Chapter 11
Activated Alleyways: Mobilising Clean and Safe Dwelling in Business Improvement Areas

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Abstract This chapter explores the role of Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) in the production and promotion of placemaking and activation. Since the 1970s, placemaking—a term generally used by architects and developers to describe design practices that bring personality to urban landscapes—has gained traction amongst governments, planners, and businesses as a tool for economic and social revitalization. BIAs, focused on the creation and management of value, have incorporated elements of broken windows policing into their mandates of "clean and safe", beautification and place-making. In seeking to add value to their areas, BIAs have turned their attention to the "forgotten", "inefficient" and "underutilized" spaces in cities. Alleyways, in particular, have become critical sites of intervention portrayed in need of "reclamation", "revitalization" and "recovery". However, for whom or what are these spaces being reclaimed? This chapter analyzes the mobility of activation scripts, as well as their granular application through the case of the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association's alleyway activation project "More Awesome Now". Predicated on alleyways as multiple objects, these business-led reclamation and claims making projects attempt to stabilize use and design-out crime and disorder. By securing clean and safe dwelling in these areas, the activation of alleyways through the installation of hostile architecture extends the BIA brandscape, capturing public spaces for corporate use.

Keywords Alleyway · Business improvement area · Placemaking · Mobile urbanism · Gentrification · Hostile architecture

11.1 Introduction

> Alleyways and micro-spaces are inherently urban "infrastructure". [These] "insterstitial" spaces [serve as] the connective tissues that lies between private developments and developed public spaces with the urban built environment. Interstitial spaces are often there but

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> underutilized for lack of purpose or function. The perception of how we can use space is changing as cities strived to reclaim these in-between areas […] Urban Place Management Organizations [UPMO] can implement physical interventions that revitalize and activate what would otherwise be forgotten space. Reclaiming these valuable spaces creates a pedestrian friendly environment in urban cores and tackles numerous important urban planning objectives (International Downtown Association 2017, p. 7).

Business Improvement Areas (BIAs),[1] a legislated form of public–private partnerships (PPP), have become a standard model for city building. An innovation of blending the expertise of new public management (NPM) with business acumen, BIAs were touted as a way to "provide a new functional answer to the dysfunctional features associated with […] downtown districts, such as poor transportation planning, unkempt streets, and ineffective downtown marketing initiatives" (Mitchell 2001, p. 203). Usually established in areas with a high density of existing commercial space, BIAs can be understood as privately governed, publicly sanctioned and specially funded geographic areas in which private tax practices (e.g. district levies) are implemented to extend municipal services (Brooks 2008; Hoyt and Gopal-Agge 2007; McCann and Ward 2012). While the extension of services varies by jurisdiction and area, BIAs' broad mandates incorporate clean and safe and beautification programmes in order to create and maintain value in their areas (Mackinnon 2019). Effectively rebranding broken windows policing and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) as *placemaking*, BIAs engage in a range of crime control programmes (e.g. street cleaning, façade regeneration, graffiti removal, loss prevention, ambassadors and private security, etc.) and beautification projects (e.g. banners, flowers, light displays, art installations and activations, etc.).

However, beyond the extension of services and being partially responsible for the liminal spaces between the public and private sphere, BIAs have turned to these "interstitial" spaces—alleyways and micro-spaces—as new sites for placemaking and value extraction. Inspired by the wave of "tactical urbanism, guerrilla urbanism, temporary urbanism, pop-up urbanism, insurgent urbanism" and other analogous terms (Finn 2014, p. 381), BIAs supplement and extend city services and city building through these *micro-spatial practices* (Iveson 2013). Already employing and enacting austerity logics of *on-demand* and *in the meanwhile,* (Ferreri 2015) found in the DIY urban movement, the corporatisation of these temporary practices by BIAs strengthens sense of place, promotes economic growth and reinforces their role in urban governance. For Ferreri (2015), the *temporary magic* of these temporary marketing and branding initiatives "keep up the pretense of constant urban growth" (p. 184).

[1]Throughout this chapter, the term BIA is used interchangeably with Urban Place Management Organisation (UPMO). Outside of the Canadian context, other UPMOs include Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), Business Improvement Zones (BIZs) and Business Revitalisation Zones (BRZs).

