Cities is meant to give an overview of creative processes in the European context, indeed the chapter would give a global glance of how creativity is even more spread in cities and what are the factors that influence and determine a city to be called *Creative City*.

According to *The Culture and Creative City Monitor* (<https://composite-indicators.jrc.ec.europa.eu/cultural-creative-cities-monitor/>), the atlas is built by taking into account not only good examples of creative processes into the cities but also understanding the ability of particular cities to enable creativity into its places, to create a cultural vibrancy that empowers the creative process and to encourage the creative economy.

In this sense, the aim is to show on one hand the data collection of the performance of each city and on the other hand what is the role of designers in terms of shaping creative spaces and defining creative processes. For these reasons the sheets are composed by two parts, one which describes the actors involved and how much they are involved and in this sense the result is a spectrum where the considered city is compared with the other European cities. The second part, represents by pictures the most outstanding creative interventions in the considered city.

Considering London as a basis to compare other cities, seven cities were analysed and divided in categories in relation to their size, firstly XXL size cities, like London, Milan and Paris, that is the class of global cities and megalopolis, secondly XL size cities, like Copenhagen, Lisbon and Glasgow, which represent the class of big cities, thirdly L size cities, like Edinburgh and finally S size cities such as Eindhoven which represents small towns.

Comparing the data collected it is possible to argue that in most cases the existence of creative processes into the city is not related to its size and above all small cities had the best performance in owning high level of culture and creativity.

On the other side, big cities, especially London, as per their high level of infrastructures, diversity and mix of uses are the best ones in enabling the environment and welcoming the change.

## 1. Culture vibrancy

22.9%

- a. Cultural venues and facilities
- b. Cultural participation and attractiveness

## 2. Creative economy

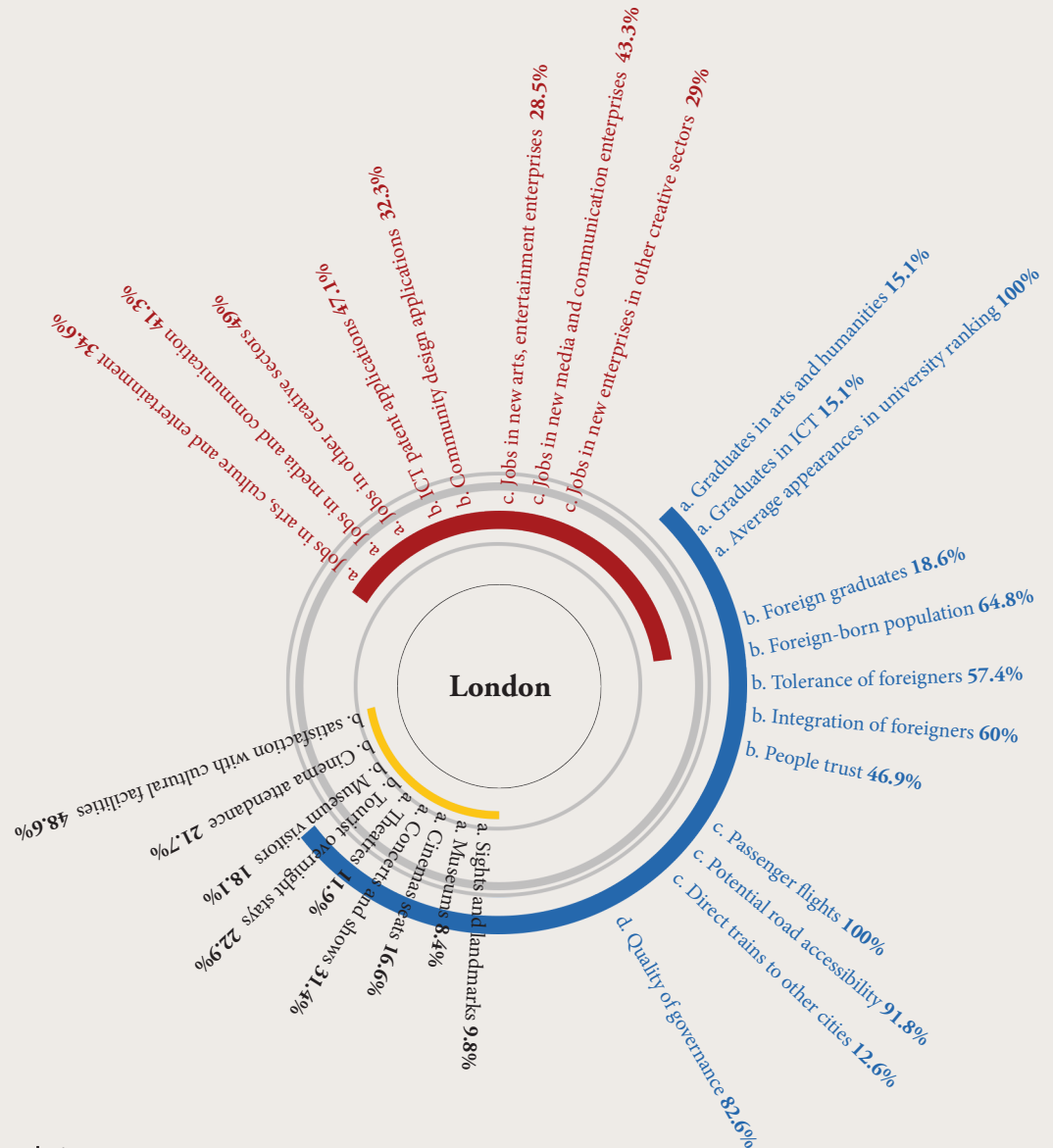
38.1%

- a. Creative and knowledge
- b. Intellectual property and innovation
- c. New jobs in creative sector

## 3. Enabling environment

51.5%

- a. Human capital and education
- b. Openness, tolerance, trust
- c. Accessibility
- d. Quality of governance

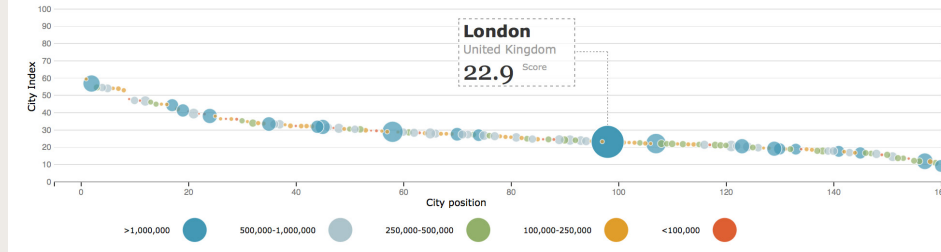


51.5074° N - 0.1278° W

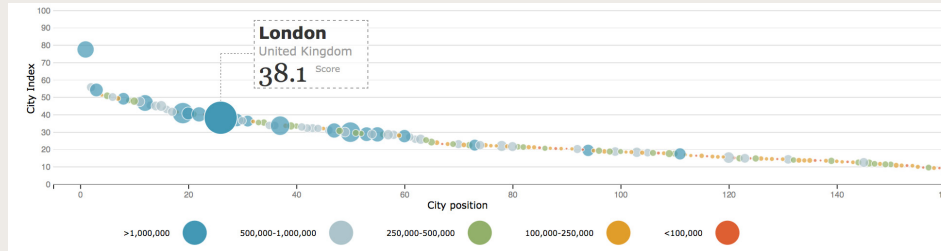
# London

London performance.  
source: *The Culture and Creative City Monitor*

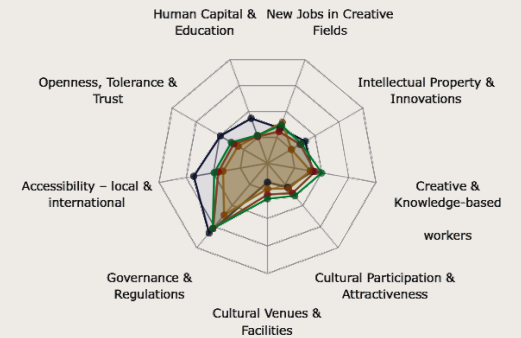
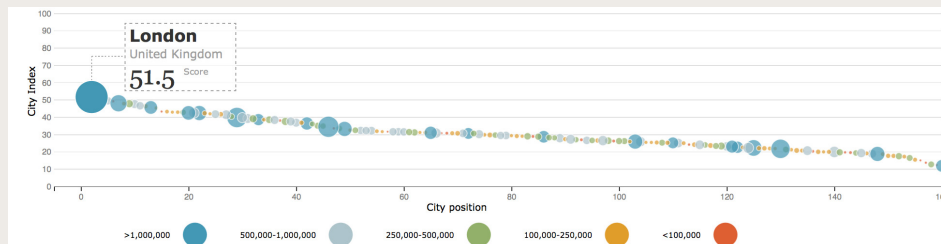
## 1. Culture Vibrancy



## 2. Creative Economy



## 3. Enabling Environment





xxL.arage

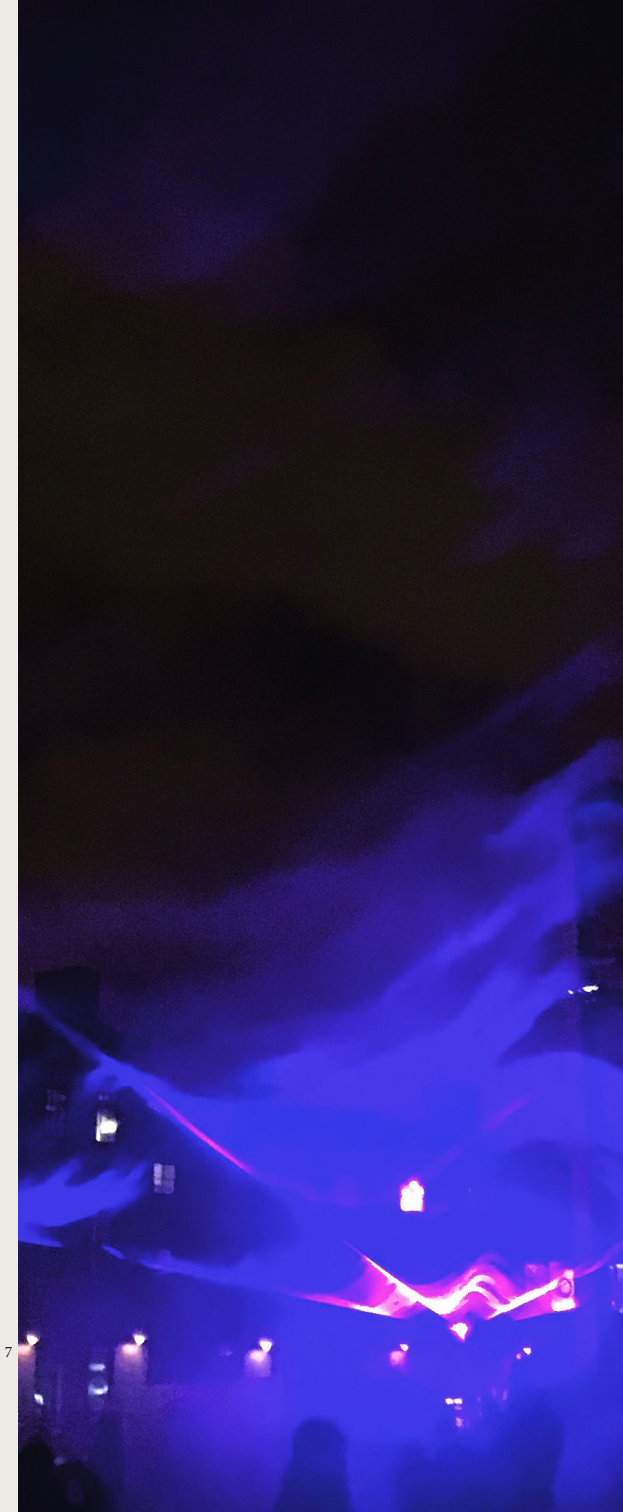
# London



5



6



7

## 1. Culture vibrancy

41.1%

- a. Cultural venues and facilities
- b. Cultural participation and attractiveness

## 2. Creative economy

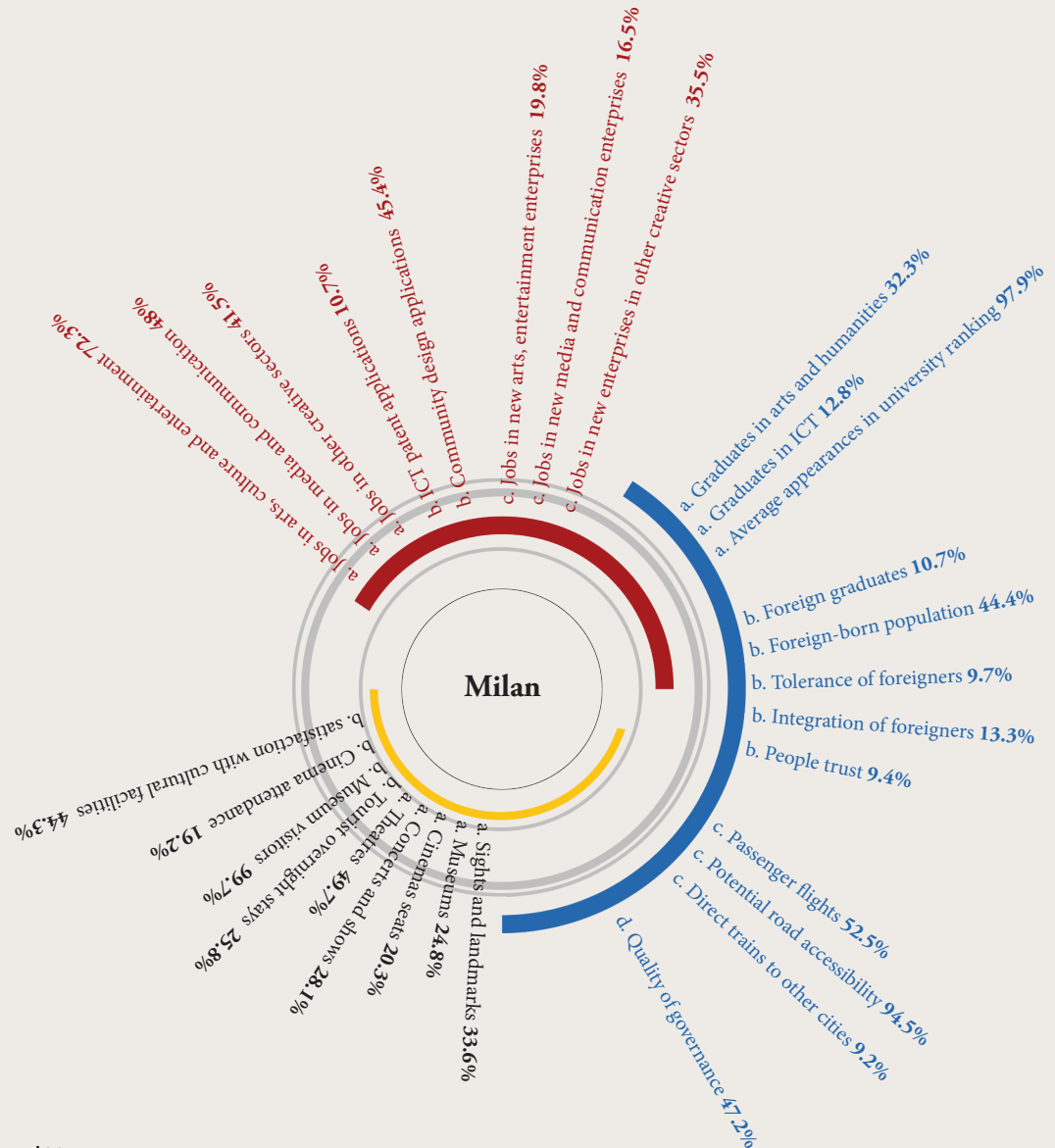
36.8%

- a. Creative and knowledge
- b. Intellectual property and innovation
- c. New jobs in creative sector

## 3. Enabling environment

36.2%

- a. Human capital and education
- b. Openness, tolerance, trust
- c. Accessibility
- d. Quality of governance



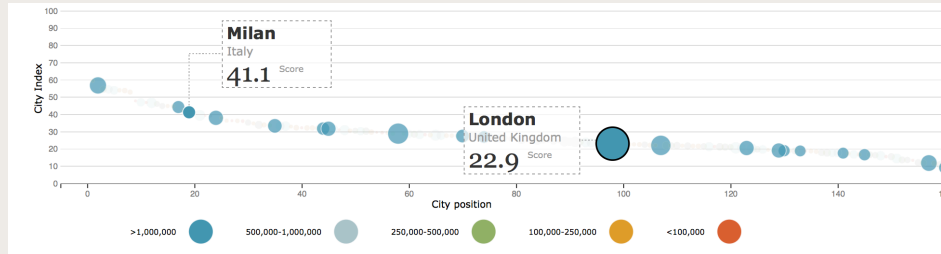


45.4642° N - 9.1900° E

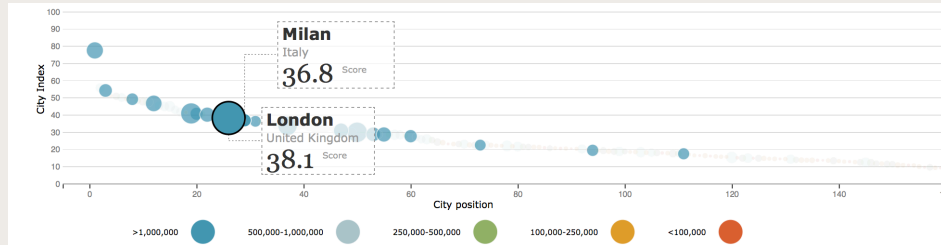
# Milan

Milan performance compared with the London one.  
source: *The Culture and Creative City Monitor*

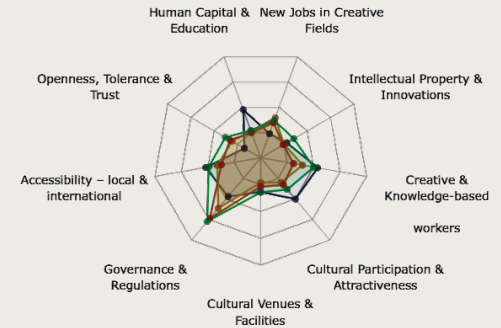
## 1. Culture Vibrancy



## 2. Creative Economy



## 3. Enabling Environment



xxL.arage



# Milan



11



12



13

## 1. Culture vibrancy

56.6%

- a. Cultural venues and facilities
- b. Cultural participation and attractiveness

## 2. Creative economy

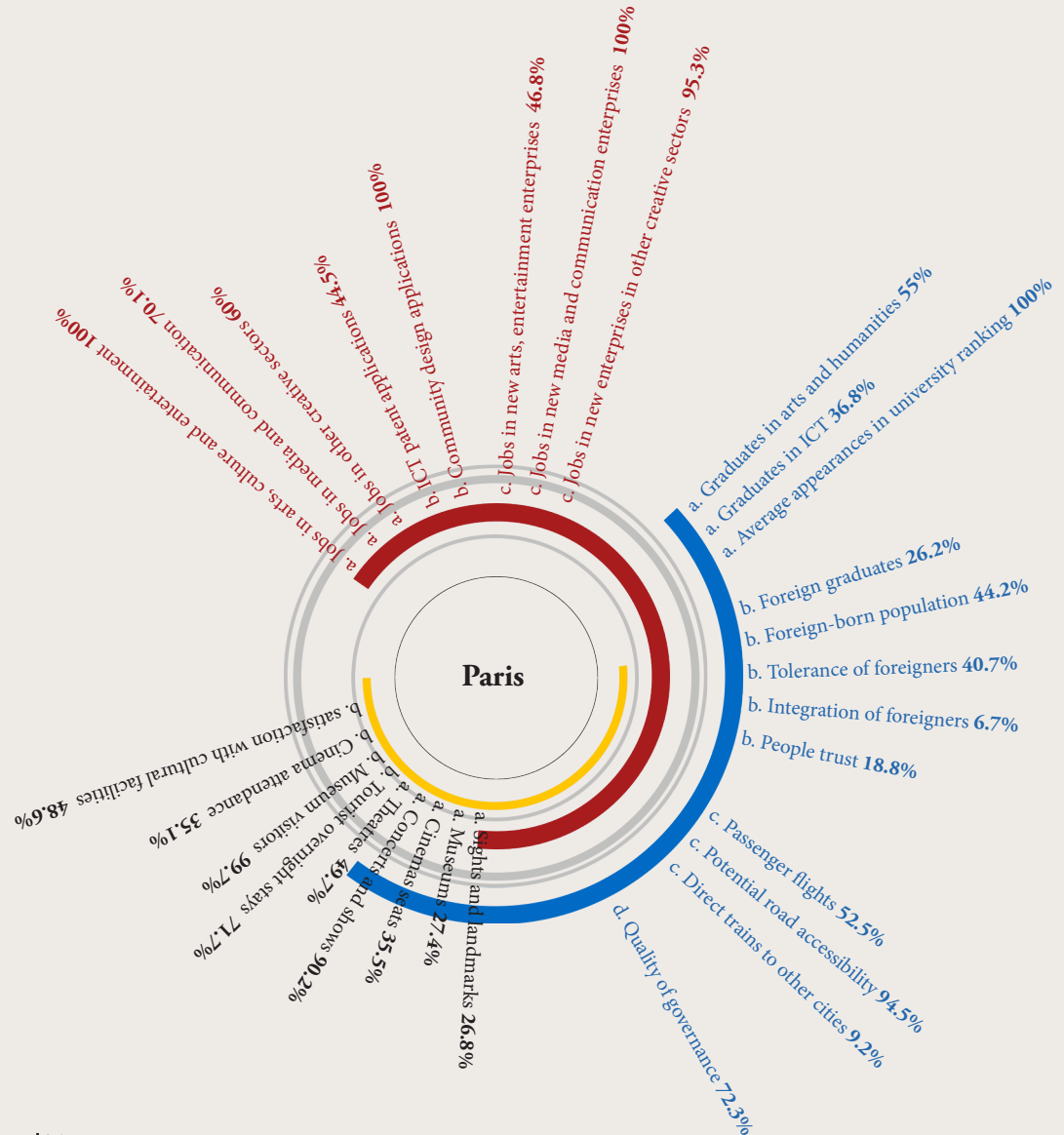
77.4%

- a. Creative and knowledge
- b. Intellectual property and innovation
- c. New jobs in creative sector

## 3. Enabling environment

47.9%

- a. Human capital and education
- b. Openness, tolerance, trust
- c. Accessibility
- d. Quality of governance

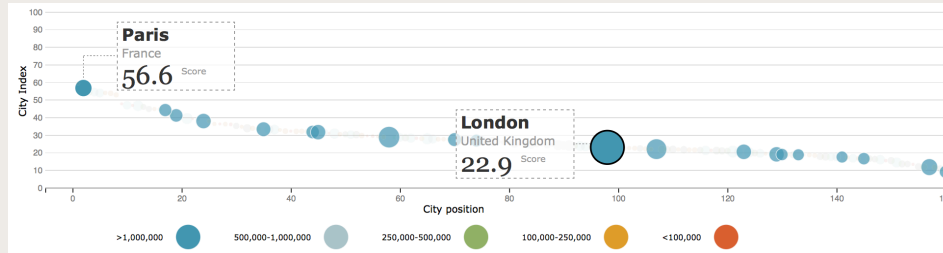


48.8566° N - 2.3522° E

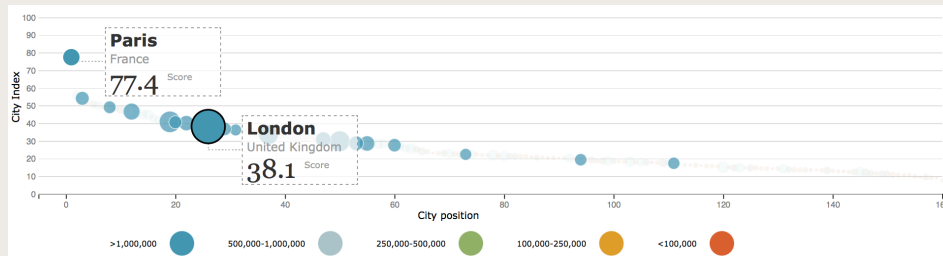
# Paris

Paris performance compared with the London one.  
 source: *The Culture and Creative City Monitor*

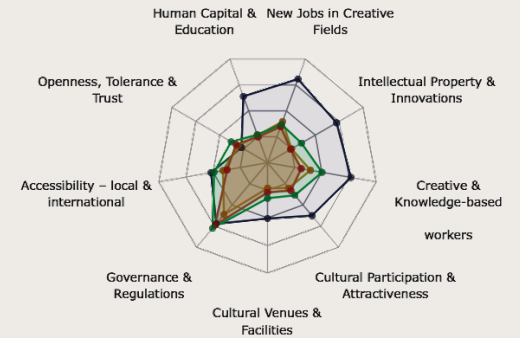
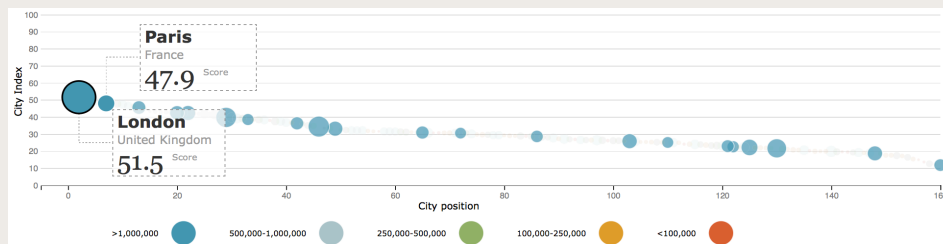
## 1. Culture Vibrancy



## 2. Creative Economy



## 3. Enabling Environment



# xxL.arage



14



15



16

# Paris



17



18



19

## 1. Culture vibrancy

53.9%

a. Cultural venues and facilities

b. Cultural participation and attractiveness

## 2. Creative economy

50%

a. Creative and knowledge

b. Intellectual property and innovation

c. New jobs in creative sector

## 3. Enabling environment

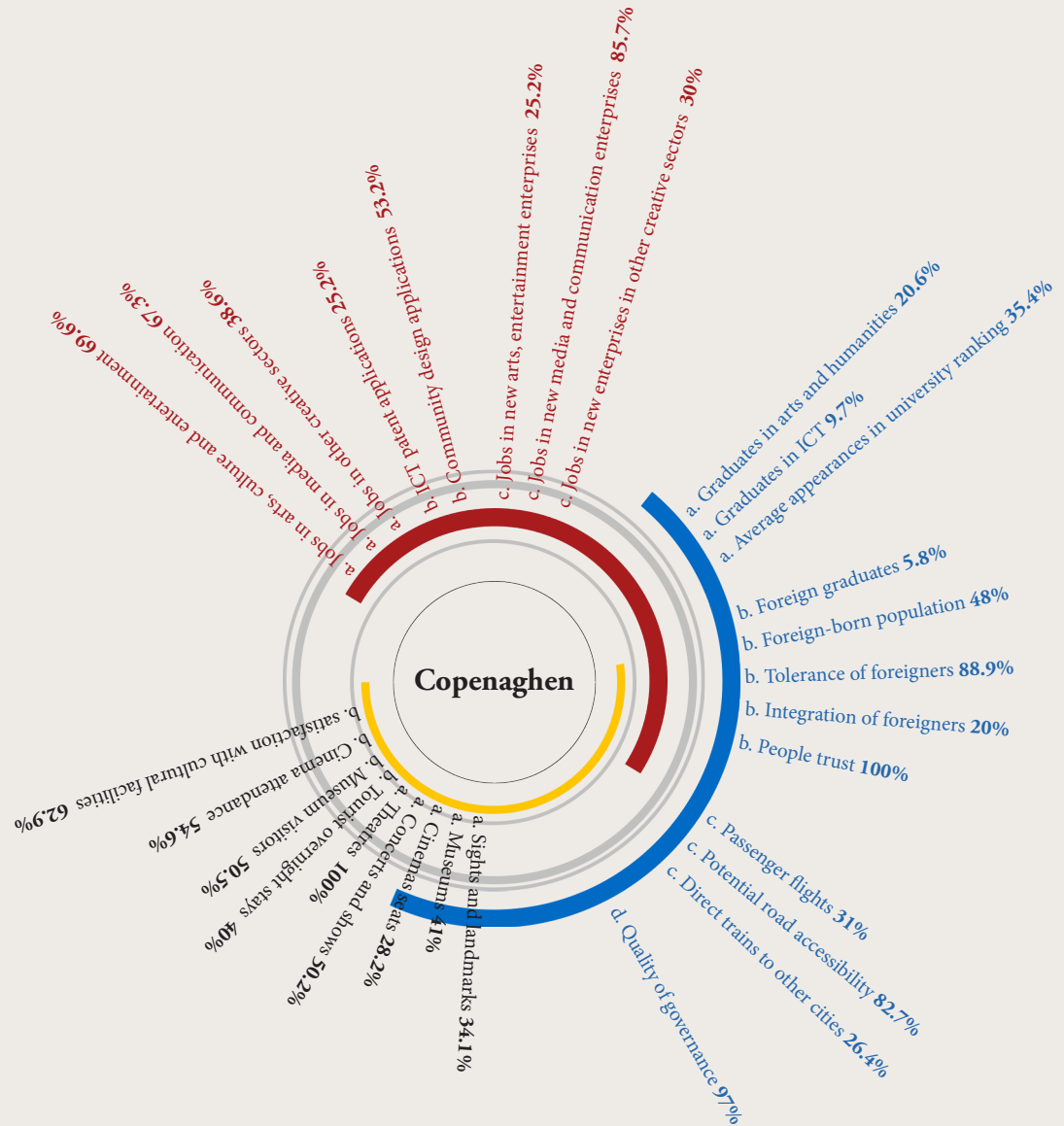
41.6%

a. Human capital and education

b. Openness, tolerance, trust

c. Accessibility

d. Quality of governance





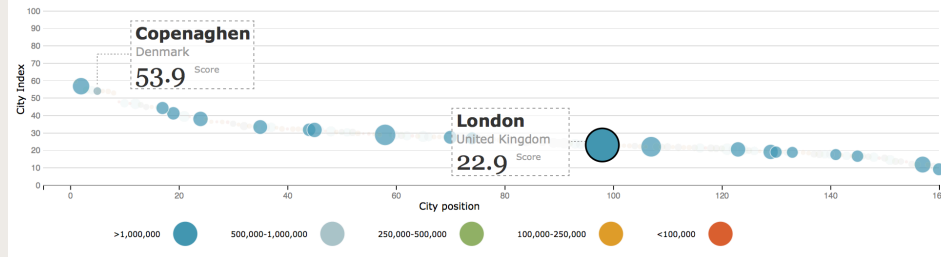
55.6761° N - 12.5683° E

# Copenhagen

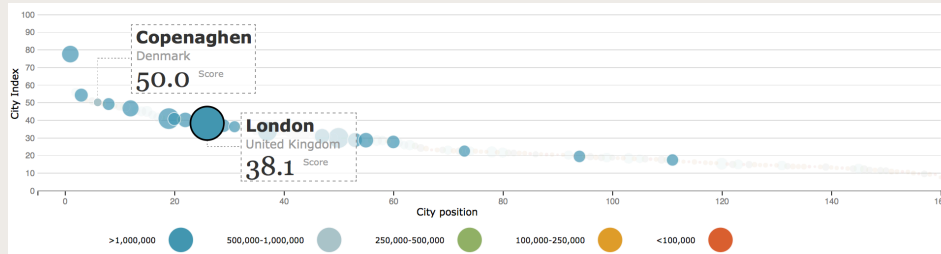
Copenhagen performance compared with the London one.

source: *The Culture and Creative City Monitor*

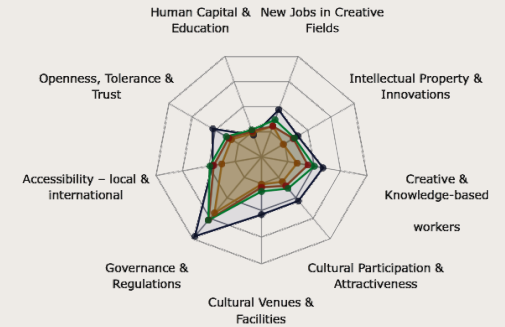
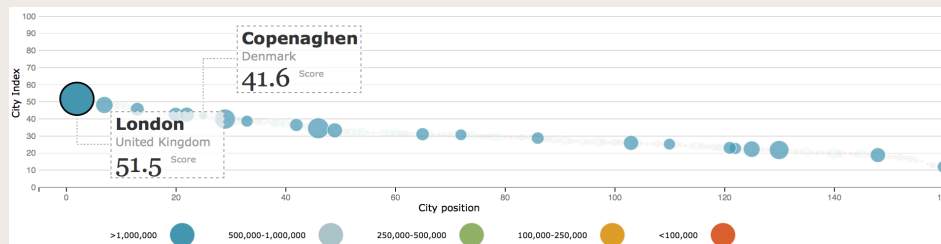
## 1. Culture Vibrancy



## 2. Creative Economy



## 3. Enabling Environment



xL.arge



20



21

# Copenhagen



22



24



23



25

## 1. Culture vibrancy

54.3%

a. Cultural venues and facilities

b. Cultural participation and attractiveness

## 2. Creative economy

36.4%

a. Creative and knowledge

b. Intellectual property and innovation

c. New jobs in creative sector

## 3. Enabling environment

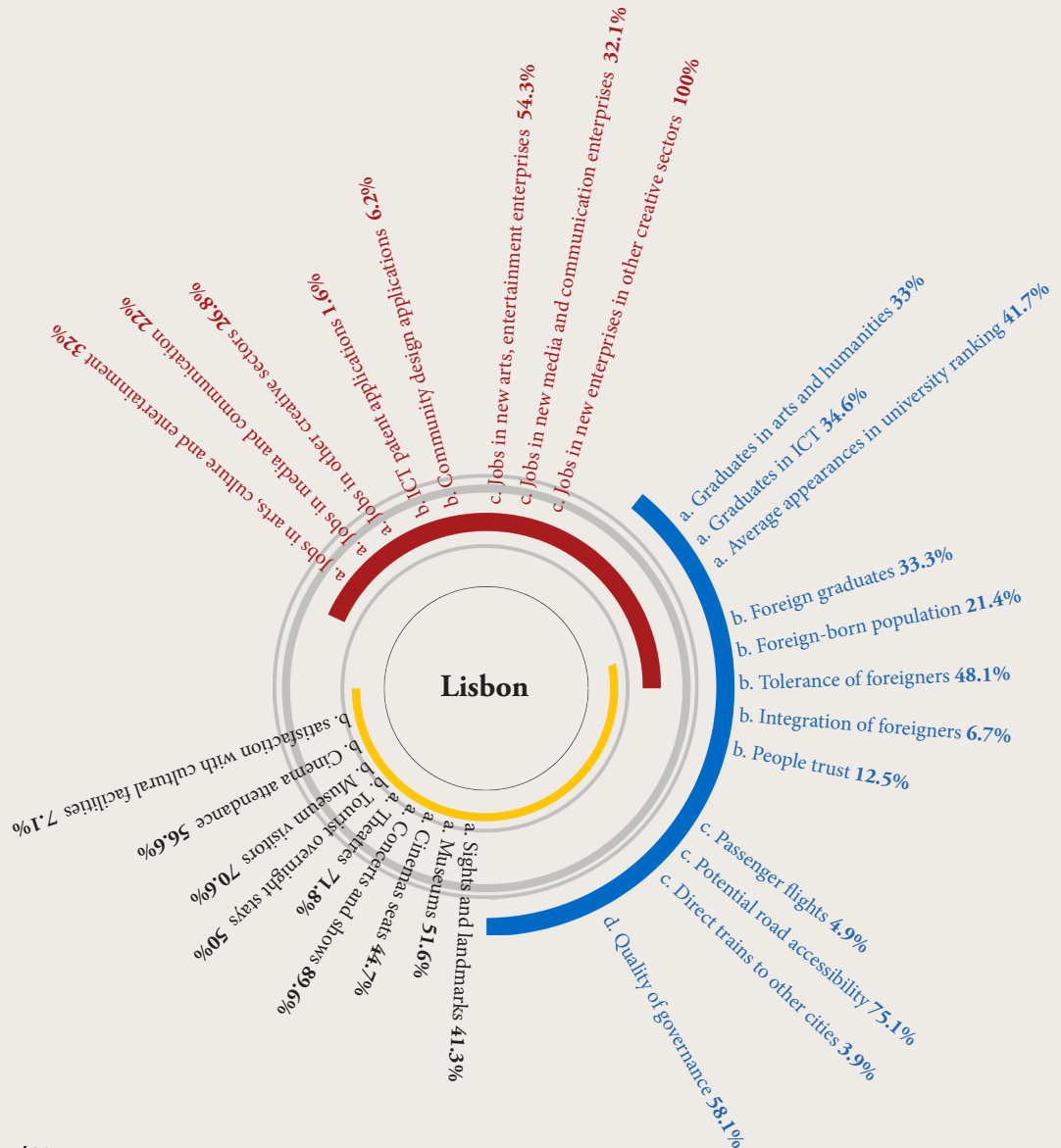
31.4%

a. Human capital and education

b. Openness, tolerance, trust

c. Accessibility

d. Quality of governance

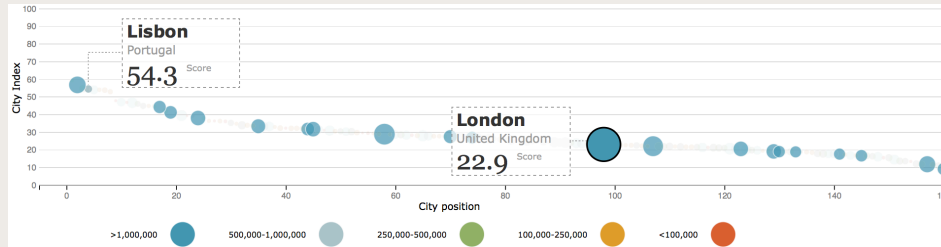


38.7223° N - 9.1393° W

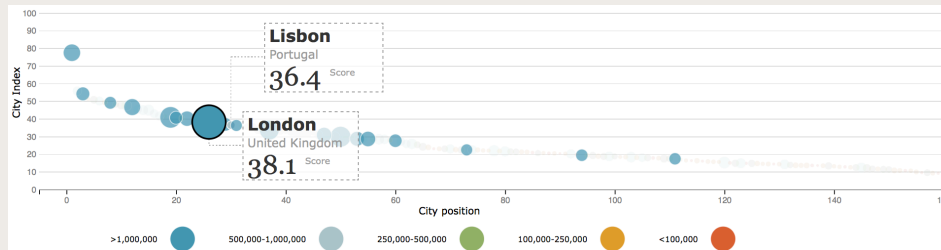
# Lisbon

Lisbon performance compared with the London one.  
source: *The Culture and Creative City Monitor*

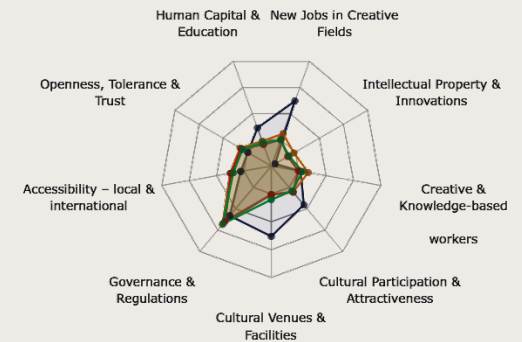
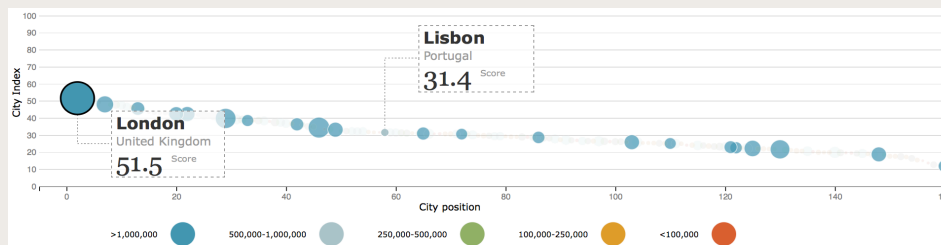
## 1. Culture Vibrancy



## 2. Creative Economy



## 3. Enabling Environment





26

xL.arage



27



28

# Lisbon



29



30



31

## 1. Culture vibrancy

33.1%

- a. Cultural venues and facilities
- b. Cultural participation and attractiveness

