

NYC SOCIAL CLUB

DESIGN FOR THE FUTURE

**JULY 2020
FINAL REPORT**

PREPARED BY
LAURA NOVA
PUBLIC ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

FUNDED BY

NYC Cultural
Affairs

NYC Department for
the Aging

Laura Nova

generates site-specific, action-oriented projects for intergenerational participation. She has been a resident of NYC's Lower East Side since 2003. Nova is a professor of Expanded Media at Bloomfield College and exhibits her work internationally.

Public Artists in Residence (PAIR)

is a municipal residency program that embeds artists in city government to propose and implement creative solutions to pressing civic challenges.

PAIR positions Artists as creative problem-solvers who can create long-term and lasting impact by working collaboratively in open-ended processes to build community bonds, open channels for two-way dialogue, and create new possibilities for those who experience and participate in the work.

During her PAIR collaboration with the Department for the Aging (DFTA) Nova strove to deepen our understanding of social isolation and to re-imagine gatherings as intergenerational connective spaces that transcend technology and pandemics.

impetus

Commissioner Cortés-Vázquez attended my Public-Artist-in-Residence mid-term presentation on Tuesday, February 18, 2020. During the question & answer session she presented a call to action: to explore branding language for “seniors” and “senior centers” — literally to **suggest/create a new name and attendant branding for “senior center.”**

Rebranding often requires exploration beyond semantics that ultimately leads to a shift in strategy and operational restructuring. Midway through the planning process COVID-19 shut down all municipal operations and physical spaces. DFTA closed the week of March 16, 2020. Combatting its clients’ social isolation had always been central to DFTA’s mission — but this global pandemic required us to rethink “meeting space” entirely. To allow for expansive thinking I proposed bringing “atypical” stakeholders into the planning process — chefs, physical trainers, artists, architects, design thinkers, and other professionals not typically affiliated with DFTA’s planning process for older New Yorkers. I recruited DFTA staff as well as the external creatives and design thinkers to join my **unfocus group for “DFTA Design for the Future”**, a series of ideation workshops planned for April and May 2020. The design-thinking process emphasizes empathy as both a tool and an end in itself for social connection and ideation. See Appendix for expanded process discussion.

💡 The design-thinking process emphasizes **empathy** as both a tool and an end in itself for social connection and ideation. 💡

When asked these questions DFTA stakeholders provided these responses:

“What are the top five challenges that face seniors?”

“What do you hope a senior space in the future will achieve?”

responses related to 👤 client well-being and health

- (9) Safety/Social Distancing/Covid-19 Protection
- (8) Access to and understanding of user-friendly technology
- (4) Access to fresh food, safe practices/Meals on Wheels
- (3) Opportunity for socializing/prevention of social isolation
- (3) Ageism/Public Perception
- (2) Financial support/affordability of retiring in NYC
- (2) Fair distribution of resources, especially among minorities
- (2) Need for human touch versus elder abuse
- (2) Exercise/health facility access

👤 responses related to operations

- (6) Offering virtual/relevant/stimulating programming that bridges generational gap
- (5) Funding
- (4) Multi-purpose/accessible spaces with break-out room for individuals
- (4) Staffing and support squads
- (3) Innovation/Expansion with reduced footprint
- (2) Need-specific/diverse services (i.e. assistance for cognitively impaired)
- (2) Transportation
- (2) Partnerships with community, farmers, and medical institutions
- (2) Attractive and inviting spaces (i.e. art on the walls)
- (1) Natural Light/ Adequate lighting
- (1) Professional kitchen
- (1) Coordination
- (1) Recruitment and retention of retirees and elders

the future of "senior" spaces

!! The Department for the Aging (DFTA) is the lead agency that funds and operates senior centers. Innovative senior centers individually receive about \$1 million annually from the City while neighborhood senior centers receive about \$500,000. The largest percentage of DFTA's budget—almost 44 percent—is spent on senior center programs. As shown in Chart 10, in FY17, DFTA is estimated to spend \$149 million for senior center programs, up from \$100 million in FY10 when senior center funding accounted for 35 percent of DFTA total expenses.¹ !!

How might we rethink spaces for older New Yorkers?

Who does or does not identify as a "senior citizen"?

What words and qualities of life attract aging New Yorkers?

Which words repel?

What hopes can we have for our older selves in a post-pandemic future?

An overwhelming number of people signed up to discuss these questions — I had planned for thirty participants and ended up with seventy-five. That said, *unfocus group* workshop invitees frequently declined to participate, with younger invitees declaring: "*I don't work with that age group — what could I contribute?*" or, conversely, older New Yorkers saying: "*I'm not that kind of senior.*" Though invitees were not asked to self-identify, of the seventy-five *unfocus groups* participants, an estimated eighteen percent over the age of sixty-five participated.

In rebranding "senior centers," this proposal seeks to address this reticence and, perhaps, the American propensity to deny the aging process and the import of intergenerational bonds.

As all populations and municipal agencies face similar challenges I recommend intergenerational and inter-agency partnership with libraries, parks, gardens, cultural centers, and transportation portals. At the time of this report our lives seem to be headed into unending entanglements with virtual realities. Will social distancing remain part of our vocabulary forever?

