Article

Co-Creation Beyond Humans: The Arts of Multispecies Placemaking

Cecilie Sachs Olsen

Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research, Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway; cecilies@oslomet.no

Abstract
Placemaking, as a form of urban development often focusing on arts- and community-based approaches, is becoming a key site for responding to pressing social and environmental concerns around the development of sustainable urban futures. This article explores the potential of arts-based methods to develop a "multispecies placemaking" in which "the community" is expanded to also include non-human species. Drawing on a performative event aiming to put the idea of multispecies placemaking into practice, the article brings together theories and practices of the evolving field of multispecies art with the more established field of socially engaged art to discuss challenges of co-creation and participation from a multispecies perspective. It concludes with a reflection on the possibilities of arts-based methods to foster not only methodological innovation within the field of placemaking but also to suggest a re-thinking of what placemaking is and could be.

Keywords
arts-based methods; co-creation; multispecies art; participation; placemaking; socially engaged art

1. Introduction

As concerns around the detrimental effects of human activities and settlements on nature, ecosystems, and biodiversity are growing, the role of the urban arena as an experimental field, institutional interface, and focal point for reworking socioecological relations is intensifying. Alongside a widespread belief in the failure of national policies to address climate change, cities are increasingly targeted by planners, politicians, social movements, activists, and scholars alike as locations for progressive visions of future sustainable life (Angelo & Wachsmuth, 2020). "Placemaking" is accordingly receiving increased scholarly attention (Courage et al., 2021; Courage & McKeown, 2019). The term relates to a paradigmatic shift in urban design, policy, and planning towards community-oriented urban development. Focusing on the co-creation of urban space by various actors, placemaking is increasingly seen as an important site for responding to pressing social and environmental concerns around the development of more sustainable cities (Raven, 2021).

To engage the "in situ" community voice in urban development, placemaking often turns to socially engaged art. This participatory form of artistic practice is well recognized for sensitizing practices of urban development to the voices and interests of marginalized groups by working on a sensory and emotional level often seen as lacking in the more technocratic language of policy and planning (see e.g., Metzger, 2010; Sachs Olsen & Juhlin, 2021; Sarkissian, 2005; Vasudevan, 2020). It opens up possibilities for transcending the reach of conventional forms of data collection, participation, and representation, and provides new ways in which urban development can better understand and respond to the needs and interests of marginalized actors. With the emergence of "planetary urbanization" (Merrifield, 2013) and because the traditional understandings of "cities" as ontological entities separate from "nature" are increasingly unsettled, calls are being made to take the focus on including marginalized actors one step further, to also include non-human actors in placemaking (see e.g., Courage & McKeown, 2019). In response to these calls, this article discusses the potential of

arts-based methods to develop so-called "multispecies placemaking." While scholarship discussing multispecies approaches to cities is growing (see e.g., Hinchcliffe & Whatmore, 2006; Houston et al., 2018; Jon, 2020; Maller, 2021; Metzger, 2014), the term "multispecies placemaking" is rarely used in urban studies, planning, and design. One notable exception is the work of Duhn (2017), who positions the idea of "multispecies place-making" to rethink the politics of who makes places from a multispecies perspective. Building on Duhn's work, this article defines "multispecies placemaking" as an approach to community-based urban development in which "the community" consists of both humans and non-human species.

