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COMMONS-PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS: NEIGHBOURHOOD AS NEXUS OF POLITICAL DECISION MAKING

Torange Khonsari

This lecture frames the need for a legitimate grassroots political sphere, that interrupts the hegemonic and binary paradigm of the Market and the State. It uses the discourse of the distributive commons as a theoretical framework that can articulate and structure this 'other' political sphere. By a formal redistribution of power between Commons (grassroots), State and Market, where each one has very different logic, procedures, economics and practices this 'other' space can force systemic change and accountability in the other two.

Based on both empirical and theoretical research in the past 24 years, Khonsari uses a diagram of commons-public partnership to structure this talk. The map starts with politically disengaged residents and their journey towards engaged political action by restructuring systems and reframing environments in the city.

This move to politicise society whose civic engagement has been reduced to consumption or coercive consultation has impact on neighbourhoods. If we reframe the neighbourhood as the nexus of political decision making rather than centralised government where decisions are made, then how does that both change the way we re-imagine the city and reform politics.

TORANGE KHONSARI is Co-Founder and Director of the urbanism, public art and architecture practice Public Works since 2004, an inter- disciplinary practice working on co-production methods in art, architecture, urbanism, systems thinking and citizenship. She is the co-director of Centre for Applied Research in Empowering Society (CARES) at London Metropolitan University. Torange has had 23 years in academic teaching in architecture and design. She is currently teaching on the suit of post graduate and doctoral courses she wrote called Design for Cultural Commons at London Metropolitan University where she is the course leader. She is Unit Master at the Architectural Association. She has taught at international universities such as the UMA school of Architecture in Sweden, unit leader at Royal College of Art - London as well as a visiting professor at Barbican and Guildhall school of Music and Drama. She is currently visiting professor at International University of Barcelona on the MA - emergency architecture. Torange delivered a TEDx talk on Harnessing the power of Civic Commons. She completed being a consultant on the five year framework on the Mayor of London's Specialist Assistant Team for community engagement in regeneration. She is a chartered designer and an expert adviser for Design Council. She has been invited to be one of the 9 experts on Design Council's initiative Design for Planet fellowship 2021/22.

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