

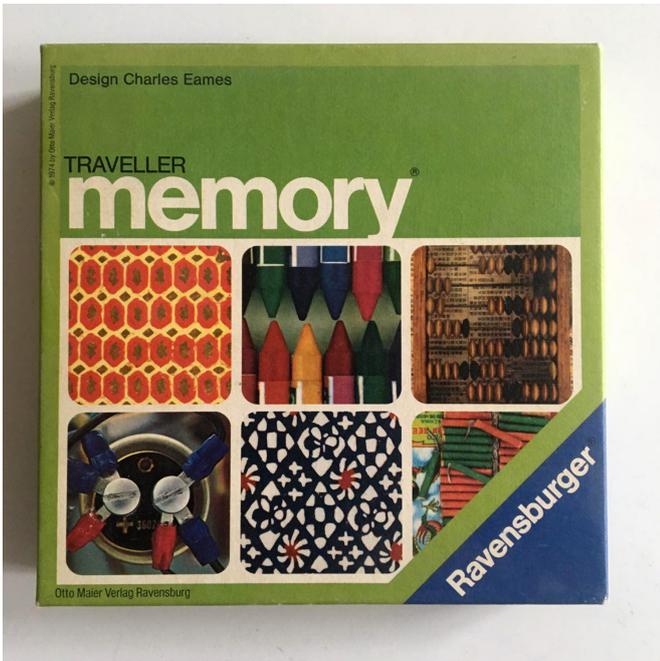
URBAN
MEMO



URBAN MEMO

Urban Memo is a methodology developed by Tesseractae to facilitate participative processes. It is aimed at assessing urban territories, engaging local communities and scripting place narratives. The Memo lab is based on conceiving, designing and realising a variation of the popular Memory card game with images captured by the participants. The **concentration game**, popularised by the German brand Ravensburger as **Memory**, is a well know table game. Its simple structure is based on two sets of cards that the player need to match to make points. Since its appearance, a great variety of memory games have been produced as recreational and educational tools, art objects or design experiments. The collaborative design of the memory game is employed by Tesseractae as a flexible instrument for facilitating urban surveys and participative processes. Urban Memo is a co-design methodology aimed ad engaging small groups of participants in a situated reflective practice. It is employed to improve their capacity to use photography and graphic composition, and to foster collective reflection and elaboration on a given socio-spatial context.





The original Traveller Memory designed by Charles Eames for Ravensburger



Urbingo is a single card set variation realised by Laimikis in Vilnius <http://www.tesseracte.eu/place/snipiskes>



A 2005 prototype by Lorenzo Tripodi

PURPOSE

The Urban Memo methodology can be applied to the purpose of investigating the history of a territory, to capture its existing conditions and current transformations, and as a preparatory step for project interventions or local policy making. Urban Memo can be used to explore a bounded context like a neighbourhood, an area interested by a plan, or the surroundings of a specific project. An UM Lab can be applied to an entire town or metropolitan area, as well as a single street. UM can also be employed to assess or develop an itinerary or tour. An Urban Memo workshop can be developed with a participatory and political approach to spatial development, for practical design purposes or as a tool for artistic practice or documentary projects. The Urban Memo workshop module can complement processes of assessment i.e. in combination with **Urban Reconnaissance** Labs, to rearrange materials and knowledge produced during the UR survey or to draft ideas for projects and interventions. It can be employed also to create storyboards for scripting narratives or documentaries, i.e. used in combination with the **Urban Sketches** digital storytelling method.

BENEFICIARIES

The Urban Memo methodology is intuitive and visual. It builds on universal codes of graphic language and user friendly production means. It can be easily employed by people with any background and expertise, either adults, elderly people or children. It works as an effective intergenerational and intercultural mediation tool, facilitating the confrontation of diverse perspectives on places and stances of local communities.

STRUCTURE OF THE LAB

An Urban Memo lab consists basically of five phases that may assume different relevance according to the purpose of the lab and the participants interest:

