Citizenships

with
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Meaghan Kombol, Paul McGann,
River Wittke, Torange Khonsari.

chaired by
Anushka Athique & Roo Angell.

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Roo- Thank you for coming, this is the final of this series of roundtables - Collective Landscapes Futures, the aim of these has been to open up the debate and challenge our ideas in a friendly setting. To welcome the breadth of knowledge from within the student body, the department, the professional field of landscape architecture, and practitioners from outside that field. We want to think about how we can develop new ideas, in order to challenge social, environmental, and political issues that we're facing. We have been inviting creative exchanges, fostering new ideas, and establishing a level platform of communication between each other.

We will start with bit of conversation, and then open up to share that with you pretty early on. We will be recording this evening. And all of the conversations that we've been having will be transcribed into zines.

The subject of this evening's conversation is citizenships. For me, straight up, I thought, *"that's a tricky one"*, because when I hear citizenship in the singular, I immediately think of something which is either imposed or granted and can be rescinded by a state. When thinking about citizenship (plural), perhaps this can allow us to think more broadly. Are citizenships something that we're active in making ourselves, and together it becomes a collective enterprise that we're all engaged in; building it through our actions? If we look at it from that way, does that shine a new light on the my initial meaning of citizenship? If we're working together can we use our shared citizenship that we've created to challenge or influence the power structures that we find ourselves within?

More questions will come up as we go along. Can we hold multiple citizenships? Or can diverse citizenships exist in one single location? And how as landscape architects can we support active citizenship?

So, to introduce our panel which I'm really excited about this evening…

(someone comes in late)

Torange- If you're late you have to sit at the front
(laughter)

Roo- Kris, who graduated with a Master's in Architecture, Landscape and Urbanism 2 years ago, your final design project here was based on the idea of child-led direct action, transforming the city of the City of London and the area around St Pauls. I'm sure we're gonna talk about that later. Alongside your work you manage the landscape company Fine View.

Meaghan, many of you will know, the leader the BA2 studio, and has worked for design practices including Martha Schwartz and Katherine Gustafson. More recently, a mentor of the public practice initiative at Croydon Council and has recently started a really exciting new job at the DfE as Lead Sustainable Design Advisor on Green Infrastructure.

(applause)

Torange, who is a co-founder of Public Works, which is described as an interdisciplinary practice working on the thresholds of participatory and performative art, architecture, anthropology and politics. You've worked to establish and give support to many community organisations, and are the designer and course lead for Design For Cultural Commons MA at London Met. And again, much more.

Fran is a final year master's student in Landscape Architecture, and alongside your extensive practical work you work for community organisations. You've also recently written your dissertation exploring models of community participation.

River is current a third year BA student, soon to graduate in Landscape Architecture, she has recently completed her dissertation, exploring the nature of the informal settlements, which have emerged through migrant crises; looking at how those spaces are collectively formed and organised.

And, Paul, last but not least, you are one of the founding members of Grow London, which is a social enterprise that works with local communities and landowners to make spaces for gardening, working, learning and social life, with projects at Elephant and Castle and Grow Tottenham, which I'm sure many of you are very familiar with. Would it be fair to say you combine guerrilla tactics with a creative tenacity to secure cracking spaces, and some great parties as well! The first question just to open up, what does citizenship or citizenships mean to each of you? Paul, I wonder if I could start with you?

Paul- Well, it's not a word that I ever use, or really think of in my life or in my work. I would associate it with national identity and a nation state. It's not a very familiar term to me and I became quite anxious when you asked me.

Roo- Well, lets come back to it, as this is something that, I think fits in very much to the work that you do and things that you think about a great deal. Lets see whether it's a helpful tool for us to be working with. Torange is it something that you feel uncomfortable with?

Torange- I have thought about it throughout my career. When you do participatory and community engagement work you need participation in order for projects to happen, if that is the core of what you're doing and a lot of the time I've had to think, *"why aren't people participating?"* So, for me, there are three, there might be more, but there are three issues.

One - we have the new liberal capitalist context in which we have to continuously be productive. There's time scarcity, nobody has time because we have to work so hard to actually live. And then those who actually have time, who have the privilege of engaging, and that has nothing to do with class, because you might have time, and you might be from very different classes. So there is a privilege of time for those who get engaged. That's why I have a huge problem with volunteering. But, let's pause that for a minute.

Then there is the value system, that when you are in a capitalist value system, where community engagement and citizenship is down there, and making money is up there as the thing that everybody thinks is the value, then How do you create this value?. Previously, in the 1960s, in the schools, there was a citizenship curriculum, but it doesn't get taught. Actually, I've asked 12 schools if they'd teach it, but because it's not compulsory, it's too unknown, *"we just mix it with RE"*. Hmm.

And then I think there's trust. So, through that kind of citizenship, you can actually build trust relationships, which we can probably all agree that between politics and people, there is a massive mega lack of trust. That lack of citizenship has contributed to that lack of trust, because, okay, there are a lots of issues around that. But just finally, all of those problems are why I became so interested in the Commons, and the Commons are not public, they are not open to all, they're very different logic. You have the public, which is open to all, its state, it's for the crowd. And then you have the private, which is the market and whatever. The Commons is the sphere of community. With that, it's much more contained, you have to design the boundary so it doesn't become exclusive. It is much more specifically situated and that's why I focus much more on the idea of Commons than citizenship, probably, because citizenship has so many kinds of other connotations.

Roo- River, what did you discover about citizenship in the very fragile context that you were investigating?

River- I was looking at refugees, and self built and more autonomous centres versus state built refugee camps. As we talk about citizenship, it's the state largely bestowing certain rights on to who's born there and what becomes really clear is that refugees, I wouldn't call them citizens of refugee-ness, but they have very specific rights to their situation, regardless of what country they originated from, that does not apply to the rest of the population. And it absolutely affects how they're able to live and build and work and learn, in the same way that any sort of citizenship to a country would. But it happens within the geographical boundaries of other countries, which makes it a thing to wrap your head around. I think it absolutely intersects with the political context of landscape and place, because we have secondary or somehow partitioned-off denizens of the same place with separate citizenship statuses. It's a very weird context in which to view that through. I think Meaghan may also agree that citizenship is really hard to define when you're at home, in your home country and you haven't had reason to leave. Becoming a citizen of somewhere else is also a strange process.

Meaghan- Because you've kind of been a citizen of nowhere. I think we've talked about how we don't feel like we are from America or from here. We live in this hybrid world where we are neither and both, which is interesting, because then you can take what you like and leave what you don't. There's an interesting relationship there. Something that has interested me about citizenship and I agree with Paul it is quite complex term. When you're working in a local authority, you represent their communities, the citizens of that local authority. So you very much participate in that relationship, and their voices can be heard quite clearly sometimes. The time element that Torange has talked about is is probably one of the biggest problems, and value. Those two often decide who participates in your event. We did some work to try to get engagement in the south of the borough and it was consistently the same, and that was quite interesting to us to hear. In roomful of 10 people which were supposed to be representative of a ward with literally same opinion over and over and over again, we didn't represent the younger generation or another value system, it was, in that case a car dominated - car is king culture, *"how can I make my roads wider and bigger, safer?"* It became an issue and we didn't know how to reach out and get the other community members. I do think that's probably one of the biggest challenges to participatory design and how we can create citizens. It's something I've looked at, in terms of how we create green spaces and how we manage green spaces. In local authorities like Croydon or others who are suffering in terms of maintenance budgets, how do you get citizens to realise that this is their asset and to take ownership of it and take care of it.

