



Celebrating Crafts for social change

EnsAD, Paris
From Conflict to Conviviality
through Creativity and Culture

the mediation lab

The Mediation Lab «Travelling crafts for social change» at l'Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs (EnsAD) in Paris aims to show the importance of understanding and integrating the social, political and cultural issues of present and past migrations in solving conflict situations by applying design methodologies. More specifically, the objectif of the Mediation Lab is that of co-creating a tangible pedagogical service and/or tools of know-how transmission capable of highlighting, revealing and valorizing specific practical knowledge and expertise of migrants, or "expert newcomers" as we decided to name them. These pedagogical services and tools are the results of the analysis of different methodologies proper to specific know-hows, level of expertise and contexts of mediation in which the labs took place. The aim is to circulate this pedagogic model and present it to other art & design schools, as well as other national institutions. Helped by a team of designers and teachers, migrant-craftsmen and students have co-imagined several pedagogical models of transmission of 'travelling crafts' and conceived 'manifest objects' that illustrate the different approaches of each expert newcomer. These objects developed for the different mediation labs are discursive and materialize specific cultural exchanges with a specific narrative. Based on a horizontal model (expert migrants-designers-students-public) and experimented within the Mediation Lab, these models/tools allowed the public to understand and experience these narratives and the working methods proper to each craftsman thanks to an ad-hoc pedagogy outlining their potential and a recognition of their skills by the public, e.g. during the below mentioned workshops with the local community with the more general objective of considering migration as a rich, stimulating and creative experience that must be shared.

The Mediation Lab was much more than a year long activity in which to discuss, develop and experiment design research approaches to migrants' and situations. During the year long activity students and migrants have been increasingly asked to reflect together about the meaning of co-creation of pedagogical tools for craftsmen or for non-expert newcomers interested in developing manual activities and how these co-developed specific tools would have been capable of highlighting their own knowhow and approach.

Therefore, the Mediation Lab has been conceived as a joint venture bringing together users, in this particular case expert and non-expert newcomers, and students with the aim to co-create pertinent solutions that would have been able to enhance the capacity of the newcomer of perceiving the real value of his knowhow or of the knowhow he was willing to develop and of the student to deepen his knowledge on a specific knowhow and co-develop creative skills to transmit it to a larger public. The initial research based on group activities, collective mapping and "mosaic" skill developing techniques in October has gradually lead to intensive mediation labs in May-June where students, migrants, communities and more in general the public have co-develop the aforementioned pedagogical transmission tools.

Each week during the whole academic year of 2018-2019, debrief sessions in presence of the different participants were happening in order to go over the challenges and benefits of each expertise, exchange the information gathered by the different research groups (four groups where formed composed by expert newcomers, students, student researchers and designers), plan for future sessions and consolidate the student's theoretical approach. Students have been able to analyse the contexts of development of each craftsmanship and exchange extensively with "expert newcomers" about each of their will, needs to develop and share their unique skill. In addition, different experts have been invited to enrich their perspective and give a feedback on the improvement of their works.

The first part of the development of the Mediation Lab took place at EnsAD School on Mondays and the second part at Emmaus Les Resilientes, an open social design laboratory, where public could eventually participate at any phase. There, EnsAD students and Les Resilientes met every week on Wednesdays and had access to material resources on place. The third part of the Mediation Lab happened in various places open to the public throughout the city of Paris where all participants could meet for a specific mediation event and share with a wider audience.

Beyond these weekly meetings, workshop's animators accompanied students to visit newcomers in the place where they daily develop their skills and helped them with their research. Students were highly encouraged to pursue their fieldwork research beyond the classroom and to engage with expert and non-expert newcomers outside of class hours.



The Mediation Lab was structured in three stages: the time of revelation, the time of transmission and the time of valorisation of expertise.

Transmitting skills: October 2018-January 2019

The Studio 4Cs students collaborated with 4 expert-craftsmen who shared their know-how and co-created transmission tools that could easily adapt to different contexts. Together, they co-produced manifest objects resulting from their exchange. These pedagogical tools were first shared with the public during the ENSAD open doors in January 2019.

Revealing skills: February-June 2019

The Studio 4Cs students collaborated with non-expert migrants to 'reveal' their skills at Emmaüs Les Résilientes. With the designer Eugénie de la Rivière, Emmaüs Les Résilientes they proposed 3 labs (1 per month) gathering inhabitants, EnsAD students, and 'newcomers'. Together they produced collaborative design objects based on creativity and collective intelligence.

Valuing skills: May-June 2019

The Studio 4Cs students assisted the migrant-experts in the mediation of their know-how possibly at la Villette Makerz, Centre Pompidou and the event "La rue aux Enfants" of the Cafézoïde. This last phase was the occasion to share the year's experience and celebrate the enhanced value of the know-how of the craftsmen-newcomers.



First working sessions at EnsAD school, October 2018

Transmitting skills



Bassam Salwkh, plasterer
artist sharing his skills with EnsAD student **Alphée**
EnsAD, November 2018

The aim of the **Transmitting skills** first phase of the Mediation Lab, happening at EnsAD, from October 2018 to January 2019, was to rethink the space of the classroom or workshop space as a place for horizontal knowledge sharing between all participants, a place for diverse subjectivities to collide and nurture one another. As the only design school part of the 4Cs program, we focused on how to welcome and include inside our school a pedagogical team of newcomers with a professional background in crafts, design or art. We collectively reflected on new ways to share know-hows in creative and radically inclusive ways in such a context with the hope that it would inspire other design and art schools to do so and offer meaningful jobs to newcomers who are professionals in those fields.

Since the beginning of the Mediation Lab, we focused on hospitality and getting to know each other with care. Welcoming warmly every actor with their identities, their stories, their knowledges. On the very first class, in October 2018, we drew a big mind map where each one wrote freely about what they liked, their crafts skills or the crafts they were interested in learning, the countries they were connected to, etc. This large drawing was unable to group to visually see all the connections between their interests, paths, and origins. In the classroom emerged spaces of conversations, personal exchanges and of emotional connections. We also institutionalized shared meals at the end of every class where everyone could bring a typical meal from their region. The art of weaving relationships was made possible by conviviality in action, open-mindedness, observation and listening. It created the context for a positive mediation to bloom and eventually the incorporation of new knowledge for all actors.

