

Aesthetics of Place:

Illustration of Aesthetics of Place

- Cornwall Crescent, Ladbroke Grove, West London -



Introduction:

The etymology of aesthetics refers "to perception by the senses". It's a universal and instinctive way to understand the world around us, conceptually and physically.

Based on principles from environmental aesthetics, "aesthetics of place" can be defined as the behaviours, materials, objects and colours that we see in the environments around us, that tell us about the people we share it with.

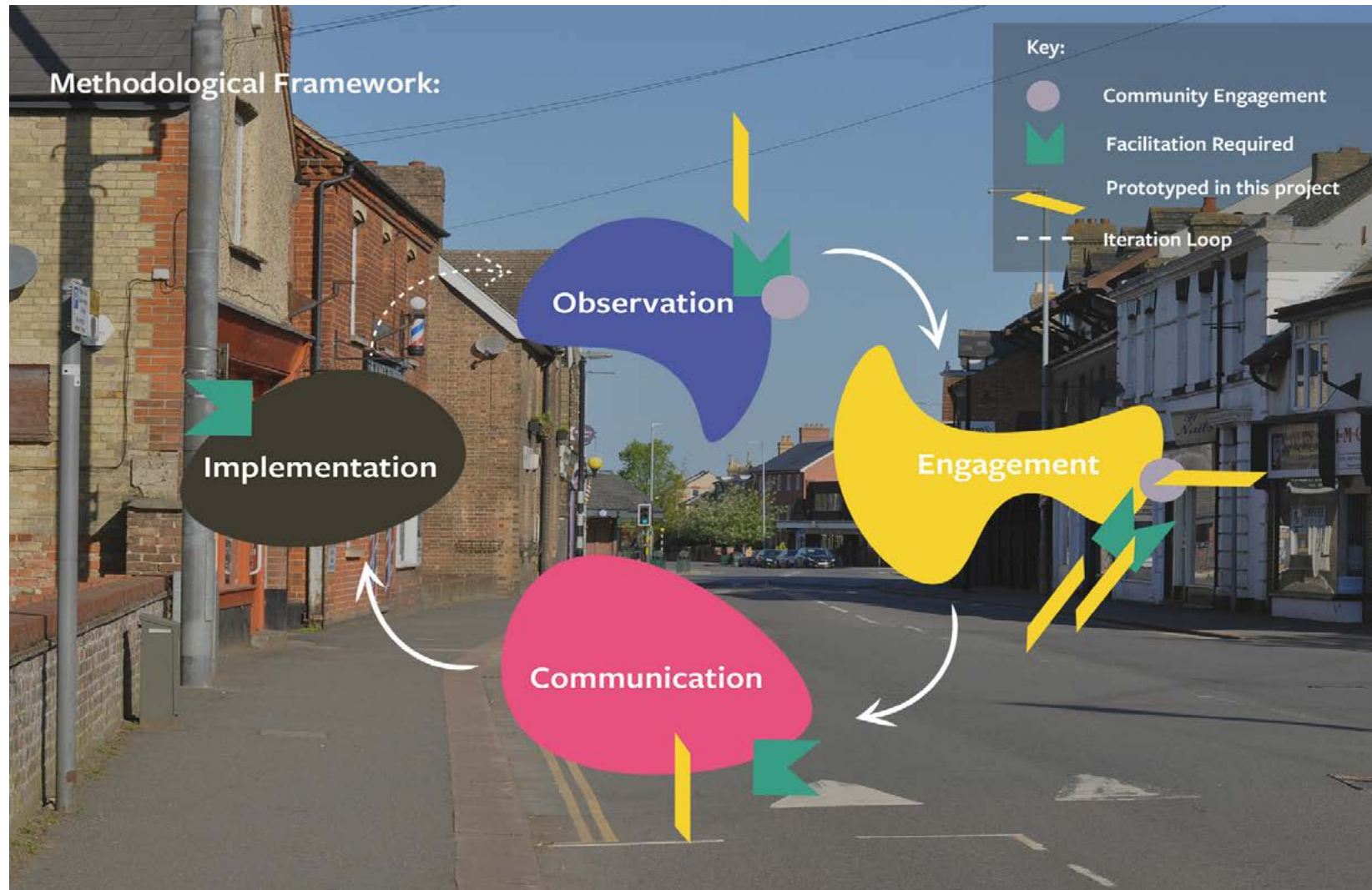
This project explores how we might use the aesthetics of place we see in our shared spaces as a lens to explore collective cultural values and community aspirations. Addressing the existing visibility gap between diverse communities and the external powers that shape our shared spaces, it offers external parties (like built environment professionals and local councils) a method and tools to more sensitively understand and respond to the current and future aspirations of the diverse community they represent.

Project Video:

<https://vimeo.com/431256227>

Methodological Framework:

To inclusively develop community-led strategic and design directions for the development and/or re-generation of places through aesthetics.



This methodological framework is designed to be used by external parties (e.g. built environment professionals, local councils etc.) to engage with aesthetics as a way of inclusively developing places in complex, diverse socio-cultural environments.

