Introduction:
Sensing place, a moment to reflect

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The chapters in this volume illustrate how place-making and the arts intersect civic, social and democratic life. Arts organisations and artists reveal how they work with sensitivity in regions, cities, towns and spaces to engage citizens in a deeper understanding of themselves and the places where they live. In a postmodern globalised world, where a sense of belonging to place is fragmented, disrupted and under continual redefinition, the opportunity to consider relationships to place through art-making, curated conversations and the bringing together of communities in a place is increasingly important in creating a sense of connection, well-being and understanding of how people are living together in the twenty-first century. Moreover, ‘place-making’ is a term applied by local authorities and developers to inform standards on the development of new places, which may or may not include specific arts and culture provision. The value of the arts and culture in terms of place-making is thoroughly explored in the Culture and Local Development background document (2018) prepared by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The OECD propose the transformative role that culture can play in enhancing the economy and quality of life for a region:

Cultural productions can contribute to the development of a territory by creating jobs and economic value, and by improving the quality of life. One of the drivers of local economic development is a positive image of a place or a region, by identifying and valorising own cultural assets. Whether urban or rural, culture can also contribute to a better living environment. Culture can re-activate decayed industrial zones of inner cities, breathing new
life into the dead infrastructures of factories and power stations, dockyards and tram depots, schools, barracks and banks. (OECD 2018, 22)

The OECD’s vision of place-making includes arts and culture. In the UK, there is a commitment to making arts accessible to all communities: the government’s white paper on culture states that ‘Better collaboration between the cultural sectors, and between cultural organisations and their partners at a local, regional and national level will deliver the full benefits of culture for all our communities’ (DCMS 2016, 34). However, in the context of funding cuts at national and local levels, such policies invite creativity, innovation and a tactical approach in order to create projects with genuine and meaningful impact. When discussing the UK context, Pritchard draws attention to the issues of gentrification and neoliberalism, and argues that place-making is a deeply problematic project in that:

creative placemaking is a state- and local-authority inspired policy wedded, via corporate partnerships, to neoliberalism: an approach that merges art with community and economic development at every level of society – from the global to the hyper-local. It suggests that creative placemaking thereby utilises Creative City and Creative Class models alongside New Urbanist principles and social capital theory to become an effective means of gentrification. (Pritchard 2019, 1)

Pritchard calls for artists to take on more grassroots and activist practices in order to resist gentrification. Other critics of place-making are also concerned with the superficial impact of projects and propose that many initiatives create more disparity through gentrification. For example, Kahne points out that, ‘when places and amenities are “installed” in a community without genuine community input and a recognition of the specific needs and desires of that community, this kind of “placelessness” will inevitably result’ (2015, 9). What does effective, inclusive and transformational place-making practice through the arts and culture look like? Chapters in this book offer national and international case studies from a range of arts practice – including theatre, film, creative writing, sculpture, storytelling, dance, photography and mixed media – that offer insight into successful as well as problematic projects. By analysing and documenting recent projects as well as offering a history of specific
contexts and places, the book offers a useful insight into arts policy, practice and ambition for place-making in twenty-first-century Britain.

The term ‘place-making’ was first used by Jane Jacobs and William H. Whyte in the USA in the 1970s, and further elaborated upon in Whyte’s book *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (1980), which studied the use of city spaces, of which some ‘work for people, and some do not’ (p. 10). The book offers a detailed insight into people’s behaviours in New York City, tracking patterns of use, social interaction and design decisions. The idea of participatory design with communities is seeded. The work of Jacobs and Whyte is continued by the Project for Public Spaces, who see themselves as ‘the central hub of the global placemaking movement, connecting people to ideas, resources, expertise, and partners who see place as the key to addressing our greatest challenges’ (PPS 2019). Focusing on a wide range of projects including urban regeneration, intervention and cultural practice, the Project for Public Spaces illustrates the varied and creative approaches to place-making that have emerged over the past 40 years.

