

A 'Minifesta' as the Promise of Collective Voice

I. Contextualising Statement

While a manifesto is a known literary form that 'makes public' policies or aims and is a published declaration of the intentions, motives, or views of the issuer, be it an individual, group, political party, or government,¹ here we explore what 'a minifesta' might be. By operating in an 'other' mode, we discover how a minifesta can open up alternative spaces for discussion and contrasting views, seeking to reveal subaltern perspectives on what appears as a consensus, and thus, offering collective moments of syntony within a cacophony of multiple conversations.² This paper discusses an exercise of transformation from manifesto to minifesta, whereby an international group of researchers worked together to create a shared statement on urban equality. The methodology to deliver a 'manifesto workshop' mobilized the language of other manifestos as a means to stimulate complex conversations around shared values and joint statements. In the process, the statement became a celebration of diversity, a minifesta.

¹ This definition that we used as the starting point for our discussion follows the definition of manifesto from the Cambridge Dictionary.

² See for example, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's influential essay, 'Can the subaltern speak? [1988] republished in part for example in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (eds) *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 28-37. See also for a discussion of feminism, spatial practice and alterity, Doina Petrescu (ed.) *Altering Practices; Feminist Politics and Poetics of Space* (London: Routledge, 2007).

The writing of this minifesta was a performative event with the display of multiple and contrasting perspectives that provided an opportunity to develop a collective voice through the sense of being together. Such event could be described, in the words of others, as a piece of 'minor literature,'¹³ a 'minor theory,'¹⁴ or a 'micro-narrative.'¹⁵ For us, the result is a minor text that we have called a 'minifesta,' taking inspiration on ideas of epistemic justice from de Sousa Santos.⁶ Compared to a manifesto, with its explicit declaration of intentions – political and cultural, something that everyone should be ready to commit on the spot – this Kampala minifesta and similar work produced by performative and creative techniques, place emphasis, not on the universality and durability of the manifesto form, but on the makeshift character of the minifesta and its provisionality. A minifesta carries subaltern ideas and minor theories alongside the remembered promise of a collective voice, a promise felt during its composition. This minifesta emerges within an experimental space created by the project *Knowledges in Action for Urban Equality* (KNOW). KNOW is a four-year project funded by the UK Global Challenges Research Fund that brings together 13 institutions from cities in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Led by Caren Levy at University College London, KNOW seeks to promote urban equality through transformative research and capacity building.⁷ A fundamental assumption of KNOW is that transformative research requires knowledge co-production between civil society, the public, and the private sectors, and the development of a shared language. KNOW provided the opportunity to deliver a manifesto workshop in Kampala (Uganda) to develop shared language on urban equality across a diverse group of academics and practitioners based in different locations and disciplines.

This essay, which remembers the writing of a collective manifesto during the Kampala workshop, has been authored by four people, whose contributions are indicated by a different font treatment. Vanesa Castán Broto and Yael Padan, who wrote together, in plain font, David Roberts, who proposed the workshop form, in bold font, and Jane Rendell, who reflects on the

³ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, trans. Dana Polan, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, [1975] 1986)

⁴ Katz, Cindi. 'Towards minor theory.' *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 14.4 (1996): 487-499.

⁵ Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994)

⁶ De Sousa Santos, B. (2014) *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide*. New York: Routledge.

⁷ For more information visit <https://www.urban-know.com>.

process, in italic font. The phrases extracted from the chosen source manifestos are presented in a variety of fonts. The minifesta that resulted from the writing workshop is in bold italics, and was authored by Shuaib Lwasa, Teddy Kitembo, Judith Mbabazi and Hafisa Namuli from Makerere University in Kampala, Tim Ndezi and Festo Dominick Makoba from the Centre for Community Initiatives in Dar es Salaam, Prof Alphonse G. Kyessi and Tatu Mtwangi-Limbumba from Ardhi University in Dar es Salaam, Sulaiman Kamara from the Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre, Emmanuel Osuteye, Cassidy Johnson, Chris Yap, and David Heymann from the Development Planning Unit at UCL, Yael Padan from the Bartlett School of Architecture and Vanesa Castán Broto from the University of Sheffield.

