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The Adventure Playground: A Playful Attitude by Aberrant Architecture

KEYWORDS

project, people, shopping centre, play, space, public realm, design, structure, create, children, Eastbourne, idea,, playful, places, school, architecture, playful attitude, hamlets

SPEAKERS

Kevin Haley (Aberrant Architecture), David Chambers (Aberrant Architecture), Canan Batur

Canan Batur 00:02

Hi, good evening, folks. My name is Canan Batur and I'm the curator of live programmes here at Nottingham Contemporary. It's my pleasure to welcome you to this season's presentation with Aberrant Architecture on how we can rethink our ideas around play, and adopt a playful attitude to everything we do. Imagining play as a way of being in the world, Aberrant's designs blend some of the characteristics of play into all our non-play activities such as work, shopping, or education. Using the power of playfulness, Aberrant believes we can transform buildings and reanimate public spaces to add to the life of cities, inviting people of all ages to use these existing places in imaginative new ways. For those of you who are with us for the first time, we often invite artists, thinkers and scholars to collaborate with us on opening up our curatorial research and programmes and artistic propositions within our current exhibitions. These interventions and subversions of dominant modes of thought allow us to develop complex questions, and eventually invent new methodologies for rewriting the artistic canon and the dominant historiographies and for making critical thought public. Before introducing our guests, I would like to share a brief housekeeping note. Our live programmes open up different interventions and propositions within our curatorial research across the organisation. And this event

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expands on our current research strand, Emergency and Emergence, as well as our current series The Adventure Playground: Architectures of Contemporary Play exploratory talks and propositions that investigate processes of play and imagination, and their role in built environments. I'd like to take this opportunity to show our gratitude to the University of Nottingham, Nottingham Trent University and Paul Mellon Centre for generously and graciously supporting today's event, as well as acknowledging my colleagues, Philippa Douglas, Shannon Charlesworth, Jim Brouwer, Catherine Masters, Paul Buddle, Andy Batson, Amalia for making this event possible. I mean, you should have seen this space like 30 minutes ago, I think the list goes more beyond than the list that I'm actually counting now, so thank you for everyone who supported us this evening. Although we will keep an informal atmosphere throughout the evening, our talks performances and screenings seek to create challenging environments where open mindedness and respect for each other's approaches and perspectives can foster growth. So please be mindful and respectful of each other's opinions and views. Although we will keep an informal atmosphere throughout the evening, our talks, performances, I just read this sorry about that. Without further ado, I just would like to introduce our guests this evening. Aberrant Architecture is a multi-award winning collaborative studio of designers, makers and thinkers. Their projects, whether interactive architecture, interiors, public art, exhibitions or installations offer new and unexpected ways of exploring everyday life. By placing storytelling and research at the heart of their practice, they produce spatial experiences that are both meaningful and beautiful. So without further ado, David and Kevin, I'll let you deliberate. Thank you so much for being with us this evening and accepting our invitation. Thank you.

Kevin Haley (Aberrant Architecture) 03:27

Thank you for coming. Hello, good evening. I'm Kevin, this is David. We thought it would be a really good opportunity to start our talk with a film. Next one. So that film there is actually of the Beacon Shopping Centre in Eastbourne, if anyone knows it, which can now boast of a playful landscape, featuring lots of different activities for visitors to explore as well as discover about the area they live in. And when David and I were putting this presentation together, we went back through our archives, and this was one of our first projects we ever did. And it's

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kind of no accident that play has been a part of our practice from day one. So this is actually a shot of Selfridges shop window, where it's about a year into our practice, and we approached Selfridges. And we said, we wanted to move the studio into one side of their shop window. And on the other side was this. And this was a collaboration with the street. And so we would ask people walking past what they loved, what they loathed about their city. And we would build what they said. But of course, if someone said they enjoyed high rise towers in the city, but someone said they liked green spaces, we would start to break down what they were seeing. And so it became a piece of theatre. And we really enjoyed this, it was kind of a playful interpretation of the streets, he was collaborative, and really set the premise of what was to come. As we've gone, over the years, our practice started in 2010, we've kind of decided that actually, we describe ourselves as playful placemakers. I think for us, we reveal authentic stories about places, and we design spaces that inspire people to emotionally connect with a neighbourhood and community. And that idea of an emotional connection is really important in our work. And once again, when we went back through the archives, there's a project here called the tiny travelling theatre. This is for Clerkenwell Design Week, which is a three to four day festival in London. And this structure tells a story about that place. So Clerkenwell actually, was one of the first places that had a theatre, and it was built by a gentleman called Thomas Britton, he built it above his coal shed in his back garden. And so we really thought that was an amazing story to tell about the place and let people discover it for an experience. So we built this structure, this odd looking red thing that uses the narrative to guide its design, so the roof is made from coal scuttles, and you can have a intimate experience on the inside, where you get to, the coal scuttles now become spotlights, but you begin to discover the story about the place. So this attitude, we call it a playful attitude. And really, it's about our work exploring how we can rethink our entire idea of play and adopt a playful attitude to everything we do. We imagine play as a way of being in the world, blending some of the characteristics of play into all our non play activities, such as work, shopping, or education. And this is the journey we're going to take you on this evening, we're going to talk about our playful attitude to education, to shopping, and to galleries. And really, we describe playfulness as our superpower. We believe we can transform buildings, and reanimate public spaces to add life to cities,

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inviting people of all ages to use these existing places in imaginative new ways. And quite often, Dave and I will talk about, you know, an ambition in a lot of our projects is to conceive them as a series of design layers. And these layers consist of this idea of a playful personality. So the image you see here, on your screen is actually of beanbag parachutes designed for a public realm in the RAF Museum. These parachutes were designed in collaboration with a local community over a series of workshops, amongst other objects that are dotted around the public space within the gallery, and very much the idea is that we believe that involving people in the process, there's an emotional durability to the project. People are emotionally connected, invested into something, these projects will last longer because it's a collaborative process. The second image is of a piece of public art in Swansea and it celebrates place. Swansea was once the centre of the copper industry and had an amazing relationship with Valparaíso in Chile. What you're seeing there is a slice of Valparaíso, on the opposite side is a facade made up of coins that were designed by the local community. And this becomes a stage for people to use, which leads to the next layer which is this idea of stage. We often design things we want people to riff on top fair work. So that structure you see there at the end, is in Lower Marsh Market, we call it the Roman market, and it provides market traders an outdoor room, a stage on top to put on performances to talk about their marketplace. Engagement. Up here is another important layer. Most of our projects, we really encourage clients we work with or institutions that we design ways to encourage people to be involved. And I was talking earlier about how that sometimes means we have to leave the institution or the gallery and we sometimes do workshops in pubs in schools, and community centres where people feel comfortable that they can engage in the process. In the middle, another layer, this has become more recent. So this idea of sustainability that is the Christmas tree we designed for the V&A Museum, it's made from recycled paper, and recycled plastic, talking about a time when a lot of that is wasted, to be working with really interesting materials such as smart plastics and rich light, to see how we can kind of embed sustainability into our work. And finally, inclusiveness, this idea we don't want to design spaces for just one type of person, we want to design spaces that has a range of activities, and considers different body forms so that people and all different types of people can enjoy these spaces as much as we do. So

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I'm going to hand over to David now and we're gonna go a bit back and forth, take you through a bit more detail our idea of an attitude, a playful attitude, to education, to galleries, and to shopping.

