

11TH EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF
DESIGN CONFERENCE

Dr Neal Haslem

RMIT University

neal.haslem@rmit.edu.au

APRIL 22-24 2015

PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY

BOULOGNE BILLANCOURT
FRANCE

CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS:

PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
PARIS SORBONNE UNIVERSITY
PARIS COLLEGE OF ART
ISTEC PARIS

ABSTRACT

This paper examines a recent design research project titled Open for Inspection. The project takes the form of a designed gallery space and a number of events staged within the space. The project aimed to generate discussion around housing-stress and homelessness with participants of public events held during the exhibition.

Open for Inspection is part of the larger project Homefullness: a project developed by the untitled collective, a group of art, design and housing researchers based in Australia and Sweden.

Open for Inspection aimed to use design artefacts to create a space for dialogue (Suda, 2007) about housing stress and homelessness with visitors to a gallery space. The project's aims and methods are informed by participatory design practices, and aim to investigate the dialogic capacities (Bakhtin, 1981 [1975]) embedded within and enabled through design artefacts. The conversation spaces created through the Open for Inspection exhibition aim to investigate the potential for 'Bohm Dialogue' inspired events (Bohm, 2004)—augmented through use of design artefacts—to investigate the application of participatory dissensus and its potential for rich, pluralist discussion upon critical, seemingly intractable, contemporary issues. (Keshavarz & Mazé, 2013; Rancière, 2008 [2000]).

Ultimately the aim of the untitled collective and Homefullness is to enable social and political change leading to full housing for all. This paper will report on the findings of this design research project with respect to design, art and social change.

Keywords: Dialogue, Participatory design, Homelessness, Design Research, Social change

1 INTRODUCTION

This paper reflects on *Open for Inspection*, an exhibition in an artist-run gallery space that took place in Melbourne between June and July 2014. The exhibition is part of a larger project *Homefullness*, which aims to develop a conversation around issues of housing stress and homelessness. The group behind the project, 'the untitled collective' has members based in both Australia and Sweden.

The paper refers to the *Open for Inspection* project to discuss how the practice of design may attempt to create spaces for dialogue. It also touches on what might be termed the 'modalities' of design practice; modality in the sense of what design and designers might hope to achieve through their work and what might be assumed to be the aim of their work. In the paper a 'problem-framing

OPEN FOR INSPECTION: SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH DIALOGUE

Dr Neal Haslem

– solution-locating’ modality is critiqued and compared with a more process-orientated practice in which the ‘solution’ to a particular design problem is merely seen as a step on the way to other issues, other situations, other people and new design work.

Throughout the *Homefullness* project—and its manifestation as *Open for Inspection*, a range of artefacts and events have been created with the aim of stimulating and prolonging dialogue around housing stress and homelessness. This paper examines those events and artefacts in order to think through their various capacities in this regard; how they act as isolated objects, how they come together, how they draw people together and how they might, in the longer term, enable social change.

2 ‘OPEN FOR INSPECTION’

Homefullness began in 2012 as a response to a ‘Homelessness design challenge’ initiated by the Design Research Institute at RMIT University in Australia. Starting with the writing of a manifesto, the *Homefullness* project has since its inception, led on to a number of events, the most recent being the *Open for Inspection* exhibition.

Homelessness and housing stress remain highly complex aspects of contemporary urban society. In Australia 1 in 200 people are officially ‘homeless’ every night (Homelessness Australia, 2012). This includes both those who are ‘sleeping rough’ but also those who’s dwelling is inadequate, precarious or does not allow them access to space for normal social relations (Homelessness Australia, 2012). Issues of housing stress and homelessness continue to exist, in Australia and other wealthy nations worldwide, despite numerous attempts to solve them, using social, political and design based practices.

Homefullness as a design-led response to homelessness, aims to facilitate on-going conversation around the issue, rather than provide a ‘solution’ to the ‘problem’. As a project, it does this in the belief that the process of dialogue enabled through the *Homefullness* project will—in and of itself—maintain the social relevancy of the issue as a project of society as a whole, facilitate further understanding and help develop new strategies or ways of thinking around the issue. While the ultimate aim of the *Homefullness* project, and *the untitled collective* is, as stated in the group’s manifesto ‘full housing for all’, the actions taken by the collective aim firstly to disengage society from current understandings of homelessness and housing stress as an intractable part of contemporary society. Through this, it is hoped, the project will enable innovative practices and understandings to emerge allowing the issue to be seen in different way, from different individual perspectives.