In this context, 4 working groups of about 5 EnsAD students and 1 facilitator designer each following one craftsman newcomer were created:

The group « Alara » led by potter Yasir Mohamed Elamine

The group « Château de plâtre » led by artist Bassam Salwkh

The group « Karim Ruhullah » led by upholsterer Karim Ruhullah

The group « Something new » led by model architect Ibrahim Adam

Their stories will be shared in the pages to come.



Ibrahim Adam assembling wooden structures, EnsAD, December 2018
Clay shapes made by Yasir Mohamed Elamine and his students, EnsAD, December 2018

THE GROUP « ALARA » led by potter Yasir Mohamed Elamine

The “Alara” working group was centered around craftsman newcomer Yasir Mohamed Elamine, as well as 4 students for various education department within EnsAD: Théophile Berthemet (Graphic Design), Claire Buet and Thomas Guillermet (Object Design) and Xunan Hou (Interior Architecture); as well as a local designer and facilitator Carmen Bouyer.

Yasir Mohamed Elamine is an artisan potter of Sudanese origin and has been living in France for several years. In Sudan, in Khartoum, he created the first contemporary pottery workshop in order to complement the traditional methods already present in his country. Yasir named his studio “Alara”, after a Sudanese queen, former patroness of the arts. In Langeac and then in Paris, Yasir continues his work, notably in collaboration with La Fabrique Nomade in Paris, with whom he organizes pottery workshops open to all. Throughout his career he has developed simple techniques to transmit his know-how in a short workshop format.

TRANSMISSION

During the studio with the students of Ensad, Yasir presented his techniques to us in excellent French language. Yasir came from Soudan with a very pedagogical approach to share his work in a short time to inexperienced students. Already in his home country we he had created his own studio, he was sharing his own vision and way of working with clay with apprentices. In France also, he had been teaching occasionally his techniques and collaborating with designers. At ENSaD, with two sessions of two hours for each techniques, and over the course of two months, Yasir shared with EnsAD students and educator, his way of wedging the clay as well as four different techniques to shape objects: the technique of Coil construction, Slab construction, Slip casting and Pinching. Coil construction is a technique where a piece of clay is pressed and then rolled into a coil. A hollow volume, like a bowl, can be assembled by superimposing coils on top of each other and welding them together with water, gradually stacking and joining

coils of clay one on top of the other. The coil can also be used as a decorative element on an already structured shape. In the method of Slab construction, the desired volume pattern is cut out from a 2 to 6 mm thick clay plate. Once done, the different elements of the pattern are assembled on a sample shape. On the other hand Slip casting is a mould technique used for complex parts that are to be replicated in several copies. This technique is based on the use of plaster moulds and can be carried out in two different ways. The first one consists in pouring liquid clay into the mould which we didn’t do in class. The second, more used in Sudan and the one we experimented, consists in placing pieces of soft earth against the walls of the mould. Finally the Pinching technique consists in shaping the clay by pinching it. All Yasir’s methods have in common that they can be executed virtually anywhere with very little material and tools. Except for the clay itself and a pencil case full of small wooden clay tools, Yasir used recycled material, like wood planks he had found in the street, free newspapers and plastic cups from the cafeteria as base shapes, patterns or moulds.

While Yasir was teaching the students his techniques like apprentices over the course of a few weeks, the students in design have introduced him to new tools that could bring in new contemporary forms into his work - in particular thanks to 3D printing with clay that was available at the school - and thus feed Yasir’s research for innovation in his profession. The students also did researches on traditional and contemporary Sudanese ceramic that they shared with him.



CO-CREATION

The challenge for the group was not to co-create a pedagogical method to easily share Yasir's know-how as a potter since he had already structured a condensed way of transmission. But rather to enable Yasir's mobility and capacity to teach in more places and share more widely his methodology. Through conversations that sprouted while learning his know-how, Yasir shared with the group of students his dream of creating a more structured nomad workshop that we could use in the long run, enabling him to move around with his tools and reach a wider audience as a teacher. Yasir at that time, as he lived on the outskirts of the city, had to carry around his material over long distances, through buses and subways, with many often heavy bags. The group took the challenge and identified collectively the tools needed to create such a light, easily transportable workshop place. Together we imagined a «nomad workshop» - an easily transportable object - which brings together all the tools necessary to the transmission of his know-how. Using light wood cut with laser techniques, the students created easily moveable boxes in which all the material Yasir needed (clay, tools, aprons, etc.) could be stored easily. The mobile workshop had to also include space for the future students' finished pieces to be transported before being fired, typically in another space than where the workshop would happen.

In the meantime, Yasir shared his know-how in various contexts with the help of the students as now trained assistants. In January 2019, at EnsAD School Open doors, Yasir's workshop was very successful with two sessions full of visitors, some touching clay for the first time. Again with very little tools except for the clay, the "Alara" workshop was a success. It happened again in May 2021, at the event La Rue aux Enfants, an outdoor festival designed for children. Yasir with the help of the group from EnsAD transmitted his practice to about a hundred of happy kids over the course of an afternoon.

CHALLENGES

The main difficulties that the group of students encountered were technical as the students were faced with one of their first design object making process. With difficulties with finding the right materials, managing budget and deliveries, and structuring time to actually produce the "nomad workshop" in the different school studios along with their other classes. We saw here that collaborating with a professional person like Yasir while being a student and learning in the process can be challenging.

Another difficulty that we faced as a group was the contradiction between wanting to propose new shapes to Yasir inspired by the French idea of contemporary design and respecting deeply his own ways of designing objects. Aware of neo-colonial patterns that can quickly emerge in that context, we decided as a group to step out of co-design in the field of Yasir's know-how - ceramic - to support technically the transmission of his own ways. We decided to support him by designing a cart-like object for transportation of his work rather than intervening in his already very structured process of transmission and shape making.

CONCLUSION

This project addressed the issues of conviviality, hospitality, know-how transmission as well as more specifically the mobility of craft sharing. By designing collectively a nomadic workshop, we address the need for more fluidity in knowledge exchanges and transmission. It also highlights the possibility for expert newcomers to create income, professional collaborations and keep their know-hows alive by teaching in a wide variety of contexts (schools, museums, festivals, etc.) next to the space where they live.

