



607457-CREA-1-2019-1-ES-CULT-COOP2

Strategies for embedding creative and artistic productions in sociocultural environments

2021-23

Deliverable 3.6

CREATIVE EUROPE Cooperation Project Agreement number 607457-CREA-1-2019-1-ES-CULT-COOP2

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

A-Place

Deliverable 3.6

Strategies for embedding creative and artistic productions
in sociocultural environments (2021-23)

Version 1.0

Author:

Luisa Bravo

Contributors:

Veronika Antoniou

Luisa Bravo

Victoria Sacco

Mila Pesce

Teresa Tourvas

30 November 2023

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
1. Introduction.....	5
1.1. What we know about creative placemaking.....	5
1.2. Experiences of creative placemaking.....	7
1.3. Our definition of creative placemaking	9
1.4. A-Place festivals: a diversity of approaches to creative placemaking	10
1.5. Limitations in the exchange of knowledge during the COVID-19 pandemic	11
1.6. Cooperation and knowledge sharing after the COVID-19 pandemic.....	12
2. LOOP Barcelona festival	13
2.1. How to engage the artist / how to collaborate with the artist	13
2.2. How space, place, creativity, and public participation are intertwined	14
3. Urban Visions festival.....	15
3.1. How to engage the artist / how to collaborate with the artist	16
3.2. How space, place, creativity, and public participation are intertwined	16
4. Pame Kaimakli festival.....	18
4.1. How to engage the artist / how to collaborate with the artist.....	18
4.2. How space, place, creativity, and public participation are intertwined	19
5. Conclusions	20
6. References	21

Executive Summary

The three participating A-Place festivals are held in Barcelona, Bologna and Nicosia. These events are intended to help develop the career of professional artists and creative thinkers and designers, and to internationally promote and disseminate the activities of the project within the realms of art, research and academia.

The three festivals are different in scale and scope:

- LOOP Barcelona promoted by Screen Projects is part of a larger, city-wide annual event, an internationally renowned fair dedicated to video art, which takes place in different locations in the city of Barcelona, with the engagement of international galleries and the organization of exhibitions, screenings and live performances;
- Urban Visions promoted by City Space Architecture in Bologna is a film festival dedicated to exploring urban humanities through the screening of short films focusing on contemporary urban complexity, exploring the relationships between people and spaces with multiple media, tackling urgent issues related to participation, inclusion, sharing and social practices, with an international perspective and applying an interdisciplinary approach;
- Pame Kaimakli is a neighbourhood cultural festival curated by Urban Gorillas and jointly organised with the active collaboration of residents from the Kaimakli district in Nicosia. It hosts an open gallery and a hub of creative and social actions, linking ad-hoc informal events in the private houses of the neighbours, while exploring publicness, co-creation, and community engagement through creative interventions of local and international artists with the collaboration of residents.

This document describes different practice-led approaches from each festival with regard to the production, sharing and dissemination of creative and artistic contents in the socio-cultural context in which they take place, and the strategies developed to engage the artists as content creators of public space knowledge and meanings. Such strategies are challenging the current definition of so-called "creative placemaking" by placing an emphasis on a curatorial entrepreneurship for the production and dissemination of art-led content - that acts as a mediator between artists and communities.

1. Introduction

1.1. What we know about creative placemaking

The three festivals of the A-Place project, namely LOOP, Urban Visions and Pame Kaimakli, work on the production and dissemination of creative and artistic contents such as videos, films and artistic installations, presented and discussed during community events, intercultural debates and public gatherings in different venues. The engagement of the artists follows specific strategies, that are defined according to the context in which each festival takes place, focusing on specific issues or dedicated sites. Artists are selected through open calls and curatorial activities and are invited to produce content that is able to expand the meaning and notion of public space and to theoretically shape its physical and social character.

These strategies are usually described as “creative placemaking” since this term has been associated to certain bottom-up and impact-driven practices which are able to redefine public space, its use and transformation, commonly referred to as “placemaking”, through the engagement of creative thinkers, designers, and artists, and thus considered as “creative”.

According to Project for Public Spaces (2018), “placemaking” is “an overarching idea and hands-on approach for improving a neighbourhood, city or region”, which “inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community”, “strengthening the connection between people and the places they share” (Figure 1).

What Makes a Great Place?

Project
for Public
Spaces



Figure 1. Place diagram by Project for Public Spaces (2017).

More info: <https://www.pps.org/article/grplacefeat>

The definition of placemaking revolves around four main pillars: 1) Access and linkages; 2) Comfort and image; 3) Uses and activities; 4) Sociability. And for each of them a set of intangible urban qualities is defined according to several indicators. According to this diagram, “great public spaces are the places we remember most vividly, the places where serendipitous things happen, the places

we tell stories about". So the definition is addressing mostly a physical condition of space that is able to enhance the sense of place, without a clear reference to the art and creative component.

The American Planning Association defines creative placemaking as "a process where community members, artists, arts and culture organizations, community developers, and other stakeholders use arts and cultural strategies to implement community-led change. This approach aims to increase vibrancy, improve economic conditions, and empower residents to take ownership of their communities"¹. According to the National Endowment for the Arts, "in creative placemaking, partners from public, private, non-profit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighbourhood, town, city, or region around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired." (Markusen and Gadwa, 2010). This report, which has been cited nearly 700 times in further works, helped define that field and resulted in an investment of over a hundred million dollars into that subset of placemaking in the United States. According to research shared at Placemaking Week Europe in Strasbourg (Smolar, 2023), to this day there are more web references to 'creative placemaking' than just 'placemaking'.