For example, while recognising the infrastructural purposes of alleyways as spaces for dumpsters, delivery and drainage, as well as associations with dirt, disorder and crime, BIAs have taken to changing the perceptions of these spaces. By extending the logics of clean and safe passage (Lippert 2007, 2012), alleyway activations are presented as a means of designing-out particular uses of the space and promoting clean and safe *dwelling*, and moreover consumption, albeit temporarily. For example, according to the International Downtown Association (IDA), "alley activations have the potential to address core UPMO issues, pedestrian experience or placemaking, prioritizing economic development, and improving safety for users and repairing ecological performance of existing infrastructure" (IDA 2017, p. 6). Alleyways, as described in the above quotes, are simultaneously multiple, but also "underutilised", "unactivated", "inefficient" and forgotten. In other words, BIAs promote a retailed treatment of alleyways as blank slates that conceptualise these interstitial spaces as being in need of "reimagining", "reclaiming", "revitalising" and "recovering". *But for whom, for how long and to what end?*

In order to analyse the logics and discourses of temporary urbanism and activation, this chapter draws on qualitative data collected from a larger project on BIA governance and placemaking.[2] I contend that alleyways are cast as the latest urban frontier where value can be extracted. This activation is predicated on an understanding of alleyways as unstable multiple objects. As such, their (re)activation is a practice of ontological politics, which attempts to stabilise and legitimise multiple uses (e.g. a site for delivery and refuse collection while also a site for play, retail, etc.). However, it is also a limited *multiple use*, one that brands spaces as sites for consumption and consumers before other uses and users.

This chapter begins with a historical discussion of alleyways and places theories of activation, in conversation with BIA and brandscape literature. From there I detail the multiple forms of mobility at play by unpacking alleyway activations as ideas *made to move* and *made to make things move*. These scripts of activation are contextualised using an empirical case study of the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association's (DVBIA) *More Awesome Now* alleyway activations. Specifically, I examine the rationalities of activation and articulation of its achieved status. I conclude that these corporate forms of placemaking and activation, by scripting uses and users of the space, may also amount to the (ongoing) activation of anti-homeless politics, which are *far from temporary*.

[2]Specifically, data collection and analysis for this chapter included document analysis of BIA focused placemaking and alleyway activation documents including reports and toolkits (some of which were purchased by the author), PowerPoint documents, news media dated between 2011 and 2019 (n: 58), attendance at annual BIA conferences and specific workshops/webinars concerning activation and placemaking (n: 6), participant observation in Vancouver, as well as interviews with BIA staff (n: 4).

11.2 Alleyways as Places in the Making

From the French word allée meaning small street, in the nineteenth-century North American context, alleyways were incorporated into urban planning with the widening of main streets for walking, transit and traffic (Ford 2001). Juxtaposed against impressive downtown facades, alleyways created a front and back dichotomy (Ford 2001). These backdoors of the city, obscuring spillover, mess and clutter, were used for refuse, wiring and other everyday infrastructure (Ford 2001; Martin 2001). Partially designed-out of the suburban context, in the twentieth century, the remaining urban alleyways became sites of concern (Ford 2001). For some, they represented the irrational and inefficient use of space and poor waste management (Hage 2008), and for others, they were seen as criminogenic spaces associated with crime and disorder (Borchert 1980; Brantingham and Brantingham 1993; Poyner 1983). Specifically, in the 1970s and 1980s, police and media portrayed alleyways as spaces of law evasion, stolen car disassembly, sex work, drug dealing and use and rough sleeping (Brantingham and Brantingham 1993; Ford 2001). These perceptions and associations with fear of crime continue to hail interventions. Despite the application of broken windows policing and CPTED (e.g. revitalisation and beautification, blocking points of access and entry, additional lighting and surveillance technologies, etc.), alleyways continue to be sites of target hardening. Specifically, alleyways are presented as in need of securing (Loukaitou-Sideris 1999), or in other cases, sites to be demolished or replaced (Franks et al. 2015).

However, the betweenness (Entriken 1990), liminality (Jones and Moreno-Carranco 2007) and interstitially (Ford 2011) of alleyways challenge their ability to be secured and *placed* (Lynch 1960)—both in a physical as well as in an ontological sense. As Imai (2013, 2017) argues, alleyways are often nameless, jurisdictionally unclear, public and private, dependent on the existence of other places, relationally understood, situated between the past and present and inherently multi-use. This instability, on the one hand, enables them to be sites of prefiguration and channels for various intellectual, artistic, cultural and economic and political discourses (Imai 2013). In a sense, alleyways *act* as an ordinary landscape and backdrop for everyday life, as well as understandings of it (Carmona et al. 2003, cited in Imai 2013). On the other hand, their transformation contains multiple narratives of change and negotiation, and the securing of this narrative is ontological and political.

