

Hi, so what I'd like to talk about today has mostly to do with work that I've done as a policy student at university, concerning the promotion of creative industries like design.

Now I'm not a designer and I don't have much life experience as a professional to speak of, so I realise I'm approaching the industry and events like this as somewhat of an outsider.

But that's ok, I'm hoping this will be to my advantage in offering a different perspective and covering some topics that will hopefully be interesting to you.

Now this is not a topic that lends itself well to visual representation - so don't search for meaning in these slides, just consider them something to rest your eyes on. **{IMAGE1: peacock}**

I've been coming to Design Assembly for most of the seminars last year and even without being a designer I've found many of the talks very inspiring and compelling, so I feel quite chuffed to be standing instead of sitting tonight and contributing my own two cents.

Just a few things I want to touch on is:

policy, the supercity, the role of designers in the arts sector, and perhaps some questions at the end can reflect on how DA fits in to these areas.

{SLIDE: Designing Cooperation: A Framework for the Auck Arts Sector}

I'm currently doing my honours in policy at the University of Auckland, my research is looking at how the Auckland art sector can better organise itself and better co-operate together, for the purposes of growing the sector and its presence in NZ and overseas.

Where I'd like this to take me in the future, is to be working with creative people and organisations, and to be a bit of a go between for them and government organisations.

IMAGE 2: tiki

I often get blank looks when I mention that Policy is my speciality and I myself didn't know really what the word meant until my final year as an undergrad. So I'll just quickly go into what we mean when we use the word policy.

Policy is commonly understood to describe the actions of government. But the word policy is used more widely than that. An industry or company also sets its own policies – you may recognise these in your own business. And we can think of these like strategies to reach goals or guidelines for maintaining the values that form the identity of an organisation or business.

SLIDE: what is policy?

When we talk about policy we're always trying to make improvements on the current state of affairs, so we bring into debate differing ideals about what the nature of that utopian goal we're trying to reach actually is, so that's part of the process, discussing those different ideals and how they impact on the final solutions that are chosen as well. Policy analysis uses tools like cost-benefit analysis, impact assessment on gender and ethnicity groups and the environment to present different courses of action to decisionmakers and make recommendations on how to proceed with a given problem. However, when these recommendations are brought into reality, things don't necessarily always go as planned, but policy analysis tries to be as scientific in its predictions as it can, to minimise unpredictable outcomes as much as possible.

{IMAGE 3: Supercity}

After talking to a few leaders of local Arts Organisations during the first phase of my research last year, I identified the arts sector in Auckland as needing attention and analysis, particularly in the context of the new supercity. This is going to be a huge change and what formal networks does the sector have to organise a strategy to attack issues arising from it? Its not just about the supercity, I think it's a sector that also needs to get organised just to be stronger in itself.

Many city centres around the world that have strong arts and culture also attract tourism and business, and successful young residents.

Auckland is the largest city in NZ both demographically and economically and we are the ones who have the greatest potential to promote ourselves globally, but we aren't fostering this enough and I believe we're already behind Wellington and Queenstown in building our reputation.

Within Auckland, if the Arts sector can develop and present a strong identity to the rest of the city and NZ, then it will invite more consultation in the process of shaping the new city.

It's easier said than done though. Time and resources are common barriers to any project.

But also there's the problem of competition which occurs naturally between businesses in an industry – for example the design industry – and even amongst non-profit organisations that share a limited pool of funding.

So competition is an inevitable barrier even between people who would benefit from cooperation. How do we then promote co-operation amongst competitors who have a common link in that they're involved in the arts, but still may instinctively see each other as rivals?

{SLIDE: Competition}

In my research I am seeking to identify this common link that will provide a motivation for the various art sector members to coordinate with each other. As part of this, I will be interviewing a variety of members of the arts sector for their opinions, so if any of you would like to participate in this I'd be very grateful to have you take part.

(policyprojects.ac.nz/elisesterback)

Or if you'd like to share it with everyone bring it up at the end of my talk.

My feeling is that as creative people what we share is a desire to be innovative in what we do, and that's a common thing that runs through all types of arts practices.

At a very basic level, if we see what we're doing as worthwhile enough that we devote our time to it, then we must also be able to agree that we want the activity to endure and thrive.

As designers, do you want the city you live in to become an outward expression of who you are as people? Do you want to feel part of a local industry that is expanding and pulsing with life?

