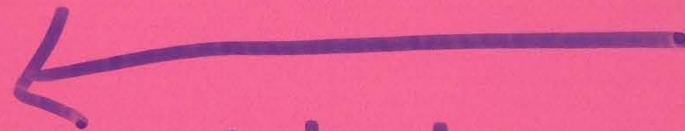


UNLIKELY CONNECTIONS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

THE UNUSUAL SUSPECTS FESTIVAL GLASGOW

W225



Metadesign
workshop

10-12 & 2-4

**How can Metadesign strategies
encourage greater collaboration in
Glasgow?**

8th October 2015

THE UNUSUAL SUSPECTS FESTIVAL



About the festival

The Unusual Suspects Festival brings together the 'unusual suspects' from across Scotland and the world - from youth clubs to ex-footballers to think tanks and governments - all to explore how we can work together in new and different ways to create real social change in society.

One intended outcome of the event was to leave a legacy in Glasgow. Organisers reached out to the Scottish government with what they had been told by local experts to be needed in the city. All were hopeful that the City Council and Scottish Government would recognize the cause and collective efforts of the festival and sponsor a subsequent event for the cooperative work on integrating Glasgow's public services and creative organizations.

www.unusalsuspectsfestival.co.uk



THE UNUSUAL SUSPECTS FESTIVAL

The participants

About 20 participants participated in the design workshops. Most have been working with social innovation for the past years in organisations such as the Scottish Institute for Enterprise, Glasgow School of Art and Thrivehq.

Participants included designers and non-designers, with ages ranging from 22 to 60 years old. Some examples of professions were an artist, lawyer, nurse, service designer, prison services volunteer, social enterprise director and a public health specialist.



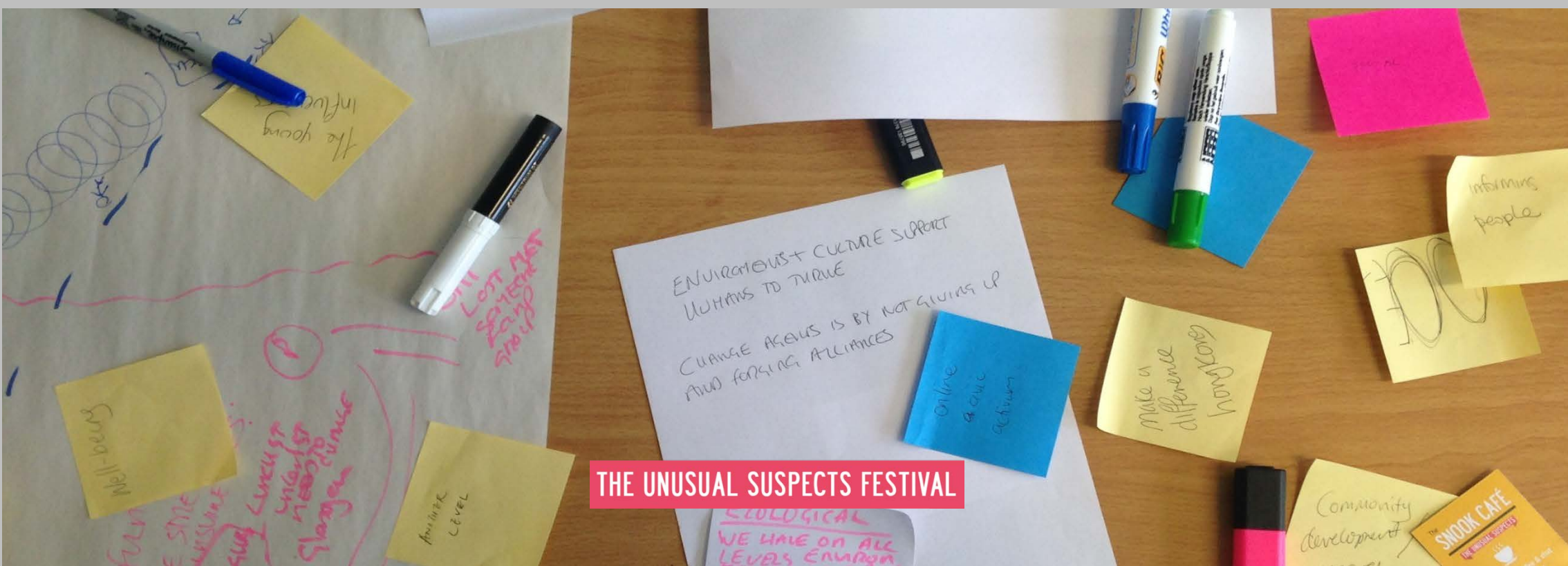
THE UNUSUAL SUSPECTS FESTIVAL

Lead contributors

The sessions was run by Meaghan McClure, Marie Elvik Hagen and Bruno Patias Volpi, designers with different academic and professional backgrounds that recently completed the MA in Design Futures and Metadesign at Goldsmiths University of London.