3 METHODOLOGY

Open for Inspection used an inner-city gallery space within which to produce an installation aiming for participation and dialogue. A key element of the exhibition was the installation of a 1:1 plan drawing from a 1960s Swedish kitchen, applied to the gallery floor (Figure 1.). A washing line was also installed between two gallery walls to dry and display tea-towels designed and printed during the exhibition. The exhibition also included a lounge setting with cushions displaying current housing plans and housing data, as well as a video work that depicted

THE VALUE OF DESIGN RESEARCH

11TH EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF
DESIGN CONFERENCE

APRIL 22-24 2015

PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY

BOULOGNE BILLANCOURT
FRANCE

CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS:

PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
PARIS SORBONNE UNIVERSITY
PARIS COLLEGE OF ART
ISTEC PARIS

OPEN FOR INSPECTION: SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH DIALOGUE

Dr Neal Haslem

the work of moving house; packing and unpacking boxes, cleaning and moving. The aim of these artefacts, and the exhibition as a whole, was to create a space within which issues of homelessness and housing stress were brought to mind and could be reflected upon and discussed.



Figure 1 – Initial gallery installation with floor plan, lounge chair and video.

The works created prior to and during the exhibition were produced collaboratively by members of *the untitled collective*. The author's role in the collective, as communication designer, rather than architect, urban designer or housing researcher, led him to focus on the Swedish kitchen plan and tea-towels, and the communicative role these artefacts play. This paper provides an opportunity to reflect on those works both in their capacity to contribute to an end of homelessness as well as what they might reveal as artefacts of design research.

The Swedish kitchen plan was inspired during an earlier *Homefullness* event. A roundtable was held with other members of the untitled collective and a range of speakers, architects and housing researchers, in Stockholm in late 2012. During the roundtable discussion the Swedish *Miljonprogrammet (Million Program)* project was presented and discussed. *Million Program* was Sweden's response to housing shortage in the 1960s (Putri, 2012). This massive social project aimed to increase the housing stock in Sweden by one million homes and did so successfully between 1964-1973. One of the key points revealed during the roundtable discussion was that, despite massive social programs aiming to provide adequate housing, Sweden, as a wealthy developed nation, with an enviable reputation for social justice, continues to find (as Australia does) the provision of adequate housing for all people a difficult and complex issue.

Dr Neal Haslem

11TH EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF
DESIGN CONFERENCE

APRIL 22-24 2015

PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY

BOULOGNE BILLANCOURT
FRANCE

CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS:

PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
PARIS SORBONNE UNIVERSITY
PARIS COLLEGE OF ART
ISTEC PARIS

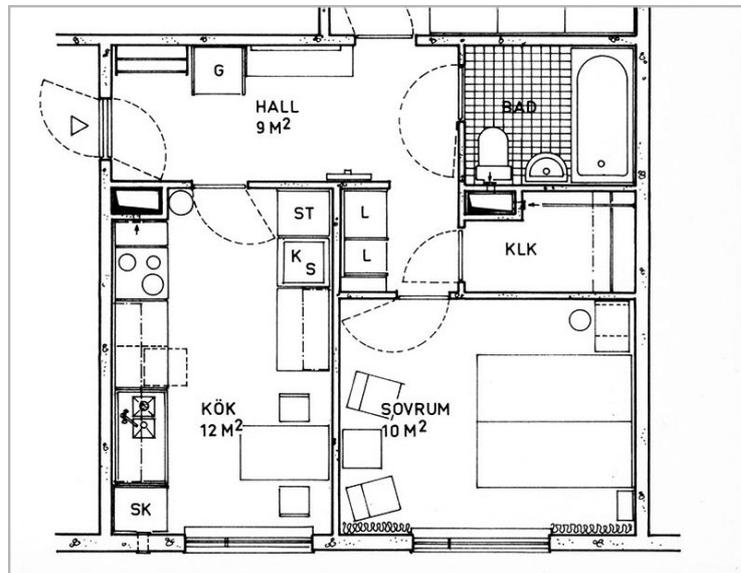


Figure 2 – Typical apartment in public housing projects, two bedroom apartment, 63 m² in Kallhäll, a suburb in Stockholm. Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lägenhet_1970.jpg (Holger, 2009)

Applying a strongly functionalist strategy the *Million Program* project combined the research and domestic space design principles of its post-war era to design and produce standardised and optimised spaces for living. Based on the average post-war Swedish 4 member family, the 'standard three room apartment' (Figure 2) apartment designs (Putri, 2012, p. 26) were constructed throughout Sweden and remain as a lasting legacy across Sweden today. Currently the design principles they embody and, with this, the apartment's efficacy as a design response to housing, are under challenge by changing housing needs driven by immigration and representation of different cultures within Sweden. *Million Program* apartments are being modified to provide for a more diverse range of users needs and changing contemporary lifestyles which challenge the 'universal' one solution fits all approach to design which provided the guiding principle of the original *Million Program*.

