

Honours Program CC2100/ Assignment 3

Cultuur&Campus Putselaan Blogpost

Alisa Minchenko 668653

21.04.2025

Education = democracy

The Cultuur Campus Putselaan is a unique project because of its educational potential. The educational programme, if developed by the Erasmus University in collaboration with art schools in Rotterdam and local representatives, could bring educational multidisciplinary and innovation into the academic field. Artistic perspective transferred on to education can be a great contributor to social cohesion and development.

Educational practices within universities often reinforce the same old Western-oriented ideals. It establishes the hierarchical positions people can occupy within the economy. Established methods do not encourage creativity and critical thinking, however, academic rigour is valued. The project provides a great space for innovative educational development within the context of Rotterdam South. It also has a potential to elevate the well-being of the locals. Values of inclusivity of this project, with promises to be welcoming for everyone, can democratise education.



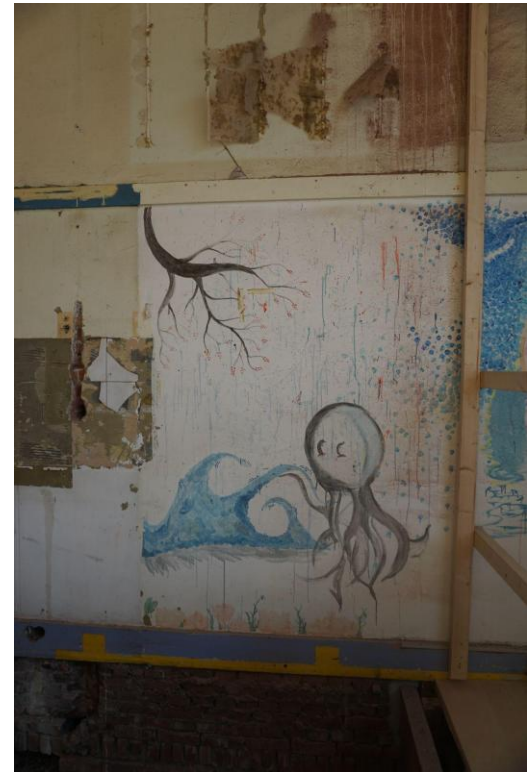
The Cultuur&Campus Putselaan can create a positive outline for future collaboration and democratisation within the educational sphere. Educators can learn from the students, and, undoubtedly, vice versa. This space can act as a facilitator of social interactions,

exchange of knowledge and formation of political opinions that include diverse perspectives and experiences. In line with the Erasmian Values, the project can contribute to academic development, scientific rigour as well as inclusivity and equality. The important thing is not to overlook the pitfalls that the project could fall into and to remember core values that will drive the project further.

The project is contributing to the idea that education should be creative and accessible. Therefore, education can be seen as a common good that will be cherished within Cuultur&Campus. As Feinberg et al. (2021) writes, urban commons are not only limited to actual physical spaces, but are also places that enable atmosphere for cultural exchange and communication, and prompt discussion. The commonality of the space makes it belong to everyone equally. Such practices bring the feelings of belonging and responsibility to each individual which constitutes the basis of democratic society. Urban commons can encourage a feeling of shared identity within a community (Feinberg et al., 2021).

The collaboration of different institutions on different levels on the Cultuur&Campus project is a part of strategic placemaking (Markusen et al., 2010). The results of it, in the best case, encourages diverse people to participate, share and inspire in the South of Rotterdam. The accessibility of the campus and practices that invite local population, ignite knowledge and experience exchange. The democratic practices and intersectionality can be a great driver for understanding, resilience and change.

Education plays a vital role in the growth of every human-being. The educational programme developed by the Erasmus University in collaboration with local representatives and art institutions, can encourage an alternative educational agenda and be an innovator in the educational sector. As identified by Read (1944), education can either reinforce the structure of society that encourages unequal and imperialistic practices, or develop unique individuals that contribute to the society in a versatile manner. Cultuur&Campus can be a forerunner in alternative educational practices that encourages critical thinking and creativity over an established positivist framework that reproduces the same Western-oriented ideals.



The C&C hub aims at developing the local level of life in the South bringing sustainability and cultural diversity to the neighbourhood. A similar project has been developed in Marseille, France, called La Friche la Belle de Mai (Andres, 2009). The project hosts cultural, networking and educational programmes in the neighbourhood that has many diasporas. It has existed for over 30 years, and showcases a successful integration of culture into urban areas that struggle over economic and social issues. The main difference present in these two projects is that while C&C has been established with the help from the European Union and large institutions, La Friche la Belle de Mai is a grassroots initiative. Now it operates as a cooperative, co-governed by 70 representatives from the area. In this case the urban common is well engraved into the infrastructure of the neighbourhood. It is sustained by the residents themselves, which brings a lot of engagement and community. Maybe C&C could learn from this initiative that local voices can best be represented and preserved through the locals themselves. Although institutional structures of the C&C can help with organisation on the initial level, without direct engagement from the community the project won't last for long.

The events in La Friche la Belle de Mai mostly revolve around culture and art. However, their space is always open for visitors. C&C aims to resolve spatial dispersion in the area. Local residents in the South have been complaining that there is not much space available for them to get together, therefore this project aims at creating a communal space for exchange and communication. Making it open and available at all times demonstrates the welcoming attitude of the project.

With its cultural programme, La Friche la Belle de Mai encourages migrant cultural expression and decolonial aesthetics. By empowering the local community it contributes to the well-being of the locals, who feel seen and heard in their community. C&C can encourage the same agenda of decolonisation and liberation of knowledge. Its mix of educational and artistic programmes can be a great driver of progress and community-building. Help from the higher institutions could also be a resource for more insights and knowledge.

Cultuur&Campus Putselaan hub is symbolically bringing new practices to the 100 year old school building in the south of Rotterdam. A collaboration between Erasmus University and art schools in Rotterdam has great potential to approach education from an artistic perspective. The development of educational programmes with a multidisciplinary approach can lead to innovation within academia, while helping people from the neighbourhood, by

giving them relevant education with academic rigour embodied by Erasmus University and the creative openness of art schools.

Importantly, to sustain the project's community-oriented goals, it must be passed on to the active residents who volunteer to take care of it. Creative placemaking is an effective plan for developing affected neighbourhoods, nevertheless through collaboration with the people who can bring meaningful lasting impact within the community.

The hub should also be open throughout the day, in order for people to have an embedded feeling of belonging to the community created within. Making events will also ensure the inclusiveness of the place and diversity of its audiences. Moreover, it will warm people up to the idea of a newly established place in their neighbourhood.

If all goes well, the project can be a significant initiative for innovative education that embeds creative values and artistic practices into the academic rigour. This can stimulate diverse conversations and critical thinking amongst individuals. Learning together and exchanging experience is a substantial breeding ground for creation and change.



References:

Andres, L. (2009). La ville mutable. Le cas de la Friche Belle de Mai. *Faire Savoirs*, 8(2009), 111-120.

Feinberg, A., Ghorbani, A., & Herder, P. (2021). Diversity and Challenges of the Urban Commons: A Comprehensive review. *International Journal of the Commons*, 15(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.5334/ijc.1033>

Markusen, A., Gadwa, A., Markusen Economic Research Services, & Metris Arts Consulting. (2010). Creative placemaking (By National Endowment for the Arts, United States Conference of Mayors, & American Architectural Foundation). <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/CreativePlacemaking-Paper.pdf>

Read, H. (1944). The purpose of education. In *Education Through Art*. (pp, 1-13)