David Chambers (Aberrant Architecture) 11:07

Hello. So I'm going to kick off looking at our playful attitude to education. And actually, I'm going to start by talking about a project that is not one of ours. But I thought it might be interesting to revisit this piece of research that we did in the context of the Nottingham Contemporary and the show that you currently have one called Schools of Tomorrow, which is revisiting some of the work of the Italian Brazilian architect Lina Bo Bardi. Back in 2012, we did a big research project looking at another school project by a famous Brazilian architect, this one is Oscar Niemeyer. And he designed a school called the CIEPs in the 1980s. You can see a picture of it on screen. And what was really what we found fascinating about this project is that it wasn't just an architectural proposal, but it was a collaboration with an expert in school curriculum called Darcy Ribeiro, and a politician called Leonel Brizola. And they collaborated to create this whole combined programme of architecture and curriculum that really explored ideas that were far ahead of their time, such as wellness and nutrition, and how curriculum can link to architectural space. So the project was part of a commission that we won as part of the British Pavilion in the 2012 Venice Architecture Biennale, this is a shot of the pavilion from that year. And part of our commission was we were able to actually travel to Rio de Janeiro to research and investigate the schools and bring that kind of research back to Venice to the pavilion and to share what we found. So this is a shot of our research wall, where kind of captures some of the photography, some of the videos, some of the information that we discovered about the schools. And what we found really fascinating about these schools is that they weren't just one that was built, it was 508 of these schools that were built from a repeated design that was built all over the city and state of Rio de Janeiro, which is an area the size of Wales. And you get these schools in city locations like the one on screen, also in favelas, where often it's the only professionally designed piece of architecture surrounded by informal dwellings. Also in hillside locations, and the schools will also feature you know, incredible facilities such as outdoor swimming pools, but also very interestingly,

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many of them had little houses on their roofs, where children who perhaps didn't have the best situation at home would actually be living in the schools with carers. And were provided with this 24 hour kind of curriculum, which is really amazing. This drawing just kind of gives you starts to give you an idea of the scale of the project. So the little blue bits are a different school. So you can see the big spike of numbers in the middle there that's Rio de Janeiro, the city. And then you can see how they're distributed around the state. And in order to do this, they created this factory of schools where all the different components for the schools are made, and quickly distributed so that they can make them. So we actually made our own little factory and made a model for the Biennale of each of the individual schools out of a mould. And we used that to create an installation that we shared in the British Pavilion, where we had a model that represented each of the schools that were made, which were labelled with the name and location just so people could really understand what the ambition of a project that's kind of delivering 508 schools over a period of eight years that really started to transform lives. We actually got so much research information from from the project that we didn't get to share at the Biennale that subsequently, we actually published a book about the project, which is available on Amazon, a little plug. And the book itself can be sort of understood, almost like a documentary. So we looked at interviewing different people involved with the project to get different perspectives. So we interviewed people who are involved with generating the curriculum at the time, we interviewed Oscar Niemeyer's right hand man who was responsible for the design, we interviewed some of the original teachers, we interviewed some children who went to the school at the time, we interviewed the head of the heritage in Rio city, we interviewed the Secretary of State for Education to get these kinds of different perspectives on the project. But I think the perspective that was most important is from the actual students themselves. So we did a series of workshops where we tried to kind of find out, you know, what they thought about their schools, and, you know, simple tasks, like getting them to draw their favourite spaces. And consistently, what came out that they really loved was the playground, and the kind of areas that they could play in the school. And the playgrounds themselves, they featured quite a lot of things that you would find in normal playgrounds such as goalposts, for people to play football, for example. But there were also

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areas with different levels, with steps that invite a more informal type of occupation or informal type of play. There was covered areas where children could play when it was too hot, or when it was raining. But also what really was we found inspiring is how the architecture started to suggest other uses or invitations for children to you know, have a game of penalty shootout, for example. And I think these sort of ideas at the time are things that we've subsequently built on. What is also really quite amazing is that this idea of a playground was actually pulled straight through into the interior of the school itself. So rather than have staircases separating the floors, there was big ramps that would connect the ground and the first floor, and at break time, you'd see kids running around actually using the circulation areas as slides and they, you know, they were very keen when we were there to demonstrate, you know, how they would actually run around and slide and that kind of sense of embedding play or inviting play into all these areas of the school, I think was really very interesting. Also, in the interiors of the corridors, they became, they were wide enough that they were areas where children could actually paint and and display their work. So it became almost like a canvas that you know, that it invited people to respond to. That kind of idea extended to the public realm. So you can see these simple, concrete, geometric shapes in the landscape, where, again, just giving enough to suggest that you know how someone could respond to it and start to play. And also love this picture on the right of this is actually the sign for the school, but just how a little girl has sort of occupied the area underneath and created a little sort of home for the day within the kind of larger scale. And all of these ideas, I think, have become, you know, really influential for us. And then lastly, looking at how simple pieces of furniture in the landscape, so this is a table, a concrete table that's sized so that you can use it for table tennis, but also it becomes a platform for to invite children to use in different ways. So you can see how they're just using it to relax or jump off. And that this idea of just providing enough of an invitation for people to then respond, that Kevin was mentioning earlier, almost like a stage or as a kind of as a prompt is something that we found, you know, incredibly interesting. As well as just being as well as the playgrounds and the play areas being a place for children to play, what we found really interesting is that the CIEPs themselves were very much so centres of the community. So this is a couple of pages from our book, where we've illustrated some of the

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other activities that happened in the school. So rather than in opposite to perhaps schools in the UK, which increasingly become like fortresses that have fences and try to keep people out, the ethos of this project was really to invite the community in. So all these play spaces became places where the community could come together for different events. So in the top right, you'll see that actually people got married in the schools and still do. And so the areas become places for weddings, but also for adult education classes, capoeira, or just samba schools. Subsequently, you know, being inspired by these uses of public space in schools in Rio in Brazil, we returned a few times to further investigate this. So what we did, we took on two occasions, a group of students from a group of our students that we taught at Central Saint Martin's, to Rio, for a series of two week workshops, where we, in collaboration with a local university, we explored the potential for, you know, how could we design furniture or insertions that could really start to animate further these public spaces. So what you can see on screen is a group of students as part of the two week workshop, designing and quickly testing at scale, this is part of a table/seat design. And you can see, the idea was that it's a table with a series of seat portions that can be pushed together to create a table or taken apart to become individual seats. These were rapidly designed and tested. So we actually produced full one to one prototypes of these designs. So you can see here, the seats themselves are able to rock so they can the children can play with them. And, you know, both either sit on them individually or kind of use them to rock back and forth. But they can also put them together to create tables in public space, but can also you know, again, invite different uses, such as tunnels that go around or people can stand on the top. Another aspect that we looked at as part of this project is how can we look at you know, quite mundane, everyday features of these public spaces such as railings, and produce a series of interventions that again can start to catalyse activity. So what you can see here is a proposal for a structure that sits on top of the railings, which on the one side provides a seat, but on the rear, then start to provide an area where children can climb up between the different levels and start to explore in a different way. This project, this particular one was subsequently taken on by the local university in Rio, and developed into a full kind of working prototype that subsequently won a design award.

