



JULY 2023

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ARTISTS AS *AGENTS*

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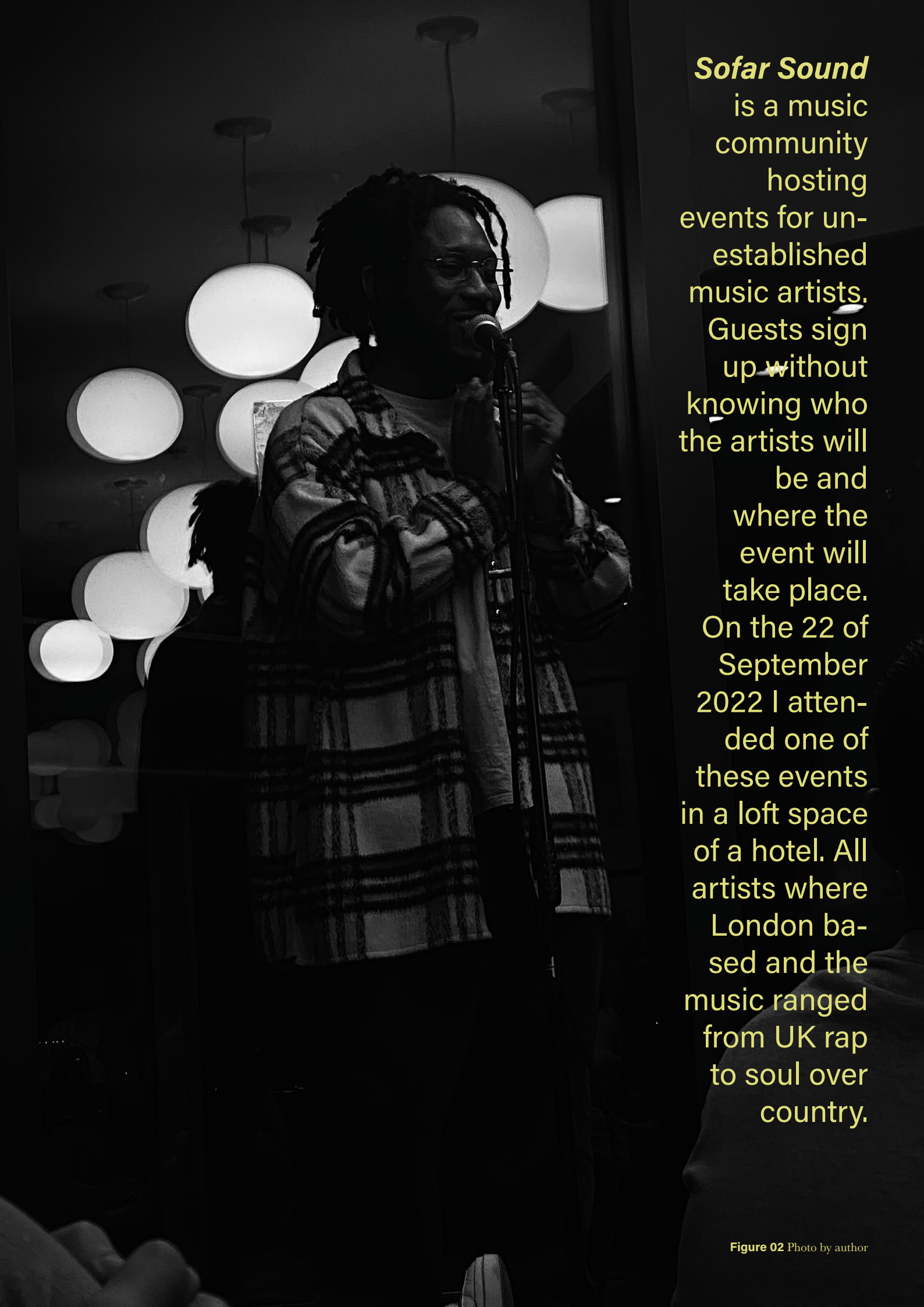
The impact of Art(ists) as an everyday practice on the built and lived environment

NO.01

ARTISTS FOR

interaction
connectivity
thought
creativity
equality
redevelopment
progression
placemaking
education
empowerment
transparency





Sofar Sound
is a music
community
hosting
events for un-
established
music artists.
Guests sign
up without
knowing who
the artists will
be and
where the
event will
take place.
On the 22 of
September
2022 I atten-
ded one of
these events
in a loft space
of a hotel. All
artists where
London ba-
sed and the
music ranged
from UK rap
to soul over
country.

Figure 03 diagrammatically showcases the money distribution among the three main actors (artists, dealers, buyers) of the art world. It shows that most of the money is found and traded in the smallest, top layer (buyers) whilst the biggest, lowest layer (artists) is left with the least.

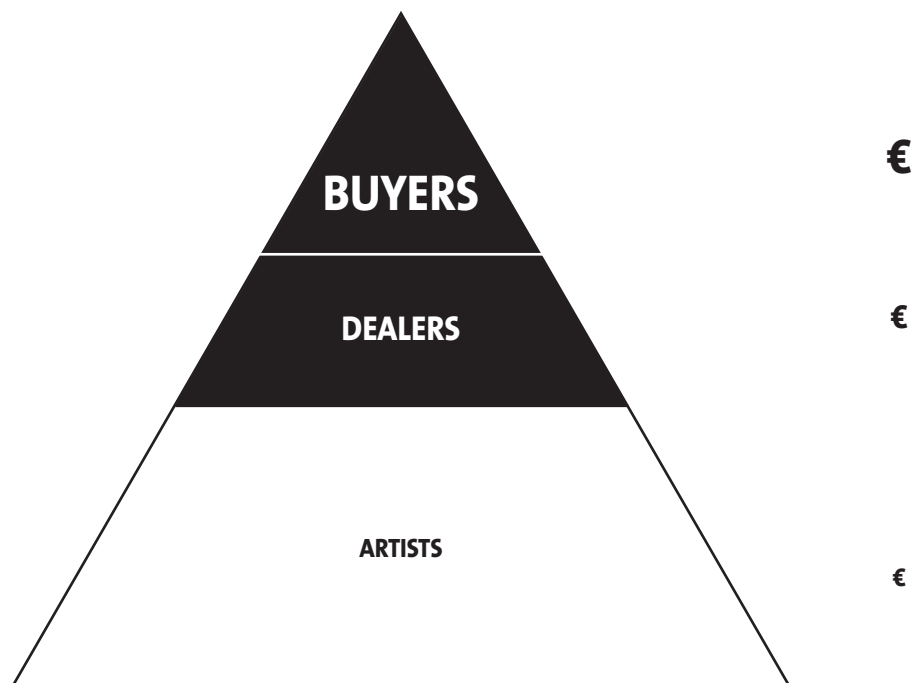


Figure 03 Value system

¹ 1. Magnus Resch and Jeffrey Deitch,
Management of Art Galleries, 3rd ed.
(Phaidon Press Limited, 2018), 18.

**,The Art Industry is cool,
sexy and overflowing with
money. Oh, no hold on. It is
an edgy, gritty world, with
painters and sculptors who
would die for their art,
caring nothing for money
but passionately committed
to their artistic meaning.’¹**

- Management of Art Galleries, M. Resch

The Architectural Design Crossovers graduation studio perceives the heterogeneity as the pervasive urban condition in the contemporary city, a state which cannot be addressed through the conventional disciplinary division. Therefore, in the studio we consider the architectural project a synthesis of the im/material conditions in an interdisciplinary framework that requires a multi-modal design research.

This years ADC graduation studio will focus on the heterogenous city of **London**.

AR3DC100 Architectural Design Crossovers
Graduation Studio 2022-2023
Heterogenous City

Research Paper

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A special acknowledgement to my tutors *Agnes van der Meij* (Design Mentor),
Florian Eckardt (Building Technology Mentor) and *Alper Semih Alkan* (Research
Mentor) for supporting me throughout the process.



Figure 04 Andy & Jean Michel painting problems at Andy's studio at 860 Broadway New York City, March 1984

2 1. Vocolo Radio, "Basquiat Decorates
Time and Space in Virtual Showcase
from the Broad," Vocolo Radio 91.1FM,
January 21, 2021

**,Art is how we decorate space,
music is how we decorate time.'**²

- Jean-Michel Basquiat (December 22, 1960 – August 12, 1988).

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Synopsis

3 1. Magnus Resch and Jeffrey Deitch, *Management of Art Galleries*, 3rd ed. (Phaidon Press Limited, 2018), 10.

Being an Artist is or can be an unthankful, often not even officially recognized profession. Although they entertain and sustain the cultural scene and the livelihood of our cities, they suffer to make a living and are placed at the bottom line of the Art Network (Figure 03, p. 6). This problem has traveled through time: Van Gogh, Monet, Vermeer, El Greco, all died poor and only became famous after their death. Today their paintings are worth millions. A phenomena that introduces a common, still existing issue evoking the question - Why are artists so undervalued and where does all the money go?

Magnus Resch in his book *Management of Art Galleries* puts it as follows:

„The art world is tough, the rules are a complete mystery to the uninitiated, and only the lucky few make money. Life in the art market means being constantly torn between culture and commerce [...].“³

What Resch summarizes is what intrigued me to further investigate: Why would someone decide to become an artist if the market and financial situation is so unrewarding? What are the reasons for this imbalanced distribution within the art world and the city? What impact do art, artists and art institutions have on the built environment? What does the economy around the artists look like? And after all, where in this network of relations can I position myself as an architect?

My first visit to London enhanced this curiosity and marks the starting point of this research. Drifting through the boroughs by looking at the city through the lens of art I realized atmospheric and appearance fluctuations between Center, East and South. It was clearly visible, where in the city art is being supervised and used as an implement to advertise or commercialize and where art is rather *uncontrolled* and used as a tool of expression or as a *voice-giver*. I wanted to know and understand what impact and dependencies these two opposing sides have on each other and their surroundings. How can they coexist?

The upcoming chapters will be a short time travel through the art world in London leading to a potential forecast that incorporates current changes, developments and technologies that impact our artistic spaces and the way we experience, perceive, sell, buy, produce and display art. What this research aims to unravel and conclude is the potential the artistic practice and especially the human actor, the artists, can have, if only actively incorporated and empowered more and given the freedom to flourish within the social, urban and built realm.

But first I would like to clarify who the artists are. This research sets focus on the **everyday artists**. Contrary to established, renown artists like Damien Hirst, Jeff Koons, Anselm Kiefer. etc. who have reached the top and now make millions with their art, everyday artists are people like you and me. They are artists, but also parents, teachers, bar tenders, café workers, cooks, students, etc. working part-time to maintain a living. They, unlike established artists, are often overseen and even undervalued although they make up the majority of all artists. And even though for most of them it is unlikely to climb the career ladder to reach the top of the art world, they still, knowingly, decide to choose this career path. Why? What drives and motivates them to walk this bumpy road?

The research is divided into a theoretical and theory based analysis (theories, case studies, theoretical readings, articles, interviews, etc.) and an ethnographic research which was conducted on site, in London.

The topic is introduced by giving an overview of the *impact* artists have on the built and lived environment. This is showcased on a variety of examples in London as well as other cities all around the world, revealing permanent changes, regenerations or innovations that derived from them. It then transitions into the *relations* art and artists have with other professions including architecture, revealing that art is more than just an artwork but rather a multifunctional discipline. Following this, art is brought into context with recent technological developments and *changes*. It will elaborate on how this has and potentially will influence the profession and the in-

volved actors. Eventually I will end the theoretical analysis with an actor-network analysis based on Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory. The aim was to obtain an understanding of how the art world and its actors operate. I wanted to uncover underlying social, financial and organizational dependencies and relations to define where an architectural design project could intertwine to empower the everyday artists.

All of this was supplemented by a practice-oriented ethnographic research in London which was composed of passive as well as active observations. I therefore analyzed a selection of sites and buildings (through documentary photography, sketches, notes, thematic maps) and conducted interviews and informal conversations with the study group ,everyday artists' as well as relevant, related people.

A mural painted on a shabby wall in London to beautify its appearance.



Figure.05 Photo by author

The ,everyday artists'

HI I'M MAX

Performance Artist
studies art history and
works as a
barkeeper during the
weekend

HI I'M JULIE

Postgraduate art student
works as a **barkeeper** as a
side job to maintain a living



HI I'M YASMIN

Master Student in fine arts
works as a **gallerist** in a small
gallery and gives **privat art lessons**

HELLO, I'M JOSHUA

Master Student in fine arts
works as a **cook** for private parties and **hosts**
gallery events as a side job

HEY I'M TINA

Is a painter and sculptor
she is a **mom**, works part-time in a
restaurant and gives **workshops** for
school kids

HI I'M KEVIN

Sculptor since 56 years
works as a **art teacher** in schools
and gives **workshop** for amateurs

HEY I'M MARY

Performance Artist
working in a **theater** and a **café** as a
side job to maintain a living

MY NAME IS JOE

Sculptor since 40 years
works as a **art teacher** in schools and
gives **workshop** for amateurs

Research Paper

22	<i>Introduction</i>
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Introduction

22

Figure 07
Woman in bathrobe holding a fire drencher to quench fire caused through the war



Keywords

art; gallery(ies); museum(s); public art; commodity; spatial discourse; net of relations; human and non-human actors; Actor-Network; social network; spatial network; everyday artists

4 1. Wouter Davidts et al., *Trading between Architecture and Art: Strategies and Practices of Exchange: Studies in Art and Architecture* (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2019), 17-25.

5 1. Sarah Bonnemaison and Ronit Eisenbach, *Installations by Architects: Experiments in Building and Design* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2009), 145.

London is known for many things, above all it is known to be a Hub of Art and Culture. With over 800 *art galleries*, 140 *museums*, a sea of *public art* and almost daily changing cultural events it is indisputably a City shaped by creativity. However, although Art plays such a vital role for the built and lived environment, defining and esteeming Art as an autonomous, independent and needful discipline turns into a challenge. For many art is predominantly seen as a component of or to Architecture or urban planning adding value, meaning, completion and uniqueness.⁴ But what falls into oblivion are the many faces art can have and the *spatial discourse* it can erect between humans, public space and the artwork itself. Art is not solely tied to its visual and performative appearance. It goes far beyond this understanding and opens up a podium for discussion, exchange and knowledge. Eventually art can be seen as a form of protest, giving voice to the voiceless, supporting a communal spirit by connecting people with the same purpose (Figure 06, p. 10 and 08, p. 25). Or a form of politics. Many artists use their works (paintings, sculptures, performances, music, literature) to challenge and question existing power structures, advocating for social change. Simultaneously does it serve as a platform for social commentary or critique often leading to social movements and change. Only one of many examples is Banksy. A street artist whose stenciled art works can be found all around the world and are mostly charged with critiques on social and political issues. Recently a series of banksy works have been revealed in war zones in the ukraine, sparking conversations and therethrough attracting the attention of a larger audience (Figure 07, p. 22).

No matter in what form we are confronted with Art, eventually it is as vital for a functioning and vibrant city and social life as any other discipline such as Architecture, Engineering or Urban Planning.⁵

6 Resch provides a detailed reading that evaluates the *Management of Art Galleries* from an insider perspective. His analysis is supported with a set of case studies and quotations that he obtained from interviews he conducted. The book gives insights and helps 'outsiders' to understand the system of how the art world, with focus on galleries, function and operate.

7 Latours Actor-Network Theory rethinks the notions of society and the explanations for it. In this research his definition of Actors serves as a guideline to define and untangle the Actor-Network of the art world. Latour defines actors namely not only as physically existent parts of the network, but rather everything that influences, changes and depends on the network and its actors.

1. Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, 1st ed. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

8 The YBA's or the Young British Artists have had an undeniably important and groundbreaking impact on the contemporary art market in London. Originating from a lack of space to exhibit, they redefined what was said to be in vogue, introducing new art forms and eventually transforming the entire system of art establishments. Fullerton explains on basis of archival research and in person interviews with YBA members, how this happened, what the cause was and what impact it had.

1. ELIZABETH FULLERTON, *ARTRAGE! The Story of the Britart Revolution*, 1st ed. (S.I.: THAMES & HUDSON, 2021).

9 1. *Contemporary Art in the United Kingdom* (London, U.K.: Black Dog Publishing, 2012).

10 1. Magnus Resch and Jeffrey Deitch, *Management of Art Galleries*

1. Magnus Resch, *How to Become a Successful Artist* (Berlin: Phaidon, 2021).

But because of a lack of appreciation and awareness among society of the relevance of Art for the built and lived environment the art world in itself is as dissected and unequal as it could be. Whilst at the peak art is being traded for millions of euros, the bottom barely gets to see any of the money. Artists belong to one of the professions with the lowest revenue (exceptions are not considered), which is shocking considering the average art auction sales are over 30 billion a year.⁶ How can these two opposing and at the same time dependent worlds coexist and survive?

To evaluate and formulate an answer to this question, there are two main components that form the foundation of this research. One is composed of a historical analysis, uncovering the evolution of the art world from the 80s until to date, elucidating the distribution of artistic spaces and institutions in the city. The other one digs deeper into the relations and the different, dependent layers of the art world, aiming to untangle and understand the *net of relations* or the *Actor-Network* which consists of *human and non-human actors*.⁷ By examining who and what is related, dependent and influenced by one another I was able to uncover secreted 'problems' or obstacles that exist spatially, financially as well as socially.

Main theoretical framework

Elizabeth Fullerton provides one perspective of *The Story of the Brit Art Revolution*, specifically enhancing the role of the YBAs (Young British Artists) on the rise of the contemporary art scene, which forms one of the most lucrative businesses among the art world today.⁸ Aligned with *Contemporary Art in the United Kingdom* by Black dog publishing, I was able to further justify and understand how the artistic practice and the exponential increase of art institutions during the past 40 years have influenced not only the art world but also the built and lived environment.⁹

The definition and evaluation of the *Actor-Network* is based on Bruno Latour's *Actor-Network-Theory*. A further understanding of how the actors operate, depend and relate to each other was delivered by Magnus Resch's *Management of Art Galleries* and *How To Become A Successful Artist*.¹⁰ He provides insight into the life of the art world based on a 10 year research and case studies.

Exhibition at Tate Modern 15. September 2022 - Bosnian Girl from Sejta Kamerić



Figure 08 Photo by author

WHAT ARE
WE GOING TO DO
WITH ALL THIS
FUTURE?

GUCCI

¹¹ Sennett describes in “*Building and Dwelling Ethics for the City*” Cities as living spaces for people. With the notion ‘open city’ and the concept of ‘ville’ and ‘cité’, he suggests to interpret the city as rather an open system that is adaptable and includes society (the users) in the forever ongoing shaping process than to exclude them or leave the decisions to a small group of authorized but not necessarily justified group of people.
1. Richard Sennett, *Building and Dwelling: Ethics for the City*, 1st ed., of American (s.l.: Farrar, 2018), 12-34, 42-78.

Lastly Richard Sennett in *Building and Dwelling for the City* presents a more expanded framework of the relations and leverages that a *social network* can have on the *spatial network* of cities bringing together the two components that form my research base.¹¹

The first two chapters *The impact of art and artists in the city* and *Relations of art and architecture* are based on an extensive theoretical reading which consists of theory-based, empirical and practical-based literature as well as statistical reports. They elucidate on the development of the evolution of the art world, helping to understand the relations between spatial and social patterns in the city and why and how accumulations of institutions or humans in certain areas have evolved, maintained and spread. Furthermore, did they provide an overview on how the art world has evolved over time and how we got to where we are today. A series of thematic maps have been created to mark mentioned patterns and eventually define areas of inquiry for my *fieldwork*. The third chapter *Technological developments and art* elaborates on current and future changes initiated by technological developments such as the rise of social media, electronic media or artificial intelligences (AI). This chapter ends with predictions towards future developments and progressions in the art world and how this will influence the architecture and the spatial requirements. These assumptions are substantiated by interviews and questionnaires I have conducted and evaluated during my ethnographic research (see chapter Fieldwork).

The last chapter *Untangling the actor-network* will investigate further in the social and institutional relations among the actors of the art world. On the basis of Bruno Latour’s Actor-Network Theory (ANT) as well as Magnus Reschs extensive case studies on art galleries I made an attempt to untangle the net of relations specifically focusing on the social connections and dependencies among the actors (human and non-human) and the financial flows.

Research questions

Main Question

28

What architectural, spatial intervention is needed to maintain, enhance and sustain the proliferation of the everyday artists in the built and lived environment?

Sub Question

What does the architecture have to provide to serve as a catalyst for everyday artists and the public realm?

How do current and future progressions influence the relation between art and architecture as well as the life and the career of everyday artists?



Figure 10 Photo by author -

The impact of art and art

From squatting to urban renewal

Figure 11 Strikes in London, Southwark



The evolution of the art world in London, especially the contemporary art market, is influenced and shaped by a series of consecutive events, protests and movements that started during the 70s and reached their peak by the end of the 80s. They mark a time of change. These events not only impacted and redefined the perception of the public towards the art market, which was to date preeminently associated with a *very discreet gentlemen's club*¹², but also influenced the housing market as well as the city structure and the emergence of most of London's today existing art institutions and initiatives.

artists in the city

12 I. ELIZABETH FULLERTON, *ART-TRAGE! The Story of the Britart Revolution*, p.7

13 The ACME Housing Association is a charity from Artists for Artists since 1972, providing affordable studios, work/live spaces and a programme of residencies and awards. ACME was an officially registered association which gave Artists the freedom to repair and redevelop properties given from the Greater London Council.

14 'Southwark Park Galleries is a contemporary arts organization delivering exhibitions, public engagement and learning programmes across two galleries in the heart of Southwark Park in North-East Southwark.' (Southwark Park Galleries, n.d.)

Chisenhale Art Place (CAP) is a artist lead charity in Tower Hamlets, London. Its a formation of three independent institutions, CAP, Chisenhale Dance Space (CDS) and Chisenhale gallery. During the mid 80s they moved from a building complex named Butlers Wharf by the river Thames into the today CAP building, a former veneer factory that stood empty for over 10 years until artists repurposed and reused the space.

Emergence of Artist communities

London's housing market has always and still is a frustrating challenge especially for the ones with little to no regular income. The prices are outrageous and the supply is limited. During the 70s and 80s though, particularly in the south and east of the city, the supply of empty properties wasn't as limited as it is today. Many houses and apartments stood empty, exposed to decay. However, despite the south and east ends reputation described as rural, less developed and partially derelict, many social minorities among which were Artists saw these empty spaces as an opportunity. *Squatting*, a form of taking illegal ownership of empty properties, was the solution to their housing problem. Often the consequence was vandalism, arrest, protests or strikes (Figure 11, p. 30). As a counteraction and to find a legal solution to inhabit, in 1972 Artists founded the first Housing Association *ACME*.¹³ This formed further pockets for independent Artist communities. By gradually repurposing abandoned, almost ruin-like building leftovers into living, working and (temporary) exhibition spaces. In a way, they paid their rent through the contribution of free art for everyone and simultaneously upgraded and „cleaned up“ the entire neighborhood. Over time the Artist scene of the south and the east turned into a self-sustaining environment, functioning alongside the adjacent districts. This period and the formation of ACME stimulated the redefinition and the rise of the contemporary art scene in London. However, it took another almost twenty years until the contemporary art scene also found recognition of the public and established institutions. Organizations like *Southwark Park Galleries* (1984) in the South or *Chisenhale Art Place* (1980) in the East are first examples of former redundant spaces that have been repurposed by Artists to support and offer a platform for networking, exhibiting and engaging with one another and the communities.¹⁴ Not only did they turn ‚nothing‘ into ‚something‘, but by taking over decaying buildings and entire areas they uncovered an until then overlooked and long forgotten potential.

Figure 12 Photo by author - Facade of Chisenhale Art Place, Tower Hamlets



- 15 Urban renewal: A „process [that] involves the inflow of capital investment into the real estate of an already existing place in the metropolitan region whose values are depressed.“

Gentrification: According to Gottdiener and Budd in *Key Concepts in Urban Studies* Gentrification „involves the inflow of capital investment into the real estate of an already existing place in the metropolitan region whose values are depressed.“ It's consequences are often „deterioration of the housing stock and the community environment. [...] Rents rise [...] [and] higher income owneroccupation“.

1. Mark Gottdiener, Leslie Budd, and Panu Lehtovuori, *Key Concepts in Urban Studies* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2016), 32-33.

Urban renewal and its consequences

London's population has reached just about nine million people with a tendency of further increase in the upcoming years. Whilst the population can grow the space however is limited and already almost exhausted. *Urban renewal* or *Gentrification* therefore is a well known phenomena to regenerate former empty plots and buildings mostly turning them into luxury apartment complexes or ‚hipsterized‘ areas.¹⁵ Artists unknowingly support this mechanism by revealing the potential these areas have. An example that showcases this regeneration process, delivers the already mentioned charity and artist lead *Southwark Park Gallery* association. During the 70s a group of independent Artists formed an artist community - the Bermondsey Artist Group. Due to the lack of space and expensive rents they moved into an empty warehouse complex in Southwark called Butler's Wharf (Figure 16). Located right by river Thames and thanks to the ‚clean up‘ done by the artists, local authorities have become aware of it and turned the complex within only a couple of years into luxurious apartments, restaurants and cafés. Eventually the entire area underwent an ‘upgrade‘ today offering a variety of established museums, galleries, fancy restaurants and cafés. This is not a critique on Gentrification persé, however by

¹⁶ **Spatial network**

According to the definition of the University of Cambridge, A spatial network is a graph whose nodes are embedded in a metric space. Hence, in spatial networks, one can apply a distance function between two nodes in the network.¹⁶

1. Anastasios Noulas, "Social and technological Network analysis' Lecture 4: community detection ...," Social and Technological Network Analysis: Spatial Networks, Mobility and Applications, February 2015, <https://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/teaching/1415/L109/L109-lecture4.pdf>, slide 3.

For example a spatial network could consist of different locations, areas or buildings.

Social network

An example for a social network would be an artist community like the Bermondsey Artist Group. Its a self-sustaining and self-sufficient social formation of people that connect, network and depend on each other. Most of the time these groupings emerge on basis of a similarity (interest, aim, etc.), in this case art and the a lack of space.

¹⁷ 1. A Shkuda, "The Lofts of Soho," University of Chicago Press, April 1, 2016, <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/L/bo22776667.html>, chapter 2,3,4 and 8.

displacing without *replacing* the urban renewal process not only dissipates the *spatial network*, it also wrecks the *social network* apart.¹⁶ Furthermore does this process in many cases not solve the initial problem - a lack of affordable housing - in fact, it only shifts or allocates the 'discriminated' from one place to another. ***In a way they become wanderers or nomads in the city.***

This phenomenon and the impact of artists on urban change, urban renewal and the redevelopment of neighborhoods and buildings can be backtraced all around the world. Another example can be seen in SoHo in New York City, USA (Figure 32, p. 38/39). Likewise in London, Artists in New York suffered under the lack of affordable housing and studio spaces to work in.

SoHo, a former manufacturing hub in lower Manhattan, offered a variety of empty, redundant, industrial cast-iron buildings that had stood empty since the beginning of the 19th century. During the 60s artists illegally started moving into the empty buildings. The top floors, known as Artist-Lofts, offered an ideal natural light setting and enough space for all kinds of creative operations and interventions (Figure 13, p. 35 and 23-26, p. 36). The ground floors were partially repurposed into gallery and exhibition spaces or restaurants (Figure 27/28, p. 38/39).¹⁷

Living in a loft or in an industrial building, might seem like an implicitness today, but was inconceivable back in the 60s. Artists were pioneers, introducing this new concept of living by rezoning the use of former industrial buildings. They demonstrated how forgotten, almost dead areas can be revitalized and turned into one of the most hip and expensive areas of the city. This process was so successful to the extent that cities all around the world started to imitate the appearance as well as the buildings division. Rotterdam's Little Coolhaven is one good example. A recently built neighborhood not only emulating the rustic and industrial atmosphere of SoHo's brick buildings but also the spacious artist-loft inspired top floors and the open, commercially used ground floors.

The reason why cities imitate and rebuild neighborhoods like SoHo in the case of Little Coolhaven, is because of the reputation it has. It's associated with terms like ,cool', ,hip', ,artsy' and ,contemporary'. The term *Artist-Loft* is often even used to advertise a space and to attract attention of potential tenants or buyers. A successful urban intervention eventually not only provides new space but contributes to the city's economy and identity.

In a way it seems almost paradoxical, considering the Artist-Lofts initial use was a stopgap for a group of socially undervalued and overseen people and today none of mentioned people live in them. In fact the opposite is the case. Artists-Lofts are one of the most expensive apartments within a building, mostly belonging to developers or private, wealthy non-artists. The shift of ,tenants' has taken away the authenticity of these spaces and subdued the unique identity it once emerged from.

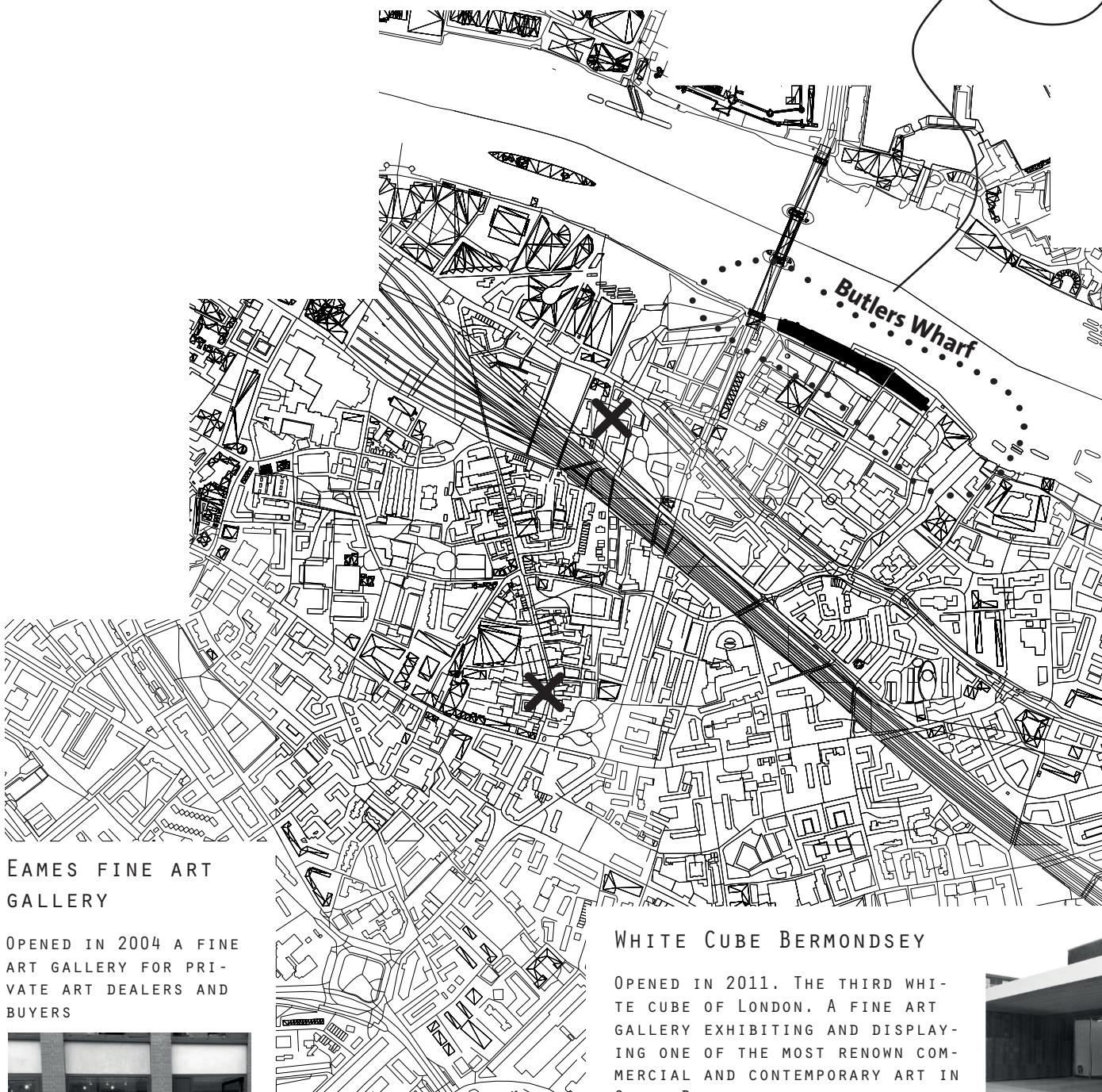
The contribution of artists for our cities goes far beyond the sole production of art itself. What falls into oblivion is that they redefine and introduce new ways of how to use space, they breathe new life into ormerly forgotten almost dead areas and buildings and above all they are a vital component of the driving engine of the city's economy.