Creative practises are often process-driven and move towards a complex and more nuanced understanding of creative placemaking, regarding the role of the artist and the social, economic and political contexts in which the artist's work is developed, throughout a dynamic process that evolves together with the practice itself. Arts-led and socially concerned placemaking celebrates the capacity of the arts to address the city as a complex ecosystem, so that projects and actions can integrate culture and community and can result in boosted local economies and increased levels of social connection and civic engagement (Courage, 2020). In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, non-profit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighbourhood, town, city, or region around arts and cultural activities.

Since 2010, the rapid adoption of the term "creative placemaking" has led to confusion with regard to which activities can be considered under that umbrella and how their impact can be measured (Zitcer, 2018). In particular, the role of the artist carrying out his/her practice in a socio-cultural context is the most criticised aspect of the activity. Such engagement is not just a component of the community development process nor an instrument to solve social issues and promote urban regeneration, as it seems to be assumed by creative placemaking. Rather the artist is called to speak the language of the community and to learn and be inspired from the process of engagement and sharing with the community, while at the same time being free to elaborate and produce artistic contents. To do so, the artist should be strongly supported by the organization(s) that is/are inviting him/her and is/are in charge of the project management, through proper curatorial strategies that are able to make the contribution of the artists meaningful for the community and the related socio-cultural context.

Screen Projects, City Space Architecture and Urban Gorillas are playing a curatorial role as creative entrepreneurs for the engagement of artists, with a strategic approach able to:

- design activities to exploit the potential of artistic practises and productions;
- define and support art-oriented actions at the local scale but with an international perspective;
- shape an overall vision in which the artists can feel comfortable and can produce impactful outcomes, that could foster awareness and eventually produce a long-term change into specific socio-cultural contexts.

¹ Read more here: <https://www.planning.org/knowledgebase/creativeplacemaking/>

The three festivals operate on three different scales and impacts:

- local, at the community level (Barcelona, Bologna and Nicosia);
- urban, with regard to the city where it takes place, linked to associated issues and debates related to public space design and implementation, use and appropriation;
- European, as part of the A-Place project, to inform a larger debate - also with the engagement of the A-Place network - in the realms of art, research, and academia, and to internationally promote the artists' works and to support the artists' career.

1.2. Experiences of creative placemaking

The United States, where the definition was firstly coined in 2010 by the National Endowment for the Arts, boasts many examples of creative placemaking interventions. A comprehensive overview is provided by the American Planning Association, together with an archive of projects, guidelines and research outcomes:

“Successful creative placemaking interventions are considered those that highlight unique community characteristics: projects can focus on connecting local history with the present, bringing cultural influences into the spotlight and creating new traditions. It also builds connections between people and places by encouraging collaboration and visualization. Oftentimes, creative placemaking is able to activate public spaces or create a short-term opportunity to connect residents around arts and culture. While the creative placemaking process results in changes to physical spaces, it is also an opportunity to build relationships between diverse partners and to build positive change. A key element in the creative placemaking process is to have stakeholders, including artists, engaged early in the process. This provides opportunities to look at community challenges in an inclusive manner, gathering and deciding on creative placemaking actions based on a variety of community perspectives”².

In Europe the concept of “placemaking” is quite recent and is linked to the establishment of Placemaking Europe (the first event took place in Amsterdam in 2017), defined as “a network that connects practitioners, academics, community leaders, market players and policy makers across the field of placemaking. Placemaking Europe develops and shares knowledge; contributes to designing and testing tools; creates the ground to exchanging ideas; and actively advocates for better public space policies”. According to Placemaking Europe, “placemaking is an approach to urban planning and design that focuses on the people who use a space, rather than just the physical structures or buildings. The idea is to create places that are not just functional, but also beautiful and meaningful to the people who live, work, and play there. Effectively, it is the processes by which a community and its advocates turn any space into a place.”³ This concept includes also “creative placemaking”, even if it is often simply associated to creative and artistic practices that are not necessarily produced with the community, such as murals, street art and colourful painting of certain public areas, and thus have not been produced as part of a process intended to define shared values.

The Arts Council in the United Kingdom published a report (Parkinson, Buttrick, & Knight, 2020) on “Arts and Place Shaping” produced by “Wavehill: social and economic research”, which highlights how arts and cultural activities could be driving forces in building stronger communities through several activities such as:

- playing a role in facilitating reconciliation and understanding among different groups creating more harmonious communities;

² Read more here: <https://www.planning.org/knowledgebase/creativeplacemaking/>

³ Read more here: <https://placemaking-europe.eu/what-is-placemaking/>

- inspiring local communities to volunteer their time, expertise and energy to support others, thus promoting cohesion and sense of belonging;
- creating healthy communities through a place-based approach that foster wellbeing and a better quality of life;
- generating a sense of civic pride, place identity and fundamentally enhancing the public realm by building social capital.