Multispecies approaches to urban planning are predominantly informed by posthuman scholarship and thinking (e.g., Houston et al., 2018; Jon, 2020; Metzger, 2014). The common thread running through this work is the Anthropocene (scientific claims that human environmental impacts are reaching geophysical levels) as a cause for re-thinking human-environment relationships, in terms of, for example, decentering the human subject and reconceptualizing non-human agency in questions of urban development and planning. Within posthuman thinking more generally, artistic practice plays an important role in re-thinking agency and human-environment relations (Davis & Turpin, 2015; Wolfe, 2021). Art has long offered social and natural science empirical objects through which to theorize nature and society-environment relations through paintings, installations, land-art, and, more recently, eco-social art and art-science collaborations such as BioArt (Daniels, 1993; Dixon et al., 2013; Fitzgerald, 2019; Kastner & Wallis, 1998; Lippard, 1983). Adding to this history the emerging field of "multispecies art" (Boyd et al., 2015) is part of a shift from using art to highlight environmental issues (as with the eco-art of the 1960s and 1970s) towards interactive works that engage humans and other species as well as artworks produced with other species. While much of the work done by posthuman art theorists focuses on an artistic practice that includes animals, multispecies art arises specifically out of the work of new materialism (Coole & Frost, 2010) and multispecies ethnography (Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010) and is inclusive of all species: human, animal, fungal, marine, plant, microbe, and so on. The evocative potential of art is recognized here for developing new ecological sensibilities and new social, aesthetic, and ethical relations with these non-human species (Boyd, 2015).

The starting point of this article is that, due to its focus on the co-creation between humans and non-human species, multispecies art could become the new form of socially engaged art in placemaking: It offers an arena in which to expand "the community voice" in placemaking to also include non-human species. To consider how this might be done in practice, the article discusses a performative event entitled The Parliament of Species, which took place at the site of a planned large-scale urban development project by the Oslo Fjord in Norway. The event brought together theories and practices of socially engaged art and multispecies art to develop and explore tools and methods for a multispecies placemaking that aimed to include the needs and interests of non-human species in the development. This article begins by discussing some of the challenges of attempting to extend the practices of co-creation to also include non-human species in placemaking. It moves on to reflect on how The Parliament of Species addressed some of these challenges and ends with a reflection on the potential of arts-based methods to foster practices of multispecies placemaking.

2. Re-Thinking Co-Creation Across the Human/Non-Human Divide

Multispecies art and socially engaged art have in common that they are art forms that are produced "with or for" other species/humans rather than "of or about" them. Hence, both point to a form of collaborative art in which "the artwork" is not necessarily an object but a process that is co-created between artists and human/multispecies participants. The term "co-creation" is key here. I define this term, in line with Brandsen and Honingh (2018), as revolving around the role of the participants as co-initiators and co-designers of the process. "Co-creation" is understood here as more all-encompassing than, for example, the term "co-production," which, according to Brandsen and Honingh (2018), refers to the later stages of a process, such as the implementation of outcomes and results.

While co-creation is central in both socially engaged art and multispecies art, their use and function of the term differ. In multispecies art, co-creation is used mainly as an analytical framework for challenging the hierarchy between humans and other species. That is, co-creation generally refers to the idea that humans and non-human species are intertwined in shared worlds, with both involved in the "creation" of these shared worlds. The problem, as many critics see it, is that this focus risks ignoring the unequal distribution of power between humans and non-humans: Co-creation is seen as inherently emancipative and revolutionary, with little attention given to the meaning of this co-creation and the context in which it operates, for example, in terms of how co-creation might actually intervene in human-centric processes of placemaking. Hence, multispecies art often remains remarkably disembodied, self-referential, and a-geographical (Biermann et al., 2016; Kaika, 2018; Lövbrand et al., 2015). It rarely engages with on-the-ground actors and practices in specific local and regional contexts.

Within the field of socially engaged art, critics have long warned against uncritically celebrating the idea of "co-creation" in and through art as inherently emancipative and revolutionary (Bishop, 2006; Charnley, 2011; Kwon, 2004). For example, in her influential work

Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics, Deutsche (1996) examines how aesthetic and urban ideologies were combined during the 1980s to legitimize urban redevelopment programs that claimed to be beneficial to all. Arts-led regeneration emerged as part of these programs and often focused on the instrumentalized potential of art to contribute to urban revitalization (see e.g., Florida, 2002; Landry, 2000). Deutsche points to how the mobilization of a democratic rhetoric of "creativity," "openness," and "co-creation" within arts-led placemaking often is structured by exclusions and, moreover, by attempts to erase the traces of these exclusions. These exclusions hinge on producing space as a substantial unity and, in so doing, expelling any perceived "disturbances" (i.e., homeless people) of this unity. In a similar vein, some Indigenous scholars (see e.g., Celermajer et al., 2021; Fitz-Henry, 2021; Martin, 2020) take issue with the use of Indigenous thought as a way of conceptualizing non-human agency to promote multispecies co-creation. In celebrating Indigenous thought as a rejection of colonial human-centered imperialism, accounts of non-human agency risk not only flattening the diversity of Indigenous perspectives but also silencing subaltern perspectives that do not accept these renderings of non-human agency.

