Place-based Research:
Landscape Decision-making in Scotland

Design Innovation & Land Assets (DI&L)
Design Innovation & Cultural Resonances (Resonance)

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Foreword

Scotland's legacy of land ownership is undergoing significant change through grassroots activism backed up by innovative policies at a national level. Over 75% of people living in the Outer Hebrides are now living on community owned land and established community buyouts are into the second generation of leadership. As a result, communities are now taking responsibility for land assets, developing their own cultures and economies.

We associate 'design innovation' with digital business start-ups and disruptive apps, however design offers approaches, which address complex and systemic challenges - what are frequently called - 'wicked problems'. Wicked problems have no agreed definition and no single solution, much as the challenge of community land ownership has no correct model and no clear pathways. Specific local needs are brought into relation with national (and sometimes international) policy and legislation. Each situation requires innovative ways of working, which meet the ambitions of the people and communities whilst engaging with the policies and frameworks put in place by the Scottish Government. Policy that makes sense as a general approach from an office in Edinburgh meets specific circumstances on the ground, oftentimes when land in private ownership comes up for sale, when a business model (not just a plan) needs to be created and when a community needs to come together to embrace an opportunity. Talk about a wicked problem…

The Innovation School at The Glasgow School of Art is well-versed in the ways design-led innovation approaches can support communities to engage with policy, understanding the need to walk a mile in the shoes of those who inhabit these challenges and geographies.

They understand that change requires a willingness to embrace uncertainty and that whilst a risk assessment is useful, the future is indeterminate. Covid has demonstrated this to all of us and requires design researchers to rethink their approaches. This report therefore highlights the learnings from bringing design innovation approaches to the challenges of communities and land and cultural assets, as well as the adaptation driven post-pandemic. It highlights the value and impact of design innovation approaches to people developing new ways of living well in the northern and western isles. Everyone involved embraces the challenges of working out what community means and how to sustain it.

Dr Chris Fremantle

Place-based Research

A deep understanding of context is critical to place-based research that acknowledges the lived and felt experience of people and communities located in distributed geographies and island archipelagos. Relations with landscape, land and cultural assets are connected to hybrid communities of place (Manzini, 2020) that transcend geographic and virtual contexts and are exemplified by shared values, language and culture.

It is these social processes and cultural identities that are embedded within the physical and environmental character of the Highland & Islands and rural communities in Scotland. In working with such communities DI&L and Resonance followed a transdisciplinary approach grounded in the practice of Design-led Innovation. Design-led Innovation can be described as the successful creative engagement with people and communities that promotes collaborative ways of working as the means by which new knowledge is generated, exchanged and applied in practice.

Methodologically, we endeavour to pay attention to: the situated contexts of our work; asset valuing; mutual learning; reflexivity (rigour through self- examination); emergence (of insights, consequences, actions); community empowerment; self-actualisation; building sustainable capacity; and insights for the long term (policy).

In designing for and with communities, designers are tasked with formulating a response as they seek to support communities through the process of addressing their concerns and opportunities. Specifically, how design supports the process of communities 'coming together', of establishing collaborations around shared issues or challenges.

Working in this way foregrounds questions around how to build equitable place partnerships, how within the process of community engagement and beyond, design draws community members into distinct forms of association, alongside supporting particular types of interaction, collaboration and dialogue. What values emerge, what alternative economies arise and what sustainable capabilities are engendered enable a reimagining of communities as collectives of citizens and as custodians of the future.

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We extend our thanks to...

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Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
Dr Katherine Champion,
University of Stirling
Keiba Clubb,
Videographer and Director
Carey Doyle,
Community Land Scotland
Ass. Prof. Davide Fassi,
Politecnico di Milano
Dr Chris Fremantle,
Robert Gordon University
Morven Gibson,
South West Mull and Iona Development
Dr Saoirse Higgins, artist and director
Graeme Howell,
Shetland Arts Development Agency (SADA);
Dr Liesbeth Huybrechts,
Hasselt University
Dr Michael Johnson,
The Glasgow School of Art
Finlay MacLennan,
Community Land Outer Hebrides
Professor Ezio Manzini,
Politecnico di Milan.
Dr Marianne McAra,
The Glasgow School of Art
Alastair McIntosh, writer and activist
Louise Mullagh,
Lancaster University
Martin O'Neill
The Stove Network;
Dr James Oliver,
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
Professor Frank Rennie,
University of the Highlands and Islands
Dr Sally Reynolds,
Scottish Land Commission

Dr Lesley Riddoch,
Broadcaster, Activist and Journalist
Dr Eirini Saratsi,
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Design Innovation &
Land Assets (DI&L)

2020-2022

Introduction

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded Design Innovation & Land-Assets (DI&L) programme comprises the Design Innovation and Land-Assets Network and Follow-on Funding (FoF) DI&L: Towards New Thinking & Communities as part of the strategic Landscape Decisions fund. The collective aim of DI&L was to develop a multi-faceted decision-making framework, which addressed questions of landscape, land-use and land assets from an environmental and heritage perspective, including intangible cultural heritage. In doing so, DI&L identified how design-led innovation practices deepened understanding and enhanced community decision-making in relation to landscape, land-use and ownership and land-assets towards reimagining 'communities of place'.

DI&L engaged with people, groups and community-led organisations in the Highlands & Islands of Scotland, specifically the Western and Northern Isles to explore individual and collective relationships to land, opportunities for hyper-local decision-making and the priorities needed to support communities at local, regional, and national levels in a post-pandemic world, and in response to complex intersectional challenges including Brexit and Climate Emergency.

The Summer Stravaig (link: www.tinyurl.com/2vwv4abd / padlet password: stravaig) - a two-week immersive digital and distributed symposia - allowed for extensive creative engagement with communities and stakeholders including those involved in design, policy, environmental ecology and heritage. The Stravaig traced themes of: Land in Scotland; Cultural Assets; Dialogue; Policy & Governance; Design for Reimagining Communities; Hope & the Future; and Frameworks for Decision Making.

Informed by design-led innovation, the Land-Assets Decision Making Framework offers a set of interconnecting viewpoints in relation to social, cultural and economic domains. The process underpinning the Landscape Decision Making Framework has allowed for a more dialogic and inclusive decision-making process to be enacted, with key assets and priorities being identified by stakeholder groups. Interviews with community members, practitioners and policy makers further informed the Landscape Decision Making Framework, which can be found within this report.

The overarching aim of DI&L was to explore how a cross-disciplinary Design-led Innovation practice in collaboration with practitioners, academics, policy makers, and community land stakeholders supported the development of a land-asset decision-making framework. The DI&L Follow-on Funding expanded the original DI&L Network from community-based decision-making and land ownership in the Hebrides to wider concerns particularly in relation to social, cultural and economic domains. This extended to the role Design-led Innovation plays in supporting holistic approaches to land-use that reflect the diverse heritage and cultural values of the indigenous island communities of Orkney, Shetland and the Inner and Outer Hebrides.

Place Partnerships

Western Isles

The Western Isles, or Outer Hebrides (Na h-Eileanan Siar), is an archipelago comprised of fifteen inhabited and more than fifty uninhabited islands off the north-west coast of Scotland. Across the 130 mile stretch from the Butt of Lewis to Barra Head, Scottish Gaelic remains the first language. The islands themselves have an ancient geology and are formed of basalt, granite and Lewisian gneiss: a complex metamorphic rock that formed over two billion years ago. The latter is the oldest rock in Europe and has gifted the largest island within the Western Isles its name, the Isle of Lewis. It is this island that homes Calanais Stones, the oldest standing stone henge constructed around 2900 BC.

Neolithic communities began farming the land of the Outer Hebrides from around 3700 BC and the millennia that followed saw the establishment of Celtic clan structures and passing of Viking raids, which brought Lewis into Norwegian ownership from the 9th to 11th centuries. Lewis was brought back into Scottish ownership in 1266 following the Battle of Largs and from then, until the Highland Clearances of the late 1700s, was inhabited by both lordship and clan chieftain social structures. The inequitability of land ownership and depopulation that followed this period has inspired a strong contemporary culture of community land ownership across the Isles. In pursuit of sustainable development, environmental protection and repopulation, community land trusts have been used as a mechanism by residents to re-claim their rights to local decision making. In 2014 it was documented that over 50% of all land in the Outer Hebrides was community owned and 75% of the population lived on community owned land (Community Land Scotland, 2014). This movement has increased local employment and population, invested in off-grid renewable energy initiatives and affordable housing, and established widespread natural resource and biodiversity protection (Rennie and Billing, 2015). The North Atlantic Current, which passes overhead, brings a milder climate for a such an exposed and northernly location, and with this, a range of rare bird species that migrate across the islands in spring and autumn.Community Trust, Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn, established a nature reserve and observatory on Loch Stiapabhat to celebrate the phenomena.

Orkney/Papa Westray

Orkney comprises over seventy islands and skerries, twenty of which are permanently inhabited. Four islands are connected to the Orkney mainland by a series of causeways known as the Churchill Barriers: South Ronaldsay, Burray, Lamb Holm and Glims Holm. The causeways were used as defences during World war two but now connect the islands removing the need for boat or plane travel between them, making them feel less like islands and more part of the Orkney mainland.

