

# Relational States of Dalston Research Project

## Principle Researchers

Carsten Jungfer, Senior Lecturer, SFHEA, unit A tutor  
Fernanda Palmieri, Hourly Paid Lecturer, unit A tutor

## Students working as Co-Researchers

Angelle Dimech  
Dalcimaira Nunes Cardoso  
Julia Skiba  
Kiesse Andre  
Marianne Gallagher  
Nelton Bordonhos Barbosa  
Nisha Anwar

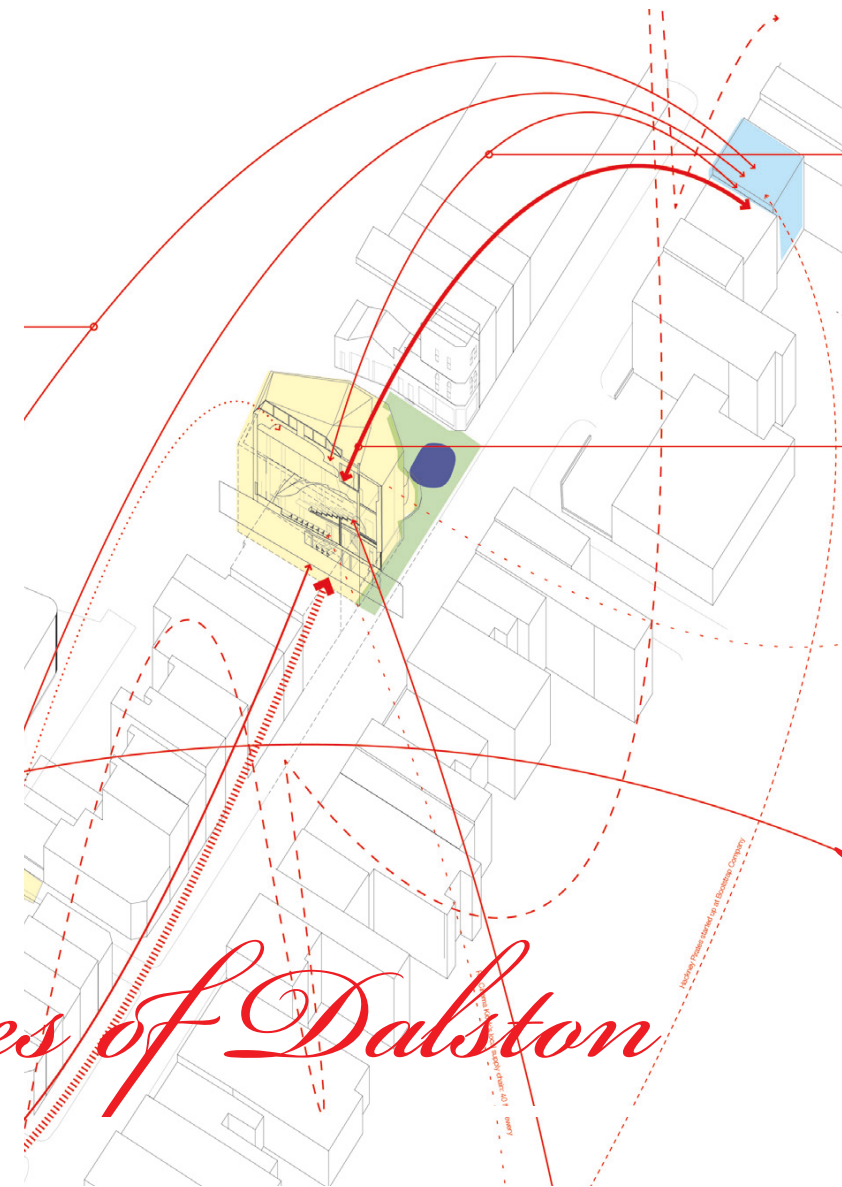
## Partnership Organization

London Borough of Hackney, Planning Department with  
Mayor of Hackney  
+  
University of East London, Architecture, Unit A

## Local Stakeholders we worked with

Age UK  
Cafe Oto  
Bootstrap Charity  
Dalston Square Tenant & Resident Association  
Eastern Curve Garden  
EarthH  
Forest Road Youth Centre  
Hackney Cooperative Development  
Hackney CVS  
Hackney Pirates  
Ridley Road Market  
Rio Cinema  
Tropical Isles Carnival Youth Group  
Vortex Jazz Club  
V22

*Relational States of Dalston*



# Relational States of Dalston

How can collaborative urban design practice enhance social & spatial capital?

