

THE HAPPENSTANCE.12
On Legacy

Scotland
+ Venice

Outdoor Cinema, Apr 2019
Image: Michael Hea

IMPACT

IMPRESSIONE
QUOZ' CULTURAL

The Happenstance exhibition, Custom Lane, Edinburgh October 2018
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THE HAPPENSTANCE

The Happenstance was Scotland's contribution to the 16th International Architecture Exhibition, Venice, 2018

In this dispatch, Principal Design Officer, Architecture and Design Scotland, Morag Bain and anti-curator of The Happenstance, Peter McCaughey give a broad-brush stroke of some of the many legacy outcomes of The Happenstance. It looks at the direct results, including an exhibition tour, and also outlines some of the events, activities, and invitations to present the project, that highlight how avidly others wish to learn from The Happenstance. Tools shared, friendships and connections made, and the leaving of the outdoor cinema equipment to the people of Venice, ensures The Happenstance legacy is ongoing as this is being written.



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This publication is one in a series of twelve reflections on The Happenstance. Click here or go to ads.org.uk/the-happenstance-archive-dispatches to access the other publications.



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year of young people
bliadhna na h-òigridh
2018



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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Aithearrachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba



BRITISH COUNCIL

‘many tools and techniques were used, explored, and developed that have been passed on to others’



Hold the Front Page event
Image: Brian Hartley

‘a participatory approach promotes and supports positive action’



Postcard verbs
© Architecture and Design Scotland

‘among the most vital voices are those of our children and young people’



Maree Todd and Peter McCaughey at The Happenstance opening, The Lighthouse, Glasgow August 2016
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The Happenstance Legacy

Morag Bain and
Peter McCaughey

The energy and creativity of The Happenstance continued during and beyond the time in Venice, leaving an ongoing legacy in its wake.

There was, and continues to be, significant demand, across the fields of Art, Architecture, Urbanism, Cultural Theory and practice, to hear the story of The Happenstance, and to chew over, digest and learn from the outcomes. Many invitations were received to take part in presentations, conferences, and interviews with PHD students and those interested in exploring the idea of freespace.

There are many ongoing connections and projects between the artists and architects who were part of The Happenstance, and many connections and projects with people

who were met through the project, or had heard from others of The Happenstance.

Many tools and techniques were used, explored, and developed that have been passed on to others.

Below is a summary of the ongoing story...

1. Exhibition 2018

While an events programme was running in Venice until November 2018, other events and presentations were happening in Scotland reaching 17,272 visitors and participants.

This included an exhibition tour, presented as a scrapbook of images and films, showing both the work that took place in Scotland and the project in Venice.

The Exhibition:
31 August – 2 October
The Lighthouse, Glasgow

12 October – 11 November
Custom Lane, Edinburgh



Hold the Front Page event
Image: Brian Hartley

The launch in The Lighthouse, one of the busiest in recent memory, was opened by Maree Todd, The Minister for Children and Young People. There was a great deal of Ministerial interest in the project project - tours and discussions took place with Linda Fabiani, Deputy Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament, and Fiona Hyslop, The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs.

During the run, artists Hannah Brackston, Brian Hartley and Ruby Pester, carried out a fun creative consultation in Glasgow's Mitchell Lane, using elements of play explored in Venice, including costume, sculptural objects and drawings, to generate dialogue and conversation amongst people passing through the lane.

In Custom Lane, The Happenstance was also presented to Heads of various Scottish Government departments from Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. There the project was part

of Archifringe (Pecha Kucha) and a presentation was made to the Cross Party Group, Scottish Parliament.

As part of keeping work going on home and away fronts a version of the armature structure was built on-site at the Graffiti Festival at SWG3, Glasgow in June, and in September for Archifringe at the Laurieston Arches, Glasgow, part of the armature structure was built on-site and combined with a film screening.