I've done some research into the work of Suzanne O'Connell, from The Decorators, she used to be a lecturer here on the Masters. She was looking at greening Stoneybatter in Dublin, and looking at how she got participation into design and the complexities that actually come with that. Within that conversation, you suddenly get, *"I want a tree my street"* and the next door neighbour doesn't want a tree in the street, and which citizen is right in that case? How you take that forward without pissing off the person who wants a tree and the person who wants the opposite? So it does become quite complex negotiations. It's not easy, even when you do get that participation that you're so after, to get that stakeholder engagement and then ownership of the process. So there's a multitude of issues, and that's something we've looked at and struggled with, and I haven't yet come up with the answer, but continuing to research and to look into it.

Torange- It is also about the quality of what that citizenship is really about, and where the power lies. A lot of the citizenship, from the local authorities perspective, keeps the power of decision making - deep decision making, I don't mean *"Where does the tree go?"* I mean, what happens in terms of planning - those are kept within the remit of the state and the public. So people don't engage, because, a lot of the time, it's just not deep enough. That's where I think they are very different spheres, the sphere of the community and the sphere of the state are very different. And they have to collaborate, more than one being shoehorned into the other. Once they have their own autonomy, and their own logic, then it's okay, and we can ask where's the facilitator? Exactly as you say, who then will negotiate? Are we going to have a tree or not, and then you run a dialogic session around what is the benefit of a tree or not, so those hosts, are these kinds of people between the state and the community. At the moment, it's a bit messy, because the state feel they have authority over community, and communities don't feel they have actually much voice or actually any decision, any power. So, it just becomes this strange Kafkaesque relationship. And that's where, and also why, it just becomes really functional and narrow. Carparks! I mean, Jesus Christ, but there is no imaginary of what could you do? What could that be? That imaginary is our role, to create those new imaginations of what those could be and then working with the state. I'm not saying it's a power of one tool over the other, because I think it has to be that they actually all work together as an ecosystem. Not one having hegemony over the other.

Roo- We're starting to cover a lot of bases here which we need to be part of this conversation. Leading on from what you were both talking about. Is it worth talking about direct action at this point? Kris can I direct that towards you?

Fran- Imagination was mentioned too and I thought about your project.

Kris- Imagination was the first catalyst for the project that I produced a couple of years ago. It consisted of a dragon which the community made with scraps of vehicles and other machinery, it's a very hypothetical situation, where kids control this dragon and use it to tear up the streets of London and turn it into a glorious playground. It is reminiscent of those times after World War Two, where there was bomb sites, and kids could actually be kids once more, because at the moment, when you're in a playground play is very prescribed through tubular steel structures that just do one or two tasks at the maximum. And they're so rigid that the child loses imagination and the will to play on the apparatus after let's say, a day or two. So, the idea was to bring back this very manipulatable environment, that not just the children, but I'm going to say 'the elders', the adults, would come in and say, *"this is what you could do…"*
"If you put this together like this, and this together like this, then you could create this",
"Get on with it", kind of thing.

Then the kids would be in their own imaginative world, which I feel today, and I'm sorry, I'm digressing from citizenships, I feel that today, youth are not imaginative enough, that everything these days is very prescribed to them, whether it's via a tablet, or a television screen. I don't know if they read actual paper magazines, or comics. The idea was concentrate on children because I felt that children are getting a very raw deal amongst the modern economy, the modern way of living. So by doing this direct action we could have a community-led project, we'd need someone if it was a landscape architect or design consultant, somebody who could get a community based project together. And then say, *"let's do this"*. Let's use children as the instigator and let's do something outlandish. Let's just put something out there to cause disruption, but it's for the kids, and everyone will appreciate it because everyone will really want something positive for children. I could have thought about other things, elderly people playing chess or something like that and maybe a percentage would like that but everybody can agree on something that benefits children because they're our future. And that was my thought process.

Fran- Can I interject there? It's funny you say that, because my first relationship with citizenship was in a youth project that happens every summer across a lot of different boroughs. I think counties across the country call it the National Citizen Service, which has some problematic elements to it, but it is about young people from the age of 14 up to 18 being able to play out roles of leadership and have authorship over projects. They were encouraged to form intergenerational relationships. What I started to notice was their relationships to space, what you often find is after they're being an 'active citizen', they then carry on and continue to do direct action projects within their own environments. For me, citizenship has always been about - and with the community groups that I've worked with, a sense of place; which is interesting in parallel to what you're talking about. That can be very, very small; for some people that I've worked with it's a small garden, or maybe even a meanwhile space for a short period of time. But it's often a space where people are allowed to be diverse and equal and it often revolves around food. Citizenship conversations, can then start happening.

Roo- I want to ask Paul quickly, earlier you mentioned a new food growing project, is that's something that comes into that?

Paul- Citizenship?

Roo- And the idea of identity that River and Fran mentioned.

Paul- Yes maybe…

River- I feel like it's not one of those things people talk about on the ground unless they're forced into a situation where they have to talk about it. But I do think, to your point, there is citizenship that's bestowed upon you, there is citizenship you're born with, and there's citizenship where people feel it. The stuff that you're talking about is more about autonomy, and exacting autonomy over your environment in this case. They're definitely interrelated, but hardly ever spoken about simultaneously and in the same breath.

Torange- But I think it's interesting, because the citizenship you're talking about, in terms of belonging to a nation state, you can't control that border. Whereas, and I'm sorry to keep going on about the Commons, but there you have borders that you have to design, they are social and physical with a kind of autonomous community. There you have autonomy in designing what is that border, and what is that boundary, and that, in terms of who is allowed to be there, how open you are, how you manage the membership, so it becomes much more porous. And so, the institutional framework of that autonomous community is where you can build these different identities. That's where people can build their own different identities through how they come together, and self organise, and self govern. That kind of self governance, where you suddenly start to have a voice. How do you do that?

I was always really keen to get those who don't ever come to a meeting, to be engaged. One method, I'm not saying it's the only one or the correct one, we started to have public living rooms. The one we have now is now a permanent building, and it goes hand in hand with land-grab somehow - we would build a temporary piece of architecture, legally, on a piece of land that is either publicly owned or owned by a housing association. We would then run a lot of community projects in that space. And it didn't matter what it was, because what you're doing is showing that there's social value on this site, the site is not just a commercial-value site, because otherwise I go, *"No, no, I can put a house in there and it costs 400,000 pounds, I can sell it"*. But when you've actually run the social programmes, and you write a report, with how much social capital you've generated, then we could go to the Housing Association and say, *"Can we have the site please forever, for the community?"* Being a resident on site, through artist residencies, or whatever it might be, just being in residence meant that lots of people would just pop in, because they're curious, because you're there all the time. And that's where you start to build that trust that I was talking about.

You start to have conversations, what are their needs? What do they actually want? And people are fascinating! I mean, honestly, I could sit there forever, and just chat to people. And that's where you start. For example a Bangladeshi mother comes and says, *"I don't have a bank account. I'm not allowed to have a bank account"*. So then then you start to see what the needs are. Then there was a Citizens Assembly. Some of the women I've worked with, would never come to a Citizens Assembly, but I said to them, *"I'm going. Why don't you come with me?"* And they all came, they didn't know what was going on, but they were on the same table with me. They were present and afterwards I asked, *"what did you think?"*
"What does this mean? And what did this mean?"
"I would never come because I don't understand what it is".
And so on, one of them even said, *"I don't want to lose my residency. So I don't come to political things"*.
My father said that too! *"I'm not going to tell the doctor because there might chuck me out"*.
"You have a British passport, they're not going to chuck you out!".
So, it's that anxiety as well *"that I've had to go through hardship, I've now got to settled status, I'm not going to risk that in any way"*. I wouldn't have known that if I hadn't been situated and really been able to understand what it is.