Let us use Covid-19 as an opportunity to rethink our social spaces.

¹ <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/aging-with-dignity-a-blueprint-for-serving-nycs-growing-senior-population/>

social club

a deliverable gathering space

who are the people in your neighborhood?²

💡 The increasing size and needs of the aging population combined with the success of the existing senior center program suggests that senior center services will continue to be required in the future. Indeed, the previously mentioned 2016 study found that seniors who do not utilize senior centers cite inconvenient locations as one of the top five reasons they do not attend.³ 💡

² Who are the people in your neighborhood is a reference to the “Sesame Street” song that emphasizes the community is made up of people you meet each day and recognizes essential workers. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V2bblZwIGQ>

³ <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/aging-with-dignity-a-blueprint-for-serving-nycs-growing-senior-population/>

In 1996 the Buena Vista Social Club emerged as the darling of the music world. Named after the members' club in the Buenavista quarter of Havana, a popular music venue in the 1940s, the club recruited a dozen veteran musicians, many of whom had been retired for many years.⁴

⁴<http://www.granma.cu/cultura/2015-07-03/buscando-la-sociedad-buena-vista-social-club>

This phenomenally successful branding method inspired me to imagine similar branding for “senior centers” in New York, each personalized according to geography or special interest — i.e. the Good Companions Social Club, the LaGuardia Social Club, New Lane Social Club. Membership in these clubs would offer a badge of honor and a bridge to transcend public spaces previously segregated by class, culture, age, and race barriers. Similar to the already existing innovative community centers that serve infants to elders and village-style communal living of age-in-place spaces like NORC (Manhattan) and NORC WITHOUT WALLS (Marin County, CA) these social clubs would provide social services, recreational activities, meals, cultural programming and promote:

- Intergenerational pairing
- Multi-Race/Ethnicity participation
- Inter-agency collaboration
- Inter-city exchange programs
- Structured activity as ritual
- Multi-media tools for accessibility, meaningful connection
- Deep awareness/expression of community needs
- Culturally and linguistically appropriate services

three recommendations for branding strategy and structure

01 change name of "senior center" to "social club"

to reflect existing intergenerational “innovative community centers”
and encourage replication of desegregated and welcoming paradigm....
Allow “seniors” to self-identify as “older,” “senior,” “artist,” “Latinx” etc.

02 create membership drive⁵ and offer membership cards

Upon their registration at local social club, members will have a sticker
added to their existing NYC ID card. The sticker offers access to interagency
programming and city discounts. Membership will allow DFTA to track usage.

⁵ New York City has an extensive network of about 250 senior centers that provide an array of services like meals, activities, and help obtaining benefits. The centers—visited by over 29,680 seniors daily—served over 160,000 New Yorkers in FY16. Of the senior centers, 120 are located in New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments (<https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/aging-with-dignity-a-blueprint-for-serving-nycs-growing-senior-population/#edn63>). In 2019 the data shifted to 247 senior centers, visited by 29,726 seniors daily, serving 168,000 New Yorkers and 70 locations are located in NYCHA developments as noted in the master senior center list compiled by the DFTA Bureau of Community Services and <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/operations/performance/mmr.page>



