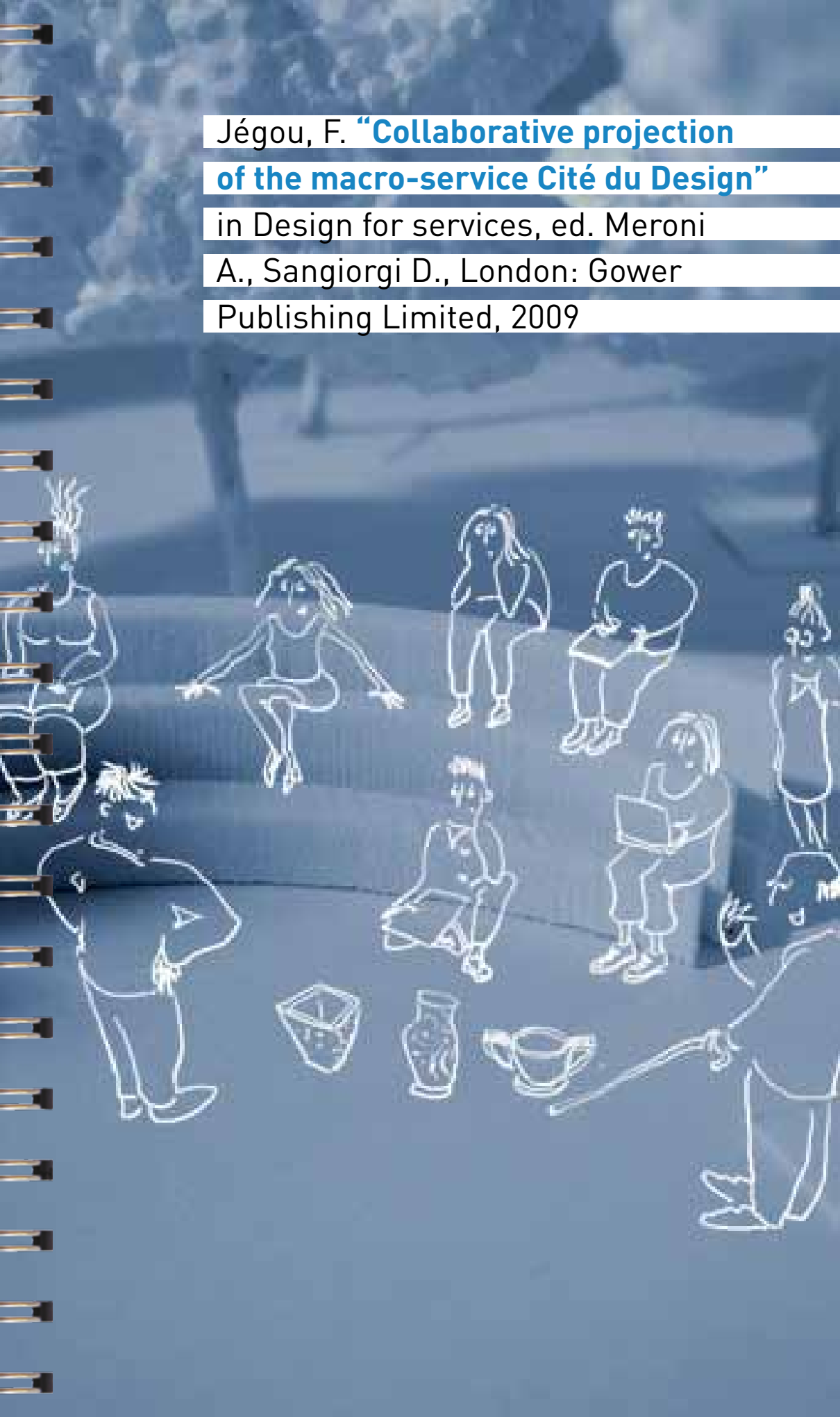


Jégou, F. **"Collaborative projection of the macro-service Cité du Design"** in Design for services, ed. Meroni A., Sangiorgi D., London: Gower Publishing Limited, 2009

This booklet has been made from the chapter titled: "Collaborative projection of the macro-service Cité du Design" by François Jégou in a book called Design for services, edited by Anna Meroni and Daniela Sangiorgi and published by Gower Publishing Limited in UK in 2010.