Keywords: context, urban transformation, socio-spatial relationships, spatial production, multi-dimensional representation, social value, agents of change.

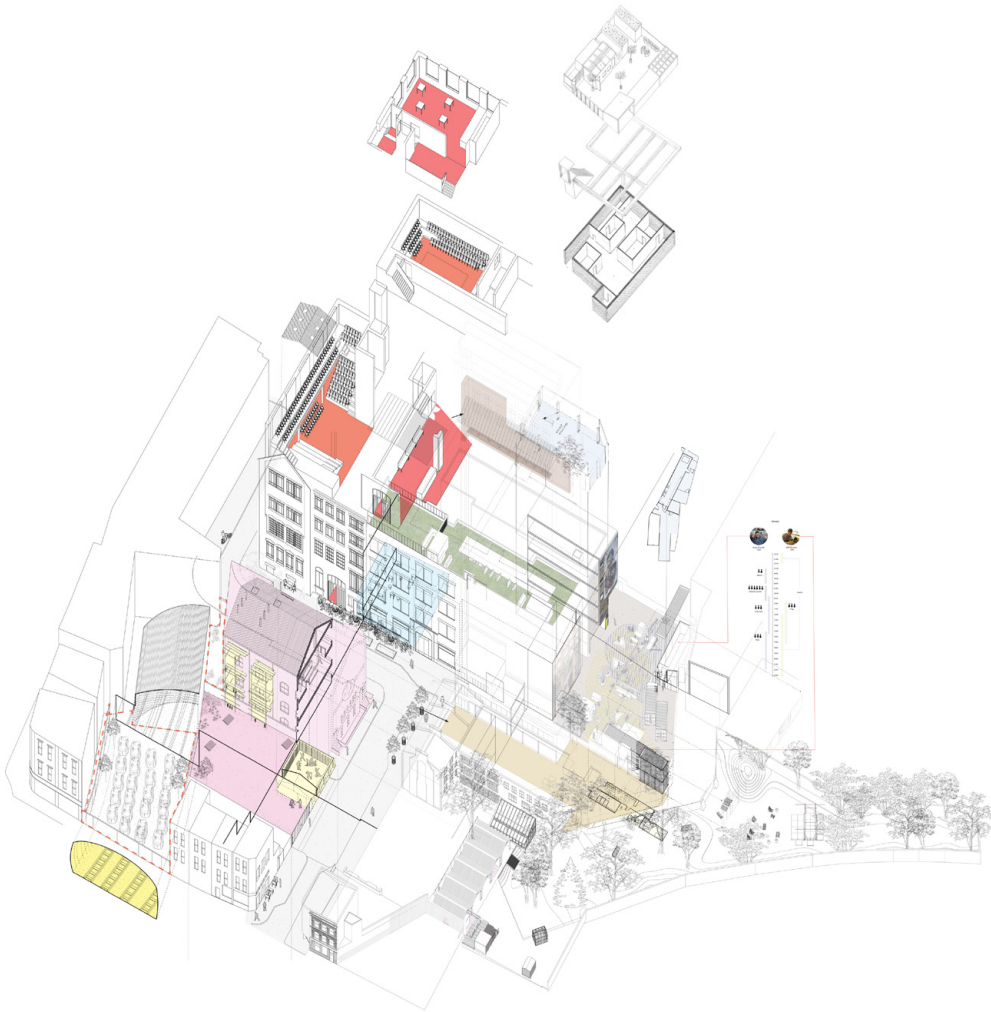
‘Relational States of Dalston’ research project was initiated by us (Carsten Jungfer and Fernanda Palmieri) for the 2017-18 academic year and originates from the fundamentals of our design teaching methodology of the design studio in Architecture we run at the University of East London since 2012 and our work as urban design practitioners.

