

Sue Palmer  
Winston Churchill  
Travel Fellowship  
2016

## Parks and people: Innovative participation in public urban green space



*Street tree, East Vancouver, Canada*

WINSTON  
CHURCHILL  
MEMORIAL  
TRUST

***“We all genuinely  
love parks”***

*Helen Goulden,  
Executive Director,  
NESTA, UK*



*From top left clockwise:  
Tempelhofer Park, Berlin; Image from public leaflet about Stanley Park,  
Vancouver; Park am Gleisdreieck, Berlin; Infographic at Tempelhofer Feld, Berlin*

## **1. About this research and document**

In 2016, I was awarded a Winston Churchill Travel Fellowship to undertake research into innovation in participation in public urban green space in three cities. I travelled to Berlin, Germany in June 2016, and then to Vancouver Canada, and Portland USA in Autumn 2016. Over the six weeks of travel, I met many people, organisations and projects that make extraordinary things happen in and with public green space.

My research focus was formed through an intersection of two interests: my work as an artist with a social practice and my work in the environment sector. Through my work in South West London supporting parks, green spaces, friends groups and environmental organisations, I have seen how vital parks and urban green spaces are for people and nature and how important participation and community involvement is in keeping these spaces alive and open. I wanted to learn about the adventurous ways that other cities and cultures have approached participation and urban nature. As an artist, I wanted to see how arts and culture were directly engaging people with urban green space, and bring ideas back to the UK.

I chose the cities, organisations and projects to visit through online research, conversations and networks. I wanted to find unusual, energetic ideas and places - things of benefit to people *and* to nature and other species that we share the world with. I documented many of the projects I visited in detail on my art and nature blog [Inquilines](#) - visit my [WCMT Travel Fellowship page](#) for links to the blog posts written during my research.

This document aims to reflect the inspirational projects researched and share the generosity and inventiveness of the people I met who make things happen with and for others. Most importantly, it intends to transmit a real enthusiasm for how we come together in public green space for our well being - to learn, socialise and communicate, with each other, in and with nature.

Sue Palmer - April 2017

*“Parks ultimately, are  
an interplay  
- a conversation, if  
you will - between  
people and nature”*

*Peter Harnik, ‘Urban  
Green, Innovative Parks  
for Resurgent Cities’*



*Dawn Chorus Walk in Marble Hill Park, Twickenham, May 2016 led by Jan Wilczur and Sue Palmer as part of 'Springtimes: art, environment and education', SWLEN's partnership project.*

## About Sue Palmer

I work as an artist and project manager. As an artist with a social practice, I make live performance, sound and moving image work, often in collaboration with other artists, people and places, drawing on over 30 years of professional experience working in a diversity of contexts with people across age and background, and informed by my work as a lecturer in performance for a decade at the internationally renowned Dartington College of Arts in Devon.

As a project manager and consultant, I have managed HLF projects, environmental and cultural programmes both in the UK and internationally, and have undertaken many commissions in relation to public participation and engagement. I am currently based in Frome, Somerset, my home county.

As a resident of London for seven years until 2016, I worked as the Community Projects Manager for the South West London Environment Network (SWLEN), alongside volunteering in a number of urban environmental contexts, including the initiative to make London the world's first National Park City. As a result of these experiences, I became increasingly passionate about public green space; they deepened my understanding of the civic, social and environmental function of parks.

[www.biggerhouse.co.uk/sue](http://www.biggerhouse.co.uk/sue)

## About the Winston Churchill Travel Fellowship

The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust funds British citizens to investigate inspiring practice in other countries, and return with innovative ideas for the benefit of people across the UK. Each year more than 100 Fellowships are awarded for a wide range of projects. The Fellowships provide a unique opportunity for British citizens to travel overseas to bring back fresh ideas and new solutions to today's issues, for the benefit of others. This allows them to maximise what they can achieve in their lifetime, both as leaders and role models to inspire others.

### Note:

- All photographs, unless otherwise indicated or credited, by Sue Palmer.
- Underlined text always indicates a hyperlink to a website or online document, including [underlined headings](#).



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### 3. Acknowledgements

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**Berlin:** Jared Gradinger - Artist, The Impossible Forest; Hendrik Brauns - Project manager at Gruen Berlin for Tempelhofer Feld; David Endter - Project manager at Gruen Berlin Park am Gleisdreieck; Daniel Sieple - Artist and architect; Matthias Einhoff and Lotta Schafer - ZK/U; Elisabeth Meyer-Renschhausen - Allmende Kontor; and particularly to Ralf Leibau from the Langer Tag der StadtNatur (The Long Day of Urban Nature).

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## 4. Short summary & ‘3 x 3 toolkit of actions’

**This research** focuses on innovation in participation in public urban green space, through the use of social arts practice, urban design and planning, gardening and cultivation, gathered through travel to Berlin, Vancouver and Portland Oregon.

**The task:** to find inspiring, engaging and achievable examples of projects that bring about well-being for people and nature, to meet with the people who enable them to happen, and and to bring that learning back to the UK.

**The central question:** How can innovative participation in urban parks benefit people and nature, and increase support for and involvement in urban green space?

I work as an artist with a social participatory practice and in project management and engagement with parks and urban green space. I am an advocate of public space, of our common meeting and play spaces, of biodiverse cities. During my six weeks of research, I met with city parks departments, arts programmers, community gardeners, urban designers, environmental educators, ecologists and artists. Across all three cities, I found a multiplicity of models, ideas and projects that could inspire others and bring benefit to UK parks and urban green spaces.

My findings are collected in the Case Studies (sections 7, 8, 9 and 10), along with analysis of the thematic explorations of innovation and participation in relation to the projects visited (section 6), providing evidence of connecting people with public urban green space and animating a diverse engagement.

*“A park is a cultural entity but it also has a natural and ecological aspect: nature and culture converge ...”*

Jesse Garbe, Artist, Vancouver (Research interview)

In Vancouver, the Artist Studio Residency in Parks programme offered an inspiring structure providing artists with free space in exchange for engaging park users in cultural and environmental projects. In Berlin, a city-wide event ‘The Long Day of Urban Nature’ celebrated multiple green spaces attracting thousands of people, including exemplary new parks, intercultural gardens and DIY urban farming. In Portland, innovative programmes, organisations and artist residencies addressed environmental education, Intersection Repair and urban species cohabitation.

In all the programmes that I visited, participation was a key focus, from communities engaging in co-designing new green spaces to issues of equity, from new approaches to environmental learning, to ecological restoration using creative engagement.

*“If you’re not at the table, then you’re on the menu”*

Sharita Towne, Artist, Portland, Oregon

Another outcome of the research, inspired by looking at arts and cultural practices, nature and cultivation in these three ‘progressive’ cities in the Western world, is an encouragement to loosen some of the orderliness in the UK around green space: to allow more vernacular design, encourage experimental and collaborative management with a wilder approach to gardening and management of nature spaces, both in relation to aesthetics and behaviour.

Many of the projects in this report push at the borders, the order of things, and the culturally accepted norms. The ‘in-process’ is celebrated, and with that comes a transparency in relation to participation: an openness, a questioning of our perceptions. As demonstrated by the fact that increasing numbers of coyotes are drawn to the urban habitat and living amongst humans in North American cities, how we cohabit in and with nature is vital for our long term well-being, our neighbourhoods and our public green spaces.

### **A 3 x 3 toolkit of actions:**

#### **1. Participation**

1. prioritise equity and inclusion, involve people from the start, outreach beyond the usual networks, collaborate, widen the circle
2. develop opportunities and programmes using artists with a social practice, and create cross-discipline projects and activities
3. diversify the stories of heritage and history around parks and green space, include contemporary cultural contexts, other narratives and ways of engaging

#### **2. Resources**

1. partner with other services, organisations, arts and culture providers, to develop opportunities, share expertise, joining up with other resources and projects
2. utilize underused resources such as park facilities, for artist or other specialist residencies, through models of exchange that engage and benefit park users
3. join up parks with other public green spaces; commit to a long term investment, grow things slowly and inclusively

#### **3. Nature and Environment**

1. create city-wide events and initiatives that celebrate multiple spaces and environmental projects, gaining new audiences, generating attention and publicity
2. develop environmental projects that prioritise learning and experience, using cross-discipline projects to engage new participants and communities of interest
3. dissolve barriers, encouraging multi-functional use of parks and green spaces and loosen the culture of management, allowing ‘untidy’ nature, DIY cultivation, making room for other approaches, enabling the human and the non-human to cohabit in the city

Wherever we can activate parks and public green space to bring together people and nature, we enable learning and engagement, and build social cohesion and healthier neighbourhoods. Parks are the lungs, the glue, the opportunity at the heart of communities.

## 5. Overview and context of the research



*Children's play area, Park am Gleisdreieck, Berlin*



*'Start conversations  
... Widen the circle ...  
Build partnerships...  
Explore possibilities  
... Develop a vision  
... Create ...  
Steward your place.'*

*The key strategies for  
'Intersection Repair', from  
**City Repair's** handbook,  
Portland, Oregon, USA*



*View over city of Portland, Oregon from Mount Tabor, looking east across the city centre and up to the Marquam Nature Park, the Arboretum and Zoo, showing the tree-lined streets*

## Overview of the research

The research is focused on urban parks and green space, and in the opportunities they create for the cultivation of people through social arts practice, urban design and planning, growing and gardening and other innovation in public engagement. I set out to:

1. Find inspiring, engaging and achievable examples of projects, design and management that bring about well-being for people and nature in public urban green space;
2. Meet and dialogue with the people and organisations that make it happen: artists, managers, programmers, institutions, community activists;
3. Study the ways that other cities are enabling cohesive neighbourhoods through focusing on green space, design and engagement

Following my interest in bringing together nature, social arts practices and enthusiasm for public space and the 'commons', I researched examples of unusual and exemplary projects. Berlin in Germany, Vancouver in Canada and Portland, Oregon in the USA, were chosen to reflect the diversity of approach and cultural contrast:

- **Berlin** for the unique 'Long Day of Urban Nature' city-wide public event, its outstanding new parks designed in collaboration with residents, and for the urban farming movement and 'Intercultural Gardens';
- **Vancouver** as a world leader in urban green space and its pioneering Artist Studios in Park Fieldhouses programme;
- **Portland** for its reputation for green innovation and artistic integration, and as a city that connected geographically with Vancouver.

**“Central London contains 27 square metres of green space per person, almost a third more than Vancouver. But Vancouver feels infinitely more green thanks to the metrics of proximity.”**

**Charles Montgomery,**  
*‘Happy City’*



From top left clockwise:  
Park am Gleisdreieck, Berlin; Benches in Tempelhofer Feld, Berlin; Gezi Park Fiction, Hamburg, Germany; and Victoria Park, East Vancouver BC.

It was only during my travels did I realise the extent to which all three cities faced a very pressing issue: gentrification - the changing culture and demographic make up of the city, forcing more people into houselessness, and profoundly affecting the green spaces, both in relation to parks becoming a refuge for the homeless and green spaces being pressurized by property development. These cities are not alone in this respect: Charles Montgomery notes in his book *‘Happy City’* that New York’s ‘residential property within a five minute walk of the High Line more than doubled during the eight years straddling the park’s opening in 2009’. London, alongside other cities in the UK, is also troubled by this phenomenon. My research took place in contexts profoundly marked by these contemporary political, social and economic contexts and was informed by them.

Influenced by my own practice as an artist, I was looking for triangulations between three things: people, place and nature - innovation, participation, public urban green space. No single project was a perfect example of all three elements, yet all of the projects I visited had at least two components; for example Jared Gradinger’s ‘Impossible Forest’ in Berlin is equally a social arts practice *and* a public garden.

I was open-minded and inquisitive in order to allow in new methods and ideas, deliberately navigating a diversity of projects and processes of engagement, with some case studies at the edges of my research, moving closer to urban planning; it was important to travel along that continuum as that is where relational learning occurs and connections are made. I sought out a diversity of projects relevant to the field - for park managers, arts programmers or environmental educators. The report is structured through:

- exploring and defining **innovation, participation, social arts practice and public green space** as a result of research across all three cities.
- **Case studies** that focus on specific projects within themes such as parks or urban nature, with further supporting evidence in Appendices.
- The **Conclusion** and **Recommendations** draw the findings together relevant to UK contexts.

## Why parks? Why participation?

Parks and public green space are at the centre of planning, policy making, budgetary decisions and public attention at this moment, in the UK and around the world. The austerity agenda, privatisation of public services, physical and mental public health, pressure from expanding and developing cities, as well as changing cultural patterns and habits, mean that attention and focus have been increasingly directed onto our public urban green space.

Local authorities have no statutory duty to fund or protect parks in the UK. Many organisations, including the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces, have lobbied for years and with persistent focus for the government to make the provision of parks a statutory duty. Following budget cuts to park maintenance and green spaces over the past decade, resources have been reduced, and some fear a return to parks being degraded, and even closed, with lobbying groups citing the decline in park management in the 1970s as something that we must avoid returning to. The current situation differs across the UK according to council and local authority resources and contexts.

The threat to parks is well documented through key research such as the HLF's State of UK Parks Report, first published in 2014 and updated in 2016. The 2014 report found that *'45% of councils are considering either selling their green spaces or transferring their management to private businesses'* - a very depressing thought. In July 2016, the Communities and Local Government Committee of the UK Parliament launched an inquiry *'into public parks to examine the impact of reduced local authority budgets ... and consider concerns that their existence is under threat'*, (I was one of many individuals and organisations who submitted evidence). The report *'Public parks'* was published in February 2017. And in October 2016, the Mayor of London tasked The GLA's Environment Committee to investigate *'the management of London's green spaces, at a time when funding is decreasing and sustainability is key'*. In the same month 38 Degrees started a campaign which raised over 300,000 signatures calling for the protection of parks, with over *'150,000 taking part in a consultation'*.

These consultations are measuring public opinion while simultaneously looking at other potential ways of managing our parks in the future: public-private models, ways of generating income through events and hires, and an increasingly risky reliance on volunteers to support management and maintenance.

Public popularity and enthusiasm for parks continue to rise: they are central to public health and well being, to improving air quality, to biodiversity and integral ecological systems, to social cohesion and in the provision for outdoor play and recreation, particularly for children. It has repeatedly been proven through research that parks and public green space are key to our well being. This report does not focus on justifying the need for urban green space in our cities and towns; it's a given based on existing evidence. Nor does it seek to find alternative funding solutions. My research is about public participation and involvement in green space. We have to *want* parks, to use them and support them - in this current climate, we can't take public space for granted. **How we perceive, understand, use and value urban green space is key to its future.** So new ways of seeing opportunities for participation, of stimulating interest and engagement are vital to make the connections between us and nature. And in current contexts, **how can changing culture create opportunities?**

## 6. Research findings:

innovation, participation, public urban  
green space, public art / social art practice



*Inviting entrance to Cloudscape Comics evening 'Drop-in Drawing' session and meet up at South Memorial Park Fieldhouse, Vancouver, BC, Canada*



*“Risk taking is part of what we do – like making art – the residencies take on a life of their own in response to community, creative ideas, the seasons for example ...”*

*Cyndy Chwelos and Danita Noyes, Arts Programmers with Vancouver Parks, Recreation and Culture  
(Research interview)*



*Fabrication Station at Trillium Park North, Vancouver BC, part of Sharon Kallis' EarthHand Gleaners Society Fieldhouse Residency*

## **i) Innovation: some examples**

A well-used term - one that can perhaps have too much of a grasping for the 'new' about it. However it represents change, a shake-up, and new methods. Innovation is also a shift of emphasis, or a break with tradition.

Small shifts in the way that an activity is presented can galvanise engagement. Portland Parks Foundation's Parke Dieme is a city-wide event inviting anyone to volunteer in green spaces over one weekend in October each year. Parks and community gardens in every neighbourhood open up for a few hours as part of a witty and energising public invitation; the collective focus attracts people to volunteer who may not normally get involved alongside the ease of finding and accessing your local neighbourhood green space, or indeed one on the other side of the city - all the spaces are connected through one focus.