03 curate and distribute social club in a box

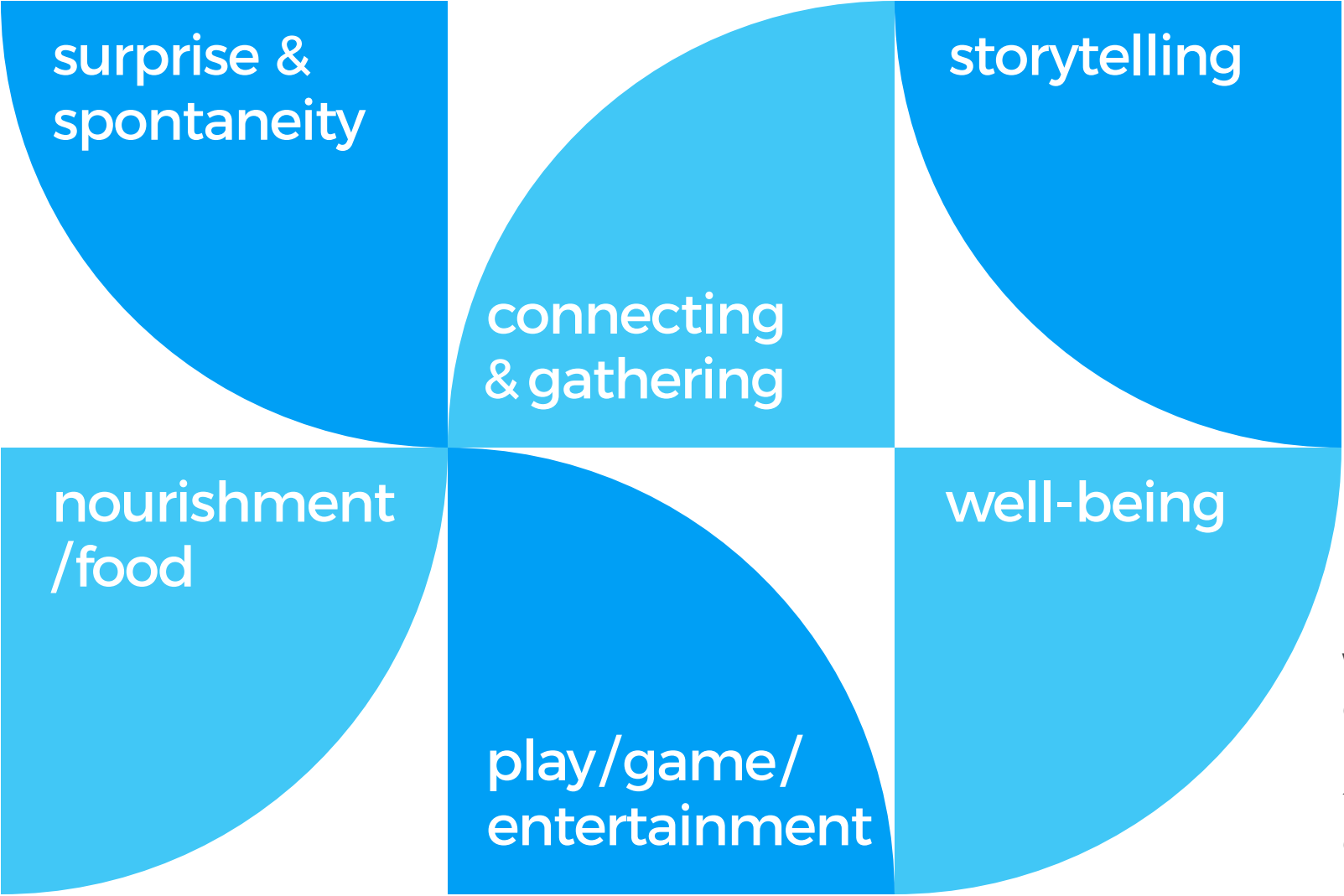
I propose to meet members *where they want to be met*. Literally.

During Covid-19 we need to contain and deliver intergenerational opportunities and services beyond brick and mortar spaces. These opportunities will be literally delivered — or shipped — in a box to members or picked up at a local social club. The curated contents consist of activities and related materials: magic markers, disposable camera, story recording device, seeds, plants, sourdough starter, recipe cards, rituals, Invitations/QR codes and surprises for online cultural and wellbeing activities. The box will be a membership subscription service. See Appendix for curatorial ideas.

(image) social club sticker to be placed on members' NYC ID cards

six ingredients for success

In envisioning social spaces, *unfocus group* workshop participants repeatedly emphasized the importance of these six ingredients of social success. See appendix for participants' vocabulary lists.



operational suggestions

curators

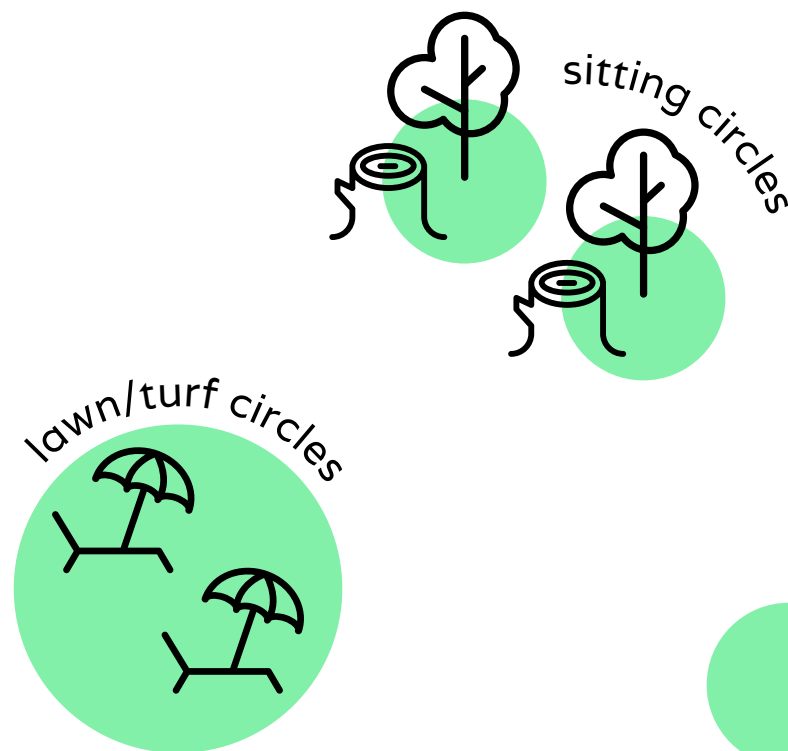
Clubs will have revolving “curators” or “chefs” who will mix the six ingredients of social success in creating club activities as part of members’ free subscription. Who are potential club curators? the *unfocus group* participants!! *unfocus group* participants created a bevy of activities from which curators may choose or use as a point of departure for their own ideas. Curators will include postcards and postage so that participants can offer feedback to help curators make adjustments for future activities. Curators may also include a calendar of structured activities and rituals.

