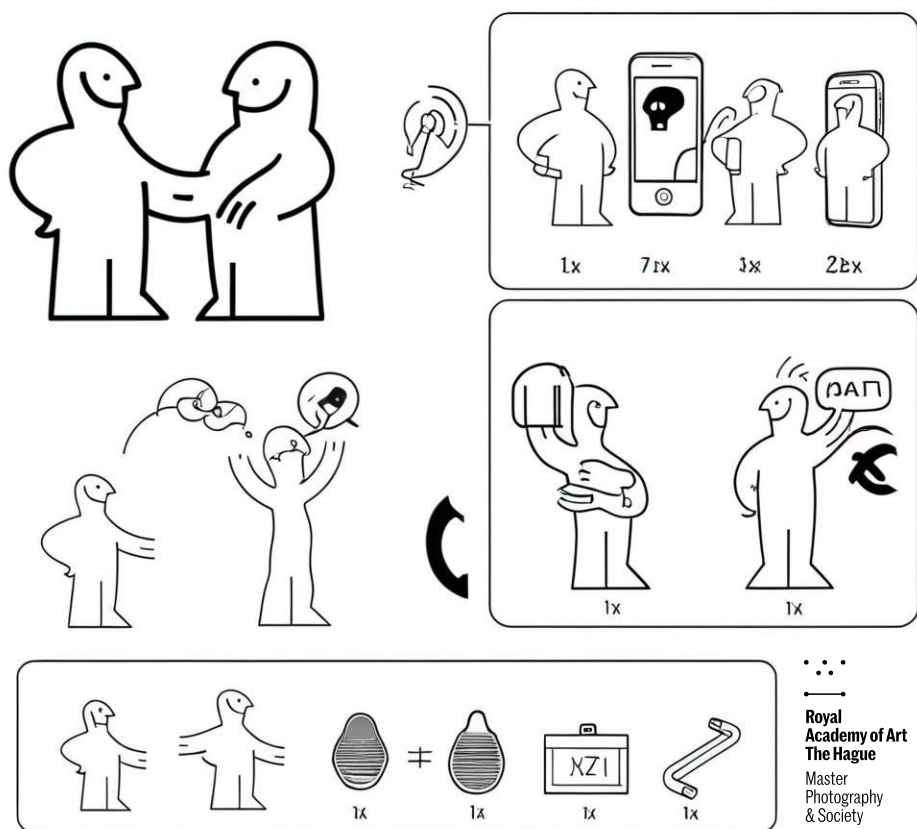


TALKING TO STRANGERS



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 Royal
 Academy of Art
 The Hague
 Master
 Photography
 & Society

A MAPS Toolkit

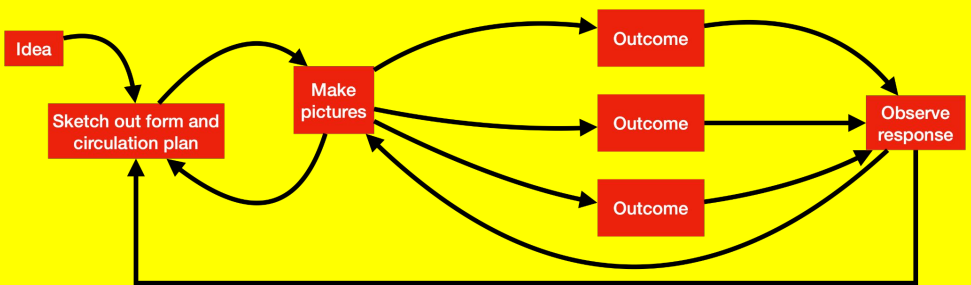
About This Toolkit

The Thematic Seminar *Talking To Strangers* asks how, why and where our photographic projects (could) circulate in the age of small screens.