Place-making and a sense of place are infused with tensions. The process of urban regeneration also signifies loss: a loss of what was there before, a loss of older architectures or empty spaces that, while derelict, may still hold cultural significance for many. One may witness the poetic representation of stark emptiness and abandonment of Potsdamer Platz in the iconic Wim Wenders film *Wings of Desire* (1987), or may have been in person to the vast emptiness of Potsdamer Platz shortly after German reunification. Later, perhaps one is not able to recognise the same location after its twenty-first-century regeneration into a sleek urban area of brand-new glass buildings, smooth concrete walkways and franchise restaurants. Tensions in desire and different agendas play out in architecture and in the apportionment of spaces for culture, commercial activities and living. In the UK, partnerships are across the private and public sectors. Urban planning is commissioned by local and city councils from private companies, while publicly funded arts organisations, schools and universities play significant roles in developing the cultural and social fabric of a place.

With so much at stake, participatory and community approaches to place-making and civic development have emerged over the past three decades. Since 2011, the Arts and Humanities Research Council’s Connected Communities project has commissioned significant research into understandings of place-making across the UK. Significant to the development of cities in the UK has been the City of Culture programme, which has sought to bring urban regeneration through cultural
programming. The long-term impact of City of Culture is yet to be measured and fully made sense of. However, the Creative Participation in Place-Making report found that a distinction could be made between the ‘built environment’ and the ‘felt environment’, and it is this felt sense of place that this book further explores, taking up the recommendation to investigate how ‘participation in these broader conceptions of place-making can be facilitated at the local level’ (Layard, Milling and Wakeford n.d., 2).

At the local level, a sense of place is about place, location, city, town and environment, and it is also about people, conversations and knowledges that arise through specific exchanges in specific places. The meeting between artists often represents a myriad of journeys, lineages and cultures. It can represent struggle and deep commitments to understand the different; to open the space for dialogue, transformation and exchange. In the first years of the twenty-first century, artists have used terms such as ‘site-sensitivity’ and ‘site-responsiveness’ when engaging with specific places to indicate a sensitivity to partnering with a place. Victoria Hunter points out that the artist ensures that ‘the work develops in collaboration with the site as opposed to imposing itself upon it’ (2005, 375). This key element of non-imposition is particularly important for artists to consider when working in diverse, hybrid and, sometimes, fractured communities. In the cultural agendas that have positioned artists as place-makers, the role of the artist as a positive force for creating community cohesion and community futures has been emphasised. While this agenda may be critiqued, Hunter goes on to explain how the artist can reveal elements of place through their work but stresses that the audience perceptions are key to creating the understanding of place through the experience of artistic work. Place-making through artworks comprises the specific meetings of artists, audiences, communities and points in space and time, thus creating an ephemeral and fleeting quality to the experiences of places and their meanings. Artistic practice offers opportunities to over and over again reconnect, reimagine and recalibrate relationships to place.

Context for each section

The recent Connected Communities initiative by UK research funders has led to a re-examination of the benefits of arts practice in urban and rural communities. Max Nathan (2016) talks of the political policy tremors and structural changes that have altered regeneration models in the
last decade in ‘Microsolutions for Megaproblems: What Works in Urban Regeneration Policy?’. He says that ‘[h]olistic neighbourhood-level regeneration has essentially ceased as a state-led activity’ (Nathan 2016, 65; see also Florida, Mellander and Stolarick 2011). Central government has responded to the call for localism and devolved the activity, but due to austerity retrenchment in this sector it has become underfunded. Despite an increasing number of measures in place, the unevenness of urban renewal makes it difficult to assess regeneration and the picture is not clear. This hampers strategic interventions and progress in the sector. However, evidence-based evaluations show that local initiatives can work.