Feedback from **Carmen Bouyer**, Designer and facilitator within the « Alara » working group



Yasir Mohamed Elamine showing his Slab construction technique, EnsAD, November 2018



Students experimenting the Coil construction technique, EnsAD, November 2018

THE GROUP « CHÂTEAU DE SABLE » led by artist Bassam Salwkh

In the context of Studio 4cs, in the frame of the Mediation Lab. We have participated in the creation of workshops and pedagogical models, involving action-research methodologies with the objective of promoting the skills of new-comer craftsmen to the public and imagining workshop models that promote the professional integration of craftsmen. In this context, I supervised Bassam Salwkh's group with the students of Design Alphée Grand and Adrien Buyukodabas. First, the pedagogical objectives were set up according to a horizontal model and modelled by Bassam's ideas, his background, history and expertise. In order to be as close as possible to its history, we have decided to be all the members of the group in practice, theory and methodology.

Bassam Salwkh, originally a craftsman stafer in Syria, developed an artistic work after his exile, where narrative serves as a form of resilience, Bassam's pieces are metaphorical, narrative constructions, made of plaster, figurative representations such as a castle or a boat, embodiment of his exile. The notion of resilience in physics evokes both qualities consistency and flexibility that allow a metal to regain its shape and flexibility structure after being hit. The metaphorical use of the term « resilience » has especially was developed in psychology by Boris Cyrulnik to designate this ability to recover from his injuries. Cyrulnik (2003) rightly emphasizes the importance of creative and artistic activities as vectors of resilience. Promoting symbolic expression through the implementation of narratives has been the objective of our work within the framework of the mediation lab.

METHODS

Our work was carried out in several phases. First, we referred to a bilbiographical review to understand and know the origins of plasterwork in Syria, both in terms of Bassam's personal life journey, his learning and the pieces they used to make as well as his subjects of inspiration.

The students carried out research and developed a state of the art in order to be the most relevant for the rest of the project. It then seemed essential to us to dialogue with Bassam, around his art pieces, his way of creating, his path, to first get to know himself but also to reflect on the issues raised by the transmission workshop that we were going to co-create.

We therefore asked ourselves a number of questions: How can we not denature Bassam's approach through our research methods? What is Bassam's desire for the future? Does he want to return to his craft practice or embark on an artistic career? How can we help him to realize his desires without distorting or interpreting them? How can we transmit Bassam's know-how as much as the emotional charge of his approach to the public?

In order to answer this question, and as part of our contribution to the 4Cs project with the objective of designing a transmission workshop, we have designed and co-created a multimedia series of objects with different aims.

INTERMEDIATE OBJECTS AS A MEDIUM OF MEDIATION

After discussion, it seemed appropriate to define Bassam's know-how and enhance its expertise through several objects, intermediate objects, serving as a mediation with the public in order to share its creative process. Symbolic expressions of culture build the relationship life of societies human, mediate between the individual and the community, build identities, give them meaning, make them visible in the public space « to reduce the « social divide» by producing a « social bond », and to formulate the reasons for living together », Caune (1999).



We have developed different media to both understand the process of creating of Bassam, give him the conditions to express and share his know-how. A document presenting the different stages and processes of Bassam's work, its methods and the materials used, serving both as a means of understanding students of Bassam's work and as a means of sharing his expertise with the public. Then, the design of a narrative object, referring to Bassam's work, which served its primary inspiration, taking the form of inspirational wooden modules, images and texts, pieces to assemble and arrange as a puzzle or as a construction game to understand its design process. We then designed tools to build a plaster castle, an emblematic piece of Bassam, in order to decline and share the making of this piece, we have reduced the scales. The objective being to imagine a plurality of architectures made by the public for the design by all the participants while allowing the transmission of the process of Bassam. We referred to the game, for the forms of spontaneity, playful as reflexive and collective that this support could take, also the objective being to highlight Bassam's spontaneity in the construction of his pieces, but also to highlight the emotional charge of his story.

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

Our role was also to understand the difficulties of new-comers in their daily lives, and through cultural actions with an artistic aim, to set up a process of individuation and a form of resilience. Regarding problems encountered, they were of several kinds, the first difficulty was the language barrier due to the complexity of the project. Indeed, we did not want to distort or interpret Bassam's work, and we wanted to be sure that he could get a message across. Using drawing as a tool used to be a relevant because it was universal, a medium of and for communication within the group. Also the difficulties encountered by Bassam on a daily basis were felt in Bassam's involvement in the workshop, as any new comers, the quotidian and the difficulties encountered are also a dimension to be taken into consideration in the construction of the project, particularly with regard to their involvement and their desire for the immediate and future. How can the workshop really be registered over time and then support Bassam?

EXCHANGE WITH THE PUBLIC

Regarding the exchange with the audiences, we had different reactions depending on the people and ages of the participants, approaching the workshop either as a technical learning and recreational moment, or as to understand and engage in a conceptual exercise with regard to Bassam's work. Making was a catalyst for an exchange with the public, and to find alternatives to the language barrier.

CONCLUSION

The action-research methods have made it possible to set up and make visible the process of Bassam's creation, both to enable him to apply his work in other forms, tools allowing him to develop a professional activity around the construction of workshops. They also allowed students to grasp the role that a designer can have in the context of social innovation and the different formats and contexts that a designer can also face, going beyond the simple objective of creating a shape or an object but also a process, relationship supports serving the resilience of a new comer artisan. Also, the methods have made it possible to share Bassam's activity and to value its work with the public. Finally, it allows to give tangible examples, and transferable to designers, artists, researchers or associations in other contexts or similar situations. Action research has its limits, because it builds a model constructed according to Western rules and a process that removes a form of spontaneity from Bassam's artistic work, it can also lead to a distance from original manual work. However, an individual's sense of belonging to a community is develops with the ability to express himself, his expectations, his suggestions and the feeling of being recognized in and that he can contribute something to society (Guilbert 2004), while Bassam was confronted with anonymity, since his arrival in France, le mediation lab a permis de restoring his confidence, whose role was also to offer him a space for expression, transmission and sharing.