Creative events and festivals in public space, as pointed out by FestSpace⁴, a research project coordinated by the University of the West of Scotland,

“offer opportunities for urban public spaces to be reimagined as more welcoming and more diverse spaces encouraging different behaviours and producing the inter-subjectivity that can foster the integration of migrants and other socially excluded people. However, there is also a risk that festivals and events represent merely a superficial ‘quick fix’ to social problems or worse - they might exacerbate social and economic exclusion. In their planning, and in their realisation and legacies, festivals and events include and exclude people and they allow (and restrict) the celebration of certain identities. They have the power to disrupt the fixed nature of public space and to change the dynamics of spaces. Like the spaces they inhabit, urban festivals and events are contested - with different interests competing to secure their own objectives”

So creative and artistic practices should be implemented through an effective curatorial strategy that considers opportunities but also risks and counter-effects such as exclusion (Brownnett & Evans, 2020). That is why a certain expertise and entrepreneurialism is required as part of a curatorial strategy able to link social and community issues to cultural and artistic content, maximizing the impact of creative and artistic productions developed with - through participatory practices - and for - in response of specific needs and desires - the community.

Adopting a more nuanced perspective, the placemaking model ought to consider values such as co-creation, human-scale design, and active curation, while effectively addressing the creative aspects inherent in the process (Figure 2).

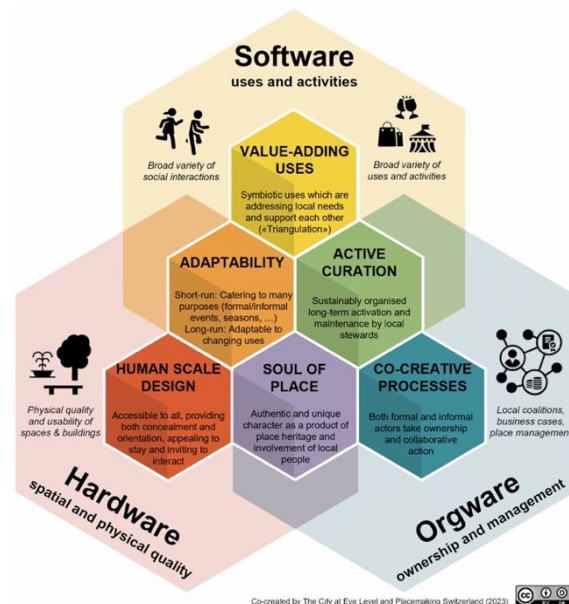


Figure 2. Six Building Blocks of Placemaking by Placemaking Switzerland (2023).

⁴ Read more here: <http://festspace.net/>.

1.3. Our definition of creative placemaking

Creative placemaking can be defined as an approach to urban planning and community development that integrates arts and culture into the fabric of a place. This concept recognizes the role of creativity, artistic expression, and cultural activities in shaping the social, economic, and physical aspects of communities. The aim of creative placemaking is to leverage the power of the arts to revitalize and strengthen neighbourhoods, fostering a sense of identity, community, and well-being, using through public art installations, cultural events, performances, and other creative interventions to activate public space.

Key features of creative placemaking include:

1. **Collaboration:** Encouraging collaboration between artists, cultural institutions, local residents, businesses, and policymakers to collectively contribute to the development of a place;
2. **Cultural assets:** Identifying and building upon the existing cultural assets and resources within a community, including its artistic traditions, history, and creative talents;
3. **Engagement:** Actively involving the community in the creative process, allowing residents to participate in and shape the artistic and cultural activities that influence their surroundings;
4. **Innovation:** Promoting innovative approaches to urban development by integrating artistic and cultural practices into the planning and design of public spaces;
5. **Economic development:** Recognizing the potential for creative industries and cultural activities to contribute to economic development, job creation, and the overall vitality of a community.

In addition to creating dynamic, inclusive, and culturally rich environments that enhance the quality of life for residents, creative placemaking also addresses the economic development of the cultural and creative industries. This means that creative placemaking is not just an output or an event, but it is a complex set of contents, expertise and actions intended as an opportunity to create positive change by investing in urban transformation: creative placemaking can be a driving force to shape human environments through innovative solutions that disrupt age-old systems and establish a new creative economy (Howkins, 2011) through cultural entrepreneurship. According to Kolsteeg (2013), “cultural entrepreneurs by definition work in a social, political, economic and artistic discourse”, they, as Lange (2008) points out, “possesses the ability to mediate between and interpret the areas of culture and of service provision”. According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, arts and culture contributed \$919.7 billion to the nation’s economy in 2019. This represents 4.3% of the GDP—a larger share of the economy than transportation, agriculture, and construction (2019 data). According to the European Commission, the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) ecosystem represents approximately 3.95% of EU value added and employs around 8 million people, including around 1.2 million firms, over 99.9% of which are small and medium-sized enterprises. Therefore, creative placemakers can be identified as cultural entrepreneurs, since they are “cultural change agents and resourceful visionaries who organize cultural, financial, social and human capital to generate revenue from a cultural activity” (Enhuber, 2014).

