DESIGNING INCLUSIVE URBAN METAVERSES

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DesignLibrary Kaunas

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INTRO

The cycle of encounters "Inclusive Urban Metaverses" is organised within the T-Factor project as **AN ACTIVITY OF THE TRANSFORMATION LAB "CITIZEN-LED SMARTNESS"** in the pilot city of Kaunas (Lithuania).
Rooting its action in urban regeneration pilots across Europe, T-Factor develops new knowledge, tools and approaches to **TEMPORARY URBANISM THAT CAN CONTRIBUTE TO INCLUSIVE AND THRIVING FUTURES IN CITIES.** The "Citizen-led smartness" T-Lab is led by Futuribile. Kaunas Technology University (KTU) and Design Library are the main Lithuanian partners involved in the cycle.

Our work is part of the urban regeneration process of the AIIP area in Kaunas. This **FORMER MILITARY HELICOPTER FACTORY SITE WILL BECOME AN INNOVATION PARK.** In the regeneration process, we are challenged with **TRANSITIONING** the area's identity **FROM A SOVIET MILITARY CONNOTATION TO AN "INNOVATION SANDBOX"** while activating participatory processes that allow citizens to appropriate and transform the site's legacy, identity and physical space. Since **THE AREA PRESENTS A VARIETY OF LEGAL AND INFRASTRUCTURAL CONSTRAINTS** for exercising established temporary urbanism tactics, **WE LOOKED INTO DIGITAL PLACEMAKING** (utilising digital technology to foster deeper relationships between people and places) as means to provide a viable meanwhile strategy for engagement and sensemaking.

T-LAB

The T-Lab aim in Kaunas became to **EXPLORE HOW THE COLLECTIVE AND INCLUSIVE ELABORATION OF NOVEL DIGITAL TERRITORIES** twinning urban regeneration areas can support placemaking. In the "meanwhile" time towards the masterplan implementation, the AIIP digital model becomes an extension of the city, a land of opportunities playing the role of a "digital social innovation sandbox". Indeed, its collaborative definition federates citizens around concrete needs and expectations that are hard to address in the physical world for infrastructural or cultural reasons, supporting community building, giving a novel identity to the place and cascading into traditional or digital community projects.

THE CYCLE IS INSCRIBED IN THE EMERGING FIELD OF URBAN METAVERSES. It involved international and local experts as well as local communities and stakeholders in defining the theoretical and design framework of an urban metaverse oriented towards social justice. This line of work was crossed with **A PARTICIPATORY PROCESS ENGAGING LOCAL COMMUNITIES OF CITIZENS TO BUILD THE CONCEPT FOR CONCRETE METAVERSE USE CASES.**

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WEL COME

THIS MANIFESTO is the first step of **AN INTERDISCIPLINARY, COLLECTIVE REFLECTION ON URBAN AND CIVIC APPLICATIONS OF "METAVERSE" PLATFORMS.** We are a diverse group of practitioners, researchers and citizens from different backgrounds. We aim to deliver the first design guidelines for inclusive urban metaverses, by working on the (so far) fictional case study of building a civic metaverse in Kaunas (Lithuania) that mirrors the urban regeneration area of Aleksotas Innovation Industry Park (KAIIP). By investigating the requirements of an inclusive urban metaverse in Kaunas, we want to highlight the challenges of deploying Extended Reality (XR) in cities through the lens of social justice. The Kaunas metaverse is an experiment in collective imaginaries through which we hope to inspire other cities to to conceptualise their digital territories as enhancers of inclusiveness and avoid technosolutionist approaches.

A "metaverse" is **A FULLY VIRTUAL OR HYBRID ENVIRONMENT** (this is why we use the term "Extended Reality", encompassing both) that relies on a combination of technologies (Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, Blockchain, Artificial Intelligence). "Metaverse" territories are still in their infancy and concentrated in the entertainment and real estate industries. **THE ENABLING TECHNOLOGIES ARE R&D PRIORITY AT THE MOMENT:**

as a matter of fact, running the metaverse race is an investment on future commercial opportunities in endless application fields, included the urban context.

We observe the growth of "metaverse" platforms, and especially how, in the public debate, they are depicted as the future of social interactions and as a novel form of everyday reality for our societies. Putting things into historical perspective, the metaverse appears as one of the newest in a long list of technosocial systems being attributed a salvic role.

Although the metaverse is often coupled with Web 3.0 and its decentralised paradigms for organisation and remuneration, the most popular use cases follow the extractive models that so far led digital technologies to exacerbate inequalities and social fragmentation. This can be observed at different levels: the operating systems (owned by big tech players like Meta, Epic Games, Microsoft, Niantic, Roblox); the financial models (real estate and art speculation, Ponzi schemes); the economic accessibility (the need to own expensive hardware - headsets or computing power - to join) the ergonomic accessibility (with ableism shaping all the interfaces) and the digital accessibility (enjoying a full and aware experience requires a high degree of digital literacy and skills).

