

The Well-Maker-Space [Workshop]

by Nick Gant, Fiona Hackney and Katie Hill



Introduction

This workshop sought to build and share understandings of how making might contribute to wellness or, as we term it, 'well-making'. To this end, it offered a range of talks exploring different maker activities, processes and projects that are devised, owned, championed and offered by modern makers in support of health and well-being. The workshop also hosted discussion and reflective activities in order to interrogate the meaning of well-making and the well-maker-space.

Run in a gallery space around communal tables covered in paper, cardboard, pens, sewing materials, scissors and tape, the Well-Maker-Space workshop brought together twelve paper presentations from international authors to contribute to prototyping: debating, imagining, questioning, visualising, conceptualising, critiquing and creating a framework (and potential design brief) for the well-maker-space.

Participants were encouraged to listen actively to the presentations and record their thoughts and responses, generating a variety of perspectives on what a well-maker-space might be, how it might function, and what it might contain. Together with presenters they 'made' representations of these insights, which were then collected on our cardboard 'making wall', a material metaphor for our own pop-up well-maker-space. This paper discusses how the well-maker-space concept has formed thus far and how the workshop papers and activities contributed to our thinking about well-making.

The workshop was chaired by the authors - Nick Gant (Community21, University of Brighton) and Professor Fiona Hackney (AHRC-funded project Co-producing CARE: Community Asset-based, Research & Enterprise, University of Wolverhampton) and Katie Hill (Leeds Beckett University and University of Wolverhampton) - all of whom have been exploring making and health with a range of collaborative partners and communities of practice.

Context, Provocation and Method:

Global economic and social structures creak and groan under the burden of ever increasing demand for social services in times of austerity – so can the maker community and maker spaces come to the rescue? Making is

good for us right! If so, what now for modern maker-spaces in this context? There has long been an implicit notion that making provides benefits beyond the mere function of object, artefact or product creation. However, recent research has helped catalyse a demand and opportunity to develop understanding of this idea, not only to provide a more rigorous and explicit evidence base for how making practices support health and well-being, but also to demonstrate this and put it into action in multiple ways. The 'Maker Community' is on the rise, evidencing a growth of interest in communal making and making places, and along with this the opportunity and the need to understand the implicit health benefits of making, or well-making as we term it, become more pressing (see **Dr. Bastian Lange's keynote for Making Futures 2017**). Ours to Master, a recent report by the Royal Society of Arts, reveals the potential for maker-spaces to boost people's sense of self-efficacy and wider well-being (Dellot 2015). Maker-spaces seem to offer a particular form of private/public space, as third spaces or 'great good places' (Oldenburg 1989) that foster creativity and social interactions, the health benefits of which require further attention if we are to better understand and maximise the value of the arts in our communities.

So, could the maker movement actively and more explicitly support community health? What processes and methods might be developed or enhanced to amplify their value to human health and well-being? Could maker-spaces be prescribed – a mode of crafts on prescription (Desmarais 2015) - to communities, people mental health challenges and those with complex needs? What do we mean by well-making? How exactly might making help our wellness, and how might that function for those different conditions and in different settings? We propose an iterative process that reflects on making affect through a process of creative-critical (reflexive) making. The Well-Maker-Space initiative, as such, responds to growing popular interest in creative making as well as a perceived need from policy makers to evidence making's well-being value.

While we have many questions and to some extent are in the early stages of this investigation, we are clear about our research process, which draws design research together with crafts thinking to explore well-making through (playful/reflective) practice and making. Design research (Frayling 1993), or as Stappers et al. (2018) termed it more recently 'research through design', is a relatively new area of phenomenon driven studies in which knowledge is generated through a design action that is reflected on and evaluated using knowledge from different disciplines. With its commitment to achieving an improvement, design research is challenging, exploratory, and depends on processes of 'ideation, creativity, reflection, making, trying, and association rather than linear logical argument' (Stappers et al. 2018: 171-2). Prototypes and/or flexibly designed frameworks are central components of design research, prototype being understood as a physical instantiation of a finding, and framework as a means to place a phenomenon in a conceptual perspective built on hands-on exploration and the application of relevant theory. Both give rise to concrete experiences, connect to possible applications and fit well into the practices, cognitive repertoire of design, craft and making skills. We propose that the dual process of prototyping and framework development enables us to test and build a method for interrogating the complex set of emotions, thoughts and sensations - satisfaction/frustration/connection/a sense of belonging/pride etc. - that we undergo when we make things together, and their potential health benefits.