In order, then, to critically scrutinize the use and practice of multispecies co-creation in placemaking, it is necessary to move beyond the focus of multispecies art of seeing co-creation as an analytical framework into examining how it can be better understood as it is in socially engaged art—as an active process of empowering and engaging with those involved. What is key here is to examine not only how urban space is shaped by multiple human and non-human actors but also to examine the processes by which these actors become engaged in the (co-)creation of urban space. The question of participation is key here, and I will discuss this question in the next section.

3. Expanding the Practice of Participation Through Arts-Based Approaches

While participation is a concept that is warmly persuasive, it often leans towards practices that have strong exclusionary effects (Holsen, 2021; Mansbridge, 1980). Critics point to how participatory practices are often guided by norms of deliberation that implicitly value certain styles of expression as orderly or articulate, thus excluding participants who do not conform to these norms (see e.g., Young, 2000). Socially engaged art is recognized for having the potential to challenge these exclusionary forms of participation by expanding the more technocratic and discursive parameters of urban planning and placemaking to include affective, somatic, and non-verbal experience (Sachs Olsen, 2019; Sandercock, 2003; Sarkissian, 2005). Albeit focusing on human participation, this form of socially engaged art has much in common with multispecies art. The latter also experiments

with new ways of including marginalized voices in participatory practices, for example, by attempting to generate sites for human-non-human communication beyond verbal signaling (Kirksey, 2015). To do this, multispecies art often focuses on "non-representational" (Thrift, 2008) and performance-based approaches. Performance is understood here as an ephemeral event that cannot be represented (Phelan, 1993). Hence, it is seen to offer an unmediated authentic relationship to the world, escaping the limits and demands of the human-centered world. The problem with this idea of an unmediated practice is that it risks seeing participation as an act that speaks for itself. It thereby cuts out half the equation by sidelining the conditions that are part of participation to begin with, as well as those produced through the encounters taking place within it. For example, important scholarly work has been done to invoke practices of listening as means to recognize the "voices" of both human and non-human environmental "others" (see e.g., Duffy & Waitt, 2011; Gallagher & Prior, 2014; Kanngieser et al., 2017). However, when implemented in urban development processes, the call for greater attention to the "voices" and "languages" of nature risks being perceived simply as a form of romantic re-enchantment of the natural world (Revill, 2021). Such an understanding may pave the way for manipulation, tokenism, and "empty listening" in which "being seen to be listening" becomes a form of statecraft strategy (Ryan & Flinders, 2018, p. 137).

Hence, to challenge exclusionary forms of participation, we need to critically question how the political, institutional, spatial, and affective contexts in which the participation takes place affect the power relations among stakeholders, for example, in terms of who can participate and in which ways. Key here is that it is not so much participation itself that is the problem but the context in which the exchange of ideas and interests must take place (Hajer, 2005). Recent studies of political authority show how specific modes of "staging" delimit possibilities for deliberation and action within a given context (Coles, 2005; Hajer & Versteeg, 2012). In the next section, I will discuss how The Parliament of Species used a theatre-based approach to reconfigure the context and "staging" of multispecies participation and co-creation. This theatre-based approach is rooted in socially engaged art as well as in a long tradition in the social sciences, particularly within geography, for mobilizing notions of performance to reflect on contestations around, for example, place and identity (Johnston & Pratt, 2010; Longhurst, 2000; Nash, 2000). Performance is recognized here for offering a means through which to reveal not only the experiential, affectual and processual qualities of specific contexts, but also to provide ways to think about their power-laden politics (Rogers, 2012).