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Kevin Haley (Aberrant Architecture) 23:19

Then we came back to London, and we had the opportunity to work with a school in East London just in De Beauvoir and this is Rosemary Works school. And this is the existing classroom, one of them. And the school, they, you know, they were kind of talking to us about the work we've done in Brazil. And we got the opportunity to begin to test I guess some of these ideas, David was mentioning at a slightly larger scale on a very tiny budget. And the focus of this project became very much about collaboration. So we ran a lot of workshops, taking that inspiration from the CIEPs, so we did a workshop with parents, workshop with students, workshop with the directors, workshop with teachers, assistant teachers, and we kept on doing these workshops because we wanted to get everyone's vision for the school. And lots of drawings were produced and here are some of our favourites. This one begins to talk about how Rosemary Works, and particularly the students wanted to move away from rows of tables and chairs and they started to see their classroom as a landscape where they could begin to have different territories for things they wanted to learn. And this is what has been expressed here, which we thought was really fascinating. Similarly, children were drawing kind of, we call them like nooks or little escape zones away from adults. So we very much wanted to provide them that, as well as there were drawings like this which were talking about fabrics or tent-like structures. One of the things that we learned from the students was that one of the a lot of the activities would happen in the same space, so the school hall would be the Breakfast Club, Art Club, dinner club, Lunch Club, PE, and the children wanted to be able to change their environment. So this idea of sort of tents was really interesting to us. We also found this image in the school's library. It's from a book that talks about Edwardian interior architecture. Once again, this image really talks about this idea of territory, but territory on the wall. So the Edwardians have a kind of very sophisticated way of using wall surfaces, the top bit, which was known as the frieze of bespoke drawing about the room, then a middle section and a bottom section giving two environments. So one, when you're seated, you get a feel for the space to one when you're standing up, the dado rail protects the wall and the expensive materials put on the wall. And we thought this was a really interesting observation about Edwardian theories against this idea of children conceiving their classroom as also bits of territory that they

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could access. So we took all that and we translated it into this. And you can see on the wall there, we begin to kind of use that idea of territory. So at the top, that was when it first opened the classroom, but it's a plywood frieze, where they could add drawings to the room over the year and celebrate children's work. And in the middle was the section for the teachers, they can access everything they needed. And the bottom was the Children's Zone. The classroom moved away from loads of tables and chairs in rows and into the idea of a landscape, different territories that children could go and access. And these were kind of experimental classrooms to see what would happen. I think the other thing to mention is this idea of colour. And so each classroom had a different colour scheme. On the one hand that really helped children orientate themselves around the school, so new children come in, I'm in the blue and pink classroom, I'm in the yellow classroom, etc. Once again, it also reacted to light. So we discovered when we looked more into the book about Edwardian interior architecture, that actually, there's a relationship between how you use colour and we have lots of it, you could be much more complimentary. And when you have less of it, you can be more exaggerated. So we tried to, once again begin to thread all these things together and begin to tell a story about the history of the building, the occupants in it, and some of our own kind of research into play. And this is one of our favourite images. It's one of those nooks, actually it's a it's a canal barge, the actual school's right by a canal. So we built a fleet of mobile barges for the children that they could only access and they used to use these as kind of informal impromptu theatre zones, and they would perform to each other. And then the idea of fabric became a really great idea we used in the school hall. So on the right, you'll see the children eating, on the left, this has kind of been set up for Breakfast Club. But there was two rails, one rail had a sheer curtain, one had a solid curtain. And the idea was they could just move the curtains to kind of recreate the space to change it for different activities. So you can see here it's set up for PE, on the right is set up for reading club.

David Chambers (Aberrant Architecture) 28:23

So now we're going to take a look at our playful attitude to galleries. And I think the best project for us to explore this is a commission that we were awarded a few years ago in Matadero Madrid. So Matadero

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is a cultural institution in Madrid that occupies a former abattoir site. And they've been very interested in this idea of the potential of galleries and museums to be more than just galleries and museums, how can they start to become places for play, places that invite play. And they invited us as part of their programme to respond to that and come up with a commission for their spaces. As part of their research, they'd been looking at Madrid itself, and tried to identify different areas and the different types of spaces that encourage play in the city. And together, we formulated this idea of how could we perhaps encourage a play space or invite play within a gallery or institution itself? Building on, you know, our previous interests in projects like the CIEPs that invite play in a unprescribed way and inspired by images like this where you can see you know, existing or everyday parts of the public realm or the you know, the cityscape being appropriated by children to kind of create play opportunities led us to, obviously, in many ways to Aldo Van Eyck. So for those of you who don't know, Aldo Van Eyck is a Dutch architect, who is very much the expert and has built an amazing series of playground projects in Holland, after the war, that really look to embed play opportunities within the cityscape and in the public realm. And, as part of this commission, we took a real deep dive into his work and really started to interrogate all the ingredients and all of the thinking and the concepts that went into generating his playscapes. And created, this is one of the drawings that we created almost like a research collage that starts to unpick some of the things. Just to pick out a couple of aspects of this architectural vocabulary. So firstly, he was a big believer in using quite minimalist geometric shapes, that, again, this idea of not being overly prescriptive, but just suggest enough so that children can respond in their own mind and create their own playful characters or playful stories, and not be overly prescriptive. Also, this idea of surface relationships or playing with surfaces, again, to create territories, or different thresholds in a similar way to what Kevin was talking about in Rosemary Works, that was going on on the walls, but looking at the sort of the horizontal on surfaces. And also, again, this idea of territory, so having objects that have an impact on their surroundings. So taking all these sorts of this research, and building on some of our interest from previous projects, we came up for this proposal for a giant landscape that would occupy one of the main spaces of the institution. So this is the plan for a project that was or that we called Landscape for Play,