Meaghan- I would like to add to that. One part of the triangle that you didn't talk about, is that we have the community, the state, and developers, and right now the state and the developers are the dominant forces and voices in how we deliver anything and everything. In a lot of participation there's a lot of 'fake participation', which the developers use to meet planning requirements in terms of in community engagement. I think it should be recognised that when you're trying to engage community members, altruistic means of getting the 'right voices' in, doesn't work in the current system, under the current planning model where local authorities are at the mercy of developers to bring the money in in order to deliver housing or education systems. Academies are an example of that. It's really important that they're understood as part of the problem, and that model is definitely not functioning.

I was up in Liverpool last week, and I went to the Granby Street project. I thought my kids are going to kill me, I landed them in Liverpool, *"we're going to Granby Street"*
"We're going where?"
It was 20 minutes walking, to get to these four or five streets, the reverse of what I just described of a developer led model of delivery. There was this wonderful community, it's so diverse and so interesting, and actually trying to capture that spirit of that community. There was a Jane Jacobs desire to get to the real people - and not blanking or cleaning them out through increasing the pricing of the housing, but actually keeping them as part the community. I went to the Winter Garden, which sounds like a lovely name, but actually what it was - it was Friday and it was Easter, most of the community was just dropping the kids off; they're doing art projects, while the Mom had to run to the shop. You can do anything, you can do yoga there, you do art there, you can do anything. The design element is the possibility that they can see what they can get out of the project. And that's where we, as designers, or we as landscape architects, or even architects come in, to help show communities that stuff can happen. And that takes time, that project has been going on for 20-30 years. It is such a wonderful thing to see the asset, go back to community, and it had to do with the grounding of that community in place, and the strength of a few voices that then pulled in the rest to say, *"Hey, don't rip us down and start again, we have value and we add that wonderful…"*

Torange- That's why you had the autonomy, because if it was a single person, they'd have been chucked out, quite fiercely, but when you have the autonomy, when you have the crowd, that's where you have different power structures. The autonomy of the people is a power structure, which you can't have as individuals. So you have the state, you have the market, and you need the autonomy of the community coming together in solidarity to be equal and to make demands. It blows my mind that we don't have a scrutiny system for the private sector. *"What the hell is that about?"* I went to the centre for public scrutiny, and, *"What's do you mean you're delivering health?"*. That autonomy needs to be the scrutinising body. If you say, okay, the state doesn't do it, we need to do it. It needs to be organised, you know, it needs to be associated to really have that power.

Anushka- Fran, you've done quite a bit of research into Granby Street for your dissertation, you looked into the circumstances that led up to that project happening. Could you elaborate on that a bit?

Fran- Meaghan, I'm really glad you brought it up, because Granby is seen as this thing that Assemble did, and as you described so well, for 20 - 30 years now, different voices and communities as well as neighbouring streets and communities and housing cooperatives have all been fighting for a really long period of time against developers to stay. It has this real mosaic of their little stories going on. I went up on one of the market days and I was so surprised, because in all of the literature and the images that you see the spaces are sleek and well designed by Assemble, beautiful architecture. You get there and it's a bomb site. It looks like a bomb site. There are lots and lots of huge Georgian boarded-up houses, and you're taken aback because you don't see any of that. The community have obviously done a really good job of saying *"that's fine, we'll just put some graffiti on it, and we'll decorate it and we'll make a garden"*

Meaghan- They took ownership of it too. They pushed themselves up to the pavement, which I love, planting wise.

Fran- The main street is Granby Street, going through these terraced houses, but there's many, many of which are still derelict and they are slowly going to chip away, redeveloping them. But as you said, the Winter Garden is just a little bombed out house, the inside of it was hollowed out.

Meaghan- I think I probably had the same reaction. It wasn't until I started talking to people - my daughter was actually sick, so I sat in that little seat and this family came and sat with us and talked to us. That's when I started to think actually, this is a huge asset, I know, it looks pretty in all the photographs, but they probably don't care what it looks like. For me, from a design point of view I think it's beautiful, but for them, it was just a place where they can leave their kids and do the shopping on a Friday afternoon and, why not?

Fran- When I went there it was really busy, the market was heaving with proper Liverpudlian communities from all over the place. They weren't even just from that area. There were new Somalian communities, there were young people there, there were teenagers there, there were families, everyone was intermingling. And it really did feel like your proper Liverpudlian citizens.

I bumped into loads of different people, one of which was this black photographer, activist, he's been doing a lot of work. And he said, *"we're not just a fad. We're not just things to be kind of we're here. We've been here for ages, we have a voice"*.

Meaghan- Yeah.

Fran- *"And you're just seeing a little bit of it"*. Then he told me about his exhibition at Tate Liverpool. He had been capturing, for a long while, those those citizens living in that area, and he did use the term 'citizenship' quite a bit to describe how proud he was to be a Liverpudlian. And how proud he was to be of that community who were very different and from all over the place. And he says, *"we know we'll continue to welcome lots and lots more different people into our space"*. It was very poor, there wasn't lots of money…

Meaghan- It wasn't the glossy brochure for sure.

Fran- No it wasn't.

Meaghan- You can imagine my kids walking 20 minutes to get there.

(Laughter)

Roo- I think we've got some really exciting views of what citizenship should be: the ability to design your own borders. Govern inside your own governance decisions. The autonomy that can be developed within that. The imagination which it takes and can be fostered through that autonomy to write new rules and make new decisions over space.

Before we open it out to the audience, I want to ask what are some of the challenges we can make to established systems, the practical things that we can be aware of that you have experienced? So that then we can think about how what we are going to do next.

Fran- I think Torange mentioned it. Time versus trust. I think we have to detach ourselves from how long something might take to build or create and acknowledge the trust that you have to build in order to do that.

Torange- I don't know if this is right, but I think the universal basic income can address that time, or - and this will never happen, but like Norway, a state sovereign fund to deal with the development of the sphere of the Commons or the community. To needs investment, they did really well getting all of us to be obedient consumers - there must be a whole programme for that, but the thing is the community

is not useful for the market, and actually it can be a pain in the arse for the state. So, who's going to do it?

I did one project with a developer, where the thing I was most disappointed about was the community lead in Southwark Council, because I said, *"Look, we've engaged with 550 people in a month"*, because we did the public living room on the site of the developer. *"And these are the needs they have talked about"*. We've been engaged constantly. And they were, *"no, no, our politicians have decided what the what the needs are"*.

Meaghan- If I'm honest, I think it's easier if you go through the community and up that way, as opposed to what you did, which is saying
"here's what I found" and taking it to the council.
"Your the officer to deal with it".
"Yeah, I can't do that".
But if that community group then would…

Torange- Yes, exactly!

Meaghan- It becomes big enough not to ignore. It's a funny dynamic. There is an issue of how power and information are being trickled through to the doers, to the deliverers, the mediators…

Torange- Yes. And it's that interplay of power. If we start to think about power in a much more relational way that it's actually agile. I always say it to local authorities, by sharing power, you don't lose it, you actually gain more, because if you share it there is more people behind you. You are giving them more agency, but it's just such a difficult thing to grasp. They think they're losing it.