BUILDING A CULTURE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE ACROSS DIGITAL TERRITORIES

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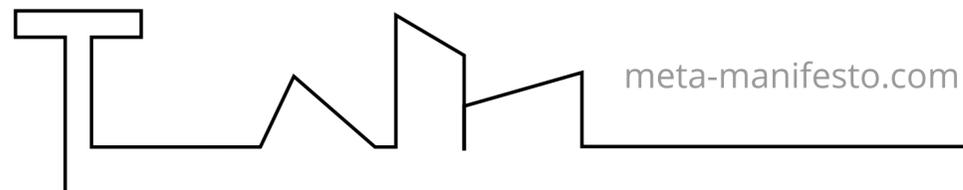
Moreover, **THE MENTAL MODELS OF THE METAVERSE REITERATE THOSE OF BIG TECH AND THEIR SOCIAL EXTERNALITIES:** the financialisation of every walk of life (associating identities and tokens, forcing in-platform shopping to enjoy a full experience); the top-down design, in the hands of a not-very-diverse elite of experts (underserving women, queer individuals and POC, generating sexual abuse and ignoring how to protect minors in virtual environments) and anthropocentrism (environmental concerns have not yet reached these platforms relying on high computing power, new hardware and fast networks). Needless to say, despite this evidence, the hype for the metaverse will only grow, as it happened in the past for other innovations. **THIS IS PART OF HOW OUR GLOBAL ECONOMIC SYSTEM AND SOCIETY WORK.**

We believe that **A HEALTHY SOCIETY IS FUELLED BY INFORMED DEBATE,** and is capable of **NOURISHING COLLECTIVE IMAGINARIES WITHOUT DIGRESSING INTO DYSTOPIA.** It is likely public institutions will look into the metaverse in the coming years as a tool to innovate their functioning, exactly as they have been looking into the digitalisation of public services for some years now. In the vast realm of the public sphere, we focus our interest on the urban space and consider translating its materiality into the virtual space as an ideal ground for debating social justice for our future society.

As cities across the world prepare for the next step of the "smart city" and look into Extended Reality (XR) as a means to provide services to citizens and optimise the city, our ambition is to provide the first set of basic guidelines to orient the Extended City towards social justice.

DRIVING VALUES

FEMINISM digital territories should welcome a plurality of voices and acknowledge differences in identity, background, race, and socioeconomic position

ACCESSIBILITY digital territories should be understandable and usable by the largest amount of citizens

SAFETY by DESIGN the handling of digital identities and the interactions in XR should respect privacy and avoid abuse

COMMUNITY WELLBEING platforms should serve community goals in their governance, values and use

INDIVIDUAL EMPOWERMENT the sense of agency and entitlement of users must be made possible with explainability and transparency, joint with possibilities for creativity and expression

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FROM THE SMART TO THE EXTENDED CITY

What would you do if you had a potentially infinite space in your city to dispose of as you wish, with no physical and infrastructural constraints to follow? It may seem a fictional question, but as the technology bundle labelled as "metaverse" develops, it is a question urban planners will ask themselves more and more.

To answer it in the public interest, they will have to privilege best practices from urban regeneration over ones coming from technosolutionism (the idea that technology is a bulletproof infrastructure for solutions that can be applied successfully to any complex problems).
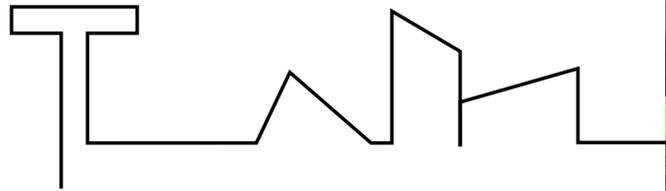
WE ARE ON THE VERGE OF A **NEW WAVE OF AUGMENTING CITIES WITH TECHNOLOGY, A NOVEL FORM OF URBAN SOLUTIONISM.** SO FAR, THE "SMART CITY" VALUE PROPOSITION WAS THE OPTIMISATION OF THE EXISTENT VIA BIG DATA, OFTEN VIA A QUESTIONABLE MASS SURVEILLANCE APPARATUS.

THE FORTHCOMING **"EXTENDED CITY" DEMATERIALISES EXISTING FUNCTIONS AND EXTENDS THE AVAILABLE LAND** (AND THE EXPERIENCES POSSIBLE WITHIN)
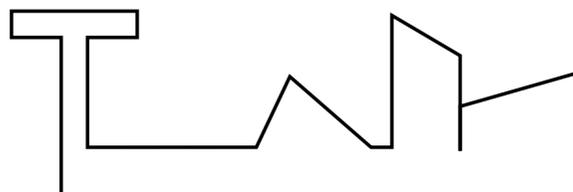
LIBERLAND

The investments in real estate, Liberland's plans to become a digital nation to the crypto crowd, the rainbow capitalism of Meta Pride: these "early signs" of urban metaverses play an explicit economic function, creating new marketplaces and marketing channels. Another model that can be observed in these early experiments is establishing them as enhanced replicas of existing or soon-to-be cities.
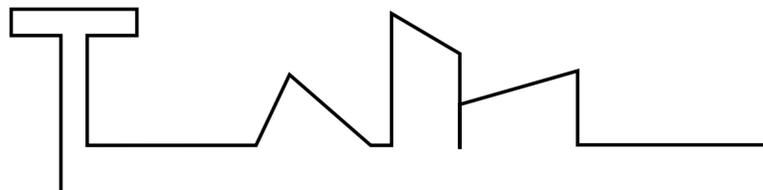
NEOM

The mega city project in Saudia Arabia will have a digital twin in the metaverse where future inhabitants can preview and "live" the city ahead of its physical implementation. The platform, XVRS, will enable mixed reality and a digital marketplace.