4. The Parliament of Species

The Parliament of Species was an event that I—an artist and scholar working with socially engaged art—

organized with my colleague Elin T. Sørensen—an artist and scholar working with multispecies art. The event took place in June 2021 at Kongshavn, one of the transformation sites of Fjord City, the most ambitious urban waterfront development in Norway's history. The Fjord City is located by Oslo Fjord, Norway's most densely populated blue recreation area. The fjord has suffered greatly from the development of surrounding urban and industrial areas. For decades, the shoreline of the fjord has been hardened by numerous blasting and landfill operations, resulting in concrete-dominated hardscapes that destroy the natural habitat of marine organisms. With the development of the Fjord City, the trajectory of shoreline hardening is set to continue. Until its planned completion in 2030, the development aims to establish around 9,000 homes and 45,000 workplaces, alongside an extensive harbor promenade connecting East and West Oslo.

As Sørensen (2020) notes, so far, the world undersea has been invisible to the architects and developers of Fjord City. After examining the plans for the development, she finds that any genuine effort to re-naturalize and care for the urban intertidal and the landscape under sea is mostly absent. And while participation and sustainability are key to the Fjord City development (HAV Eiendom, 2020), there seems to be no reflection on how to include non-human interests in the planning process. In response, The Parliament of Species explored how arts-based methods could be used to promote multispecies placemaking along the Oslo Fjord. The focus was on how non-human species could be included in the plans for developing a People's Park at the site of Kongshavn. The architects designing the park had previously invited the (human) public to give their opinions on what uses and users the park should cater for. The Parliament of Species expanded this notion of "the public" to also include non-human species. To do this, the event used arts-based methods such as a participatory theatre and role-play to stage multispecies encounters, posing questions such as: How can we foster new relationships between humans and nature? What can we learn about Kongshavn by perceiving it from the perspective of a rock or a bird? What non-human needs and interests should be taken into consideration in the development of the park? What does it mean to speak not only *for* other species but also *from* a multispecies perspective?

Sørensen and I recruited participants for the event through our professional and personal networks, focusing on gathering an interdisciplinary and intergenerational group of 15 to 20 people. The response was very positive, and we put together a group of participants consisting of scholars and practitioners from the fields of architecture, landscape architecture, planning, water management, political science, biology, geology, ecology, urban research, activism, and arts. The age of the participants ranged from children aged between eight and 13 to a pensioner that had just turned 80, as seen in Figure 1. In planning, the traditional way of dealing with questions of the preservation of nature is by way of expert advocacy through spokespersons such as environmental scientists, urban ecologists, and zoologists (see e.g., Tryggestad et al., 2013). By expanding this expert advocacy to include children and the elderly as part of an interdisciplinary group of citizens, we wanted to challenge the tendency of placing the authority to speak in

Figure 1. The interdisciplinary and generational participants of The Parliament of Species. Source: Courtesy of Morten Munch-Olsen.

political debate only on those who have been granted some permission to speak on behalf of others, such as planners, politicians, barristers, or scientists.

5. Methods and Data Analysis

My research on and with The Parliament of Species was oriented around participatory observation of the event itself as well as a focus group interview following the event. This approach drew on my extensive experience in using participatory research methods to examine arts-based participatory practices such as socially engaged art. Participatory methods are helpful to scrutinize practices of co-creation as those conventionally "researched" are directly involved in some or all stages of the research (Kesby et al., 2005). Participatory action research further informed this approach, focusing on how researchers and participants work together to examine a problematic situation or action to change it for the better. The research is thus done with and for, rather than *on* participants (Cameron & Gibson, 2005). Accordingly, my participant observation was just as much about me acting, speaking, and listening in addition to observing. The event was also recorded, and the recording was transcribed, providing a "script" that documented how the event unfolded during the 90 minutes that it lasted. Furthermore, I took notes, documenting my own observations and reflections on how the event played out. Finally, it was important to have the participants articulate and reflect on the experience of the event on their own terms. By conducting a 60-minute focus group interview with the participants after the event, I was able to gain insights that were not necessarily expressed or observed during the event itself. In the interests of not predetermining the interview responses, my questions were carefully worded to avoid introducing pre-given discourses within which respondents could easily frame their experience. Rather than asking if the participants "learnt anything," I asked them to tell me about how they experienced the event from beginning to end.