2. Scottish Projects – their own legacy

Damshot Woods, Glasgow

Following their work in Pollok with St. Paul's High School as part of The Happenstance, Hannah Brackston and Dan Sambo continued working with the woodlands, school and wider community. They applied and were successful in undertaking Phase 1 of the new Glasgow City Council / Glasgow Life - Creative Communities Scheme, as Artists in Residence for Ward 3, Greater Pollok. Further to this, in October 2019 they began a programme of youth-led engagement with Damshot Woods through the 'Young Placechangers' initiative established by greenspace scotland. This work is resulting in youth-led change, bespoke signage, trails and other permanent physical legacy

Film still from Damshot Woods, Glasgow /
Hannah Brackston and Daniele Sambo
Image: Catriona Rice



as well as significant life experience for all involved.

Perth Vennels

Fergus Purdie Architects work on the Perth vennels with Brian Hartley is now emerging as a permanent proposal to rethink the in-between spaces that are Perth's vennels. In 2019, the project was submitted for planning permission - with a proposal to develop Perth's historic vennels into accessible and exciting public spaces, turning underused spaces in the city centre into new public spaces for use by community groups and residents. Watch this space!

Laurieston Arches, Glasgow

WAVEparticle's curation of the Laurieston Arches, featured in the Open Spaces film shown in Venice, has continued. One of The Happenstance artists, Francis Thorburn, working with WAVEparticle, created a set of amazing frontages for these spaces - an iterative architecture, designed and built from the inside out. The momentum, and the wealth of community interest that has built up, has resulted in the arches being awarded one million pounds from the Scottish Government Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF), for the re-purposing of eleven derelict 19th Century railway arches to create commercial and community use spaces in the heart of the Gorbals in an attractive and upgraded physical environment.

A Town Hall for All, Penicuik

Graham Ross's (Austin-Smith:Lord) Penicuik pilot A Town Hall for All was centre stage in a renewal bid to redevelop the town hall. Funding was secured and to celebrate securing Heritage Lottery funding and Historical Environment Scotland funding, the Penicuik Heritage Regeneration project launched with a series of events, during which the 'A Town Hall For All' project was showcased. Graham and Peter McCaughey presented the Scottish and Venice versions of the project to a packed hall at the Penicuik Heritage Regeneration launch. Watch this space for further developments.

Voice to Choice

Two colloquia took place in Venice to explore designing for wellbeing in learning places based on the voices and choices of young people. It was a partnership between Scotland and Denmark, to share issues and inform practice. Stallan-Brand won a RIAS award for Broomlands Primary School that featured in the first Voice to Choice colloquium.

North Lands Creative, Lybster, Scotland and Murano, Venice, Italy

Alberto Lagos work with North Lands Creative and Murano has continued apace and is arguably the most dynamic of all the post Happenstance working relationships. He has been working with North Lands Creative as part of a European project regarding cultural connections around glass and has travelled to Lybster three times for short residencies.

3. The Happenstance: education events and workshops

Since November 2018, there have been many requests to present The Happenstance.

In November 2018 Peter McCaughey was invited to contribute lessons learned from The Happenstance to the Play Network group, at GOMA, who work with Platform and South London Gallery around the themes of play within organisations (Gallery, Museums etc).

In November, Peter also delivered a Happenstance related workshop in Beccaria, the Juvenile Prison in Milan, through the University of Milan prison programme. The workshop features in a book... SceKspir al BeKka. Il cigno di Avon dietro le sbarre, in corso di stampa, Clichy, Firenze.

A few highlights in 2019

In January Peter presented The Happenstance to students from The Glasgow School of Art, Sculpture and Environmental Art Department, then brought the tools from The Happenstance to the Firestarter Festival Launch, V&A, Dundee, where a number of The Happenstance tools, including the deckchairs were used as part of the launch.

