

Publica

RIGHT TO THE STREETS: ENABLING ACTIVE TRAVEL AND
ACTIVE LIVES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN TRAFFORD

January 2023

IT IS TIME TO TAKE ACTION

A GUIDE TO GETTING STARTED ON GENDER INCLUSIVE CITIES

INTRODUCTION

This document presents a literature review on gender inclusive public spaces that enable active travel and active lives for women, girls, and gender diverse people. Many years of feminist scholarship, research, and action means that we needn't start from scratch when deciding how to advance gender inclusivity in public spaces. To support the practical application of this work, this literature review takes a new approach by presenting feminist scholarship in the form of information postcards. We hope they will be used as starting points for discussion, reflection, and action.

The aim of the postcards is to equip project partners, designers, planners, policy makers, and - where demand exists - the wider community, with information, in-depth knowledge, and multifaceted perspectives to better understand public space through a gender lens.

The postcards also provide practical tools to plan and design gender inclusive public spaces. Active travel and active lives for women and girls is about so much more than women's safety. It is about the liberty to have free and equal access to everything the city has to offer and to remove barriers to freedom of movement and to active and healthy lives.

Our starting point is intersectional. We want to support users to acknowledge and think across difference and to see how different forms of power intersect in the spaces we inhabit, dwell in, and move through, creating different experiences that we need to take account of.

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KEY THEMES

The literature review is divided into three key themes that were identified as the most important for understanding women's active lives: Active Life, Safety, and Sense of Belonging. The postcards are thus envisioned as a tool to facilitate interaction and discussion around these key themes. Climate justice acts as the common thread running through and connecting all three themes, and achieving the 'Right to the Streets' is the central aim.

Each key theme is investigated through six to seven postcards which include literature, statistics, and reflections responding to the questions that each theme raises.

1. Living an active life

The main question that we asked ourselves is: How are active lives gendered? The answer to this question comes in the form of six postcards. These illustrate the six most important ideas and theories derived from the literature that describe how active lives are gendered:

- 1) Affordability of being active
- 2) Infrastructure for being active
- 3) Fitting in: the triple burden
- 4) Harassment, gender-based violence, and being active
- 5) Women's bodies, femininity, and being active
- 6) Boys' sports/ Girls' sports

2. Living a safer life

The main question that we asked ourselves is: How are safer lives gendered? The answer to this question comes in the form of seven postcards. These illustrate the seven most important ideas and theories derived from the literature that describe how safer lives are gendered:

- 1) Activity can be healing and empowering
- 2) Public space design
- 3) Safety behaviours in public space
- 4) Harassment and gender-based violence in public space
- 5) The stories we tell: positioning women as powerless or powerful?
- 6) The problem with policing
- 7) Safety means different things to different people

3. Living where I belong

The main question that we asked ourselves is: How is a sense of belonging gendered? The answer to this question comes in the form of six postcards. These illustrate the six most important ideas and theories derived from the literature that describe how safer lives are gendered:

- 1) Belonging is different from fitting in
- 2) Belonging relates to functionality
- 3) Representation through public art
- 4) A representative sector
- 5) Participation and co-design as belonging-in-action
- 6) Public space as a location of resistance

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TOOLS & CASE STUDIES

The second part of the document collates nineteen postcards, running alongside the key themes. These postcards illustrate tools used as guidance for practically addressing each theme through projects, programmes, and initiatives. Each postcard is accompanied by a case study showcasing best practice to bring the tool to life. The case studies showcase both national and international precedents and capture, where possible, examples from Greater Manchester.

IMAGINATION CARDS

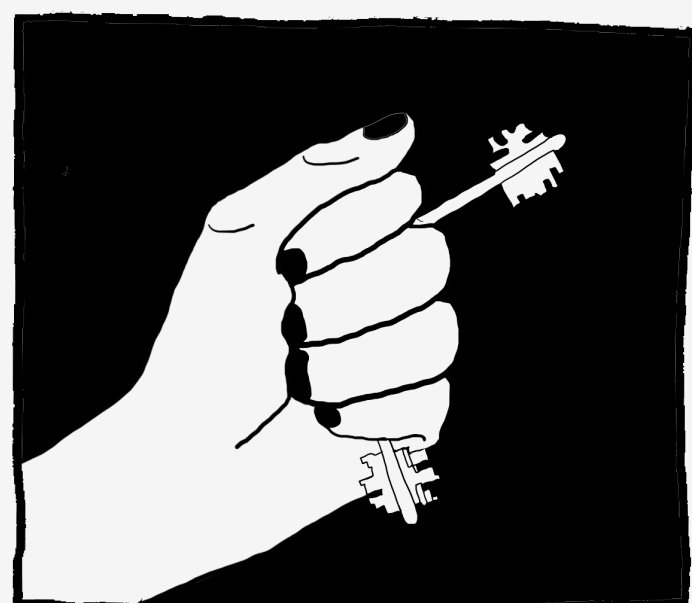
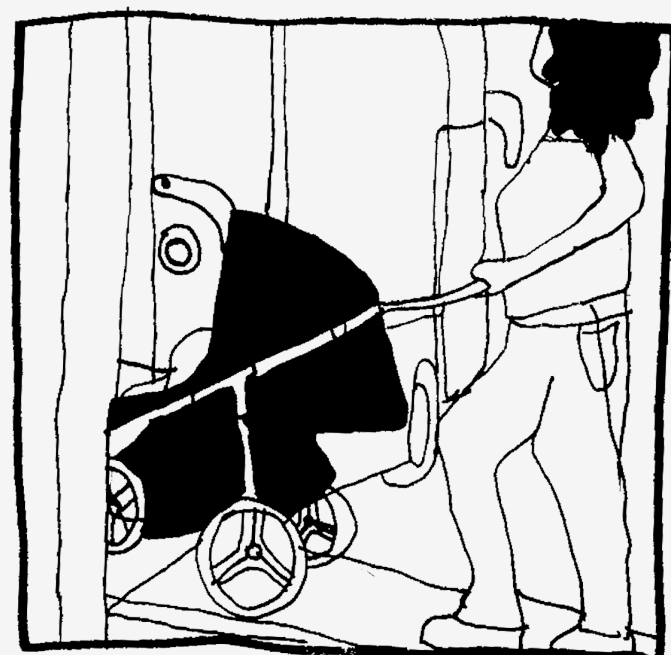
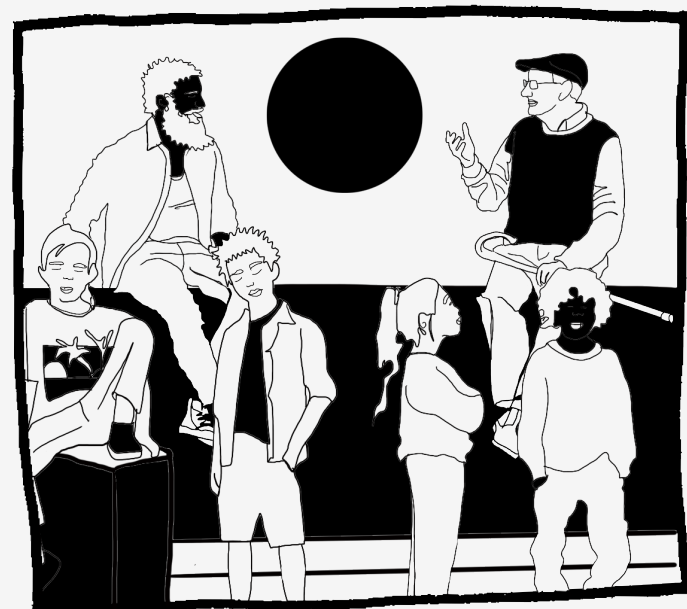
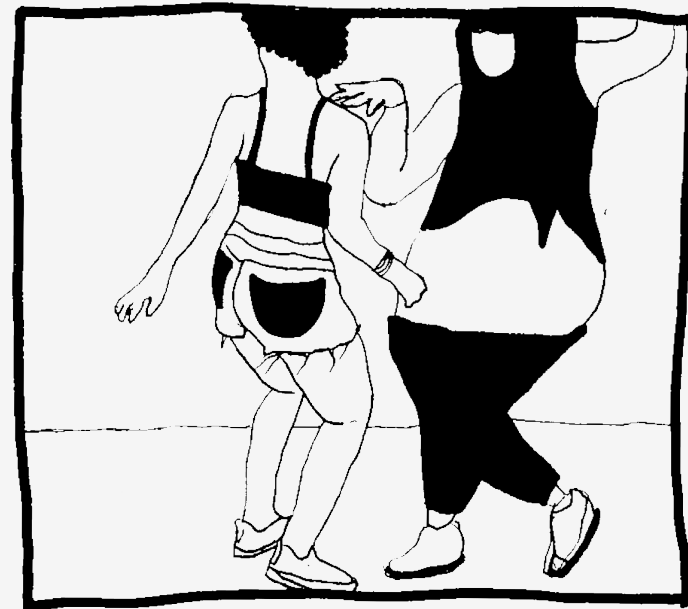
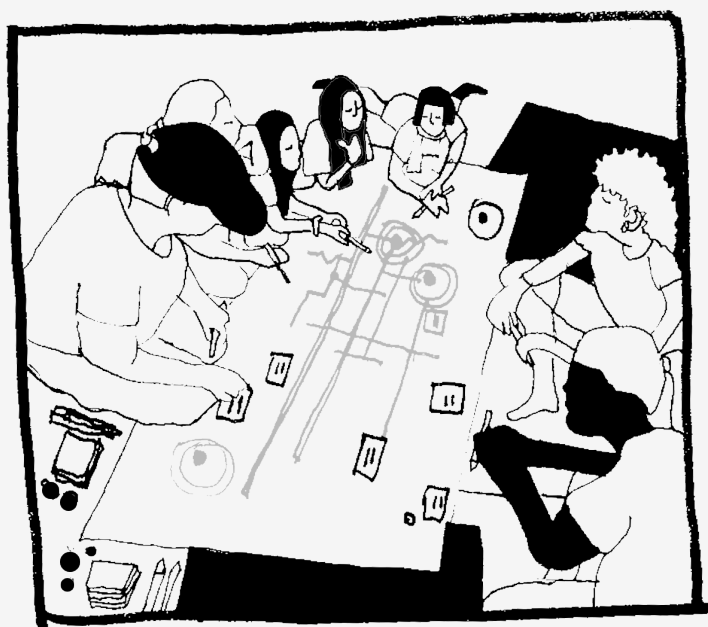
The third part of the literature review offers blank cards to address the need for imagination and knowledge-creation space.