## 2. Creative economy

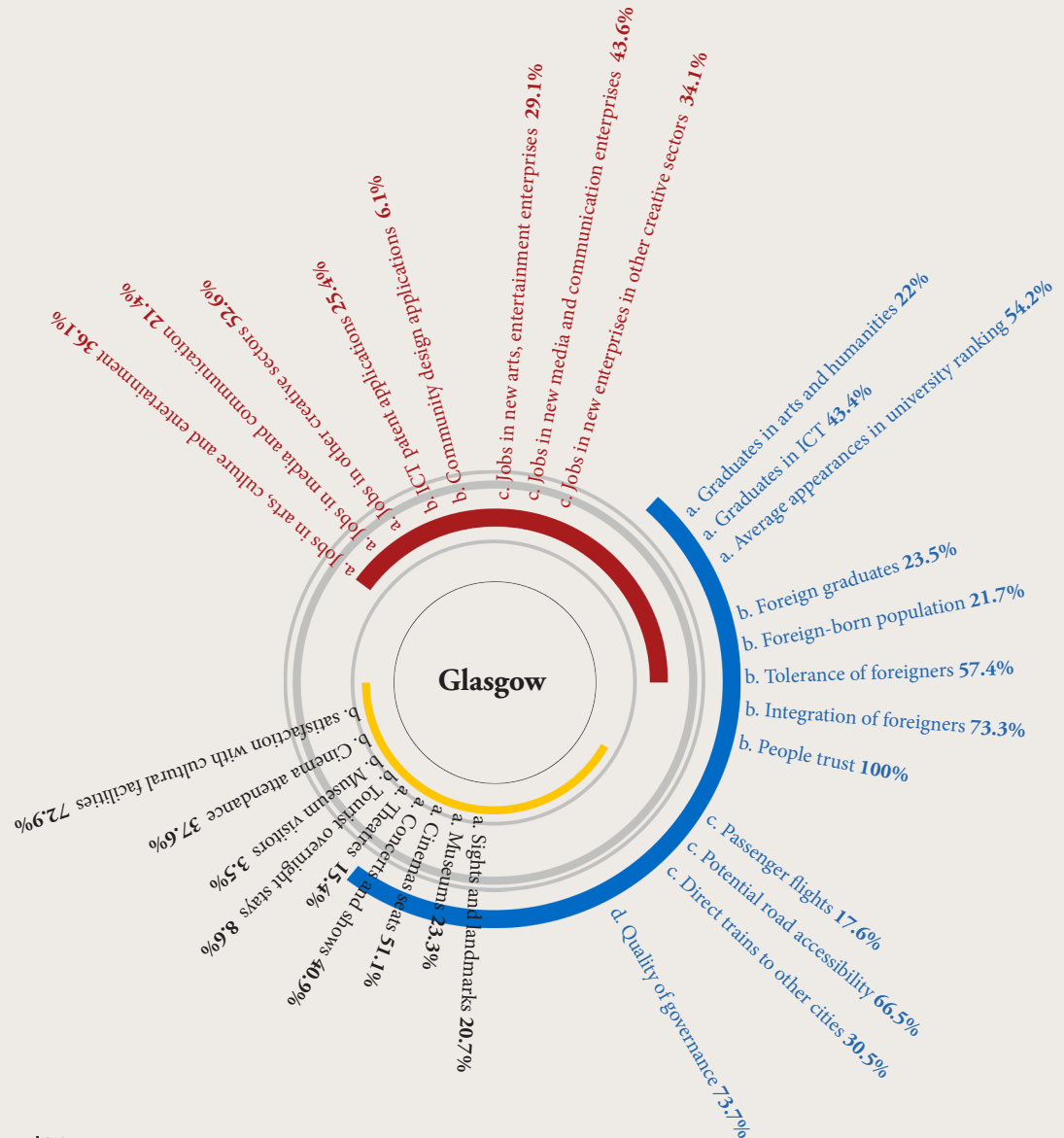
32.1%

- a. Creative and knowledge
- b. Intellectual property and innovation
- c. New jobs in creative sector

## 3. Enabling environment

47.4%

- a. Human capital and education
- b. Openness, tolerance, trust
- c. Accessibility
- d. Quality of governance





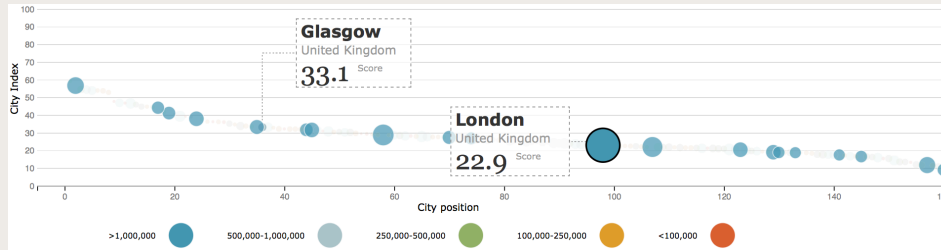
55.8642° N - 4.2518° W

# Glasgow

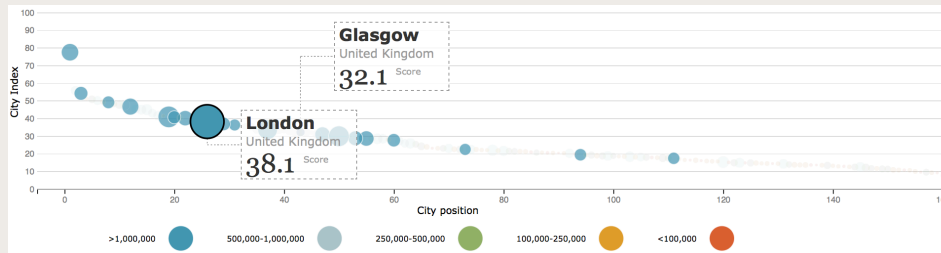
Glasgow performance compared with the London one.

source: *The Culture and Creative City Monitor*

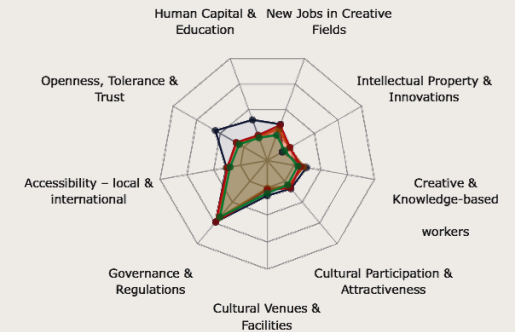
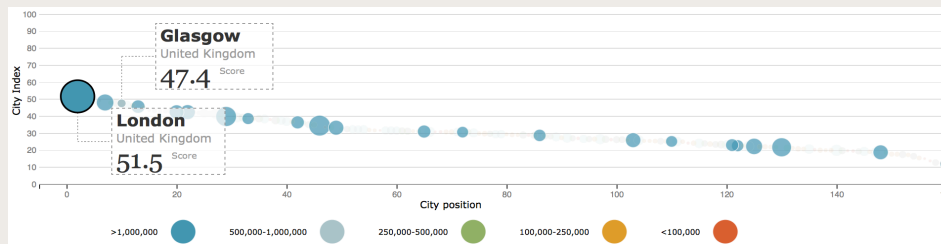
## 1. Culture Vibrancy



## 2. Creative Economy



## 3. Enabling Environment





32



33

xL.arage



34

# Glasgow



35



36



37

# Large

Population: 495'360

## 1. Culture vibrancy

33.8%

- a. Cultural venues and facilities
- b. Cultural participation and attractiveness

## 2. Creative economy

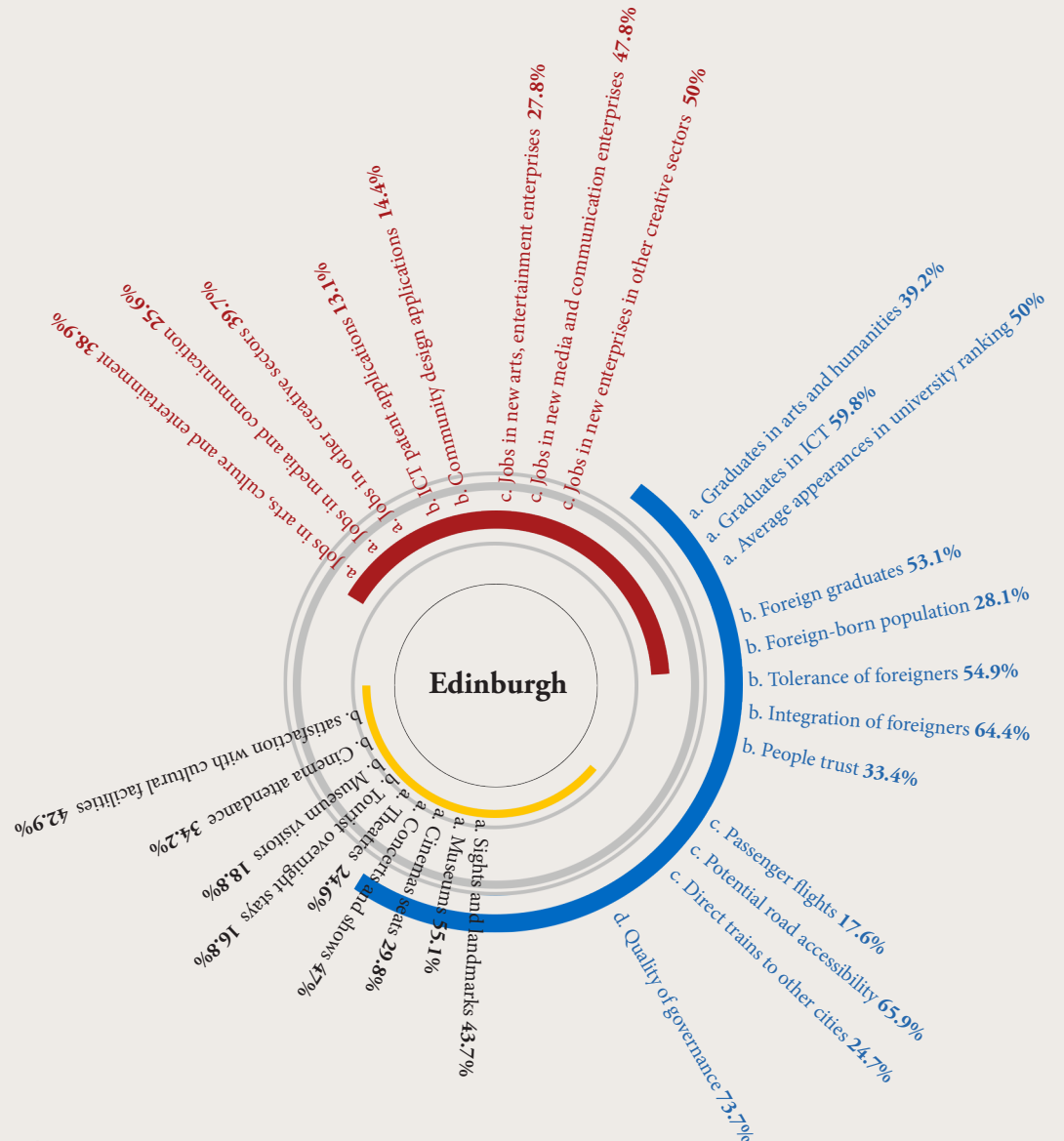
33.4%

- a. Creative and knowledge
- b. Intellectual property and innovation
- c. New jobs in creative sector

## 3. Enabling environment

47.7%

- a. Human capital and education
- b. Openness, tolerance, trust
- c. Accessibility
- d. Quality of governance



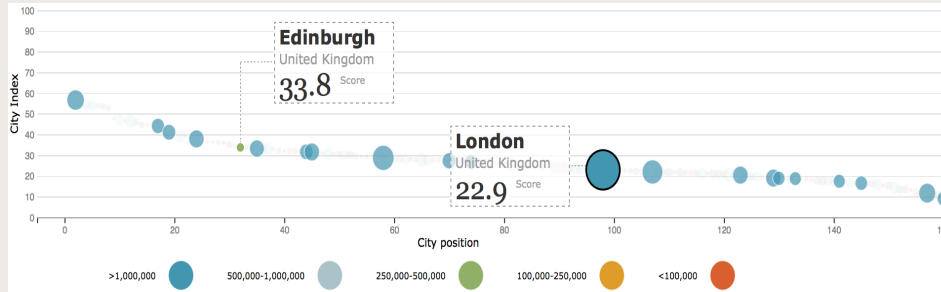
55.9533° N - 3.1883° W

# Edinburgh

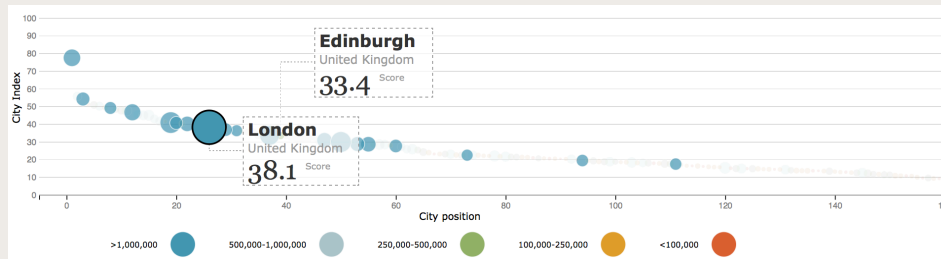
Edinburgh performance compared with the London one.

source: *The Culture and Creative City Monitor*

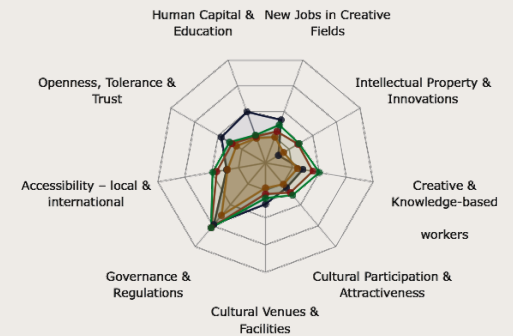
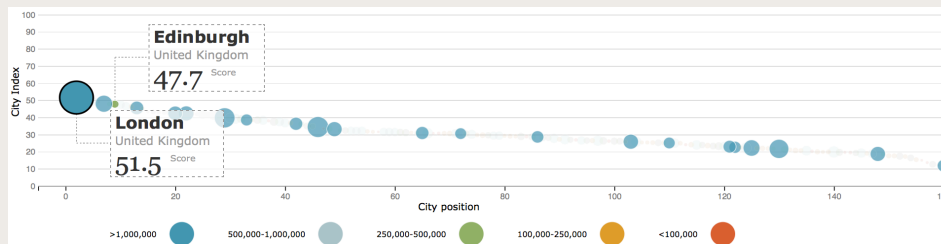
## 1. Culture Vibrancy



## 2. Creative Economy



## 3. Enabling Environment



# L.arge



38



39



40

# Edinburgh



41



42



43

# S.mall

Population: 227'100

## 1. Culture vibrancy

53.7%

a. Cultural venues and facilities

b. Cultural participation and attractiveness

## 2. Creative economy

49.2%

a. Creative and knowledge

b. Intellectual property and innovation

c. New jobs in creative sector

## 3. Enabling environment

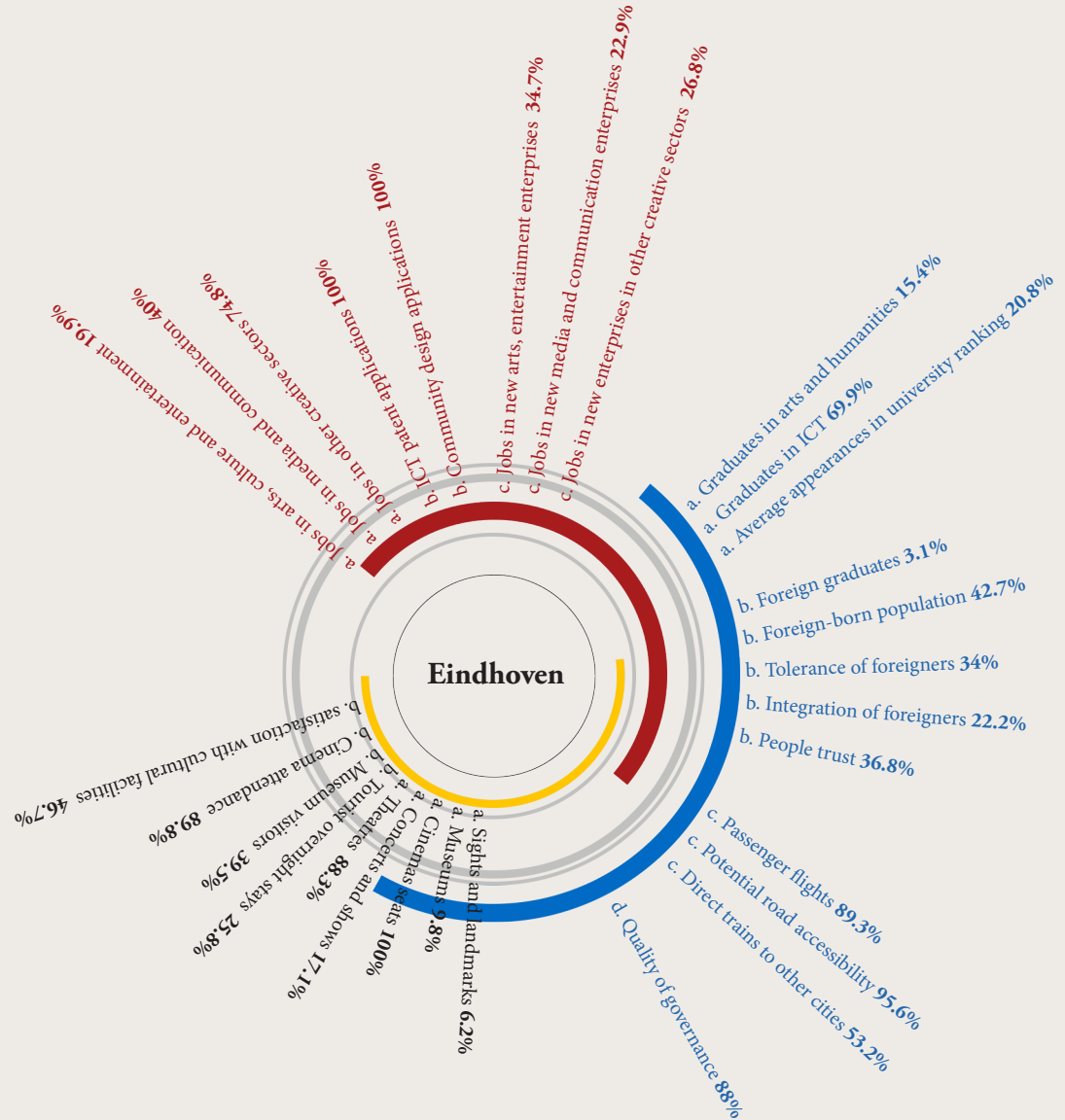
41.6%

a. Human capital and education

b. Openness, tolerance, trust

c. Accessibility

d. Quality of governance





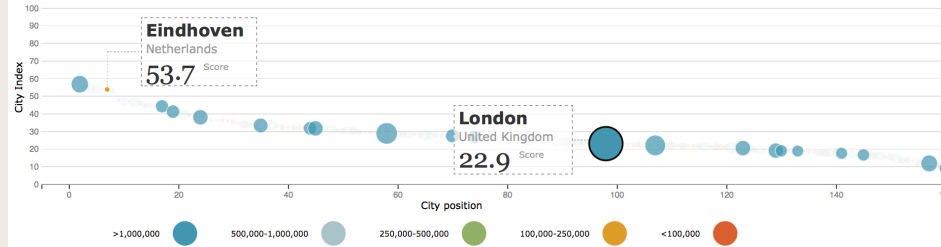
51.4416° N - 5.4697° E

# Eindhoven

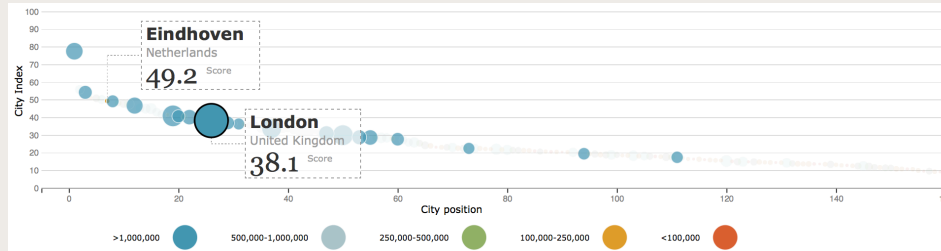
Eindhoven performance compared with the London one.

source: *The Culture and Creative City Monitor*

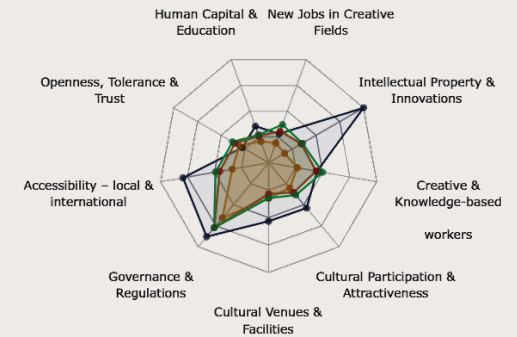
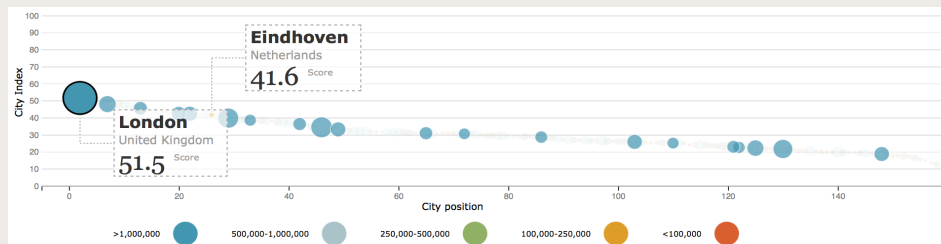
## 1. Culture Vibrancy



## 2. Creative Economy



## 3. Enabling Environment



# S.mall



44



45



46

# Eindhoven



47



48



49

## Sources of figures

1. **Pop Brixton**, London;

source: <https://www.tagvenue.com/blog/pop-brixton-the-cool-urban-space-at-the-heart-of-brixtons-revival/>, visited in April 2018

2. **Canopy Market**, King's Cross London;

source: <http://ilovemarkets.co.uk/listing/canopy-market-kings-cross/>, visited in April 2018

3. **Artworks Elephant**, Elephant and Castle London;

source: shot by the author in November 2017

4. **Pop Brixton**, London;

source: shot by the author in September 2017

5. **Gasholder n. 8**, King's Cross London;

source: P. Bishop, L. Williams, *Planning, politics and city making. A study case of King's Cross*, 2016, p. 186

6. **Central St. Martins**, Granary Square, King's Cross London;

source: P. Bishop, L. Williams, *Planning, politics and city making. A study case of King's Cross*, 2016, p. 182

7. **Central St. Martins**, Granary Square, King's Cross London;

source: shot by the author in January 2018

8. **Piano City**, Milano;

source: <https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2018/01/22/piano-city-milano-inizia-il-conto-alla-rovescia-sette-concerti-accompagnano-le-candidature-alla-prossima-edizione/4105035/>, visited in April 2018

9. **Piano City 2018**, Milano;

source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Kr0f4yCCww>, visited in April 2018

10. **Flower Garden**, Fuorisalone - Design Week 2016, Palazzo Turati Milano;

source: <https://gucki.it/art-design/design-designers/fuorisalone-2016-cosa-vedere-centro-e-zona-5vie/>, visited in April 2018

11. **Mercato Metropolitan**, Porta Genova Milano;

source: <https://zero.eu/luoghi/7763-mercato-metropolitano,milano/>, visited in April

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12. **Mercato Metropolitan**, Porta Genova Milano;

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13. **Fuorisalone**, Milano;

source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%22\\_12\\_Milan\\_Design\\_Week\\_\(Fuorisalone\)\\_Brera\\_district\\_08.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%22_12_Milan_Design_Week_(Fuorisalone)_Brera_district_08.JPG), visited in April 2018

14. **Place de la Republique**, March for the climate, Paris;

source: <http://www.eco-business.com/news/in-pictures-citizens-march-for-climate/>, visited in April 2018

15. **Place de la Republique**, Paris;

source: <https://www.archdaily.com/557185/preserving-a-place-for-protest-in-paris>, visited in September 2018

16. **Place de la Republique**, Paris;

source: <http://jmlwaterfeaturedesign.com/en/projects/place-de-la-republique>, visited in April 2018

17. **Jardin de Rue Rosier**, Paris;

source: <https://www.parisladouce.com/2016/11/paris-le-jardin-des-rosiers-joseph.html>, visited in April 2018

18. **Paris Plage**, Paris;

source: <http://joshkrajcik.us/metro-paris-plage.htm>, visited in April 2018

19. **Paris Plage**, Paris;

source: <http://www.hotel-paris-londres-eiffel.com/en/lete-a-paris-plage/>, visited in April 2018

20. **Superkilen**, BIG Architects and Superflex, Copenhagen;

source: <https://www.archdaily.com/286223/superkilen-topotek-1-big-architects-superflex>, visited in April 2018

21. **Sidewalk trampolines**, Copenhagen;

source: <http://www.mommyshorts.com/2016/07/family-itinerary-5-days-copenhagen.html>, visited in April 2018

22. **Papirøen**, Copenhagen;

source: <https://www.best-of-copenhagen.com/en/photo?name=copenhagen-street-food-papiroen-2>, visited in April 2018

23. **Superkilen**, BIG Architects and Superflex, Copenhagen;

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24. **Papiroen**, Copenhagen;

source: <http://www.tahinitravels.com/copenhagen-papiroen-food-market/>, visited in April 2018

25. **Papiroen**, Copenhagen;

source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Copenhagen\\_Street\\_Food\\_Papiroen.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Copenhagen_Street_Food_Papiroen.jpg), visited in April 2018

26. **Library at LX Factory**, Lisbon;

source: <http://harborandhill.com/blog/instagrammable-lisbon-part-ii>, visited in April 2018

27. **Hub creativo do Boato**, Lisbon;

source: <http://www.cm-lisboa.pt/noticias/detalhe/articulo-lo-primeiro-dia-do-novo-hub-criativo-de-lisboa>, visited in April 2018

28. **Hub creativo do Boato**, Lisbon;

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29. **LX Factory, Open spaces**, Lisbon;

source: <http://olasupertramp.com/hipsters-paradise-lx-factory-lisbon/>, visited in April 2018

30. **Library at LX Factory**, Lisbon;

source: <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/387450374173700159/>

31. **LX Factory**, Lisbon;

source: <https://suitcasemag.com/travel/explore/a-guide-to-lx-factory-lisbons-coolest-quarter/>

32. **Glasgow street art**, Graffiti, Glasgow;

source: shot by tha author in August 2017

33. **Glasgow street art**, Graffiti, Glasgow;

source: shot by tha author in August 2017

34. **Glasgow street art**, Graffiti, Glasgow;  
source: shot by the author in August 2017
35. **Old Fruit Market**, Glasgow;  
source: [http://www.johnwoodphotowork.com/dir/phtwk\\_gallery/ilan-matthias-andrew/](http://www.johnwoodphotowork.com/dir/phtwk_gallery/ilan-matthias-andrew/), visited in April 2018
36. **Old Fruit Market**, Glasgow;  
source: <https://www.glasgowconcerthalls.com/old-fruitmarket/Pages/default.aspx>, visited in April 2018
37. **Old Fruit Market**, Glasgow;  
source: <https://checkinblog.it/en/walking-tour-glasgow-music-scene-scotland/>, visited in April 2018
38. **Openair theatre**, Fringe Festival, Edinburgh;  
source: <https://www.the730review.co.uk/2017/08/19/week-two-round-edinburgh-festival-fringe-2017/>, visited in April 2018
39. **Book festival**, Edinburgh;  
source: <https://www.euansguide.com/edbookfest>, visited in April 2018
40. **Fringe Festival 2017**, Edinburgh;  
source: shot by the author in August 2017
41. **Fringe Festival 2017**, Edinburgh;  
source: shot by the author in August 2017
42. **Openair theatre**, Fringe Festival, Edinburgh;  
source: <http://www.scotlandnow.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/edinburgh-festival-fringe-2015-official-5822514>, visited in April 2018
43. **Book festival**, Edinburgh;  
source: <https://www.scottishreviewofbooks.org/free-content/edinburgh-international-book-festival-launches-2017-programme/>, visited in April 2018
44. **Strijp-S**, Creative industry, Eindhoven;  
source: <https://www.pinterest.com.au/pin/350295677249175870/>, visited in April 2018
45. **Strijp-S**, Creative industry, Eindhoven;  
source: <http://www.braaksma-roos.nl/project/machinekamer-strijp-s/>, visited in April

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46. **Strijp-S**, Creative industry, Eindhoven;

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47. **Strijp-S**, Creative industry, Eindhoven;

source: <https://www.holland.com/global/tourism/destinations/more-destinations/eindhoven/strijp-s-the-creative-city-in-eindhoven.htm>, visited in April 2018

48. **Strijp-S**, Creative industry, Eindhoven;

source: <http://2016.dds.nl/index.menu/venue>, visited in April 2018

49. **Concert at Strijp-S**, Creative industry, Eindhoven;

source: <https://www.npo3fm.nl/nieuws/3fm/362535-concertverslag-faithless-op-strijp-s>, visited in April 2018



## 2.2 London creative city.

The aim of the research is to study through an in-depth analysis of case studies the creative actions that are rooted in the contemporary cities from the beginning of the global financial crisis in 2008 until now, and investigate how the city has reacted to those actions, evaluating the differences and defining a comparison. The great contemporary city is defined as an emblematic object of study and field of research trials. Since time cities have been the centre of studies in the areas of economic growth, as fertile places of opportunity and welfare. As Jane Jacobs argued, the great cities are the main engine of strength and innovation, as home to a high diversity of talents and specialties: the diversity generated by the city offers the opportunity for people to live so close together and share different skills, habits, needs, cultures inherent in each of them (Jacobs, J. 1970). In this sense, the strength of the city is identified not only within their infrastructure and physical assets, but also, and especially, in the concentration of the talents and abilities of the people who live there, the so-called human capital (Glaeser, E . 2011).

*“Creative people need creative cities”*, in this way the geographer Ake Anderson argues his theory of the importance of the place within the creative processes, in fact, according to the same, the greatest thinkers, artists and writers of history were belonged to a city that attracted and stimulated the creative talent. In fact, cities provide for the construction of an inspiring and fertile environment for creativity, offering facilities, scenes, and ecosystems capable of attracting talent from outside, who are looking for a high-quality level of experiences, great openness, and tolerance towards diversity and high opportunity to express their abilities. And in this sense cities have always been the driving force for the development of economies based on culture and knowledge, contributing to be the hub of creativity and build an environment for the development and growth of creative practices related to innovation and knowledge.

London has historically been a fertile place concerning the creative industries: great centre of intellectual and cultural production has quickly become one of the largest cities in Europe attractor of artists and musicians. Nowadays London is considered one of the dominant city in the world economy and one of the key cities in the production of cultural goods (Lee and Drever, 2012; Pratt, 2006, 2009; Sunley et

al., 2008; Comunian , 2011), which is a fundamental part of the city economy: Freeman (2010) has estimated that in 2007 almost 400,000 persons were engaged in the creative industry in London (Lee and Drever, 2012).

The density of the city supports and promotes the exchange of knowledge and enables the transmission and sharing between individuals, furthermore, the city provides access to different institutions and cultural sites, such as galleries, museums, theatres that stimulate creative people to enter and establish in a cultural context of such turmoil.

The presence of many artistic and cultural institutions makes London an ideal place for the production of new ideas and thus a global hub of creativity. Linked to this and to the change in the economic value of culture and knowledge as a result of the global crisis, London is an excellent study and deepen development tool, being itself the subject, especially in certain parts, of radical urban changes as result of creative practices. In the final decades of the last century, London has witnessed regeneration and urban transformation processes as a result of artistic movements that have spread in some parts of the city. Attracted by the strong cultural and intellectual potential of the city, groups of artists have for over 40 years settled in cheap areas of the city as close to the centre, within which context each of them has developed and carried out their own creative talent. Through these spontaneous settlements, related to a need for exchange of knowledge and cultural incentives, which have taken hold of the deep changes in the economy, social and spaces of the city.

The artistic invasion in areas forgotten and/or undeveloped in the city led to the rebirth of the places and gave impetus to the development of support services and facilities, such as cafes, restaurants, shops. In this way areas such as Soho, Camden Town, Hackney, and Tower Hamlets have become the place of settlement of many large companies and start-up of national and international levels (Landry, 2001).

Companies which in turn attract and involve a large number of clients and collaborators from the outside, who are them self-established in the area by helping to ever new needs and requirements and thus to transformations. Many of these interventions are rooted in a spontaneous and uncontrolled manner, transforming the city without any means of control and modification program, but for some years, particularly after the GFC in 2008, this issue has become the subject of discussion not only within professional backgrounds, such as architecture and urban design but

Figure  
**Street art in the London East End**  
Village Underground  
source:  
shot by the author on May 2018

20

**Love**  
music

**hate**  
**Racism**

PSYCHATERACISM.COM  
SOCIETY AGAINST OLIGARCHY AND RACISM





also in administrative contexts and local government. This led to the development of urban transformation programs and plans that see cultural and creative activities as the centre and the goal of the process. In particular, creativity is increasingly becoming a central theme in the architectural and urban design debate of several architectural firms in the London East End, who develop creative regeneration projects in places underused or in a state of degradation, through bottom-up and participation processes. These processes have the ability to trigger multidisciplinary approaches and working not only on the spatial dimension of the place but also on the economic and social dimension. From this, it derives a great change in the architectural approach and of the role of the designer within the process, as it assumes in this context not only the task of planning and design but also, and in particular, to management and control.

The deeper root of these practices and creative regeneration of urban places makes London a perfect case study from which to understand and learn. Understand how these practices have sprung up in the city, through such actions, spontaneous or planned, has branched modification, what are the actors and the materials involved, as we outline the different dimensions of the process and especially how the city reacts to the changes.

Therefore, what are the areas most sensitive to change and more likely to embrace it, to understand what are the relationships between the creative process and geographical - economic - social environment? To build a strategic confrontation map that will be the basis for the establishment of different strategies for urban transformation practices that are based on the continuous cycle Action - Reaction - Re-Action is necessary.

Taking the City of London as a study and research tool will allow not only to understand how the creative process is taking root in a global city and according to what characteristics, methods, and types are developed, but also wants to be expedient in order to understand if there is the possibility to take the British example as an application model to be proposed in other contexts.

## 2.2.1 Tools and methodology of analysis

The methodology of analysis of the case studies aims, on one hand, to identify the reasons why the creative practices are taking place and are rooted within contemporary cities and, on the other, to understand the material and immaterial actions, the actors involved and finally the reactions that the creative process of transforming a place has on the image of the city or part of it. In this direction, first of all, it is necessary to locate the important field of action, or more precisely to choose the case studies.

Considering that the transformation occurs at the moment of a need, in this case, due to the crisis and the modification of the concept of value both economically and socially, the choice of case studies will be done not only through a mapping of creative identifiable actions within the City of London but also studying the close relationship between the emergence of these new practices and the dynamics of urban development of the geographical area in question, which will study the economic, political and government.

As it is known that there are of the peculiar characteristics of some places, related to the historical development, the succession of events, the presence of particular characteristics that make it more or less fertile the birth of creative practices of urban transformation. The definition, therefore, a comparative diagram between the historical evolution and the emergence of today's practices will identify what will be the aim of the research, firstly considering what kind of relationship exists between the creative act and the place where it takes place, from the point of view of history, geography, economy and town government.

The research faces the *spectrum* of the contemporary city whose opposite poles are identified in the *healthy city* and in the *declining city* and at the same time to identify the level of needs and the intensity of the intervention. "*Cities are an immense experimental laboratory*" (J. Jacobs, 1961), and very often it is very difficult the task of understanding their modifications; such as the change happens sometimes without us even noticing, without any kind of control, what happens is defined in a very short span of time and through actions entirely spontaneous and at some point it has happened, as in the multi-quoted by Jacobs North End neighbourhood of Boston or as well as Shoreditch in London. It is therefore of extreme importance from the

Figure

### **Yellow lines flower painter**

Banksy street art in Pollard Street, Bethnal Green.

source:

<https://qph.ec.quoracdn.net/>

visited on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018

methodological point of view the choice of the field of study in order to be a real survey as a research tool.

The identification of the field of study plays a key role from the methodological point of view since it is configured not only as a research background but also as a real survey instrument. In relation to this, it is considered as a field of action the London Borough of Hackney, which develops towards the northeast to an area stretching from the City to the Olympic Park Queen Elizabeth II, and are identified as case studies the Shoreditch districts, Dalston and Hackney Wick and Fish Island. These places have been and still are at the centre of the larger creative transformations in London, but it is clearly identified the different nature of the transformations occurred and in place; for this reason, along with their belonging to the same administrative district, it is very interesting to make an analysis that compares the economic, social and geographic aspects, and how they become crucial actors in the transformation process.

Building a timeline allows you to frame in the space-time relationship the economic, social and political conditions of the area underlined and to define what are the critical points of the process. In addition, it is necessary to build a map that identifies all creative existing activities within the field and identifying the predominant characteristics of the interventions which will be firstly mapped and then studied extensively through the construction of an analysis board. The sheets will be constructed to identify first three main categories: space and the actors involved; the intervention occurred/made; the effects that had on the intervention area.

In the first case, we will study the environment from the spatial point of view the nature of the place in question, if an open space or closed, what are the materials of which it is made, from the point of view of composition and functional but also social and economic.

Secondly, the place will be analysed from a design point of view, the types of intervention, their level of intensity and the magnitude of the change: through what actions the modification has occurred, such as organisation and control mechanisms were triggered in order to implement the process, what are the relationships that have been established between the sites and the actors, and finally what are the times of transformation, that relationship is triggered between temporary and permanent (P. Bishop, 2012).

Finally, the third category will study what feedback obtained and triggered the intervention on the action by the spatial change perspective: how the creative process has returned to the site a higher quality of space, the use of the space was increased reviving and reactivating disused areas-degradation? The reactions will be studied also as regards the social and economic aspect: the modification sparked and increased social interaction by establishing an atmosphere that promotes positive feelings and tolerance towards different (P. Sendra, 2015) and it has encouraged the creation of local economies.

The analysis of individual interventions will require the grouping of them in sub-systems that have similar characteristics, this operation will allow the identification and the definition of different but precise categories of reading and interpretation of the transformation.

The methodology of analysis of the case studies thus works on two parallel levels, which are sometimes intertwined in order to deepen the study: the first level is part of a global scale and consider the historical-political-economic relations of the geographical context allowing you to understand such places and because the creative transformation began in earnest; the second level belongs to a local level and analyses the nature of the transformation, by configuring the needs and effects.

The close relationship between the two levels of analysis will allow the establishment of a theoretical framework of knowledge and the application of the creative process. The three categories through which the creative modification process is expressed and through which the case studies will be analysed will then be explored in a theoretical way in the third part of the research.

The definition of these three categories and their theoretical study will allow at a later stage to verify the expected results, in the first place recalibrating and reworking the analysis of the study cases on the basis of the same categories, attributing to them an active component within the process, in order to define possible strategies of intervention through which attribute to the concept of creativity its operating and not only descriptive role in the modification.







## 2.3 The case study of London Borough of Hackney

The London Borough of Hackney is located on the Northern Eastend of the city and has four main centralities which are: Shoreditch, Dalston, Hackney Central and Hackney Wick<sup>1</sup>.

The London East End has a history of left socialist politics and particularly Hackney attracted and attracts a long number of young white people left-voting belonging to the ex-working class community as well as a high number of immigrants coming mainly from Turkey and Africa. The highlighted separation from the conservative West End has defined the Borough as a place with a very high level of radical actions and social deprivation<sup>2</sup>.

The revolutionary government and social conditions have created a strong sense of community in the area that has determined a big difference in terms of urban policy compared with other parts of London. The big transformation of the Borough started in 2010 with the public investment of extending the Overground Line to Stratford, placing a stop in Dalston Junction, Hackney Central and Hackney Wick.

The advent of the Overground has raised the quality of life in the Borough and placed the area in the market raising the value and the cost of land which is now comparable to central London. However, other planning attempts driven by the Global Authority were strongly criticised in most cases (Chapter 2.3.3, pp. 155-171), keeping a deep community-led governance. Indeed, the Council adopted a role of curator within the planning processes<sup>3</sup>, which is the reason why different new planning approaches have happened and happen in this area.

In this sense, all those reasons make the Borough of Hackney interesting from the research point of view and the perfect place where to study and understand how the creative process is driven and spread. Particularly, the research analyses Shoreditch, Hackney Wick and Dalston as case studies, trying to find similarities and differences within the approach leading and the process spread.

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Cllr G. Nicholson, cabinet member for Planning in the Hackney Council interviewed on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2017

<sup>2</sup>Peter Bishop during a conversation at the Bartlett School of Architecture on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2017

<sup>3</sup>Cllr G. Nicholson, cabinet member for Planning in the Hackney Council interviewed on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Figure  
**London Borough of Hackney**  
Boundaries of the Hackney Borough  
and case studies location

edited on July 2018



Hackney Wick

Dalston

Shoreditch



### 2.3.1 Shoreditch

#### Introduction

The first case study considered is the neighbourhood of Shoreditch. It is one of the central London current areas, as well as headquarters of the nightlife and radical chic of the city. Historically, however, it was a working-class industrial suburb of the East End that suffering a high level of deprivation, as well as being productive district and work was also considered one of the most down-at-heel districts in London. With the crisis in the manufacturing sector which struck Britain in the late 60's causing a gradual and radical abandonment of industrial areas and consequently an increase in the availability of space, Shoreditch has seen a new re-birth. We are witnessing a gradual development of processes that initially occurred with occupancy of the left empty warehouse and industries spaces, but which are ultimately proven true regeneration processes of an urban degraded tissue.

This chapter considers the area in question as an emblematic case study aimed at the measures that have spread and have helped make the place one of the most important creative clusters of the city, and one of the most historic. The roots of his change in contemporary history, as well as strategic geographic location relative to the main areas of economic life of the city, laid the ideal conditions for the rapid and solid transformation in social, economic and spatial fields.