In March, Lee Ivett and Peter McCaughey presented together at The Spotlight Sessions, Strathclyde University Lecture series – (marking the relaunch of Strathclyde University student society). Peter also went to Belfast in March, to talk on The Happenstance at the Imagine Belfast

Festival in Northern Ireland. Then it was up to Lybster in August, where WAVEparticle was invited to lead a series of creative workshops over a weekend at a symposium in North Lands Creative bringing Peter McCaughey, Lizzy O'Brien, Alberto Lago and NLC Director, Karen Phillips, together for first time since Venice.

In September, at the V&A, Dundee, WAVEparticle were asked to facilitate and catalyse A Design Project for Scotland using The Happenstance mapping tools in an event opened by Fiona Hyslop, Hyslop, The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs, who spoke at length about the impact of The Happenstance.

In October, back in Glasgow at Civic House, Peter presented films from The Happenstance as part of 55 Things, his durational performance.

Finally, in November, taking the Outdoor Cinema tool from The Happenstance, WAVEparticle launched a project on High Street, Glasgow with a four-screen event. The screens reflected the history of the street, the current activity on the street and the aspirations for the street, gathered from interviews with The Butcher, The Baker, The Candlestick Maker, ... The Barista, Publican, Printer and Tattooist, The Customer, The Chef, The Historian, The Seamstress, The Planner, The Fishmonger, The Resident and The Barber ... and 25 more contributors, building on the work in Venice, reflecting the community back to itself.

4. The Scottish Fellows

The Scottish Fellows have gone on to realise a number of interesting projects which have been inspired and informed by their participation in The Happenstance, connecting to the ethos and spirit of the project.

Eilish (Camplisson) was involved in organising and running a 3-day Architectural Humanities Research Association conference at Dundee University in November 2019.

Iga (Swiercz) is part of a student run international collective called Mies.UK <https://www.miesuk.com/> which runs a video interview series and podcast that aims to showcase the behind-the-scenes of the architectural world in the UK.

Rob (Colvin) is working with Hoskins Architects, having successfully completed his Part 3 architecture studies. Rob regularly attends EASA (the European Architecture Students Assembly).

Theo (Shack) tested an app idea named 'Bard App', which aims to create a gig economy for performing artists - matching musicians, actors, storytellers in a local area to people who have the space and a small gathering of friends to hear them perform live in their home. In addition, Theo's 'manifesto' project for the London School of Architecture was entitled: 'Nooks, sign-making, attachment – How our architecture can inspire care for place', where the memory of The Happenstance was the starting point.

Lucia (Uriarte) completed her Part 1 Architectural Assistant at Stephen

Taylor Architects and is currently doing a Masters in Architecture at the London Metropolitan University. Lucia is on the committee that leads MASS, the architecture student society, working hard to represent fellow students in these trying times. She regularly organises events for Mass and attended Villars last summer for EASA with Rob.

The Fellows stay in contact with each other and with the many friends made in Italy.

5. The Team

The creative relationships between the team of artists, architects and designers that fuelled The Happenstance continue. Here are a few examples and some team news.

WAVEparticle is currently working with Stallan-Brand on an extensive art strategy that will deliver significant works across Phase 3 of the redevelopment of Laurieston, Glasgow. Paul Stallan also supported Francis Thorburn to explore a long-term project embedded in Kinning Park, Glasgow. Naomi Van Dijck, who interned with WAVEparticle supporting Neil McGuire on creating The Happenstance website, is now a member of staff. Pester and Rossi have been commissioned by Rule of Threes to work in collaboration with Community by Nature, encouraging participation in community centred learning, play and forest school, based in Bootle, Liverpool. Dan Sambo and Hannah Brackston's project with Damshot Woods is mentioned above Scottish Projects.