II. Prologue

Manifestoes have played a powerful role in architecture and urbanism over the past century. The manifesto, architectural historian Beatriz Colomina argues, is 'the site of self invention, innovation, and debate', where 'even buildings themselves could be manifestos'.⁸ As well as 'an indispensable vehicle for setting transformative architectural projects in motion', Craig Buckley warns how manifestoes 'have also been associated with some of the more problematic elements of such vanguard positioning, from hyperbole, exhortation, and naïveté to misogyny, racism, and sympathies for fascism'.⁹ To write a manifesto, therefore, is no simple task. In October 2019 I was invited to share my manifesto workshop approach with the KNOW project. I run workshops on debating and drafting manifestos as a means to introduce emerging and established practitioners to the range of issues and positions that inform architectural inquiry and to articulate the practitioners they seek to become.¹⁰

My workshop involves six stages: setting out *contexts* and *concepts*, negotiating *content*, *configuration*, and *confrontations*, before performing a group *concerto*. We begin by discussing the contexts of our writing and how these shape its principles and purpose. At a time of climate breakdown and biodiversity loss, systemic social injustices and inequalities, there is an ethical imperative to move beyond architecture's Western-centric bias, the narratives and concepts we perpetuate.¹¹

Drawing from new global anthologies from critic Jessica Lack and political scientist Penny Weiss, I invite each participant to read a selection of manifestos, to copy words, phrases and paragraphs that express their ethics onto multicoloured notes and affix them to a wall. As each person shares their rationale for including the line, careful to explain the author and

⁸ Beatriz Colomina, *Manifesto Architecture: The Ghost of Mies* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014).

⁹ Craig Buckley, "After the Manifesto," in Craig Buckley, ed. *After the Manifesto: Writing, Architecture, and Media in a New Century* (New York, NY: Columbia GSAPP Books on Architecture, 2015), 6–23.

¹⁰ I have introduced manifesto writing workshops to Bartlett School of Architecture, Central St Martins and Aarhus School of Architecture and as part of Break//Line with Miranda Critchley for Fast-Forward Feminism. See David Roberts. 'Why Now?: The Ethics of Architectural Declaration', *Architecture and Culture*. (forthcoming, 2020) DOI:10.1080/20507828.2020.1792110

¹¹ See, for example, Huda Tayob and Suzi Hall, 'Race, Space and Architecture: Towards an Open-access Curriculum,' LSE, 2019, http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/100993/3/Race_space_and_architecture.pdf (accessed February 6, 2020).

context in which it was written, we listen to previously silenced stories in myriad political contexts, learn tactics to undermine colonialism and censorship, forge solidarity and collective identity.¹² The manifesto, Lack explains, 'opens up the space through which marginalised voices and experiences can attempt to make the voice of their diversity heard.'¹³

Taking inspiration from art collective Freee, we deliberate whether we agree with each word, phrase and point, considering which of these we wish to include or amend in our own response.¹⁴ The act of drafting a manifesto involves both a relational act of *working through* as authors respond to the principles and practices set out by others in relation to contemporary forces, and a reflexive relay of *working towards* which not only reflects but projects as a directive for future acts.¹⁵ As we *work through* and *towards*, we move, reorder and rewrite notes across the wall and confront positionality which, as anthropologist Soyini Madison summarises, 'forces us to acknowledge our own power, privilege, and biases... When we turn back on ourselves, we examine our intentions, our methods, and our possible effects.'¹⁶

Rather than defining ourselves *against* other manifestos, or in reference to the canon, this approach encourages a manifesto defined *with* and *through* other writings, sayings and phrases from outside of what is conventionally regarded as architectural or urban practice. This inclusive gesture redefines both discipline and genre, reframing the manifesto from the individual to collective and opening the page as a collaborative site to an equal multiplicity of other voices.

¹² Penny Weiss, ed. *Feminist Manifestos: A Global Documentary Reader* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2018), 2.

¹³ Jessica Lack, ed. *Why are we 'Artists'? 100 World Art Manifestos* (London: Penguin, 2017), xiv.

¹⁴ The work of Freee art collective, comprising Dave Beech, Andy Hewitt, and Mel Jordan, uses manifestoes, sculptural kiosks, spoken word choirs, and the 'bodily endorsement of slogan' in an attempt to form community forged in dialogue through the declaration of agreement and disagreement, seeking to reinvigorate manifesto writing as a practical tool for collective political engagement. See, for example Freee, *The Manifesto for a New Public*, Clapham Common Bandstand, 2012; Mel Jordan, Dave Beech, and Andy Hewitt, *To Hell with Herbert Read* *Anarchist Studies*, 23 (2). 2015, 38-46.

¹⁵ See Mary Ann Caws, ed. *Manifesto: a century of isms* (London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), Craig Buckley, ed. *After the Manifesto: Writing, Architecture, and Media in a New Century* (New York, NY: Columbia GSAPP Books on Architecture, 2015).

¹⁶ D. Soyini Madison, 'Introduction to Critical Ethnography: Theory and Method,' in *Critical Ethnography: Method, Ethics, and Performance* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2005), 14.

We conclude by all reading lines together in a concerto of imagination and ideals. This process of collective deliberation and writing has an important history in feminism, as Weiss reminds 'collective authorship means that feminist manifestos not only *inspire* political action but also are the outcome of, or reflect feminist action – a diversity of voices, informed by experience and reflection and dialogue, together confronting enormous practical and theoretical problems.' ¹⁷

¹⁷ Weiss, *Feminist Manifestos*, 2.