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essentially a landscape to encourage play, that had this big surface that incorporated different areas, different shapes, that would really invite people to play. So this is what it looked like in actualized. So you can see massive structure, massive landscape within one of the big spaces where this big surface was constructed. On the edge of the surface, you can see we designed a number of steps, building on you know, some of the ideas that we saw in the CIEPs, where steps can be really interesting way of simply providing seating opportunities, but also social opportunities, areas, perhaps for parents to sit and have a conversation whilst their children are running around playing. You can see various different surfaces that are separated and demarcated with colour, for building on those ideas that we've looked at before, how we can use colour to create different territories. And then a series of structures that are populated on the landscape, which, again, are quite geometric, don't aren't overly prescriptive, but start to suggest how people might use them and respond to them. So just to kind of run through a couple. So on the left, these are stepping stone structures that different people like children could use as stepping stones, but also people use them as seats or tables or places to socialise. And again, this wasn't just the landscape, this wasn't a playground just for children. This is for people of all ages. So it was a really interesting kind of experiment in a way to see how different people interacted with it. On the right, we designed a series of sunken rooms. So again, just simply inserting round shapes and extruding them down into the structure. So again, creating these little territories that people, and little moments that you know, children or people of all ages could start to occupy. And just to say, I mean this installation, it occupied the space I think for six months, it might have been even extended a little bit because it was just so successful. In the area itself, there was a real lack of play spaces and certainly play spaces that offered shade. So I can't remember the exact figures. I think it was almost like 40,000, 80,000 in the first month. I think it was, I think they said it was if not in the top three, maybe even the best kind of attended installation they've ever had. So it was really fantastic to see that kind of the response. Again, we looked at some of the sort of ideas that Aldo Van Eyck looked at, sort of these sort of mountain structures with different levels that allowed people, children, to investigate on their own terms. Also, little nook structures, again, bringing some of these ideas through that we've explored in previous projects, such as Rosemary Works,

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reducing the scale, so that, you know, children could get inside and create their own little worlds. And the shape of these structures, this is the structure outside, again, using this idea of quite simple geometric shapes, in this case, a hexagon, to basically just spark enough in a child's imagination, so they can fill in the gaps. So a shape, you know, might become a castle, or the doorway might become an entry to, you know, their own house. And I think that's something that really inspires us in our work is just giving enough of a design and allowing people then to kind of riff on that and sort of fill in the gaps and respond. Again, just looking at the landscape with the surface and how we've used colour, to start to create these different territories, again, starts to be areas that people can play with. So they became almost like people could, kids would create their own hopscotch games and sort of interact with the colours and the territories. But like I said earlier, it wasn't just for children. So it was amazing to see how local, for example, theatre groups, and responded to the space and they approached Matadero and were like, you know, we'd love to kind of put on shows here. So what you're seeing is actual performance by a local theatre group, who created a show that responded to the landscape and used the different areas to put on different parts of their performance. And then on the periphery, you had the audience sitting on the steps who would move around and watch them. And here you can see, again, parts of that performance, where the choir are situated on the landscape itself, and people occupying around.

Kevin Haley (Aberrant Architecture) 37:27

So another playful project situated in the gallery is this one it's called The Storytelling Igloo. It's for Arts Depot, a Gallery in North London. What you're seeing there is a structure made from approximately 250 bricks. Each one of those bricks is designed by a different student from a different school in North London. We collaborated with four different schools, each colour so the yellow, the yellow bricks are from one school, the green and blue bricks from another etc. And I'm going to play you a film that sort of talks about the process, the music you're about to hear, the music you're about to hear is written by students responding to the brief that we gave them. This is going to one of the schools. That was me talking to them about one architect very passionately. So one of the things we asked them to do was asked them to draw their favourite

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place to play, this the first part of the process. They're all wearing like a camera on their head. And the second thing we asked him to do was to model one aspect of that drawing in clay. Then we took that clay object and we showed them SketchUp programme, how they can begin to model that.

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We entered into Westminster university at a fabrication lab and we showed them how we could take the SketchUp model and cut it into some foam, then we took some corex and we made these moulds and we placed the blue foam that was cut on the CNC cutter at the bottom to all the children's designs. And then we started to experiment with a material called papercrete. So it's a more sustainable version of concrete that replaces part of the mix with papier mache. And this is us at the schools going back to mix up the papercrete. We started to add pigment to the mix, so adding colour.

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Then the children got to feel their moulds, discover papercrete, most of the paper for the papercrete came from the school itself.

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And then the bricks needed to dry. We left the bricks in the school, and then we went to collect them all for the schools and they were taken to the gallery. So some of the bricks have a CNC mould, some of the bricks we put the original play object into the brick and then we built the structure. I just want to show you, these are some of the outtakes and things that went wrong like forgetting to put the handbrake on the car.

42:43

No, that was it, I was going to show you this. It snowed halfway through it and we had to go out and get supplies. It was just a very fun project. I don't know why this image is not sort of shown properly. But anyway, this is the sort of end result. What we're trying to show here is the structure. But on the back wall is actually the original drawings, all of the foam moulds that were created. On the other side, there's the structure and then at the back the kind of the way we made the papercrete, the process of it. And really, the idea was to kind of lay out the exhibition

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to really reveal that process. And you could watch the film. Also, when you looked at the structure close up, we actually made these lintels, put the name of the school at the top, children could pop their heads through and it was really amazing to see, obviously, children all came to the exhibition on the opening, and they all came in, they found their brick, and it was just wonderful to see that. This isn't how the image is supposed to look. But it's quite cool, I like it. That's just gonna just see the wall. Just gonna now finish on the sort of last section of our talk really, which is going to look at a playful attitude to shopping. So this is going back at the beginning, we played a film of the Beacon shopping centre in Eastbourne. And here's some actual historical sort of images of Eastbourne's ideas behind public realm. And actually, at the time, they were quite visionary, they actually employed an architect to go around the world and bring back the best examples of public realm and Eastbourne effectively was divided into four hamlets, four villages. And each village that you can see in these images had a different kind of architecture, and a different kind of approach to the public space featuring different ways you could occupy it, different types of structures. That really inspired us, this idea that you could visit different parts of Eastbourne and get a very different experience. And also, this image here is showing that Eastbourne River used to have a river, it was founded upon a river, the River Burne, they're actually burying the river here. And quite nicely, that river actually ran underneath the shopping centre where our project was, so we decided to resurrect the idea of a river and now that river is going to run through the shopping centre, sort of weave its way through, and it's going to create four different hamlets, those hamlets from the past. So you had Seahouses, Meads, Bourne and South Bourne. So we wanted people to kind of experience the origins of Eastbourne but also the different villages the different hamlets. Other inspiration came from the fact that we looked at old posters, really enjoyed the sort of colour and the graphics, we wanted to bring that through. And finally, George Orwell, he went to school in Eastbourne, he wrote Animal Farm, it's said that the actual farm is based on a farm in Eastbourne so we thought that'd be amazing opportunity to weave all this together to create this playful landscape but most importantly, inside a shopping centre.