The methodology for analysis of existing urban & architectural contexts we have developed, combines aspects of ‘social arrangements’ and ‘spatial conditions’ through relational and multi-dimensional narrative, that allows new ways to discover and represent complexities of processes related to urban transformation.

The understanding of the significance of place as correlation between cultural, social, economic and spatial values, is vital to manage change in the built urban environment through creative, sensitive, sustainable and responsible interventions. The techniques developed through practice enable alternative readings of qualities of place through a process of making drawings representing multiple narratives in context by establishing relations between urban actors, uses, ownership, behaviours, networks and time, etc...

The objective of the research is to better understand socio-spatial relationships of key locations within the context of Dalston that contribute to the formation of unique conditions, that are perceived as nodes for culture, community organisations and creative enterprises. By means a contextual investigation, the research project will focus on qualitative aspects related to coexistence of programmes, overlap of networks and alternative forms of spatial production, that contribute to the image of Dalston.

The emerging question for future scaling of this research will relate to methodology of collaborative urban design practice and its impact on social & spatial capital in contested urban contexts.



Collective student work unit A during 2017-18



Unit A agenda and topic for 2017-18



Briefing with Hackney Council's planning team



Researcher team at our workspace at the Bootstrap Company in Dalston



Work in progress



Stage 1: June - September 2018

During the first phase of the research project, a partnership with the planning department of the Local Borough of Hackney was established. The collective output of the design studio at UEL about Dalston's conflicting modes of spatial production caught the Council's interest as the planning department had started a process to develop new strategies and policy documents for Dalston's town centre (Supplementary planning guidance and Dalston Vision for 2033). Our methodology of observation, careful factual on-ground analysis, and the multi-dimensional mode of representation were instantly recognised as original, unique and highly valuable to Hackney Council.

The research outcome became to form part of a wider set of informative documents, by a number of teams of built environment professionals that the Council commissioned for use to assist processes of decision-making and developing of future plans and planning policy for Dalston town centre.

The outcome of stage 1 is a large format drawing (3,2 x 2,3 metres), which was produced over an intensive two-week research workshop together with 5 graduate RIBA part 1 architecture students from UEL, working as paid co-researchers under our supervision. Students utilised prior knowledge of Dalston's urban context and carried out additional on-the-ground analysis, surveys, visits and interviews covering an extended selection of local urban actors and stakeholders (listed below) and their respective networks. The analysis focused on the impacts and conflicts related to respective activities onto immediate contexts and local communities.

Local Stakeholders that were directly engaged with:  
Age Uk, Cafe Oto, Bootstrap Charity, Dalston Square Tenant & Resident Association, Eastern Curve Garden, EarthH, Forest Road Youth Centre, Hackney Cooperative Development, Hackney CVS, Hackney Pirates, Ridley Road Market, Rio Cinema, Tropical Isles Carnival Youth Group, Vortex Jazz Club, V22

Funding contributions stage 1:  
An external funding contribution over £5,000 towards costs of stage 1 of the research was received from Hackney Council. Bootstrap Company provided a free workspace in Dalston for the researcher team over the two weeks.



Visit and interview with stakeholder Rio Cinema



Visit to stakeholder Hackney Pirates



UEL as partner institution within Hackney Council's structure for strategic planning delivery (extract from Hackney Council briefing document)



Progress meeting discussing our findings with Hackney Council at Bootstrap Company in Dalston



Student participants as co-researchers (from left): Kiese Andre, Nelton Bordonhos Barbosa, Dalcimaira Nunes Cardoso, Angelle Dimech, Marianne Gallagher



Stage 2: October to December 2018

The research outcome was exhibited at the Print House Gallery, 18 Ashwin Street in Dalston between 8th October and 5th November. The opening was attended by cross section of the community and the drawing was seen by hundreds of visitors over the duration of its 4 weeks display. The gallery also acts as the reception to creative workspaces used by approx. 300 people daily and managed by Bootstrap Company.