technological requirements

While New York City government has budgeted monies to purchase and disseminate electronic tablets to NYCHA clients, which include some of the DFTA clients, design thinkers in the *unfocus groups* expressed resistance toward increased screen usage. Participants felt that immersive analogue experiences might facilitate “gathering” in a more engaging manner. It’s a balancing act. On one hand virtual platforms offered amazing opportunities for spontaneous and surprisingly intimate connection. On the other hand, Zoom fatigue is already prevalent.

locations

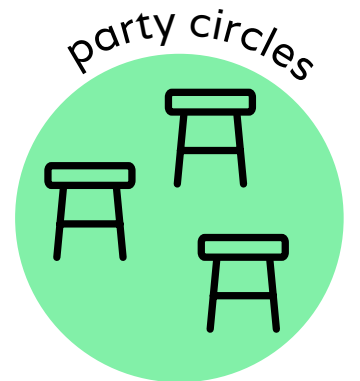
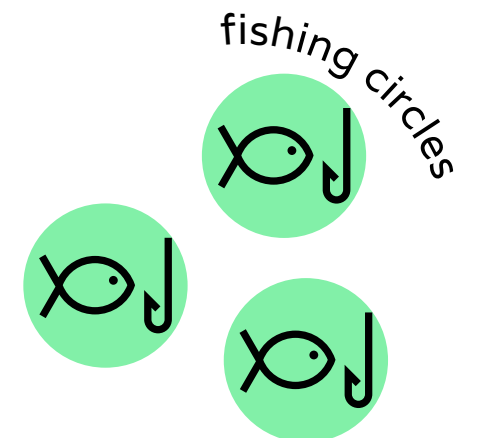
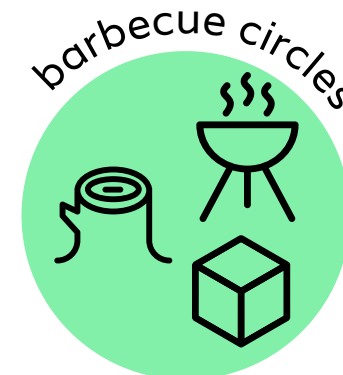
New York City has 259 neighborhoods. Some curators may ask members to meet in a park, some may work entirely via USPS, some may create a phone-in meeting. Members might access other club members via telephone, virtual platform, mail, or public space. To support this portable social club we would invite existing and new inter-agency collaborations to help with marketing, programming and distribution, i.e. libraries, cultural centers, transportation and parks. The club's flexible structure allows for access with or without virtual technology. Our future seems predicated on the possibility that much interaction will be "remote" but local. We still crave intimacy and connection with the people we recognize from our neighborhood, our family, and our friend groups.



beyond the box possibilites

Suggestions from *unfocus group* participants' exit surveys —
See Appendix for full list.

- Design city streets so pedestrians can gather safely
- Make public seating more inviting for social clubs — create buddy benches, indoor atriums and outdoor public spaces to sit and talk
- Find volunteers to teach seniors how to use technology
- Know your neighbors and let them know you
- Be together safely and for short visits with C19 tests
- Schedule weekly kindness acts to strengthen community
- Let go of fear so we can get along with one another...
- Create meet-ups in places that are open and safe.
- Design **"story circles"** that bring people together in socially distanced spots, prompted by activities like barbecuing, meditating, fishing, chatting, etc.



conclusion

There are notable gaps in where senior-focused programs are targeted and where seniors live. For example, certain neighborhoods with large numbers of seniors have relatively few senior centers or lack city benches that are designed to make public transportation and walking easier for older adults.⁶

A lunch box — be it a bento box or stackable Tiffin — is a food container that holds space for nourishment and can symbolize wellbeing. It is often home-packed, portable, and can be taken to a home, to an office, to a street corner. Like the lunchbox our proposed wall-less Social Club allows for a multiplicity of ever-changing and flexible elements, a simple structure that can be literally delivered just as easily to someone who cannot leave their home as to someone who prefers to hold court on a park bench.

⁶ https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/aging-with-dignity-a-blueprint-for-serving-nycs-growing-senior-population/#_edn63

appendix

process

ideation collection as gathering space

The online design thinking workshop itself functioned like a “social kit in a box” — the box being Zoom itself. The core principle of design thinking is empathy — participants need to empathize deeply with clients’ challenges.

We effectively engaged online. This shared process allowed strangers to pose new questions, be vulnerable, and practice empathy within an inter-generational, multi-racial, multi-ethnic cohort. This space allowed for a sharing of values in an entertaining format, gave opportunities to both story-tell and listen, and experience chance encounters with strangers, spontaneity, and surprise.