2,200-square-foot artist-loft bought by the artist L. Sampsons for \$15,000 during the 70s.
In 2020 it was sold for \$2.4 million. The space was one of the last 'original' artist lofts in SoHo.



Figure 13 Former Artist Loft in SoHo, New York

Gentrification process deriving from Artists use of empty space



EAMES FINE ART GALLERY

OPENED IN 2004 A FINE ART GALLERY FOR PRIVATE ART DEALERS AND BUYERS



Figure 17

WHITE CUBE BERMONDSEY

OPENED IN 2011. THE THIRD WHITE CUBE OF LONDON. A FINE ART GALLERY EXHIBITING AND DISPLAYING ONE OF THE MOST RENOWN COMMERCIAL AND CONTEMPORARY ART IN GREAT BRITAIN.



Figure 18

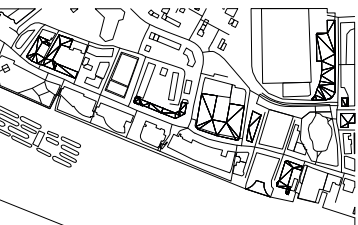
ce - London



MANY ARTISTS FROM BUTLERS WHARF MOVED TO A FORMER EMPTY VENEER FACTORY, TODAY KNOWN AS CHISENHALE ART PLACE IN TOWER HAMLETS

19TH CENTURY

A FORMER STORAGE COMPLEX BUILT DURING THE 19TH CENTURY BY THE DOCKS RIGHT NEXT TO THE RIVER THEMES. DURING THE 70S THE BUILDING COMPLEX WAS UNUSED AND EXPOSED TO DECAY.



1971

A LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND SPACES TO WORK AND EXHIBIT MADE ATISTS TAKE OVER THE EMPTY BUTLER'S WHARF SPACES.



Figure 14

1979

OVER TIME THEY RPURPOSED, REUSED AND RENOVATED THE EMPTY SPACES FOR THEIR OWN NEEDS AND SIMULTANEOUSLY CONTRIBUTED TO UPLIFT THE AREA UNKNOWNLY ATTRACTING THE ATTENTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES.



Figure 15

1980

FROM 1980 ON THE COMPLEX HAD BEEN GRADUALLY RENOVATED INTO LUXURY APARTMENTS, OFFICES AND GASTRONOMY, DISPLACING AND DISTRIBUTING THE ARTISTS ALL OVER LONDON. THE PROCESS ENTAILED THE ENTIRE AREA TO BE GENTRIFIED.



Figure 16

LAKE AND DILSTON GALLERY

DURING 1980S IN NEED OF A SPACE TO EXHIBIT CONTEMPORARY ART A GROUP OF ARTISTS (BERMONDSEY ARTIST GROUP) REPURPOSED A FORMER CAFÉ INTO A GALLERY SPACE LEAD BY ARTISTS. THE LAKE GALLERY (FIGURE 14) WAS ONE OF THE FIRST SPACES OF ITS KIND IN LONDON. DUE TO ITS SUCCESS THE GALLERY SPACE NEEDED TO BE EXTENDED AND DILSTON GALLERY (FIGURE 15) WAS OPENED.

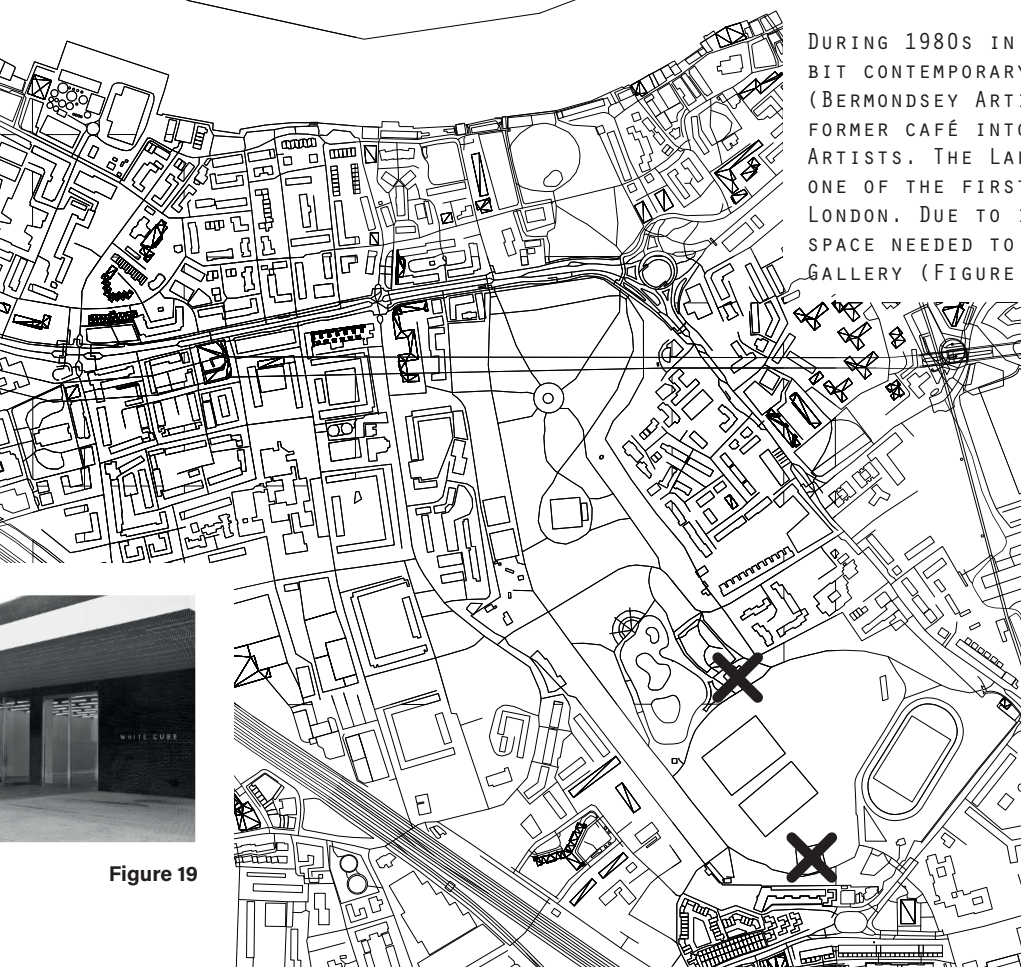


Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22

FORMER 112 GREENE STREET
TODAY WHITE COLUMNS



Gentrification process deriving from Artists use of empty space



Figure 23



Figure 26



Figure 24

ARTIST-LOFT 1970 VS. TODAY

L. SAMPSONS IS AN ARTIST FROM THE 70S WHO BOUGHT HER 2,200-SQUARE-FOOT ARTIST-LOFT IN 1972 FOR \$15,000. IN 2020 SHE SOLD THE APARTMENT FOR \$2.4 MILLION. SAMPSONS IS ONE OF THE LAST OF HER GENERATION WHO STILL LIVED IN SOHO. FIGURE 23-26 SHOW HER APARTMENT WHEN SHE INHABITED THE LOFT.



Figure 25

FOOD

A RESTAURANT FROM ARTISTS FOR ARTISTS FOUNDED IN 1971. IT WAS ONE OF THE FIRST IMPORTANT RESTAURANTS IN SOHO. ARTISTS COULD MEET, EXCHANGE AND EAT TOGETHER. AMONG THE FOUNDING MEMBERS WAS GORDON MATTA-CLARK. TODAY IT STILL IS A RESTAURANT BUT IT IS NOT CONNECTED WITH THE ORIGINAL FOOD.



Figure 27

THE DRAWING CENTER

FOUNDED IN 1977. AN EXHIBITION SPACE IN DOWNTOWN SOHO. FIRST LOCATED IN A GROUND-FLOOR WAREHOUSE IN UPPER SOHO THEN MOVED TO LOWER SOHO.



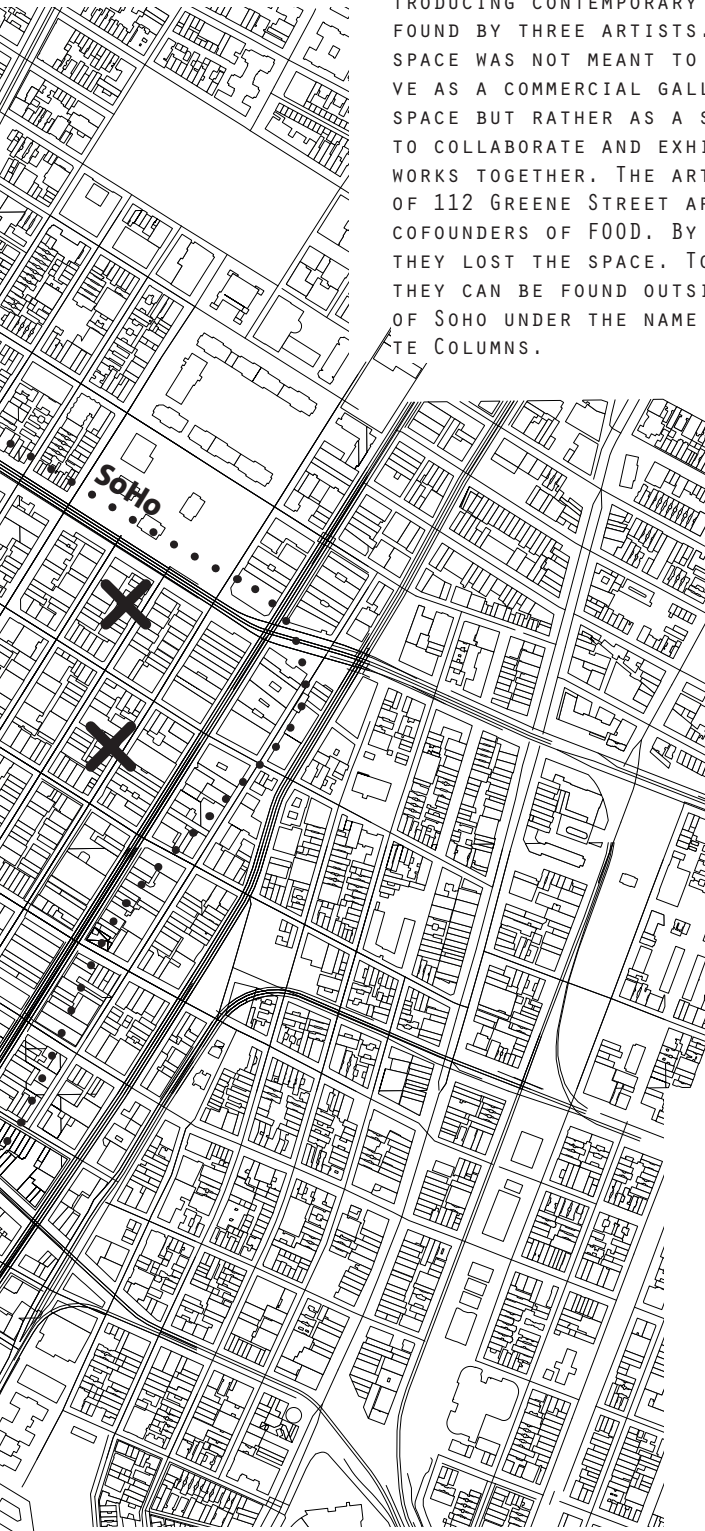
ce - SoHo, New York City

112 GREENE STREET

OPENED IN 1970, A GROUND-BREAKING GALLERY SPACE INTRODUCING CONTEMPORARY ART FOUND BY THREE ARTISTS. THE SPACE WAS NOT MEANT TO SERVE AS A COMMERCIAL GALLERY SPACE BUT RATHER AS A SPACE TO COLLABORATE AND EXHIBIT WORKS TOGETHER. THE ARTISTS OF 112 GREENE STREET ARE COFOUNDERS OF FOOD. BY 1978 THEY LOST THE SPACE. TODAY THEY CAN BE FOUND OUTSIDE OF SOHO UNDER THE NAME WHITE COLUMNS.



Figure 28



SoHo 1909

SOHO IN THE BEGINNING OF THE 19TH CENTURY WAS PREDOMINATELY AN INDUSTRIAL HUB WITH ZERO RESIDENTIAL OR LIVING OPPORTUNITIES/DEMANDS. THE BUILDINGS ALL WERE USED FOR MANUFACTURING AND PRODUCTION.

1975

OVER TIME SOHO'S BUILDINGS EMPTIED AS INDUSTRIES MOVED OUT OF THE CITY. WITH THE BEGINNING OF THE 60S ARTISTS WERE THE FIRST PEOPLE TO INHABIT THE REDUNDANT ALMOST DEAD STEEL CONSTRUCTIONS.

TODAY

SOHO TODAY IS KNOWN AS A HIP AND ARTSY NEIGHBOURHOOD. HOWEVER, ALTHOUGH STILL SHAPED BY ART AND ARTISTS, IT IS NOT ONLY (IF NOT THE LEAST) INHABITED BY ARTISTS BUT RATHER HAS TURNED INTO ONE OF THE MOST EXPENSIVE AND MOST DEMANDED AREAS OF MANHATTAN.



Figure 29



Figure 30



Figure 31

Figure 32

Relations of art and arch

and how they influence each other



Figure 33 Installation view of Freeze 1988

Experiencing the London art scene can be as fascinating as it is overwhelming. With over 800 art galleries, 140 museums and an unknown number of public art and installations it is hard to believe that most of mentioned institutions, especially art galleries, have only emerged during the past 30 to 40 years. Contemporary art before that, was a ghost strolling through the derelict areas of London's art scene. What has changed?

Figure 33

The photo shows an installation view of the inside of the Freeze building. The space is located by the Surrey Docks in London and was an empty, derelict building when repurposed as an exhibition space in 1988. After the event it was used by Damien Hirst and other artists as a working/studio space.

18 1. *Contemporary Art in the United Kingdom*. p.18

19 *ibid.* p. 19

20 *ibid.* p. 20

21 The Freeze was the first contemporary Art Fair happening in 1988 organized by a group of the YBA's (Young British Artists) redefining the role of the contemporary art market starting. One main organizer was Damien Hirst, one of the most successful artists today.

Figure 34

Exhibition of a 'Market' imitation in 1990 in an old industrial building in Building One, Bermondsey, London.

Artists as Agents

By the end of the 80s, a group of Artists known as the *YBA's*¹⁸ - Young British Artists or New British Art (among which was Damien Hirst) came together on a roundtable discussion in London. The lack of venues to display contemporary art was so pressing, that they had to come up with an alternative. They aimed not only *,to make something happen but then also to see it stick. [...] a scene, work and practices, and then platforms and possibilities would emerge.*¹⁹ This idea turned into reality and redefined the art market entirely. Galleries started to arise in all corners of the city offering official, established platforms to display art and simultaneously serve as an *intermediate* between the public, buyers, collectors and the artists themselves. An artist all of a sudden was more than just the creative mind behind the artwork, but an agent who builds a bridge towards an audience that prior only associated art with an untouchable, long-established elite. The YBAs redefined the term art, introducing it as a tool of communication, expression and interaction *,[expanding] [...] the realms of culture and economy*²⁰. One main event that manifested the birth and rise of the YBAs as well as the contemporary art market was the first *Freeze*²¹ organized by Damien Hirst and his peers in an old Warehouse by the Docklands in London (Figure 33, p. 40). What made the exhibition significant was its innovative approach to curating the artworks. Hirst and his peers took control over the exhibition space and transformed the warehouse into a raw, industrial-style setting that complemented the works on display and challenged traditional gallery conventions. The white, sleek walls and the minimalistic spatial layout were indicators that smoothed the way towards the future 'white cube'.

Figure 34 Exhibition in building One in Bermondsey



Figure 35
Spatial appearance and impact of a
White Cube on art

Art as a commodity

Again, did the self-organization of the artists lead to pioneering concepts that are eventually adopted and developed further by the generality. Likewise the Artist-Lofts did the concept of the White Cube emerge out of a simple but effective solution to a problem. By minimizing spatial distractions including natural lighting, agitative wall colors or misshaped spaces the focus automatically falls onto the object displayed, rather than the surrounding architecture. White Cubes as well as Black Boxes therefore provide the ideal exhibition space and predominate in variations in most museums and gallery spaces today. However, although the initial idea of these concepts was to accentuate and draw attention towards the object, it was also used to address a larger audience. With the Freeze new art forms and concepts have been introduced to the art market, expanding the group of interests towards the generality, hence everyone.

To comply with the uprising demand further institutionalization of gallery spaces was the consequence. That also meant that new actors were introduced to the art network including the government and wealthy or private investors who have the financial resources to build new museums or invest into art and upcoming artists. Art turned into a commodity, cementing even more the already prevailing hierarchy and dissipating the social network into an elite group of successful and established artists and the majority, the everyday artists.



Figure 35 Saatchi Gallery, White Cube exhibition space

22 I. Wouter Davidts et al., Trading between Architecture and Art: Strategies and Practices of Exchange: Studies in Art and Architecture, 17-25.

23 I. Joshua Obichere, Interviews with everyday artists, personal, September 22, 2022.

Art and Architecture - a two-way transaction

Spatially it was and still is a tightrope walk between old and new. On the one hand the crude, industrial and derelict warehouses or empty buildings mostly found in remote areas of the city, either temporarily transformed or permanently converted into exhibition spaces, like the Freeze building. On the other hand established, unique and minimalistic galleries whose reputation alone serves as a springboard for the artists. Saatchi Gallery (Figure 35, p. 42), found in 1985, is an example that demonstrates the influence the space, the location or the name of a building has on the success of an artist. Whilst in cases like old warehouses or derelict buildings, art revives the architecture by bringing back meaning and purpose, architecture in the case of *Saatchi Gallery* or spatial concepts like White Cube or Black Box, frame and uplift the reputation of the artwork as well as the of the artist.²² In both cases reputation and publicity play a key role to reach the biggest audience possible.

In an interview I conducted with an Artist student he emphasized on the relevance of the exhibition space for their career, networking and to set a foot into the market in general.

He said:

,I went to an exhibition [...] at Central Saint Martins. [...]. And there were thousands of people who came to visit due to its reputation, the atmosphere the building creates and the scenery [...]. So of course Dealers come to look out for new talents. So the building or the story build around it are vital for an Artist to obtain recognition.'²³

This suggests that especially for unestablished artists whose name or work alone isn't yet enough to receive recognition the space and the architecture is vital to serve as a springboard for their future career.

Until now though the 'trade' or the 'two-way transaction' between art and architecture was only considered how one can contribute to the other, always emphasizing the importance of Art **or** Architecture. Another option however, is the equal collaboration the two professions can form, when the art exceeds the space and they become one entity. When art and architecture, or artists and architects, per-

Figure 36

1. Markus Tretter, photograph (Bregenz, n.d.), Kunsthau Bregenz .

form in union. This can translate into art becoming architecture or architecture becoming art, influencing the way one designs the space as well as the artwork itself. One collaboration that showcases this performance is in Peter Zumthor (architect) Kunsthau Graz where Olafur Eliasson (artist) in 2001 designed with the mediate motion exhibition an experience where art and architecture became one entity. Art in that sense wasn't just perceived by our eyes, but with all our senses turning it into an augmented reality art experience. (Figure 36, p. 45)

What this example showcases is how art becomes more than just an artwork hanging on the wall'. In fact, the work of art almost disappears with the space. But not in the sense that it claims to absorb or surpass the art work, moreover does the space mute itself down allowing a synergy between space and art to take place. As a visitor it is almost impossible to differ between what is art and what is architecture. Are they the same? Is the architecture the artwork? Is the artwork the architecture? In cases like the Kunsthau Graz, where the exhibition can only be fully grasped through the physical experience and perception of the visitor, one field depends on the other by giving it purpose and meaning. Without the art the space would just be another exhibition space - hence ordinary. Without the space the art couldn't perform and be experienced in the first place. However, these 'ordinary' spaces allow the architecture to go into a subline level, meaning they could host almost anything or anyone.

Furthermore, as disciplines start to overlap and merge more and more, being an artist not only incorporates the traditional way of producing art as in drawing, sculpting, painting, performing etc. but starts to ask for an expanded repertoire of skills. The range can span from technological, architectural to scientific background knowledge.



Figure 36 When architecture and art synergize

Figure 37 shows the to date distribution of commercial, private and public galleries as well as museums. By thematically mapping art institutions I was able to identify patterns, accumulations and compressions substantiating the results of the theoretical analysis and the research on the evolution of the art world I have previously conducted. What stands out is the condensing accumulation of museums and galleries in the major city (A2 and B2), including the City of London or City of Westminster. The minor cities (C1, C2 and B3), including Hackney, Tower Hamlets or Southwark show a noticeable lower number of these institutions. This observation would presume that the location of the space is one, if not the most decisive factor of success for an art institution. However, according to Magnus Resch's research on *Management of Art Galleries*, does the location have little impact on the actual success path of a gallery space.

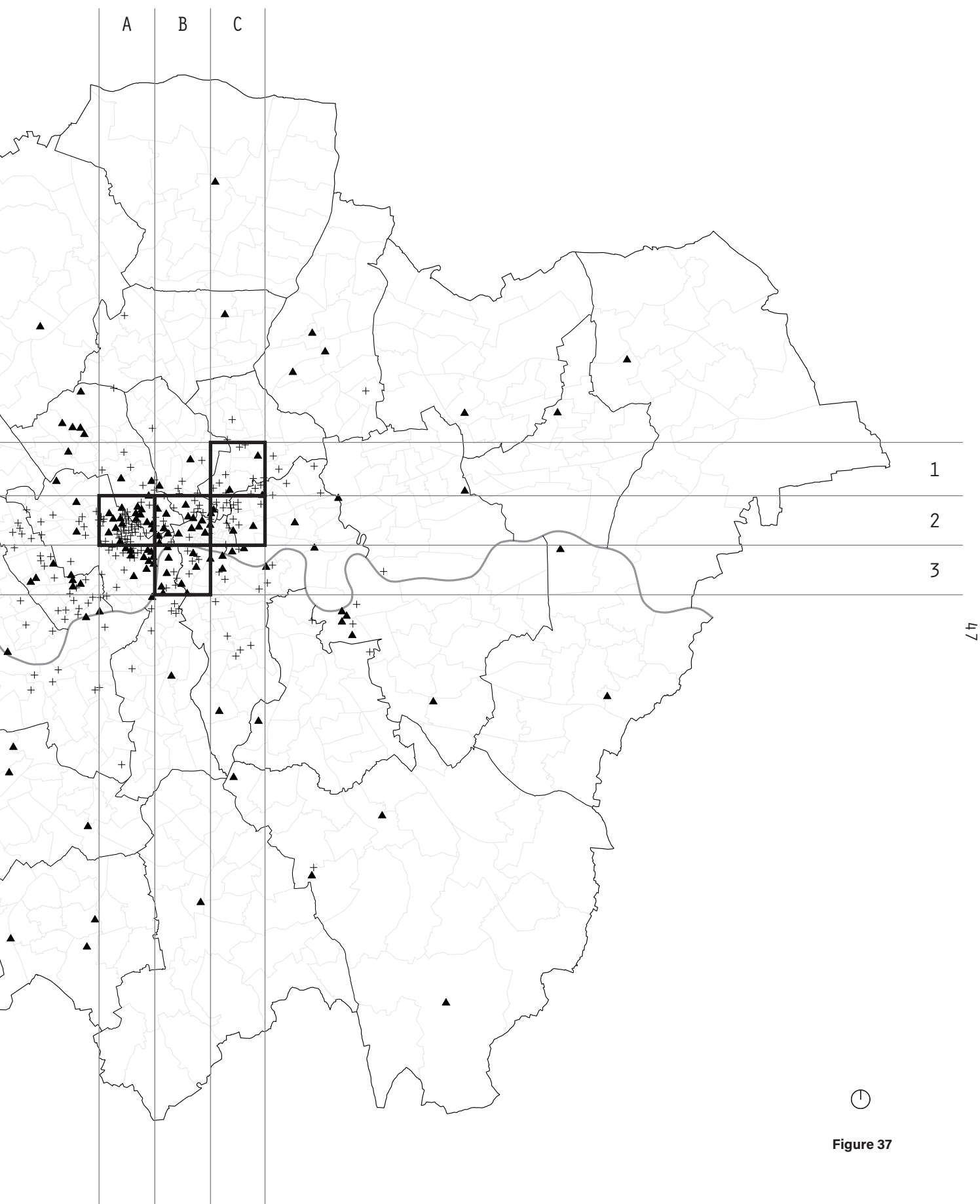
He writes:

***A gallery in a decentralized location can be as successful as a gallery in the busiest city street. [...] [it] cannot be justified with an economic rationale; to some extent, it can be explained by tribe mentality, [...] reputation, visibility and brand building.*²⁴**

Unsurprisingly this phenomena is closely connected with the high rents. Small, yet unknown galleries can't afford a premium location and have to set their space up somewhere further outside.



²⁴ 1. Magnus Resch and Jeffrey Deitch, *Management of Art Galleries*, p.36-37



Technological developm

How they will and have influence(d) the art w

48

Already during the 60s, with the development of technological inventions, including the computer or the first video game console, Artists discovered the possibilities of the use of *,non-objective materials, such as light, sound, video [and] natural processes'*²⁵. Back then, predominantly aiming to *,break the boundaries [...] of the well-defined art object'*²⁶ they also showed that art can expand beyond the traditional way of producing and displaying in museums and galleries. By collaborating with technology and nature they introduced artists as an interdisciplinary profession, bringing together the artist, the scientist, the technician²⁷ or the biologist. However, these movements known as *Earth Art and Environmental Movement* and *Art and Technology Movement* only lasted a few years, until they lost in recognition.²⁸

ents and art

world, physical²¹ and digital space

25 1. Marga Bijvoet, *Art as Inquiry toward New Collaborations between Art, Science, and Technology*, vol. 32 (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), p.6.

26 *ibid.* p. 1

27 *ibid.* p. 4

28 The Earth Art and Environmental Movement as well as the Art and Technology movement are movements that arose during the 60s as a counteraction of the previous period of modernism. They aimed „to break the boundaries“ of the traditional understanding of art by including new types of materials, technologies and progressions and expanding the field of an Artists towards other professions such as the one of a Scientist or a Technician.

29 1. Suzanne Lacy, *Mapping the Terrain New Genre Public Art*, 1st ed. (Seattle: Bay Press, 1996).

30 1. „Art and Design in 2030: The Future of Us,” School of the Art Institute of Chicago, accessed January 6, 2023, <https://www.saic.edu/magazine/fall21/art-design-2030>, par.8.

31 OXMAN is a New York based company fusing design, technology and biology found by the designer and professor Neri Oxman.
1. „Oxman,” Company, accessed March 15, 2023, <https://oxman.com/company>.

Artists beyond their field ,art‘

Today, once again the artistic practice is facing a turning point that could redefine the art world including the practice and the way we perceive, experience and display art. The progressions and expansions of new technologies and materials introduce a stage for an immersive art experience, including *mixed, virtual and augmented reality*²⁹. Especially the past two years, with Covid restricting our daily lives, enhanced the importance and the need of finding alternative solutions for the cultural sector. But not only electronic media and artificial intelligences (AI) intertwine in the practice, experimenting with biobased and natural materials becomes more and more relevant.³⁰ Overlaps and the intersection of seemingly opposing professions allow to experiment in directions that haven’t been taken into consideration before. One company that showcases how this multidisciplinary approach can successfully contribute to new discoveries is OXMAN.³¹ The company fuses design, technology and biology, hiring professionals from all three fields. Together they research new materials and new design solutions that can be used on every scale, from macro scale to micro scale. Approaches like OXMAN are fruitful because they allow us to investigate and think from unconventional perspectives. An artist for example thinks, acts and works differently to a scientist or biologist and vice versa. On top of that, many discoveries or inventions derive from coincidences or haphazardly experimenting. So why not take an artist’s work as an inspiration for a scientific solution?

The ethnographic research I have conducted on the study group ,artists‘ uncovered that many artists haven’t studied art at all or only as a Master degree. In fact, a vast number have graduated in architecture, engineering, fashion design or even science before and then switched to a degree in fine arts. This means that the overlap and the input of other professions already ties early into the work and career of an artist.

32 1. Yasmin Idris, *Interviews with everyday artists*, personal, September 22, 2022.

33 *digital (exhibition) space* is a term I use to describe social media platforms as a space for artists to display and promote their work to the public. It includes platforms like Instagram, Pinterest, Youtube, etc. and is mostly done by the artists themselves not by art dealers or curators.

The role of social media

Another observation I made was the prominence of social media. Every artist I talked to either indicated or showed me their social media account. A MA fine arts student I interviewed stated:

,Social Media is one of the main platforms for all Artists today.³²

But is that so? Considering that nowadays no matter what age, country or (financial) status, everyone owns at least one digital device (phone, computer, TV, etc.) that has access to the internet hence everything out there it is no surprise that through digitalization social media is on the fast lane as a form of *digital (exhibition) space*³³, self-promotion and networking platform. Digitalization certainly has blurred the boundaries that have been built and manifested throughout history, opening doors to fields, knowledge and opportunities that have been formerly sealed and have caused inequality and repression. However, this doesn't justify social media to be the main platform for all artists. Many art forms including performance, visual and even digital art can't equally be represented by it. Social Media can't accommodate every art to its full potential. Let's take performance art as an example. Although social media can represent the performance itself (dance or music in form of two dimensional videos or pictures) it can't compete with the physical experience. Anyone who has been to a live concert knows that the feeling of standing in the crowd and seeing the artist perform is better than watching the video on their phone afterwards. On top of that, although social media might simplify the reachability and accessibility, it also imposes new hierarchical systems that are defined by the amount of followers, popularity, content, uniqueness, etc. leading to new forms of inequality and unequal opportunities.

Eventually, the presence and use of social media as a tool of communication, interaction and display doesn't necessarily ease the life and career path of an artist but comes with another form of expectation and pressure. It almost causes an obsession with needing to be up to date and following the current trend. Additionally it invites to compare and judge one another and oneself, creating doubt and insecurity which leads to adaptation. It's almost like a downward going spiral where the uniqueness gets lost on the way.

34 1. "Art and Design in 2030: The Future of Us", par. 3,4

The impact of technological progressions on physical space

All of the mentioned progressions will ask for a redefinition and adaptation of spatial solutions, systems and programs and might even question the necessity of physical space in the first place. If immersive and explorative art forms will succeed and art will further expand and intertwine with other professions, traditional exhibition and gallery spaces will no longer be sufficient for their demands. Furthermore will these interdisciplinary approaches ask for spatial solutions, where a variety of professions can come together, learn, educate and support each other.