The analysis will consider two main temporal phases comparing them, by understanding the relationships and the contributions that each has left for the next development. Firstly, it will consider the first phase of regeneration following the industrial crisis, which will see the settlement in the groups of local and international contemporary artists. The process triggered by the artists from the early years of the 70's has put the basis for the second phase of transformation occurred after the global financial crisis of 2008, which gave the new Shoreditch Tech City face. In this timeframe of 50 years, the change is never ceased but has always been in continuous development and transformation starting from the economic and social conditions, until reaching the shape and the use of urban spaces.

The goal, in the study of this area of the city, is not only to understand the form of transformation and their roots in the urban space and in the historical time but

also to understand, comprehend and interpret the conditions that made possible the transformation it's necessary; the actors who took part, managed and implemented the transformation; in what way and through what actions it has been developed; what are the results on the economic, social and above all the space of the urban context.

For defining intervention strategies that act on the transformation of the urban areas of the contemporary city, analysing the transformation of the neighbourhood of Shoreditch, which local creative transformation, it is essential.

### Artist's movement

The South Shoreditch neighbourhood is geographically located in the southern part of the London Borough of Hackney, bordering the west London Borough of Islington, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets to the east and the Corporation of London to the south. Its location near to the City makes Shoreditch a unique and diverse area, with a high potential for development and economic growth. The strategic position, in fact, offers high regeneration opportunities, providing new workplaces and residences for the local population (Local Development Framework, 2006). What once was considered the industrial suburbs of London, site of the urban and social decay in recent times has become the centre of opportunities. And it was its low economic value history together with its geographical location to make the Shoreditch fertile place for cultural and creative urban conditions change.

Shoreditch was a whole economic industrial district of London in the 19th century, characterised by numerous industrial buildings, workshops, and warehouses. The place mainly textile and tailoring production made the district one of the most significant sites around the East End.

The manufacturing industry collapse that hit London in the 70's and 80's caused a deep break in the economy of the city: between 1971 and 1975 the 19% of jobs in the manufacturing field disappeared and so on for subsequent years; till in 1989 only the 12% of workers were employed in the sector (Thornly, A., 1992, pp. 21-22).

The shift in the economic value of the industrial good to the financial well has led to a significant modification of the urban tissue of the city, especially in the East End. Most industries closed and most of the workspaces were abandoned in favor of building a new business district located in the City, near the Bank of England. The building of the towers would have housed the world's largest companies in central London

Figure  
**Brick Lane Sunday Market 1985**  
source:  
<https://i.guim.co.uk/img/media/>  
visited on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018

grew in proportion to the abandonment of factories, warehouses, and workspaces in the eastern suburbs, leaving the whole area in a state of decay and neglect. The abandonment of warehouses and small industries in the Shoreditch made available not only cheap accommodation but a large number of spaces for working. These conditions have attracted the interest of emerging artists, local but also from the rest of Europe, making the area one of the artistic centres of the 90's (Harris, A., 2012, p. 229). The spaces abandoned by the industrial crisis were perfect inspirational spaces for the new forms of art as well as painting and sculpture to installations, and also the close proximity to central London has promoted a significant flux of visual artists and creative people in the area.

The first artistic movements were established as early as the late 80's through the works of independent artists from the local and international scene of pop-up movement, but since the early 90's a large number of artists from the Royal College of Art and Goldsmiths College has settled in the area. The location of Shoreditch close to the City and the *healthy* part of London as well as the cheaper cost of rents caused by the neglected state of the abandoned warehouses are the reasons why artists have settled in the neighbourhood so fast. In this sense, within a few years, Shoreditch became a creative cluster with a strong social network and support the artistic community.

The artistic settlement in the area of Shoreditch gave rise to a profound modification of the urban assets and of the image of this part of the city: from "squashed" and degraded district to be changed, at that time, a place with a high commercial and residential value. There were several factors to foster the growth of this new creative district in Shoreditch: spatial and formal conformation of warehouses located in the triangle between Old Street, Great Eastern Street, and Shoreditch High Street called it a perfect setting for the new creative background, ensuring compactness and identity. Unlike other places in the London art scene, the Shoreditch cluster has taken on a big socio-spatial identity force characterising itself as a new and consistent alternative. This has radically changed the image of the neighbourhood that has begun to rebuild those years, having seen the birth of new forms of post-industrial urban economy (Harris, A., 2012, p. 233).

The establishment and the rise of these artistic and creative movements have played a dominant role in the transformation of the entire area that in a short time has become a district heavily gentrified in terms of price and profile. The socio-cultural

Figure  
**The Silicon Roundabout**  
Old Street, London

source:  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/content/dam/technology/>  
visited on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018

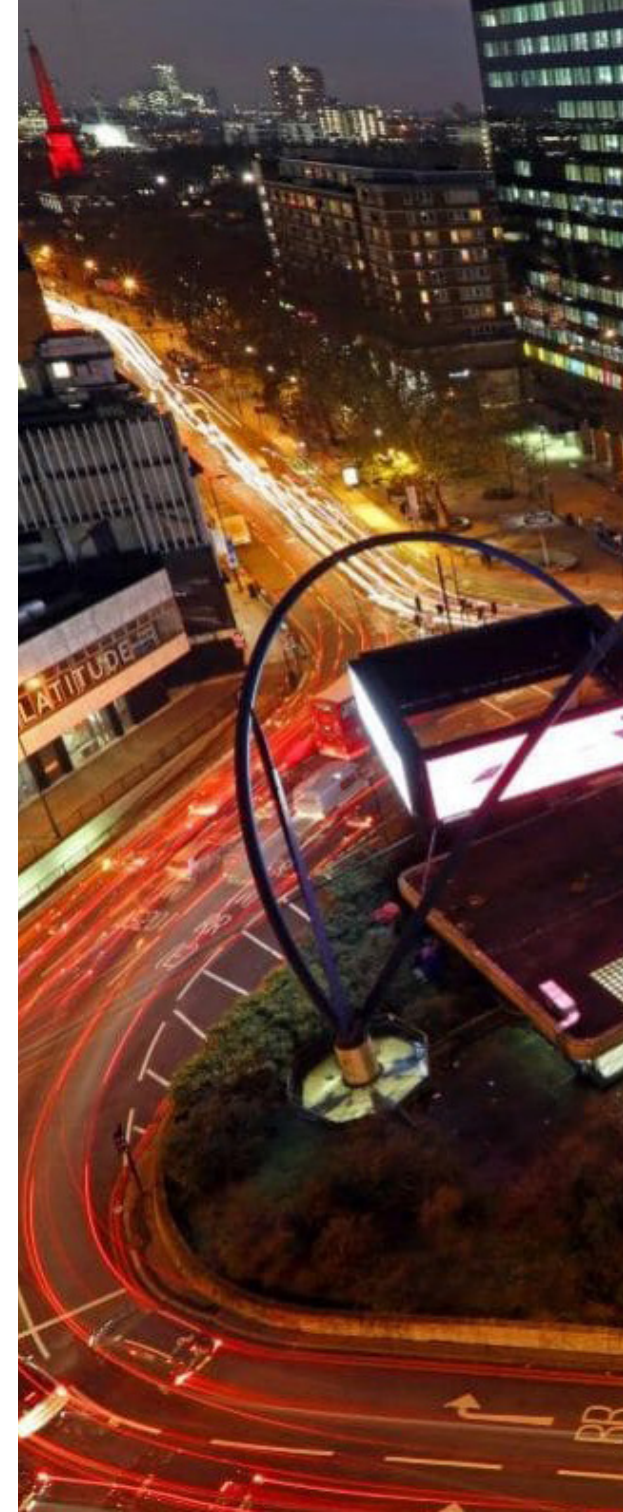
movements created by the cluster of artists have produced a development of the art commercial production (Hutton, T., 2008, p. 107), giving to the area of Hoxton Square a new economic value.

The new cultural capital in London in post-industrial growth has attracted designers, new media companies, critics and art collectors, who appeared in the area attracted by its new “radical chic” image and the market that it followed. Bars, restaurants, clubs, shops were opened to serve the new residents but also the more frequent visitors, reactivating the one that only ten years earlier was considered one of the most deprived areas of London.

This new cultural landscape developed by the artists created the opportunity for the area to rise economically giving the way to a continuous reconstruction and regeneration process. The settle in the design sector in the area of Shoreditch is considered a logical continuation of the artistic trajectory that has taken place in previous years. As part of the cultural economy of the city, the design sector has found widespread space in that area whose sense of artistic community and the favourable location represented a wide proliferation resource. The fit of design in the economic and commercial market also contributed to the competitive growth of urban areas, encouraging the development of more productive and complementary activities. This provided more and more questions and turnout on the part of the creative class, making the area one of the most sought and required places for the rise of new forms of artistic production.

### The digital revolution

The years in between of the two centuries, marked by the so-called technological revolution and the spread of the Internet, have seen the introduction into the market of new sectors related to new technologies, which have led to new forms of competition within the area. This event has kicked off at a new phase of change of urban space: the conversion and adaptability of the former industrial areas have brought a high economic interest from real estate agents, helping the unending gentrification in the urban area. From the reconfiguration of the spaces of the old industries, warehouses, and laboratories it has achieved a profound re-physical and social stratification of the whole neighbourhood, proposing the development of increasingly high housing and complementary activities and services.



The spatial and social diversity has contributed to the development of diversified areas of work, residence and also recreational. The use of public space as a place for recreation and for the exchange of knowledge has provided the conditions to give to Hoxton Square and the streets adjacent spaces of active business and consumption. In this sense, Shoreditch is an excellent example of how the reuse of industrial spaces encourage the development of creative industries and of an economy based on culture and innovation.

The diversity of the productive landscape of inner London has led to the development of a new economic model based on dependency and competition of urban spaces that see an overlapping and layering of production space, retail space, and consumption, public spaces, and homes.

The technological revolution has brought the further crisis of the productive sector, which he entrusted to the economic value of media products, innovative ideas, and technology supplied by digital work. From the first point of view it may appear this could lead to a new phase of decline, as that one happened during the 60s, however, the reality proves that this event was kicked off instead to further urban modification process.

The multi-layer landscape that was created in the Old Street area, has made the place the best environment for the digital industry growth. The emerging digital media industries are wont to be placed in the form of clusters in certain urban locations: the dynamics that are set up in certain urban areas are closely linked to the organisation and production processes (Martins, J., 2014, p. 127). The production process of the new economic form, in fact, constitute the different phases of the work, some strictly formal and active, others characterised by complementary activities, such as socialising and exchange of ideas, which contribute to building a network of collateral relations. The following work dimension has profoundly changed the nature of the working spaces, necessitating the creation of new spaces dedicated to complementary integrative activities.

The place of production is no longer identified in a single space but is configured as an extended space which also includes public and semi-public spaces. These spaces, which are identified in cafes, restaurants, libraries, areas of co-working, squares, markets, temporary shops, etc., play a crucial role as complementary places in the main workspace and their use is occasional and associated with particular activities.

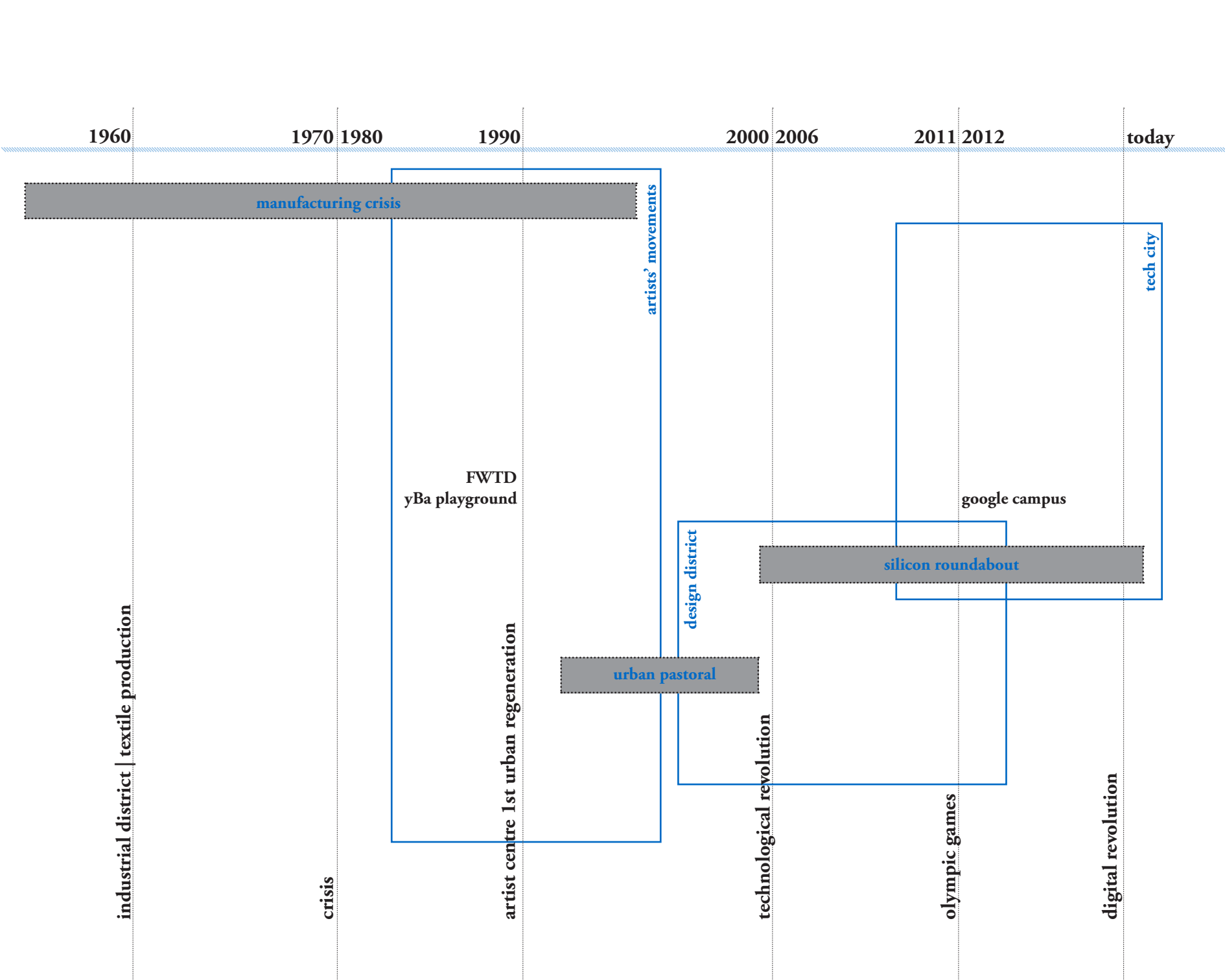
Figure

**Shoreditch time line**

The timeline showed the main events happened in Shoreditch between the crisis of the manufacture in the end of the '60s until nowadays.

edited on July 2017





1960

1970 1980

1990

2000 2006

2011 2012

today

manufacturing crisis

artists' movements

FWTD  
yBa playground

artist centre 1st urban regeneration

urban pastoral

design district

technological revolution

silicon roundabout

google campus

olympic games

tech city

digital revolution

industrial district | textile production

crisis



Figure 2



Figure 3

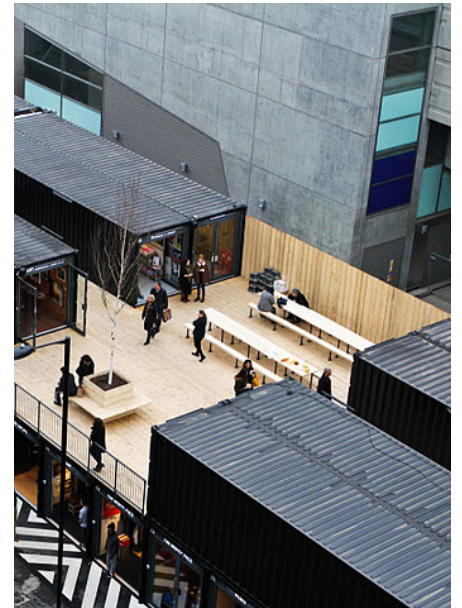


Figure 4

The increasingly innovative technological developments have made the work belongs to digital industries does not require particular physical conformations of the working space, such as access to the data and the production is closely linked to mobile devices. For this reason, the new digital industries are often located in private homes or in places that share other uses of space.

Therefore, it is important the role of complementary places which are often more appropriate for all activities that include the social aspect and the promotion of the product and the meeting with other individuals both informative reasons and for easy exchange of knowledge. It follows that whole portions of the urban fabric, both opened and closed spaces, from public spaces to private ones, become the stage and the stage of the new productive class.

The structure that had taken Shoreditch in previous transformations constitutes a peculiar and appropriate characteristic to the dislocation of the digital workspaces, making the district a perfect site for the installation of the new technology industries. The progressive settlement in the area of startups and new media industries has once again changed the image of the neighbourhood that Matt Biddulph in 2008 described with the name of “Silicon Roundabout” (Doctorow, C., 2014) and which was subsequently appointed Tech City.

## Role of designers

### *Box Park*

Box Park, opened in 2011, has been developed on an idea by Roger Wade, and is identified as the first pop-up mall in the world. Located on Bethnal Green Road close to Shoreditch High Street and near to the overground station of Shoreditch High Street, Box Park is one of the first interventions on urban space that returns a model applicable even within different contexts. Designed for the opening of the Olympic Games of 2012, the idea of Wade was to give to makers and start-uppers a cluster for the dissemination and distribution of ideas that would attract the highest number of users (Kivlehan, N.P., 2013, p. 17). At the same time integrate into the neighbourhood a recognisable place for leisure and meeting within the changing city. Structurally, it is formed by a 40 sq container block which define two functional levels. On the street level containers house temporary commercial activities and instead upstairs distribute a series of public spaces, clubs and cafes. The concept

Figure 1

### **Box Park Shoreditch**

2nd level

source:

<https://www.appearhere.co.uk/>

visited on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Figure 2

### **Box Park Shoreditch**

street section

source:

<http://4.bp.blogspot.com/>

visited on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Figure 3

### **Box Park Shoreditch**

view from the sky - winter time

source:

<https://sicklysundae.files.wordpress.com/>

visited on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Figure 4

### **Box Park Shoreditch**

view from the sky - summer time

source:

<https://thespaces.com/wp-content/uploads/>

visited on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Facing page

### **Box Park Shoreditch**

source:

<https://www.fashercise.com/wp-content/uploads/>

visited on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018



11

TRENDSETUK

10

WANDERING MINDS

09

JEALOUS

08

POP-UP STORE

E

JEALOUS

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# BOXPARK

BS

BOXPARK LONDON

07

TUSCH & EGON

06

HYPE.

05

YRSTORE

YRSTORE





Figure 1

**Village Underground**

Working space inside the carriage

source:

<http://www.villageunderground.co.uk/about/>  
visited on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Figure 2

**Village Underground**

Carriages set-up

source:

<http://www.villageunderground.co.uk/about/>  
visited on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Figure 3

**Village Underground**

Carriages set-up

source:

<http://www.villageunderground.co.uk/about/>  
visited on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Figure 1

**Village Underground**

View from the sky

source:

<http://www.villageunderground.co.uk/about/>  
visited on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2018

is identified by merging the idea of street food and placement of local and global brands in one place that takes on its own identity, establishing itself not only as a place for the meeting, but also ensuring the development of local economies by providing them an iconic place in which to express themselves.

The containers are thought as low-cost / low-risk units and are assembled to create a complete pop-up high street (Bishop, P. and Williams, L., 2012, p. 61). One of the characteristic of this project is the relationship between temporary and permanence with which it has been thought. Initially it was started as a pilot project that would have to stay in the area just to the year of the Olympics, but has been maintained for many years, both for the general level of feedback that he had to the urbanity of the area, both for issues cost return.

Today it is already installed and does not seem to have an “expiring date”. But what makes it interesting is the organisation and management of the rhythms of its times: the permanence of the container allows a high level of temporariness of its uses, ensuring an always new and differentiated appearance. Pop-ups are defining the chance to test the market and promote emerging talents into the local economy (Bishop, P., and Williams, L., 2012, p. 60).

The capsules that compose it can be rented by the brand on temporary contracts from one month to one year, this guarantees a fast turnover of commercial activities and a high possibility for local economies to express themselves and grow. At the same time it returns to the city an increasingly new and differentiated alternative.

*Village Underground*

Village Underground, instead of Box Park, was created for a different need: the creation of a place where creative people could express, produce and share their own ideas. The project, that starts in 2006, has had the aim to give back to the creative class East End a workplace, to meet people and to exchange knowledge and to the entire city a recreational area where listen to music and have a drink with friends.

The project, created by local creative organisation, is also ecologically thought: the idea is to reactivate an existing space through reuse and conversion of items no longer in use, like the old trains of the now disused subway, buses no longer used and industrial containers.

In this sense, the distribution of space is designed in a heterogeneous, dividing the



Figure 2



Figure 3



centre of creative production within the old trains of the Jubilee line, semi-public and meeting places in the container and an open public space which hosts events and concerts. Inside of enclosed spaces creative platforms are placed where they work side by side, sharing spaces and ideas, over thirty artists including filmmakers, architects, play-writers, photographers, producers and start-uppers.

The sharing of space and the spirit of creative community encourages and stimulates the development and exchange of ideas prompting the individual to concentrate on the production of exactly what want to achieve. Furthermore, this type of trim offers the community the establishment of a network of contacts and partnerships useful for the development of its business.

Village Underground in addition to providing space for rent in the long-standing creative company, also has rentable space even for a few hours, such as meeting rooms for meetings and special occasions. In this sense, Village Underground is one of those places for complementary creative people based elsewhere in the city. Thus the internal creative community opens to the outside ensuring a continuous flow and maintaining openness towards new ideas and productions.

## Discussion

The economic, social and spatial transformation that is deeply rooted in this portion of the city very quickly resulted in a regenerative process with loose planning control. For this reason, we can say that “Shoreditch has happened” and appears to be an emblematic example of how creative peculiarity has the driving force for the transformation of urban spaces. In this sense, and on the basis of analyses carried out on the Shoreditch district it is necessary to inquire about how these processes have actually taken hold and how the architect and the planner take part in the process.

In this case the reactivation process and regeneration of the area it is triggered by spontaneous actions caused by a portion of the population: the artists that are spontaneously settled in a place made available.

The creative and economic needs of this particular social class were the impetus to the definition of the new settlement, whose physical spaces were the perfect answer to the needs. The re-birth of Shoreditch happens without the introduction by management and practitioners of recovery plans, only several years after the beginning of the process, by which time the area had been shown to have a large economic value, were

Figure

### **Village Underground**

View from the outside, the two old tube carriages which are now hosting the co-working space.

source:

Bishop, P., Willians, L., (2012), “The Temporary City”, p. 173



implemented plans for the settlement check. Control which was mainly driven by the interest of real estate agents and developers and not by urban planning needs.

The regenerative action is totally entrusted to the society, whose need to express their creativity and share it with other individuals is expressed as a driving force for transformation. The economic power has created a change in social values, the changed society is defined as the active energy for the modification of the spaces. Urban areas that were designed to perform a specific function, and logically destined to die at the moment when it stops to exist, are instead to be able to adapt and accommodate other and diverse uses.

The transformation of the neighbourhood has occurred in this case through different phases. Each of them has developed over time in a seemingly autonomous way: the speed of the world economy and the capital value change has characterised every single process of urban transformation, which found the identity as a single artistic movement or the latest Tech City. Each of these processes individually analysed can be defined as a cycle which is operated through a crisis, both deep or weak, of the economy from which new social needs arise that modify the use of city spaces, and closes with the definition of a new urban order. But if momentarily we turn away eyes from the individual process and we focus on the entire development process as the sum of all the individual steps we can clearly understand that the first sets the conditions necessary for the development of the second and it is the base, so the second to the third and so on. For this reason, we can say that the transformation never stops to exist and to recur but it is a process that is constituted of multiple individual processes which generate different scenarios.

We are therefore in front of a process that is diverse and interdisciplinary: the actors who take part are heterogeneous and cannot be categorised into one group of people belonging to a specific category. What is common to the different figures that come into play is the creative potential, and the need to express it, that is specified in a particular productive sector but which as a whole is multidisciplinary. In this sense it is not possible to rely on a small group of practitioners the reactivation of Shoreditch district, rather a large number of characters does not belong in any way to architecture and urban planning. That's why it is logical to ask: what is and what was the role of the architect and the planner in the transformation of this East End London area? To answer this question one must focus on two main aspects. First, by



analysing the development of the process, visible so far, it is not possible to identify a dominant role on the part of the urban designer to ensure the regeneration of the urban fabric. Surely, it is crucial the project restore and renovate the old and derelict industrial buildings, projects that surely contributed to the transformation, but that cannot be thought of as urban regeneration programs. The real transformation in the case of Shoreditch is coming from though.

The second aspect concerns the present and the future of the place, whether it was able to regenerate without the need for a specialised plan might assume that the process can continue in an unchanged forever. In reality, we are not sure about that and it is precisely for this reason that it is necessary to find space for professionals within these seemingly independent processes. Move the point of view means to be able to build applications and programmatic strategies that are able to move away from the traditional urban design approach that over-imposes a form-functional masterplan of enormous size and long run times. The case of Shoreditch leads to the realisation that the urban fabric is able to regenerate and reactivate radically without necessarily developing strong intensity transformative tools. The process develops from the bottom up, by way of minimum and weak actions, often unaware. In such a context the imposition from above of a project could result in loss of balance, rather what is missing and what is needed is the control and management of change.

The practitioner should be called to direct the transformation process in the spaces and times, checking the appropriateness of the bottom-up actions in a development context and urban regeneration. By analysing and studying the effects they have on the site, identifying what is working and what needs to be redirected. Figure out what is missing and develop maintenance and integration plans in order to establish a solid base to be able to respond to subsequent amendments.

The neighbourhood of Shoreditch sets the stage for a thought oriented to the construction of an urban transformation strategic model that focuses on the process creativity as a real modification tool and call the practitioner to assume a coordinating role and direction in order that it is controlled.

Figure

### **Village Underground**

Theatre and exhibition space during an event.

source:

<https://hirespace.imgix.net/spaces/>

visited on 9th February 2018



## 2.3.2 Hackney Wick and Fish Island

### Introduction

The object of this chapter will be the Hackney Wick neighbourhood, historically located beyond the boundaries of the city and characterised by a degraded industrial landscape, is today considered a place of opportunity. The area was the background of London's labour scene, defining itself as the place of work, featuring industrial buildings, warehouses, and workshops, as well as the home of London working class. The advent of the 2012 Olympic Games marked a deep break in the area, entrusting it with a high potential for transformation and development possibilities. At the same time, the project of the Olympic park has totally changed the urban layout of the district, which has seen diverse transformations.

Hackney Wick is considered, in this case, as a study case, by analysing the transformations which have been objected to, especially considering the relationship between spontaneous modification and controlled planning.

The Hackney Wick district is located at the East End of London Borough of Hackney and geographically belongs to the Lower Lea Valley. It is defined as an urban island defined by the water borders of Hackney Cut Navigation to the East and of the Hertford Union Canal to the South, and by the infrastructures borders of the North London Railway to the West and of the East way to the North. The neighbourhood has always been considered a border area at the edge of the city. Its location has characterised the site as an industrial area and a labour's neighbourhood (Davis, J., 2016, p. 426), a characteristic that it maintained until the early 21st century. The 2012 London Olympic Games event has led to a deep break in the development dynamics of the area.

Assuming the Olympic Games event as a time cornerstone, the analysis of the conditions will take into account two periods of time: before and after the event.

First, the analysis will take into consideration the transformations that took place in the area over time between the 60's manufacturing crisis and London's candidature as the venue for Olympic competitions.

Second, it will be analysed the changes that have taken place since the end of the

Figure  
**Arstist's studio**  
Hackney Wick  
source:

*<http://content.presspage.com/>*  
visited on 10th February 2018

games. Both time periods are characterised by the need to cope with the consequences of this particular event. Factory closure left the East End area in a state of total abandonment and consequent degradation, which led the municipality to develop regeneration and reuse plans.

The attempt to regenerate has led to the establishment of groups of artists who, taking advantage of the availability of space, have triggered a series of spontaneous actions to reactivate abandoned places. London's nomination as the 2012 Olympic headquarter has returned to the east edge of the city the real opportunity of transformation. The construction of the park, however, has mainly separated the Hackney Wick area, making it necessary a resulting controlled planning to reconnect the neighbourhood to the rest of the city.

Hackney Wick has been considered with the goal of understanding the relationship between spontaneous action and planned action within the creative transformation of places. In this case, unlike its "opposite" Shoreditch, the process does not only rely on spontaneous actions, but it also takes control tools for transformation. For this reason, the purpose of the study is to understand how the continuous interaction between weak and uncontrolled actions and heavily planned actions plays a determining role in the process.

Assuming case studies as a tool for understanding the regenerative process, the ultimate goal is to understand how designers are involved in the transformation. The aim is to set up intervention methods which see urban designers as an element of moderator between spontaneous and controlled.

#### Conditions for change - pre-Olympics phase

From the second half of the 1800s, Hackney Wick became part of London's boundaries as an urban centre, defining itself as part of the city's industrial expansion (Davis, J., 2016, p.428). In few years, the neighbourhood has become an attractive place for industrial innovation and it has defined itself as a real production district. Its geographic location has favoured the development of the industry, located on a crossroads of the road and navigable infrastructures.

The industrial development has transformed in a short time the newly-born industrial neighbourhood into an unhealthy and polluted place, one of the poorest and most degraded in the city. The environmental issue has led the administration's attention





Figure 1

Figure 1  
**Street Art**  
Hackney Wick  
source:

<https://dispatchesfrom2012.files.wordpress.com/>  
visited on 10th February 2018

Figure 2  
**Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park**  
Drawing  
source:

LLDC, *A walk around Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park*,  
(2012), p. 57

to health and well-being, which has put Hackney Wick urban area at the centre of the debate on drafting the neighbourhood redevelopment plan.

Despite management's attention to local environmental conditions, Hackney Wick has maintained a high state of degradation throughout the 20th century. The first recovery plan dates back to 1965, which includes the post-war reconstruction program of the entire London East End, which was largely destroyed by the world conflict. The war devastation and the crisis in the manufacturing industry caused the abandonment of most of Hackney Wick's industrial spaces, lowering its conditions even further. During the last years of the 20th century, the London administration has put the area of Hackney Wick at the centre of the debate on the definition of a recovery plan, with the development of several proposals. Hackney Wick was considered a neighbourhood with a high potential for development and opportunity area, but lack of public transport has confirmed its state of the industrial district until recent years (Davis, J., 2016, p. 446).

In the early 2000s, the abandoned industrial structures have attracted the attention of artist communities to the search for cheap places to settle and develop their works. In 2009, the artistic community of Hackney Wick was considered to be the largest in Europe, counting over 320 labs according to an analysis developed by the MUF architecture practice (Davis, J., 2016, p. 447). The artistic invasion has started a series of reconstruction and regeneration processes in the area: renovations and re-use of spaces have been implemented by the community in an autonomous and in many cases not governed ways. The tacit permission of landowners has given way to the development by the artistic community of bottom-up processes to re-activate the area that has returned the life to the site making it interesting even outside.

What differentiates the artistic community of Hackney Wick from others in Europe, is precisely the reorganisation of the form of industrial blocks settlement. The abandoned places of industrial production are, in fact, re-configured in all their spaces in order to build areas of collective employment: different types of shared studios and places for sharing (Brown, R., 2013, p.8). The spatial configuration of storage blocks was the ideal human scale for the development of new "creative factories" (Brown, R., 2013), as well as the basis for the development and the reactivation of the entire area. In this sense, the transformation consists of three main aspects: the first one, related to the urban scale, takes into consideration the entire block of warehouses;

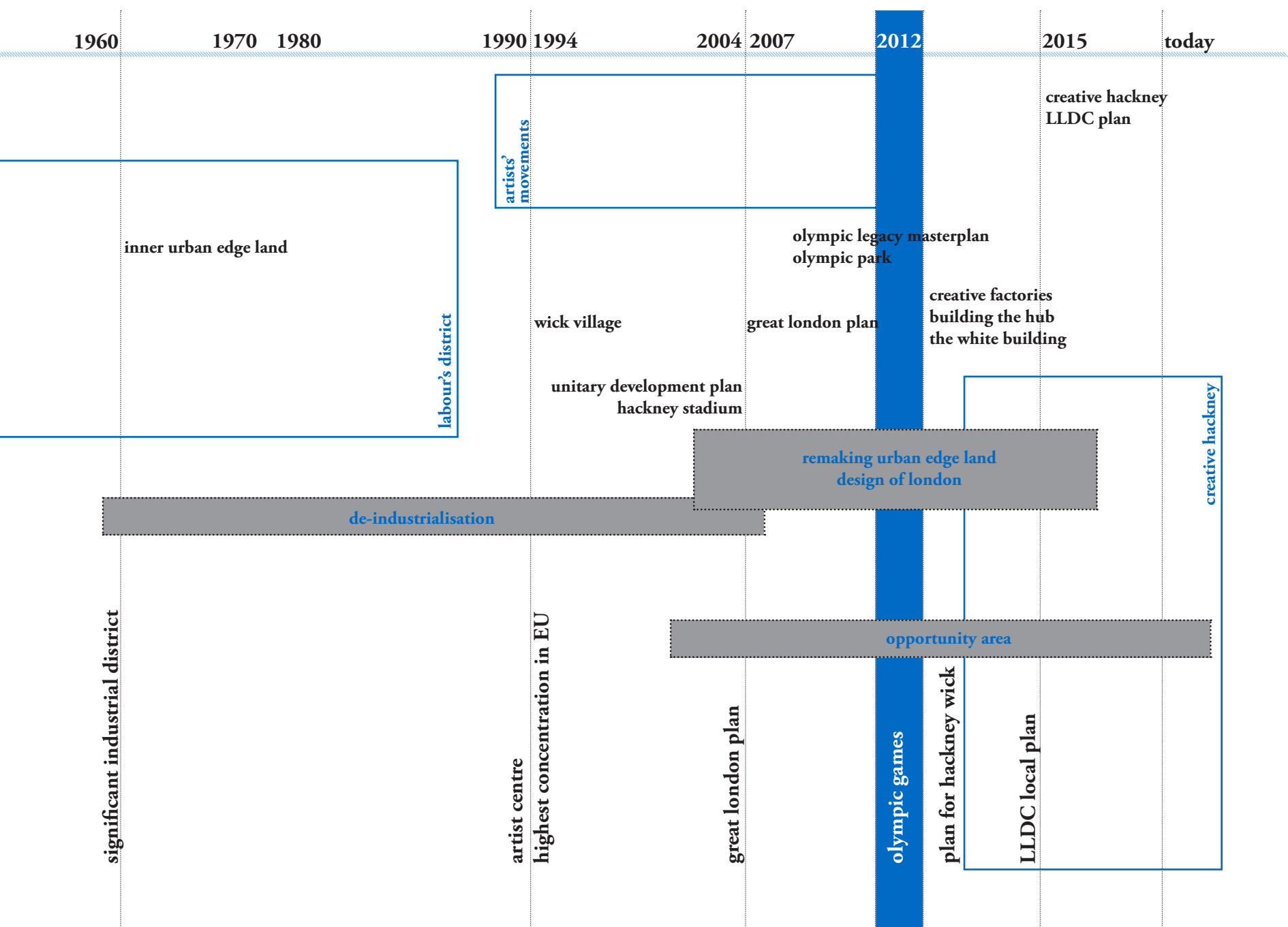
the second concerns the open spaces that assume both a distribution role and a shared space; the third, which refers to the architectural and typological scale, relating to individual housing units.

The scale of the industrial block has the features to accommodate a large number of studios and at the same time guaranteeing the cozy and intimate character of the inner courtyards. These aspects support the spirit of community and promote the functional mix between public and semi-public as well as between trade, work, and residence.

The open spaces placed between the different stores of each block, providing spaces and taking up a distribution role and constitute a space dedicated to temporary functions as well. Temporary functions such as events, and sharing. The existence and the use of these spaces by the community are very important in the logic of creative factories, as they are the place of sharing and exchange of ideas, encouraging the sense of conviviality and interaction (Brown, R. , 2013, p. 7). The scalar proportions of these spaces, which refer to the human dimension, favour the occupation of space itself. Finally, the studio units are the real space of artistic production. These spaces, made from the divisions of large industrial warehouses, are designed to meet the needs of every single artist or group of artists. In most cases, these are flexible spaces with the possibility of future modification. Some units are simply dedicated to working, in other cases, there is a coexistence of places for work and living. In most cases, the rebuilding and the reorganisation of these spaces have been self-developed by the inhabitants themselves.

The transformation of warehouses into creative factories has become a crucial turning point in the urban condition of the neighbourhood, which has witnessed a rebirth and a reactivation. However, the process of modification has had a fragile and precarious characterisation: the absence of a regeneration plan has in most cases meant that adapting spaces to the artists' needs was carried out by the artists themselves, both in design and economic terms. This scope that links social aspects to spatial aspects leads to the emergence of self-regenerative capacity within the spaces of the city and the communities in which they live. The potential that places of desolation and degradation take in terms of transformative force raises the question of how much an over-imposed plan may be less effective.





1960

1970 1980

1990 1994

2004 2007

2012

2015

today

inner urban edge land

labour's district

artists' movements

wick village

unitary development plan  
hackney stadium

great london plan

olympic legacy masterplan  
olympic park

creative factories  
building the hub  
the white building

remaking urban edge land  
design of london

de-industrialisation

opportunity area

significant industrial district

artist centre

highest concentration in EU

great london plan

olympic games

plan for hackney wick

LLDC local plan

creative hackney  
LLDC plan

creative hackney



## From the nomination to post-Olympics

The 2004 London Plan considers the entire metropolitan area East End an “Opportunity Area”. The dizzying rise of the urban population in the first two-thousand years has focused attention on the need to develop residential areas within urban boundaries. The need for greater space makes all the East End industrial areas a potential for use. The real opportunity is actually identifying the possibility of recovering all those abandoned industrial areas, reconfiguring them into new neighbourhoods for the ever-growing population.

Moreover, the location of the Olympic Park near the Lea Valley system is initially seen as an opportunity to define a new centre at the East End of the city. In the years between 2005 and 2007, the entire area is entrusted to the London Development Agency (LDA) for land reclamation work (Davis, J., 2016, p. 447).

The Olympic Park project obviously involved the Boroughs adjacent to the area, Hackney Wick underwent particular modifications. The park’s boundaries have divided the neighbourhood into two parts, however without incorporating it into the process of transformation. In this sense, the Olympic Park project, seen as an opportunity for the entire area, was actually seen as a major breakthrough within a transformational process that was previously initiated. The construction of the park has sparked many criticisms within the artistic community that had settled in the area, which in many cases responded through provocative demonstrations, a particular example is the 24-h Olympic State (Morero-Guillamon, I., 2014, p. 370). Surveillance events, documentaries on the transformation of Hackney Wick landscape during the construction of park megastructures, are just a few examples of how the project had caused a strong change in the environment of the artistic community that lived next to it. In a short time, many groups have left the area, moving somewhere else.

The breakdown caused by the construction of the Olympic Park has not only shaped itself from the social point of view but also and above all from the space sphere. The park, in fact, marks the very precise boundaries between what is included in the transformation and what remains of it, showing an evident difference between ‘regenerated’ and ‘abandoned’. In the years 2010 and 2011, the areas adjacent to the boundaries of the park became the interest of the Design for London project, which has developed various urban regeneration interventions through the construction of

Figure

### **Hackney Wick time line**

The timeline showed the main events happened in Dalston from the 60s with the first artists establishment until nowadays

edited by the author on July 2017

public and social spaces, such as a primary school, a space for the creative arts and several gardens. The goal was to have spaces that were different from those dedicated to games, protecting the fragility of peripheral areas (Davis, J., 2016, p. 449). The attempts to reactivate and regenerate Hackney Wick after the construction of the Olympic Park were multiple and of several entities.

Close to the opening of the Olympics in 2012 the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) was established, with the main aim of managing the urban development of the entire area (Ferreri, M., e Lang, A., 2014, p. 37). The vision of the Corporation was to make the East End, especially the area of the Queen Elisabeth Olympic Park, the centre of London's social, cultural and economic growth (LLDC, 2013).

The construction of the Park for the Olympic Games became an opportunity for the development of the entire area. For this reason, the design of five new neighbourhoods located on the park boundaries was the LLDC's first objective. Between 2012 and 2014 the Legacy has supported different projects within the surroundings of the Olympic Park (Ferreri, M., and Lang, A., 2014, p. 37), through the drafting of the Design for London. Design for London was a tool for planning strategies to help the development of the place. The first important goal was to preserve the original character of each neighbourhood, for example in the case of Hackney Wick the vision was to maintain its artistic feature. In this sense, the work of the LLDC was driven through propositional mapping for the understanding of the existing context (LLDC, 2013, p. 31).

The Hackney Wick transformation process is developed by a range of actions belonging to different nature. On one hand, the role of the LLDC has driven controlled and planned action with the aim to build a new neighbourhood for the London population. The need to re-establish and reconstruct at the structural level the connections between the new Queen Elisabeth Park with its adjacent urban tissues has led the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) to develop more structured and controlled Masterplan. On the other hand, we faced different actions, led by the community, characterised by weaker interventions started from the inside. In this perspective, it is notable the role of *Public Works* within the development of temporary and soft use project. A programme such as *Re-Urban Wick* has the aim to regenerate place from the inside through participatory and spontaneous proposals.