Making, like design research, is an iterative process that can increase understanding or result in solutions. It nonetheless has its own disciplinary characteristics and qualities that produce distinctive forms of knowledge. Crafts authority Martina Margetts, describing a 'hidden embodied knowledge of making [that is] dangerously disregarded by policy-makers', conceptualises making as 'a sequence of repetitious acts, incrementally forming objects with meaning'. Much of its value lies in the ability to challenge the sharp distinction between the 'reflective' and the 'active', the 'mental' and the 'physical' that is 'so detrimental to societal progress and well-being' (Margetts in Charny ed. 2011: 39). As such, making occupies a useful centre ground between 'research' and 'design'. While the former concerns 'what is' questions aiming to understand the past and present to provide knowledge that will be of use in the future, and the latter focuses on 'how to?' to construct a positive future (that may not yet exist), making's embodied engagement with materials, processes, skills and

knowledge produces 'what is?' knowledge about the now that synthesises past and future. Involving mental, and physical, reflective, and active engagement making, that is, draws on the past through repertoires of embodied experience, knowledge, skill, memory, heritage to better understand current phenomena and envisage an improved future that is potentially more creative, engaged, connected, and healthier.

With its focus on action, and commitment to addressing real world phenomena, the maker-space-workshop adapts design research to a maker sensibility in order to address its central aims to:

- Engage with critical, rigorous research to present diverse perspectives on 'making well and well-making'
- Foster the development of a community of 'well-makers' and 'well-making' researchers in support of the enhancement of new knowledge and practice in this area

Prototype well-maker-space(s) as a vision for modern provision of healthier communities within a distributed network of makers



What's inside the Well-Maker-Space? Fiona Hackney prototypes well-making



Work-shopping well-making and the Well-Maker-Space concept

The Maker-Space Team:

The Maker-Space-Workshop has evolved from research projects conducted over the past five years by the workshop leaders, as demonstrated below.

Nick Gant's practice-based-research at the University of Brighton and research-based-practice (Community21) has been exploring the role of making and maker spaces in a range of nuanced community settings. These include collaborative creative communities established between the UK and remote communities in South Africa and Indonesia enabled through internet enabled technology, maker workshops in a community pub on a social housing estate and a maker space in a museum in a culturally impoverished town aimed at 'making culture'. The Well-Maker-Space development method we used at the conference is a further iteration of a similar workshop, which utilised at the previous Making Futures conference 2015. There we ran a similar workshop process to explore notions of a maker-space that engaged specifically with 'place'. The Place-Maker-Space workshop and related papers helped to shape the theoretical and physical creation of a prototype space, which was installed on a development site in Brighton as a 'living lab' space for research and public engagement. Following the success of this process we revisited this methodology as a means to enrich a constructive, 'making research' approach to support diverse research perspectives feeding into the speculative design specification of a maker-space as a means to both build and then deploy and further interrogate the insights through practical application and analysis. In this case, it is hoped that the Well-Maker-Space specification developed through the workshop and this paper will support the creation of a community resource within a care home in East Sussex in 2018. The results of this will be published later.



The Community21 Place-Maker-Space Brighton – developed after our Making Futures Workshop 2015

Fiona Hackney: *Makinging*, by which we mean the process of making with all its attendant social, sensory and skill's-based activities, is central to our conceptualisation and interrogation of the Well-Maker-Space as fluid and unbounded yet shaped and driven by its users, and events that take place within it. Fiona's interest in the power of making has developed over a number of action research projects with community groups funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Connected Communities programme which, simply put, examined what happens when diverse people come together to make, in a variety of contexts and to different ends. These include Co-Producing CARE: Community Assets-based Research & Enterprise and its Follow-on project Maker-Centric: building place-based co-making communities, as well as the activist initiative Craftivist Garden #wellMAKING.