Feedback from **Alexia Venot**, Designer and facilitator within the « Château de plâtre » working group



Bassam Salwkh sharing his techniques using recycled materials, plaster and paint,
EnsAD, November/December 2018

THE GROUP « KARIM RUHULLAH » led by artist Karim Ruhullah

The workshop «Karim Ruhullah, discovering Afghan tapestry through an introduction to knots and patterns» was co-designed by Afghan upholsterer Karim Ruhullah and students Chloé Dutruc-Rosset, 3rd year Object Design, Natalia Pageau, 2nd year Graphic Design and Alexandra Penteado, 2nd year Apparel Design; and supervised by Natalia Baudoin, SACRe PhD student, ENSADLab. The methodological approach used was based on a horizontal model of co-creation with the aim of facilitating the transmission of know-how from the expert newcomer and enhancing his know-how. This was done in two steps, which will be discussed here after. First, bonding through exchange and second, conceptualization and designing transmission strategies.

1. BONDING THROUGH EXCHANGE

A series of activities have been set up to create bonds between the students and the newcomer expert. These bonds were of personal and professional natures. The first concerned more the life experiences of each actor, the second concerned their technical knowhow. The exchange of experiences on a personal level alternating with the technical exchanges allowed to establish a space of trust between the actors, putting them at the same level for the creation of the tool of transmission of know-how.



PERSONAL EXCHANGE

At first the experts and the students presented themselves and exchanged on their life journeys, their origins, the composition of their families, etc. This allowed them to start bonding on a personal level and allowed the students to understand the migratory and professional journey of the expert.

Karim Ruhullah, 30, learned his craft from his family, they are all upholsterers. He fled his country at the age of 2 with his family to take refuge in Pakistan where he went to a Franco-Afghan school. Back in Kabul, he made hand-knotted carpets for the French embassy, which later allowed him to obtain a visa to settle in France. Once in Europe, he worked in various small jobs before being able to practice his craft again. While visiting a cousin in Maastricht he visits a carpet gallery and after discussing with the manager he gets his first job in carpet restoration. Today he works in a carpet gallery in the Paris region where he mainly sells and restores carpets. The majority of the pieces he sells, he has them manufactured in Kabul in the family workshop, making only a few pieces himself.

TECHNICAL EXCHANGE

Simultaneous to the personal exchange, a back-and-forth dynamic between manual learning of the technique of traditional Afghan tapestry and the theoretical learning brought about by research that students did around other existing tapestry practices in the world and particularly in France. Dialogue was established not only verbally, but also through the transmission of technical gestures: how to handle tools, twist the thread, make knots, etc. A powerful gestural communication, which conveyed the understanding of the technique through the body, involving other senses than that of sight and hearing.

By confronting themselves with the learning of this new technique, and by drawing it closer to their own knowledge of the weaving techniques learned at school, as well as to their research on tapestry in France, the students and the expert newcomer began to question the different approaches to the transmission of craft trades. They were able to see not only the technical differences inherent in each craft technique, for example the difference in weaving structure

between the Gobelins tapestries and the traditional Afghan tapestry, but also and above all they noticed differences in the way of transmitting the craftsmanship and the place that these crafts occupy in the societies in which they exist. In Afghanistan, the craft of tapestry is transmitted from generation to generation, in an open manner and where craft has a place in everyday life, being more democratic.

In France, craftsmanship is «patrimonialized» and protected. As a result, it becomes almost untouchable and the transmission of the know-how is therefore extremely controlled: specific forms and spaces of transmission are dedicated to them and transmission only exists in that context.

FEEDBACK OF STEP 1

At first the exchanges were a little forced, a little cold, almost clumsy. The students and the craftsman had a hard time getting confidence. There were two reasons for this. On the one hand, the students had to wait a long time to have the material necessary for the experimentation of the tapestry technique (Karim Ruhullah's loom was large and difficult to transport for the lessons), which made their first technical exchanges a bit abstract. On the other hand, the age difference aggravated the difficulties of communication. As a supervisor I had to intervene several times to try to create dialogue between them, as a mediator, asking questions about their journeys and future desires to all members of the group in order to look for common topics of conversation. They were able to surpass these difficulties when some of students were able to visit Ruhullah's workshop and were able to see his living environment, and experiment the technique with the real tools. Bringing the dialogue out of the classroom and into a daily space has created this personal connection in a more tangible way. In a future experience, I would recommend scheduling visits to the newcomers' workshops or living spaces as part of the outof-wall conviviality activities.

2. CONCEPTUALIZATION AND DESIGNING TRANSMISSION STRATEGIES

From these exchanges, the expert and the students began to question how to transmit this technique during the workshops planned for ENSADs' Open Doors and La Villette Makerz. They had to negotiate on their different points of view. Ruhullah, attached to the method with which he had learned his craft himself, had difficulty detaching himself from it to think of other forms of transmission. The students, having experienced this learning, tried to conceptualize the main and essential stages of this technique, in order to make people who participate in the workshops understand in a simple manner the complexity of this craftsmanship with rich in details and meaningful patterns.

CONCEPTUALIZATION AND SCHEMATIZATION

A simplification and conceptualization exercise were necessary to achieve their goal. They realized that the pattern in the tapestry was constructed in the same way as the digital image. That the knot in the tapestry was analogous to the pixel in the digital image. Thus, in order to transmit in a simple manner, the upholsterer's job, three learning stages have been defined: the learning of the knot, the construction of the pattern from knot lines (the cartoon) and the notion of resolution in the pattern related to the size of the knot. The students made diagrams and sketches explaining the differences between French and Afghan tapestry as well as diagrams explaining the knotting and the composition of a cartoon for patterns, the notion of image resolution in the tapestry patterns.

SETTING UP THE TRANSMISSION DEVICE

The transmission workshop co-designed by the students and the expert craftsman proceeded as follows. After a general explanation of the Afghan tapestry and a practical demonstration in Ruhullah's traditional loom, the participants, with the help of the students, passed by small looms where they learned successively the knotting and the knot line. creating a pattern with a thick knot and creating

a pattern with a thin knot. These successive stages accompanied by the diagrams made allowed visitors to understand the complexity of the Afghan tapestry technique based on the elemental principles that compose it. Ruhullah's team developed a new approach to tapestry learning in order to facilitate and make it more interactive.