Phillip Glanville, the Mayor of Hackney and his planning team attended a formal presentation event delivered by the five co-researcher graduated students. The Mayor of Hackney noted the importance of the collaboration between UEL and the Council as a unique approach and model for future partnerships fostering unconventional knowledge transfer, critically needed in context of current public debates relating to social impact of urban development and gentrification.

The exhibition was a showcase for UEL presenting itself as a pro-active partner within the East London community delivering relevant, critical and high quality work produced by its students, lectures & researchers collaboratively with external partner institutions.

Funding contributions stage 2:  
Hackney Council external funding contribution £750  
Top-up funding from UEL £1,000  
Bootstrap Company provided free use of exhibition space



Research drawing displayed at the Print House Gallery in Dalston



Presentation event with Mayor of Hackney and his planning team

From: Blanka Hay <Blanka.hay@hackney.gov.uk>  
Subject: Mayor event - run through  
Date: 12 October 2018 10:48:25 GMT+01:00  
To: carsten.jungfer@gmx.net, Fernanda Palmieri <fernanda.palmieri@gmail.com>

Hi both,

I just put together a rough run through of how the evening next week could look.

Let me know what you think, maybe more / less time on each point?

**Relational States of Dalston Presentation**  
**17th October 2018 - Print House Gallery, Bootstrap**

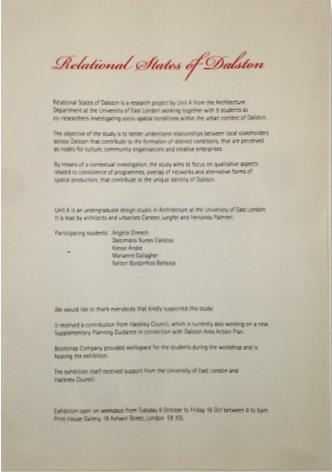
- 5.30pm - Introductions and welcome (UEL / Bootstrap)
- 5.40pm - Project as part of wider Dalston SPD project (LBH)
- 5.50pm - Importance of collaborations in research (UEL Director of Research)
- 5.55pm - Introduction to Relational States of Dalston (Carsten / Fernanda)
- 6.00pm - Findings of the project (UEL students)
- 6.20pm - Questions and open discussion (ALL)
- 6.45pm - Ends

Thanks,

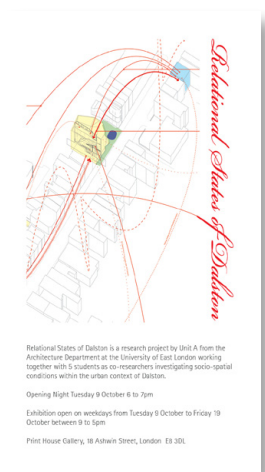
**Blanka Hay**  
Senior Delivery Planner, Growth Team  
Planning Service  
London Borough of Hackney  
Email: [Blanka.Hay@Hackney.gov.uk](mailto:Blanka.Hay@Hackney.gov.uk)  
Tel: 020 8356 6826  
[www.Hackney.gov.uk](http://www.Hackney.gov.uk)

1 Y Hackney

Event programme



Exhibition information

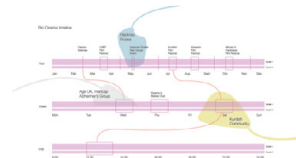
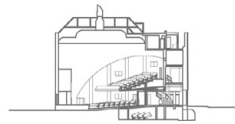


Exhibition invitation



Tweet by Mayor of Hackney





**Heritage Asset**  
Destination Cultural Asset  
Legacy of Enterprise Bookshop  
Afro & Caribbean  
renewable energy Youth groups  
pastor's Kurdish community  
Well-being

