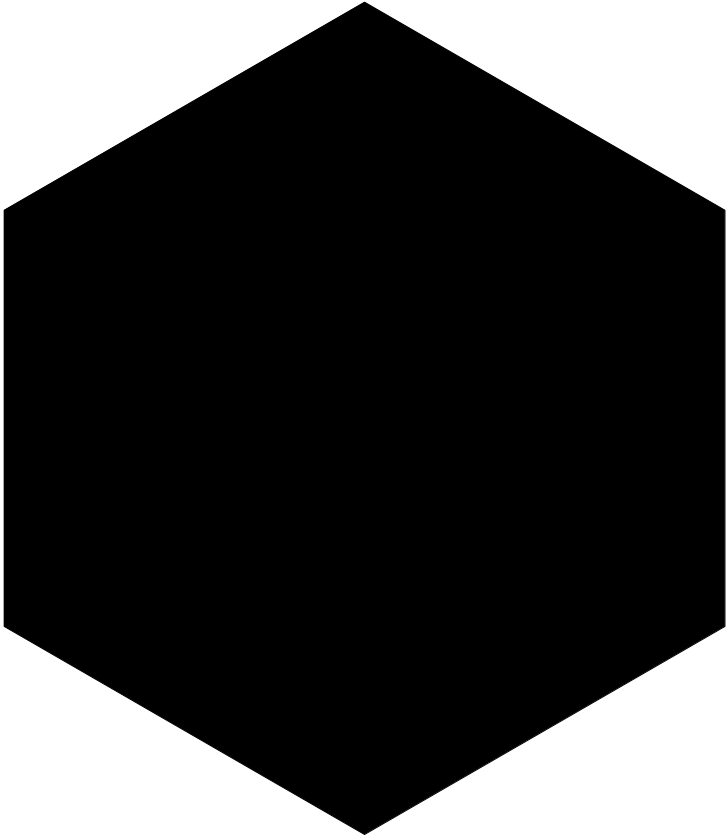


# PlayGround





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**2-script** p15

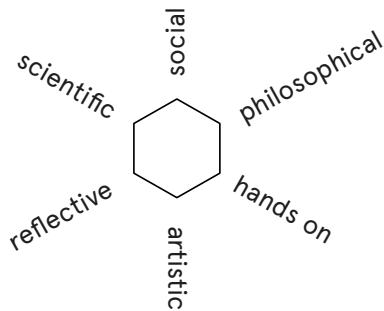
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PlayGround presentation and prototype  
October 2015, Milan (IT)

# 1-intro



PlayGround is as much of a workshop as it is an artistic experiment. Its roots lie in a dialogue between Lydia Ashman (Bow Arts, UK) and Breg Horemans (TAAT, NL) about their common aim to connect artistic production with education and society.

Lydia and Breg decided on a 'prototyping' method for the development process of PlayGround. This resulted in an extensive 'learning by doing' approach that was a continuous framework from the starting point – October 2015 – to the presentation of PlayGround in London schools in January 2017.