Kevin Haley (Aberrant Architecture) 45:49

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This image, again, has sort of gone a bit weird, but you can sort of just make out that this is actually one of the entrances to the shopping centre where you're greeted with this totem chimney structure with a horse head on top, it's a meeting point, a concierge point for the shopping centre. But for us, it was a chance to this actually is inspired. This is a chimney structure looking at the architecture of the hamlet Bourne. So we used, we looked at the forms and we brought those into the shapes. And we played with those shapes, we created spaces for people to lean on. But also we wanted to kind of really have a lot of fun so people could say, you often hear it when you walk around Eastbourne Beacon centre now, I'll meet you by the blue horse head, or, as you're about to see the big green pig head. This is a social swing, it's the second hamlet It's Meads, you'll notice they have they're using inspiration, different colours, different forms and different play opportunities. So as well as three people being able to sit on this swing, we also wanted to introduce activities of traditional seating, but there's plug points, USB points, there's tables to work from, we're really trying to change the way people conceive sort of transitional spaces in shopping centres, but you can go there, there's an amazing sort of family offer, and shopping becomes secondary, it's actually about the interior public realm offer. This was a local resident Laura, we met, her daughter absolutely loves playing here, they frequently visit. This is another part of the centre, this is celebrating South Bourne, you can't see it on the front of that structure is a goat's head inspired by Animal Farm again. But there's soft play surfaces for children to play on, as well as we started to adapt traditional seating. So there's tunnels, there's greenery, there are places for people to work. And also we introduced on the right, that kind of beginning to introduce into the shopping centre was quite challenging semi private spaces for people to have these moments or as you can see these children on this net having their own sort of little bit of territory, their own little space within within the public realm. The adorable kids on the left are sitting next to peepholes, so subtle play opportunities that can be discovered. And within the vinyl as well this river that flowed through the shopping centre, there are games there are patterns that can be interpreted, there's even messages about the story that you can read along your journey. And continue that idea of sort of semi private spaces. There's these nooks that take inspiration from the forms from the different architecture from the hamlets that create

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these kinds of amazing opportunities, opportunities for people to dwell and it's really great to see you know, we designed this with different seating levels, some have got backrest some have got armrests, really trying to encourage all of Eastbourne's users to use the centre. This is the last image we're gonna end on, it's one of our favourite images, it's of the Seahouses hamlet, there's a gigantic chicken at the back, in the middle there's a nook and at the front there's a bed with a soft netting surface and really what's really exciting for us is you know, we've done projects in galleries and places like this, these installations but we're now starting to move into places like shopping centres and high streets, where I think we can have quite an impact on how we begin to concede these spaces and change them up so we'd just like to say Thank you very much.

Canan Batur 49:26

Hi. Okay, here we go. Thank you so much for this amazing and compelling journey that you've given us into your practice and how you actually utilise and use play in your thinking. And, I mean, what fascinated me the most is how much you pay attention to the kind of you know, the protagonist of the spaces that you made. I mean, be it the school children or kind of the residents of the you know, area that you kind of push forward or kind of like develop these projects on and I was wondering I mean, one thing that I was quite, I was quite fascinated by and interested in knowing further is what comes first? I mean, like, I mean, I'm sure that you have some sort of an idea when you're kind of, you know, investing yourself into the space, but you also this collective decision making in the process, so I was wondering how do you navigate between these kinds of data that you collect through, including, you know, like these drawings that children do kind of create. And also, you also have some archival kind of, you know, research. So I was just wondering, how do you navigate between those things I guess?

David Chambers (Aberrant Architecture) 50:41

Yeah, I think it's definitely an integral part of our process. And I think that period, where we're almost discovering as much about a site about a place as possible, and almost trying to get as many ingredients as possible, is key for us, because it in many ways, I don't think we can design until we have that material to respond to. And, you know,

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by weaving that all together, almost like the design comes out if that makes sense. And I think, what's a really then key part of our process is designing the processes that allow that. So we know we're very interested in, we run co-discovery workshops, where it's about working with different groups to help us actually discover these insights. That would be that's one part of the process. And then we would follow that up with co-design workshops, where on different projects where we would then take those insights and start to develop them. And even you know, a lot of projects, then there's co-production workshops, where, you know, certainly with students and things start to test those. So I think we, we have a suite somehow of different tools that we use, that we deploy, probably on different projects, depending on the different requirements, some projects, we actually get to use all of them. Like The Storytelling Igloo is quite a nice example I think, of like a microcosm of a project and quite small, but actually, we got to pretty much do all of those things. And I think that's why it's quite a nice project as a sort of a demonstration of maybe a potential of kind of something that we'd like to do more of at a bigger scale.

Kevin Haley (Aberrant Architecture) 52:33

Yeah, I mean, I think I would just add, the conversation doesn't stop. So we, we don't just do the workshop, we really enjoy what we're doing. So we go back.

Canan Batur 52:42

You can see that clearly in the video.

Kevin Haley (Aberrant Architecture) 52:43

It's a lot of fun. And I think what begins to happen is that sometimes people in our workshops are worried that their idea might not be included. But I think when you have the work, have keep on having the conversation, what seems to happen is themes start to emerge. So you begin to like group ideas together. And so, you know, actually, it's really, it's really amazing to go back at the end. And people generally feel like they've got a bit of a when I was talking at the beginning, like it's an emotional connection to it, because they've been a part of it. So if we would just stop the conversation after one workshop, I don't think it'd be as as successful, but to continue it. And to allow some of the attention

coming back at us. Hold on, where's my I mean, one of the children in Rosemary Works said to me, when I went back to the school, he said, I sketched chocolate rain, where's the chocolate rain? And I was saying, well, you know, the chocolate rain's a really, really good idea we moved on to colour, it became an important thing in his drawing and things like that. So, you know, it's fun, we enjoy it.

Canan Batur 53:43

I guess, again, what was quite fascinating about Storytelling Igloo as well and then beyond that, kind of asking their opinion, amplifying their voices in the creation of the kind of, you know, the sculpture, you also slowed down the process, almost kind of like turn it into a skill sharing experience as well. So I mean, you were talking about CNC, you know, you were talking about, you know, showing them how to use SketchUp. And you're also like, I mean, showing them how to, you know, create papier mache, but also use, you know, renewable materials. So it really feels like it's a project that in each stage kind of provided something in return to the residents, or the kind of the person who partake in these projects. And I think that I find quite important in your practice, and I feel like it kind of cuts across in many of the projects that you do. I guess one question will be about the way you kind of use this idea of like playing because, I mean, of course, there's a differentiation between you know playing game, I mean, game being this kind of more structure where there's these inviting propositions, whilst play is a contentious kind of almost spontaneous pulse. So I guess how much how do you navigate in between and also how do you kind of when you're especially intersecting in these places like gallery spaces, shopping malls, you know, schools and so on and so forth, how do you, I guess, navigate around that? And how do you, how does project manifest itself through these kinds of, you know, soft playfulness that you kind of deploy?