One of a nine projects exploring different approaches to co-production, CARE examined the benefits and challenges involved in using domestic textile processes (knitting, sewing, embroidery etc.) as a means to build community assets and agencies. Beginning with the sociologist Richard Sennett's (2012) proposal that when we create together we engage in modes of cooperation that promote trust and empathy and counteract isolation, CARE consisted of a series of co-created 'crafty' interventions which explored how making together can promote self-reflective 'critical crafting' as a social and emotional resource. Participants went on to start their own community projects, work with a local Fab Lab to develop craft and creative outputs, undertake volunteering and further education, and generally became (even) more engaged members of their various communities in different ways. The project also revealed that creative making is no easy panacea for connectivity and agency, and the productive tensions that variously emerged shaped a more nuanced appreciation of the socio-psychological value of making (Hackney et al. 2016). Maker-Centric puts the CARE method of collective making into practice with a place-based and local heritage focus that is appropriate to West Midlands project partners Craftspace and Creative Black Country and their associated crafts and maker communities (Hackney et al. 2018).

One recurrent theme in all these projects has been the well-being value of collective making, not only as a means of mindful distraction and absorption, but also because participants found that the process can forge a safe space in which dissonant voices, feelings, experiences, knowledge, beliefs could be expressed and worked through (Hackney et al. 2016). During Craftivist Garden #wellMAKING, in particular, what were often very private stories of ill health began to emerge and be explored in the craft groups, and the project served as a catalyst of agency. I believe that while well-being is a contested category and the craft process is by no means struggle free (Desmarais 2016), experiential making - envisaged as a set of embodied, interactive activities - promotes wellness in distinct ways and this is bound up with our concept of well-making. A central research interest is to explore how making-in-place might better enable the conditions associated with wellness to emerge. Our ongoing work on Maker-Centric suggests that something of this lies in the tension between process, practice (the doing and the being), space, place, and the various constituencies of the groups involved; the iterative process, that is, of *how* one shapes the other, and how this manifests differently in different places and groups (Hackney et al. 2018).



Two participants resolve their differences through making together. Co-producing CARE: Community Asset-based Research and Enterprise project, Birmingham, 2015

(<https://cocreatingcare.wordpress.com/the-project>)

Katie Hill is a lifelong maker and as her work in design research and social design has developed, making has crept in and become a key tool for engaging people in research and design. Working in Leeds, Katie has worked across a range of educational and third sector organisations finding opportunities to apply design research to social and environmental issues: supporting social enterprises focussed on recycling and sustainable consumption; community gardening and food growing; supporting innovation in new researcher communities; and designing engagement tools for community development. A core interest has been the development of design practice to address complex social and environmental problems that starts to exist outside traditional boundaries of the design industry and identifies new roles for design and designers. As such, the well-maker-space becomes an example of expanding the potential for designers to re-design their role in society. Change is needed in many aspects of current structures and practices to move towards a more equitable and responsible society, and designers have the capability to enable change, but need to design the change in design practice in order to design the change needed in the wider world.

At Making Futures 2015, Katie submitted a paper proposal to facilitate a making workshop at the conference with Lizzie Harrison, to develop their practice of 'making as enquiry', which they had been working on through a co-design and co-production of research project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (Hill et al. 2014). Nick invited Katie and Lizzie to facilitate making activities throughout the workshop rather than as a discreet paper, and through that a collaborative collage record of the Place-Maker-Space workshop was created (Hill and Harrison 2016). From this developed the idea of using the conference track as a prototyping space to generate material rather than just reflect on past research. Katie had also worked on projects about

making and wellbeing with Fiona, and Making Futures 2017 provided an opportunity to bring those two strands of work together.

The Well-Maker-Space Workshop: Papers and Themes:

It is important to remember that a research prototype is not a finished product but rather is unfinished and open for experimentation: a tool for generating insight into phenomena. As such, the artefacts, films, happenings, events, stories, photographs, and installations in the workshop papers, and the papers themselves, are envisaged as prototypes and, alongside the iterative process of responsive discussion and drawing/mapping/observation/reflection that went into creating the well-maker-wall they inform the well-making framework discussed in the final section of this report.