BIAs as urban entrepreneurial actors—concerned with creating and maintaining value—engage in revitalisation and placemaking by using a variety of programming and projects to bring personality to their areas (Ward 2007). In addition to meeting baselines of cleanliness and safety, this branding and knowledge production about their areas serves to strengthen their accounts of areas (Lippert 2012). For example, while ambassador programmes primarily promote hospitality and physical security, Lippert and Sleiman (2012) suggest that these BIA ventures also (re)produce understandings of the area and the city. These understandings not only justify downtown consumption, and larger NPM governance structures, but they also serve to legitimise their continued role or importance (Lippert and Sleiman

2012). A mundane and unlikely urban assemblage, BIAs and their revitalisation activities require constant shaping and alignment (Lippert 2010; Mackinnon 2019). Although these programmes and forms of knowledge production may not always directly promote consumption, Lippert and Sleiman (2012) argue that they promote and thereby couple the governance and stewardship of public space with BIA efficiency. Theorising similar shaping and governing practices, Bookman and Woolford (2013) contend that BIZ beautification and security projects, as well as environmental design, are used to maintain a stable and safe image. This is similar to Murakami Wood and Ball's (2013) discussion of brandscapes of control or securityscapes, where the brand itself becomes a source of policing. By ordering space and evoking a regulatory ideal, the BIA brand subsumes local cultural, spatial, social, economic and political practices in order to shape and co-produce urban renewal (Bookman and Woolford 2013). And by extension, these practices further urban gentrification, dispossession and supress others' right to the city (Masuda and Bookman 2018).

11.3 Mobilising Alleyways: Multiple and Made to Move

> Reinvented alleys ways can become a "place" unto themselves rather than just a short cut. (IDA 2017, p. 12)

More than just a short cut or passage, through this reimagining process, alleyways become places to visit and dwell. Movement in and through the space is highly scripted, stabilising what the alleyway is, what it is for, and moreover, which uses of the spaces are allowed to remain. Beyond this straightforward sense of movement, alleyway activation functions as a vehicular idea (McLennan 2004; Peck 2012). The extension and expansion of these malls without walls (Graham and Marvin 2001) *move* the logics of BIAs in a local and global sense. Despite being spatially delineated through legislation, BIAs and their practices are not so straightforwardly placed, instead they are assembled and circulated through trans-urban policy pipelines (Cook and Ward 2012; Ward 2011). Rather than rigid templates, these policies and practices are made to *travel well* across a variety of contexts and often formulated with enough ambiguity to easily circulate between locations (McLennan 2004). In the process of circulation, this mutability of policies enables interpretation and reinterpretation between various actors and contexts (Cochrane and Ward 2012). Compelling stories, expert testimony and cases from around the world offer seemingly tested solutions. For Robinson (2013), "urban policy mobilities constitute cities and their futures – it is in the context of circulating policies that city managers, citizens and other actors frame their imagination about where cities are going and make city futures" (p. 2).

A hot topic in these policy pipelines, alleyway activations have been the subject of many placemaking conference sessions, presentations, workshops, reports, toolkits, news reports and field excursions (see Anzilotti 2016; Fialko and Hampton 2014; Greco 2012; IDA 2017, 2019). Often drawing on community and practitioner work, temporary DIY urbanism is presented as a means of overcoming austerity urbanism

(Ferreri 2015; Tonkiss 2013). Far from (once) grassroots guerrilla and community initiatives, the professionalisation of these practices (as exemplified by these travelling texts) offers the private sector a profitable solution to the increasingly splintered streetscape, which BIAs have had a clear hand in (re)producing (Graham and Marvin 2001). Throughout these texts, cities such as San Francisco, Seattle, Tokyo, Melbourne and Chicago are frequently presented as paragons of successful alleyways or activations. Strikingly similar, almost interchangeable, testimonies are found in every guide:

> Many cities in the world have discovered this capability of alleys to stimulate public life, interpersonal commerce, and enhanced ecological function: Melbourne's lanes dissect oversized blocks to create network for people places: Christchurch's and Auckland's lanes are loci of vibrant shopping, after work gathering and nightlife, Tokyo's narrow shopping and market lanes are filled with 24 hours commerce; and Chicago's residential alleys bring neighbours together while infiltrating storm water, keeping it out of overloaded sewers. (Rottle cited in Fialko and Hampton 2014, p. 2)

While explaining the granular and grounded contexts or characteristics of the spaces, these texts cast alleyways as both mutable immobiles (Guggenheim 2010) as well as immutable mobiles (Latour 1987). In other words, alleyways act as *im/mutable im/mobiles* (Guggenheim 2016)—fixed sites in themselves potentially amenable to change, as well as standards and templates able to keep their shape through a process of circulation. From the strong identities and bright colours of San Francisco's alleyways, to the retail hubs enabled by Melbourne's disruptive laneways, to the green alley initiatives of Chicago and Seattle, these downtown innovations serve as case studies and best practices.

Predominantly, North American projects of (re)claiming urban commercial alleyways, these placemaking texts and toolkits—taking inspiration from old European cities, Japan's urban roji (alleys) or other aforementioned places—conjure and claim romanticised, exoticised and imagined geographies. Dislocated and appropriated from their diverse histories, communities and cultures, the corporate commodification of alleyways distils their discernible, innovated and valued features for export. In other words, they are cast as flat architypes or almost non-places (Augé 1995), which when assembled in BIAs create a hybrid, third space (Oldenburg 1989) or personality (Ward 2007). Despite making reference to atmospheres, immutable and immobile qualities of these exemplary alleyways, their mobile features are presented as scripts or recipes—*add and/or remove x, y, z ingredient(s) in order to activate the space*.

> Alleys are places of drama-enticing in their narrow linearity, exciting in their perceived risk, and scaled as stage sets, where the human body figures large against a constrained backdrop and directed lighting. Alleys are also quintessentially about movement, whether by individuals perambulating and pedaling, vehicles accessing business backdoors, or water flowing from rooftop drains. With this excitement, potential for human encounter, and utility in moving people, merchandise and water through the urban fabric, alleys possess compelling potential to produce a vibrant secondary public realm that might also help to repair the ecological performance of our cities. (Rottle cited in Fialko and Hampton 2014, p. 2)

From physical improvements to marketing initiatives, a reoccurring list of elements is recommended for successful activations. Usually referencing the permanence, budget and type of alleyway project, these recommendations predominately offer a range of improvements. These improvements focus on value creation and capitalise on the liminal and multiple-use nature of the space, especially in terms of everyday and critical infrastructure. For instance, it is recommended that new pavement should be both strong enough to withstand delivery trucks, while also being potentially reflective and porous to reduce heat island and runoff effects. In alignment with existing BIA initiatives and CPTED practices, lighting is frequently cited as the most visible and effective improvement for alleyways, as it can discourage crime, promote security and further clean and safe passage. With images and illustrations of lanterns and large installations found throughout these texts, other features such as canopies, are recommended as a physical means of creating atmosphere and personality. Similar to the justifications behind lighting, practitioners also recommend (re)opening up back facades of buildings to increase lines of sight, surveillance and transparency. By drawing on examples from outside of North America, these "alterative entrances" script movement through the alleyway into places of business. More than creating movement through these spaces to businesses, many of these physical features are meant to promote particular forms of gentrified *dwelling* in alleyways, which is used as a measure of engagement and the "reclamation of public space".

For example, while explicitly not promoting the dwelling of "unwanted populations", the addition of street furniture is usually described as moveable and temporary (e.g. pop-up cafes or parklets). Often these are forms of hostile architecture, such as short divided benches that are locked-up or taken down at night. Both infrastructural, aesthetic and environmental, green initiatives are presented as means of urban reclamation. Plants and gardens not only offer shelter (similar to canopies) but also improve air quality, drainage and urban ecosystems.