While it is fitting that *Open for Inspection* provides 'a kitchen' within which to gather and talk, the installation of the kitchen plan also allows reference to the functionalist instrumental strategies of universal design solutions. This mode of design, which continues to dominate design practice, thus provides the literal and figurative foundation to the *Open for Inspection* dialogue.

The 'domestic' has been a strong element of the *Homefulness* project since its first material outcomes. While the use of domestic communicative forms refers literally to the home and things 'homefull' it is also a deliberate attempt on the project's part to resist grandiosity. In this sense the *Homefulness* project engages domesticity to 'bring the conversation back home' and privilege the homely, common, non-expert, non-privileged, and individual experience of the issue.

The use of tea-towels within the *Homefulness* project came about soon after the manifesto was written. As material artefacts, their connotations are towards the banal and the ubiquitous, rather than to heroic or stately gestures. With simple designs screen-printed by hand, the 'manifesto on tea-towel' takes a provocative

11TH EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF
DESIGN CONFERENCE

APRIL 22-24 2015

PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY

BOULOGNE BILLANCOURT
FRANCE

CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS:

PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
PARIS SORBONNE UNIVERSITY
PARIS COLLEGE OF ART
ISTEC PARIS

OPEN FOR INSPECTION: SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH DIALOGUE

Dr Neal Haslem

political statement and shifts its orientation and 'tone of voice' towards the individual, the humble and the conversational. The tea-towels gesture towards what some within society assume as a birth-right; kitchens, washing up and domestic settings. They act as a reminder that some people in society find these common domestic practices out of reach.

From a functional standpoint, the use of tea-towels and screen-printing is inexpensive and uses simple technology. It is a commonly accessible—and somewhat anachronistic—production process, which enables the collaborative production of the communicative artefacts in public situations with public participants. In addition to the material form of the tea-towel, the method of production, and the chosen site of production, also support an undermining of the communicative artefact's authority to make solution-like statements.



Figure 3 – Initial gallery installation with washing line and manifesto tea-towels.

The designs printed onto the tea-towels (Figure 3) were also intentionally simple, and non-grandiose. They incorporate a deliberate reflexivity, thus opening their communication, and point of view, to refutation and thereby towards a more conversational nature. They present homelessness and housing stress as domestic issues that are common to all, affecting everyone to some degree. In this way the tea-towels attempt to take the problem of homelessness, and the objectification of the homeless, and bring them within the home as subjects and part of intersubjective discourse.

During *Open for Inspection* three new tea-towel designs were created. Each of these were designed during the exhibition timespan and printed on-site during public events. The three new tea-towel designs corresponded with three events during the exhibition; 'cup of tea', 'live-printing' and 'house meeting'.

THE VALUE OF DESIGN RESEARCH

OPEN FOR INSPECTION: SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH DIALOGUE

Dr Neal Haslem

11TH EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF
DESIGN CONFERENCE

APRIL 22-24 2015

PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY

BOULOGNE BILLANCOURT
FRANCE

CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS:

PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
PARIS SORBONNE UNIVERSITY
PARIS COLLEGE OF ART
ISTEC PARIS



Figure 4 – The ‘cup of tea’ event.

The *cup of tea* event (Figure 4) was the first event of the exhibition following the official opening. It occurred a few days after installation was complete. This event offered cups of tea and biscuits to all who wished to ‘join the conversation’. Taking place in the gallery space, with a table placed above the kitchen floor plan, the aim of this initial conversation was to introduce the exhibition and to start to generate conversation around the topics of homelessness and housing stress. These conversational moments then seeded concepts that ran throughout the exhibition and influenced the designs of the tea-towels (Figure 5) and the following events.