Abstract

Saint-Étienne, a medium-sized town in the Rhones-Alpes region plays host to the Biennale Internationale du Design, a fair that has established itself, over the last ten years, as one of the major design events in France. The city and surrounding metropolitan decides to follow this trend and create a permanent institution, called la Cité du Design, including research and design facilities, an arts school and exhibition halls in order to boost the local social and economical fabric in difficulties and promote Saint-Etienne as major capital of design.
This article is a review of a macro-service co-design process at the local, regional and international levels, with a

view to defining the various modes of operation of the new Cité du Design. More specifically, we will attempt to demonstrate how a "collective projection" process can, over a year, reveal the vocational nature for sustainable territory development of such as a public institution for research, education and cultural studies.

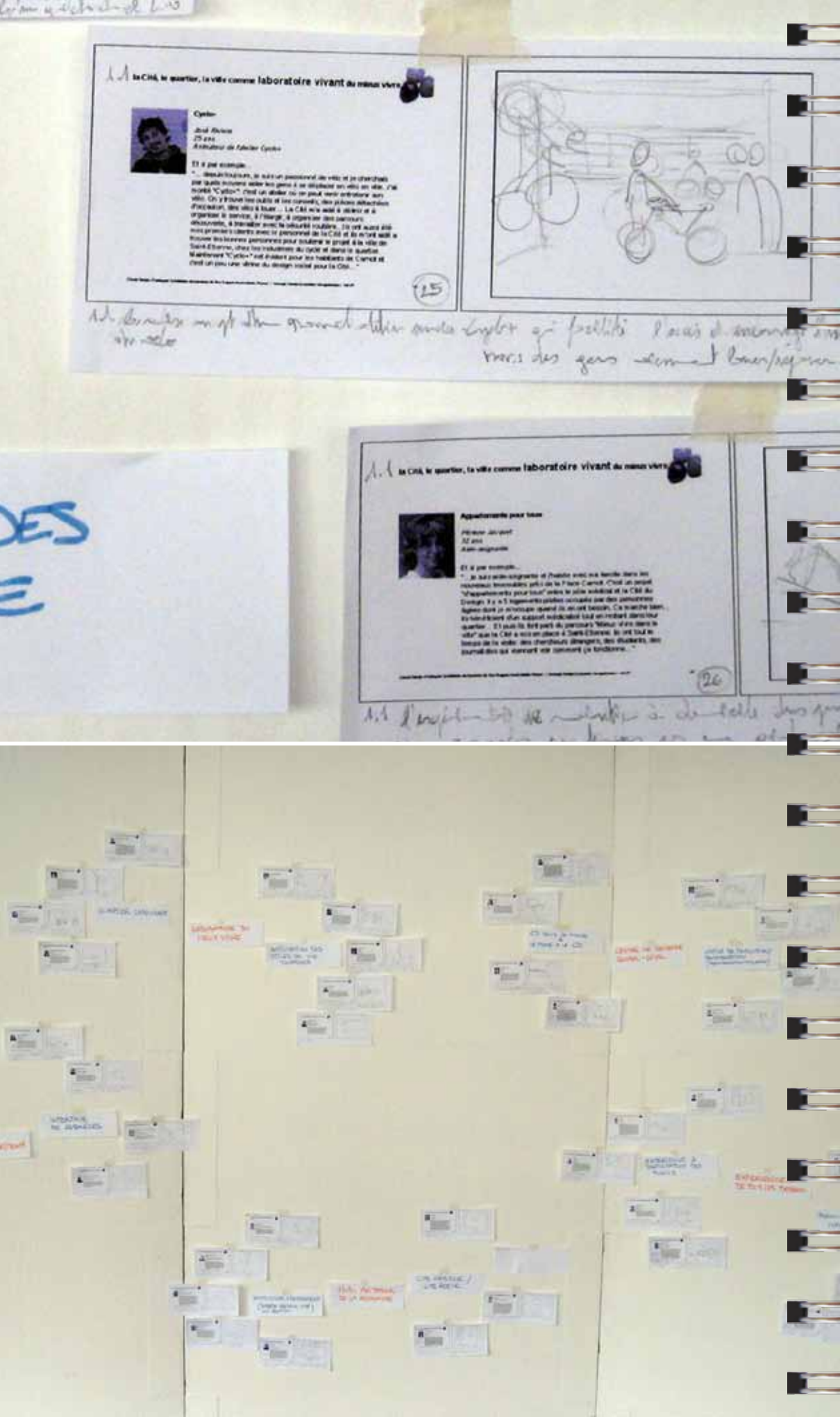
We will discuss the mechanisms and tools of story-telling and video-sketching that were used so that all actors could converge around a shared vision, both on the range of services that the Cité du Design provides, and of its specific mission to put the Saint-Etienne metropolitan area on the path of sustainable growth.