On the other end of the scale, following the same structure of a time-defined event, the Langer Tag der StadtNatur (The Long Day of Urban Nature) in Berlin creates an accessible programme of 26 hours of hundreds of nature related activities for just 7 Euros per adult and free for children, in every district throughout the city, attracting thousands of people to connect and learn about urban nature - an event being copied by other cities in Germany.

Innovation in relation to more fundamental change, with a long term influence on both green space and culture, is reflected in the seizing of an opportunity by Vancouver Parks, Recreation and Culture in turning over vacant park buildings into artists studios engaging many park users. Portland's City Repair initiative has spent the past 20 years reclaiming public space transforming road intersections into playgrounds and gardens, building neighbourhood cohesion, and even changing the city's planning laws.

These examples are explored further in the Case Studies in sections 7, 8 and 10.

***“If you’re not at the table, then you’re on the menu”***

**Sharita Towne, Artist,**  
Portland OR

(at Alliance of Artist  
Communities Conference  
2016)



Vancouver BC, Canada - from top left clockwise:  
Strathcona Community Garden celebration; Homeless person in a Downtown park; Swing on a street tree; Woman at a street book exchange in East Vancouver.

## **ii) Participation: how does it happen?**

*‘Public parks for example, tend to reflect the preferences of the socioeconomic class whose members designed them - typically middle-class professionals with kids.’*

Charles Montgomery in ‘Happy City’.

As an artist with a social practice, I have spent a lot of time thinking about and enabling participation. And I am always asking myself the questions: **participation by whom? designed, controlled and organised by whom? and to what end?**

In relation to public green space, many of the same concerns and issues apply. As park managers, activity and event programmers, particularly working with volunteers and often ‘targeting’ communities as part of outreach commitments, the question of participation and how it happens is key - it can profoundly affect the success of a project, even creating long-lasting damage if managed poorly. Processes of participation were central to my research and the findings here are brought together from many examples across the three cities.

The importance of considering what is at the heart of participation came at the Alliance of Artists Communities Conference in Portland, Oregon in the session ‘Arts and Equity in the Neighbourhood’. Artist Sharita Towne said in relation to a photographic project she had been commissioned to make around gentrification in Portland: *“How do we get people off the menu and at the table? I think about that all the time with my work.”*

Sharita’s astute and activating proposal says what needs to be said about our civic responsibility in relation to racial, social and class equity. It reminds us: if you’re not part of the process of making or designing a project or activity, then you are likely to be the ‘target’ participatory group or audience - the ones who need to be engaged.

- Who holds the power?
- What is the process?
- What agency do participants have? - have they been invited in from the start?
- Does the project reflect the diversity of the neighbourhood or the city?
- Where and who is the 'community'?
- Who am I not talking to?
- Do I assume what might be 'good' for others?

*"We're trying some big initiatives, for example with First Nations people – that's a city-wide initiative. It's in our mind all the time – who's not showing up, who's not coming. We use all kind of strategies. When we work in larger contexts, for example on Canada Day for a public event, we'll bring in an art project that will extend it – yes, we will have face-painting and cake, but what happens if we bring in an environmental artist too. Inclusivity is always on the front burner!"* Cyndy Chwelos, Arts Programmer, Vancouver Parks, Recreation and Culture

### Participation means engagement at every level.

From the design of the park or green space that allows everyone to feel they have a right to be there, to activities and events for people from all backgrounds, of all ages, participation is about social cohesion among people, and also in relation to nature and other species. In the development of two parks in Berlin, Tempelhofer Feld and Park am Gleisdreieck, public participation was key to the design and planning, but it took many years.



*Allmende Kontor, Tempelhofer Feld, Berlin*

*"The most important thing in participation is that people think their interests are being listened to. It's good to slow down, to take time."*  
David Endter, Project Manager, Park am Gleisdreieck.

As example of one outcome of this participatory process is the self-organising garden in Tempelhofer Feld initiated by the Allmende Kontor (common gardens) civic network, a rambling DIY garden cultivated by 500 gardeners of all backgrounds and cultures, that has at its heart open access to all, the absence of fencing between plots, and a festival atmosphere of integration (in Case Study 9).



*EarthHand Gleaners Society,  
Trillium Park North, Vancouver*

In Vancouver, Sharon Kallis was one of three community members contributing to the design of a community garden and shipping container making space in Trillium Park North with the Vancouver Parks Board. The EarthHand Gleaners Society project grows materials and weaves objects out of invasive species and native plants in collaboration with schools and community groups, using weaving as both activity and metaphor, to strengthen social fabric, to educate and support biodiversity (Case Study 8).

The park is open day and night, and Sharon has to navigate homeless people, and others on drugs and alcohol, who are also using the garden as a home and as a toilet. It is illegal to camp in parks in Vancouver, but they are often the only spaces available for homeless people in the city. Mindful of the multiple needs and contexts of the city's population landing in the middle of the outdoor



classroom, Sharon's approach is one of tolerance, aptitude, flexibility. Rather than excluding the problems and fencing the garden, Sharon continually seeks solutions to the problems, experimenting with ways of creatively resolving and educating the urban green space users. Participation is also about receptivity to, and consciousness of, the wider context.

In Portland, City Repair's Kirk Rea talked with me about working at the 'edges' (Case Study 10):

*"The difficult parts – the 'edges' – is dealing with classism and fear, for example the fact that by making more benches, space and community gardens, people think the homeless will come more. Our projects are grassroots. We work with the houseless, with different communities.*

*"Who doesn't have access? Who has less ability to participate? Houseless communities, communities of colour have disproportionately less of those benefits such as canopy cover, trees. Wherever trees are planted, 'liveability' goes up. There are dilemmas and issues – a community orchard will raise property values, but if we don't plant an orchard, then that community is not benefiting."*

Kirk Rea, City Repair, Portland, Oregon (Research interview)

Participation means re-examining our prejudices and resistances, our preconceptions of how people will respond or behave. We can be creatures of habit and tend to continue to believe the same old reasons why some things work and some things never will. If you don't think something will work, ask a teenager if they have an idea. Invite an older person to get involved, someone from another culture – look for a good example in the next neighbourhood along, or in another city.

*'... One of (our core goals) is to increase the equity of parks in the City of Portland, and to create an equitable approach to services. Many of our under-served communities, our communities of color, and our immigrant and refugee communities are in North Portland and Outer East Portland. This is also an area of the city where there are physically fewer parks and natural areas ... PP&R has taken on creating new parks and programs for underserved communities as a priority. I follow the same lead in thinking about where to create new programs ... each year I add new sites to Ladybug Walks ... to get new families into nature in their neighborhoods.'*

Chrissy Larson, Environmental Education, Portland Parks & Recreation (Email exchange)

### **Widen the circle.**

### **Involve people from the start.**

If you want to work with young people, don't design a project that you then have to persuade them to take part in, and if they don't, then something 'fails'. Ask them what they are interested in doing or making, what they think, what they need; co-design by making suggestions or giving examples of what could happen. The process may be slower, but it will encourage equity and allow increased ownership.



*Moon Festival 2016 at the Renfrew Ravine, Vancouver*

In Vancouver, Still Moon Arts have spent years building a ground breaking arts and environment project which engages hundreds of young people every year; without their involvement the event simply couldn't take place (Case Studies 8).



Participation requires patience, open-heartedness, good humour and a willingness to listen, and listen again. Sometimes it means not knowing what's best, or what's right because you find it through collaboration with others. Ask questions you don't have the answer to in order to collectively generate new knowledge.

### Create the conditions for participation.

Berlin's Mauer Park is a fine example of this. Space created by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 has been central to Berlin physically, culturally and economically; some has turned into real estate, some into historic monument, and some into parkland. Located at the border of the Prenzlauer Berg and Gesundbrunnen districts of former West Berlin, 'Wall Park' was part of the Berlin Wall and the Death Strip between East and West Berlin. Mauer Park is one of the most popular places for young people from the city, and it also draws people from all over the world.

The green space would be considered unkempt and scruffy by UK park standards, but here it's functional and practical. With no formal planting or lawns, there are huge areas of wildflowers on the slopes, a central pathway, sand and grass areas and a 30 metre graffiti wall. It hosts a flea market, basketball court, musicians, outdoor eating and barbecues, people socialising; it's a crowded, popular space, receptive to and encouraging spontaneity, and actively enabling responsiveness to the space, including an improvised nightlife. Nature and people are not 'organised' in Mauer Park - it's an informal green area and participation arises from the design, the conditions of the park.

One Sunday in 2009, an informal Karaoke show happened in the stone amphitheatre in the park. The circular stage and surrounding seating and viewing, with the backdrop of the park, creates a wonderful performance space. The Bearpit Karaoke is now a regular fixture in the park every Sunday afternoon through the summer months. People come from all over the city, all over the world, to perform and to watch. The audience joins in, cheers and boos people off; Joe Hatchiban, using portable, battery-powered sound boxes, has built a unique participatory phenomenon in a park. Would this be allowed in a park in the UK? If not, why not?



*The Bearpit Karaoke, June 2016, Berlin*

### iii) Parks and public urban green space

*'For city residents the world over, public parks hold a special place in our hearts. They're our backyards, our country escapes, our athletic facilities, our beaches, and our nature preserves all rolled into one. They are places where families from every imaginable background come together and share in the sense of community that is at the heart of city life. Parks help clean the air we breathe, reduce carbon emissions, attract businesses and tourists and provide a home for cultural celebrations and events. And for city kids, parks are living classrooms where the natural world comes alive.'*

Peter Harnik, 'Urban Green, Innovative Parks for Resurgent Cities'

Parks, green corridors, street trees, playgrounds, squares, nature reserves, amenity grasslands, community gardens, urban farms, 'wastelands': let's focus on the weave between the central neighbourhood green space - the park - and the verges and edges, the corridors, the waterways and ecosystems that link us, other species and life forms together.

Parks should not exist in isolation or in a vacuum, and need not be an excuse for a lack of other green environments. Rather, given the crisis in biodiversity and the need for green and blue infrastructure to travel through both our urban and rural places, parks are the open gathering spaces that connect out and through. In the UK, the initiative to make London a National Park City casts the whole area inside the M25 as a living network - a whole park - a good example of a project creating a shift in perception, ambition and possibility.



Sign outside the Benson Hotel, Vancouver, Canada,

Perhaps spaces such as this lawn outside a hotel in central Vancouver - the very one that was hosting the Projects in Public Spaces Placemaking Conference 2016 - need have no place in our city centres. Is it time to move on from tightly controlled lawns, from this exclusive use of urban space? - from this aesthetic display of nature left over from a historical aristocratic, and here colonial, perspective? These areas could be alive with wildlife, open for play, with free edible food.

In Berlin, perhaps the most striking thing about the city is the multitude of different kinds of accessible public green spaces: the established children's playgrounds on most street corners, the tradition and popularity of allotment 'Kolonie' gardens, community gardens, urban farms, and the expansive new parks like Tempelhofer Feld. In many of these spaces in Berlin (with the exception of the formal city centre Tiergärten), there is an open-hearted and open-minded attitude to how elements work together: sport, growing, relaxing, playing, meeting, eating all seem to happen in close proximity, in circulation, in hybrid spaces, with an informal approach that is in stark contrast to the controlled and bordered public spaces and acres of amenity grassland that populate the UK.

**What opportunities are there, given our environmental needs and changing culture?** Can we loosen our relationship with our historical past of formal borders and obsessively cut grass? Can we let nature be 'untidy,' our spaces more disorganised? **What do we want our parks to be like?**  
**What do we want them to do?**

## iv) Public art / social arts practice

### How are artists relating both to the environment, to nature and ecological systems, and working with the city, with neighbourhoods and communities?

Public art generally takes the form of sculpture in squares and parks, often commissioned as part of building development or urban regeneration. The siting, aesthetics and process of the selection of public art is often provocative and complex, alongside the significant associated maintenance costs, with historic examples of expensive art works by celebrated artists being rejected by residents. Do we need more monuments in our public parks? Who gets to decide and how? Who does this public artwork speak for and to?

In Portland, Oregon the city has a proud history of commissioning public art, with an established trail around the city of over 120 art works. The Regional Arts and Culture Council (RACC) commissions both permanent and temporary art works.

A good example of where permanent public art meets directly with a city's contemporary culture is the People's Bike Library of Portland, or 'The Pile' as it is known in the city; a collaborative creation by Brian Borello, Vanessa Renwick and ZooBomb in 2009, a gold child's bike atop a pole with hooks for as many children's bikes as can fit on. Biking has generated many subcultures in Portland, and ZooBombing is one of them: a self-organising event with grown-ups speeding downhill on kiddies bikes every Sunday night, starting at the Zoo up on the hillside above Portland and descending at great and exciting speeds to the city centre. The 'Little Bikes, Big Fun' sculpture was installed so that people could borrow bikes to take part - a fine example of public art dovetailing with social event.



*The People's Bike Library, Portland, Oregon*

This kind of public art amplifies and celebrates a cultural event, connects to the city, supports a social activity, enabling participation, continuously in process, as people take and leave bikes. As a permanent artwork, it has a social function as a point of exchange; it performs and activates memory without becoming monumental.

In parks and green spaces, many commissioners, landowners and users tend to think of public art as being a static sculpture or monument; a work brought in and placed in a site, often to mark a historic event or person, without the need to work with park users. Sometimes, works are commissioned or made without long term planning, curatorial understanding or allowing for maintenance and repair costs. Ill-conceived artwork can quickly turn into an eyesore, creating monuments that communities don't relate or connect to. The challenge to commissioners and managers in green space, as well as the public, is to think beyond public art work as a way of representing something in monumental form. Let's use art and culture to develop connections and relationships in public green space.

We already have many parks in the UK with underused bandstands - why not create temporary arts initiatives within them? - and find new ways of activating them.



Social arts practice (or socially engaged art) focuses on processes of making activities, events and projects that are transient and temporary, with participants. It has gained traction as a means of creatively engaging and motivating people and neighbourhoods, enabling social cohesion, often through creating 'temporary communities' of activity.

*"Social practice artists and producers aim to affect their community and environment in a real (rather than symbolic) way that enables social and political change. Each project is tailored to the community and environment in which it will take place."* Wikipedia, Social Practice (Art)

Some projects are initiated from contextual research, with artists gathering participants interested in an idea or project to create an event or temporary art work, while some projects are conceived and produced through collaboration with residents or communities from start to finish. Many social arts projects use conversation and direct communication with participants both as research and sometimes in the art work itself, as well as generating documentation and archive material. The strength of social and participatory art is the impermanence and transient nature of the work.

In some contexts, art has been the subject of criticism in relation to gentrification and 'artwashing': for example, property developers will use artists to raise the popularity of an area or neighbourhood, which can then displace poorer people, and communities of colour, and awareness of this is increasing.

Innovative social arts projects, connecting directly with people, place and nature, are a rich resource for growing participation in green space. Portland State University in Oregon runs an Art and Social Practice MFA. In October 2016 I took part in a podcast and discussion 'Psst...a Portland State Social Practice Talk' with students and staff. Clearly the course has had a direct impact on Portland through the plethora and diversity of social art programmes and projects around the city, including significant interaction with public green space, such as the Creek Colleges project (Case Studies 8), where art classes are bartered for environmental restoration work.

In Vancouver, the distinctive Artist Studio Residencies in Park Fieldhouses programme (Case Studies 7) is of particular relevance, bringing social arts projects and environmental arts into the centre of parks, engaging with park users, with around twenty sites active right across the city. The

programme has supported adventurous projects that have developed into significant participatory activities and events, including Sharon Kallis' EarthHand Gleaners Society (Case Studies 9), and the Still Moon Arts, Moon Festival and Renfrew Ravine Restoration (Case Studies 8).