III. A model manifesto for the co-production of urban equality

Urban equality is a collective project that requires the involvement of multiple voices to understand not only multiple perceptions of urban equality but also how it could be achieved. Delivering pathways to urban equality is the central purpose of the KNOW project, which integrates perspectives from diverse actors within and beyond academia and across different countries. In this case, we brought together a subgroup of KNOW partners from Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, and the UK at the University of Makerere in Kampala, in November 2019.¹⁸ The purpose of the manifesto workshop that we report in this paper was to work together to make a collective statement about the meaning and significance of urban equality.

After requesting suggestions from all participants, we compiled 14 manifesto documents. We aimed to select a wide variety of source manifestos, ranging from the institutional to the revolutionary, from policy documents to radical subversive collective statements, from serious and grandiose declarations to humoristic and sarcastic propositions, from practical demands to utopian suggestions, and from sweeping narratives to small-scale initiatives. The documents range from manifestos addressing deprivation and providing urban services to those ensuring sustainability and fair labour practices. Their contents reflect our shared interests relating to urban equality, social justice, and environmental sustainability. During the workshop, participants observed that they were relevant to their work in different ways and found them engaging and thought-provoking.

From each manifesto we extracted one quotation that encapsulated the purpose and meaning of the document. We compiled these quotations in a 'model manifesto' as a means to access different texts. The model manifesto appeared as a collage of sentences that express purpose and intent.

¹⁸ Participants were those who authored the manifesto.

MANIFESTO FOR THE CO-PRODUCTION OF URBAN EQUALITY

There might be lots of buzz about the opportunities of Shanghai, Bangalore and São Paulo but you don't really hear people raving about the quality of life.¹⁹

Insist that every new neighbourhood should be within a 10-minute walk of a station or bus stop, and that existing neighbourhoods are within a 10-minute walk of new or extended public transport routes.²⁰

The first step to black liberation – to achieve dignity and an end to white arrogance and racism – is LAND FIRST! It is land that shall put BLACKS FIRST! Without LAND we are nothing! With LAND we are everything we want to be and more!²¹

The map can function as an early warning system, a way to address small problems before they become big ones, and in general to help you articulate your experience. Locating yourself can be a source of power. Maps can show you ways to move, and maybe show you if you should get out!²²

Physical and mental space for learning and experimentation is a necessary condition for transformative social innovation.²³

We decide to establish an alliance to promote the social and inclusive economy in the world and provide a framework for coherence between different regional, national and international initiatives and policies.²⁴

¹⁹ Brûlé, T. 2007. 'Urban manifesto: The factors that make a city great, *The New York Times*.' This quote suggests that what makes a city 'great' is not necessarily the same that advances quality of life and more equality.

²⁰ 'An Urban Design Manifesto for the Government', www.udg.org.uk puts at the core of delivering sustainable cities urban design: as this phrase shows, the design orientation puts the focus on concrete, measurable interventions that improve people's quality of life.

²¹ 'BLACK FIRST! – LAND FIRST! A REVOLUTIONARY CALL' <https://blf.org.za/policy-documents/blf-revolutionary-call/> makes explicit the colonial practices of land appropriation that have shaped contemporary society and that must be challenged to achieve equality.

²² 'PRECARIOUS WORKERS BRIGADE. About Surviving Internships: A Counter-Guide to Free Labour in the Arts Training for Exploitation? Open Letters to Art Institutions' helps define strategies for self-development in a fundamentally unequal labour context, something that reproduces at another scale concerns related to urban equality. The manifesto talks about having a 'map' to build a sense of orientation in relation to one's objectives to reach desired results.

²³ 'Manifesto for Transformative Social Innovation', <https://tsimanifesto.org/> conceptualises radical change as depending on finding means to innovate, and presents individuals as agents of such innovation.

²⁴ 'PACT FOR IMPACT MANIFESTO- A GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR A SOCIAL AND INCLUSIVE ECONOMY' <https://ccednet-rcdec.ca/en/new-in-ced/2019/08/19/pact-impact-manifesto-shares-vision-solidarity-and> identifies the economy as a means to deliver social wellbeing and equality, challenging dominant views of economic development.