Case studies of place-making

In Section 1, on case studies of place-making, we give voice to the artists, curators and originators of projects which have been designed to enrich a specific locale or urban landscape. They cover different locations in the UK, from Norwich in the east to Plymouth in the west, and encompass an inner-city borough as well as a nature reserve. These histories are narrated by the people who made them and they come from a tradition of artistic intervention for community-building. Our case studies show an instructive range of techniques and link to the wealth of experience which the Connected Communities project brought together. Sanna Wicks’s use of social media in ‘Raising the Barr’ draws on the potential of social media in a wildlife-rich habitat surrounded by, but away from, residential areas. It was used too in the ‘Big Society’ community project which engaged the local community in co-production. In their write-up in ‘Contemporary Governance Discourse and Digital Media: Convergences, Prospects and Problems for the “Big Society” Agenda’, Chris Speed, Amadu Wurie Khan and Martin Phillips show how their public art work involving a digital totem pole in Wester Hailes, Edinburgh, explored the notion of ‘hacking’. They call for the embedding of a ‘“read-write” facility in public art to present possibilities for community engagement and regeneration’ (Speed, Khan and Phillips 2016, 147).

The ‘process of listening to stories and experiences and the potential truths they hold’ was enabled by Steve Pool and Kate Pahl in their engagement with a group of young people to make a film to send a message to government (Pool and Pahl 2016, 89). Their belief in community co-production is taken forward in this volume in Kim Wide and Rory Shand’s experience in the Take A Part community engagement. All of
these artists testify to the importance of localism and show the need for policy-makers to ‘direct their energies to creating the legal and funding framework to enable communities to achieve their preferred activities’ (Speed, Khan and Phillips 2016, 159). How this is done through new forms of interactive governance and co-production with the community has been researched in Europe, and insights from the analysis of initiatives in Marseilles in France and Fieris Féeries in Belgium are relevant to the UK context. These are discussed by Bobadilla, Goransson and Pichault (2018), who evaluate the success criteria for urban planners opening a polyphonic dialogue between themselves, artists and the community, an idea we will return to when discussing the next sections.

In Against Creativity (2018), Oli Mould cites Sadiq Khan’s 2017 launch of the ‘London Borough of Culture’ competition. The Mayor of London offered £1,000,000 of arts funding to a London borough that celebrated its creativity. In the narration of the promotional video, Khan said, ‘Culture has the incredible power to transform lives, build new friendships, tell new stories and write new histories’ (Mould 2018, n.p.). The competition was won in 2019 by Waltham Forest, in which Walthamstow’s E17 Arts Trail resides, and Artillery CIC were heavily involved (Artillery’s co-directors are interviewed by Alexis Weedon in this volume).

It is a testament to Artillery’s inclusive approach and their sensitivity to the needs of the disparate groups within their community that Khan’s award was for the community rather than the grand arts institutions, of which London has many. Their theme was ‘Radicals, Makers and Fellowship’, and there was a borough-wide collaboration between local residents, artists and creatives whose ‘home’ is in the borough. Mould’s book of 2018 came at the beginning of the initiative and the author could not review the fruits of the competition. However, he reflects critically on the American example of Tony Goldman’s ‘outdoor street art gallery’ in Wynwood, a small neighbourhood in Miami, Florida. Rather than developing a sense of place – it was not a place, Mould says; there was no place there – Goldman’s company bought up buildings, whitewashed them and invited international artists in to paint murals to make a sense of place. It was, Mould observes, revitalisation as opposed to regeneration. ‘It has been argued that Wynwood’s by-the-book creative city development has been “post-race”: it utilizes ethical and racial diversity as tools to promote cosmopolitanism (as per Miami’s “global city” script), rather than to highlight racial and gender inequalities’ (Mould 2018, n.p.). Mould’s knowledgeable and insightful research into our changing cityscapes and deep concern over the superficiality of some interventions...
is evident in his article ‘Tactical Urbanism’ (2014). He points to the danger that short-lived, underfunded community co-productions can mask real problems, commenting that they represent ‘the latest cycle of the urban “strategy” to co-opt moments of creativity and alternative urban practices to the urban hegemony’ (Mould 2014, 537).