**(w)here**

**do**

**you**

**learn? / !**

**(w)here**

**do**

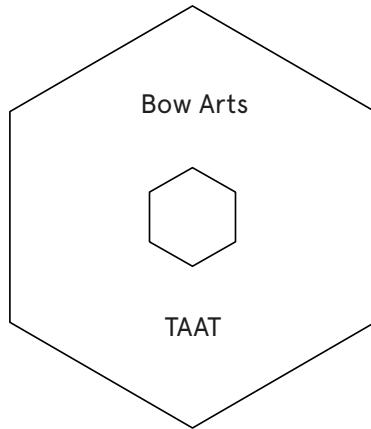
**you**

**play? /!**



*PlayGround tryout session at Bow Arts office  
April 2016, London (UK)*

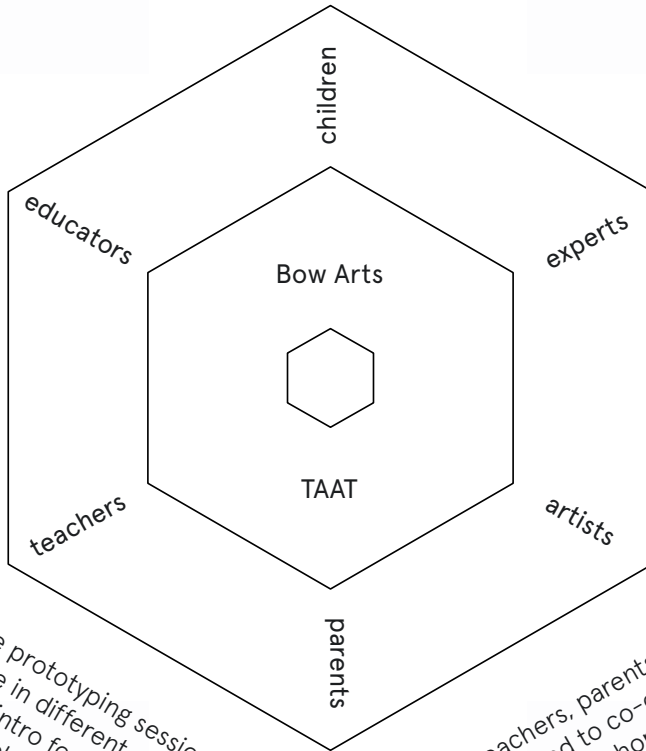




The prototyping method resulted in several tryout sessions of PlayGround, where Lydia and Breg used the concept to get to know each other's organisations. PlayGround in this sense served as a tool to develop, build and reflect on a common project in an equal way.



PlayGround tryout session at KHOR II by TAAT  
April 2016, Hasselt (BE)