The islands have a history of close human interaction with the sea, from Neolithic times to present-day renewable wind and wave energy technology (Jones Wickham, 2017). The Orkney archipelago is today often considered peripheral to the rest of the world but was once seen as central (Oliver, 2016). It was a busy hub of activity in Norse times from the eighth to 13th centuries and the remnants of monasteries, Viking graves and settlements are situated across the islands. Hermits' and Irish monks' desire for remoteness was about being at one with nature and God and their chosen remote islands were places for contemplation, meditation and prayer. Islands represented a chance to step away from the rest of the world and think clearly away from mainstream modern life (Orkneyinga Saga, AD 2000).

Modern desire for remoteness comes from the current fast pace of life partially resulting from constant access to others via social media and technology. The sense of edge, 'geographical precision' (Baldecchino, 2005: 35) and 'obstinate separateness' (Edmond and Smith, 2003: 4), has been a defining feature of islands. The self-contained scale and 'edgeness' of islands mean that the changing ecology and environment can be measured and monitored easily. Islands can be regarded as the antithesis of the global issue of climate change – an ungraspable problem too big to hold in one's mind's eye. Living on an island is a complex expression of identity, according to Stratford (2008: 160), requiring sharing an ethos of private and communal living.

- Dr Saoirse Higgins, 2020

Shetland

The Shetland archipelago is located 100 km north of Scotland, and the capital Lerwick is almost equidistant from Bergen in Norway as it is from Aberdeen in Scotland. It comprises about 300 islands and skerries, of which 16 are inhabited, with around 80% of the archipelago's population of 23,200 living on the main island (called Mainland) (National Records of Scotland, 2017).

Traditionally the island economies have been reliant on agriculture and fishing, having received an economic boost as a result of public spending funded by the oil and gas industries over the past three decades. More recently, tourism has constituted an important source of income. Tourism has had a profound impact economically, socially and culturally on many island communities (Macleod, 2013).

Shetland also has a rich history of craft work, including the internationally recognised traditions of Fair Isle knitting and lace making (Matarasso, 2012; Scott & Marr, 2012). Despite this, it has been acknowledged that there is a lack of in-depth research on the creative industries and the region faces particular innovation challenges, including dispersed working communities and the attendant lack of technological infrastructure that can limit opportunities across the creative economy (HIE, 2013).

Furthermore, within creative economy policy and academic research more broadly there has been a tendency to focus on global centres or formerly industrial cities in the process of restructuring, with a lack of attention on non-urban and, indeed, island-based creative activity. Islands are frequently characterised as remote and peripheral and therefore their communities often denied centrality (Grydeh et al., 2015). As Alexander (2016, 2015) further asserts in relation to migration decisions within the Scottish islands, applying mainland models to island contexts risks obscuring the patterns we can see and understand.
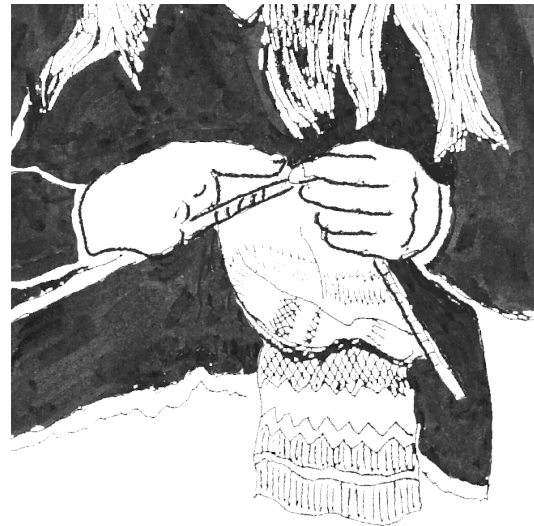
Mull/Ulva/Gometra

The Isle of Mull is the second-largest island in the Inner Hebrides, after Skye, and is surrounded by a variety of smaller islands, namely Iona, Ulva and Gometra. Beinn Mhòr is the only munro on the island and is also the highest peak in all of the Scottish isles. Once volcanically active, Beinn Mhòr is the remains of a local volcano along with the basaltic columns on Staffa and Ulva.

Now the Isle of Mull is dense with woodland and moorland, laying home to abundant and diverse flora and fauna. It is a regular tourist spot for bird watchers and a filming location for the BBC's Springwatch, which often features Mull's eagles, otters, red deer, seals, whales and dolphins. Unlike the Outer Hebrides, Mull and its surrounding islands were invaded by Irish settlers who initiated the formation of the Gaelic kingdom Dál Riata in the 6th century. During this time, Columba arrived in Iona and formed the Christian monastery of Iona Abbey. Iona maintains a strong community and remains a cultural symbol of Christian spirituality. Dál Riata was however occupied by the Norse, claimed and eventually released alongside the Western Isles.

The Isle of Mull shares a contemporary culture of community land and asset ownership with the Western Isles (Outer Hebrides). The South West Mull and Iona Development Trust (SWMID) delivers numerous community-led projects across the islands to support economic, social and environmental regeneration. This includes the management of the Tiroran Community

Forest, the recent establishment of a seaweed farm and watersports club at Bendoran and the management of the Ross of Mull Community Garden. The North West Mull Community Woodland Company (NWMCWC) manages the Langamull and West Ardhu forests, has established nine new forest crofts and a forest school. In 2018 the community company purchased the neighbouring island of Ulva (Ulbha). Now almost completely uninhabited, the 7.4-mile-long island was once home to over 800 residents and a thriving kelp industry before the Highland Clearances. NWMCWC now seeks to support the gradual repopulation of Ulva through the development of affordable homes and sustainable infrastructure.

Just beyond the Isle of Ulva lies the tiny island of Gometra. Accessible only by a small bridge between the islands, it is inhabited and managed by climate activist and geographer, Roc Sandford. Those who live on or visit the island maintain an off-grid lifestyle that celebrates the island's zero-carbon footprint.
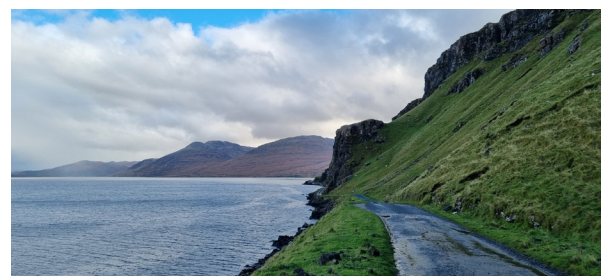
Methodology and Emerging Themes

Research Approach: A Hybrid Method

With DI&L research commencing in January and March 2020 respectively, both projects were impacted significantly by the first 2020 Covid-19 lockdown. The DI&L Network's original intentions to carry out contextually located scoping activities and co-design with communities in the Hebrides and Northern Isles of Scotland were initially suspended with the anticipation that these could resume in Summer 2020, but rising Covid-19 cases, ongoing travel restrictions and further national lockdowns prevented the research from taking place as planned. Being cognisant of the unique challenges that the pandemic has imposed on small island communities; our duty of care to them, ourselves as researchers and GSA institutionally; and the likelihood that the easing of restrictions may be reversed or reimposed, the DI&L network developed a hybrid approach blending in-person and distributed methods, tools and techniques.

Remote working has led to significant benefits and rewards concerning engaging people and communities in research contexts. The network has developed approaches to enable diverse people and communities to coalesce, identified opportunities to stimulate dialogue amongst decision-makers working in distinct contexts and at different scales, and experimented with creative and participatory approaches to mediate cultural, geographic and technological barriers to engagement towards stimulating, capturing and disseminating insights and outcomes that address complex societal challenges. With these limitations came opportunities to connect with distributed, dispersed and diverse communities of place and of interest.

Reconsiderations of the concepts and roles of place, communities and space are an area of much attention in place-based research. Within this, interventions that seek to strengthen community resilience at the hyperlocal scale can lead to immediate impact, and as Manzini (2020) unpacks, there is a need to actively 'cultivate[ing] a network of relationships that, after the crisis, could evolve into hybrid communities of place, that is, communities capable of living in both the physical and the digital space' (2020). Exploring ways that onsite placemaking methods and approaches can be reframed for distributed engagement, Cipolla (2020) highlights that digital approaches have the capacity to 'progressively include the connections and relations between residents and nurture a sense of place', but that 'there is much to be learned on nurturing interpersonal relationships and a sense of place in a contactless way' (2020: 681).

As such, the research approach was reframed around virtual engagement, co-design and dissemination. This has enabled the DI&L programme to meet its objectives and to use the awarded funding in ways that are not only pragmatic and possible, but which illuminate and aggregate nuanced perspectives, ambitions, and ideas surrounding land-assets and landscape decision-making.

Methods: Co-Design

Contextual grounding within the frame of community land decision-making in Scotland was established through a series of scoping interviews with prominent individuals and organisations. At a local scale, this included individuals in community trust leadership roles, residents, and private landowners with expertise in collaborative and sustainable land use. Regionally and nationally, this involved third sector organisations who support community landowners and influence land reform policy and political agendas. Those involved in the scoping interviews remained core members of the wider DI&L network and participated in identifying emerging areas of thematic interest, other relevant land decision-making stakeholders and communities that represented diverse needs and models of local decision-making.