Linda Nelson Keane, a professor, architect and designer sums it up as follows:

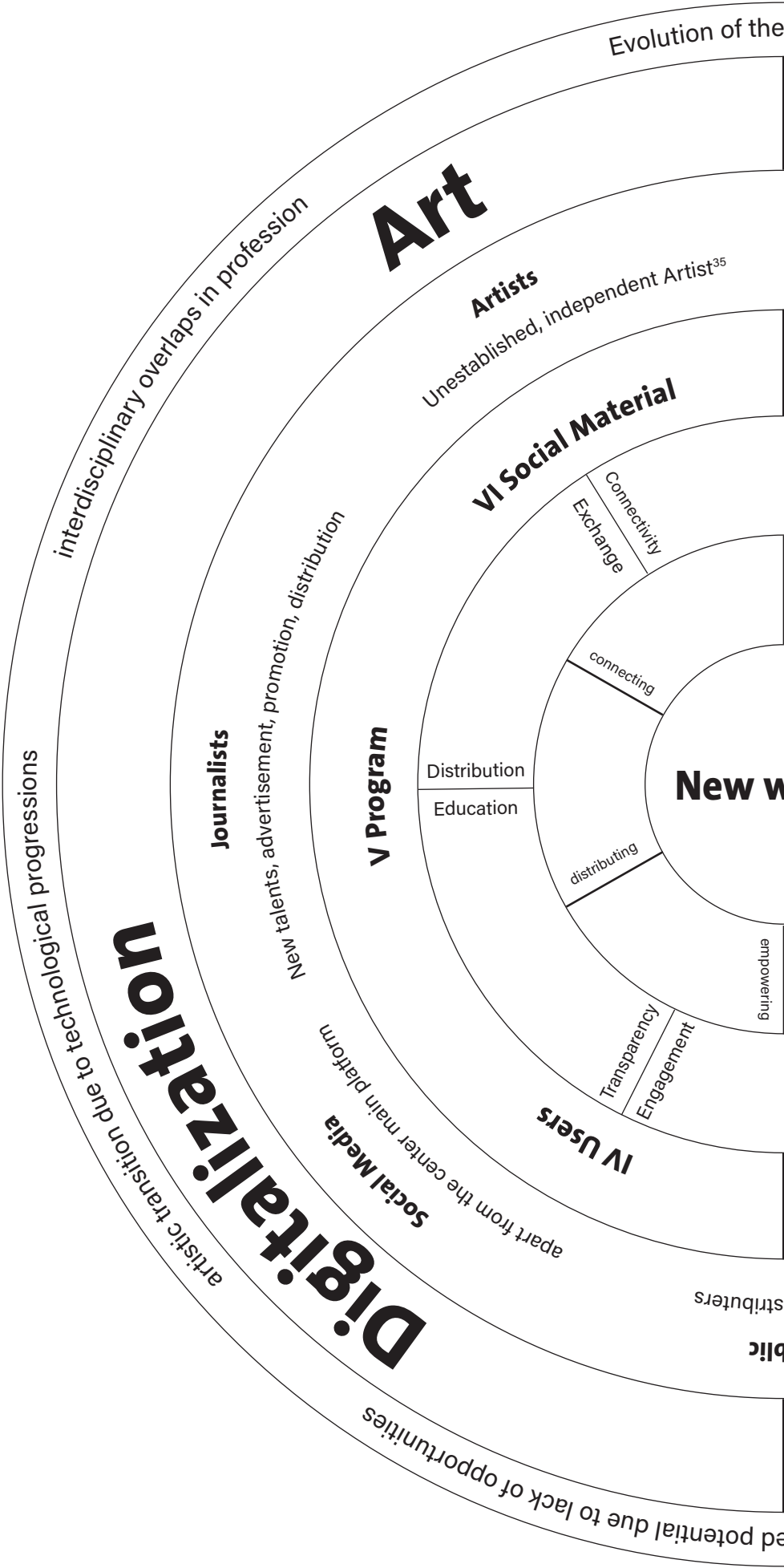
New ways of thinking, seeing, and knowing expand our experiences, develop empathetic behaviors, and establish understandings that will change our culture of consumption to a culture of stewardship and appreciation. Architecture will re-examine almost every aspect of human life and seek the best shared ecological responses in renaturing our cities [...]³⁴

But what exactly are *new ways* and how can we find them?

Figure 32 visualizes and summarizes the consecutive steps on how new ways of empowering, displaying, engaging, producing, connecting or accessing can influence and eventually redefine atmospheric qualities, the structural framework, the technical requirements, the user, the program and eventually also the social material of the art world.

However, to proceed and eventually exceed the following chapter *Untangling the actor-network* will build the foundation to explore and identify potential new ways. Therefore I had to first decrypt and understand the existing structure that prevails in the art world. By applying a three step procedure I aimed to ,untangle‘ the current Actor-Network of the art world, tracking down and elaborating on the financial flows, the relations and dependencies of each actor (human and non-human). It also includes current and future progressions, on which I have already touched upon in this chapter.

35 **Unestablished, independent Artists**
 Defines the user group and targets Artists from fields of fine art, digital and experimental art or sculptors. The requirement for Artists to participate in the new model is to be fully transparent in terms of production, creation and display of the art product. It is an extension of the concept of an 'open-studio' allowing the public to participate and engage with the Artists and the Art during the creation process physically as well as digitally. One of the biggest problems among art is that it is hard to grasp and therefore often misunderstood, leading to underestimation and disinterest. Transparency as well as engagement will open up the former enclosed and isolated group making it more accessible and comprehensible.



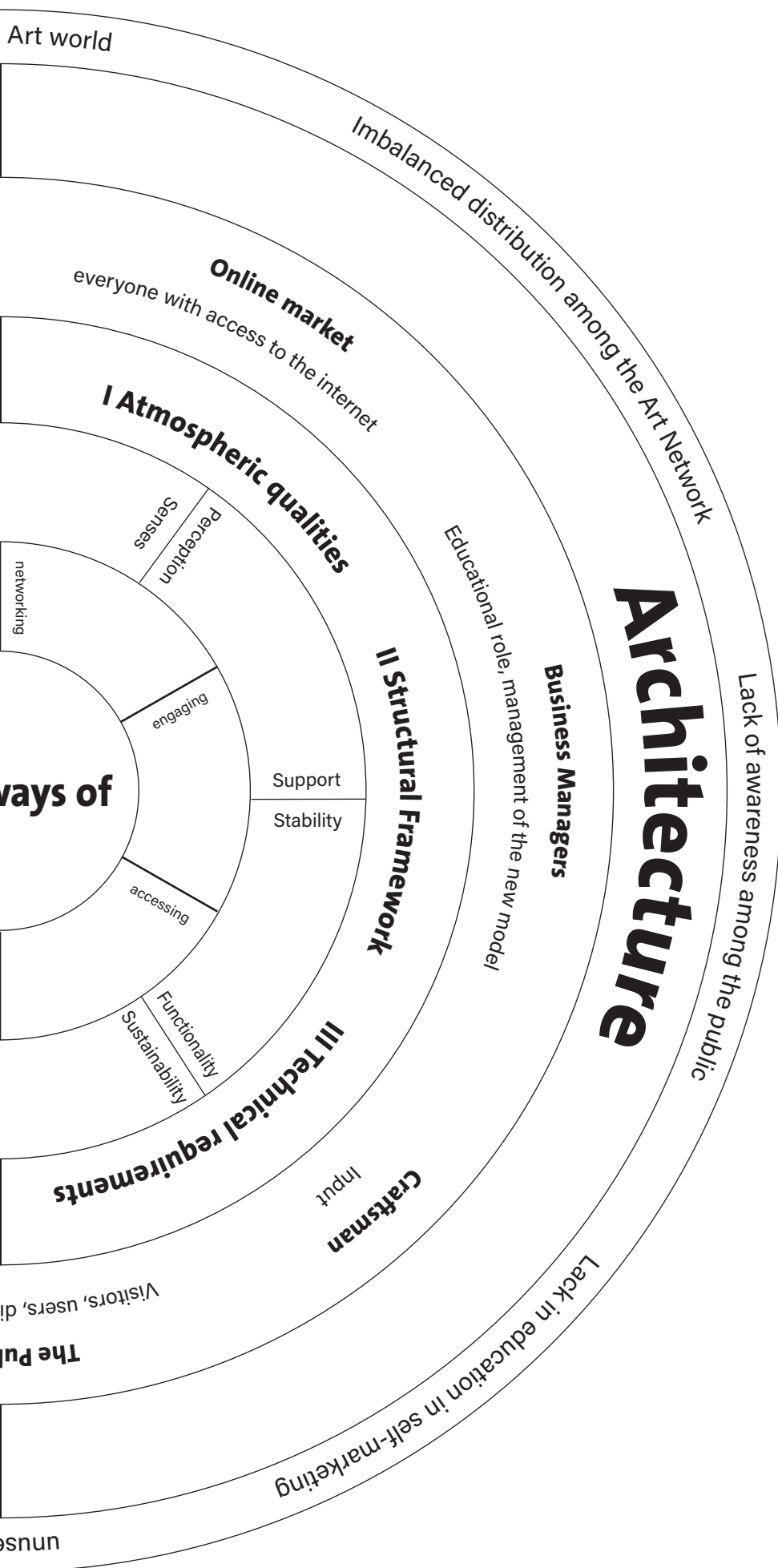


Figure 38 Steps of new ways

Untangling the actor-net

Step 1 - Defining human and non-human actors

36 1. Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, 1st ed. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

1. Bruno Latour, *On actor-network theory: A few clarifications*, (Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1996), p. 369-370

The first three chapters aimed for a general understanding and an overview of the progressions, events and interventions in the past and the present, that have shaped artistically, politically and socially the urban fabric. The second part will now dive deeper into the substance and the relations of the relevant *actors*, untangling the underlying *net of relations* that ties together the art world.

The Art network is as mysterious as it is unknown. Its tentacles reach from the wealthiest and most powerful actors to the poorest and least heard ends of the City. Grasping and defining the entire picture seems almost impossible since it's a constantly changing and adapting system of people, objects, developments, relations and dependencies. However, to proceed I had to understand and untangle this net. The first step was to define who the involvents hence the actors are.

Bruno Latour's *Actor-Network Theory* (ANT) served me as a guidance. His Theory can eventually be applied to any phenomena that consists of **human** and **non-human actors** that stand in direct or indirect relation or dependency to each other and have an effect on social processes. According to him „An „actor“ in ANT is a semiotic definition“, which means that an actor is not identified and limited to a human but can be seen as „anything provided [...] to be the source of an action.“³⁶ To clarify, an actor can eventually be anything and everything. An inanimate object, a human being, a structure or a system, etc.

Figure 39 lists the most relevant actors I have identified for the art world.

In between the two lists stands the **work of art** produced by the Artist. Therefore the beginning of all relations and connections derives from the human actor - Artist and his/her work of art. Over time however, the artist and the work of art disconnect from each other. The work of art starts to live a life of its own traversing through a variety of other human and non-human actors serving as a form of investment, an exhibition or a trading object, a decoration, a statement, a message, etc.

network

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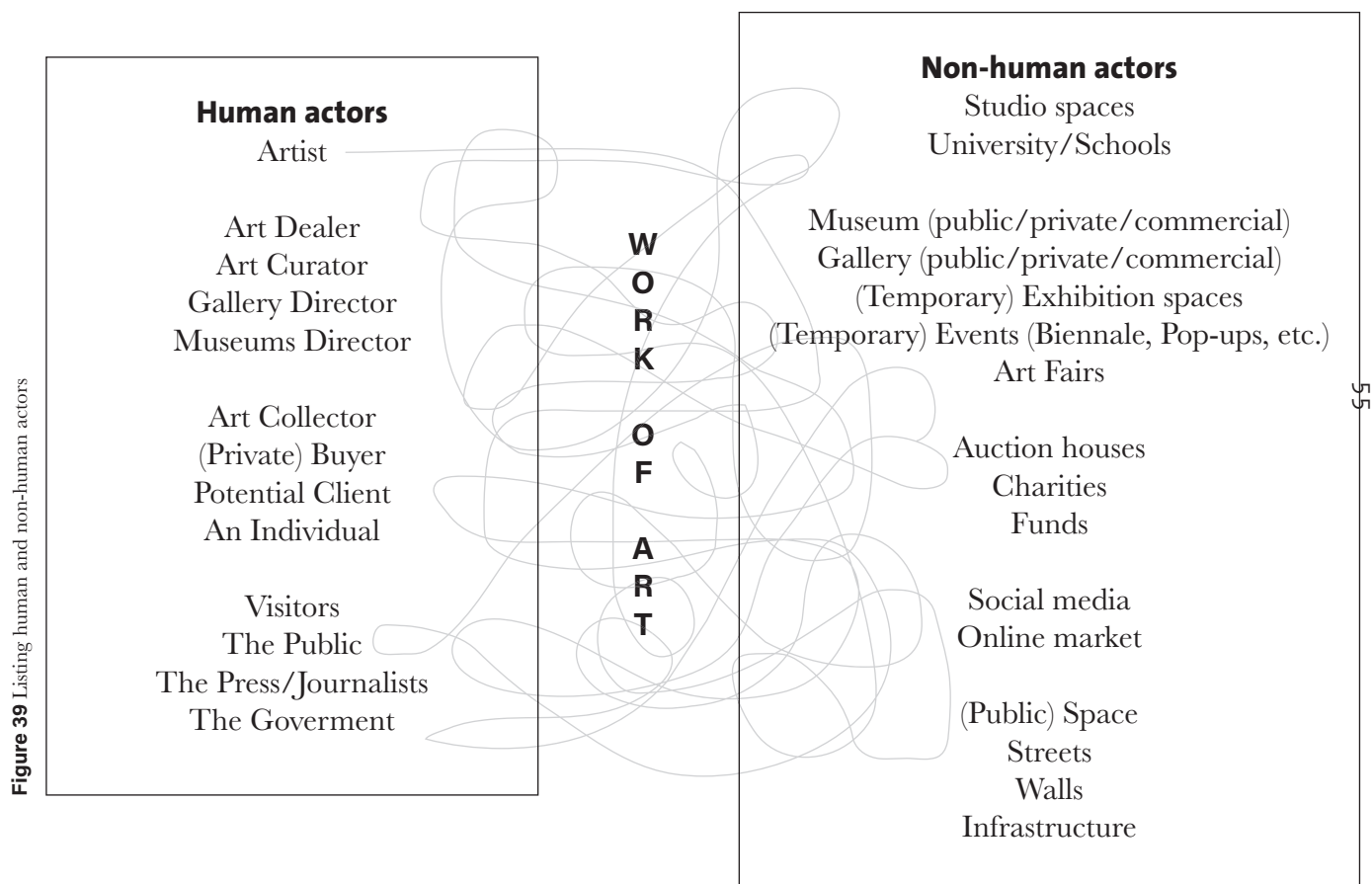


Figure 39 Listing human and non-human actors

Step 2 - Delineating the relations among actors

37 The term *layer* is meant figurative and describes the actor-networks ,institutional network', ,art market' and ,creators network'. Layer in this case indicates the stratification of them, meaning one is above or below the other. In Figure 23 these layers are stacked on top of each other and create a hierarchical pyramid.

On basis of Figure 40 to 43 I would like to further delineate the relations, the intersections, the overlaps and the hierarchies among the different actors. Whilst Figure 40 draws light on the general, hierarchical division among actors illustrating different *layers*³⁷ that predominate and steer the art world (based on power, influence, financial resources/capital, success, etc.), Figure 41 to 43 dissipates this division and elaborates on the underlying dependencies, relations and overlaps of the seemingly dissected classes/layers (actors).

Figure 40 consists of three layers, illustrated in the form of a two-dimensional pyramid. At first they seem to be independent of each other. Every layer includes human as well as non-human actors. The lowest layer, the ,creators network' or also ,makers network' consists predominantly of the everyday artists and the everyday art. Its main purpose is the production and creation of art, forming the foundation of the art world. The middle layer, the ,art market' is as the name indicates defined by the commerce of art. It's where art meets the public and where most of the money is spent, made and traded. Actors involved are amongst others art dealers, curators, collectors, gallery directors, journalists, (local) authorities, buyers, investors etc. The top layer, ,the institutional network' mainly acts on an institutional level (museums, archives, public space, art history, etc.), meaning in the interest of the public. Its area of inquiry is exhibiting, educating, researching or maintaining and is not predominantly money driven. Artists themselves are not necessarily actively involved, but rather their intermediates such as Art Dealers or Curators.

Knowing this, it's clear that every layer consists of a network on its own. However, none of the layers could sustain without intersecting and interacting at some point with the other. Figure 41 and 42 therefore dissipates the boundaries, shifting and overlapping the layers and showcasing how everything depends on the other. One of the most obvious examples showcasing these dependencies can be backtraced on the basis of an artist's career. The majority of artists start in the bottom layer. To gain recognition and eventually a stable income it is necessary to move towards the second layer, the art market. Since

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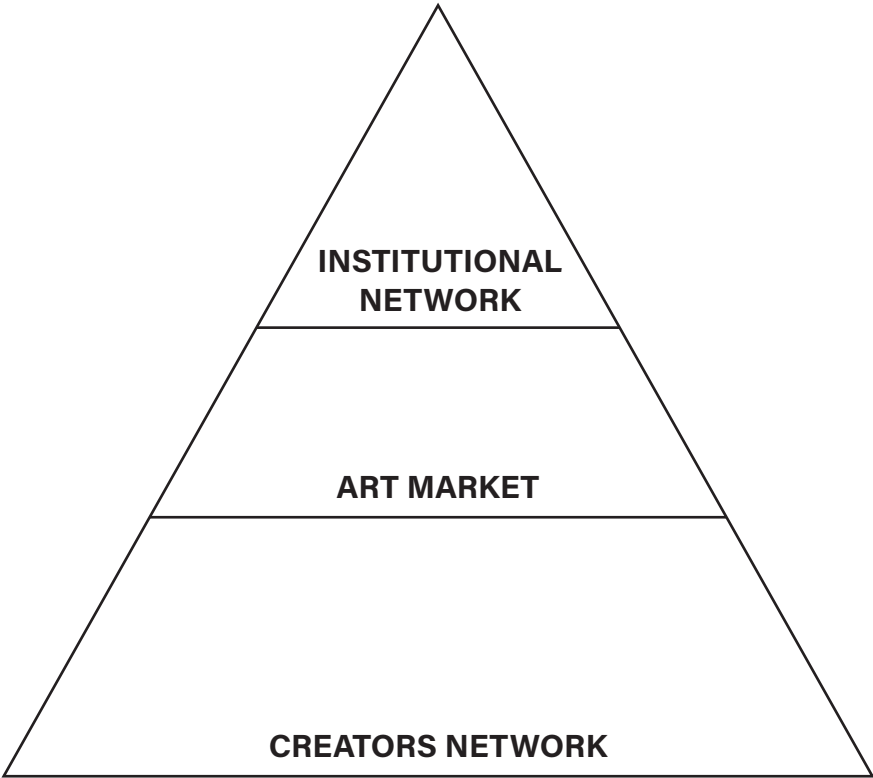


Figure 40 Illustration of the layers of the art world - clear hierarchy

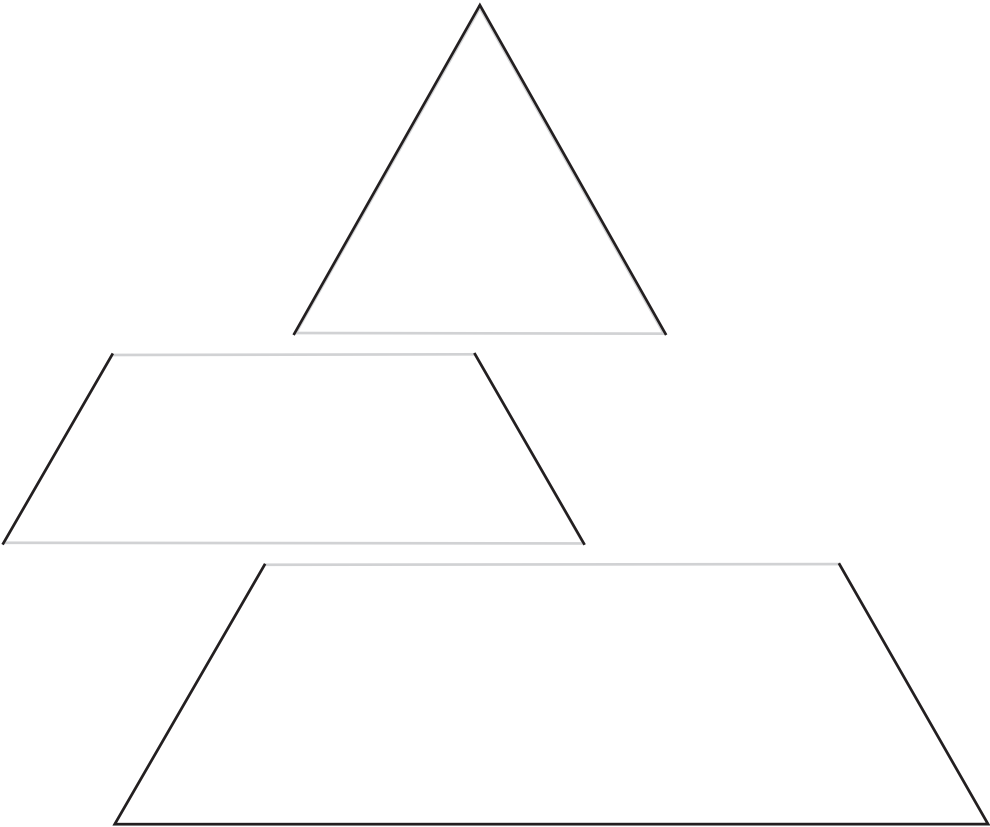


Figure 41 Illustration of the layers of the art world - hierarchy shifts

Figure 42/43

Figure 42/43 are inspired by Christoph Alexander's semi-lattice structure. It illustrates how elements within a system interact with each other with no defined hierarchy.

1. Review: *A city is not a tree*, Christopher Alexander - WPMU dev, accessed May 2, 2023, https://cpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/sites.northwestern.edu/dist/6/2724/files/2019/01/2016-2-5-vernon_review-lrwcjj.pdf.

competition, expectation, trends, uniqueness, connections, confidence, etc. predominate this environment many artists rely on an *inter-mediate* for example an art dealer to handle these matters for them. Art dealers on the other hand rely on the artists and their work as a commodity but also draw the connections and build a bridge to potential buyers, clients, galleries, art fairs. Eventually they build an entire network that can serve as the springboard for their own career as well as the one of an artist (explained example can be backtraced in Figure 44, p. 60/61).

Another important example that showcases a more economical and political dependency of the layers is the use of art as a form of branding. Many cities including London (see also chapter *The impact of art and artists in the city*) have used art and artists to advertise and attract the attention of people, boosting the economy and upgrading the identity of the city. Shoreditch in the East End of London for example is covered in colorful and vibrant street art and is therefore one of the most trendiest areas in the city. Associated with a landmark it is a must-see for anyone who visits London in some cases even the reason for a visit in the first place.

These examples are only a few of many that prove that the seemingly separated layers are actually a network of relations, deeply connected and intertwined with each other. Although a hierarchy (defined by social status, financial resources, connections, intentions, etc.) does assign actors to a specific layer, none of them could sustain without the other. **Eventually it's a give and take with an unequal distribution or compensation of revenue, status, acknowledgement and opportunity.**

Figure 44 is a condensed and simplified summary of all layers, connections and dependencies. It defines the different actors and their relations and can be read either through following the path of an actor (f.ex. artist), money (selling, buying, etc.) or the artwork itself.

Side note: I want to mention that this analysis is a very condensed and simplified illustration of reality. Nevertheless does it reflect and showcase fundamental structures that eventually help to understand the bigger picture.

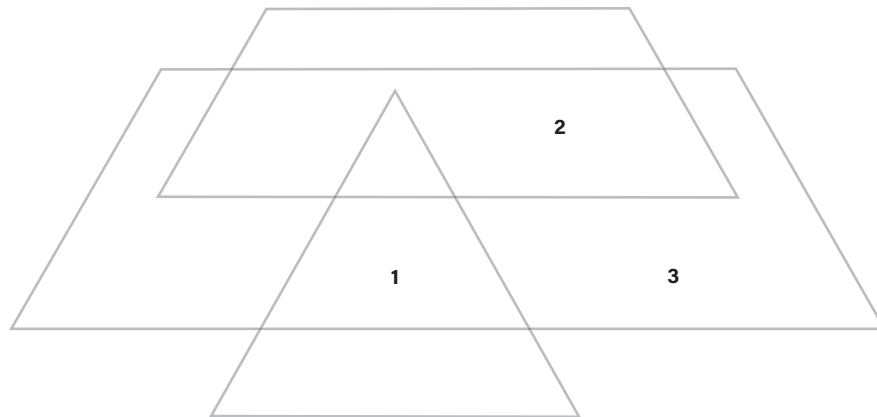


Figure 42 Illustration of the layers of the art world - hierarchy overlaps

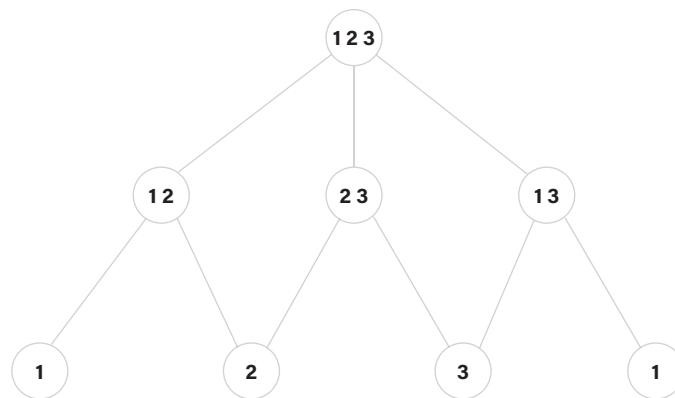
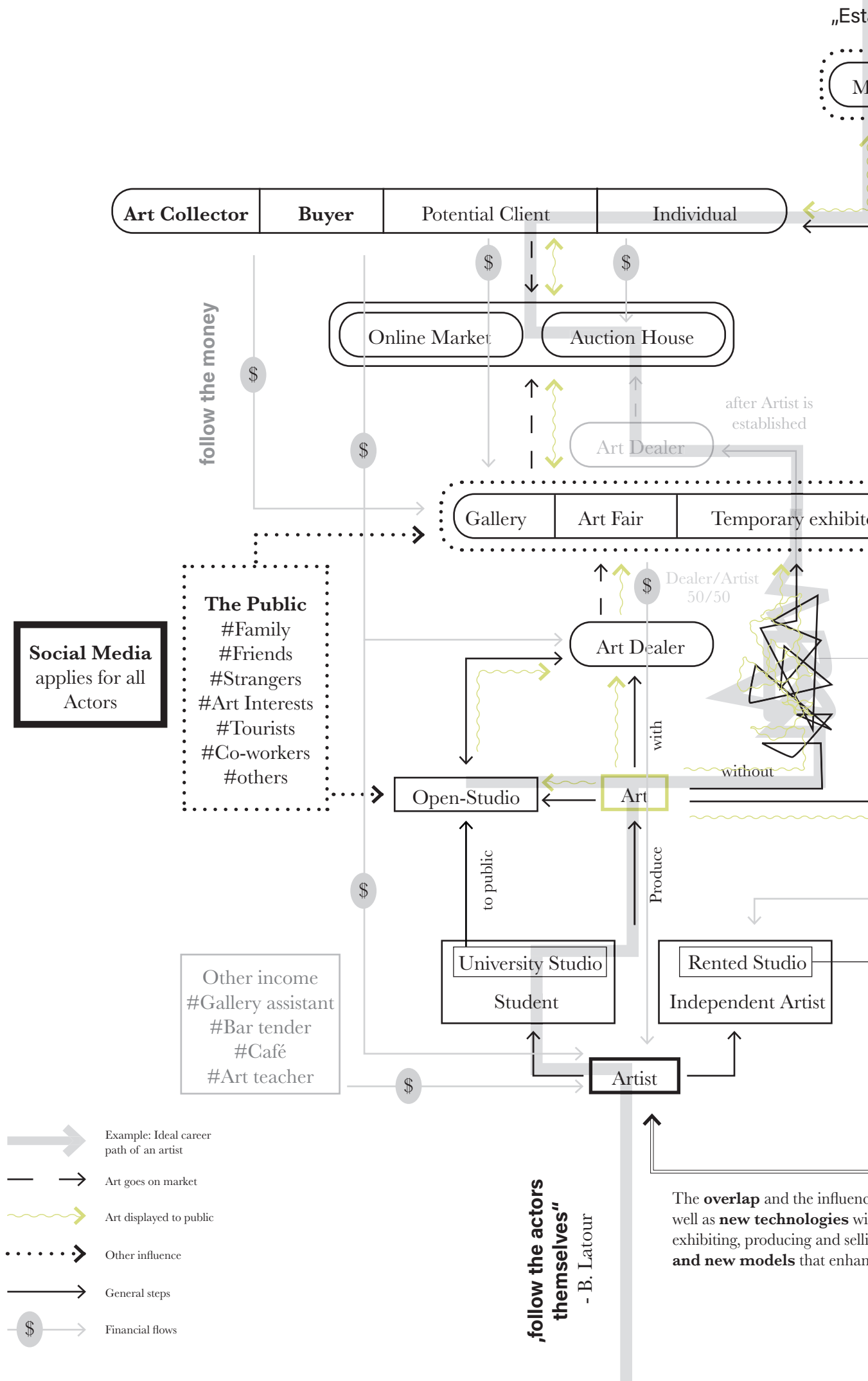


Figure 43 Illustration of the layers of the art world - hierarchy overlaps

LAYER 01 # The Institutional Network

LAYER 02 # The Art-Market Network

LAYER 03 # The Creators (Makers) Network



ablished" ?!

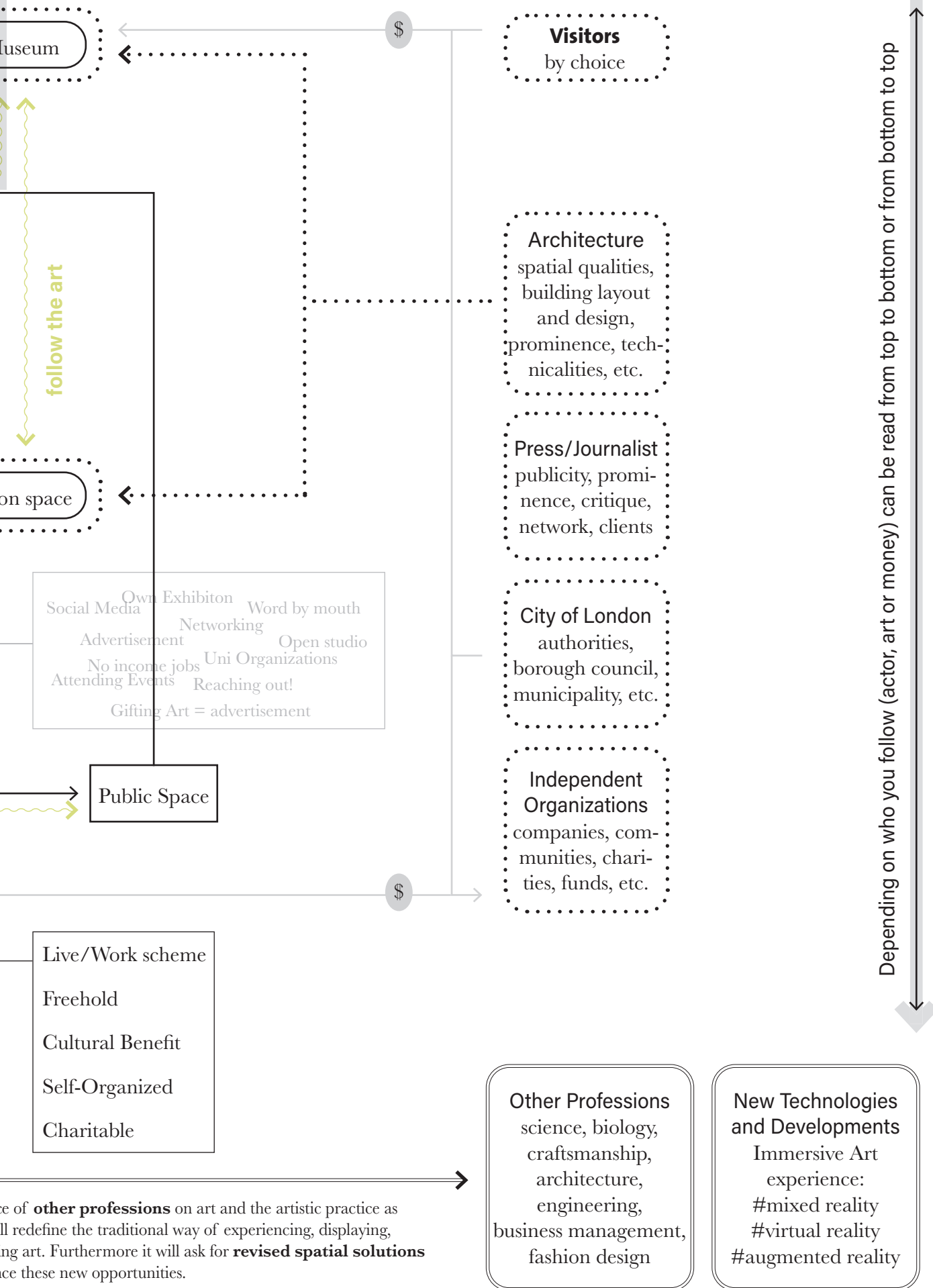


Figure 44 Following the career steps of an Artist

Fieldwork

Strategy and Methods

38 Ethnographic research is a method to conduct social research and is to study human behaviour and social phenomena. It is mostly used in social sciences such as anthropology, sociology and human geography but can also be used as a method in architecture and design to understand social and spatial relations, networks and behaviours.