Figure  
**Contrasts**  
Hackney Wick, in the background the Olympic Park  
infrastructures  
source:  
<https://cdn3.digitalartsonline.co.uk/>  
visited on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2018



GENS

STAY SURE

GENS

REDWINE

OD

DEPS FOL

GRITTY

AD

These conditions make the in-depth analysis of the designer role necessary with the special goal to find a balance between the “controlled” and the “uncontrolled”. Looking for particular interventions in order to understand how partitioners could carry out a role of mediation between two opposite coexisting processes.

## The role of the designers

### *The White Building*

The White Building is a creative hub located in Hackney Wick on the edge of the Olympic Park: geographically located on the west side of the Lea River Lee Navigation Canal. It was the result of the recovery of an old industrial print-works by architect David Kohn Architects in 2012. The idea also developed through the support of the London Legacy Development Corporation, has the aim to give to the Hackney Wick art community a space of public evidence for art, technology, and sustainability. The place, as well as giving space to the normal activities of the inhabitants and artists, providing a range of spaces for work and artistic life, it is a real landing place for visitors, offering space for events and public spaces (LLDC, 2013, p. 66). The reorganisation of the adjacent open space, signed by Muf Architects, assured the White Building to be connected and integrated with the urban connection system, offering visitors access to it in a variety of ways: walking, cycling, public transport, and even boat through the canal (LLDC, 2013, p. 66).

The White Building is an interesting example of how the regeneration of spaces initiated spontaneously by the artistic community can combine with more programmed and controlled interventions through the work of practitioners and administrators. The objective of the LLDC was to secure and support through the construction of the White Building the existing creative economy of the area, previously initiated by communities established in Hackney Wick.

In addition, the project wanted to keep the feature of the creative process underway by consolidating the creative cluster profile that had acquired that place, ensuring art and artists to be the heart of the future development of Queen Elisabeth Park. In the end, the Hub’s development process was through the direct involvement of artistic, residential and school communities that were directly involved in the process of transformation.

The interesting point of this intervention lies in the shift from the point of view

Figure 1

#### **The White Building**

Internal view

source:

<http://davidkohn.co.uk/>  
visited on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Figure 2

#### **The White Building**

Café internal view

source:

<http://dka.whataboutnever.com/>  
visited on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Figure 3

#### **The White Building**

Café external view

source:

<http://i10.wp.com/www.craftbeermovement.co.uk/>  
visited on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Facing page

#### **The White Building**

General view

source:

<http://www.queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk/>  
visited on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2018

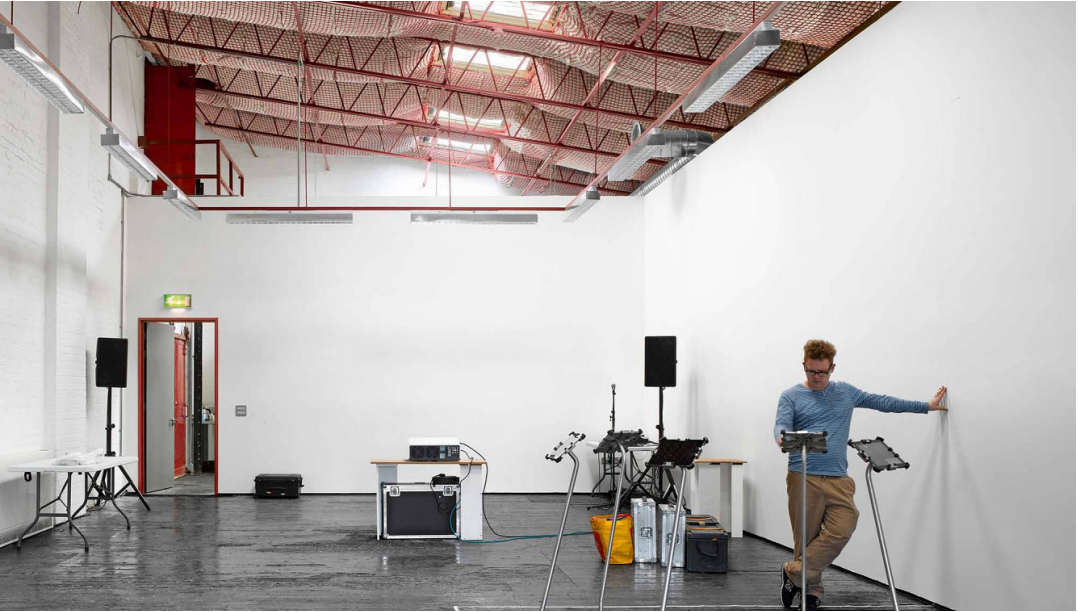


Figure 1



Figure 2





RESIDENCY  
STUDIO

EVENTS







of design: the elements of the project taken as a constructive tool were not solely and exclusively in building materials and architectural spaces, but rather all those spontaneous and weak actions already initially activated were taken as a new transformation tool within the controlled program

## Discussion

The transformation of Hackney Wick did not follow a linear path as in the case of the neighbourhood of Shoreditch. The great break caused by the construction of the Olympic Park, which then became a real urban park, interrupted a “spontaneous” regeneration process entrusted to the creative potential of the communities inhabiting the sites.

The first process of transformation was totally entrusted with the redefinition of the degraded industrial spaces by means of employment, not always legalised, of the spaces made available by the manufacturing crisis. The low price and the high spatial and functional flexibility of the old warehouses have been the perfect feature for the establishment of different art groups, which by simply dwelling and adapting the places to their needs have begun a process of rebirth of the whole neighbourhood. Rebirth happened through spontaneous actions, coming from the inside through tacit arrangements with property owners and renovations carried out in most without the need for major structural transformations and the help of practitioners.

The construction of the Olympic Park has taken the administration’s interest in East End, considering it as an area of opportunity. At the same time, the Olympic event was also an occasion for defining a new urban centre, strengthening its local economy, and enhancing the flow of people. The location of the park in the Lea Valley area has strengthened its intentions to over-impose an urban transformation aimed at the definition of new residential quarters, capable to accommodate an ever-increasing population. In fact, already in the 2004 London Plan, the entire Lea Valley has been identified as an “Opportunity Area”, which is the location of accommodating and residential neighbourhoods for the reception of the population from the inner city (Davis, J., 2016, p. 447).

The design of five new districts around Queen Elisabeth Park, permanently opened in all its parts in 2014, was supported and implemented by the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) in order to begin a process of gentrification



of the East London and promote the park as the new heart of social, cultural and economic growth. The reconstruction project around the park would combine new green spaces, water lines, residential neighbourhood, sports facilities, workspaces and services (LLDC, 2013, p. 7).

According to Legacy's view, every new neighbourhood would maintain the particular industrial site features as it was before. In the case of Hackney Wick, the intention is to preserve its particular artistic feature: giving support and preserving the artistic community that has always inhabited it.

All of this series of controlled interventions and in most cases over-imposed became necessary in order to rebuild a connective structure that had been radically compromised. The construction of the park radically interrupted a regeneration process that started from the bottom and strongly modified the morphological and structural layout of the entire urban area. Walking through the streets of Hackney Wick today, you are in a neighbourhood deeply marked by uncertainty.

On the one hand, you feel a temporary state, many areas are in the construction site and at some moment of the day almost seem like an abandoned neighbourhood. On the other hand, going deeper into the spaces between the warehouses you can discover small self-managed spaces, artists' studios, crafts bars, places of different functional type, a real hidden world. Unlike Shoreditch, however, this creative force that is hidden in some of the former industrial halls has had and has no propulsive power to regenerate the entire area.

The modification of the structural asset and the lack of structural links makes it very difficult to graft a widespread regeneration process. In this case, coordinated, controlled and structured intervention is needed to reconstruct an interconnected environment. In this sense, we face two diametrically opposed processes: firstly actions coming from the bottom, from the inside, are weak from the structural point of view and relationally effective, secondly, predetermined actions, studied a priori, strong from the structural point of view and dubious from the point of view of relationships. The question that naturally arises is: how do these actions of a totally different nature coexist with the aim of reactivating a degraded, abandoned the urban area and in some ways traumatised areas?

Taking this aspect as the centre of the transformation process, the point focuses on the

Figure  
**The White Building**  
General view  
source:  
shot and editing by the author, June 2017

real role of the architect and the urban designer. The task of mediating between two actions that they took individually and left uncontrolled would end up collimating is precisely entrust to these professional figures.

The case of Hackney Wick, although the process is still being defined and calibrated, is the example that proves that the creative process of the site is not always controlled by unmanaged actions. On some occasions, control, program, and project are real creative actions. The peculiarity and the point at which attention is to be taken is in the continuous inter-relationship between controlled and uncontrolled in order to build a balanceable to assume the transformative force.

The architectural and urban project is traditionally born as tools for building new and possible relationships between the spaces. In the case of the creative process, it is to move the point of view on what kind of relationships to build, the level of intensity needed to do so. The places under consideration reflect a common condition in many areas of our cities, and unlike some thoughts, they possess a regenerative propulsive force that is entrusted not only to the architectural quality of the spaces, but to all other elements that make up them: the society in which they live, the economy that guarantees their life, and the historical development that forms the basis of every transformation. Elements that must be considered as fundamental as design materials and managed in a program of actions that work according to interrelated relationships. The architect and the urban designer are called today starting from these “materials”, which, like steel and cement, constitute the construction of transformation.

The neighbourhood of Hackney Wick becomes the field of action for a design exercise that is centred on a spontaneous transformation and a controlled one, both if they manage to their best, able to reconfigure spaces, to form a new centre and reactivate a place that for years has been abandoned.

### 2.3.3 Dalston

#### Introduction

The neighbourhood of Dalston, which is the topic of this chapter, is situated to the north of Shoreditch and was in the thirteenth century documented as a settlement outside the London boundaries (Davidson, G., Dovey, K. and Woodcock, I., 2012, p. 49). As a place outside of the fringe, Dalston has developed as an industrial and working-class residential area of the city in the end of 1800 and has maintained this characteristic for circa half a century. During the Second World War, the neighbourhood endured significant bomb damages with large areas subsequently cleared and redeveloped as social housing resulting in a mix of detached dwellings (Davidson, G., Dovey, K. and Woodcock, I., 2012, p. 49). The post-war saw a great affluence of migrants in Dalston coming principally from the Caribbean but in the end of the century a mix of ethnics have been counted and the neighbourhood became one of the most social mixed places in London. In 2004, after the nomination of London as the Olympic 2012 location, the GLA (Greater London Authority) has designated Dalston as an area for regeneration within the London Plan presented. This was the moment in which Dalston started its transformation made by several reconsiderations and a strong community presence.

The chapter will open with the analysis the process of the 2004 action plan made with a jointed venture between TfL (Transport for London), LBH (London Borough of Hackney), LDA (London Development Agency) and Barrett Homes, considering the residents' resistance. Furthermore, an outstanding importance will be given to the community demonstration and its influence within the social and spatial scene of the place. The willingness of the local authority in one hand and the opposition of the local community on the other have driven a series of processes which have now defined Dalston as a place of radical changes and with a strong sense of community. In this regards, the community has the force to drive the final and continuous transformation of the area and was the focus of the modification.

znse of place and the cohesiveness of the residents have made the place changes and enable modification processes coming from the inside rejecting the top-down interventions led by the outsiders. For this reason, Dalston would be an emblematic

case study to understand how the process is spread into the area of the city and with what ways is carried on. At the same time, the existence of such a strong community movement and involvement puts the attention on how each people with its behaviour has the capacity to change a place and how much this could contribute for the design of the place itself.

### An opportunity area

At the beginning of the twenty-first century Dalston was characterised by a high level of deprivation and social exclusion (Davidson, G., Dovey, K. and Woodcock, I., 2012, p. 50) caused firstly by a never completed reconstruction project after the bomb damages and secondly by a constant movement of migrants in and out of the neighbourhood. This was the reason why the GLA has considered it as an area to be renewed and regenerated and has focused the attention of the 2004 London Plan on it by developing the 2004 Dalston Action Plan. The plan was considering mainly two adjacent plots placed on the south-east corner between Dalston Lane and Kingsland Road, which are Dalston Junction and Dalston Lane South. The plan dealt with the construction of a new overground rail station, which would connect the centre of London to the Olympic site.

For the global and local authority, the need to improve the public transportation towards the Olympics represented the opportunity to develop a wider regeneration plan for Dalston (Davidson, G., Dovey, K. and Woodcock, I., 2012, p. 50). In this regard, the document presented by TfL and LDA in 2005 was writing Dalston Junction has great potential but any development faces significant challenges including high cost versus low return, extremely tight timescales for approvals and the requirement for a minimal impact on the delivery of the East London Line.

If the challenges can be overcome then the proposals will create a vibrant extension to Dalston Town Centre that maximises this one-off opportunity whilst respecting Dalston's distinctive identity (TfL and LDA, 2005, p. 3). Dalston Junction has been, indeed, developed together with Dalston Lane South, the programme provided for a mixed-use scheme around the area of the station. The aim was to achieve higher density level for the two sites and TfL had committed to opening the new rail line and station by 2010 (Davidson, G., Dovey, K. and Woodcock, I., 2012, p. 53).

The action plan proposal would provide further to the rail station and the bus

Figure  
**A mix of culture**  
Ridley Street Market, Dalston  
source:  
<http://fergieinfife.blogspot.co.uk/>  
visited on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2018

interchange, also a mix of more than 500 dwellings, of which 13% would be affordable, retail spaces, one library and public open spaces (Davidson, G., Dovey, K. and Woodcock, I., 2012, p. 52). The campaign for the public consultation was published in 2005 for Dalston Junction and in 2006 for Dalston Lane South, the advertisement provided an exhibition at the local library, dépliants, online announcements and press release (Davidson, G., Dovey, K. and Woodcock, I., 2012, p. 52).

The architecture studio Barratt Homes was accounted to develop the proposal and in 2008 it provided a development project titled Dalston Square; two marketing brochures were produced and Dalston was described as vibrant, diverse and changing with the implication that the entire neighbourhood, not just the redevelopment site, was to be transformed (Davidson, G., Dovey, K. and Woodcock, I., 2012, p. 53).

The proposal of Barrat Homes described as a place to become readily recognisable and identity changed; the document presented has shown an iconography reality made by attractive places and a wealthy life with white people and young couples.

The images presented in the brochures have not described the reality of Dalston and local places were not shown, rather than in only a few pictures. No people are visible [...], and there is only one non-white person in the entire brochure - despite the fact that the neighbourhood was actually 44% non-white (Davidson, G., Dovey, K. and Woodcock, I., 2012, p. 50; LBH, 2007).

The proposal for the redevelopment of Dalston presented by Barratt Homes has not shown the identity of the place and has not respected it as well, the vision was totally reconstructed without account for the local community life and space. This fact was totally concerned by the residents who felt not to be part of the redevelopment; that's why they start a big campaign against the plan.

### Community drive force

The proposal for Dalston redevelopment emphasised the local authority's thought that the neighbourhood needed to be transformed; this idea was strongly resisted by the local community. Especially the OPEN (Organisation for the Promotion of Environmental Needs) organisation took the case into account and moved legal proceedings against the London Borough of Hackney. The case used the proposed demolition of a former theatre on the Dalston Lane South site as the basis of the



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**DALSTON**

movement (Davidson, G., Dovey, K. and Woodcock, I., 2012, p. 56). From this event started a big campaign against the plan and several times OPEN granted to halt the demolition of the theatre, and in 2006 OPEN were refused permission to proceed further with a judicial review (Davidson, G., Dovey, K. and Woodcock, I., 2012, p. 56). The organisation led by the local Dalston community fights against the fact that local authorities with Barratt Homes were trying to destroy the identity of the place to attract people in.

The specific character, which is expressed by an ethnically diverse society, would be wiped out for attracting a new social class led by young creative professionals. Dalston Square was designed by looking for an imagined unique community and not for actual local people; the open spaces were developed as ancillary spaces for start-ups and rising businesses. Those places were not developed for local residents who would be used them as an open-air dormitory and the level of deprivation would be increased. Moreover, the new type of wealthy resident (Davidson, G., Dovey, K. and Woodcock, I., 2012, p. 58) was concerned as the engine to increase the price of properties and promote a gentrification process which allows a recurring move in and out of the area.

Furthermore, the plan provided the demolition of local authentic buildings as theatres, cinemas, and local music venues, which were the symbols of the character of the neighbourhood (Davidson, G., Dovey, K. and Woodcock, I., 2012, p. 58), in favour of retail chains and standardised venues. Their restoration and incorporation into the new project was not deemed financially viable and they were slated to be demolished (Davidson, G., Dovey, K. and Woodcock, I., 2012, p. 58), this would damaged the identity of the place itself and the importance of the local culture, in this case the importance of black music culture. The project reflected a lack of respect for Dalston and was thought as a top-down and super-imposed intervention from the residents.

The concerns to the Dalston Square project were a lot during the public consultation and during the following period a group of activist residents followed through the OPEN organisation have presented an alternative proposal (Davidson, G., Dovey, K. and Woodcock, I., 2012, p. 59). The proposal led by the community provided 320 units of commercially financed social housing, green open spaces, an area for locally produced artwork, a landmark rooftop lighting installation, a mix of retail

Figure

**Dalston, Who asked you?**

Demonstrations against the plan presented by TfL, LDA, LBH and Barratt Homes

source:

<https://www.residentadvisor.net/>

visited on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2018



Figure 1

Figure 1  
**Save Dalston Lane**  
Manifesto produced by OPEN during the  
demonstration period  
source:  
[https://pbs.twimg.com/profile\\_images/](https://pbs.twimg.com/profile_images/)  
visited on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Figure 2  
**Dalston time line**  
The timeline showed the main events happened  
in Dalston from the development of the Hackney  
Corporation in the 80s until nowadays

edited by the author on July 2017

and workspace facilities, a rail station and a bus interchange, [...] the former theatre building would be restored as a theatre and music venue (Davidson, G., Dovey, K. and Woodcock, I., 2012, p. 59). This proposal showed that Dalston community was not completely adverse to the redevelopment of the area rather just to the proposal presented by the joined venture between TfL, LBH, LDA and Barratt Homes.

Despite the proposal presented by the community in 2006 the London Borough of Hackney granted the planning permission with just a few minor changes and in April 2010 the dwelling has sold and the railway station has opened. The redevelopment improved pedestrian connections (Davidson, G., Dovey, K. and Woodcock, I., 2012, p. 61), which are actually used by local residents, and the high street adjacent to the rail station remains dominated by discount retails (Davidson, G., Dovey, K. and Woodcock, I., 2012, p. 61). However, the contrast between the new development and the other part of the neighbourhood is very evident.

### The role of the designers

The case of the Dalston redevelopment has seen how the community would preserve the character and the identity of the place and how much public space can be created without losing the assets that exist (J&L Gibbons LLP and Muf Architects, 2009, p. 14). Indeed, in 2008 the Matrix Partnership composed by J&L Gibbons LLP and Muf Architects has responded to the Dalston Action Plan with the study aimed to map and explore the wider cultural context (J&L Gibbons LLP and Muf Architects, 2009, p. 15).

The study, named Making space in Dalston has originated to deep analyse the context of Dalston Lane South in order to highlight and value the existence of creative activities and understand which role plays the public realm in enabling them. One of the main objectives of the study was to open a dialogue with residents and the whole local community, and the local authority as well. Furthermore, the Making Space in Dalston research was developed by two phases: the first one consists in the mapping of cultural sites and places, which ended with a public exhibition at the Arcola Theatre on June and July 2008.

The second phase regards the design of 10 costed projects and an action plan for amenity space, cultural programming, and management (J&L Gibbons LLP and Muf Architects, 2009, p. 15). The goal of the project was to understand how regeneration



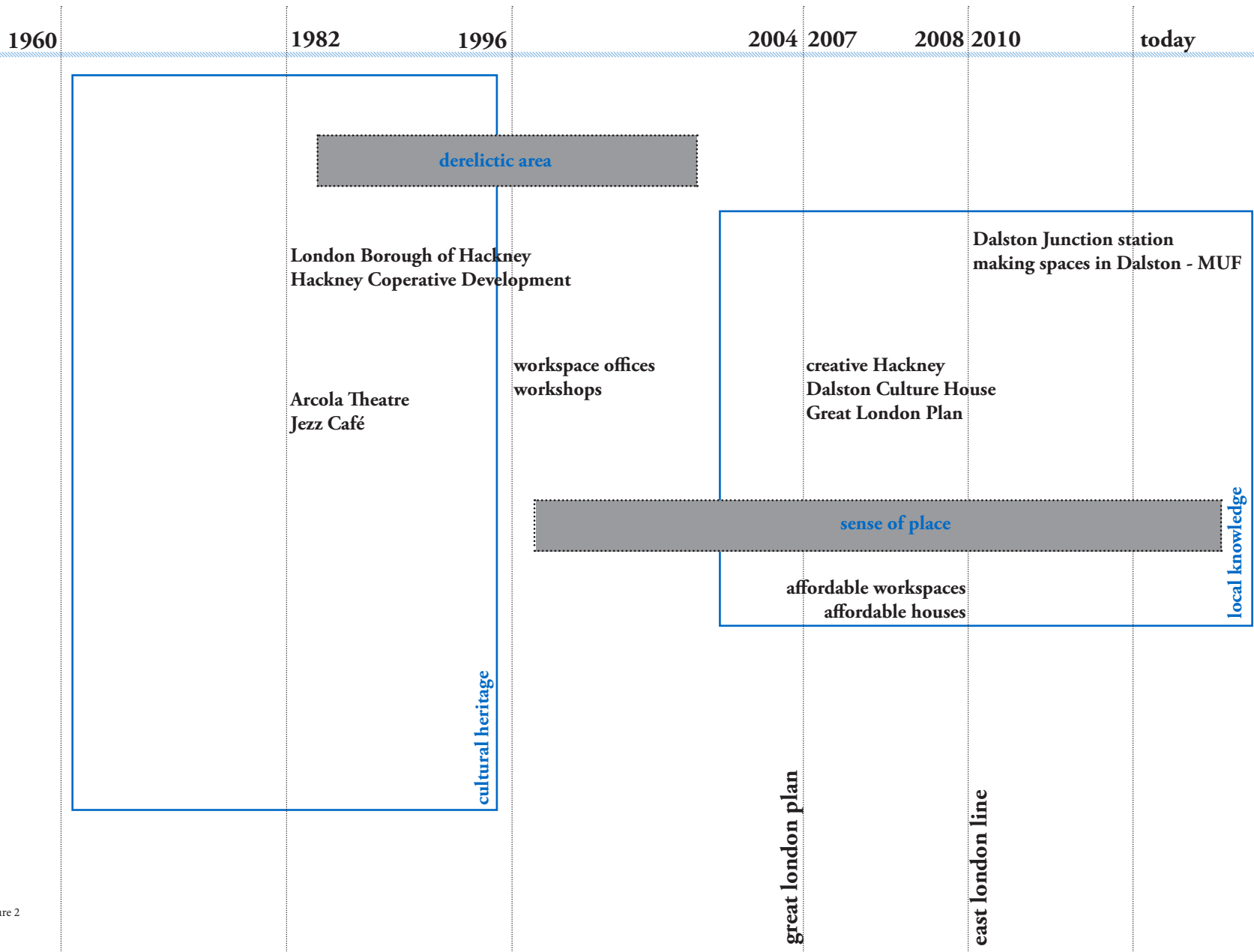


Figure 2

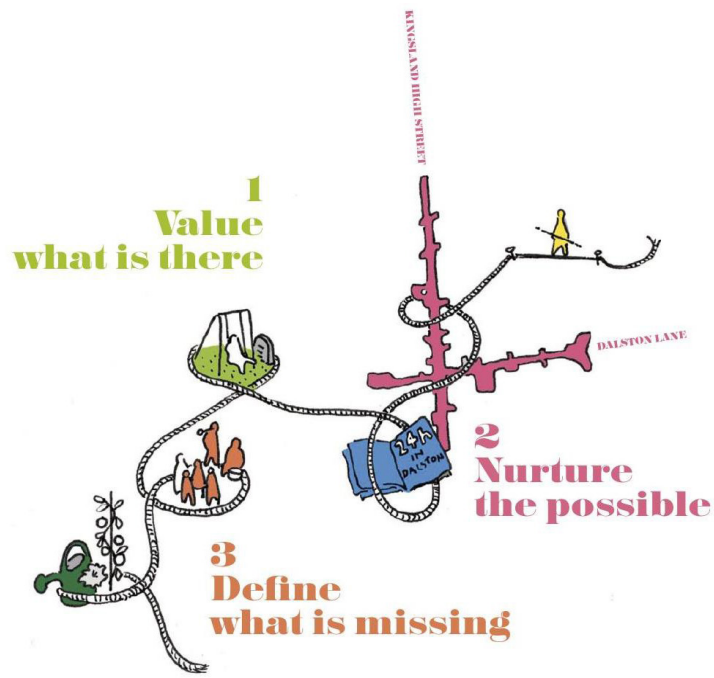


Figure 1

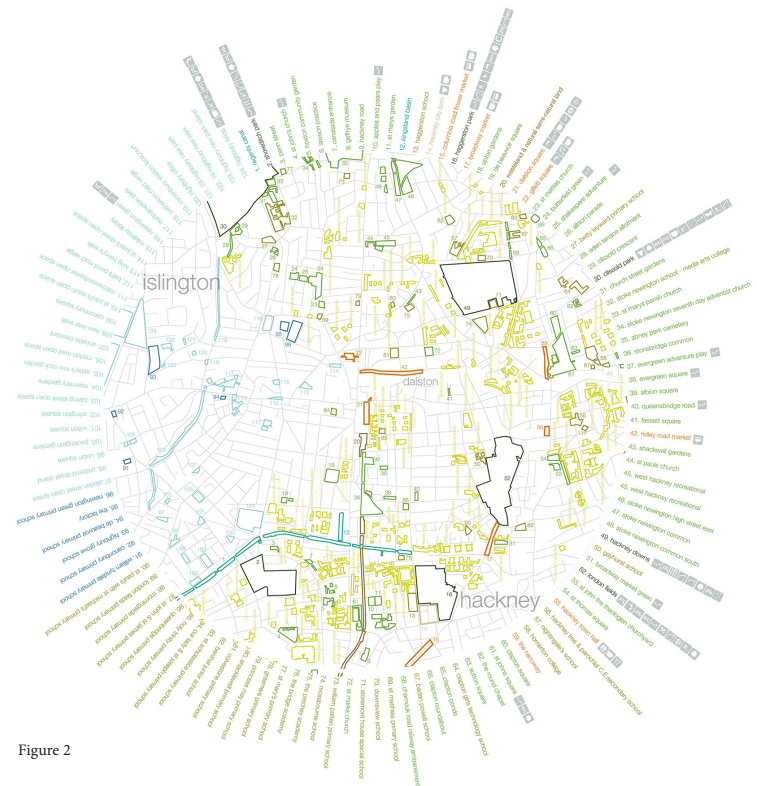


Figure 2

### Making Space in Dalston

J+L Gibbons LLP & muf architecture/art LLP November 2009

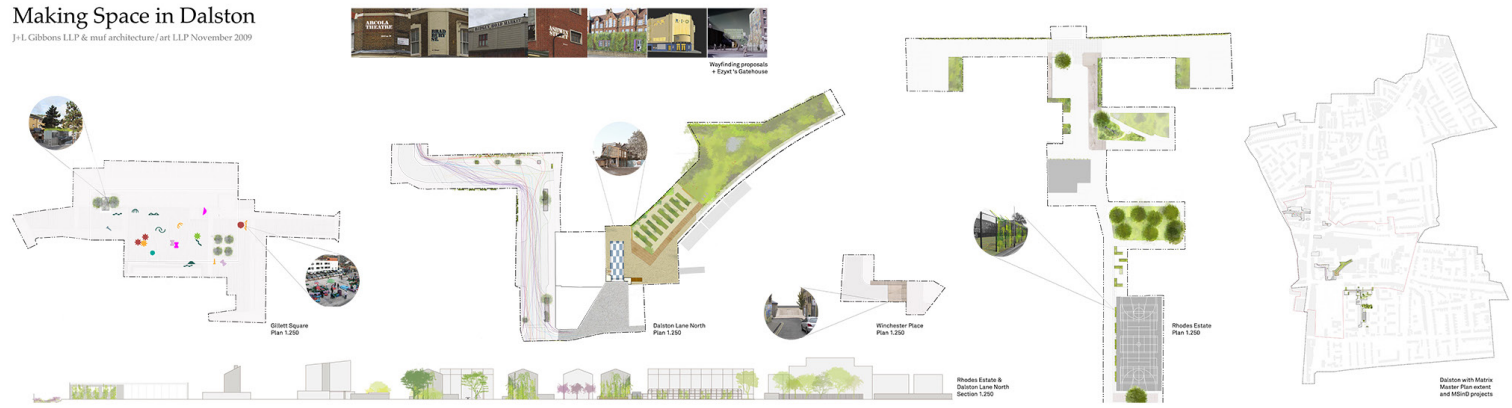


Figure 3

could benefit existing communities by improving the quality and access of the public realm; identifying existing assets and how to secure them; ensuring a coherence of design approach by demonstrating how project could be linked, programmed and funded (J&L Gibbons LLP and Muf Architects, 2009, p. 15).

The preparatory value map has accounted to identify the existence of the diversity and creativity within the neighbourhood and understand which were the grassroots of them. Through action research, analysis and engagement to promote incremental and responsive change via a close understanding and collaboration with the formal and informal creative sector (J&L Gibbons LLP and Muf Architects, 2009, p. 19). From this concept the project has been developed by applying three main paradigms: Valuing what is there, Nurturing the possible and Defining what is missing (J&L Gibbons LLP and Muf Architects, 2009, p. 19).

Considering Dalston as a place of diversity in terms of economics, ethnics, cultural and heritage; an informal active networks and social settings (J&L Gibbons LLP and Muf Architects, 2009, p. 19) place, the projects would put in evidence and underlined all the cultural assets inward. Such as actors and participants, organisations, cultural and creative brands and firms, small niche cultural retails, independent artists, etc. The natural cultural characteristic of Dalston was obvious in terms of existence and the Making Space in Dalston would value and emphasised it. In this regard, the first paradigm had the aim to cultivate this natural and existing creative value.

Once underlined the existing value of the neighbourhood and established its potential level, the process moves to care and enhance this potential by promoting engagement between organisation pushing to work together and build up partnerships of trust and confidence (J&L Gibbons LLP and Muf Architects, 2009, p. 19). Cultivating the idea that the whole Dalston should be considered as a venue for the Create Festival associated with the Cultural Olympics 2012 for examples (J&L Gibbons LLP and Muf Architects, 2009, p. 19).

Finally, the last paradigm consists of the design and the definition of what is considered a need to be implemented in the neighbourhood. In this case, ten projects were developed and have been prioritised. Particular attention was put to the involvement of the community into the process and opportunities and strategic objectives have been identified and the promotion of incremental regeneration not reliant on an economic upturn, but on individual and complementary processes (J&L Gibbons

Figure 1

**Making space in Dalston**

Design strategy, the three principles

source:

J&L Gibbons LLP and Muf Architects, (2009), *Making Space in Dalston*, p. 18

Figure 2

**Making space in Dalston**

Existing open spaces

source:

J&L Gibbons LLP and Muf Architects, (2009), *Making Space in Dalston*, p. 26

Figure 3

**Making space in Dalston**

General plan

source:

<http://muf.co.uk/>

visited on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018

LLP and Muf Architects, 2009, p. 19) to be realised was put at the centre of the second phase of the research.

In this chapter two main project would be explained more in depth, as they are the most emblematic for understanding the fundamental role of the community not only into the design process but also in the use and management of the space over the project itself. Those are the intervention in Gillet Square and the development of the Dalston Curve Garden.

### *Gillett Square*

Gillet Square is a public open space located on the west side of Kingsland High Street and is actually physically presented as an urban plaza with bars, cafes, and food shops. However Gillett Square is more than this; the Matrix Partnership which made Making Space in Dalston viable has worked for providing a space for the community in Dalston, allowing it to congregate in celebrations. This place is conceived as a place to walk through, to sit down, to share, to meet ([gillettsquare.org/about](http://gillettsquare.org/about)) in particular a space dedicated to the everyday routine of local people (J&L Gibbons LLP and Muf Architects, 2009, p. 62). The project was carried out with the goal to help the temporary use of the space otherwise never used and to keep it alive. The introduction of play element enables people to stay and use the space as a daily playground. The physical intervention made by Gibbons and Muf was not heavy; the pavement was renewed and several pop-up cafes and shops introduced, furthermore a container to contain play devices were placed to one side of the square. Rather, an organisation for managing and creating activities was formed and a series of events are always organised.

Gillett Square represents a cultural public realm to invite all potential users ([gillettsquare.org/about](http://gillettsquare.org/about)). Considering the cultural background of Dalston, previously mentioned, Gillett Square is people from an astonishing range of ages, socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds and beliefs, all sharing the space with each other, to work and play ([gillettsquare.org/about](http://gillettsquare.org/about)) together, to exchange knowledge and produce even new ideas. In this regard, the value of this intervention is not merely connected to the beauty of the design however to such processes it would spread into the urban realm, in terms of use of the space and enabling activity within it. Indeed, it represents an emblematic example of how the involvement of the community in the design and awarding the place ownership could root deep modification processes

Figure 1

#### **Gillett Square**

General view

source:

Author, July 2017

Figure 2

#### **Gillett Square**

View from the sky

source:

J&L Gibbons LLP and Muf Architects, (2009), *Making Space in Dalston*, p. 26

Figure 3

#### **Gillett Square**

General plan

source:

<http://muf.co.uk/>

visited on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Figure 3

#### **Gillett Square**

Container detail

source:

<http://fergieinfife.blogspot.co.uk/>

visited on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018



Figure 1



Figure 2

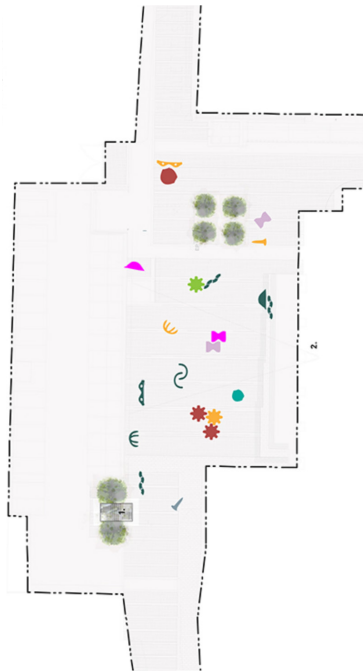


Figure 3



and shape further transformations.

### *The Dalston Curve Garden*

The Dalston Curve Garden is another example of how the community could lead a process of transformation of a place and how much those bottom-up activities could influence the shape of the space. The actual site consists into the result of a process started in 2009 with the Dalston Mill Project, a temporary off-site installation within the Barbican Art Gallery exhibition Radical Nature – Art and Architecture for a Changing Planet 1969-2009 in collaboration with EXYZT (<http://eco-publicart.org/dalston-mill/>).

The Dalston Mill consisted of a five-stored windmill and pizza oven erected in the open space area left by the old railway after the rail tracks were removed. It provided an opportunity for between 400 and 1500 people daily to experience the potential of the area as a green host space for planned and unplanned activities (Bishop, P. and Williams, L., 2012, p. 196). At the beginning, it also provides a test for meanwhile uses and then became an opportunity to get a space for the community and was involved in the Making Space in Dalston Project.

The project provided a green space, as an Eco Park (J&L Gibbons LLP and Muf Architects, 2009, p. 91), which is composed by three ground layers that are an informal path layer, a shrub, and field habitat layer and a tree canopy habitat layer; and an additional layer made by pavilions, wind turbines and benches and hides (J&L Gibbons LLP and Muf Architects, 2009, p. 93). Space was built up in 2010 and the designers have asked the Council to let the community manage the space, however, the request was rejected at first instance, giving the ownership and the management to a partnership composed by the Arcola Theatre and the two landlords Hackney Council and Kingsland Shopping Centre.

Notwithstanding that, the community had a principal role in the development of the space and in two years space started to generate income with the open of the café by selling drinks and snacks. Indeed in 2012, the community involved in the development of the place formed a social enterprise starting a funding running out which continues also today. The Dalston Curve Garden is now considered an oasis in Dalston neighbourhood where community workshops and activities are organised and an army of gardening volunteers are working in.

Figure 1

#### **Dalston Curve Garden**

General plan

source:

J&L Gibbons LLP and Muf Architects, (2009), *Making Space*  
in *Dalston*, p. 91

Figure 2

#### **Dalston Curve Garden**

General view

source:

Author, July 2017

Figure 3

#### **Dalston Curve Garden**

General view

source:

Author, July 2017

Figure 3

#### **Dalston Curve Garden**

General view

source:

Author, July 2017



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3











## Discussion

The development of Dalston represents an emblematic example of how much the design process which led the transformation of an urban area is changed and changing continuously. The first action plan for Dalston redevelopment made by the local authorities and Barratt Homes was totally detached from the real needs of the neighbourhood and was following an ideal vision of what external people imaged Dalston to become. The result was a plan based on a top-down master planning approach that would change not only the formal and physical assets of the area but would pretend to modify also the social capital, erasing the cultural background of the place as well.

The reactions to the plan made by residents and local activists are significant of the sense of place built around a physical space, how people feel belonging to public and private spaces, and how much they could feel detached and homeless whether the place itself is going to change. During the fight campaign against the plan proposed by TfL, LBH, LDA and Barrett Homes, a lot of residents declared they felt to be a refugee without actually leaving home - where they demolish everything else around you, and you get that feeling of you're no longer at home anymore, you're a refugee but you haven't gone anywhere (Davidson, G., Dovey, K. and Woodcock, I., 2012, p. 59).

The followed intervention made by the Matrix Partnership and led by J&L Gibbons and Muf Architects involved the local community into not only the design process but gave to it also a strategical role into the management of the redeveloped place. In this way, the community starts to feel to be part of the change and gave to the project, as an internal actor, the local value to be used as a tool for the transformation. Moreover, the example of Making Space in Dalston highlights how it is possible to define big change, in terms of regeneration, without using a radical and strong modification of the physical assets. Indeed, the listed projects developed into the Making Space in Dalston project were developed by weak and small intervention, by using movable devices and little structural addition and construction; and by adopting a very structured programme of actions which defined what they really need to improve, to change and to build.

Therefore, what we are faced with is another example of a process that is different, complex and interdisciplinary. The actors are multiples and the actions not always

require the participation of the urban practitioners as most of the change is not structural and community driven. In this sense, considering these changes into the design process the obvious question is how is possible to define a methodological approach to the process in order to let architects, urban designers, and planners redefine their role?

The case of Dalston is emblematic in this sense, as would be the tool for understanding in depth what are the main actors and the ancillary ones, through what actions they play their role into the transformation and at the same time what are the reactions to those transformations.

The Dalston redevelopment seen in all its phases represents a clear example of how much importance is appointed to the social, economic and physical reactions. In this sense, the study of Dalston it is significant in order to set a new way of thinking towards a definition of a strategical urban transformation model which focuses on creative bottom-up processes.

Figure

**The Mill Dalston**

View on the wind mill

source:

<https://c1.staticflickr.com/>

visited on 10th February 2018

Previous page

**Closing the street**

Dalston, London

source:

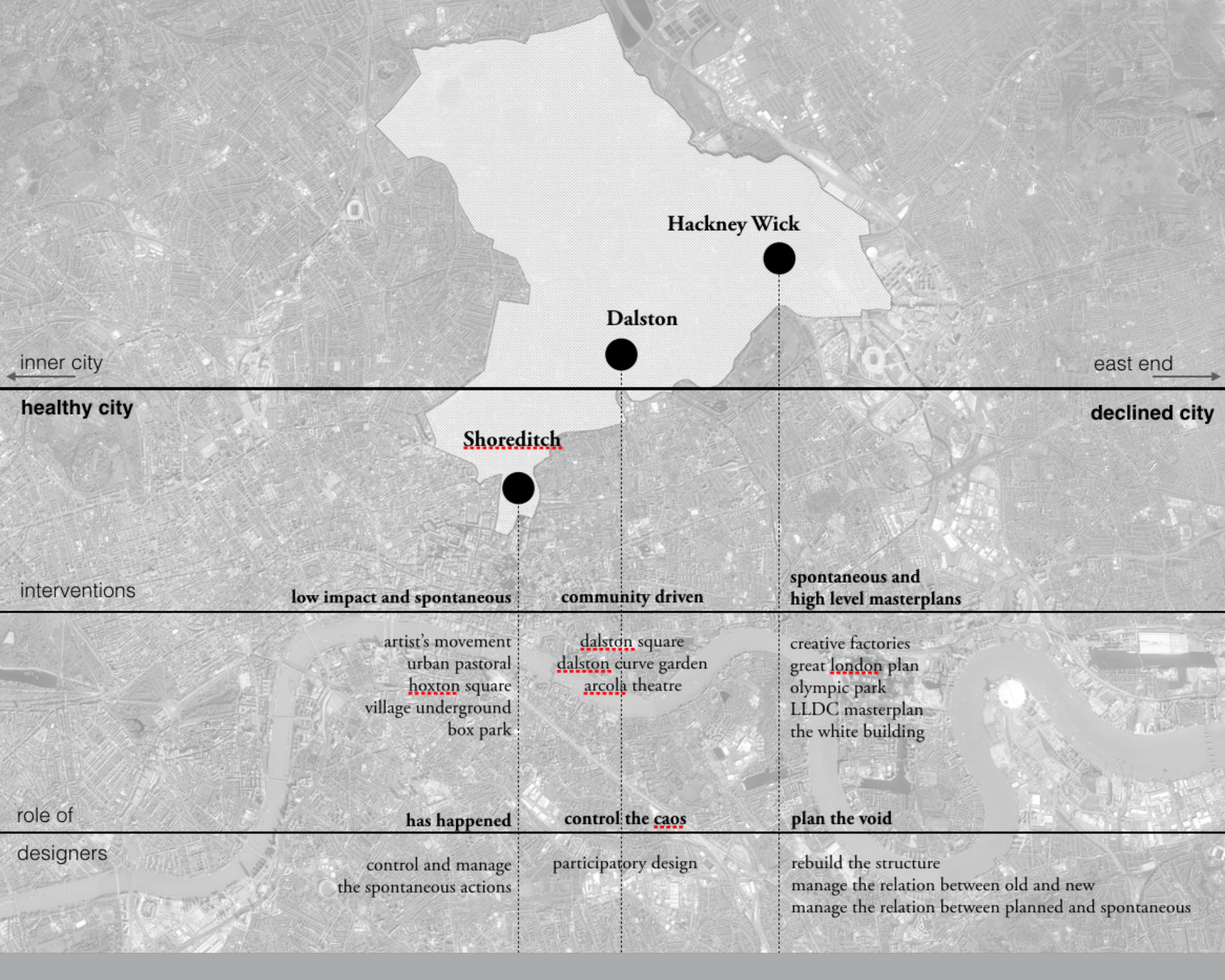
Bishop, P. and Williams, L., (2012), *The Temporary City*, p. 196

Facing page

**London Borough of Hackney**

Boundaries of the Hackney Borough

and case studies location and synthesis of the analysis  
edited by the author in July 2018



inner city

east end

healthy city

declined city

Hackney Wick

Dalston

Shoreditch

interventions

low impact and spontaneous

community driven

spontaneous and high level masterplans

artist's movement  
urban pastoral  
hoxton square  
village underground  
box park

dalston square  
dalston curve garden  
arcola theatre

creative factories  
great london plan  
olympic park  
LLDC masterplan  
the white building

role of designers

has happened

control the caos

plan the void

control and manage the spontaneous actions

participatory design

rebuild the structure  
manage the relation between old and new  
manage the relation between planned and spontaneous

## 2.3.4 Conclusions

The three case studies analysed showed how creativity is spreading in to the urban settlements and precisely, they showed three different way creativity appears and happens. In this sense, it is possible to argue that we are facing three different creative transformations processes of urban spaces.