Meg is looking for a career in Integrated Urban Transport Infrastructure Consultation, Planning and Design in London. Marie is continuing on her final year on a MSC Design Degree in Norway, bringing in the Metadesign process to her projects. Bruno is looking for a career in Service Design for business innovation.







The Workshop in Brief

1. About Metadesign: Short introductory talk about Metadesign with focus on change agency.

2. About Co-creativity: Short introductory talk with focus on collaboration, flat-structured processes and synergies.

3. Tool > Speed drawing: In pairs, participants were asked to explore questions about Glasgow.

4. About Ecomimicry: Short introductory talk about Ecomimetic, with focus on biodiversity, ecosystems and feedback loops.

5. Tool > Positioning islands: Participants were asked to share ideas from the Speed drawing tool in post-its down on the floor, connecting topics and dividing themselves into groups.

6. Tool > Group drawing: Participants were asked to draw their journey to the workshop, sharing with others observations regarding their overall experience.

7. Tool > Collective storytelling: Participants should now focus on Glasgow and analyse it as a group.

8. Tool > Bisociation Cards: participants were invited to make cards (key-words & drawing) with future scenarios divided into the following themes: cultural, social, ecological, economical and emotional. In pairs, participants bisociated cards and co-created ideas for how to seed a future scenario.

9. Sharing outcomes: participants presented the ideas from the bisociation session and synergies in process.

A top-down view of a wooden table covered with various workshop materials. In the top left, there are two balls of white string. Next to them are several red pens. Scattered across the table are numerous colorful sticky notes in shades of yellow, orange, pink, blue, and green. There are also several white papers, some of which have logos for Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) and text about 'THE UNUSUAL SUSPECTS FESTIVAL'. A clear glass jar with a metal lid is visible in the bottom left corner. The overall scene suggests a creative and collaborative workshop environment.

Workshop feedback

Metadesign workshop follow-up Survey <https://goo.gl/XyRA7Z>

“Quick, nicely formatted and worked well with a mixed demographic. Perhaps some of the earlier tasks could have been clearer, with better defined boundaries for each task.”

“As it was all quite new to me I liked that there were lots of activities to help evidence the tools and theory. I think that the session could have been longer or in two parts (morning and afternoon) so that participants could get a handle on it all and begin to apply in their own context.”

“Liked it all, disliked nothing.”

Workshop participants.

THE UNUSUAL SUSPECTS FESTIVAL



Workshop reflection



Marie Elvik Hagen

The Metadesign framework was new to most of the participants, and many were curious to learn what it is about. Some were mostly attracted to the sustainability part, while others found the co-creative approach most attractive as it connected to their own interests in collaborative work. Many could also relate to terms such as 'ecosystem' which is more frequently used in design jargon these days, but not always explicitly explained.

To be prepared with a detailed schedule was very helpful, it made everything run smoother. In most workshops something unforeseen will happen, and with different people it will always be a different atmosphere, and so with a proper plan we were more able to respond to changes. Clear instructions also allowed each participant to be active, especially when some tasks required everyone to listen to each person.