In Berlin, Jared Gradinger's 'The Impossible Forest' sculpture and garden is at the centre of an important and resonant social practice (Case Studies 9). Working as a choreographer and artist, Jared is also one of the initiators of the activating and dynamic Social Muscle Club, a growing network of social practice that invites people 'to exercise "social muscles" using art and creativity as a tool'.



*Volunteers and visitors to 'The Impossible Forest', Uferstudios, Wedding, Berlin, Germany*



## 7. Case Studies:

### Parks, social arts and participation



*Swings for all ages at Park am Gleisdreieck, Berlin*

**“...community activism has a strong tie to local green spaces”**

**Katharine Burgess,**  
Urban planner and  
researcher



*Tempelhofer Feld, Berlin - from top left clockwise:  
Infographic on consultation process; Caravan at Community Garden; High chairs  
at the Skylark fields; View towards the gardens at Tempelhofer Feld*

## **Public participation: designing new parks in Berlin, and social arts residencies in parks in Vancouver and Portland**

The section of the report looks at specific case studies in relation to projects that use social arts practices to increase participation in urban public green space. It explores the Artist Studio Residency programme in parks and park facilities throughout the city of Vancouver, Canada, and an unusual artist residency in the renowned ‘hard’ park, Pioneer Courthouse Square in Portland Oregon.

I also researched community participation in the design of parks in Berlin. The last decade has seen the initiation of two significant new public parks in the city - Tempelhofer Park and Park am Gleisdreieck - created through an impressive amount of public participation that has influenced the design, management and accessibility of these large green spaces.

*“It’s been a great process, with so many highly engaged people, and Tempelhofer has been totally developed through a participatory process ... We have an advisory group made up of two people from Grün Berlin, two from the Senate, and seven citizens”.*

Hendrik Brauns, Project Manager, Tempelhofer Park, Grün Berlin

Hendrik Brauns, from Berlin’s public parks management Grün Berlin explained that his job is to ensure the transparency of the process of participation, to enable people to participate and to guide them through the process. Research relating to these parks is in [Appendix 1](#) of this report.

In her [comprehensive essay about these two Berlin parks](#), published on the website the [Nature of Cities](#), urban planner Katharine Burgess outlines the complex and lengthy consultation and participation process for both Tempelhofer and Park am Gleisdreieck; her detailed account of the process that she witnessed first hand is very useful to a non German speaker.

*“Berlin’s planning processes also have an extensive tradition of community involvement and are proactive in their efforts to incorporate local interests into newly designed parks, as well as into the technical Landscape Plan for the city as a whole.”* Katharine Burgess - Community Participation in Parks Development: Two Examples from Berlin.

## Artist Studio Residencies in parks and park facilities, Vancouver, Canada

The city of Vancouver has a unique and innovative programme - Artist Studio Residencies in Parks - that brings artists into the centre of parks and green spaces. Not only does the programme provide affordable space for artists to make new work, it creates the means and context for artists to work directly with parks and park users.

Cyndy Chwelos and Danita Noyes are Arts Programmers and part of the Arts, Culture and Engagement Team at Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation and Culture. The Park Board is managed by a unique body of elected commissioners for the City of Vancouver. The initiative was first seeded over ten years ago at Moberly Arts and Culture Centre in South Vancouver, through seeing an opportunity in the fieldhouse attached to that centre. Perhaps the fact that culture is integrated with parks and recreation within one civic department has enabled this significant project to happen, able to capitalize on the grouping of public services.



*Falaise Park Fieldhouse, Vancouver*

Fieldhouses are stand-alone buildings originally built in the 1950s for caretakers of the parks, who were very much part of the neighbourhood. Due to the changing culture and management of parks, the caretakers had moved out and the fieldhouses were largely being used for storage. Following consultation and strategic planning with artists and community members, initiated by the Arts and Culture Coordinator Jill P. weaving and the Arts Programmer team, the Park Board began what has grown to be a very progressive and successful project: an 'exchange' programme placing creative artistic engagement at the centre of parks and neighbourhoods, giving artists free studio space in return for participatory engagement.

*"As community art programmers, we are guided by a Park Board Art Policy that clearly affirms the value for creativity and arts for all. In this field of recreation we are particularly interested in arts programming that connects to and increases health and well being, a sense of purpose, and creating a deeper sense of belonging. Meeting this priority through the fieldhouse studio residency programme gave us a green light to proceed.*

*The Park Board could see how the fieldhouse studio residency located artists in community and could recognise the value and benefit for both – the artist and the community at large."*

Cyndy Chwelos and Danita Noyes (Research interview)

The requirements are that artists must need the space to do their creative work; they are required to be onsite five times a week, and to create a dedicated blog. In return, artists give 350 hours of community engagement, which can include research and development, meeting new people, workshops, promotion, events and activities, developing community networks, evaluation, and meeting regularly with a designated



*Cyndy Chwelos and Danita Noyes*



arts programmer. For a collective or small group of artists, the exchange is easily managed. Artists can also use the ‘in-kind’ space as leverage to raise money through other grants.

*“We started with 7 field house studios and now we have 18 sites. This year, we have expanded the programme from artists to include sports groups, environmental groups, food groups, garden groups or a combination of those.*

*“This programme aims to increase the role of the arts into everyday life. Is one of our goals to expand and include community? – absolutely. Artists provide hands-on participatory creative encounters for this to happen. The fieldhouse comes with no financial award; the artist gets a studio space with access to it 24/7 but they can’t sleep there. The fieldhouses are attached to the infrastructure parks in our organisation, so that maintenance is covered. The process is all juried – there’s a selection panel. It’s transparent: there are staff, community members, peers, other artists. We go through an entire process so it’s accountable.”*

Cyndy Chwelos and Danita Noyes, Arts Programmers (Research interview)

Each artist approaches community engagement (the 350 hours per year) differently. In Vancouver, I visited seven of the artists in residence, attending their project events and activities. The diversity of projects and engagement was outstanding. Three are explored here, with a further three examples in [Appendix 2](#).

*“We’re open to the fact that each one is different. We all come from the arts, our whole team. Having trained staff that understand what it is to create is really part of the success of our team. Risk taking is part of what we do – like making art – the residencies take on a life of their own in response to community, creative ideas, the seasons for example.*

*From all our arts programmes, we want to see the boundaries pushed and of course we want to see exceptional art come out of it. The process is really important but the end product counts – whatever that is. Every artist has their own way of doing it which means that this model of practice is very open to multiple forms of practice – there is no one set way for engaging community... This work suits a certain kind of artist.”*

Cyndy Chwelos and Danita Noyes (Research interview)

### [David Gowman at Maclean Park Fieldhouse](#)

Artist David Gowman opens his studio every Tuesday evening for a drop-in ‘Tool Fun’ workshop as ‘[Onkle Hoonki’s Fabulous Hornshop](#)’- everyone and anyone is welcome to just show up. David works as a musician and carver, making horns from natural material and hand carving, and he invites people from the neighbourhood and from across the city to explore these crafts.

The regularity of the session run every week is also the real strength of this residency, with people passing by to use the park seeing the gathering, having time to become curious and get involved. People make spatulas, spoons, start their own carving projects, mend things and learn how to use tools. The Pot Luck dinner is a social break in the session.



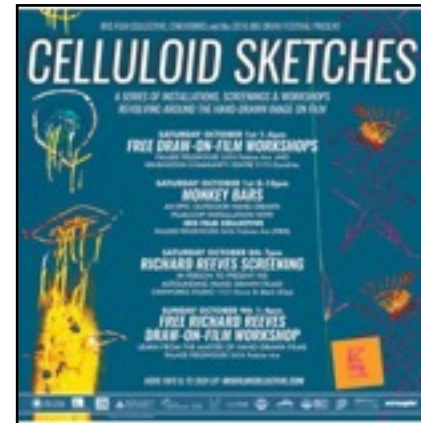
David Gowman at the Maclean Park Fieldhouse



## Iris Film Collective at Falaise Park Fieldhouse

The Iris Film Collective, with a total of eight members, use the park house as a studio - sometimes individually, sometimes collectively - to make their own films (including turning some of the Fieldhouse into a dark room for film processing), to share their work publicly on site and to create activities for the neighbourhood.

IFC has run screenings in the park, on the grass – the flickering film in the dark draws people passing by – as well as showing films in the studio itself. Iris also hosts a monthly screening of ‘works in progress’ and they were also part of the Big Draw 2016, a city-wide Festival, with a free draw-on-film workshop and screening, with an outdoor film loop installation in the park.



*Iris Film Collective public event at Falaise Park Fieldhouse*



## Urban Animal Agency, Vancouver BC

The Urban Animal Agency is a ‘group of artists, ecologists, and other entities who promote healthy longterm co-existence between species’. This collaboration arose out of mutual interests and the desire to challenge perceptions of the city as a purely human habitat. I met up with artist Genevieve Robertson, and ecologists Robyn Worcester and Dan Straker from the Urban Animal Agency, which is based in the A-frame Fieldhouse near Second Beach in Stanley Park.

*“Our space is set up as a kind of science lab meets arts lab - a kind of pseudo agency and museum! We’re interested in the ways that humans and other animals co-exist and collectively define urban spaces. How do we start to think of ourselves as urban animals?”*

*Genevieve Robertson (Research interview)*

Bringing attention to ‘the entanglement between humans and other urban animals’, the UAA is distinct in their collaboration as artists and ecologists, bringing specialist knowledge and understanding of the environment together with artistic practice that opens out investigation and exploration. The UAA organises participatory activities: walks led by both an artist and an ecologist, or walks that specifically engage with sites marked for development, and other activities especially for young people such as Animal Daycamp. Exploring what it means to be an urban animal in the city, the session used motion triggered cameras and games to explore privacy and surveillance, around kids’ experience of decreasing privacy in the digital world, and the lack of privacy afforded to animals in relation to being photographed. The UAA also participate in city-wide events, running sessions as part of Big Draw Vancouver.



*Genevieve Robertson, at UAA, Stanley Park*

*“The Urban Animal Agency is about remembering that humans are animals - it’s thinking about and playing games with the idea of institutions, of departments, and it’s also about animals having agency.”*

*Robyn Worcester and Dan Straker, the two ecologists from UAA (Research interview)*

The UAA are also part of the coordination team and committee for Vancouver Bird Week, an important annual awareness-raising week with bird-related art workshops, walks, talks, exhibitions, and lectures across the city; so as both artists and ecologists, they are integrating and supporting key environmental organisations in the city.



UAA Animal Daycamp Photo: Urban Animal Agency website

**The Artist Studio Residencies** in parks and fieldhouses was one of the most influential and absorbing parts of my research. The sheer vision of the programme making the explicit and confident connection between arts, well being and participation in green space, enabled interesting and productive interaction for both artists and communities. Cyndy, Danita and their team saw the opportunity of vacant publicly owned buildings with the potential to meet artists needs. The value of the studio space in-kind and the worth of the artists' work to The Park Board is estimated as an in-kind benefit of \$18,000 p/a.

The arts are often one of the first services (along with parks!) to receive funding cuts, but the Park Board arts policy helps protect the arts and bring them to communities. Documentation of the projects, particularly using video, provides evidence and advocacy in relation to the value and benefits of the programme.



Urban Animal Agency, Stanley Park Fieldhouse

The 3 year residencies allow artists consistent making space and time to get fully involved in their locality, encouraging experimentation and projects to develop from the artist's practice and contextual research. The programme brings creative professional exploration and engagement to the centre of the neighbourhood, with temporary projects that privilege experiential art over monumental art. The programme is demonstrable evidence that when arts and culture are embedded in public space, the rewards are huge; and critically, the programme is enabled by staff who understand both the role and capacity of the arts embedded in public space.

At the conclusion of the three yearly cycle of studio residencies, an exhibition featuring all the work is held at the city's Roundhouse Community Arts & Recreation Centre. Vancouver Parks, Recreation & Culture are involved in a number of programmes including the Healthy Local Food Residency Programme, Dance in Community Programme and Environmental Art. Further detail is available here in relation to the Artist Studio programme: Fieldhouse Activation and Eligibility.

*"Why does this arts work happen? - Because the community wants it ... As we see more art work in museums and galleries around socially relational work, we're seeing some crossover, but there is a division between community art being 'real' art. We're really interested in where we can cross over those boundaries - how to bring the art into everyday life, to try to 'un-privilege' it. Over the last decade there has been a huge change; the seriousness of this work has grown in the last ten years ..."*

Cyndy Chwelos and Danita Noyes (Research interview)

## Housequest residency in Pioneer Courthouse Square, Portland, USA

Pioneer Courthouse Square is known as 'Portland's Living Room'. Working in partnership with the City of Portland, a non-profit organization manages the urban 'hard' park's daily operation and programme of around 300 annual events *'through community-driven initiative and the generosity of private sector sponsors'*. It's a unique public-private management model, set up prior to the park's opening in 1984. Pioneer Courthouse Square has been recognized as one of the most successful public spaces in the USA.

It's a 'free speech' plaza, a flexible gathering space, with businesses hiring space to promote products, alongside festivals and large gatherings that have become significant events in the city's calendar. The Board of Trustees, acknowledging the mostly commercial endeavours in the square, were interested in supporting artists sharing and making public art that addressed important topics.

Housequest is *'an experiment in site-specificity, collaboration, and participatory public art'* programmed by curators Sarah Turner, Justen Harn and Randy Cragg. Each 'Housequest' creates an on-site work at the Square facilitating *'relationship-based, socially-engaged interventions with the objective to inspire and catalyze interaction among the diverse visiting and transient public'* (from project website).

In June 2016, Parallel Studio filled the Square with light and sound. The third residency in November 2016, by artists Ralph Pugay and Ariana Jacob, created S.A.D. Park – the world's first park for people with seasonal affective disorder, designed to ease one of the most prevalent mood disorders in society in the notoriously grey and rainy Pacific N.W.

S.A.D. Park featured healing levels of bright lighting, workshops and activities to address and alleviate S.A.D. symptoms. and even a play session with 'Puplandia' – a visiting group of puppies, alongside licensed social workers as 'Park Rangers' as opposed to security guards. The artists were interested in how SAD Park could be an experiential model for how to reorient our culture away from privatised suffering and towards public, collective solutions. It attracted visitors of all ages and backgrounds, creating a collective participatory social space, addressing an important health and well being issue.

*"This is a socially engaged work on a very topical issue ... accessible to all. The work looked at the social and civic function that a public space can play in relation to exploring an issue that is generally treated privately.*

*Why don't we have environments that can deal with seasonal affective disorder? Why aren't we talking about depression? It's a park that's about psychological and emotional equanimity."*

Ralph Pugay, Artist, S.A.D. Park,  
(Research interview)



*S.A.D. Park, Housequest artist residency, Pioneer Courthouse Square, Portland. Photo: Housequest website*



## 8. Case studies:

### Urban nature, participation and environmental education



*Moon above Berlin City centre taken on the 'Blaue Stunde auf der Spree', the late night boat trip on the River Spree, seeing the city's nature night life as part of the Langer Tag der StadtNatur - The Long Day of Nature 2016*



## Urban nature and participation - humans are part of nature.

This section explores our relationship with urban nature through a series of case studies, from how we co-exist with non-humans to events that celebrate urban nature, from environmental education to ecological restoration partnering with the arts.

As important in how we work together in green space is how we participate in 'nature', as an integral and essential part of the environment.

*"We are not distinct. We have co-evolved. More activities are happening in parks beyond the human ones. A park is a cultural entity, but it also has a natural and ecological aspect: nature and culture converge - its a dance between them that blurs their boundaries. A park is a constructed, contained and restricted place, maintained by people through aesthetic choices. Unfortunately, nature is becoming more and more restricted - freeways, fences, and boundaries are restricting animal, insect and plant interactions."*

Jesse Garbe, Artist and Lecturer, Vancouver (Research interview)

By shifting from an environmental perspective of observation and control as our primary engagement with nature, to one of participation and inclusion of ourselves as part of nature, we have much greater potential to create inter-species habitats and successful urban ecological systems.