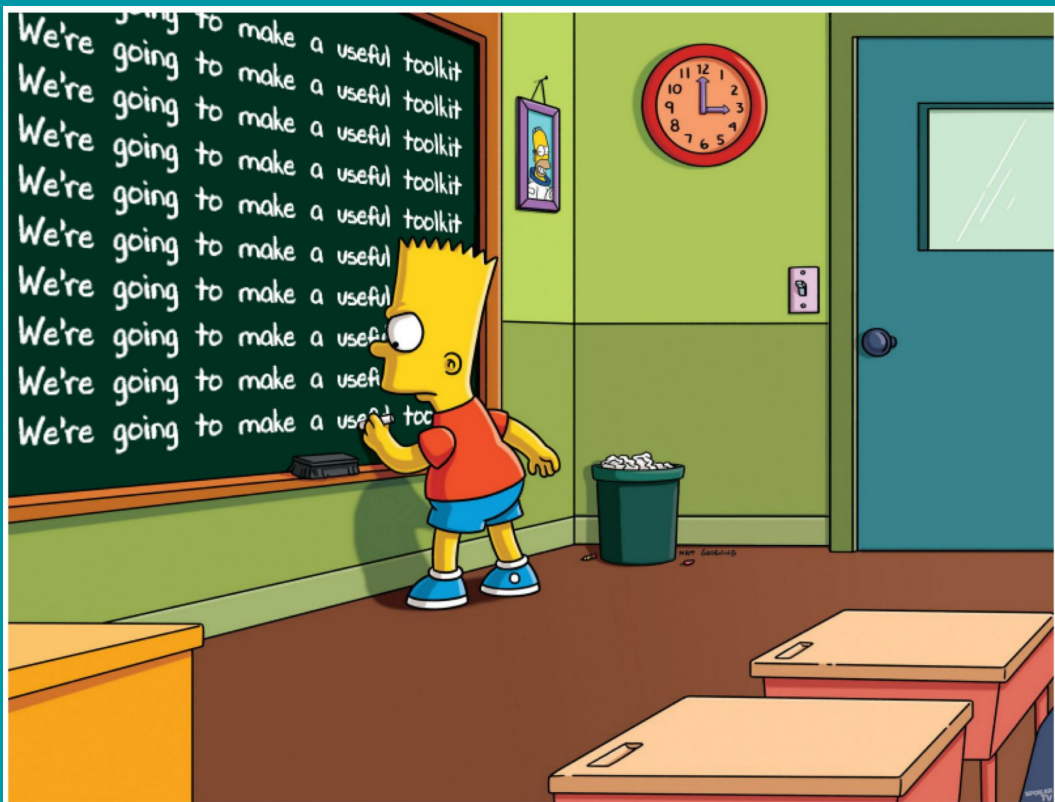
We spent a week conducting discussions and readings, and the result is the toolkit you're now looking at on the screen in your hand.

Experts and institutions exist to support the careful and deliberate production of photo books and exhibitions. Meanwhile online sharing, with its diverse scope and potential, receives less attention.

It is clear that many aspects of intentional online circulation cannot be neatly separated. Where does making become publishing? When is an audience also a collaborator? Should we treat apps as tools or media? And where is the line between intention and impact?



The most important difference circulation seems to offer over the traditional conceptualization of publication, it seems, is an emphasis on the relationship between maker and audience and the importance of inviting – and listening to – their responses. The recursive nature of such forms of making demands new considerations, but their potential is transformed too.



Participants



Aline Pape



Ana Francisco



Andong Zheng

Ft. Sophie Allering & Will Boase



Aline Pape

Aline's project 'Modern Gender, Masculinities' addresses how photography can open spaces to have an impact on masculinities through the act of gender performances.

In this seminar, Aline explored a strategy to reach new audiences who might be interested in participating in the experience. She also found out approaches to circulate the project to build a community around it.





Ana Francisco

Ana's project focuses on sharing the stories and experiences of a group of people living with schizophrenia with the ultimate goals of creating new knowledge, increasing empathy/identification, and, consequently, reducing otherness.

In this workshop, Ana explored the definition of multiple audiences and messages/intentions within a project and how those impact the tailoring of the interfaces and mechanisms utilized.



SCAN ME

EVERYBODY'S GUIDE
TO THE MAGICAL WORLD OF
QR Codes



Andong Zheng



Andong's project 'American Business Trip' seeks to explore the potential for new meanings to emerge as family album photos enter the public cyberspace.

In this workshop, Andong aims to develop effective strategies to make photos from a family album visible to the people currently living where these photos were originally taken, and explore channels to gather more visual materials related to this time-space, to further enrich the depiction of history as well as highlighting its slipperiness.



Message

What Are You Trying To Say?

- A message is what you want to communicate with your images
- Some projects' messages are conceptual, while others are activist or aesthetic
- There may be more than one message within the same project
- Consider how rigid you want your message to be, because digital spaces encourage flexibility

e.g.



1. question, challenge masculine gender performance



2. people living with schizophrenia face a double illness: the condition itself and the associated stigma. increasing identification and empathy will decrease otherness



3. the message could be varied from "this happened here" to "that person in the background is my aunt."

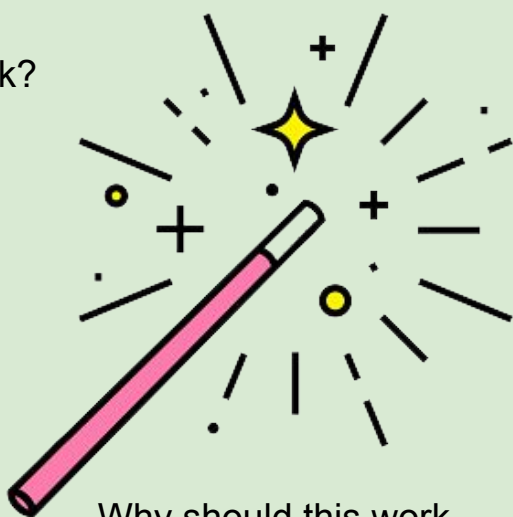
Intention

What Effect Do You Seek?