Shoreditch has been lived its own life, being transformed spontaneously and without particular notice; it has happened as a result of a sequence of specific happenings. On the other side Hackney Wick suffered the huge development of the Olympics which has broken a started and ongoing process and required now different actions. And then Dalston faced a totally different approach and development, driven by a mutual agreement between the community and the authorities.

Those three different case studies represent the actual example how creativity can arise in completely different ways and approaches; taking the process into account, all of them could be considered a creative urban transformation process however it is displaying differently.

Understanding the nature of the actions happened or planned in those contexts reveals the further needs to let the transformation continue as well as to understand the role of the urban practitioner within the change. And in this sense, the creativity is not considered like a skill or a function but rather, it is considered as a process of transformation.

Furthermore, the fact they belong to the same Council and so to the same administration authority is an additional proof to demonstrate that creativity is not an exact condition but it appears according to the different context and conditions.

All those reasons allowed the awareness to deepen the study about the creative process, which is developed in the Part 3 of the research, with the aim of figuring out what are the elements that make the process up, what are the actions required and how to keep the process ongoing by establishing the righter role of the designers according to the context, conditions and needs.



**Part 3** | to build. The Creative Process





### 3.1 Theoretical background. The assemblage thinking

The creative transformation of a place is set up through a process of modification of the place itself. The process as a dynamic concept that goes beyond the mere physical space modification but also embraces the social, economic and political (Bishop, P., 2012, p. 29). The construction of the process, or processes, is highly influenced by a continuous entanglement of elements that become part of it as scenes, actors, and acts of the urban theatre. The composition and combination of the elements (actors), through a twine of actions (acts) that take place on a given urban background (scene), give life to the show, or to a process of transformation. And as every theatre show its success is affirmed by the 'public' reaction.

In order to build strategies of redefinition, regeneration, and transformation of urban place, the process has a critical role. In this sense, it is necessary deeply to understand the reasons and the ways in which it manifests itself in and is rooted in some areas of the city and at the same time to understand with what role creativity is part of it and takes part. The process can be comprehended better if it is divided into several categories that compose it, which will become the pieces of a puzzle with endless combination possibilities.

There are three categories that have been used to study the creative process of transformation - *materials, actions, and reactions* - each of them has a specific configuration and *assemblage*<sup>1</sup> of them defines and constitutes the peculiar characteristics of the process. The concept of assemblage is in this sense an interesting analysis tool as it focuses on the interactions between the different elements rather than the final result (Sendra, P., 2015, pp. 821; McFarlane, C., 2011, p. 204). In relation of this, we will be faced to reverse processes that are no longer the result of a preconceived project, but rather are the result of an entanglement of people, materials and different uses and actions within a shared space (Amin, A., 2008, p. 8).

Therefore, the *materials* will configure in all those physical and non-physical elements that compose the city and directly involved in the process: the physical space, open or closed, the tangible and intangible infrastructures, human and non-human resources, the network of relationships, the time as the physical element of measurement of the rhythm of the place. The study of materials is fundamental in the process because

Footnote

<sup>1</sup> Reference is made to the concept of Assemblage thinking, historically introduced by Deleuze and recently introduced in the urban design debate by Benet (2005), McFarlane (2011) and Sendra (2015; 2016), applied to the transformation of urban public space and collective culture (Amin 2008).

it allows you to understand and evaluate *what is already there* (Bishop, P., 2012, p. 29) and opens the door to the construction of intervention strategies, or the second category, the *actions*. The actions, the way in which they occur, the time rate with which they take place, are extremely fundamental to the understanding of a process. Understand first the nature of the actions allows you to understand the relationships among the planned actions and the spontaneous ones, with which the formal city interacts with the informal one (Sendra, P., 2015, p. 821). We are in front of different processes that have taken place almost without noticing there, through small and local spontaneous transformations that have had the power to transform whole portions of the city, an example is the Hoxton and Shoreditch district in London. The identification of the nature of the processing actions, whether are spontaneous or planned, constitutes one of the first interweaving materials and actions, allowing to understand what are the actors in the process and how they carry out their role, as well as to recognise what that must be increased, and what is missing. The close relationship and interplay between the materials and the actions define the actual process, and in the case of the creative transformation process identifies the special role of creativity: be it material or action. In this sense, it is also demarcated the role of architects, planners and urban designers within the process and how this changes depending on the mode of the *assemblage* of the elements.

According to Deleuze's theory, *assemblages are composed of heterogeneous elements or objects that enter into relations with one another* (Bryant, L., 2009; Deleuze, G., 2009), *those elements are not all of the same type but defined by physical objects, events, happenings, and so on, but also signs, utterances and so on* (Little, D., 2012, p. 2). In this sense, it is impossible to configurate a fixed and stable system where elements create the same connection to each other and where element are always the same. Rather, *social formations are assemblages of other complex configurations, and they in turn play roles in other, more extended configurations* (Little, D., 2012, p. 1). With the same way it si possible to perceives the city, a complex system defined by the assemblages of different materials and elements, but in the case of the city, an outstanding role into the assemblages is played by the active form of the elements, that are the actions.

The concept of assemblage is a *process of doing that produces events through different temporality and different contingencies* (McFarlane, C., 2011, p. 209; Li, 2007).

Figure

**Rhizome**

A Thousand Plateaus, Delouze and Guattari

source:

<https://blogs.ethz.ch/prespecific/2013/07/25/a-thousand-plateaus-deleuze-and-guattari-1980/>

visited in April 2018

Furthcoming page

**Jackson Pollock: Blind Spots**

Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas (2015-2016)

photo by Hans Namuth

source:

<https://www.artsy.net/artwork/hans-namuth-jackson-pollock>

visited in September 2018







### 3.2 Breaking the process down

This chapter is dedicated to the breakdown of the urban transformation process with the aim of understanding how and through which ways creativity could be the tool to drive and manage the transformation. The objectives are to define strategical approaches to the urban design focused on designing the process, as well the re-identification and the re-meaning of the role of the urban practitioners (architects, urban designers, and planners) would be fundamental to let the process work. The case studies analysed showed how much the regeneration process has changed and how much it has shifted from a top-down master planning strategy to a bottom-up place-making approach. In this sense, the actors involved in the process has changed and frequently the main drivers are people who live in the area and starting a transformation from the inside. The process assumes indeed a more complex structure which involves different actors that take a proactive role on. The actors are of different natures and characters and play a different role in the process, however fundamental. Also, the actions that take root and drive the process have changed in terms of intensity and approach.

Considering the case studies analysed as a toolkit for understanding how the transformation is rooted in the city, the idea in the first instance is to break the process up for defining which are the actors (materials) involved and what are their role into the process, through which actions the transformation is spread and what is the nature of those actions. Moreover allowing time to see how the city reacts to the actions applied and understanding what is missing. Once understood the missing, re-start with new actions in order to complete the previous process and starting a new one which has the role to maintain the control of the first actions and define new ones to let the process continue.

The break up of the process allows the research to define one or more approaches to the urban design transformation process by the identification and definition of a method which could be the matrix to follow and apply to different contemporary cities. Breaking up for building up is the way the research would adopt not only to define strategies but also to understand whether a strategy could be defined. And above all for understanding the interconnected roles behind the process itself, that means to acknowledge the change and re-design the roles.

Figure  
**Materials**  
drawings by Kevin Lynch  
Variabilità dell'immagine  
source:  
Lynch, K.; Ceccarelli, P., (2010),  
"L'immagine della Città", p. 98 and p. 100  
edited by the author in September 2018

Further to the above preconditions, the chapter would consider, try to define and give a meaning to the elements which are composing the process, to the working procedures put into place and to the missing points to be concluded and from which to start a new process.

In this sense, the categories to take into account are the *materials* meant as all those elements physical and non-physical which constitute the contemporary city and are involved in the transformation process. The complexity of the process allows the research to divide the materials allocating each one into a tangible - intangible dimension and space-time dimension, to define a spectrum of elements and roles.

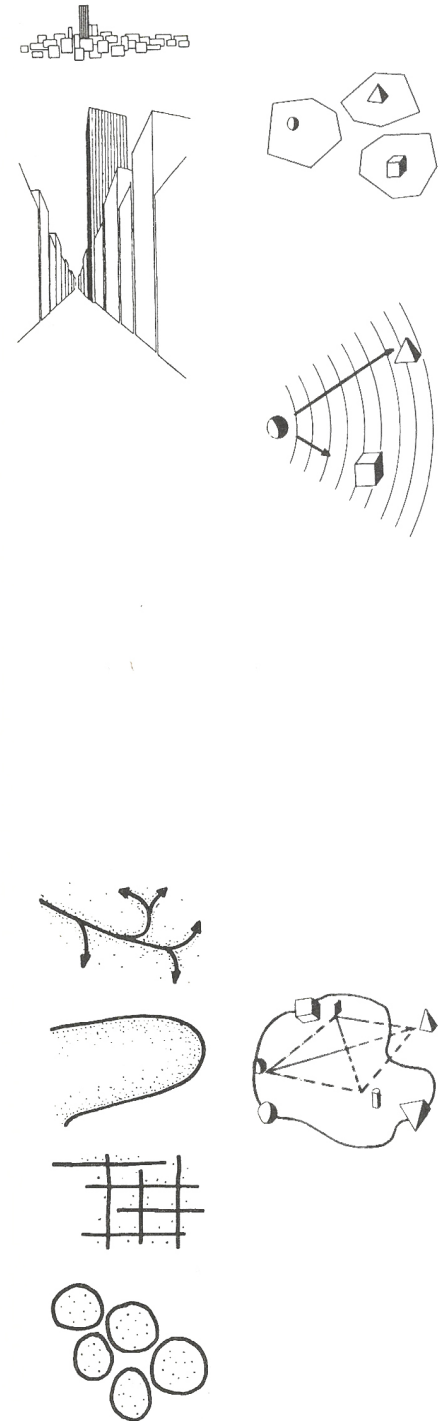
The *actions* represent the actual creative action, the study of which allows to define the process itself. The action is identified as the gesture, the intervention, the program and the organisation put in place at a given location by the actors, through the elements. Understanding the nature of the actions and their characteristics leads to the identification of different types of processes.

The *reactions* underline actions impact on the city and its elements. The reactions are, therefore, identified as fallout on urban space, on the rhythm of change, on the economic and social aspects of a place.

Finally, the *re-actions* allow continuing the process on two main lines of action: on one hand, the organisation, maintenance, and control of the initiatives and practices already established and on the other, the construction of new practices following a verification of the rations are missing. In this sense, the re-actions appear to be the meeting point between the cyclical process that begins and ends and the spiral process that tends towards infinity and is a continuous retrieve and consolidate the practice, which is the result of a new starting point.

### 3.2.1 Materials

The materials are meant as all those elements belonging to the city-scape and contributing to its transformation. According to the *assemblage thinking*, the image of the city is composed by the aggregation of elements which are different in terms of nature as well as dimension. In this sense, following the point of view of the





assemblage, the relations between different elements drive the assessment of a city, a neighbourhood, and an area. Understanding, identifying and defining the physical, social and economic elements of the urbanity and their relations between each other allows a deep comprehension of the dynamics which are taking grassroots in an urban area.

The aim of the chapter indeed is to study all the forms and mechanisms through which they participate in the process, by defining the categories of membership, identifying the roles, whether active or inactive, understanding the relationships between them. *What matters it is not the elements, but what are the relationships that form between them and the field of forces and tensions that this causes* (Marti Aris, C., 2013, p. 65).

The materials are divided into a Cartesian place into two dialectical couples which are space-time and tangible-intangible; the plane allegorically represents the scenes of the city where each element, whatever it is, tangible or intangible, as an actor plays a role and the relations between those actors have a consequence to the place, both in terms of space and time.

The mix of tangible and intangible elements into the physical or temporal dimension established an active partnership able to drive and manage the process. Sometimes, however, those groups are not formally expressed since most of the elements and their relations are not properly recognised. For this reason, give a name to those elements and understand what is the role of each of them and how much it plays it into the process and what are the relations triggered would be very helpful for driving and controlling the urban transformation.

### 3.2.1.1 Tangible and intangible elements

The first category is expressed by a dialectic couple of tangible and intangible elements. The complex urban system is, indeed, composed of different elements which are touchable or untouchable, which are physical recognised or evanescent to the sight. Both those tangible and intangible materials play an important and fundamental role into the city-scape, the physical objects are drawing the boundaries of the spaces,



defining the different functions and determining the border between open and close, public and private, collective or individual. As well as the intangible materials allow the physical objects to carry out their role, by activating interconnections between the statics and allow them to interrelate each other.

### *Tangible elements*

According with the deep analysis of the case studies developed in Part 2, the found *tangible elements* are belonging to the physical characteristic of the space and are basically defined by geography, urban assets, objects and people.

To define a place, naming its characteristic and its character is needed. There are lots of elements which give a place its typical arrangement and first of all the *geography* and the location are one of the main aspects which influences the identity of the place itself. The geography gives to the place its natural conformation which influence, the weather, the temperature, the fauna, the building heritage as well as the culture, the behaviour and the history.

The geography is the first aspect to look at before starting a design process and from it, it is possible to learn a lot about the place and area considered. The geography is a tangible item, belonging to the touchable ground, which has physical and measurable dimensions. In terms of the city-scape, the geography determines the spectrum between the *healthy* and the *declining city* (Bishop, P., 2016)<sup>2</sup>; indeed, the geographical location of the place and its distance to the city centre define particular aspects and needs fundamental to the understanding of the creative urban transformation process.

In the case of London, especially in the Hackney Borough, the location of each case study plays a critical role in the development of the transformation. For example, the regeneration of Shoreditch was strongly influenced and simplified by the proximity to the City: the financial district enabled the proliferation of the start-ups and the success of the current Tech City. As well as, Hackney Wick was considered the right place where developing the Olympic Park thank its location: a declined area needs to be redeveloped but at the same time with the strong infrastructure assessment which provides the basic structure where starting the development. In this sense, the case studies considered in the previous chapter help to understand how much critical role is played by the geography of the place for future developments.

Footnote

<sup>2</sup> During a conversation at The Bartlett School of Architecture held on November 2016, Peter Bishop has described London looking through a horizontal spectrum moving from west to east. The west part was considered the healthier part of the city and the east one the much more declined instead.

Figure

### **Canberra**

Aerial view to represent the assemblage theory

source:

<https://understandingsociety.blogspot.co.uk/2012/11/assemblage-theory.html>

visited on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018



What calls *urban assets* are all those elements belonging to the urban planning dimension, and are the built-up spaces, the open space, the parks and all the infrastructures which enable the movement around the urban space. All these elements are considered active project materials and have a fundamental role in the development process.

Firstly, they are considered as an existing resource to start from, as well as they give a meaning to the place and endow the place with a sense of place and identity. In such cases, the availability of existing unused and/or abandoned spaces empowers the process to start, indeed as the case studies have shown, the occupation, most of the times illegal, of a place begins a chain process of use of the space and determines the basis for activating the place itself. The urban assets are the elements, also called *hard infrastructures*, which fix the flats of the scenes and represent the scenography of the transformation.

*People* are the more active material of the process and play a decisive role in the development or the transformation of a place. As seen through the case studies most of the actions and the transformations take grassroots by spontaneous activity driven by people who live the place considered. In this sense, people are the real owner of the modification process and their creativity leads the intervention often without any kind of professional interference. It is possible to recognise the different way in which people are involved in the process and also the level of engagement is always varied. In the case like Dalston, the participation of the local community is high intensive during all the process, in other cases, such as Hackney Wick, local people who have started the process are walked away afterward, giving space to other groups or authorities.

The *urban objects* are all the devices which allow people doing things into the city, allowing mobility such as public transportation, cars, bicycles; as well as the devices related to the light and the shadows of a place, such as street lights and trees; as well as the devices related to the temporary use of the space, such as benches and tables, stands for street market and other devices for multiple activities.

All those elements determine the environment of the place by giving the conditions to be followed in terms of programming and designing. The word environment is, in this case, considered not only in the sense of natural environment but above all as the system in which all the elements and the materials are grouped. So, the environment

might be considered as the background of the urban scenes, the physical system with its boundaries where all the actors are playing their specific role.

#### *Intangible elements*

The environment of a place is defined not only by the physical, touchable and visible elements, however, an important role is played by all those latent aspects which enable the connection between physical materials. The *intangible elements* define an additional layer into the complex stratified ground of the city which make the character of the city recognisable, by giving it a meaning. The intangible elements indeed are all those untouchable elements belonging especially to the relational sphere, and in this sense are: *networks* and *social interactions, happenings, governance and management, sense of place and identity*.

The *networks* represent all the interconnected relationships between things, people, and places, they might be expressed in physical and digital networks. The physical networks are those devices which enable people and things to get physically in touch and share knowledge and experiences. Furthermore, the digital revolution and the spread of the internet have empowered cities to define new relationships in a virtual layer, “*the digital revolution is creating radically new approaches that revolutionise the way in which individuals and institutions engage and collaborate*” (Schwab, K., 2016, p. 19).

The opportunity to be virtually connected has critically changed the way of using the private and public space, as well as the way of working and living. At the same time, the addition of this digital layer is setting up further way to transform the space and it would be definitely considered as a proper urban material which enables the process to take grassroots. The powerful of Tech City, in Shoreditch, came in the first instance from the modification of the place for working, the increasingly innovative technological developments enable access to the data and productions directly from mobile devices, allowing the new creative industries to be home-based. In this sense, most of the work is detached into the two network categories: the virtual one moving on the digital set and the physical one transferred into the urban spaces, modifying them into the stage of the productive process. Each space contributes to being the place of birth, proliferation, and distribution of new ideas, returning to the image of a creative and productive cluster to the city, enabling things to happen.

*Happenings* are very important to understand the process as they are something

Figure

#### **Urban Acupuncture**

Graphic representation of urban acupuncture in Helsinki

source:

<http://helsinkiacupuncture.blogspot.co.uk>

visited on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018

that occurs, frequently without realising it, but that has a very strong effect on the space. *Shoreditch has happened* (Chapter 2.4.1, p. 136), has happened spontaneously without awareness, and what happened gave an identity to that place and became the reason to understand and follow up the process which provides those radical and successful change.

Furthermore, the global and local authority plays a crucial role in terms of *governance* and *management* of the urban transformation, as seen through the case studies they allow things happened, even though not borne. However, the role of governance and management is not belonging just to authorities but in most cases is carrying out by people who live and develop the change. The need of management is fundamental in term of carrying ahead the transformation in order to understand what is missing and how to make it continues; sometimes happens that this is not properly developed and it might be missed.

The *sense of place* (Relph, E., 1976) and identity is another important and strategical element to take into account during the transformation process, it should be considered as a proper material which takes actively part into the development. It is defined by all the elements that are composing the space both tangible and intangible which give a meaning to the experience lived in the place itself, as well as it might be expressed by lighting and sounds, as well as smells belonged to a specific place. The sense of place is something related to the feeling of *belonging and of emotional attachment* (Carmona, M., 2010, p. 120), and often it drives the transformation.

People who live in a place are battling to keep the place recognisable to them and frequently move actions to preserve the place identity. The example of Dalston, and in some case also the one of Hackney Wick, is clearly expressing this concept and shows how much the sense of place felt by the local community could have the engine force to start and carry out a transformation process.

All the elements described above are defining a complex system of project materials engaged in the creative process of urban transformation; they are *acting* into a space-time dimension, providing different interactions each other.

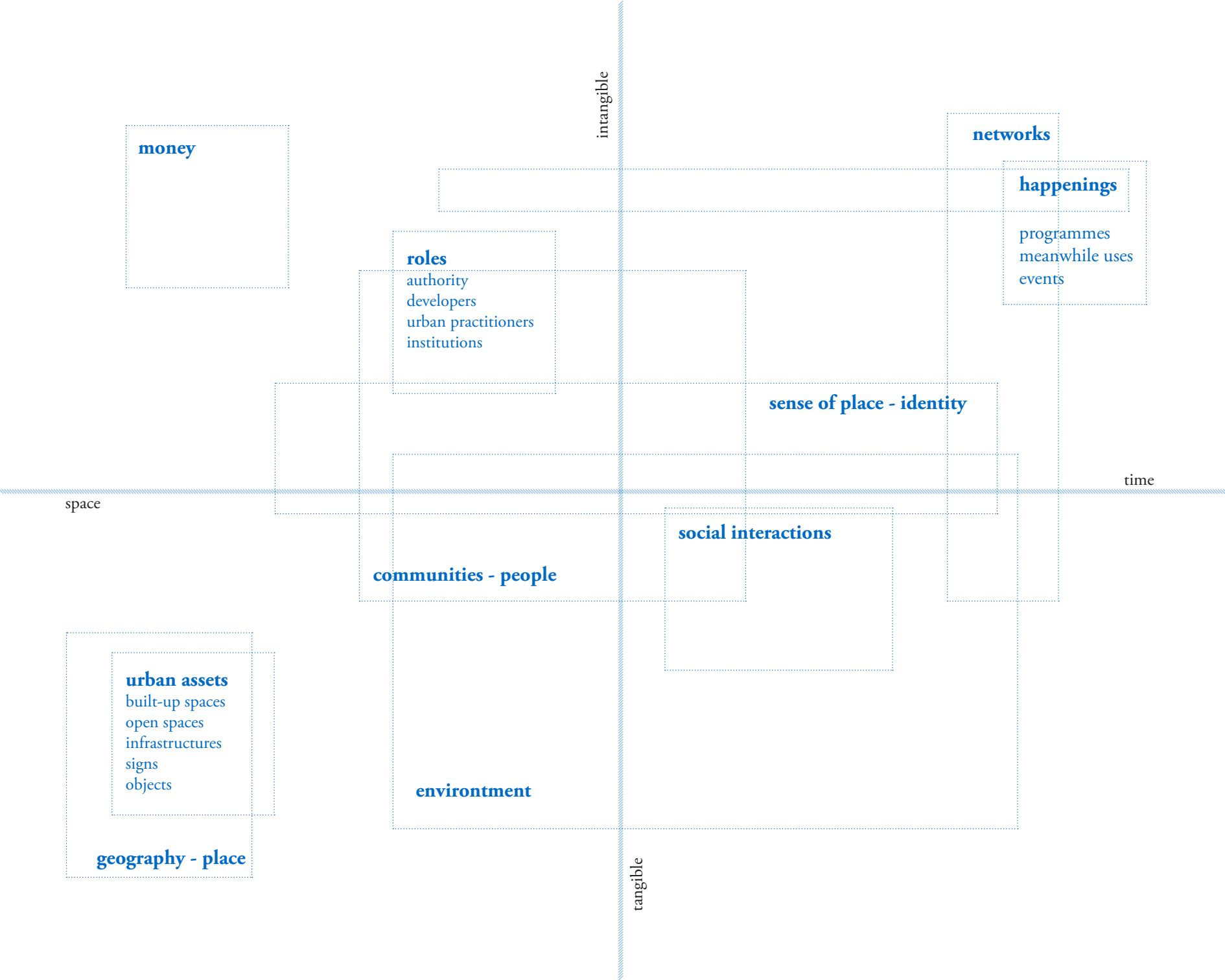
Diagram

### **Materials**

Diagram which represents the relationship of materials in a time/space and tangible/intangible dimensions

source:

edited by the author, March 2018



intangible

tangible

**money**

**networks**

**happenings**

programmes  
meanwhile uses  
events

**roles**

authority  
developers  
urban practitioners  
institutions

**sense of place - identity**

time

space

**social interactions**

**communities - people**

**urban assets**

built-up spaces  
open spaces  
infrastructures  
signs  
objects

**geography - place**

**enviromtent**

### 3.2.1.2 Between space and time dimension

In terms of urban design, space and time are always been interconnected, and, as Lynch argued, the evidence of time influences the form and the image of the city (Carmona, M., 2010, p. 241). According to with Lynch (1972) the concept of time would be expressed into two different categories: the *rhythmic repetition* of the daily actions across the cycle day time frame, and the *progressive and irreversible change* of the never end of the time passing through life. This concept defines a double dimension of the time, a short-time dimension expressed by all the action which starts and ends in a cycle which is going to be repeated and a long-time dimension which will reveal the proper changes. *Urban designers need to understand how environments change, what stays the same and what changes over time* (Carmona, M., 2010, p. 241).

Nevertheless, this chapter means the space as well as time as a material of the process, which acquires an active role in the transformation and is taken into account during the design. The creative urban transformation process, studied from the analysis of the case studies, considers not only the physical transformation and design of an architectural object or place but also a big value belongs to the maintenance and management of the change. In this sense, the process is composed of an twine between space and time.

The design space and its physical structure provide the shape and form of the playground where activities are driven, the redevelopment through the design of the existing help the place to be reactivated, the settlement of the space with devices which allow social interactions and activities gives form to space. It is considered not only a container where activities are holding but also the real actor able to change and modify itself, by playing its role in the transformation. Masterplans, projects, and construction sites are the tools and materials which through the transformation of the space is driven and they give to a given space a new form and configuration, they permit the adaptation of the space to the new needs.

Furthermore, understanding the timeframe is very crucial within the creative urban transformation, indeed the designer of a development is normally represented by a short-term timeframe, building a space requires different actions into a sharped time dimension. However, making a space requires even more time and the change

conveys not only into the construction process but also and above all in the living of the place itself. For this reason, most of the more powerful experiences studied, are related to the temporary. In this case, the time is not only something that passes through but is something that needs to be detailed design, as well as a building.

Events, happening and meanwhile uses are the expression of the time in terms of design and they play the role to activate a given space for a while, let see what happen, allowing people to understand and grasp the change. As expressed by the case studies, most of the empowered activity is coming from temporary tools, the Dalston Curve Garden, for example, was developed after a trial temporary event, which had the force to change totally an abandoned space. This temporary event was successful and allow the starting of a new, more permanent, transformation process afterwards. In other cases, the temporary event failed and the transformation was ended and not continued.

As in the creative economy the risk hold by the process could be high and the feedback could be strongly negative, the case of Hackney Wick and the moving of most of the artists after the construction of the Olympics site is an expressive example of how much the control of the time, allowing people to grabs the change is totally needed in those kinds of processes.

### 3.2.1.3 Defining partnerships

The complexity of the process is firstly underlined by the mwultiplicity of its materials, as already mentioned each material plays a crucial role within the transformation and, the success of this is determined by the balanced interrelation between those. In this sense, all the elements need to work together, defining a partnership aimed to carry out all the phases of the modification.

The partnership is composed of delegates who represent the tone of each material into the specific time frame needed. The partnership focuses on the entire process, from the vision to the delivery and maintenance and, as a film director, leads and chairs the programmes, managing the actions, organising the timing and building the relationships. In this sense, the partnership, as a supervisor, become the real

designer of the creative process. Authorities, institutions, developers, delegates of the local community, architects, planners, and designers need to seat together to let a good partnership to be composed.

The partnership is setting the arrangements for the regeneration and all actors are working together as a unique element, merging together all the knowledge, experiences, needs and creativities to let the process become a complex and flexible action.



### 3.2.2 Actions - Reactions

Within a breakdown of the creative process, actions take on a key role, as they represent the proper creative operational procedure which allows defining the process itself. The action is identified as the gesture, the intervention, the programme and the organisation put in place at a given location by the actors, through the elements. Understanding the nature of the actions and their characteristics leads to identify the different types of processes.

Furthermore, the concept of assemblage means as a tool of analysis that focuses on the interactions between the elements, producing a reverse process that is no longer the result of a preconceived project, but rather is the result of an entanglement of people, materials, actions and uses within a shared space (Amin, A., and Thrift, N., 2017, p. 23). The word action pinpoints a *process of doing* that produces events through different temporalities and contingencies.

The chapter is dedicated to different types of actions and new approaches to the urban design which are spreading into the city and are clearly recognised within the case studies analysed. Most of the actions are taking roots spontaneously and only recognised as strategies after they collected positive reactions.

The breakdown of the process allows understanding separately what is the action and what is the reaction to the action, giving a value in approaching the process. Translating an action into a strategical approach allow urban practitioners to find their own role into a process that looks able to follow without any control and it is the goal the research is keen to reach.

In this sense, three main codified approaches to the urban design are considered, considering them as a translation of the actions collected through the case studies.

#### 3.2.2.1 Urban acupuncture

As the medical practice of acupuncture which uses needles to nurse a pain, as well as *urban acupuncture* is a concept that considers a given action acts in a specific



Figure

#### **Les Bouquetistes**

Original street bookshops in Paris

source:

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bouquinistes\\_seine2.](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bouquinistes_seine2.jpg)

*.jpg*

visited on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018

place to revitalise a sick urban area, which could be a city, a neighbourhood or a place. Popping up as lots of pinpoints, urban acupuncture occurs to the space with activities originated from different needs, indeed most of them don't play a decisional design role when occurring but become critical into the process of modification of a space. Keeping the shops of little-Korea in New York opened all night was a need for those Korean people to adapt their home habits to a new place, NYC, not a planning strategy, nor an attempt to modify a space either, but in the end, it turns out in being a good act of urban acupuncture. The night opening of those shops enables the flowing of people in those part of the city for the entire 24 hours, keeping the place so much safer than other parts of the sleeping city (Lerner, J., 2014, p. 6). In this sense, this action that was totally detached to a planning intervention revealed itself to be the driving force for reactivating the neighbourhood.

There would be different forms of urban acupuncture able to trigger urban transformation, from the Tango dancers in San Telmo, Buenos Aires, to the urban gardeners in Curitiba, passing through artworks temporary or permanent exhibited in public space, such as the bronze sculpture *Mamam* by Louise Bourgeois showed in 2016 in front of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. The common ground of urban acupuncture is to allow people to take responsibility for space, making things creatively and keep the ownership of the action itself. The acknowledge of those unplanned human interventions could be a basis from which develop a design strategy due to the reactivation and revitalisation of declined areas. The acupuncture dots appear in the city without an outstanding rule, however, those happening together considered become more mutually supportive, and are able to improve the activation of a wider urban system.

Urban knowledge, awareness, and kindness are needed conditions for a good urban acupuncture, indeed allowing people to do something impose them to be aware and comfortable with the place they are going to act in. The most successful experience of urban acupuncture is driven by the consciousness to let people know the value of the place, triggering into themselves the willingness of taking care of it. Therefore, preserving the identity and sense of place is one of the goals of this practice, developing, even more, a feeling of belonging which empowers people in doing things.

As per its typical character of spontaneity and unplanned, urban acupuncture is

Figure  
**Los Tangueros**  
Openair tango in Plaza San Telmo, Buenos Aires  
source:  
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/469711436126521157/>  
visited on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018

difficult to be programmed, however, the need is to set the right environment to let it continue. Indeed, in cases of urban acupuncture, the aim for the practitioner would be to let people doing things independently by giving them the right condition for doing it. Continuity, both in terms of space and time, is fundamental to keep the place active and let the practices going ahead within the city-scape; *filling up the urban voids can be the first step to sound acupuncture* (Lerner, J., 2014, p. 37). Understanding what is missing and find a way to fill it is the first action to do, in order to keep the place vital. The urban micro-interventions, led by micro-companies and local start-ups, present a very high degree of failure risk, and generally have a limited lifespan; ensuring an supporting environment to spare continuity allows the site to remain active over a long period of time, even if the activities carried out 'turn on' only for brief moments.

The economy is always the driving force for determining the power of a city or neighbourhood, indeed the success of a new development is generally defined by its economic power and outcome that has to the place. It used to think that big and mega projects bring success to the city but they take an extended timeframe to be constructed and in most of the case they carry out just global interests rather than act locally. Urban acupuncture aims to generate even more local business opportunities (Lerner, J., 2014, pp. 23-25) which, all grouped, have the equivalent engine of the bigger ones. Acting locally for thinking globally is one of the main slogans of urban acupuncture and helps to keep the place alive and healthy.

Businesses and activities attract people to go to those places and live them and stay there. The presence of people is the sign which guarantees that the place is working well, indeed people want to go where other people are. The London East-end turns out to become one of the most outstanding places in London from when people started to go there. Today, people want to live in the neighbourhood like Dalston or Hackney, the value of the area is increasing and the wider contest is under the attention of the GLA (Greater London Authority) which, with the Local Councils, is developing action plans to keep the area active and vital.





### 3.2.2.2 Tactical urbanism

The word *tactical urbanism* is referred to an urban design approach that took grassroots in the USA around 2010; it is used to describe all those actions commonly referred to as ‘*guerrilla urbanism*’, ‘*pop-up urbanism*’, ‘*city repair*’ (Lydon, M., 2012, p. 1). In *Tactical Urbanism* a catalogue of actions around North America is collected aiming, above all, to investigate the change, offer local ideas for local planning, develop the value of the social capital and build interconnections between the public and private sector (Lydon, M., 2012, pp. 1-2). The slogan of tactical urbanism is *short-term action - long-term change* and would explain the main essence of this approach, indeed both the case studies previously analysed and *tactic examples* are highlighting how much small interventions, mostly spontaneous and people have driven, get radical change within a wider area of the city.

The reason for tactical urbanism is located in two main needs: on one hand, the need for people who live the city to understand the meaning of the transformation and way of change, mega-projects work on such a large scale which is hardly understandable from people who are going to live there; on the other hand, in a period of time characterised by a strong economic crisis, the risk of large investment turns out to be too high. In addition, the lack of the conventional tools and mainstream practices is noted and lots of times are not well-established by local communities and economic outcomes.

The three case studies considered in the second part of the research reveal how much the spontaneous and small actions have had the driving force to transform a place in a long-term temporality. In this sense, attaching a tactical urbanism approach to the public and planned one *may quickly build trust amongst community leaders* (Lydon, M., 2012, p. 1), engaging citizens to build their own places allows much more increasing social capital, improving local economies and activating urban spaces. As seen, allowing people to do something attracts other people in participating, staying in and creating something new, getting comfortable with the place and process, taking the ownership and battling to keep it preserved.

*Tactical urbanism* means not only engages citizens in the planning process, rather allows them to do things in the city-scape contributing to the modification of the

Figure

**Mamam**

Guggenheim, Bilbao

source:

Lerner, J., (2014), “Urban Acupuncture”, p. 69



space itself. Indeed, most of the tactical actions started in a non approved situation becoming sanctioned just after they have been done.

Furthermore, these kind of actions are not a new concept, what is new is thinking to them as a proactive tool for transforming the space. Indeed, is possible to recognise in the past examples of tactical urbanism, such as Les Bouquetistes in Paris, those booksellers on the Seine riverfront are a substantial example that shows how much small actions have the driving force to change a place. Les Bouquetistes started in the 16th century as an unsanctioned and illegal action becoming a symbol for Paris and, in 2007, a Unesco protected heritage site, changing completely the pedestrian path of the Seine bank side (Lydon, M., 2012, p. 5). As Les Bouquetistes represents one of the first spontaneous pop-up shops became a studied example of tactical urbanism, as well Shoreditch and Hackney Wick collect a series of spontaneous actions which are becoming the meaning of their transformation through the time. Acquiring a critical view in terms of urban design, the effective role tactical actions play in the process, could be considered a proper tool for driving the transformation.

As a non-traditional design practice, tactical actions are driven by a mix of actors whose combination and interaction would determine the nature and characteristic of the development. Nowadays, intangible materials act a key role in the process of sharing tactics into the virtual world allowing them to be duplicated in different places by different actors; as an open-accessible manual, the web represents one of the most efficient channels to spread these kinds of practices. In this sense, very important is the presence of a strong virtual life of those as a fundamental part of the action itself.

### 3.2.2.3 Place-making

*“Most of the wonderful places of the world were not made by architects but by the people”* (Alexander, C., 1977), which this assertion Christopher Alexander rejected the top-down approach declaring they are in opposition to the human nature (White, W. H., 2013, p. 6).

The importance of the social and human interactions are at the centre of most

of the urban design approaches since time immemorial, in this sense the public space represents the place where those interactions occur. This is the reason why the public space is always at the centre of the debate about urban design and urban planning; according to the urban sociologist Richard Sennett it plays an important role “*in creating the necessary social friction between different groups of people who would otherwise not meet*” (White, W. H., 2013, p. 6).

A great public space is place where people want to go and stay for spending time with other people, doing things and sharing knowledge and experiences. To allow people to spend time there a place needs to be “*accessible and well connected, comfortable*” and with a “*good image, attractive and welcoming*”, and should create a “*social environment*” (Placemaking Leadership Council, visited on 2018). A good accessibility to the urban space allow people to recognise the place and to easily get to, enter in and navigate through and they are encouraged to walk to a space which is well connected with other parts of the city and /or other important places. In this sense, the edges of the space play a key role in the process because they represents the real attractor points which are embracing people to get in.

More over, a good image attracts people to spend time in that comfortable space and in this sense people want to spend time in a place where they can have a perception of safety and cleanliness, as well as where they can feel comfortable to do things and participate in activities.

And finally, it should create a social environment to boost people interacting to each other and sharing interests. In those senses, a great public space is that space which gives people a reason to come to.

The concept of *place-making* is based on enabling people to do things in to a given space, is a practice of doing which pays attention to the process rather than to the product, and sees communities not only as “*recipients, but active participants in this shaping*” (Kent, F., 2013, pp. 9). Place-making is not only a chain of action to produce an architectural product but rather it empowers citizens to create social engagements, builds interactions and connections, settles the social capital in, and last but not least, activates derelict places.

The idea of place-making underlines a flexible approach which could be temporary and removable, it could activate a place just for a while and let things pass through afterwards, as happened with the project *Folly for a flyover*, an intervention by

Figure

### **Favela Painting**

Artists’ movement to activate favelas in Rio de Janeiro

source:

<https://mypost.com/2014/06/17/brushing-up-rios-slums-for-the-world-cup-with-favela-painting/>

visited on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018

Furthcoming page

### **Colorado Avenue**

Tactical urbanism in Washington DC

source:

[http://urbanplacesandspaces.blogspot.co.uk/2012/10/tactical-urbanism-smart-growth\\_8.html](http://urbanplacesandspaces.blogspot.co.uk/2012/10/tactical-urbanism-smart-growth_8.html)

visited on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018









Assemble Architects where a theatre was temporary build up under the highway viaduct in Hackney Wick, London. The action occurs just for nine weeks during which residents, artists, and visitors would be able to live and perform the space. Furthermore, as happened in Gillett Square in Dalston, the action is characterised by an iterative component, which allows the playground to see life just a couple of time each week, and an interactive one that enables and ask people to be proactive to give to the space its peculiar temporary connotation to be a proper playground.

All those types of actions constitute the character of the place-making approach implementing a process of sharing knowledge, culture, and information, as well as a process of influence, attracting even more people. By breaking the formal common barriers, the ones who used to be the users of the space start to feel a sense of belonging to the place, becoming the makers themselves.

#### 3.2.2.4 How places react

The three approaches explained above are similar to each other in some part, however, present also specific differences. The biggest difference is the intensity level of the gesture: where urban acupuncture could be associated with an event, something that happens, almost totally unplanned and, in a way, coming from *individual* needs, as well tactical actions could be considered as the tool through which manage the creative process, those action are in most cases spontaneous and unplanned but easily applied to a defined programme. Finally, place-making is considered as a proper approach to design which focuses on the development of a process delivering a methodology.

As well they present some divergences as they have a common ground that is represented by the unconventional design procedure: all these practices could be and in most cases are driven just by the community without the need to involve urban practitioners and have the highest reaction as compared to big masterplans. All the examples reported show how successful are these kind of actions, how able they are to bring vital life to a place previously underused or abandoned, how healthy they are to take care of a sickness place.