SEOUL

In 2022 the municipality launched its metaverse version in beta to more than 3,000 residents, who can use avatars to explore a virtual Seoul City Hall and play games in Seoul Plaza. Plans for the longer term focus on dematerialising city services.

RE

Metaverse real estate functions precisely as the traditional one: for instance, value increases in the proximity of the centre or other attractions. The platform The Sandbox currently dominates the scene, owning approximately 62% of the entire market.

META PRIDE

The LGBTQ+ iconic street march has seen its first metaverse edition in 2022, with the MetaPride on Decentraland platform sponsored by Mastercard. Entertainment events were organised around a digital Pride Plaza.
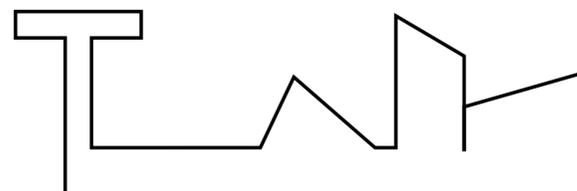
URBAN USES

The investments in real estate, Liberland's plans to become a digital nation to the crypto crowd, the rainbow capitalism of Meta Pride: these "early signs" of urban metaverses play an explicit economic function, creating new marketplaces and marketing channels. Another model that can be observed in these early experiments is establishing them as plain replicas of existing or soon-to-be cities (Seoul, NEOM). Hence, despite the enormous anticipatory and fictional potential that metaverse technology can provide, **THEIR USE IN URBAN CONTEXTS FOR THE MOMENT IS VERY MODEST WHEN IT COMES TO IMAGINATION.**

If urban metaverses must be - and they will be, considering the investments behind the technology infrastructure: why not use them as a way to rethink what's missing in our cities and provide a space for collective experimentation? **SIMILARLY TO URBAN REGENERATION AREAS, THE METAVERSE PROVIDES AN UNDER-UTILISED LAND FOR CITY-MAKING AND URBAN USES;** likewise, without an inclusive approach to the context and the involvement of citizens, building these extensions of the city can quickly slip into gentrification and injustice.
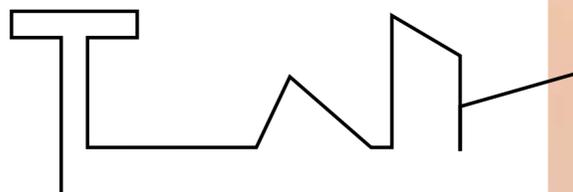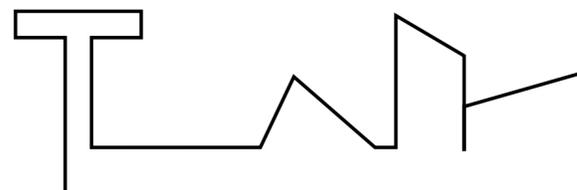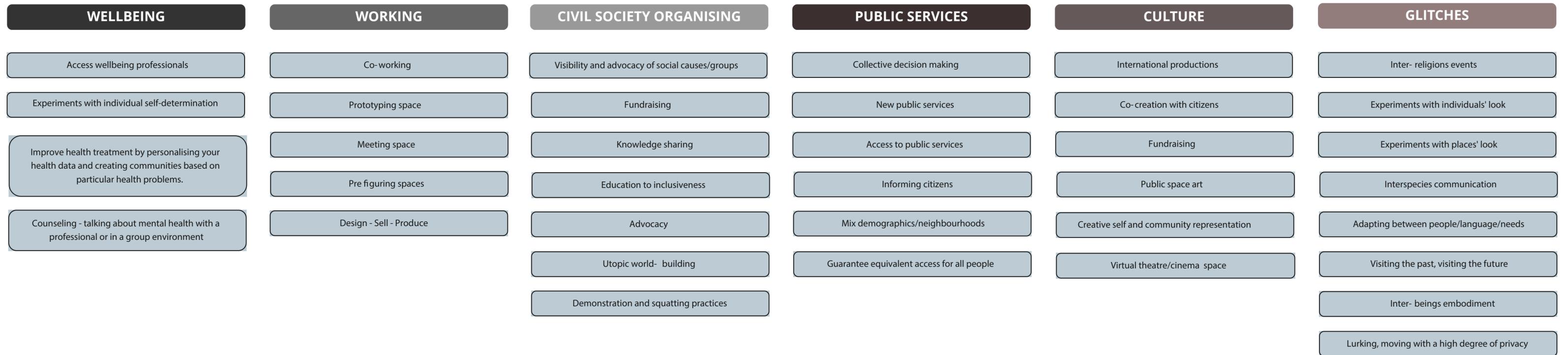
In the following pages

WE PRESENT POSSIBLE FUNCTIONALITIES OF THE EXTENDED CITY, DESIGN PRINCIPLES THAT WOULD INCREASE ITS INCLUSIVENESS, AND AN EXAMPLE OF A DISTRICT CO-DESIGNED WITH CITIZENS.