The city is a space for co-habitation. An interesting and vibrant example of this is the story of the North American coyote. Rather than being displaced from the urban environment by humans, coyotes are actively attracted to the city - populations have gradually and significantly risen over the last few years. Both Portland, Oregon and Vancouver have programmes in relation to urban coyotes.

In Vancouver, notices around parks in Vancouver '[Co-existing with Coyotes](#)' are part of what has become the longest standing programme of its kind in North America. A collaboration between Vancouver Park Board and the [Stanley Park Ecology Society](#), the programme encourages the public to understand animal behaviour and make room for coyotes to live with us; there are some simple rules to follow, especially around pets.



*"Historically, the sites of urban development were probably the most biodiverse ones, as they are sited on estuaries, where salt and fresh waters meet. Most people want wildlife but they're confused about it: a high percentage of people thought we were encroaching on the coyote's land, rather than the coyotes coming here because of humans. Communication - that's the issue."*

[Dan Straker](#), Urban Wildlife Programs Coordinator (Research interview)

Similarly, [The Portland Coyote Project](#), a partnership between the Audubon Society of Portland and the Geography Department at Portland State University, invites people to submit sightings and become citizen scientists. The [online map of sightings](#) is ample evidence of coyotes cohabiting with us, using the city streets and green spaces.

**Our co-existence in and with nature, at this point in time, is perhaps the most important act of participation in urban green space.**

Co-Existing with Coyotes sign as displayed at Trout Lake, East Vancouver

## Langer Tag der StadtNatur - The Long Day of Urban Nature, Berlin

This city-wide event runs over 26 hours, on the weekend closest to the midsummer (the 21st of June), organised by Stiftung Naturschutz Berlin - the City's Foundation for Nature. With 500 events run by many different organisations in every district of the city, the Long Day of City Nature celebrates both the richness of urban nature and the people who work for nature.

Inspired by the Long Night of the Museum model, and now celebrating its 10th year, the event has seeded to other cities including Hamburg and Zurich, Switzerland. Funded partly through state funding and partly through sponsorship, one ticket costing €7 (and free for children) gives access to all the events, with selected events having additional charges and requiring reservations.

The programme is rich and varied, from late-night boat trips on the Spree to highlight urban nature nightlife, to walks and talks, educational and science-based activities, bus and bike-led tours around the Intercultural Gardens, birdwatching, poetry, arts and crafts, open gardens, urban farming - a truly packed programme of events that start on Saturday afternoon and go right through to Sunday afternoon. I met and talked with Ralf Leibau, one of the organisers, as well as attending Langer Tag events. Ralf talked about the hard work and dedication it has taken to grow the event to its current popularity, and the importance of winning political support and advocacy.



Programme cover for The Long Day of Urban Nature 2016

*"We have 25,000 visitors, people of all ages. We want - and we reach - people from all generations, from all over the city, and we have visitors who come to Berlin specially for this weekend."*



Urbane Klima-Gärten, Modellregion, Berlin

*"So many people are doing small things about nature across the city, but the Langer Tag makes it one big thing. Nature exists here every day but people don't see it in their daily lives. The idea of 'Langer Tag' is to show in 26 hours people who are birdwatching, working with bees, in the zoo, the botanical garden, both traditional organisations and people who just founded their organisation yesterday; we bring it all together, to focus on it. Everyday nature is not so easy to find in the press, but when you have one big event, that makes it visible."*

*"We have a three step objective: the first is to reach people, to make them sensitive to nature and that it's right in front of them."*

*The second step is to explore what that means, and the third step is to invite them to do something for nature - how they can be involved - they must find their own way into that!*

*"We want to overcome disconnection to nature in the city. It's easier for us to reach Spanish tourists than some of the Turkish communities here in Berlin, so we're always evaluating how we can reach people who aren't yet engaged, and include more projects and events that meet those needs and areas of the city."*

Ralf Leibau, Stiftung Naturschutz Berlin (Research interview)

## Moon Festival, Renfrew Ravine, Vancouver

The first Moon Festival, created by Still Moon Arts, took place in 2003 and has been running annually ever since in the Renfrew-Collingwood neighbourhood of Vancouver. Taking place on the full moon of September, this vibrant event, and beautiful, illuminating parade, attracts thousands of people to visit and participate, celebrating harvest abundance and honouring diverse cultural traditions. Still Moon Arts Society was founded in 2004 in response to the success of the first festival. The theme for 2016 was 'Songs for the Salmon' to celebrate the Chum salmon returning to Still Creek; art and culture meeting with environmental regeneration.



Carmen Rosen delivering her TEDx talk in 2013

When Carmen Rosen, Artistic Director of the festival and Still Moon Arts moved into the Renfrew-Collingwood neighbourhood, she soon discovered the Renfrew Ravine and Still Creek, one of the only remaining ravines in the city, which no one seemed to care much about. The Collingwood Neighbourhood House had been doing clean-ups in the ravine for five or so years removing a dumpster full of household rubbish at each clean up. Carmen was determined to make a difference to the ravine and the creek (which largely runs underground until its emergence in the ravine) through working for environmental improvement, and by using the arts as a participatory tool for change.

*"How can I change people's relationship with the Ravine? How can it become as asset for them – that was my premise. I didn't understand why Renfrew Ravine wasn't a feature. It was dangerous. I thought, can I find a way to re-frame it as a place of beauty for people and nature?"*

Carmen Rosen (Research interview)



Moon Festival 2016 at Renfrew Ravine and Park.  
Photo by Jenn Lin

Joining up with neighbours to first make a garden at the entrance, Carmen made it clear to the neighbourhood that she was committed to the project, enabling her to win support and advocacy. Carmen also wanted the event to connect to the Chinese population in the neighbourhood:

*"The Chinese celebrate the fullest moon of the year, and have a traditional Moon Cake, with food, tea and stories. I wanted to bring that together with the Harvest Moon, a cross-cultural symbol of fertility, with lanterns, lights, a procession – a festival."*

Still Moon was also part of an Artist collective called ArHF (Art House in the Field). After a decade of running the Moon Festival, alongside outreach work to neighbours, new immigrants and other marginalized people, Still Moon took up a residency in Slocan Park Fieldhouse for two years (2013-15) as part of the Vancouver Park Board's Artist Studios in Fieldhouses Programme to continue to grow their various projects including the Moon Festival. Now over 250 young people volunteer, and around 5000 people attend the Moon Festival. The young people (and schools) are key to the support, and Carmen and her team have enabled the young people to take ownership of the festival – they are the performers, make the lanterns, run the festival, volunteer on the night and clean up afterwards. Moon Festival volunteer T-shirts have become a status symbol at the school. 'Training days' in the schools give



students the chance to learn about and become directly involved in running the event, with lots of lantern making workshops.

*“By framing the ravine with gardens, we’re saying that something in the middle is special - we have changed the space. Now just a couple of bags of garbage are removed in the clean-ups. We talk with our neighbours – we can’t assume about what the value of nature is to people. It’s been 15 years of work. Kids have grown up in it - ones that were small when it started are now team leaders!”*  
Carmen Rosen (Research interview)

For Carmen, the whole project is also focused on the environment, on the biodiversity of the ravine and the creek; her long term focus has been to get the Salmon spawning once again in the ravine, the first time since the 1930s - this would be a real mending.



*Moon Festival 2016 at Renfrew Ravine.  
Photo from Still Moon Arts website*

*“We are educating people about the need to have cleaner water. We have issues with plumbing infrastructure, with cross connections meaning sewage runs into the creek. But we’re starting to get people aware of the watershed. We do this through creative workshops with kids, through the Moon Festival book ‘Still Creek Stories’ which tells stories of the last 100 years of the creek, and through self-guided tours and materials. We are collaborating with ecologists to raise awareness; my job as an artist is to feature the environmental work.*

*“There have been many groups lobbying governments for many years ... I think when there is enough public enthusiasm and public pressure, it makes it easier for people within the infrastructure of governments to spend the money required to improve ... our waterways.”*

Following infrastructure including a fish ladder, pipes and baffles being installed in stages since 2009 to enable the fish to travel upstream, in 2012 an amazing thing happened – salmon were seen for the first time in Still Creek in Vancouver.



*Moon Festival 2016 at Renfrew Ravine  
Photo from Still Moon Arts website*

*“The whole process of the Salmon lifecycle is part of the environment. This is First Nations shared territory, and we want to have a meaningful relationship with First Nations.”*

Carmen and some of the young people joined the Wild Salmon Caravan in June 2016, in the Rockies, at the headwaters of the Fraser River to be part of an important ceremony to celebrate wild salmon – *‘to build capacity of coalitions and campaigns that link Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples ... who are working to protect, conserve and restore wild salmon and its habitat ...’*

In November 2016, for the fifth year in a row, chum salmon have come back to Still Creek, with 2016 being the most prominent year in terms of number and size.

*“People can and do change when they have an emotional connection. When they care, when they are inspired. We have found that inspiration is a better motivator for change than guilt.”*  
Carmen Rosen (Research interview)



## Creek College, Portland, Oregon - art class barter for environmental restoration

Another example of ecological restoration working in close collaboration with arts practice is Creek College: *'an experimental school that bridges art, education and conservation'*. Creek College offer free art classes along creek restoration sites that are 'paid for' through a barter system. The barter for the classes are activities that aid in the restoration of the creek.

The project is a collaboration between Kim Sutherland and Adam Carlin, graduate students in the Art & Social Practice MFA program at Portland State University, and Kristina Dutton, an artist based in Oakland, California. Creek College began in 2016 with sites shifting for every session to allow the opportunity to engage with a diversity of waterways, artists and communities. Courses have included Bookmaking and Nature Journaling, How To Play By The Creek, and Creative Mapping Soundscapes, with sessions led by artists.

*'Creek College originated in the form of a question; how can we, as artists, make the broadest impact in aiding restoration efforts? We began to ask: can a poem benefit a creek? In what ways can sound, dance, sculpture, design, and other art practices bring attention to creek restoration?'*

*'Art allows us to explore the horrific, beautiful, peaceful, threatening. In this way, art has potential that perhaps traditional environmental education lacks - a natural way of forming meaning where important or difficult issues can be expressed sincerely, and where intuition and self-exploration can be guiding'.*

*Creek College website*

The natural environment becomes a place of learning, of experience, with classes developed for people of different backgrounds, ages and interests, and the artistic and environmental collaboration aims to bring communities together by being more than an art or restoration project alone.

For the second iteration in 2017, funded by the Precipice Fund, the college will take place along the Columbia Slough in Portland. They will be collaborating with NAYA (the Native American Youth and Family Center) and the Columbia Slough Watershed Council to produce three, one-day symposia along the Slough, including conversations with 'panelists' varying in approach and location - in canoes, through walking, and by bike - with a representative from NAYA and the Watershed Council, an artist, and an ecologist.

*'Each class has a barter activity associated with it. We collaborate with a watershed council and local ecologist (for our upcoming session it will be the Columbia Slough Watershed Council) to come up with activities that participants can do that will aid in restoration of the watershed - these activities are the barter and act as a form of payment for taking the class. For our upcoming symposium our barter so far are invasive ivy removal and working on tree-cages for beavers.'*

Kim Sutherland (Research interview and email exchange)



*Art session at Creek College, Portland, Oregon  
Photo: Creek College*

## Portland Ecologists Unite, in PDX

One of my most inspiring and absorbing visits in Portland Oregon was to an evening meet up of EcoUnite!, an informal network of ecologists, scientists, teachers, hunters, environmentalists, book designers, parks managers, street tree friends, artists - anyone with an interest in the field of ecology - the interrelations of humans and nature.



Invited by convener and environmental manager Toby Query, I went along to give a short presentation about my research and to learn about the group which 'works to improve the resilience of the community of ecologists by coordinating discussions, transfer knowledge, and build networks that create a foundation for quality ecological land management'.

Toby Query started Portland Ecologists Unite! five years ago in 2011, after attending a conference in BC and hearing about 'novel ecosystems':

*"Conservation tended to focus on 'kill everything non native and plant only native' with no self-reflection on that. The conference had people talking about the faults of this mindset and discussed the positive effect of new arrivals providing natural processes – novel ecosystems. We have to talk about all this - there are important issues at work; we have to deal with the complexity."*

Toby Query (Research interview)

EcoUnite! meet once a month with around 25 people attending, from a growing membership of over 450 people. A guest speaker focuses a theme, followed by a general discussion with notes subsequently posted on their blog. Recent discussions include 'native / non-native', the growing population of houseless and homeless people living on the green spaces - a pressing concern arising from complex multiple reasons. PDX Ecologists Unite! and the Society for Ecological Restoration NW also teamed up to host "*Art and Ecology Unite!*" featuring six Portland-based artists to discuss the connections between art, nature, and science.



PDX EcoUnite! meeting October 2016

*"I wanted to invite people interested in ecology to meet together to talk about the dominant culture in environmental management and improving ecosystems."*

*I grew up in Portland and played in Forest Park. I've spent 17 years as a Natural Resource Ecologist for the City of Portland, helped plant 3 million trees and tons of native grass and wildflower seeds! A lot of money has been invested in salmon habitat restoration. Now we're asking – how do we manage land and environments in the long term where it's not immediately obvious what we should do? And what are our future forests going to look like?"*

Toby Query (Research interview)

PDX EcoUnite! investigate and explore ecology, bringing people together from across disciplines to expand the field, allowing in new ways of thinking, understanding and responding.

## 9. Case Studies:

### Cultivation: gardening, urban farming and participation



*The Impossible Forest at Uferstudios, Wedding, Berlin, by artist and choreographer Jared Grading*



## Urban gardening in Berlin

There is a long tradition of neighbourhoods having community urban farms and growing spaces in the city, with over 800 allotments (Schrebergärten) alone. The strong history of urban farming and cultivation in Berlin gives rise to a plethora of extraordinary projects and spaces, diverse in their design, appeal and individuality - you can find any type of garden across the city, from the highly organised lawn and flower gardens in a 'Kolonie', to a roughly built but carefully tended plot made out of pallets in a disused space, to urban farms and community growing ventures in the very heart of the city. What connects them all is the clear importance of the role that cultivation plays in Berlin. For further examples of Kolonie gardens, community gardens and urban farming including the renowned Prinzessinnengärten, go to [Appendix 4](#).



*Intercultural Gardens Tour - 'Bermuda Gärten', Berlin  
as part of The Long Day of Urban Nature 2016*

Intercultural Gardens arose in Germany in the mid-1990s, and bring Germans and immigrants, often with refugee backgrounds, from all walks of life together to garden, providing shared growing and social space for communication and integration, connecting different nationalities and cultures. They enable cultivation at all levels for people with and without migrant backgrounds: food, language, resources, knowledge. Intercultural Gardens tend to have a looser, freer approach to a communal space, with self-built raised beds of recycled wood, individually designed plots, repurposed and upcycled furniture and structures, open pathways, and a vibrant, open-hearted and enthusiastic sense of community.

## Allmende Kontor

In 2010, the network of Intercultural Gardens was given space at the expansive Tempelhofer Feld, creating a centralized information and networking hub, with 5000 square meters of gardening space, and over 250 gardening beds; The Allmende Kontor (which translates as Commons Office) was founded by a small group of *'experienced garden activists, researchers and friends of urban gardening.'*

Allmende-Kontor, now self-organising with over 500 gardeners, *'is a civil network to support Berlin's community gardens and urban agriculture projects' ... and works together cooperatively with community gardens as well as different social and civil initiatives, foundations, research supporters, and government - in Berlin and across Germany'*. The DIY approach to this unique collection of gardens, where you can't tell where one plot begins or ends, is brave, open-hearted, porous and dynamic - and feels like a festival with its diversity of gardens, gardeners, visitors and tourists.