39 I. rep., *Artists' Workspace Study* (London, London: We Made That LLP, 2014).

40 Passive observation is conducted through the passive, non-interactive observation of the surrounding or the study group. The observer role is to document what perceives without interfering with anything or anyone.

41 Active observation requires an interaction, best case even a participation with the study group. This kind of research method can include to become a member of the group, interfering with their natural habitat. Due to a lack of time I wasn't able to obtain this extensive insights and knowledge. However, the interviews, surveys, visits to artist studio spaces and informal conversations have provided me with a good foundation for my research.

The next research step was to visit London. It substantiates the results of the previous, mainly theoretical research and will further inform on the study group, Artists. I planned to approach the fieldwork from **two angles**. One was to conduct a *site analysis* which included drifting through the examined areas of inquiry, visiting a selection of artistic institutions and observing and documenting the space and its surrounding and the other was *ethnographic research*³⁸ which is a form of social research.

To make the most of my time whilst *drifting* through the city, I pre evaluated on a set of criteria areas of inquiry and eventually specific institutions I wanted to visit. The criteria included accessibility, multidisciplinary concepts and programmatic innovations, programmatic overlaps of studio, gallery and exhibition space and context (park access, nearby other art institutions, etc.).

This concluded into multiple *thematic maps* (Figure 47-52) that revealed patterns and accumulations that indicated a speciality or an abnormality. Within these patterns and with the help of a *case study*³⁹ done by the Greater London Authority I eventually was left with in total three studio spaces and (Chisenhale Art Place (CAP), Bow Arts Trust and Trinity Buoy Wharf) and four gallery spaces (Lake gallery, Dilston gallery, Auto Italia and Serpentine Gallery Pavilion) that I went to visit.

In next step I wanted to conduct ethnographic research. As my time was limited, I had to find a way to execute it in the most efficient way, obtaining as much information, insights and knowledge on the people (future study group = artists) and the locations as possible. Therefore I decided to use different ethnographic methods. One was *passive observation*⁴⁰ which means documenting without interacting, turning the observer into an outsider. This was done to obtain an understanding of the habits of people, routines, movement, etc. I documented it in the form of documentary photography, sketches and notes. In a further step I directly approached the observants, turning the passive into an *active observation*⁴¹, the observer into an insider, which was then substantiated by *interviews* and informal conversations. Some of the interviews I had already preplanned, to en-

Studio space of MA fine art graduates from Central Saints Martins CSM, London

In this space I conducted most of my interviews with the artist students. We casually sat at one of their working tables surrounded by art works, materials and other students and talked about art, struggles they see and experience, why they decided to study art, what their passion and motivation is, where they see themselves in the future, etc.



Figure 45 Photo by author

Side note: Whilst visiting these places I also found my future site for the design project. Chisenhale Art Place in Tower Hamlets is an old brick building complex and a former Vencer factory. The building complex consists of two independent building blocks. One has been repurposed by artists during the 80s. The other one is unused and redundant ever since the factory owners have sold it to the local authorities of Tower Hamlets. I decided to refurbish and extend this part of the building.

Figure 46

The photo shows my toolkit that I have prior to my visit to London prepared. It included not only digital tools such as my phone or my laptop but also analogue tools such as pens, brushes, a sketchbook, public transportation or walking by foot.

sure success. I contacted Artists, Curators and Gallerists as well as the secretary office of various artist studios and galleries either via Instagram, telephone or Email. I was lucky to know an Artist student from CSM (Central Saint Martins) that helped me to get in further contact with other potential interviewees.

Furthermore I made a *questionnaire* that was handed out to the artist students and/or was displayed at CSM, UCL and UAL at the information desk. They could be sent back to me via email. I was returned around 24 questionnaires from which 16 were filled out by art students that I have directly approached. A total of 8 forms were sent back via email. The main topics the questionnaire addressed where:

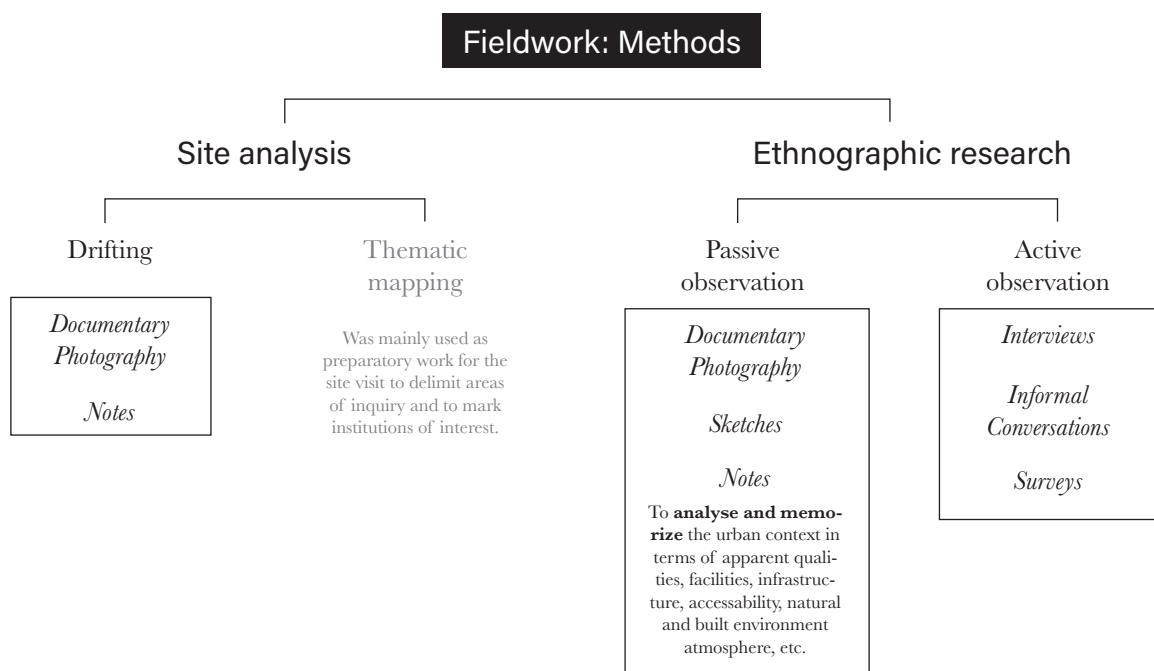
- Financial situation of an artist in London
- Spatial preferences for a studio space
- Side jobs and income
- Cross disciplinary education



Figure 46 Photo by author

One of the main aspects I could take out of the questionnaires were fundamental spatial qualities that artists see as indispensable for their studio space. This will be translated into a catalog of spatial necessities that have to be included in the design project.

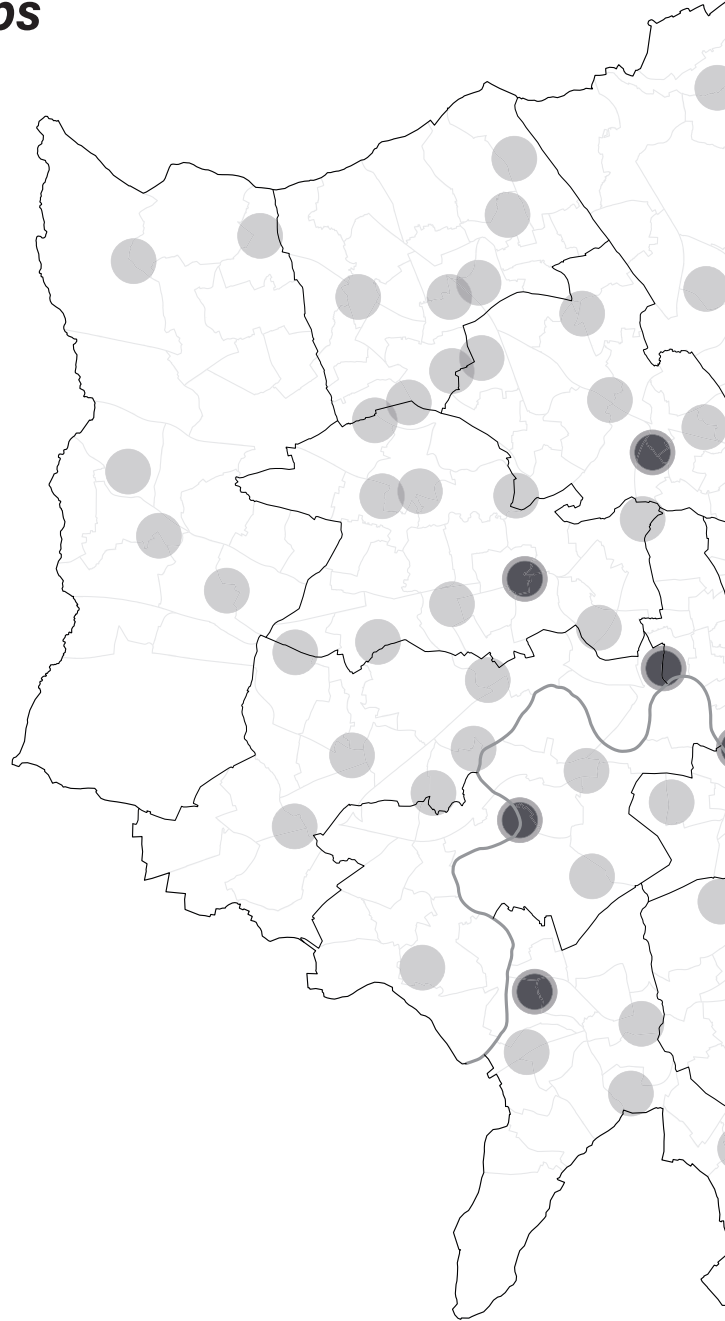
All in all the goal was to gain an understanding of the on site substance and to substantiate or to confound what I have evaluated so far. Who are the people, who are the artists, what defines these spaces (spatially, logistically, socially), how do they relate and connect to other art institutions and to the neighborhood, who are the actors involved, what's the organizational and financial structure behind it, what works well/what doesn't, etc.



Thematic maps

Thematic analysis on distribution of Public Art in London

Public Art: Public Art includes all publicly accessible art positioned in the public realm. It can include sculptures, temporary/permanent installations and murals. Also included in this map are sculptures dedicated as memorials.



- > 100 public art within this circle
- 50 - 100 public art within this circle
- 25 - 50 public art within this circle
- 10 - 25 public art within this circle
- < 10 public art within this circle

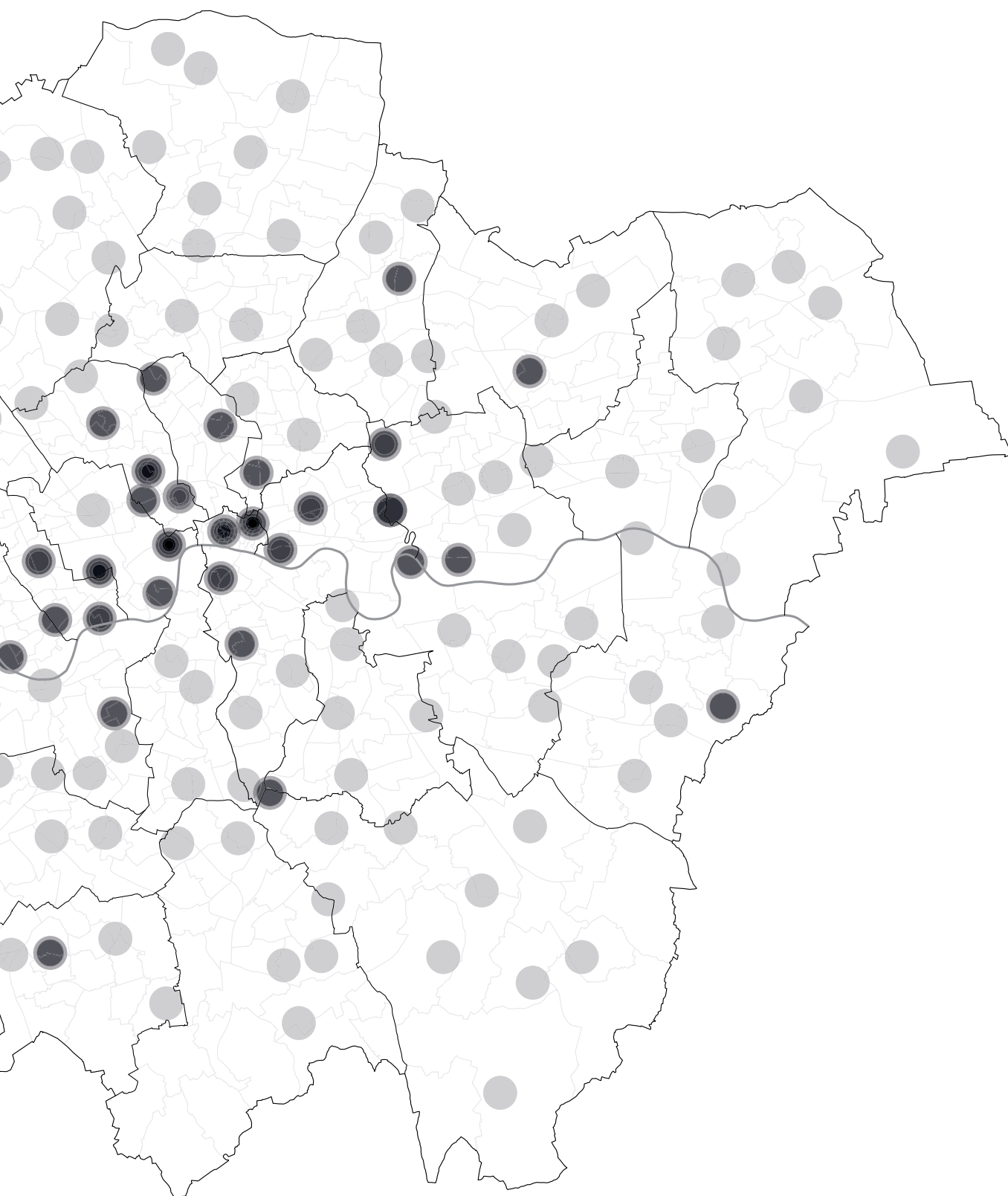
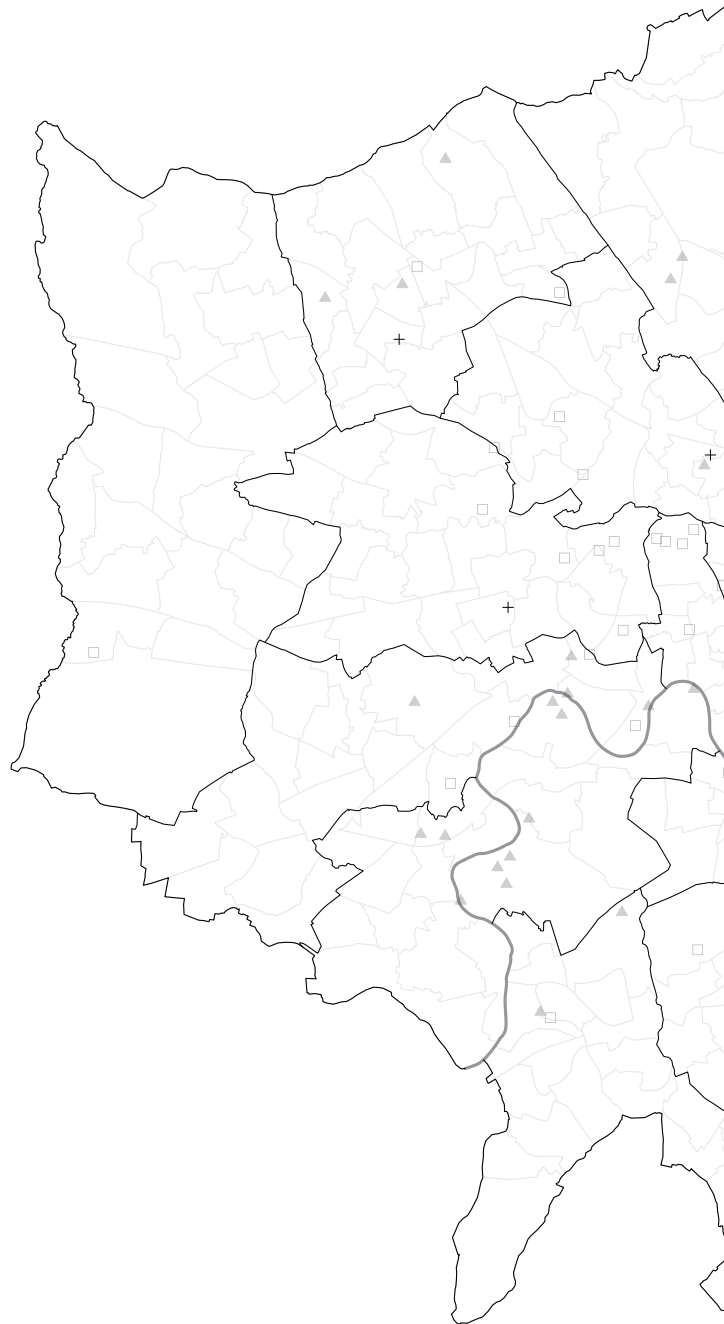


Figure 47

Thematic analysis on distribution of commercial and private galleries



+ Commercial and private gallery

▲ Museum and Public Gallery

□ Artist Studio

x Universities with Art degree

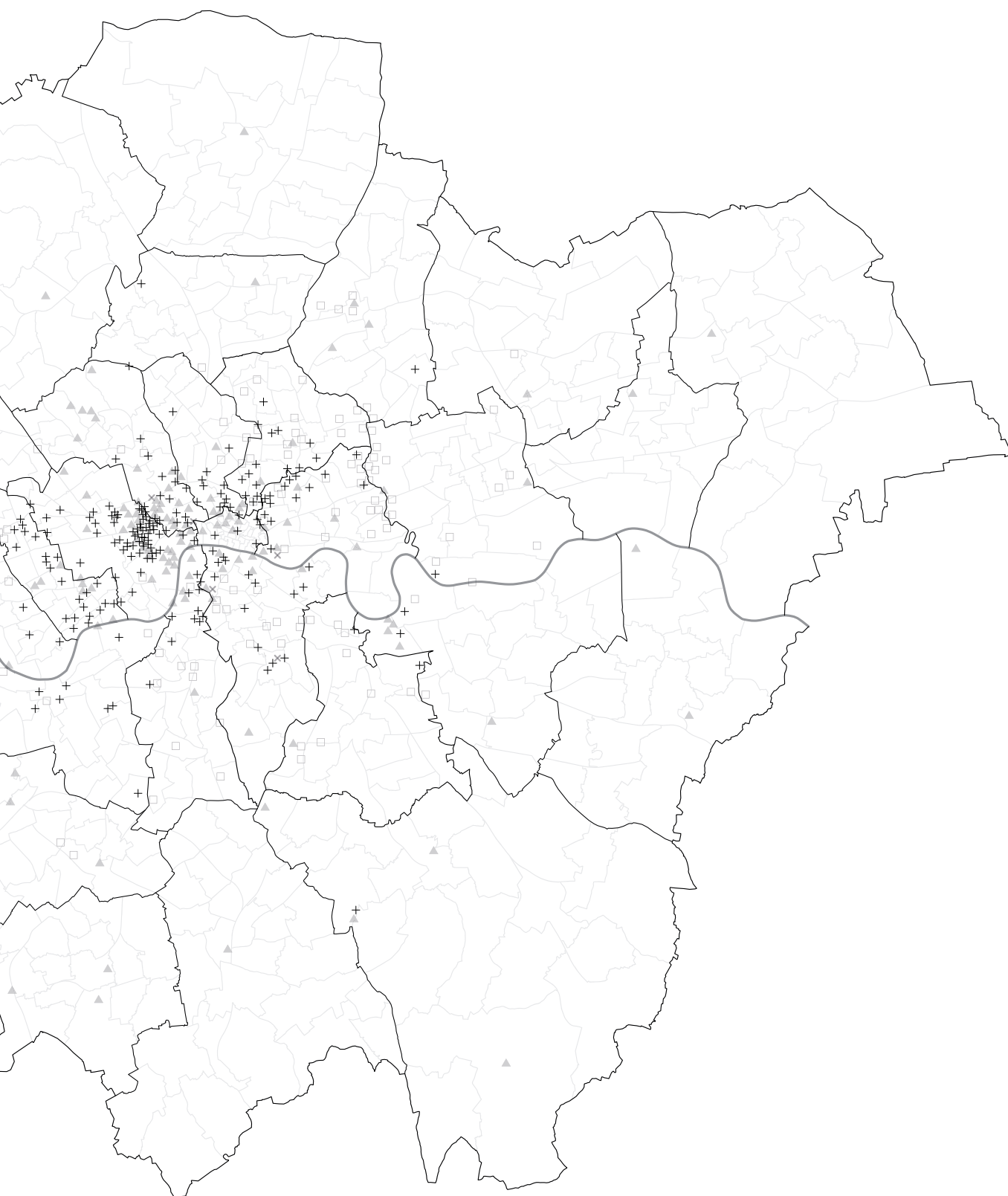
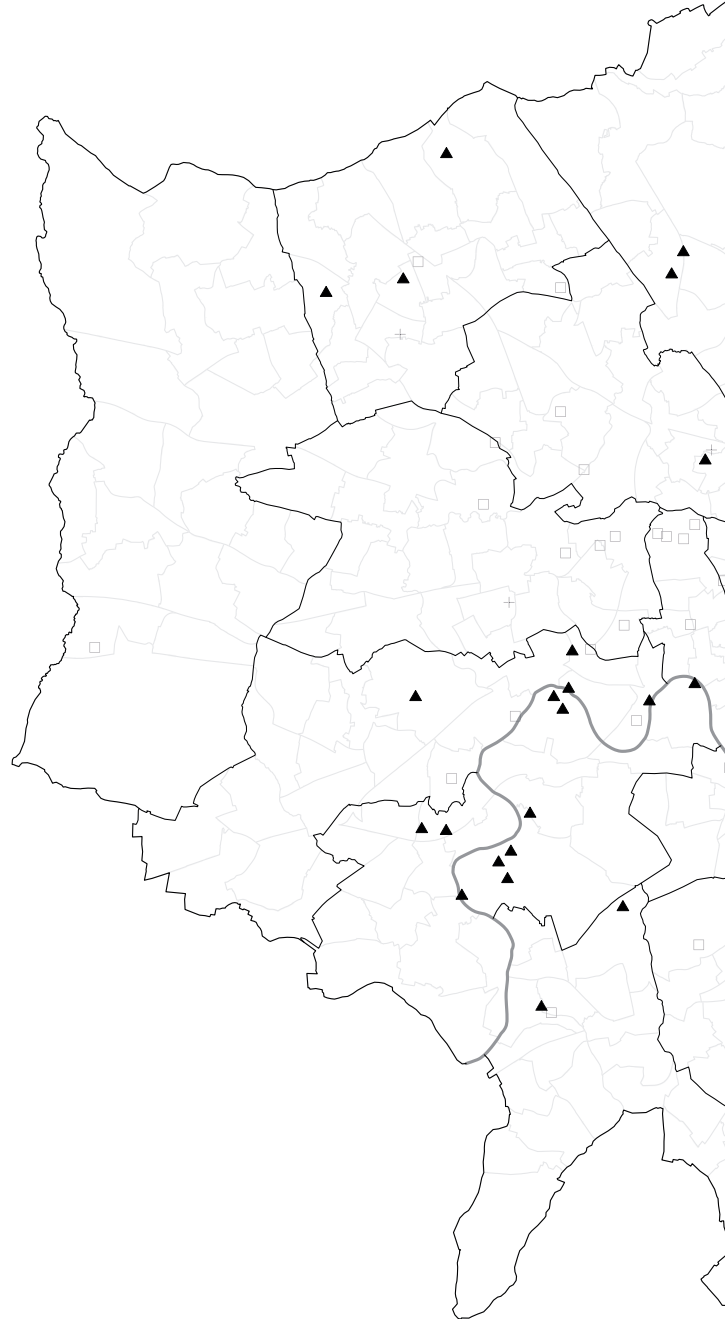


Figure 48

Thematic analysis on distribution of museum and public gallery



+ Commercial and Private Gallery

▲ Museum and public gallery

□ Artist Studio

× Universities with Art degree

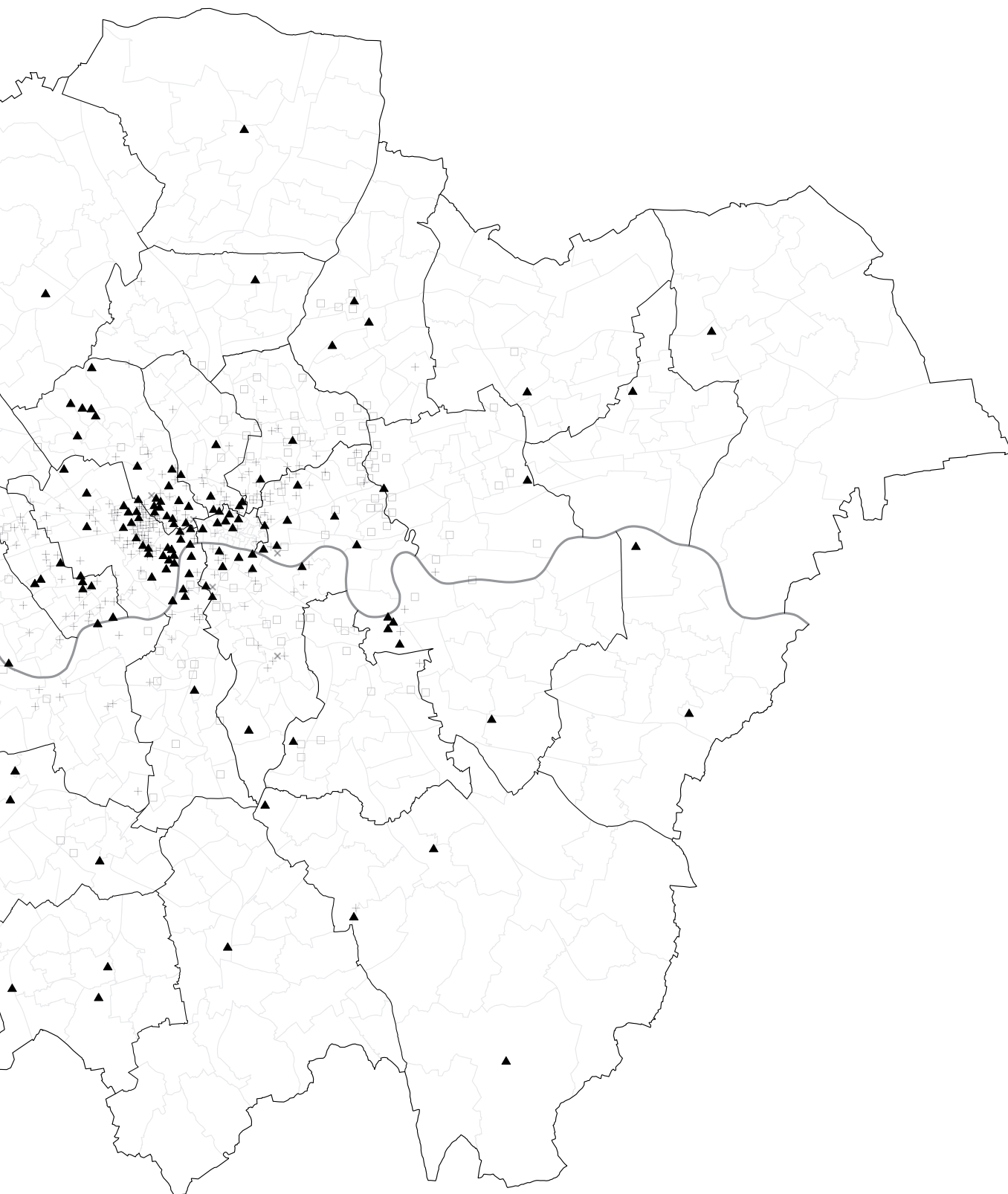
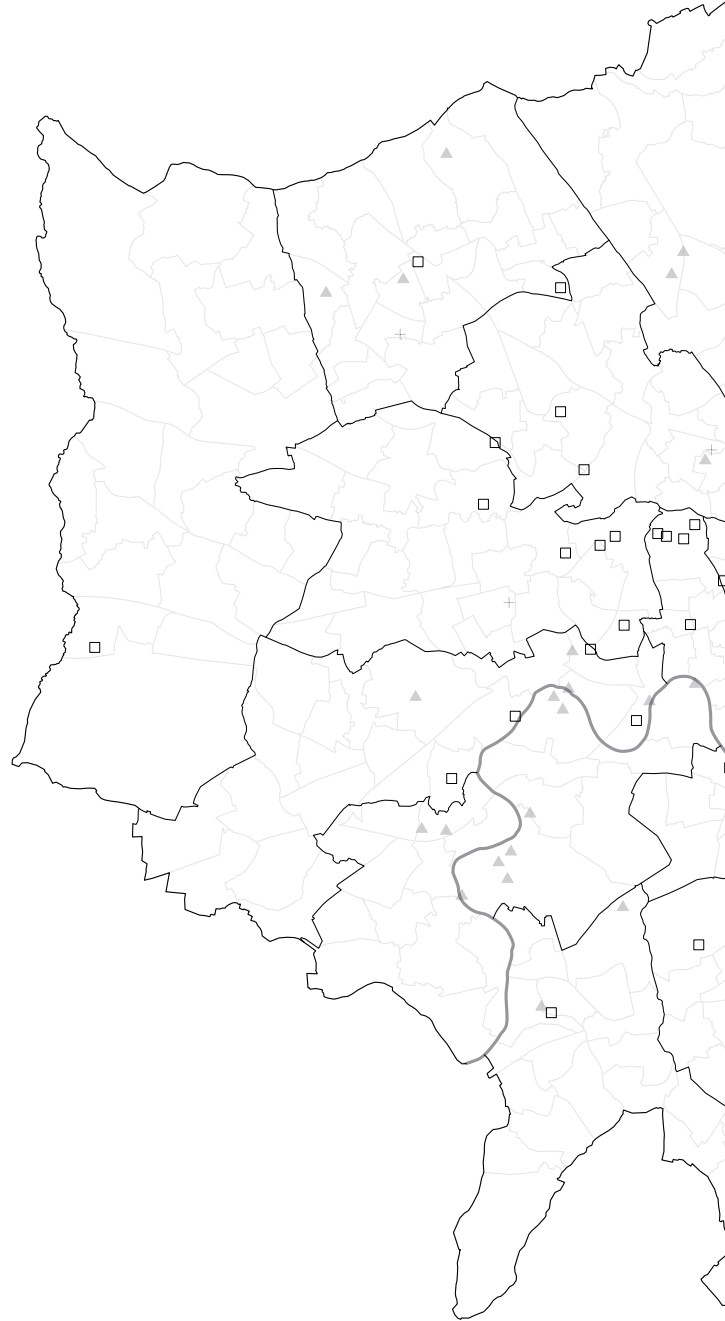