What do you want your audience to get from your work?

What do you want to achieve with your work?

Where is this work made to be seen?



Why should this work travel in this way?

e.g.



1. to create a workshop to see how far photography can influence the gender expression of men



2. to share stories and information about what it is to live with schizophrenia and to reduce perceived otherness



3. to gather a diverse array of materials from those who experienced the events and locales captured in the original photographs.

Impact 🌠

If this works, how will we know?

- Impact is the outcome/realization of your intention(s)
- How do you know whether your intention has come to fruition?



e.g.



1. the participants that taking part of the workshop and feeling the performative act



2. to have people accessing information that will change their understanding of what it is to live with schizophrenia and increase identification



3. to enrich the depiction of history as well as highlighting the slipperiness of it (see comment section).



Audience

Who are you (not) trying to reach?

- Your audience is the group of people you intend to reach
- There may be different audiences you would like to reach
- Is the audience you are trying to reach narrow or broad?
- How/Where do you reach that audience?

Creating a “Persona”
is a useful tool to find
out more about your
audience

e.g.



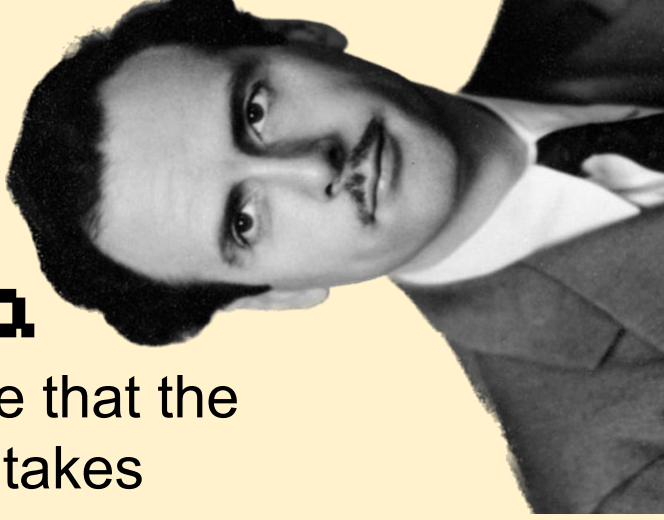
1. the current one: young, open minded about masculinity, the desired one: middle aged / older masculinities not questioning gender norms performing masculinity



2. people who work in (mental) health care; people who do not know much about the condition



3. People who inhabited the regions and time periods captured by these photographs. The further stage of the work leads to a broader audience.



Media

The shape that the message takes

- Most photographic projects centre on photographs (obviously)
- However, screens allow for the inclusion of additional media such as audio and video
- When sharing images digitally, we don't control the context in which they are encountered and read
- This means that we need to be careful in considering what to leave out as well as what to include
- We can also play with multiple representations of the same image, for example showing zoomed-in details or crops of images

e.g.



1. *photography, text, film*



2. *photography, text*



3. *photography+captions/posts/questions*

Format

The way your medium is organized

- Physical or virtual ? In situ / ex situ
- A Work can have several formats
- Different formats bring different affordances
- Consider mobility and accessibility



e.g.



1. workshop: image making as an offer to create an activity + exhibition: form a community



2. exhibition in which additional information and resources are accessible



3. Instagram posts+Google Maps site description photographs+Reddit posts+newspaper classified ads.

Interface

The way your work is accessed

- Interface is the gate through which people pass to access information
- Which are the tools that will allow your audience to access your work?



e.g.



1. flyer, sticker, Instagram-posts, that leads to website to apply to participate + word-of-mouth recommendation



2. Exhibition + QR code on flyer that leads to PDF with additional information and onward journey



3. Instagram profile page where the photographs are showcased and the feedbacks are gathered. Meanwhile, the photographs bleeds into google maps app, reddit posts, and (perhaps) local newspapers.

Mechanics & hooks

How work travels between makers and audiences

Dictionary

Definitions from [Oxford Languages](#) · [Learn more](#)



mechanism

/ˈmekənɪz(ə)m/

noun

plural noun: **mechanisms**

1. a system of parts working together in a machine; a piece of machinery.
"a third motor powers the tape eject mechanism"

Similar: [apparatus](#) [machine](#) [appliance](#) [tool](#) [device](#) [implement](#) [utensil](#) ▾

2. a natural or established process by which something takes place or is brought about.
"the immune system's mechanism for detecting pathogens"

Similar: [procedure](#) [process](#) [system](#) [operation](#) [method](#) [technique](#) ▾

A hook can be something that 'grabs' the viewer, like a headline, or it might also be a promise or reward offered in exchange for viewing or interacting with the work

Mechanics are a set of actions, an operation in which one thing triggers the next thing, a chain of actions & reaction.

e.g.