SECTORS AND SERVICES

WELLBEING	WORKING	CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISING	PUBLIC SERVICES	CULTURE	GLITCHES
Access wellbeing professionals	Co-working	Visibility and advocacy of social causes/groups	Collective decision making	International productions	Inter- religions events
Experiments with individual self-determination	Prototyping space	Fundraising	New public services	Co-creation with citizens	Experiments with individuals' look
Improve health treatment by personalising your health data and creating communities based on particular health problems.	Meeting space	Knowledge sharing	Access to public services	Fundraising	Experiments with places' look
Counseling - talking about mental health with a professional or in a group environment	Pre figuring spaces	Education to inclusiveness	Informing citizens	Public space art	Interspecies communication
	Design - Sell - Produce	Advocacy	Mix demographics/neighbourhoods	Creative self and community representation	Adapting between people/language/needs
		Utopic world- building	Guarantee equivalent access for all people	Virtual theatre/cinema space	Visiting the past, visiting the future
		Demonstration and squatting practices			Inter- beings embodiment
					Lurking, moving with a high degree of privacy

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

1) Dis-Accessibility

2) Cybersecurity

3) One-sense-per-time

4) Social serendipity
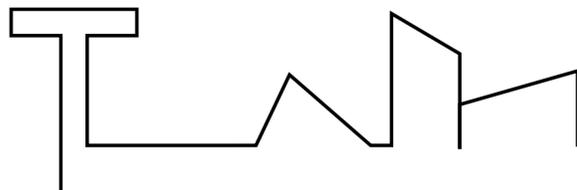
5) Environmental frugality

6) Finitude/Infinity ethics

7) Reflexivity

8) Antagonism and transformation spaces

9) Multi-idioms society

10) Interoperability of virtual and real worlds

DIS-ACCESSIBILITY

Description
An urban metaverse takes it as essential to facilitate the connecting of people to what they want to do. It adapts to individuals' characteristics and makes the notion of disability pointless, instead of blaming them for their differences.

Why it matters
The physical world is dominated by ableism and most infrastructures can't adapt to the needs of all people.
It is thought to be too expensive and complex to do this IRL. An urban metaverse can bring more people together by providing endless adaptations.

CYBERSECURITY

Description
Personal data should be private and anonymised to prevent abuse, unauthorised commercial exploitation and discrimination.

Why it matters
Immersive environments can collect a new array of personal data (face and eye movement, neurological activity...) for which regulation and ethics are still in their infancy.

ONE-SENSE-PER-TIME

Description
Living in a hyperconnected exhistance doesn't mean stressing our bodies out of their natural capabilities. Technologies should be integrated with reciprocal respect for both the limitations they are carrying along with. Once sense per time, as apps on our digital devices, should be involved. Not more.

Why it matters
A long lasting relationship with these technologies requires a sustainable, healty, approach, first of all.

SOCIAL SERENDIPITY

Description
The possibility to reshuffle and mixdifferent demographics/social groups in a safe way is part of the design of the system. This could be allowed for instance by spending one day in the shoes of a person with a particular disease, or sharing time with people from a different neighbourhood.

Why it matters
It would be a built- in system against society's fragmentation: being exposed to some healthy degree of serendipity in a safe environment.

ENVIRONMENTAL FRUGALITY

Description
Virtual worlds have a strong environmental impact. Skip accessorial, unnecessary and ultra decorative employments of metaverse to focus on use cases with a promising impact in the real world.

Why it matters
Just because a media exists it does not mean it has to be used at all costs for whatever reasons and whimsical scopes (see oil, water and quinoa). Everything should be created in the metaverse with a perspective of sustainability and circularity: how does data decompose?

FINITUDE / INFINITY ETHICS

Description
Put in place decision-making mechanisms to square the difference between thefinitude of the real urban environment (for example resources, or human mortality) with the endlessness of the metaverse.

Why it matters
Endlessness and timeless of the virtual world has to be tempered in terms of boundaries toward social responsibility and environmental sustainability.

REFLEXIVITY

Description
Utilise reflexive design to continuously gather and take into consideration feedback from people with diverse backgrounds when developing/enhancing the virtual environment.

Why it matters
It is hard to anticipate the needs of different people to make the environment more inclusive and accessible. Hence, leaving space for improvements over period of time and not having a 'set in stone' virtual space is important.

ANTAGONISM AND TRANSFORMATION SPACES

Description
Allow the possibility to express antagonism against the system. Squatting, demonstrations or temporary occupations should remain a spontaneous, sudden, free, accessible practices for all.

Why it matters
Antagonism and spontaneity are engine for political and creative production that must persist in a virtual urban environment.

MULTI-IDI0MS SOCIETY

Description
Affirm and favor a multi and pluri-language* society.
Multi: a place where people speak many languages
Pluri: a person who speaks more that one language.
Preserving endangered languages on the metaverse and consider every single systems of writing as a priority to be enabled in the systems. For instance implement the Baybain or Ge'ez alphabet, although not considered (by who?) dominant language.

Why it matters
"One language to rule them all"'s time is over. Intregrates different languages + systems of writings + sign language indicates a positive process of communication systems's equality normalization.

ENTEROPERABILITY OF VIRTUAL AND REAL WORLDS

Description
A user friendly scheme and tools to 'land' the digital experiences, initiatives, prototypes, ideas into RL or vice- versa, addressing RL challenges in the metaverse. It includes tools for measuring the impact and ensure the legacy of the projects in the RL.