THE VALORIZATION OF KNOW-HOW THROUGH THE TRANSLISSION TOOL

This experience allowed the expert craftsman to develop with the students methodologies of transmission of his profession where he discovered a niche that will renew his cutting-edge practice of the art of carpet. Indeed, the transmission tool allowed him to see his job not as a technique used to make objects (carpets) but as a resource that can turn into a service through the transmission and therefore likely to bring other economic inputs.

FEEDBACK OF STEP 2

At this stage, the students were able to put into practice the tools specific to their designer trade: conceptualization, schematization, the use of image creation software, etc. They put their toolbox at the service of transmitting Ruhullah's know-how, allowing him to discover the usefulness of the designer's approach and to appropriate some of their tools for the practice of his craftsmanship. For example, the students were able to show their expert the use *Illustrator* for the design of the pattern cartoons. In the beginning Ruhullah had some doubts about the transmission tools, but gladly he let himself be carried away by the intuition of the students. It was having experienced the transmission tool during the first workshops at ENSAD's Open Doors, and noticing the interest that people had in his know-how that he was convinced of the effectiveness of the proposed method. So, for the second experience at La Villette Makerz he was much more excited.

Feedback from **Natalia Baudoin**, Designer and facilitator within the « Karim Ruhullah » working group



Karim Ruhullah sharing his skills in tapestry making, EnsAD, November/December 2018

THE GROUP « SOMETHING NEW » led by model architect Ibrahim Adam

« Architecture is about doing something new. »

Ibrahim Adam, Sudanese model architect

Ibrahim is Sudanese. Five years ago, he left his country for Libya where he studied ceramics and porcelain for a year. It is after this year of study that he arrives in France where he spends several weeks between Thionville and Metz-en-Moselle, then in Boulogne-Billancourt next to the Porte de Saint-Cloud. He arrived in Paris, where he worked with BAAM (Bureau d'accueil et d'accompagnement des migrants) and ENSAD's PEI association, where he continued his work on architecture.

Since then, the one who can be described as a dreamer has developed a work of models on a city scale, which he describes as «something new». This «something new» he imagines is inspired by modern buildings such as those in the Parc de la Villette, the Porte de Saint-Cloud, La Défense and Dubai. Ibrahim's compositional work tends to move away from the breeze block constructions that he calls old: he is inspired by the shapes and colours of nature, he imagines buildings with ceramics, porcelain or wood.

In his models and drawings, we often find a change of scale, from the object to the building. Thus, a library is formally inspired by the book form, as if the architectural elements should be readable and understood by all.

By spontaneously assembling and composing disparate elements, Ibrahim erected buildings whose habitable potential is dictated only by the forms and sometimes the materials that compose them. They then become successively school, hospital, building, hotels, music kiosk, to compose a new city. Like the synthesis of an experience, incorporating what he would have learned and seen on his way, Ibrahim imagines pieces of cities, as many possible proposals.

« APPREHEND THE WORLD DIFFERENTLY »

Saying by doing things, the gesture as a means of transmitting knowledge

« The architect is expressive, also conceptual. It's exciting! But the problem we have today is that Ibrahim is not fluent in French. We have difficulties to understand everything he is trying to convey to us, to tell us. » says Victor Champion, a student of the Médiation Lab, during the first exchanges with Ibrahim.

If his work is inspiring, language - or orality, as it is present in African cultures, as a form of transmission of his history and knowledge - becomes the creative constraint of the project.

How can we account, with energy and generosity, for Ibrahim's words when he talks to us about his vision of architecture? It is a question of approaching the problem through other media, which will undoubtedly make the singularity of the methodology to be put in place: learning to say not with words, but with the help of tools that are those of the creative people that we are (students and mediators) :

— Gestures, primary, elementary or even archaic forms of language, offer us initial answers, and the possibility of establishing a lexical field specific to the architecture that Ibrahim imagines.

— From the lexical field, it is then a question of associating a corpus of images with it, proposing an illustrated imaginary of architecture according to Ibrahim. The students deliberately chose to mix the typologies of architecture, drawing both from the Sudanese vernacular universe and from the contemporary context (with the work of renowned architects in particular). This referencing work is a key point in the methodology we are building because it is also a question of grasping the place occupied by the tangible heritage of Ibrahim's country of origin. The issue of migration automatically implies a particular relationship to cultural history, and this particularity must be expressed with the greatest possible transparency.

It also makes it possible to explain this choice for the architecture Ibrahim has chosen as his mode of expression.

This corpus of images that we regard as a cartography/moodboard has thus made it possible to identify more specifically the plastic and formal universe that interests Ibrahim, and to build his critical (and therefore conceptual) sense about his vision of architecture.

— «To make architecture» in our case means starting from what surrounds us, and begin to sketch proposals : compose, associate, assemble, cut, tape, etc. A lexical field of active verbs.

Doing things without necessarily having any goals. But it is a way to see Ibrahim simply do, and from these own gestures, to bring out attitudes, postures that will become characteristic of his transmission project. Then, doing it again, together, and again, to make sure that what is being said is real and close to Ibrahim's wishes.



«DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY», another way of thinking about architecture according to Ibrahim

From gestures to the protocol of creation and then transmission

The search for the novelty is Ibrahim's main quest when he thinks of architecture. This novelty does not appear as an overload, but rather as a desire to do otherwise. Architecture is not a building, it is a skilfully orchestrated composition of buildings that presents a new world. A world where the primary needs are present, where greenery and playgrounds are necessary. This is how Ibrahim's generosity manifests itself: by caring for those who could potentially live in his imaginary worlds.

Far from school codes, Ibrahim's approach has allowed the student to co-construct a city, in which a leaf turns into a roof or a box of candy into a church. He then reveals these spontaneous architectures through drawing - a drawing that is first objective to capture their elements, the decisive details to transform them into habitable architecture. The model completes this process to compose this imaginary city. Ibrahim's freedom of composition is not unlike the approach of the Italian radicals of the mid-20th century, but also of other artists who tried to build the idea of a new or ideal city.