A semi-collaborative approach to build ‘life systems’

How will la Cité du Design accommodate the various audiences it is reaching out to? How will it fit in to its surroundings in the Carnot area? How will it invigorate the local economy and encourage research in France and beyond? ... But most of all, how will it organise its internal operations to reduce its impact on the environment, regenerate the fabric of society, and accelerate Saint-Etienne’s reconversion into a city that offers both high and sustainable living standards?

In early 2007, Saint-Etienne and la Cité du Design commissioned our company, Strategic Design Scenarios, to define the “life systems” of La Cité du Design in order to encourage a debate and find answers to these questions.
More than a “study”, the objective here was to trigger a “social conversation” amongst all actors inside and outside la Cité : to consult, involve, and take stock of individual expectations and constraints in order to build collectively define the Cité du Design service as a whole.

Now very much in the limelight, la Cité du Design is a popular topic of conversation among the inhabitants of Saint-Etienne. All those involved are keen to find out how the newcomer will settle in, and the attention it receives is further enhanced by the Biennale Internationale du Design, now a major international event... How can this hotbed of ideas, intentions and projects, vulnerable to some degree because of occasional publicity stunts and voices of criticism, be streamlined into a constructive process of social conversation, with


1.1 la Cité, le quartier, la ville comme laboratoire vivant du mieux vivre
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1.1 la Cité, le quartier, la ville comme laboratoire vivant du mieux vivre
Appartements pour tous
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a view to defining the practices, services to implement and projects of the young institution?
The methodology we suggest uses the semi-collaborative scenario buiding approach. This approach was chosen essentially because it is a classic design approach, with a view to defining a macro-service taking into account a particular context of use.

La Cité du Design is certainly a complex institution, combining multiple functionalities and user typologies. Scenario-building is the most appropriate design tool to trigger social conversation in such a complex, interdependent and evolving environment. This construct cannot be elaborated by the service designer alone: s/he should hear all the actors involved in the project (however remotely) and interact with them in a semi-collaborative process where vision and consultation balance out.

We will now look at this approach in more detail.

1.1 Building a collective projection through story-telling...

As discussed before, high expectations surround the "life systems" initiative. After several years of incubation and three years ahead of inauguration, la Cité du Design is becoming a project of some proportion and an event for the people of Saint-Etienne (Jégou, 2008). "After the city's major public works, this is the other important project for Saint-Etienne in the last 5 years."

It is on people's minds and in public declarations. There is a stong aspirational dimension to la Cité, which people hope will "reveal Saint-Etienne to the world, create employment and economic development in the region..."

However, the town authorities are still quite vague when it comes to the kind of applications and uses la Cité will have.
"There is a lot of talk about la Cité, but no one seems to know what it will actually be there for."

◀ A collective writing process involving all actors of la Cité du Design – social and economic partners, local businesses, town cultural organisations, local inhabitants, the international design community, the general public of the metropolitan area, etc. – gives form to a collective projection around 5 macro- themes of the institution's future.