On-site collaborations and workshops with community groups across rural Scotland were intended to form a practice-based investigation that would test Design-led Innovation's ability to support the development of new participation approaches. However, restrictions imposed by the pandemic required DI&L to reform as a remote programme of research activities. Recognising that contextually-situated, practice-based activities could not be effectively replicated online due to the connectivity limitations and accessibility needs of diverse residents, a new approach was crafted that prioritised the formation and evolution of the DI&L stakeholder network. Community representation within the network was fundamental and this was established through the involvement of resident land trust representatives from the Inner Hebrides, the Outer Hebrides, the Northern Isles and mainland Dumfries and Galloway.

Over the course of two weeks, an online symposium of talks and events titled the 'Summer Stravaig' brought members of the network together with social and Participatory Designers to discuss themes within the research: Land in Scotland; Cultural Assets, Hope and the Future; Dialogue, Policy and Governance; (Designing for) Reimagining Communities. Embedded creative practitioners from the Hebrides and Northern Isles were commissioned to produce creative representations of their communities through engagement with residents directly. Three subsequent films were scoped and commissioned during the Stravaig, which illustrated residents' experiences of living and participating within their landscape. The Stravaig concluded with plenary sessions facilitated by thematic specialists to collaboratively reflect upon findings from the discussions. These reflective discussions enabled the identification of participation needs, and barriers and opportunities within land decision-making across hyperlocal, regional and national scales.

Towards Reimagining Communities: Summer Stravaig 2021

The Summer Stravaig created opportunities for a distributed network of communities, activists, practitioners, researchers, Post Graduate Research (PGR) students, partners, stakeholders and policymakers to exchange lived experiences of landscape, participation, and practice to generate insights, approaches and collectives towards 'reimagining communities'.

Taking place in July 2021 and responding to the constraints imposed by Covid-19, the Summer Stravaig acted as a virtual platform and symposium to craft conversations and share insights about landscape decision-making challenges and opportunities. The Stravaig advanced multi-disciplinary discourses through exploring diverse heritage and cultural values within island archipelagos in the Highlands & Islands of Scotland and the role that design-led innovation may play in enhancing decision-making in relation to landscape, land-use and land assets. Reviews of participatory mechanisms reveal that processes are often limited in citizen access, engagement and representation.

This presented a timely opportunity to explore how notions of ownership and empowerment are understood and integrated into advancing 'political agency'; how communities become aware of the opportunities policy affords; and how policy can be enacted to benefit communities. Discussions revolved around the following themes:
Reimagining communities with a focus on existing cultural and material assets;
Equitable, representative and inclusive participation and defining pluralities of value;
Methods, tools, artefacts - digital and/or physical – that facilitate decision-making;
Interaction between the past and present in advancing political agency;
New alternative models that support community and environmental renewal;
Towards new communities: **hope and the future**.

Land in Scotland

The first session was chaired by Frank Rennie, Professor of Sustainable Rural Development, the University of the Highlands and Islands, who brought together Carey Doyle of Community Land Scotland, Finlay MacLennan from Community Land Outer Hebrides, Morven Gibson from the Southwest Mull and Iona Development Trust, and Dr James Oliver from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.

Discussions explored the complexities of land and asset management across diverse land types, including both urban and rural, and within various ownership models such as community land trusts and private land ownership structures. The current role of participation within land and asset decision making was presented from different perspectives and across various scales, from neighbourhood to national levels. This allowed the identification of the pragmatic capabilities and limitations of participation within decision making structures, particularly in relation to the roles of individuals, local authorities, and public bodies and highlighting that policy and decision-making models of community land ownership must be adapted. An 'innovation from the edge' approach was advocated for, that embraced learning from the advances of rural communities over the past three decades and recognition that despite success inequalities still exist.

Stravaig derives from 18th century Scots extravage, meaning 'wander about; digress, ramble in speech', in turn derived from Medieval Latin extravagari 'wander, stray beyond limits'.

Highlights of the two-week programme included:
Panel presentations from international experts in design innovation, land, democracy and policy;
Thematic plenary sessions with broader cross-sectoral partners and stakeholders;
Film previews from creative practitioners based in the Western and Northern Isles;
Presentations with postgraduate research students.

Cultural and Land-Assets

The second session traced cultural aspects of communities related to place-based ways of life, beliefs and traditions. Through this lens culture(s) can be tangible, reflected in particular craft, design and creative objects and heritage landscapes, and also intangible, including stories, narratives, rituals and a sense of a shared community. In this manner, cultural assets are both polyvocal and polysemic.

Cultural assets are often relationally linked to place, for example, through employing vernacular materials, by skills linked to a particular locale or imbued with an aesthetic that is rooted in tradition. They are also commonly place-based and shared by a particular group of people in a particular time and therefore reflect a complex nexus of social relationships or a collective sense of cultural capital (McHattie et al 2018, 2019). On the one hand, there was a clear emphasis on historic traditions and the meaning of significant local sites and land-assets. This enfolded ecological considerations, noting the value of the immediate natural connection that comes from residing in an area of outstanding beauty. Here, the idea of landscape takes on a cultural layer. Beyond this, there was also a strong emphasis on contemporary initiatives, which give renewed form to cultural assets such as music and craft, and their broader relationship to the landscape.

Dialogue, Policy, Governance

The third invited perspectives from academia, design, policy, and community engagement on dialogue, policy and governance. Historical evidence and interpretation can be positioned as resources to inform alternative directions, exploring relationships between historical and contemporary dialogues about the qualities and characteristics of land as an asset and how such constructs can be used to shape landscape decision-making in action, from addressing communities' practical questions, to opening discourse around land reform, land rights, and broader social, cultural and environmental concerns. Interrogating the relationship between ingrained political structures and funding models at a macro level and communities' energy and resilience to collectively tackle complex societal challenges, collaborative approaches are essential in strengthening decision-making cultures and mapping meaningful landscape opportunities. This raises questions concerning the position and power of design in reframing landscape decision-making, its role within established institutions and organisations and its capacity to navigate nuanced socio-political situations.

Dialogue with communities is critical here, and while community-based organisations may excel in sharing information transparently and ensuring that communities can understand how decisions are made, the emphasis must be on reciprocity, exchange and action for communities to influence policy. In small island communities, transitory spaces within the land can function as more visible and inclusive venues for stimulating, sustaining and extending decision-making.

There are opportunities for communities to become involved in landscape decision-making at a local level, and organisations such as the Scottish Land Commission are interlinked with Community Land Scotland to feed local views into regional and national debates. The core challenges lie in supporting communities to engage in opportunities to influence governance at this scale, to support them to build the capacity and resources required to engage, and to ensure that governance models are designed to foster inclusive and accessible engagement.

Towards Reimagining Communities

This session brought together five panellists: Dr Nicola St John and Ass. Prof. Yoko Akama of RMIT in Melbourne, Australia; Ass. Prof. Davide Fassi and Prof. Ezio Manzini of Politecnico Milan, Italy; and Dr Liesbeth Huybrechts of Hassalt University, Belgium. This theme sought to explore the ways in which community-based co-design and participatory design projects can support a 'reimagining of the ways groups come together'; through a process that is equitable, representative and inclusive; a productive decision-making process. Nicola and Yoko put forward a position, which revolved around working relationally, what they termed 'on country'. In this account, country is a place of belonging. There is an absolute kinship with place. They seek to avoid an homogenising ontology of co-designing. Here, the 'co' of co-design is a refusal to see the self as an epicentre of knowledge. It is instead about attuning to place, recognising that we are entangled with our positionalities and our situatedness. 'Anma' was proposed as a guiding principle, which refers to waiting, working slowly with communities; and readying, a state of being and becoming that you are always ready to embrace.

Intentional Communities: Communities of Place

For Ass. Prof. Davide Fassi and Prof. Ezio Manzini, the key point of emphasis was placed on how we think about communities. In their account, we can contrast traditional communities with intentional ones (i.e., communities who choose to come together), physical and digital ones, as well as open and closed ones.

In project-based communities, there are institutional actors and research-based actors. Institutions are seen to have the role of endorser, facilitator and partner, ultimately helping the projects to come about. The 'research lab' is seen to have all of these roles too but must also act as a trigger - to be the bridge - between top-down decision-making and project proposals. A new community of place emerges out of a traditional community, which has through the support of institutions and actors been able to host a diversity of projects, or project-based communities, which are relatively autonomous. It is an outcome of a design process but it's not designed within it. In terms of its form, it is a self-organising mesh of interweaving groups, with a diversity of actors and a diversity of participation that may exist longer term.

Frameworks for Decision-Making

Dr Oliver Escobar focused on the notion of 'democratic innovation' in response to contemporary upheavals faced by democratic institutions and what future challenges and possibilities guide the development of a participatory culture in governance, for example, mini-publics, participatory budgeting and crowd-sourcing. A particularly prominent point emerged in relation to the challenge of 'reshaping' existing mindsets and ways of working in this context, i.e., democratic innovation.