The twelve papers that made up the well-maker-space workshop take us through a spectrum of perspectives on the complex relationships between making and wellbeing. Three central themes emerged: 1) Maker Spaces and Products, 2) Making Processes and Memory, and 3) Locating/Mapping Maker Spaces and Activities. Rather than summarising the contents of the papers in the order they appeared at the workshop, we have grouped them into themes that take us through a narrative sequence of product, process, and place.

We start by discussing some obvious and instrumental connections that manifest in the design of products for health, and how making and engagement can help to soften some of the impacts on well-being that living with ongoing health problems and unwellness can bring. This leads onto a set of papers that opened up perspectives on and approaches to the processual nature of making, memory, and narrative, involving often intimate and personal responses to making and health. Finally, the range and diversity of spaces in which well-making might occur emerged in all of the papers. The final theme explores that diversity – from the street to the bedroom, from professional maker spaces to care homes, from the virtual to the physical – articulating the possibility for well-maker-spaces to manifest in multiple locations and forms.

Theme 1: Making Spaces and Products

Ross Head presented bespoke product realisations for disabled children and in many respects clearly defined a stake in the ground of our 'space' denoting the role for making well through the direct creation of highly functional objects and products for health benefit. Here, the skill and ambition of the maker is to provide an *exacting fit* both literally, as physical forms tailored to specific needs, and also in terms of the emotional benefits afforded by objects that enable new mobility, enhanced life experiences, and positive opportunities. Head showed how the deployment of tools and techniques within a maker-space, such as systems of computer controlled cutting or scanning technology, can bring a level of engineered precision to user specificity and literally 'make change' in people's lives. More artisanal techniques were deployed by Gerard Blom, Tara Jeroen, Briscoe French in the creation of prosthetic attachments (greaves) that sought not only to provide function but also enhance a sense of individuality in the material and creative expression of an object co-designed and produced with the client within a maker space. Antje Illner's paper, which articulated the role of making and the maker in redefining an archetypical and homogenised healthcare device (in this case the asthma inhaler), also foregrounded the value of human sensibilities and user-engagement in design. Taking a craft approach to design, the maker identified opportunities and enabled personalisation through product 'hacks' and customisation to better reflect the personality of the user. The artefact is realised through the considered application of a set of enabling tools (typical and non-typical) that both make and mediate. As a result, 'stuff' is turned into 'a thing', but in a way that reaches out and connects to the user through the capacity to embody and reflect personality and individualism in compelling ways. A pathway to resilience results from being able to create, control, and articulate products through reflexive, responsive making.

In each case, the research process is manifestly 'made' with critical enquiry embodied within the physical realisation of prototypes. These are not only objects that interrogate the problem and the solution, but through *making* research relationships between the subject and the maker are established, developed and strengthened. These relationships are mediated by making and they help to engage and enfranchise users into the research process. The object (prototype) not only functions to help answer questions about the effectiveness of the research, but also serves as an outcome of a collaborative investment and process of meaningful interaction and engagement in response to personal life experiences. The making of prototypes takes time, skill and in some cases technology - it also requires the sharing of knowledge, experience, and critical reflection.

Theme 2: Well-making as Process: Memory and the Meaning of Well-being:

Embodied in making is the operation of time and memory, with which the mind's eye, hand and tool draw on a profound well of tacit knowledge to originate form, sometimes in slow and patient incremental steps, sometimes in an instant. (Margetts in Charny ed. 2011: 40)

Martina Margetts, writing about the extraordinary everyday things in the V&A's Power of Making exhibition, describes the making process as multiple 'acts of intuition' driven by tacit knowledge; making, that is, as David Pye (1968) famously characterized it as 'workmanship of risk'. Margetts, moreover, suggests that time, memory and self are embodied in and intrinsic to the act of making craft through a 'repeated affirmation of the conscious coming-into-being of the person and the thing'. How time and memory are entangled in making process and the significance of this for well-being was a central theme running through several presentations, in particular those given by Hackney and Mah Rana: 'The Power of Making', Tabatha Andrews on 'Crafting Language: Dementia, Community and Play', Rachel Johnston: "What I need my hands need to talk about": Mental health and making, the Grayling Heritage Project', and Lucie Hernandez: 'Resonant Threads: Crafting Community Voice Through Collaboration and E-Textiles'. Crafted products in the form of film, animation, embroideries, photographic installation, e-textile artefacts, and a sculpture/cabinet, also functioned as a means to provoke or stimulate participants towards a 'coming into being' different ways. As such, these artefacts and images might be regarded as prototypes for generating insight into the value of craft and making processes for wellbeing.