In combination with marketing and branding, such as naming the alleyway or creating specific programming (e.g. yoga, sports, markets, etc.), these features claim the space, thus furthering the BIA brandscape. These BIA-led initiatives of "reclamation" and "revitalisation" while invoking publicness and environmental sustainability are nevertheless economic ventures. Responsible to their member businesses, alleyway activation promotes consumption in the BIA and raises their prominence. To restate Robinson's above question "where are cities going?", in light of these *im/mutable im/mobiles*, heuristically *what does Melbourne, Tokyo or Seattle look like in Vancouver?*

11.4 DVBIA's Alley Oop Activation: Painted Pavements and Malls Without Walls

After a public engagement process[3] in 2015, the DVBIA in partnership with HCMA (an architecture and design group), the City of Vancouver and member businesses, concluded that people wanted more activated alleyways[4] and launched *More Awesome Now*. This ongoing project consists of three alleyways in Downtown Vancouver—Alley Oop, Ackery's Alley and Alberni Alleyway. With over 240 publicly owned laneways, the DVBIA presented laneways explicitly as a means of reclaiming land that is at once "valuable and scarce", while also "off limits to development" (see DVBIA 2017a). The DVBIA called attention to Vancouver's "distinctive grid" and its unintended inefficiencies and suggested that the reclamation of alleys would increase pedestrian traffic and transform underutilised space (DVBIA 2017a). As explained by the DVBIA President and CEO:

> Laneways serve an important business function, but for a big part of the day they are underused and full of potential. So we asked, if we make our lanes more appealing, could they become public spaces? More Awesome Now is an experiment in turning laneways into places of discovery – friendly, accessible, and lively parts of the urban streetscape. (HCMA 2016a)

As depicted in the initial designs (see HCMA 2016a), to the DVBIA, alleyways were reimagined as spaces for play, adventure and dwelling.

> Reimagining and reconfiguring these utilitarian corridors as vibrant recreational, commercial, and performance spaces injects a new type of fine-grain activity into the urban commons, increasing the public pedestrian area of the city by as much as 30 per cent! Over time, this could develop into a robust network of interconnected lanes, each with its own sense of place and continually evolving identity. (DVBIA 2018, p. 8)

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[3] *Downtown Vancouver Reimagined* was led by the DVBIA in partnership with Simon Fraser University Public Square and included 1129 respondents providing input into future planning in downtown Vancouver for 2040. Respondents included DVBIA members and stakeholders—based on listed partners—I assumed stakeholders were predominately residential and commercial property development groups. The report outlines (1) the online survey method, (2) the convenience sample and (3) stresses the lack of statistical significance. However, given the private access to the survey and membership/stakeholder criteria, this sampling is arguably purposive. Furthermore, throughout surrounding documents, this data often carries connotations of representativeness. And even more concerning, in multiple conference presentations and media releases the sample is often inflated to 11,000 respondents (which also boast further claims of significance). For example, in their IDA award press release they claim, "More than 11,000 Vancouverites surveyed said they wanted downtown Vancouver to be home to a connected series of activated alleyways – welcoming spaces with hidden gems to discover, including galleries, restaurants, and art walls where graffiti and visual storytelling are welcomed" (DVBIA 2017b). While perhaps a typo, or confusion between number of respondents and number of responses to the total number of questions, this repeated presentation of non-representative data is misleading.

[4] Specifically, this finding was based on 686 responses to a closed-ended question "Q11. What kinds of fun and entertainment would you like to have in downtown Vancouver in 2040? Please select up to three things you'd like to see most in the future?" In response to this question 62% ranked "Activated back alleys with cafes, tiny shops, and galleries" as one of potentially three selections (DVBIA 2015, p. 52).