In this context, it was noted that if structures are to be reformed such that the various levels of governance interact appropriately and decisions are not top-down, we need to consider how citizens are invited to participate – as spectators or actors? Oliver argued that if democracy is to be renewed we must seek to reimagine what democracy is, what forms it can take and how, within this, citizens can be invited to become actors. It is in this way that cultural change can come about. An important aspect highlighted here in relation to the Scottish context, was the lack of local government structures and large geographic areas involved in local representation.

Films and Embedded Practitioners

Embedded Practitioners: Films of Place

DI&L commissioned three filmmakers to creatively explore landscape decision-making 'in practice' in the Scottish Western and Northern islands. The films foreground key insights pertaining to local assets and their sustainability, decision-making infrastructures across island cultures, and the role of creative practice and practitioners to support articulations of innovation within these contexts.

Saoirse Higgins

Saoirse Higgins is a multi-media artist and designer from Dublin, Ireland now based on Papa Westray, Orkney where she collaborates with local experts and communities to explore the connections between the world that we live in and our expectations for the future. Her film 'common good' located on the North Hill

on Papa Westray acted as a site for inquiry that positions collective cattle grazing within a defined natural ecosystem that represents both 'fragility and balance in terms of the delicate decisions that are taken to protect its future'. While local decisions are made for preservation, sustainability and survival, the islanders have little say over global policy agendas and their impact on the island. Decision-making can be seen as a constellation, in which some access points are permeable and others are impenetrable. Saoirse's film speaks to the need to balance sensitivity, integrity and a duty of care to communities and to represent authentic local assets, experiences and perspectives.

"Island communities; relationships with land are omnipresent and enmeshed in daily life and there is more distance from centralised systems and structures."

Keiba Clubb

Keiba Clubb is based in Shetland and runs Keiba Film - offering filming and photography locally as well as globally - producing adverts, music videos, visual art, documentaries, explainer videos and product imagery. Sharing her experiences of growing up on Shetland and returning to the islands, Keiba foregrounds the inspiration she takes from engaging with traditional industries and individuals who are 'living off the land' and rely on the islands' natural assets as material for both sustenance and exchange.

This is exemplified by challenges within the wool industry, which are pronounced in Shetland, whereby the indigenous knowledge, hand skills and social networks of crofters and crafters are deeply embedded in Shetland sheep, wool and material culture. Notions of value are developed in Keiba's film, linking concepts of ownership to tensions surrounding preservation and progress, expressions of identity, belonging and relations with and to landscape.

Beatrix Wood

Beatrix Wood is based in South Uist and is a self-shooting Director/Producer who leads production company TrixPixMedia making creative documentary films for UK and international audiences via TV, cinema and online platforms. Beatrix's film foregrounded her parallel practice as a crofter or 'farm maker' as physically grounding her on South Uist. Through crofting Beatrix has been involved in traditional forms of decision-making that have given her an insight into challenges and opportunities for future development. Radical innovation within land ownership is predicated on new forms of leadership - the ways in which governance structures are distributed and embedded - vary from community to community as well as relationships. Historical and contextual awareness and sensitivity, are required to drive forward change: 'it's easy enough to observe this landscape, it's difficult to actually interact with it on a on a meaningful level of what goes on underneath and behind the scenes to power it forward'. The use of land and the value it creates must be reimagined.

Insights

Hope and The Future:
An Era of Hope

'Hope and the Future' - in a post Covid world - proposes that the poetic recognition of land tells the story of the past and with it shapes our identities and ways of being, such that the future is one that is hopeful. Through sensitive activism and holistic processes, we are restoring the very human relationships with land and the future heritage for those who come after us. Within the process of reimagining and intentionally shaping natural heritage and qualities reflect a 'spiritual revolution', which is in contact with the earth (Jungstra, C. 2022), as an intricate connection to nature. This form of engagement is one that runs through DI&L and informs the future - through being present and engaged - working with the natural cycles, rhythms and rituals of nature as a tangible web of connections with the land that reveals its visible and multi-layered biography.

Throughout Stravaig discussions, narratives of hopeful futures were shared in parallel with reflections on the past and current experiences of navigating the complexities of policy, participation and deliberation: the reality of land decision making in Scotland. The following themes present DI&L's findings, which address the role that design-led innovation may play within supporting democratic models of community land and asset decision-making.

Creativity Allows for
Greater Inclusivity

The role of creativity (e.g. art, crafts, poetry, creative writing, sculpture) can be seen to shape shared narratives and identities and offers communities an opportunity to engage with people and landscape in dynamic, open and experiential ways. Throughout the Stravaig, this was demonstrated by references to community-engaged arts, the involvement of arts practitioners and their ability to bring communities together. Beyond socially engaged art and arts practitioners' use of interactive installations and events to stimulate shared local narratives, the introduction of creative facilitation through external (non-resident) specialist practitioners has been demonstrated by landowning communities, as led by Community Land Scotland. It can be proposed that design-led innovation may have a further role to play in co-developing creative engagement with communities while providing expert facilitation support. This support, due to its reflexive and intersubjective positioning, enables creative participatory practitioners to navigate different perspectives between residents with minimal conflict and identify and visualise shared values and visions for the future.

Visualising Local Assets Supports Community Decision-Making

Communities with successful experiences of collaboratively developing local assets, such as community centres, seaweed farms, renewable energy initiatives, affordable housing programmes and social enterprises, did so by gaining deep understandings of their existing assets and engaging with relevant local stakeholders who influenced and were influenced by their transformation. Through this process of hyperlocal and informal engagement, unheard and relevant voices such as local people who would be impacted by the developments, were more likely to be identified and involved in the decision-making process. Where design plays a role, is in the visualisation of local stakeholder networks and their relationships to land assets. Visualising these social networks alongside asset mapping may support community groups to understand who influences what and who is influenced by what decisions, in turn revealing unheard voices and providing direction towards inclusive engagements.
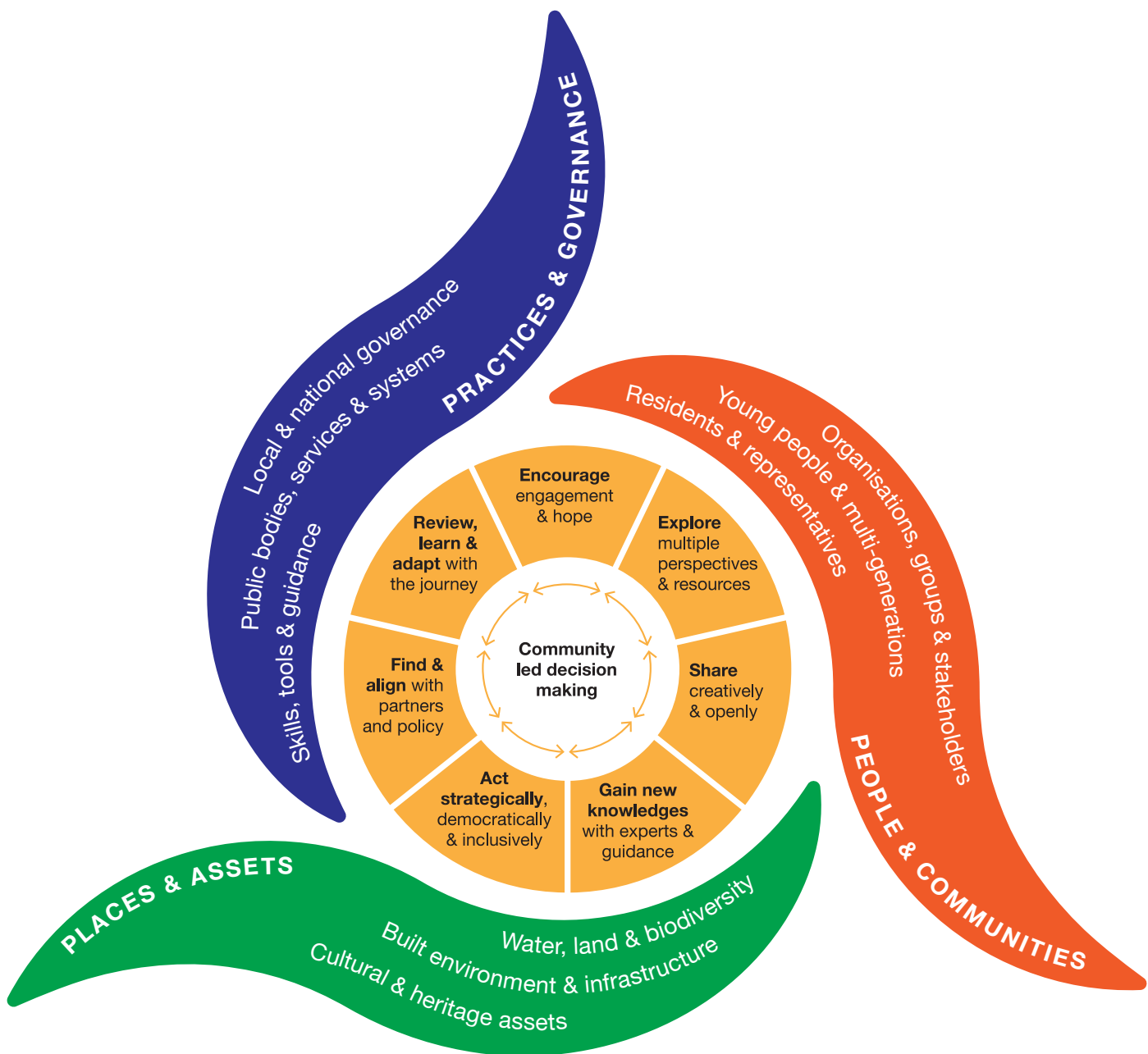
The Need for Greater Connection Across Systems