Just as in craft, the process of making and engagement described in these papers involved patient, incremental steps that enabled something 'magical' to happen. The slow pace and regular rhythm of Rana's stitching (a process termed stitch encounters) with her mother who has early stage Alzheimers, for instance, enabled the power relations between the two to gradually shift so for a time at least the carer (Rana) became the student/daughter again, while the 'patient' became the mother/teacher (Rana and Hackney 2018). Many of the most powerful responses happened spontaneously, in a form of knowing through making that exists beyond words (Polanyi 1966). Rana's mother for instance broke into song as the sewing process surfaced youthful memories, producing Rana's insight that a well-making-place – in this case the sewing room – can help you to 'sing yourself into wellbeing' (Rana written on Well-Maker-Space workshop wall). The song became the unifying feature in the project film that Rana (2016) produced and a major factor in communicating the women's emotional connection and experience of making together. An art/craft work, the film could also be seen as a prototype provoking questions and generating insight into the role of making for well-being.

Other papers questioned assumptions about what 'well-being' means, using making to blur boundaries between notions of 'health' and 'illness', 'amateur' and 'professional'. Titled *The Dispensary*, Andrews's project involved her working with dementia patients and wood-turners to co-produce a 'cabinet of curiosities' filled with visual, tactile and sonic objects, including beautifully turned wooden shapes, 'small acts of craft' designed to stimulate curiosity and trigger memories. '[P]art tool-cabinet, part dressing-table part bureau or fridge', The

Dispensary is intended to engender 'purposeful play' through repetitive and rhythmic actions, and sensory engagement to unlock embodied tacit memory, and aid communication by connecting participants' inner and outer worlds (see <https://vimeo.com/181069269>).

Shared community, collective and public memory, forgotten or suppressed, underpinned both Johnston and Hernandez's talks. The former examined the 1950s art therapy archive attached to the West Sussex Country Asylum (the HLF funded Graylingwell Heritage Project, GHP), while the latter worked with local memory and oral history archives housed in Penryn, Cornwall. The past serves as a trigger for co-created artefacts – an object and photo-installation (GHP), and interactive e-textile artefacts and an animation at Penryn – to help communities better understand current experiences of mental health (GHP) and place (Penryn).

Viewed as prototype 'tools for generating insight', the artefacts, images and processes employed during these projects tell us much about the 'how to?' of maker research. In different ways each evidences craft affect, through the complex engagement with time and memory through making, the sensory emotional qualities revealed, the capacity for making to stimulate and mediate 'coming-into-being', produce concrete experiences, and possible applications. Rana's 'stitch encounters' with her mother, for instance, suggest a method to help carers engage with those with early-stage Alzheimers, while pop-up cabinets in hospital wards stimulate and re-engage dementia sufferers. In the process, these prototypes raise important questions about creativity and wellbeing, blurring the boundaries between what constitutes 'health' and 'illness', craft and creativity, and who has the right, ability, and wherewithal to be creative, in which context, and to what ends? Carriers for interdisciplinary discussion, they are a prop to carry activities and tell stories that involve, as Margetts observed of the act of making, a 'crucial realisation and transmission of the self within the object' and a 'conscious coming-into-being of the person and the thing'.

Theme 3: Where is the Well-Maker-Space?

As the notion of 'maker spaces' becomes more established, a sort of code for the type of space that we might expect a maker space to be emerges – an artist's studio, a workshop, an industrial unit, and new community building, a pop-up space in a disused shop or warehouse. One of the things that we looked for in selecting papers to contribute to this prototyping process was to explore the possibilities for where well-maker-spaces might be and to expand on this existing code.