Why it matters
The ultimate goal of an urban metaverse should be to impact the real world.
To achieve this, we need tools understandable to all that enable the transition from virtual to digital and viceversa. Also, it is important to have tools to measure the real impact and collect evidences.
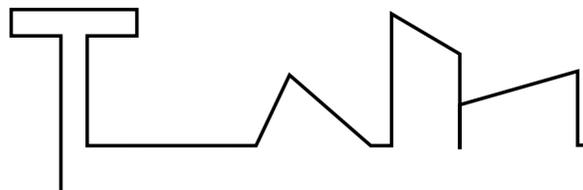
CASE
STUDY

CO-DESIGN OF THE DISTRICT OF ECOLOGY AND CARE.

In November 2022 a group of Lithuanian citizens and health practitioners gathered in Kaunas to co-design AIIP metaverse as a "District of Ecology and Care". To our knowledge, our cycle of events the first ever metaverse co-design activity.
These are the needs and interests that emerged in terms of what can be done in the area, what does it look like, and how the individual and the community come together.
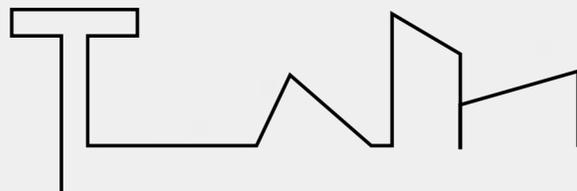
COMMUNITY SPACE

Thematic and community spaces for gathering shamelessly with people who wouldn't normally share about their disease in real life

Share knowledge among peers facing similar health problems

Declare your visit motivation as you enter so you can get needed support or services or be matched with relevant people

MARKETPLACE

Marketplace for real life experiences and services

Buy niche/rare treatments that you can't find in Lithuania but are in use elsewhere

HIGHLY CUSTOMISED CARE

Re-designing treatment into personalised and customisable care journey

Obtain quick test results and individual recommendations

Visualise the whole body interconnectedness

Check-in easily your current health/wellbeing status

A place to speed up care with a holistic approach before disease complications evolve

Access remote support by experts from all over the world

HEALING EXPERIENCES

Fighting your fears, dealing with traumas

Crossing the boundaries of time

Experience your old age differently - when the body is powerless, the imagination is still alive

Improve anxiety and emotional control

Play a game collectively to solve a real clinic case

Quest - taking care journey

Access art and design for therapy

WHAT

AGENCY

Having a choice: to be connected or not, to be observed or not, to be read or not

It is possible to connect even if you have what is considered a disability (eg blindness)

Possibility to leave anytime

KNOWLEDGE

Access knowledge, practices, healing tools and specialists

Trusted and easy information source

Easy orientation in information

All previous health records in one place

Thorough data analysis

A DISTRICT FEEDING BACK INTO REAL LIFE

Evoking a memory/a problem in metaverse, dealing with it in real life (psychology)

Organise community real life retreat in the surroundings of Kaunas

~~It links back to real life by policies (eg. speeding~~ up the adoption of an effective therapy in the Country)

Receiving a challenge in metaverse and then acting on it in real life in Kaunas
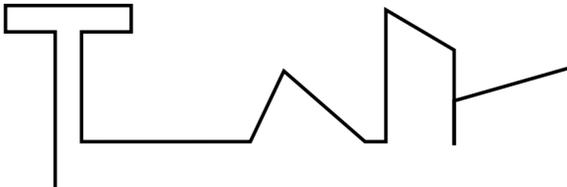
WHAT

LOOK

Space resembles reality

Dreamy - filters the real life situations in a simulation

Not too immersive, because it will become an addiction

You should be able to personalize it

NOT a social media, no ads

Inspiring scenes: dreams, fantasies, trips

Information are visual, not written in text

FEEL

Safe to declare emotion

Empathy

Experience rooms

6 senses

Comfortable space

Environment where you feel loved
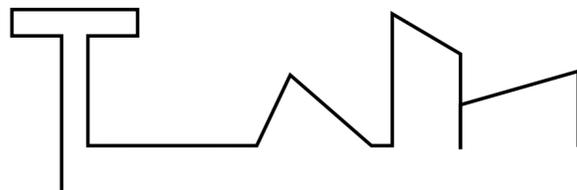
Shameless reinventing of yourself

Non aggressive, non invasive

Rhythmic

Governed by principles of cosmic nature

Clear, strong feelings

Real sensations

LOOK+FEEL

Avatar - my health persona

Avatar conceals your disease, contact barrier

Change the avatar appearance according to body measurements/emotions

Patient to patient communication

Knowledge exchange between people suffering from different levels of the same disease

Declare your emotions as a "status"

Communication subtitles - a way for people with different abilities to communicate

Validators of knowledge and experiences: a group of doctors for example

Use metaverse to gather people for real life practices

Everybody need to comply to ethical agreements and privacy regulation

You can decide to go anonymous

Ability to choose how much do others know about you

A technology that extends the subconscious, rather than our critical mind

Subconscious connections and communication: the collective unconscious brings a sense of community responsibility

Experience mutual breathing

You can easily access support to have a safe experience

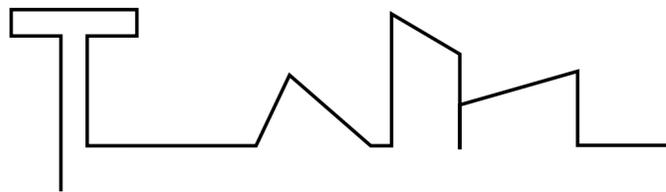Data from individual parameters measurement affects the overall harmony
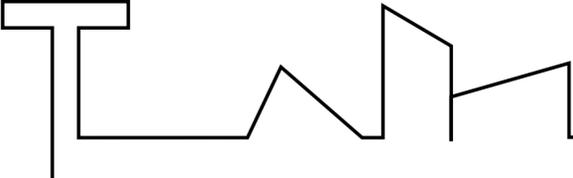
SELF+COMMUNITY

SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE CYCLE

LOCAL

The cycle of events allowed the local coalition to interact with previously unknown local stakeholders.
In particular, the topic of building a metaverse for care spurred the interest of several professionals and agencies.