Figure 49

Thematic analysis on distribution of artist studio



- + Commercial and Private Gallery
- ▲ Museum and Public Gallery
- Artist studio
- × Universities with Art degree

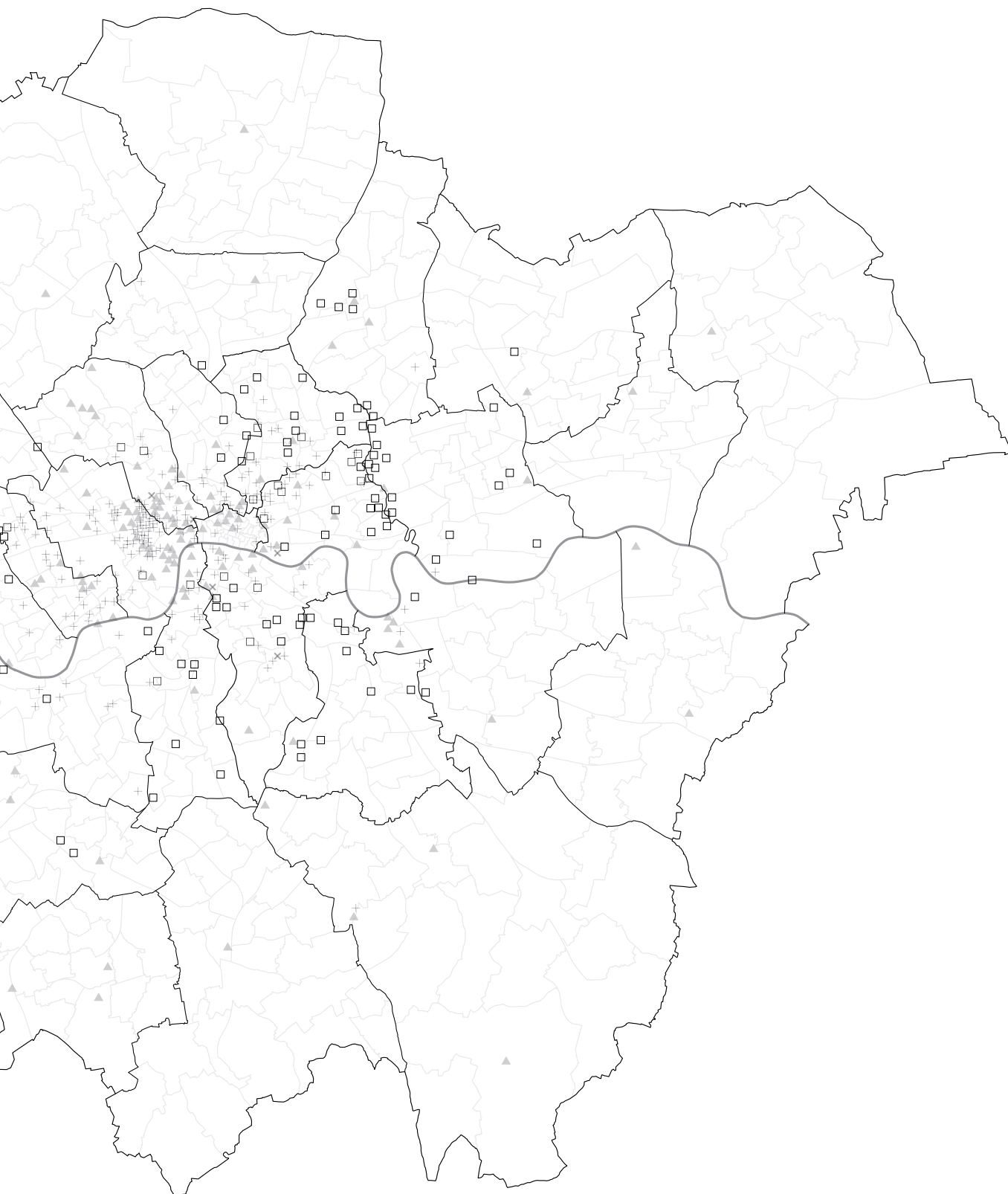


Figure 50

Thematic analysis on distribution of universities with art degree



+ Commercial and Private Gallery

▲ Museum and Public Gallery

□ Artist Studio

× Universities with art degree

Overlaying findings to find areas of inquiry. Within these areas on basis of a set of criteria* I defined **three artist places** that I wanted to further investigate through *passive* as well as *active observations*.

Set of criteria:

- # A merge or overlap of different uses/users (gallery, exhibition space, studio space, café, bar, artists, craftsman, etc.)
- # Location and accessibility
- # In proximity potential collaborators (educational institutions, other art industries, museums, etc.)
- # Organizational model (should contribute through activities, education or other offers to the community or the neighbourhood = cultural benefit)

01 Camden & City of Westminster

Highest density of commercial, public and private galleries, museums, universities and public art, no Artist Studios

02 Hackney & Tower Hamlets

Equal occurrence of commercial, public and private galleries, museums, universities and public art, no Universities

03 Tower Hamlets & Newham

High(est) density of artist studios and public art, little to no occurrence of commercial, public and private galleries, museums, universities and public art

- > 100 public art within this circle
- 50 - 100 public art within this circle
- 25 - 50 public art within this circle
- 10 - 25 public art within this circle
- < 10 public art within this circle
- + Commercial and Private Gallery
- ▲ Museum and Public Gallery
- Artist Studio
- × Universities with Art degree



BOW ARTS TRUST

A COMBINATION OF STUDIO SPACE, GALLERY AND CAFÉ DEDICATED TO ARTS AND CULTURE. LOCATED ALONGSIDE A MAIN STREET IN BETWEEN CHURCH, COMMERCE AND RESIDENTIAL.

ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL:
LIVE/WORK SCHEME

COUNCIL OF TOWER HAMLETS
OWNER = LANDLORD

CONTRACT HAS TO BE
RENEWED EVERY YEAR

BOW ARTS
TENANT

NUNNERY
GALLERY-
TENANT

STUDIOS

CAFÉ



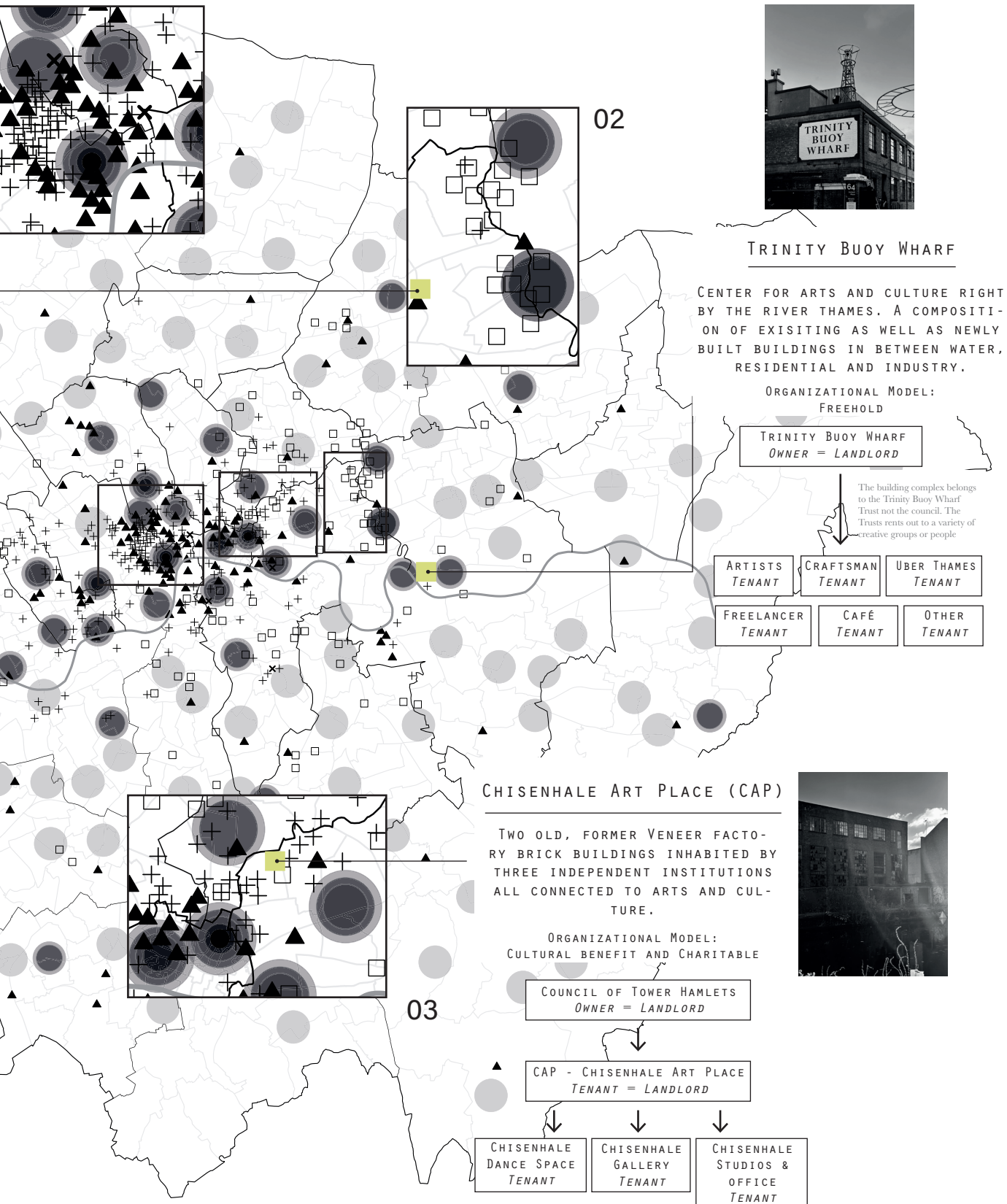


Figure 52

Passive observations - Documentary photography

Chisenhale Art Place is one of three places that I have analyzed and evaluated. The other two examples (*Bow Arts Trust* and *Trinity Buoy Wharf*) can be found in the Appendix.

CHISENHALE ART PLACE	Other	Material	Natural
<div><div>78</div><div>Tower Hamlets</div><div></div><div>SILENCE, HIDDEN, INCONSPICIOUS, INAPPROACHABLE, TRADITIONAL, POTENTIAL, BRICK, GLASS, DERELICT, REDUNDANT, CLOSED, ATMOSPHERIC, MYSTERIOUS, RHYTHM, ALTERNATIVE, STRANGE, DETAILS, PEACEFUL</div><div><div><div>A Arts and Crafts</div><div>P Park or Greenery</div><div>H Housing</div><div>E Educational institution</div><div>X Office space</div><div>€ Commerce</div><div>O Industry</div><div>† Religious institution</div><div>== Infrastructure</div><div>P Public transport</div><div>~ Water</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>SOUTH FACADE, CHISENHALE RD.</div></div> <div><div>NORTH FACADE, WATERFRONT</div></div> <div><div>NEIGHBOURING RESIDENTIAL BUILDING</div></div>	<div><div>BRICK</div></div> <div><div>STEEL FRAME WINDOWS</div></div>	<div><div>WATERFRONT RESIDENTIAL BUILDING</div></div> <div><div>VICTORIAN BUILDING</div></div> <div><div>WATERFRONT BUILDING</div></div>

raphy (Chisenhale Art Place - CAP)

al surrounding	Built surrounding	Accessability	
 <p>FRONT TIAL NGS</p>	 <p>RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS (HIGH RISE, NEWLY BUILT)</p>	 <p>CHISENHALE RD.</p>	 <p>WATERFRONT</p>
 <p>A PARK</p>	 <p>RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS (HOUSING, NEWLY BUILT)</p>	 <p>CHISENHALE RD.</p>	 <p>WATERFRONT</p>
 <p>FRONT</p>	 <p>RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS (HOUSING, OLD, TRADITIONAL)</p>	 <p>CHISENHALE RD.</p>	

WHAT CAP OFFERS

TRIED TO EXTENDS PROGRAM TOWARDS A MORE INTEGRATIVE AND PUBLIC ACCESSIBLE SPACE THROUGH THE GALLERY (STUDIOS ARE NOT PUBLIC)
GALLERY OFFERS OPPORTUNITY FOR VIEWERS TO BE PART OF THE ARTISTIC CREATION PROCESS = EXPERIENCE HOW AN ARTWORK IS MADE THROUGH WORKSHOPS

KEY FACTS

FOR PERFORMANCE, DANCE AND VISUAL ARTISTS
FOR EDUCATION, EXHIBITION AND PRODUCTION
ARTISTS RENOVATED AND CLEANED UP THE BUILDING OFFERED BY TOWER HAMLETS IN THE LATE 70S BEFORE IT WAS DERELICT, EMPTY
CHISENHALE GALLERY OFFERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE THE MAKING OF ART TO THE PUBLIC
ARTIST LEAD ORGANIZATION AND REGISTERED CHARITY
CAP, CHISENHALE GALLERY AND CHISENHALE DANCE PLACE (CDS) ARE INDEPENDENTLY RUN ORGANIZATIONS
BUILDING IS RENTED BY TOWER HAMLETS, CONTRACT RUNS OUT BY 2030
BUILDING INCLUDES IN TOTAL AROUND 40 STUDIOS ALL NOT HEATED, INSULATED OR VENTILATED BUT WITH DAYLIGHT

EXISTING PROVISION

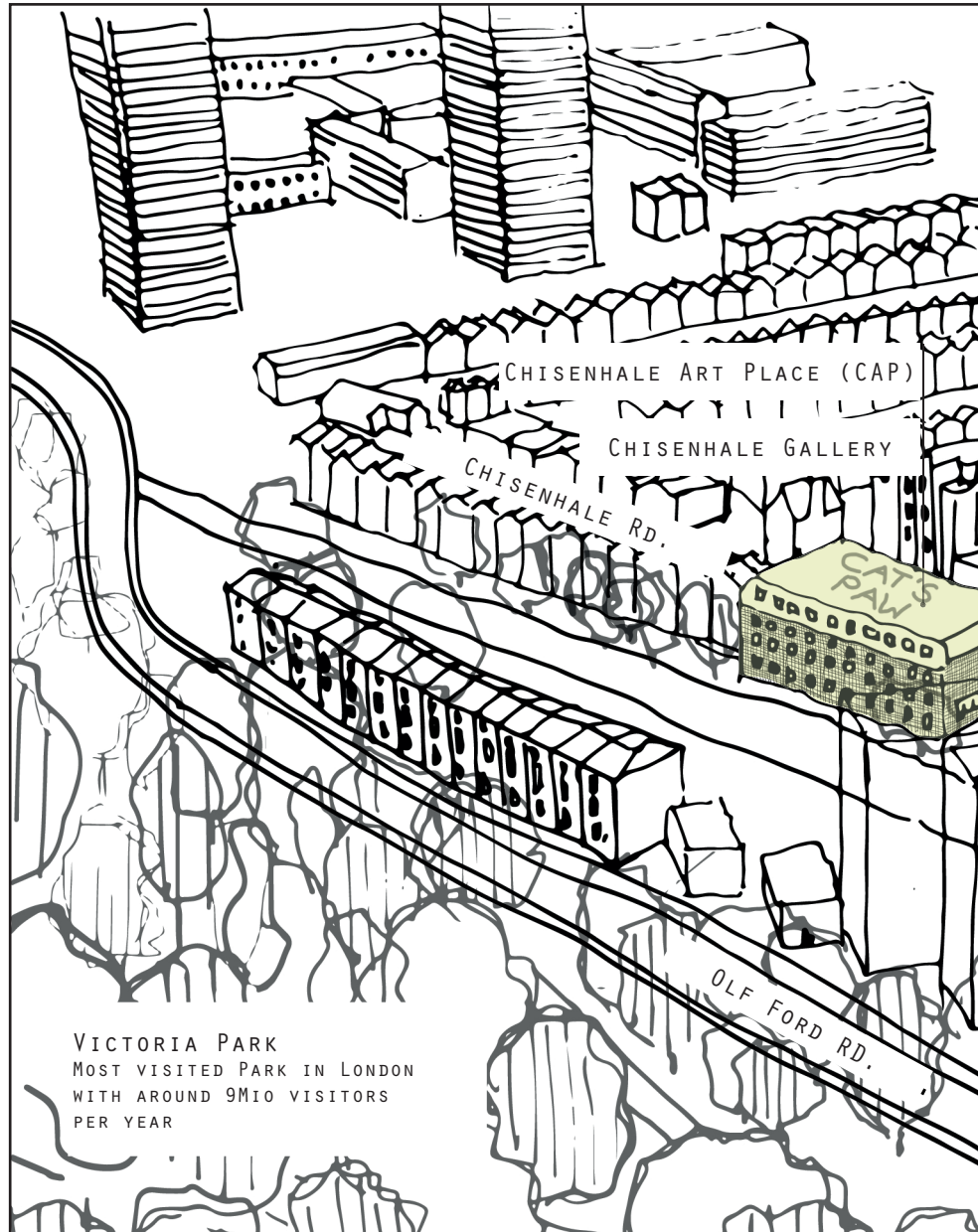
CHISENHALE ART PLACE (CAP) DOESN'T OFFER A PUBLIC ACCESSIBLE CAFÉ OR SHOP TO BUY THE ART TO CONTRIBUTE AND FINANCIALLY SUPPORT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OR TO THE ARTISTS

VICTORIA PARK

LOCATED RIGHT ACROSS THE SITE. ACCESS TO THE PARK IS ONLY POSSIBLE OVER MAIN STREET GROVE ROAD AND OLD FORD ROAD (AROUND 10 MINUTES BY FOOT). MOST VISITED PARK IN LONDON, AROUND 9 MILLION VISITORS EVERY YEAR.

VULNERABILITY

BUILDING BELONGS TO THE BOROUGH TOWER HAMLETS. CHISENHALE ART PLACE SINCE 1980 ON A 40 YEAR RUNS OUT BY 2030. TO DATE, CAP IS NEGOTIATING FOR AN EXTENSION. NOT ENSURED BECAUSE ALMOST HALF OF THE BUILDING IS EMPTY AND DECAYING. LOCAL AUTHORITIES ARE SEEKING POTENTIAL INVESTORS OR DEVELOPERS TO BUY AND REDEVELOP. INFORMATION IS CONCEIVED BY AN INTERVIEW I CONDUCTED WITH JONATHAN RISSON (SEE APPENDIX)



Passive observations - Sketches, n

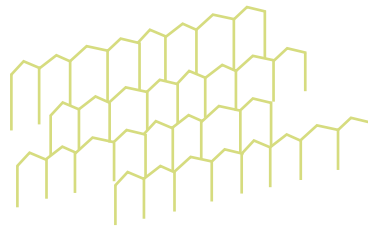


ATMOSPHERE

SILENCE, PEACE, TIAL, HIDDEN, QUIET, INAPPROPRIATE, TRADITIONAL, FRIENDLY, COMMUNITY, HOUSES, FAMILIES

NEIGHBOURHOOD ROOFS

AND IS RENTED OUT TO
LEASE. THE CONTRACT
S WITH TOWER HAMLETS
HALF OF THE BUILDING
ALREADY THINKING OF
DEVELOP IT.*THIS IN-
CTED WITH KEVIN HAR-



CHISENHALE
PRIMARY SCHOOL



otes, impressions and atmosphere

AREA AND SITE

CEFUL, RESIDEN-
N, INCONSPICI-
ACHABLE, REPETI-
ONAL, POTENTIAL,
COLOURFUL, SMALL
IES



MATERIALS AREA

BRICK, GLAS, RED, BROWN,
ORANGE, BEIGE, YELLOW, WHITE,
STEEL, PLANTS AND GREENERY,
WATER, **TILTED ROOFS**

CONDITION SITE

DERELICT, REDUNDANT, CLOSED,
MYSTERIOUS, RYTHEM, ALTERNA-
TIVE, STRANGE, DETAILS, SUR-
PRISING, INTERLACED, BACK-
YARD UNUSED AND VEGETATED,
TOP FLOOR USED BY CDS, GROUND
FLOOR (DOUBLE SEELING) UNUSED
AND EXPTY, AROUND 430qm, FA-
CADE IS WELL MAINTAINED, WIN-
DOWS PARTIALLY NOT EVEN EXIS-
TENT ANYMORE



ACCESSABILITY

PUBLIC TRANSPORT (UNDERGROUND):
BETHNAL GREEN AROUND 18 MINU-
TES BY FOOT, MILE END AROUND
15 MINUTES BY FOOT, BOW ROAD
AROUND 20 MINUTES BY FOOT
BUILDING ENTRANCE ONLY FROM
CHISENHALE ROAD. CAP, CDS AND
CHISENHALE GALLERY ALL HAVE
SEPARATE ENTRANCES



Figure 54 All photos by author

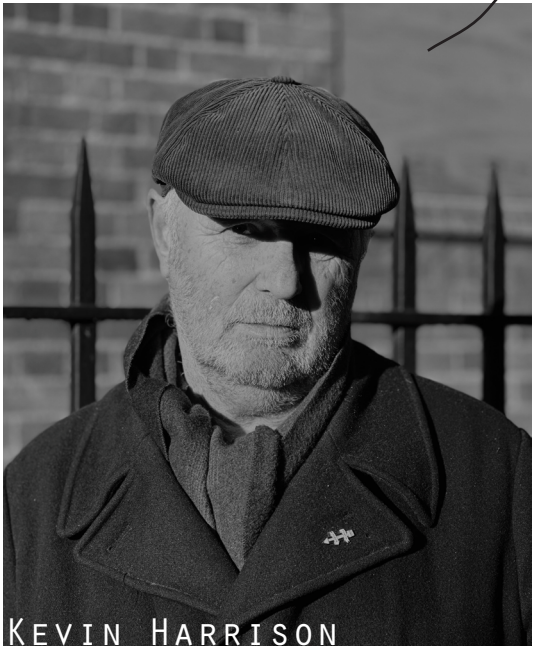
Active observations - Interviews and informal

Part of my research was to get to know the study group 'everyday artists'. I wanted to further investigate on what their struggles are, how their career path looks like, their impression of how the art world is perceived, why they chose to become an artist, what drives and motivates them (their passion), etc. Therefore I conducted multiple interviews with a variation of different everyday artists. (For the full version of the interview see Appendix XX)

„BECOMING AN ARTIST IS MORE THAN JUST A JOB, IT'S A LIFE DECISION. A MISSION I WOULD SAY. SUCCEEDING BUT ALSO SUSTAINING A LIVING IS A CONSTANT BATTLE BUT IT WAS AND STILL IS ONE I AM WILLING TO TAKE BECAUSE I LOVE WHAT I AM DOING.“

ART PLACE IN TOWER HAMLETS

INDEPENDENT ARTIST AT CHISENHALE



KEVIN HARRISON

„TECHNOLOGY HAS DEFINITELY INFLUENCED THE ARTS A LOT.“

S AS AN ART TEACHER

ARTIST STUDENT AT CSM IN LONDON WORKS



JOSHUA OBICH

„WE ARE WANDERERS IN THE CITY.“

conversations

E THAN
CI-
Y.
NING
TLE.
E I AM
LOVE

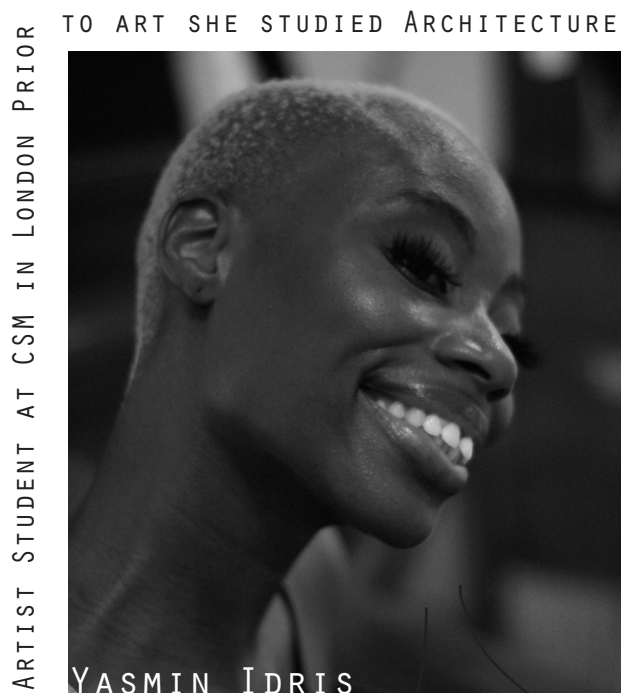
„THEY JUST DON'T
UNDERSTAND WHY I
DON'T HAVE A ,NOR-
MAL' JOB AND DO
ART IN MY FREE
TIME.“

„ART ISN'T
BOUND TO ANYT-
HING OR ANYO-
NE, IT'S INDE-
PENDENT.“

HER ON THE SIDE



HERE



83

„THEY JUST DON'T
UNDERSTAND WHY I DON'T
HAVE A ,NORMAL' JOB
AND DO ART IN MY FREE
TIME.“

„WITH PROOVING I MEAN
IF YOU ARE CAPABLE OF
SURVIVING ON THE MARKET
OR IF YOU DROWN RIGHT
FROM THE START.“

Figure 55 All photos by author

Epilogue

The research has uncovered a variety of issues that artists have faced throughout time. From a lack of affordable housing and space to exhibit to displacement, protests or political and social frictions, art and artists have always been at the forefront. Exhausting every resource the field has to offer. They extended the traditional understanding of the profession towards an overarching tool of expression - ,art as protest‘, ,art as a commodity‘, ,art as a voice-giver‘, ,art as the driving economic engine‘, etc.

However, although all of mentioned aspects are still recent challenges artists have to face, the main issue especially for everyday artists remains unsolved. Financial stability.

The majority of everyday artists need at least one side job to maintain a regular, adequate income. Addressing this issue requires a multi-faceted approach. It involves not only creating compelling artwork and talent but also developing business acumen, cultivating relationships, leveraging online platforms, and actively participating in the art community. Collaboration with other artists, curators, collectors, and art professionals can help but in order to guarantee success in exposure and income the network has to go beyond the artistic field towards the generality, hence the public.

In recent years, the internet and digital platforms have already provided new venues for artists to showcase their work and connect with a wider audience from all around the world. Nevertheless, this again created new expectations and obstacles, reinforced through competitive pressure, subjectiveness and constantly changing trends. The world we live in today is not defined by a lack of opportunities, resources or offers. In fact it's the opposite. We are confronted with an oversupply and an abundance that leads to a sense of overwhelmedness and a difficulty in navigating through this noise. The challenge is to filter out and decide what and who is relevant or necessary and what not.

For an everyday artist that means deciding on who is the right person to connect with to help set a foot on the market? How can I best showcase what differentiates me from every other artist? How can I display myself and my work in the most authentic way? What will help me to draw attention towards myself? Additionally, building

up a network can be very draining, so how can I limit my scope of interest without missing out on opportunities?

All of these questions ask of the artists to be more than the ,maker‘ of the artwork. It requires a multifaceted skill set. The same holds true for the profession of an architect.

Tackling the described issue through the lens of architecture in my opinion asks for more than a spatial solution or an architectural design. It asks the architect to think and create beyond the physical, build component, incorporating the social networks and relationships as a fundamental ingredient to the design. It will have to involve a holistic approach that incorporates social dynamics, community engagement, and the creation of meaningful connections to eventually serve as a catalyst for artistic expression, community interaction, and social change. To create this more inclusive and vibrant creative ecosystem the professions as well as the involved actors have to synergize, merge and overlap, complementing each other to navigate the complexities and inequalities of the contemporary art world.

85

Figure 56 Public Art in East London, Street unknown



Design approach

88 *Program*

92 *Site*

Program

⁴² Open studio day

This is a concept where once or twice a year the public gets access to the studio work spaces of artists. Its an organized event.

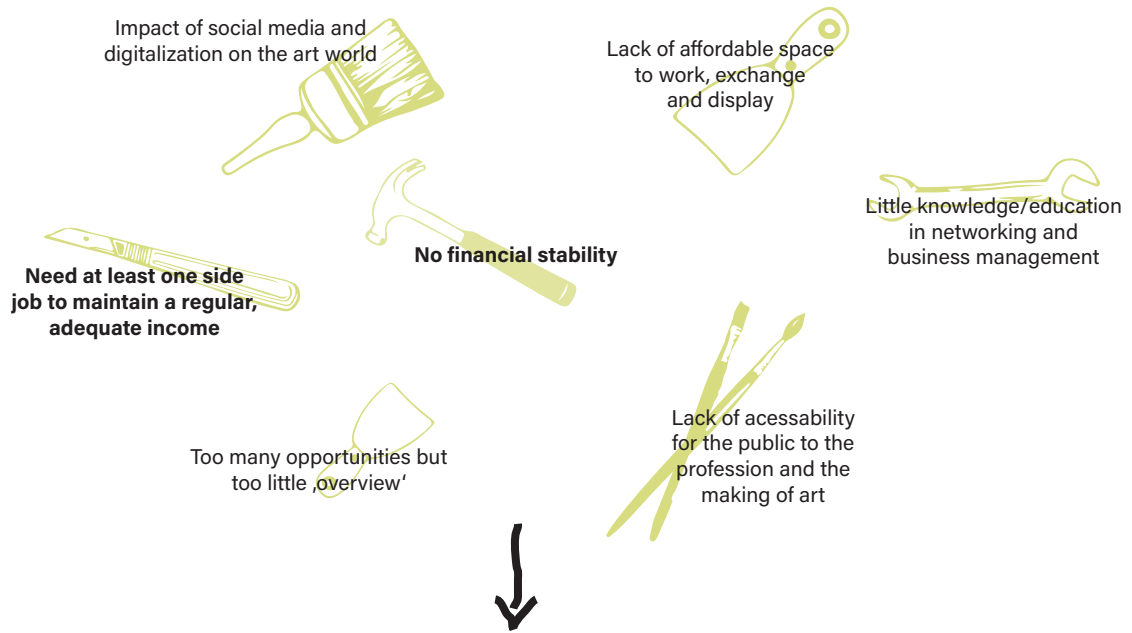
How does the research inform the design?

The research (theoretical analysis as well as ethnographic research) laid the foundation and served as a guideline for the design project. It helped me to define a ,tool kit' that is composed of various ,instruments', each symbolizing a fundamental issue, an inequality, a missing link or a social aspect. These instruments define the *programmatic framework* and will be furthered addressed with the design, eventually leading to the architectural project. (Figure 57, p. 89) Furthermore did the ethnographic research lead me to my site. It introduced me whilst analyzing studio spaces in London to an empty, redundant building that met the criteria I was looking for. The questionnaires as well as the interviews provided me with information regarding essential spatial qualities that artists need for their work space.