Anushka- From what you're all talking about, there seems to be an element of creating a situation where community or a sense of belonging or community action is valued. And it seems you have to do it through slightly devious methods. There is an Emily Dickinson poem where she talks exactly about this. She very beautifully suggests you have to do things, but you do them askew. 'Tell the truth but tell it slant'. In the discussion we have heard ideas about having parties, public living rooms, food, childcare. In your research, you were talking about the language that's used. There seems to be certain methodologies that spatial designers can employ to create that sense of ownership over a place. And I think something we could explore a bit more.

River- This is more of a question. It seems like the state and the market are often talking with each other to the disrespect of the citizen. And do you, - because you're working so much with the Commons and the state in particular to build citizenship, might it be easier to exert that sort of autonomous citizenship outside of the state than it is to work with the state when allowing citizens to express that same thing? Especially in terms of spatial dynamics?

Torange- It comes to a point where you can't avoid not engaging. So, if you know about 'Donut Economics' by Kate Raworth, she talks about her 21st century priorities, that's where I started to think about the ecosystem, because she talks about the commons, the state, and the markets. She says, 'the markets are powerful, but control it. The state is necessary, but make sure its supportive. The Commons are creative, allow them to thrive'. For that to really work as an ecosystem, then everybody needs to stay in their bloody space, and not co-opt each other and not want hegemony. And that is the patriarchal problem of having one powerful 'thing'.
"Well, no".
Let's think about it as an ecosystem and let's think about it as a network, and let everybody do their thing, how they should be doing it. We need all of it.
When in history when have we not had a marketplace? Okay, It doesn't have to be global, there are also a lot of discussions around plural markets right now. So, it's interesting. What is the market when it's connected to the commons? What is the material system that coincides with planetary care and is outside consumption and the production of commodity (which is mainly in the market)? We don't have it. We don't have a system within which common good, as artefacts or spaces, circulate? What does that even look like? That's what I try to figure out with my students. But it's like:
"Err, I don't know what it is",
"Where is its economy?"
"Where does it…"
"How do you…"
"Is it reciprocity?"
"How does it circulate?"
"Does it go from your garden to my garden to…"
"Where is it all circulating?"
Mapping that would be really interesting, because maybe it doesn't travel a lot. Maybe it is recycled and reused. It just has a very different logic.
That and materiality, and we were talking about it this morning in the Design Council, we weren't able to say, *"I don't want a plastic vinyl for the sign"*. I mean, I really tried.
Somebody from Central Saint Martins was saying, *"Oh, but maybe we can create it in Material Cultures"*,
"Yeah but, I don't have time for you to create it!"
Once we start to think about these common-good materials and systems, and when there is a place you can go to have them, then… But that's the system we need and that we don't have.
The state, it shouldn't go to the private sector, we shouldn't sell public land to strengthen the private, we should have creative thinking and collaborate with the commons to strengthen the public sector and the public assets. So how does that system work together? Just don't allow the private to just take it all.

Roo- Paul can you talk about your experience with working with the private sector, you've been working directly, I won't say with them, but in the context of them, to create these spaces.

Paul- I've had sites from Southwark Council, and from Lendlease, and from Notting Hill Housing Association. I've had interactions with Lewisham Council and interactions with Harringey Council, they all have their own agendas. I think it's changed a lot in the last 10 years, particularly with meanwhile spaces. There's a much clearer idea of what they are and what they're supposed to do. We started off in Elephant and Castle 10 years ago, and it wasn't as clear, there wasn't as much of an industry around meanwhile spaces, there wasn't as many consultants working in that space, which was a good thing. We just had a space and we were able to get on and do things. There wasn't an expectation that all of these goods and cultural strategies and placemaking strategies; that's crept into it much more, probably with a desire to commercialise those temporary spaces and extract value from them, whether it's rent or cultural value, and like all those things I just think are deadening. I find it increasingly difficult,

Roo- That's really interesting. Even in that space, which was an in-between space, it is being co-opted by the market and co-opted by the state.

Torange- But they always got co-opted. Temporary spaces, the moment you left, if they were private they would just be built upon.

They are holding the value. At one point, I was really angry that we did that, that we were on a private site holding that value with our R-Urban project, which was a community garden and circular energy and all of that stuff. And I said, *"why did we do that in E20?"*, we shouldn't have done it, we should have gone and actually set it up. We have done now in Poplar, for the housing association, they're public-private, but at the end, they have a public interest. In the end, they have a duty of care to their residents. So I think we have to be a bit careful with holding value on private land, or at least do it in a strategic way.
I kind of hate placemaking, because I think it's become very commercialised. For me, it's about how we do the practice. I don't think there's anything wrong with those particular ideas. It's when we don't work creatively and we don't take it away from private capital, then those who are unscrupulous will always do it.
I'm all for the cracks, how do we make the cracks, and permanently. I'm interested in the permanent cracks, not just the temporary.

Meaghan- I know a crack! There's this crack that I discovered, it's just an anecdote, and maybe not of interest to anyone, but I'm pretty sure it sits within the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) which is what we all sit under for planning. At Croydon, when we reviewed our local plan, there was something called Local Green Spaces. A lot of councils sell off their land for housing, for schools or other public uses, but that can be really antisocial. Under the Local Green Spaces you can ask people if they use a local green space, if they do they could apply for it to be designated as a local green space and therefore it could never be built on. So, what you have to do is prove that you use it for a certain period, maybe three years to five years for certain uses. So, once a year you might have a picnic on it with your street, or you might have a party on it every Christmas. As long as you could show some evidence and you get some support from a community member or local MP or Ward Councillor, then it would be designated and never be built on. It would be your own asset.
What was interesting about that is - we asked the community, I think about 100 of them, we wrote to them and said *"we think you use your local green space do you want to apply for this thing?"*
And only half did. We didn't get as big a response as we thought, but we got some quite random ones. Someone who had made a little vegetable plot outside of their local gym. You would never built on anyway, but they just want to designate it as their local resource, it was brilliant, these three planters where they grew vegetables and of course that was fine, that that one went through. That was a nice crack, that could be exploited or explored in a different way to empower people.

Fran- Sometimes communities are really hesitant about registering for community assets, whether it's green space or a building, because they seem to think that the local authority has some ulterior motive in asking them to do that, or at least that's what I've experienced. But when you have really strong residents associations, in little pockets of areas they tend to do that.

Meaghan- Or people who are maybe a little bit more in the know, which is probably where it's unfair, people who understand what we're trying to do.
If someone wrote me a letter and said, *"Hey, we think you use your green"*.
"Oh, maybe I shouldn't have. I'm American, maybe they'll take away my citizenship".
You're right, maybe it is a communication barrier, or trust.

Torange- It's quite overwhelming for a lot of people unless they've been doing it for years.

Meaghan- It's almost like you want, what did you call it? We called it an urban room, butyou called it a public living room. Like a doctors surgery where you can fill out the form for them.
"Do you ever come here?"
"We think you do"
"You have? Let me see your iPhone for photos from it? The application's done. Sent off. Yeah, that's all it took. It wasn't complicated".

River- It's also asking people to take ownership, not ownership exactly, but the feeling of ownership of a space they don't feel entitled to. A once a year picnic, which obviously, they should be entitled to in that space, but to them it seems like an opportunity, like it's a reach, right, and that's such a difficult thing. Green space, if you use it, it should be yours, even if it's a once a year thing, if it's a block party, if it's a sled day when it snows once every five years. But it's really hard to get that through to people, I think it's a very capitalistic thing. If we don't use it every day. It doesn't belong to us, unless we bought it.

Fran- Money and value, I guess, Paul and Torange you must have experienced this as well. There is a point where maybe all the language and the hard work needs to happen?
If we can actually say to people, *"Okay, you might not even use that green space, because you don't actually that welcome. What can we do to rebuild it? Can we recreate it together so, you feel a sense of belonging in this area?"*
Those should be the things that are happening with those communities.