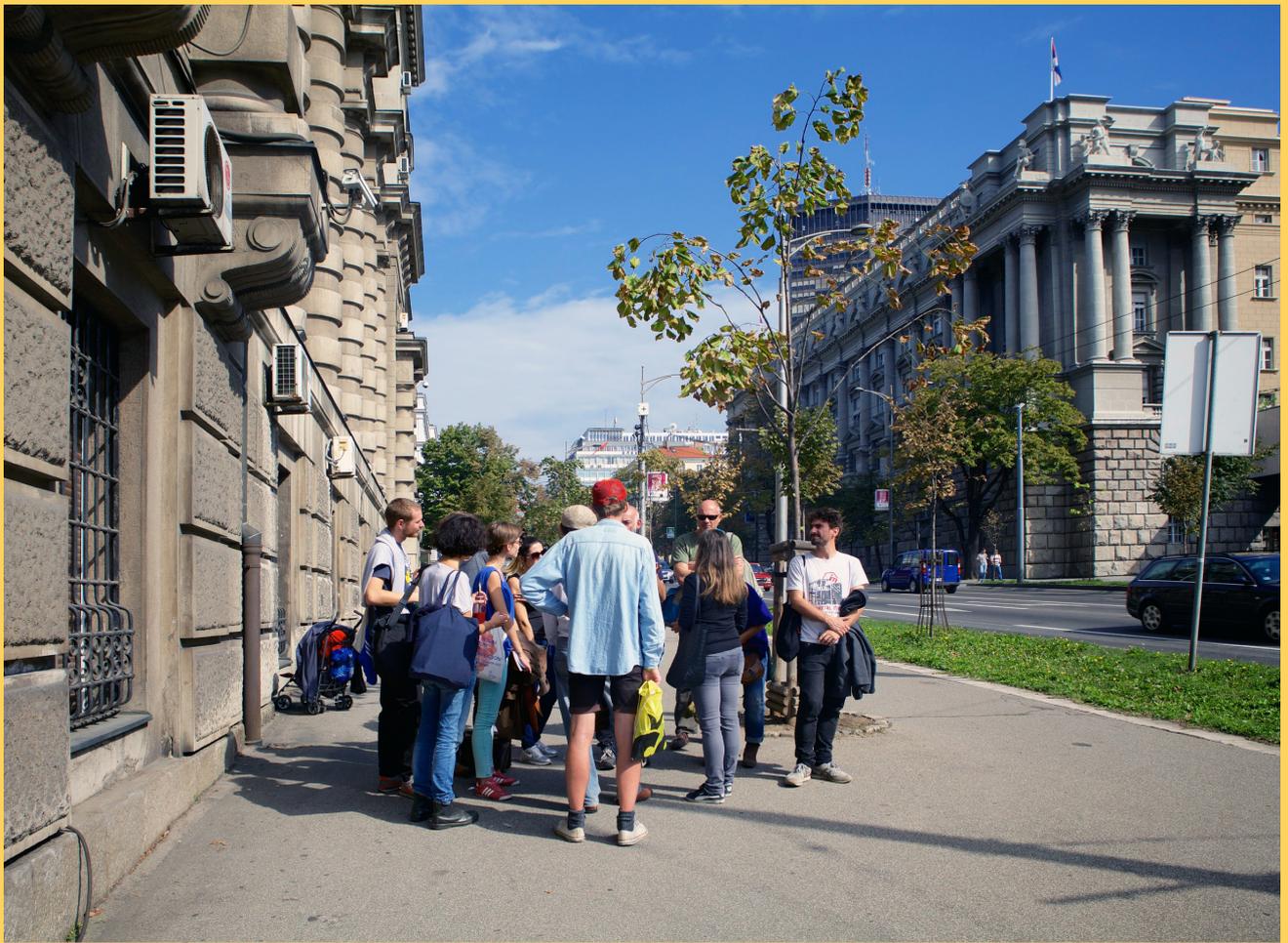
1. DEFINITION
2. COLLECTION
3. SELECTION
4. PRODUCTION
5. APPLICATION

1) DEFINITION

The first session defines the scope of the laboratory and extension of the application area. Here the participant discuss the purpose of the laboratory, the specific focus, the geographical area under scrutiny, the rules of exploration and the format of the materials that will be produced in the successive phase.

2) COLLECTION

The participants explore the territory under scrutiny using digital photography to capture elements they find significant. They are free to collect as many images and ideas. They can as well collect physical items, scan paper documents, or download stock images available in the commons. Any sort of documentary material is admitted as long as it can be reduced a to a single chart with a clear iconic form. Successively, each participant will propose a strict selection of few poignant elements. This phase ends with a plenary to discuss individual selections and combine them in a common collection.