Beyond local assets and stakeholders, various Scottish policies and local governance structures influence community land decision-making via national targets that bind funding offers, incentivisation, and available support. At a national level, public organisations also support community groups to access and participate in formal decision-making processes through the development of tools and guidance, as influenced by policy agendas. Stakeholders at regional and national levels therefore influence what can be achieved within local and hyperlocal community decision-making. This wider network of policies, public organisations and resources is there to support community groups to increase their participation capabilities. However, the challenge of navigating through the system with a lack of clear direction often left communities confused, frustrated and exhausted on their journey towards more equitable land decision making. Organisations who seek to support communities in this public model experience competitive funding processes that encourage a duplication of efforts and contradictions, thus increasing the system's complexity. The role of design in this instance, can be to facilitate engagement and shared understanding between public sector organisations and communities towards developing consistent models and offerings of support that respond to the holistic experiences and needs of communities. Embracing cultures of collaboration and shared innovation across the sector is a transformation that can be shaped by political intervention and multi-level cooperation.

Landscape Decision-making Framework

A Design-Led Approach:
Next Steps to a Conceptual
Framework

The DI&L team have developed a conceptual Landscape Decision-Making Framework that supports communities to navigate tthis complex and multilayered system. Recognising that community engagement must be supported by reinforcing connections and collaborations amongst multilevel stakeholders and systems as a means of enabling consistent and accessible guidance and information, addressing barriers to resourcing and capacity within decision-making, and ensuring that informal interaction leads to meaningful participation, and in turn, to actionable change. Thus, highlighting opportunities to bring together further networks, knowledge, skills, roles and resources across these geographic and systemic scales that support people and communities to participate in effective landscape decision-making.

PRACTICES & GOVERNANCE

Local & national governance
Public bodies, services & systems
Skills, tools & guidance

PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES

Young people & multi-generations
Residents & representatives
Organisations, groups & stakeholders

PLACES & ASSETS

Water, land & biodiversity
Built environment & infrastructure
Cultural & heritage assets

Community led decision making

Encourage engagement & hope

Explore multiple perspectives & resources

Share creatively & openly

Gain new knowledges with experts & guidance

Act strategically, democratically & inclusively

Find & align with partners and policy

Review, learn & adapt with the journey

Design Innovation & Cultural Resonances (Resonance)

2021-2023

Introduction

Design Innovation & Cultural Resonances: Place-based Collaboration (Resonance) foregrounded knowledge exchange and translational research to connect local and regional communities with design-led innovation processes towards enabling the community-led development of cultural assets. In partnership with Shetland Arts Development Agency (SADA) and the UHI Centre for Island Creativity Resonance focused on the creative and cultural economy with a longer-term view for place-based partnerships to contribute to local regeneration and development plans. Working across Shetland (Scotland, Northern Isles), Sanquhar (Dumfries and Galloway) and Bushmills, County Ards (N. Ireland), collectively we explored the role of local material culture and landscape and their relations to placemaking and regeneration.

The Resonance research and knowledge exchange programme foregrounded questions related to place, landscape and creative practice broadly conceived from both an environmental and heritage perspective, including intangible cultural heritage. The overarching aim was to build place partnerships through developing a shared language – through participatory practice including participatory film making - to enable the development of local innovation capabilities and capacity. This approach supported communities to identify the value of, and contribute to the development of, place-based cultural assets. By co-producing with creative practitioners, local businesses and community development organisations, together we: created an approach to identify and define cultural assets; produced a film that celebrates people and communities lived and felt experience through examples of 'cultural assets' in practice; and hosted a public 'knowledge exchange' event to help practitioners to develop creative confidence through sharing approaches, tools and resources.
Resonance links to a body of place-based research including DI&L, which is broadly aligned to the Scottish Government's Wellbeing Economy agenda, and in doing so seeks to explore non-monetary economics including alternative economies as heterogenous spaces for exchange.

Through the bridging of policy silos and prioritising social, cultural, economic and environmental indicators that enhance the quality of life and wellbeing of people and communities. This work resides in the relationship between modes of qualifying and valuing communities shared cultural assets and their future sustainability towards informing local development plans and cultural strategies. The triangulation of interviews across the place-based portfolio with community members, practitioners and policy makers articulated a desire for more creative approaches to placemaking decisions and identified a gap in knowledge around a more equitable language and dialogue relating to 'cultural assets' and the role they can play in identifying shared values that contribute to local strategic planning and developments.

Shetland *arts*

UHI | Centre for Island Creativity | Ionad airson Cruthachalachd nan Eilean

People, Place and Practice

Cultural Assets

Culture relates to shared ways of life, beliefs and traditions, which in this project we focus on the placed-based ways this manifests. Through this lens, culture(s) can be both tangible, reflected in particular craft, design and creative objects, historical buildings and heritage landscapes, and also intangible, including stories, narratives, rituals and a sense of a shared community. In this manner, cultural assets are both polyvocal and polysemic. We view cultural assets as more resonant when linked to place, for example, through employing vernacular materials, by skills historically linked to a particular locale or imbued with an aesthetic feel of a place and in doing so rooted in traditions that are deeply place-based. They are also commonly shared by a particular group of people in a particular time and situation, therefore reflecting a complex nexus of social relationships or a collective sense of cultural capital.

Cultural Resonances as Shared Values

The goal of Resonance was to contribute to cultural life and local regeneration through collaborative practice and place-based learning in the transfer of skills, experiences and knowledges. Resonance therefore addressed local social, cultural and economic contexts to elicit place-based "resonances" for culturally appropriate local recovery. The design-led innovation practices embedded in Resonance enabled conversations between people and their cultural connections to places through expressing and discussing their ways of living and working (practices). Knowledge exchange in this format was facilitated through participatory film-making that centred lived experiences and supported contributors to find similarities or 'resonances' between their perspectives. These 'cultural resonances' became a shared set of values for cultural asset developments.

Place Partnerships

Resonance was conceived and shaped in collaboration with key partners: Shetland Arts Development Agency (SADA); A' the Airts, Sanquhar; and North Down Borough Council in Northern Ireland, in addition to connecting directly with the Scottish Government's Island Plan. The three local contexts have been selected on the basis that each represents an area with ambition for socio-cultural growth and development through community engaged creative and strategic developments.

We worked primarily in Shetland (Northern Isles, Scotland) to explore cultural asset decision-making due to the area's locational momentum and current development ambitions. Our process, outputs and findings about cultural asset decision-making were then evaluated through engagement with Sanquhar (Dumfries and Galloway, Shetland) and Bushmills, County Antirm (N. Ireland). Collectively we explored the role of local cultures and landscapes in place-making and regeneration.

1. Shetland, Northern Isles, Scotland

The initial phase of the project has a particular focus on Shetland and Sanquhar. Lerwick the capital is Shetland's only town, with a population of approximately 7,500 of the 23,080 total population of the islands. Traditionally, the island economy has been reliant on agriculture and fishing, having received an economic boost over the past three decades as a result of public spending funded by the oil and gas industries (McHattie et al 2018). Shetland has a rich history of craft work, including the internationally recognised traditions of Fair Isle knitting and lace making (Scott & Marr 2012).

2. Sanquhar, Dumfries & Galloway

The Ancient and Royal Burgh of Sanquhar, with a population of 2,021 is located in Dumfries & Galloway in the Scottish valley of Nithsdale. Traditionally, an industrial mining economy Sanquhar has long been associated with the woollen trade; hosiery and textiles (Rutt, 1987). It is worthy of note that both Lerwick and Sanquhar have museums with textiles collections located in their respective towns. The Shetland Museum and Archive's Textile Collection is a Recognised Collection of National Significance in Scotland and Sanquhar's Tolbooth Museum hosts the Sanquhar knitting history and textile archive. These sparsely populated communities have deep ties to place-based textiles, craft and cultural assets that inform contemporary craft-work. Historically, Fair Isle and Sanquhar hand-knitting has played a significant role in these particular economies.

3. Bushmills, County Down, Northern Ireland

Beyond the Scottish contexts, the Bushmills in County Down, Northern Ireland has a population of 160,800. Historically, its economy has been focused on the activities of tourism and fisheries, with the emergence of a large Belfast commuter population from the late-1960s onwards (Lowry 2009). The area is rich in cultural assets pertaining to the landscape and historical sites (e.g., Mount Stewart) and has a burgeoning local craft industry of small-scale makers. In terms of strategic economic plans, a new Belfast Regional City Deal will see a programme of major investment in the area, centred upon new socially-focused infrastructure projects such as greenways and a significant waterfront development. To compliment this work, the local borough council is currently commencing a process of consultation focusing on the development of a post-pandemic, citizen-led vision for the future of the borough.