**Rio Cinema**  
Independent cinema, agency for  
local history and cultural exchange,  
local collaborative, educative and  
platform for experiments

**Gillet Square**  
play  
pop-up  
inclusive  
workspace  
Events

**Creative Open space**  
What: Local history & community  
Why: To create a space for  
local history and community  
How: Through a series of  
workshops and events

**Education Link**  
What: Local history & community  
Why: To create a space for  
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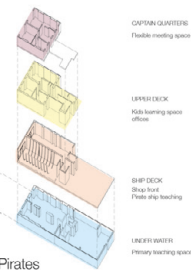
**Education Link**  
What: Local history & community  
Why: To create a space for  
local history and community  
How: Through a series of  
workshops and events

**Playful**  
What: Local history & community  
Why: To create a space for  
local history and community  
How: Through a series of  
workshops and events

**Educational Link**  
What: Local history & community  
Why: To create a space for  
local history and community  
How: Through a series of  
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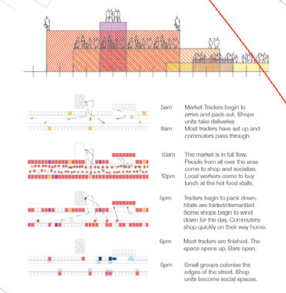
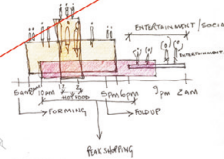
**Hackney Pirates**



# Relational States of Dalston

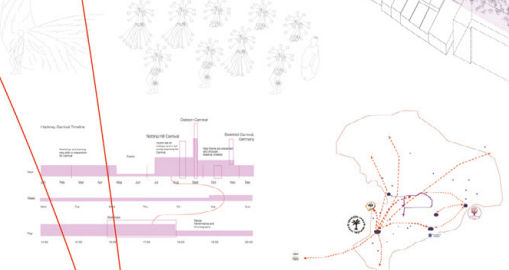


**Ridley Road Market**  
HERITAGE ASSET  
employment Afro Caribbean  
All Local Communities inclusive  
interaction Diverse  
DEMOCRATIC  
ACTIVE

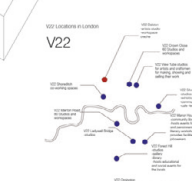


**Cultural Collaboration**  
What: Local history & community  
Why: To create a space for  
local history and community  
How: Through a series of  
workshops and events

**Hackney Carnival**



**Eastern Curve Garden**  
Well-Being  
Green Oasis  
Learning Space  
Inclusive  
Youth groups  
Well-being  
Food Plants  
Free



**Hackney CVS**  
MEDIATORS  
exclusive Local  
YOUTH COMMUNITY employment  
community talks to POLICE  
NGOs HUMAN RIGHTS  
mental health  
IT





and hosted two events

Stage 2 (continued)

In parallel to the exhibition we ran a series of collaborative drawing workshops with stakeholders that we had previously interviewed, and we engaged them in dialogues about the representations of our findings with a focus on social impact across the study area. Feedback from these sessions was then brought back into the drawing to further advance the depth and scope of the ongoing research. The following stakeholders participated to the workshops held at the Print House Gallery during the first two weeks of the exhibition (see also calendar):

Bootstrap Company, V22, Dalston Square Tenant Association, Hackney cooperative Developments, Hackney CVS, Hackney Pirates, Tropical Isles Carnival Group, Rio Cinema & Vortex Jazzclub

Feedback received from stakeholders generally about the research outcome was overwhelmingly positive. It enabled them to understand their own position in relation to other organisations and the wider context and network of relationships. The majority of stakeholders suggested the drawing could be exhibited in their locations - allowing their user-groups & visitors to see and share the findings from the research. The easy accessibility of information was also positively commented on.