Using workshops and engagement sessions to improve, expand, and iterate the literature is fundamental to nurture the explorative and intersectional nature of the project, allowing for a continuous process of information and knowledge gathering. Blank cards offer an opportunity for people using the card deck to explain what each theme means to them and add case studies that they already know about or that they have experienced.

USING THE POSTCARDS

The design of the postcards allows users to connect, overlay, and juxtapose postcards as needed, and according to the scope of their own project. The postcards can also be used to support the planning, delivery, review, and evaluation of projects.

When using the cards, it is important to bear in mind the gender spectrum lying at the basis of definition of gender and gender norms, the importance of personal histories, and categories of identity and privilege, etc.



KEY THEMES

THEMES

QUESTIONING THE STATUS QUO

- LIVING AN ACTIVE LIFE
- LIVING A SAFER LIFE
- LIVING WHERE I BELONG

⋮ **THEME I**

LIVING AN ACTIVE LIFE

1. Affordability of being active
2. Infrastructure for being active
3. Fitting in: the triple burden
4. Harassment, gender based violence, and being active
5. Women's bodies, femininity, and being active
6. Boys' sports/ Girls' sports

● LIVING AN ACTIVE LIFE

AFFORDABILITY OF BEING ACTIVE

EXPLANATION

Women often have less access to financial capital than men, and yet often need to spend more money to access appropriate infrastructure for active lives.

TELL ME MORE...

- Being active often relies on access to basic equipment (e.g. a bicycle and associated safety gear) and infrastructure services (e.g. toilets, water, rest spaces).
- Where this equipment and infrastructure is not freely available, being active depends on one's ability to afford to buy such services. This might include, for example, buying a coffee so one might use the toilet and rest. This is especially relevant when caring for a child or elderly person is a central part of ones daily activity, during menstruation, or if managing a disability.
- Women generally have less access to financial resource than men because of lower paid jobs and higher likelihood of working in low or unpaid care roles. This means that women are less likely to be able to pay for access to physical activity.
- Women are more likely to rely on walking or public transport, in part because it is cheaper, yet they are less likely than men to have their needs met by transport infrastructure. This paradox means that women end up paying more, despite having less money. For example, a lack of public spaces that feel safe to walk through at night means that many women face the choice between not going out after dark, or paying a high proportion of their income for a safer journey (e.g. a taxi).
- Inequities in access to financial resources means less access to specialised equipment such as non-standard cycles or appropriate storage facilities. Specialised equipment such as cargo bikes, trailer bikes, tag-a-long bikes, tandems, tricycles, etc. are often unaffordable. This directly impacts the ability of women to move freely in public space when facing a disability or caring for children. **2**

“Department stores and malls provide toilets and other women-friendly amenities, but these are more accessible to wealthier socioeconomic groups.”

Yasminah Beebeejaun 1



● LIVING AN ACTIVE LIFE

INFRASTRUCTURE FOR BEING ACTIVE

EXPLANATION

Women's movement and active lives rely on suitable infrastructure that reflects their needs and realities. This includes a particular need for access to segregated cycle lanes, toilets, and spaces to rest.

TELL ME MORE...

- Although segregated cycle lanes improve access to cycling for all, they are particularly important for women and girls.
- This is in part because women and girls are socialised to be more fearful for their safety in public space than men and boys, and in part because men are socialised to be more confident and aggressive in relation to perceived safety threats. Therefore, males tend to be less reliant on the existence of cycle infrastructure in order for them to get on their bikes.
- On top of this, women are more likely than men to be injured, harassed, or subjected to frightening events while taking active modes: “On average, women reported about 0.42 “near miss” or harassment incidents per mile, compared with 0.24 per mile for men. **3**
- Other important infrastructures for activity include the provision of green spaces, toilets, and rest spaces, as well as ensuring streets are clear of obstacles such as slippery leaves, snow, and other street clutter such as shared bikes. A study of pedestrian injuries in the Swedish city of Umeå found that 79 percent occurred during the winter months, and that women made up 69 percent of those who had been injured in single-person incidents. **4**
- Active transport infrastructure is not always suitable for the journeys that women are more likely than men to make, which include travel with children or heavy bags, multi-stop, and local journeys.

**“Protected cycle lanes
are necessary but not
sufficient to get more
diverse people cycling.
We also need to tackle
the patriarchal ‘might is
right’ culture of our
roads and society.”**

Tiffany Lam



● LIVING AN ACTIVE LIFE

FITTING IT IN: THE TRIPLE BURDEN

EXPLANATION

The uneven distribution of caring responsibilities and household tasks between men and women often mean women have less time for physical activity, and that the physical activity that is available is not appropriate for their needs and realities.

TELL ME MORE...

- The ‘triple burden’ is the idea that women are expected to fulfil traditional roles related to family life, as well as taking on community leadership roles (through volunteering and other community activities) while also working in the paid labour force. These three roles often leave women little time or resources to prioritise their own wellbeing and health needs.
- Unaffordable childcare facilities and services restrict women’s lives to their caring role. In England, childcare for under-twos costs the equivalent of 65 percent of the median salary. **6**
- Women are even more likely to be confined to domestic space if their residential context lacks good public spaces, green spaces, and accessible public infrastructure. **7**

**“Women’s leisure
tends to be reactive to
the needs of their
families as they take
on the burden of
responsibility for
housework and care
for children and
elderly relatives.”**

Women’s Sport and Fitness
Foundation 5





LIVING AN ACTIVE LIFE

HARASSMENT, GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND BEING ACTIVE

EXPLANATION

Instances of sexual harassment in public spaces are particularly common when women are active in public space.

TELL ME MORE...

- When women, girls, and gender diverse people are active in public space, they are more likely to experience gender-based harassment and violence.
- A 2020 survey of 2,000 women in the UK found that 25% of runners experienced harassment on a regular basis. Of these runners, 74% reported being subject to unwanted sexual attention or sexist comments, 39% reported someone repeatedly trying to talk to them, 33% reported body shaming, 27% reported being followed, 22% reported a comment about sexual or gender identity, 12% reported unwanted physical contact, 11% reported being flashed at, and 2% reported comments about race or ethnicity. **9**
- These experiences are directly related to the normalisation of sexual harassment, and the ways it is left unaddressed, played down, and laughed off. **11** The result is that women, girls, and gender diverse people's pleasure in movement and physical activity is too often subject to a sexualised and dehumanising gaze that ultimately limits their freedom.
- When cycling, women and gender diverse people often experience more close passes and verbal abuse from drivers and other cyclists.
- Black women, women of colour, disabled women, trans women, and women from other marginalised groups often experience more and different types of harassment than cisgendered, straight, white, able-bodied women. For example, when a racialised woman rejects unwanted sexual advances, she/they may subsequently be subject to racist abuse. **10**

**“Women learn to adapt
their behaviour and
movements, habitually
limiting their own
freedom in order to
prevent, avoid, ignore,
and ultimately dismiss
what they experience
as ordinary.”**

Fiona Vera-Gary and Liz Kelly 8



● **LIVING AN ACTIVE LIFE**

WOMEN'S BODIES, FEMININITY AND BEING ACTIVE

EXPLANATION

The 'double bind' of socially constructed female beauty standards and notions of exercise being masculine (and therefore undesirable for women) hinders women's access to active lives.

TELL ME MORE...

- There are gendered social norms and expectations about what a female body should look like. This includes female beauty standards, as well as the idea that exercise itself is masculine and therefore undesirable for women.
- The combination of female beauty standards and the idea that exercise is masculine means that women face extra barriers in accessing active lives. For example, the socially-induced shame and stigma associated with women having body hair, having a larger body size or a fat body, or even simply sweating and being red-faced whilst exercising, hinders women's access to active lives.
- Even where some women are catered for, exercise-related clothing and equipment is designed for a narrow user group, excluding particular body types, shapes, and other needs. For example, there is a lack of bike helmets suitable for afro hair, and minimal access to exercise-appropriate religious head coverings. This means that the experiences, needs, and realities of people of colour, disabled people, and members of particular faith groups are ignored and their free access to active lives is reduced.

“You can be happy now, if you want. Your body is amazing, right now. For years I exercised to change and shrink my body and that both ruined exercise and made me miserable. And made it unsustainable. When I changed my motivation to 'finding joy' and 'feeling present in my body' - the whole world of movement totally changed before me. An epiphany of sorts. Highly recommend.”

Jessica Fostekew 11



● LIVING AN ACTIVE LIFE

BOYS' SPORTS/ GIRLS' SPORTS

EXPLANATION

Participation in certain physical activities or sports is considered to be for either 'girls' or 'boys.' This can present barriers to entry for women and girls to participate in these activities.

TELL ME MORE...

- Public spaces for movement, exercise, and sport such as skate parks, football pitches, street dance gathering points etc. are male-dominated realms and are often perceived as 'sports for boys'. Sports that are considered for females (such as netball) tend to rely on formal programmes and have less of a social and informal culture around them.
- This perception not only sends the message to girls that there are types of physical activity that are not 'for them', it makes their presence conspicuous. Simply by presenting as female in these spaces makes them stand out and face a different level of scrutiny than males.
- Women and girls who do participate in these sports are seen by some to represent 'all women', and have the added burden of proving that not only are they good enough to be there, but that all girls everywhere are. This burden is not felt by boys and can be a huge barrier to entry.
- The Make Space for Girls campaign explores the social and spatial needs and realities of girls. **13** Their research has uncovered a lack of data relating to gender desegregated usage patterns of public sports facilities. In relation to skate parks, they found only two studies globally, one which noted that 90% of skate park users in Nottingham, UK are male and that 95% are male in Australian cities. **13**
- Women, girls, and gender diverse people, especially those from marginalised groups, have been under-represented in the sports sector. Lack of representation and media coverage in community participation, elite athletics, coaching, and leadership can give women the sense that they do not belong in the world of sport, and by extension physical activity in public space. For example, only 5% of sports coverage in national and local papers is dedicated to women's sport. **14**

**“Sport is a domain
where inequalities
between men and
women are still
ubiquitous and often
legitimised... This often
leads to a restriction of
sport practice
possibilities in relation
to an individual’s
gender.”**

Mélissa Plaza, Julie Boiché, Lionel Brunel,
François Ruchaud 12

∴ I AM ACTIVE WHEN...