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Etienne Dupont
43 ans
Responsable d'une association pour la réinsertion professionnelle
Et si par exemple...
Accompagner industriels et designe
Comments Off
Albert Lenoble
53 ans
Chef d'une PME stéphanoise
Et si par exemple...

Its features seem to distract from its purpose.
"the library of materials, the exhibition volumes, the restaurant..."; "the only centre in the world that can offer research, education and dissemination under one roof..."

But any attempt to describe its purpose is glossed over with generic ideas.

"a resource centre for communal purposes", "a living space of interaction", "an experimental social laboratory and a place for discovery", "a force for change", "a place for inspiration and creativity"...

We introduced a story-telling approach to give shape and form to all this creative energy. Participants were asked, quite literally, to tell a story so that the diffused vision that exists within this complex system could settle and materialise into a series of small and characteristic narratives. These stories (Fig. 1) explain what la Cité du Design is from the point of view of a local company executive, a student in Saint-Etienne or a retired person who lives on place Carnot.

Of all the scenario-building techniques, story-telling is probably the most appropriate means of participatory projection for a wider audience: essentially it asks the subject to describe the perceived advantage of a particular product or service provided by la Cité, without having to care for how it could be provided.
Nevertheless, we have, as a result of this process, achieved the first step of macro-service design by identifying some consistent elements of both a desirable vision (at least for participating sample: "it would be nice to do this, this would be reasonable..."), and a feasible vision (formulated through realistic narrations: "I could be a part of this, I could make the effort...").

As a result of this process, a collection of more than 100 stories reflects the collective projections of the subjects in the audience.

◀ The ongoing publication of stories on a blog allowed participants to read up on the process of social conversation as it unfolded and to converge around an articulated vision of what the future Cité will hold.

SYSTÈMES DE VIE POUR LA CITÉ DU DESIGN...

...PROJECTION COLLECTIVE D'HISTOIRES

1.2 A co-elaboration on several levels involving internal and external actors in an iterative approach...

A progressive and multifaceted approach is required in order to achieve a collective projection based on a collection of intricate stories; this does not happen overnight.
Many actors play a part in la Cité du Design : industrialists, local designers, students and professors, local inhabitants, tourists of Saint-Etienne, cultural organisations, Saint-Etienne's institutional bodies...

Their involvement in the social conversation process happened on two levels. It was agreed with la Cité that a restricted group of people were selected as representing the core actors who had a role in the institution. They were chosen on the basis of availability and direct involvement to be part of a pilot committee that was consulted on a regular basis. A second and wider group was also created, more diverse and more representative of all the actors involved. This group was mainly solicited in the writing process, so that more opinions and points of view could be collected.

The actors in la Cité are numerous but also diverse. The tools of dialogue used in the process of social conversation had to be flexible enough to accommodate everyone. The social conversation was also implemented on line, so that story-telling process could be published in real-time and read by all actors as they gradually became more involved in the discussion. Saint-Etienne's school of Arts and Design took actively part into the process through creative workshops and internship with stakeholders. Remote micro-interviews and discussion groups were set up to channel the dialogue to involve remote actors in the conversation.
The dialogue process was applied in an iterative fashion, collecting and confronting stories, and progressively modifying them until the different categories of actors converged. But unlike a typical

◀ A collection of approximately forty stories was summarised and illustrated. It is available online but also in a micro-booklet (A6 format) that was printed and circulated among internal and external actors, on the basis that a physical support would make the results of the collective projection process more tangible. The heterogeneous stories were symbolically linked together so that they could be shared and discussed. Each participant received a booklet so that so he could share the results with others.

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participative mediation process, the idea here is to explore most of the possibilities. If we reverse P. Watzlawick's metaphor, the captain who sails in heavy fog should not only find the route that is obstacle-free; he should pinpoint the obstacles so that he can picture all possible routes (Watzlawick, 1988). A large range of possible roads emerges from the co-elaboration of a collective projection, reflecting the clear and compatible visions of all actors.