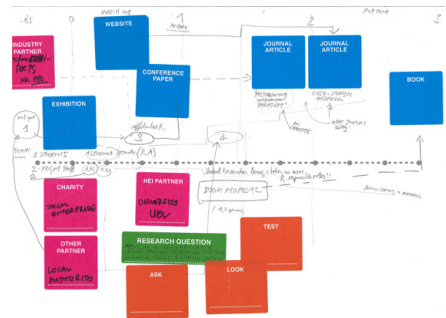


Stakeholder drawing workshop in Print House Gallery



2018	Monday, 8 Oct	Tuesday, 9 Oct	Wednesday, 10 Oct	Thursday, 11 Oct	Friday, 12 Oct	Monday, 15 Oct	Tuesday, 16 Oct	Wednesday, 17 Oct	Thursday, 18 Oct	Friday, 19 Oct
all-day	RSD exhibition Print House Gallery					RSD exhibition Print House Gallery				
09:00										
10:00	10:00 exhibition set up			10:00 Andrew Woodgett <andrew@rio-cinema.org.uk>						
11:00									11:00 Douglas Racionzer from HCD <d.racionzer@hcd.co.uk>	
12:00			12:00 RSD-Kuo-Chieh + Gunter Jancke from Bootstrap Company							
13:00										
14:00	14:00 Ben Collins - Dalston Sq TA			14:00 Jake Ferguson Hackney						
15:00				15:30 Edward Quigley - Hackney Co-operative Developments					15:00 Tara V22	
16:00				16:30 Banks + Lizzy						
17:00				17:00 Carmen Nasr - Hackney Pirates						
18:00		18:00 exhibition opening	18:00 Oliver Weindling - Vortex					17:30 RSD - exhibition opening w. Hackney Mayor		
19:00										
20:00										

Workshop programming during first 2 weeks



Strategic sketch for future scaling of research



This stage of the research commenced in January 2019 and ran until April 2019. We expanded the scope of the study area and two UEL architecture students worked as paid co-researchers on the project. The student researchers interviewed a number of stakeholders and further extended the previous drawing adding new findings.

We secured a UEL Funded internship scheme, that allowed two year 3 architecture degree students to work as co-researchers over 12 weeks under our supervision. Equivalent funding value: £1,764





Stage 4 February 2019

What makes Dalston unique?  
Understanding economic and social value in Dalston Town Centre. Workshop run by London Borough of Hackney

Unit A alumni of 2017/18 were invited to a consultation event hosted at the Bootstrap Charity in Dalston to presented their urban analysis and research outcome from the 'Relational States of Dalston' project. The former students actively engaged in the debate with a number of invited stakeholders about opportunities for change and positive impact in relation to the Councils future planning policy that is currently being developed for Dalstons town centre.



Round table discussions with local stakeholders at the consultation event organised by London Borough of Hackney



Unit A Alumni explaining their socio-spatial onbservations



Stage 5 September 2019

Design Research for Change Exhibition  
London Design Fair 2019 at Truman Brewery, London

The ‘Relational States of Dalston’ Research Project was exhibited at the Design Research for Change Showcase as part of the London Design Fair held at the Truman Brewery.

Design Research for Change is a collective showcase of over 60 design-led projects of early career researchers across the UK, ‘that transcend disciplinary, methodological and conceptual boundaries’. The exhibition ‘illustrates [the] wide-ranging social, cultural and economic impact [this research has] and highlights the significant roles that UK-based Design researchers play in some of the most complex and challenging issues we face both in the UK and globally and the positive outcomes that are being designed and developed.