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⋮ **THEME II**

LIVING A SAFER LIFE

1. Activity can be healing and empowering
2. Public space design
3. Safety behaviours in public space
4. Harassment and gender-based violence in public space
5. The stories we tell: positioning women as powerless or powerful?
6. The problem with policing
7. Safety means different things to different people

● LIVING A SAFER LIFE

ACTIVITY CAN BE HEALING AND EMPOWERING

EXPLANATION

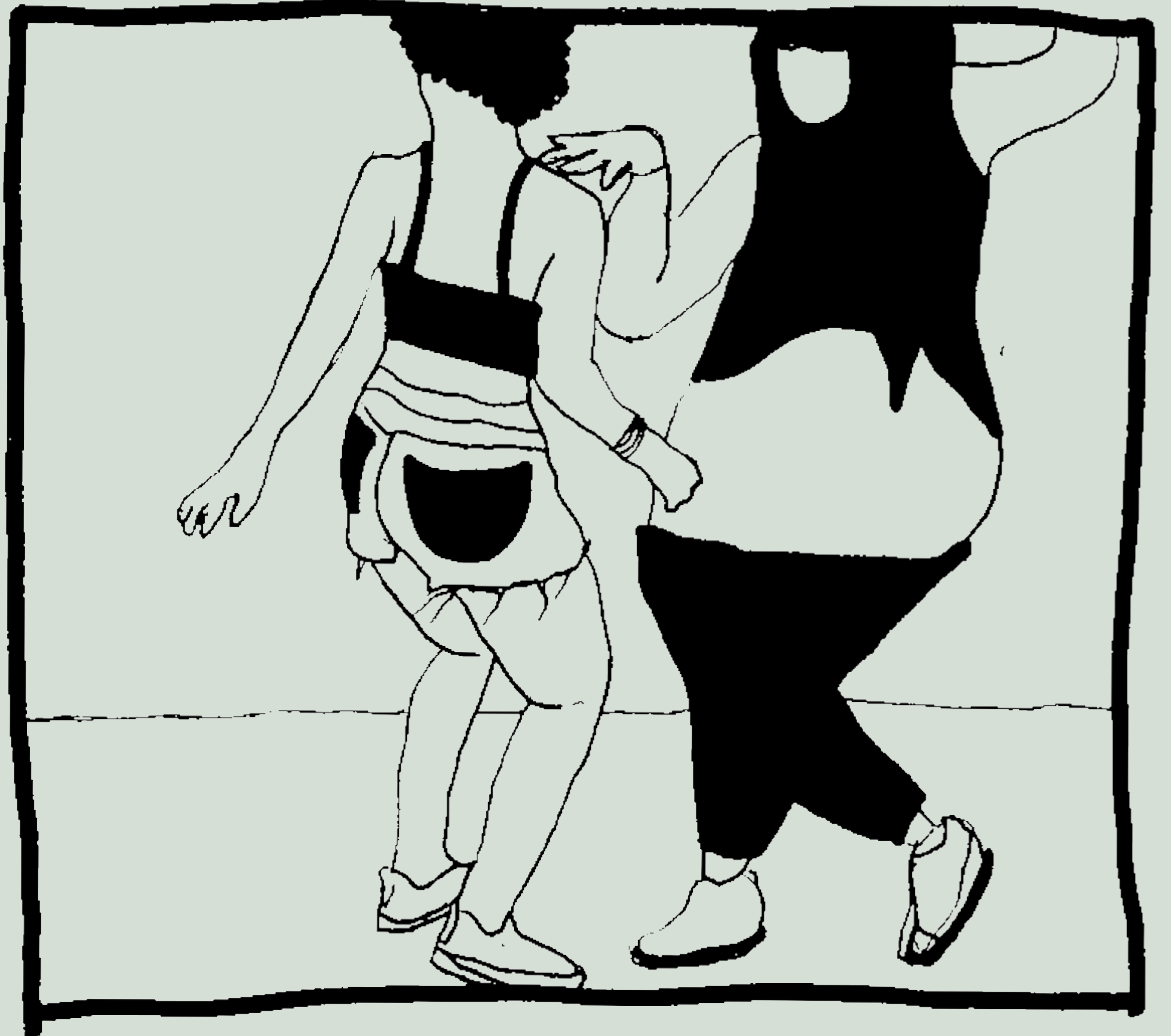
Many women who have experienced gender-based violence and harassment find that physical activity helps them to recover and feel safe in public space again. This is especially true when participating in communal activities.

TELL ME MORE...

- Many women have experienced traumatic gender-based violence. This trauma has physiological impacts (e.g. anxiety) and can also induce dissociative states (meaning a felt sense of 'leaving' one's body) that last well beyond the time where the threat or traumatic event has passed.
- Feelings of dissociation can increase vulnerability in public space as there is a lower level of engagement with the surrounding environment, and so a slower response time to potential threats (e.g. crossing the road safely). On top of this, simply being in public spaces can feel overwhelming after trauma and can make public spaces feel more intimidating. This can mean that trauma survivors spend more time indoors.
- There is a wealth of literature that explores how re-connecting with the physical sensations of the body through movement can reduce levels of trauma-related dissociation and support psychological healing. This can range from simple body movement such as walking, running, and dancing as well as more specialised forms of movement such as yoga or Trauma Releasing Exercises (TRE). **16**
- On top of this, feminist self-defence is an approach to movement in public space that supports women in trusting their bodily instincts and learning how to feel powerful in their bodies. **17**

**“Reclaiming your body is
central to overcoming
trauma”**

Bessell van der Kolk 15



● LIVING A SAFER LIFE

PUBLIC SPACE DESIGN

EXPLANATION

From lighting to planting, the design, maintenance, and quality of public spaces send signals to individuals about how safe they may or may not be in certain areas.

TELL ME MORE...

- Although violence against women and girls (VAWG) cannot be solved by improving public space design, there are ways in which some public spaces create ‘conductive contexts’ that enable male violence against women to be committed more easily, and to go unnoticed. **19**
- Conversely, some public space designs send the signal to women and girls that the space has been considered with their safety needs in mind.
- There are no quick fixes when it comes to creating safer public spaces for women and girls. However, basic gender inclusive accessibility principles and features include:
 - Clear and long sight lines (building on ‘see and be seen’ principles),
 - Avoiding blind corners and making escape routes and exit routes clear
 - High levels of maintenance that signal a place is cared for
 - Active frontages: shops, cafés, etc. and active spaces (bystanders)
 - Spaces for rest and respite
 - Play spaces and playable features
 - Adequate lighting infrastructure
 - Active transport infrastructure: step-free access, segregated cycle lanes, ramps, dropped kerbs
 - Public art that celebrates diverse identities and signals the presence of community and local cultural vibrancy
- There is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ design for a feeling of safety from violence. Therefore, engagement, participation, and co-design play a crucial role in the development of design solutions that are place-specific and community-specific.

**“Our cities are patriarchy
written in stone, brick, glass
and concrete”**

Jane Darke 18



● LIVING A SAFER LIFE

SAFETY BEHAVIOURS

EXPLANATION

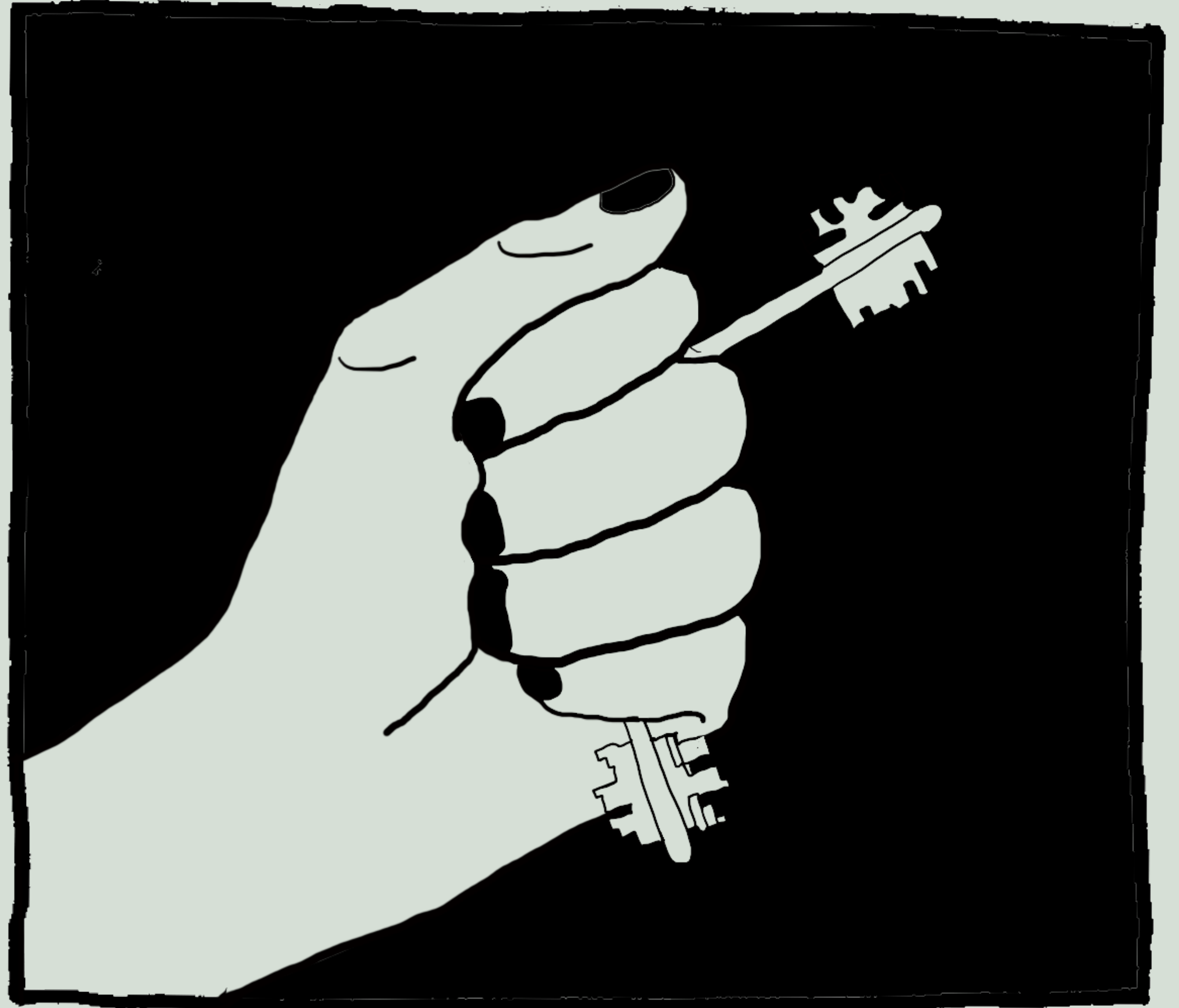
*“From changing routes home to choosing seats on public transport, physically reducing themselves in public to using headphones and sunglasses as a way of feeling invisible, women and girls globally are routinely making strategic decisions to avoid sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence.” **Vera-Gray and Kelly 21***

TELL ME MORE...