11TH EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF
DESIGN CONFERENCE

APRIL 22-24 2015

PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY

BOULOGNE BILLANCOURT
FRANCE

CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS:

PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
PARIS SORBONNE UNIVERSITY
PARIS COLLEGE OF ART
ISTEC PARIS

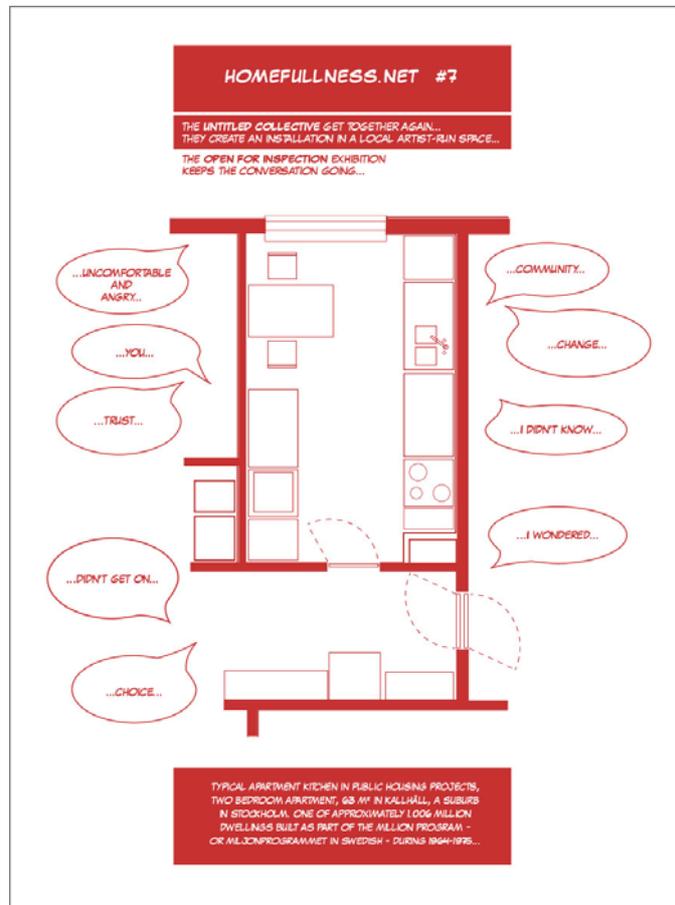


Figure 5 – Homefulness #7; the first of three new tea-towel designs developed and printed during Open for Inspection.

Two live-printing events occurred during the exhibition, both of these live-printing events (Figure 6 & 7) were public, one, timed to coincide with a 'nite art' city-wide event brought more than 400 visitors to the exhibition. The act of setting up equipment, printing, hanging out to dry and ironing the tea-towels to set the ink, provided opportunities to engage gallery visitors in discussion around the *Homefulness* intention. At times public took part in the printing process themselves, using the natural performativity of 'pulling' a screen-print to engage enquiry and creative energy. The tea-towels held deliberately simple 'comic-like' imagery that could act as a low-commitment precursor to facilitate the opening up of conversations held between visitors as they moved through the exhibition, looked at the work, and in so doing, became part of the *Homefulness* project.

THE VALUE OF DESIGN RESEARCH

11TH EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF
DESIGN CONFERENCE

APRIL 22-24 2015

PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY

BOULOGNE BILLANCOURT
FRANCE

CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS:

PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
PARIS SORBONNE UNIVERSITY
PARIS COLLEGE OF ART
ISTEC PARIS

OPEN FOR INSPECTION: SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH DIALOGUE

Dr Neal Haslem



Figure 6 – First live-print run.



Figure 7 – Second live-print run coinciding with public event 'nite-art'.

House meeting was a more formal event that included specifically invited participants from a number of homelessness and housing stress related organisations. During *house meeting* conversation strands that had occurred during the exhibition were revisited and future directions for the untitled collective and the *Homefullness* project as a whole were investigated.