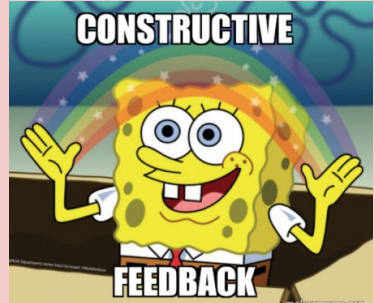
1. participants share their experiences and bring people to exhibitions etc. - community is growing

2. work is exhibited in healthcare related spaces + people access information via a QR code on flyer

3. curiosity for randomness+searchability across different platforms embedded in consistent usernames /domains

Feedback & Analytics

Paying attention to the audience



- When we publish online, it can be really hard to figure out who we are reaching
- However, most digital tools keep records of how they are used, which can help
- Consider using stable upload spaces so that links don't decay and can be tracked
- Register with websites properly, they usually have some kind of dashboard you can access to track your work
- If you want readers to engage with the work by adding information or responding to you, make that process easy



e.g.

1. number of requests of participants



*2. conversations during and post-exhibition;
number of total QR code scans; contacts*



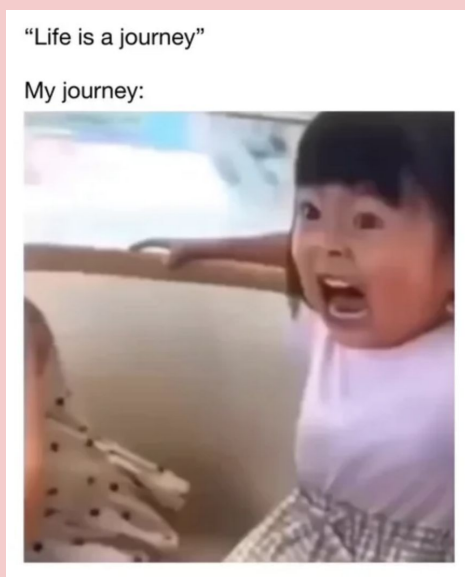
*3. visual materials received; instagram comments;
emails*



Onward journey

How can you/your work and your audience move forward?

- Are there next steps for this work?
- Are there next steps for your audience?
(consider, for e.g., the need to provide more information or aftercare)



e.g.



1. workshops and exhibitions can continue, let the community grow and the project can be repeated in different ways



2. PDF will contain links for additional pieces of the work (e.g., book) and other resources on schizophrenia focused on care and help



3. a bigger pool of photographs and visual materials (originals + those from the audience) accumulated, together with the entire process itself, could be put into an edited format (e.g., a book or a dedicated website) for further circulation

Your Questions Answered

- **Do I need to change the way I work?**
 - Nope. Just treat digital publication as a separate form of publication with its own affordances and pitfalls
- **Should we make an app?**
 - No. It's expensive and people will use it once and forget it. Use existing apps.
- **How is this *not* communication design?**
 - Instead of planning how to structure communication, we're expanding the impact of artistic practice
- **My work is too sensitive for online spaces- what can I do?**
 - The internet is Pandora's Box. Not everything needs to be shared online.
- **Instagram is afraid of my nipples- help!**
 - Try a different platform, or consider what you share in which spaces. We don't make the rules, but we can decide where we go.
- **By defining my target audience, to what degree am I also excluding others?**
 - This depends on whether you only use one strategy. Every form of publication necessarily includes some audiences and excludes others, but by combining strategies we can encourage overlap

Some Useful Tools

Design, distribution, tracking, response



QR codes connect online and offline. They can also track usage statistics, and can be printed out and put in private and public places



Messenger apps allow the transmission of entire files (like PDFs) across the internet, allowing users to publish very efficiently and create work that travels easily



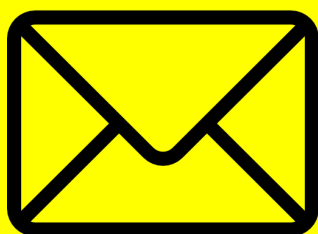
Applications like Instagram are not just publishing platforms- they can also be used for designing outputs which can then be downloaded and used elsewhere



The Screenshot function is a flexible camera which records what is seen on the screen. This is a very powerful tool for making screen-optimised images in a hurry.

BEDANKT ALLEMAAL

ANY QUESTIONS?



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