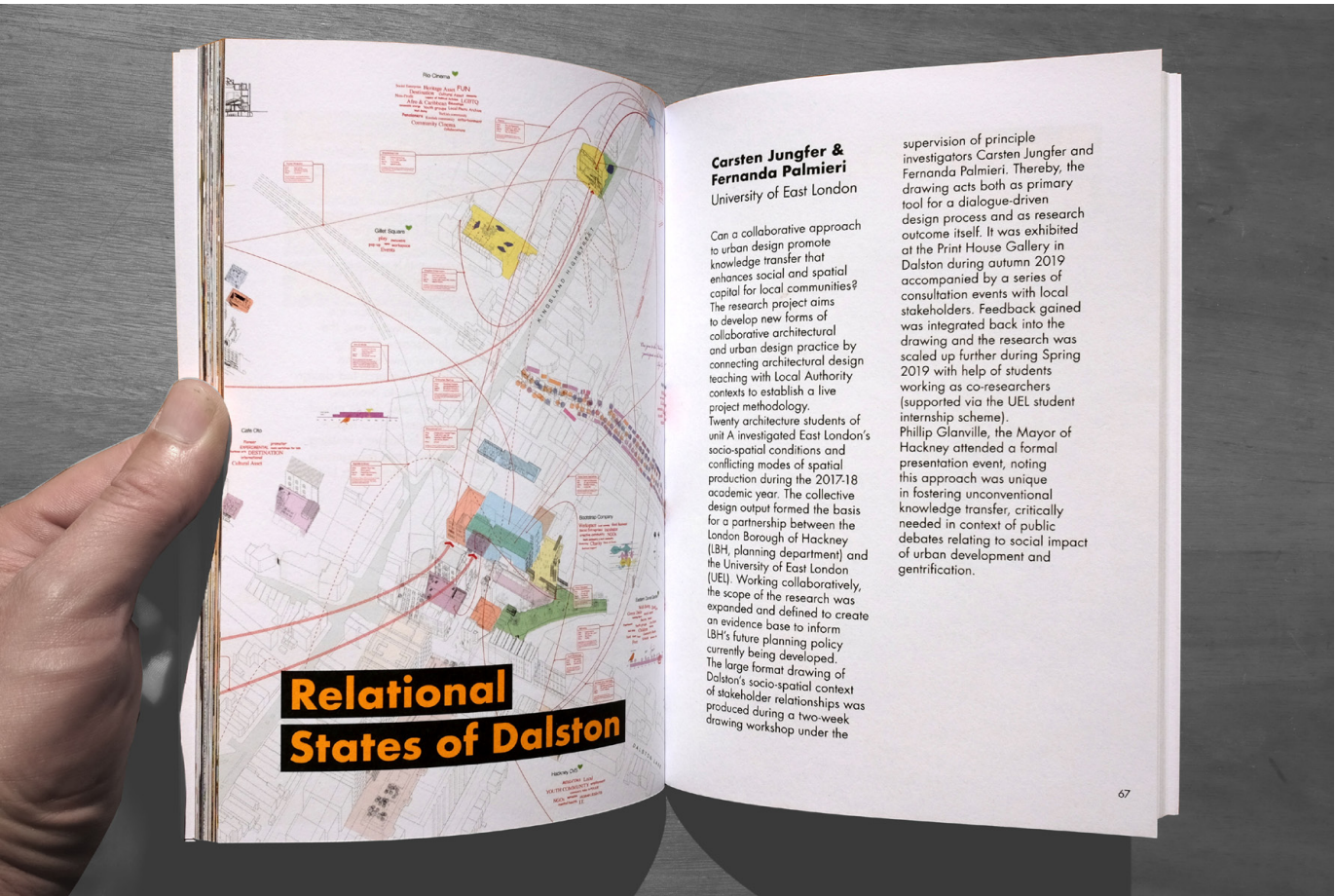
Design Research for Change is an initiative by Lancaster University lead by Paul Rogers and supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).



Showcase wall display



Exhibition at the London Design Fair 2019



Publication in connection with the exhibition





***What is the collaborative nature of this project and how was it shaped by non-academic stakeholders?***

‘Relational States of Dalston’ research project has originated from the fundamentals of our design teaching methodology developed in the architecture design studio Unit A at UEL as well as from our work as architects and urban design practitioners.