Beth McLaughlin writing about the production and consumption of the Pussyhat in the USA totally blows out of the water the idea that a well-maker-space needs to be contained in any one space, presenting a powerful argument for this maker movement as a space for creating collective wellbeing in multiple spaces: digital, activist and physical. A community of millions gathered via social media and in mass demonstrations, using making as a tool to respond to threats to collective and individual well-being caused by political turmoil. Some of this making did happen in more traditional maker spaces – an image of a group in a yarn store sitting around a table and making the Pussy Hats together.

As a stark spatial contrast, the paper given by Niamh Lily Wimperis talked about her embroidered fabric fort and its role in working through anxiety and mental health. This highly personal space started in her home and was taken out into a gallery where it could be shared, and others invited in to feel the benefit of an intimate well-maker-space.

Emily Ohlund talked about the experience of Dyspraxia in the craft workshop, enabling us to think more about traditional making spaces used by students and professional craftspeople. Understanding the experiences of makers with this developmental coordination learning disorder can open up a broader understanding of the relationship between the maker space and well-being. For example, insights about personal organisation and how the space enables organisation practices can help us to think about the broader life practices that spaces

need to intersect with – it's not just about making, and in order for making to happen, many other things need to work as well: communication, social interaction, and organisation etc.

Issues experienced by students with Dyspraxia in the craft studio set out a debate about accessibility – if we are going to prototype well-maker-spaces we need to think about who can use them and how we create accessible spaces. The papers have already suggested that the spaces can be diverse – and Mari Salovaara takes that forwards to suggest that we need to take the maker space to people who find it difficult or impossible to leave their own spaces. Drawing on the Erasmus+ Project Handmade Wellbeing, Salovaara's paper discussed the experience of trying to facilitate making activities in care homes with elderly people who were unable to move to other spaces to access making. The paper highlighted a number of practical and cultural challenges to bringing making activities into the care home space – lack of tools, materials, and suitable spaces, and lack of funding, but also the potential for bringing into the care home otherwise scarce opportunities such as for intergenerational collaboration.

As a final note on spaces Philip Hector brought case studies from Germany, Slovenia and Finland of maker and repair spaces where the experiences of participants and facilitators were analysed to look for indicators of sustainable well-being. Images of these case studies showed street fairs and community events where informal drop in style workshops were run to enable people to bring and repair their broken belongings. This paper highlighted some of the complex interactions between well-being, making and sustainability and how shifts toward greater sustainability and well-being may be designed for through the design of maker spaces.

In this final paper the spaces were temporary, outdoors, and public, but by looking across this set of papers with respect to identifying the potential for where the Well-Maker-Space might be, we can see that we need to take an expansive view of where and what sort of space the Well-Maker-Space can become.

Reflections and Discussions: Workshop Prototyping:



Well-Maker-Space workshop: responses and reflection sheets.

The images pictured here show a variety of participant responses to and reflections about the workshop papers that were visualised and pinned to the 'well-maker-space' wall in a collective act of prototyping. The themes, issues, questions, thoughts, challenges, and positions arising were many and various, and this section summarises just a few of those.

Continued interactions with diverse communities of amateur or community makers from a wide range of contexts and capabilities have empirically supported the notion that nobody wants to make 'crap' craft. There is a universal compulsion to make compelling 'things' and indeed some of the emotional benefits drawn from making can be associated with the acquisition of new skills and pride in their in application for production. However, within the hypothetical of the well-maker-space it was suggested that it might be necessary for Craft (with a capitol C) to shift along a spectrum where we consciously let go of the benchmarking of craft excellence and some of the rigours and criticality in relation to mastery or conceptualisation of technique; such an approach marks a tipping point into a space that can support a 'lighter' notion of craft without loss of authenticity. This space might include the 'tell-tale' aspects of material manipulation as a means to express or explore function (physically and metaphorically). A more explicit sense of the act of making is fundamental to the cognitive and physical state, which individual(s) perceive as a valued experience in its own right. Technique is still fundamental but this can be superseded by the 'technical-task-trance' or state arrived at through repetitious making or the close, intimate connections gained through making with someone and even the sense of belonging established through collective participation in making – much of which, participants told us, was experienced at the well-maker-space workshop.