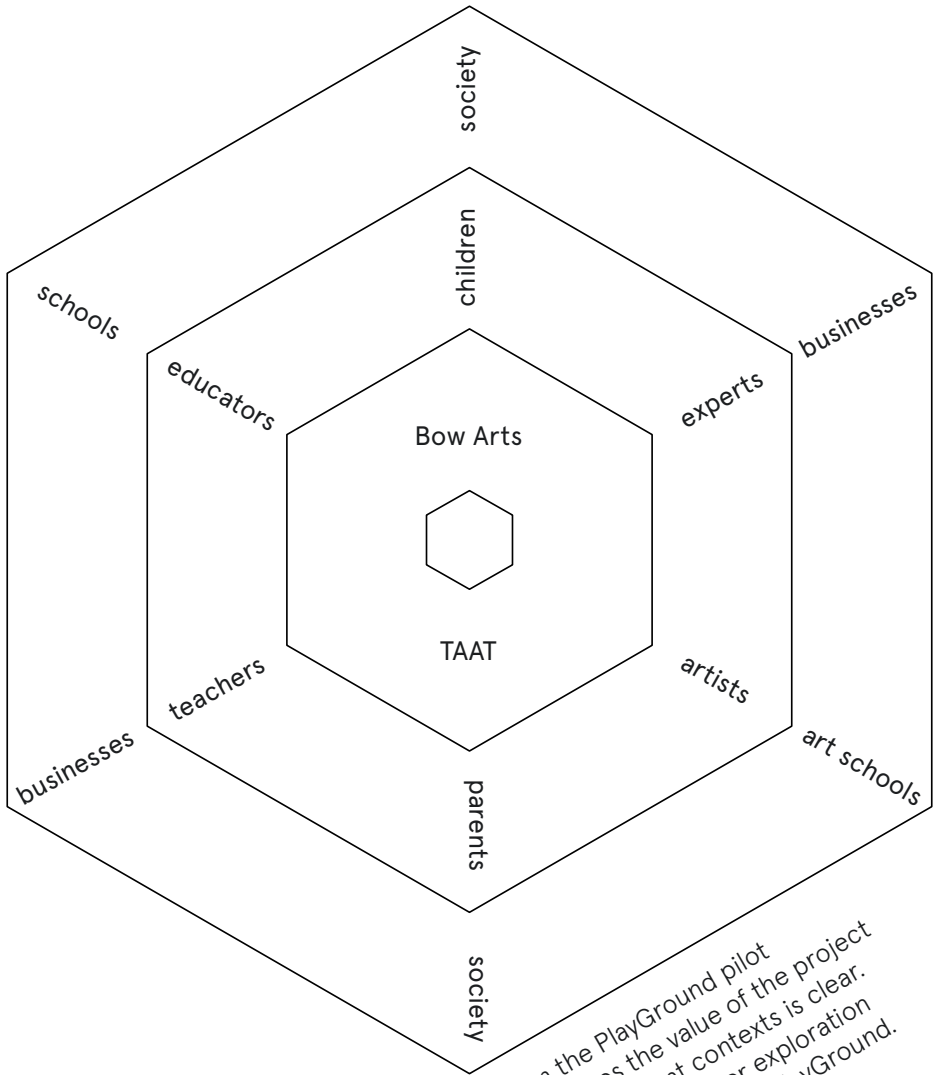


The prototyping sessions took place in different settings: as an intro for a TAAT meeting in Utrecht, during a Bow Arts staff presentation, at a Bokrijk weekend, in KHOR II, in the office, on the street,...

Educators, teachers, parents and artists were invited to co-create the PlayGround workshop, in which the different perspectives were taken into account. This approach triggered the participants to think about the way we learn and the way we play.



*PlayGround tryout session at Stebon primary  
January 2017, London (UK)*



From the PlayGround pilot workshops the value of the project within different contexts is clear. This triggers further exploration into the potential of PlayGround.



# 2-script

The following script is the latest version and the result of an ongoing process. PlayGround is operated by a wooden building kit, where instructions written on wooden discs, guide you through the process.

PlayGround  
is a space  
where  
learning is  
playing and  
playing is  
learning.



## A. Introduction

- Short introduction
- Icebreaker exercise
- Introducing facilitators
- Name round
- This is an experiment
- There is no right or wrong
- We're all equal
- Safety rules

## B. Group discussion

- Where do we learn?
- Where do we play?

## C. Instructions

- 1. Form a big circle
- 2. Put the disc on the floor
- 3. Open the box
- 4. Lay out all the discs
- 5. Study one disc
- 6. Find a team mate and connect your disc
- 7. Connect with the rest of your team
- 8. Each group decides their position on the playground
- 9. Take 10 discs to create a structure on the 'first' level. The 'structures' should not be touching each other
- 10. Add a second level
- 11. Continue building (complete/expand)
- 12. Connect with one of the other structures
- 13. Connect the two structures
- 14. Decide on a 'final' structure together

## D. Group discussion

- What did we create?
- How does the structure make you feel?
- How did you feel about cooperating?
- What do you take from this workshop?

try,  
reflect,  
build,  
try,  
reflect,  
build,  
try,  
reflect,  
build,

## E. Interventions

-Freeze in your current position, the only thing you can move is your eyes, look slowly all around you, taking in all of the details

-Create a "viewfinder" with your fingers, scan over the structure, or group members until you find something interesting

-Lay down and look at your structure from below

-Jump up and down and look at your structure

-Get someone to give you a piggy back and look at your structure

-Look at your structure really close up

-Observe from as far away from the structure as you can.

-Close your eyes and feel your structure

-Look at your structure over your shoulder

-Look at your structure using a mirror

-Look at your structure for three seconds then close your eyes for three seconds then repeat

-Look at your structure for one second then close your eyes for one second then repeat

-Standing up, put your head between your knees and look at your structure upside down



# 3-research

**Essay**  
**A Model for a qualitative society**  
by Palle Nielsen for the catalogue  
Modellen. Moderna Museet,  
Stockholm, 1968.