It seemed important not to overqualify Ibrahim's work. Do not name it too much, because by naming it, we tend to reduce things, to limit things where the imagination seeks to deconstruct, to distort the contours of the norm.

The workshop we have set up and developed with Ibrahim is therefore called «Something new». The term architecture only comes up at the end of the workshop. It proposes to penetrate his working method and thus enrich, co-construct a new vision of architecture, the city, and potentially the world.

The participants have in their possession a library of various forms and materials, which they will assemble, compose freely to «do something» and then «do architecture», and thus, co-construct Ibrahim's idea when he tells about this profession: architecture is about doing something new.

Here, the 5 steps of the Ibrahim's transmission project:

1 assembly & composition of the elements

2 photographs of the elements/mini-sculptures

3 drawings/representations of mini-sculptures

4 placement of buildings

5 translation into drawings of habitable architectures

A round table with the participants about potentialities of imaginary architectures

finishes the workshop.

Through this project, we wanted to Ibrahim to tell his story, with the most

accurate honesty possible. Letting him do it alone first means making sure things come from him. Only free expression, and in various forms (drawing, collage, mock-up, gestures, etc.) is the support of truth.

By observing his working method and questioning his ways of doing things, we tried to highlight his singular division where each stage can constitute a project: the richness of the assemblies of his models, the expressiveness of his drawings, their translation into the form of practicable architectures and the composition of his imaginary cities.

The students' involvement is expressed by touch so as not to distort Ibrahim's work: the presence of small silhouettes to embody the constructions, the addition of an information cartridge to present, classify and archive the drawings, the addition of materials to diversify the possible shapes and compositions.

While the absence of words has made it possible to focus on the forms and

plasticity of Ibrahim's work, the question of language remains unresolved. What forms could this project have taken if it had been associated with a translator?

Would this be the right answer given that the translator is already an intermediary between the one who wants to transmit and those who receive?

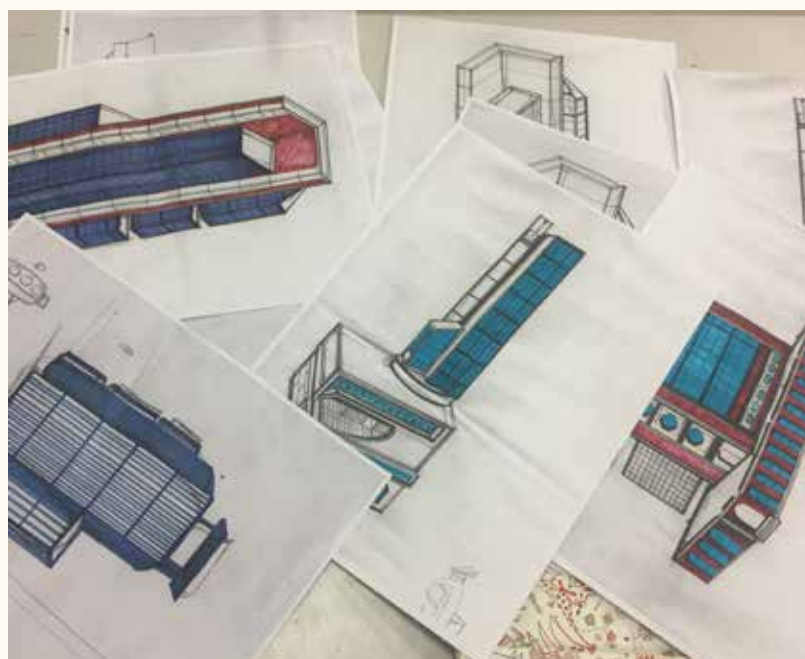
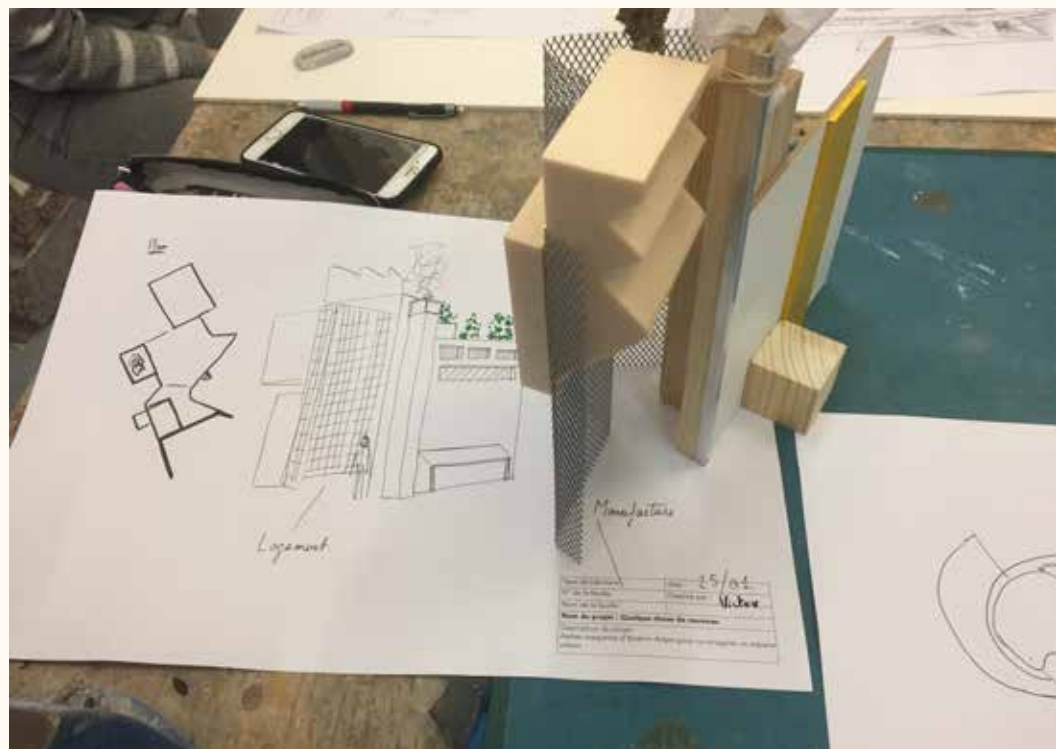
Our work as mediators is first and foremost to be revealing and not direct actors

in the project. But, because we are human, our choices are also governed by our affect, our sensitivity. It seems to me that the subject of transmission is considerably oriented according to the actors who have practiced it. And that therefore,

«Something new» is one way, among a thousand and one, to tell the story of Ibrahim.