Well-Maker-Space workshop: responses and reflection sheets.

The gender agenda had us considering stereotypes of person and process and whether the prevalence of sewing and knitting in many of the papers and references assumes an accessibility that may need further unpacking. While stitching is conventionally perceived as female – despite the long history of seamen and soldiers sewing - the ‘shedding’ movement (‘Men in sheds’) also reproduces a binary notion of sex and gender that is typically associated with maker-spaces and the ‘tech savvy’ domain of the Fab Lab. Perhaps we need to expand/combine notions of sewing and shedding - ‘sewdding’ – or acknowledge that much of the pleasure of home crafting is as a gendered activity. Certainly such assumptions alongside the history of domestic crafts as a gendered activity mitigates against women participating in what are widely perceived as ‘techy’ Fab Labs, just as it does against men joining dressmaking classes. Whilst participants volunteered examples of men sewing, this does not necessarily address the issue of equality of access and the modes of making that the well-maker-space might adopt and deploy as benefits to all.



Well-Maker-Space workshop: responses and reflection sheets

There are indeed risks to consider – the workshop identified the danger of a possible stigmatisation that may occur if we started to directly associate making and well-being. In consciously shifting the context of craft into a supportive method for ‘care’ we may undermine community grass-roots initiatives which are satisfied with an implicit appreciation of the well-making benefits of creative making – by raising awareness of the well-making benefits of making we might overcomplicate the process and restrict pleasure in participation. Participants agreed that if we are to seek to further empower, enrich and amplify the role of making as a means to address complex health issues, then we need to establish some ground rules about how this is to be approached. What language should we use, which tools and processes will engage and support people appropriately and how will we know? Not all ‘makers’ will need or want to engage with notions of making for health (well-making and making-well, that is). By arguing for well-making and associated spaces as a mode of social prescription, or

indeed as part of the governments new initiative around mental health in schools (Secretary of State for Health et al. 2017), do we risk diminishing the health benefits of an emergent cultural practice that could be seen as self-defining without needing to self-diagnose?

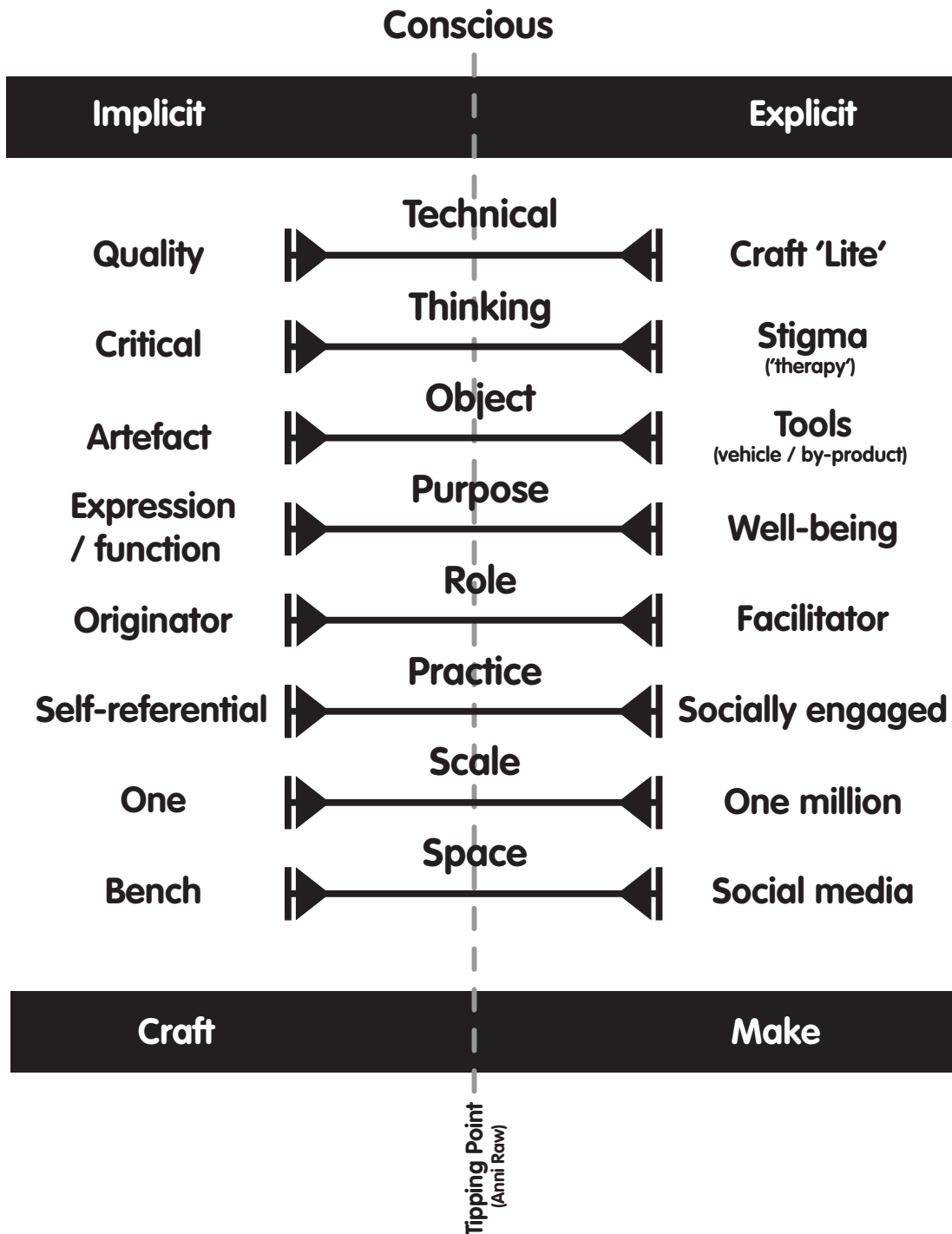
Conclusion: Framing the Well-Maker-Space