4 OPENING UP *OPEN FOR INSPECTION*

11TH EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF
DESIGN CONFERENCE

APRIL 22-24 2015

PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY

BOULOGNE BILLANCOURT
FRANCE

CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS:

PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
PARIS SORBONNE UNIVERSITY
PARIS COLLEGE OF ART
ISTEC PARIS

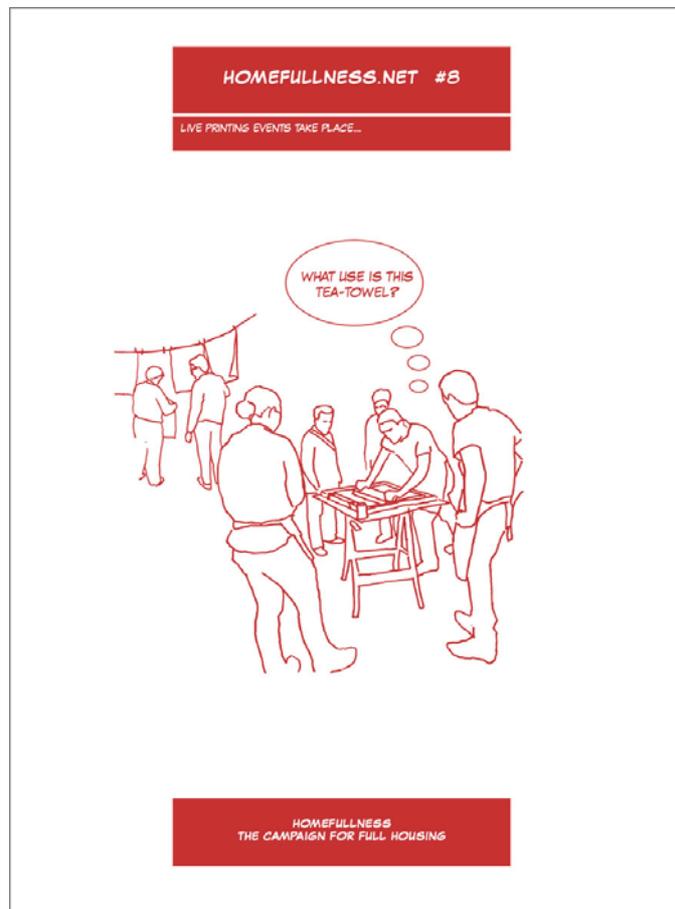


Figure 8 – Homefullness #8; the second of three new tea-towel designs developed and printed during Open for Inspection.

Through reflexivity the members of *the untitled collective* find a voice to respond to issues of housing stress and homelessness. Rather than prescribe solutions based on expert knowledge the project aims to encourage dialogue and welcome diverse perspectives on the issue. Reflexivity is used quite deliberately (Figure 8) to encourage potential participants to bring their own stories, opinions and experiences to the dialogue.

An aspect of housing stress and homelessness that came through during initial *cup of tea* conversation was the sense that as people moved from being 'homefull' to 'homeless' they lost agency and became 'cases' or 'problems' to be solved by those more empowered in society. This takes place as people (that housing research tells us are essentially 'just like us') become homeless and objectified as 'cases'. *Homefullness* attempts to find an alternative to this objectification through the use of reflexivity, shifting the issue from being something external and 'a design challenge' to being part of one's life and part of one's society.

While *Homefullness* has aspects of participatory practice in its collaboration and its location within public spheres, it does not undertake this with the aim of generating consensus on a universal solution. Instead the group incorporates its own individual understandings and misgivings deliberately into the process in an effort to invite others to do the same. The collective do not see themselves as

THE VALUE OF DESIGN RESEARCH

11TH EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF
DESIGN CONFERENCE

APRIL 22-24 2015

PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY

BOULOGNE BILLANCOURT
FRANCE

CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS:

PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
PARIS SORBONNE UNIVERSITY
PARIS COLLEGE OF ART
ISTEC PARIS

OPEN FOR INSPECTION: SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH DIALOGUE

Dr Neal Haslem

the architects of solutions to homelessness and housing stress. Instead they aim to bring the issues to mind and allow conversations to take place that keep the issues alive. Thus having a conversation across a screenprinting table with a young man who recalls spending six months couch-surfing becomes as important as a formal conversation with the director of a housing support organisation or an architect designing affordable housing.

Open for Inspection and the conversations hosted as part of it were partly inspired through a reading of David Bohm (2004), American theoretical physicist turned social theorist, and his championing of 'dialogue'. For Bohm, dialogue (and what became known as a *Bohm Dialogue*) provides a means whereby the more common discursive form of opinion and rebuttal, 'speaker' and 'listener', question and answer, can be replaced by a more open 'dialogue'. His emphasis is to produce a generative meeting of people, everyone invited to contribute, no one person leading, no pre-set agenda. His belief being that such a dialogue allows the articulation of the new (Bohm, 2004, p. 7), and more importantly the articulation of that which is disallowed if conversations occur in their normal 'discursive' fashion. For Bohm '[discussion] has the same root as "percussion" and "concussion" ... [it] emphasises the idea of analysis ... and breaking up'. In Bohm's dialogue 'nobody is trying to win ... [it is aimed at] changing the way the thought process occurs collectively' (p. 10).