Creative placemaking can have a meaningful impact if framed as an action of cultural entrepreneurship, which can be defined as “an entrepreneurial process that uses components of culture as a medium to achieve specific entrepreneurial goals while also promoting the culture as a whole, which helps the region’s socioeconomic growth” (Patowary et al. 2022). A study published by the European Union on job potential in the cultural sector (MKW et al, 2001) identifies a new type of employer and/or employee named as an “entrepreneurial cultural worker” who no longer fits into previously typical patterns of full-time professions of the European welfare-state system, following

a European debate on the “economisation of culture” or rather “culturalisation of the economy” (Ellmeier, 2003). Amongst all societal challenges and reconfigurations, at the European and international level, culture is a powerful means to contribute to social change, it is a crucial space for learning and to open a terrain of debate and exchange, where diversity meets and the society at large redefines democracy and social cohesion (Lafleur et al, 2018).

In summary, creative placemaking should include the following key features:

- the placemaking action is conceived and designed with a strong artistic or creative component with the engagement of artists and experienced creative professionals;
- the implementation is developed through a curatorial strategy that mediates between the artists and experienced creative professionals and the local community (key features 1. Collaboration; 2. Cultural Asset; 3. Engagement) to properly embed them in the sociocultural environment;
- the entire placemaking action, from design to implementation, incorporates an impact-driven approach forged through a cultural entrepreneurship process (key features 4. Innovation; 5. Economic Development).

1.4. A-Place festivals: a diversity of approaches to creative placemaking

The curatorial strategy of each festival challenges the definition of creative placemaking, since it establishes a methodology that goes beyond the artistic production *per se*: it is intended to create conditions for the artist to produce his/her work without restrictions or guidance - thus giving them the freedom to understand and interpret - while embedding social cultural issues in the artist’s path. So, essentially the three festivals focus on the process of engagement of the artist and the production of contents which are creative, artistic and context-dependant.

The three festivals contribute to A-Place by promoting different creative actions:

- LOOP festival promotes an open call for film productions, awarded every year by a jury to one or more film-makers and/or creatives. The awarded films are then presented during the days of the festival;
- Urban Visions film festival promotes a short film competition, with two different categories, one in particular dedicated to “Migrants, refugees and displaced communities” and the other one that varies every year (for the first year it was dedicated to the pandemic with “A Confined Urban Vision”, included in “A Confined Place”, and for the second and third year it was dedicated to recovery after the outbreak of the pandemic with ‘Resilient Communities’). After a curatorial selection from all submitted short films, a jury is appointed to award different prizes for the two categories. The shortlisted films are presented during the days of the festival and the winners are announced during a ceremony on the last day of the festival. In addition, the Urban Visions Film Festival organises public debates and interviews, online and offline, with international artists, film-makers, scholars and curators. It also promotes an Audience Award to engage online audiences by encouraging them to vote for their favourite films via the streaming platform;
- Pame Kaimakli festival promotes a neighbourhood-based cultural event, with the active engagement of local residents and artists through open calls and collaborations which result in creative and social events. The festival has over the years facilitated the engagement of many international artists including screenings from three film and animation festivals, and video productions, selected by the curators.

In line with the aim of A-Place, which is to provide a platform for creating, discussing and experimenting with the sense of belonging and identity that groups from different backgrounds and cultures have in their social and physical environment, each partner develops an appropriate strategy, with regard to:

- how to engage the artist / how to collaborate with the artist;
- how space, place, and public participation are intertwined, with the intention to promote awareness and inform the audience on specific issues and topics through film productions and public gatherings.

Each festival is committed to producing an impact in its respective socio-cultural environment, contributing to the understanding of the notion of place. With this purpose, each festival develops and uses a specific format and targets a specific audience, so that artistic productions can create a greater benefit for the community by fostering practises of appropriation, activation, and renovation of the public realm, thus contributing to place attachment.

1.5. Limitations in the exchange of knowledge during the COVID-19 pandemic

One of the main objectives of the networked cooperation among the three partners Screen Projects, City Space Architecture and Urban Gorillas is the exchange of cultural agents and artists. During the first two years of activities, this exchange was significantly limited due to Covid-19 restrictions with regards to in-person events and travelling. However, the three partners cooperated throughout various activities, exchanging knowledge and good practices, and becoming familiar with the creative and artistic approach and curatorial strategies of each other, and engaged each other in various activities of the A-Place project. In particular:

- LOOP festival took place in November 2020 (1st edition, online only) and in November 2021 (2nd edition - "A Body's Journey", hybrid format) and invited Urban Gorillas to join the jury for the first open call for audio visual productions and City Space Architecture to join the jury for the second open call;
- Urban Visions film festival took place in April 2021 (1st edition, online only - previously scheduled on November 2020 and postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic) and in November 2021 (2nd edition, hybrid format) and invited LOOP to join the jury for the competition "[A Confined Urban Vision](#)" and later the jury for the competition "Migrants, refugees and displaced communities" for the first year, together with other partners from A-Place (NOVA); the [opening ceremony of the 1st edition](#) was introduced by the A-Place coordinator Leandro Madrazo, LOOP also gave an introductory speech at the second edition. A selection of contents from the first edition of the Urban Visions film festival was disseminated in Rome during the Karawan Fest promoted by associated partner Ecomuseo Casilino ad Duas Lauros in September 2021;
- Pame Kaimakli festival took place in September 2020 ("[A Delicious Place](#)") and hosted films selected from A-Place partners (NOVA, KU Leuven, Prostorož) and the film "Not just food" by the Italian non-profit organization ACRA, recommended by City Space Architecture. Urban Gorillas invited LOOP to serve in the jury for the competition "A Confined Place".