Feedback from **Dimitri Zephir**, Designer and facilitator within the «

Something new » working group



Various researches based on Ibrahim Adam's methodology, EnsAD, October 2018
Ibrahim Adam's drawings

Students experimenting with Ibrahim Adam, EnsAD, November 2018

These co-creation activities have been ushered in by **test mediation labs during the Open Doors of EnsAD school in January 2019** where students and « expert migrants » have experienced their work and had the chance to develop it for the following sessions. During the open doors Karim Ruhullah, upholsterer, Ibrahim Adam, model architect, Bassam Salwkha, plasterer and Yasir Mohamed Elamine, potter, offered the public workshops in which they experimented for the first time with these tools developed with the students.

The design process required that students engage with “expert newcomers” through a co-creation process to develop appropriate design solutions to improve the acknowledgment and acceptance of expert newcomers into our society. This year’s students have adapted the personal, ethical chart developed during the workshop in order to clarify their project’s ethical implications and leitmotifs.

Students have been requested to provide a detailed description of their projects for the open doors January 2019 in a pre-established template to be uploaded to a common dropbox space. Students and expert newcomers have been asked to define a name for their project; describe the project’s context, the issue(s) identified, and the needs migrants expressed; they had to indicate the type of co-creation methodology they had developed according to which know-how what type of tool that will be proposed to the public during the Mediation Labs.



All four workshops posters, designed by EnsAD student Theophile Berthemet, January 2019



The workshop « Alara » led by potter Yasir Mohamed Elamine, at EnsAD Open doors, January 2019



The workshop « Château de plâtre » designed by artist Bassam Salwkh and led by EnsAD students, at EnsAD Open doors, January 2019



The workshop « Karim Ruhullah » led by upholsterer Karim Ruhullah, at EnsAD Open doors, January 2019



The workshop « Something new » led by model architect Ibrahim Adam, at EnsAD Open doors, January 2019

Revealing skills



**Eugénie de la Rivière shows
students how to use recycled materials**
Emmaüs Les Résilientes, February 2019

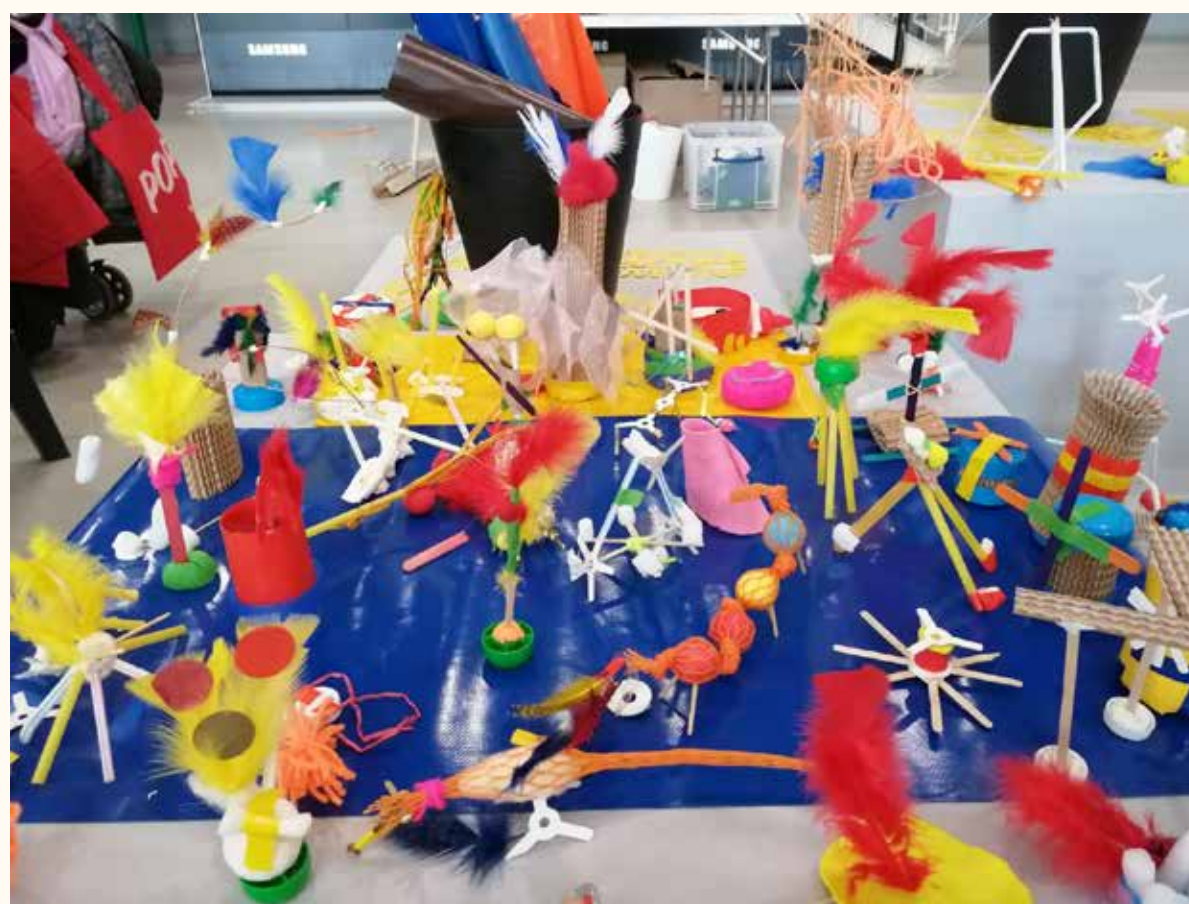
The aim of the **Revealing skills** second phase of the Mediation Lab at EnsAD, from February to June 2019, was to bring studio 4Cs students to collaborate with non-expert migrants in order to 'reveal' their skills. With the support of designer Eugenie de la Rivière and her non-profit organization Emmaüs Les Résilientes, the design studio of Emmaus Alternative. They together proposed 3 «labs», 1 per month, all open to the public gathering inhabitants, EnsAD students, and 'newcomers' from Emmaüs' social work. The goal was to produce collaborative works based on creativity and collective intelligence.