In my analysis of the empirical data stemming from the observations and the focus group interview, I approached The Parliament of Species not as a "finished" product or artwork but as an ensemble of practices and experiences. The focus of my analysis was on how these practices and experiences open possibilities for interventions that interweave a reshaping of intellectual landscapes with a "doing of work" in the world. Hence, my analysis enabled the discussion and development of theoretical ideas in this article to draw on experiences with The Parliament of Species, and, moving in the opposite direction, The Parliament of Species asked questions about the theoretical concepts.

6. Becoming Spokespersons and Stakeholders

The Parliament of Species used the idea of "the spokesperson" to explore how nature might find a voice within a revised democratic constitution. This idea was inspired by Macy's development of a "council of all beings" (Fleming et al., 1988) and Latour's (1993) conceptualization of a "parliament of things." Both references invoke the idea of "the spokesperson" as a vehicle for giving expression to heterogeneous collectivities of humans and non-humans.

The spokesperson is an active figure of intermediation since, as Latour (2004, p. 68) emphasises, "no beings not even humans speak on their own, but always through something or someone else." In the context of human representative democracies, we are used to this idea of the spokesperson, and we are familiar with the doubt about their capacity to speak in the name of those they represent. As Metzger (2016) notes, the distrust in spokespersons is rampant: Do they really represent those they claim for or only their own interests? The intermediary function of the spokesperson, then, is characterised by notions of translation, doubt, manipulation, and invention. Yet, the words "manipulation" and "invention" in this context need not imply malevolence. Rather, they point to how any attempt at "giving voice" to a given subject is performative; it brings the voice into being and so enables or constrains certain (re)configurations of it. As this performative process is the same whether it is humans or non-humans that are represented, the function of the spokesperson opens an arena in which an exchange between these groups can take place.

To initiate the exchange between non-human species and the human participants of The Parliament of Species, the latter were split into groups of three and encouraged to explore Kongshavn in search for multispecies stakeholders. Deciding on one stakeholder that they found that sparked particular interest, they were asked to get to know it better: Does it have a name? Where does it prefer to stay? What does it like to do? What does it need to thrive? Why is it here? How does it use the area? What kind of transformation of the site would it like and not like? This speculative process of getting to "know" the multispecies stakeholders goes beyond how the consultation of stakeholders is usually imagined in traditional forms of placemaking and planning. In Healey's (1997/2006) influential book *Collaborative Planning*, she asserts that for placemaking and strategic planning to be successful, the key task of the planner is to conduct an analysis to identify stakeholders and make sure that the planning efforts grow out of their concerns. This understanding—that stakeholders exist prior to the planning process—has been largely adopted in planning practice. The stakeholders are usually positioned as already existing "out there," and the task of the planner is to simply locate them and bring forth their "stakeholderness." But, as Metzger (2013, p. 788) points out, planners do more than simply "assist" stakeholders; they actively foster specific stakeholder subjectivities through an active practice of creating interests that work to entwine subjects and environments. Stakeholderness

should therefore be seen as a relational effect rather than an ontological property. Hence, instead of seeing the consultation of stakeholders as a faithful representation of an underlying bedrock reality, The Parliament of Species directed the attention towards consultation as a speculative and manipulative activity. It foregrounded how consultations require practical skills in generating and "staging" stakeholders. These practical skills were further explored through the parliament itself, which used participatory theatre, such as role play, to examine how the participation of stakeholders can be staged in ways that enable new ways of participating and of co-creating places across the human/non-human divide.

