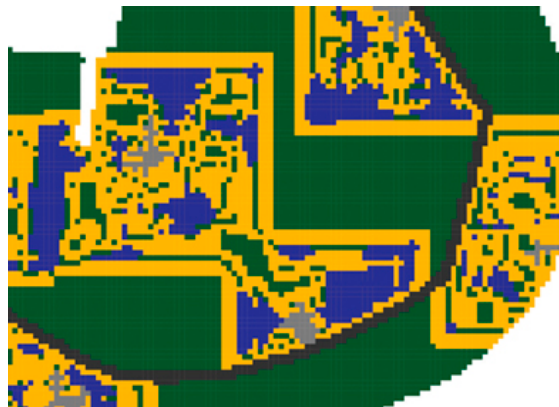# INTRODUCTION

An interaction designer as city maker

With a background in interaction design, I used to study rapid developments in digital technologies, and explored how to keep interacting with those in a 'human' and personal matter.
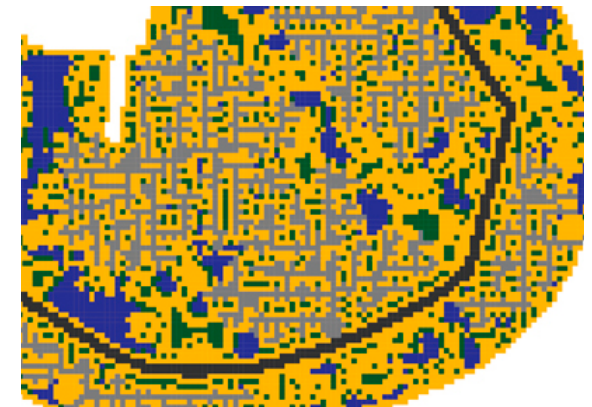
I developed a particular interest in how to take this 'interaction design' out of the screen, and into the city.

After studying a masters in urbanism at the Architectural Association in London, I continued doing projects in UX ('user experience') for the built environment, helping architects, planners and policy makers to keep an eye on the human scale of big developments.
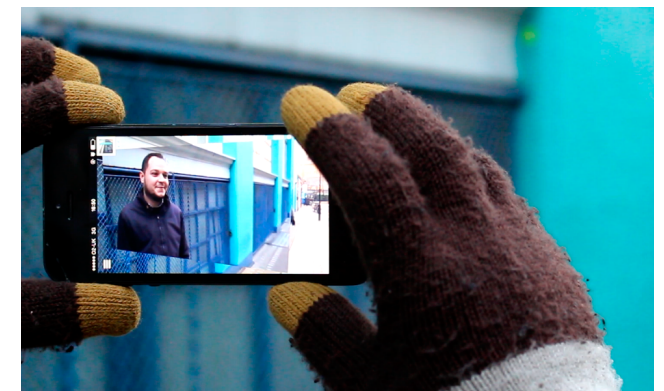
Samples of work

Adjacencies: a digital, algorithmic 'human-scale' urban planning tool

Relational Urban Model: a 3D negotiation tool

StreetLive: An app to see the neighbourhood to someone else's eyes, through augmented video's.

Tessa Steenkamp, 11-11-16

CITY AS A PLATFORM

Respect existence or expect resistance

A city can be seen as an interface between man and society. Where society itself doesn't have a tangible form, a city may provide structure to its complexity and enables the individual to interact with it.

I believe every new building creates a new part of society, a new culture around it. At the same time, it should work with the culture present before the building was there. A great design finds the perfect balance between those two.

What in a neighbourhood should to be maintained, supported, or empowered? And what part of the local culture needs to be adjusted, re-directed, or complemented?

A human-centered, iterative process

Interaction designers, usually working in the domain of human-technology interaction, are excellent in finding this balance. Their products are fine-tuned to their users' intrinsic motivation, needs and understanding. Not by asking the users directly, but by observing how they use the product. Through 'user testing', the designers observe friction points and improve the interaction continuously.

I believe the process and methods of interactions designers can be of great value when applied to the built environment. I'd like to think of cities also existing of hardware (the physical properties) and software (the way people give use to them). How do you design them to perfectly work together? And, instead of planning ahead for forty years: how to leave space in the physical design for the software to be updated - according to societal changes?