*Allmende Kontor Intercultural Garden  
Tempelhofer Feld, Berlin*



## The Impossible Forest, Berlin - a garden as social art

Dancer, choreographer and artist Jared Gradinger created the Impossible Forest garden in Berlin, in the centre of a dance art complex at Uferstudios in Wedding, Berlin for an art commission, under the title 'companions'. In the centre of the tarmac space, between the buildings, is a stand of dead trees, with an abundant green rolling floor. The Uferstudios complex is in a poorer area of Berlin, with little open public green space. The garden is in the middle of a public thoroughfare so many different kinds of people pass by and interact with the garden and with Jared - it's a conversation, a point of social exchange.



*Jared Gradinger, The Impossible Forest at Uferstudios, created for the festival Tanznacht, an initiative of Tanzfabrik, 2016.*

Experimenting with plant intelligence as something to listen to and respond to, Jared is making the garden as an integral interdependent process. The dead trees are the only sunken objects, straight in to the concrete. The sandy soil is spread straight on the surface of the tarmac, shaped, with an abundance of plants – a rockery, self seeded hemp plants, wisteria, pumpkin and cucumber climbing the trunks. Mallow, red clover, yellow mustard. Bees, insects, birds – a diversity of life makes use of the opportunity; it's an island of green, of flowers in the industrial neighbourhood.



*The Impossible Forest, Uferstudios, Berlin*

*"Dead trees – a lot of people weren't interested in it when I proposed it! And it is a provocative, challenging garden".*

Jared Gradinger, (Research interview)

Created in March 2016, The Impossible Forest is unfolding, unfinished; moving between decay and growth, it's a circle both physically and metaphorically - one that affects and changes the environment and ecology of the Uferstudios. There are connections and cycles through to the human body, bones, organic matter, exchange, states of living; the 'dead' cherry tree sprouted a small branch that leafed green and bright. Taken by something Rudolph Steiner wrote, Jared thought of bringing together decay and dying

with growth and flowering: to make visible two processes not often made explicit in a garden.

*"It's rooted in practicing to be able to perceive the imperceptible. Give space in your life to notice things that are decaying and dying, and give space in your life to notice things that are blossoming and blooming. And then to create a space to allow for feelings and thoughts to arise ..."*

*"The Impossible Forest has changed the traffic, slows people, you have to go around, it's changed the patterns of speed and direction. It's created a meeting point, while I'm watering or weeding, for strangers, for people who live in the neighbourhood, who come in with a curiosity. This place creates a vulnerability. In Berlin we don't interact with strangers much. Many of the the young people in this area don't have any relationship with nature. Here, there's a different approach ..."*

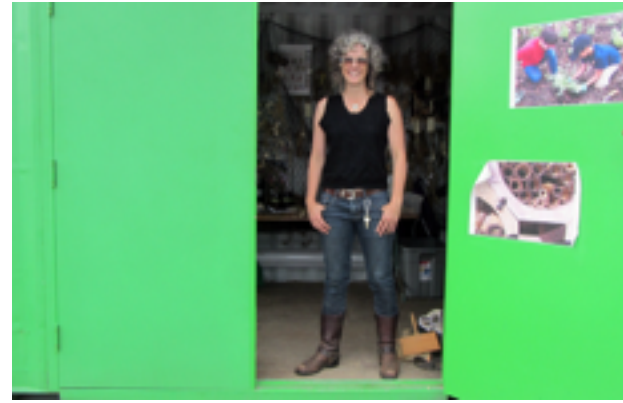
Jared Gradinger, (Research interview)



*Red Clover, The Impossible Forest, Wedding, Berlin*

## Sharon Kallis, EarthHand Gleaners Society, Vancouver, BC

Sharon Kallis is an artist who specialises in working with 'unwanted' natural materials, connecting traditional hand crafting techniques with invasive species and garden waste through involving community participation, to create installations that are also ecological interventions - integral yet impermanent art works using natural materials.



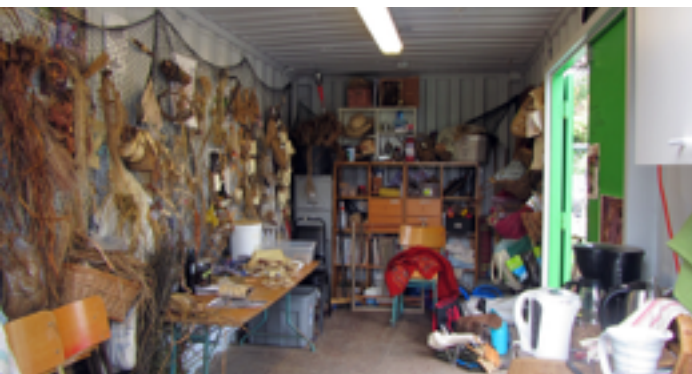
Sharon Kallis at Trillium Park North shipping container

*"I started off working with fallen debris, with free materials, with fur, hair, leaves - and a seasonal awareness started to grow around the green waste pile in the city: for example, the seasonal pull after Thanksgiving, when the annuals are pulled from the parks, and working out I could use them for dyeing. I grew relationships with parks-keepers and city systems. In 2008 I had my first Park Board residency, and Parks have invested in every project I've done since, including regular work with Stanley Park Ecology Society."*

Sharon Kallis (Research interview)

In her book, 'Common Threads - weaving community through collaborative eco-art', Sharon focuses on 'The Three Ps: Places, Plants, People'.

Sharon has been involved in numerous environmental art projects across the city, and partners with organisations, places and diverse communities to run inclusive projects with people of all ages. A thread through her work is public green space, not only as physical space, but in terms of seizing opportunities in relation to plants grown and used across ecological and human systems in the city.



Inside the EarthHand Gleaners shipping container

*"I was working with unwanted plants, and was recommended to research and work with English Ivy. It led to planning an environmental art programme in response to that species with Stanley Park Ecology Society - basically a regular open studio day with a pile of ivy. We started crocheting with it, literally off the wrought iron fence posts - and realised we could make netting - we made sheets of it! We worked around erosion control using English Ivy as bio-netting. That was my one good idea! - low profile public art; it biodegrades because it's dead, supports topsoil, and helps the mulching process."*

*"Some people get drawn into my workshops to learn a hand skill, some because of the environmental approach, and some for the social aspect. I approach community groups, invite partners in, and I initiate connections, and try to draw a diversity of people together from high and low income demographics."*

Sharon Kallis (Research interview)

Sharon was Artist in Residence at MacLean Park Fieldhouse (as part of the Vancouver Studio Programme detailed in this report) and now works in partnership with the Park Board at Trillium Park

North in a unique co-management arrangement, with a five year contract to manage the garden area of the park instead of having city gardeners take care of it.

*"I've recently created the EarthHand Gleaners Society as a non profit organisation. Because of the work I had done with invasive species and with weaving, I was invited to be part of the consultation and planning for North Park Trillium. There's three hectares, with two hectares for sports with astroturf, and one hectare was a counterpoint - a community garden. We put in a*



*The community garden at Trillium Park North*

*harvest table, a shipping container, a covered outdoor space. We listed the plants we wanted for production, based on Nancy Turner's book (my bible) 'Plant technologies of First people of British Columbia' - with native species, and thinking carefully about what could grow here and be productive. Pacific Dwarf Willow is great for weaving with children and seniors for example, and the school kids can harvest and weave Catalan Tension Trays for example, make rope, and learn spinning. My big time long term research is around Apocynum Cannabinum (Indian Hemp), as a soil cleaner - it's a social enterprise in itself as well as a brownfield site cleaner!"*

Sharon thinks and works as an artist, a city planner and an ecologist - an unusual and important triangulation, especially in relation to this research. I ask Sharon about this:

*"That's probably why I hit walls all the time! I meet great people in public space. I'm a healthier person when I connect - I'm part of a very eclectic community. I believe in public space - it's crucial to survival. The worst thing in North America is suburban expansion - there's nowhere to have conversations. We need common ground.*

*"I'm glad the parks and the gardens I work in are unfenced, but it is really challenging because trees get broken, weavings get broken ... I don't think in the terms of permanence ... they're living, breathing, moving, and sometimes that includes destruction before you want it. ... It's a conversation with strangers, with the landscape - a constant social experiment."*

Lastly I ask Sharon about her thoughts in relation to her work with plants:

*"Tracy Williams, a Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) weaver, and I were out harvesting Blackberry for upcoming workshops ...*

*I start cutting away, and I catch Tracy has stopped and is leaving an offering of tobacco, thanking the Blackberry ... And I had this moment, a lack of consciousness - a realisation of my attitude as a Western trained person around gardening, ecology and invasive plants. It was a turning point, I needed to shift my own practice. It's not easy - I'm still re-educating myself. I have a Skwxwú7mesh word that I learned, and the word encompasses the words for head, line, heart and hand - how our lines are all connected - and as a spinner there's that idea of a line that connects us all, so when I'm harvesting on Skwxwú7mesh land I use that word, as an offering of gratitude."*

Sharon Kallis (Research interview)



*The community garden at Trillium Park North*



## 10. Case Studies:

### Public space: placemaking, neighbourhoods, rights and inclusivity



*Sunnyside Piazza, a City Repair project  
East Portland  
2014 Re-Paint  
Photo © Anton Legoo (Sunnyside Piazza Facebook page)*

## What makes a place great?

*'Public places are the geographical glue that binds a community together. These spaces are friendly, secure, distinctive and well-integrated into the community fabric; they are places for democracy, sociability, gathering, collective memory, communication, connection and local economic vitality.'*

*'Enriching people's experience of public life and providing a platform for activities where people have a sense of community ownership, great places evoke a sense of identity and provide a focal point for cultural exchange and transformation.'*

City Repair's Placemaking Guidebook (2nd Edition)

As part of my research, I looked at the wider context of public space and at 'placemaking' in order to turn out from parks and defined green space to look at innovative practices in participatory design that enable social urban spaces, cohesive neighbourhoods and reclamation of public space. I wanted to understand how such initiatives were intersecting with green spaces and ecological systems.

While in Vancouver, I attended the [Project for Public Spaces 'Placemaking' Conference Week](#) - an annual gathering that brings together projects, organisations and ideas from all over the world. Based in New York, PPS have built an extraordinary body of evidence and practice around placemaking, influencing many cities around the globe, and their website is rich with resources.



*Rainbow pedestrian crossing on city centre intersection in Vancouver, BC*

*"It's not right to put water in front of people then not let them into it"*

Fred Kent, Founder and president, Project for Public Spaces

'Placemaking' has been around for as long as humans have been gathering to live together - it relates to the spaces that we co-design and cohabit; the squares, plazas, green space and streets that we use and inhabit. The term has gained traction particularly over the past 20 years or so, to describe the approach of reclaiming our cities:

*'...both an overarching idea and a hands-on approach for improving a neighborhood, city, or region, Placemaking 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, Placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. More than just promoting better urban design, Placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution ...'*

*'Placemaking inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community. Placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place ...'*

Project for Public Spaces ['What is Placemaking' webpage](#).



## City Repair, Portland, Oregon

City Repair is a grassroots organisation that has changed Portland for the better from the streets up. The City Repair Project facilitates artistic and ecologically-oriented placemaking *‘through projects that honour the interconnection of human communities and the natural world’* (City Repair website)

The many projects of City Repair have been accomplished by a mostly volunteer staff and thousands of volunteer citizen activists: *‘an organised group action that educates and inspires communities and individuals to creatively transform the places where they live.’*

Mark Lakeman, the co-founder of City Repair 21 years ago, is a national leader in the development of sustainable public places. ‘Share-It Square’ was the first community-initiated and community-built project in Portland, first constructed in 1996 for \$65. When a group of Sellwood neighbours began building an unauthorized gathering space, a Portland city official’s response was, *“That’s public space. Nobody can use it.”* Mark was one of the local residents who designed and implemented the project.

*“Our cities and places are no longer ours. We’re not building our own places; we’re not designing them to fit our own needs. The neighbours chose to transform an intersection, because a crossroads is a gathering place where people come together. In America, our great archetype is the main street, which is not really a center. It’s just a flow. It’s a movement corridor, and you have to yell across the street because there isn’t a place in the middle. There isn’t a social commons that you can attain and occupy.”*

Mark Lakeman, City Repair



Kirk Rea and a new volunteer, Karmon from City Repair at Sunnyside Piazza, Portland.



Annual repainting of Sunnyside Piazza.  
Photo: City Repair website

I met up with Kirk Rea, Volunteer Coordinator and Placemaking Organizer from City Repair, at Sunnyside Piazza, on Southeast 33rd Avenue in Portland.

In 2001, this neighbourhood was suffering from noise, speeding, drugs and abandoned cars. After many meetings and workshops facilitated by City Repair, and support from the city and the residents, the community came together to paint a giant sunflower - a Fibonacci spiral geometry - in the intersection on Southeast 33rd Avenue.

Sunnyside Piazza now features a community information kiosk, cob benches, rock gardens, benches, trellises and planters. Over 700 interviews with residents bear witness to the fact that the community experiences more happiness, health and safety because of the repair. Alongside regular social events on the Piazza, the community come together annually to repaint the sunflower, and many visitors come by too, to see first hand one of the first Intersection Repairs that has been so influential to the city.



*“Permaculture gardening, natural building, community-based art – they all make up ‘intersection repair’. The ‘repair’ is reclaiming the piazza. Intersections are crossing points. We’re ‘repairing’ the neighbourhood in terms of social and physical relations. Reconnecting relationships is the primary role – painting, permaculture, making, that’s just the means to do it: food and beauty while connecting us together.”*

*“The movement came from the neighbourhood, and the vast majority of projects come from community interest. 21 years ago, this was a new concept, and painting and natural building in the city of Portland was illegal at the time. Developing garden space and natural building is key to City Repair’s work. Over time, the City has legalised intersection art – of course they wanted to harness that creative problem solving energy! We are demonstrating that localization of culture, economy and decision-making is the foundation for a sustainable future.”*

Kirk Rea, City Repair

Folding out from Intersection Repair and urban public space, I spent some time researching relationships to public land and land rights in North America. Particularly in Canada, the recognition of First Nations land rights are currently of great importance - they are the focus of thought provoking and moving discussions around ever more vital questions around historic abuse, colonialism and issues of equity. Provision, ownership, access to and protection of public land is an active and resonant subject throughout the world, and ever increasingly important in relation to the protection of nature and support to biodiversity and the non-human.

In Portland, Oregon, I met [Ryan Pierce](#), who in 2008 along with his partner Amy Harwood, an environmental activist and public land advocate, began Signal Fire ‘to connect artists to wild places, to build the cultural value of the natural world’.

## **Signal Fire Arts**

*‘A Portland-based residency that connects artists and writers with the North American wilds through extended backpacking trips and hiking book clubs, providing wilderness residencies and retreats for artists of all disciplines.’ (Signal Fire website).*

Signal Fire Arts offers different programmes during the year: week-long excursions and retreats, ‘Wide Open Studios’ for up to a month, and day hikes around Portland with a focus on reading and writing in relation to the natural world. Their 2016 programme ‘Unwalking the West’ *‘traced the routes of famous explorers in the reverse direction, exploring the legacy of conquest and settlement in the present day challenges facing the American West’*. The group has three part-time staff with [Ka’ila Farrell-Smith](#) an artist and community activist, as well as a pool of trip leaders.