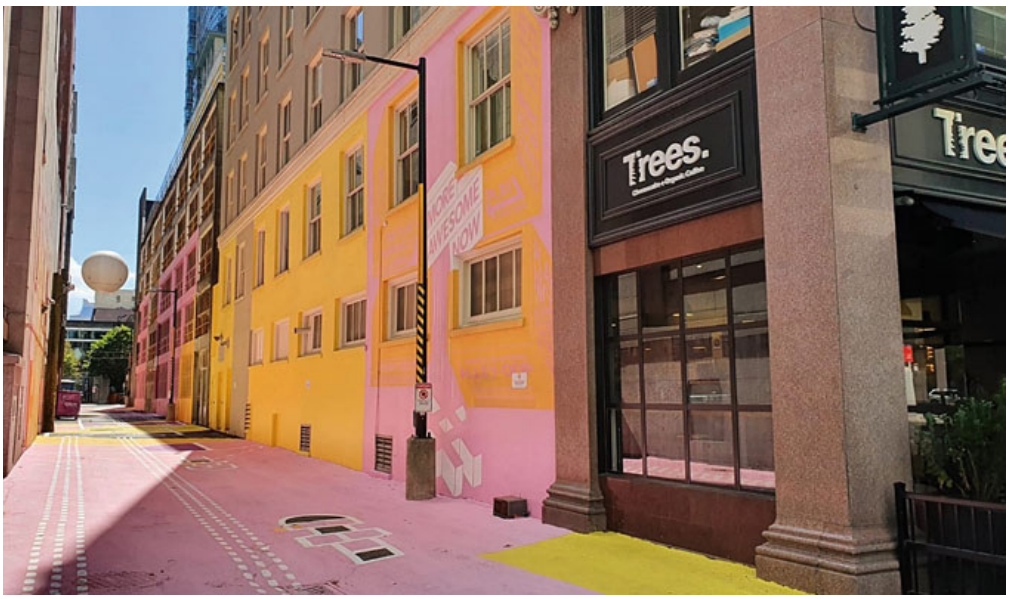

Fig. 11.1 Alley Oop activation

Like the other projects, they drew inspiration from Tokyo, Melbourne, Chicago, Seattle and Montreal. The DVBIA frequently used images from each city, which displayed large crowds, bright art installations, graffiti, elaborate lighting, furniture, plants and open permeable pavements with a diversity of programming, brands and advertising. At once representing distinct and now iconic places, the interchangeability of these images, especially when presented repeatedly at conferences, exemplifies their commodification as vehicular ideas and im/mutable mobiles. Conceived of as an aspirational project that will inspire others, More Awesome Now was positioned as a cohesive strategy and another case study on par with iconic alleyways. The guiding principles of this project included transforming perceptions and experiences of public spaces, maintaining permanent and semi-permanent installations, creating a clean and safe environment which retains elements of grist and risk, and is also beneficial and inclusive (DVBIA 2018, p. 17).

In order to further justify their project, onboard stakeholders and demonstrate return on investment, the DVBIA engaged in further data collection to craft a compelling account (Simakova and Neyland 2008) for their first activation Alley Oop, —located behind 688 West Hastings between Seymour and Granville (see Fig. 11.1). Impressions such as smells (e.g. garbage, urine, cigarettes, coffee, pastry and curry) vehicle traffic (e.g. number, type and purpose), pedestrians (e.g. assumed gender) and sounds (e.g. loud trucks, buskers) were recorded throughout the day.[5] Specifically, traffic and the gender of lane users became key indicators of, or proxies for, inefficiencies and perceptions. Noting a 3:1 ratio of men to women, they concluded "less women = less safe or the perception of less safe" (DVBIA 2017a, p. 50; DVBIA 2018, p. 15). These assumptions were based on a generalised

[5]See page 15 in DVBIA (2018) for more measures and indicators.

Fig. 11.2 Elements of Alley Oop activation

perception of fear projected onto an alleyway in the central business district, which crafted a compelling case for this improvement project.

An 18-month project, the "activated space" exhibits many of the aforementioned "successful" elements—with distinctive, painted (pink, yellow and purple) walls and pavement, a lighting installation, programming (e.g. basketball court, photo opportunities), pop-up cafes and a clear cohesive brandscape (see Fig. 11.2).[6] The DVBIA considered the activation successful due to the noteworthy aesthetic elements, increased pedestrian traffic, scripted dwelling time in the space, positive perceptions and multiple uses of the space. For example, post-activation more women entered the space, shifting the ratio to roughly 2:3 (women to men) from the baseline ratio of 1:3 (DVBIA 2017a, 2018). Furthermore, post-activation data collection found that people spent 15–30 min in the space, engaging in travel, photography, smoking and basketball (DVBIA 2017a). Predicated on a recognition of alleyways as multiple objects, this activation attempts to secure the corporate and value-creating features of the space and in doing so eclipses other uses and users.

11.5 What is Being Activated?

Placemaking and these design features serve as inscription devices (Akrich 1992) or spatial scripts (Mackinnon and Richardson 2017). Attempts to stabilise what alleyways are and what they are used for align with frontier and revanchist politics (Smith

[6] See #moreawesomenow on Instagram and Twitter, as well as HCMA (2016b) for additional images.