We initiated a partnership with the planning department of London Borough of Hackney in 2018 after the collective output of our design studio at UEL about conflicting modes of spatial production in Dalston caught the Council's interest. The planning department was in the process of developing new strategies and policy documents for Dalston town centre and our methodology of observation, careful factual on-ground analysis, and the multi-dimensional mode of representation were instantly recognized as original, unique and highly valuable by Hackney Council.

‘Relational States of Dalston’ is a collaborative and multi-phased research project, exhibition and participative engagement, that ran between 2018-2019 and was funded by LBH, UEL and with support in kind by Bootstrap Charity, with a total value of approximately £10,000. The core aspect of this research project investigates questions of how collaborative urban design practice can enhance social & spatial capital?

The project employs collaborative methodology and was initially set up around a structured learning framework setting out a series of questions that outline a direction of investigation. A formal or expected outcome however was deliberately NOT defined at the start. Retrospectively, what proved critical to the success of this process, was the collaborative working approach that enabled participants to engage in open dialogue. From those exchanges, ideas emerged slowly and through discussions and drawings critical positions developed. Findings were then graphically translated and collated into a big format collective urban drawing which became the formal research output.

The participants included 21 students working on their coursework, 7 students working as paid co-researchers during the following summer, 15 local stakeholder

organizations, 5 members from our partnering organization London Borough of Hackney Planning department, 24 invited guest critics and us two as unit tutors and principle researchers.

***What were the aims of the project and how did your project reach audiences who do not usually engage with research/wider activities of higher education?***

The aim was to build a better understanding of the role of local stakeholders and their relationships within the community against a context of conflicting modes of spatial production as a result of rapid urban change in Dalston.

During the second phase of the project, the research output, a large format spatial drawing (3,4m x 2,3m), was exhibited at the Print House Gallery in Dalston. The Mayor of Hackney opened the exhibition and it was visited by hundreds of people (including one visitor from Argentina).

In parallel to the exhibition, we held a series of collaborative workshops with local stakeholders in the gallery space in order to engage in a collective process of reflection about our findings and emerging patterns of urban change at local scale, conflicts and threats. The drawing also seemed to help local stakeholders to situate themselves for the first time in relation with a wider ‘eco-system’ of social, cultural and spatial relationships.

We believe that, by supporting critical debate, we helped to increase awareness of the significance of local community assets and cultural and social activities that contribute to the production of social value within the community.

***What were the direct outputs from the project and what are the long-term outcomes (delivered or planned)?***

The direct research output is the socio-spatial urban analysis (large format drawing) which became critical part of a series of investigative studies commissioned by Hackney Council to serve as analytical evidence base for the forthcoming Dalston Area Action Plan. As far as we know this was the first collaboration of its kind in Hackney.

***Long-term collaborative partnership:***

Following the success of the collective project in 2018, we built on the trust gained and further advanced the collaborative working relationship with London Borough of Hackney during the academic year 2018-19 when we focused on Ridley Road market as live project site context also in collaboration with Hackney Council. Students and planners benefited again from interacting and exchanging ideas and knowledge about Ridley Road market considered by many as the heart of Dalston town centre.

In the current academic year 2019-20, we continue to grow the partnership and are currently working with LBH (London Borough of Hackney) on a live study area in Homerton. Our investigative approach and collaborative engagement with local stakeholders will as before contribute and inform future and forthcoming planning policies for Homerton. UEL students highly value this form of collaborative approach and live project contexts and seem very motivated and engaged with their projects. Through this interaction students are also developing critical skills that we believe will give them competitive advantages with their future employability.

***Additional outcome:***

The engagement work developed with local stakeholder in this research project (RSD) unfolded into an entirely new collaboration in 2019, between UEL architecture students and Tropical Isles Carnival Youth Group, to co-design and co-produced a Mas-Piece (a piece of body architecture) for the Carnival 2019. Tropical Isles won several awards at both Notting Hill Carnival and Hackney Carnival 2019.



Mas-Piece at the Hackney Carnival 2019