Signal Fire Arts. Photo source: Signal Fire website

*“Our residencies are mostly in the West, mostly remote and always on public land. We’re always exploring the nature-culture intersection. Sometimes we run an urban or day hike ‘book club’ from Portland – a reading and place event – on Mount Hood, or in Forest Park. We give out readings as a lens to see the wild landscapes.”*

*“UnWalking The West interrogates the foundations and the myths circulating about the settlement of the West, about the attempted genocide of Native American Indians, in order to shift the dominant views of land in the American West. In North America nature is romanticised and exploited simultaneously. And there can be a lot of racism in the environmental movement; we have a lot of work to do.*

*These so-called ‘unpeopled places’ – hundreds, thousands of people inhabited them up to the 1850s. We utilize public lands to advocate for equitable access to, and protection of, these vital places. Artists have the opportunity and the capacity of ‘storytelling’ – the chance to open up these histories and tell these stories.”*

Ryan Pierce, Signal Fire Arts



Stanley Park, Vancouver, BC, Canada

## Public Land, First Nations, Inclusivity

Native American land rights are present and active in contemporary political and social culture in North America, particularly in relation to the environment. In Vancouver this was especially visible, with the topic being part of most conversations, every project I encountered, and at the start of presentations. For example, on the website of Still Moon Arts is an acknowledgement similar to all those that I heard:

*‘Still Moon Arts Society acknowledges that we are on the unceded, occupied, and traditional lands of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Xʷməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Səlilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh), and Stó:lō nations, and for this we are thankful. Through creating art, restoring environment, and building community, Still Moon commits to facilitating spaces for understanding and for knowledge sharing. This work will acknowledge and respect the contexts of the past and the present.”*

At the Project for Public Spaces Placemaking Conference in Vancouver, Debra Sparrow, a Xʷməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam) weaver, artist and knowledge keeper, spoke about Stanley Park:

*“My great grandmother’s home was Stanley Park. She was escorted out by a musket. They burnt her house down in front of her. These are the feelings we are working with today ... If we forget our ancestors, we forget our descendants.”*

Debra Sparrow, Musqueam weaver, artist and knowledge keeper, at PPS Conference, Vancouver

It is essential to attend to Debra’s testimony; stories like these need to be heard in understanding the historical context of our public parks and green spaces. Wherever we are designing, developing and exploring public green space in any part of the world, it is vital to consider the diversities of communities that access and use it, and to acknowledge and explore historical contexts. Land ownership and rights, colonial and settler history need to be on the table. The book *‘Rethinking Urban Parks’* (2005: Low, Taplin, Scheld) focuses on promoting and maintaining cultural diversity in parks and on identifying factors that are problematic: *‘historical interpretive materials that ignore the contributions of different ethnic groups, high entrance or access fees, park usage rules that restrict ethnic activities, and park ‘restorations’ that focus only on historical or aesthetic values.’*

Stanley Park is described on Vancouver Parks and Recreation as the ‘*first, largest and most beloved urban park*’. First Nations people raised their voice about Stanley Park in 2015, and they have now started working with the Stanley Park Ecology Society in relation to the land, its ecology and biodiversity. The Urban Animal Agency, one of the environmental artist groups in residence in Stanley Park, is keenly aware of this:

*“This is hereditary land, overlapping three different First Nations territories, so it’s very important to us how we engage with the land. There are layers of history in this place - the history of the beach below us - the flora and fauna that is alive today is affected by historical events and contemporary influences. As a settler, I want to engage deeply and critically with the place I’m in. How can I really engage with this land rather than depict it? We have to take on the complexity.”*

Genevieve Robertson, Artist, Urban Animal Agency (Research interview)

Native land rights are also very much a focus for Portland Parks and Recreation: Cully Park, a new park being created on a landfill site in the North East of the city, has a Native Advisory Committee that has been at the centre of conceptualising, designing, planting and naming the park.

And in February 2017, a new program ‘Parks for New Portlanders’ was initiated by Portland Parks & Recreation with the goal of providing recreation opportunities for immigrant and refugee communities, following increased intolerance after the 2016 election. Young people representing cultures around the world have become community youth ambassadors, to make sure services and spaces are welcoming and accessible to communities of colour, immigrants and refugees; an inspiring and affecting move that puts public green space at the centre of community cohesion.

In Berlin, a project initiated by artist and architect Daniel Sieple brings the expansive opportunity that the rivers and waterways of Berlin offer to a new programme for newcomers to Berlin. ‘Making Waves - Boat Making Workshop for Newcomers’ invites refugees to build a motorboat, with a workshop that offers ‘*hands-on lessons in carpentry and DIY boat construction. Participants engage in all stages of the boat’s construction ... Once their vessel is complete, the new Berliners will explore the region’s abundant waterways and converse about the divergent paths that led them here*’. This project is about a common means creating common travel, a way of people participating in public space, to look at the city from the water, from the networks and the substance that connects us all.



*View back to the city of Vancouver from the Stanley Park sea wall*



## 11. Conclusion, summary and application to UK contexts:



*Swing on a street tree, Vancouver, Canada*

Can we imagine more street trees in the UK?

Can we imagine **swings** on street trees in the UK?

What needs to happen to regenerate street play, to create playgrounds and places in neighbourhood green spaces?

In the current context of the challenges facing parks in the UK (section 5), participation and public involvement is vital in order for them to thrive in our urban centres and neighbourhoods. Other models, ideas and examples of projects that stimulate and inspire new approaches here in the UK will benefit both the people who work with and manage parks and green space, and the communities that use them, as well as cultural organisations and artists interested in collaborating with public space.

## 1. Participation:

### a) In the planning and design of public green space:

*“Professionals are against participation because it destroys the arcane privileges of specialisation, unveils the professional secret, strips bare incompetence, multiplies responsibilities and converts them from the private into the social.”*

Giancarlo De Carlo, Architect, planner and writer

Community involvement in planning and decision making is key to the recent success of new parks in Berlin - Tempelhofer Feld and Park am Gleistrieck (Case Studies 7 & Appendix 1). City Repair in Portland Oregon have changed the way public space is used and designed through their committed neighbourhood engagement approaches that include the creation of green space through permaculture and cultivation, even changing city planning laws as a result (Case Studies 10). In the UK, we could do much better in opening out the design and planning of urban green spaces to include residents and communities from the inception, to diversify use, focus on need, advance inclusivity and encourage the sense of ownership. It's particularly important to find progressive ways to reach out to young people as they don't tend to come forward to participate in consultation.

*“We get white men, over 50, at our public meetings - you have to go **out** to youth meetings.”*

Jennifer Keesmaat, Chief Planner, Toronto CA, at PPS Conference, Vancouver

In the UK, participation in urban design can appear to be an obligation for some public space designers who perhaps want to see their own ideas enacted in a 'pristine' fashion, unmuddled by the realities of contemporary social contexts; consultation initiatives can pay lip-service to equity and fail to progress widening the circle of engagement. Public green spaces will be lost if people across age and culture don't feel that they own them and are part of them, precisely at a time when we need them more than ever to provide common ground and enable social cohesion.

*“Never assume what is best for a community. The only way to find out is to bring people into the process”*

Sarida Scott Montgomery, Exec Director, Community Development Advocates of Detroit, at the PPS Placemaking Conference, Vancouver

### b) Participation and outreach to bring everyone to the table, and to the park

Portland based artist Sharita Towne's *“If you're not at the table, then you're on the menu”* (Section 6) is central in thinking about how we view participation and equity. Every project I encountered was concerned with inclusivity, with reaching people and communities who had not yet been invited in, and in working with under-resourced neighbourhoods. We need to continually create structures for

inclusive participation, and to provide the means and models for a diversity of ways that people can be involved in green space, and with nature and the environment.

Participation is also about collective problem solving - our green spaces are often the first places that people turn to when they are troubled; they host rough sleepers, provide refuge for people with psychological challenges and gathering places for substance abuse. These issues are part of a broader societal problem and need to be addressed at root ideally before they end up in our parks. Where they do, we need patience, tolerance and thoughtfulness, and inventive approaches, not exclusion or the creation of barriers.

*“Design a space to keep some people out and you keep everyone out.”*

Eduardo Santana, Executive Director of Pershing Square Renew, L.A. at PPS Conference

Discourse around public land, land rights and the commons are crucial in order to address inclusivity and to widen participation from all sections of the community (Case Studies 10). Here in the UK, how we engage in public green space is often contoured by historical behaviours and assumptions related to class and cultural background. We need to reevaluate how our heritage is perceived and understood and how we can include other stories and histories, as well as the contributions of different ethnic groups and cultures. Park restoration programmes need to move beyond simply reinforcing received historical narratives, aesthetic values and conservative programming, and respond to contemporary cultural contexts.



*Bermuda Gärten, Berlin, Germany*

Many people in the UK do not realise that the provision of parks is not a statutory duty, and often assume their taxes are ensuring the upkeep and protection of their local public green space. There needs to be more focus in actively drawing communities into the reality of the provision of green space by widening the circle of participation at design and management level and through activities and events.

### **c) Use cultural programming and social arts engagement to involve people**

*“In Vancouver, Parks, Culture, Sport and Recreation all come under one - recreation is physical, social, cultural - it’s leisure, defined by choice: what do you want to do with the time you’re not at work.”*

Cyndy Chwelos and Danita Noyes, Arts Programmers, Vancouver Park & Recreation

Vancouver’s Fieldhouse program in parks is an impressive and highly successful example of the integration of cultural participation in urban green space, as well as problem solving unused or underused resources and creating models of exchange (Case Studies 7). The initiative has brought artists, culture and creativity into the centre of green spaces, enabling communities to participate and contribute to the cultural diversity of the city.

The inclusion of trained and experienced arts programmers within parks staff in Vancouver specifically allows opportunities in this area to be realised, and the value of art as social practice to become evident and relevant. The programme is structured to be of benefit to both artists and the



Parks, Recreation and Culture remits, and is now folding out to include other areas such as food and sport.

Artist residencies in urban parks, such as the Houseguest residency in central Portland (Case Studies 7), create dynamic public involvement, directly addressing social issues. Still Moon Arts' 'Moon Festival' in Vancouver attracts hundreds of young people to be part of a large scale event that celebrates an important ecological site and cycle, and is crucially linked to an environmental restoration project creating new learning, engagement, action and understanding (Case Studies 8).

There are many opportunities in the UK to integrate urban green space, arts and culture. Park and green space managers can create arts and cultural policies, and initiate partnerships with arts organisations and programmers to generate new projects and artist residency programmes. Unused or underused facilities can be made available to artists or other communities of interest through models of exchange to enable participation and engagement with park users.

This research demonstrates the benefits of prioritising temporary or transient arts projects over 'monumental' or permanent art works - the social reach is often greater, more influential and inclusive, and learning and participation are enabled. Temporary social arts projects also tend to generate further collaboration and partnerships and have no ongoing associated maintenance costs.

*"When you start to make things happen in your local geography, that changes things. You create a vessel and you let people fill it. They do the content and the variations. People are empowered."*

*Carmen Rosen, Artistic Director, Still Moon Arts, Vancouver (Research interview)*

**Follow City Repair's 7 point plan** for community participation (Case Studies 10):

- \* Start Conversations: straightforward yet profound, initiating conversations with your neighbours is a significant gesture and the foundation for any community project
- \* Widen the circle: make continuous efforts to include and engage every part of the neighbourhood
- \* Build partnerships: collaborate with the people and organisations that are already working to build community; strengthen your neighbourhood fabric
- \* Explore possibilities: envision potential projects or events that can serve your residential area
- \* Develop a vision
- \* Create
- \* Steward your place

## 2. Resources:

My research focused on public green space, although in Portland I did research the city centre's highly regarded 'hard parks' with their public-private funding contexts, which provided an interesting model for funding more unusual participatory activities. I am an advocate of publicly owned space resourced through public finances and public sector management; space that is owned and shared by people - the residents, the neighbourhood - invites collective responsibility, civic participation and social cohesion, where an eighty year old and an eight year old can be safe, content and well in a park. Although I'm familiar with the pressures on public finances and on the current focus on other

models for managing and supporting public green space, I continue to advocate for public space being publicly owned and resourced.

What are some of the opportunities presented in relation to the pressures of resourcing in the UK?

- \* creating partnerships with other publicly funded services, for example, finding common ground with the local library to bring some of the library to the park and vice versa
- \* creating partnerships with other cultural and recreational providers who are within the neighbourhood or reach of a green space to deliver participatory activities and share resources and delivery
- \* working with local voluntary and community organisations to create partnership activities
- \* closer collaboration with 'Friends of Parks' groups and other community groups
- \* enabling use of unused or underused park facilities by others through models of exchange
- \* moving away from labour intensive historic or formal planting designs, as well as intensive mowing regimes to looser, wilder planting that supports other species and biodiversity

Volunteering from committed individuals, often facilitated through friends of parks groups and conservation and wildlife organisations, is an important factor in sustaining green spaces. Friends groups have been key in raising public consciousness, protecting green spaces from development, working to create new spaces, and in improving park facilities and the environment. Often such groups are reliant on key individuals who have applicable expertise and boundless energy to give, as well as a generation of mainly retired people in support. These groups are vulnerable too: having to do more with less support, lack of participation and new people coming forward, personality clashes, and often no participation from younger people. What will the future bring? Will people have the time and inclination to be part of committees? What other models of participation can grow? Can we join public spaces and services together and focus on the neighbourhood as a whole as they often have the same needs and issues? Can social media and digital platforms play a role in networking to a wider group with stronger representation?

We need to focus locally and also be part of a bigger environmental picture. As evidenced in my research, environmental restoration working with other disciplines through barter systems, experiential education programmes, or ecological work meeting cultural activity (Case Studies 8) all provide starting points for increasing participation and sharing resources. In the UK, the initiative to make London a National Park City invites us to imagine a whole city as an integrated environmental network for humans and other species with many access points, routes and opportunities, highlighting local places and groups within one 'national park' - a single focus of multiple resources.

### 3. Nature and Environment:

Working across disciplines, we can create innovative approaches to learning and to participation, expanding the ways in which we relate to and understand ourselves as part of nature, as well as bringing direct benefits to biodiversity and environmental restoration, and species co-habitation (Case Studies 7, 8, 9):

- \* Portland's Creek Colleges' barter system 'art workshops for environmental restoration'
- \* schools, young people and neighbourhoods centrally involved in ecological restoration of the Renfrew Ravine in Vancouver brought together by Still Moon's annual arts event

- \* Sharon Kallis' open community garden and shipping container planted for making and weaving, utilizing 'invasive' species, working with schools and the ecological societies
- \* the active collaboration between artists and ecologists in Urban Animal Agency creating shared understanding and knowledge transfer, and prioritising experience and perception in environmental education
- \* Jared Gradinger's Impossible Forest: a new garden, a sculpture, a social interaction.



*Allmende Kontor, Tempelhofer Feld,  
Berlin, Germany*

In Berlin, natural spaces are visibly in process, and noticeably less manicured, bordered and formal than green spaces in the UK.

Urban farms, intercultural and community gardens have a looser, more vernacular and plural aesthetic, integrating and celebrating a diversity of cultural approaches to planting and growing. Many of these green spaces invite a more open-minded and generous attitude to how popular elements work together; sport, growing, relaxing, meeting, eating all seem to happen in close proximity, in circulation, in co-designed hybrid spaces, with an informal approach that is in stark contrast to the control and bordering of green space in the UK. While some initiatives have successfully started in the UK,

we need to progress integrating edible planting and farming, and shift aesthetic and cultural attitudes through public engagement.

Asking ourselves why and how we 'organise' nature are important questions in order to create new approaches to managing green space, and to facilitate the essential integration of flourishing ecosystems for both humans and other species in the 21st century. In the UK, much of our environmental conservation activity is associated with control - cutting back, managing, removing - as opposed to more experiential, observational and participatory activity which generate other ways of engaging. Cross-discipline environmental projects are good examples of ways of engaging and learning, building shared and influential knowledge. A good example of a participatory environmental science initiative with which I am familiar with is the '[Citizen Crane](#)' project on the River Crane in South West London - a water quality monitoring programme engaging multiple partners and volunteers to bring about environmental improvement and inspiring behaviour change.