With the intention of supporting the careers of professional artists and creative thinkers and designers during the COVID-19 pandemic, City Space Architecture organized an [online public dialogue](#) with curators of the Hungarian Contemporary Architecture Centre Kek in Budapest and Wonderland in Vienna during the first edition of the Urban Visions film festival in a bid to promote film festivals on themes related to architecture and urban spaces in the city.

1.6. Cooperation and knowledge sharing after the COVID-19 pandemic

In the two last years of the project, Screen Projects, City Space Architecture and Urban Gorillas developed a common strategy to promote cooperation and knowledge sharing, to learn more from each other and to better define common processes and strategies for artists' engagement. They developed the following activities:

- City Space Architecture participated in the 2022 edition of the Pame Kaimakli Festival organized by Urban Gorillas that took place in Nicosia, where three short films from the Urban Visions Film Festival's A-Place competition on "Migrants, refugees and displaced communities" were screened at the pop-up cinema in Ayia Varvara square. Furthermore, the winner of the first Open Call from LOOP Barcelona, "La città dentro" by ZimmerFrei Collective was screened. This was also the opportunity to be part of the different events of the festival including a public debate on Festivals and Urban Activism with local artists and creative professionals on how to implement strategies to expand the level of engagement of local communities, including various, diverse and intergenerational groups, with different cultural backgrounds;
- City Space Architecture participated in one of the professional meetings promoted by LOOP, as an in-person event in Barcelona in November 2022. These meetings are a series of closed-door informal debates and networking sessions for local and international art professionals with like-natured practices to exchange knowledge and debate common interests;
- City Space Architecture hosted a special event at the third edition of the Urban Visions Film Festival in November 2022 to screen the short film "La città dentro", the winner of the LOOP's first open call. The screening was followed by a public debate with the director Anna De Manincor from Zimmerfrei collective, and the two main characters Filmon Yemane and Bana Abreham;
- at the 2023 Edition of the Pame Kaimakli Festival, Urban Gorillas hosted three short films from the Urban Visions Film Festival's A-Place competition on "Migrants, refugees and displaced communities" and on "Resilient Communities", that were screened at the pop-up cinema in Ayia Varvara square.

The cooperation among the three festivals was an opportunity to reflect and discuss on these questions: who are we trying to benefit with our curatorial strategies? Are they able to address equity and social justice, and not just increasing the vibrancy of neighbourhoods? Can the work of the artists become a tool to tackle most urgent societal challenges and define the true meaning of places, based on inclusion and shared values? These reflections are intended to inform the curatorial strategies of each festival and to open up the multiplicity of implications regarding creative and artistic productions in socio-cultural environments.

2. LOOP Barcelona festival

Since 2003, LOOP Barcelona has been a recognized platform for the dissemination, discussion and creation of audio-visual artworks. Under its three main formats, that of a festival, an art fair and a programme of knowledge exchange and debates, it carries out a continued exploration of the latest productions that emerge from the contemporary art practises related to video, film and the overarching concept of the moving image.

Most of the artistic productions that the festival supports aim to capture the complex layers that animate the notion of public space and the various constructs that define people's sense of belonging, as well as the intimate ways in which they relate with the world. In short, the intent of LOOP Barcelona is to help artists achieve those experiential aspects that are the hardest to be observed in material terms, all the underlying and forgotten aspects that form an integral part of the use, meaning and construction of place.

LOOP Barcelona established a section for the A-Place project, exclusively dedicated to exploring, advancing and establishing creative placemaking practises, as well as to the exchange of knowledge with other A-Place partners. The A-Place programme is designed to follow two basic lines of action that feed each other and are, therefore, mutually complementary:

- a production line, through videos selected in an open call and commissioned to artists. Through the commissioned video works, LOOP Barcelona wants to foster research on placemaking practises implemented in a specific territory, on the impact that those practises might have at the physical, cultural, historical or social level.
- a debate line, through a series of closed-door debates that allowed local and international professionals to exchange knowledge and discuss subjects about the creation of a sense of place and the role of artists and artistic media - in particular, video art - divided in two streams: "Embodying space through memory" and "Place-making through body moves".

2.1. How to engage the artist / how to collaborate with the artist

Nurturing artists is part of "curating" and caretaking, and can include offering feedback, making them aware of opportunities to learn and develop, or simply listening to their needs. Continuous feedback and follow up conversations are important, through emails, face-to-face meetings or Zoom encounters, with the scope to solve the artist's problems (as long as it is feasible) and to favour the creative process. Problems can often be administrative, financial, production-related, or sometimes conceptual.

Helping artists to bring their wildest ideas to life means connecting them with other creative thinkers from a diversity of fields: a writer can help contextualize or expand the narrative around an artist's work, or an architect or anthropologist can help develop aspects of creating a project. In this way, the work of the artist will be enriched as long as his / her professional possibilities will also develop beyond the project.

Taking these questions one step further by conducting interviews with artists is also very helpful. During these discussions, the artist can obtain a deeper understanding of the work and the related priorities. It is also essential to help the artist to think in a cross-disciplinary way and with a critical perspective.

