Notes from “Healing the Democracy”

Sherryl
Close your Eyes.
What does healing the democracy mean to you?

Ryan
Adding the controls for a place to the place

Ben
Detroit's community benefits agreement so that developments are more equitable

Cade
Making sure people are involved in shaping the public space
Democratic institutions should be neutralized and equalized
Healing our democracy at the scale of our neighborhoods are about sharing our investment/ownership

Carmen
People and processes, inviting people into spaces
Did an event called “Meet Me” inviting black transplants and people into the suburb to an inner city park for a brunch mixer and invited community elders. Intergenerational
Inviting people is rare. Barriers were broken down at the event. People want to have deeper connections but might be overlooked or only at one dimensional

Thea
Pronounced “TAY-uh”
Neighborhood in San Jose, lower income neighborhood, closest communit center was far away
No one had a voice for a city
Redevelopment funds came together to build a teen center
It was a healing safe space
Healing democracy was part of that process

Ethan
Shared PPS articles
Encountered all types of healing democracy stories
refugee stories, governance at all levels faces issues
How can placemaking disrupt and replace democracy

Ryan
Introduced to book by Ryan Salzman book “Placemaking as Protest” which compared placemaking and protesting and found similarities in how they “embody the value/change we want to see in the public realm”

Cade
Leveraged funding to make more bikeable and community development towards more walkable streets
3 funding sources: NAtional Safe Routes to Scholl, Ruth Mott Foundation (housing around community centers), Charles Stewart Mott Foundation (was interested in increasing voting), AARP, National Association for Realtors

Ethan
Did a Place Game in Tel Aviv
Asked people what people like in the space and how they would improve it
The people who were perceived as loiterers were actually great observers of the space
And the problem was the solution

Sherryl
Interviewed homeless people in a park
The homeless people in the park were organized, went fishing for crab, two good fisherman were in charge of the process
They had their own set of rules
Systems for family visitation

Marcelo Rebelo (Cicades.co)
We do placemaking here in Brazil
Our business model is
Every plaza has a what app group of the neighborhoods
Most improvement energy is not effecting change because people don’t know how to do it
We teach them how to do it
We teach the law, give out tools
Giving access to knowledge to those spending
Neighbors fighting against each other
We mentor communities
The plazas are in bad condition
People can go to the government and say they will spend their own money to adopt the plaza
We teach people how to do collaborative adoption. 3-4 become the leader of a plaza group, they
crowdsource and organize neighborhood and find resources and become operator of the space
20 most connected communities are entering their platform

Tina Govan, Raleigh, NC
Teaching people what they can and can’t do
Navigating the city’s website
Got a grant by AIA to walk people through the process of neighborhood popups
Creating a lending library of street equipment for closing the gap between placemaking
Boopsie does activist parklets and popups
Did it on parking day and invited the city councilman and city department who committed to
being in the parklet

Sherryl
Redoing the parklet ordinance
Work on a booklet to walk people through it

Ryan
Concept of subsidiarity that social issues and opportunities should be handled on the lowest
level possible
Tells story of Whiskey Tax, the first tax caused the Whiskey Rebellion which cost more to
squash than the tax ever raised.

Sherryl
We had a whiskey street, people have had to resort to going underground often

Ethan
Great to see Marcelo
Were learning across the world that teaching people and giving people access to these abilities
is the trend we’re seeing everywhere and that place leadership is coming from all sectors

Sherryl
When I think of healing the democracy
When I was living in Puerto Rico
Great to have international points of view
In Puerto Rico, you do what you do with what you have
If there’s a plaza, you take it over, we have 500 years of that history
In America, the way cities are managed is different like having places closed from dust til dawn
Giving people the ability to change these plazas or whether or not you even have one
How do you make public spaces a common ground

Jackson
Visiting friends in Veracruz including architects and students
Importance of organizing for democracy
Core concerns were safety in public space
Like minded groups of people but how do we connect Placemaking Mexico with them

Ethan
Placemaking Mexico was in Costa Rica this week making their new network
And there is a Puerto Rico network coming soon

Cade
Our public process is so painful, it seems like it’s purposefully set to keep people away from the halls of public participation
Have to bring your own dinner to go to city council
I get paid to be there sometimes
But it’s rare to have neighbors go because it’s not worth their time

Sherryl
Avoiding council should be one of the best ways
Used our own money to power wash an alley

Ethan
Frustration with some lacks of political will byt start with where the energy is

Ryan
Placemaking Europe just released their After Covid City declaration in which they want people to have access to experimentation in public space
We have Placemake Earth going up on Friday April 1st as a learning/doing community
This is an opportunity to put what we’re talking about into action