Anushka- Let's carry on this discussion, but bring in the audience and also look at what practices we can develop to allow these things to happen.
I don't know if that's what your question was about Ed?

Audience 01- No, it wasn't but thank you for leading me towards it. I'm gonna go back to Paul's original comment about citizenships. I agree with a plurality of it. Not citizenship. In my conversations on citizenships, I think 'belonging' is a better term, particularly in relation to what it is, I think, maybe it's where the conversation seems to be going. My question is - do you agree citizenships is a rubbish term, that's it got too many unuseful ambiguities? And that 'belonging' allows us to think about how we belong, or I belong, to a place, but also the expectation of places belonging to individuals.

Meaghan- Are you asking a question Ed?
(laughter)
Is that a question?

Audience 01- I'll phrase it again. I think 'Citizenships' is rubbish and 'belonging' is better.

Anushka- I disagree, because I think 'belonging' and you mentioned that in your comment, belonging is individual or can be individual.

Audience 01- Hmm

Anushka- With citizenships there's more of a communal act, in my opinion.

Audience 01- I could be a citizen of London, but it doesn't mean I'm collectively a citizen. I think that both of them have individuality. I would deny that the Commons is the only way in which we could get that sort of collectivity. I just find that there's a difficulty with the

term which I think stops us from engaging with it. I can engage with citizen, but citizenships…

Torange- How would you do it? In terms of a more autonomous - not just how you belong to a space, but how to have a collectivity or autonomy, which is what we've been talking about. How would you think that would work?

Audience 01- I think the claiming of belonging I think it's important, the claiming of a relationship to a place …

Audience 02- Do you think belonging is about agency then?

Audience 01- I think there's certain amount of agency, I think there's a certain amount of struggle. I think there is the claiming of the state, which I think is necessary, whether we call it citizenships or whether we call it belonging.

Torange- But how do you have that sense of belonging with others?

Audience 01- I think we can claim it collectively, but we've got to claim it individually.

River- I think the obvious answer in terms of this word based argument would be 'denizen'. Citizen related - it's of a place, its niche, certainly. Citizen communicates the government bestowing of rights, belonging is almost too ambiguous and too personal as Anushka said, but 'denizen' both denotes the place and denotes the beings, I suppose denizen can apply to animals as well, if we extrapolated it that way. I feel like if the question was fundamentally word based, that's quite easily solved. I think the greater question is about what makes denizen / citizenship relevant to place?

Torange- It's a slightly liberal thing of, "well, we just happened to all live in a place, so then we feel we belong to it". I'm not sure I buy that.

Audience 01- Thats not what I was thinking…

Torange- But that's why I want to know - what are the mechanisms within which you start to feel like you are collectively belonging to a place?

Audience 02- Isn't this about transforming this idea? Historically, the idea of autonomy has not been at all about the individual. It's freedom for, as opposed to freedom from. To convince people that true autonomy comes from this idea of: *"I'm gonna have to give up something"*, it's a misreading of Berlin's concept of positive-negative freedom - that true liberation from any structure is true freedom. And I would disagree. In order to have autonomy, you have to be part of a group. And as an American, this is what I struggle with, so they'd rather pay less taxes, but not have health care. So I'm free, but for what life?
To have true autonomy, you have to be part of this collective. Redefining these words to understand that - is that part of what we have to do to engage communities?
One other thing I want to say, I've always thought about borders. At any scale, borders are problematic. I grew up with a city in Chicago. It was completely divided, full of invisible borders. Now it has this ramification towards redlining, and zoning and property taxes. So why do we need borders to create that sort of autonomy of a collective? Can we do it without borders?

Torange- I think borders which are closed off and impenetrable are problematic. So for example, our organisation, Public Works, we can't say it's open to all, you can't just come in and take all of our IP and leave. So it has a border. You can't just be open all the time. It has a border. But, we have to think what are the means of membership? Who can have IP access? At what point can they have IP access? If people want to work with us how do they engage? You design that kind of membership, so you don't just go, *"No, it's only people who work here"*.

Audience 02- Not all the borders were started with good intentions.

Torange- I think that's how you implement the governance. If you have hosts that manage and constantly rethink the agility of that border - it's not that you just do it and then stop thinking about it. I'm not saying it's right, I'm saying it's interesting to explore. In terms of the 'belonging', we created a community garden opposite our house, and there were people on the street going, *"Oh my God! No, we can't do that"*. I just went for a funding application and it was all good, but that brought the entire street together, we're all on WhatsApp, we all help each other. There's two of them who are pensioners, we made sure during COVID we all had drinks at five to make sure they don't feel isolated. It wasn't that we just felt 'belonging', there was a trigger, which was the garden that got us to create that community. And that community, we were really strong, so when there was a really hideous development next to us we were the only ones who managed to stop it. All the other mega things in Stratford just went through, and we completely stopped it.
That's what I mean, it doesn't have to be a commons, I'm interested in that framing, because I feel it's multi-layered, but what are the triggers to create that kind of collective? And it doesn't have to be that you give up your individuality.
There's this fantastic book called 'Neither Horizontal, Nor Vertical'. I don't think we can go back to communist collectivism, where you give up your records, because we've been too much in an individualist, libertarian…
(interruption)
You have to also know yourself. You need to personally have power to feel self empowerment. Without self empowerment, you won't have collective empowerment. It is really complex.

River- I don't want to be an instigator here, but I do want to talk about that last sentence, you just said, 'without self empowerment, don't have collective empowerment'. I actually think it's often quite the opposite. I think the collective can roll on its own or at least provide protection for certain actions. Those are things that are outside of the state again, so there is that push and pull. But it is interesting, when the singular outweighs the multiple. The collective

Anushka- Will, you had a question.

Audience 03- The word that keeps popping to me is 'comfort'. If we're citizens of somewhere then you have to be comfortable of something; that can be a singular or a collective entity, you have to be comfortable to join at the roundtable, to go to your citizens assembly. We have to be comfortable with direct action and dealing with the fact that we're probably trying to insult someone into changing and seeing our view. We've got a system that's wrong, the metrics are bad, they're not based on comfort.
How do we change the system? We have to prove the concept we're looking at. Rob Hopkins and Kate Raworth provide those transitional elements; we can trick and play how we make those people with power see the difference. We can incentivise and now we can start to prove concept. And once we prove concept almost everyone feels a bit more competent. And then we might get there. It's not really a

question. 'Belonging' maybe not, but 'comfort' I think is a meaningful word.

Audience 01- Im not convinced by comfort.
I prefer a bit more debate.

Audience 03- I think we have to get to a comfortable place, you can't kick the door open and expect a good conversation.

Kris- Is it the cause of the event that creates that?

Meaghan- Yeah, I think it's the event.

Kris- I only say that from the perspective that I'm not really from London, I come from the countryside. I work in a little village called Aylesham, which is a mining community. Because of the huge heritage behind the mining community and a huge population of ex-coal miners, they've created their own citizenship. So, when we have new developments happening around on the radiating perimeters, there's a *"what you doing here"* kind of job; because these external people, maybe they have lives of their own, are not really interested in the mining community. It's the mining community that creates all these events, happening in place, which gets people involved. When you become a citizen of that area is because you participated in something coal miner-like. There's other villages, or satellites that have their own particular, agricultural, or other kind of trade specialism to them; where they've all helped, hand in hand, to get their unit up and running. But the thing is, new people that come in, they don't really care, they haven't got the interest and that's the problem we've got, there are people who aren't really interested in engaging with the classic systems that are already implemented. If we could find a way of breaking the wall and saying,
"Look, if you just come down, have a look, just have a look at the pit at least, and then walk away. Maybe just have a coal mine pasty, I know you won't get through it all, but just have a coal mine pasty and say thank you to the people that are about. You'll get accepted, and maybe get involved with some projects".
So that there's like that kind of aspect, which is maybe more event based that can bring them all together.