Opening up opportunities to explore urban human and non-human co-habitation through focusing on species choosing and adapting to live in cities, will stimulate participation and learning. Berlin's large scale, city-wide event the Langer Tag der StadtNature / The Long Day of Urban Nature (Case Studies 8) celebrates multiple green spaces across scale, engaging thousands of people of all ages, over 24 hours at the midsummer turning point of the year. Amplifying nature through making the city into one whole habitat, this distinctive participatory event encourages and enables learning, seeing, listening, experiencing - at the meeting point between nature and culture, in public space.

*"I'm glad the parks and the gardens I work in are unfenced, but it is really challenging because trees get broken, weavings get broken ... It helps to be always thinking from an ephemeral perspective.*

*I don't think in terms of permanence, of things having to be archival - they're living, breathing, moving and sometimes that includes destruction before you want it to. It's frustrating, and there's tons of heartbreak, and there's beautiful things that have happened - people change your work, move things - that's always interesting.*

*It's a conversation with strangers, with the landscape - a constant social experiment."*

Sharon Kallis - Environmental artist, EarthHand Gleaners Society, Vancouver (Research interview)



## 12. Recommendations



*Interkultureller Garten Rosenduft, Park am Gleisdreieck, Berlin*

These recommendations provide strategies for increasing and diversifying participation in public urban green space. The research findings (section 6), the case studies (7 - 10) and the conclusion and summary (11) in this report provide the evidence and detail to support these recommendations which are summarised under three headings: participation, resources, nature and environment.

## 1. Participation

1. Prioritise participation for all - equity and inclusion - through open approaches, transparent strategy, collaborative structures, experimentation and programming.
2. Outreach beyond the usual networks, ensuring young people have a place at the table, and that they are trusted and empowered.
3. Enable participation at the inception of the idea, from the very beginning, allowing participation to take place in different ways, at different paces, with involvement at all levels; the processes of engagement are slower but ultimately more effective
4. Create collaboration between disciplines and organisations, such as artists working with ecologists, parks departments working with cultural organisations, to allow opportunities for other knowledge and understanding, for new audiences
5. Use artists and social arts practices in public space settings to create engaging and activating projects, including embedding artists and makers in co-designing and supporting green spaces to change culture and perceptions
6. Build new audiences by programming an unusual and unexpected environmentally focused activity as part of another cultural public event
7. Diversify the stories and histories around urban green space, and include contributions of different ethnic groups and cultures; park restorations and heritage projects need to respond to contemporary cultural contexts.
8. Use City Repair's 7 point action plan: start conversations; widen the circle; build partnerships; explore possibilities; develop a vision; create; steward your place

## 2. Resources

1. In a parks department or service, develop an arts and culture policy in order to support cultural activity, and engage trained arts programmers to co-produce, curate and manage arts and culture
2. Prioritise temporary arts projects run by social arts practitioners over monumental or permanent works in public green space, to ensure greater social reach and participation
3. Seize opportunities where there is an underused or unused resource, for example, an empty building in a park (sheds, pavilions, clubhouses for example), and develop ways of activating, using and sharing those resources

4. Engage artists, designers, craftspeople and other professionals from relevant disciplines such as horticulture or biology, providing free studio or work space in a park building in exchange for public engagement through models of exchange or mutual benefit
5. Create and maintain partnerships with other public services, community organisations and groups to reach participants, develop ideas, share expertise, establish networks and access other sources of funding
6. Commit to long term investment in bringing ideas and projects to fruition, in relation to resources, commitment and time, and to changing mindset and culture; grow things slowly and inclusively
7. Build a network of 'supporters' who can advocate for projects, who can speak on behalf of a green space or initiative and bridge between different communities and interests

### 3. Nature and environment

1. Create a city-wide event that celebrates urban nature from micro projects to larger scale green spaces, to bring focus to the whole city as a habitat for humans and non-humans, to generate attention and publicity
2. Develop other ways of involving people in and with green space, beyond conservation work, by using cross-discipline activities and leaders, for example artists and ecologists, and social arts practitioners collaborating with environmental education and restoration projects
3. Deliver ambitious environmental management that actively encourages co-habitation between humans and non-humans, through participatory environmental education and cross-discipline projects
4. Create structures and programmes that enable young people of all ages to participate in green space through play, learning and experiencing nature and other species, with clear pathways of engagement as they grow up
5. Dissolve borders between activities and park users, encouraging multi-functional use.
6. Loosen the culture of management and planting, allowing 'untidy' nature
7. Allow open and collaborative DIY spaces for gardening and urban cultivation, encouraging a diversity of approaches to how a garden or park looks and works

Hang a swing on a street tree?



## 13. Update: my current application of the research in the UK

I am currently working as the Community Ranger in Sydney Gardens in Bath (2017 ongoing), as part of a Heritage Lottery Funded Parks for People Project.

Sydney Gardens is one of Britain's best remaining 18th Century Pleasure Gardens, with a fascinating 200 year history. The Great Western Railway runs through it, as well as the Kennet & Avon Canal. As a Pleasure Garden, it hosted galas and fireworks, balloon rides and entertainments, social breakfasts and supper boxes; what is now The Holburne Museum was originally a hotel and the 'Ride' which encircled the Gardens is still in the footprint of the park. Sydney Gardens became a public park in the early 20th Century and is managed by Bath and NE Somerset Council.

In my work as the Community Ranger, I am designing the Activity Plan and Programme for the restoration project that will run from 2019 to 2021 (dependent on full HLF funding being secured).

Two projects are planned for the park, directly inspired by research during my Fellowship:

- A 'model of exchange' residency for The Bothy, a former gardening store and currently unused building in the park, inspired by the Vancouver Parks Fieldhouse Programme. Following a refurbishment of the Bothy, we plan to start a residency programme in 2020 using the Vancouver 'model of exchange' structure: free tenancy in exchange for organised participatory learning activity for park users.
- An Art & Nature Festival in Sydney Gardens, exploring nature in relation to our perceptions and experiences, influenced by the Cosmorama, an 18th Century display that used lenses and light to show images of other places and worlds, will be programmed as a 24 hour event on the weekend nearest to Midsummer. This event is directly inspired by the Long Day of Urban Nature in Berlin, Germany which I visited in 2016.

In October 2017, I gave a presentation about my WCMT Fellowship research, about opportunities to broaden public participation in parks and urban green spaces, at the World Urban Parks European Regional Congress in Birkenhead in the UK.

Updates on how my research continues to be applied can be found on my blog, or through my Twitter feed @suepalmer23

Sue Palmer  
August 2018

## 14. Supporting information & Appendices



*Ladder on street tree in East Vancouver, Canada*

*'You think ecologically tuned life means being all efficient and pure. Wrong. It means you can have a disco in every room of your house'.*

Tim Morton's Twitter feed, Professor and Rita Shea Guffey Chair in English at Rice University, Texas.

## Appendix 1: Berlin's parks: Tempelhofer Feld & Gleisdreieck

In Berlin, the active, political and social movement around public space - the feeling that people not only have a right to it, but that it's unacceptable for an expanding city to be sacrificing public spaces to private ownership when they are needed more than ever for the city's residents - is inspiring and galvanising.

### Tempelhofer Feld

Berlin's former inner city airport to the south closed in 2007. Following long-term public engagement and consultation about what should happen at Tempelhofer Park, it opened as a temporary park in 2010, with much of the space left intact, with experimental projects seeded to test out what would work in this vast space. Former runways were used for rollerblading, wind-surfing, kite-flying, beside huge open meadows inhabited by skylarks (40% of the city's population live here); in addition, Intercultural and Community self-built gardens were started and a Mini-Golf designed by 18 commissioned artists. Further design work was commissioned with continuing public consultation, and plans were drawn up which included a proposed library and some new housing.

A citizen-initiated Referendum in 2014 protested against these proposed developments, with the formation of the 100% Tempelhofer group campaigning to keep Tempelhofer Feld as it was, entirely as parkland, and to allow the 'pioneer' projects such as the urban farming and the uses of the park to continue; the intercultural and community gardening projects have been very important in relation to refugee integration and support. In 2015, refugees were temporarily housed in the huge disused airport hanger, creating a resonant complexity in relation to the historic context of the airport.

Consultation proceeded with open public meetings, focus groups and online consultation over a two year period after the Referendum, and 2017 will see the initiation of more temporary projects, artists in residence and cultural events. Just a few trees have been planted on the field; and an ecological survey of the whole area has been conducted, with a management plan drawn up of how to protect the unique biodiversity of plants and wildlife on the all important 'poor' soil.

Two points are clear: there is to be no commercial enterprise there, and whatever takes place must be of some benefit to the community.



*Looking along the main runway at Tempelhofer Feld, Berlin, Germany*

Tempelhofer Park is an immense and impressive space open from sunrise to sunset, that takes hours to travel around and through - it is incredibly popular with both residents and visitors. There's nowhere else like it, with its vast open space, lack of trees and huge sky. What makes Tempelhofer Feld particularly distinctive is the creation of a park from what already exists on the site, and just that: using a disused airfield as it is, with its history, context and even runway signage intact, with all the opportunities that presents - where planes have been replaced by kite sails. Here public participation, over many years, has fundamentally influenced what this park is, and how it is used.



## Park am Gleisdreieck

Park am Gleisdreieck is a new, large public space has been developed on a disused railway site, with Gleisdreieck meaning ‘Triangle of Rails’. As with other historically powerful and important sites in Berlin, painful narratives are left uncovered and visible and the railway tracks in Gleisdreieck, part of the transport systems that were used in Nazi Germany, have been left amongst groves of birch trees that grew on the goods yard site over its fifty years of ‘abandonment’. To travel through the park, which connects many neighbouring communities together, is to journey through history. Materials and structures have been powerfully integrated into this green space, which is halved by the huge steel S-Bahn bridge that spans it; an area in the West with sports fields, play areas and terraces, and the nature reserve and quiet spaces of the eastern half. Elements are repeated through the park, such as the huge swings for people of all ages to use.



*Park am Gleisdreieck, Berlin*

Created in the wake of major development of nearby Potsdamer Platz, the park arrived through an in-depth consultation process with city residents. Between 2000 and 2007, extensive consultation took place, with many proposals submitted. Landscape architect Atelier-Loidl won the design competition, and community groups continued to advocate for particular elements including Intercultural Gardens, which had started at the edges of the land when it was ‘disused’. The Senate even financed a professional mediation process at one point in order to resolve differences of opinion. Ultimately the park is a very successful compromise between the people and the planners, and is held up as one of the best examples of participation, winning the German Landscape Architecture Award; and while I was there, a delegation from Korea had just visited wanting to copy the model.



*Crossing points, Park am Gleisdreieck, Berlin*

What is striking about the park is the clear and clever split into two parts, two ‘speeds’, as urban planner Katharine Burgess describes in her article:

*“The City found that two primary interest groups existed within those engaging in the consultation process: one sought a quiet, natural park and the other was interested in a heavily programmed park offering opportunities for sports and activities. From these interests, and the unusual geography of the site, the concept of the “park of two speeds” emerged. Another main theme from public dialogue that influenced the design process was Spurensicherung—the gathering of evidence, or the protection of the traces of history (and tracks) on the site.”*

The rhythms of the space, and the diversity of places at Gleisdreieck are extraordinary, and a feat of design; how is it possible for bikes to pass through a children’s sports area without them being separated off behind a fence? I sat and watched; the bikes slow up. It’s an indication of exceptionally thoughtful design, strengthened by consistent community participation over a long, well supported, patient process, to bring about an exemplary city park.

## Appendix 2:

### Three further examples from Artist Studio Residencies in parks, Vancouver, Canada



*Publik Secrets at Hadden Park Fieldhouse*

#### Publik Secrets at Hadden Park Fieldhouse

George Rahi builds instruments out of bike frames and adapts bike parts for diverse uses. The group's participatory projects range from experiential large scale public installations to kids workshops making instruments from recycled bike parts, to a Bike Gamelan Orchestra. Publik Secrets have held multiple events: Bike-In Pedal-Powered Movie Nights, Tea Gatherings, Shadow Jams (making puppets) and Culture Days Open House, including a 24-hour Karaoke. Now they run two recurring events each month: a See Sounds Listening session and a FreeStyle Rap-influenced Focus Group.

#### The Department of Bird Safety at Queen Elizabeth Park (2013-16)

The Department of Bird Safety was created by artists Jesse Garbe and Genevieve Raiche-Savoie, with the focus of using art to motivate public policy. Becoming members of and working with the Vancouver Bird Advisory Committee, the artists addressed the issue of resident and migrating birds dying from hitting glass in the city's buildings. Through workshops, walks and talks and community engagement, the artists designed a practical structure and art work, both functional and aesthetic, that enabled people to participate as 'helpers' with involvement open to all, and ran public activities applying coloured dots/visual markers to the windows of community buildings. It was also an opportunity for people to understand how to make windows and glass bird friendly and carry that information back to their neighbourhoods, to their own houses.



*Department of Bird Safety logo*



*Sunflower Garden Project, LocoMotoArts*

#### LocoMotoArt at Aberthau, West Point Community Centre

LocoMotoArt is a collective of 10 artists making interactive and immersive sound and visual installations and digital landscape interventions. Their work includes installing and exhibiting video and digital art works in parks and outdoor public spaces. As part of their fieldhouse residency, artists Laura Lee Coles and Rob Scharein worked with pre-school students in the neighbouring school to plant sunflowers in the Aberthau Community garden. Creating a pictorial essay by meticulously documenting the process of the entire sunflower cycle, through over 7800 photos, a series of artworks recreating the sunflower were made.

## Appendix 3:

### Portland Parks & Recreation: environmental education

Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) offers ‘diverse environmental experiences in the city’s natural areas: classes, guided walks, camps, volunteer opportunities.’ Environmental Education is the educational arm of the ‘natural areas programme’ and works closely with ecologists, land managers and stewardship coordinators. While there are other private environmental education providers such as Forest Schools, a significant amount of educational activity is run by the Parks department - a common model in the U.S. From Summer Nature Day Camps to Teen Environmental Education, there is a huge range of activity, with most charged at affordable rates. City Nature Birthday Parties buys you a two hour activity with a PP&R educator.

Drawing together funding and long-term partnerships across the city, PP&R also runs Summer Free For All providing free concerts, film screenings etc, for people of all ages, and the all important Summer Playgrounds and Lunch programme, with recreational activities including creating temporary playgrounds, along with free lunches for children (57% of young Portlanders are eligible for free or reduced price lunches).

The Ladybug Nature Walk is specially designed for pre-school children and parents and led by a trained leader through a natural area local to a neighbourhood, with specially designed Ladybird backpacks for children with magnifiers and other useful equipment.

There are multiple ways for young people (aged 14-25) to get involved in the environment through naturalist training programs, paid internships, and paid summer work with the Youth Conservation Crew. In addition, Teen Environmental Education involves being part of the Greenspaces Restoration & Urban Naturalist Team (GRUNT).



GRUNT team. Image from PP&R website

*‘The staff working with those programs build relationships with the teens when they are still in middle and high school, then we work to continue providing them with employment opportunities ...*

*The ultimate goal of the program is to introduce them to nature at an impressionable age, and to mentor and teach them experiential science with the hope that as they grow they will come to love our parks and natural areas. We hope that ultimately this love for nature and stewardship leads them into environmental careers.*

*‘... One of (our core goals) is to increase the equity of parks in the City of Portland, and to create an equitable approach to services. Many of our under-served communities, our communities of color, and our immigrant and refugee communities are in North Portland and Outer East Portland. This is also an area of the city where there are physically fewer parks and natural areas ... PP&R has taken on creating new parks and programs for underserved communities as a priority. I follow the same lead in thinking about where to create new programs ... each year I add new sites to Ladybug Walks ... to get new families into nature in their neighborhoods.’*

Chrissy Larson, Environmental Education, Portland Parks & Recreation (from email communication)



## Appendix 4:

### Further examples of urban gardens and farming, Berlin

In the former East Berlin areas of the city, 'Kolonie gärtens' (colony gardens) exist where everyone can grow food; each one covers a significant area and is relatively close to the city centre with large gardens, each one fenced, with flower and vegetable plots and a summerhouse. Publicly owned and managed by the city, people 'buy' the house at relatively low cost and rent the plot. These are communities in themselves within neighbourhoods - close-knit and purposeful - and impact significantly on the access people have to green space. These community gardens usually have communal areas with a central greenhouse, a social hut or cafe/bar and a playground.