David Chambers (Aberrant Architecture) 55:22

I think a key part of us with respect to play, is this idea of being playful and using a playful attitude, or the idea of play almost as the glue to weave everything together. So I think, you know, rather than for us to see, you know, somewhere that this is where you go to work, or somewhere where you go to study, or this is where you go to play, or live, it's, we think that you can use play to kind of join everything else

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together. So why can't you work in a playful way and playful setting? Or why can't you study? Or, you know, why can't you play and work at the same time? I think that's a kind of something that I think is developed over time through our projects and through our thinking. But it's, I think, increasingly, it's a very interesting way for us to then approach a project such as an interior of a shopping centre, and say, well, actually, you know, you've got this amazing public realm, that currently, there's no animation, it's just a corridor for people to go from A to B. But actually, by, by using play, we can use the power of play almost, to kind of weave together all these other activities, so people can then go there to work, go there to hang out to socialise, we can use play, and playful methods to sort of design the project to involve people in the design of it, also to embed meaning and narrative. So it almost becomes like an exhibition in a way. And I think that's one of the I think that's what surprised a lot of people, the client side, I think, on that project, is, we were convinced that actually, people would be really interested in learning more about where they live, in Eastbourne. And, you know, we were kind of quite insistent on, you know, okay, we've got all these references and things, and I think people would be really interested to know why there is this animal head and that was a discussion that we had, and then it ended up, we, you know, we got to a place where we had that interpretation in the floor. So it almost became like a gallery space, or like a kind of an exhibition that you can also occupy. And people love it, people like, you know, walk around and say, oh, I didn't realise that, you know, and they kind of they, and it's amazing to engage with people out of, you know, out of bringing that sort of, you know, approach out of the gallery setting and taking it into more everyday settings. And that's, I think, the start of our practice, that's what we've always been interested in is the sort of how you can elevate the everyday or sort of.

Kevin Haley (Aberrant Architecture) 58:13

Yeah, I also think, Landscape for Play in Madrid and the beacon centre, what, you know, I think we really enjoyed seeing was, yes, it's amazing to see children translate these spaces and come up with different ways to use it, and play. But for example, in Beacon shopping centre, the slide is probably more popular with adults a lot of the time than it is with just children or you, when in Landscape of Play, you see how people start to, it's almost like in The Storytelling Igloo, you ask a child to sketch their

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favourite place to play you. And they just do it instantly. And they will start to imagine things and riff on it and things like that. And as we get older, it's almost like play is like removed from how we look at the world. And so by bringing it into places like the shopping centre, I'm really, I love it when I see adults starting to, you know, creatively just jump a little bit across the vinyl. And I think those little moments kind of add value to that day, they sort of change up the way you begin to the, you know, it opens up the imagination. So, you know, I think I think that's exciting for us.

Canan Batur 59:18

Yeah, I totally understand that. I mean, I remember the moment when we opened up our exhibition upstairs. And when the first I mean, we had the preview for schoolchildren first, and I remember the excitement that they had when they realised that their creation was there, but also most being this kind of contested spaces, and mainly used by adults. And then I guess, like, you know, your perception changed so much over time that you tend to kind of forget what's in your background, and you just focus on where you're going and somehow don't slow down and digest actually what's happening around you. So having those prompts and providing them these interrogations and kind of questioning and also adding the interpretation which was going to be my question, actually, and you answered, I think does give this kind of idea of you know, this does allow them to immerse in the space and claim their own. And I guess like the moments I see upstairs when the adults are actually playing with the sculptures that we have are always the ones that are quite exciting. I mean, not that I'm disregarding of course children and you know peoples that we usually kind of accommodate. But I think this idea of, you know, breaking from or breaking from what you're kind of used to, and letting yourself go and being able to like immerse yourself into that space is always much more difficult when you are in that, I guess, sort of stage. And what you were saying was quite interesting, in terms of how architecture and playfulness, you know, in everyday life, which is very much related to the Lina Bo's kind of life practice, how can architecture represent everyday life? And how can everyday life represent being ingrained in the architectural thinking itself? So I guess there's a lot of kind of, you know, overlaps with what you what we have done, I mean, upstairs and what you have been doing throughout your

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practice that seems like it's ever unfolding, and changing and somehow, this playful gesture is always ingrained. And I guess my question will be, I guess, yeah, we heard about how things kind of unfolded for you. But we don't know much about them and where everything started, I guess. I mean, how did Aberrant Architecture came about and I know you studied at a college of arts. And maybe you can talk a bit about where this idea came from? And how did this idea of playfulness became so ingrained in your practice?

Kevin Haley (Aberrant Architecture) 1:01:39

Yeah, I mean, we studied together at the RCA, it was actually a field trip to Tokyo.

David Chambers (Aberrant Architecture) 1:01:47

It's a lot about play again.

Kevin Haley (Aberrant Architecture) 1:01:51

Sitting on a ledge. I mean, I think, I don't know I, I'm not sure. Correct me if I'm wrong. But I think there was, you know, Dave, and I went out, you go to the RCA and it was at the time with Nigel Coates and narrative architecture. And, you know, we've been really encouraged to tell stories through play and through place and that's already immediately playful. So my first experience of studying at RCA was I you know, I watched films I, we didn't look at architecture references, we were encouraged to seek out narrative. And I think that's something that we David and I have in common, although sometimes our approach was slightly different. So there was a similar agenda, I think a lot of time it was interactive, social and playful, especially in the work we were doing in the RCA. And it was encouraged by this narrative theme running through the school. And then I think when we left the RCA as sort of some people sort of experienced, there was a bit of frustration of not being able to find a job that really you could do that. And I think we were lucky enough to win a commission at the V&A, the residency in 2010. And a recession, not knowing how to set up an architecture practice, but we had a bit of time to go there and really explore that. So that was that was the origins of it. Really. That's how it all started.

David Chambers (Aberrant Architecture) 1:03:13

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Yeah. And I think certainly, early on, we were very lucky enough to get some quite actually quite small, temporary commissions, but they were really, probably because they were temporary, they were really good opportunities to do some quite interesting, challenging things, such as the Red Theatre, which is also a blue mobile structure. And these almost became like little test prototypes, or it's a sort of, I think, one of the things we've always been interested in and we didn't want to be a paper practice. So you know, if we wanted to kind of build and test and kind of create projects and get them into the public realm and see how people respond and.