Audience 04- That's what the Big Lunch was all about. As a way of community engagement. Food is such a great levelling process.

Anushka- Through food you can so easily represent who you are. It a shows care or comfort.

Audience 02- You also see commonalities. *"That's my food!"*

Audience 04- And *"I want to try your food"*.

Audience 02- There's no ideological threat at that moment. I think it applies to everything like, it took me a long time to ever walk into a gallery in Chicago, even though it was public. I just thought I couldn't go in. This happens at every scale, I'm convinced food is actually the way.

Meaghan- Free food. People come in for the free food

Fran- There's also a level of discomfort isn't there. We need to become more uncomfortable. Generally, we talk about people who want to participate in community things, but actually, there are many communities that aren't anywhere near involved in any of it. Maybe we need to become much more uncomfortable with how we approach and involve and engage people. And find people who are doing much more humble work than us, with those communities - to help us to do that. And to think differently about who else is involved, not just ourselves. Maybe we have to completely redefine the terms, loose the language that we are using, and allow other people to define the terms. I agree with what you say Will, I think there needs to be a comfortableness, as that's the point where people do engage. I also think there needs to be more discomfort in order for us to get away from where we currently are.

Audience 02- Maybe it's an interruption. An interruption to the status-quo. Something that stops you and makes you become present in the moment.

Audience 03- But that's the problem. There is so much discomfort at the moment. The world is fucked. We have to make it better.

Roo- Can there be some structure from this? Is this an actual vision of the autonomy that we've been talking about? And for that reason Ed, whilst I come from a similarly uncomfortable position around the word 'citizenship' I think we need to work with that, and sit with that discomfort, because with that discomfort, we're talking about borders, we're talking about autonomy, we're talking about governance, we're talking about how we're funding and paying for it, how we're managing our time, all of these things, but we have been accepting that the state and the private sector have complete decision making control over it. We have to push through that discomfort perhaps.

Torange- I've been listening and I was thinking, it's all of those things, I think it is belonging, it is comfort, it is discomfort, but ultimately what it is, is our emotions. When we talk about citizenship, it becomes so abstracted, and so mechanical, but actually, it is about respect, and comfort and a feeling of belonging, being disheartened, not being listened to, disrespect, they're all subjective things that the modernist paradigm just abolished, so maybe we have to go back to care and emotion and actually respecting emotions…

Audience 02- Taking back the word 'value'

Torange- The emotional value. The subjectiveness of personal feelings.

Audience 05- I fairly recently went through a name change, and they changed the law a bit before I did the name change. It was insane. I already di dn't know what I was going to be filling out, so, I was sat there in the office filling out these forms. And there was a question asking me, what place do I identify with? I was filling this out in London and I am Czech. They have asked me the question of what citizenship do I identify with. And I was sat there freaking out. That was an interesting discomfort. Similarly, I had a discomfort when the UK was leaving European Union. I had applied for my settlement scheme, but there were these two days where if my settlement still hadn't come through and the UK had already left. I am here. Yet, I don't really have a right to be here. I am not a citizen here. If I now decide to leave the UK, because once you can legally belong, where the state will take care of me. I can't come back. So the discomfort is really interesting. It is really bound to the space where you are at and leaving that space you risk not having it back.
Even in terms of community, you are bound by the landscape and the space you're in, because once you leave it, you can't claim any rights to it. I had been sharing an allotment with a neighbour, I was part of the local community. And now I've moved, only two miles away, but still I moved. I'm no longer part of that community, despite me identifying with the allotment and what they're doing. And theoretically whilst I was a citizen of that allotment, now I can't be.

River- We don't often factor in time as an element of citizenship. Being a citizen in the UK in 1980's was different than it is today. And it's different from what it'll be 50 years from now. That's a horrible thing to have to design around, especially for landscape where you're working on such long-term scales. How can you possibly design for something that does not exist, that you cannot conceptualise and will not exist after it? Working with time as an element of design is incredibly difficult.

Meaghan- It's also an opportunity too, that things do take time. We have that ability to allow for the evolution of a project as different community groups, different ages and interests come through and have different passions for certain vegetables or something. It's a benefit, different to architecture, that we have the flexibility to take things out and put other things back. It's an opportunity, but it's hard to see, I agree. It's really hard to visualise what that looks like and how to convince others.

River- I think that comparison to architecture is really interesting because you build a building, you finish it and it lives. The issue in landscape is, you build it, and you're supposed to change it. And that often doesn't land well with the public and certainly not developers or the state. I don't know how you start going about convincing people that that's how it should be?

Audience 02- As an architect...

River- Sorry,

Meaghan- Sorry!

(laughter)

Audience 02- Let me rephrase. As a recovering architect, I think the best projects made of buildings are the ones that can evolve; a tower that's turned into a restaurant that's now a library. The role of architecture is to create a space that can be a multitude of places. So in its fixity, allows it to change. We don't teach that, of course, because before programme there's developers, Excel spreadsheet architecture. You've got the Dutch who places programmes on everything. So I think it's understanding that architects can't create place, but we can enable a multiplicity of places through a type of space; the understanding that through cultural geographers, like Soja and such, who kind of came up with this idea. So, I think architecture can do these things, it's a different scale to landscape, but we have to be aware of that. That's my defence of architecture.

Audience 05- Is it about designing the space to be able to change, or for ease of change?

Audience 02- I think it's good lighting, circulation of air to heat and cool it - cross ventilation, so just make it a physically pleasant space. Then people will want to be there and you will want to turn it into a school. It's not 90m walls that move, because with operational costs, no one changes that. It's too expensive, you have to do something that's not going to take 19 people to change the wall. Just teaching this, considering capital investment, operational costs, how can you allow it to be flexible without being mechanical. It's a matter of changing the way we think of our role as an architect. That we're not designing things for other people and giving them these projects. We want to create something that's really beautiful and that works. It doesn't need lights during the day. I told my students, if they want to be radical, make sure every bathroom has a window. That's the best thing we can do right now. Really great floor plans. You can't have a courtyard for protest, you can't institutionalise the very thing it's trying to destroy. Understanding the tools we have is very important for architects. Sorry, no more defence of architecture.

Anushka- On that thought, I want to ask a question to everyone here, the audience as well, if we are to collectively design a practice that can deal with all of those issues that we're talking about: belonging, citizenships, a sense of collective duty? What would that look like? What would that practice look like?

Fran- It will be mobile in terms of both its ability to move and its ability to change it's thinking.

Torange- It wouldn't have singular discipline, for sure.

Audience 02- Anti-discipline?

Torange- It would be transdisciplinary. The problem with transdisciplinary, is it goes beyond, to a point that you don't even recognise the disciplines within the work. It is so unfamiliar that we ignore it. That's really interesting in terms of psychology of familiarity, and unfamiliarity, because we ask for things, which, if it really happens, is so unfamiliar, we won't engage with it. The psychology of familiarity is that even if things are unfamiliar, you will find something that you can hold on to, that's familiar in order for you to understand it. When, for example, I'm talking to local authorities, as long as it has some kind of language that they understand, then even if I'm saying something completely bonkers, then they might come into it.
It probably can't have very solid borders.