**Quotes**

Howard Gardner  
Pate Kane  
Joseph Jacotot



We often find ourselves standing and watching children play. And we have a strong interest in their play. At the same time, we have a feeling that they are also watching us – watching our play. We notice that they try to play at things they have learned from us. When we see them playing it is as though we recognise something of ourselves. It is as though we see how they use their play to try to comprehend the world around them. They imitate our actions in play, because we have given them a picture of the world around them. And that frightens us, because we would prefer it if they could comprehend the world around them by themselves. But that would require that we ourselves understand them. We are frightened because we ourselves perceive society as something above ourselves, outside ourselves.

So we go up to our apartment, up to our world. We know that it is too cramped. Sometimes, at certain moments, we don't feel content with it, with our world. But this discontent is so difficult, so incomprehensible. So we console ourselves with the thought of how hard it was to get the apartment, and that we ought to be grateful that we got it. But then, sometimes, when we get home from work, we feel deep down inside that we can't understand what we are doing there. It's so small, the children are screaming and running around between our legs. And at work we were discussing politics and got into a bloody row. We couldn't understand why we had to work at such a fast pace. We get paid more – but when we get home, what happens? Well, she's in a bad mood: it's the kids, there's nowhere for them to play outside.

It's no fun any more, they say. And then it's evening. We have the TV, but it was actually nicer when friends used to come by. But they stopped doing that when we had the kids. There's simply no

room now; it would wake them up. And anyway the friends live further away now. And we haven't made any new friends here in the neighbourhood.

Sometimes we feel restless, annoyed, about having become isolated. And sometimes we dream of how it could have been, if only we hadn't got in a rut. But there are always too many 'if onlys'. We can't even remember when we gave up trying, wanting to realise our long-cherished dreams. It was all so hard. When we applied for a job we had to bow and scrape, when we had to make ends meet we had to say thank you. Always having to stand in line, bow and scrape and be thankful – perhaps that's why we gave up. It was hard to keep fighting, because we were always too insignificant. But we can dream about all the things that might have been. If only we had been more together. Maybe we would not have felt as lonely, if our friends had come over more often. When we see the kids playing down in the yard, we dream. We know they are playing at being us. That they play at what we do every day. Their contact with reality is the account we give them of it. They play at being cars, at being mummy and daddy and children. They play at cops and robbers. They talk to each other the way we talk to each other. And they play at what they see on TV. They try to make contact with each other – to communicate.

But we no longer talk to one another. There's nothing happening any more that we can give one another. And we notice one day that the children have also stopped talking to other people. Because they do what we do. But what if they were allowed to do all the things that we didn't have the opportunity to do? Because that's what we've been working for. Then they could play and express themselves as human beings together with other kids. What if they were allowed to





play with all kinds of things, to build, to play with water and fire, to paint? Then they could become themselves. And do what we never managed to do.

Yes, but their words are our words. They try to comprehend the new world they see, and their information comes from us. After all, the only people they know are us. How could they comprehend their reality if we don't comprehend ours? Perhaps we did everything wrong. We worked to give them a better life. But they express themselves in our images. Now, if we had given ourselves the opportunities we want to give the children, then they would also have expressed our reality. In other words, we have not given our children better opportunities than those we had ourselves. That means that we have given them the same conditions in which to understand other people and society that we have, and are incapable of using. And if they feel isolated now, it is because we are.

