REPORT EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE 02
19-20 NOVEMBER 2018, EINDHOVEN

Report by Lorenzo Gerbi

INTRODUCTION

The second RegionArts Exchange of Experience took place in Eindhoven on November 19-20, organized by Dutch partner Baltan Laboratories. The exchange included study visits and learning workshops. After analysing the policy instrument in the previous exchange in Bologna, the focus of this gathering was to explore concrete tools for mapping ecosystems, both strategic and artistic, which reflect the nature of the project and its content.

ABOUT THE EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE

The first day was dedicated to present Eindhoven-based initiatives relevant for the RegionArts project and to participate in a learning workshop about mapping, led by Ingrid Willems (Datascouts).

The day started at Eindhoven City Hall where, after an introduction of RegionArts by Porto Design Factory, Sandra Koster (CEO Economy, Design and Culture at Municipality Eindhoven) explained some key facts behind the city's successful model of integration and support to the creative industry, an important player in the regional economic growth (+ 4,9 %, the biggest growth among the Dutch cities). As obvious as it may seem, everything started at Philips: the merging between creative and corporate world began inside the company. Leaving Eindhoven and more specifically the Strijp-S area, lot of spaces became available in the former factories, which were then populated by creatives. In this landscape of high tech industries (ASML, High Tech Campus, Technical University…) and a vibrant creative scene (Strijp-s, Sectie-C, Design Academy…), few important cultural events started, which are more and more mixing these two souls: Dutch Design Week and GLOW (International Light Festival). Both internationally recognized, these two events initiated from a little group of enthusiasts, a truly bottom-up approach that was then supported by the city, government and businesses.

Few blocks away from the City Hall, a street called Stratumseind is considered the longest pub street in the Netherlands: 225 meters, 50 pubs, 2 coffeeshops, few restaurants. It's no surprise that the place is also known for its frequent fights. To change that image, Stratumseind has become one of the "smartest" streets in the Netherlands. Lamp-posts have been fitted with wifi-trackers, cameras and 64 microphones that can detect aggressive behaviour and alert police officers to altercations. Tinus Kanters, project manager of the Living Lab Stratumseind, presented the project, its goals and the ethics behind the data collection, essential for the lab. Data that span from bike parking info and video people count to sound (decibel, but also stress in people's voices or glass breaking) and social media conversations. Data that can be correlated then with school calendars (students tend to drink more after exams) or with data from breweries (what kind of alcoholic beverages are served in the pubs) for example. All these databases are feeding different projects, some governmental others in collaboration with universities and companies, like De-escalate, a research project by TU/e and NWO, in which researchers investigate whether interactive lighting may help serve to confine, contain and control aggressive events. Regarding the use of the data, the open data principles of Eindhoven states that data collected in the public space belongs to everybody, so it has to be made available, once anonymised.

The afternoon session was hosted by Effenaar, a pop music venue that in the last years is trying to support innovation in the field, helping artists to integrate technology in their new production. Director Jos Feijen explained to the participants that their goal is to change the future of experiencing pop music, a very conservative field. In order to do so, they bought devices such VR headset, sensors and controllers for artists to use and experiment with, encouraging them to prototype their ideas and test them with Effenaar audience.

One of the fields in which art and ICT came together in the last few years is undoubtedly virtual reality (extended also to augmented and mixed reality). Natasja Paulssen, board member of the Hyperspace Institute, gave a presentation about the status of the art of VR in the Netherlands and the role of Hyperspace Institute in this context: an organization for VR/AR/MR professionals whose goal is to professionalize even more the field, promote its

development and increase the quality of the projects, becoming a platform for knowledge sharing and advice.

The last part of the day was dedicated to a learning workshop on mapping ecosystem, led by Ingrid Willems, CEO of DataScouts, an intelligence platform for companies and organizations to gather competitive, ecosystem, market & value-network data. Part of what they offer as a company are tools to map ecosystems of relations and this knowledge was shared in the workshop, through different group and plenary sessions. After exploring the concept of an ecosystem with different graphic representations, participants collectively defined the steps of mapping: from desk analysis to field research, while selecting stakeholders and fixing parameters, in this way the first attempt of mapping could be carried out. A process that would need to be repeated continuously, to include more and more relationships and actors. Mapping will be the first step of the project: this phase will allow partners to scan for existing or potential opportunities. User needs should be then defined, as well as the impact criteria. Participants were asked to divide again into 3 groups to define possible roadmaps to reach the goals of the project. From the different proposed roadmaps, it emerged the needs to align ICT professionals and artist, to create a platform for them to meet and collaborate, getting out of their bubbles. A smart way to achieve that would be to create a call for them to work together on a specific topic (fashion, smart mobility…). The consortium will then support these new project, scanning for opportunities on a national and European level.

The day ended with a presentation of Matteo Michetti from ERVET (the agency for the economic valorization of region Emilia-Romagna in Italy) about identifying the perimeters of CCIs (Culture and Creative Industries), a classification that can change regionally according to the skills present in different areas. Matteo gave an overview of the framework used in Emilia Romagna and Eurostat, proposing new approaches to define CCIs, for example through occupation/profession rather than sectors.

Participants had dinner at Kazerne, an international podium for the creative industries in the heart of Eindhoven. Founder and Creative Director Annemoon Geurts explained to the attendees their original model: in a former military police barracks, the worlds of art, design, knowledge and technique come together with good food and drinks.

The second day of the Exchange of Experience started at Baltan Laboratories, in their public programme space in the basement of Natlab, the former Philips Physics Laboratory, repurposed in 2013 as a cultural space, hosting, besides Baltan, an arthouse cinema, a film-making platform and an architecture center. Olga Mink, director of Baltan Laboratories, shortly introduced Baltan, a platform that Initiates experimentation on the crossroads of art, design, science and technology. Baltan explores the implications, promises and pitfalls of our technological society, while curiously exploring the notion of what it means to be human. The topics of the lab are structured around this notion of a new humanism: the relationship between man and economy (Homo Economicus), identity and technology (Homo Sensorium), man and society (Homo Socialis), leaving space for curiosity and experimentation outside these themes (Homo Ludens). Baltan translates these ideas into different outputs, including collaborations, events, workshops, storytelling, publications and expos.

The following learning workshop helped participants to experience Baltan's mindset and speculative approach while giving an artistic perspective and methodology on mapping. The deep mapping workshop by audiovisual artist Miss Milivolt aimed to teach participants to listen to their surroundings in a different way, discovering the influence sound has on the perception of places. After a series of personal exercises on listening, a bit of sound theory and few examples from artists' practices, participants went for a walk in the neighbourhood of Strijp-S and, through the deep mapping kit designed by Miss Milivolt, were able to create their own sound map of the area. It was an important exercise for the group, an exercise about observing while influencing, as in the RegionArts project: mapping ICT and art collaborations, while helping to shape them.

After the workshop, Vassilis Charalampidis from the leadership group of the European Creative Hubs Network briefly presented the role of the network and the procedure to become a member.

Photos of the Exchange of Experience can be found online:

https://www.flickr.com/photos/baltanlaboratories/albums/72157704227455054

Credits: Photos by Sas Schilten

Contact Information

RegionArts Coordinator

Porto Design Factory (Porto Polytechnic Institute)

lmp@sc.ipp.pt

Communication:

🌐 www.interregeurope.eu/regionarts

🐦 @RegionArts

📘 www.facebook.com/RegionArts

💼 www.linkedin.com/company/regionarts/

Consortium RegionArts