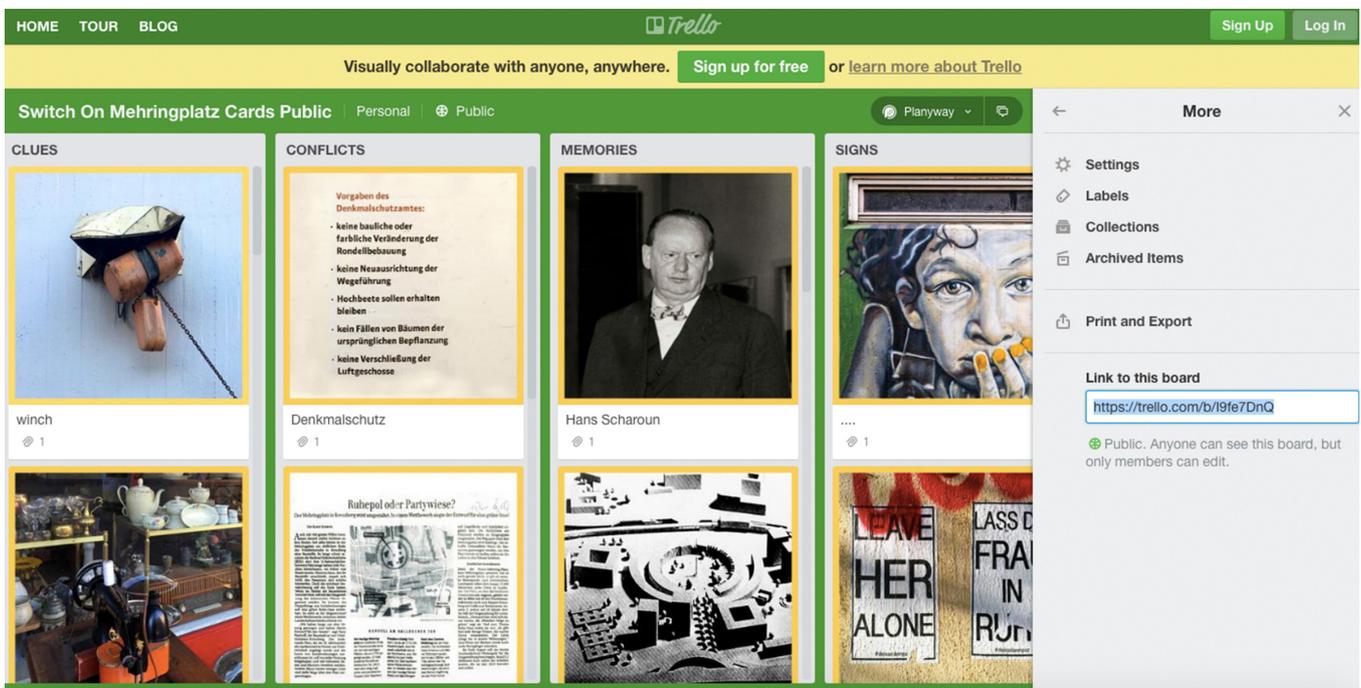


3) SELECTION

An online repository is adopted to share and organise the set of images. For this purpose is suggested a **Trello Board**. The facilitator introduces a set of categories used to classify the images. The typical basic taxonomy is as follows:

- MONUMENTS
- MEMORIES
- PLACES
- TRANSFORMATIONS
- CLUES
- PEOPLE
- SIGNS
- CONFLICTS

This taxonomy can be discussed and adapted according to the lab's purpose and context. The selection process can take longer time and go through online interaction. Voting tools can be also used to determine the final selection, usually constituted by a maximum of 64 images.



Trello Board

4) PRODUCTION

The set of digital images (drafts) are reworked and edited to produce the final cards, including going back on site to take more appropriate photo shots. Depending on the focus and skills of the participants, training on photography and graphic design can be provided as part of the didactic experience. Otherwise, this phase can be delegated to a skilled designer / photographer to produce a final version. Therefore, the actual set of cards is produced creating a layout, printing and cutting the cards. Multiples can be produced as a material outcome for each of the participants.



5) APPLICATION

The card set is ready for use. It can be employed for recreational purposes, as a regular memory card game. The game can be turned in a tool to facilitate discussion and foster reflective practices, i.e. extracting cards and asking for comments and stories about the represented places or for mapping issues and conflicts. The set of cards can be used to stimulate “find the spot” tours and treasure hunts games. It can be used to create storyboards, using the cards as representing plans and shots.

Through these different stages the group designs a cognitive process that includes setting objectives; exploring a spatial context, capturing impressions and information; refining graphic and photographic composition, selecting and editing contents; finally, delivering a creative and aesthetically valuable artefact in collective form, and employing it as an entertaining reflective practice.

Produced by **Tesserae Urban Social Research**
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