*Plänterwald Kolonie, Treptow-Köpenick, Berlin*



*Honey stall at the Ziegenhof farm and park, Berlin, open for the Langer Tag der StadtNatur*

#### The Ziegenof Park in Charlottenburg, Berlin

A fine example of a neighbourhood park, with goats, vegetable plots, football, playground, bees - everything working incredibly closely together within a very small space, with open access all hours. The area was rescued when houses were knocked down in the 1970s, and the neighbours campaigned to create a green space for the community. Entirely run by volunteers, with around 20 people in the group, it is a good example of the 'Verein' - the club or voluntary society that runs through German culture, as both a social structure and an important concept: a shared voluntary active space open to all.

#### Prinzessinnengärten, Berlin

Prinzessinnengärten in Kreuzberg, off the busy Moritzplatz roundabout in the city centre, is an urban garden, a mobile garden, a neighbourhood and political movement, an open space of urban learning. It's a powerful example of how public space has become public again. Inspired by a visit to Cuba, Nomadisch Grün (Nomadic Green) launched Prinzessinnengärten as a pilot project in the summer of 2009 on a site which had been a wasteland for over half a century. Along with friends, activists and neighbours, the group cleared away rubbish and built transportable organic vegetable plots, creating relationships with schools, kindergartens, youth projects, researchers and garnering international attention within the communities of urban agriculture and urban space politics. The garden has had over 50,000 visitors, with more than 1000 people involved, 60 institutions/schools that have run educational projects, 500 species of plant, 30,000 meals per season.



*Tomato labels at Prinzessinnengärten, Moritzplatz*

## Appendix 5:

### Itinerary: organisations and projects visited for the research with links to websites

#### Berlin, Germany - June 2016

##### Main projects visited:

Impossible Forest - Jared Grading, Artist and Choreographer

Travelhome - Daniel Sieple, Artist and Architect

Tempelhofer Feld - Hendrik Brauns, Project manager at Grün Berlin

Park am Gleisdreieck - David Endter - Project manager at Grün Berlin

ZK/U - Matthias Einhoff and Lotta Schafer, Artist Collective

Langer Tag der StadtNatur (The Long Day of Nature)

Allmende Kontor and Berlin urban farms - Elisabeth Meyer-Renschhausen

##### Other projects:

Prinzessinnen Garten - urban mobile farm and sustainable living

Malzfabrik - Designers of place, shaped by creativity

Gezi Park Fiction - Hamburg

#### Vancouver - September 2016

##### Projects visited:

Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation - Arts Programmers, Cyndy Chwelos and Danita Noyes, and Arts and Culture Coordinator jil p. weaving

Iris Film Collective - Lisa G Neilson

UpCYCLEd Projects - Sarah Van Borek

The 2016 Moon Festival and Still Moon Arts - Carmen Rosen

Uncle Hoonki's Fabulous Hornshop - David Gowman

Public Secrets - George Rahi

LocoMotoArts - Laura Lee Coles

EarthHand Gleaners and Sharon Kallis

Urban Animal Agency - Dan Straker, Robyn Worcester and Genevieve Robertson

The Department of Bird Safety - Jesse Garbe & Genevieve Raiche-Savoie

Cloudscape Comics

Projects for Public Spaces Placemaking Week



*Paper making at Strathcona Community Garden, Vancouver*

## Portland, Oregon, USA - October 2016

Erica Meryl Thomas - Artist

Roya Amirsoleyman - Portland Institute for Contemporary Art

Taryn Tomasello - Artist,

Katy Asher - South East Uplift - Portland Neighbourhood Association

Houseguest - Ralph Pugay and programmer Sarah Turner

Roz Crews and Harold Fletcher - Portland State University, MFA in Art and Social Practice

Eco Unite PDX - Toby Query

Signal Fire Arts - Ryan Pierce

City Repair - Kirk Rea

Regional Arts and Culture Council - Keith Lacowicz and Kristen Calhoun

Creek College - Kim Sutherland

Blair Saxon-Hill - Artist

Portland Parks and Recreation: Chrissy Larson, Ellen Sweeney, Marlene Zellors and Susan Hawes

World Land Trust: Considering my carbon footprint for this international journey, I travelled by public transport and by bike in each city, and the train internally between Canada and the USA. I chose to fund the purchase of two acres of rainforest by the World Land Trust to 'set against' my flights to Germany and North America.



*Environmental Youth Alliance 'Thank you', Strathcona Community Garden, Vancouver*



## Appendix 6:

### Bibliography, articles of interest and links to websites

#### Books:

'Urban Green: Innovative Parks for Resurgent Cities' (2010), Peter Harnik

'Make\_Shift City - Renegotiating the urban commons' (2014), Francesca Ferguson, Urban Drift Projects (eds.) In cooperation with the Berlin Senate for Urban Development

'Rethinking Urban Parks, Public Space and Cultural Diversity' (2005), S. Low, D. Taplin, and S. Scheld

'A Walk in the Park' (2016), Travis Elborough

'Organised Excursions' (2014) Daniel Sieple, Berlin

'Common Threads - Weaving Community through Collaborative Eco-Art' (2014), Sharon Kallis

#### Park related organisations:

World Urban Parks: <http://www.worldurbanparks.org/en/>

Parks for London: <http://parksforlondon.org.uk/>

The Parks Alliance: <https://www.theparksalliance.org/>

National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces: <http://www.natfedparks.org.uk/>

NESTA - Rethinking Parks: <http://www.nesta.org.uk/project/rethinking-parks>

Future Parks: <http://www.futureparks.org/>

Greater London National Park City Initiative: <http://www.nationalparkcity.london/>

Bristol Parks Forum: <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/>

London Green Spaces Friends Group Network: <http://e-voice.org.uk/london-friends-network/>

South West London Environment Network: <http://www.swlen.org.uk>

Green Connect for Parks: <http://www.greenconnectforparks.org/>

#### Park related sites / blogs:

Parks4Life blog by Neil McCarthy in Australia: <https://parks4life.wordpress.com/>

Parksify: online articles and blogs and parks (USA): <https://parksify.com/>

HLF Parks Matter (UK): <https://www.hlf.org.uk/about-us/news-features/parksmatter>

A collection of artists and projects working in parks in the UK: <https://inquilines.com/parks-art/>

### Urban green space, art, nature and placemaking:

The Nature of Cities: <https://www.thenatureofcities.com>

Participatory Cities (UK): <http://www.participatorycity.org/the-illustrated-guide/>

Project for Public Spaces (USA): <https://www.pps.org/>

Project for Public Spaces (USA): Ten strategies for transforming cities through placemaking: <http://www.pps.org/reference/ten-strategies-for-transforming-cities-through-placemaking-public-spaces/>

Art in the Park (London, UK): <http://artinthepark.co.uk/>

### Articles of interest in relation to urban green space, nature, art and participation:

Two articles by Katharine Burgess on The Nature of Cities website:

- [Community Participation in Parks Development: Two Examples from Berlin](#) (2014)
- [Urban Nature as Festival: Berlin's Long Day of Urban Nature](#) (2015)

Article by Christa Müller (in English) about the Intercultural Gardens of Berlin: <https://difu.de/publikationen/german-journal-of-urban-studies-vol-46-2007-no-1/intercultural-gardensurban-places-for-subsistence.html> (2007)

Article by Christine Bertschi about the Intercultural Gardens of Berlin:

['Rooted in the Intercultural Garden - Germany, Migration and Daily Life'](#) (May 2016)

Article about 'Artwashing' and neighbourhood gentrification in Los Angeles, USA: ['Artwashing, or, Between Social Practice and Social Reproduction](#) on A Blade of Grass website (NY, USA) (1 February 2017).

Article in The Guardian (UK) about public art and urban development:

[Urban public art: can it be more than a developer's decoy strategy?](#) (10 February 2017)

Article in support of UK parks by Alison Benjamin in The Guardian: [Parks are a huge asset, and we need to value them for the 21st century](#) (February 2017)

Nesta's Rethinking Parks Report (2015): <https://www.theparksalliance.org/rethinking-parks-exploring-new-business-models-for-parks-in-the-21st-century/>

Jerry Saltz writes about New York and the relationship to public art by: <http://www.vulture.com/2015/12/how-new-york-solved-the-problem-of-public-art.html> (2015)

Jane Owen writes in the FT (UK) on 'How to save parks and other urban green spaces' <https://www.ft.com/content/7b238d6e-c51d-11e5-808f-8231cd71622e> (2016)

George Monbiot writes in The Guardian on monetisation of the environment: 'Put a price on nature? We must stop this neoliberal road to ruin': <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/georgemonbiot/2014/jul/24/price-nature-neoliberal-capital-road-ruin> (2014)

Peter Watts on the complex area of privatisation in public parks in the UK in The Guardian: [https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/feb/18/park-life-britain-green-spaces-cash-go-ape-battersea?CMP=share\\_btn\\_link](https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/feb/18/park-life-britain-green-spaces-cash-go-ape-battersea?CMP=share_btn_link) (2016)

On Nesta's blog 'Habits for successful parks innovation' <http://www.nesta.org.uk/blog/habits-successful-parks-innovation?> (2016)

An article by Peter Massini (principal policy officer for green infrastructure at the Greater London Authority) on how London is shifting the nature debate: <https://greenallianceblog.org.uk/2016/01/29/how-london-is-shifting-the-nature-debate/> (2016)

Article in The Guardian about how public space is changing in European Cities: <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/mar/24/how-is-public-space-changing-in-european-cities> (2016)

Online article about parks and art in NYC, USA: <http://www.crainsnewyork.com/article/20160425/OPINION/160419962> (2016)

Article in New York Times about parks and their relationship to civic space for protest and gathering: <https://mobile.nytimes.com/2017/01/27/nyregion/anti-trump-protests-nyc.html> (2017)

Keiron Pim writes in The Guardian 'Out to grass: is your local park under threat?': <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2016/aug/13/out-to-grass-local-park-under-threat> (2016)

Parks for New Portlanders program (USA): Jared Paben writes about teens representing cultures around the world becoming community youth ambassadors: <http://news.streetroots.org/2017/02/23/young-immigrants-refugees-build-cultural-connections-portland> (2017)

Parksify (USA): Realising the potential of parks for social connection: <https://parksify.com/realizing-the-potential-of-parks-for-social-connection-78eb45533442> (2017)

Podcast: 'In Praise of Parks' with Travis Elborough on Radio 4: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07v2mf7>  
House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee - Public parks report: <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmcomloc/45/45.pdf>

### **Other relevant websites in relation to urban participation:**

CicLAvia catalyzes vibrant public spaces, active transportation and good health through car-free streets: [www.ciclavia.org/](http://www.ciclavia.org/)



Jennifer Keesmaat: Official Blog of the Chief Planner of the City of Toronto, Canada: <http://ownyourcity.ca/>

Community Engagement in Urban Planning and Development - Biljana Savic WCMT Fellow 2014: [http://www.wcmt.org.uk/sites/default/files/report-documents/Savic%20B%20Report%20%20Final\\_0.pdf](http://www.wcmt.org.uk/sites/default/files/report-documents/Savic%20B%20Report%20%20Final_0.pdf)

Big Car Collaborative - collaborating on art in the city (Indianapolis, USA): [www.bigcar.org/collective/](http://www.bigcar.org/collective/) and an article about how they work in relation to a city: <http://www.curbed.com/2016/7/18/12214122/artist-gentrification-indianapolis-big-car-collaborative>

The City at Eye Level: <https://thecityateyelevel.com/>

Jane Jacobs (USA): <http://www.pps.org/reference/jjacobs-2/>

The Kaleidoscope Conversation Instructions: <http://www.artistcommunities.org/sites/default/files/shared/TheKaleidoscopeConversationInstructions.pdf>

Park(ing) Day: <http://parkingday.org/>

#### **Other links in sites of research:**

##### **Berlin, Germany:**

Grün Berlin (Green Berlin): <https://gruen-berlin.de/>

Allmende Kontor and Intercultural Gardens: <http://www.allmende-kontor.de/?id=9:allmende-kontor-engl&catid=2:uncategorised>

The Langer Tag der StadtNatur 2017 (The Long Day of Urban Nature): <https://2017.langertagderstadtnatur.de/>

##### **Vancouver, Canada:**

Vancouver Parks, Recreation and Culture: Fieldhouse Programs in Parks: <http://vancouver.ca/parks-recreation-culture/fieldhouse-programs.aspx>

Vancouver Parks, Recreation and Culture: Environmental Art Program: <http://vancouver.ca/parks-recreation-culture/environmental-art.aspx>

and the Stanley Park Environmental Art Program: <http://vancouver.ca/parks-recreation-culture/stanley-park-environmental-art-project.aspx>

Environmental Youth Alliance, Canada works to engage and empower youth to create meaningful, positive action for our community and environmental health: <http://eya.ca/>

Jay White's urban Coyote Walks: <http://www.findingcity.ca/coyotewalk/>

Video of Dan Straker speaking at the Living with Wildlife



*Hay play space, Strathcona Community Garden, Vancouver,*

Conference about 'Co-existing with Coyotes' (2013): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aCtfvDyodc>

Stanley Park Ecology, co-existing with Coyotes: <http://stanleyparkecology.ca/conservation/co-existing-with-coyotes/>

Still Moon Arts producer Carmen Rosen speaking at TEDx Renfrew Collingwood: [Shedding light on the ravine](#)

Caut Guide to acknowledging traditional territory: <https://www.caut.ca/docs/default-source/professional-advice/list---territorial-acknowledgement-by-province.pdf?sfvrsn=12>

## **Portland, Oregon, USA:**

Portland Parks and Recreation: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/>

City of Portland: Homelessness Toolkit: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/toolkit/>

Portland Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan (2012-2015): <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/article/418535> And the update to the Strategic Plan (2015-2020): <http://www.pdc.us/strategic-plan.aspx>

Portland Parks and Recreation - Teen Environmental Education: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/51570>

*Should designers be outlaws?* with Mark Lakeman of City Repair: Podcast: [Social Design Insights: 'http://currystonedesignprize.com/socialdesigninsights/'](#)

City Repair, Portland: <http://www.cityrepair.org/>

Communitecture, Portland: <http://www.communitecture.net/>

Portland Fruit Tree Project: <http://www.portlandfruit.org/>

Friends of Trees, Portland and Oregon: <http://www.friendsoftrees.org/>

Sharita Towne: 'Our City in Stereo': [www.c3initiative.org/sharita-towne--c3studio-residency.html](http://www.c3initiative.org/sharita-towne--c3studio-residency.html)

Portland State University, MFA in Art and Social Practice: <http://psusocialpractice.org/>

Portland Ecologists Unite: <http://pdxecologists.tumblr.com/>

Signal Fire Arts: <http://www.signalfirearts.org/>

Creek Colleges, Portland: <http://www.creekcolleges.com/>

Regional Arts and Culture Council, Portland: <https://www.racc.org/>

City of Portland Public Art program: <https://www.racc.org/public-art/public-art-program-overview/>

Portland's Green Loop initiative: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/65670>

Portland Urban Coyote Project: <http://www.portlandcoyote.com/>

Wisdom of the Elders: <http://www.wisdomoftheelders.org/>