{IMAGE 4: Look Both Ways}

Plans for the new supercity may have raised controversy but they also present exciting opportunities. There is potential for a lot to go wrong here, people to lose their jobs, good progress made by the city councils to be lost and a lot of money to be mis-spent.

But there is also the chance to make strategies more coherent across the region, to clear away barriers to cooperation and make more progress in promoting Auckland than has ever been made to date.

In terms of where the supercity is at, so far there have been three bills passed to set up the basic legal structure of the new Auckland Council (which is what it will be called, it won't actually be called the 'supercity'). But I won't go into too much detail about the structure of the new city - if you want to know the specifics check out the ATA website. **{SLIDE: Auckland Council structure}**

So that's just the skeleton that's been set up so far, I think where it's really going to get interesting is when the policy and planning phase kicks off next year. This will involve the amalgamation of the existing long term council plans from each city. And this is where there is scope to bring real progress, we can take some great work that's been done in terms of arts strategy by Waitakere city and Manukau as well as Auckland city. And build in new approaches and edgy, forward thinking. It is in areas like this where the arts sector needs to be proactive in making its presence and its expectations heard, both in the submissions process and to the community in general, and it also needs to set itself up as a body that can be consulted as part of the policy-making process.

{IMAGE 5: Lei Tree}

Some members of the sector have already recognised this need and have started to come together to meet and share ideas. Maggie Gresson from artists alliance, along with Linda Blincko from the Creative People's Centre and the Depot Artspace in Devonport and others have initiated several meetings for any and all members of the arts sector to attend and have their views considered. The group hopes to influence decision-making around the formation of the supercity and so far they have approached key members of the Auckland transition authority and aided group members with making submissions on the bills as they came out.

The group aims to establish an enduring consultative relationship with public bodies like local council, national decision-makers and the ATA. They have already had success in ensuring that the need for a regional arts strategy is acknowledged and that the arts maintains its 3rd tier position in the Council services hierarchy – alongside sports and libraries. Which is a significant acknowledgement that the importance of the arts needs to be recognised.

There is a lack of representation from the design industry in this arts group. There are plenty of 'art organisations' which is understandable because of their vested interest in local government for funding needs. Even though private ventures are more removed from political and public decision-making than non-private ones, they still have a lot to offer in terms of shaping policy. I think that if you're voluntarily attending something like DA, you're demonstrating your desire to engage in the industry beyond your day-to-day work requirements. So you might also have an interest in seeing Auckland thrive as a cultural city and playing a part in making that come about.

As Jade has discussed, designers can make a difference in social change. Politics could be made more popular with the aid of design. You know pigs could fly..

A group such as the one I've been talking about could benefit from a raise in profile. They're currently seeking to increase their representation but they need help presenting themselves and their cause, they need greater media attention, and to eventually become a kind of independent body like the arts council in London, they will need a name and an image.

Previous attempts at these kinds of efforts have not embraced the important role that design could play in their success. Groups like arts advocates did not manage to gain much of a profile and have been abandoned by members that don't want to be associated with its weak image. **IMAGE:** arts advocates

SLIDE: Get involved

So if you are interested in making a bit of a mark you should pop along to one of the next meetings which are held every couple of months or so. Once you're there, there's no obligation to participate or sign up for anything, just go along for your own curiosity's sake and to show support for what they're doing.

Send your name to Maggie Gresson and she will add you to the mailing list.

Or check out the big idea and creative peoples centre website for updates on progress they are making.

IMAGE: graffitti

So just to round up, hopefully you can now appreciate that the development of the supercity, and even just politics in general, is a very organic process that is calling out for and is actually shaped by people's input. And that's anything from the scientific analysis of policy right the way through to the 'image' if you like, that design can create for groups of stakeholders and their strategies.

So thank you for your attention, and I'd also like to thank Zoe for helping me put together these beautiful slides.

If you've got any questions please ask, I've got some questions for you:

SLIDE: Questions for end:

- Do you think designers have a common interest with each other? and with other members of the arts sector?
- Do you think greater cooperation can benefit all involved more than if they were to try and make the same impact as individuals? in trying to reach their own goals
- Lets be frank - is design assembly meeting your needs? what role does it play in the industry?

even if you don't have anything to say, post something on the da forums online or contact me elisesterback@gmail.com