BECAUSE we must take over the means of production in order to create our own meanings. BECAUSE viewing our work as being connected to our girlfriends-politics-real lives is essential if we are gonna figure out how we are doing impacts, reflects, perpetuates, or DISRUPTS the status quo.²⁵

We embrace strategies in circular economy and digital social innovation, and foster collaboration between a global network of European and worldwide cities and territories to meet the planetary challenges presented by climate change and social inequalities.²⁶

Creating compelling images is the way we make our living. If we give away our images for free, or spend too much time responding to requests for free images, we cannot make a living.²⁷

WE COMMIT TO SUPPORTING URBAN GOVERNMENTS TO DEVELOP THEIR RESPONSES TO THE SDGS AND WORK WITH THEM SO NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND. ... WE RECOGNISE HOW MUCH CAN BE ACHIEVED THROUGH STRONG LOCAL DEMOCRACIES AND ORGANISED URBAN POOR GROUPS.²⁸

Social Furniture are not second or third-class furniture – they are the expression of a worldview rooted in collectivity and common welfare.²⁹

Above all else, our politics initially sprang from the shared belief that Black women are inherently valuable, that our liberation is a necessity not as an adjunct to somebody else's may because of our need as human persons for autonomy.³⁰

²⁵ 'RIOT GRRRL MANIFESTO' <https://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/riotgrrrlmanifesto.html>, written by all-female indie rock bands in the 1990s, this manifesto was a means to disrupt conventional thinking about a rock music industry that only left space for male musicians, by mocking it and making outrageous statements.

²⁶ 'The FAB City manifesto' <https://fab.city/>, builds on theories of the urban commons to propose a route for the collaborative planning of cities.

²⁷ 'Reasons Why Professional Photographers Cannot Work for Free,' <https://photoprofessionals.wordpress.com>, reclaims the dignity of a profession that is often undervalued, like professional photographers. Here professional photographers stand in for all those whose work is not valued in the urban environment.

²⁸ Satterthwaite, D. and Johnson, C. 2016. 'Ten essentials for the New Urban Agenda in one page'. *IEED Blog*, provides a guide to think about collaboration in urban environments casting community groups in informal settlements as central agents of change.

²⁹ 'Social furniture manifesto', www.eoos.com calls for change through the use of sustainable approaches to consumerism, by recycling and sharing furniture.

³⁰ 'The Combahee River Collective Statement' <http://circuitous.org/scraps/combahee.html> was written by a collective of Black feminists following their involvement in political work that is committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression to achieve a more just society.

Satisfaction is not the goal. Comfort is overrated. Cities should act as catalysts for new ideas, creative change, and individual and collective evolution.³¹

The international community must refocus on and reassess their responses to urban needs, prioritising investment in water and sanitation and using their influence to champion the cause of poor urban communities.³²

Manifestos can be very severe and pompous, but also, they can challenge conventions making outrageous statements or deploying irony using the same format.³³ Our manifesto collection had examples of all kinds. The model manifesto aims to give a taste of different approaches in a way that breaks down any preconceived notions of how a manifesto should look in advance. The purpose of the model manifesto is both to get inspired by other peoples' work but also to freely develop individual relationships with different words and phrases. The action is to examine collective statements and break them down through individual appropriation so that they can be brought together further in a reconfigured joint statement. In doing so, the manifesto can become a 'minifesta,' to support, expose and validate the development of new subjectivities through forms of minor theory as those proposed by geographer Cindi Katz.³⁴

If we can extract one lesson from the model manifesto, it is that whatever the motivations for including a particular piece of work, and whatever the quotation selected, it can always be reinterpreted and appropriated in different ways that will relate to participants' motivations and to the context where those quotations are exposed. This also means that any such

³¹ 'URBAN Emergence Manifesto (The Academy of Urbanism)!' <https://www.academyofurbanism.org.uk/urban-emergence-manifesto/>

is an attempt at proposing a radical urban agenda that sees the right to the city as a revolutionary act. It also approaches its own radicalism with humour.

³² 'Sanitation and water for poor urban communities: A manifesto (Water Aid)'

<https://washmatters.wateraid.org%2Fpublications%2Fwateraid-poor-urban-communities-sanitation-and-water-manifesto&usg=AOvVaw1MfmDiy8JWHAgRhGTMil7C>,

is in many ways a policy document with technocratic proposals for development aid (very serious!), but at the same time it is a practical document that makes it explicit why water and sanitation are essential services for urban communities and why they matter in achieving urban equality.

³³ Discussing the radical feminist SCUM Manifesto by Valerie Solanas and its interpretation by Moynan King, Sara Ahmed (2016: p. 232) has described the importance of 'making manifest' the order of ideas through disruption and disturbance. She says: 'Manifestos are often disagreeable because they show the violence necessary to maintain agreement' in Ahmed, S. (2016) *Living a feminist life*. Duke University Press.

³⁴ Katz, Cindi. 'Towards minor theory.' *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 14.4 (1996): 487-499.

quotations can be manipulated to serve different purposes than those in which they were originally intended. Reading and writing a manifesto is an act of interpretation.