Models and methods for developing place-making through the arts

In our second section, on models and methods, we draw on research into how we sustain the creative sector. Rachel Farrer and Imogen Aujla’s research into the freelance careers of dancers demonstrates the pull of the capital for those seeking to earn a living from their practice and the struggle within the regions. The ‘London-centric skew of the wider creative economy is well established’, say Jones, Long and Perry (2019, 224), citing Oakley (2006). Farrer and Aujla’s qualitative interviews and quantitative approach raise important policy issues which must inform funding of the arts in Britain. They found that moving away from London led to dancers feeling that they had to start again on the career ladder and dual careers with secondary employment were common.

In 2016 Kirsten Forkert published the results of her interviews with 41 artists, intermediaries and academics in London and Berlin in 2008–10, comparing the ecology of the arts in the two cities. She found that high rents in London were a substantial drawback and as a result dual careers were common. In Berlin lower rentals enabled artists to support themselves on marginal part-time employment and identify as artists with a bohemian lifestyle which could be sustained with lower outlay. The issue Forkert identifies is the nomadic tendency of artists, who move to develop their practice and so may not act collectively to protect this loophole in affordable rents and protect the artistic careers of the next residents. The Canadian artist-researcher notes that in the UK pressurised careers resulted in ‘slower processes of exploration and questioning’ (Forkert 2016, 89). In Asia state-constructed solutions have had a beneficial effect: Lily Kong in ‘Beyond Networks and Relations’ observes that the artist cluster in Telok Kurau, Singapore, does have a sustaining momentum. Kong says that ‘geographical propinquity does not in itself generate fruitful relationships amongst the artists’ and for this community the answers lie in three factors: its reputation in attracting award-winning artists, an environment which is conducive to work, and cheap rentals (Kong and O’Connor 2009, 74).
Forkert (2016) notes that the culture of managerialism in arts funding, with its emphasis on measuring results in numerical terms, has similarly affected the depth of exploration that artists can sustain. Deriving from policy-led strategy, managerialism can veer towards short-term targets and meeting strategic measures of achievement rather than long-term goals which are outside the administration’s lifespan. Kate Oakley concurs and observes that a mobile artistic community fuelling small to medium-sized enterprises in incubation offices and generating new industries has provided the good news that policy-makers and politicians crave (Oakley 2006, 2014). She is more critical of the influence in policy circles of Richard Florida’s notion of a creative class and its impact on the economic health of our cities. Florida’s methods of quantification have supplied numerical evidence that policy-makers have used in the allocation of arts funding. For example, Florida, Mellander and Stolarick (2011) surveyed 27,883 people across the USA on the effects of beauty and aesthetics on community satisfaction. They report that the four key attractions of a place were a solid economic foundation; the quality of schools; opportunities for social interaction and perceived ability to make and meet friends; and beauty and aesthetics. Less important were the colleges and universities, job opportunities, religious institutions, public transportation, climate, healthcare and cultural opportunities.

Oakley (2009) critiques this approach, arguing that is not transferable to contexts other than North America and presenting a UK perspective on the creative class. ‘The degree to which economic needs, brought about by the global economic restructuring of the 1970s and 1980s, were the drivers behind creative industry and creative city strategies in the UK should not be underestimated,’ she argues; and in response, regional cities offered ‘a mix of subsidised workspace, job-training and support for intermediary networks in the creative industries, largely aimed at small firms’ (p. 122).

More outspoken, Mould (2018) observes that the discourse of degeneration leads to regeneration, not to considerations of the more difficult topics to spin, those of redundancy or change of use. He marshals evidence to support this from Sir Peter Bazalgette’s 2017 review of the creative industries, which states that ‘emerging evidence from place-shaping research indicates that growth in Creative Industries is enhanced when an area has a strong cultural, heritage and sporting offer, enhancing the attractiveness of locations to live and work and acting as an accelerator for regeneration’ (emphasis original; quoted in Campbell 2019, 276). Such rhetoric suits political action, as Oakley comments: ‘One of the
attractions of the creative industries strategies adopted hitherto by UK cities was that they were seen as attempts to release talents and abilities of the local population’ (Oakley 2009, 127).