After having identified and gotten to know the multispecies stakeholders (including the swan family, the common periwinkle, the acorn barnacle, the grey alder, and the bedrock), the human participants gathered around a circle of wooden benches that formed the stage of the parliament. One participant from each group sat on the bench with the two other participants in the group standing behind, as seen in Figure 2. The person on the bench acted as the spokesperson for the multispecies stakeholder that the group had found and that they represented. The two participants standing behind were not to speak but simply listen in on the conversation. They could, however, at any time tap the shoulder of the spokesperson, swap places with them, and thereby take on their role. This swapping of roles highlighted the potential of the play frame of participatory theatre to

Figure 2. The spokesperson and the listener. Source: Courtesy of Morten Munch-Olsen.

open a liminal space where one is both inside and outside of a role at the same time, occupying a space that is temporarily "betwixt and between" (Ryan & Flinders, 2018, p. 144). In the introduction to the parliament, I highlighted this focus on being both inside and outside of a role by sharing what I learnt as a theatre student—that the goal of acting is not to become the character one is performing but to apply "the magical if" in terms of being able to imagine oneself in the character's shoes: What would I do if I was this character I am playing? This form of role play may foster understandings that are key to urban planning in terms of developing a sensitivity to the plurality of the stories—both human and non-human—that places are made of. For example, the participants noted how The Parliament of Species made them question the dominant story of Kongshavn being "an empty industrial site" ripe for transformation as they imagined the place from the perspective of other species: the swan family using Kongshavn as a refuge to shelter the kids from humans; the common periwinkle who "stays local" because it is not very mobile and prefers a tranquil life on the rocky shore; the grey alder branch who defines itself as "hyper local" because its family has lived at Kongshavn for thousands of years. As such, the event provided a method for training participants to develop their ability to "imagine oneself in another skin, another story, another opening of space" (Sandercock, 2002, p. 8).

7. Respect Across Differences

A growing body of scholarly work is concerned with how we can imagine the city from a multispecies perspective and, in this way, better understand how non-human species make their homes in cities and render meaningful the places they inhabit (van Dooren & Rose, 2012; Von Uexküll, 2010; Wolsch, 1996). Within this work, multispecies art is often recognized for its potential to expand our understanding of the "life story" of non-human species and their "storied-experience" of non-human places. By drawing attention to non-human species as narrative subjects in their own right, multispecies art is seen to hold the promise of prompting the recognition of similarity and responsibility between non-human species and humans. This recognition is in no doubt helpful in broadening our perspectives on various place-attachments, but it might also occlude a closer examination of which actors are more important than others in making places and thus prevent understandings of the broader structures within which various actors act. The latter implies thinking through and taking responsibility for the effects and consequences of human-centric placemaking on a host of both local and non-local non-human species. To do this, The Parliament of Species did not try to achieve sameness of capacities and situations by proceeding from an "analogical," "like us" kind of thinking but rather tried to establish relations of respect across the differences between ourselves and

other species. The potential of participatory theatre in this regard is that it creates opportunities for humans to act on other possibilities for being (Ryan & Flinders, 2018). This way, it might not only help us change how we think about and relate to non-human species but might also help us become conscious of our own roles in prioritizing human needs at the expense of others and the arbitrary ways in which we do so.

For example, one of the architects in the group had become the spokesperson of a bedrock. At the beginning of the parliament, stating that he was partly speaking from the perspective of an environmentally aware architect, he emphasised that the rock did not want to be pulverised and turned into concrete but to remain in its natural shape and to be used in local constructions and interventions. During the focus group interview he admitted a change in perspective. He observed that he—and most architects he knew—have an inherent will to facilitate or programme the environment by making benches and little pavilions that no one uses, or—more generally—filling out space with hard and closed surfaces. Listening to the perspectives of the other species, he realized that the point was maybe *not* to programme the People's Park but to leave the site unprogrammed. What, then, he concluded, if the desire to facilitate or programme the environment was not oriented around the desire to leave a mark but, on the contrary, focused on not unduly interfering with things in such a way that it would be possible for them to reach their full potential?