- Fear of violence and harassment influence the way in which women and girls use public space. This affects how, where, and when women choose to travel, often limiting their movement and ability to access parts of the city or meaning they spend more money (e.g. via taxis) or take longer journeys (in order to avoid areas that are perceived to be more dangerous).
- ‘Safety work’ can include taking longer walking routes after dark, keeping in contact with friends and family when out alone, or gripping keys between knuckles when out at night. When women are taught how to do this work, it sends the message that it is their personal responsibility to protect themselves from violence. This messaging ultimately puts limits on the freedom of women to move through public spaces.
- Girls are socialised from a young age to be fearful in public spaces and so they do not have to have been directly affected by gender-based violence to understand that by presenting as female in public space, they are vulnerable to male aggression. In fact it is the fear of violence, not crime statistics themselves, that block women’s free participation in public life. This fear is rooted in personal histories and experiences of violence, how it is fetishised in mainstream media, and how women, girls, and gender minorities are socialised from a young age.

**“Have you ever thought
about how much energy
goes into avoiding sexual
violence?”**

Fiona Vera-Gray 20





LIVING A SAFER LIFE

HARASSMENT AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN PUBLIC SPACE

EXPLANATION

Gender-based violence takes many forms in the public realm. These include physical intimidation, stalking, flashing, staring, groping, up-skirting, intimidation, close passes, or more extreme forms of sexual violence such as rape and abduction.

TELL ME MORE...

- Gender-based violence and harassment is common in public spaces and varies from daily micro-aggressions such as staring and catcalling, to groping, flashing, stalking, and more extreme forms of violence such as rape and abduction.
- Women and girls are socialised from a young age to be fearful in public space. As a result, they expect to experience some form of harassment, male aggression or insecurity when moving through public spaces or using public transport.
- This often goes unreported in part because of the normalisation of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and due to scepticism around the impact and efficacy of reporting.
- Some 71 per cent of women in the UK have experienced some form of sexual harassment in a public space, with this number rising sharply to 86 per cent among women aged 18–24. **23**
- Women of colour, disabled women, and LGBTQIA+ people are often exposed to greater threats of violence and harassment due to racial, ableist, and homophobic discrimination. For these groups, experiences of sexism intersect with and are compounded by other forms of structural discrimination. For example, across Europe, 50% of LGBTQ individuals surveyed reported avoiding public spaces because of fear of harassment. **24**
- For example, transgender people are subjected to different types of harassment than cisgender people. This includes transphobic hate crimes and invasive questions about their gender identity. **25** At the same time, there are few specialised support services for gender diverse people. **26**

“Every woman has stories of the time she got off the subway or bus at a distant stop because she worried she was being followed, or took a long and winding route home to ensure she was actually alone. We avoid short cuts through laneways and parks. We vary our travel routes and carry our keys in our fists. We pretend to be on the phone. We avoid certain places completely.”

Leslie Kern 22





LIVING A SAFER LIFE

THE STORIES WE TELL: POSITIONING WOMEN AS POWERLESS OR POWERFUL?

EXPLANATION

Perceiving women as powerless victims fosters a dynamic whereby they must be 'saved' by militarised police forces. This reinforces women's position as powerless as it not only places their safety outside of their own control, but in the hands of men.

TELL ME MORE...

- Approaches to women's safety often focus on minimising danger. This leads to safety solutions that reinforce women's position as powerless (e.g. the creation of women-only train carriages away from males who are considered 'mainstream,' or over-policing and surveillance that reinforce the idea that women are only safe if they are protected by male/masculine/patriarchal police forces), rather than seeking to dismantle social and physical structures that get in the way of women's full and equal participation in urban life.
- On top of this, a sole focus on urban insecurity fails to acknowledge the great liberating potential of cities for women, girls, and gender diverse people. Many people flock to cities for employment opportunities, to access a diversity of rich cultural experiences, and to build community and friendships with people who sit outside family networks.
- Additionally, due to structural racism and patriarchy, black women, women of colour, and transgender women are often perceived of as threats to white cisgender women. As a result, not only are racialised and transgender people underserved by notions of the 'helpless woman', they are often actively victimised by it.

**“All women and girls
have the right to
participate and be part
of the decision-making
process in local
governance and urban
planning.”**

Carolyn Whitzman et al. 27

● LIVING A SAFER LIFE

THE PROBLEM WITH POLICING

EXPLANATION

Police and crime-led approaches to women's safety aren't working. This is, in part, because much harassment in public space isn't illegal because of the normalisation of violence against women and girls in public spaces, distrust of the police, and a variety of other structural issues in relation to misogyny, racism, homophobia, and other forms of marginalisation.

TELL ME MORE...

- Much violence against women and girls (VAWG) in public spaces isn't illegal. It is not illegal to shout at a woman in the street or to follow her home, and there is no specific law that protects women from street harassment in and of itself. It was only in 2019 that up-skirting (taking pictures up women's skirts without their consent) became illegal after a sustained and hard-fought campaign. This means that there is often minimal police power in responding to VAWG in public space.
- Where VAWG is a crime, it often goes unreported in part due to the normalisation of these behaviours, as well as the embarrassment or shame that often accompanies it. Some 76% of girls who have experienced harassment in their lifetime have never reported it to the police and 42% have never told anyone about it at all. **29**
- When VAWG is reported, policing services are often ineffective in prosecuting. In the UK, only 1.6% of reported rapes end in prosecution or summons and rape convictions have declined by 64% since 2016/17. **30**
- Deep mistrust of police forces and public perceptions that they are characterised by cultures of misogyny, compounded by low prosecution rates, further contribute to under-reporting.
- BAME and other minoritised groups are more likely to feel threatened by the police and less likely to be believed. The London Sexual Violence Needs Assessment found that a criminal case is more likely to be 'nocrimed'—meaning no further action will be taken—if the accuser is BAME, has mental health problems, or has learning disabilities.
- Much public spending on making cities safer for women is funnelled into policing systems that we know aren't working, for the reasons described above. The hope that policing works for women is understandable; we want to believe that the systems put in place to protect us are working as they should do. However, paradoxically, this keeps us stuck, because the more we invest in solutions that don't actually meet our needs, the more helpless we feel in the face of them.

“Much violence against women and girls in public space is not illegal. It is not always illegal to shout at someone in the street or follow them home, and there is no specific law that protects people from street harassment in and of itself.”

Dr Ellie Cosgrave 28





LIVING A SAFER LIFE

SAFETY MEANS DIFFERENT THINGS TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE

EXPLANATION

A feeling of safety is a subjective experience and there are no universal design solutions that meet everybody's safety needs.

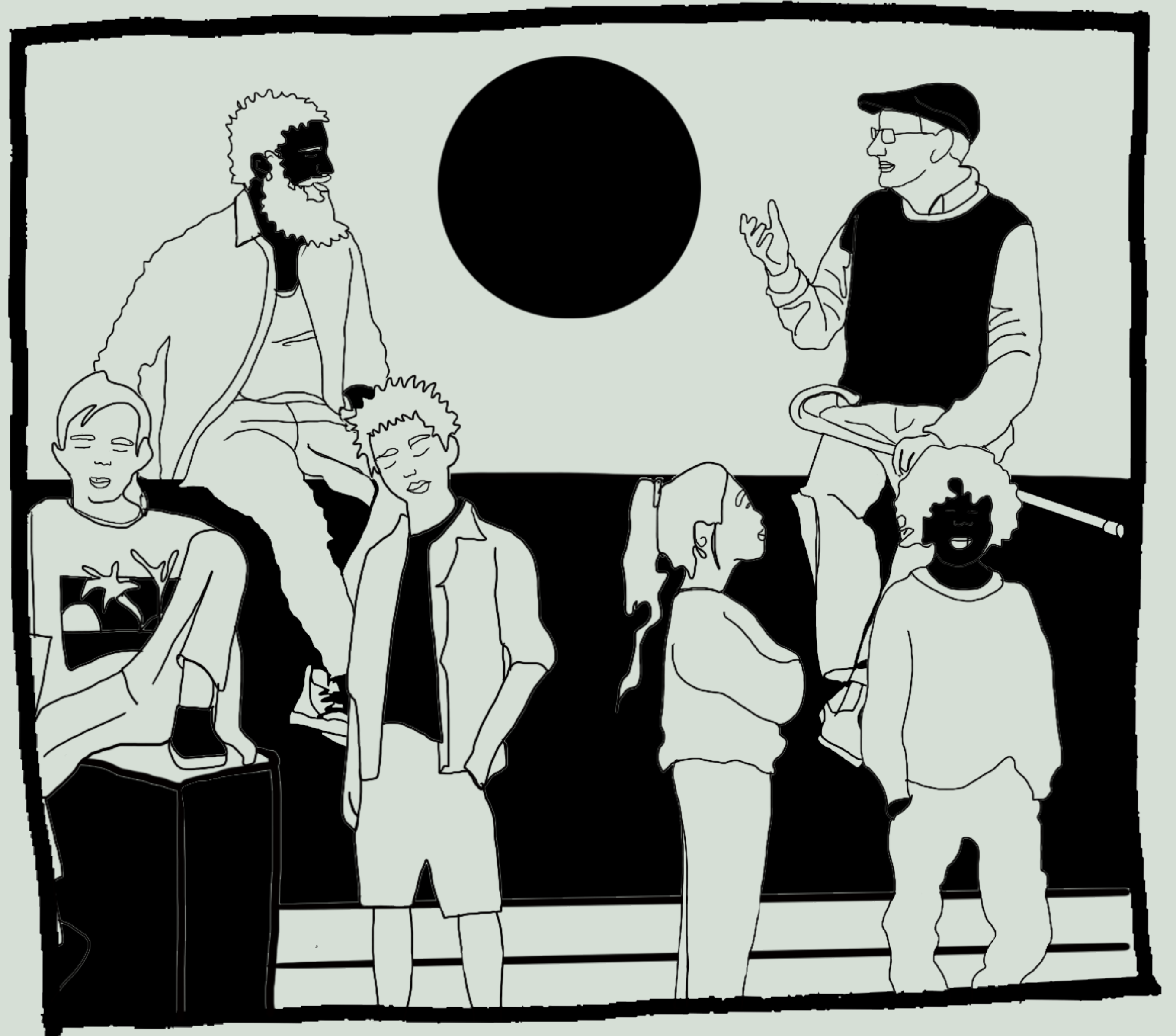
Crime prevention through design (i.e. bright lighting, removal of benches, etc.) is imposed on communities and often removes already marginalised people from public spaces, while ignoring women's lived experience, needs, and realities.