LOOP Barcelona understands the importance of being very open to find out what artists actually want to do. This is only possible by performing active listening. When a relationship between producers/curators and artists is strong, based on trust, respect and mutual help, both sides are inspired to co-create powerful projects.

LOOP developed a specific strategy for the A-Place open calls to contact artists:

- create a press release and contact the press for its dissemination in online and offline media
- contact artistic agendas (online or offline) that contain an Open Calls section
- contact national and international artist associations
- contact local and international artist residencies
- contact A-Place partners
- create a dissemination campaign on social networks (of LOOP and of A-Place)
- contact specialized curators and critics who could help with the dissemination
- create a talented and prestigious jury that can help with their own social networks to spread the call

enlist previous Open Call winners to act as ambassadors for the award.

And for dissemination of artistic works:

- contact press, curators and institutions that might have any interest in screening the video productions
- create a dissemination campaign on social networks (of LOOP and of A-Place). In this regard, use trailers and photos in social media as reminders of past activities and productions
- contact specialized curators and critics who can help with the dissemination.

2.2. How space, place, creativity, and public participation are intertwined

The video-works commissioned to artists explored the attachment, sense of place in different contexts, narrating emotional landscapes, beyond the visible and physical locations. Productions dealt with personal beliefs and memories, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural meanings, roots, languages, and care, expanding knowledge and urban perceptions. The narratives of the videos unfolded feelings of belonging, inclusion, and identity, with regard to a specific condition and referring to diversity, migration, displacement, and contributed to the understanding of the notion of place, describing or encouraging practises of appropriations and sharing through creative interventions.

Video productions focusing on placemaking are intended to generate debate and experiment about the sense of belonging and identity which groups from multiple backgrounds and cultures hold within their social and physical environments, and to expand not only the concept from the narrative and the script perspective, but also provide specific value through the audio-visual work. It is also desirable that video productions generate knowledge, raise critical questions, create a poetic reflection on image production and foster experimentation and innovation in the audio visual creation. Video art is able to create both contexts and contents that contribute to the perception of place and the individual artists' perceptions represent concrete issues of their own communities: Their works bring their arguments closer and stimulate questions about the way we live and inhabit a place. Ultimately, by creating, showing new environments, each of these artists reinforces and expands the paradigm of their projects, blurring the boundary between the screen and the reality of the viewer's surroundings, creating their own sense of belonging from the experiences of others.

3. Urban Visions festival

Urban Visions. Beyond the Ideal City is the first, independent, Italian-based film festival for short films entirely dedicated to the contemporary city and to urban public life. It is aimed at exploring urban humanities through an interdisciplinary approach.

The Urban Visions film festival aims to collect the narratives of different realities, to investigate city's connections, intersections and activities while focusing on the public realm, where public aspects, related to participation, sharing and social practises, blend with private aspirations, related to individuality, diversity and lifestyles. Urban Visions intends to collect stories of happiness or poverty, success or solitude, conformity or rebellion, beyond the seducing and reassuring shapes of the beautiful, ideal city. Overcoming the stereotypes and well-known images of consumerism, Urban Visions looks for something that our eyes, deliberately or unconsciously, do not know or cannot see.

From a research perspective, the aim of the Urban Visions film festival is to develop a field of activities to facilitate a dialogue between urban theory, social complexity and film studies, and to raise awareness of contemporary urban issues, emphasising the relationship between individuals and the urban spaces they inhabit. In this context, a film becomes a tool to open new perspectives, to explore new theoretical paradigms and research methods, to establish an effective understanding around urban humanities, especially in the urban settings in which the festival takes place. In terms of audience engagement, the Urban Visions festival is willing to create cross-disciplinary learning spaces involving an inter-generational audience and different social groups, and to develop and apply creative placemaking practises, through workshops, art-based interventions and temporary transformation of space, both indoors and outdoors, in order to establish new places for peaceful coexistence. These activities can contribute to fostering understanding of the living conditions of migrants and refugees, while promoting solidarity, cooperation and trust among people from diverse cultural origins and to approach notions of identity and belonging from a multidisciplinary perspective.

The A-Place contribution of Urban Visions film festival consists of:

- two short film competitions
- screenings of films out of competition
- talks, interviews, public debates and exhibitions

Six short films from the first edition of the Urban Visions festival were selected for a dissemination activity that took place in September 2021 at Parco Sangalli in Rome during the Karawan Fest as an open air cinema event, developed in cooperation with associate partner Ecomuseo Casilino ad Duas Lauros. The third edition (2022) of the Festival was presented, as a dissemination activity, at the Fondazione Marta Czok in Venice, on the occasion of the opening of their Project Space, as part of the exhibition "The Rise and Fall of the Ideal City", in partnership with World Art Foundation and London Metropolitan University, and opened in conjunction with the 18th International Architecture Exhibition, Venice Biennale (2023).

3.1. How to engage the artist / how to collaborate with the artist

In the Urban Visions festival artists are invited to contribute in various ways:

- submit their work in response to open calls for short film competitions
- join the jury panel for the evaluation of shortlisted films
- participate in talks and public debates
- give an interview to explain their approach to socially-engaged art actions

In all these activities, artists produce enrichment and set the ground for a more reflective perspective on society's contemporary challenges. The collaboration with artists is then a source of inspiration to re-think and potentially re-define the process of creative productions and its goals, and to frame contents for a more effective social impact, by sharing awareness and developing a critical reflection through a multifaceted approach to urban issues.