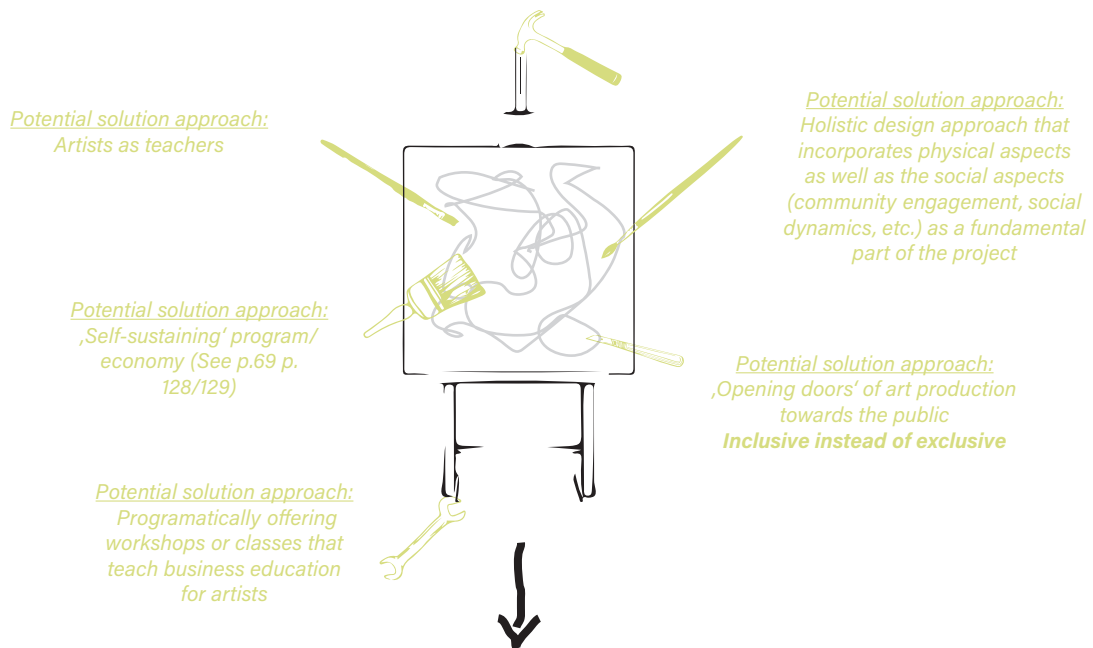
One of the main outtakes from the research was the realization that especially among the study group ,everyday artists' the major issue is financial stability. Most of them have to compensate by having at least one side job to maintain a regular income. One of the reasons is a small social network which is essential in order to create opportunities for exposure and income. As a consequence they are often overseen and miss out on potential new collaborations, job offers or career chances.

Here is where the program and the design wants to intervene. It will bring together spatially and programmatically the artists and the public. This includes actively promoting their work through various channels such as social media, exhibitions, art performances and networking events but also to give the public access to art production by having an open studio space creating transparency, engagement and interaction. The open studio space is inspired by the concept of the *open studio day*⁴² I was introduced while being in London for the field-work. The idea is for artist studio spaces (public and from universities) to open their doors once or twice a year, allowing access to anyone who's interested in art: Other artists, art dealers, parents, friends, investors, etc. Whilst currently this only happens every once in a while the new program will adopt this concept but redefine it, turning the temporary into a permanent situation.

,tool kit' = programmatic framework



,making art' = from research to design



,the artwork' = the project

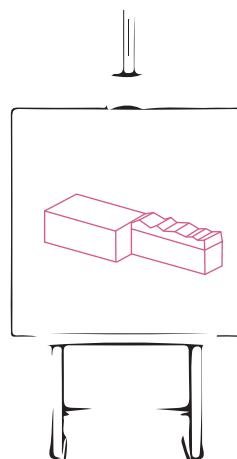


Figure 57 From research to Design

Programmatic framework:

a common ground (exclusiveness rather than inclusiveness)

A multifunctional space that can be used for exhibitions, events and performances (music, dance, visual art, debates, etc.), spatially allowing interaction and engagement between public and artists.

educational offers = exchange of knowledge (knowledge)

(can be solved programmatically as well as spatially)

Workshops offered by artists (Artists as teachers),

Workshops offered for the artists (Artists as students)

open studio/work space (transparency)

Inspired by the open studio day in universities, the open studio space adopts this concept making art production and the interaction with the artists accessible and possible throughout the entire year (it will be aligned with programmatic additions such as live art performances, interview sessions, workshops, etc.)

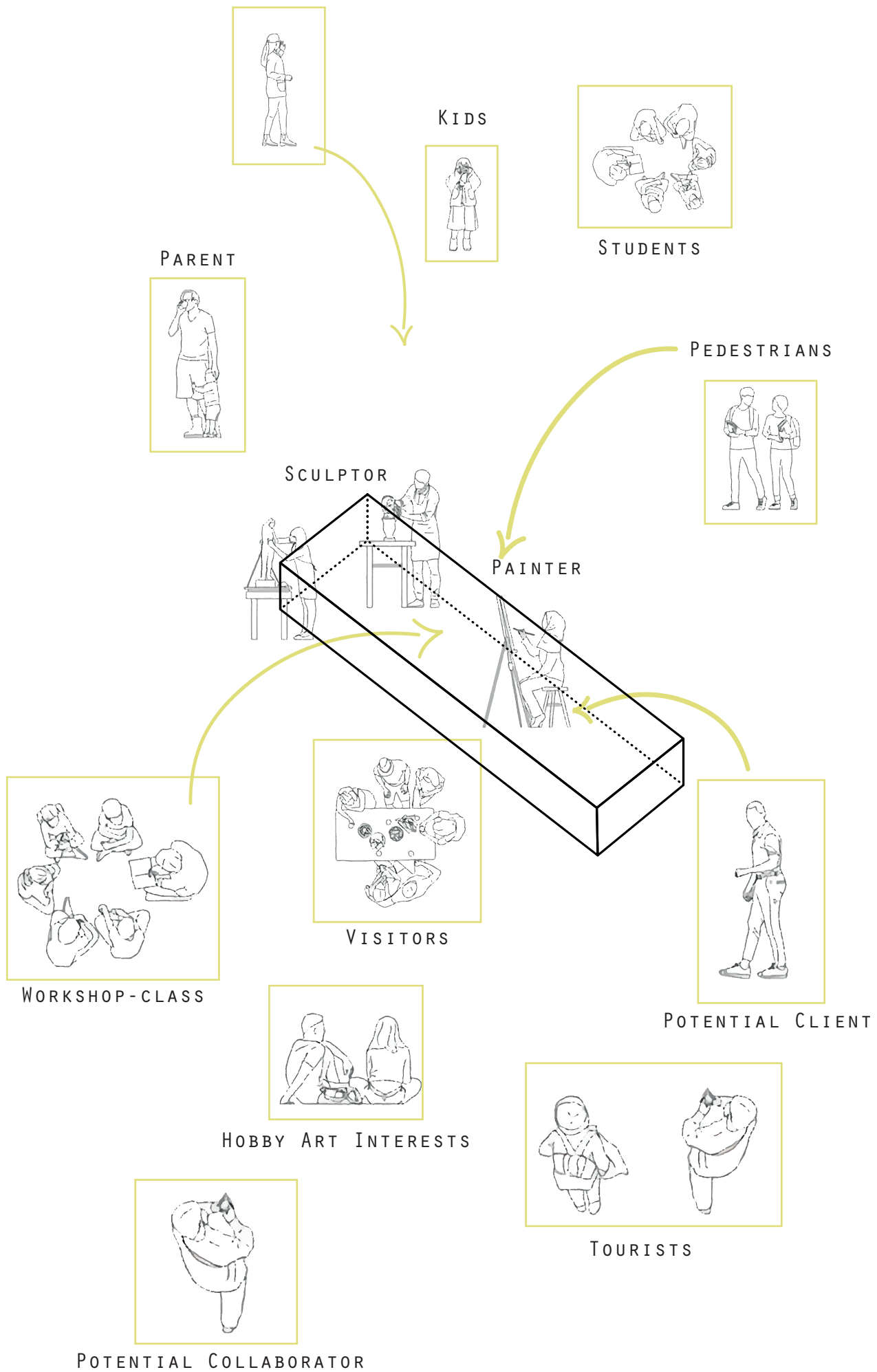


Figure 58 Open studio space - Group of interes

Site

The site is located right across the Victoria Park in Tower Hamlets (area Bow), in between predominantly residential buildings. The building consists of two connected brick building blocks. Steel framed, single-glazed windows structure the facade.

The former Veneer factory was built during the second world war in 1943. After shutting down in 1972 it was bought by the council of Tower Hamlets. Until Artists took over the space in the 80s, the building stood entirely empty and exposed to decay. Almost half of the building is still empty. The other half is rented out by the council of Tower Hamlets to Chisenhale Art Place (CAP) and Chisenhale Gallery, and Chisenhale Dance Space (CDS). Both are independent organizations that provide space for creatives (visual and performance artists), art production as well as art display.

The project site and the program will therefore intertwine within an already existing creative network, *complementing* and *adding* to it. The site consists of the empty, decaying part and the adjacent courtyard towards the Victoria park. An addition on the roof as well as a new, direct connection to the park is planned to enhance the visibility and accessibility of the building.

Map of London, yellow marked is the area of the site



Existing condition - Chisenhale Rd., south facade



ade



CONTEXT

FACADE DETAIL - VIEW TOWARDS ARTIST STUDIOS

Figure 60 All photos by author

Existing condition - Waterfront, north facade



TRANSITION SITE TO CHISENHALE ART PLACE



CHISENHALE BUILDING IN CON



TEXT

FACADE DETAIL

Figure 61 All photos by author

Existing condition - Interior

DOUBLE CEILING, ONE ROOM INTERIOR SPACE (DIMENSION WIDTH 8M. 13 CONCRETE BEAMS WITH A GRID-DISTANCE OF 3M STRUCTURE THE SPACE EQUALLY. IN BETWEEN EACH COLUMN SITS A STEEL FRAMED, SINGLE-GLAZED WINDOW. MOST OF THE WINDOW GLASSES AS WELL AS DOORS ARE EITHER DAMAGED OR NOT EXISTENT ANYMORE DUE TO DECAY. THE SPACE HAS NO FUNCTIONING BUILDING TECHNOLOGY (INSULATION, ELECTRICITY OR VENTILATION). THE FACADE CONSISTS ENTIRELY OF BRICK WITH A THICKNESS OF APPROXIMATELY 50CM. THE INNER WALL HAS BEEN PAINTED OR PLASTERED WHITE WHILST THE OUTSIDE HAS BEEN KEPT IN ITS NATURAL APPEARANCE - RED BRICK. PRESUMABLY (ON BASIS OF A RESEARCH I HAVE CONDUCTED ON THE *EVOLUTION OF BUILDING ELEMENTS*⁴⁴ DURING THE 19TH UNTIL 20TH CENTURY) IS THE FOUNDATION A CONCRETE POINT FOUNDATION (STRIP FOUNDATION ONLY BECAME POPULAR DURING THE LATE 40s).

⁴⁴ Evolution of Building Elements
University of the West of England, Bristol
<https://fet.uwe.ac.uk/conweb/house-ages/elements/print.htm>



DOUBLE CEILING, EMPTY SPACE (EAST VIEW)



Figure 62 Interior space of site

Existing condition - Context and surrounding



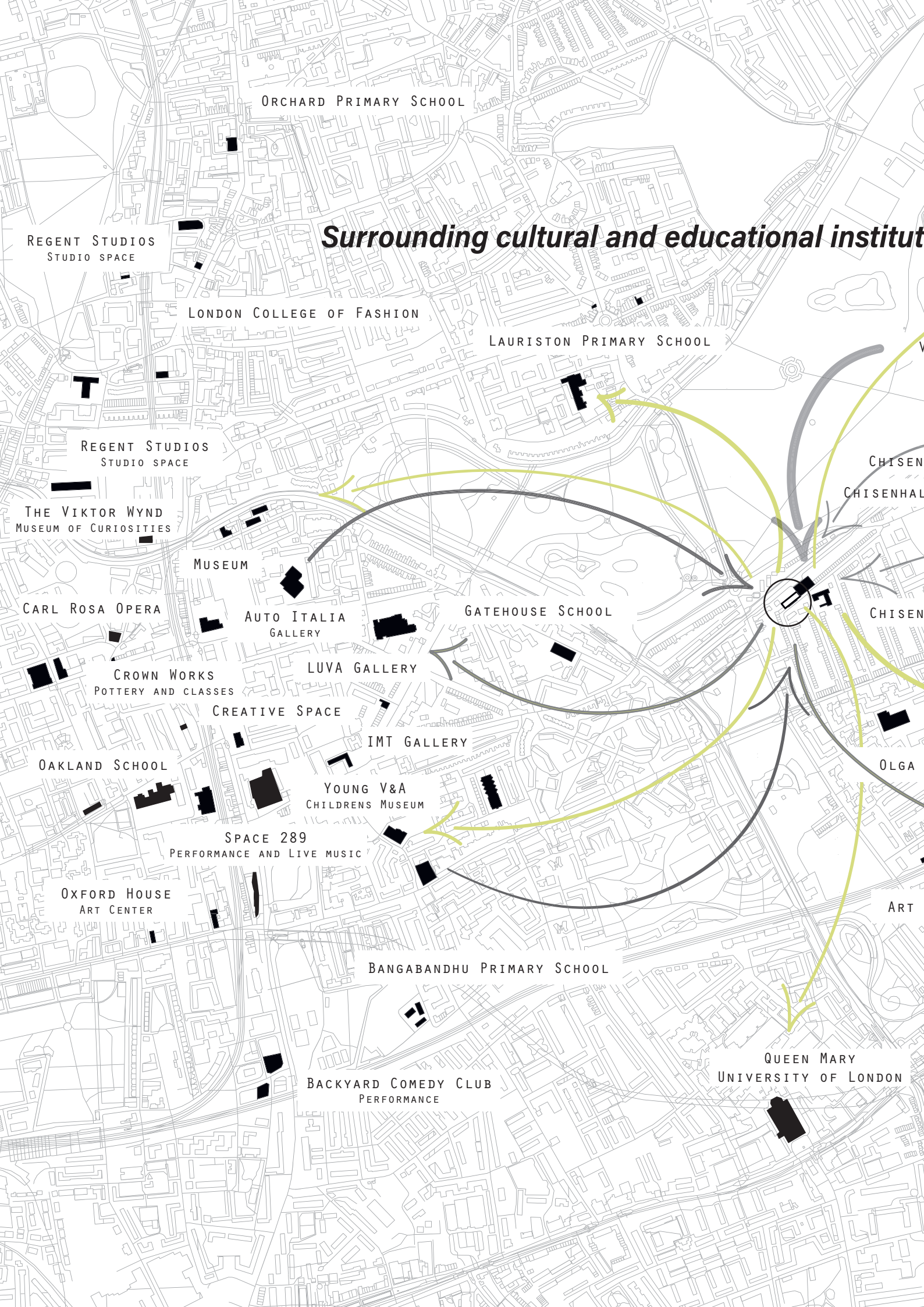
CHISENHALE RD., WEST VIEW



CHISENHALE RD., SOUTH VIEW



Figure 63 All photos by author



Surrounding cultural and educational institut

ORCHARD PRIMARY SCHOOL

REGENT STUDIOS
STUDIO SPACE

LONDON COLLEGE OF FASHION

LAURISTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

REGENT STUDIOS
STUDIO SPACE

THE VIKTOR WYND
MUSEUM OF CURIOSITIES

MUSEUM

CARL ROSA OPERA

AUTO ITALIA
GALLERY

GATEHOUSE SCHOOL

CHISEN
CHISENHAL

CHISEN

CROWN WORKS
POTTERY AND CLASSES

LUVA GALLERY

CREATIVE SPACE

IMT GALLERY

OAKLAND SCHOOL

YOUNG V&A
CHILDRENS MUSEUM

OLGA

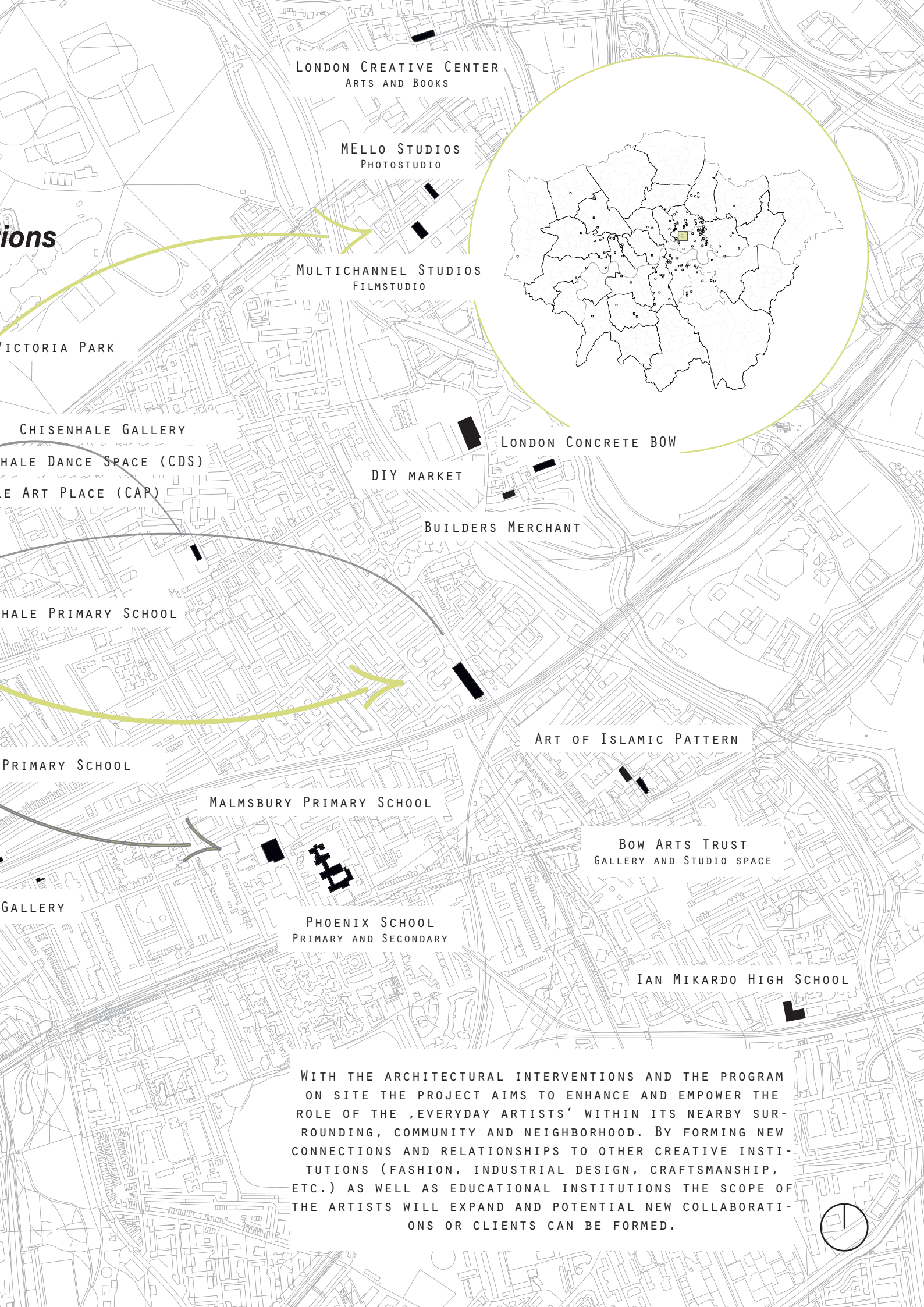
SPACE 289
PERFORMANCE AND LIVE MUSIC

OXFORD HOUSE
ART CENTER

BANGABANDHU PRIMARY SCHOOL

BACKYARD COMEDY CLUB
PERFORMANCE

QUEEN MARY
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON



LONDON CREATIVE CENTER
ARTS AND BOOKS

MELLO STUDIOS
PHOTOSTUDIO

MULTICHANNEL STUDIOS
FILMSTUDIO

ions

VICTORIA PARK

CHISENHALE GALLERY

CHISENHALE DANCE SPACE (CDS)

CHISENHALE ART PLACE (CAP)

LONDON CONCRETE BOW

DIY MARKET

BUILDERS MERCHANT

CHISENHALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

CHISENHALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

MALMSBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL

ART OF ISLAMIC PATTERN

BOW ARTS TRUST
GALLERY AND STUDIO SPACE

PHOENIX SCHOOL
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY

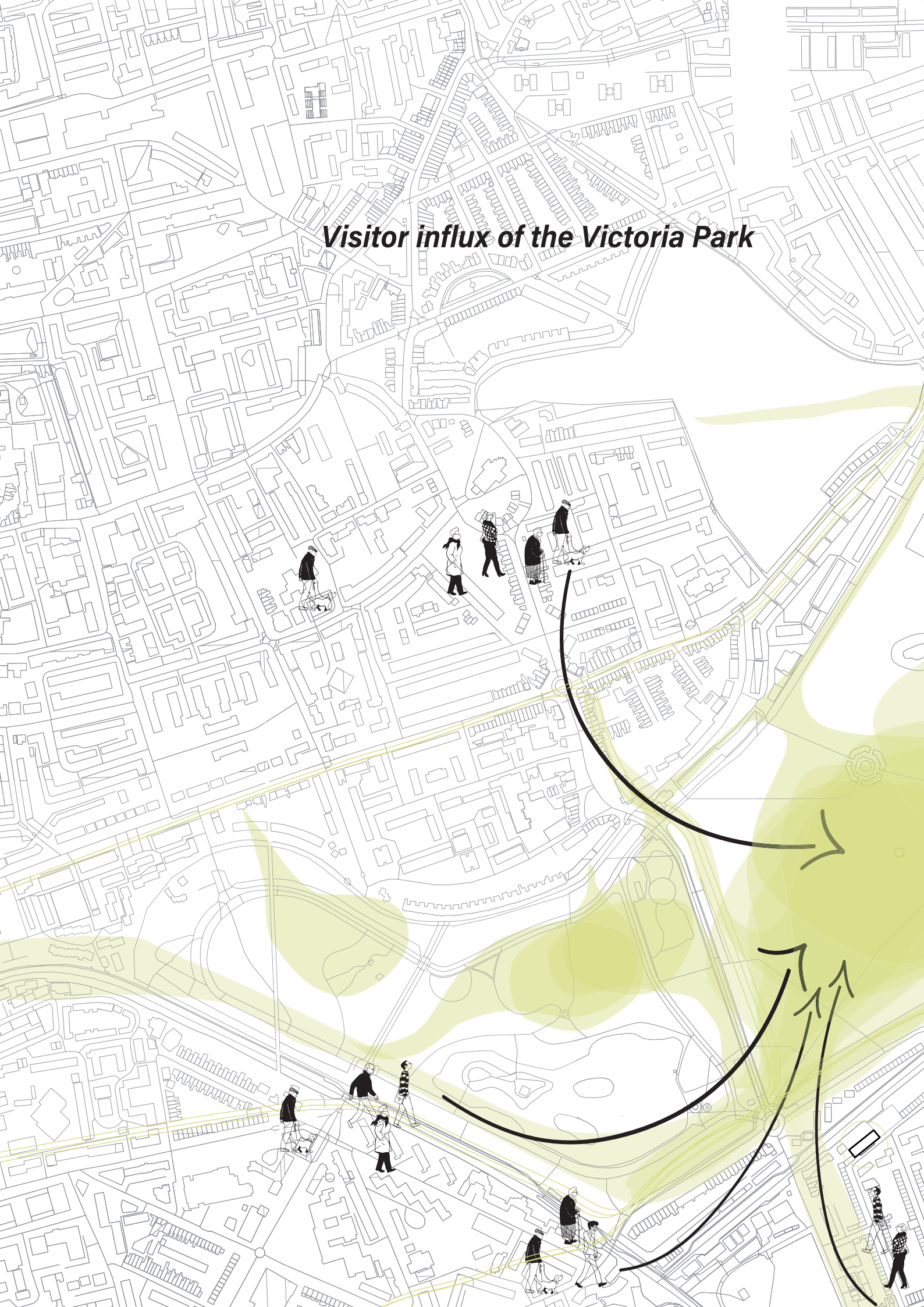
IAN MIKARDO HIGH SCHOOL

GALLERY

WITH THE ARCHITECTURAL INTERVENTIONS AND THE PROGRAM ON SITE THE PROJECT AIMS TO ENHANCE AND EMPOWER THE ROLE OF THE 'EVERYDAY ARTISTS' WITHIN ITS NEARBY SURROUNDING, COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD. BY FORMING NEW CONNECTIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER CREATIVE INSTITUTIONS (FASHION, INDUSTRIAL DESIGN, CRAFTSMANSHIP, ETC.) AS WELL AS EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS THE SCOPE OF THE ARTISTS WILL EXPAND AND POTENTIAL NEW COLLABORATIONS OR CLIENTS CAN BE FORMED.




Visitor influx of the Victoria Park





9 MILLION
VISITORS/YEAR

THE VICTORIA PARK IS THE MOST VISITED PARK IN LONDON AND OFFERS A LOT OF POTENTIAL NEW VISITORS, COLLABORATORS, ART INTERESTS, ETC. HOWEVER, THE CONNECTION FROM PARK TO BUILDING IS AT CURRENT STATE NOT IDEAL IF NOT EVEN GIVEN. TO CHANGE THIS SITUATION AND INVITE PASSERBYS TO ENTER THE SITE, A NEW CONNECTION BETWEEN PARK AND BUILDING HAS TO BE CREATED.



Creating a new connection and entrance from

VICTORIA PARK

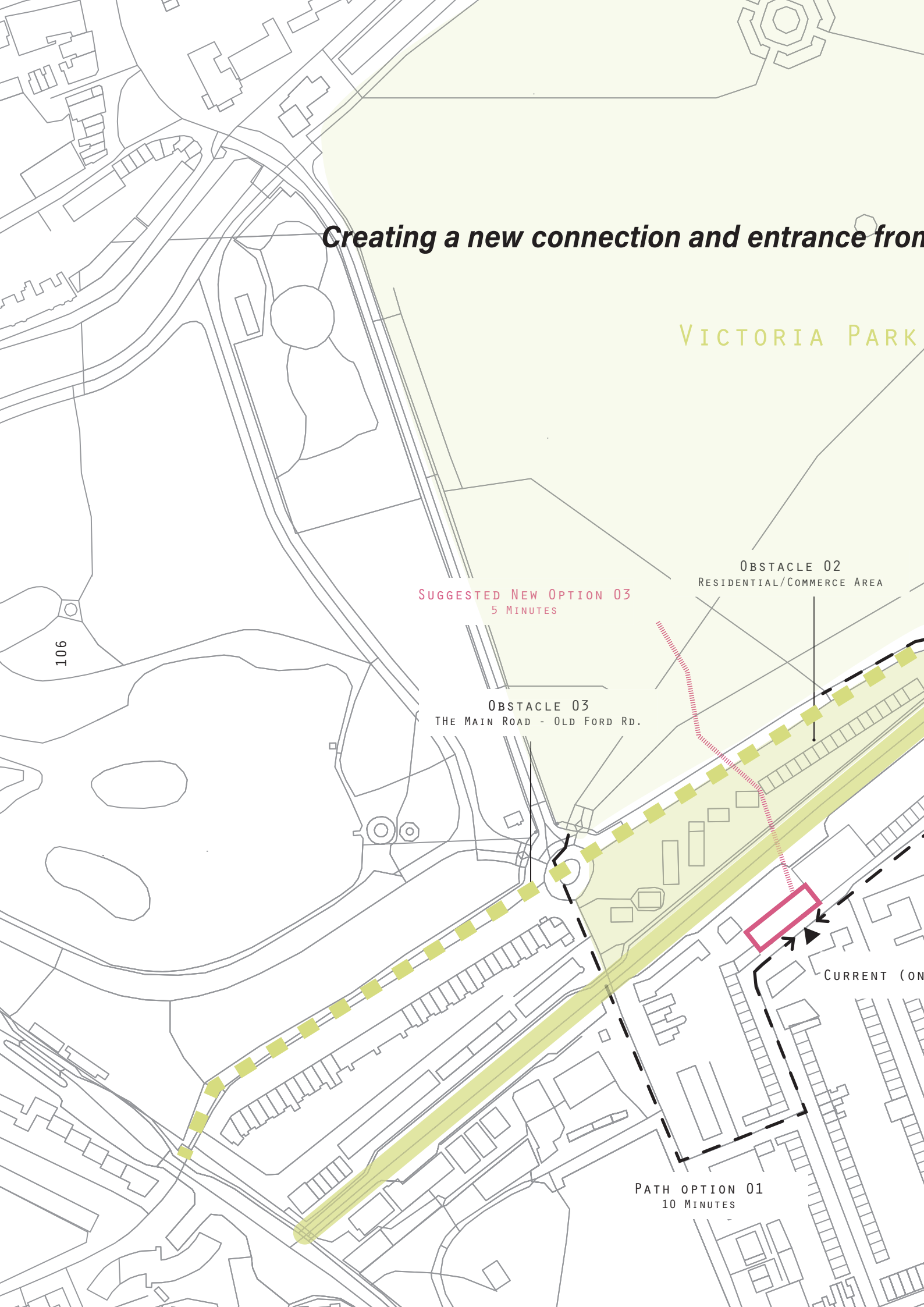
SUGGESTED NEW OPTION 03
5 MINUTES

OBSTACLE 02
RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCE AREA

OBSTACLE 03
THE MAIN ROAD - OLD FORD RD.

CURRENT (ON

PATH OPTION 01
10 MINUTES



From the Victoria park to the building



PATH OPTION 02
12 MINUTES

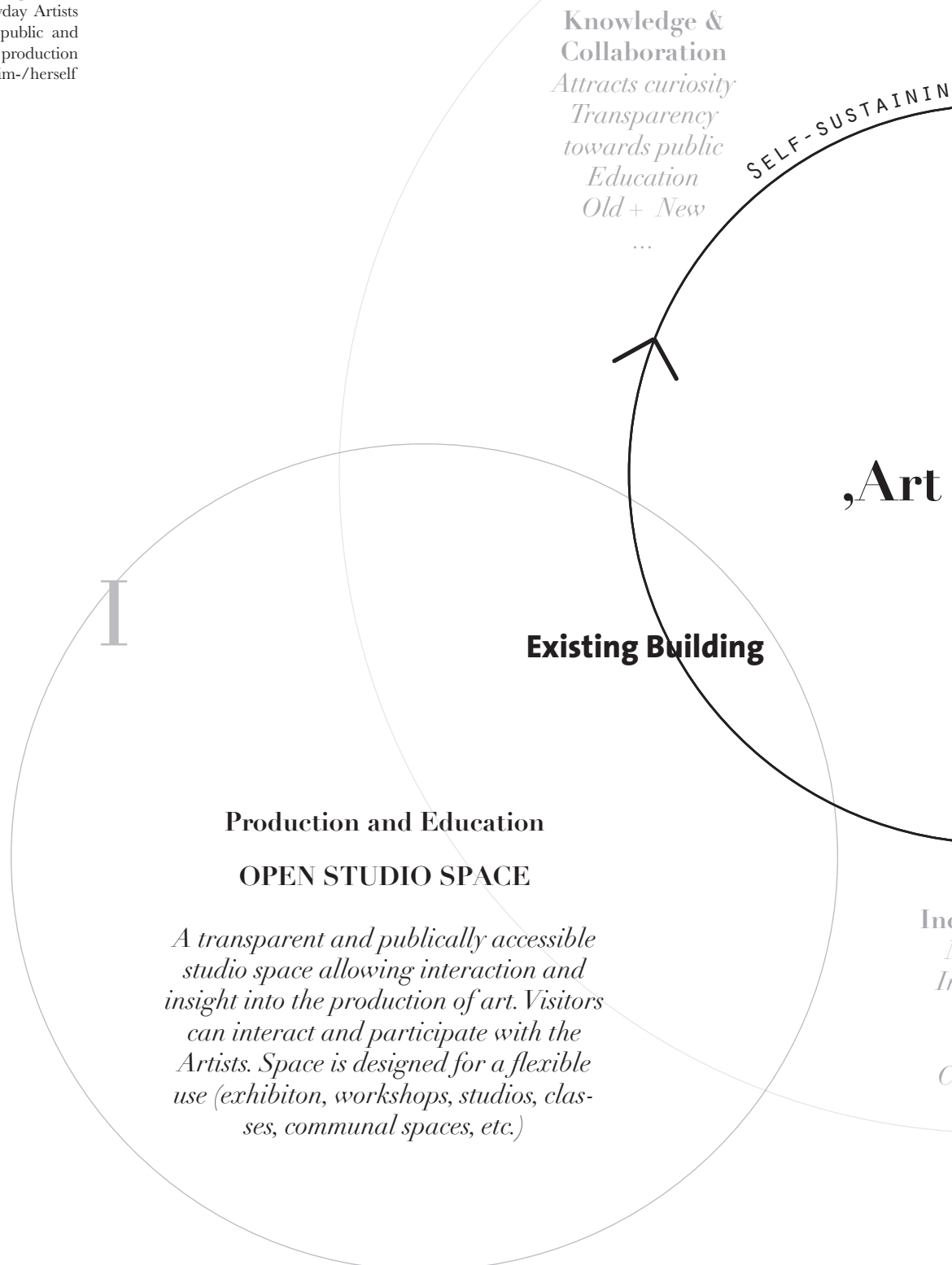
OBSTACLE 01
THE RIVER

LY) ENTRANCE

SINCE THE VICTORIA PARK IS THE MOST VISITED PARK IN LONDON, CREATING AN ACCESS THAT LEADS DIRECTLY FROM THE PARK TO THE BUILDING WAS OBVIOUS. IT WILL ATTRACT THE ATTENTION OF NEW AND BIGGER POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS (PASSERBY, PARK VISITORS, ETC.) AND MINIMIZE THE WALKING DISTANCE. TO EXECUTE THIS IDEA, IT WILL HAVE TO BE ACCOMPLISHED IN THE FORM OF A 'BRIDGE' TO OVERCOME ALL THREE OBSTACLES.