TELL ME MORE...

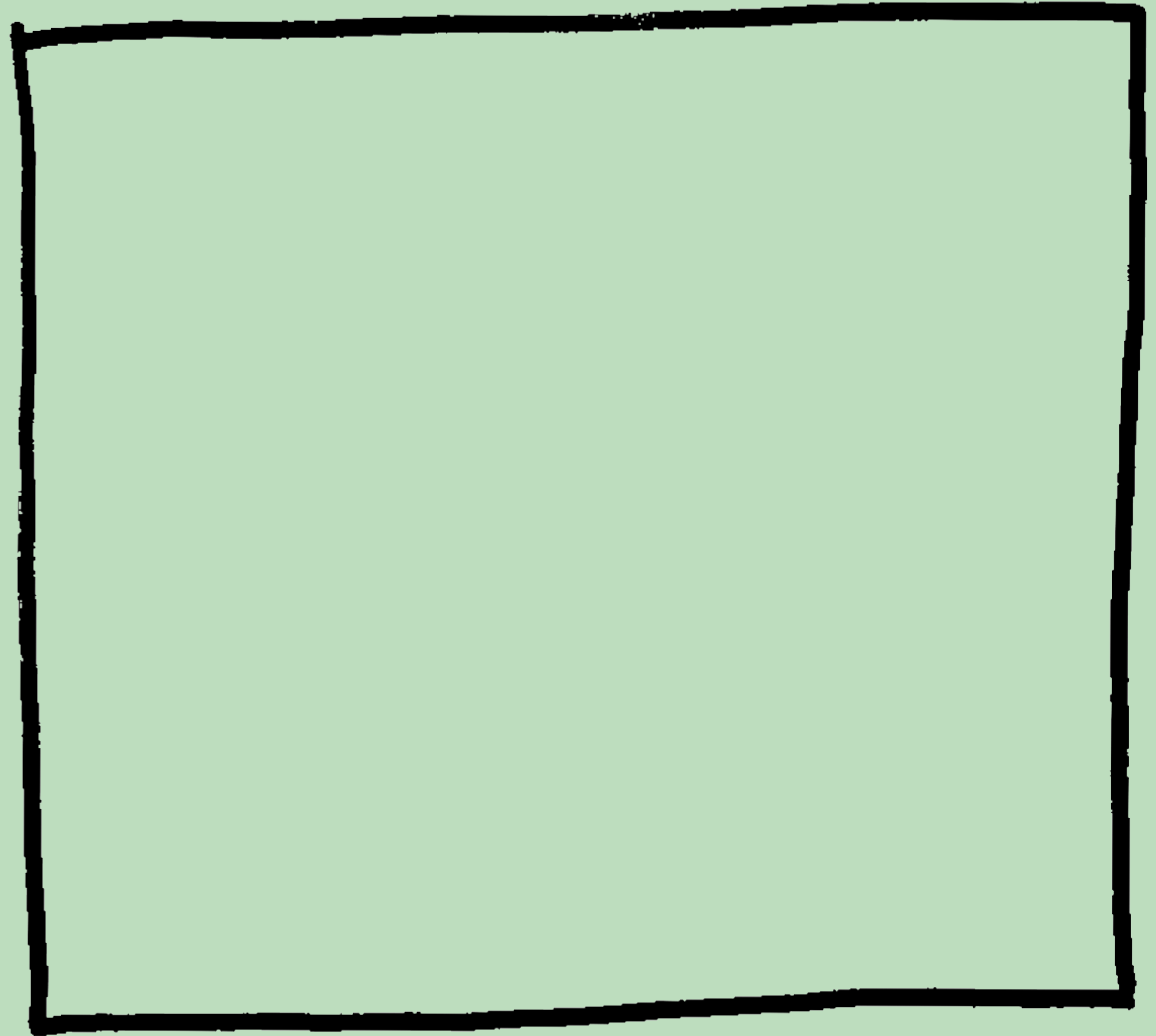
- Safety is a subjective experience that means different things to different people, and is experienced in different ways relating to individuals' personal histories, experiences, and identities.
- This means that often people's safety needs are in conflict with one another. For example, while one group may feel safer in crowded spaces where they may be less visible, others are intimidated by lots of noise and bustle. As such, there is no universal understanding of 'safe spaces' and no single design solution can be comprehensive.
- Crime-led design solutions used to minimise the possibility for criminal activity include interventions such as CCTV or the removal of benches where young or otherwise marginalised people might gather. This is often applied bluntly with limited understanding of the spatial, temporal, and social dynamics of the local area. **32**
- Criticism of these approaches are that they tend to focus on simply removing the most marginalised (eg racialised, homeless, young, etc.) from public spaces to make them feel safer for other people. **33**
- When we create visions for 'safe' places there will always be underlying value systems at play about for whom and from whom the city should be made safe. These need to be critically thought through and challenged.
- This approach tends to reduce the usability and quality of spaces for all, leading to under-use and in turn, higher likelihood of crime.

**“There is no neat match
between what crime
statistics might say about
the safety of an area and
how people actually feel
fear and safety in that
area.”**

Dr Clare Edwards 31



∴ I AM SAFER WHEN...



⋮ **THEME III**

LIVING WHERE I BELONG

1. Belonging is different from fitting in
2. Belonging relates to functionality
3. Representation through public art
4. A representative sector
5. Participation and co-design as belonging-in-action
6. Public space as a location of resistance

● LIVING WHERE I BELONG

BELONGING IS DIFFERENT FROM FITTING IN

EXPLANATION

Belonging in public space is the feeling that one's identity is welcomed and celebrated by the culture, and need not be hidden away or muted in order to be acceptable and accepted.

TELL ME MORE...

- Belonging is a core diversity and inclusion principle and is different from the idea of fitting in. Instead, it is the idea that one's identity is welcomed and celebrated by the culture, and need not be hidden away or muted in order to be acceptable and accepted.
- From a public place perspective, a sense of belonging relates to the ways in which one sees one's identity reflected in others, the ways in which one feels connected to the 'social life' of the x (e.g. knowing and chatting with the newsagent or neighbours) **35**, or the ways in which one is aware of and able to participate in local events.
- When people they feel like they belong, they are more likely to be invested in caretaking and maintaining the place, to protect and preserve local cultural assets, and to participate in re-shaping the spaces when opportunities arise. A sense of belonging is therefore key to the idea of the Right to the City, which is the right to change yourself by changing the city. **36**
- Therefore, a sense of belonging can be the difference between a community or neighbourhood that simply 'gets by' and one that thrives, is self-sustaining and resilient.

**“Walking, I will establish my
presence, as one who is
claiming the earth, creating
a sense of belonging, a
culture of place.”**

bell hooks 34



● **LIVING WHERE I BELONG**

BELONGING RELATES TO HAVING NEEDS MET BY THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

EXPLANATION

When women do not have their basic infrastructure needs met, it sends the message that they do not belong, that they don't matter, and that they are not wanted in public space.

TELL ME MORE...

- Many public spaces lack the necessary infrastructure to address women and gender diverse people's daily needs. For example, there is an under-provision of affordable care facilities, food outlets, accessible toilets, places to stop and rest or to play, step-free access, and transport that explicitly address the practical and social needs of women, girls, and gender diverse people.
- This under-provision sends the consistent message that this space is not 'for' women, girls, and gender diverse people and blocks their access to public spaces.
- Conversely, when people's basic needs are met, they are more likely to assume that the space is 'for them' and to spend more time in public space. In turn, their presence in public space signals to others that they also belong.

“Every aspect of public transit reminded me I wasn’t the ideal imagined user. Stairs, revolving doors, turnstiles, no space for strollers, broken elevators and escalators, rude comments, glares: all of these told me that the city wasn’t designed with parents and children in mind”

Leslie Kern 37



● LIVING WHERE I BELONG

REPRESENTATION THROUGH PUBLIC ART

EXPLANATION

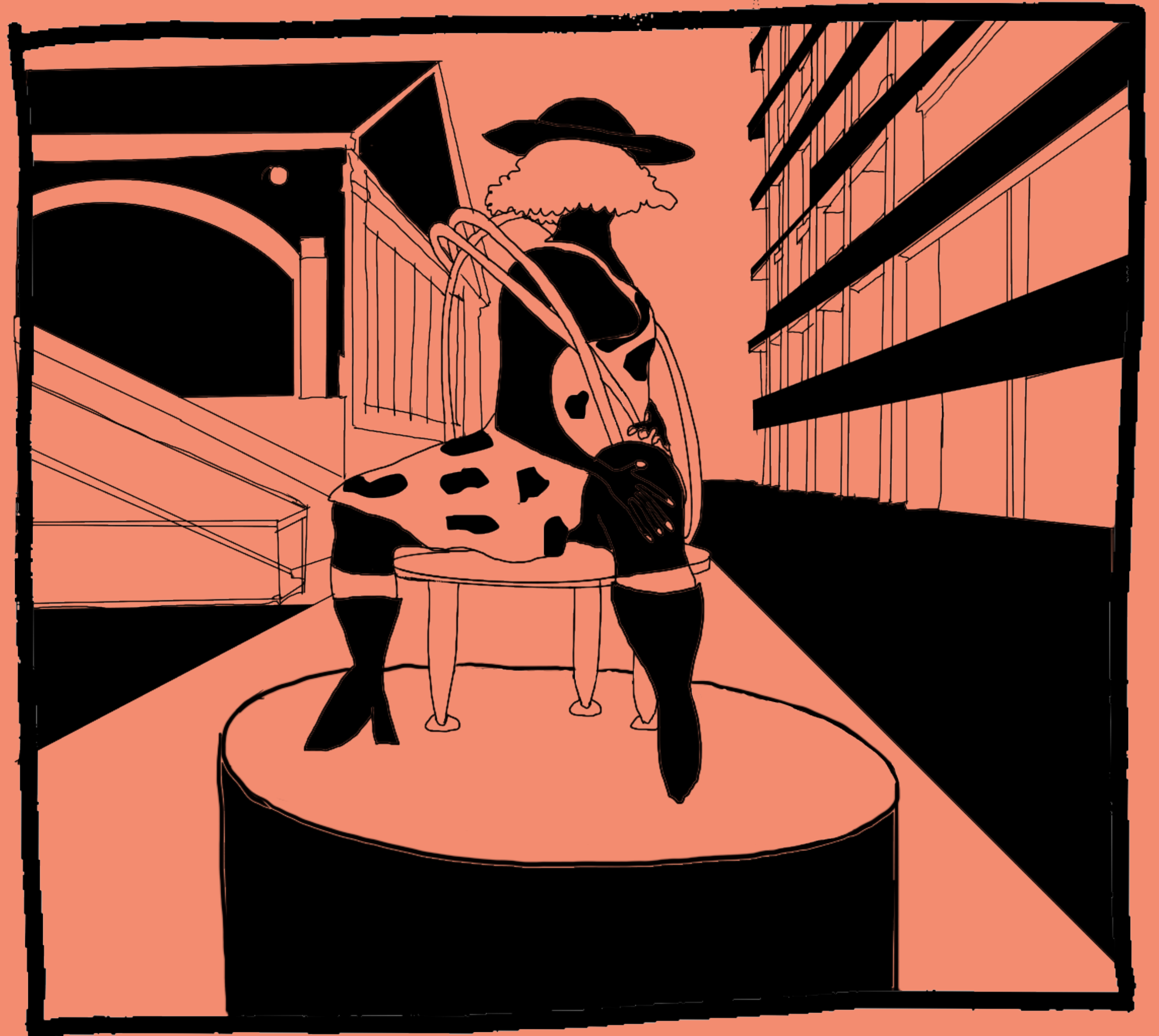
Who we celebrate and memorialise in public spaces has an impact on the extent to which people feel welcome and a sense of belonging or ownership in public spaces.