But how can we change ourselves now? We lack the necessary means to prevent what we don't want from happening. Meanwhile, we hide inside our own little world, and feel that there is nothing we can do. And that's the picture we convey to our children. But the dreams we once had about how things would be for us – we hope our young people will have those dreams as well. And not only dream them but actually make them come true. We could make those dreams come true now, to show the kids that we are not afraid of society. After all, those dreams were about creating something, experiencing what we did as something meaningful. Being able to change things that we knew were wrong. Having the right to decide. And we talked about this with all our friends. About what we would be able to do. When we were together, we could do something. Because we felt

solidarity for one another. We wanted the right to make decisions about our own work, about the production of which we ourselves were a crucial part. In those days, we didn't want anyone to have a worse life than we had. Because that was the logic of society. And we agreed that we would live close to one another – and that we ourselves would always decide where and how we would live. So we could learn from one another. And play with our children – tell them about everything we had been through together. Tell them about other countries and other children, so that they would understand that other people have the same right to play as they did. And if anyone tried to stop us, we would change our conditions. In those days, we wanted ourselves.

And now, when we see children playing, we want to offer them the chance to play like children, and we experience that same feeling we had then. In those days, we wanted to experience this, having a life, one day; a qualitative life. But now we know that we need to change ourselves, our own approach to society and to the people we encounter and know, while giving children the opportunities they need as human beings. Then they will also play at what we do. And that is a model for a qualitative society.



In our evolved human nature, play exists to spin out and test out possibilities and living. So is play a form of resistance? It can be. Can it also be the most subtle education into conformity and complacency? Yes, it can be that too. How should artists use play? Well, I would have thought a bit like holy fools. The most interesting art that relates self-consciously to play says that play is about forging an art of living. How can we see the artfulness by which I mean the non-inevitability in economics, politics and civics? Radically playful art sees all structures as up for grabs, and has the imaginative confidence to remake and recast them.

*Pat Kane, Structures up for grabs, The Cat Came as a Tomato*



Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence is the capacity to use your whole body or parts of your body your hand, your fingers, your arms to solve a problem, make something, or put on some kind of production. The most evident examples are people in athletics or the performing arts, particularly dance or acting.

*Howard Gardner, The Arts and Human Development*



I want to look and I see. I want to listen and I hear. I want to touch and my arm reaches out, wanders along the surfaces of objects or penetrates into their interior; my hand opens, develops, extends, closes up; my fingers spread out or move together by obeying my will. In that act of touching, I know only my will to touch. That will is neither my hand, nor my brain, nor my touching. That will is me, my soul, it is my power, it is my faculty. I feel that will, it is present in me, it is myself; as for the manner in which I am obeyed, that I don't feel, that I only know by its acts. . . . I consider ideation like touching. I have sensations when I like; I order my senses to bring them to me. I have ideas when I like; I order my intelligence to look for them, to feel. The hand and the intelligence are slaves, each with its own attributes. Man is a will served by an intelligence.

*Joseph Jacotot, Journal de l'émancipation intellectuelle, after René Descartes*





# 4-process

Visit wood workshop  
Bartlett School of  
Architecture  
London, April 2016

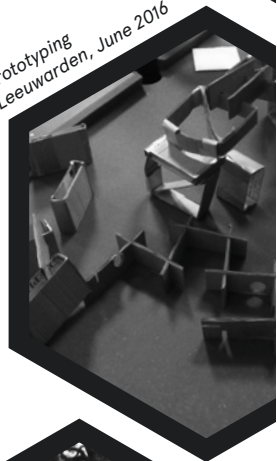


Craft workshop at  
Bow Arts  
London, April 2016

Visit nursery school  
Stratford  
London, April 2016



Prototyping  
Leeuwarden, June 2016



Building workshop  
Bokrijk, May 2016

Building workshop  
Bokrijk, May 2016



Prototyping in KHOR II  
Hasselt, August 2016



Prototyping  
Leeuwarden, June 2016



Building KHOR II  
Hasselt, August 2016



Pilot workshop in school  
London, January 2017



Pilot workshop in school  
London, January 2017



Pilot workshop in school  
London, January 2017







*Pilot workshop in school  
London, January 2017*



*Pilot workshop in school  
London, January 2017*



# PlayGround

This booklet is a pilot version of the development of the PlayGround manual + publication. It was made for the Tandem Europe final meeting in Athens + Elefsina from 24 to 29th January 2017 and will serve as a starting point for future development.

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