IV. The KNOW project in Makerere minifesta

David Roberts' methodology for writing the manifesto emphasized opening opportunities for performative and creative action. The performative aspect was delivered by reading aloud the manifesto. In Kampala, participants read the 'sample manifesto' to the group, each person reading one quote. The language used in the model manifesto made the performative reading theatrical, and some phrases were read as chants that created a particular collective effect. Then participants were asked to familiarize themselves with the language by underlining phrases that they liked. They could choose to read both the sample manifesto or the original documents that contained those phrases. The creative aspect was then emphasized by encouraging participants to cut down and color the manifestos, breaking them into their constituent parts.

Then we brought participants to work in front of three panels to translate individual impressions into collective ones, as explained in the methodology above. Cut fragments of manifestos, painted or enlarged with new words, could be placed directly into Panel 1. The only condition was for participants to explain why they thought that was important. Each proponent could then suggest moving two cuts from Panel 1 to Panel 2. The process provided opportunities to create new configurations and open up the floor for contestations.

We read all the phrases in Panel 2 and agreed which ones could be moved to Panel 3. Ordering was a step to write the final manifesto. Ordering also created a discussion about how to guide the reader through the text, about the rules for establishing and maintaining the order, and about the specific elements that had to be ordered.

The manifesto presented in the third panel – the group 'concerto' in David's words – read like this:

A call to action for inclusive, ethical and transformative co-production initiatives³⁵

We, a heterogeneous group of affiliates of the KNOW project, including university academics, members of the civil society, government and community representatives³⁶ are committed to inclusive, ethical and transformative³⁷ co-production projects.

This is a manifesto to engage with all stakeholders in decision-making processes and empower citizens to take ownership of innovation and change-making.³⁸

- ***We commit to recognise, support and work with representative organisms of the marginalised and low income groups.***
- ***We will strive to deliver urban spaces for everyone: safe spaces for all groups to speak up.³⁹***
- ***We engage with urban centres as engines for new ideas and creative change, providing the basis for individual and collective action.***
- ***We recognise the need to address urban issues recognising their multiple dimensions and interdependencies, in a struggle to build resilient and inclusive urban areas capable to thrive in a climate-changing world.⁴⁰***

³⁵ The title was collectively agreed after reading the manifesto aloud for the first time.

³⁶ One of the participants proposed to make it clear who we were and why we were writing the manifesto. This introduction was read humoristically, as we knew both that we were mocking international declarations while also recognizing the importance of defining our constituency and audience. Using humor made this formulation acceptable for the whole team.

³⁷ Participants searched for these characteristics and cut them out of existing manifestos to show the basic requirements of action for urban equality. Each characteristic was discussed independently. They were easier to agree than most participants had anticipated.

³⁸ All participants understood the importance of representing informal settlement dwellers as the main actors in delivering urban equality not only because their needs should be addressed, but also because they are agents of development.

³⁹ The spatial aspects of urban equality became very important during the discussions of the manifesto. For example, several participants emphasised the importance of connectivity and mobility across the city and, during the discussion, it was synthesised into this concern with having safe spaces for different activities.

⁴⁰ All participants felt committed to specific urban issues they are involved with. For example, our Sierra Leone colleague was particularly interested in transport and mobility, while one of our Dar es Salaam colleagues was interested in the problems of flooding and sanitation as well as public transport. However, when discussing collectively, sectoral approaches to urban equality were put aside in favour of a broader, more abstract definition that everyone identified with.

- ***We are actively committed to struggling against racial, tribal, sexual, heterosexual⁴¹ and class oppression and we challenge interlocking systems of oppression.***
- ***We advocate co-production as a complementary means to build basic infrastructure.***
- ***We support the shared use of all local available resources adopting a circular economy approach to construct productive and vibrant urban spaces.⁴²***

What we do⁴³:

- ***We co-create transformative knowledge.***
- ***We encourage local governments, communities and citizens to share experiences and knowledge across local, national and international urban contexts.***
- ***We invent, construct, and tell stories about cities and urban areas.⁴⁴***
- ***We create scenarios for interpersonal encounters that facilitate cooperation and exchange.***

⁴¹ Discussions of sexual and heterosexual oppression made some of the participants feel uncomfortable. Some colleagues preferred to use neutral terms such as gender. However, the discussion only reinforced the collective interest in this quote from the Combahee River Collective Statement. Any concerns were eventually dropped. The sentence was highlighted several times and brought to the Panels by several participants, in full or in fragmented form.

⁴² This line of the manifesto was strongly contested as ideas of ‘circular economy’ were not shared by everyone. The concept of ‘circular economy,’ which evokes practical ideas to advance sustainability, is widely contested. Its interpretation ranges from a compendium of resource efficiency and waste prevention strategies, to a restorative, regenerative approach to economic flows (as explained, for example, in Geissdoerfer, M., Savaget, P., Bocken, N.M. and Hultink, E.J., 2017. The Circular Economy—A new sustainability paradigm? *Journal of cleaner production*, 143, pp.757-768.). During the discussions in Kampala, participants with first-hand experience in urban management in Africa found that the concept of circular economy resonated with their understanding of urban management, while colleagues based in the UK criticised the concept for advancing efficiency concerns for the reproduction of a neoliberal understanding of the green economy. Eventually the quote was voted by raising hands and the majority decided to leave it in.