TELL ME MORE...

- The opposite of belonging is a sense of being excluded. Exclusion in public space is heightened by a lack of visibility of communities that have historically been marginalised in the public realm. This refers to both who is present in streets and whose work, identities, and contributions are celebrated in public art and advertising in public space.
- Celebrating women, care work, and feminised roles in public spaces is key to fostering a sense of empowerment and belonging. This can be achieved by celebrating marginalised identities and telling the stories and histories of women's contributions to urban life through public art installations, place names, advertising campaigns and community events.
- In Manchester, 2017 saw the unveiling of only the second statue of a woman - Emmeline Pankhurst - in the city. **39** There are currently no women of colour, disabled women, or LGBTQ+ women represented in Manchester statues.
- On top of this, public space adverts that play on the sexual objectification of women and girls reinforce notions of women as inferior to men.

“This figure represents all individuals, but women in particular, who understand the power and importance of simple gestures that assert their right to take up space”

Tschabalala Self 38



● LIVING WHERE I BELONG

A REPRESENTATIVE SECTOR

EXPLANATION

Professions that produce public space are male-dominated. This leads to the exclusion and minimisation of women, girls, and gender diverse people's lived experiences, needs, and realities in the commissioning, design, constructions, and maintenance processes.

TELL ME MORE...

- Women and gender diverse people are underrepresented in industries that commission, design, and produce urban infrastructure. This is particularly true in decision making roles in this sector, where women occupy just 10 percent of the highest ranking jobs at the world's leading architecture firms. **41**
- A study from the Royal Town Planning Institute found that this under-representation leads to a 'boys club' mentality in the sector, with 80% of respondents feeling that their workplaces reflected "masculine norms and behaviour". Almost 60% of female respondents said they sometimes felt they were not taken seriously by male colleagues. **42**
- This means that the city is missing out on women's knowledge and expertise. In her book Invisible Women, Caroline Criado Perez writes, 'When we exclude half of humanity from the production of knowledge we lose out on potentially transformative insights'. **43**
- This under-representation affects not only the way we design, but who we imagine we are designing for. **44** When women are not in the room to think through how space will serve them, their experiences and needs get ignored.
- The dominance of men in the urban planning, infrastructure, and transit fields contributes to the gendered production of infrastructure.
- On top of that, the masculine notion that planning is 'objective' and 'technical' rather than relational and creative further limits the field's engagement with gender, race, and other critical social factors affecting mobility. **45**

**“The lack of diversity
affects not only the way
we design and plan, but
also who we design and
plan for”**

Bicquelet-Lock et al., 2020 40



● LIVING WHERE I BELONG

PARTICIPATION AND CO-DESIGN AS BELONGING-IN-ACTION

EXPLANATION

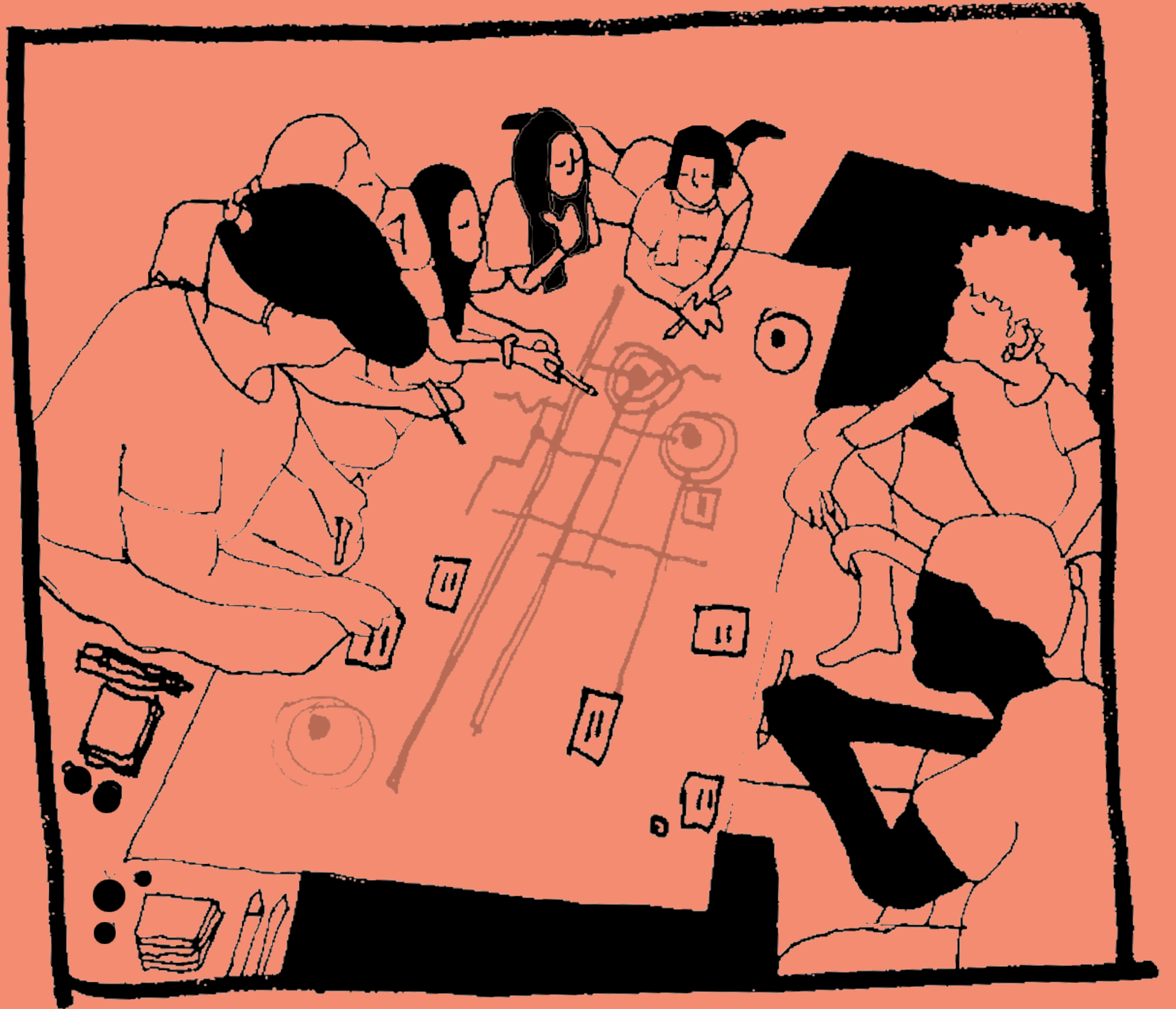
When local residents and communities are actively involved in the design and production of their own public spaces, they are more likely to feel a sense of belonging in their area and actively contribute to its ongoing vibrancy.

TELL ME MORE...

- In the context of urban development, participation is not only about including the lived experiences, needs, and desires of residents heard in the design process. True participation recognises that residents and community members are the true experts in how their neighbourhood functions, what works well, and what is missing.
- Participation that is well-executed therefore creates the felt sense in the community (and the individuals within it) that they matter, that their experiences matter, and that they are taken seriously.
- Participatory research carried out by Publica on night time city policies found that simply by participating in the development of the strategy, participants felt a greater sense of belonging and safety at night. One participant reported that “during the night time, I used to feel very anxious and scared because you never know what can happen. I feel much safer at night now because I feel more connected with my community.” **47**
- Co-design is a design methodology that uses creative and participatory approaches with the aim of sharing knowledge and power in the design process. It can take many forms and often makes use of accessible artistic methods such as drawing and model building. **48**
- The sense of belonging derived from being able to participate in the production of space not only fosters a sense of ease, joy, and a right to be in the city, but also increases the likelihood of community members being active participants in shaping and reshaping public space in future.

“The right to the city for women and girls is actively linked to the voice and active participation of women and girls in building safer and more inclusive cities”

Carolyn Whitzman et al. 46



● LIVING WHERE I BELONG

PUBLIC SPACE AS THE LOCATION OF RESISTANCE

EXPLANATION

While public space is often the site of violence, it is also the space of resistance and collective power. It is where people gather for protest, for vigil, and to organise collective action.

TELL ME MORE...