Bohm's concept of dialogue supports the sense through which *Open for Inspection*—and the *Homefullness* project—aims to create the conditions for open conversation (Figure 9) rather than aiming for consensus through a breaking up and analysing of various expert opinions based on existing thinking and assumptions.

Dr Neal Haslem

11TH EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF
DESIGN CONFERENCE

APRIL 22-24 2015

PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY

BOULOGNE BILLANCOURT
FRANCE

CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS:

PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
PARIS SORBONNE UNIVERSITY
PARIS COLLEGE OF ART
ISTEC PARIS

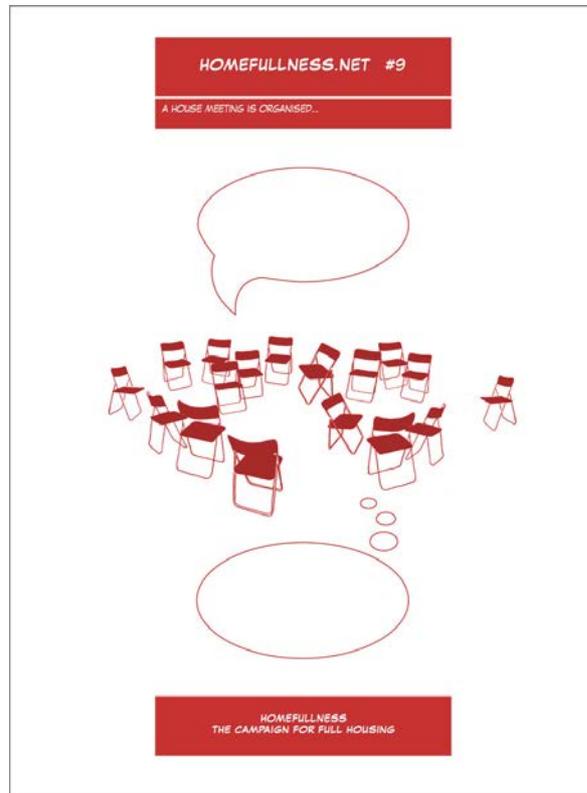


Figure 9 – Homefullness #9; the third of three new tea-towel designs developed and printed during Open for Inspection.

Another influence in the design of the exhibition was Jacques Rancière and his discussion around democratic *dissensus*, as opposed to consensus. Famously, for Rancière, if consensus is a requirement then democracy cannot be achieved. Similarly to Bohm's critique of 'discussion', Rancière critiques Jürgen Habermas' model of communicative rationality (Habermas, 1985 [1981]) in that '[it] presupposes ... that both the interlocutors and the objects about which they speak are preconstituted; whereas, from my perspective, there can be political exchange only when there isn't such a preestablished agreement' (Rancière & Panagia, 2000, p. 116). For Rancière 'the political persists as long as there is a dissensus about the givens of a particular situation, of what is seen and what might be said, on the question of who is qualified to see or say what is given' (Rancière & Panagia, 2000, p. 124); there must be room for difference; thus *dissensus*.

In a recent article Keshavarz and Mazé (2013) relate Rancière's concepts to design research in order to 'explore the political implications of participation in design' (Keshavarz & Mazé, 2013, p. 2). They discuss a design research practice orientated around 'dissensus' and contrast their work to many participatory projects in which '[p]articipation in design is often oriented to the practical matter of achieving consensus, or agreement upon and stabilization of a particular set of social relations, norms and courses of action' (p. 2). Keshavarz and Maze articulate their aims and their deliberate application of the principles of dissensus;

11TH EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF
DESIGN CONFERENCE

APRIL 22-24 2015

PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY

BOULOGNE BILLANCOURT
FRANCE

CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS:

PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
PARIS SORBONNE UNIVERSITY
PARIS COLLEGE OF ART
ISTEC PARIS

'[in] order to approach design in ways that do not merely affirm the current constitution of society, along with exclusions and differentials, we seek alternatives to concepts such as consensus' (Keshavarz & Mazé, 2013, p. 2)

Homefullness also attempts to enable similar conditions in which the 'current constitution of society' can be questioned through the inclusion of diverse views.