⁴³ The group distinguished between ‘what we believe’ (the set of principles our work departs from) and ‘what we do’ (the kind of actions we feel justified in urban environments).

⁴⁴ The literature on urban planning and environmental sustainability provides numerous insights into how storytelling- a form of human expression that encourages imagination through accounts of events- is a world-making activity because it produces collective narratives that make sense and provide models of action for a shared future (see, for example, Veland, S., Scoville-Simonds, M., Gram-Hanssen, I., Schorre, A.K., El Khoury, A., Nordbø, M.J., Lynch, A.H., Hochachka, G. and Bjørkan, M., 2018. Narrative matters for sustainability: the transformative role of storytelling in realizing 1.5 C futures. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 31, pp.41-47.). Some participants described ‘storytelling’ as a tool for coproduction with different actors. During the workshop, all participants agreed with a description of themselves as ‘storytellers.’

- ***We develop partnerships for resource and capacity-building.***
- ***We promote opportunities for local innovation.***
- ***We aspire to be ethical researchers: the ethical researcher⁴⁵ is kind, respectful, honest, and has humility and sense of humour, and a loving, caring attitude to deal with urban challenges.⁴⁶***

The 'manifesto' provoked some afterthoughts during the workshop, in particular, the extent to which it reflected the participants' shared ethics. Rather than revealing a shared code of practice, the manifesto showed the limits of what is and is not acceptable. Participants expressed their satisfaction with the results of the workshop in different ways: through smiles, encouraging words, and engagement with the activity, creating a sense of collective achievement. Participants agreed that the manifesto reflected their practices rather than a prescriptive recommendation for future work. Although the participants identified with the idea, inherent in the format of the manifesto, of voicing a declaration by a type of 'social movement,' they were aware that this was instead a performative exercise, whose audience is imaginary or fictional. They agreed that this was, therefore, more a methodology for searching and exploring the possibility of sharing a collective voice, rather than an opportunity for 'causing a disturbance.'⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Originally we had floated the idea that the manifesto was about the ethics of doing research on urban equality, but when participants engaged with the methodology they focused on different aspects of urban equality and how to achieve it as an integral aspect of ethics. Thinking of a more equal city is intrinsically linked with ethics, participants argued, and to the way they think of themselves. Ethical challenges are a difficult discussion subject for researchers. Researchers may be willing to share the ethical challenges that they face in intimate situations, but not in public and even less in performative contexts with a large group of colleagues with whom they have considerable professional and emotional investments. In this sense, the manifesto concealed more than it revealed, and failed to make manifest any disturbing and painful issues. When the gap was pointed out during the discussion, this statement was added using both cuts from manifestos and a quote from a previous workshop – that is, existing sources which enabled the participants to engage in an indirect way.

⁴⁶ Participants discussed and agreed what characteristics should an 'ethical' researcher have. The phrase 'the ethical researcher is kind, respectful, honest, and has humility' was chosen by the group because it came from a community member participant in a previous workshop, conducted within the KNOW project with a mixed team of researchers from academia, informal communities, local government and NGOs. The rest of the characteristics were added during the manifesto workshop. Ideas of humor, care and loving attitude were spontaneously proposed by participants.

⁴⁷ In the sense referred to, for example, by Sarah Ahmed, in her 'Killjoy manifesto'. Ahmed, S. (2016) Living a feminist life. Duke University Press, 251.

The manifesto workshop was an event, that is, something that happened at a point in time, and that had some significance for those involved in it. The workshop helped to build dynamics of collaboration and contestation. Still, the intense process of sharing required and the particularity of the manifesto means that the manifesto only makes sense when understood within that particular moment and for that specific time. The result can never be a final, universalizing declaration of intentions that we happen to call 'manifesto.' Instead,

- the manifesto is a process, not a product;
- the consensus is a dynamic and potentially disruptive exchange;
- the shared values expressed during an event such as the manifesto workshop are also subject to change.

Rather than seeking to enact the 'grandiose purposes' that inspired most modernist manifestos, the workshop demonstrated the power of 'minifestos' which seek to disrupt the foundations of hegemonic knowledge,⁴⁸ seeking instead alternative spaces of operation where urban equality is constructed. The result is 'a minifesta:' a collective statement that pins our work to the minor and the female, in the spirit of Cindy Katz. Calling our statement a minifesta is a means to diversify the process of finding a collective voice. A minifesta is a celebration of difference.

⁴⁸ De Sousa Santos, B. (2014) *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide*. New York: Routledge.