In tandem with five facilitators, Laura Nova led seventy-five Zoom participants through one hour icebreaker and ideation exercises to explore this challenge:

- “ How might we create deeper connections and meaningful gatherings for socially isolated New Yorkers to bring them closer together than ever before? Consider those who live permanently in social isolation and don’t have access to technology.”

icebreaker

- “ Find one thing in your home that is meaningful to you at this time that you can share with us.”
- “ Please tell the story of your **object** and list **three ingredients** that make it special at this time.”

ideation

- “ How might we create connection and gatherings for older New Yorkers using the objects and ingredients shared? If possible **give your ideas a name/brand**.”

exit survey

Workshop participants responded to two electronic surveys as well — an initial intake and exit survey. Non-municipal participants were offered a choice to keep a \$50 honorarium or donate to humanitarian agency of their choice. Municipal employees participated as part of their normal work day.



participants

DFTA stakeholders

Stakeholder participants included eleven older New Yorkers, caregivers, senior directors and DFTA staff as well as NYC Mayor’s Office and the Office for Urban Design.

participants

Cheryl Moch	DFTA Supervisor Elder Justice
Vutha Guy	DFTA Deputy Chief Operating Officer
Laura Marceca	Greenwich House: Center on the Square Director and Administrative Coordinator of Senior Centers
Kate Douglas	Theatre - Writer/Director/Performer
Roxlyn Moret	Body Mind Centering and Yoga teacher practice
Susan Lee	Tax Preparation
Ben Wexler	Composer/Lyricist and Artistic director of the Broadway Advocacy Coalition
Yehuda Hyman	Theater & Dance. Choreographer, Playwright, Teacher
Andy Ingall	Art Administrator and Independent Curator
Brooke Singer	Environmental artist, Professor of New Media
Kerry Downey	Teaching artist and museum education
Daniel Lazour	Musical Theatre

external experts

participants

Carrie Saunders	DFTA Analyst in Planning, Research, Evaluation & Training (PRET)
Alondra Perez	Program Director and Social Worker, Phipps Plaza NORC
Alec Applebaum	Writing and teaching in journalism and schools
Andrew Freiband	Art, Research, Film, Education
Estefana Fadul	Theatre Director and Producer
Barbara Rich	Chef/Instructor
Ilya Blokh	Director of Product for an online learning startup
Mary Smith	Publishing - editor, retired
Amanda Brennan	Host of How to be American, Tenement Museum podcast; Tour Guide at Turnstile
Rudy Shepherd	Artist and professor of sculpture
Max Resnick	Local Media/Journalism
Aviva Rahmani	Ecological Artist
Sarah Jane Lapp	Editor
Ruth Chung	Designer