1.3 A shared definition of a feasible vision...

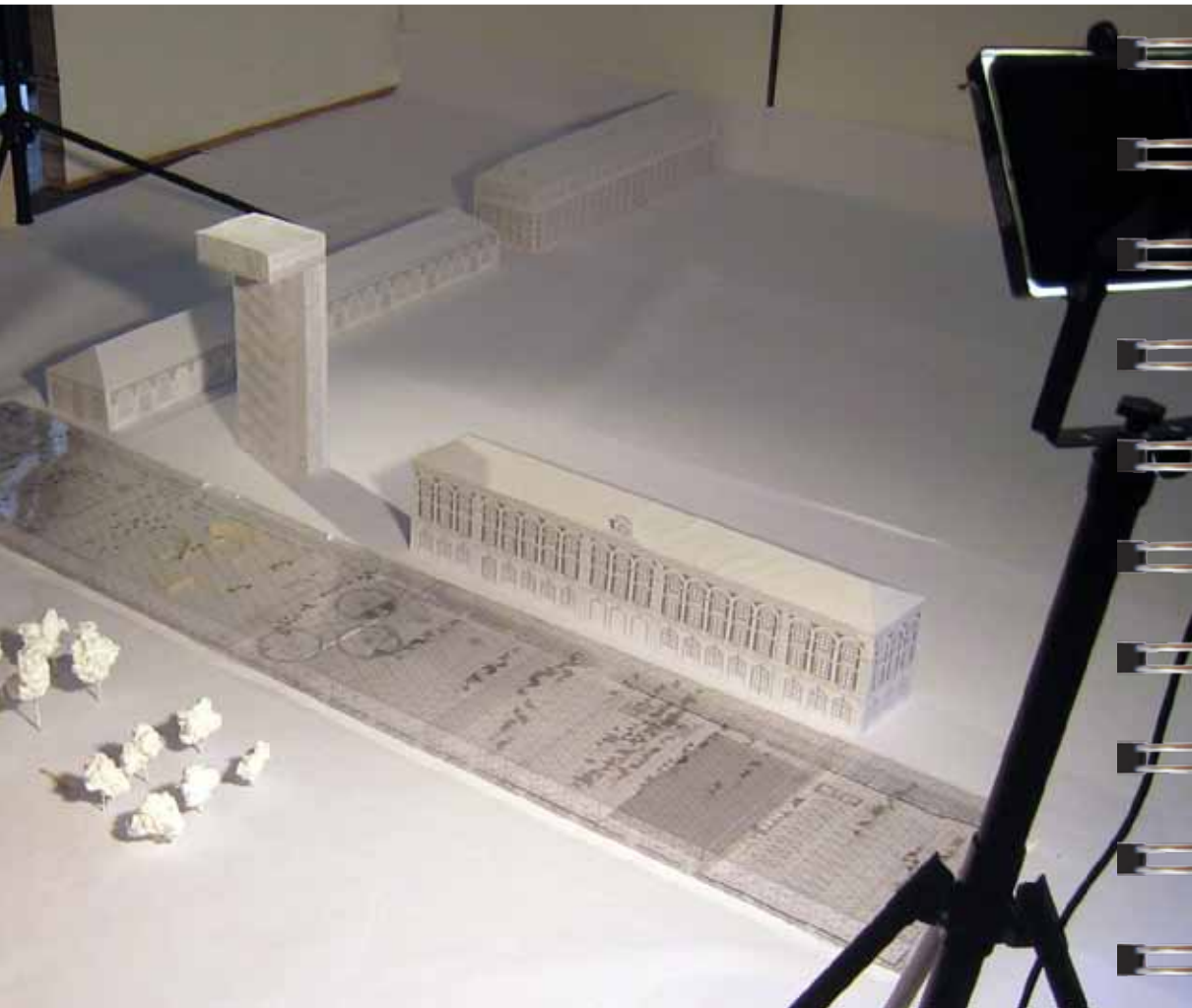
Clustering the stories, stimulating the generation of new ones and combining more loops of deductive and inductive reasoning brought at a point where the collected stories settled to reflect a sufficiently representative and stabilised collective projection. The definition of the specification the Cité du Design macro-service was then extrapolated from it: from any given story, one can infer the necessary characteristics that are required to reproduce what is told and from the collective projection a detailed briefing specification about the functionalities, the atmosphere and spirit to be given to the macro-service Cité.