«Le Lab» concept was born at Emmaus Les Résilientes out of the desire to make the benefits of creativity accessible to as many people as possible. It offers creative workshops for Emmaus employees in integration and beneficiaries of their social actions including migrants (day care, food bank, therapeutic apartments, etc.). Inspired by the methods of creative innovation developed in the design studios, and the therapeutic virtues of the activities developed by art therapy, the workshops alternate between group and individual work, creative exercises and prototyping, and are aimed at the creation of redesigned objects. As a true laboratory that encourages exploration and experimentation, The Lab is a vector for regaining self-confidence and for social integration, which are the first steps towards the goal of professional reintegration and sustainable employability for newcomers.

The co-created Lab events, between 4Cs team and Emmaus Les Résilientes, happened at a women's shelter in Paris and at Emmaus Les Résilientes in April 2019 and culminated at the museum Centre Georges Pompidou-Beaubourg for a special workshop entitled «Atelier good vibrations» in June 15th-16th 2019. During this two days event, at Centre Pompidou, non-expert newcomers, EnsAD students and the public experienced the results of a three-month «revelation» pedagogy developed by Emmaus les Resilientes and its founder, designer Eugenie de Larivière. The development of newcomers' creative skills was enhanced and triggered by the "revelation" of a young public invited to the ateliers and produced collaborative works based on creativity, ingenuity and collective intelligence. The notoriety of the place allowed access to a wider audience.



A revealing skills workshop led with Emmaus Les Résilientes at a Women's shelter in Paris, April 2019



A revealing skills workshop, called « Atelier good vibrations », led with Emmaus Les Résilientes, at Museum Centre Pompidou-Beaubourg, June 2019

Valuing skills



Karim Ruhullah, upholsterer, presenting the carpets he crafted,
Villette Makers, May 2019

The aim of the **Valuing skills** third and last phase of the Mediation Lab at EnsAD, from May to June 2019, was to share the year's experience and celebrate the enhanced value of the know-how of the craftsmen-newcomers. Students assisted the migrant-experts in the mediation of their know-hows at two events, one at la Villette Makerz and one at "La rue aux Enfants».

Three **Valuing skills workshops** happened at Villette Makerz, on the 11th and 12th of May 2019, with the group « Château de plâtre » led by artist Bassam Salwkh, the group « Karim Ruhullah » led by upholsterer Karim Ruhullah and the group « Something new » led by model architect Ibrahim Adam. Villette Makerz is a third place connecting people and ideas, driven by WoMa, a neighbourhood factory, and supported by the City of Paris and the Etablissement Public du Parc et de la Grande Halle de la Villette (EPPGHV). The three expert newcomers, students and designers shared with the public different pedagogical models developed during the year. The goal was to enable the public to create objects, while highlighting the exceptional knowhow of each expert and developing new approaches to each craftsmanship. The context was perfect as la Villette Makerz is situated in a public parc welcoming very different publics because of the different institutions present in the parc (Cité de la Musique, Cité des Sciences, National Music and Dance Conservatory, the Philharmonic, several theaters, hippodrome, etc.). The participation was continual and particularly active.



Model architect Ibrahim Adam preparing the material needed to run his workshop, at Villette Makers in Paris, May 2019



Valuing workshop at Villette Makerz, led by Bassam Salwkh, Karim Ruhullah and Ibrahim Adam with EnsAD students, May 2019

The fourth **Valuing skills workshop** happened at «La Rue aux Enfants», on May 19th 2019, with the group « Alara » led by potter Yasir Mohamed Elamine with EnsAD students. « La Rue aux Enfants » is an event voted during the Paris 2014 participatory budget and proposed by the association Cafézoïde. It is the first children's café in France, created in 2002 as a place of life where caring adults welcome children and allow them to participate fully in cultural and artistic life, encourage appropriate means of leisure, recreation, artistic and cultural activities for the benefit of the child on equal terms. « La rue aux Enfants » is an event that takes place during the national game day with the objective of recognizing the game as an essential activity for the child's development, a tool for learning, knowledge transmission and education for all.

On the 29th of May 2019 during the event we proposed a Mediation Lab by the expert newcomer potterer Yasir in the form of an experience for children as a mean of cultural expression promoting intercultural and intergenerational encounters, creation of social and communication links and thus source of pleasure. This open-air event was perfect for the Mediation lab and the young public could enjoy it during the whole day. It was also a great context to introduce the 4Cs project to parents during their kid's activity. All the pieces made by the children during the workshop were fired at EnsAD ceramics studio, where they could be picked up later on.



Potter Yasir Mohamed Elamine welcoming many children to his workshop, at « La Rue aux Enfants » event in Paris, May 2019



Potter Yasir Mohamed Elamine's ALARA workshop led with EnsAD students, at « La Rue aux Enfants » event in Paris, May 2019

Lessons learned from the Mediation Lab

In conclusion, we can affirm that the Mediation Lab was a highly successful activity for all actors: EnsAD students/researchers, newcomers, partner institutions, local communities and through and with them the society as a whole.

Students, migrants and local community members that have participated to the Mediation Labs have acquired the following design skills that can be briefly outlined as follows:

- co-identification of research contexts proper to each craftsman skill
- co-identification of specific migrant contexts and develop exchanges aimed at getting life stories and detecting issues related to the possibility of enhancing the transmission of migrants' knowhow
- co-identification of the role of migrant craftsmen in the Parisian context and but also on a more international level
- research, with specific "experts", of adequate solutions to the issues or problems that were detected
- application of a design methodology to further develop the ideas that emerged from the exploratory phase and the more in-depth exchanges with expert newcomers developement of a detailed brief describing each project, the issues and needs it addresses, who they would work with and to which end
- co-creation of transmission tools with expert newcomers capable of highlighting their knowhow and self-esteem

We are thankful to everyone who participated in this collective exploration of convivial living and conflict resolution through the sharing of knowledge and cultures.

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Villette Makers
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Cover picture: Atelier « Alara» at EnsAD open doors, January 2019

Back picture: Afghan tapestry knotting style

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