Figure 1 and 2

##### **Cineroleum**

Reactivation of a fuel pump into a cinema by  
Assemble Architects

source:

<https://assemblestudio.co.uk>  
visited on November 2018

Furthcoming page

##### **Folly for a flyover**

Theatre under the viaduct by Assemble Architects

source:

<https://assemblestudio.co.uk>  
visited on November 2018

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The strengths belonged to those practices appear in how the city itself react to the action, as theatrical performance, the composition and combination of the elements, materials, or *actors*, through a sequence of actions, or *acts*, which are taking place in a given urban background, or *scenes*, give life to the creative process of transformation, or *show*, which is affirmed by economic, social and spatial reaction, or *audience*.

The reactions identify the fallout of the action to the space and are basically economic, which represent the financial outcomes of an area in terms both of business opportunity and income; social that represent the success of the place to the society in terms of social interactions and use of the space and spatial meant as the capacity of the physical space to host the transformation in terms of resilience.

As well the reactions are a critical element used for developing the process, allowing time to actions for having consequences on the reality of the place and to us for understanding what is missing in the process. Indeed, to guarantee continuity to the process figure out what is missing is needed.

**Urban Acupuncture**

events  
something that happens

different needs  
no planning expectations

*ex: 24h shops, New York City*

**Tactical Urbanism**

tool  
short-term actions - long-term change  
spontaneous interventions

actions that could be added to a programme

*ex: Les Bouquetistes, Paris*

**Place-making**

approach  
methodology  
programme

design practice  
process of doing

*ex: Making space in Dalston*

ACTIONS  
REQUIRED

**to continue**

**to manage**

**to plan**

### 3.2.3 Re-Actions

Once the cyclical process is apparently concluded, the reactions to the applied actions enable to understand what is working, what got wrong and what is missing or not yet completed and exactly at that point is possible to organise thoughts for starting a new cycle. The new process would provide for the definition of what failed in the previous one and the consolidation and maintenance of what has already happened.

The implementation of new actions, the Re-Actions, allows to continue the unfinished process and represents the meeting point between the cyclical process, that begins and ends, and the spiral process that tends towards infinity and is an ongoing retrieve and consolidation of the practices, which is the result of a new starting point. The big difference between the canonical architectural project and what is here called creative urban process is the attention shift from a product delivery, which is the goal of the architecture, to a process development, which is the main objective of the creativity.

Keeping the focus on the process means to take care to all the phases and not only the ones belonged to the space construction and, moreover, keep it goes on towards even more new actions in a long-term timeframe.

This paragraph develops a deductive analysis of possible but not certificated new actions to the different approaches already shown, in order to understand what is the possible role of the urban practitioners within those processes that seem able to happen and go on without guidance. Further to the understanding of the roles played, the aim of the research is to propose a possible methodology to guide, manage and plan the change. In this sense, the reactions reasonably gathered, and shown below, are: to keep it spontaneous, to partially plan and to plan.

#### 3.2.3.1 To keep it spontaneous

The case study of Shoreditch, explained in paragraph 2.3.1, reveals clearly how quickly and without control could an area change whether it has the right condition to drive the transformation. *Shoreditch has happened* (chapter 2.4.1, p. 136) spontaneously

Figure 1 and 2

#### **Park(ing) day**

Tactical urbanism in Portland, Oregon

source:

<https://www.fayettevilleflyer.com/>

visited on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018

Previous page figure

#### **Folly for a flyover**

Theatre under the viaduct by Assemble Architects

source:

<https://assemblestudio.co.uk>

visited on November 2018

Previous page diagram

#### **Actions**

Diagram which represents the action type and its

characteristic

source:

edited by the author on March 2018





towards a sequence of occurrences cropped up in the right place at the right time. As pinpoints, urban actions occurred in the space through time; starting from the artist's movement till the actual Tech City, an action follows another one making the transformation go ahead and driving the change of the place only by way of the happening of things. The results were the re-birth of a neighbourhood which was declined and abandoned, becoming fascinated and attractiveness. Shoreditch now is a place where people want to go, hanging out with friends into its pubs during weekends, spending time around its streets full of creative boutiques, working in its café and sharing knowledge with other start-uppers.

All those small actions are taking root into the cityscape in some cases with a good degree of success and in other cases with a total breakdown; in some cases they stop when the fallout is not completed and the regeneration ceases as a *never ended*, in other cases they finish but are not enough to produce effects to the city. For this reason, evaluating what are the reactions, checking out what are the impacts and understanding what is missing is the next step of an ongoing process which is, in some cases, not already ended and possibly will never end.

Shoreditch appears to be the place where spontaneous and community actions are working very well, the regeneration occurs physiologically and the place rebirths without strong caring interventions; this situation highlights the following question: what the urban practitioner should do if the city doesn't need him? This question seems to declare a catastrophic scenario for the future of the planning process, however, the author argues instead that the research aims to demonstrate the different situations this issue could generate.

What is happening to our cities enlightens that we are missing something in the way we used to look at them and work with them; Shoreditch doesn't need a traditional planning intervention but it strongly needs the started process to keep going on as it is. If it didn't need urban practitioners at the beginning of the process, it needs them now to help in providing the right conditions which let the process continues. Apparently, Shoreditch doesn't need anything to be a good place to stay, and the ongoing actions have a good impact on the economy and society, as well as space is welcoming even more people, events, tenants, residents, workers, etc.

According to the Shoreditch Action Plan 2017, the population of the neighbourhood

increases over 65% in the last 10 year, and “*this is reflecting the significant change Shoreditch has undergone over the last decade*” (Hackney Council, 2017, p. 22).

The swot analysis carried out by the Hackney Council highlights the vibrant and diverse mix of activities principally belonged to the creative sector, the value of the heritage assets and permeability of the network of streets, buildings and spaces, and the high level of sense of community and place as main strengths (Hackney Council, 2017, p. 30). However, some weaknesses appear in the analysis which is: the poor conditions of some areas, the traffic, noise, and litter caused by the vibrancy of the nightlife which gathers lots of complaints by the residents (Hackney Council, 2017, p. 31).

Even more, the threats of the area are the increasing of intensity of using the space which could cause the decrease in the quality of the space and the loss of the feature of the place itself (Hackney Council, 2017, p. 33). Considering all those aspects the future of Shoreditch is on the hands of a good management of growth, what provided the regeneration of the place has already occurred spontaneously in the previous decade, what is needed now is to bolster the strengths and ward the threats off.

Therefore, new actions in Shoreditch would be working on reactions by deeply understanding the lacks in previous actions and acting exactly in that point. Building partnerships, formed by a mix of interested actors, which have the task of improving the potential of what already is there and provide the right environment to create new actions. In this process, the urban practitioner, with his multiple skills, has the role to direct and manage this ongoing process of maintenance. The urban practitioner, in this case, is not asked to create and apply a real action but rather to establish the right condition to let people act in the place.

### 3.2.3.2 To partially plan

The case study of Dalston reveals another point of view of the creative regeneration process, the events occurred there is the best portrayal of how much a planned change is in some ways not a better choice for a place. The first action plan for





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Dalston gathered lots of complains, bad reactions and declared demonstrations, the plan which concerns a new development close to Dalston Square was totally against the community needs and from them totally rejected. Therefore, this example represents the reason why the urban practitioner needs to be aware of the impact a new development might have to the society and to the place as well; the importance to keep the attention to the process rather than to the product comes from situations like the one of Dalston.

After the community has taken the leadership of the regeneration process, Dalston starts changing life and face, however, unlike Shoreditch, Dalston has not happened and the transformation was driven by a coexistence of actors which includes residents, tenants, authorities, architects, and urban designers working together. The programme Making Space in Dalston underlines a series of bottom-up interventions which are partially planned and partially left to the follow up of the people who used to manage the space. This experience sets the background up to build up an un-ended process where spaces were arranged to host different activities, a mix of affordable retails, facilities and workspaces were provided and historical buildings were restored to protect the sense of the place (chapter 2.4.3, pp. 170-171).

All those interventions were applied under the ongoing control of authorities, community associations and urban practitioners, who were managing the change with the aim not only to deliver the regeneration of Dalston but also to establish an ongoing process which allows people to go on in doing things and handle the space. Dalston represents the real application of the three paradigms developed by J&L Gibbons and MUF Architects which are: “*valuing what is there, nurturing the possible and defining what is missing*” (J&L Gibbons and Muf Architects, 2009, p. 19), however those three paradigms which are composing a cyclical process with a beginning and an end seems to be replayed through times in an ongoing process that doesn't end with the definition of what is missing but continues to check whether and what is always missing and might be defined, nurtured and valued.

The local authorities are working on the analysis of what are the strength to hold and are building a vision for the neighbourhood which considers the maintenance of the local character and identity, the supporting of creativity and culture, the promotion of a local based economy and the revitalisation of the public realm as the main objectives of the current action plan (Hackney Council, 2013, p. 23).

The actual vision of the London Borough of Hackney for Dalston is totally changed from the one presented in 2004 on the redevelopment of Dalston Square and the community is considered as the element to be most enhanced and valued. In this sense what are the re-actions for Dalston? Trust! Trusting the community and let them caring the place by doing things, promoting places and investing in them is primary encourage things to let something happen.

Notwithstanding, this kind of processes need to be controlled continuously in order to check they would not turn into a chaos. Furthermore, the urban practitioner needs to be involved in the management of the spaces by continuing controlling the process previously started and guiding the community doing things and managing the space.

The Dalston Curve Garden and Gillett Square show very well how this could happen, the management of the space is totally driven by the association of residents and they also would provide spatial modification in the place itself. In both projects, and in the wider *Making space in Dalston* programme as well, the designers are involved in the maintenance, management, and control of most of the activities which are done within those spaces.

### 3.2.3.3 To plan

The last case study, Hackney Wick, and Fish Island, are showing a totally different approach instead: if both Shoreditch and Dalston represent the creative process as a bottom-up strategy, coming from the inside and growing up as pinpoints in the city, Hackney Wick “*proves that also controlled, planned and designed actions could be creative*” (chapter 2.4.2, p. 154). The need to rebuild the broken connections caused by the construction of the Olympic Park starts a process where authorities, urban practitioners, and thinkers were asking themselves how to develop a neighbourhood which had the aim to become a new centre for east London.

The idea of the LLDC (London Legacy Development Corporation) was to develop a regeneration programme of the five neighbourhoods around the Olympics fringe by giving a topic and a character to each area. Theoretically this approach, on one hand,

Figure

#### **Brooklyn Borough Hall**

Installation by the artist Mark Reigelman

source:

<http://www.urbanacupuncture.network/2016/06/23/urban-patterns-that-instigate-urban-acupuncture/>

visited on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018

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#### **Cebada Tactical**

Tactical urbanism at Mercado de la Cebada, Madrid

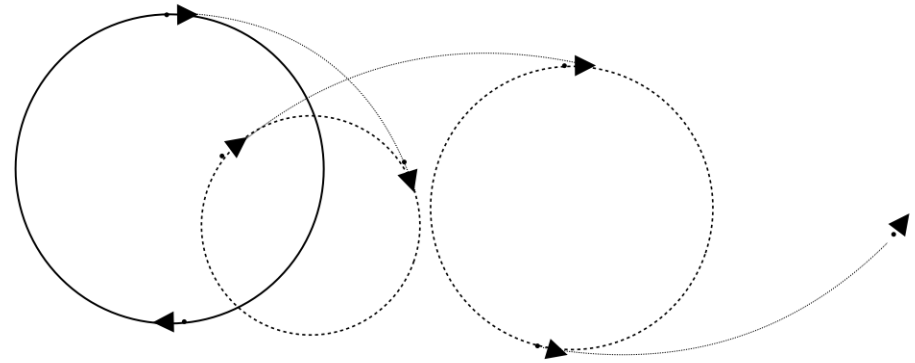
source:

<http://www.uncubemagazine.com/blog/15673595>

visited on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018







is solving the breakdown of the urban tissue and trying to rebuild the discontinued connections; on the other hand, giving a meaning to each neighbourhood shows the aim to safeguard the peculiar character and identity of each of them.

In particular, the vision for Hackney Wick concerns the aim to underline the “*vibrant focal point of world-class culture*” (LLDC, 2013, p. 2) and stress the historical creative and cultural nature of the area. Furthermore, the last action plan for Hackney Wick developed by the local authority has the aim and the vision to develop in the site the so-called Creative Media City (Hackney Council, 2012, p. 17) which “*will be an inspiring mixed uses area of new employment urban quarter, home to strong, competitive creative, technology and green industries*” (Hackney Council, 2012, p. 17).

Putting together both visions, the one of the LLDC and the Hackney Council’s as well, it seems the objective of the redevelopment concerns to be an attempt to recreate the Shoreditch conditions within to deepest east-end. However, the superimposition of a vision is not so strong to let the regeneration working, as well as it not always has the engine force to drive the change. Indeed, walking around Hackney Wick turns out something was still missing and the area is just starting to change his life.

What is deeply clear with the experience of Hackney Wick is that only bottom-up actions are not enough and strong to make a difference, the spontaneous process is not working in this area the same way is working in Shoreditch. The reasons are mainly two: firstly the location of the area, located in the deepest east-end of London and detached from the healthy centre of the vibrant City; secondly, the events throughout the Olympics construction have not only broken the physical connection within the

Figure  
**Wellington City Council**  
 Tactical urbanism  
 source:  
<https://twitter.com/WgtnCC>  
 visited on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018

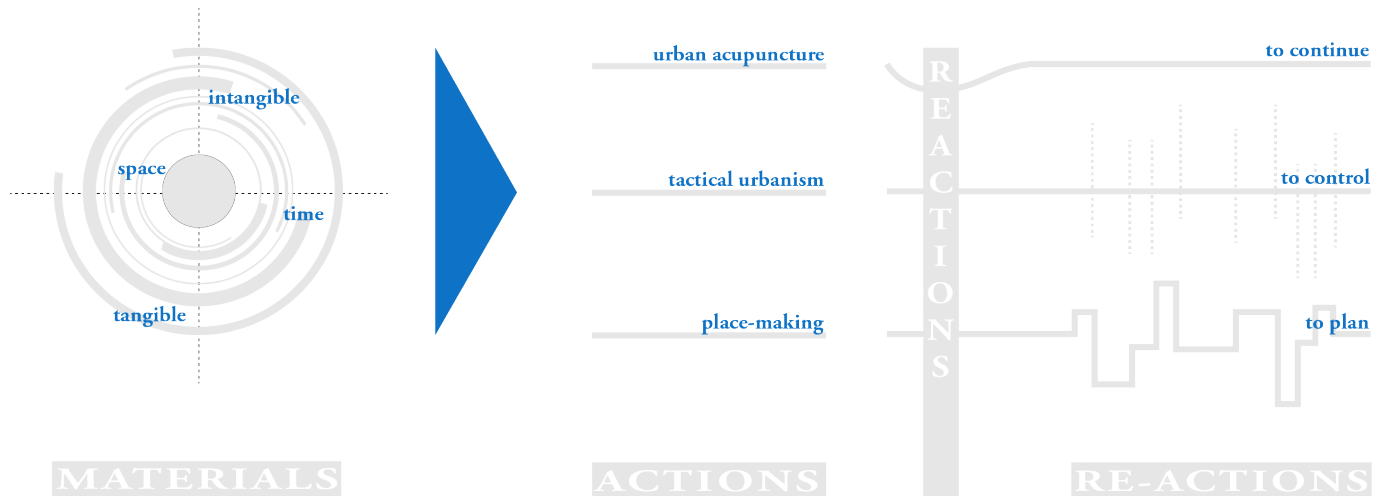
Diagram  
**Ongoing Process**  
 Diagram which represent the cyclical process and the ongoing process  
 source:  
 edited by the author on November 2017

Figure  
**East Street Market**  
 We Made That

source:  
 Mayor of London and Southwark Council  
 “What Walworth Wants”, p. 23

Diagram  
**Breakdown the process**

Diagram which represent the relationships between  
 Materials, Actions, Reactions and Re-Actions  
 source:  
 edited by the author on February 2018

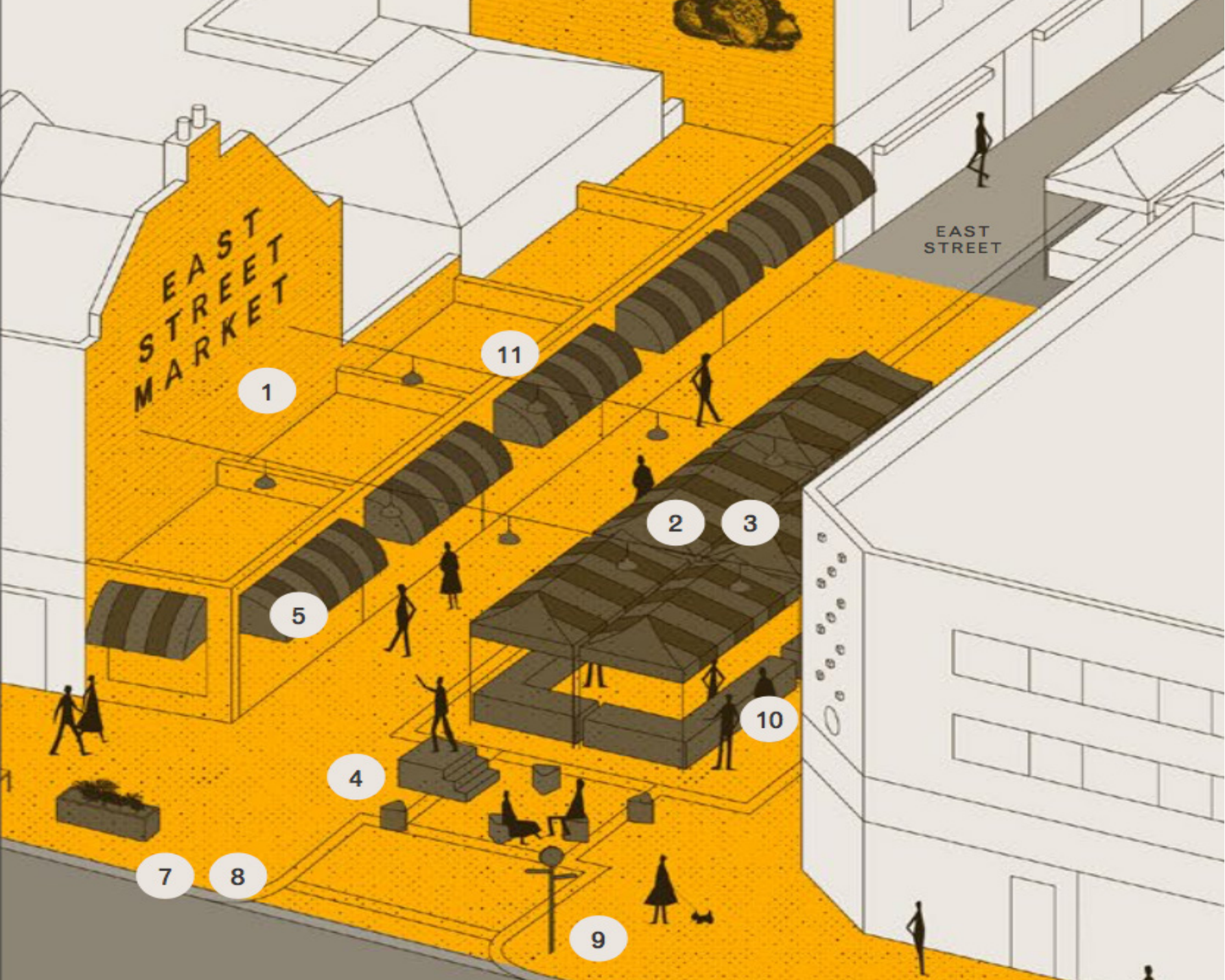


urban elements but also have interrupted a social and economical process which was seeing a spontaneous regeneration action by the artistic community.

In this sense, both spontaneous and planned actions could not work apart: the voids need to be filled and the connections built but at the same time the small hidden activities couldn't suffer the effects of a big redevelopment. The ongoing inter-relationship between planned, controlled and designed and spontaneous, uncontrolled and informal actions are needed.

The urban practitioner, in this case, should totally play a role that jumps in and off to the traditional approach of master planning and design and the management one which leads the spontaneous actions by directing them and giving them the fertile arrangements to be applied.

The case of Hackney Wick is the one that needs a greater attention in terms of the ability of balancing two apparently opposite actions; if the other two cases are needing an ongoing supervision of what happened or an organised control and management of what is going on, here we are faced with the real requirement of taking a balanced action which stays in the in-between.



EAST  
STREET  
MARKET

EAST  
STREET

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### 3.3 Building the process up

The analysis of the case studies and the following breakdown of the process highlight a situation that is the result of actions led mainly by people and not by architects, urban designers and planners and, related to this, the obvious question is how is possible that a place works very well when people move its transformation on? Why does a big project not take grassroots in this place? And what can do the urban practitioner to reshape his role into the process? We are facing a period of time which sees a radical change within the field of urban design, the traditional top-down master planning approach, led by urban practitioners, is leaving, even more, its place to a bottom-up place-making strategy, led by everyone who wants.

The history shows that lots of over-imposed projects, where the future of an area is decided, drawn and then built, are failing and, the informal and not planned processes of doing, driven by spontaneous and often naive actions, are working instead. This awareness has started the urban practitioners to sensitise their behaviours and change their approach, by putting the process at the centre of their thoughts, instead of the product. However, in many cases it seems they had lost their own peculiar role in the process itself and they need to find another way for leading the design; just because in most cases the design is not needed. On the other side, the totally uncontrolled actions placed by people are sometimes turning out into a chaos and the outcomes in terms of the form of the space are not always satisfy.

In this sense, the main objective of the research is to find what is the role of the urban practitioner in the process out and build a balanced strategy up, where the urban practitioner goes back to being the owner of the space but with a different character, not specifically as a designer but mainly as a director and a curator. “*We are enablers, not place-makers*” (Mckie, L., 2018, p. 3), with this sentence the London Silvertown Partnership is calling themselves suggesting “*they intend the Silvertown programme will be driven by the new creative community*” (Mckie, L., 2018, p. 3), so they’ve found their own role in creating the right conditions and settlement to let people make things in a given space.

Going back to the research questions it is possible to recap that the aim of the research is to find how *creativity* is involved in the process out and why those kinds

of processes could be called *creative process*.

Furthermore, understanding the way through which the designers have been engaged in the process and proposing an action strategy to approach and lead the change. The breakdown of the process underlined all the components of the wider process, highlighting a complex system of multiple actors involved in, analysing the dialectic pair of actions and reactions by understanding the outstanding importance of the reactions as a crucial point of the proceeding and, identifying the new actions to define what the previous ones have missed.

The coexistence of a mix of actors, playing different roles and acting different actions, shows the entity of the change at first instance: whether the traditional top-down approach concerns a chain system of multiple actions applied sequentially, the creative urban process requires an ongoing exchange of actions between the different actors and materials. Where, within the traditional approach, the process timeline is linear and continual, defined by the analysis of the place at first instance, followed by a concept stage and definition of objectives, which is followed itself by a preliminary stage of drawing and designing, going through the construction stage on, within the creative process of doing the actions timeline could be defined by a complex mesh system instead, which is set by thousand of ongoing connections and interactions between the different materials, tangible and intangible actors.

In this sense, the first main change the urban practitioner need to face on is being aware firstly to involve in to the design process all the actors required, each one with his own skills and knowledge, secondly to manage a complex proceeding which concerns not only the design but also the organisation, control and maintenance. Nonetheless, he is asked to understand where the design is needed and where not, moreover where a design action is needed and where he has to enable people to drive the process. As a director, the essential work of the urban practitioner within the creative urban process is behind the scenes and doesn't end with the delivery of the product but continues possibly towards a long-term timeframe.

Considering this change assess as a sort of general background for the transformation process, before giving a role to the creativity within the process, defining the meaning of the word creativity is needed. Indeed, understanding the meaning of creativity within the field of urban design and figuring out what is meant by the *creative process* is an outstanding requirement to define the approach.





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IDEA **HERE**



# creativity

[kree-ey-tiv-i-tee]

## Cre•a•tiv•i•ty

- “The ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships and to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, interpretations, etc.”(Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary).
- “Mental characteristic that allows a person to think outside the box, which results in innovative or different approaches to a particular task” (Business Dictionary).

A deeper analysis of the term is defined by Emilio Garroni within the development of the word *creativity* of the Einaudi Encyclopaedia. Particular awareness is dedicated to the word used into the specific linguistic sector, indeed in the first instance, Garroni defines creativity as a human natural instinct to approach to the world, typical skill of the infant. The process of making things and spontaneous actions that belong to the infant behaviours related to a given context, the experiment of moving and approach to places and things never seen before, make the infant be creative, as well as the word *creativity* is strictly linked to the term “*finding, discovering*” (Garroni, E., 2014, p. 65). As a consequence, “*creativity is in general defined as a featured category of a ‘superior’ knowledge, ‘different’ compared with the current way of learning*” (Garroni, E., 2014, p. 66), with this definition Garroni highlights the opposition between something known and in some ways governed by a series of rules and the “*creativity organist the regularity*” (Garroni, E., 2014, p. 66). This concept is expressed by Garroni as the “*scientific dilemma of creativity*” (Garroni, E., 2014, p. 65).

If you only take a blinkered view of the meaning, thinking to build up a methodological approach to the urban regeneration process seems to be impossible, however enhancing the study of the term and integrating it within the linguistic sector the “*rule-governed creativity*” and the “*rule-changing creativity*” (Chomsky, N., 1964) are defined. The philosophy of the creative’s rules within the Chomsky’s contemporary language is summarised with the following affirmation: “*the language gives limited tools but unlimited opportunity for expression, bounded only by the rules for building concepts and phrases, which are on one hand particular and idiosyncratic and on the other hand all-around, that means they are a common human gift*” (Garroni, E., 2014, pp. 112; Chomsky, N., 1966, p. 69).

Considering the “*ruled creativity*” concept as a compromise and basis to define a “*given changeable system of linguistic rules*” which could be infringed upon and others

Figure

**King’s Cross**

Public realm in London

source:

Author, April 2018

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**Your Idea Here**

Here East, Hackney Wick

source:

shot by Irene Manzini Ceinar on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2017



could be established (Garroni, E., 2014, p. 123), a creative urban process, based on the method which defines spontaneous, weak and uncontrolled actions, could be built as well.

Those actions are defining a bordered background of rules where creativity is expressed and can act. The establishment of the boundaries of the background comes from the knowledge and awareness of the place and by pinpointing and explaining the already happened actions in the place, as well as the ones which are meanwhile happening.

For this reason, building a reference model within the urban design practice is desirable and could allow the urban practitioner not only to control and plan a process often uncontrolled but also to restore under different standards the role of the designer which seems to be in some ways missed.

Assuming this concept as a needed requirement for the scientific advancement in terms of methodology, the case studies allow to identify three different methodological scenarios and define three active strategies by giving to the word creativity three different roles into the process. In this sense, creativity as a *result* of something already happened, creativity as an *answer* to something new and unknown and creativity as a *tool* to regeneration.

### **3.3.1 From a question mark to a creative process. Creativity as a *result***

Creatives processes happen sometimes without a real awareness of what is going to happen, and at the same time of what that often happened without a previous programme or imagination. Things happened without a very real reason or specific vision, people are doing things for themselves and places, in consequence, are changing, maybe nobody wanted this to happened and nobody forecasted or planned the change.

In those case, where the process happens instead, creativity appears as a *result* of something, it was not decided before, it was not planned, it was not predicted, just happened. And probably just because of this, it has the righter reason to be called





*creative process*; however, a process should be in some ways governed and the fact that it is a result of something happened doesn't mean this couldn't be translated into a design strategy. In the case where the place move independently on, even if uncontrolled actions, doing something to regulate it and take preconceived decisions "*could do more harm than good*" and in those cases "*doing nothing is the most urgent priority*" (Lerner, J., 2014, p. 21). An outstanding action would be understanding the nature of the process instead and enabling the environment to welcome the change.

How could this happen? The role of the urban practitioner is meant to be developed into a design proceeding but not always this could be accomplished, and sometimes the design is not needed and overall could be damaging. Notwithstanding, this would not express that the figure of an urban practitioner is not needed, actually these roles are certainly what those processes are calling for, but within different practical boundaries.

The role of creativity as a *result* of a given process admits the existence of few advantages conditions for the development of the process itself; furthermore, the action strength is not defined by designing a place but rather by setting and enabling all those conditions which allow the place to exist. However, those needed conditions are not always physiologically living in each place and they couldn't exist forever as well; that's the reason why to understand what they are, how they can live and how to enable their existence would be the real objective the urban practitioner is asked to develop.

Even more, the urban practitioner is asked to acquire adaptable and versatile skills to detach his behaviour from the traditional role the history gave him. In this case, indeed, the requested task doesn't involve the development of the design of a space but rather the control of all those spatial transformations which are changing the assess and appearance of the given space.

Furthermore, giving attention to the use of the space as well as to all the dynamics that happen within it could help in the collection of indicative data which, considerably analysed, highlight which are the positive conditions and negative ones in terms of the process development. As well as which are the conditions which influence the rise of spontaneous actions in terms of urban transformation and how those could be controlled.

The urban practitioner, as an expert in building the spaces, is able to analyse and

understand how those actions develop, take grassroots and spread with different solutions, and as a consequence, a maintenance programme can be developed, as well as a process of control which is not requiring a traditional design action.

In this sense, the theories described by Jaime Lerner into his *Urban Acupuncture* are totally aligned with what is meant *creative process*, and acting towards this direction would be the trait to build a qualifying strategy of even ongoing transformation processes.

The case of Shoreditch and its action plan developed by the local authorities, prove how much a good governance is needed to establish a balance between community-driven actions and discussed and planned actions. The Shoreditch power causes in different ways lots of imbalances in terms of use of the space, overall during the night time; those generate different concerns from the residents and at the same time deface the quality of the spaces within the neighbourhood.

This situation triggers some issues which are difficult to solve within the micro-degree typical of the single spontaneous actions which are just happened; rather a high-ranking control, which has the ability to define rules boundaries, is needed. The rules boundaries allow acting into a limited and defined background which is easier to manage both the global glance of the wider process as well as all the singularities, such as all the pinpoints which are switching on and off in the area. The global awareness of what happens allows to control the happenings and give to creativity the pure role to create things.

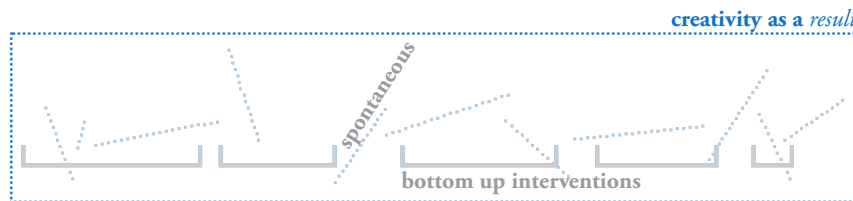


Figure  
**Playing with Water**  
Granary Square, King's Cross, London  
source:  
Author, April 2018

Diagram  
**Creativity as a Result**  
Diagram which represent the involvement of creativity in the process  
source:  
edited by the author on April 2018

### 3.3.2 From strong interventions to a question mark. Creativity as an *answer*

In other cases, the creative process is defined as the *answer* to a needed but unknown demand. The building of big urban regeneration system towards the need of a spatial and economic development of a given area follows up into a not resolved solution with a lack in the continuity of the physical and not connections between different urban areas. The city adjustment to a big top-down transformation needs a frame of time and not always this could have good outcomes both in terms of human behaviours and use of the space. In these cases, creativity is meant as the bottom-up answer which, through re-activation of the space interventions, has the ability to rebuild all the physical connections missed through times and caused by the transformation.

At the same time, the insightful and behavioural connection belonged to the use of the space by the inhabitants could be restored. In this sense creativity acts as a crucial transit element between the spontaneous occupation of the urban space and the planned and controlled regeneration plan, belonged to the traditional master planning approach; it acts within an intermediate layer to activate a *new* space towards short-term and temporary planned actions which allow the space to generate a feeling of trust to the space itself.

The *answer* to the redevelopment is located in the junction point between “*hard and soft infrastructures*” which is often expressed by the role of all those activities that are popping up, switching on and off, like *pop-ups* or *meanwhile uses*. Those actions, where very well programmed and planned, set an essential layer into the re-design of the wider urban area. “*Tactical urbanism is most effective when used in conjunction with long-term planning efforts*” (Lydon, M., 2012, p. 2) and “*if included as part of a public planning process it may more quickly build trust amongst disparate interest groups and communities*” (Lydon, M., 2012, p. 2).

The cities are facing on everyday with even new regeneration plans of the urban spaces which need a re-arrangement after an abandonment and decay phase or merely for a change in needs.

The redevelopment process is almost always translated into a design which has

economic edges as main objectives and the transformation is lead by market trends; in this sense, the fallout on the urban space is felt just like a *subsequent consequence*.

Lots are the examples where the urban regeneration falls in a total breakdown in terms of space; even if the places are very well designed and the quality seems to be extremely cared, the place is never used by the residents and people who live the area; just to give an idea looking to different ex-Expo areas is enough. In those cases the market needs don't turn in to active spatial prototype out, that is causing negatives fallout both for the future of the area and local businesses.

The neighbourhoods of the Olympic's fringe are struggling to sort their future out after the big 2012 event and they are finding new ways to redefine the missed identity and broken connections. However, the development of big urban area regeneration plans are needed in terms of arising and increase of the city and it is not possible to imagine a city driven just by bottom-up actions. In this sense creativity as an *answer* is identified as the translation in terms of space of the micro lever top-down redevelopment interventions; that is the junction point between *hard* and *soft*, between *strong* and *weak*, between *planned* and *spontaneous*.

In London wider areas are currently into an urban regeneration stage, the programmes concern outstanding scope plans which is expressed as a long-term construction site timeframe, from 5 to 10 years, i.g. the redevelopment of Elephant and Castle and / or King's Cross<sup>3</sup>. The strategy GLA (Greater London Authority) has opted for is the one where the Partnership plays the role of programming and managing the process. The Partnership is defined as a group of multi-discipline practitioners which have the role not only to carry the programme out but also to speak directly with the local community.

Within the process, indeed, a place to the development of community-driven actions is envisioned, that means the set of spaces which are defined by a one /two years (depends on different business plans) temporary programmes which would be renewed or redistributed following the outcomes. Those spaces are identified as *meanwhile uses* and set into those free spaces made available by the complex dynamic of the construction site and always change with the site timing. In this way, the resident is completely involved in the transformation both as a user as well as an active actor in the process<sup>4</sup>.

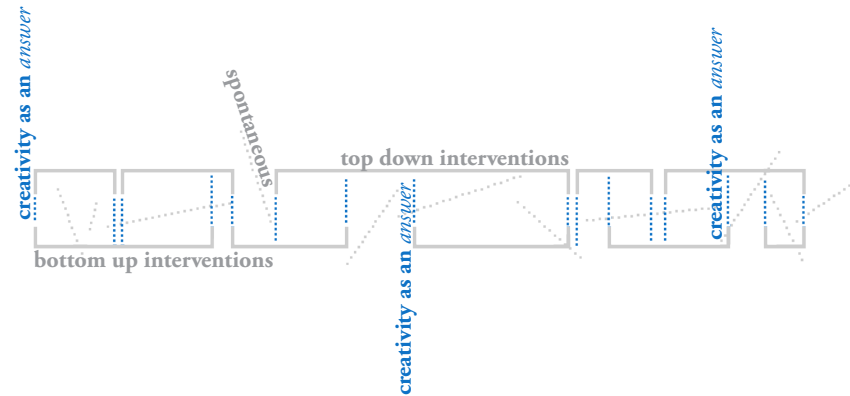
Following those reflections is possible to admit the strength and need of a complex

Footnote

<sup>3</sup> Look the actions within the Elephant & Castle neighbourhood in London through the role of the Partnership - <https://www.elephantandcastle.org.uk> - or /and the case King's Cross, which is currently in the final construction stage - Bishop, P. and Williams, L., 2016, *Planning, policy and city making. A case study of King's Cross*, RIBA Enterprises.

<sup>4</sup> The concepts have been learnt and acquired by the author through the work experience at Central Featured Ltd, 15 Cromwell Road, London SW1 2JB. The director of the practice, Patricia Brown, is charing the E&C Partnership and involved the author into the meetings which are holding quarter. The engagement into the practice allows the author to understand in depth the process dynamics. The author is currently working at Central from September 2017.

multi-layered process which sees creativity as an *answer* to an essential question expressed by a big top-down regeneration plan.



### 3.3.3 From spatial prototype to different scenarios. Creativity as a *tool*

Finally, creativity meant as a real *tool* of transformation opts for a different model as compared to the traditional planning tool and it is integrated into the process from the beginning. In this sense the approach change objectives and is identified by the so-called *place-making* process, that is expressed by the process of doing, through the union of bottom-up and studied from the inside actions and small top-down and controlled ones. Those are defining a unique process which is distinguished by an ongoing transformation. In this situation the designer is meant as a leader figure within a wider group of actors between whom the local communities represent the more active part, as per the community is able to influence the design and engaging people in the process helps in shaping a successful built environment (Carmona, M., 2017).

The power of the “*making*” is that it “*builds*” physical “*connections, creates civic*

*engagement and empowers citizens, in shorts, it builds” not only physical and economic value but also and overall, social capital (Kent, F., 2013, p.9).*

Dalston expresses very clearly this concept and its process represents one example of urban regeneration where creativity is meant as a proper transformation tool, in this case, the designers were asked to modify their own way of thinking and detach their behaviours to the traditional approach. The demand was, on one hand, to deliver a shaping design of the place but also and above all to build a programme which concerns the oversight of all those actions which didn't need a certain design proficiency.

The creative *tool* is moving across different approaches and defines a wider glance to the design process, setting itself up as the *design of the process*, that is meant like the construction of a *process* beyond the *project*. In this sense the building a process which sees creativity as a *qualifying tool*, giving it the assignment to identify, define and build the connections and interrelations between actors and actions, followed by the collection of even different reactions and the understanding of the even new actions and interventions.

This series of *connections* pinpoints the proceeding sequence of the process which would be each time different and not always linear; the sequence of the proceedings is not established in advance but is set each time as new and doesn't follow a reference model. However, the model is defined by the approach to the process which seems to be detached from the rules.

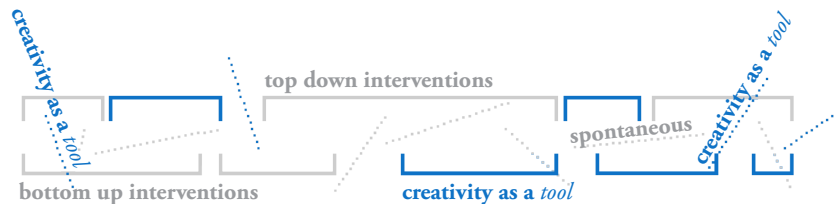


Diagram 1

**Creativity as an Answer**

Diagram which represent the involvement of creativity in the process

source:

edited by the author on April 2018

Diagram 2

**Creativity as a Tool**

Diagram which represent the involvement of creativity in the process

source:

edited by the author on April 2018

The versatility of the urban designer is in this sense defined by building the connections, by the ability to allow exchange between actors, identifying and constructing even new and more relations across them; by the design, direction and management of the physical actions; by the identification, collection and analysis of the socio-economic and spatial reactions of the place and by the identification and definition of what is missing or by the re-balance of the failed actions.

Creativity as a *tool* represents effectively the methodology to build a process translated into a 'spider web' system with unlimited formal solutions. The spatial prototype is involved as a dynamic element which is flexible, latent and reversible and which turns out with different scenarios.

Furthercoming page

**Revolution is now**

Street art by Ian Stevenson & Russell Brand at Village  
Underground, London

source:

<http://www.konbini.com/us/inspiration/nonsense-art-street-artist-ian-stevenson-on-his-russell-brand-revolution-mural/>

visited on February 2018

edited by the author in March 2018







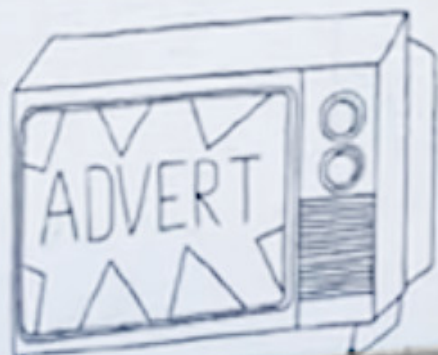
THE REVOL

501 That's all



OLUTION IS NOW!

Folks!



30



**Part 4** | to propose.



## 4.1 Think a different London

### Building the process in Shoreditch

The design proposal has the aim to apply what is described in the previous chapters and is focused on building and leading a creative process. As well as it would appear as a reality check in order to experiment practically what is previously theoretically argued.

The experimental site is located in the neighbourhood of Shoreditch and take into account the site of the ex-railway station of Shoreditch High Street. The site is developed on the south side of the actual Shoreditch High Street overground station and is extended from Shoreditch High Street and Brick Lane.

The entire old station was partially demolished to host the new one and actually the remaining old structures is into a condition of abandonment and dereliction. However, the urban fabric appears to be well conserved and solid. According to what is possible to see from the outside and analysing the old maps the building is composed by a series of supporting walls placed with a North / South orientation. Furthermore, looking to the old maps an internal cross connection appears very clear, as an internal street it links the SH Street side with the Brick Lane side.