DFTA Design for the Future workshop
Wednesday, May 27, 2020 at 12 noon

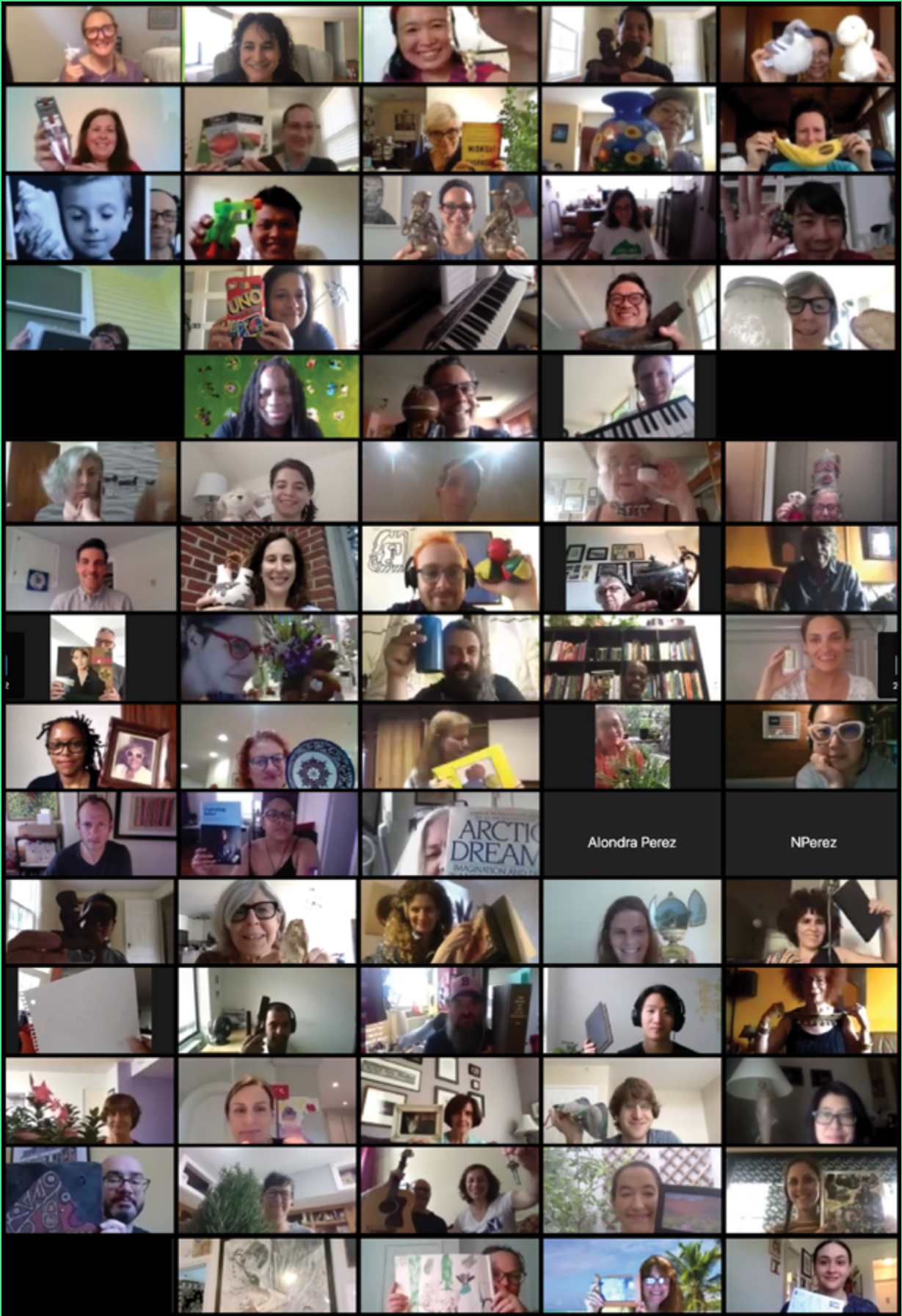
facilitators

Lee Kim	Tracy Brandenburg	Donna Teuber
Sumin Chou	Dan Toyama	

participants

Cheryl Moch	DFTA Supervisor Elder Justice
Vutha Guy	DFTA Deputy Chief Operating Officer
Laura Marceca	Greenwich House: Center on the Square Director and Administrative Coordinator of Senior Centers
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Andy Ingall	Art Administrator and Independent Curator
Brooke Singer	Environmental artist, Professor of New Media
Kerry Downey	Teaching artist and museum education
Daniel Lazour	Musical Theatre
Art Jones	Media and visual arts
Lisa Hecht	Food Photography, Styling, and Recipe Development
King Phojanakong	Chef/Restaurant/Food & Beverage
Janet Zweig	Public art, higher education
Rossana Martinez	Art and philanthropy
Veronica LoFaso	Associate Professor Medicine, Cornell Weil

(image) participants of the icebreaker exercise share an object that is meaningful to them.



DFTA Design for the Future workshop

Thursday, May 28, 2020 at 4pm

facilitators

Lee Kim	Tracy Brandenburg	Donna Teuber
Cheryl Moch	Daniel Paccione	

participants

Carrie Saunders	DFTA Analyst in Planning, Research, Evaluation & Training (PRET)
Alondra Perez	Program Director and Social Worker, Phipps Plaza NORC
Alec Applebaum	Writing and teaching in journalism and schools
Andrew Freiband	Art, Research, Film, Education
Estefana Fadul	Theatre Director and Producer
Barbara Rich	Chef/Instructor
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Mary Smith	Publishing - editor, retired
Amanda Brennan	Host of How to be American, Tenement Museum podcast; Tour Guide at Turnstile
Rudy Shepherd	Artist and professor of sculpture
Max Resnick	Local Media/Journalism
Aviva Rahmani	Ecological Artist
Lisa Kim	Gallery Director, Ford Foundation
Roni Gross	Book artist/graphic designer
Julie Rosenberg	DFTA Social Worker
Taja Lindley	Artist, Entrepreneur and Consultant
Nydia Perez	Case Manager, Phipps Plaza NORC
Little Wing Lee	Interior Design
Brooke Salzman, MD	Geriatrician, Associate Professor

DFTA Design for the Future Workshop

Friday, May 29, 2020 at 12 noon

facilitators

Lee Kim	Sumin Chou	Bob Kalison
Cheryl Moch	Tracy Brandenburg	

participants

Jessica Kahkoska	Theatre & TV Writing (plays, musicals), Community responsive work, Research/Dramaturgy
Karina Aguilera	Photographer and Professor
Julie Gayerkris	Social Worker, Non-Profit Community Center / Wellness + Arts
Cindy VandanBosch	Certified accessibility professional in the museum and tourism industries
Brian Chung	Game Design
Tina Alexander	Digital Marketing / Ecommerce Consultant
Eve Mosher	Environmental artist/facilitator, educator
Esther Cohen	Writer, teacher, activist
Theresa Loong	Experience design and interactive media
Ben Denzer	Artist, Graphic Designer, Educator
Vinay Kuman Mysore	DFTA Deputy Chief Operating Officer
Stacey McMath	Director of Programs, NYC Dept of Cultural Affairs
Madison Gates	DFTA City Research Scientist
Lauren Margolis	Director of Programs, NYC Dept of Cultural Affairs
Milcah Bassel	Artist and Educator
Julie Dalton	Executive Director, Riverdale Senior Services
Tyler Rowland	Artist, Administrator, and Educator SVA Faculty and BFA Fine Arts Director of Operations