It is worthy of note that both Lerwick and Sanquhar have museums with textiles collections located in their respective towns. The Shetland Museum and Archive's Textile Collection is a Recognised Collection of National Significance in Scotland and Sanquhar's Tolbooth Museum hosts the Sanquhar knitting history and textile archive. These sparsely populated communities have deep ties to place-based textiles, craft and cultural assets that inform contemporary craft-work. Historically, Fair Isle and Sanquhar hand-knitting has played a significant role in these particular economies.

Methodology

Practitioners as Peer Researchers

Building upon our evolving method of engaging creative practitioners within communities as peer researchers in DI&L, Resonance recognised the value of on-the-ground connections. Residents who represented the creative and cultural economy in Shetland, such as business owners and creative practitioners working with local heritage and contemporary assets, were invited to join the 'peer group'.

These practitioner-peers became core sense-makers and knowledge creators within Resonance's inquiry (Candy, 2011). They facilitated a recruitment approach that prioritsed unheard voices and engagement with emerging creatives who had not yet engaged in place-based research through previous projects. Our approach sought to foster agency within the peer group to enable their sense of ownership of the research process and outputs.

We offer a special thank you to Bruce Eunson, who in his capacity as a peer-researcher ensured that we were introduced to a rich and diverse group of Shetland folk.

Lived and Felt Experiences

The peer group shared their lived experiences and perspectives about the role of local cultures, assets and landscapes within their work. This group of fourteen individuals represented diverse backgrounds and places across Shetland and a variety of practices within the local creative and cultural economy.

These people and their practices resonated with the following categories: music and sound; film and media; literature and poetry; craft; art; design; textiles; jewelry; heritage; food and agriculture; sustainability; wellbeing.

Together we mapped the relational engagements between people, places and practices, which formed the foundation of our shared language around cultural assets, their identification and definition.

Participatory Film-making

Keiba Clubb, local film-maker and Director of Keiba Film, evolved her role as a peer-researcher within DI&L into the participatory film lead in Resonance. Participatory film-making, in this instance, became the engagement and co-analysis method that facilitated ongoing dialogue within the peer group. Vignettes of each participant's experiences were played back to the group during two co-design sessions, which instigated collective sense-making and the emergence of shared themes.

During the collective film 'play-backs', the peer group were asked to identify resonances between themselves by responding to promps: 'Does this perspective resonate with you? In what ways do your values differ or align?'. Shared values were therefore represented by the themes within these cultural resonances. In response, the film was then re-edited and participants' vignettes inter-spliced and regrouped to provide collective conversations around their shared values.

This method has fostered dialogical and relational experiences through a generative approach to data capturing, validation, co-analysis, sensemaking and dissemination. As such, Resonance has delivered a process that platforms the subjective nature of cultural values by embedding the lived experiences of residents within cultural asset deliberation and cultivating agency within residents and communities as a peer research group (Kaszynska, 2015).
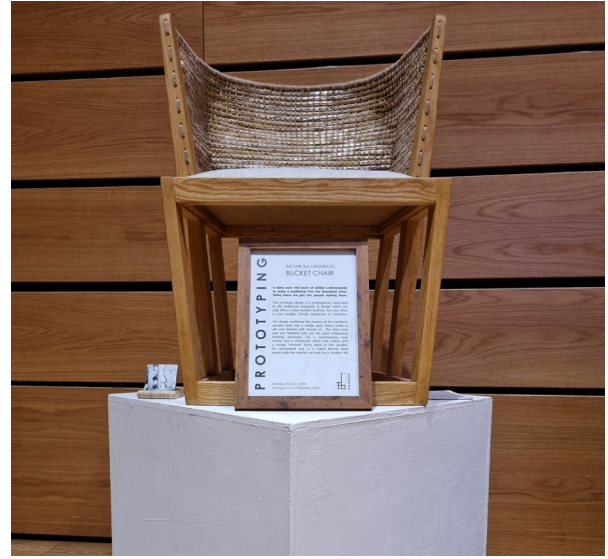
KE & Evaluation

A final two-day knowledge exchange event was hosted at Mareel in Shetland, which invited the peer-group, general public and key stakeholders to exchange perspectives and 'cultural resonances'.

Bruce Eunson and Petter Ratter spoke about the role of cultural assets within their creative practices and reflected upon the importance of intergenerational sharing and connecting past and future narratives. Gabby Giacchino and Renzo Spiteri presented their experiences of working in Malta and using their creative positions to foster a community of practice that drove a cultural strategy within the national Government. They offered guidance from one island to another and discussed the socioeconomic value that this journey had delivered.

Together we exhibited physical artefacts from the peer-researchers' practices and provided two showings of the final film alongside short films from DI&L and selected peers across Shetland. Through tangible engagement and peer-researcher talks, the event facilitated validation and evaluation of the approach and proposed questions to the Shetland Islands Council, Creative Scotland, SADA and influential members of the community: how do we embed this process and materialisation of shared values into cultural asset development at a local and regional level? What comes next?
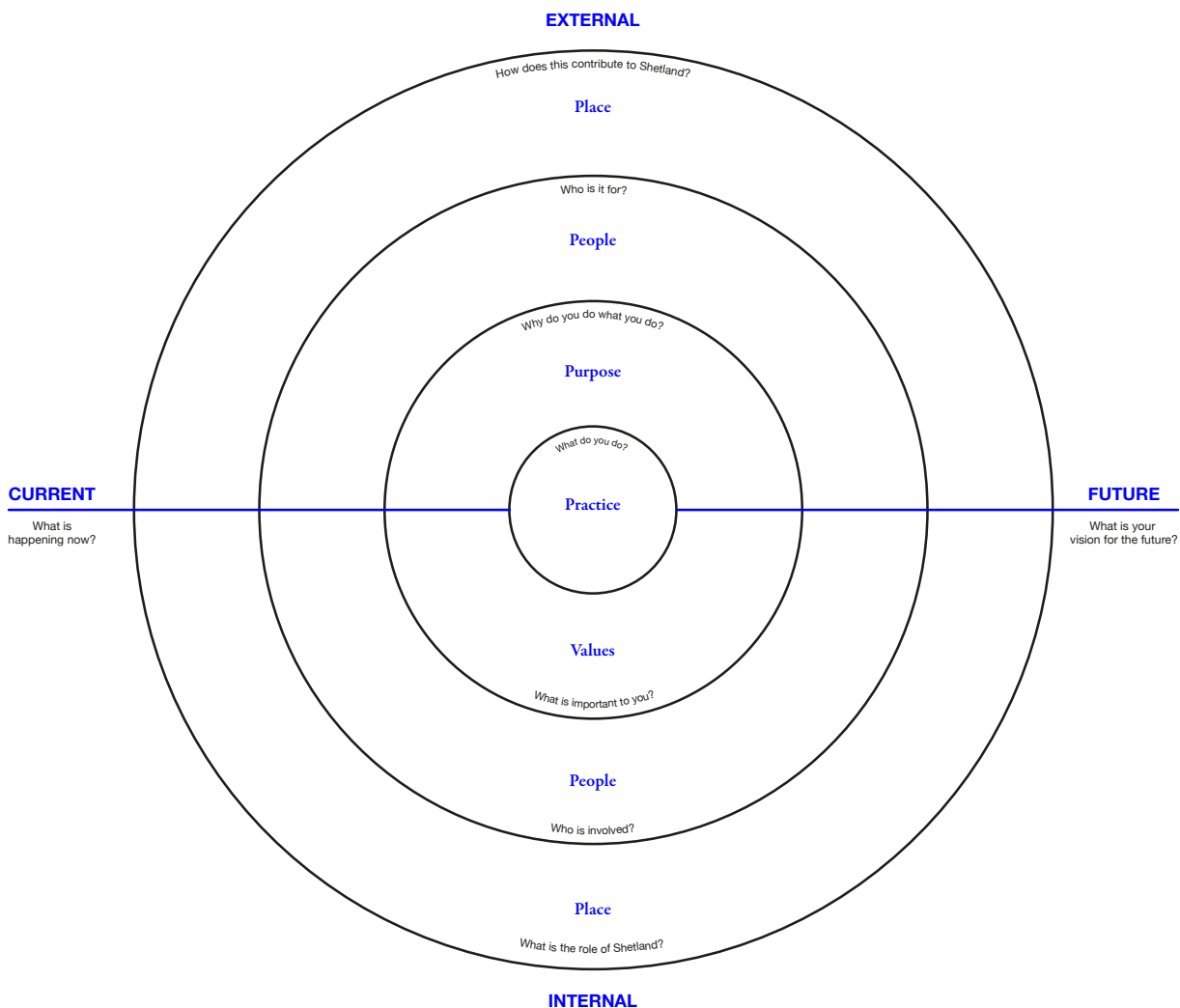
Shetland's Cultural Resonances

Mapping Relationalities

Each practitioner who engaged in the project was invited to map the role of people and places within their work and practices. They were prompted to consider the internal and external relationalities as well as reflect on current and past experiences in parallel with their future hopes and ambitions. In doing so we were able to pin-point the complex interconnections that contextualise the value of cultural assets, which are often intangible or implied.