Project components and its self-sufficiency

The aim of the Art Agency is to create a **self-sustaining environment** for the everyday Artists and to bring together public and artists by making the production of art and the artist him-/herself more accessible.



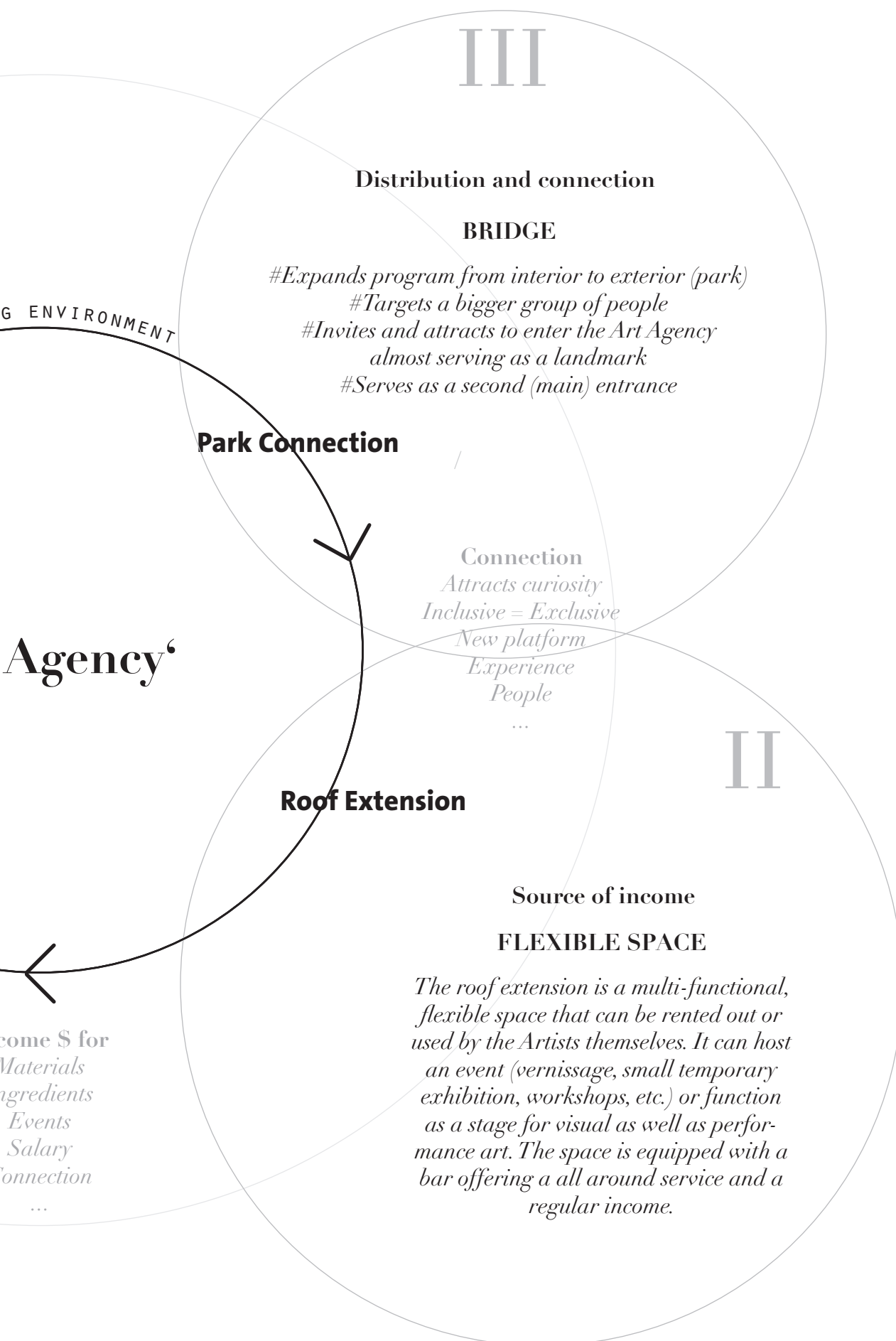


Figure 64

Appendix

112	<i>Research</i>
132	<i>Precedents</i>
138	<i>Bibliography</i>
146	<i>Reflection</i>

Research

Supplementary research - Passive observation

BOW ARTS TRUST

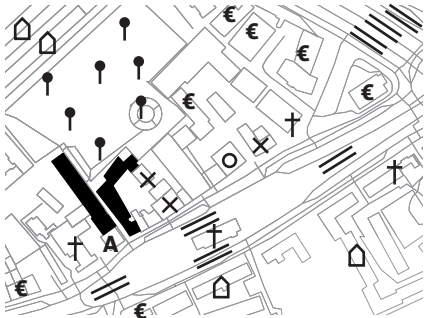
Other

Material

Natural

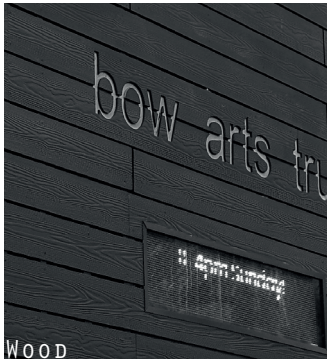
03

Tower Hamlets



NOISY TOWARDS STREET,
QUIET TOWARDS THE BACK-
YARD, HIDDEN, OVERSEEN,
ASSEMBLAGE, SMALL, WIND-
ING, DIY

- A Arts and Crafts
- Park or Greeneries
- Housing
- E Educational institution
- X Office space
- € Commerce
- O Industry
- † Religious institution
- == Infrastructure
- P Public transport
- ~ Water



ons - *Documentary photography* (Bow Arts Trust)

al surrounding	Built surrounding	Accessibility	
 D	 CHURCH	 MAIN ROAD / BOW RD.	 MAIN ENTRANCE/EXIT
 ALL PARK	 NEIGHBOURING ART ATELIER	 MAIN ROAD - BOW RD.	 MAIN ENTRANCE
 ALL PARK	 HOUSING AND COMMERCE		

WHAT BOW ARTS TRUST OFFERS

- # RECONNECTING ARTISTS WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH COMMUNAL EVENTS
- # PROVIDING ACCESS FOR THE COMMUNITY TO THE ARTS THROUGH LEARNING PROGRAMMES, EVENTS AND EXHIBITIONS
- # A CAFÉ LINKED TO THE GALLERY (NUNNERY GALLERY AND CAFÉ)

KEY FACTS

- # BOW ARTS WAS FOUND IN 1994 BY TWO ARTISTS
- # TWO HISTORIC BUILDINGS (STILL PART OF THE COMPLEX TODAY) FORMED THE INITIAL SITE. BOW ARTS GREW QUICKLY AND EXPANDED TOWARDS ADJACENT BUILDINGS INCLUDING A FORMER NUNNERY WHICH WAS RETROACTIVELY RENOVATED BY THE ARTISTS THEMSELVES AND TODAY SERVES AS THE GALLERY
- # 1998 BOW ARTS ESTABLISHED AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME WHERE ARTISTS ARE BEING EDUCATED HOW TO TEACH ARTS IN SCHOOLS
- # IN COLLABORATION WITH POPLAR HOUSING AND REGENERATION COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, BOW ARTS ESTABLISHED THE LARGEST AFFORDABLE LIVE-WORK SCHEME FOR CREATIVES IN LONDON
- # OFFER OPEN STUDIO DAYS EVERY YEAR TO SUPPORT AND SHOWCASE YOUNG, EMERGING ARTISTS

EXISTING PROVISION

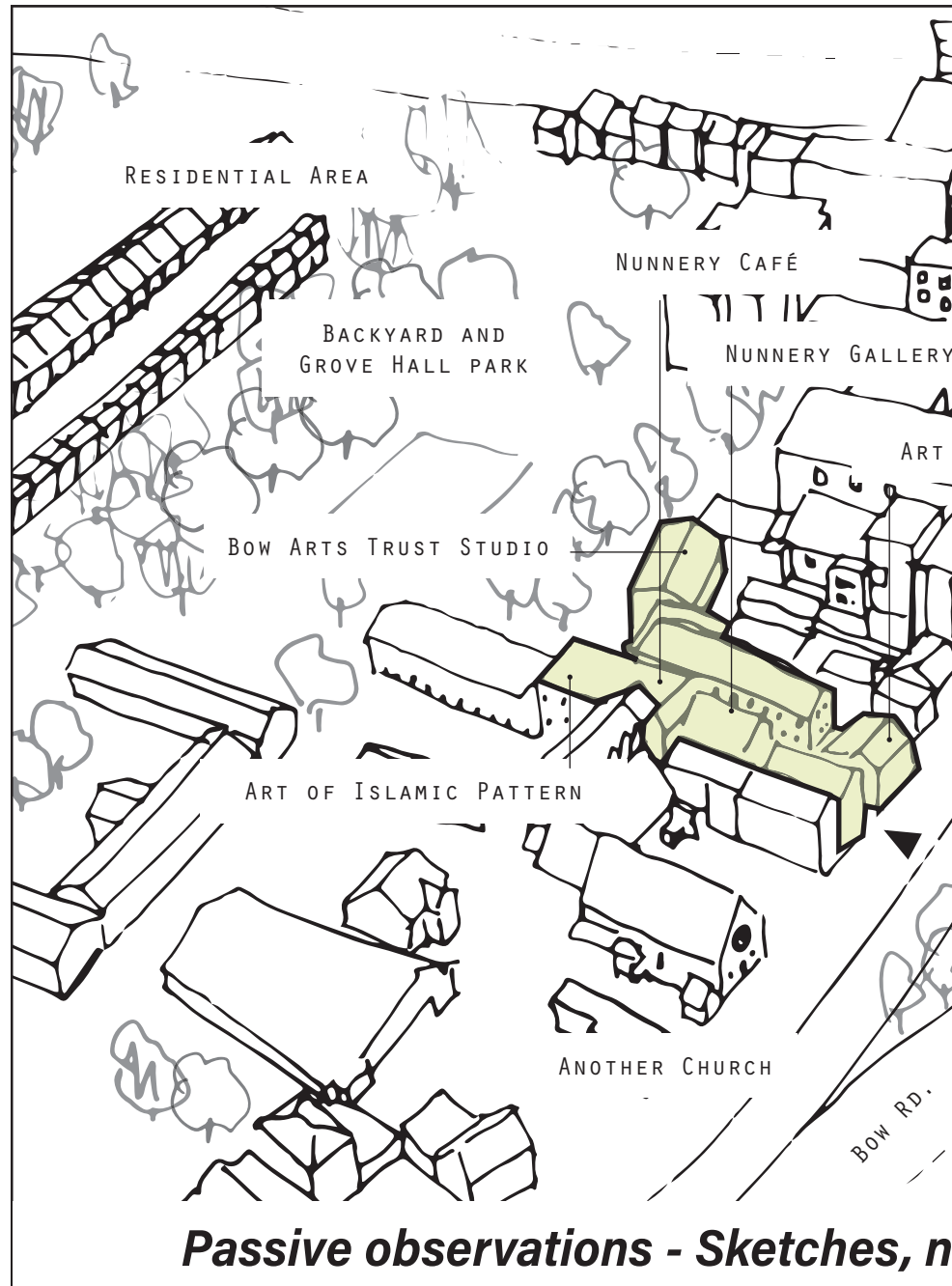
HIGHSTREET PERIPHERIES ARE OFTEN MARKED BY EMPTY AND VACANT PROPERTIES. ARTISTS WORKSPACES OR OTHER CREATIVE USERS HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO RE-ACTIVATE AND REPURPOSE THESE SPACES BY BRINGING BACK MEANING AND LIFE.

NEIGHBOURHOOD

BOW ARTS TRUST IS LOCATED RIGHT BY THE HIGHSTREET PERIPHERY BOW RD. AND IN BETWEEN A MIX OF COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL USE. TWO CHURCHES FRAME THE SITE. BOW ARTS USES THE ADVANTAGE OF LOW RENT OF UNDERUSED BUILDINGS IN NON-PRIME LOCATIONS AND SIMULTANEOUSLY RE-ANIMATES AND UPGRADES THE NEIGHBOURHOOD THROUGH AN ARTISTIC INTERVENTIONS.

VULNERABILITY

THE BUILDING(S) OF BOW ARTS TRUST BELONG TO THE HAMLETS AND ARE RENTED OUT ON A YEARLY BASIS TO THE ARTS TRUST HAS AN AGREEMENT TO FURTHER SUBLETTING TO STUDIOS, NUNNERY GALLERY AND THE INDEPENDENT CAFE TO BE RENEWED EVERY YEAR AND IS CONSIDERED AS HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO BOW ARTS TRUST THEY ARE THE COUNCIL AND THEREFORE HAVE NO NEED TO BE WOR

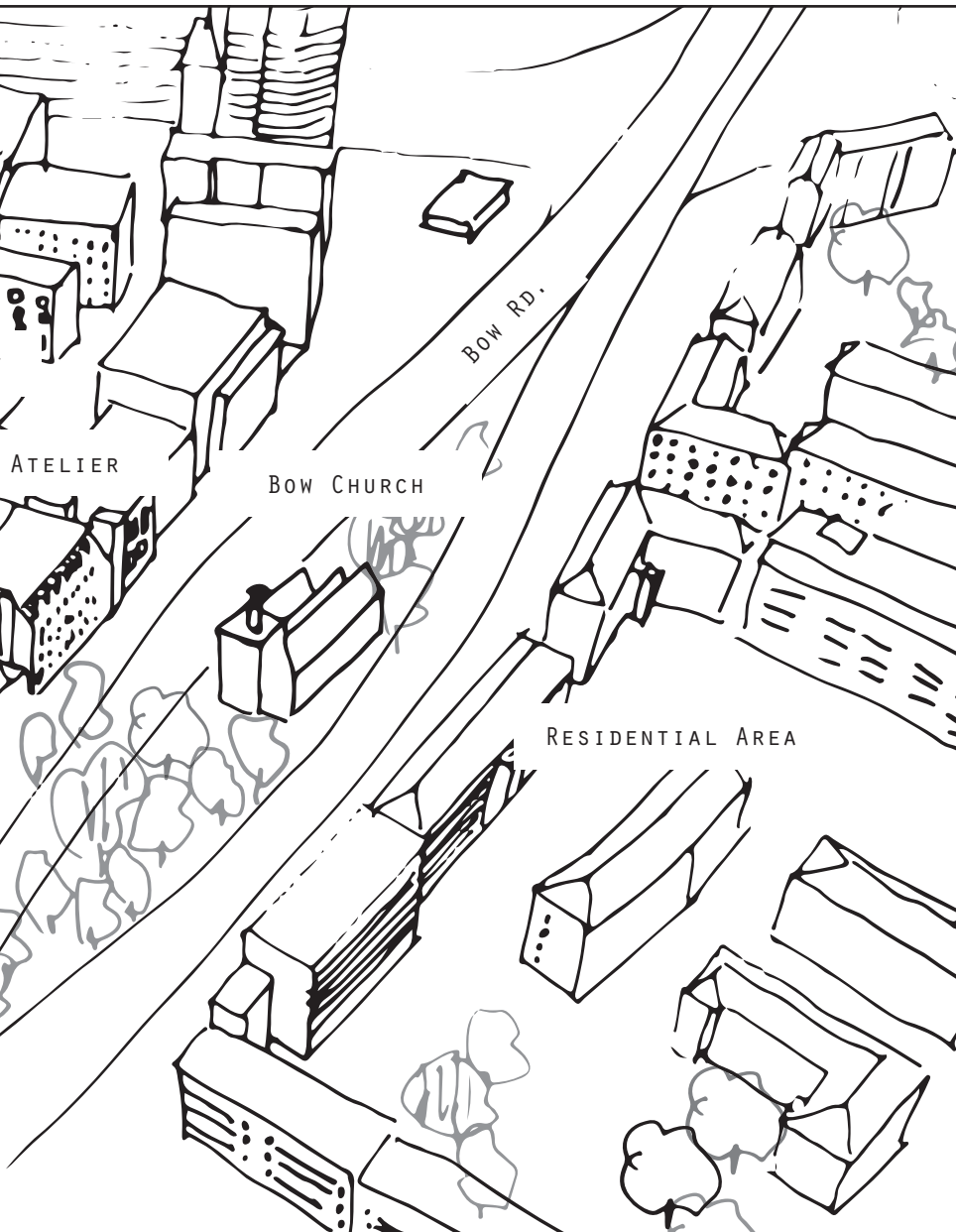
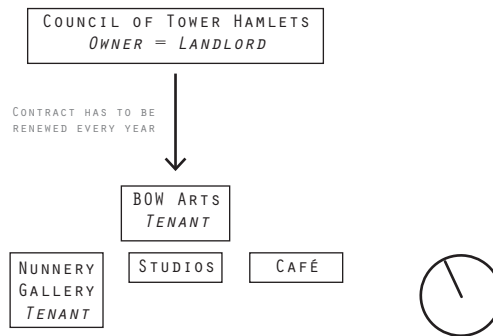


Passive observations - Sketches, n



ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL: LIVE/WORK SCHEME

THE COUNCIL OF TOWER
BOW ARTS TRUST. BOW
HE SPACES TO BOW ARTS
FÉ. THE CONTRACT HAS
,HIGHLY VULNERABLY'.
ON ,GOOD TERMS' WITH
CARRIED ANY TIME SOON.



notes, impressions and atmosphere

MATERIALS AREA

BRICK, GLAS, RED, BROWN,
ORANGE, BEIGE, YELLOW, WHITE,
STEEL, PLANTS AND GREENERY,
FLAT ROOFS AND TILTED ROOFS



CONDITION SITE

RENOVATED AND WELL MAINTAI-
NED BUILDING STRUCTURE. STU-
DIO SPACES AS WELL AS GALLERY
HAVE BEEN RETROACTIVELY IN-
SULATED AND RENOVATED BY THE
ARTISTS THEMSELVES.

ACCESSABILITY

PUBLIC TRANSPORT (UNDERGROUND):
BOW ROAD AROUND 8 MINUTES BY
FOOT, BROMLEY-BY-BOW AROUND
10 MINUTES BY FOOT
PUBLIC TRANSPORT (CITY RAIL):
STOP BOW CHURCH, ANOTHER 5
MINUTES BY FOOT

BUILDINGS MAIN ENTRANCE FROM
BOW ROAD THROUGH A NARROW COR-
RIDOR WHICH LEADS TO NUNNE-
RY GALLERY AND THE CAFÉ. THE
STUDIOS ARE ACCESSED THROUGH
ANOTHER ENTRANCE




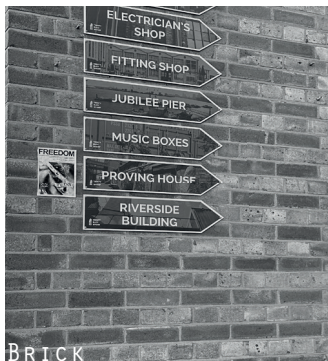
ATMOSPHERE AREA AND SITE

NOISY TOWARDS STREET, QUIET
TOWARDS THE BACKYARD, HID-
DEN, OVERSEEN, ASSEMBLAGE,
SMALL, WINDING, DIY, ENCLO-
SED, NARROW



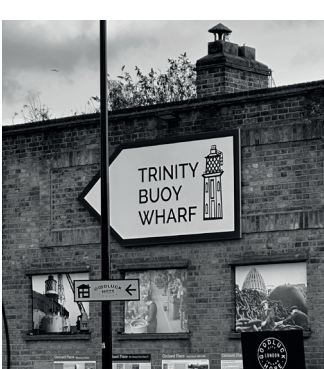
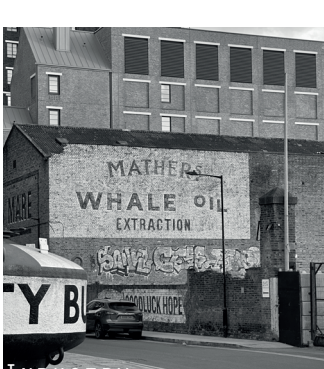


Figure 66 All photos by author

Supplementary research - Passive observation

TRINITY BUOY WHARF	Other	Material	Natural
<div data-bbox="188 869 236 913">04</div> <div data-bbox="188 943 209 1016">Newham</div> <div data-bbox="284 853 711 1167"></div> <div data-bbox="188 1205 692 1391"><p>REMOTE, HIP, CONTEMPORARY, IMPERSONAL, EXPENSIVE, COLLECTION OF USE AND SPACE, PROFESSIONAL, 'SUPERFICIAL', DIY, MIXED USE</p></div> <div data-bbox="188 1599 389 2051"><div><div>A</div>Arts and Crafts</div><div><div>P</div>Park or Greenery</div><div><div>H</div>Housing</div><div><div>E</div>Educational institution</div><div><div>X</div>Office space</div><div><div>€</div>Commerce</div><div><div>O</div>Industry</div><div><div>†</div>Religious institution</div><div><div>==</div>Infrastructure</div><div><div>P</div>Public transport</div><div><div>~</div>Water</div></div>	<div data-bbox="775 824 1101 1182"><div>CONTAINER CITY 01</div></div> <div data-bbox="775 1205 1101 1563"><div>LISTED BUILDING</div></div>	<div data-bbox="1129 824 1458 1182"><div>STEEL (CONTAINER)</div></div> <div data-bbox="1129 1205 1458 1563"><div>LAYERING</div></div> <div data-bbox="1129 1585 1458 1944"><div>BRICK</div></div>	<div data-bbox="1487 824 1596 1182"><div>RIVER L</div></div>

ons - *Documentary photography (Trinity Buoy Wharf)*

al surrounding	Built surrounding	Accessibility
 <p>SEA + THAMES</p>	 <p>RESIDENTIAL</p>  <p>OFFICE</p>	
	 <p>RESIDENTIAL</p>  <p>RESIDENTIAL</p>	
	 <p>RESIDENTIAL</p>  <p>INDUSTRY</p>	

WHAT TRINITY BUOY WHARF OFFERS

PROGRAM CONSISTS OF WORKSPACES FOR ARTISTS AND CREATIVES AND AN EVENT SPACE. ADDITIONALLY IT OFFERS A RESTAURANT AND A CAFÉ.
APART FROM THAT THEY ORGANIZE REGULAR EVENTS, EXHIBITIONS, EDUCATION FOR KIDS AND TEENAGERS, COMPETITIONS FOR ARTISTS (INCLUDING PRIZE) ETC.

KEY FACTS

LOCATED ON THE RIVER THAMES IN TOWER HAMLETS
SITE USED TO BE A LIGHTHOUSE (NOT IN USE ANYMORE) WHICH IS STILL VISIBLE AND PART OF THE CONCEPT
CENTER FOR CULTURE AND ART ACTIVITIES OF ANY KIND (VISUAL, PERFORMANCE, MUSIC, CRAFTSMAN, FASHION, TATTOO ARTISTS, ETC.)
CONCEPT INCLUDES ARTIST WORK STUDIOS (SOLELY WORK NO SLEEP), A RESTAURANT, AN EXHIBITION SPACE, PUBLIC TOILETS, STORAGE, TEMPORARY EVENTS, RENTAL SPACES
SPACE CAN BE RENTED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR FOR ANY KINDS OF EVENTS (ART EVENTS, WEDDINGS, ETC.)
ARCHITECTURE IS A MIX OF HERITAGE (OLD BRICK AND STEEL FACTORIES) AND MODERN DESIGN

EXISTING PROVISION

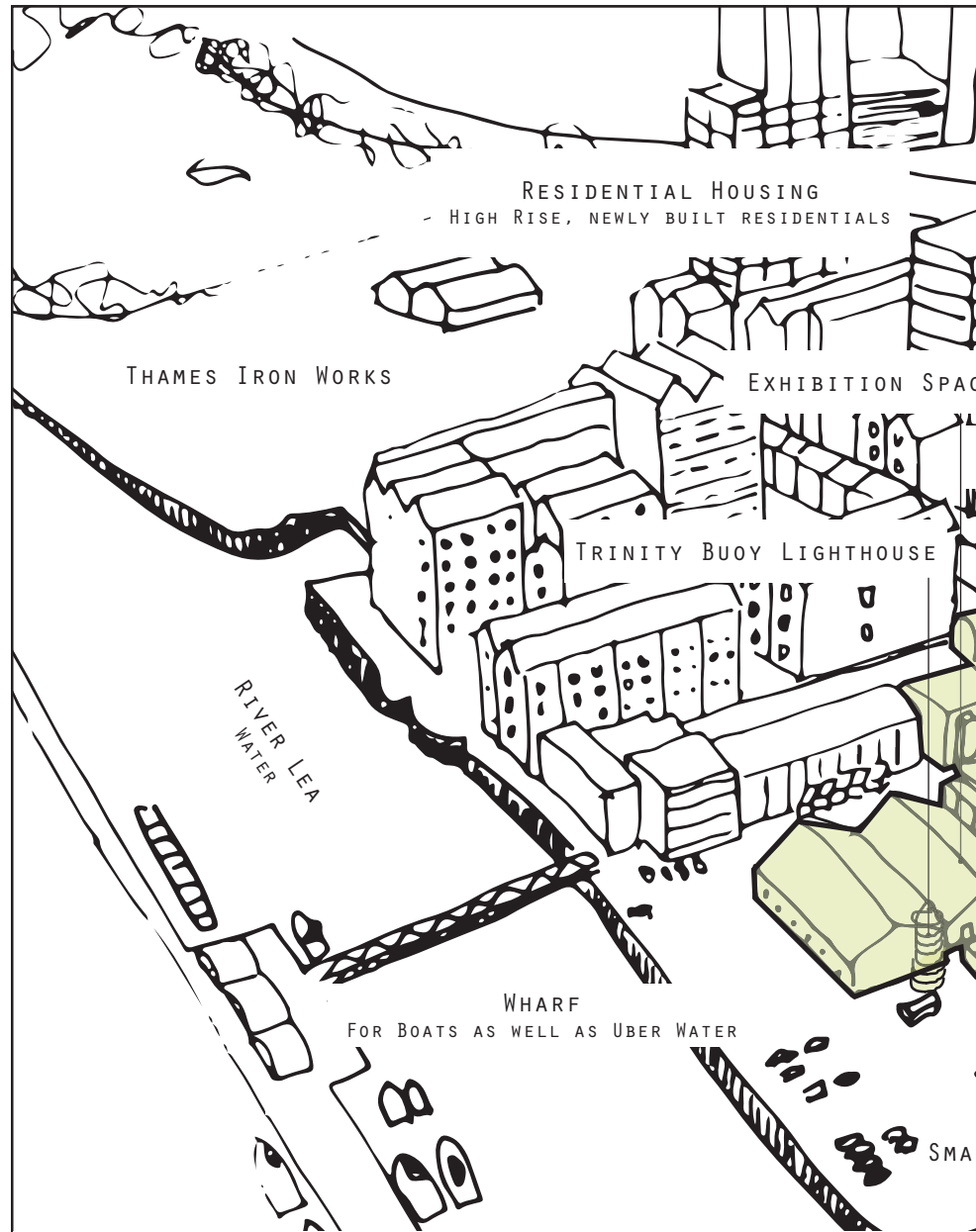
TRINITY BUOY WHARF OFFERS PART OF ITS SPACES FOR RENT OF ANY KIND (EVENTS, WORKSHOPS, EDUCATION, ETC.) AS WELL AS A PUBLICALLY ACCESSIBLE RESTAURANT /CAFÉ. HOWEVER THE STUDIOS THEMSELVES ARE MORE FOR PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS RATHER THAN THE PUBLIC.

NEIGHBOURHOOD

MOSTLY NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS. LOWER FLOORS ARE DEDICATED TO COMMERCE AND OFFICE UPPER FLOORS TO HOUSING. PREDOMINATELY HIGH RISE MIXED WITH REINTERPRETATION OF THE TYPICAL ENGLISH TILTED ROOF HOUSES. AREA SEEMS ARTIFICIAL AND NEW HOWEVER FORMER INDUSTRIAL ATMOSPHERE IS STILL VISIBLE.

VULNERABILITY

TRINITY BUOY WHARF'S ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL IS A MEANS THAT IT IS A SELF-INITIATED SPACE OWNED BY TRINITY BUOY WHARF TRUST. THE TRUST IS THE LANDLORD, LEASING SPACES TO A VARIETY OF TENANTS. SINCE TRINITY BUOY WHARF DOESN'T RELY ON GOVERNMENT OR PUBLIC FINANCIAL SUPPORT, THIS ALSO MEANS THAT THEY HAVE TO SELF-SUSTAIN THEMSELVES THROUGH OTHER SOURCES OF INCOME (EVENTS, RENT, ADVERTISING, ETC.)