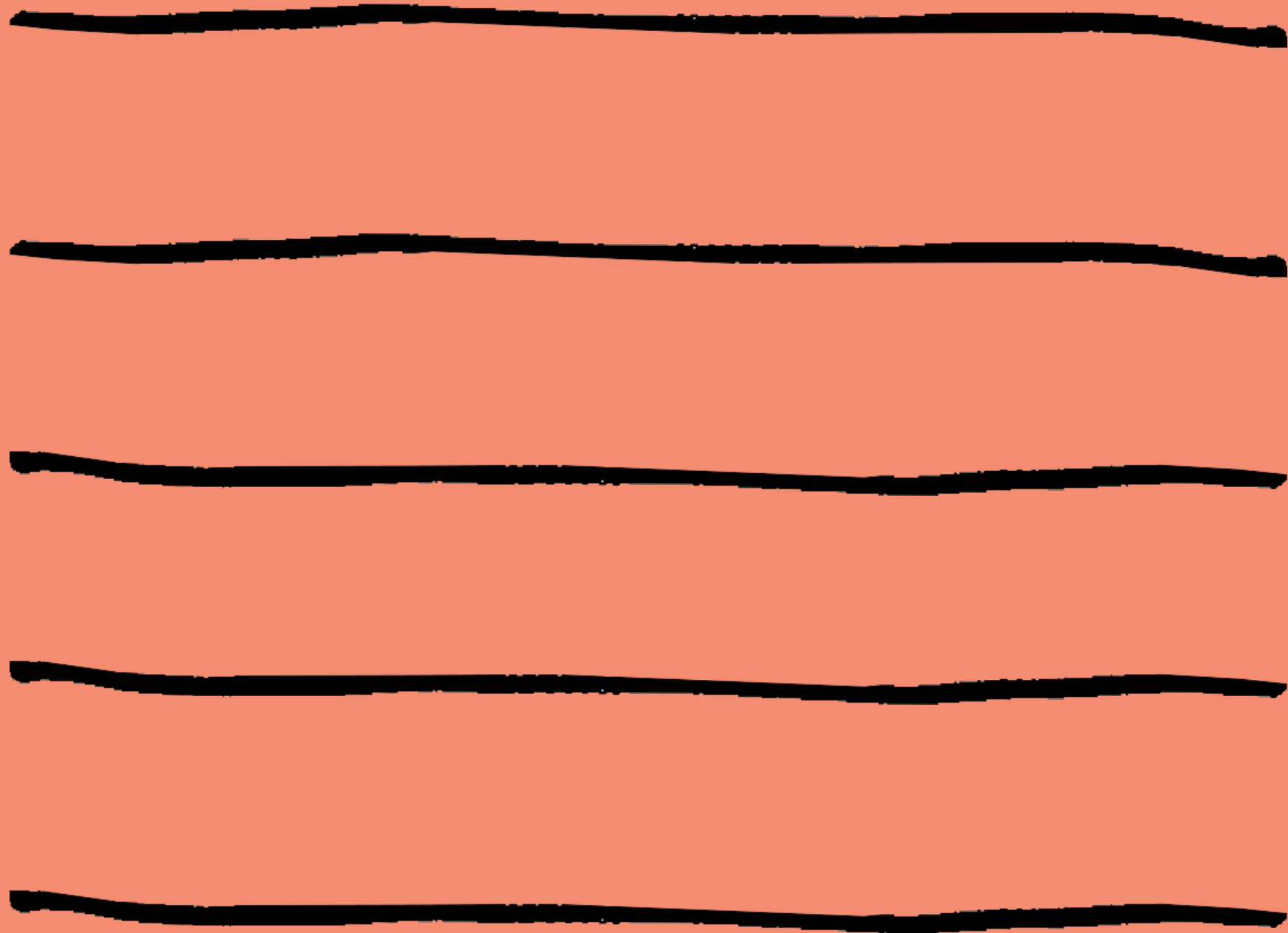
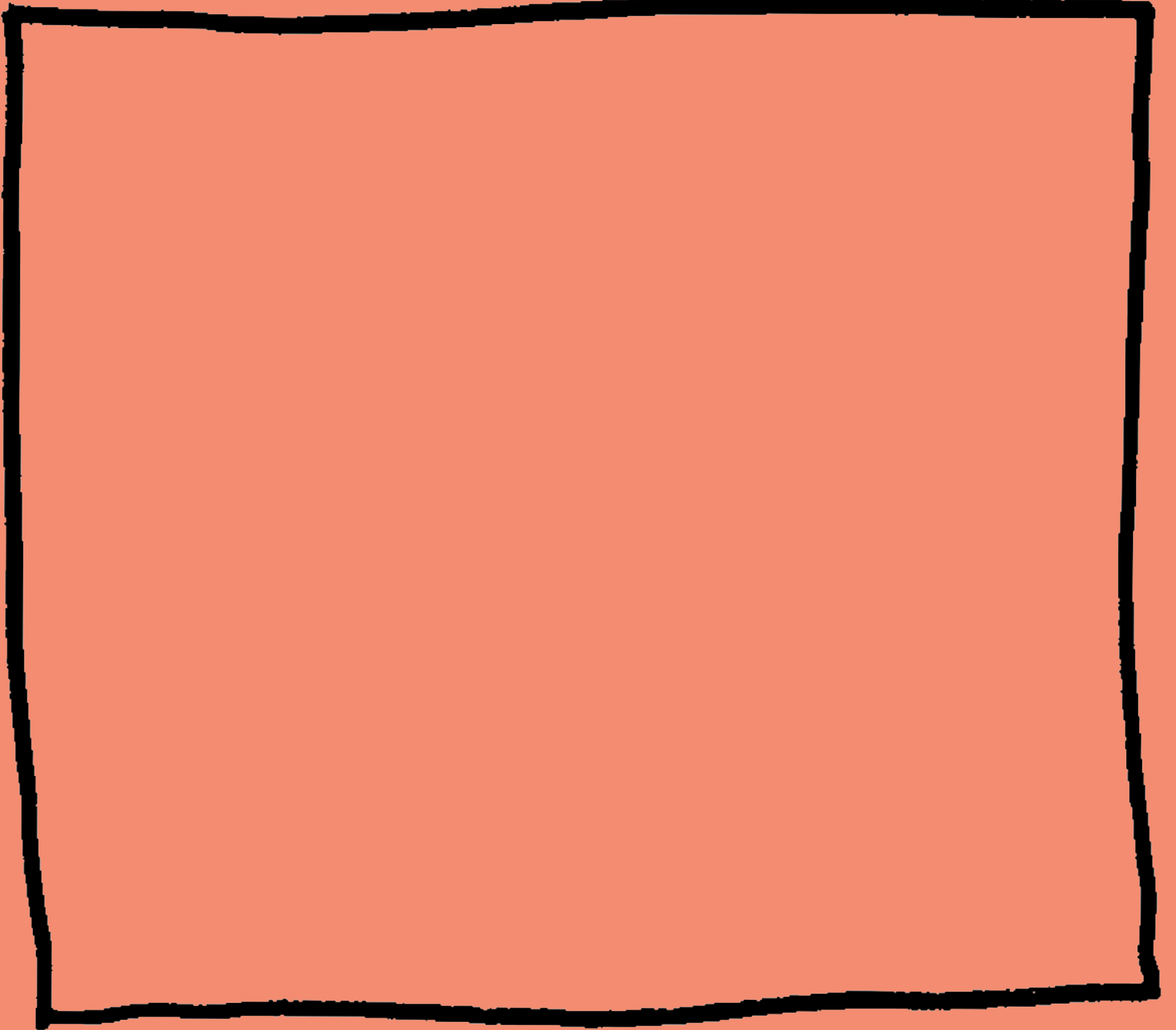
- Public space provides essential physical communal location for the coming together of collective frustrations and visions for change. In this way, public space is the site of resistance to norms, cultures, and structures that block the most marginalised from living free and active lives.
- This can manifest in collective grieving for the hurt caused by violence against women and girls. For example, after the abduction, rape, and murder of Sarah Everard in 2021, a vigil was held in her memory on Clapham Common. This vigil provided a unique space to mark the collective grief of the community. Grieving in community can serve to validate one's experience and catalyse action for change.
- Other protest movements such as Occupy, use public space as a place to debate - devising and discuss the priorities of the movement. Feminist direct action and civil disobedience led by groups such as Sisters Uncut is also a common tool applied in public space for highlighting fundamental issues relating to gender justice and calling for change. **50**

“Public spaces are places of expression... Often the sites of protest, they transform into places of resistance, where revolutions and social uprisings emerge.”

Christele Harrouk 49



∴ I BELONG WHEN...



TOOLS & CASE STUDIES
FOR GENDER INCLUSIVE CITIES

TOOLS

TOOLS FOR GENDER INCLUSIVE CITIES

1. Participatory women's safety audits
2. Gender inclusive design services
3. Gender mainstreaming demonstrator projects
4. Activating spaces through events
5. Gender-informed public space messaging and public awareness campaigns
6. Joined-up local area action plans
7. Gender budgeting
8. Gender disaggregated data collection and analysis
9. Gender mainstream city policies, strategies, and action plans
10. Gender mainstreaming training
11. Gender-informed signage and wayfinding
12. Gender-informed public art
13. Representative culture
14. Body mapping
15. Photovoice
16. Co-design
17. Space programming and community events
18. Bystander Intervention training
19. Consent training

● TOOL 1

WOMEN'S SAFETY CHARTERS



Image Credits: cityco.com

TOOL DESCRIPTION & CASE STUDY

Women's safety charters provide tools and actions for businesses to improve the safety of women and girls in venues and public spaces.

Women's Night-time Safety Charter is a newly introduced initiative by Manchester City Council that includes a series of pledges that organisations which operate at night sign up to. These pledges include (but are not limited to) nominating a women's night safety champion who can push the agenda within the organisation; informing customers as to what they can do if they are concerned about their safety; staff training around women's safety; gender informed design principles for public spaces.

● TOOL 2

GENDER-INCLUSIVE DESIGN SERVICES



Image Credits: spatialagency.net

TOOL DESCRIPTION & CASE STUDY

Gender-inclusive design services have expertise in gender and the public realm and can advise city leaders, local businesses, planners, transport authorities, policy-makers, and others on gender inclusion issues.

Since 1987, **Women's Design Service** in London has worked for a future where all buildings, transport systems, streets, parks, and open spaces are designed to incorporate the needs of women. Their constitutional aims are:

1. To promote good standards of architecture and planning with particular reference to women, especially women from ethnic minorities and women with disabilities.
2. To advance education through the provision of information and/or advice to women relating to architecture, associated design services, and the built environment.
3. To undertake research into the above areas, and to make public the useful results of such research.

● TOOL 3

GENDER MAINSTREAMING PILOT PROJECTS



Image Credits: smartcitysweden.com

TOOL DESCRIPTION & CASE STUDY

Gender mainstreaming public realm projects means designing spaces with an understanding of gendered experiences, needs, and realities.

In the development of **Umeå's Stationtunnel**, the architects worked with space, height, daylight, rounded edges, gradual gradients, immersive artwork, sound, and maximum transparency to retrofit the site using a gender lens. This allowed for a greater inflow of light, softer-rounded corners and a large entrance in the middle. Anyone who walks or cycles through the tunnel can also listen to author Sara Lidman's voice reading poems from speakers. Connecting the city centre of Umeå to the neighbourhood of Haga, the new station tunnel is an exemplary precedent showcasing how physical planning and design can be developed by implementing a gender perspective. Umeå Municipality has positioned itself as a leader in equal urban development in Europe.