Our conversations foregrounded deeper questions about how we define and value culture in place. For example, can people and their knowledges be considered cultural assets? Can, or should, cultural assets be valued in the same way as land and economic resources? How, and should we, put a metrical value on culture?

Participatory Film & Practitioners

The following individuals represent the practitioner-peer researcher group. Beyond the sharing of their lived experiences, they participating in co-designing and co-producing the Shetland's Cultural Resonance Film. Through their deliberation with each other over the course of the project, they identified shared values and visions relating to cultural asset development across Shetland.

EXTERNAL

How does this contribute to Shetland?

Place

Who is it for?

People

Why do you do what you do?

Purpose

What do you do?

CURRENT
What is happening now?

Practice

FUTURE
What is your vision for the future?

Values

What is important to you?

People

Who is involved?

Place

What is the role of Shetland?

INTERNAL

Cheryl Jamieson is the owner of Glansin Glass. She is a glass artist living and working in Unst.

Claire White is an experienced native Shetland musician, presenter and producer.

Peter Ratter is an award winning poet who was born and lives in the Shetland Isles.

Eve Eunson is a designer-maker who uses heritage craft practice in wood and straw to promote the Fair Isle Strawback Chair.

Gaby Giacchino is a freelance arts project manager and community pharmacist.
Renzo Spiteri is a multi-percussion player, sound/multimedia artist, field recordist, composer and arts collaborator. Together they founded Curious Pilgrims, an award-winning not-for-profit organisation based on the Shetland Islands.

Keiba Clubb is a film maker and film lecturer/teacher who owns and directs Keiba Film.

Jakob Eunson is the farm manager on Uradale Farm, which provides "field to fork" produce from pure native Shetland lamb and beef organically.

Jon Pulley is a native Shetlander, archaeologist and owner of tour company, Adventure Shetland.

Bruce Eunson is a poet, filmmaker, educator and Dialect Coordinator at Shetland ForWirds.

Paul Bloomer is a contemporary artist and lecturer with UHI who lives and works in the Shetland Islands

Jane Cockayne is a creative facilitator who specialists accessible craft practices.

Roisin McAtamney is the owner of R.A.M. Knitwear, a design and manufacturing company based in Shetland.

Jane Matthews is an artist and Creative Project Programmer at Shetland Arts
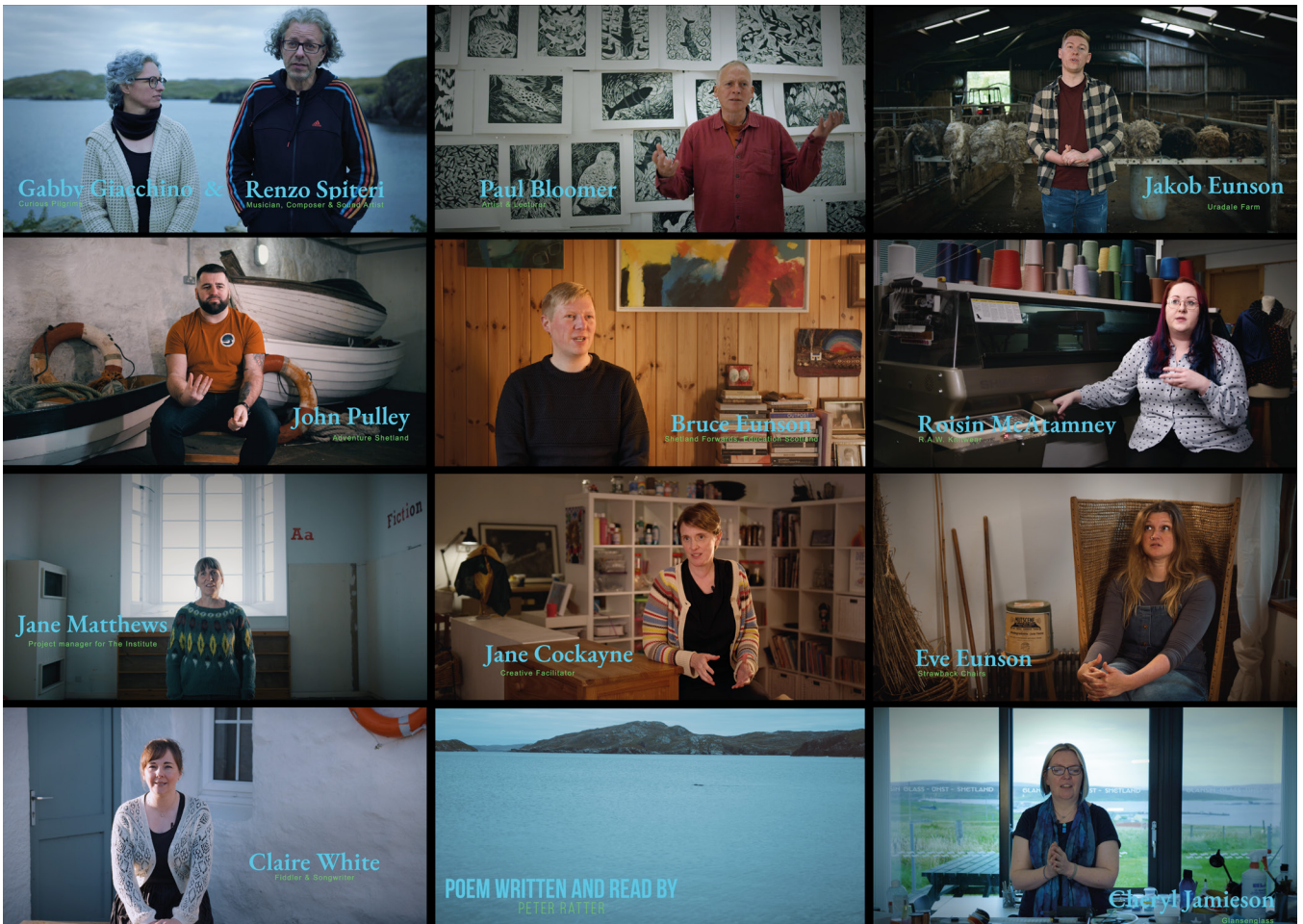
Emerging Shared Values

The following shared values emerged through the Resonance approach of facilitating dialogue through collaborative film-making with embedded community peer researchers. Each of the five values represents the existing achievements of these creative and cultural practitioners and their collective visions for how cultural assets should be developed in the future across the Shetland Islands.

The values can therefore be used as principles for development planning and indicators for monitoring and evaluation. The process of reaching these values through social resonances is an ongoing one that should be continuously engaged with to ensure representation within and evolution of the values.

Image: Paul Bloomer's studio and artwork, Bigton

Collective wellbeing through creativity and connection to place

Supporting people to access healing and wellbeing through creativity and connection to nature.

Creative practice and local business as an ambassador for the living world.

Creativity as a voice for the wellbeing of human and natural ecosystems.

Image: Uradale Farm

Supporting sustainable communities and land practices

Sharing stories of sustainable practices

Models of living with land that nourishes local life

The value and role of vernacular materials

The role of Shetland and its people within changing climate and landscapes

Image: Claire White's home, Quarff

Documenting and sharing knowledges and practices belonging to place

Sustaining, passing on and raising awareness of traditional knowledges and practices

Revitalising roles in craft and heritage

Documenting contemporary practices and craft

Telling stories about provenance, people, place and practice

Image: Bigton Collective, Bigton

Enterprise leadership and creative employment

Supporting people to develop their own interests and passions

Valuing local businesses as producers of culture and community

Embracing new and innovative models of business

Reaching local, regional, national and global audiences

Working with enterprise leaders to support creative employment

Image: Gaby Giacchino and Renzo Spiteri (Curious Pilgrims), Snarraness

Valuing creativity and communities of practice

Supporting people to be creatively confident, to follow their passions and ambitions

Supporting wider skills sharing, cultures and models of collaboration

Creating more intergenerational exchanges and engagement

Evaluation Across Place

The Resonance approach identified shared values for cultural asset development as resonances through ongoing creative dialogue. The values outlined on the previous pages are not static but rather reflect a moment in time for the people and practices within the place of Shetland during Resonance's engagements. As such, we sought to evaluate not only the resonances that other people, places and practices may experience with values from Shetland, but also how such an approach may deliver value in other remote and rural locations facing similar challenges across the UK.

Two evaluation sessions were held with communities who expressed similar ambitions for community-driven cultural asset development. Each group were invited to view the film, Shetland's Cultural Resonances, and respond to the following prompts:
• What are your interpretations of the themes, as articulated for Shetland?
• To what extent do they resonate within your own context?
• What possible futures are planned, emerging or envisioned for Sanquhar in relation to these themes?
• What do you consider the role / potential for impact of this method / approach?

