



PolyU Design

PHD

THESIS SERIES

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Design Participation Tactics: Involving People
in the Design of Their Built Environment

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This thesis documents a process of rethinking user participation in the design of the urban built environment, and investigates options for the roles of architects and designers as generators and facilitators of design processes that enable designing with people. This research investigates the tactical knowledge of participation in design and explores how architects and designers' knowledge can be shared and developed with non-experts. The theoretical discourse of this study centres on Henri Lefebvre's distinction between the 'abstract space' of designers and the 'concrete space' of people and day-to-day life in spatial practice. This dialectic model of space was developed as an analytical tool to define, understand and re-appropriate the term 'participation' in the environmental design field. This study contributes through a critical assessment of different practices of Design Participation and further defines the term 'participation' within the greater social context. The pursuit of increasing user participation in the design process implies a realignment of designers' roles from producing objects, environments, and systems to that of facilitating innovative collaboration and creating platforms for social inclusion in design practice.

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