8. The Contradictions and Paradoxes of Transformation

The realization of the architect points to what Heikkurinen (2019) refers to as a "transformation paradox" that is inherent in all processes of placemaking. One of the main aims of placemaking, from an architect's or planner's perspective, is to achieve better place-based outcomes than would otherwise have been achieved (Campbell, 2012). This aim is predominantly rooted in what Heikkurinen (2019, p. 534) characterizes as the human "will to transform," which ultimately has led the planet to a state of ecospheric overshoot. The will to transform, he observes, is closely linked to the largely accepted premise of progress, in which the purpose for the human being comes from efforts to move humanity to an improved state. But as he points out, "from the viewpoint of the Earth, it is precisely less human action (not only better action) that is needed" (Heikkurinen, 2019, p. 533).

The contradictions and paradoxes of human action in relation to the environment were highlighted throughout the parliament as the role play drew out responses that often were spontaneous, intuitive, tacit, experiential, embodied, or affective, rather than simply cognitive. For example, the spokesperson for the acorn barnacle expressed concern about shaping the shoreline so that humans could go swimming. She feared that the making

of sandy or smooth surfaces left no room for the sharp shells of the acorn barnacle. The spokesperson for the common periwinkle—wanting to express her support for the perspective of the acorn barnacle—suggested that humans could just wear bathing shoes to avoid the need for smooth surfaces, to which the spokesperson of the acorn barnacle immediately replied: "Oh no! We don't like bathing shoes! That would mean that we would be stepped on—It's the certain death of both of us!" This immediate response evoked laughter among the participants, recognizing the many paradoxes and contradictions in human actions, what Broto (2020, p. 2373) describes as "the excess product of the encounter between human understanding and an unruly...world." These paradoxes and contradictions, however, remain part of humans' dynamic engagement with the world we inhabit. The point of the Parliament was not to resolve the contradictions but to acknowledge them as a step towards a heightened awareness and an active, political mode of being in the world. As Broto (2015) argues, becoming aware of contradictions may provide a direction towards broader reconfigurations of social practices and generate a desire to change. The promise of multispecies placemaking in this context is to engage with co-creation in such a way "that collective thinking has to proceed 'in the presence of' those who would otherwise be likely to be disqualified as having idiotically nothing to propose" (Stengers, 2005, p. 994). According to Metzger (2016, p. 591), this is not necessarily a question about uncritically inviting "everybody" into the placemaking process but about "staging events that open up its participants to surprising insights and unpredicted collective becomings through which they learn to be affected in new ways."

9. Cultivating Awareness, Listening, and Receptivity

To become affected in new ways, Speight (2013) suggests a move from placemaking to "place-listening" as a form of open-ended, durational, sensory, and embodied engagement with a place. She argues that while placemaking has a visually oriented and mainstream urban regeneration focus, place-listening involves what Rodaway (1994, pp. 110–111) describes as an "auditory sensitivity" that is concerned with "flows and continually changing relationships, rather than objects or parts and compositions or views." This form of sensitivity enables modes of immersion that, in turn, have the potential to help planners tune into a multiplicity of modes of being in places and their related regimes of expressivity (see e.g., Andreyev, 2021; van Dooren et al., 2016). One of the participants described how The Parliament of Species made him listen differently to Kongshavn. Being located in-between a container harbour, a highway, and railway tracks, Kongshavn is dominated by a noisy, industrial soundscape. The participant noticed that during the parliament he became acutely aware that he was not able to hear any "natural sounds" from birds, insects, waves, and

so on. He described how this realization "hit" him with a "wave of discomfort" stemming from his sense of responsibility as a human for so violently silencing nature.