Jessica Kahkoska	Theatre & TV Writing (plays, musicals), Community responsive work, Research/Dramaturgy
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Julie Dalton	Executive Director, Riverdale Senior Services
Tyler Rowland	Artist, Administrator, and Educator SVA Faculty and BFA Fine Arts Director of Operations
Eric Rivera	DFTA Special Assistant
Esther Rosario	Press Secretary - Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs
Jackie Berman	DFTA Senior Director, Research
Sarah Jane Lapp	Artist, Puzzle Designer

test workshops

DFTA, Phipps, Dream Design Lab: April, May 2020

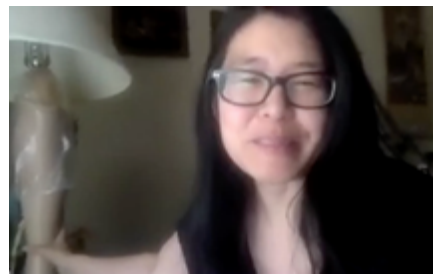
Bureau of Direct Service, Elder Justice	Bureau of Social Services	Members of Phipps Plaza NORC
Cheryl Moch	Bureau of Social Services	Members of Dream Design Lab
Annie Kalman	Eileen Mullarkey	
Carla Lherisson	Alan Hom	
Margie Ruggiero	Carolina Hoyos	
Monica Pareja	Tobi Abramson	
Paula Meyerhoff	Erin Neubauer-Keyes	
Rosalind Pino	Gwendolyn Baker	
Sonia Patterson	Susan Fein	
Cheryl Lee	Jean McEwan	
David Knapp	Janet Smith	
	Annette DelBianco	
	Vera Khaseleva	
	Adele Anderson	
	Pamela Watler	
	Shanna Blinderman	
	Jorge Romero	

final report

editor Sarah Jane Lapp

designer Ruth Chung

selected stories from ice-breaker exercise



participant
Theresa Loong

object
lamp

ingredients
love, humor, memory

Theresa shared her father's lamp who recently passed away. Upon retiring from the VA hospital her father received this lamp made from a prosthetic leg as a gift. The lamp reminds her of the father she loves.



participant
Little Wing Lee

object
portrait of grandmother

ingredients
love, history, style

In this portrait Little Wing's grandmother wears BIG sunglasses. Little Wing loves her grandmother, a woman whose style inspires her own. She still wears big sunglasses today.



participant
Vinay Kumar Mysore

object
sitar

ingredients
recharging, creating, grounding

Vinay has played for pleasure for twenty years. He first had to study Western music, but the sitar is a way to feel connected to his culture. His partner's father plays the banjo, so now he is also exposed to this music.

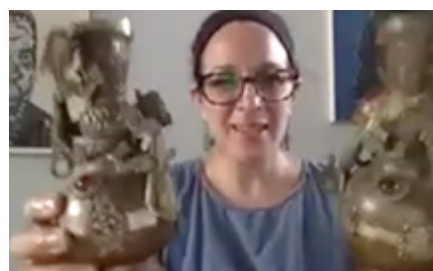


participant
Julie Gayerkris

object
key

ingredients
freedom, space, movement

This key unlocks her neighbor's uninhabited apartment. The apartment (drop the s) offers a whole new world for her — an (not her) extra mental and physical space away from the one room apartment she shares with her husband and son.



participant
Lisa Hecht

object
vase

ingredients
travel, family, storytelling

Twenty years ago Lisa traveled to India to visit her mother's ancestral home in Bombay. When she knocked on the door, the current tenants looked at her face and knew exactly who she was and welcomed her inside. She saw a corner stand her family had left behind and she asked if she could buy it. Though probably not monetarily valuable she felt strong nostalgia seeing the piece. Instead of the corner stand, the residents gave her this vase.



participant
Rudy Shepherd

object
Buddha

ingredients
appreciation, challenges, balance

During his first years as a public school art teacher, Rudy received this Buddha from a student. He didn't think he was a very good teacher, so this token of appreciation meant a lot. The Buddha is now chipped and tattered, but it still feels meaningful.



participant
King Phojanakong

object
mortar and pestle

ingredients
love, community, family

King stood up and showed us how to use a traditional mortar and pestle. With every turn he felt both love and a physical connection to his ancestors, "You don't get from a food processor." The spirit of the process helped King feel closer to his family and community.



participant
Mary Smith

object
silver teapot

ingredients
history, connection, future

This vessel of knowledge was passed down from her great-grandmother, the first female college-educated teacher in Northern Ireland. Mary anticipates passing the teapot down to her daughter and granddaughter along with the story of their groundbreaking ancestor. The teapot connects her to the past and the future.

selected stories from ideation

ideas relevant to
storytelling

artist pair

Matching service that pairs artists with social club members for one-on-one creative calls as a gift exchange.

magic ball

Distribute Haitian magic ball to prompt storytelling.

pause toy

Stuffed toy prompts intergenerational storytelling.

game of questions

Gather and distribute simple weekly games involving “yes or no” questions and/or mystery objects.

reading room

Create intergenerational, telephonic reading rooms and library partnership.

memory kit

Memory kit helps participants remember and tell stories to connect to each other.