1

EPILEPSYALIENS.COM

Epilepsy Alien is a foundation which represents people affected by epilepsy and their entourage that seeks to improve the way epilepsy is treated in Lithuania. Indeed, **it stands for a holistic approach** that includes not only drugs but also means such as nutrition, fitness, forest therapy, breathing exercises, and psychological support.

For them, the added value of a metaverse district of ecology and care relies upon:

- Accessing immersive therapy in a safe context

- Hold realistic remote consultations with foreign experts

- Having a marketplace to access drugs that are praxis elsewhere but still not diffused in Lithuania

- Build local community

- Learn from peers

- Spread a multi-therapy custom approach culture to treatments

- Access a network of therapists and case studies from abroad
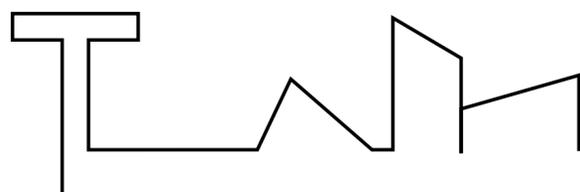
A cycle of encounters in the three main cities of Lithuania, **Kaunas, Vilnius and Klaipeda** is following up to the District of Care gathering.
The first already occurred on January 28, 2023, in Kaunas.

Title: **"share YOUR epilepsy"**
https://www.facebook.com/events/686652396280317
Guest speaker: **PhD Daniel Ehrens,
Stanford University School of Medicine**

The other two meetings are planned to be organized by the end of the season.

Secondly, after the District of Care meeting, Epilepsy Aliens got access to an international network of professionals to support services to patients who need access to alternative treatments compared to those locally available, which are mostly focused on allopathic pharmacotherapy.

Partner: **Helvethica, pour l'avenir**
helvethica.ch
Dr. Werner Nussbaumer
Media: GDrive

external links:
www.rsi.ch/news/ticino-e-grigioni-e-insubria/Unassociazione-di-medici-dissidenti-15867034.html
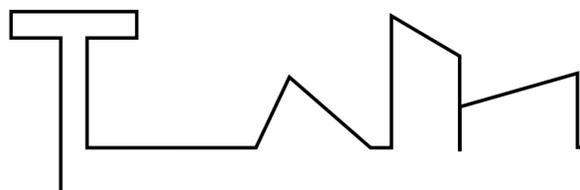
2

Among the participants of the District of Ecology and Care evening was also the Project Manager of Hope for Football, an NGO active in the Kaunas area for about ten years in support of children from needy families, orphans or refugees between Italy and Lithuania. Its goal is to help children living in orphanages and those experiencing health or family difficulties using sports activities, trainings and international exchanges to prevent unhealthy lifestyles, form wellbeing habits and train teamwork.

HOPEFORFOOTBALL.ORG
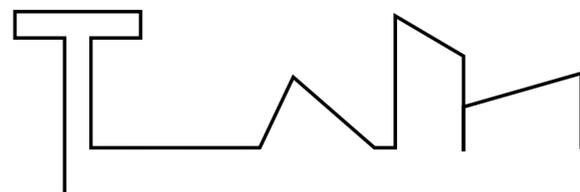
Fabio Colucci had heard of the activity about the metaverse district when he arrived from Italy as the new Project Manager of Hope for Football. He lives in Aleksotas, not far from the Kaunas Pilot area. He attended in his process of mapping all the local realities active in the area that could be interesting for partnerships and development.

The result was a collaboration to support the organization of a charity dinner a month after the workshop, together with the local International Red Cross office, to raise funds. Part of the proceeds from the dinner was donated to Hope for Football thanks to the participation of "Casa della Pasta", a chain of Italian restaurants spread across the three main cities of Lithuania.
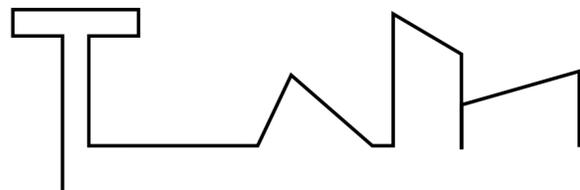
charity dinner interview from participants, here:
https://www.instagram.com/p/CmeTEzaNoKt/

links and contacts:

Fabio Colucci
linkedin.com/in/fabiocolucci

Lietuvos Raudonojo Kryžiaus Kauno centras
www.facebook.com/redcrosskaunas

Casa della Pasta
www.casadellapasta.lt

3

Performative Design Agency

Performative design is a hybrid field, operating with a set of socially oriented applied methodologies from various design and performative arts practices.
PDA is developing this approach since 2014 through a series of collaborative events and actions, stressing out the importance of participation of various knowledge groups and experts in the process of the creation/co creation, which is crucial for data generation, co-constructing and distributing meanings, stories, values between the collaborators' network.

