

## Places that \_\_\_\_\_.

---

*Placemaking as a tool for participation in public space.*

The workshop *Platser som \_\_\_\_\_* / *Places that \_\_\_\_\_* is situated in a framework of a larger project which is a collaboration project between Mattias Gunnarsson and Anna Hydén (HDK), Harens Universitet och Trollhättans Konsthall. The project was initiated and started in September 2017 and will run thru 2018 (and hopefully longer) with a home base / project space at Trollhättans Konsthall.

*Places that \_\_\_\_\_* will focus on young peoples thoughts on public space and thru different workshops together with classes in schools, visitors to Trollhättans Konsthall, other museums and libraries we will explore different ways of verbalizing the relation to the public realm. The voices of the young generation is crucial in the planning, making and building of our public spaces and the project aim to practice the voices of that group.

[www.placesthat.se](http://www.placesthat.se)

On November 22nd 2017 between 13.00 - 17.00 at the Gothenburg Design Festival / Open week at HDK Anna and Mattias ran the first workshop within this new project. It was a drawing, mapping, writing and collaborative publishing workshop in which participants worked with thoughts on public space and place thru drawing maps, images, words and collage.

We had invited 30 students from Schillerska Gymnasiet who participated together with some students from Design at HDK.

We started with a rather strict setup with two large tables seating 20 participants each. Everybody got A3 drawing paper and two different black markers.

The first task was to draw the way from home to school (or work if you were a teacher) from memory (phones with google-maps were kindly asked to be put away).

After 10 minutes of drawing a list of 30 questions was distributed that the participants could use as they saw fit. Questions like: (along your trip) Is there a place that is extra good, romantic, shitty, or if you were a secret agent and had to hide where would it be etc

This added new type of information to the maps.

After 45 minutes the maps were collected, scanned, set in InDesign and printed.

Next task for the participants was to pair up with the person across the table and get

seated back to back and explain the way to school while the other person drew what he or she heard.

Each pair got 40 minutes with 20 min for each teller / drawer.

The maps were collected, scanned and set in InDesign on site with the computer desktop projected so everyone could see what was being done, and then printed on yellow and pink coloured paper.

Every participant got a publication with all the maps from each session collected in a folder to bring home.

Overall the students from both Schillerska and HDK were engaged in both the drawing and the discussions together on the city space they travel thru. The printing process was a bit too slow so there was a bit of waiting.

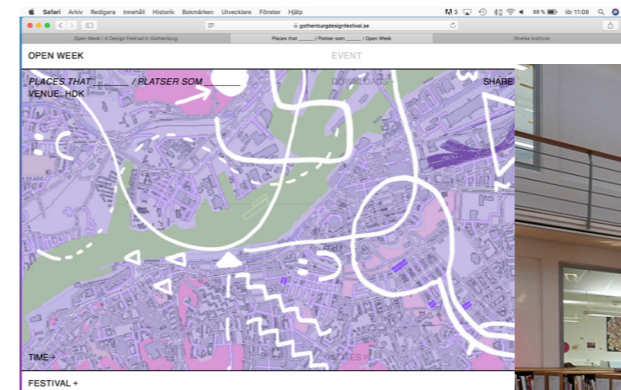
So what happend?

It is a bit difficult to measure things from a workshop like this, since this was a one-off workshop with a group of participants we will not meet again. We use observations on site and thru looking at the material produced.

The actual site of the workshop (HDK Aula/Library) most likely plays a role, especially for the students from Schillerska Gymnasiet who were both younger than other participants and on visit. One can assume that this was part of why the first half of the workshop was a bit hesitant.

The first part of the workshop, where the participants drew their own way to school was a bit quiet and tentative as everyone was doing the task but also decoding the whole situation. There was some tension.

When we added a paper with around 50 questions on place, public space and actions (both the more real ones like "How far is it?" and the more playful like "If you were a secret agent, where would you hide?") the atmosphere lightened and the maps got more intricate in detailing.





The second part of the workshop, where the participants told each other in pairs about the way to school and the other one drew offered a very different energy in the room. Everyone talked at the same time, volume raised, more laughter and the fear of not doing the task properly was gone.

The lower threshold of the second part of the workshop, where the interpretation was more open and there was a bit of a team-thing going seems at first more successful since there was a more joyful energy in the room, but at the same time there was a focus within the group in the first part that was real strong and from looking at the maps they produced there is a lot of thought put into them.

What we didn't have time for was a discussion about the workshop and its content, method and the participants' findings. This could have added another interesting layer of thoughts on public space, for all of us.

For us, this workshop was a first test-run for something that will grow into a larger project during 2018. It was in the context of Gothenburg design festival and OpenWeek / Night School where participants were offered a kind of Design Academy medley of methods, questions, lectures and discussions.

If we want to reach further and deeper in our discussions with teenagers about their relation to place and public space we will have to meet more than once, to have time to talk about what we do and let thoughts and questions formulate.

But as a dress rehearsal for us it work out as good as we could have hoped for.