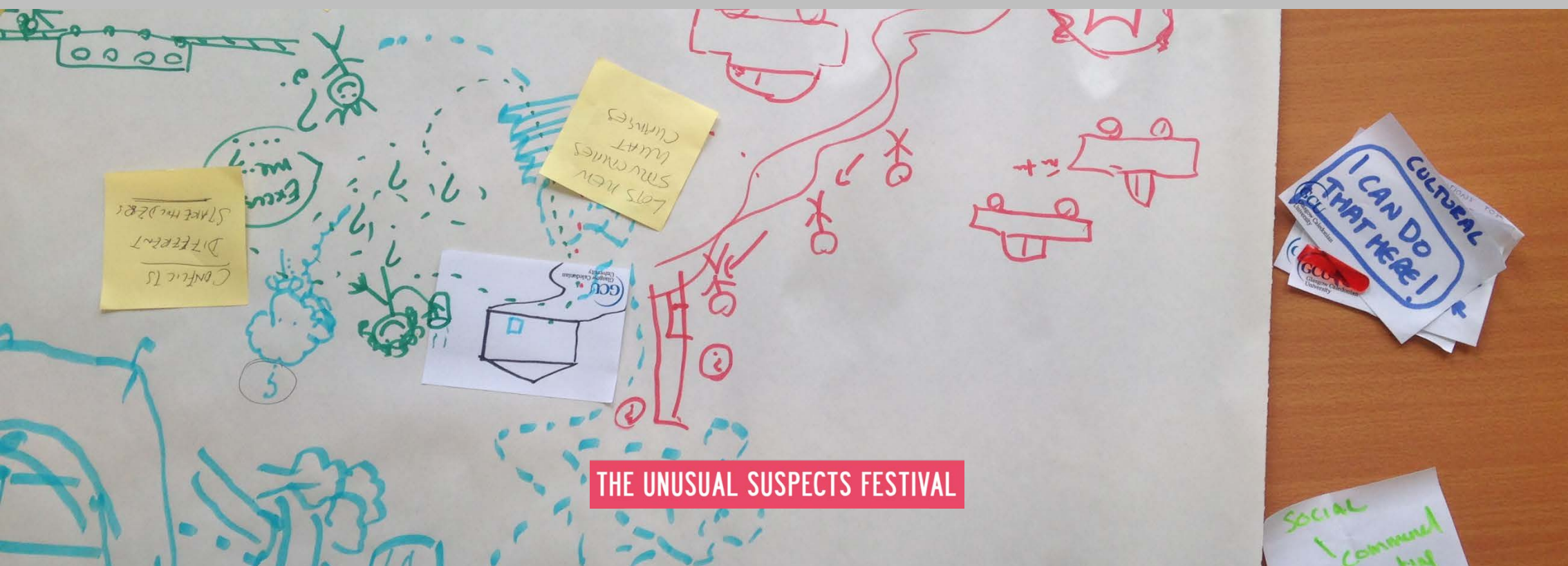
It was positive to bring in theory to the workshop as it guided the participants and made them curious to learn more after finishing the workshop. However, Metadesign is quite overwhelming to dig into in a two-hour workshop, and perhaps we could have focussed on even less topics to explain further and deeper. On the other hand we are looking for a balance where participants can relate to most of the theory, but maybe only fully understand parts of it at the time. Then the process will continue in reflection and further research and exploration afterwards.

Workshop reflection

Marie Elvik Hagen

Last September I did not know what Metadesign was. I was interested in the way it addressed sustainability and socially responsivity by re-designing design, and simultaneously I was curious of the language used to describe Metadesign, which was different from what I had seen in descriptions of other design disciplines.

When facilitating the workshop in Glasgow it was exciting to recognize that the Metadesign framework itself is as comprehensive as it encourages design processes to be. Metadesign therefore offers many opportunities for exploration. To be able to facilitate a workshop at a festival with so many skilled designers, students and other professionals, and to see that participants were genuinely interested was delightful and a perfect transition from being a student to a graduated designer. And finally, exploring Metadesign with new people with different backgrounds in a new place made the notion of 'synergy-of-synergies' emerge in a stronger sense than in the classroom.





Workshop reflection



Bruno Patias Volpi

This workshop proposition was personally important because it brought into discussion whether and how it is possible to use Metadesign to change direction by fostering an innovation system able to incorporate the active side of local organizations and their capabilities. From the ideas presented by participants, it was clear that the new vision of social innovation in Glasgow must start with an appreciation of all network actors' knowledge, abilities and motivations. From the feedback received by participants, it was also clear that by daring to be open-minded to new ways of seeing and doing, local social innovators managed to seed solutions where they least expect them – transboundary collaborations that may turn their initiatives into completely new directions.