Bash Khan and WAVEparticle continue to collaborate on several fronts including an extensive Living Library of over 200 local portraits in the new Gorbals Health Centre. Alberto Lago continues to visit Scotland and works closely with North Lands Creative. Brian Hartley is working with a school in Edinburgh in 2020 with Imagineate, and continues investigations from the Perth stage of The Happenstance. Fergus Purdie is developing an innovative self-build masterplan for Dunning – written about in the RIAS summer issue 2020. Emily Speed has won the inaugural Art North West award, which will see her develop her first solo exhibition in a major UK gallery, in Spring 2021. Emily wrote a lovely account of her time on The Happenstance here: <http://emilyspeed.co.uk/news/category/exhibitions/>

Emily and Lee Ivett have teamed up several times on projects, during/ since 2018. Lee was appointed as undergraduate course leader at the Grenfell-Baines Institute of Architecture in his home city of Preston in October 2018. Lee has written a short account of the challenges of his practice in and around the time of The Happenstance here: <https://www.architecturetoday.co.uk/good-pressbad-press/>

Dr Ambrose Gillick was appointed as a lecturer coordinating Stage 3 at Kent School of Architecture and Planning in 2018 and continues to publish prolifically. The case study that follows details the ongoing work by ASL and WAVEparticle. And of

course the document you are reading has been designed by Neil McGuire.

6. Tool Kit

The Happenstance toolkit that WAVEparticle brought to Venice was honed through years of an artist organisation working alongside architects - most regularly with Austin-Smith:Lord and this work continues. The WAVEparticle team are employing the toolkit from The Happenstance on a series of projects with Austin-Smith:Lord that reconfigure landscape and design public space. These projects include The Outer Space project around Glasgow Science Centre; Glasgow City Council's District Regeneration Framework of Townhead, Merchant City, Learning Quarter and Cowcaddens, and notably the Riverside site in Ayr which has a remarkably similar configuration, scale and remit as the garden in Zenobio.

Graham Ross arranged Austin-Smith:Lord's AGM in Ca'Zenobio - subsequently, the Directors encountered The Happenstance live and connected to WAVEparticle's working methodology, resulting in The Happenstance tools being utilised in projects in Cardiff and Crawick.

A Case Study

Through presenting The Happenstance to South Ayrshire Council, WAVEparticle, working with Austin-Smith:Lord, were trusted to begin the process of the redevelopment of the Riverside site in

Ayr with an on-site event, (October 2019) building an identical set-up to Venice - 66 deckchairs bespoke to Ayr, gable end wall outdoor projection (using the same type of projector that we left in Venice). The same methodology: trust the people you meet to hold treasure, find that, convince them to share it, show it to each other. A fantastic night and a great relaunch of a space that the community have fought to have as a freespace, a gathering space, a civic space, an outdoor museum... it is exciting that the ideas and tools from The Happenstance are directly shaping live projects that design permanent public space.

As a result of this work in Ayr, Professor David McGilivray, from the University of the West of Scotland's Ayr Campus, invited Peter McCaughey and Graham Ross to present The Happenstance to the European research group HERA on the theme 'Festivals, events and inclusive urban public spaces in Europe'. David leads the FESTSPACE team researching 'Enlivening Public Space: The Role of Festivals and Events in Inclusive Placemaking'.

There is an exciting opportunity to combine the live project in Ayr with academic research and knowledge sharing, weaving The Happenstance methodology into a permanently functioning exemplar of best practice, and connecting and sharing this academically all over Europe.

Public space has become an increasingly contested arena for academics, policy makers and practitioners, especially in a period

defined by neo-liberalised, post industrial urban revitalisation, in western Europe and North America. Public spaces including public squares, public parks and streets carry with them different historical significance and uses and are, in the contemporary period, the site of struggles over ownership and use. The central premise of this research will be how festivals / events affect the inclusivity of urban public spaces, focusing on major European cities (Manchester / London / Glasgow etc).

Note: HERA workshop dates (March 2020) were affected by the Covid-19 Lockdown but will take place at a later stage.

As The Happenstance continues to influence work in Scotland – the deckchairs concept and connecting cultural connectors, prototyped in Venice, have been added as tools to WAVEparticle's tool kit. A bespoke edition of the deckchair tool was commissioned by Ardrossan Community Development Trust to enliven the South Beach; and Glasgow Science Centre are the next institution exploring a deckchair edition to activate their outdoor space. In each case the tool is referenced to The Happenstance and the model of open space, freespace, outdoor cinema and community empowerment.