The notion of place-listening can be linked to a small body of scholarship that in recent years has emerged within political theory, dubbed "sensory democracy" (Dobson, 2014; Ryan & Flinders, 2018). Scholars within this tradition have suggested that representatives of government should endeavour to become more—and differently—politically attuned by foregrounding the roles played by processes of watching, listening, and feeling in fostering, shaping, and improving traditions of democratic practice. Notable here are attempts, such as those by Dobson (2010, 2014), to move the debate away from the focus on voice and speaking in representative democracy towards an awareness of the importance and potential of listening as "a form of receptivity that breaks with or suspends existing categories, thereby making space for new or marginalised viewpoints to find their way into the political arena" (Ryan & Flinders, 2018, p. 137). In the context of multispecies placemaking, this understanding of co-creation does not simply suggest a greater attention to the "voices" and "languages" of "nature" as a form of romantic re-enchantment of the natural world. Rather, it focuses on whether the practice of listening enables marginalized voices to actually make a difference in our thinking about them (Disch, 2008). As The Parliament of Species demonstrates, the use of arts-based methods is key here as such methods offer ways to pay greater attention to a broader sensual range of experiencing a place from both human and non-human perspectives.

10. Conclusions

The Parliament of Species not only points to the possibilities for methodological innovation within the field of placemaking but also suggests a re-thinking of what placemaking is and could be. Moving beyond the will to transform, multispecies placemaking promotes urban development approaches that do not unduly interfere with places but that focus on taking care of what already exists in a place. This is by no means a passive process and demands more than the abstract acknowledgement that places are co-created between humans and other species. Rather, it requires an approach that actively intervenes in "the production of space" and "the spatially constructed order" in terms of the production of meaning, knowledge, discourses, and institutions among various actors (Elden, 2004; Lefebvre, 1974/1991). The arts-based approach is crucial here as art implies a challenge to familiar categorizations, such as established views, assigned usage, and order—what Rancière (2003, p. 201) terms "the distribution of the sensible." This distribution of the sensible is strongly linked to the distribution of places, as Rancière (2003, p. 201) puts it: "What are these places? How do they function? Why are they there? Who can occupy them?...It is always

a matter of knowing who is qualified to say what a particular place is and what is done in it." The Parliament of Species illustrates the potential for arts-based methods to test and rehearse new strategies for co-creating urban space in this regard. Co-creation is understood here as an active process of empowerment rather than as a passive analytical framework. It points to how stakeholders and interests are produced as a performative and relational effect rather than as an ontological property. This means that stakeholders and their interests do not exist prior to the placemaking process but are created in and through it.

The creation of stakeholders and the staging of humans and non-humans alike in participatory processes foregrounds the fact that barriers to participation in placemaking are not located in the capacities of individuals but in institutional structures that form specific contexts for participation. The question, then, is not how do we duly consider the interests of those that are deemed unable to participate, but how do we change these institutional structures and participatory contexts to enable other species to have a say regardless of their capacity to speak? In response to this question, The Parliament of Species demonstrates how arts-based methods may, firstly, establish relations of respect and solidarity with other species despite fundamental differences, and, secondly, how such relations might work back on our spatial ordering principles to open novel and productive ways of thinking about and engaging with multispecies approaches to urban space.

No doubt the practical generation of multispecies placemaking as an integral part of urban planning and development processes would demand further method development, and—not least—a structural change concerning what interactions, relationships, and knowledges placemaking depends on. While arts-based methods cannot provide such a structural change in and of themselves, they can help sensitize practices of placemaking to multispecies perspectives. The Parliament of Species is therefore merely a practical starting point for discussing how multispecies placemaking can be further developed in practice. Nevertheless, it initiates an important debate about multispecies co-creation in urban planning and thus challenges conventional human-centric approaches to placemaking.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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About the Author

Cecilie Sachs Olsen is a research fellow at the Norwegian Institute of Urban and Regional Research at Oslo Metropolitan University. Her work revolves around developing creative methods for urban research and exploring how artistic practice can be used to analyse and re-imagine urban planning, space, and politics. Cecilie has led a series of urban research and art projects around Europe in the last decade.