Each phase requires collaboration between external parties and the local community, facilitated by a designer or "mediator".

Human-centred, Participatory Activities and Tools:

To engage people in identifying, understanding and augmenting their aesthetics of place.



Observation: Participatory Visual Ethnography - collecting photographic evidence and collectively identifying key aesthetics of place



Engagement: Participatory Workshop - (digital/physical), to self-identify and re-imagine the future aesthetics of place

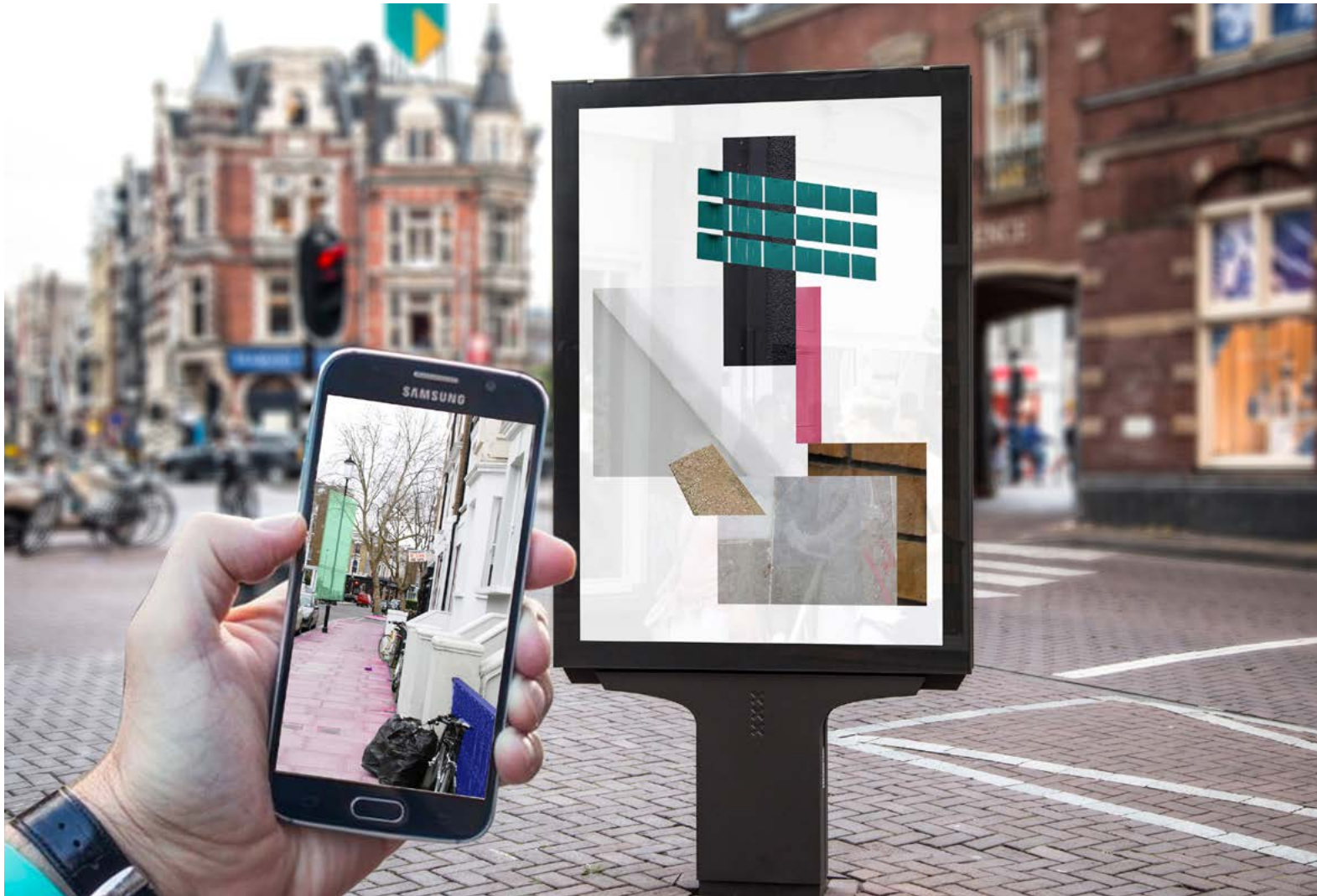


Engagement: Digital Cultural Probes - to visually identify key values/attitudes amongst community



Speculative Outcome:

Communication and Implementation: AR engagement tool, for communities to visualise and shape the proposed aesthetic strategy of their place.



It could be an app with AR capability that allows people to visualise and feedback on what the place might look like, building on the aesthetic "strategy" shaped by the participatory tools and activities.

This could facilitate communities to proactively shape the aesthetic and cultural strategy of their future place.

Speculative Outcome:

Communication and Implementation: Community-led visual manifesto & "Trend Forecast" of specific place.



Based on community-led insights from the participatory activities and tools, this document would support and inform planning strategies and requirements. Reviewed alongside planning strategies (e.g. every 2 years) this guide would help external partners shape the aesthetic and cultural strategy of a place in line with the community's aspirations.