The simple concept of offering a freespace to local communities, and trusting that they can inspire each other and galvanise themselves, has also been central to the work WAVEparticle has been delivering with Glasgow City Council on High Street, the oldest line though the

city (from the Cathedral to Glasgow Green) - researching, making connections, and agitating for positive change along High Street and Saltmarket, using filmmaking and Outdoor Cinema.

7. Policy Scottish Government

In the month that The Happenstance was fully open, the garden at Palazzo Zenobio saw over 13,000 visitors, of whom over 3,000 have been directly involved /engaged in events/workshops/screenings/colloquium, etc. Due to its success, the relationships built and the extremely positive feed-back both locally and internationally extra funding was given by the Scottish Government and Creative Scotland to extend the project until the close of the Biennale in November 2018.

A strategic partnership

Over the last 15 years the Scotland + Venice project has made a significant contribution to the country's international reputation and profile, presenting new work in the fields of art and architecture to thousands of audiences from across the world at the Venice Biennale.

Building on the achievements of Scotland + Venice, the partners in the art and architecture projects have come together to work strategically to harness its potential and to pool their extensive knowledge and experience to achieve a step-change in its delivery to develop more effective and efficient ways of working that will increase the international profile of the

project and generate stronger creative outcomes and legacies. This will include, amongst other areas, a shared venue and a consolidated Fellowship programme.

8. Venice Legacy

Palazzo Zenobio faces an uncertain future. By demonstrating a sustainable model our hosts felt and saw the strength of that approach - but the Armenians are essentially a very private people. The idea of permanently opening their garden is a step too far at the moment. Towards the end of the project's run in Venice, an archive of The Happenstance events was built for the Armenians and also for visitors, including a visiting Armenian Diaspora who come from all over the world to see the place they, their fathers, or their husbands studied. Simply built from laminated photos attached to the armature – it provided an accessible version of the project's philosophy to put the individual at the centre of the work inviting their treasured memory to populate the work and to talk about a permanent resource. As described elsewhere, it was a great moment when the Armenians bought the armature - effectively zeroing the rent and taking significant ownership of it until February 2019 when it was finally cleared. There is much work to be done in Venice.

Association of Associations: Launch
Guided by the municipality, the DO.VE association, Poveglia Per Tutti (the largest association in Venice) and in particular by Alberto Lago, the final act before leaving Venice, in November 2018, was the formation of the Association of Associations, whose manifesto is to share information and resource across 291 associations.

The Happenstance provided the model as a place of open meeting and directly led to the forming of the Association of Associations.

The need for this was underscored by insight into the problem of so many competing associations in Venice. To help catalyse this, a donation was made of the prized outdoor cinema projector, PA system,

mixing desk and cables, and 24 of the deckchairs that had been used with such great success to run The Happenstance Outdoor Cinema programme.

The associations now work together to multiply resilience and open up and affect change in Venice around the many issues, present-day concerns and the future of the city.



Prototype at SW3 Graffiti Festival, Glasgow © Architecture and Design Scotland



Gobhy, by Pester adn Rossi, at The Lighthouse, Glasgow

RESOURCES

- [Poveglia per Tutti Website](#)
- [Action group Website](#)
- [About About Website](#)
- [Venetian Housing Association Website](#)
- [Taiwanese articles translated text](#)
- [Related Films](#)



Laurieston Arches Frontage



The Happenstance out and about at the garden of Awai, Venice



Fiona Hyson and Petya McCann
Image: © The Scotsman



High Street Outdoor Cinema, Glasgow
Photo: James Chapelard

How the ongoing legacy of The Happenstance continues through events, tools shared, the friendships and connections being made.



Alberto Lago and Peter McCaughey and participant

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