David Bohm's use of dialogue bears relation also to Russian linguistics scholar Mikhail Bakhtin's use of 'dialogic' to identify the process of meaning generation between people:

The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when ... the speaker appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic expressive intention (Bakhtin, 1986 [1979], p. 277).

For Bakhtin, meaning does not belong to one speaker; 'contextual meaning is potentially infinite, but it can only be actualised when accompanied by another (other's) meaning, if only by a question in the inner speech of the one who understands' (p. 144).

In terms of the exploration of 'dialogic' in communication design, Jan van Toorn is important to note. For van Toorn however *dialogic* describes design artefacts that have the intention to engage their audience in a dialogue, through the artefact, with the artefact's audience, their assumptions and aspirations. In this manner van Toorn, again in contrast to a Habermasian model of communication, aims to deliver an open-ended or provocative communication (van Toorn, 2010). The artefacts produced for *Open for Inspection* also aim to engage viewers in van Toorn's sense of dialogue but beyond that they aim to engage participants in a political and social collaborative dialogue with others with the generative capacity to remain open to difference, challenge assumptions and develop the new.

One further important influence on this project, and on the author's work as a communication designer is that of Hans-Georg Gadamer, a German philosopher, known for his work in philosophical hermeneutics. Gadamer uses dialogic similarly to Bakhtin, and I would argue with some correlations to Ranciere and Bohm:

To allow the Other to be valid against oneself – and from there to let all my hermeneutic works slowly develop – is not only to recognize in principle the limitation of one's own framework, but [it] also allows one to go beyond one's own possibilities, precisely in a dialogical, communicative, hermeneutic process (Gadamer, 2000, p. 285).

The theorists, designers and commentators above have all helped support *Homefullness* and provide critical friends with which to take on the *Homefullness* journey.

Open for Inspection adheres also to an understanding—and a privileging—of the particular in relation to the universal. Like the *Million Program* so many strategies to combat homelessness focus on defining universal conditions; both to assess the 'problem' and then to plan 'solutions'. Yet homelessness is a continuing issue that plagues contemporary society. Homelessness itself is, through its continued existence, a critique of the foundations of our society. If we cannot provide housing for all, what can we claim to have achieved?

11TH EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF
DESIGN CONFERENCE

APRIL 22-24 2015

PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY

BOULOGNE BILLANCOURT
FRANCE

CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS:

PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
PARIS SORBONNE UNIVERSITY
PARIS COLLEGE OF ART
ISTEC PARIS

OPEN FOR INSPECTION: SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH DIALOGUE

Dr Neal Haslem

Open for Inspection relies on the particular—the individual, as a way to confront and negotiate these seemingly intractable issues. The project aims, through the tone of its visual language and the content of its work, to support individuals and their individual stories and understandings. It is seen that it may be through the particular; this person, this story, this understanding, that the issues are kept from being objectified as a ‘problem to be solved by someone with power’ but remain as a ‘live’ topic, lived in the moment and relevant.

The entire thrust of the project/campaign that is *Homefullness* is the maintenance of a conversation. Is it possible to engage with an intractable issue like housing stress from a processual stand-point?, to see the point of practice as one of being ‘in’ the issue, and facilitating this entry into an issue, rather than stepping outside the issue, thus objectivising and reifying it as a problem to be solved?

Open for Inspection attempted to make a conversation possible, it attempted to move away from the role of solution provider and move towards a role as facilitator for dialogue. In that dialogue, and in the project’s deliberate reflexivity, is a trial of a modality for design practice; one that creates a space for conversation through artefact, rather than a designer as expert addressing themselves to providing a new solution.

What *Homefullness* allows is an experiment in breaking down solution-orientated practice, stepping away from ‘design as perfect plan’ and moving towards design practice as facilitator of generative dialogue. The moves are ever-changing, and the conversation that results from those moves changes with them. Each design outcome gives a nod towards its imminent demise as the next outcome is generated. Design, as a practice of material manifestation, uses those material outcomes to generate conversation and to move to the next iteration. The conversation in and of itself, if open, leads to change. The people who make that conversation, the experts, the non-experts, the artists and designers, make the changes together, through their thoughts and dialogue. Material artefacts give recognition that an issue exists, give pause to think and prompt and provoke thinking and dialogue.

