

Informal Placemaking. Social Activism and Practices of Art and Culture

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Special Issue

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Informal placemaking practices are key in contributing to knowledge production and transfer in the urban environment. However, the recent acceleration of social activism in public urban settings joining forces with recent trends in contemporary art and cultural practices has not yet been spotlighted in this context. Through cultural and artistic practices in urban space, the sensual and cognitive experience of the environment generate new ways of identifying with urban settings and contributes to a common understanding of divergent identities and urban livability.

We understand 'informal placemaking' as a concept referring to the practices and strategies undertaken by citizen participation as well as by artists, activists, and designers. Informal placemaking is hereby defined as inclusive practices, based on citizen participation in placemaking. The practices of arts and design, have the ability to occupy these new developments. Cultural and social activism have severe impact on the sustainable implementation of social justice and mutual cultural understanding in urban environments. Despite the huge popularity of literature on the potential of art and the creative industries to positively transform cities, very little attention is directed towards the role of artistic and cultural practices in spatial planning and community development.

In this special issue, we want to develop and facilitate the discussions on the practices of 'informal placemaking'. Informal placemaking practices contribute to an attitude of sustainability of new urban concepts, as well as to sociable and collective practices of sharing. Here we would like to suggest the significance of the term and the practices related to 'informal placemaking' through which social, cultural, or ethnic groups shape their environment and landscape, in direct and subtle ways. The practices of informal placemaking include DIY practices and interventions. However, we would also target the relevance and significance of the practices that are defined as neither DIY practices, nor interventions, and emerge from daily life. We want to maintain a comparative perspective by case studies from various cities, emphasizing the significance of informal practices of placemaking for lively urban environments.

Such practices might include but are not limited to:

- Urban narrative production and informal placemaking: Practices that produce place-based narratives, challenging norms, disentangling, and inspiring new cultural narratives.
- Practices (of social change) through art and design that contribute to spatial planning, improve community development, interaction, exchange and enhance collective practices channeling work in communities to inspire social change through art and design.
- Informal placemaking and collectivity: Practices of informal placemaking through collective actions around food, sports, festivals, community projects, material culture, objects, and spaces of memory.
- Informal placemaking and placetaking: Practices of activism and social movements that reveal new claims on urban space, such as heritage and memorial activism.
- Informal placemaking and collective intelligence: Practices on how individuals integrate information provided by others shaping the community; how to integrate conflicting personal and social information; how knowledge transfer between different social communities joins forces with the “wisdom of the crowd”-approach to cultural and artistic practices.
- Informal placemaking and digital technologies: Emerging benefits and challenges of digital technologies in terms of a sustainable participation of citizens in spatial planning, place narrating, production of knowledge on urban space, dissemination of citizen’s knowledge on urban space.

Authors interested on submitting a paper for this issue are asked to submit an abstract (of max. 250 words) and a title to guest editors.

The papers should be submitted at: <https://bit.ly/38QSQLy>

Submission of Abstracts: 30 May 2022

Submission of Full Papers: 30 Jan 2023

Reference:

CFP: Informal Placemaking. Social Activism and Practices of Art and Culture. In: ArtHist.net, Apr 23, 2022 (accessed Apr 15, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/36490>>.