The chosen site would be an outstanding opportunity for the neighbourhood in terms of space availability. Indeed, get access to the old station structure would create availability of space for different uses slackening the gentrification caused by the Box Park on one hand and the compression of the weekend informal and street market of Brick Lane on the other.

Nonetheless, the spaces under the current underground station are already occupied and used by the Shoreditch Football League which are an outstanding opportunity for the development of new other spaces for the community.

In this sense, the aim of the design process is to enable spaces to let people doing things, provide open air urban spaces where people can stay and meet, which are actually very few in this part of the city.

As per a very high uncertain component of the process, which is look to what happen, the proposal is developed in three phases within which human behaviour of getting



Diagram

#### **FABrickSHOreditch**

Logo of the design proposal which represents the idea of the development of the process between tangible and intangible assets, between production (FABrick) and delivery (SHOps) into the urban context belonging to the Brick Lane and Shoreditch fringe.

source:

edited by the author on March 2018

ownership of the space would be partially imagined.

### 4.1.1 Understanding Shoreditch

Starting from the analysis of the current situation, the investigation of what is there was lead especially by understanding what are the main areas belonging on one hand to the creative industries and the Tech City, on a second hand what are the main vibrant areas for retail and on a third hand what are the areas belonging to the informal use of the space. In this sense, it is possible to recognise two main poles which are the one related to the digital, creative and tech industries on the west end side of the site, towards Old Street, and the more informal, tailored and handcrafted on the East End side towards Brick Lane.

The Shoreditch creative core is basically located within the *triangle* composed by Great Eastern Street, Shoreditch High Street and Old Street. Lots of start-ups, artists' workshops and micro industries are located in this area which appears as the real creative district and give a very special feeling of sense of place. Especially in the day time frame the perception of the place is to be in a different London with a diverse human cultural range, totally detached from the metropolitan and global dimension of the closest City. As well as, during the night time, the place appears as the core of the night economy, full of bars, pubs and clubs. Most of the day time working places turn into event venues during the night time, especially in weekends.

In this sense, the triangle area gives a very vibrant hot spot both for the night-life and creative and cultural life of the neighbourhood, fostering the success of the place and encouraging people to stay and live the area.

On the other side, Brick Lane's informal identity, expressed by the weekly street market belonged to the vintage market gives back to the area a sense of the 80's atmosphere of the artists' occupation. However, the notoriety of the market and concentration of people, especially during weekends give rise to a deeper development of stalls and food trucks in the street, which are obliged to spread towards the fringe areas. The *disorder* of informal street market meets the *order* of the artists' and handcraft's boutiques, in this sense different typologies of retail spaces are spread in the area,

Map

#### **Creative industries**

Graphic interpretation of the Shoreditch Creative District  
source:  
edited by the author on February 2018

Furthercoming page

Map

#### **Retails, handicrafts and street markets**

Graphic interpretation of the Shoreditch Market District  
source:  
edited by the author on February 2018

Figure 1

#### **People on stalls**

Brick Lane Street Market  
source:  
<https://qbichotels.com/london-city/guide/brick-lane-market/>  
visited on May 2018

Figure 2

#### **Future Shoreditch**

Artists' studios and boutiques in the Shoreditch Creative Triangle  
source:  
Hackney Council, (2017), "Future Shoreditch", Area Action Plan





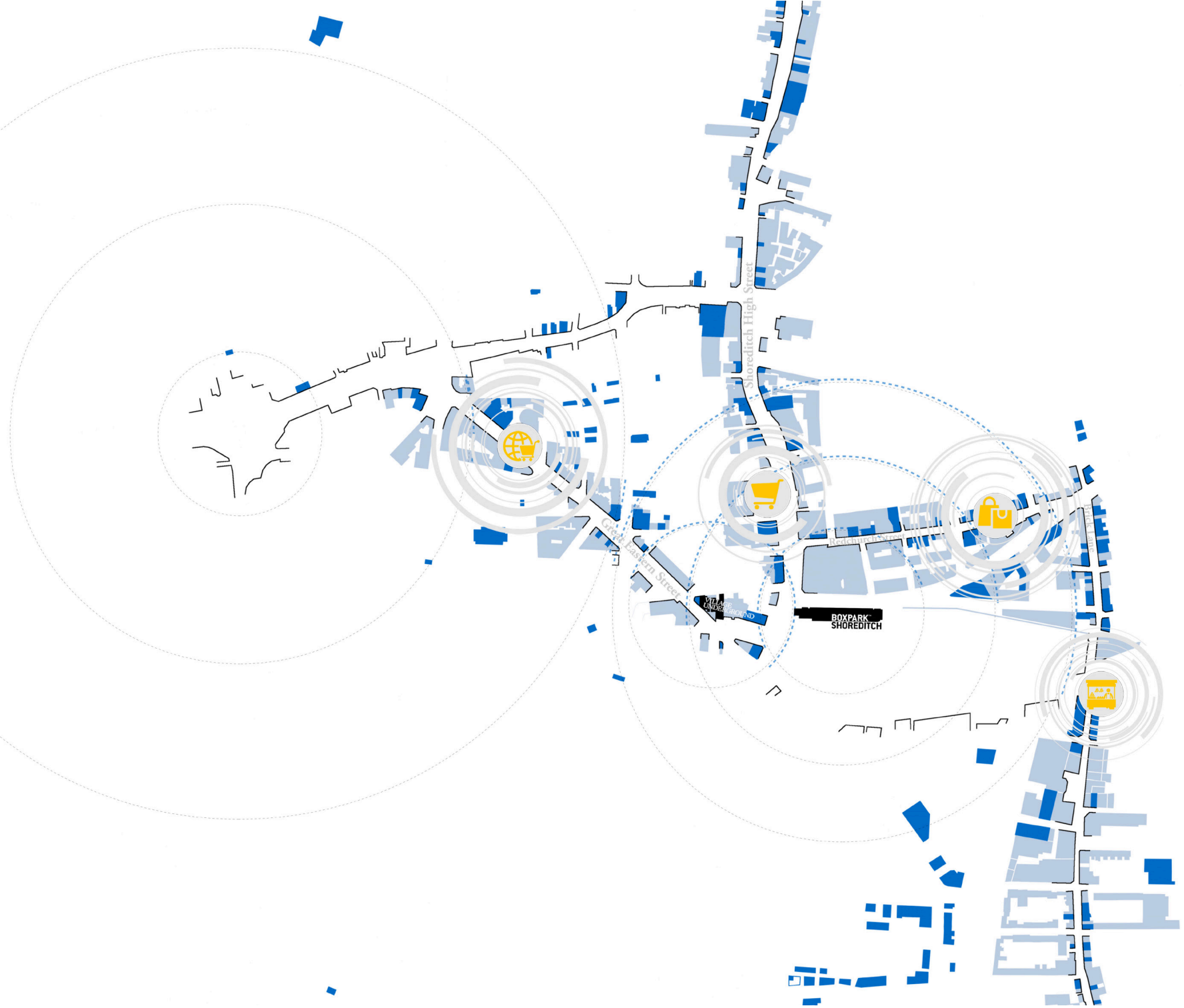


giving main character to the place.

The object area is located exactly inbetween the two realities which give identity and sense of place to the neighbourhood. As well as it is defined as a strategical junction point where identities could be marged as an outstanding opportunity to keep the tranformation ongoing.



Figure 2



Shoreditch High Street

Great Eastern Street

The Old Spinnaker Yard

BOXPARK SHOREDITCH



# S

## strenghts

1. **Creative heart of London**, central to Europe's creative, digital and tech industries;
2. **Vibrant and diverse mix** of shops, restaurants, bars, workspace and homes;
3. Independent and specialist shops that create a **competitive retail destination**;
4. History as a **place of production**, full of craftspeople and industry;
5. **Permeable network** of streets, buildings and spaces;
6. Very **well connected** by public transport and **close to the City**;
7. **High rates of workers** travelling by walking and cycling;
8. Long-standing **artistic and creative communities active** in Shoreditch that have helped shape its unique identity and appeal;
9. **Real sense of community**.

# W

## weaknesses

1. **Popularity of the area and competing demands threatens the creative and leisure uses**;
2. **Lack of** street planting and green, **open space for people to enjoy**;
3. Pockets of areas in **poor condition and disrepair**;
4. **Increasing footfall and traffic movements** are putting strain on existing roads, streets and the public realm;
5. Busy traffic and poor junction crossing create an **unhealthy and unsafe environment**;
6. **Lack of integration** between those living in, working in and spending time in Shoreditch;
7. Residents impacted by the **negative outcomes from the evening and night-time economy**;
8. **Lack of community and public-facing facilities**.

# O

## opportunities

1. **Deliver medium and large workspaces** for start-ups;
2. Continued **strenght of cultural and leisure uses** in the face of competing commercial demands;
3. Diversify the evening and night-time economy **to introduce more food and cultural venues**, as well as open spaces for people to enjoy;
4. New development will contribute to **improvements in the public realm**;
5. **Encourage greater cohesion** between the residential and business communities in Shoreditch;
6. **Building links between informal and street market of Brick Lane and the creative and tech city**;
7. Regenerate an unused area which **gives space for openair and leisure activities for the communities**.

# T

## threats

1. **Expansion to the city** may undermine the strenghts of the leisure and evening economy;
2. **Loss of diverse**, unique residential and business communities through unaffordability;
3. **Loss of varies, affordable workspace** for light industry and artists;
4. **Increased intensity of use from passengers** entering/ exiting the station;
5. Quality of the public realm made worse through **limited maintainance and limited improvements**;
6. **Increased traffic and congestion**;
7. **Residents miss out the benefits and opportunities presented**;
8. The driving out of value, long-standing residential and creative communities due to **increasing land values**.

## 4.1.2 An opportunity for Shoreditch

According to the analysis made in Shoreditch and previously explained in the part 2, the neighbourhood presents a high performance in terms of the culture vibrancy and creative economy, however the good condition created needs to be kept ongoing; furthermore there are some criticism to fix and places to rethink. In this sense, the London Borough of Hackney has presented last November the Action Area Plan, Future for Shoreditch which provide an in depth study on the condition of the area as well as which are the weaknesses on which focus the attention.

According with the actual Action Area Plan which is defining a future for Shoreditch, the SWOT analysis was driven by understanding what are the strengths and the weaknesses of the area as well as the opportunities and the threats. Surely, the strong culture and creative identity of the area is the greatest strenght added to the proximity of the centre and the City which gurantee a high level flux of people coming through the area. On the other hand the *self-made* character with the high level of popularity of the area caused a lack in the order and maintainence of the spaces and the place perception is a disordered and poor space.

In this sense, enabling spaces for activities and for people would be an opportunity to keep the neighbourhood working and to improve the public realm. Furthermore, more places for local residents, for open air activities are needed in order also to build a stronger relationship between passengeres and locals.

Considering all those factos, it is easily to recognise that the whole area behind the new overground station needs not only to be restudied and redeveloped but rather it represents a great opportunity to solve problems within the adiacent places.

Indeed, the location and above all the shape of the area define a strategical junction point between two different realities that are currently barely connected. Furthermore the availability of spaca would be very helpful to accomodate all those activity that are now unsafely street placed as well as to reduce the gentrification sense belonged to the Box Park.

In terms of structure, the site presents an hidden closed street which connect internally Shoreditch High Street to Brick Lane becoming an actual opportunity if opened. Nevertheless the rhythmic sequence of walls would be a lucky chance to accomodate

Diagram

### **SWOT Analysis**

source:

edited by the author on February 2018

Furthercoming page

Map

### **Strategy**

Graphic interpretation of the design strategical proposal

source:

edited by the author on March 2018

Figure

### **Shoreditch High Street**

Aerial image of the current situation

source:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/dgeezer/>

visited on February 2018

Page 234-235

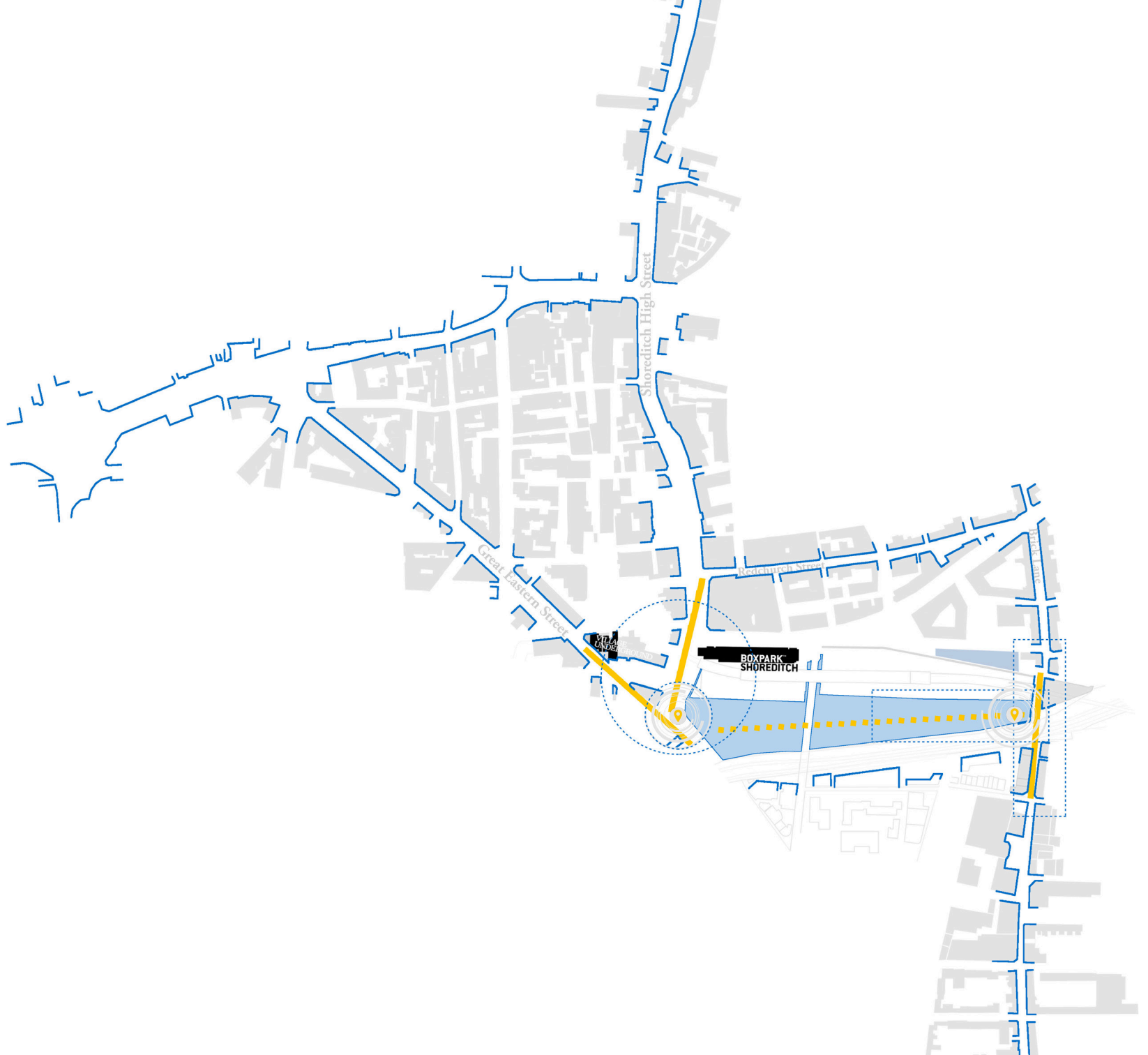
Figures

### **Old Shoreditch H. Street Station**

Images of the current situation of the old Shoreditch High Street Station

source:

shots by the author on April 2017







and welcome a mix of different activities without doing strong interventions and big changes.

The design proposal is, for this reason, placed in the old abandoned station and is developed into three phases which start from the external node towards Brick Lane and Shoreditch High Street to spread even more toward the centre of the area.

The idea is to start a process without particular architectural modification rather enabling the place to intrigue people to take ownership of it and let it change consequently.







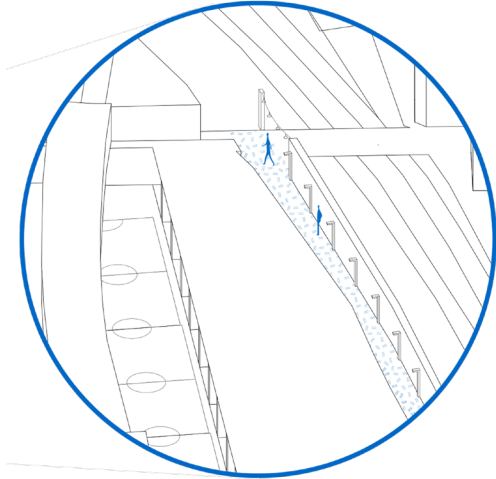
## 4.1.3 Designing a process in Shoreditch

### Phase 1 - Scenario in the late 2018

The first phase is characterised by reaviling the existence internal street which connect the two node in Shoreditch High Street and Brick Lane by overtaking the roof and enabling places to be walked and used by people.

A new pavement would be set up to intrigue and encourage people to get in and discovered the place as well as street lights are intalled to keep the area safe and accessible also during the night-time.

The transformation is started in this sense from the two external point espacially on the Shoreditch High Street side a new plaza is defined, got available by removing the existence wall of the old station, where some trees were planted to define the shape of the pedestrian path.



Zoom 1

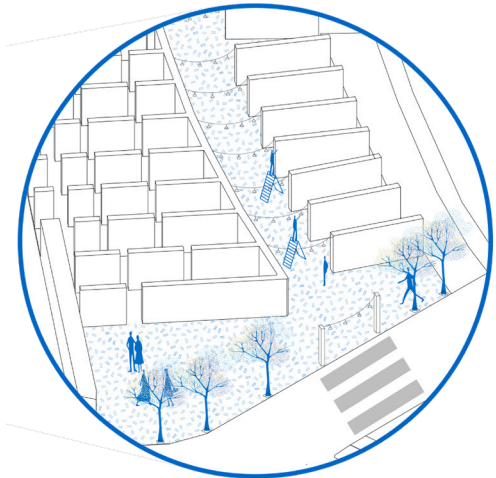
Particular single actions were applied on both sides especially:

#### 1. Shoreditch High Street Entrance

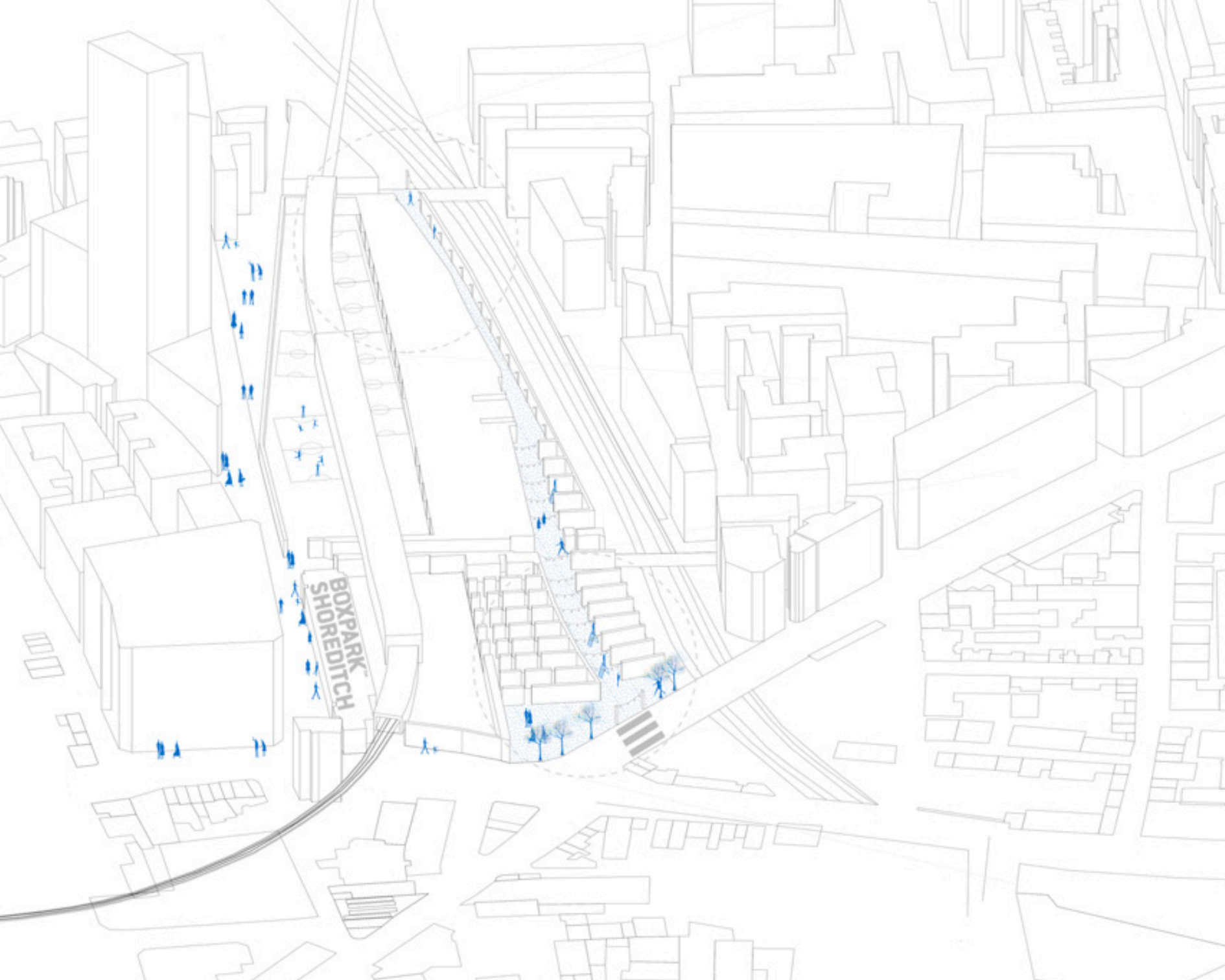
- Enabling access
- Defining a public plaza
- Open a direct connection to Brick Lane
- New pavement and lights
- Enabling spaces between existence walls
- Removing the completely the roof

#### 2. Brick Lane Entrance

- Enabling access
- New pavement and lights
- Removing the roof partially

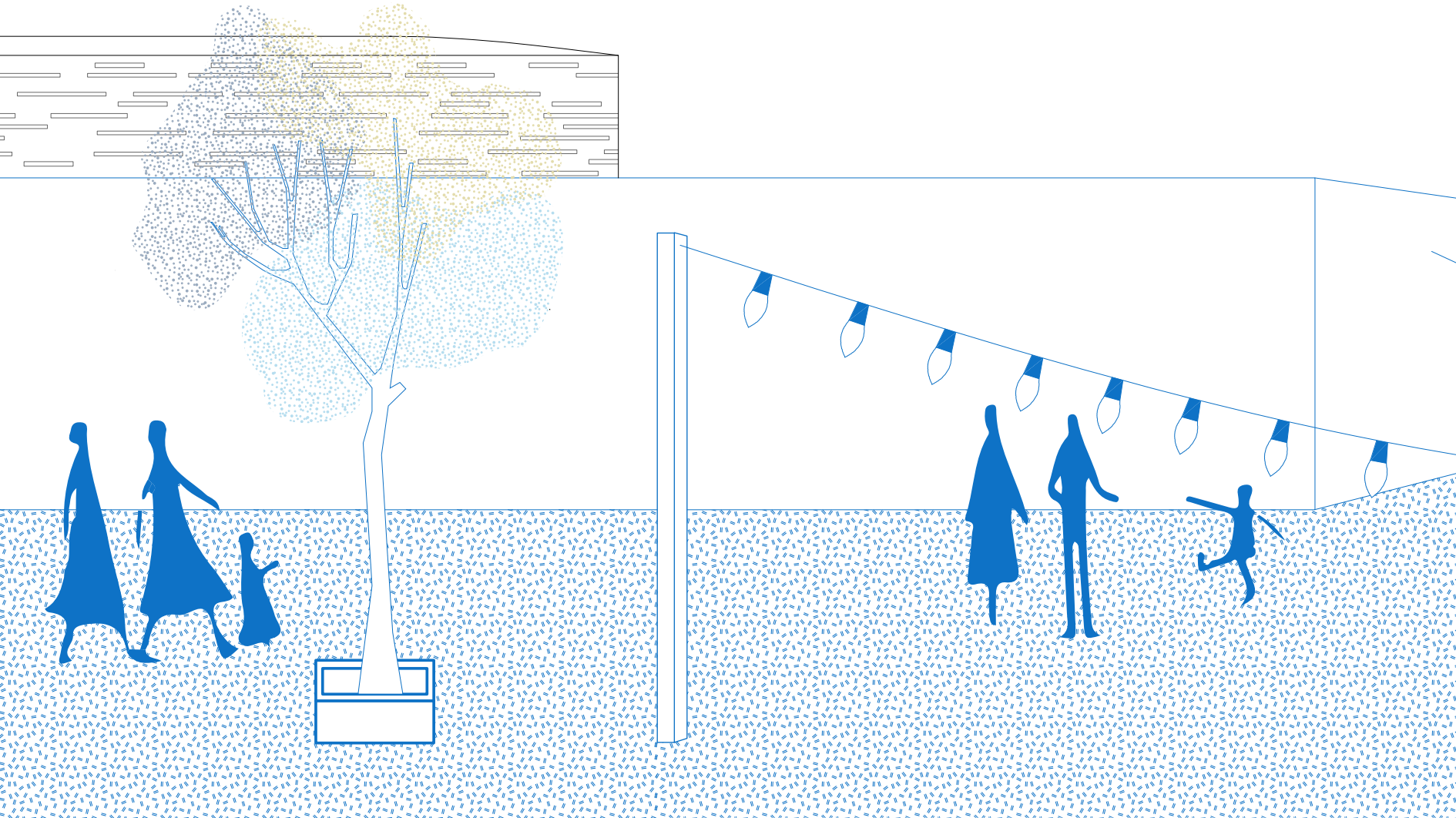


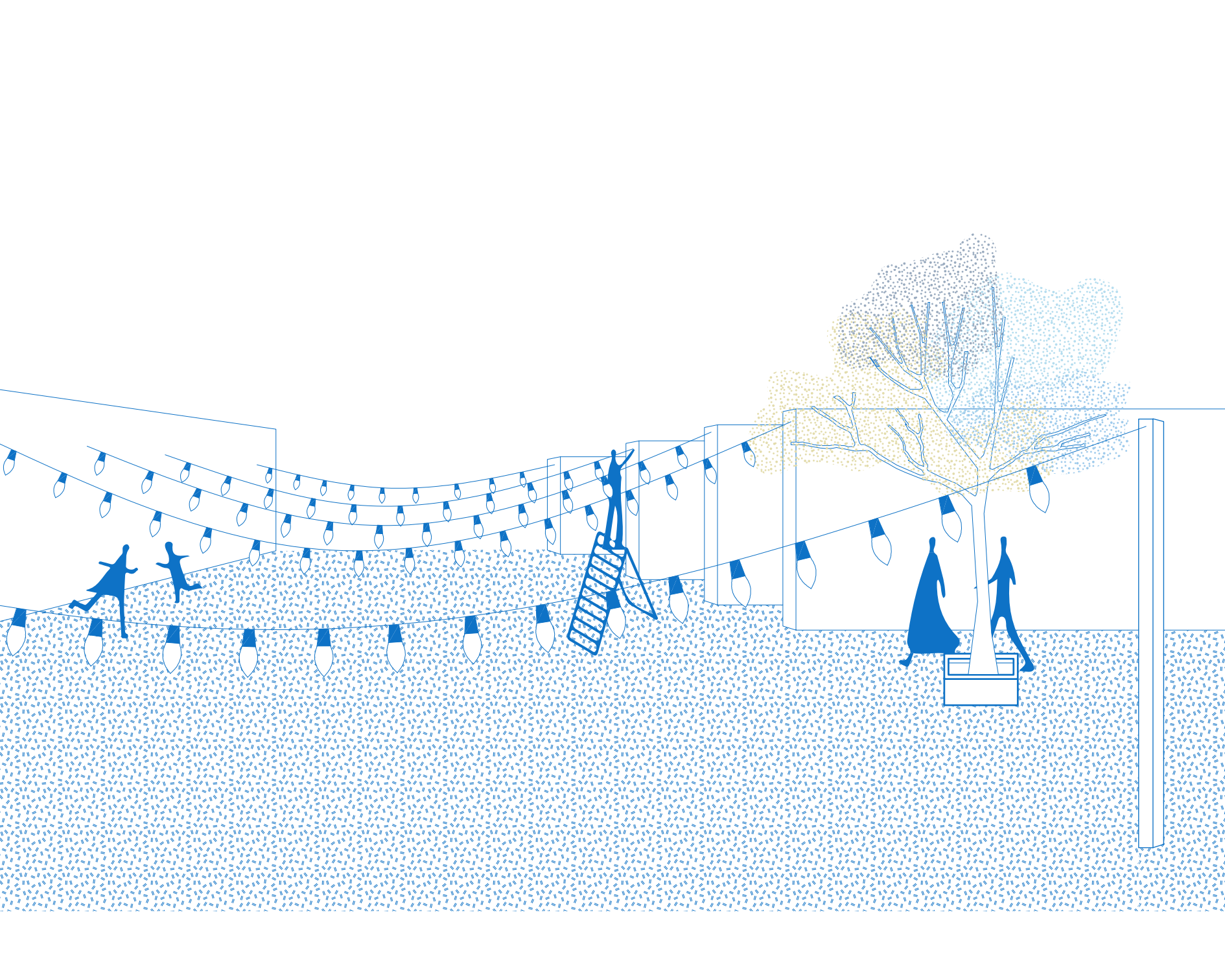
Zoom 2



# Shoreditch High Street Scenario

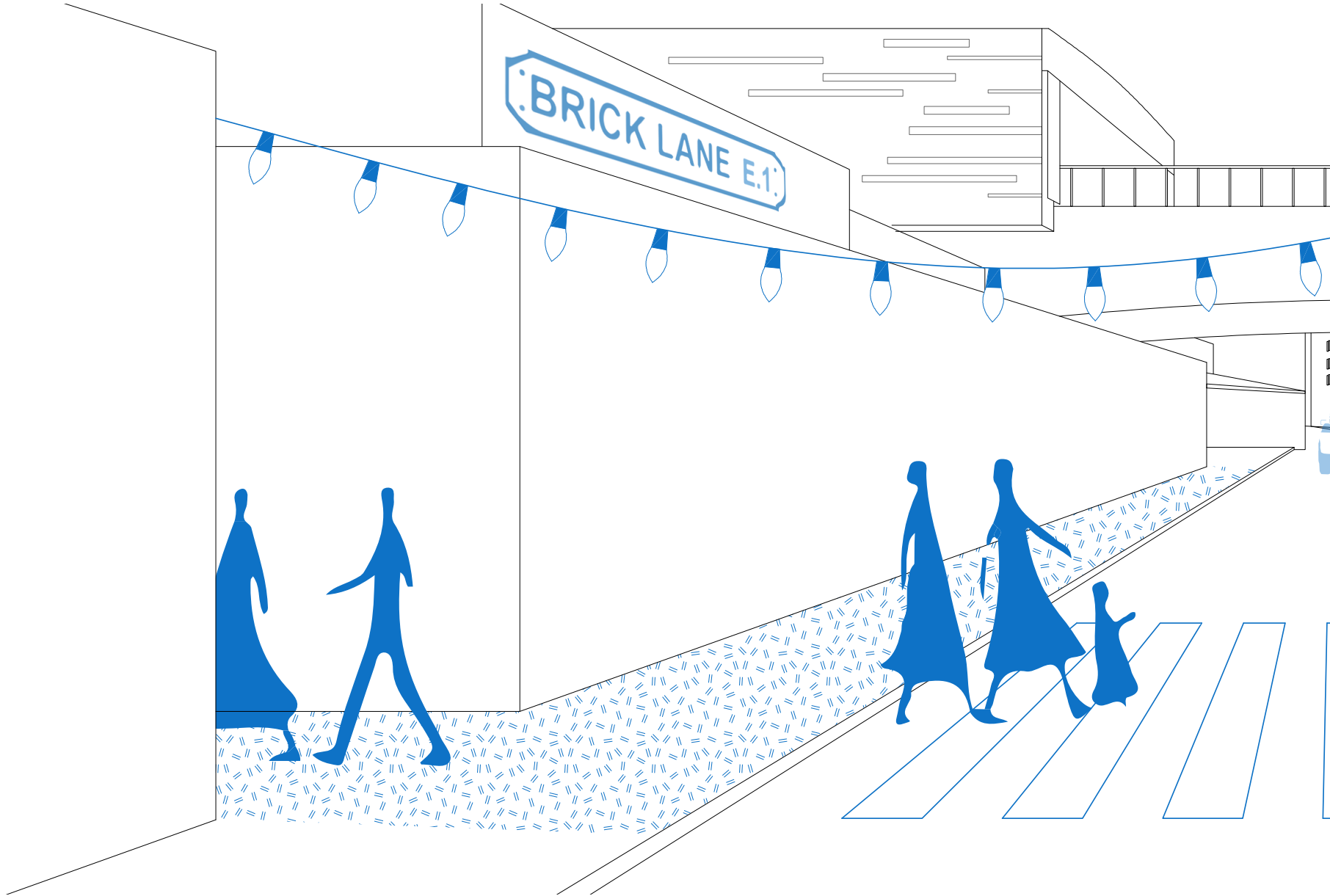
phase 1 - *defining a new public space*

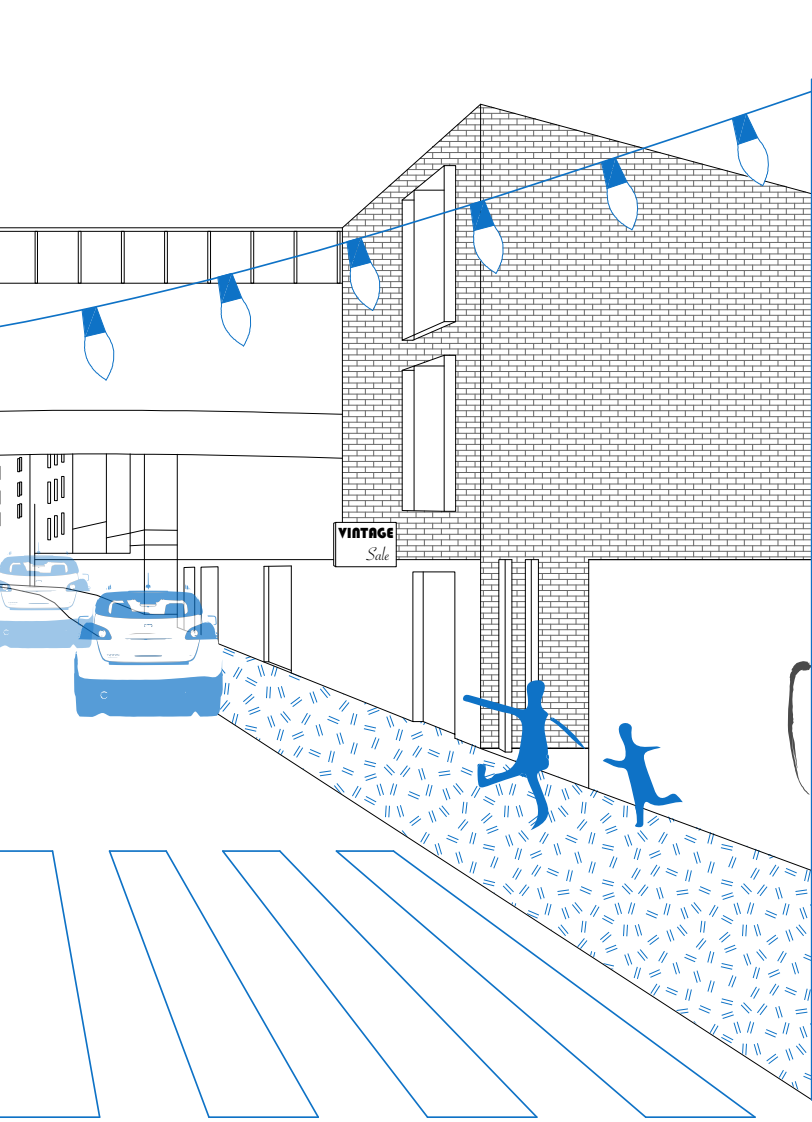




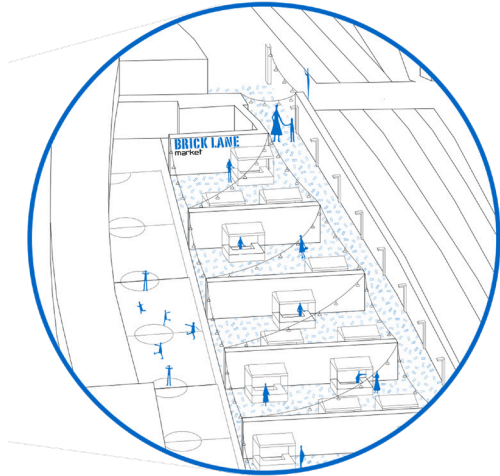
# Brick Lane Scenario

phase 1 - *highlighting the pedestrian crossing*





## Phase 2 - Scenario in 2019



Zoom 1

The second phase has started by assuming people start to trust the place and use it, getting in, walking through and doing things in, in this sense the spaces close to Shoreditch High Street are getting available and would be used to promote events related to the Box Park activities. Those spaces were defined by removing the roof and some internal partitions in order to host the activities.

On the other side the informal street marker of Brick Lane is starting occupying spaces with some stalls and starts spreading into the new area.

According to the idea of *building the process* this phase is strictly attached to a programme of management and promotion of the place itself; indeed, the intention to enable and allow this place to activities that are already ongoing would create an outstanding condition to empower trust. For this reason, in this phase the configuration and the use of the space is partially caused by the attachment to the existence environment.