Audience 03- Do we become a communication agency? Showing not telling, proving concepts, communicating, containing and lobbying to change the system. It is that process, whether it's direct activation, or language, or whatever. It's just communicating the idea to make this get to that point to make that adjustment.

Torange- New imaginaries.

Audience 05- How do you not end up as the article which says: *"anarchy in practice is incredibly boring?"* When you have to listen to everyone's opinion, how do you move to design an action from that? You can be stuck in a circle discussing ideas forever.

Torange- But that's only if you want consensus, you don't have to have consensus, you can just have consent.

Audience 06- A question to the whole panel, sort of rewinding just a little bit to this notion about food, and then tying that to green space and the commons, those three things. The question is, what sorts of relationships exist between those three things, that we can actively enable to allow for more types of space for the kinds of belonging that we're talking about here? In the sense of preserving cultural identity in a post-refugee / refugee environment, preserving culture and identity in place. How do we think about the sorts of relationships between those three different things and actively trying to build more of it?

Torange- I'll give you a concrete example. This community garden that I was talking about, it's a public park, so is openly accessible, but it has a community garden in it, where people are growing food. So, there is a very finite community of plot holders. They don't pay, so it's not an allotment, but then they have to look after the other spaces in the garden as a community, but there is lots of conflicts between those two situations, because people come in, they think it's a public park, they take the food. So there are different logics, there's

a very different logic between these two paradigms of public, community and the Commons. They get really annoyed and don't want to come back so it can be quite disruptive. We have two hosts, who are continuously working with the community, they go: *"Yeah, but does one courgette matter?"* It is as banal as that, but then of course there are educational events. It has to be programmed to keep that trust building, that sense of belonging. But then there are very different cultures. We have Eastern Europeans, we have Chinese, we have Bangladeshis, and they get irritated by each other, because their cultures are so different and their boundaries of what they can and cannot do is so different. So, how do you manage that?
And the hosts are always with me, saying, *"What are we gonna do, she's just taken over, somebody's plot"*
"But its unkept"
and the other woman goes *"But that's how we do it in Eastern Europe, you know, just letting the weeds grow"*. It's not like it's all nice and tidy and neat, these spaces are complex, and it is conflictual. I love that stuff. Thats why dialogic platforms are really important in order to understand each other's perspectives.

Meaghan- It sounds like my household every night.

Torange- That's what society is, you don't just get consensus. It's dialogue. Our organisation, we are a collective. I have no idea what some of them are doing, it's up to them. I'm not the boss. We're all directors and we don't have any employees. Everyone's a director and Companies House hated that because we're 12 directors and no employees. We don't have a legal form in the UK that is horizontal. So, *"I'm sorry, deal with it"*. You have to have trust. You say this is the manifesto. This is what our objectives are. If you think you're swaying, then we're gonna have a conversation about it, but otherwise go and do it. There are mechanisms to do that. We don't have to talk everything to death.

Anushka- Let me pull two things out of that for this imaginary practice I'm creating. First, dialogic platforms, and second horizontal structures.

Torange- Legal structures, we don't have a legal structure that is horizontal, everything's hierarchical and it's really destructive, because community organisations decide they have a board, whether it's a CIC or trustees, and then you have to go *"well, I'm gonna write the culture now of how you govern, because legally, it's impossible"*. So then, you know, trustees turn up going *"well, I think this should happen"*
"Then do it! We don't have the resources".
There's a lot of things around governance that to happen. It's all still very much based on 18th century kind of governance.

Audience 07- It sounds like you're getting closer to creating a political party.

Anushka- So what would we do to pull it back?

Audience 07- Maybe it's got to do with Kris' tearing up the street with a rogue dragon?

Meaghan- I like the children taking over.

Audience 07- It loosens the bondage of power. If you have this relationship with state and individual whereby from the 70s onwards, the power of the individual, at least in this country seems to be washed under the bridge, you lose the autonomy within this community that's supposed to be a vehicle for your own voice. And with that you lose your creativity and your control over the landscape. It seems like from a far off perspective, that New York in the 1970s and 80s was a really poor place, the balance of power was really levelled by poverty. But when that power was levelled, it enabled so much of a creative output from the Beach Boys to Basquiat, people were able to express themselves in a new dialect. Whilst we have this manicured state that has us in a tight embrace, where citizenship is defined as your right to a name or a place, it's quite hard to be an individual. Perhaps it's just a historical process whereby we have to wait for the next Malthusian break down to make a change.

River- I think there's an argument there for investment of creative capital into places that aren't being extremely overly developed like London is. There's so many incredible places around the globe, especially in the Global South, that have incredible artistic talent, but they're not experiencing the same renaissance because the same amount of Western Northern money isn't running around. In the next 30 years we could definitely see a renaissance in a lot of cities that, to the West seems like something from the 70s and 80s.

Audience 03- The danger there is that we live in a system that would capitalise them.

River- Yes, absolutely! Yeah.

Audience 02- Capital Flows

River- Immediately, what lasted 20, 30 years before, maybe 2 or 3 years now. The question of an ideal studio, how would it combat that? I have no idea!

Fran- I feel a bit like nature and climate change are going to make that decision for us in the next 30 years. Within our cities, we're gonna see things change. There is this term, that recently has become quite popular 'food citizenship', people growing and taking ownership of space through that. It's really interesting what you're saying about linking the relationships between food and refugees and space because I did a project a while back where we went and got free food from Walthamstow Marshes, it was welcomed for anybody to come and join. We also went and skipped dived, because my housemates used to do that quite a lot. So, we went to Waitrose very late at night, and there was actually quite a lot of different, very poor, elderly citizens from different ethnic groups and migrant backgrounds skip diving. We realised how insulting it was for us to come along and take their sources of food. But, we invited them, of course to the meal and we built great relationships from that, it started food clubs and community kitchens within the local area. I don't think there's going to be the sort of relationships we're talking about, we're going to have to think very differently because nature is really pushing us in that direction, we're going to see dramatic changes to our cities through climate change. In particular it's water or wind at the moment, and maybe food that will be this catalyst.

Meaghan- The last project I worked on at Croydon Council was this thing called the 'Friday Foodstuff', which is where the local community took all the food from supermarket's - it just took the skip out of it - they took all that food and just sold it off quick. The community really wanted to celebrate that they were doing this. But down the street, you had the grocery stores, and here up on the hill you have this community food, and they're making this public space for people to come together and get all these foods together. Growing food is one thing, but not always, these people were quite desperate for food, so there wasn't the time for the cucumber to grow.

Torange- Or somebody would take it!

Meaghan- They needed it then and now. So there's two different treatments for how we are getting food. It's such an interesting flip, taking it away from the market, and getting these huge donations where people come in and talk to one another, talk about issues and making that community, that kind of comfort, that connectedness, the care, that was all happening there.

Torange- You need a lot of land to grow food to sustain one family. You can't do it in a little plot, which is -this- wide. I have a few tomatoes, it's just a bonus. One of my speculations right now is - what if you take land investment out of the earth and put it up there? - You start to then free up. First you've got to have affordability because the reason why land is so expensive is because of speculation, and that's the reason why we land bank and build so much. Land banking is not really about needs. There are tonnes of Russians and Indonesians and whoever, who have flats that have just been sitting there since 1980. They are empty in Kensington! There is so much land, so much empty space, which is just land banked. So, as a speculation, what would that do? If you take land investment and, actually even better, you don't need planning permission, just go! Design in the metaverse.

