Research Cluster Workshop Report

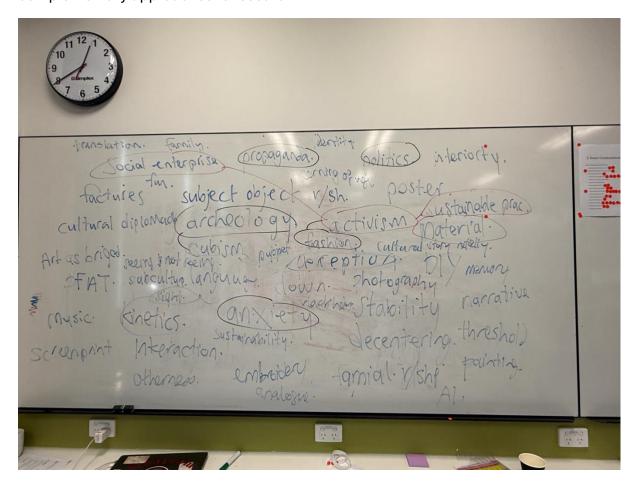Susan Wakil Health Building, 28th October 2024
Dr. Sanné Mestrom

Overview

The structured workshop was conducted to identify and establish research clusters among faculty members, employing a multi-phase approach designed to foster organic connections and sustainable collaborative relationships. The process combined individual reflection, peer-to-peer engagement, and collective mapping exercises to reveal natural synergies and potential partnerships.

Workshop Structure

The session began with Pecha Kucha presentations, where participants shared their research stories through brief visual presentations. This was followed by a series of carefully structured activities:

1. Research Speed Dating: Two-minute rotating conversations focused on methodologies and potential collaborations rather than specific topics

2. Territory Mapping: A visual mapping exercise using color-coded notes to identify research interests, methodologies, outputs, and FASS priority alignments

3. Pattern Analysis: A systematic examination of connections across materials, themes, methodologies, and outputs

4. Cluster Formation: Organic grouping based on identified patterns and shared interests

The approach emphasised the "how" of research collaboration rather than just the "what," encouraging participants to consider methodological combinations and complementary approaches to research.

Key Outcomes

Three distinct but interconnected research clusters emerged from the process. Please remember that these groups are 'loose', not fixed, and we will revisit them in the months ahead:

1. Urban/Situated Art, Sustainability, and Community Engagement

  - Focus on art's role in urban spaces and sustainable practices

  - Strong emphasis on community involvement and participatory projects

  - Integration of cultural heritage with contemporary environmental concerns

2. Material Practice and Craft

  - Emphasis on traditional craftsmanship and sculptural techniques

  - Exploration of material properties and sustainability

  - Bridge between traditional methods and contemporary practices

3. Time, Image, Sound, and Digital Materiality

  - Integration of time-based media and digital technologies

  - Focus on immersive sensory experiences

  - Exploration of AI and interactive installations

Next Steps

I am now reaching out to Chairs of each group (Stuart, Andrew S and Madeleine) to give me a little bullet point summary of each respective group (please feel free to use the template provided/ attached).

I am hoping that by mid-November each cluster will have established initial meeting dates and communication channels. Participants are to identify quick wins and longer-term collaborative opportunities, with clear delegation of responsibilities for website development and other immediate tasks. Moving forward, I'll follow up with the Chairs directly.

Thanks so much for your participation in what I hope felt a fun and productive session!

Very best wishes,
S.

1. urban \ situated \ sustainability + community + social
2. material \ practices \ sculpture \ craft
3. time \ image \ sound \ digital materiality

community & social engaging

digital