Kevin Haley (Aberrant Architecture) 1:04:03

And what sealed the deal actually, the RCA was David tried to bring bees into the college and I tried to bring dogs into college as part of one of our structures we were designing so I was like we definitely yeah.

Canan Batur 1:04:19

I guess I'm conscious of time, we only have 20 minutes left. And so maybe it's a good time to open up to our audience. Can you wait for a microphone to be passed to you?

David Chambers (Aberrant Architecture) 1:04:49

I just wanted to ask you if you think that

Canan Batur 1:04:52

Sorry it's not working I think It's just for the recording and the documentation of it.

Audience member 1:05:09

Hello yeah, I think that works. Finally, I just wanted to ask you, if you think that play can really, truly be facilitated in social spaces in the UK, because I found it quite interesting to look at what was going on Rio. And I feel like, that wouldn't be possible in our culture of things needing to be like ultra safe and low risk and padded, if like children are going to be around it. So it's like, I don't know, I just wanted to know what your thoughts would be of if like, culturally, the UK could ever get to that space of having the freedom amongst the people?

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David Chambers (Aberrant Architecture) 1:05:48

I think we've definitely seen a massive rise in health and safety and, you know, playgrounds, over the last 20 years have become, you know, massively overly designed, so that, you know, with soft surfaces and various aspects that, you know, really restrict what a child can do, but I think we're seeing a movement now. And a response to that, and I think people are starting to understand that we can manage risk a bit better. And also, I think there's starting to be an acknowledgement that, you know, a bit of risk and play is really so important to, for all of us, and certainly for children, to kind of learn. So I'm not saying that it's gonna be like, completely sort of dangerous, but there's certain things that you can do that, can, it's not, nothing, too bad's gonna happen. I think there's projects that are starting to acknowledge that and, we've, you know, I think, you know, we, in our projects, you know, we work with health and safety consultants, and that's conversations that we have about, you know, looking at, okay, you know, we can do this, we can do that. So, and I think maybe previously or for a long time, I don't think people are necessarily challenging things or, or sort of just, you know, they were kind of accepting, okay, that's what you have to do. But actually, if you if you ask certain questions, or try, and you can actually, I think, find a little bit of sort of wiggle room and start to maybe do things, perhaps not as unrestricted that maybe you find in maybe, you know, other other countries or other cities might not have such sort of comprehensive health and safety regulations. But I think there's definitely. I also think that, I think it's a really good question. And I think there is a there is a bit of a cultural difference for sure. What we saw going on in Rio, and I think one of those differences mainly is in the presentation with David saying is that how the school the CIEP was the centre of the community, which invite people in, and that's why I think we're excited about projects like we're doing in shopping centres, I think in the UK, shopping centres, high streets are probably have a similar sort of notion that's the centre, but when you go to those kinds of places at the moment, you wouldn't really see the kinds of things we're doing in Eastbourne experimented with, typically, they're quite similar. And so if we take the notion of the CIEP, in Brazil, inviting different types of activity into a centre, what we're trying to do in places like high streets and shopping centres in the Beacon is imbibe that different activities, and then we can build upon that. So you know, we're now working with shopping centres where, you know,

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I've said shopping is slowly starting to be removed and workplaces starting to come in. So you're gonna think over the sort of next 10-15 years see a real diverse change in high streets and shopping centres. And I think they will become these more playful environments. And so they will become, I think, strong centres again, not just for shopping for other uses, like we saw in the CIEPs. I would say actually one of the things that's probably we're increasingly taken from the CIEPs is this idea of how robust things need to be in the public realm, so that they can stand up to a real, you know, intense use. I think one of the, you know, one of the things that we've really observed is that shopping centres and public realm and shopping centres are probably one of the most intensively used spaces that you can get, and really attracts a massive cross section of society. And so just looking at, you know, product like the CIEPs you know, their insertions were I mean, they're very raw, but concrete, incredibly hardwearing were built to sort of last and withstand a really high intensity use them as sort of kind of lessons like that thing that we can start to sort of bring in to how we can design these spaces that are incredibly robust.

Kevin Haley (Aberrant Architecture) 1:10:21

It's a really good point, because at the moment, in the Beacon shopping centre, the swing is shut. Because it's so well used. We now have a new problem, which is if we really wanted to make these places the centre and people to riff on top and have his activities, what Dave is saying is right, we've got to make them more robust. That was our first attempt, we learned lessons, we're going to start doing some other ones. But also, we really want to, with some of our clients, introduce them to like really exciting new materials that we could bring into the domain, like recycled plastics and things that have that duration that's needed. Because for a lot of our clients, I think the dilemma is that they don't really want to potentially deal with the ongoing maintenance, but at the same time, we're encouraging more people to use these spaces, is it, it's probably partly our role to think about the robustness of this, do you really encourage activity, we don't want to see the swing closed. At the same time, there probably needs to be some kind of management of it. But so we're really excited about it, we can involve people in the process, that idea of sort of their, you know, some of their ideas, I think people become more emotionally connected to centres, I kind of think

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that people will also maybe take care of them as well, you know, you can often see with guerilla gardening around cities, people just start to like, you know, do those kinds of things naturally, it'd be amazing to see that in a shopping centre, like someone coming along, just like to like, build something off that bench or I don't know do something or you know, become their office for a week or something. That'd be amazing.

David Chambers (Aberrant Architecture) 1:11:53

Yeah, just to clarify, the swing will be opening soon. Yeah.

Canan Batur 1:12:00

Any other questions?

Audience member 1:12:05

Hi, very, very interesting. I like play a lot. I wanted to ask about the process. So you mentioned co-discovery and co-design. In testing, do you do you test any early designs? And I guess, when you are seeing how people, children, adults, interact with those early designs, do you have to change things? And do you have any stories about that? How that's gone before?

David Chambers (Aberrant Architecture) 1:12:35

I think we would, I would say a lot of our projects are almost I'd say, our work as we do certain projects, are almost like tests. And it's, you know, as we do a project, we, you know, we're very keen, you know, there's a brief at the start. And as, obviously, there's criteria, we design to from clients. And we work with with clients to produce these designs. But also, it's really important. And increasingly, this is something that's become much more important in our practice, is after a project is completed, what's the learnings? What's the kind of what's the what's the lessons, what's the data we can take, that we can then use to inform the next project. So the next project builds on the previous projects, and you get to capture all that learning. So whereas well, actually, why would say that? I don't think we do any projects where we've probably done any physical tests with that project. But I'd say there's a maybe a cross fertilisation between, say, for example, Landscape for Play, was a project in a gallery setting, but also an opportunity to do a big test, in a, say, a six month commission for ideas and approaches, which

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we then applied in a more permanent commission in the shopping centre. So and I think that for us, that's quite interesting switching back between projects for in a cultural situation, which you probably have a bit more flexibility with regards to regulations, and you don't have to deal with necessarily some of the issues. But they become become these prototypes, these tests, which you can then take and apply in maybe more commercial settings. So I think there's definitely a dialogue and a give and take between sort of our work in different sectors. And certainly, as we kind of do different projects, we're taking what worked well. We're certainly doing that from Eastbourne and we're currently applying some of the lessons to other shopping centres around the country.

