Experiential Design – Rethinking relations between people, objects and environments

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Spinning Out: Codesigning ‘sense-sational’ spaces for inclusive play with neurodiverse children

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• Abstract (300 words):
Children with disability or neurodiverse children, are often excluded from school play spaces. Sometimes this exclusion is due to external factors, and other times, due to Sensory Processing Disorders, or neurodiverse behaviours. Sensory Processing Disorder affects 42%-88% of neurodiverse children, creating anxiety and discomfort as the child struggles with regulating sensory stimulation from the surroundings. Sensory processing is necessary to modulate appropriate responses for effective integration. However, to fully include these children, it is critical to understand sensory and neurodiverse exclusion from their perspective. This paper investigates the benefits for inclusion of the neurodiverse voice through an equitable CoDesign approach, creating an inclusive play space.

Development of play based CoDesign workshops, will provide a way to facilitate the neurodiverse children in evaluating their sensory needs and developing a prototype of their play space. This prototype will be revised further by a neurotypical group of children, to determine if it is in an inclusive and engaging play space, for them, as well as all children.

This paper demonstrates how Codesign as a methodology is fundamental in providing a set of principles that supports these needs and builds capacity for the neurodiverse child. This could be transformative in the development of a specific
needs-based play space, that results in being interesting and inclusive for all children.

The success of this play space, CoDesigned by neurodiverse children, is that it empowers children who are marginalised and excluded daily. This research will provide benefits and unique opportunities for neurotypical children to engage in the same space, and that it is fun, interesting and inclusive for all.

A final observation of this study will be the impact on social recognition of these children at school and the broader school community.

Keywords: Neurodiverse, neurotypical, disability, CoDesign, Sensory Processing Disorder, play, inclusion

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Shelly Kelly is a Brisbane based researcher and installation artist who studied at The London Institute, Chelsea College of Art & Design and Middlesex University in London, completing her BA (Hons) in Fine Art / Sculpture in 1996. Her thesis, entitled ‘Engendered Spaces’ looked at the role of women in public space with research based on evidence in both the fields of architecture and art. She completed an MA in Visual Arts (Research) at Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane in 2000 and is currently undertaking a PhD at QUT, Brisbane. The themes of social inclusion through play for the neurodiverse child using CoDesign will underpin this PhD study, drawing on my creative resources as a practice led researcher.

Kelly used her return from the UK to change focus and study in more detail the elements of perception and how this directly relates to the viewers’ interpretation and experiences. Her Master’s thesis, entitled ‘Not So / Visual Art’, examines a more minimal approach to materials and explores the manipulation of these to predetermine specific outcomes within an audience.