This workshop at the Making Futures Conference 2017 brought together international perspectives on the role of the maker community, maker-spaces, and making methods in relation to promoting well-being and supporting physical and mental health in diverse communities and contexts. It invited papers responding to themes that included (not exhaustive); diverse studies on making for well-being, mental and physical health, case-studies of maker-spaces that directly engage with health issues, well-making methods and practices and the tools and processes of 'making-well and well-making'.

What is evident from the papers, and workshop speakers and participants' contribution to prototyping activities is that the phenomenon of well-making and the Well-Maker-Space is meaningful for a diverse and multidisciplinary range of projects, practitioners, and communities in varied contexts locally, nationally, and internationally. It works across art, craft, and design practices; happens in public at the market, and privately at home; is shared online or in person, but common to all is the fact that the act of making embodies, enables, or realises some aspect of wellness. While we all use making as a tool to foster well-being, we do so differently according to such variables as the specifics of a design problem/brief, the nature and needs of participants we are working with, the modes of craft practice we employ, the contexts in which we work, our parameters and contingencies, and the complex inter-relationship between all these, among other things. The workshop confirmed wide interest in this work and gave us a more nuanced and multifaceted perspective on how well-making might be conducted and what a well-maker-space might be and mean. The question remains: what can we learn from these diverse examples and approaches and how might we take that learning forwards?

One answer is to synthesise the learning from our prototyping into a framework (or frameworks). Our invitation at the workshop was for participants and speakers to contribute to a design brief for the Well-Maker-Space: 'What can we learn from these papers and projects that might inform a specification for a future well-maker-space?' Analysing the themes and ideas that emerged, we have generated a conceptual framework (see below) which proposes a preliminary response: to refocus or reposition the implicit, tacit nature of 'craft' making in relation to the more explicit characteristics required in making for health. Without being reductive we hope that the framework offers at least one - there are many others - speculative approach to inform future iterations of well-maker-space prototyping in the form of a checklist of the aspects of making that might (or might not) best inform/support well-being.

Lastly we thank all our workshop presenters and participants. This research is presently at a preliminary stage. We are in the process of analysing the rich material that emerged from the workshop, and invite others working in this field to contact us with a view to developing the research further.



Proposal for a well-making and well-maker-space framework

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