1996). Consistently using discourses of reclamation, in tandem with the quantification and assessment of the public laneways in their areas, the DVBIA expanded their territory—albeit inwardly. Under the guise of promoting public space, businesses and corporatising interests captured and further colonised these remaining spaces as sites for value creation and extraction. With patios wrapping around into the alleyway, activation in these spaces serves to extend the consumption of goods, services and the BIA brandscape. Alleyways, when activated, homogenise the space under their brandscape. The focus on pedestrian traffic and use of the space, presented as a measure of public use and engagement, also scripts activity around consumption in the alleyway and surrounding area. More than granting clean and safe passage through alleyways, their activation promotes the clean and safe dwelling of business and consumers, re(enforcing) the use of the space. In other words, like BIA clean and safe programmes, these beautification and branding exercises secure and claim the space. In essence, painting the pavement physically demonstrates the scope of these malls without walls and their colonising logics. Furthermore, by attempting to create a permanent installation, this alleyway activation stakes a claim to city property and places it under the purview and care of the BIA. From painting the pavement to offering programming in the space, the DVBIA established its longstanding involvement with activation, and its maintenance of the alleyway has become an ongoing project. For instance, between the wear and tear of users, service vehicles and graffiti, the alley requires repeated repainting and at times private security. Presented as a form of temporary urbanism, the logics, moreover the intentions behind the activation, are far from temporary.

Similar to other discourses of reclamation, the DVBIA characterised the alleyway as "underused", yet simultaneously considered "is there already a community of users that would be displaced?" (DVBIA 2018, p. 11). However, the invocation of "community" (as measured by counting cars and pedestrians) furthered these blank slate logics, as users not accounted for with this metric were made not to count. By stabilising what is considered use, this ontology also legitimated displacement. The BIA branding of the space as a place for play wedged between two office buildings distanced its use from the usual BIA slogan of "live, work, play". And while a successful activation of the space was focused on activity or staying (dwelling) in the place, understandings of this were also reimagined in terms of value. More than ensuring *clean and safe passage*, this desire to have consumers dwell (temporarily) was intended to discourage and displace other users and uses of the space.

Despite a human-interest article written by a member of the project team—telling the story of Rob, a man experiencing homelessness who appreciated the activation and saw it as a space where he was included (see Busse 2017)—inclusivity was not the intention in many cases. As explained by a DVBIA staff member, at times this displacement was purposeful:

> We're big proponents of place maintenance. For example, our alley activations – it was one of our bad alleys where we had a lot of activities and drugs. So, "what can we add, what other components can we put in the mix?" These reimagined spaces bring something else to the city, but they also have clear results. Something as simple as lights help crub public urination and promote hygienic spaces.

While wanting to maintain some of the grit and sense of risk—by romanticising danger—in practice, these were sanitising activities. In reference to another placemaking initiative in their area, one DVBIA staff member described activation as a means of scripting behaviours and designing-out undesirable ones:

> It activates the space. It's a huge issue, people sleeping in front of the doors and causing nuisance behaviour. That's our way of bringing more to the area. [For instance] there is a derelict building, it has been there for a long time. We used a placemaking approach and put our tables and chairs. Making it a place for people to sit, maybe eat their lunch. Changing how people use the space.

Unlike more controversial move-along policing, which was the subject of a 2008–2012 Human Rights tribunal case launched against the DVBIA (see Burgmann 2015), the activation of alleyways and other liminal spaces offers much softer forms of policing by brand (Bookman and Woolford 2013). For instance, the bright pink wall, distant from other forms of hostile architecture, nonetheless sanitises and orders the space. Rather than a temporary activation, the logics and narrowing ontology of the space are perniciously permanent.

Activation and DIY urbanism may have interesting roots in community development, and once commodified these vehicular ideas and im/mutable im/mobiles extend the BIA brandscape and logics through the splintered streetscape and trans-urban policy pipelines. Rather than a new urban politics, these corporate-lead projects reinforce entrepreneurial and neoliberal logics. Circulating on a global scale, and dislocated from context, communities and histories, texts and tools provide instruction to organisations—organisations which to many city dwellers remain unknown or mundane. However, in the name of "saving" and "reclaiming" public space, these consumption-centred projects combine new and old forms of colonisation and gentrification, as well as strengthening BIAs' claims to alleyway and by extension the city. Presented as temporary, corporate-led activations reinforce longstanding (ontological) politics. While requiring ongoing maintenance, these forms of claims making, policing and stewardships may pave the way for further corporate governance and city building. Like the connection between broken windows policing and placemaking, activation, rather than being temporary, serves to stabilise similar exclusionary practices.

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