In the course of extracting raw data, 5 vision for service design permeate the story collection:

_Stimulating the local economy...
LA CITE AS A HUB, CONNECTING INDUSTRIALISTS, DESIGNERS AND CITIZENS, allowing various local and international actors to network and discuss shared requirements and other issues.

_Appealing to the people of Saint-Etienne...
LA CITE AS A DYNAMIC CULTURAL CENTRE with scheduled events on weekdays and weekends to entertain a local audience but also international visitors.
_Part of the local fabric of society...
LA CITE, THE LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD AND THE CITY ITSELF AS A LABORATORY FOR A BETTER LIFE where citizens and la Cité col-

◀ 40 bits of 20 second video excerpts were created, based on the finalised story collection. This is the next step in showing and sharing the collective projection for the benefit of the actors who play a role in la Cité's development and to support large public engagement.



laborate, experiment and build models of sustainable development together...

_Creating an international research centre for design...
LA CITE AS ENGINE OF PROSPECTIVE RESEARCH PROGRAMMES, creating synergies with the Biennale, the school, the in-house researchers, the conference and exhibition programmes, the network for projects on a local or global scale...

_Exploring the full potential of la Cité...
LA CITE AS A RESOURCE CENTRE, including a public media library, a library of materials, conference rooms, studios and laboratories, a dynamic and creative infrastructure, ...

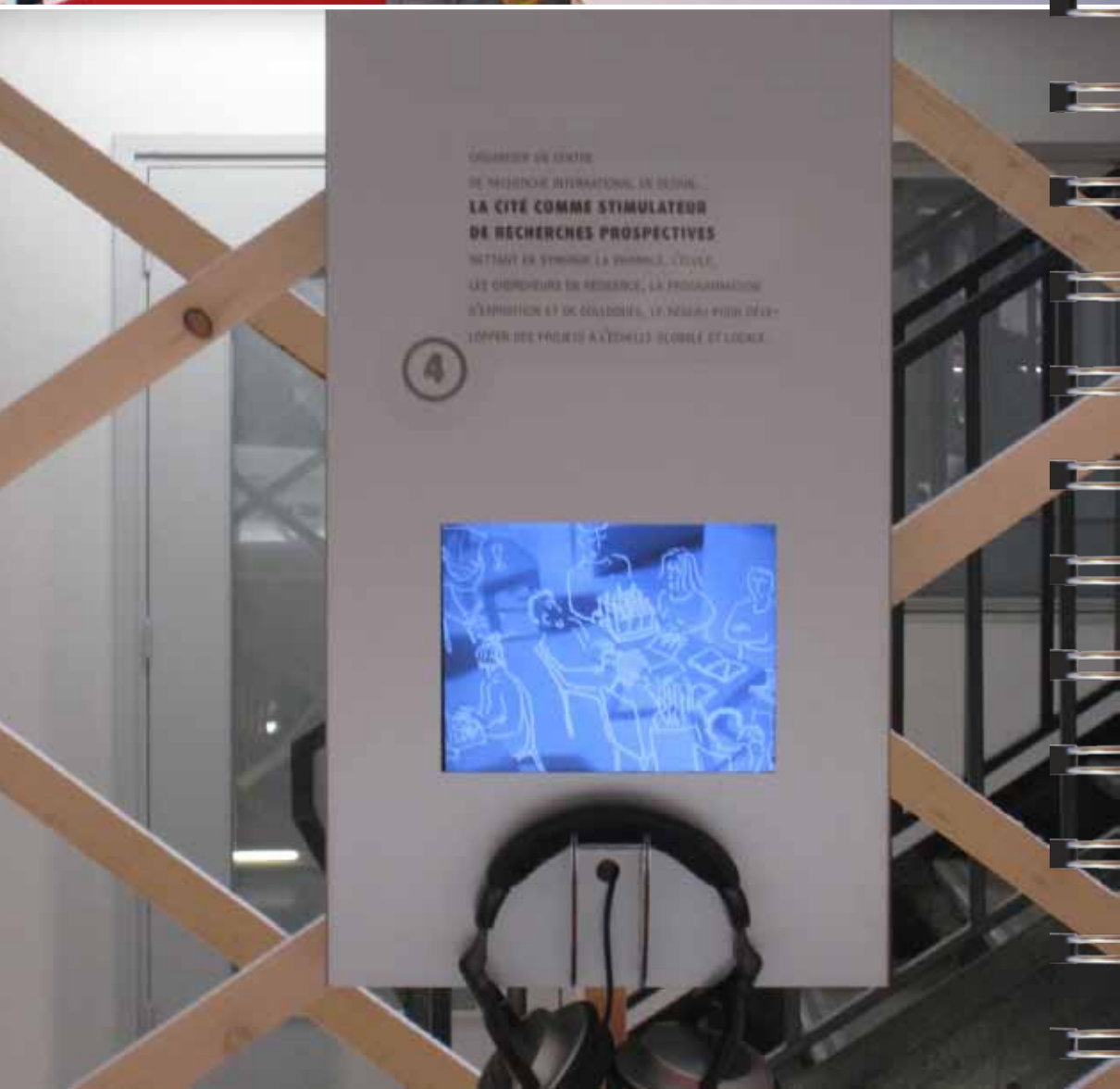
The "semi-collaborative" approach therefore contains two complementary and iterative processes;