Audience 02- Data is not clean. You've got servers. A driverless car generates 2.2 gigabytes of data a second that goes on server. So the metaverse is going to create its own problems. It's going to be just as bad as the environment. So we're all fucked!
(laughter)

Audience 08- There's something in Greenwich at the moment with the local elections. It seems Labour who have control of Greenwich Council for over a decade, haven't really been managing the Community Infrastructure Levy very well. This is money that can be used for all kinds of projects, some of which are needed for infrastructure improvements to make developments viable, but it's also a source of funding that can be invested in projects that would benefit the wider community, aside from just being necessary. It's a shame that they missed out, there's millions of pounds that should have been collected but they set the level too low. I'm sure that there's a whole sector of consultants who set rates according to the viability assessment. I'm sure the developers are there trying to influence in their own interests. I'd like as citizens and design professionals to be in that negotiation to make sure that local authorities are held to account.

Meaghan- You should join your local authority.
(laughter)
There's very few landscape architects within local authorities, so you can help out. Those funds sit there, you could apply for them, you could put them towards projects, that part's not hard. But I guess you're talking about the loss of potential funds that could have been coming here. But going forward, you could apply for it.

Audience 04- Oftentimes, it's worse than that. The CILS being collected and just not spent and it has to be given back, that's even worse.

Meaghan- That was how the communal shop was funded, and part of it was funded through grants. There's huge sums of money, that's probably another topic. But through lobbying - everyone can write FOI's, freedom of information, you can figure out how money is being spent. I encourage all of you guys to be activists in that way and take control, because that puts people on their toes. If you sent to all the local London local authorities: *"tell me how you spent your CIL's on green infrastructure or public space in the last 10 years, 5 years, or how do you intend to spend it"*. When there's a call out to all local authorities, people get a bit nervous in their boots, you're notified when it goes to all local authorities, what are they gonna do with this information? You know it's an article or a news headline that's going to come out. So, these are ways for you to take control of the information. Probably another discussion.

Torange- It's actually got worse than section 106, in my opinion, because it's become too centralised. Before they would actually spend it in the local area where the development was happening. Now, God knows, now it's to do with the mayor's pet project or whatever. With Newham...

Meaghan- They can say where it's spent, but they choose a lot of times not to. You can still say where it can be spent.

Torange- Yeah, but they won't because they want to hold on to that power and put it to what they've pledged.

Anushka- That's another point for our imaginary practice: a knowledge of policy.

Torange- She's gonna run this practice.
(laughter)

Anushka- But a knowledge of policy, that's what we're all talking about. How decisions are made? Where money goes? That's not something that we really learned as landscape architects.

River- Never.

Meaghan- No. I had to join a local authority to figure it out and I'm still not sure. I'm much closer now and it is eye opening.

Kris- It's about knowing the right people.

Torange- One question that came up, and I haven't done any research substantially on this to have an answer, but I wondered whether, due to the history of citizenship, whether it's gendered, actually, because of who had voting rights and who had the right to engage at state level.

Audience 02- The Greek citizenship was defined by land-owning males.

Torange- Yes, exactly.
Audience 02- So historically yes, citizenship has been a method to exclude instead of include.

Torange- Yes, exactly. So that is maybe quite important and volunteering was a female activity, which is why it is still free labour. But women are not free labourers anymore, so why do we have volunteering? Charity and volunteering was the way that women actually could claim a bit of agency. Whereas citizenship was still quite male, so maybe that's something to think about.

Kris- It doesn't just stop at gender equality, it's the whole intersectionality as well.

Torange- As well, yeah.

River- I think it's most certainly true. We know for a fact that black Middle Eastern women are far less likely to vote or express their cit-

izenship for various reasons, right? Economic to social. And that's true in the UK, it's true in the US. And so there's absolutely a gap between who is capable and allowed to express their citizenship. At least here, you get things like having the day off for voting, right? That's even worse in places like the US where you can't leave work to vote, so what are you going to do?

Fran- Do you get a day off for voting?

River- Oh do you not?

Audience 08- You don't, but you're allowed to leave.

Audience 02- Yes, but if it's that district in Texas that you live in, they make sure all there's only one box for all of Houston. So to drop it off, because you don't want to get COVID, you'll wait two hours.

Meaghan- Why can you just post it?

Audience 02- Texas require you to drop it off, Texas is evil. And that's where, honestly, this idea of bottom-up community driven activism is being employed by evil. Right. The state senators, the local Council men are there dealing "I want to get lithium batteries and yoga pants". Grassroot effort is actually the fundamental base of American fascism right now.

Torange- Did you want to move here?

Audience 02- July 1st!
(laughter)

Anushka- I don't want to end this with the comment *"we're all fucked"* at the forefront of my mind, but I think we need to start wrapping this up, but first are there any more questions from the audience?

Audience 01- I just want to say 'time', I think that people who said 'time' earlier are spot on. I can't disagree with time. Thinking about forging citizenships as a relationship with places, it needs time. When you disrupt people's ability to forge those relationships, to cut time short, then that's highly problematic.

Fran- Time is really linked to developers isn't it? Local authority, money, speeding up of things. It sounds like we need to have this disruption between...

Audience 04- Neighbourhood planning and Localism as well. It works when people have time, which tends to be white middle class areas.

Torange- Volunteering

Meaghan- I liked your idea that it wasn't linked to class. You might be retired, you might be, you know, it tends to be linked to class but it doesn't always have to be.

Torange- It's not always class based. It's just who has time, it's actually not to do with whether you're working class or anymore, it's about how precarious you are. It's if you have to work 14 hour days, where you have no space for anything else. That's why I get really annoyed with this old fashioned class system thinking because I think it's completely shifted.
There's a wonderful Penguin book, '21st century class', and they talk about the precarious worker, as being the class that we have to really think about now.

Audience 03- Isn't time linked to nature too though?
(agreement)
And that the people probably need more time, but the powers that be need less. As you richly pointed out in the next 20 years 'we're fucked'

Meaghan- We can't end on that

Torange- We've got to keep going!
(laughter)

Audience 03- But it's gonna get really uncomfortable and they're going to loose control. It's just gonna happen. We need to put the pressure on. So there is that balance with time too, that we don't have a lot of time.

Audience 02- Is it possible that our new practice turned communications agency is now a political party?

Audience 08- We have to do stuff as well.

Torange- But I think the only way you can address the time is to have a disruptive practice, the way I organised the course was that students had to develop disruptive practices, across different disciplines, because otherwise we don't have time, we don't have extra time to be doing citizenship stuff. But, if you do it through your practice, where there is a sustainable financial structure that allows you to, okay not get uber rich, but to have a comfortable life. That's where we need the creativity. And we need the interdisciplinarity. Activism is not the same as it was in the 70s, activism has to be through the system. And I think that's where the creativity is, for me.

Meaghan- There is talk to go to a four-day working week, they're trialling that across the country, it'd be an interesting to see what happens with that.

Torange- But if there isn't a legislation won't people just go to the pub, because if you don't have the value, that it is about community building, no, you'll go shopping, you'll go...

Meaghan- The pub is a community, right?

Torange- It's entertainment,

Audience 08- On that front...

Torange- It's complex, but I think for me, that's where I've done my activism. It's still my practice. And then of course, I do stuff in my neighbourhood, but actually, I'm exhausted with it. I'll be really honest, it's tiring. And I just said, *"leave me alone, I need three years off guys"*. You know, I'm absolutely exhausted with that stuff. But I can continue to do it through my practice and teaching but I think that's where we have to build it. It has to be disruptive practices. There's hope. Thats where we should end.

(Applause)