A continuous interaction

Both in governance as urban planning, the communication channels between top-down and the bottom-up could and should be more dynamic and interactive. Those 'channels' should become tools, mediating and allowing continuous conversation.
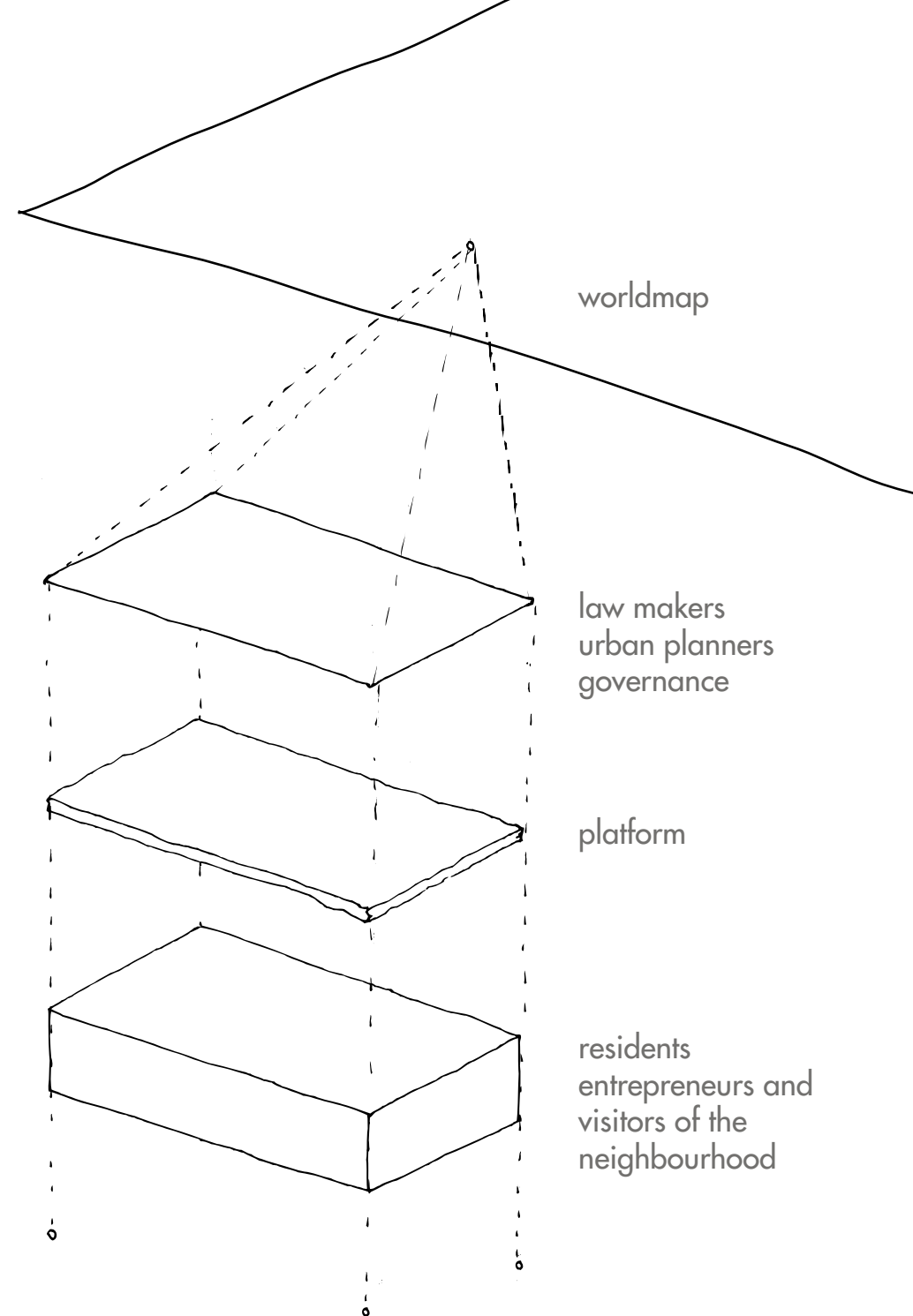
I design tools to allow inhabitants to exceed the existing structures in which they live (economically, physically and socially) and I provide them with tools to create alternative structures. While, simultaneously, allowing the planners and law-makers to be open and receive their input, not just when asked, but when it emerges.

Tessa Steenkamp, 11-11-16

TOOLS FOR CITYMAKING

When talking about the tension between bottom-up and top-down systems, the word 'platform' often comes to mind. Seemingly, a platform is the perfect mediator.

But how do you make sure everyone knows how to find such a platform? And how to use it? How do you make sure it speaks both languages, and is able to make connection between it?