roving notebook

Mail a notebook through a community. The first participant writes on one page, next participant writes on the next, etc, creating a collective story, the story of our time.

photo club

Participants receive disposable cameras and use them to photograph something they love and will want to use for storytelling. The club shares images by mail or in person.

pair share

Once a week, two people talk over the phone and share something mailed to one another via USPS. They might use a deck of cards to facilitate story-telling. They might use song recordings that are special to them. They might be making something... At some point an exhibition of pair shares could be presented...

secrets

Share an object and have people guess its origins, meanings, secrets...

ideas relevant to
entertainment
& game play

choose your own adventure

People can enter and create different rooms/worlds.

projection of the people

Participants create outdoor projections of films, personal photographs, or games. They may spray scents or distribute flowers which trigger memories. They may memory-laden songs, too.

immersive radio land

This call-in radio show allows participants to talk to/interact/perform with a composer/performer.

music club

Playing, singing or listening.
Participate at different levels.

ideas relevant to
food/sustainability
/well-being

pet fashion show

Pets provide therapy. This call-in pet fashion show allows participants to share their pet's fashion and antics.

a cup of sugar

Neighbors borrow and swap food items, provide recipes and seeds for growing food, and discuss how their culture of origin cooked specific foods.

garden matching club

intergenerational pairing at communal garden. Partnering with parks, communal gardens.

walk in my shoes

Participants offer tour of their neighborhood, show me the way. Social, health or mobility challenged can offer a virtual tour by telephone.

unexpurgated responses from the workshop

!! Please complete the following sentence with something that you would like to see change in the future about gathering:

What if...!!

"The break out room participants rotated"

"Magic was everywhere"

"What if there was a way older adults across the nation could sign up for a phone call — a buddy to call them once a week?"

"The "open streets" initiative with 100 miles of roads in NYC closed to cars was made permanent."

"Elderly people had agency in deciding what the answers to all the questions you have about them ? What if you had asked the elderly people you are talking about to LEAD this event instead of you leading it? What if you ask them what they want. How are we more knowledgeable about this then them?"

"Fear wasn't such a factor"

<p>"We had more time to be fully present in our communities"</p> <p>"If you mean about further zom meeting likethis, I think this worked just fine"</p> <p>"Breakout groups were a little smaller"</p> <p>"I'd just like to be able to gather in the future - that would enough. Safety is most important."</p> <p>"We incorporate some live input from a few clients/elders?"</p> <p>"The pandemic made our society kinder and gentler."</p> <p>"Better preparation about expectations."</p> <p>"We could be happy with things NOT going back to the way they were before"</p> <p>"We were all educated, vaccinated, supported, fed, housed, and could just hang out together"</p> <p>"What if remote but local was the status quo for civic participation moving forward"</p> <p>"(for future live gathering): What if there are more ways to connect people in different geographic locations?"</p> <p>"We were all treated as equal?"</p>	<p>"We can discuss without polarization, respect one another."</p> <p>"We can make gathering safe and fun."</p> <p>"People could talk to each other with full eye contact for twenty minutes or longer?"</p> <p>"People gathering with people outside their circles"</p> <p>"We had a more concrete problem to solve or constraints to focus on, in designing a solution"</p> <p>"What we broke into different groups throughout the meeting so that we could meet more people."</p> <p>"I never want to see video conferencing become the general norm - whether it be for social, professional or educational gatherings, but I do see it's advantages. I'd like the future of gathering via video conferencing to be able to allow small groups from many perspectives a way to meet, discuss and create innovative ideas."</p> <p>"...our gatherings were more diverse, and promoted friendships and connections across all different groups."</p> <p>"It was a lovely group."</p>	<p>"Ha! I thought that was an effective online meeting. And of course what I'd like in the future is safety for F2F. In bringing forward one idea from the group, if the group could have time to process the collective ideas and tease out strengths and contrasts, it would be good for the group and the ideas. Our leader selected one, wasprobably feeling time pressure. Efficient but not as productive?"</p> <p>"We listened hard?"</p> <p>"We used the arts to heal?"</p> <p>"We cross pollinated the groups or made something physical together as a means to get us ideating"</p> <p>"We included children."</p> <p>"...We each slow down enough to see what the other really needs."</p> <p>"What if people stayed home when they were sick, even when there isn't a pandemic?"</p> <p>"Continued safety precautions when traveling and while in big crowds (concerts, special events, subway etc) to prevent spread of germs. Cruise lines are one of the very few groups that screen for health before boarding."</p>	<p>"We didn't have to wear a mask"</p> <p>"Intercultural and intergenerational gathering was the norm and not the exception."</p> <p>"We never took gatherings for granted again."</p> <p>"We wrote our wish on paper at the end of the session and hid it somewhere, like a time capsule..."</p> <p>"... We received instructions and/or an "assignment" in advance to prepare for the session."</p> <p>"We could feel safe when we gather?"</p> <p>"The small groups could meet before the session"</p> <p>"We could find a safe way for people to gather and continue to benefit from public programming."</p>
			<div>end of report.</div>
40 Design for the Future Laura Nova			41