The low entry barriers to freelance and micro businesses are attractive and they are seen as local cultural activity that offers ‘an opportunity for places to negotiate a role within global flows of ideas, rather than simply be “subject” to them’ (Oakley 2009, 127). Yet cultural workers offer a pragmatic and precarious entrepreneurship: ‘They set up businesses because that is the easiest way to carry out their practice. They get premises because they need to work away from the kitchen table’ (Oakley 2014, 145). Phil Jones, Paul Long and Beth Perry (2019) agree and question the utility of the Warwick Commission’s (2015) eco-system metaphor, which argues that the creative and cultural economy is an interdependent unit. Community artists, they say, have no real interest in making intellectual property out of their initiatives – that is not the purpose of their artwork. Their aims are vastly different from those of state-funded museums and galleries, which have different measures for their funding and outreach activities. So the purposes of their activity, their meaning-making, are poles apart. If they both have the same ‘intermediary’ function in society – to use Bourdieu’s term – then their funding is competitive, argue Jones, Long and Perry.

The role of the university in Luton’s regeneration project in preparing, training and paving the way for artistic intervention has developed in part from the University of Bedfordshire’s previous EU-funded training for creative business entrepreneurs. It has been proactive in innovation zones, as well as regional and business leadership, as Payne and Weedon explain in this volume. Like many universities, it is thinking of how it can work best within and for its communities. Melhuish (2015) gathers prime case studies of university-led urban regeneration projects and their effect on the communities. These case studies, funded by UCL, have the practical aim of informing the university’s redevelopment of part of Stratford’s former Olympic grounds in London. In the foreword Ben Campkin says, ‘We strongly believe there is a need for new ethical models of urban renewal – particularly in London – which are genuinely research-driven rather than misleadingly “evidence-based”’. The case studies include Durham University’s redevelopment of Teesside in the 1990s through to the development of Queen’s Campus at Stockton; Newcastle’s Science Central site; and the development of Somerleyton Road in south London, where a university was the anchor institution. Another of the case studies, Cambridge University’s development to the north-west of the city, used public art to get community engagement.
However, Cambridge is a unique place and what works in one urban culture may not work in another.

Bobadilla, Goransson and Pichault (2018) have observed that the capacity to use the engagement of the relevant stakeholders, artists, local government and citizens for any significant effect is a real challenge for developers. They witnessed, as the Marseilles development progressed, much disillusion amongst the participants, who saw their artistic involvement as a mere confirmation of the planners’ aims. In Somerleyton Road in south London, the community involvement was measured and bottom-up, and expectations of its effect were more moderate. As in Fieris Féeries in Belgium, a more modest and equal partnership between listening and designing was more productive and longer-lasting. Perhaps another reason for the difference is that universities are familiar with developing infrastructures to build community and engagement with a nomadic population, as students flow through and go off to work elsewhere. As Robin Hambleton says, universities are the ‘sleeping giants of place-based leadership’ (quoted in Melhuish 2015, 9). Their commitment to such projects draws on the model of the ‘engaged university’ with its civic mission, service learning programmes, volunteering and widening access.

Multidisciplinary approaches to place and contested identities

In the third section, we draw from different disciplinary approaches to developing a sense of place. From an art and cultural studies background, Jonathan Croose’s exploration of contested cultural identities and the Olympic Games shows some elements of ‘tactical urbanism’, which Oli Mould (2014) says is a ‘popular movement for people who have a desire to change and reconfigure their city and do so without government involvement’ (p. 529). Mould cites the example of Bat Yam, south of Tel Aviv, where in September 2010 the government ran a ‘72 hour Urban Action’ event in which the community were given the tools and a small budget to build or create what they wanted. Examples included a children’s play area in the community space of a residential tower block, a reflective garden and a pop-up market stall.