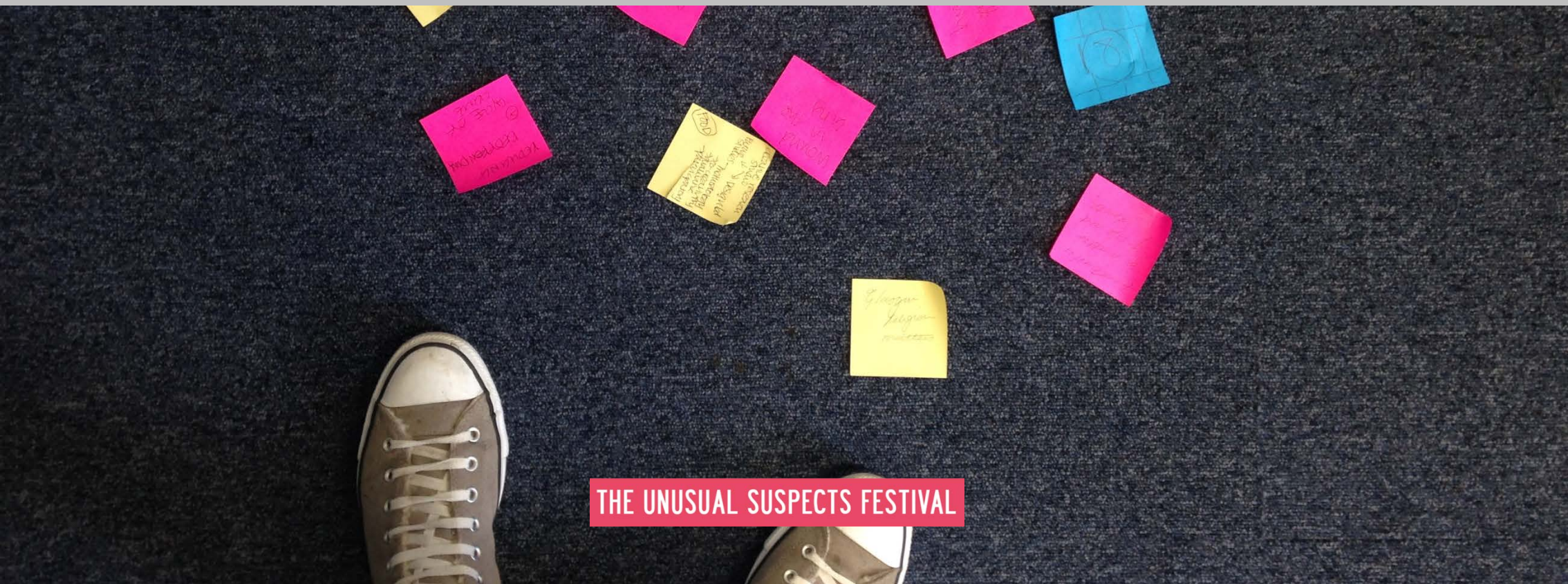


Workshop reflection

Bruno Patias Volpi

It was interesting to understand how Metadesign tools, properly designed, can encourage participation by being perceived as a delightful, stimulating and rewarding activity for all the organizations and individuals involved. Some structure seemed to reduce the chaos of conflicting social challenges and made the debate about necessary actions more tangible and pleasant.

In a networked city where knowledge and skills are involuntary being developed daily by different actors, it is no longer possible to social innovators to rely only on what they know or have invented and to create a new paradigm through internal means alone. In Glasgow I have seen the amazing solutions that innovative people from different backgrounds and Metadesign tools can yield.





Workshop reflection



Meaghan McClure

From talking with participants in both sessions it has become clear that folks were genuinely concerned with the state of social well-being in their work and living environments. Participants from Edinburgh, Belfast, London, Northern Ireland and London wanted to understand what they could do to create positive change around them. Many left the workshop commenting that they felt inspired to do more in their own capacity as well as enlisting others. This spark of appreciation for a creative process happened for me early on in the MA programme. I needed the space, interactions and methods to see more possibilities and ideas within my field. I saw this in many of our workshop participants as they discussed issues and imagined solutions to problems they were facing in their work.

Metadesign attracts people who are inspired by other people. Individuals who want to work with people and for people. This is what is needed most in the public sector, where funding is limited and jobs are being made redundant each fiscal year. New collaboration, strategy and planning is needed. We were surprised to welcome a handful of students in each session.

Workshop reflection

Meaghan McClure

Having just been identified as a student, I wonder how this role can change to take on more responsibility as a citizen, activist and contributor to processes of public engagement, consultation and re-design. Surely, regardless of the field of study, the immersion into real life scenarios would be a significant learning experience.

Challenging pre-existing structures and systems that are outdated need creative, multi-disciplinary teams to suggest how to reframe a question or process. Reframing through a creative process facilitated by Metadesign encourages opportunities because it uses systems-thinking to examine all inputs and outputs.

Being involved in the Unusual Suspects festival made me aware of the function of workshops and conferences generally. Why do we as researchers, teachers, professionals and practitioners meet and discuss our work, network, question and then leave? How can a workshop or lecture at a conference take on a form, or utility of its own? When asked near the end of the second session people couldn't put their finger on it. Clearly there is interest in co-creating in cross-sector work, making synergies and imagining unthinkable possibilities. Who? When? Where, and how can this be done well?