In the 'tools for citymaking' workshop, we bring the top-down and bottom-up together. We explore each other's rhythms and vocabularies in a 'needfinding' process.

worldmap

law makers
urban planners
governance

platform

residents
entrepreneurs and
visitors of the
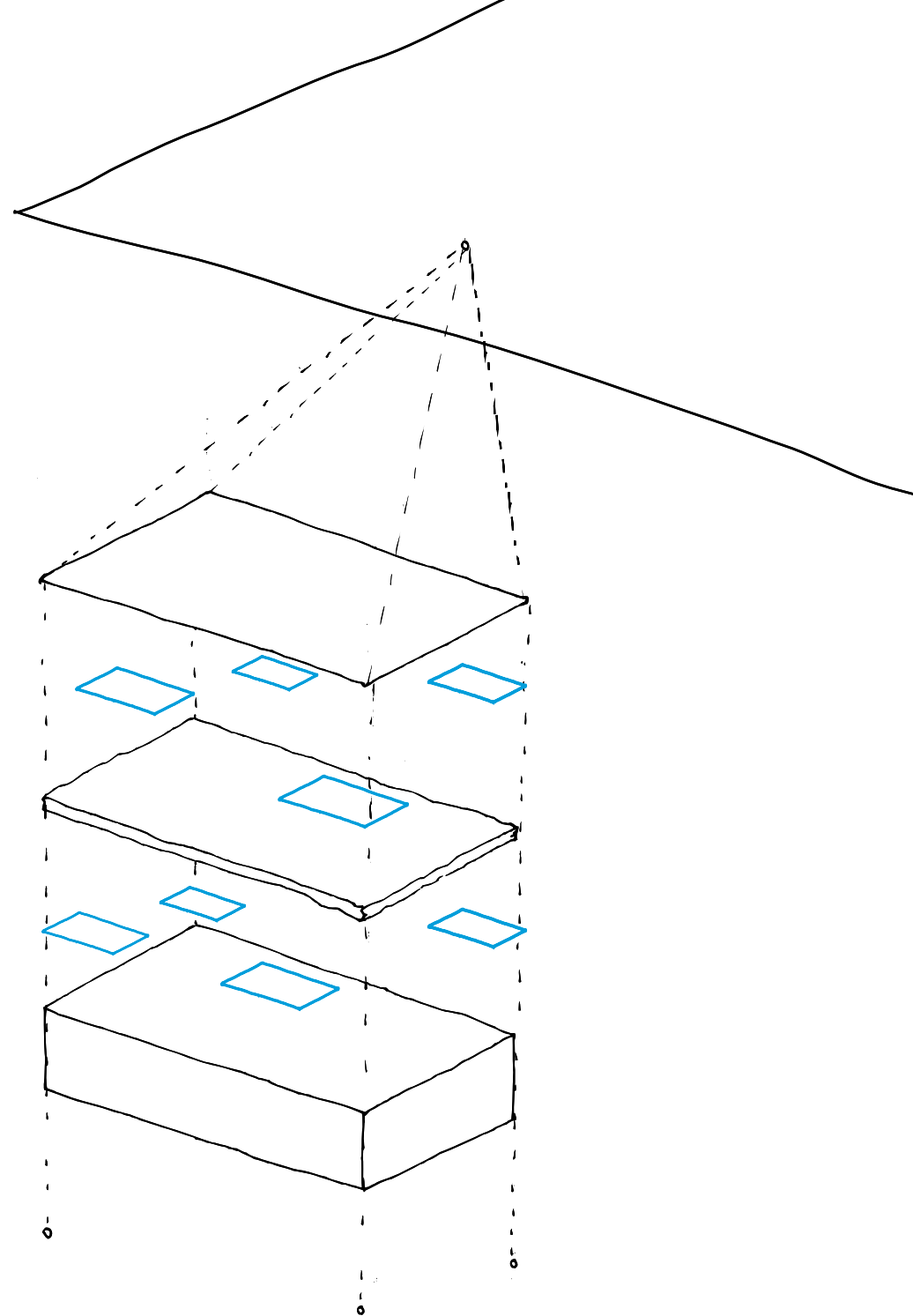neighbourhood

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TOOLS FOR CITYMAKING

The way we stepped outside our comfort
zones - we'll establish new ways of
learning from our environments. New ways
of gathering information, and new ways of
informing others.

We'll explore designing tools for this. What
tools would support you in this new way of
learning, this new way of communicating?

Everyone explores their possibilities. Step
by step, the group puts together a toolkit.
Next fase: how can we all complement
each other? How did what I found out, add
onto what you found out?

As mediators, we slowly design
ourselves out of the process. The tools,
joined together as a 'platform', and the
interactions they envoked remain.

Tessa Steenkamp, 11-11-16

PROGRAMME AND PLANNING

Programme

I'm proposing a workshop programme between 10 - 14 days.

discovery phase
3 - 4 days

ideation phase
3 - 4 days

design, build, test phase
4 - 6 days

Costs

For the execution of the workshop, I'd propose involving a social designer as an extra tutor. This will be someone I often work with together, and will be decided upon your consultation.

further preperation
1 person   €60 per hour

discovery, ideation, execution
2 persons   2 *   €60 per hour

Travel and accomedation are excluded.

Next steps

We can decide on a definitive planning together.

For the programme of the workshop itself, it's important to keep some flexibility, within a set framework. This way we can react on what happens in the neighbourhoods, and what is evoked by our interactions with it.