For Mould (as for Peter Atkinson writing on Manchester’s arts culture in this volume), this artistic intervention organised and orchestrated by developers can be seen as ‘artwashing’, a cynical attempt to make the area suitable for the tastes of the creative class. Tactical urbanism is attributed to Mike Lydon, of the New York City ‘Streets Olan Collective’, but it is not new and, Mould says, is in danger of being a quick fix in
budget-conscious austerity: ‘[T]his rhetorical world is just a pastiche of consumption, more often than not modelled on the consumption patterns of white, middle-class people’ (Mould 2018, n.p.).

In Britain, yarn bombing (knitting round poles) and ‘craftivist’ interventions may be dubbed DIY and amateurish in nature, yet they can be a way into the community for people who do not consider themselves creative, as E17 Arts Trail has shown in this volume. A long-standing and by now accepted form of arts research is by practice: either based on the process of creative production or led by an understanding of art practice gained by the practitioner. Such research brings the affective knowledge of the artist into academe and also into the understanding of place-making at a community and personal level. Sarah Haynes’s storytelling project, for example, developed a community memory of Liverpool from the perspective of the future, and engaged people in imagining their city, five, ten and a hundred years hence (Haynes 2017). They were able to articulate their fears and visions of their locale, which the author then edited into her science-fiction thriller.

More personally, David Jackson’s exploration of his connection with his father in this volume touches on a relationship everyone can recognise as giving a sense of place and home. The relationship between father and son is something that Jackson has explored in his other photographic and film work located in Malta and along the English south coast (Jackson 2018). As an artist, he questions the emotional tug behind his father’s return to a place where he had grown up but which was no longer the same. Through the empathy he builds between us and his inquiry, we delve deeper into our own private autobiographical narratives of home, growing up and the relationship with our parents. As our narrative becomes focused on the personal, we also resonate with the stories of others. Philip Miles points out in this volume that many of these are stories of migration and relocation where ‘place’ becomes somewhere to settle before becoming ‘home’. As artist-researchers, Haynes’s imagining of the future and Jackson’s imaginings of a past draw us with them to view our present as our place in the continuum of existence.

Giddens’s view is that ‘modernity increasingly tears space away from place by fostering relations between “absent” others, locationally distant from any given situation of face-to-face interaction’ (Giddens 1990, 18). Modernity’s crime is multifold: it is in the trauma of the post-colonial encounter of the film-maker, in the journalist’s ‘othering’ of migrants, in the youth’s inability to find a free space within the cityscape, and in the black British dancer’s desire to excel in an ‘othered’ form. In her chapter in this volume, Agnieszka Piotrowska views the other as a
postcolonial object, drawing on feminist psychoanalysis, but explaining in lucid fashion how this theoretical lens has affected her work in theatre and film in Zimbabwe. She tackles her subject with personal courage as a Polish white woman in black Zimbabwe questioning its societal assumptions about the role of women. Her work can be framed within Kimberlé Crenshaw’s legal challenge for racial justice, identity politics and policing in intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989). The articulation of a sense of place is much harder when the landscape of identity has been overplanted by other people’s stories. There are parallels with the photographer Caroline Molloy’s micro-analysis in this volume of a commercial studio within a Turkish community in London and the way it becomes a focal point for stories of reconnection and traditional cultural practices despite migration and relocation.

Different disciplinary angles on place-making show how we constantly redefine distance and nearness: Paul Rowinski uses discourse analysis to unpick the localism and tribalism embedded in newspaper journalism in community and national stories. Alternative media have been better at creating a sense of place and identity (Couldry and Curran 2003) and digital journals provide much more space for community news and information-sharing exchange (Hess 2013). For library and information scientists, everyday life information seeking (ELIS) has become much more of a concern ‘because so much information is passively absorbed’ (Williamson and Roberts 2010, 285). This is relevant in tourism studies, and the availability of ELIS is of special concern for local services (Franklin 2018).