A deductive one, based on story collection, extraction and specifications... And an inductive one which projects a number of visions and positions (Jégou, Verganti, Marchesi, Simonelli et Dell'Era, 2006). This approach referred in innovation management as design-driven characterise la Cité that can be seen as a design-driven institution that grows creatively through a permanent dialogue with its surroundings.

1.4 Enlarging social conversation toward public engagement...

Parallel to the specification of the service, the collective projection through story telling is a very supportive tool to foster public engagement. The synthetic final corpus of 40 stories has been turned into a series of short animated video-sketches in order to facilitate their dissemination to a broader audience online and through a series of events. The video-sketches Figures 4 and 5) show a mixed reality realistic enough to induce the projection of subject watching them but still rough and fuzzy to show that they are proposal open to further interpretation and adaptation. In the taxonomy of design visualisation tools, they belong to the sketch rather than to the ren-

◀ The visualisation techniques applied to the projections introduce a mixed reality: images of realistic models enhanced with additional sketches produce a vivid and compelling result, allowing the viewer to picture the experience of the proposed services whilst leaving room for individual contribution.


4
LA CITÉ COMME STIMULATEUR
DE RECHERCHES PROSPECTIVES

dering. They are "open visualisations" (Jégou, 2009) designed to engage in collaborative processes.

The follow-up engagement process uses the video-sketches to stimulate and start implementation. Two examples could be given along one of the 5 main visions: **LA CITE, THE LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD AND THE CITY ITSELF AS A LABORATORY FOR A BETTER LIFE** where citizens and la Cité collaborate, experiment and build models of sustainable development together...

On a local scale, La Cité's geographical location in the Carnot popular neighbourhood holds a potential challenge for the future: the prestigious institution must win over local inhabitants if it is to engage with them to face the challenges that lie ahead in the transition of Saint-Étienne to sustainable development. La Cité du Design is immerged into a very dynamic social fabric willing to overcome the difficult past decades and benefits from both top-down initiatives in line with creative cities ideas (Landry, 2000) and bottom-up initiatives from vivid creative communities (Meroni, 2007, Jégou et Manzini, 2008) linked to the rich associative heritage from the industrial past of the city.

The Biennale International Design 2008 build up on these topics in all possible directions showing local and non-local initiative from territory development to eco-design. The core idea –and core exhibition of the Biennale- is to promote the area into a City-Eco-Lab (Figure 7) exploring on-going social initiatives that have an experience and a potential for a transition towards new and more sustainable ways of living, streamlining and aggregating them, giving them visibility in an international event and supporting their development with design skills.