Particular single actions were applied on both sides especially:

### 1. Shoreditch High Street Entrance

Configuring a public plaza and defining a public realm

Enabling spaces for Box Park events

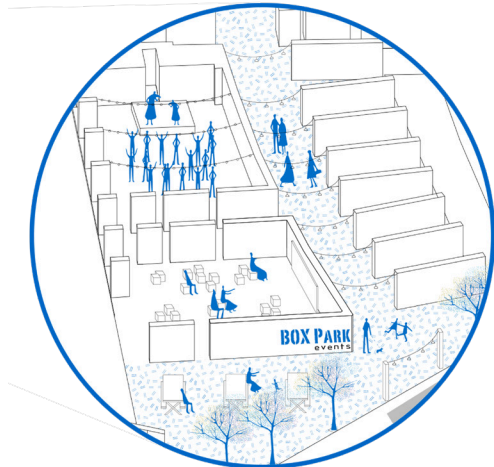
Allowing spaces for open-air activities

### 2. Brick Lane Entrance

Removing the roof completely

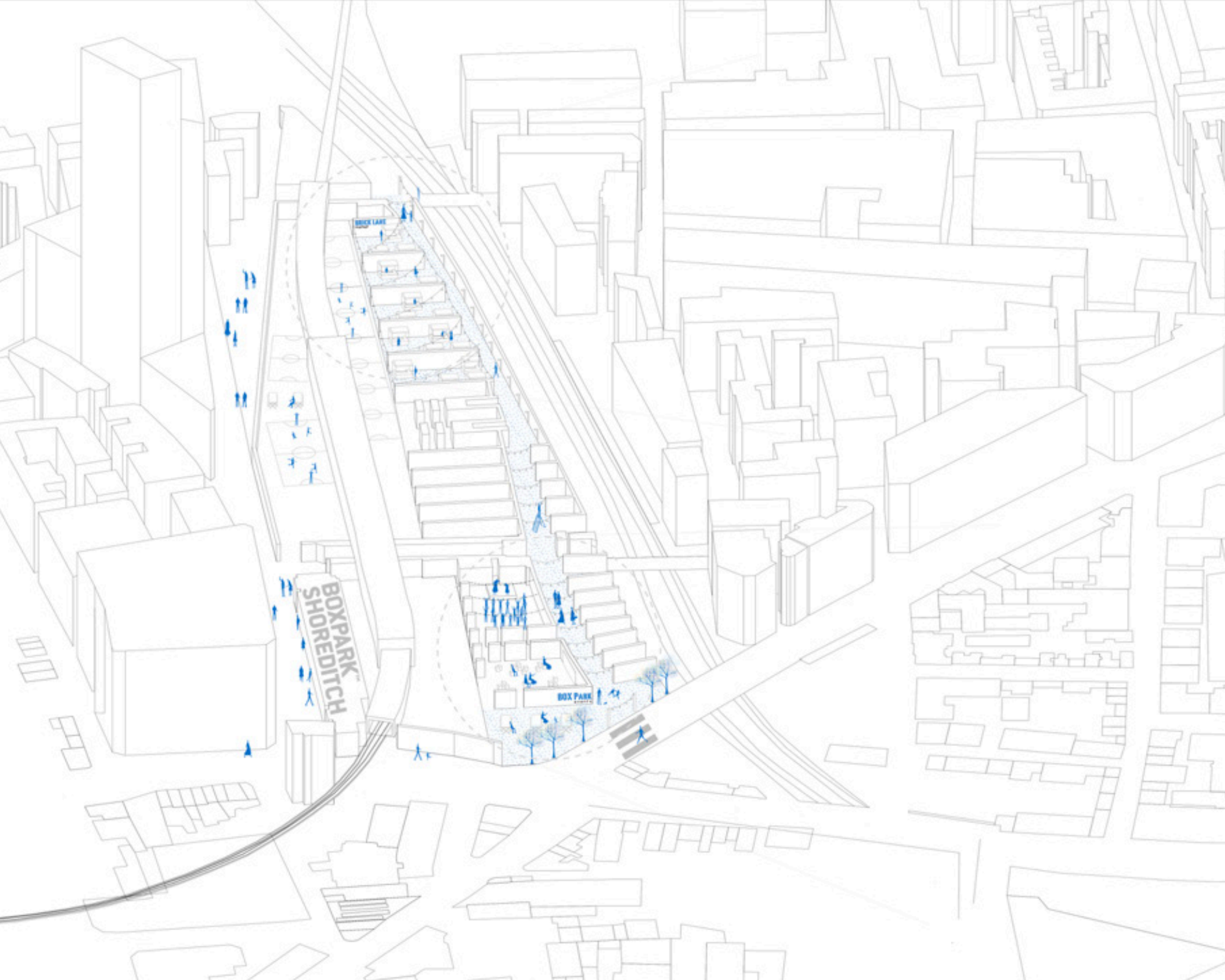
Enabling spaces for informal street market

Allowing spaces for stalls



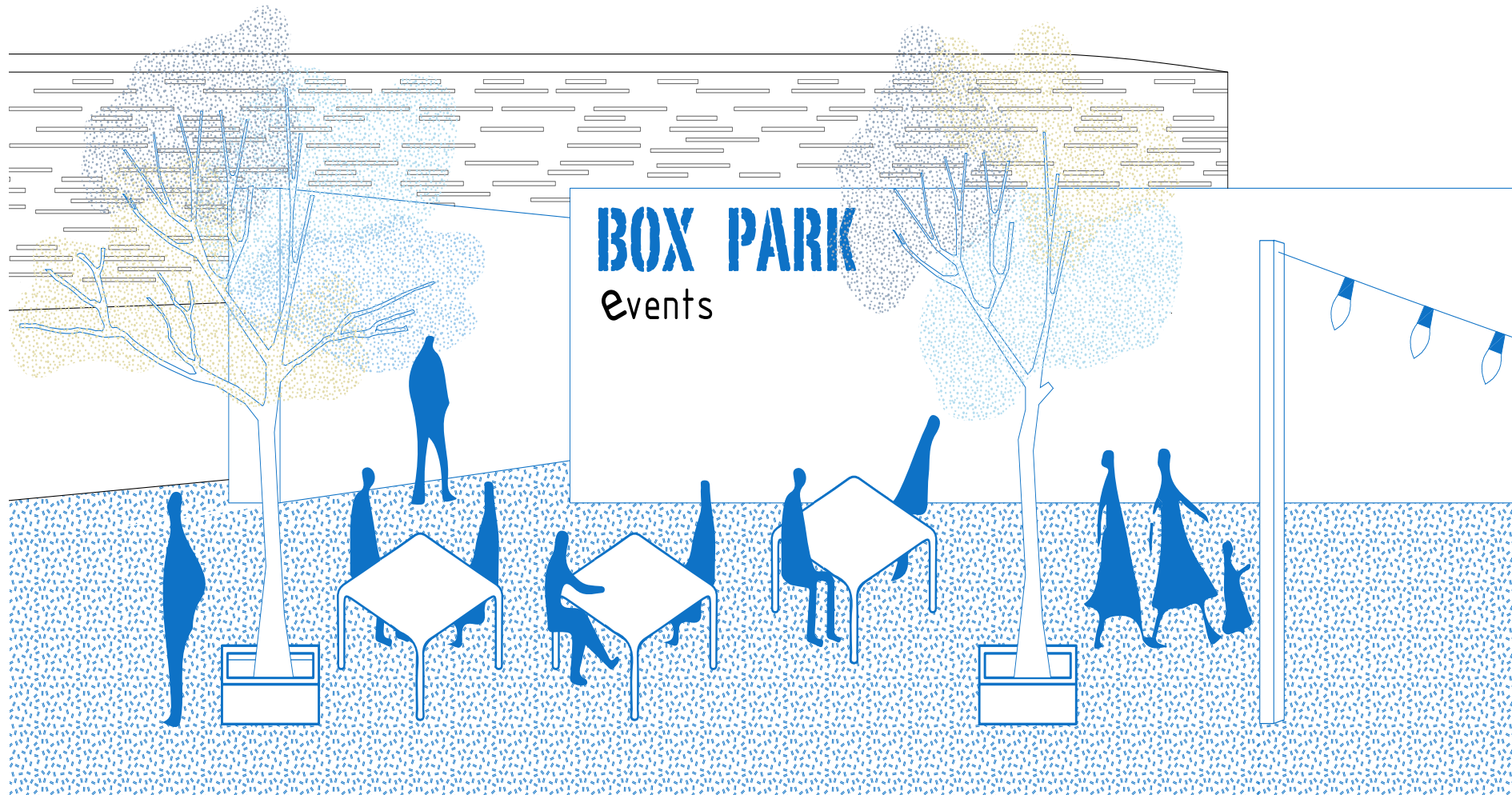
Zoom 2

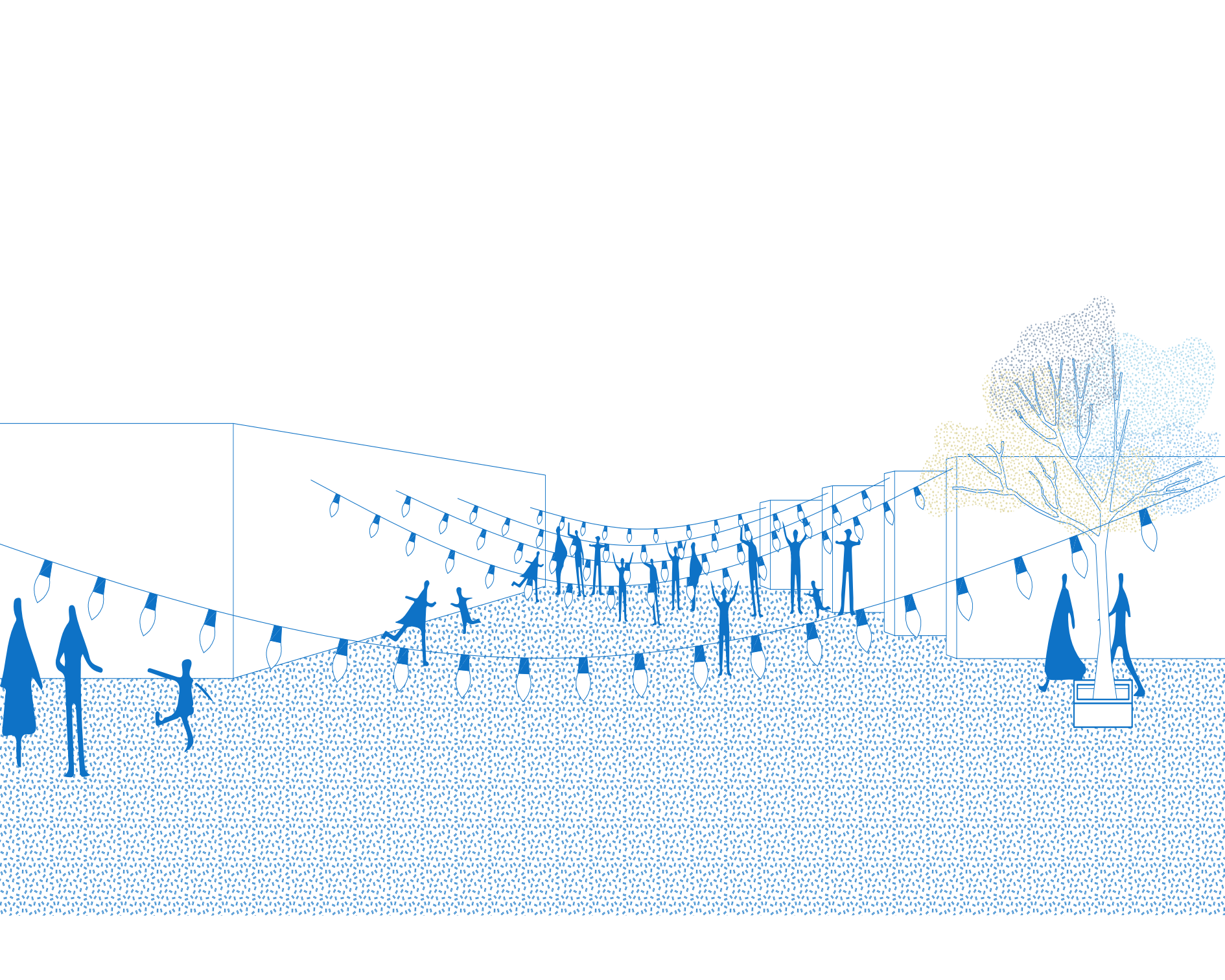




# Shoreditch High Street Scenario

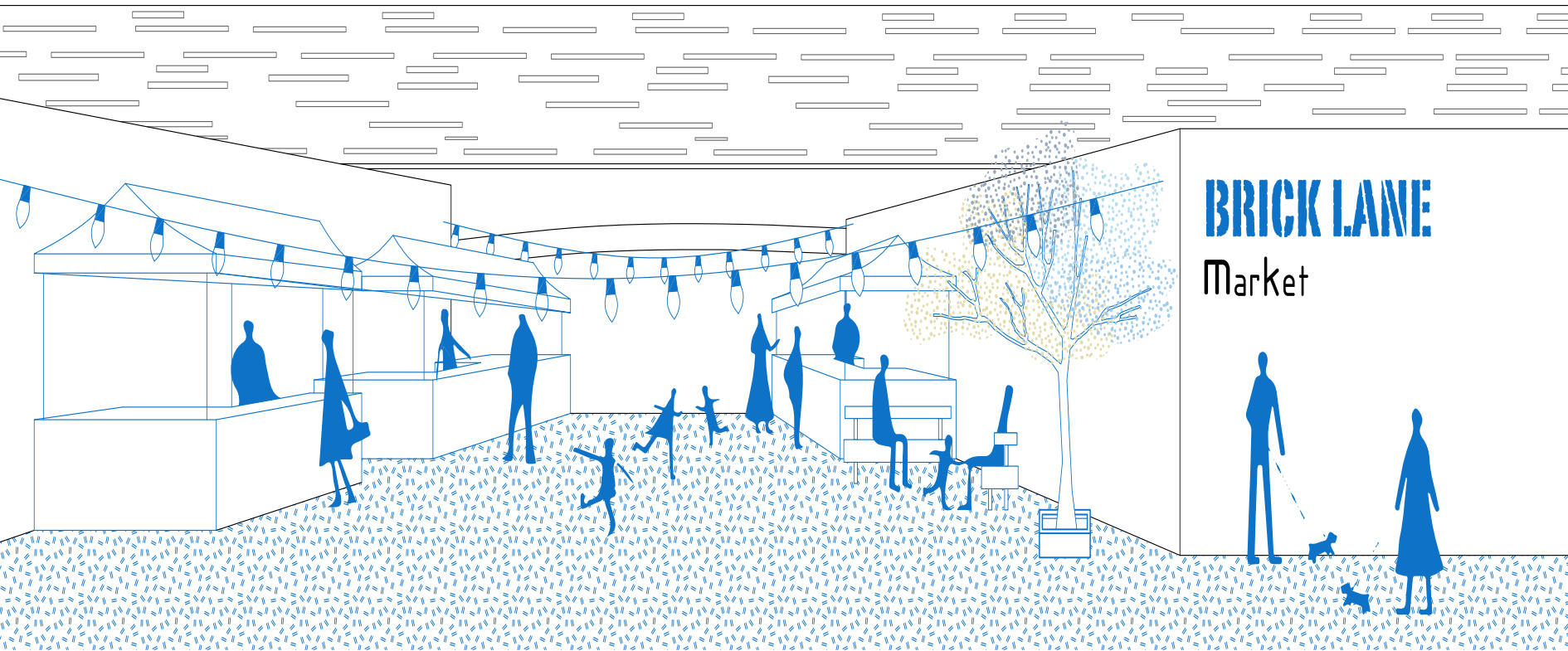
phase 2 - *enhancing local communities and social life*

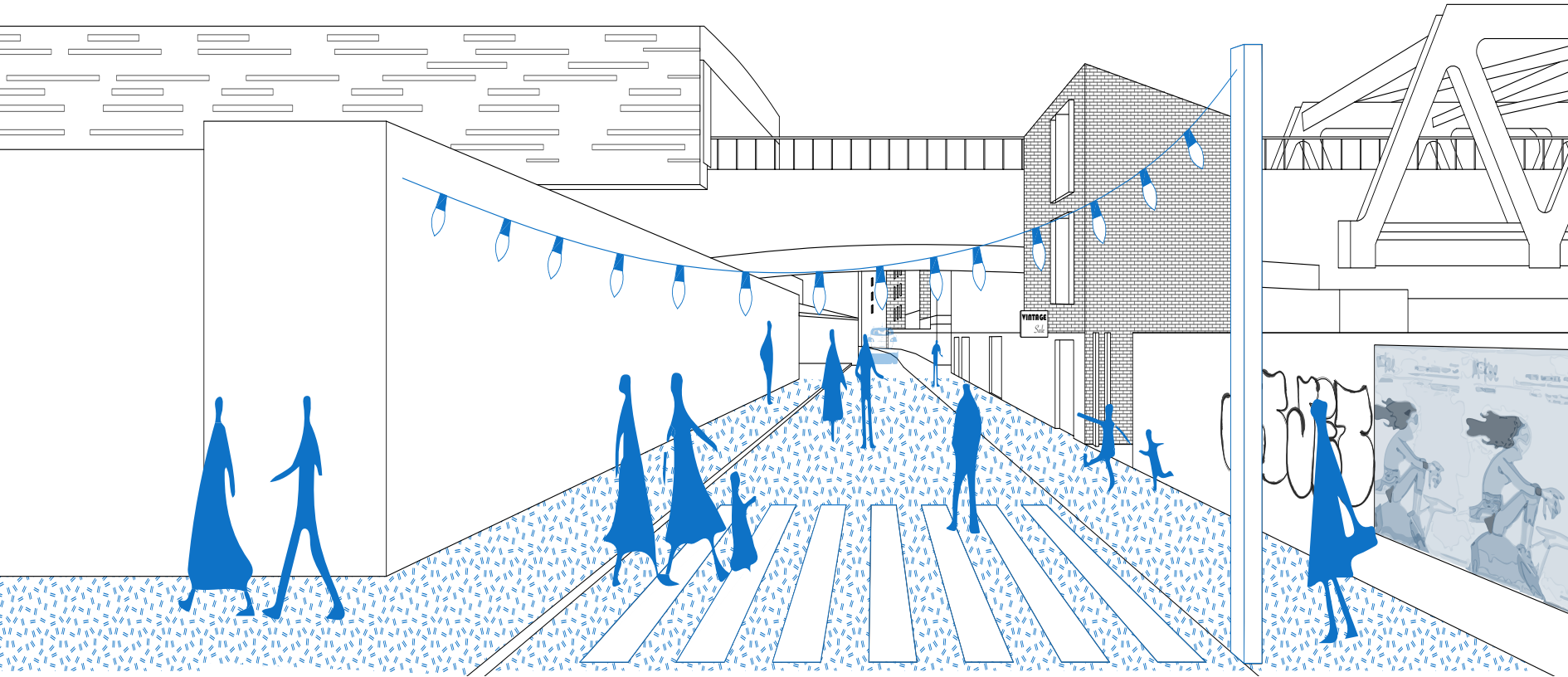




# Brick Lane Scenario

phase 2 - *straightening the local street market*





### Phase 3 - Scenario in 2020

The third phase is conceived as an *up to speed* stage and the place is assumed to be clearly recognisable in its identity. In this sense, it got a new proper name and all its parts are occupied.

The Shoreditch High Street side is assumed to work regular hosting events and creating an ongoing public realm which concerns different uses of the public plaza both during normal activities and programmed events.

The opposite side is full occupied by the stalls of the street market and some parts start hosting temporary/permanent retails allocated in containeres or small boxes. In this sense, both parts offer accomplished activities which contribute to build the character of the place itself.

A space of production is based in the middle of the area, it is conceived as a big room to host desk-based activities, where people could work together inside a vibrant environment. This space provides a space also for the activity of management, communication and control of the site.

Particular single actions were applied on both sides especially:

#### 1. Shoreditch High Street Entrance

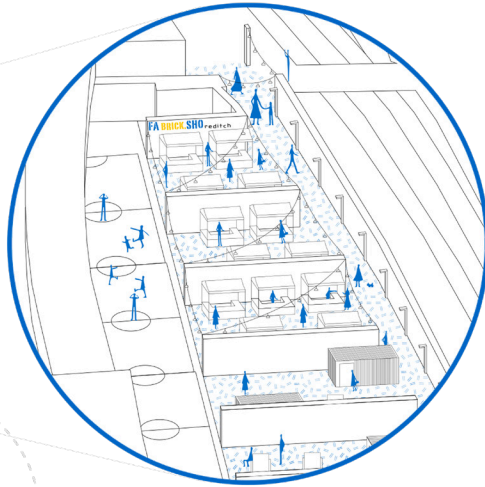
- Defining spaces for food-trucks
- Managing the ongoing process and building communication campaign up
- Building an event programme up

#### 2. Brick Lane Entrance

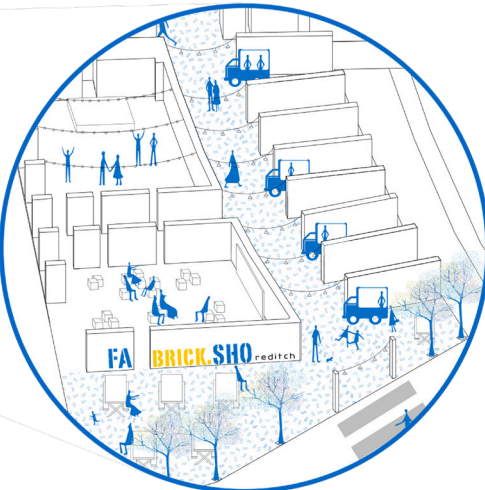
- Defining spaces for informal street market
- Managing spaces for stalls
- Allowing spaces for permanent/temporary retail
- Building a communication campaign up

#### 3. Middle Entrance

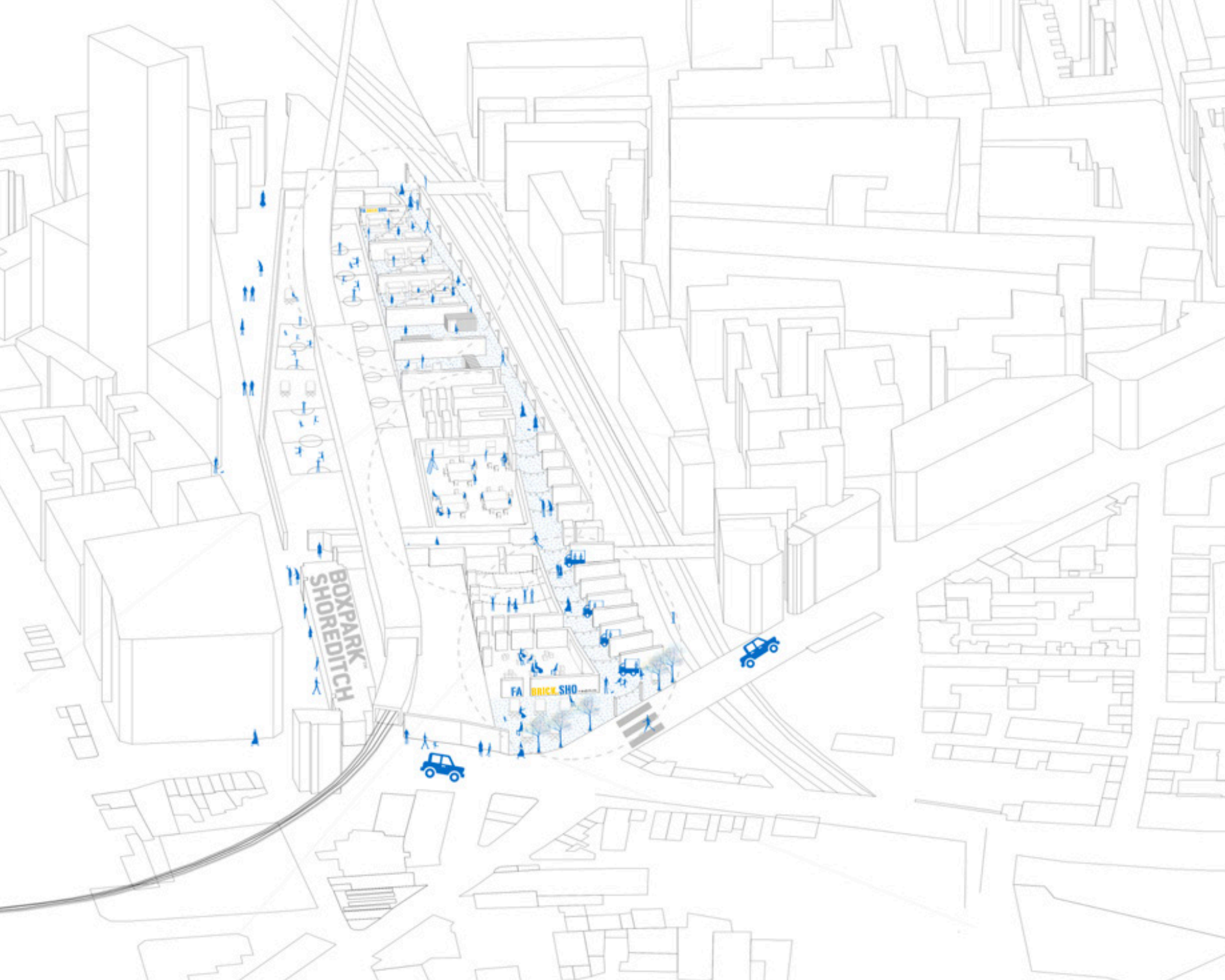
- Defining a management and production space



Zoom 1



Zoom 2

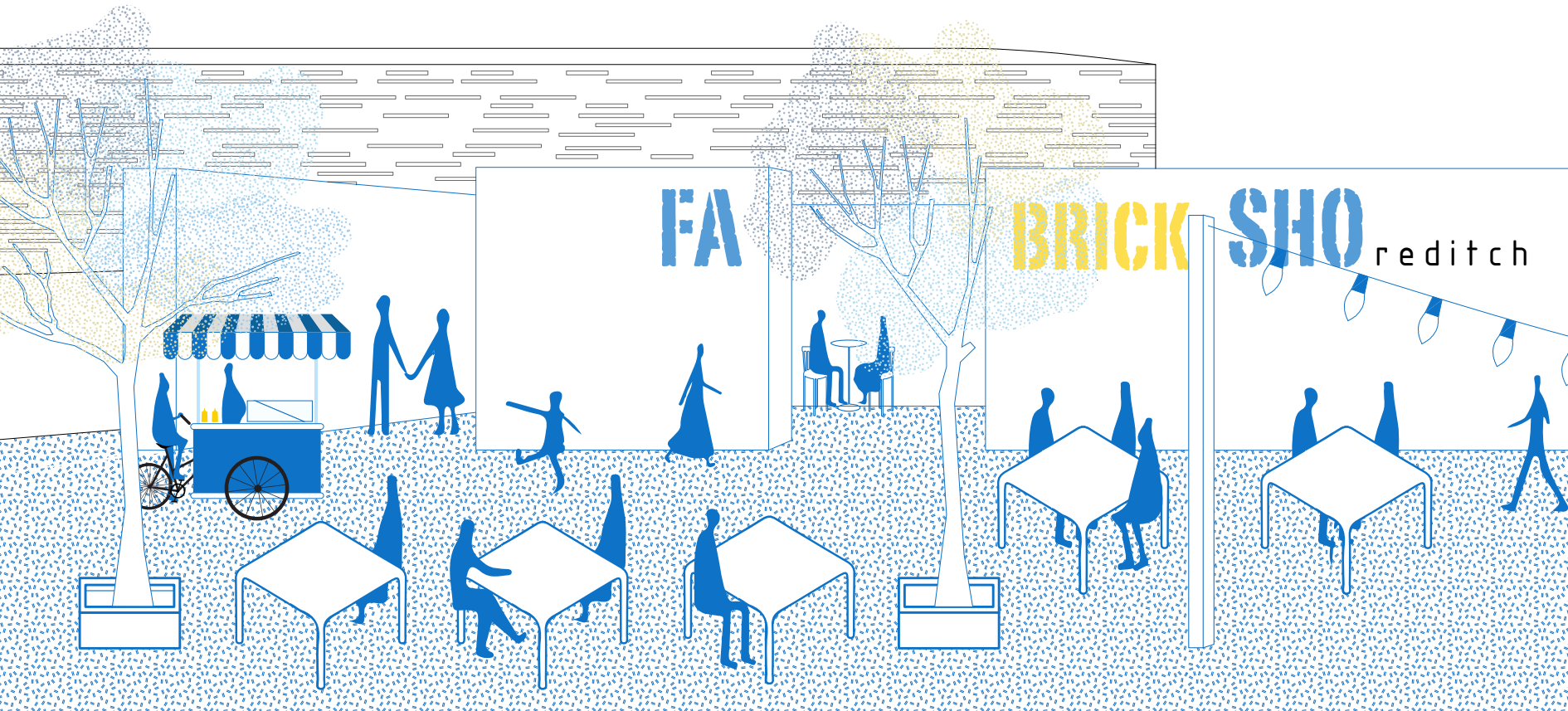


BOXPARK  
SHOREDITCH

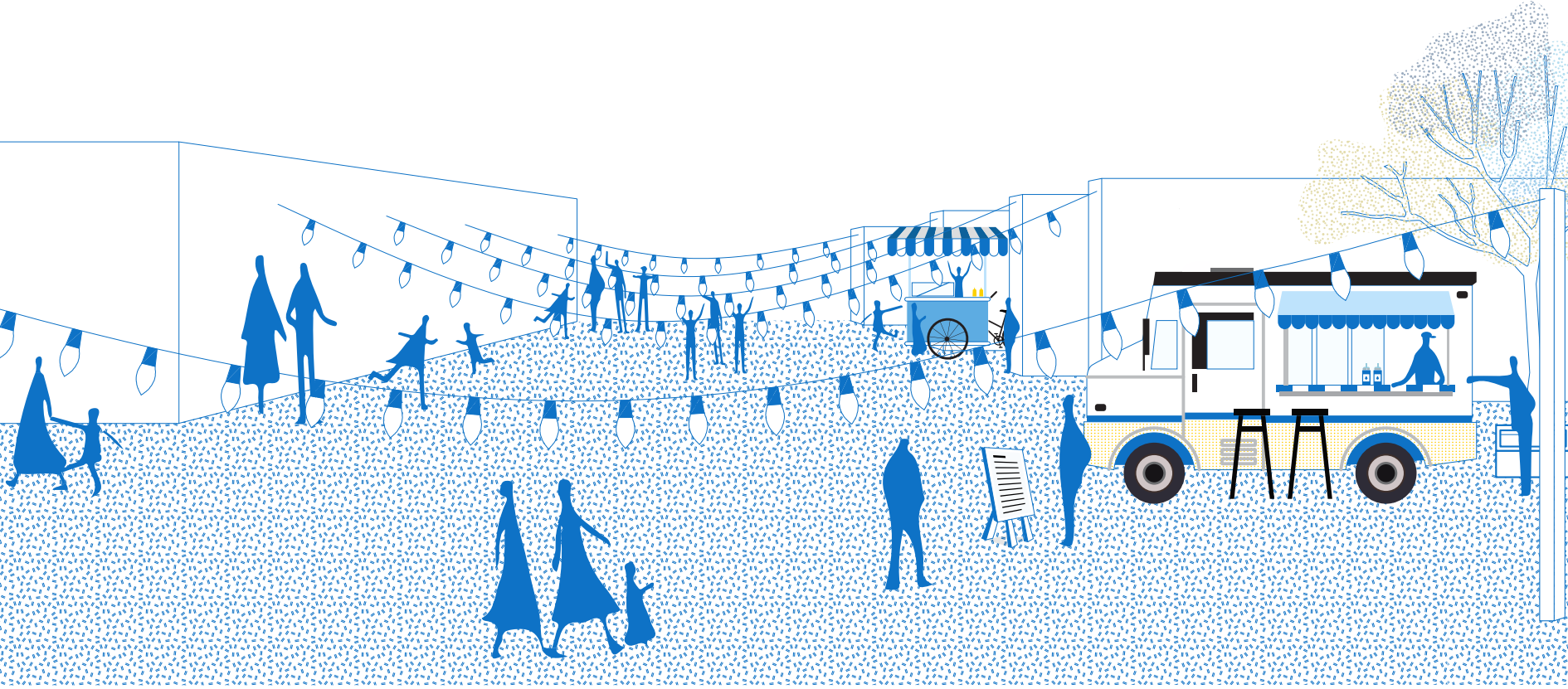
FA BRICK SHD

# Shoreditch High Street Scenario

phase 3 - *empowering the public realm identity*

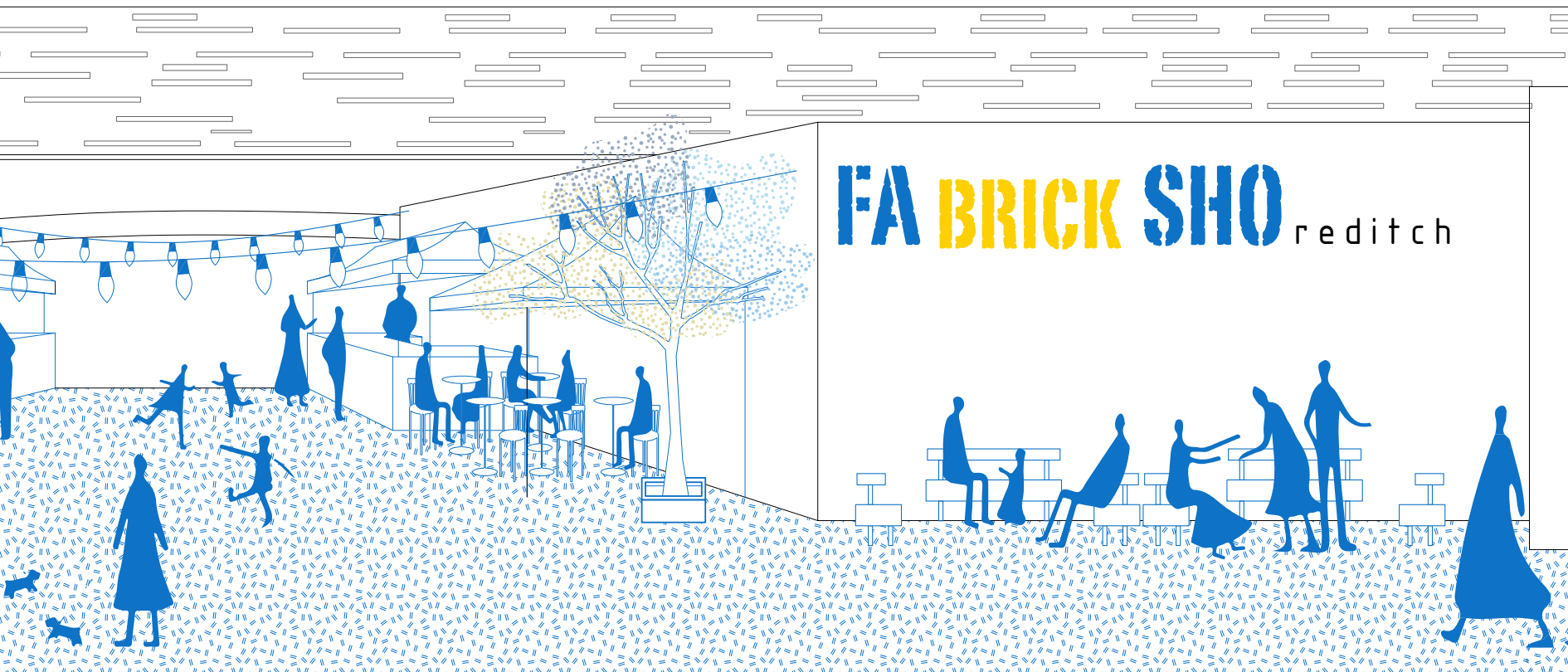


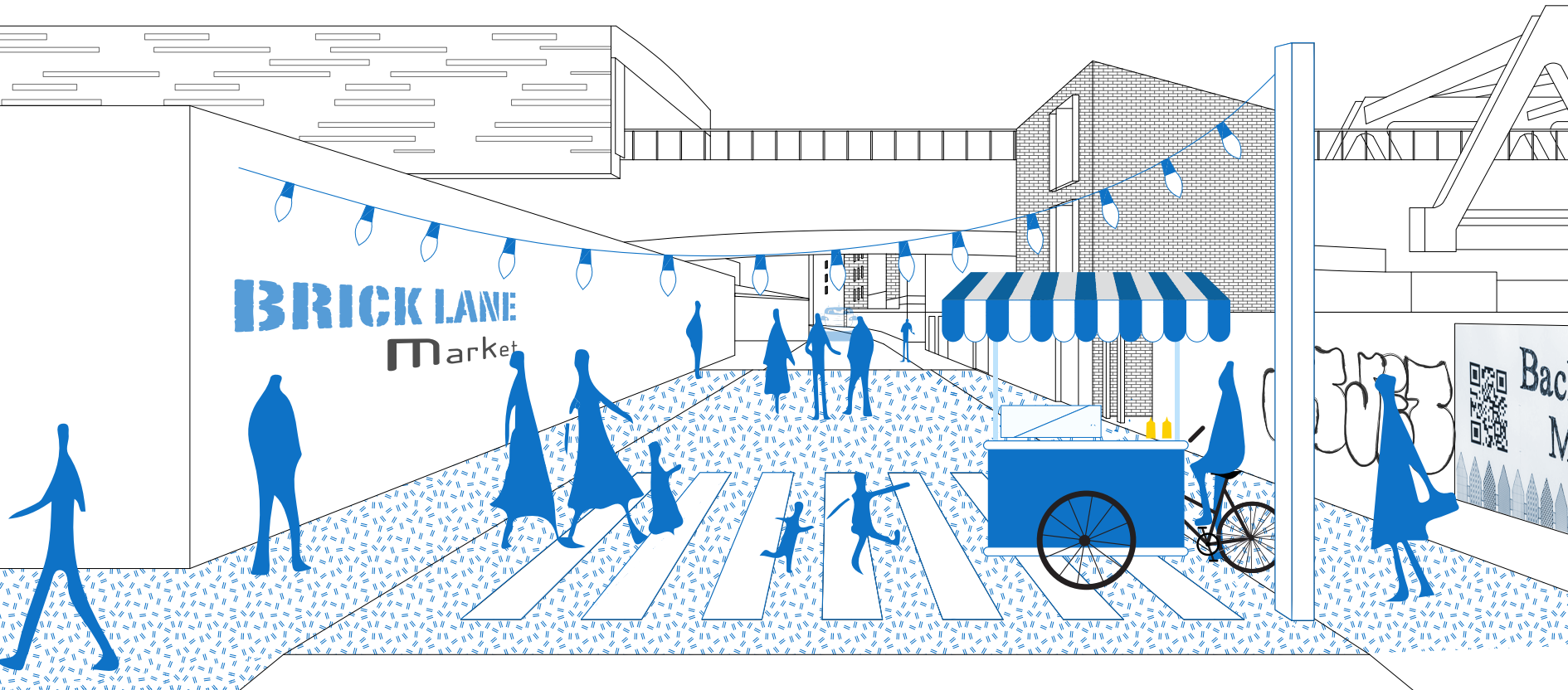




## Brick Lane Scenario

phase 3 - *enhancing local businesses between permanent and temporary*





**BRICK LANE**  
Market

Back  
Market

## Sources of figures

1. Map p. 251

### **Phase 1 - scenario on late 2018**

Graphic representation of the global new asset, axonometric projection source:  
edited by the author on April 2018

2. Zoom 1 p. 250

### **Brick Lane Entrance**

source: edited by the author on April 2018

3. Zoom 2 p. 250

### **Shoreditch High Street Entrance**

source: edited by the author on April 2018

4. Figure pp. 252 - 253

### **Shoreditch High Street Side Scenario**

source: edited by the author on May 2018

5. Figure pp. 254 - 255

### **Brick Lane Side Scenario**

source: edited by the author on May 2018

6. Map p. 257

### **Phase 2 - scenario on 2019**

Graphic representation of the global new asset, axonometric projection source:  
edited by the author on April 2018

7. Zoom 1 p. 256

### **Brick Lane Entrance**

source: edited by the author on April 2018

8. Zoom 2 p. 256

### **Shoreditch High Street Entrance**

source: edited by the author on April 2018

9. Figure pp. 258 - 259

### **Shoreditch High Street Side Scenario**

source: edited by the author on May 2018

10. Figure pp. 260 - 261

**Brick Lane Side Scenario**

source: edited by the author on May 2018

11. Map p. 263

**Phase 3 - scenario on 2020**

Graphic representation of the global new asset, axonometric projection source:  
edited by the author on April 2018

12. Zoom 1 p. 262

**Brick Lane Entrance**

source: edited by the author on April 2018

13. Zoom 2 p. 262

**Shoreditch High Street Entrance**

source: edited by the author on April 2018

14. Figure pp. 264 - 265

**Shoreditch High Street Side Scenario**

source: edited by the author on May 2018

15. Figure pp. 266 - 267

**Brick Lane Side Scenario**

source: edited by the author on May 2018



## Conclusions





## Conclusions

The research main objective is the role of creativity and the creative process within urban transformations with the aim of understanding how the process develops and, above all, how the roles of the actors involved are modified accordingly within it. The ongoing development, in recent years, of urban regeneration processes that increasingly tend towards bottom-up and place-making approaches, has placed at the centre of the debate the need to change the glance to the project and recognise the designer's new role within it. The consideration of the possibility of doing nothing, not building anything, in some cases is identified as a design strategy that the architect, urban designer, and planner must evaluate to develop the process. Otherwise, in other cases, the masterplan design tool turns out to be the only solution to re-establish the order lost for some reasons.

In this sense, the thesis has analysed the creative processes in the London context, with an opening towards European cities, with the aim of understanding if creativity itself can be considered a tool of urban transformation. To answer these questions, the investigation was carried out through four main phases: that of the knowledge, that of the investigation, that of the construction and that of the design reality checks.

The research work as a whole gave an answer to the questions that had been asked at the beginning, proposing an in-depth analysis of the thematic context both from the theoretical point of view and the case studies, and has actively contributed with a broader glance through the construction of three possible design approaches.

However, since it is a process whose programming is difficult and in some cases harmful, trying to give methodological answers could in some ways be counterproductive. For this reason, many questions are still open above all from the point of view of the practical translation of a process that appears to be complex and sophisticated. Furthermore, the events, the design and procedural actions that lead to a thematic advancement exceed the time of research, contributing with new forms of urban creativity and consolidated process. As a result, the application proposals may not be completely original as a whole.

For this reason, the research offers the first answers to the topic and certainly does not want to be an absolute response to a theoretically experimental context and practically advanced, wants, indeed, to be the basis for a research path based on the

design of the process of creative transformation of the city.

Therefore, writing the conclusion of the research presumes to recognise possible scenarios, directions and openings of the investigation conducted until now. Three main matters could be identified as actual deductions which could be described as future scenarios and be explored through a theoretical and practical experience in the future. Those matters are representing by three dialectic pairs which identify the essential meaning of the creative process.

### **Between permanence and variability**

The research has recognised the creative process as an ongoing process of transformation of the places and for this reason it acknowledges its existence in a complete interaction between something that exists and persists and something totally variable which is always modifying and changing. In this sense the time represents an outstanding condition able to play a critical role within the process. The extended glance on the timeframe contributes to the alteration of the traditional approach to the urban design and, the awareness to value the additional layer of the time in the process makes the process a much more complex system of variables.

The question of the temporary opens even more matters in terms of best practice and considering the time as a proper design tool would be an outstanding condition to drive the process, as well as the junction element to balance the critical gap between permanence and variability.

### **Between management and design**

One of the most important outcomes of the research is the awareness to handle with a complex, multi-disciplinary and multi-directional system. The rise of even more roles, that allowed the author to use the term urban practitioner rather than designer, gives a huge modification of the play roles and in particular of the design roles. In this sense the urban practitioner is asked not only to deliver a spatial solution but also to be able to manage the use of the space and plan the development of the whole process.

The overlapping of the mix of disciplines and new roles requires a change in the meaning both in a practical and theoretical way. This means that leading an urban

transformation process asks the designers to be flexible in understanding where and when the design is required and find the right balance between management and design.

In this sense the role of the urban practitioner could be considered close to the figure of the film director who has the ability to create and design the story but at the same time make it happens by managing actors, actions, background, scenes.

### **Process vs. Project**

To conclude, particular interest is dedicated to the research topic described as process versus project; the deepest study on the creative process showed the importance and the need to shift a bit the glance on the approach to the urban design. And in this sense, the endorsement of a process-based rather than a project-based approach has been deducted.

The process-based approach allows the urban practitioner, and all the roles involved, to be aware of what is going on and how it is going on in the cityscape and enabling the entire environment to keep the transformation ongoing.

However, a process-based approach requires a huge change in the design system in terms both of practical and administrative actions, as well as politic and economic ones. Therefore even if theoretically could be considered outstanding, considering it as an absolute argument would be impossible at this stage. But, a deepest study on this topic is considering a source of interest within the planning and urban design practice, as well as it could be easier extended to the architectural sphere.



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