PERFORMATIVEDESIGNAGENCY.COM
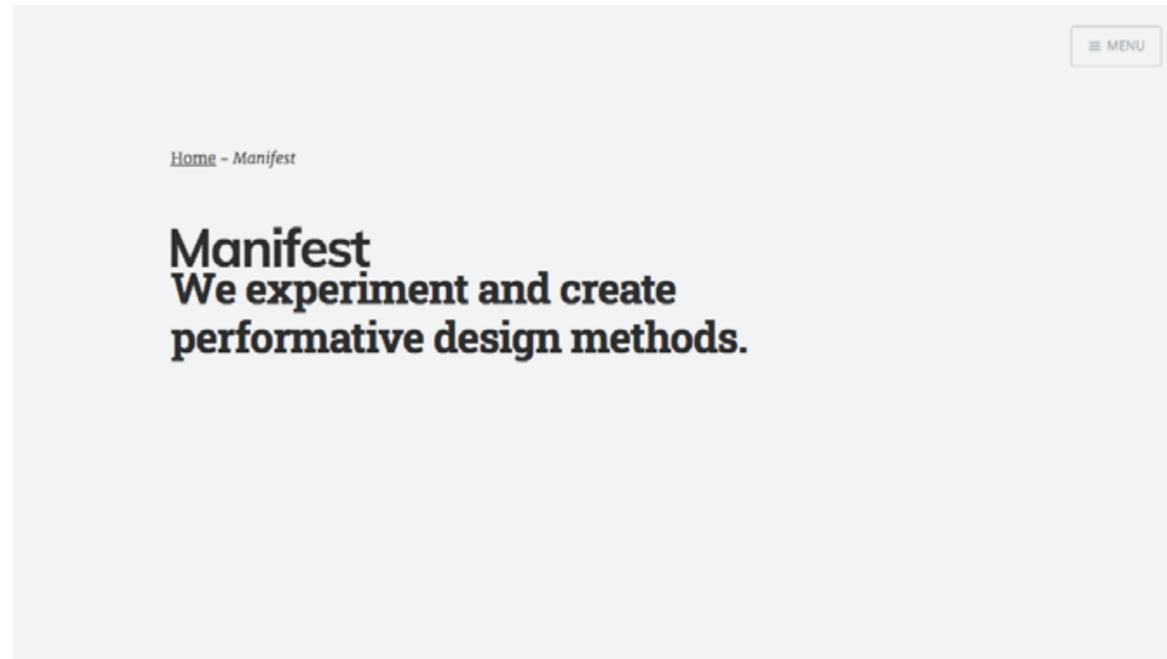
The workshop was attended by representatives of the consultancy agency who became aware of the T-Lab3 workshop cycle. They initially participated in the "Distric of Pride" as observers and then organized a group of five professionals who took part in the thematic tables at the following "District of Eco&Care".

PhD Silvia Gramegna from Politecnico of Milan were participating too, as guest speaker.
She is a designer, member of Lab.I.R.Int. - Laboratory of Innovation and Research on Interiors.
Her research work addresses issues that explore the strong anthropological value of Design.
In particular, her research topics encompass the development of therapeutic environments for elderly with dementia, within the context of GRACE_Lab, an experimental interdisciplinary laboratory.

After the workshop two applications were submitted at the Lithuanian Cultural Council (Lietuvos Kultūros Taryba), with the aim of opening a collaboration on the theme "Future of care".

links and contacts:

Silvia Gramegna
https://dipartimentodesign.polimi.it/it/staff/show/262759

Lietuvos Kultūros Taryba
https://www.ltkt.lt/en

Home – Manifest

Manifest
We experiment and create
performative design methods.

≡ MENU

K LITHUANIAN
COUNCIL FOR
CULTURE

CONCLUSIONS

EXTENDING THE RIGHT TO THE CITY

The cycle of encounters "Inclusive Urban Metaverses" was the first ever occasion where the topic of the metaverse was approached under a social justice lens, in the framework of an urban regeneration project. It emerged how digital land could be a space to extend the right to the city and not just a digital twin for top-down modelling.

The activities with citizens showed how the AIIP metaverse could act as an accelerator of social and cultural change. This anticipatory space could embody solutions that individuals seek but that are hard to materialise collectively for historical and cultural reasons. For instance, in the case study of Kaunas, there is a demand from individuals affected by specific diseases for holistic care. Still, this approach struggles to emerge in local medical culture.

Having a place for community building and experimentation around immersive non-traditional care journeys would support sufferers, connect them with practices and practitioners that are well established elsewhere and innovate the health offering in the city.
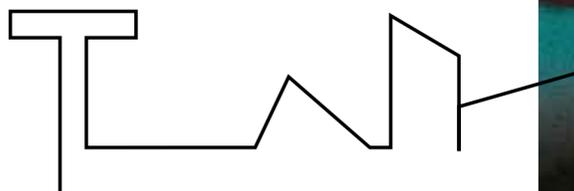
THE PARTICIPATORY ELABORATION OF A METAVERSE LAYER IN URBAN REGENERATION PROCESSES CAN ADD VALUE AS FOLLOWS:

Free the imagination of participants to think of outcomes that are considered inconceivable within built-world constraints.

Federate community around what is considered a safe space, a neutral area to start dialogues that it would be hard to put in place in the building of a project with more constraints.