The *Open for Inspection* project takes an approach to a social issue that is based on reflexive practice, artefactually supported dialogue and a processual understanding of design. *Open for Inspection* uses design as a means to engender, augment and support an extended conversation rather than an end point in its own right. This approach sees design as a catalyst and a lens rather than the definer and solver of problems. It attempts to provide a space for conversation within which the intentionality is clear but the solution and the problem itself is left open, open to be challenged, open for the individual, open for dialogue, open for inspection.

5 CONCLUSION

Open for Inspection, as an exhibition and an example of a designed space facilitating dialogue, provides a means to reflect upon a number of important issues for design practice and research today. As a project that aims to facilitate a dialogue around issues of housing and homelessness, it allows reflection upon the contribution of projects whose aims are to open up dialogue around complex social issues.

While *Open for Inspection* did achieve success in its ability to keep the conversation going (which has led to further projects now in planning) this paper

OPEN FOR INSPECTION: SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH DIALOGUE

Dr Neal Haslem

has focussed on the possible value *Open for Inspection* as a design research project. The exhibition and the materials produced prior to, and during the exhibition, allow reflective possibilities around the practice of design and point to concepts for alternative framings for design practice.

In *Open for Inspection* design does not attempt to provide solutions to problems, or to draw consensus from participants. Instead the aim of the design artefacts in the exhibition is to allow a space for dialogue to happen, and provide an impetus through which to provoke that discussion. Design, in *Open for Inspection*, is not seen as a neutral act, but is instead a situated practice, part of the discourse, implicated and invested. The practice (and the research) are seen here not as objective (and objectifying) external powers, able to turn their attention to problems and solve them, but as implicated practices who's work is that of keeping dialogue open, ongoing and generative.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper represents the author's personal reflections on Open for Inspection and the Homefullness project. The project itself is a collaboration involving the following researchers:

Associate Professor Keely Macarow, School of Art, RMIT University,
Dr Mick Douglas, School of Architecture and Design, RMIT University
Margie McKay, Coordinator of Urban Design – City of Whittlesea
Mim Whiting, Video artist

REFERENCES

References

- Bakhtin, M. M. (1981 [1975]). *The Dialogic Imagination : Four Essays* (Emerson C. & Holquist M., Trans.). Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1986 [1979]). *Speech genres and other late essays* (V. W. McGee, Trans. 1st ed.). Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bohm, D. (2004). *On Dialogue* (L. Nichol Ed. 2nd Edition ed.). London and New York: Routledge Classics.
- Gadamer, H.-G. (2000). Subjectivity and intersubjectivity, subject and person. *Continental Philosophy Review*, 33, 275-287.
- Habermas, J. (1985 [1981]). *The Theory of Communicative Action : Reason and the Rationalization of Society* (T. McCarthy, Trans. Vol. 1). Boston: Beacon Press.
- Holger, E. (2009). File:Kök 1968a.jpg. from http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:K%C3%B6k_1968a.jpg
- Homelessness Australia. (2012). What is Homelessness? Retrieved 10 July 2014, from <http://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au/index.php/about-homelessness/what-is-homelessness>
- Keshavarz, M., & Mazé, R. (2013). Design and Dissensus: framing and staging participation in design research. *DPP: Design Philosophy Papers Journal*, 1.
- Putri, A. L. (2012). *Emerging HAMMARKULLEN : Strategy for a livelier Million Program neighborhood*. Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg - Sweden.

THE VALUE OF DESIGN RESEARCH

**11TH EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF
DESIGN CONFERENCE**

APRIL 22-24 2015

**PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY**

**BOULOGNE BILLANCOURT
FRANCE**

CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS:

**PARIS DESCARTES UNIVERSITY
PARIS SORBONNE UNIVERSITY
PARIS COLLEGE OF ART
ISTEC PARIS**

OPEN FOR INSPECTION: SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH DIALOGUE

Dr Neal Haslem

Rancière, J. (2008 [2000]). *The Politics of Aesthetics : The Distribution of the Sensible* (G. Rockhill, Trans.). London: Continuum.

Rancière, J., & Panagia, D. (2000). Dissenting Words : A Conversation with Jacques Rancière. *Diacritics*, 30(2), 113-126.

Suda, L. (2007). Teacher learning circles: Reading theory in practice through dialogue. *Education Foundation Australia*. from

http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/publ/research/publ/LizSuda_TeacherLearningCircles-paper.pdf

van Toorn, J. (2010). A Passion for the Real. *Design Issues*, 26(4), 45-56.