Kevin Haley (Aberrant Architecture) 1:14:55

Yeah, so I mean, I would just add that I think that last bit there, we want to retain relationships with our clients, we very much talk in the beginning that we'd never designed a playscape inside a shopping centre. And the people we work with are up for this challenge. So it's very much you know, so it's a great attitude to work from clients that understand that we might not get it exactly right on day one. But there's a lot of amazing things that are going on. But the next one we're doing, we're taking lessons from. So I think that's, I think making sure that the ambition is set up front would really help. And I did have something else which has left my mind. So I'll come back to in a minute.

Canan Batur 1:15:39

I mean, who can blame you, it's almost 8 so that time. Exactly. Any other questions? I guess I want to know about the process of Matadero. And that was something that I actually want to ask you, because I was so I mean, that how the committee itself embraced the whole space and how they came up with their own plays. I mean, like literal sense, you know, within that space, I think it's so amazing. And I was wondering, I was wondering how you kind of you were talking about like talking to communities in some regions that were surrounding Matadero to understand exactly what kind of space that they might need, or how we can kind of ingrain the ideas of, you know, play, while they're actually creating this kind of common space and common grounds as well, for them. So I was wondering, I guess how that process exactly unfolded,

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because it's such a success to see how, you know, they have immersed themselves in the space in very imaginative ways that you probably haven't even didn't even consider when you were actually sketching out the space. Right?

Kevin Haley (Aberrant Architecture) 1:16:48

I think that's the thing that just reminded me, I was going to say, actually the, in the Madrid Madrid project, something we did, which we really enjoyed, because obviously, we stayed there and watched how people use the space. And it happens a lot in all our projects, there was one I was remember, as well as the blue structure, we showed the Roman market. And we sort of think about how people could use it. And then what happens is, I mean, we saw it in time out, it was called the world's smallest restaurant. And for Valentine's Day, they put a chef on the roof and two lovers dined underneath. Now, that's amazing to see, because they've kind of reinterpreting what we're thinking, the same thing happened in Madrid, you said that you saw families, design their own games, on the structure as we're as we're looking at it. So it's, and what I think what we really enjoy is this unknown, what, you know, what might happen to you, I think, when David was talking, he was talking about you just design enough, and then you give it over. And so the whole theatre thing where theatre group starts coming to us it that was completely unknown to us. But I think the important thing is, we always try and spend time in the projects that we designed to learn from them. Problems will come, let's not worry about the problems, let's embrace those problems, and then see how we can actually turn those problems into new opportunities to then riff on the next project. But always invite people into our spaces to see how they, how they see it.

David Chambers (Aberrant Architecture) 1:18:19

Yeah and one thing that we do a lot in our, in our design process, is create these drawings that we describe as scripted scenarios. So we, based on observations, based on our research, we imagine possible ways that we think people could respond to the invitation, and almost like create storyboards that show okay, you know, we imagine the space could be used for this type of event, or people could do this. And that allows us to kind of think through, okay, okay, there are certain prompts that we think could be used, but always without fail, the best uses of

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things that we just haven't thought about. And I think yeah, like Kevin said, that's, that's when you know, that something's really landed. And when you get these responses, and people start to riff and create new and exciting ways of responding to our work and to the place where it's situated. And that for us is probably the seal of approval. Then we know okay, we've done a good project.

Canan Batur 1:19:30

Amazing. I'm just gonna look at time we have, we can get one last question if there are any.

Audience member 1:19:45

I think it's a simple question. So what would be your two favourite places to play? So what would you have drawn and then imprinted on those bricks?

Canan Batur 1:19:55

That's a very difficult question.

Kevin Haley (Aberrant Architecture) 1:19:58

I think you know.

David Chambers (Aberrant Architecture) 1:19:59

I've got the answer, actually. So we did a workshop, and we asked this question to all the participants, and we also did it ourselves. So, unfortunately, for me, I don't have the picture. But

Kevin Haley (Aberrant Architecture) 1:20:16

It's an amazing picture.

David Chambers (Aberrant Architecture) 1:20:17

It's a picture of my parents' garden when we were kids. And I'm one of four. And looking back, it looks like one of these pictures from the 70s, not from 70s, from the 80s. But, you know, we've made this boat out have found material, like, you know, there's an oil drum and there's some bamboo and there's some pallets. And we've constructed this, yeah, this boat, and I'm the oldest, so I'm kind of Captain and my brother, and my sisters are kind of on it. And then a couple of, I don't

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even know, some friends of some of my siblings. And I think, you know, that, that kind of, again, and that sort of idea of creating your own worlds, you know, taking abstract objects, everyday objects, putting them together, creating your own games, is something that, you know, really stayed with me personally. And, you know, that's why I showed that picture. That's a really good question. And that's, you know, I think that's something that I think we always know, we always, when we're designing projects, we always try to go back to ourselves, you know, what would we kind of want to do?

Kevin Haley (Aberrant Architecture) 1:21:38

And, mine was, I'll just say, first, I was a good kid. But I used to enjoy my favourite place to play was where my mum told me, I wasn't allowed to play, which is a part of the street, probably most dangerous part of the street, because cars come around the corner. But me and my friend used to love playing kerby on this part of the street because you had the added danger. And I guess also because I was told I wasn't allowed to do it in some ways. So but yeah like I said I was a good kid.

Canan Batur 1:22:11

All right. So I guess that concludes our evening. Thank you so much for accepting our invitation, a round of applause for Kevin and David. Thankyou so much for being with us. If you want to trace some of the gems that have been shared here today, a recording of tonight's events will be online hopefully in the next few days. And also, we're concluding our Adventure Playground series with the last event taking place on Wednesday with Gabriela Burkhalter, who has been working on this project titled The Playground Project for almost a decade now. And she's going to be sharing some archival footage of the work that she has been conducting and also the research, but also sharing some films to kind of complement those ideas. So if you're interested, please do join us. Again. I mean, thank you so much, Kevin, thank you so much, David, so amazing to have you here and get a you know, great insight into your practice and have a sense of how much playfulness, you know, you ingrain yourself and almost over a decade now. So thank you.

David Chambers (Aberrant Architecture) 1:23:18

Thank you.

Nottingham Contemporary

Kevin Haley (Aberrant Architecture) 1:23:19

Thank you.

Colophon

Curator: Canan Batur

Assisted by: Shannon Charlesworth, Philippa Douglas

Technicians: Tom Chamberlain, Paul Buddle, Holly, Catherine Masters

Event Assistant: Amalia