Create an extra layer of identity and meaning for the urban regeneration area.

Provide inputs for other "traditional" activities via the ideation and community-building process.

Develop a community-based use case that can be proposed to metaverse developers when times are mature: the more the use cases that are based on real needs and expectations, the less urban metaverses will slip into dystopia.

OUR EARLY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ANY STAKEHOLDERS INTERESTED IN DEPLOYING URBAN METAVERSES WITH THE COMPASS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

Build a feedback loop with reality: creating an escapist parallel world has little social impact and will only deepen social fractures. Consider the platform a place to speed up change and prototype a different kind of social aggregation, knowledge sharing and capacity building that can impact existing initiatives, for instance, via community building, fundraising, new policy topics.

Learn the lessons **from urban regeneration best practices,** including: understanding the perspective and expectations of the stakeholders involved, detecting real-world problems, having an inclusive approach, focusing on capacity-building.

Think in terms of extending the right to the city: consider which social groups struggle to exert fundamental rights in the city and how their needs could be supported with less initial friction in this new environment.

Centre problems that are hard to solve in the physical world: by detecting pain points of citizens, it is possible to federate a motivated community of co-designers and participants.

Refrain from falling into the imaginary crisis: think of how you can extend possibilities instead of simply reproducing digitally the existent city. This also includes having a critical view of technology and making sure that the means are adapted to the purpose.

Set strong social requirements for technology: ensure that privacy, trust and safety are inherent in the platform.

Overcome ableism and linguistic barriers: in virtue of its simulation potential, the metaverse can make accessible to everybody experiences that are not in the built world.
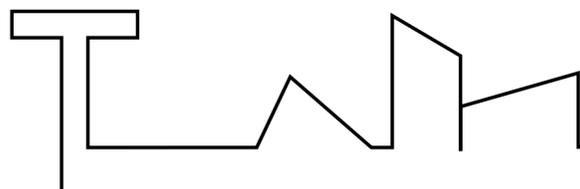
CLOSING REMARKS

ENCOUNTERS COMPOSING THE CYCLE

OCT 27 2022

Designing inclusive urban metaverses
online workshop with Aira Paliukėnaitė, Charlotte Webb, Eglė Karalytė, Eimutis Mikaila, Elena Isayev, Hillary Carey, Louisa Minkin, Kristina Ancutienė, Jūratė Tutlytė, Ieva Gražytė, Nura Tafeche, Rūta Valušytė, Mick Finch, Vytautas Mikaila.
Marta Arniani [moderator], Lorenzo Piazzi [moderator]

NOV 10 2022

Memories of places never seen visited and people never met.
Design Thursdays' Talk in Kaunas
Presentations from:
Elena Isayev (University of Essex), Marta Arniani (Futuribile),
Igor Galligo (University of Berkley)

NOV 17 2022

The District of Pride
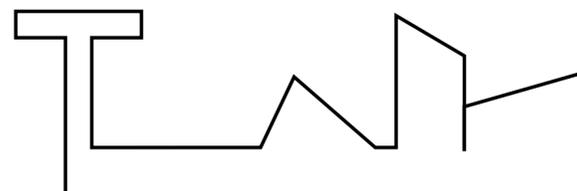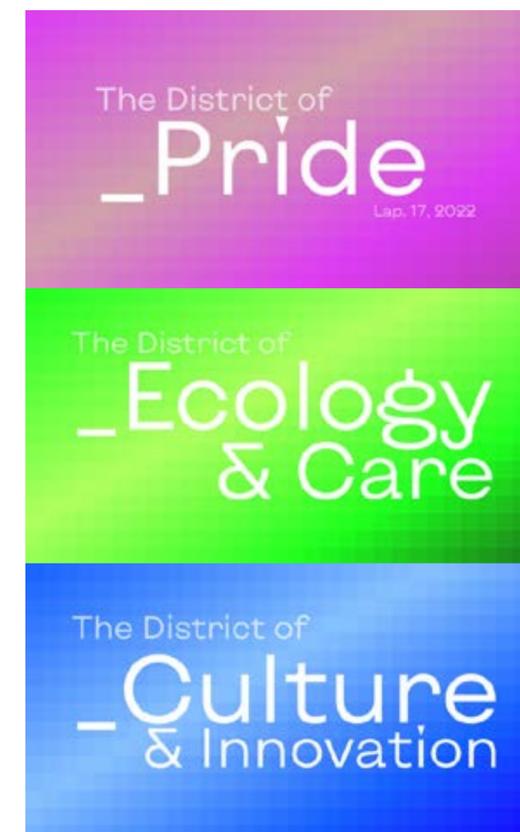co-design workshop - *Kaunas*

NOV 24 2022

The District of Ecology & Care
co-design workshop - *Kaunas*

DEC 06 2022

The District of Culture & Innovation
co-design workshop - *Vilnius*

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The lead curator of the cycle is **Marta Arniani (Futuribile),** with the precious collaboration of **Lorenzo Piazzi (Design Library) .**

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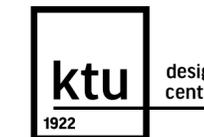
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meta-manifesto.com
t-factor.eu
futuribile.org
designlibrary.it

Cover picture: digital model of the AIIP area created with Grasshopper sofware. The picture portraits a pro-Ukraine artwork realised in 2022 on the perimeter walls.

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