V. Concerto

Emmanuel, one of the participants in the workshop, stood up, with a straight back and a broad smile on his face. He looked at Panel 3 and projected his voice across the corridor, reading each sentence slowly and clearly, as if it were a sermon. Students passed by, hiding their faces behind their hands, throwing complicit smiles at each other. We listened intently, mouthing each word as Emmanuel read them. We almost knew them by heart, after hours of collective discussion in which each statement had been evaluated. When Emmanuel finished, we clapped and hugged each other, sure of having shared a growth experience in which we had worked to find out what we share and what brings us together. Performing the minifesta was a delightful way to finish the workshop.

To what extent does the minifesta support the development of a collective voice?

Disagreements were accepted. We found ways to compromise, for example, on the use of concepts like the circular economy, which were perceived as instrumental by some, but for others gave meaning to concrete interventions in the context of the whole city. Other ideas did not offer room for such a compromise, such as the rejection of sexual and heterosexual oppression, a statement that none of the participants was willing to drop. There was a strong sense of a collective milestone being achieved during the manifesto workshop, of finding shared common ground and respect for each other's perspectives.

However, a minifesta is not a durable expression of a collective voice for the people who participate in the workshop. At most, any manifesto is an event in the development of such a collective voice, if such voice exists. A minifesta is an ephemeral sign of that event.

Achieving a collective voice is a utopian idea. Voices, individual and collective, are not waiting there to be collected into a monolithic narrative of what is to be done. Voices are shaped by the history of the people and communities they live with and by the events and situations in which their voices are expressed. In contrast, the manifesto belongs to the event in which it is produced. It can only be understood with the cacophony of voices that created this moment of agreement that we call a minifesta.

As a team, we learned this during the presentation of the Kampala workshop to the wider KNOW team, which included colleagues who had not participated in it. Rather than embracing it, our colleagues regarded our collective statement with skepticism, as some imposition. The manifesto is regarded as an output compared with political and cultural declarations of intentions: something that everyone should be ready to commit to on the spot. That kind of commitment requires a different type of involvement than that offered by the Kampala minifesta and similar work produced by performative and creative techniques. Such techniques emphasise, not the universality and durability of a manifesto, but its makeshift character and its provisionality. Manifestos become minifestas that carry subaltern ideas and minor theory alongside the remembered promise of a collective voice that was felt during its composition.

VI. Epilogue

When I suggested that David Robert's method for co-writing manifestos could be adapted for the Kampala manifesto-writing ethics workshop, that Vanesa and Yael had planned, I had in mind the session David had led, and in which I had participated, with our MA Situated Practices students. For this we prepared a manifesto, for the students' graduating show, which turned out to be a manifestas: a manifesto transformed into a party, in the feminine and in the plural, and with emphasis placed on not on the product as final outcome, but on the process, of continuous learning, understood as non-fixed. This specific manifestas was a written trace of a particular event, that involved a group of people in a time and place, something I would want to call a 'site-writing' as a form of situated criticism that performs and enacts – in words – a interpretative response to a site or situation.⁴⁹ If we wish to follow Donna Haraway, we might think of this as a form of 'situated knowledge'.⁵⁰ Recognising that one's viewpoint is partial and derives from ones' lived and located experience, is an important way of grounding the more modernist mode of the manifesto. It fits with Rosi Braidotti's discussion of a figuration,⁵¹ as no 'mere metaphor', but rather a marker of more 'concretely situated historical position'. For Braidotti: 'Figurations deterritorialize and destabilize the certainties of the subject and allow for a proliferation of situated or 'micro' narratives of self and others.'⁵²

⁴⁹ See Jane Rendell, 'Site-Writing', Sharon Kivland, Jaspar Joseph-Lester and Emma Cocker (eds), *Transmission: Speaking and Listening*, vol. 4, (Sheffield Hallam University and Site Gallery, 2005), pp. 169–76 and Jane Rendell, *Site-Writing: The Architecture of Art Criticism*, (London: IB Tauris, 2010). See also <https://site-writing.co.uk>

⁵⁰ Donna Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective', *Feminist Studies*, (Autumn 1988) 14:3, pp. 575–99.

⁵¹ The process of figuration has been described in feminist terms by Donna Haraway and Rosi Braidotti. See for example, Donna Haraway, 'Syntactics: The Grammar of Feminism and Technoscience', Donna Haraway, *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium. FemaleMan_Meets_OncoMouse: Feminism and Technoscience*, (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 1–22, p. 11; 'Cyborgs, Coyotes and Dogs: A Kinship of Feminist Figurations and There are always more things going on than you thought! Methodologies as Thinking Technologies: An interview with Donna Haraway conducted in two parts by Nina Lykke, Randi Markussen, and Finn Olesen', [2000], Donna Haraway, *The Donna Haraway Reader*, (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 321–42, p. 338; Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) p. 4 and Rosi Braidotti, *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006) p. 90. Figuration also features in the philosophical work of Gilles Deleuze, Jean Francois Lyotard, and Paul Riceour, and in the psychoanalytic theory and practice of César Botella and Sàra Botella. For an overview see Jane Rendell, 'Figurations', *The Architecture of Psychoanalysis* (London: IB Tauris, 2017).

