Design as a Public Space.
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What is my interest?

"All men are designers. All that we do, almost all the time, is design, for design is basic to all human activity"[1]. - Victor Papanek.

The potential that designers have, as Victor Papanek refers, is the potential that everyone has to create something for the purpose of solving problems. We have consciousness to create and develop tools through multiple iterations in order to efficient the environment around us. But living in our complex world with different configurations of the cultural, economic, and social layers, requires order to facilitate different structures that take place.

When we try to analyze the success or fail rate of a project, one of the key criteria to enable the critique is the context in which a determined project or product inhabits. There is a fundamental distinction between the natural process of development and the outcome of a project, and those aspects should have different criteria of evaluation. Whenever a project is born, the expectations placed at the beginning will define the scope and reach of the project. Likewise, expectations are defined by a set of critical questions about how to idealize, develop and concretize the project. But there is one question in particular that overwhelms most entrepreneurs, and that is: How should I start?

Understanding the context

"Design starts with empathy, establishing a deep understanding of those we are designing for..."[2]. - Tim Ogilvie and Jeanne Liedtka.

Understanding your client or user is one of the key elements of the design practice. The world is becoming so complex that Design as a discipline cannot grasp either the full picture or specific details of any one project. This is in part due to the designer's professional perspective and interests. Collaboration between disciplines is essential if complex problems are to be engaged, designers alone are incapable of providing "ultimate solutions" that will "save" the world.

Therefore, new teams are required, teams that need to be specialized and flexible at the same, to understand the problems and user needs, providing integral and

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[1] Carma Gorman, "The Industrial Design Reader" Excerpted from *Design for the Real World.* (MIT Press 1969), 31-33

[2] Tim Ogilvie and Jeanne Liedtka, "Designing for Growth: A design thinking tool for managers", (Columbia University Press 2011), 136 (Kindle Edition)

resilient solutions to new challenges. These interdisciplinary teams aide in the creation of tools and toolkits aimed at facilitating communication among members who may not share the same professional language. A designer will not define the term "community" as an educator, economist, politician, physician, or an administrator will. Assembling the team that will get along is not a problem, the challenge resides in defining a communal vision within the team, sharing individuals perspectives and opinions towards a common goal.

That is the potential that Design has, as a practice that promotes and develops empathy and lateral thinking, therefore, the challenge is to push the current framework of the practice by re-thinking and re-designing it. Instead of being another discipline on any project, **design should become a binding agent, a translator between disciplines, understanding the value and essence that each stakeholder provides and setting a common ground of values, interests and responsibilities within the team**. Designers should evolve to not only understand the ultimate goal of the project, but also to understand the needs of the team itself, the client, and the final user of the product, service or system.

The project

The project is aimed to explore and re-interpret both academic and "real world" Design perspectives, more specifically on the assembling and inclusion of individuals into teams. Instead of looking at design as a discipline that will provide "the" solution to the problem, design should be seen as the facilitator between disciplines, a multicultural, trans-disciplinary tool that translates through the language of resiliency.

This project reframes the traditional Design practice, from an object-oriented discipline to a design network system that hubs accessible solutions for all people interested in public space development; fostering complex solutions to solve complicated problems through knowledge, collaboration and accessible language/s.

The provocation: The vision for 10 East Lake

The brief was defined as the development of a proposal for the 10 East Lake building, where the ultimate goal is the improvement and democratization of public space incorporating: culture, education, sustainability and technology. The main asset of the studio relies on the diversity of backgrounds, professional experience, and disciplines; the potential that hold the mix of those ideas, personalities and creativity.

However, the studio is not meant to be an imposition of a predetermined idea or project, since that will limit creativity, of course, the argument of being creative and finding a way around it cannot be dismissed; nevertheless, the limitation of exploring and finding an idea that will change paradigms or structures, will be harder to develop. The studio is about developing individual interests as artists,

educators, administrators, architects, makers, activators or designers, by exploring different potentials for a single proposal, achieved through research, development, prototyping and feedback.

The ultimate goal is to find your own voice and stand for what is important and defining the needs be accomplished to improve communities. That is the essence of our project, finding the diverse interests, merging all voices, researching the needs for success and developing a project that will change the world. However, there are some challenges that need to be addressed, in particular, my interest is to develop a tool that allows constant feedback from the community and stakeholders. Feedback is critical because it provides insight into how ideas are being received, processed and interpreted. The collected data can then be used to identify patterns that will help projects to move forward with qualitative information, rather than assumptions.

The big picture

As part of the GFRY class process, collaboration is a crucial element needed in order to assemble resilient teams. However after different lectures and workshops, the conclusion stands:

Expertise and a willingness to develop public projects and engage community are happening, however the efforts are not enough, a stronger collaboration between neighborhoods, stakeholders and communities is demanded.

Potential Solution

The solution is the development of a decentralized connecting tool for experts, entrepreneurs, and volunteers interested in developing public projects. Online tools are shifting from being research-based to a vision of connection, sharing and collaboration.