While some values from the Shetland context resonated in Sanquhar and Bushmills more than others, and in place-specific ways, it was the act of 'resonating' with shared values and shared lived experiences that proved to be most impactful. When sharing ones experiences in resonance with another's, there is no right or wrong outcome, only a processes of engaging people in identifying and sharing their own positions and values within their context. The Resonance approach and evaluation activities have provided an arena for dialogue and an emerging and shared language for understanding and deliberating around cultural assets.

A' The Airts, Sanquhar

An evaluation session was held with representatives from A' The Airts, a community arts centre in Sanquhar, Dumfries & Galloway. The centre hosts events, exhibitions, classes, workshops and theatre groups for all ages but also provides a home for the Sanquhar Pattern Designs group, a heritage craft practice unique to the area. At the time of our visit, A' The Airts had just completed a large-scale renovation and upgrade to accommodate a cinema theatre and workshop and exhibition spaces.

The Designerie, Bushmills

Another session was held with representatives from The Designerie, a social enterprise, shop and creative hub based in Bushmills, County Antrim. It was established in 2018. The Designerie is an Irish craft and home store, hosting both emerging and established practitioners. It also houses a maker space, which offers tailored support to local makers seeking to establish their own business and enhance their entrepreneurial skills. Makers are offered a physical display space and can access training as well as host workshops. The space has seen some incredible success stories over the years, with many makers progressing to establish their own standalone businesses.

Collective wellbeing through creativity & connections to place	Documenting and sharing knowledges and practices belonging to place	Supporting sustainable communities & land practices	Enterprise leadership & creative employment	Valuing creativity & communities of practice

A' The Airts, Sanquhar, Dumfries & Galloway, Scotland

Collective wellbeing is core to A' The Airt's organisational aims. They use informal engagement to instigate intergenerational relationships and placemaking conversations, e.g. using creative workshops to tackle social isolation and connect young with aging populations. *"... a mix of art and everyday skills, and showing everyone that they have value and can socialise around their interests"*	A' The Airt's performs an important role within supporting the local heritage craft of Sanquhar pattern knitting. The centre homes electronic knitting machines, workshop spaces and a shop to enable local practitioners to continue to produce and train in the practice.		Within Sanquhar there is a recognition that, while many individuals engage in creative practice and expression, not many align themselves with creative employment. Often there is a need for non-locals to validate local creative practice and instill confidence. For young people in the area, creative employment and leadership needs to be demonstrated as a valuable and achievable direction.	A' The Airts provides an open culture that supports different creative practices to coalesce through proximity and sharing. There is a recognition that creative confidence within the community relies on creative sharing and a outward celebration of creative value.

The Designerie, Bushmills, County Antrim (CA), Northern Ireland

The importance of social connections - between people and place - across time and between inspiration and respect for place - resonated in Bushmills. Practitioners here draw inspiration from their surroundings in County Antrim. Coastal abstract art provide a sense of escapism and embodies the light and texture of tranquility associated with place. Linen making and bleaching was a prevalent industry in NI, with some previous generations engaging in flax growing. *"I always loved textiles... Both grandfathers grew flax and we make it contemporary through linen lampshades - it does contribute to wellbeing feeling part of local history."*	Bushmills participants observed creativity embedded with relatives within the Shetland film. Intergenerational creative tasks and the act of passing on creative knowledge resonated with them. *"The marching bands of the Orange Order communities are our versions of intergenerational knowledge, passing down instruments for example"* A sense of pride in their well-known whisky and food/drink was also associated with provenance. Heritage skills and engagement are arguably lost due to the politics behind some cultural practices. *Could a Resonance engagement process help to overcome this as a dialogue?*	Green belt planning for building in region is linked to preservation of coastline walkways, where tensions lie in local decision-making. *"Sustainability is very important to me - I use natural fabrics only [linen or tweed] - but source materials from trusted company in England - all my processes consider sustainability"* There is a sense that local business and creatives push the sustainability agenda and perhaps more that local governance.	The value of collaboration and networks of support revealed an interdependence between risk and reward. People are enabled to take on creative projects by feeling supported through community. *"We'd have makers from all over NI and Ireland CA has a strong, connected and encouraging network of creatives. One practitioner has moved from part-time to full creative employment."* The Designerie community recognises shared values around creativity being supported by tourism with socio-economic inter-dependability.	*"The Shetland contributors were able to represent their practice and enterprise really well - this seemed more socially embedded."* There was a belief that creative value is derived through connections between people and practice; that storytelling is the key to connect the value of people and practice. *"Visitors like a conscious sale to be able to connect the practitioner to the practice."*

Pathways to Impact

Collaborating and identifying shared values with the community in Shetland provided an important first step in making cultural assets more tangible within development and wider place-making decision-making. Such resonances become important criteria within which to specify indicators for evidencing and monitoring as part of planning, decision-making and evaluation.

In DI&L we identified how, within governance structures, 'dialogue with communities is critical' and that 'the emphasis must be on reciprocity, exchange and action for communities to influence policy.' Such resonances or shared values are here offered to provide themes under which to have ongoing dialogue on how local development helps to progress shared objectives. It is by finding ways to evidence value creation within these resonances, their representation and enhancement within local decision making, that processes of reciprocity, exchange and action can be articulated.

We identified two key concepts to build connections in DI&L that can assist in building structural connections for cultural resonances: the need to engender a new form of 'facilitative leadership' and 'facilitator as broker'. Such roles were proposed to help bridge the fragmented divides between communities and layers of formal governance structures. We position the resonances as a tool, representing shared values, for such facilitation to be built upon and made increasingly more tangible with dialogue. We also position design-led innovation as a supportive process that can provide some of the necessary competencies that help capture, communicate and, if necessary, adapt the knowledge and evidence of these values in situ.

Across Scotland, we see the potential to build on these further through a place partnership approach. Embedded within regional land-assets development, we propose that dialogue facilitated through a resonance approach has been, and can continue to be, used to iteratively pursue the actions outlined in the DI&L Landscape Decision-making Framework:

Encourage *engagement and hope*, is an exercise of listening, understanding and valuing needs or opportunities for development, which Resonance pursued through interviews and facilitated engagement towards co-producing the *Shetland's Cultural Resonances* film. This process aims to achieve 'buy-in' and build dialogue.

Explore *multiple perspectives and resources*, is the discipline with which a process of gathering understanding 'in-the-round' is pursued to identify and validate place-based assets, which Resonance facilitated through a consistent dialogue with partners and community members as peer researchers. This process aims to identify shared values relating to assets in place.

Share *creatively and openly*, is the methods by which the stories of people, practice and place are captured and curated into representations of the assets, inter-relations and inter-dependencies that emerge. Resonance co-produced the film and screened it at Mareel, Lerwick, as part of a knowledge exchange event that invited reflections and ideas for further development. This aims to validate connections to place-based assets through ongoing relational dialogue.

Gain New Knowledges, *with experts and guidance*, was done so through a 'community of practice' as embedded peer-researcher approach to ensure people on the ground were respected as experts of their own lived experiences and to provide opportunities to 'recruit' individuals who may have been unknown to the research group through previous work.

Act Strategically, *democratically and inclusively*, was the principles that underpinned our collective process; achieved by involving all perspectives, creating as many opportunities to engage wider audiences through sharing and knowledge exchange and by producing outputs that were permeable across layers of decision-making.

Find and Align, *with partners and policy*, was enabled through the wider DI&L contextualisation and which provided reference points throughout Resonance to ensure connections were made with appropriate policy and governance agendas on an ongoing basis.

Review, Learn and Adapt, *with the journey*, is how processes of development achieve transparency, trust and shared understanding of progress. We embraced this through iterative co-creation and evaluation with different places.

Community led decision making

- **Encourage** engagement & hope
- **Explore** multiple perspectives & resources
- **Share** creatively & openly
- **Gain new knowledges** with experts & guidance
- **Act strategically**, democratically & inclusively
- **Find & align** with partners and policy
- **Review, learn & adapt** with the journey

What is important to emphasise at this point is that the Landscape Decision-Making Framework and Resonance engagement approach promotes a bottom up and not top down model, which is different from other development frameworks in Scotland (e.g. the national performance framework or Sustainable Development Goals). Therefore, pathways to impact regionally or nationally at a policy level are believed to come in the translation or development of shared ways of speaking about the assets and resonances that emerge as shared values.

The strengths of this process are the enhanced level of engagement achieved with community members, alongside with their ongoing participation in local regeneration and development. The limitations of this are that the proposed approaches depend on effective and carefully coordinated processes with appropriate resourcing that are sustainable in the long term.

This unearths key challenges in how to evolve less resource intensive models of place-making development, perhaps by attracting investment locally in partnership with the necessary expertise. This means that such processes need to be developed and tested further with an emphasis on evidencing the return on investment that such time and resource limitations can offer.

Methodologically, we believe that more work is required to further test and develop our approach for valuing cultural assets through a community-driven approach and embedding this within wider place-making agendas. Our work contributes to a growing body of place-based design-led research that understands shared values and the process of co-creating these through creative modes of engagement as a framework for expressing cultural value (Crossick and Kaszynska, 2014). As Scotland increasingly looks to measure development against a Wellbeing Economy perspective, our models of shared cultural value-creation provide new modes of community-led land, cultural and asset valuing and decision-making.

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