⁵² Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 90.

*When Haraway goes on to reconceptualise the Anthropocene as the Chthulucene in *Staying with the Trouble*, she notes that this epoch in which the human and nonhuman are inextricably linked is 'sympoietic', adopting the term from M. Beth Dempster, she writes that mortal worlds 'do not make themselves',⁵³ but rather require a poiesis that thinks-with, makes-with and becomes-with, that she calls SF, defined as 'science fiction, speculative fabulation, string figures, speculative feminism, science fact, so far.'⁵⁴*

SF is practice and process, it is becoming-with each other in surprising relays; it is a figure for ongoingness in the Chthulucene.⁵⁵

Writing together, with the words of those who have come before, and with others in the here and now, allows us to reflect on how our own aspirations for urban equality are prefigured, but can also be refigured, remade, and repositioned with and through the words of others. Such citational practices⁵⁶ embrace new ways of acknowledging one another, blurring self-edges, 'selvedges',⁵⁷ by 'featuring' and 'remixing' each other's work. Language made strange, through unexpected juxtapositions, can expose the power systems that set the rules for our actions, and as J. L. Austin has pointed out, beyond language, words can also do things.⁵⁸ Doing different things with words, is something Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari associate with minor literature, they connect such critical textual practices or 'deterritorialization[s] of language' with calls for political and collective action:

The three characteristics of minor literature are the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the

⁵³ Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016), p. 33.

⁵⁴ Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, p. 2.

⁵⁵ Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, p. 3.

⁵⁶ Jane Rendell, 'From, In and With Anne Tallentire', Karin Reisinger and Meike Schalk (eds) *Becoming A Feminist Architect*, special issue of *Field*, (2017), 7, pp. 13-33. <http://field-journal.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/2-Jane-Rendell-From-in-and-with-Anne-Tallentire.pdf>

⁵⁷ Jane Rendell, 'Selvedges', *Architectural Review*, (2020).

⁵⁸ J. L. Austin, *How to do Things with Words: The William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).

*collective assemblage of enunciation. We might as well say that minor no longer designates specific literatures but the revolutionary conditions for every literature within the heart of what is called great (or established) literature.*⁵⁹

Architectural writer and editor, Carlo Menon has argued that 'Leaning toward the 'minor' means moving in the middle, in between institutionalised categories and practices ... refus[ing] to follow the path of the 'masters.'⁶⁰ How can this minifesta, as a co-writing of a manifesto for urban equality, refuse the major narratives of urban inequality, and instead promise through the minor mode, other ways we could become more equal? Our process suggests that a minor mode might be situated intersectionally where different kinds of language – speaking and writing – offered (and also refused) by the feminine and subaltern engage. For the four of us writing here, reflecting on a process involving many others, it has involved a refiguring (and deterritorializing) of existing voices and texts. Rather than starting afresh each time, we are interested in ways of speaking and writing together where different voices can be heard and seen in their specificities, each charged by the political prompt of inequality, rather than drawn together, made invisible, under the category of the homogenous 'we'. The minifesta, and this set of thoughts around it, engage with the question of how – to refer to Spivak, and also to Helene Cixous⁶¹ – we might 'come' to language – to speech, and to writing – in the process of manifesting, to find our voice among others, as part (to quote Deleuze and Guatarri) of a 'collective assemblage of enunciation', a practice which seeks to recognize specificities and differences involved in any process charged with the ambition of making equal.

⁵⁹ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, trans. Dana Polan, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, [1975] 1986), p. 18.

⁶⁰ Carlo Menon in Sophie Dars and Susana Lourenço Marques (with Carlo Menon, Bruno Figueiredo, and Pedro Bandeira), 'Accatone and Pierrot le Fou: A Story in Common', in *Journal de l'Université d'été de la Bibliothèque Kandinsky* n. 5, published to document the discussion: 'Artists' Publications: From the Studio to the Library and Back Again', the Museum of Modern Art, Centre Pompidou, (2–13 July 2018). See also Carlo Menon and Veronique Patteeuw, 'Magazine Architecture' in *Karel Martens and The Architecture of the Journal*, OASE, (2018), n. 100, pp. 83–144. See <https://www.oasejournal.nl/en/Issues/100/MagazineArchitecture>

⁶¹ Hélène Cixous, 'Coming to Writing' [1977], in Hélène Cixous, *Coming to writing' and other essays*, ed. Deborah Jenson, trans. Sarah Cornell, Deborah Jenson, Ann Liddle, Susan Sellers, (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. 1–58,