Passive observations - Sketches, n



ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL: FREEHOLD

TRINITY BUOY WHARF
OWNER = LANDLORD

The building complex belongs to the Trinity Buoy Wharf Trust not the council. The Trust rents out to a variety of creative groups or people

ARTISTS
TENANT

CRAFTSMAN
TENANT

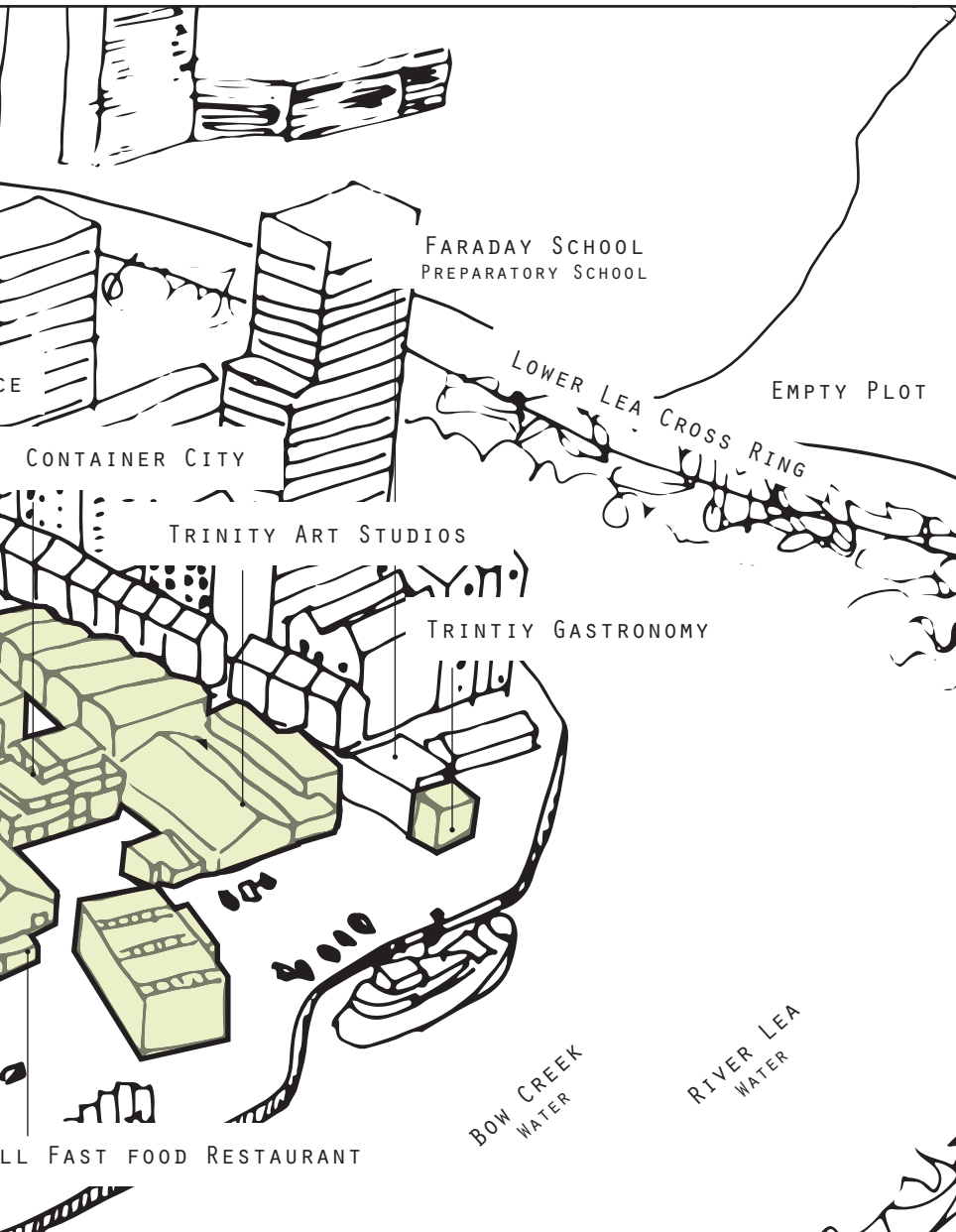
UBER THAMES
TENANT

FREELANCER
TENANT

CAFÉ
TENANT

OTHER
TENANT

FREEHOLD MODEL WHICH IN THIS CASE BY THE LANDLORD' RENTING OUT OPERATES INDEPENDENTLY. RESOURCES. HOWEVER, IN THEMSELVES THROUGH SELEMENTS, ETC.)



Notes, impressions and atmosphere

MATERIALS AREA

SINCE IT USED TO BE THE SITE OF LONDON'S ONLY LIGHTHOUSE HENCE BELONGS TO CATEGORY MARINE AND SEA TRINITY BUOY WHARF RECYCLED OLD SHIPPING CONTAINERS AS A BUILDING MATERIAL = 'CONTAINER CITY'.

CONDITION SITE

THE SITE IS IN TOP CONDITION. WITHIN THE PAST 25 TO 30 YEARS (SINCE MID 90s) THE ENTIRE NEIGHBOURHOOD (INCLUDING TRINITY BUOY WHARF) UNDERWENT AN URBAN RENEWAL AND REFURBISHMENT. LISTED BUILDINGS HAVE BEEN MAINTAINED AND RENOVATED.



ACCESSIBILITY

PUBLIC TRANSPORT (UNDERGROUND): STOP CANNING TOWN, ANOTHER 18 MIN BY FOOT

PUBLIC TRANSPORT (CITY RAIL): STOP EAST INDIA, ANOTHER 10 MINUTES BY FOOT

IN GENERAL THE AREA IS WELL SIGNPOSTED. THIS HOWEVER, IS ALSO NECESSARY SINCE IT IS QUITE HIDDEN IN BETWEEN NEW DEVELOPMENTS, INDUSTRIAL PLOTS AND HOUSING. I AM NOT SURE WHETHER THE SITE CAN ALSO BE ACCESSED BY BOAT, THOUGH A WHARF DOES EXIST AND IS CURRENTLY USED AMONG OTHERS BY UBER BOATS.

ATMOSPHERE AREA AND SITE

REMOTE, HIP, CONTEMPORARY, IMPERSONAL, EXPENSIVE, COLLECTION OF USE AND SPACE, PROFESSIONAL, 'SUPERFICIAL', DIY, MIXED USE, QUIRKY, WINDY



Figure 68 All photos by author

Supplementary research - Active observation



Portrait Kevin Harrison

Kevin Harrison is a 65 year old independent Artist working and living in London, UK. He has been a tenant of the Chisenhale Art Studios in Tower Hamlets since 19xy. His profession lies predominantly in sculpting. Harrison has experienced the evolution of the artistic scene ever since the 80s and can narrate how the art scene and the reputation of Artists has changed and formed throughout the past centuries.

Tell me a bit about yourself, why did you become an Artist? What's the passion or the engine that drives you to sustain in a field that is often traversed by so many difficulties?

(Laughing) Well, I have always wanted to become an Artist, ever since I can remember. It was what I was good at. I like working with my hands, it feels real and honest. But I was also naive. I studied Art, fine Art at four different schools. When I graduated I was sure to be an established, famous Artist within the next five years. Surprise! I wasn't (laughing).

„Becoming an Artist is more than just a job, it's a life decision. A mission I would say. Succeeding but also sustaining a living is a constant battle. But it was and still is one I am willing to take because I love what I am doing.“

Why would you say is it such a „battle“? After all art is a „product“ that is not only associated with suffering but also with money, wealth, assets?

I'll tell you something, as an Artist, you can either have everything or you have nothing. That might sound dramatic, I wouldn't say I have nothing, I am happy. But you know what I mean. Apparently as an Artist what defines you is not just the work you make, it goes way beyond. My dealer lives in Vienna, that's also where I exhibit my sculptures. I met him a long time ago and I've been stuck with him ever since (laughing).

„What I'm saying is, more important than the work itself is the connections you have. Or you're lucky. But talent alone really isn't going to make you a successful Artist.“

You mentioned that you're a member of the Chisenhale Artist Studios today, what brought you here and how is it to work in the studios?

It's freezing cold! (laughing) No, no I enjoy my work in the stu-

dios. There are many different Artists here. We still have some of the founding members working here. They work alongside the younger, new generation of Artists. We inspire each other. Chisenhale Art Place was one of the first independent educational artist-lead charities with studios for Artists in Britain. It's a place with history. Our concept was a role model for many of the studio spaces in London today.

When you say „younger, new generation of Artists“, what differs them from the „older generation“?

I mean you're a young Architect, I'm sure there are differences between the way you work compared to the way Architects worked 50 years ago. One of the younger Artists in our studio just recently signed me up on Instagram. I didn't even know that existed (laughing).

„Technology has definitely influenced the Arts a lot.“

Are you referring also to the working process?

Well yes of course. I mean there have always been two main components to the art practice: the product and the network around it. Both go hand in hand and technology, may it be Instagram or any other platform out there, simplify and accelerate how we work, reach out to people and advertise our work. But for me, that goes too far, I am old. This train has passed, I will still continue doing it the old-fashioned way (laughing).

Can you tell me a bit more about the history of the Chisenhale Art Place (CAP) building? It used to be an old veneer factory and a brewery until the 70s, what happened then?

Yes, until 1972 it was an old veneer factory until it became out of fashion. The area was known for timber, but at some point no one needed it anymore so they ran out of work. When I arrived in this area in 1977 it was all derelict you know. The East end was derelict and not a place one would want to be. Everything, all the surrounding houses were empty, partly even slums. Today though they're worth millions. So the building here (pointing at Chisenhale building) is owned by the local authority of Tower Hamlets, it doesn't belong to us. We don't have the money to buy a building worth millions.

„Artists are poor you know!“

But when Artists took this place over in the 80s they received a 30 year renewable lease from the authorities of Tower Hamlets. It will run out soon in 2030.

What happens after?

That's unclear. I mean, it's a beautiful building, well located. There are many prospects, developers and investors. They smell the money. [...] But the charity of Chisenhale Art Place is trying to find a solution to extend the contract and stay. Part of the building has been empty for almost 10 years now. It's a huge space, two stories but unused. There were multiple suggestions for repurposing it for the Artists but well, it's too expensive. I mean everything would have to be renewed, it's basically an empty shell.

„Sometimes they use it as a scenery for horror movies (laughing) - that's how bad the conditions are.“

Who inhabits the used spaces of the building and how big is it?

Here are in total 40 Studios, a dance space which is right above the derelict part of the building and a gallery. All independent from each other. [...] When the Artists took over this building in the 80s, they repurposed and upgraded it all by themselves. There were almost no other galleries or spaces for the Artists to exhibit in the city. I know that must seem hard to believe but that's how it was. The art market looked very different back then.

„And today London offers a wide range of galleries and museums. But well, most of them are not meant for Artists like me, they are all rich and posh.“

Portrait Joshua Obichere



Joshua Obichere, born and raised in London, is currently doing his MA in Fine Art at Central Saint Martins (CSM) in London. He has a BA in fine Arts from the University of Cambridge. Apart from studying he works as an Art & Design teacher, educating other Artists and Art interests about race through Art. Race and Blackness are two main subjects, that define his work. His Master Thesis addresses Blackness through a series of naked black bodies.

Tell me a bit about yourself, why did you become an Artist? What's the passion or the engine that drives you to sustain in a field that is often traversed by so many difficulties?

I've always wanted to capture stories and narratives without having to interact, I mean not in a literal way but I've always been a visual person. Something physically appealing that takes people's attention away and stops them in their tracks. I wanted to be that person that causes let's say this distraction.

„Whilst my words might not impact enough, at least my Art could.“

What are you working on right now?

I am exploring black bodies. But I am trying to tell a narrative that has never been told before. [...] Being black or being a minority in general is something that I really wanna expose and experiment with through nakedness.

You mentioned minorities, would you consider Artists as a minority?

Well, they for sure are an undervalued group of people within society.

“And in general I would say there is a lack of creativity around and that definitely derives from overlooking the Artists as an independent, acknowledged profession.“

Why do you think this is the case?

We live in a really complex and expensive world. Financial security becomes the biggest case. Back in school a lot of my friends decided to study law, medicine, finance, consultancy you know, jobs that secure a stable income and that allow you to buy a house and all. And for me I had it quite difficult because I didn't know anyone who wanted to become an Artist. That's because most of the people don't see it as a proper job, they see it as a hobby.

„They don't see a reliable future for an Artist in our society.“

A lot is falsely communicated by the media. But if you google ‚salary Fine Artist‘ there is no regulation or even a specific job description. We have to create those ourselves. So in a way, as an Artist you have to let go of that thought, of this traditional way of lifestyle. Because it is difficult to be an Artist, I'm not gonna lie.

Your friends, do they understand and support your decision to becoming an Artist?

Most of them do, yes. But of course some still can't see or understand why I dedicate my time and life to Art. It's not like they don't like the art work or are not supportive.

„They just don't understand why I don't have a ‚normal‘ job and do Art in my free time.“

I guess it's hard for them to see that I don't just put paint on canvas. Being an Artist goes far beyond that. It's the process, the inspiration and the thoughts I put into it, the social connections it creates, the discussions it opens up.

Coming back to awareness, do you have any thoughts or ideas on how this awareness could be created? Especially in terms of spatial needs.

Artists are spatially very easy to satisfy (laughing). All we need are walls and good lightning. We work with whatever we get and make the best out of it. Let's be honest, most areas that are now booming have been occupied by us Artists before. The problem though is, most of us lack money. That's why we can easily be kicked out, we can't sustain the space, it's too expensive.

„We are wanderers in the city.“

Apart from making Art, Networking is another main component of an Artist's life. How and with whom do you network? What does networking mean? Are there any organizations, events, sign-ups, etc. specifically for young Artists?

A good example is ‚Frieze London‘. It’s kind of like a massive Art Expo where works of London based Artists are exhibited and exposed to Art dealers from all around the world. It can act like a springboard for young Artists towards an international career. But not every Artist has the privilege to exhibit. You need connections and the platform to get in.

„The thing is, we don’t always know who to network with. Because it almost seems as though unless they don’t look artsy you can’t really network with them.“

Where would you say is the starting point of building a network? Is there one?

I don’t think there is a rule of thumb. But what many do is approach different galleries with a portfolio. Or also with an exhibition that you organize yourself. That’s even more efficient.

„Although an exhibition might not assure you’ll have someone to sign up with afterwards but the Dealers know what the Art market wants, what has potential in the future. That’s what you’re looking for.“

Another way is to collaborate with other Artists. That’s what students do a lot. For example with ‚open studio day‘. The school and the Artists invite the dealers, other Artists, family and friends and they come here to our studios. Basically the studio space turns into an exhibition space.

„I would say it all starts with an exhibition, when your work is on display and it’s open to the public.“

Portrait Yasmin Idris



Yasmin Idris is currently doing her MA in Fine Art Master at Central Saint Martins (CSM) in London. After graduating with a BA in Architecture, she decided to switch profession towards a more freed and independent field - the Arts. Yasmin describes herself as a multidisciplinary Artist, storyteller and world builder.

Tell me a bit about yourself, why did you become an Artist? What's the passion or the engine that drives you to sustain in a field that is often traversed by so many difficulties?

I just really like to tell stories. and I like to do that through painting and films. You know when you have that feeling that somethings calling you, it's a gut feeling. I tried other things but I always end up here again. Must be a sign.

„Art also helps me to discover myself, it's like a coping mechanism, it's frees me.“

You have a Bachelor Degree in Architecture, what made you switch to Fine Arts?

Architecture gave me anxiety (laughing). I felt overwhelmed and pressured and I never found my spot. My designs always tended to be more of an artwork than an architectural design. And at some point I asked myself: Why am I doing this? I want to be an Artist. And I made the right choice, I feel much better.

Would you say Architecture and Art are related or let's say, does your architecture knowledge contribute to your art now?

Definitely. For both questions. I mean I might have never found my spot in the architectural field but nevertheless it was my starting point. I just saw more freedom in Art than in Architecture. Architecture unlike Art is bound to limitations and regulations because after all the aim is a building or a structure and therefore needs a user. Art doesn't. Art could be anything. A painting, a sculpture, a photograph, a collage, a graphic, an installation, a 3D print, literally anything. I love that.

„Art isn't bound to anything or anyone, it's independent.“

What are your plans for after graduation?

I feel very anxious about this question (laughing). There is just so much going on and so much to think about. Unlike other jobs you don't just apply somewhere and then negotiate on the conditions of your contract and gallery. You're entirely on your own at first. And if you haven't been active in building up a reliable network or

advertising your work, you will have huge disadvantage.

And how do you prepare in terms of professional relationships, networking and getting your work out on the market, etc.?

I honestly upload everything I create on Instagram.

„Social Media is one of the main platforms for all Artists today.“

And then also Uni does help a lot too. There are support teams that help you to reach out to people or they for example send out calls for students to submit their work for an exhibition. That's where we can find potential clients, investors or supporters, a connection maybe even a dealer, but that's rare.

Why is that rare?

Because you have to first ‚prove‘ yourself as an Artist and your Art.

„With proving I mean if you are capable of surviving on the market or if you drown right from the start.“

It sounds harsh but it's a tough world (laughing). So you start by finding a gallery that displays your work. If you sustain, attract the attention of buyers or are discovered as a future potential then you get to have a dealer. But it's a process, it takes time and patience. That's why your social network is so important, the more people you know, the more potential clients you have.

What else is there that helps to build relationships and get started? You mentioned you're Uni supporting you a lot too.

There are different kind of opportunities that we are being introduced to from the Uni. The support is really good. It could be competitions, a public exhibition but also invitations to private exhibitions or uni organized events like the open studio day. Those are all condensers where the different actors come together and meet, exchange and support each other.

Who do you define as actors?

Actually an actor could be anyone. Because anyone can buy the Art or be a potential connection to someone buying the art.

„For example someone I met sometime ago at CSM told me that the best people to network with are bankers and lawyers because they are eventually the ones buying your work. And thats where I also see Architecture or Architects coming in, as a bridge, creating spaces that allow these kind of connections.“

Talking about Architecture: What do you think of clean and minimalist spaces like for example a White Cube?

I personally don't care where my work is being exhibited as long as it's not jeopardise it. But also my work is very multifascetted. If you're a painter I believe it's a completely different thing. But I also do for example film. That doesn't neccessarily need an empty space. I once projected into mirrors. My work and I are very flexible.

Precedents

Haus der Statistik, Berlin, Germany

Concept and organization

One important reference was Haus der Statistik in Berlin, Germany. After standing empty for over ten years in the heart of the city, an art initiative organized by a group of artists set the starting point for a redefinition and reuse of the building complex. Today the building stands under construction. Apart from retrofitting and renovating the existing concrete structure, an extension will be added. The program includes spaces for culture, residential, finance and public authorities.

My interest focused on the conceptual and organizational model of the project. Although the scale of Haus der Statistik exceeds the one of mine, I was inspired by the collaborative and inclusive model between the users of the space, the investors, the public authorities and the designers that all worked together and eventually made the execution of the project possible. (Figure 69, p. 132)

Additionally I conducted an interview with the ambassador of ‚WERKSTATT am Haus der Statistik‘ to receive further insight and explanation on this model as well as the underlying actor-network and its organization. To understand how the actors and involvents are related, who they are and what their role is, it was necessary and helpful to talk to someone in person. (Due to legal reasons the interview is not open to the public)

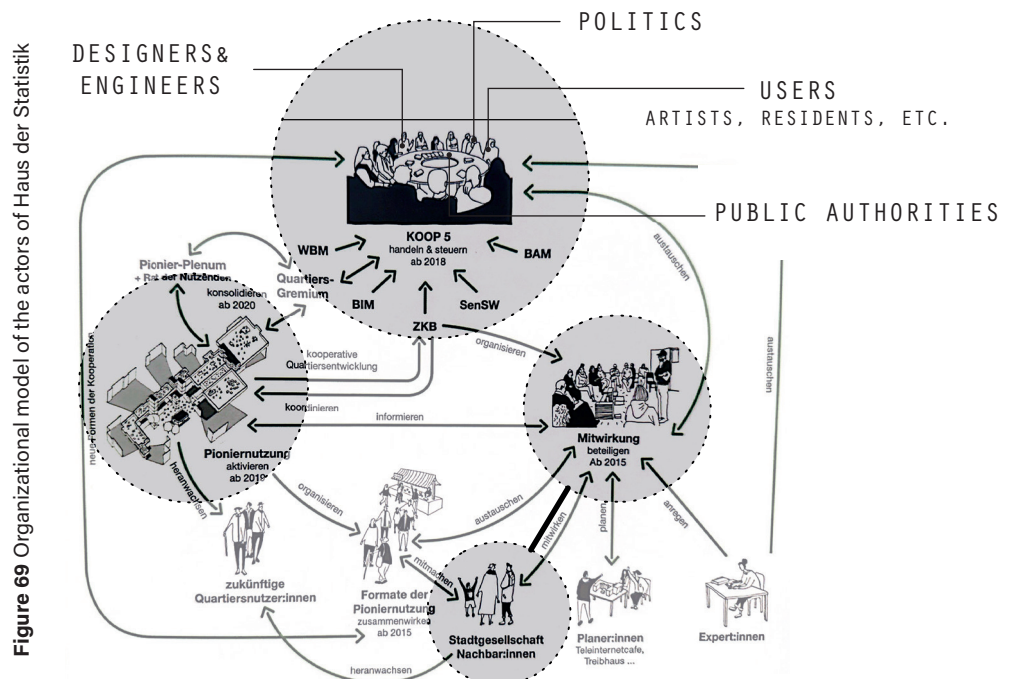




Figure 70 Photo by author

Interview scenario, the 22. September 2022

DARIA
THE INTERVIEWEE

HAUS DER STATISTIK
THE BUILDING

ME
THE INTERVIEWER



MARKED **IN GREEN** IS WHERE THE ARTISTS PLACED A HUGE POSTER IN SEPTEMBER 2015. THIS INITIATIVE MARKS THE STARTING POINT OF THE REFURBISHMENT OF HAUS DER STATISTIK.



Figure 71 All photos by author

Material, shape and appearance

Retrofitting

The project consists of three different components (retrofitting, roof extension and a connection to the park). The most prominent and influential interventions will be the roof extension and the connection to the park. In respect to its predominantly residential neighborhood, I wanted to design an addition that visually ‘disappears’ and adjusts to the context it is put in. At the same time though, it should serve as a landmark erecting curiosity and interest. Similar to the Balenmagazijn in Ghent or the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, does the existing brick building serve as a sturdy pedestal for the aluminium or glass addition on top. The facade of it reflects the surrounding and the sky whilst imitating the shape of either the ‘pedestal’ itself or in the case of Elbphilharmonie the water. These qualities (connection old and new, reflecting and imitating whilst reinterpreting) I want to apply for my own project. A respectful dealing with the surrounding but at the same time creating an eyecatcher or a landmark.



Figure 72 Balenmagazijn Ghent, Belgium



Figure 73 Elbphilharmonie, Hamburg, Germany

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Figure 01

Photo by author. *Sofar Sound, Artist 01*. September 22, 2022. Photograph.

Figure 02

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Figure 03

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Figure 04

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Figure 06

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Figure 07

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Figure 13 and 23-26

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Figure 37-44

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Figure 45

Photo by author. *Studio space of MA fine art graduates from Central Saints Martins CSM, London*. December 14, 2022. Photograph.

Figure 46

Photo by author. *Toolkit for site visit*. September 02, 2022. Photograph.

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Figure 53/54

All photos by author. *Chisenhale Art Place*. December 06, 2022. Photograph.

Figure 54

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Figure 55

All photos by author. *Portraits everyday artists*. December 06, 2022. Photograph.

Figure 56

Al Muraikhi, Reem. *Public Art in London*. September 20, 2022. Photograph.

Figure 57/58

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Figure 59

Google Maps Screenshot. *Chisenhale Art Place*. Photograph. London. Accessed through <https://www.google.com/maps>

Figure 60/61 and 63

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Figure 69

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Figure 74

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Reflection

1. What is the relation between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (A,U,BT,LA,MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

Based on the studios discourse, which focuses on the interdisciplinarity of a multi-modal design research, the graduation project 'Art as an Agency' investigates on the relevance as well as the impact of Art in the city. Therefore the definition of what art is and can be goes beyond the traditional understanding of art as a commodity but also draws light on art as a tool for expression, a voice giver, a political statement or a platform for social commentary.

Eventually the research aims to uncover social, urban and environmental inequalities within the art world that have emerged throughout time and are clearly visible in the built and lived environment. Questioning the existing, unequally distributed 'system' that prevails and steers the art world by uncovering the underlying relations and dependencies among the actors (human and non-human) the research aims to find potential, alternative 'ways' that will counteract these inequalities and eventually empower the artists and their role within society. Looking at heterogeneous city London not only through the lens of an architect or an urban planner, but also the one of an artist, I was able to reveal the multi-sided role of art in and for the city. I used a variety of methods to understand and untangle the Actor-Network of the art world. This allowed me to identify one main issue that predominates on site, naming the lack of awareness among society of the relevance of the everyday art and artists for the built and lived environment. This led to the main research question which is 'What spatial intervention is needed to maintain, enhance and sustain the proliferation of the everyday artists in the built and lived environment?'. The aim of the research is to point out and illustrate prevailing inequalities and unequal distributions within the art world and to eventually find a way, how architecture could counteract against it. It is not about solving the problem but rather about empowering and simplifying certain procedures such as the accessibility, visibility and the distribution of the everyday artists.

2. How do you assess the academic and societal value, scope and implication of your graduation project, including ethical aspects?

Art intertwines with almost every aspect of our daily lives. Art is not just an object such as paintings, sculptures or installations. It goes far beyond these definitions all the way to being used for therapeutical, educational or scientific matters. Art therefore serves as an agent for social, economic and political matters. However the profession of an artist until today still isn't fully taken 'seriously', leading to the majority of the artists (everyday artists) not being able to maintain a regular and sufficient income and needing at least one side job. Additionally art is often seen as an 'add on/accessory' rather than autonomous in the professional field. The reason for this underestimation and lack of appreciation is the fact that the impact of art and artists in the city, its thriving economy, the social relations and qualities it creates is often overseen or not seen at all.

Knowing this I wanted to further investigate on potential ways (architectural as well as programmatic) on how to empower the artists. How can architecture serve as a facilitator for art?

3. How did your research influence your design/recommendations and how did the design/recommendations influence your research?

I used my research as a foundation and a guideline for the design. It provided me with multiple main 'ingredients' that I gathered throughout the research process and therefore needed to be addressed within the design to guarantee success. Eventually the research uncovered one issue that prevails among the art world that I decided to tackle through an architectural design solution. Therefore the research, especially the ethnographic research infused the design with a programmatic framework and fundamental necessities (Figure 57, p. 89). It also led me to the location that now will host my design project. The questionnaires as well as the interviews with the artists provided me with information concerning vital spatial qualities that artists need. They also helped to clarify and further define the main study group - 'everyday artists'.

4. How do you assess the value of your way of working (your approach, your used methods, used methodology)?

All in all I am content with the topic and the approach that has been developed throughout the past couple of months. The research reflects my interest and tackles a past, contemporary as well as future 'problem' not only in the researched city London, but all around the world. However, I had some initial difficulties finding an equal balance between the written part of the thesis and the practical part, the fieldwork and the design project. Especially regarding the research I struggled at first in finding an appropriate way how to incorporate all the information gathered through my theoretical reading analysis, the right methods and methodologies and eventually translating everything from research into a design approach. However, looking back, I believe the methods and the methodology I chose were the right ones for the research topic 'Artists as Agents' and the design approach meets the requirements of the study group 'everyday artists'. (see also Figure 74, p. 151)

5. How do you assess the value of the transferability of your project results?

The project aims to showcase through a combination of existing spatial and social models (open studio, self-sustaining communal environments, etc.) a new approach on how to tackle a contemporary problem that the art world is facing. Whilst the physical, build component of the project is viable in terms of transferability into reality the success of the social component is dependent on more than just the concept itself. It will need the support of a variety of other actors (such as local authorities, the government, art institutions, financial investors, etc.) as well as the willpower of the artists themselves to open up towards the public to guarantee success. However, overall the project has the potential to initiate a 'new way' towards empowering the artists and making art more relatable and understandable for everyone.

6. How did you guarantee that the existing buildings condition meets today's building standards?

The building is an old brick building from the 30s. Since it is a former factory the building's technology (insulation, ventilation, heating, etc.) doesn't meet today's building standards. Therefore it had to be subsequently retrofitted. An interior insulation and wall heating/cooling was added as well as a mechanical ventilation system. In summer the adjacent canal can be used to cool the building through a water heat exchanger. All windows have been replaced through triple-glazed wooden windows that also allow natural ventilation. In total 36 PVT collectors are mounted on the roof to provide the building with energy for electricity and heat.

7. What is the main aim of the architectural design?

The project consists of a social and a build component. Both are equally valuable for a successful execution and both aim to create a more inclusive and vibrant creative ecosystem that allows an exchange (in form of a relationship, a trade, a sale, knowledge exchange, etc.) between everyday artists and the public. Comparable with an agency, the project serves as an intermediate or a springboard for everyday artists.

The build component is designed in such a way, that the architecture becomes a literal ,bridge‘ or connection between artists and public. The spaces reflect openness, transparency and connectivity and substantiate the idea of making art more accessible. The social component is reflected in the program which sees and needs the human actors (artists, students, kids, collaborators, visitors, etc.) as a vital and indispensable part of it.

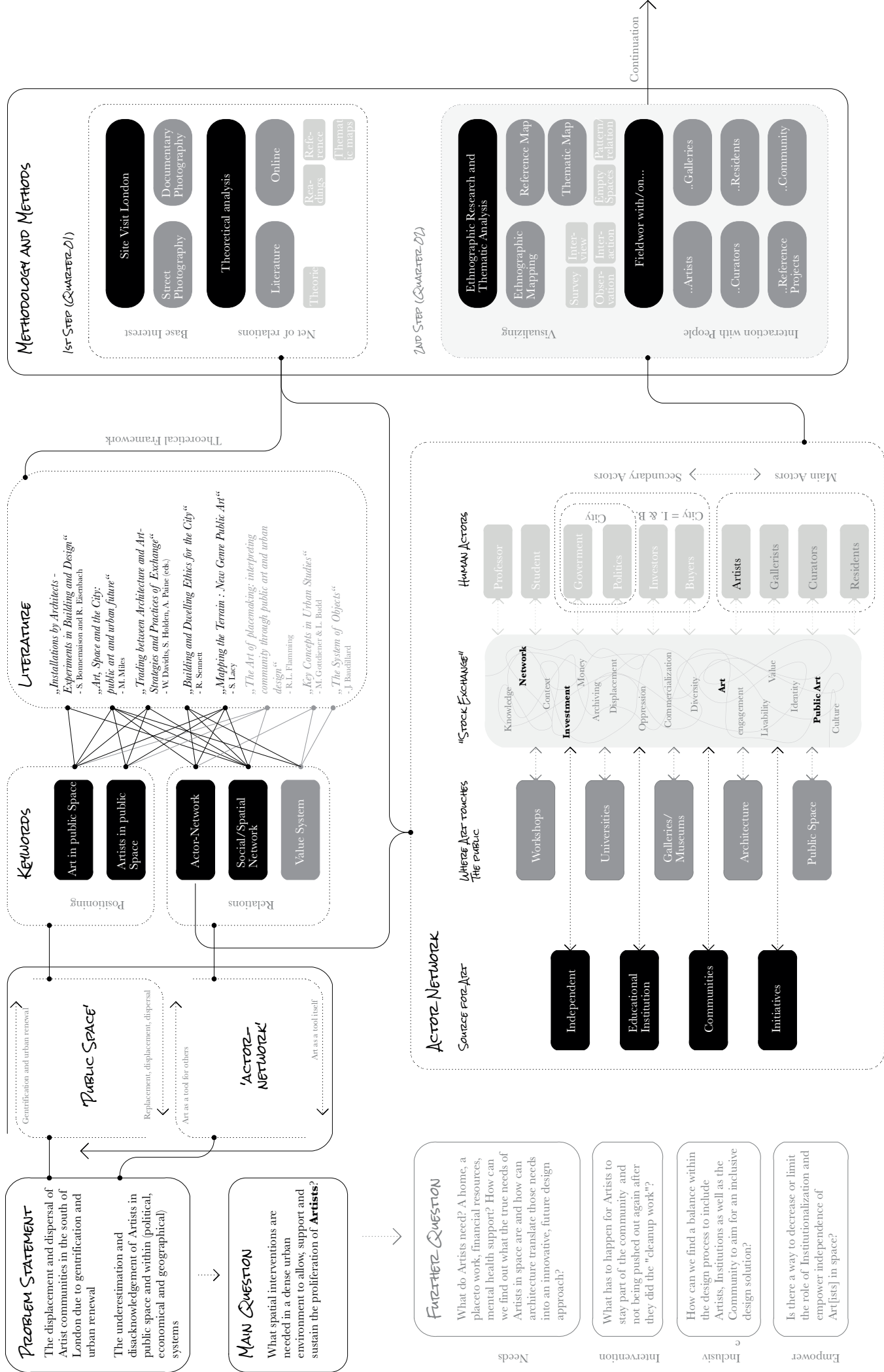


Figure 74 Research Plan