On a global scale, Saint-Etienne wishes to have the particular status of "new capital of design" (Lacroix, 2005). The city is dynamic and its commitment to innovation is widely acknowledged even though it does not enjoy the traffic and influx that major international capitals have. Therefore, the city must carefully address its involvement on

◀ All the scenarios that were produced were on display at the Biennale Internationale Design 2008 in the final step of the communication surrounding the new macro-service and in order to fully implicate all actors ahead of the official inauguration in 2010.

Margot,
26 years old,
actress,
Tardy, Saint-Ètienne

both the local and the international stage through an idea of "multi-locality" (Manzini, Jégou, 2003) whereby it must be firmly rooted in the local surroundings and forever connected with the world from a global perspective. This problematic brought to an original concept leading the development of the online presence of La Cité: beyond the classical web facilities and remote access services, a Cité virtuelle is currently under development. This "virtual city", playing in French with the word 'cité' meaning both the new institution and the city itself will embody the vision of Saint-Étienne as a Cité du design: a city of design (promoting it) and by design (transformed by it).

The complete process reported here shows an approach to the design of services – and in particular macro-public services – with a strong level of stakeholders participation using a simple storytelling process to stimulate people creativity and engagement from the very beginning of generation of new visions and through a backcasting approach until their progressive implementations in the territory. On top of being a powerful tool to facilitate conversation within large arena of different players, the collectively generated stories are used to shape the macro-service and reach a consensus on its specification on the one hand and, on the other hand, they provide a useful and attractive support to incentive dissemination and public engagement in the implementation of the service vision.

◀ The Biennale 2008 and especially its core exhibition City-Eco-Lab prolonged one of the service visions building up on the stories with inhabitants from Saint-Étienne to show how local social innovation may inspire new and more sustainable lifestyles.

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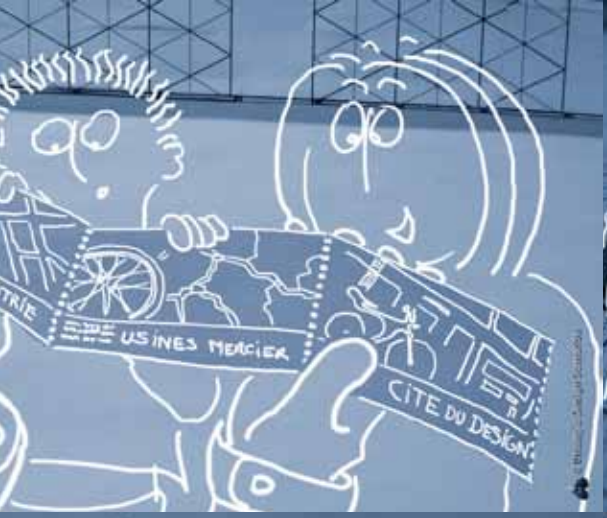
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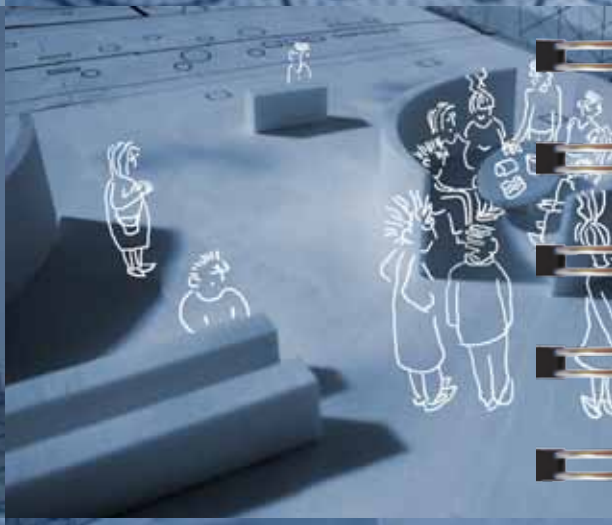

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