Urban Visions film festival developed a specific strategy for the A-Place short film competition to contact artists:

- publish the competition for short films on FilmFreeway, a professional platform for film productions
- create a dissemination campaign on social networks
- contact A-Place associate partners (Ecomuseo Casilino ad Duas Lauros and small)
- contact A-Place partners
- contact specialized curators and critics who could help with the dissemination
- invite well-known film-makers or distribution companies to suggest films that can be included in the section 'out-of-competition'
- invite international well-known artists and art curators to serve as jury members that can help with their own social networks to spread the call
- invite scholars and art professionals for interviews and public debates during the days of the festival.

And for dissemination of artistic works:

- create a dissemination campaign on social networks, using trailers of films and photos taken during the festival
- contact A-Place associate partners (Ecomuseo Casilino ad Duas Lauros and small)
- reach the global community of scholars and practitioners affiliated to City Space Architecture
- cooperate with art galleries or cultural spaces for special screenings

3.2. How space, place, creativity, and public participation are intertwined

The Urban Visions festival is an instrument to bring together urban stories from different cultural contexts, depicting societies' contemporary challenges and human stories, and it envisions how self-organised communities could become agents of change, fostering cooperation and solidarity. From the screen to local contexts, Urban Visions festival is able to offer to the audience a rich and complex perspective on the way we live urban space and how we contribute to defining places, calling for public participation in the process of making and re-making our own world. Screenings are always accompanied by talks and public dialogues, to reflect on the contents of the films and to exchange opinions and different perspectives, offering opportunities for the audience to be actively engaged.

By creatively interpreting urban spaces, artists can provide urban dwellers with a richer comprehension of their surroundings, broadening significance through diverse perspectives, languages, and forms of expression. This exposure enables users to gain insights into various ways

of understanding community urban life. In addition, they open a new dimension, made of imagination and enchantment, they represent and question human condition, they offer far-seeing inputs on people liveability in a more and more complex urban scenario. This way, they effectively contribute to the definition of strategies for creative placemaking, challenging communities to experiment solutions and ways of participation that are open and inclusive.

Learning from others, experiencing, suffering or rejoicing from the stories of other people, communities and cities generates a strong emotional impact and helps to build new awareness and new ways of perceiving places, also with respect to the decision-making process that generated them.

4. Pame Kaimakli festival

Pame Kaimakli is a neighbourhood festival launched in 2013 by the residents of the Kaimakli district and Urban Gorillas. It started as a series of ad-hoc informal events in private houses courtyards and streets, to grown over the ten years of its existence into a well-known event, welcoming acclaimed artists from Cyprus, and diverse places as far as Japan. As an annual community event it focuses on co-creation and community engagement through creative interventions with the collaboration of residents and artists. The festival activates spaces and places imbuing them with a new light creating unique experiences to festival goers and participants.

The A-Place project was showcased in three festival editions:

- in 2020, “A Delicious Place”, with the role of food in culture and in particular within the multicultural context of Kaimakli as main theme
- in 2022, “A Playful Pace”, inspired by the idea of children’s play and roaming in the neighbourhood.
- in 2023, “A Place 4 All”, focusing on stories and storytelling of Paimakli

The A-Place activities included collaboration with partners and their representation through curated works and discussions,

- hosting and screening 9 short films from two A-Place partner film festivals in the format of a pop-up cinema
- the screening of short video stories from all A-Place partners reinterpreting the same thematic (that of food its many cultural guises)
- the creation of eight local video stories engaging artists and communities (screened at various neighbourhood locations)
- two curated discussions regarding the role of festivals in activating communities, and creating meaning in places
- the commissioning of artworks including a graffiti which activated a disused parking area, and served as the backdrop for one of the pop-up cinemas, and a performative mural painting honouring a painter of the neighbourhood
- the creation of two architectural interventions which acted as props, signifiers, seating, and adaptive infrastructure spaces for festival goers
- the publication of a photography and literary book on the gardens of Kaimakli.

4.1. How to engage the artist / how to collaborate with the artist

The activities developed for the Pame Kaimakli festivals focus on creating activities which engage artists with a strong social and cultural interest, with productions which are deeply rooted in the locality of the place and aim to engage the residents in creative ways.

Open call for projects, but also direct invitations of artists create opportunities for localised productions which create multiple connections with the festival audience and the active participation of the local community members.

The thematic of each festival inspired by the neighbourhood history, traditions, architecture, but also reflected the realities of contemporary Kaimakli for example its multicultural character, the rich culinary traditions they bring, the migrant children roaming the neighbourhood, the residents love of gardening, etc.

The artists engaged have been selected through:

- open calls announced 3-4 months before the festival
- direct invitation
- commissioned artworks
- commissioned publications

Urban Gorillas actively collaborated with the artists and local community members in all stages of the development of the productions by taking on the role of the mediator, bringing the local communities and artists in contact. The organisation facilitates matching local groups and artists and often actively engage in workshops and the productions of the artworks. For example, in the case of three of the video stories, Urban Gorillas initiated three workshops in collaboration with dramaturgy and movement specialists engaging elderly and migrant communities. In the meanwhile, they created a video story focusing on food and religious rituals in the neighbourhood. These local stories drew great interest from the wider public, with more than 75,000 YouTube views, creating a new perspective on Kaimakli and its people.