Since Giddens, we have found vast digital spaces through which we can have face-to-face interactions and open up communication routes, exhibition venues and ‘third spaces’ – a term often used in human–computer design (Deuze and Prenger 2019). Even though we can ‘hang out’ in these spaces, they are not the first choice for many communities. This mix of spaces and places is evident in Wallis Motta and Myria Georgiou’s investigation of the ‘resources summoned, mobilized, and appropriated by locals in developing networks of communication’ (Motta and Georgiou 2017, 183). They mapped the white British and black Caribbean residents of Haringey’s use of hyperlocal online information, the Turkish community’s use of the community centres, and black Caribbean participants’ use of churches and mosques. In this volume, Caroline Molloy too traces the fusion of local and traditional spaces when rites of passage are celebrated by the photographer, and Kieran Holland relates how the lights of runners outlined the topography of Arthur’s Seat in Edinburgh in an artist-inspired community event. Our notion of place
has been changed by digital mapping technologies which overlay our landscape. They have an affectivity which Bradley L. Garrett talks of in relation to our heritage, how through exploring we create relationships with the immediate environment, making associations with places, sometimes with fearful, poignant, fight-or-flight reactions: ‘These neurological responses create affective association with places, the sublime experience that explorers find difficulty in relaying’ (Garrett 2015, 81). The educationalist David Gruenewald concurs: ‘places make us: As occupants of particular places with particular attributes, our identity and possibilities are shaped’ (Gruenewald 2003, 621).

Jane Carr, from a somatic perspective on dance and performance, aptly brings in the relevance of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (Carr 2014). Merleau-Ponty said in Phenomenology of Perception (1962) that our perception is inherently participatory. Place acts on the response, or beckoning, between the body and things; it has action, speech and something to say in the human–world relationship. Such reflections on the body and embodied experience are poignant for future investigations on place-making, and our sense of place. Senses are the experiential lens of the body–mind as one navigates the world. Moreover, in systems such as permaculture, practitioner Nala Walla points out that ‘our bodies are the first units of localism from which homes, villages and communities are built’ (2009, 1). Reflection is possible on how one lives in the body as well as how one lives in a particular place, and how the body is a place made, as much as a geographic location. The environmental crisis puts bodies at risk in terms of creating uninhabitable places and in terms of the health and well-being of the body itself. The crisis resonates at a cellular level. Living in the felt experience of the body, attending to the body, and thinking through its health and well-being in terms of place-making might give an ethical orientation to the future of place-making. Future place-makers might be tasked with innovative design that responds to rapidly shifting climates and migrating populations. The creativity of artists and cultural workers illustrated in this book shows how responsive and resilient approaches can be developed.

The artists and projects featured in this book show how those working in the arts traverse shifts in politics, funding and agendas with awareness, skill, insight, foresight and, sometimes, struggle. Considering a sense of place through the lenses of these contributors invites reflection upon the complex, hybrid and fluid knowledges that arrive in momentary meeting points of understanding. The notion of place as geographically anchored is under question and instead a sense of place is offered as just that: what is sensed in the moment as place, knowing, identity
and meaning. In this book, places, architectures, locations, events and bodies are proposed as fluid, changing and responsive. Nonetheless, the case studies here illustrate the positive role that artists and organisations can play in curating and developing a sense of place with the people with whom they work: the felt and lived dimensions of place.

There is no doubt, reading through this collection, that a sense of place touches all of us and provides us with a sense of trust, security and identity. History tells us that we cannot simply build homes – we must develop place and that requires the expertise of a wide range of professions and academic disciplines. We must incorporate the wealth of knowledge which the arts and humanities bring to urban planning for our communities.

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