Urban Gorillas has been active in the Kaimakli neighbourhood for almost a decade and has created a strong network with locals and artists. This sense of trust has created the conditions for connections between the specific communities and artists.

4.2. How space, place, creativity, and public participation are intertwined

The productions of Pame Kaimakli festival are the result of local stories and local actors. They are also presented outside traditional art spaces, bringing art and creativity in surprising locations and closer to audiences who would normally not attend festivals and be exposed with contemporary arts.

This context-dependent approach also gives participants and the audience a sense of pride, as it directly connects the presented outcome in a local context. The festival showcases these results and has over the years established a stage for a local breed of productions, and a collaboration with independent community groups and artists. In a way, the activities also have strengthened the framework for ongoing and future actions and cultivated the idea of locally produced art as a community engaged process, deeply rooted in place.

With regards to audience development, the festival structure (open calls and direct invitations to artists and local organisations) act as a catalyst, engaging community members who would normally be kept outside the process of artistic production. At the same time, it brings people from diverse backgrounds to the neighbourhood and has over the years established a strong following. The showcased productions reveal multiple layers and allow the audience to approach from many directions, while empowering the idea of storytelling and creativity from within the community and the unseen voices.

5. Conclusions

Screen Projects, City Space Architecture and Urban Gorillas have applied diverse curatorial strategies in their respective festivals to present artistic productions, mostly video productions, in their local socio-cultural contexts, and have seen how these productions have been able to contribute to community integration and identity. These productions (screenings, public meetings, debates and exhibitions) were meaningful for local sociocultural environments and created cross-disciplinary learning spaces while acting as cultural platforms for the dissemination of art and creative contents. Their main aim was to prioritise deeper connections to certain urban spaces and communities to preserve local heritage and foster community cohesion.

Common topics that the three festivals shared are mostly related to diversity, migration, displacement, explored through multiculturalism, richness of perspectives, diversity of languages and creative means. Activities reported by the three festivals in the annual reports show the complexity and richness of artistic productions in the three cities (Barcelona, Bologna and Nicosia) that generated social impact, at different scales and in regard to different social groups, and reached a large and diversified audience through different activities and actions.

The three festivals implemented a creative placemaking approach, each with diverse objectives and scope, but all addressing collaboration, cultural assets, engagement, and innovation, according to our definition. In terms of economic development, the A-Place project faced unprecedented challenges given the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a particular impact on this aspect, although all the three festivals were able to redesign their activities in a completely different scenario, while remaining faithful to their specific core mission. The entrepreneurial process for all of them is mature and well-framed in the context in which Screen Projects, City Space Architecture and Urban Gorillas operate, at the local, European and international scale.

6. References

- Brownnett, T. & Evans, O. (2020) Finding common ground: The conception of community arts festivals as spaces for placemaking, *Health and Place*, 61, 1-8.
- Courage, C. et al. (2020) *The Routledge Handbook of Placemaking*, Abingdon: Routledge.
- Ellmeier, A. (2003) Cultural entrepreneurialism: on the changing relationship between the arts, culture and employment, *The International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 9:1, 3-16, DOI: 10.1080/1028663032000069158a
- Enhuber, M. (2014) How is Damien Hirst a cultural entrepreneur? *Artivate: A Journal of Entrepreneurship in the Arts*, 3(2), 3-20.
- Hawkins, J. (2001) *The Creative Economy: How People Make Money from Ideas*. Penguin.
- Kolsteeg, J. (2013) Situated cultural entrepreneurship. *Artivate: A Journal of Entrepreneurship in the Arts*, 2, 3-13.
- Lafleur, B., Maas, W., and Mors, S., (2018) *Courageous Citizens. How culture contributes to social change*, Valiz.
- Lange, B. (2008). Accessing markets in creative industries: Professionalization and social-spatial strategies of culturepreneurs in Berlin. *Creative Industries Journal*, 1(2), 115-135.
- Markusen A. and Gadwa, A. (2010) *Creative Placemaking* [online]: National Endowment for the Arts. Available at: <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/CreativePlacemaking-Paper.pdf>
- MKW Wirtschaftsforschung GmbH/Österreichische Kulturdocumentation. Internationales Archiv für Kulturanalysen, et al. (2001) Exploitation and development of the job potential in the cultural sector in the age of digitalisation (European Commission DG Employment and Social Affairs, Brussels). Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e3e9ef3f-3bfc-41a3-9ba6-9f7bbaad6d0e>
- Parkinson, A., Buttrick, J., Knight, E. (2020) *Wavehill: social and economic research- Arts and Place Shaping: Evidence Review*, United Kingdom. Available at: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/placemaking%20wavehill.pdf>
- Patowary, B. et al (2022) The process of cultural entrepreneurship: a literature review, *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 6(2), 1567-1574.
- Project for Public Spaces (2018), "What Is Placemaking?", available online: <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>
- Smolar, R. (2023) *If Our Movement Won't Define Placemaking, Someone Else Will*", available online: <https://www.placemakingus.org/news/if-our-movement-wont-define-placemaking-someone-else-will>
- Zitcer, A. (2018) Making Up Creative Placemaking, *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 40(5), 1-11.