● TOOL 4

ACTIVATING SPACES THROUGH EVENTS



Image Credits: resolvecollective.com

TOOL DESCRIPTION & CASE STUDY

Temporary public events, installations, and exhibitions can help to activate spaces of the city that might otherwise feel unsafe. Such events or installations transform unused and dark areas of the city into destinations. Such spaces might include underpasses, alleyways, parks, and canal sides, among others.

This temporary transformation turned an abandoned space underneath **Brixton Station passageway** into a temporary platform for local artists and entrepreneurs. The space, designed collaboratively by Resolve Collective and the Brixton Design Trail, hosted artistic installations and adapted with each event, from adjustable hanging tables to a 'night-mode'.

● TOOL 5

PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS



Image Credits: westender.com.au

TOOL DESCRIPTION & CASE STUDY

Well-designed public awareness campaigns about violence against women in public space alongside bystander intervention can support community understandings of the prevalence of violence, how to spot it, and how to safely intervene.

In 2014, The Australian Human Rights Commission, the Australian Council of Trade Unions, and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry jointly launched the **'Know Where the Line Is' awareness strategy** intended to run in workplaces around the country to help workers and employers recognise sexual harassment and know how to take action. This campaign explained the difference between an acceptable behaviour vs. unwanted behaviour. Although the campaign addressed sexual harassment in the workplace, the messaging could be adapted to public spaces.

● TOOL 6

LOCAL AREA ACTION PLANS

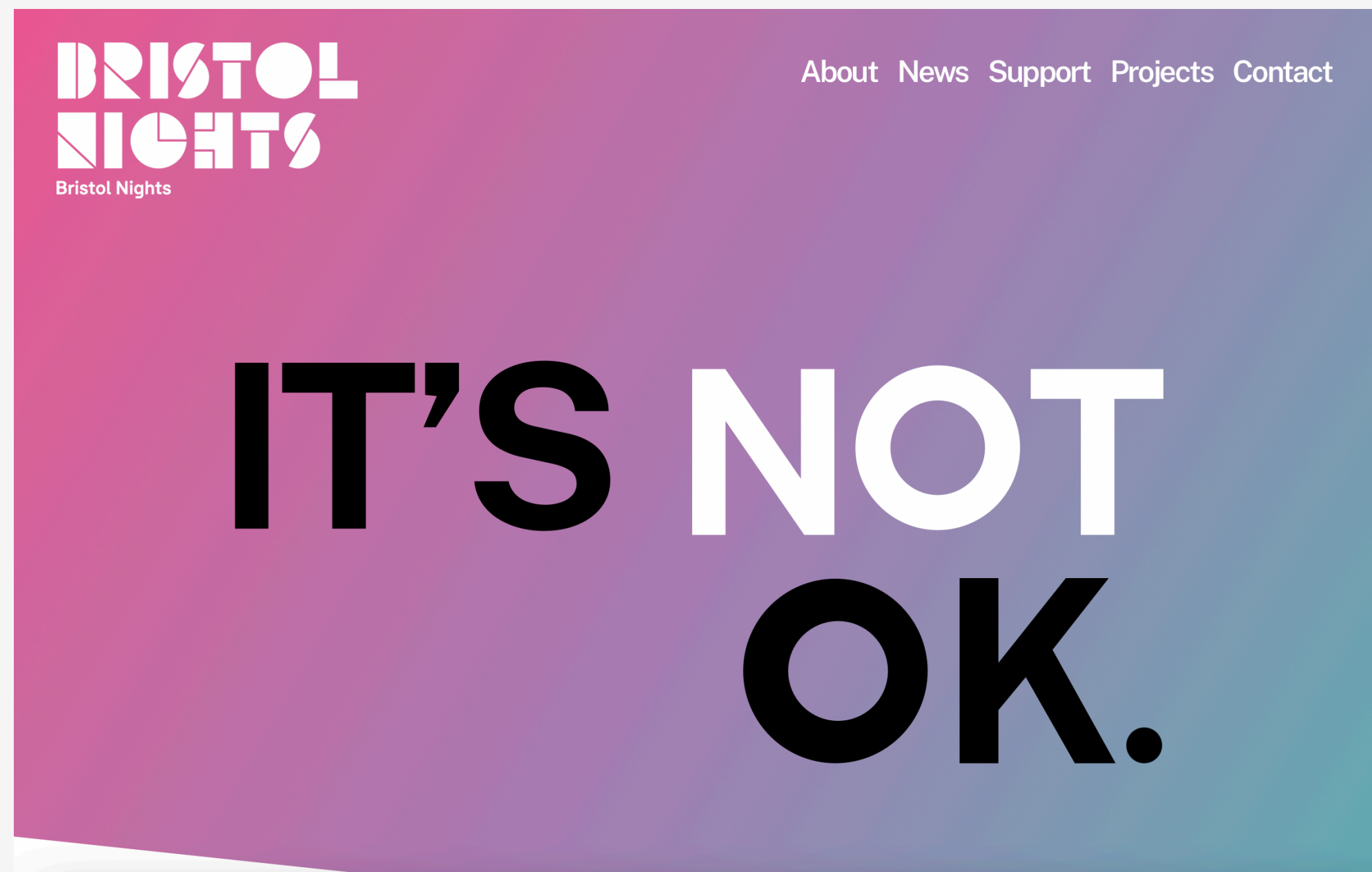


Image Credits: bristolnights.co.uk

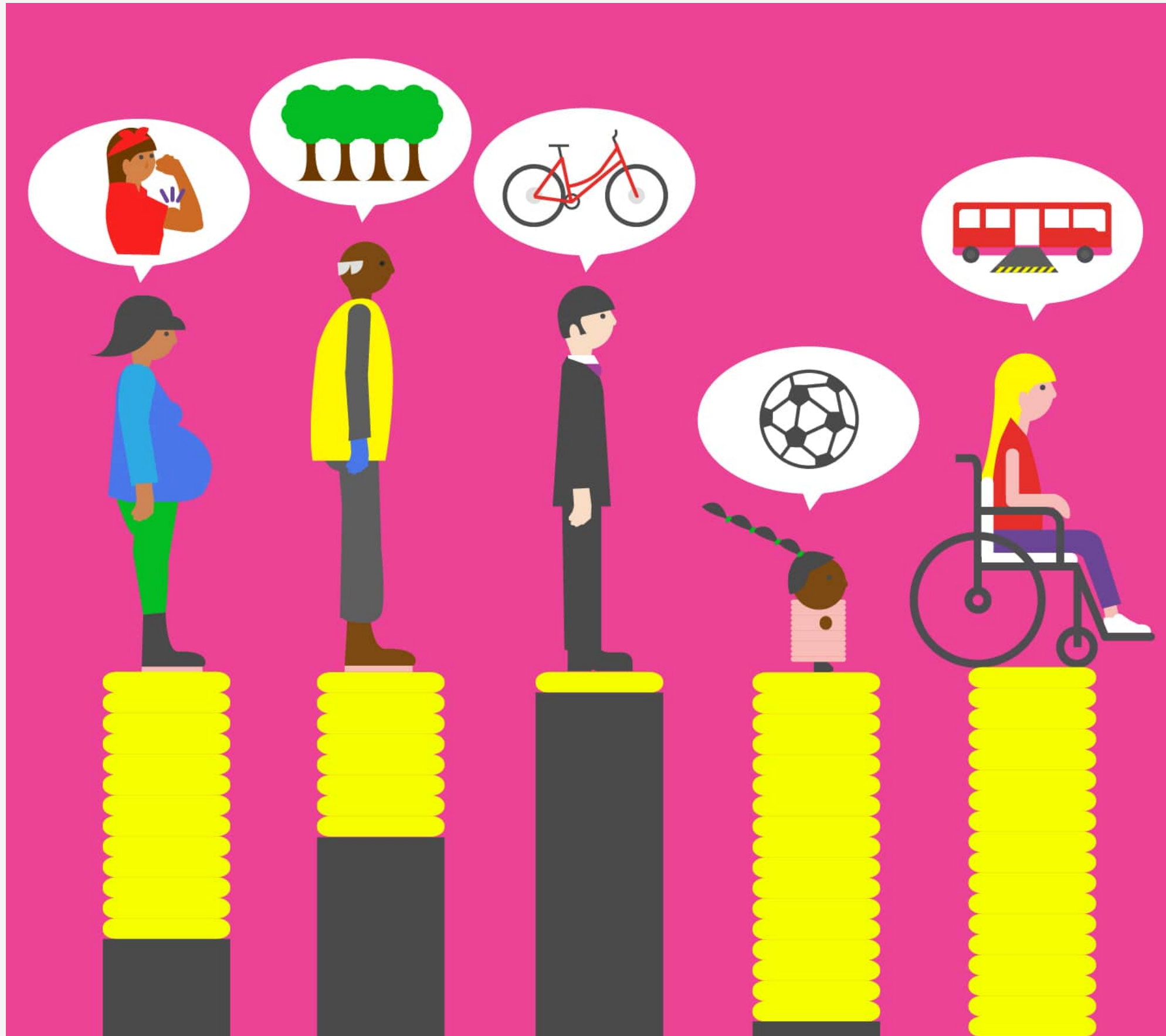
TOOL DESCRIPTION & CASE STUDY

Joined up local area action plans create a space for all local actors, such as bars, pubs, clubs, transport providers, retailers, and workplaces, to co-design and commit to a series of actions and strategies that holistically address the needs and realities of women. Working in partnership can ensure that actors share resources, join-up their efforts and clarify responsibilities.

The **Bristol City Centre Business Improvement District** developed a free anti-sexual harassment training programme for all businesses in the district's footprint. The training was developed for staff employed in night time industries and detailed the legal framework around sexual harassment, provided bystander intervention training and support for managing vulnerability. The training reached 106 organisations through 36 in person and 2 online training sessions.

● TOOL 7

GENDER BUDGETING



TOOL DESCRIPTION & CASE STUDY

Gender budgeting provides an analysis of how public spending and resource allocation in a city impacts men and women differently and whether there is an equitable distribution of resources to meet different needs.

In 2006, **Vienna** pioneered gender budgeting and started collecting gender-disaggregated data to understand the use of public services and distribution of public resources between men and women. Civil servants were provided with gender budgeting training and worked closely with the office for gender mainstreaming. The city's budget now includes gender-specific goals and the expected number of people impacted by each budget item and decision split by gender.

● TOOL 8

GENDER-DISAGGREGATED DATA

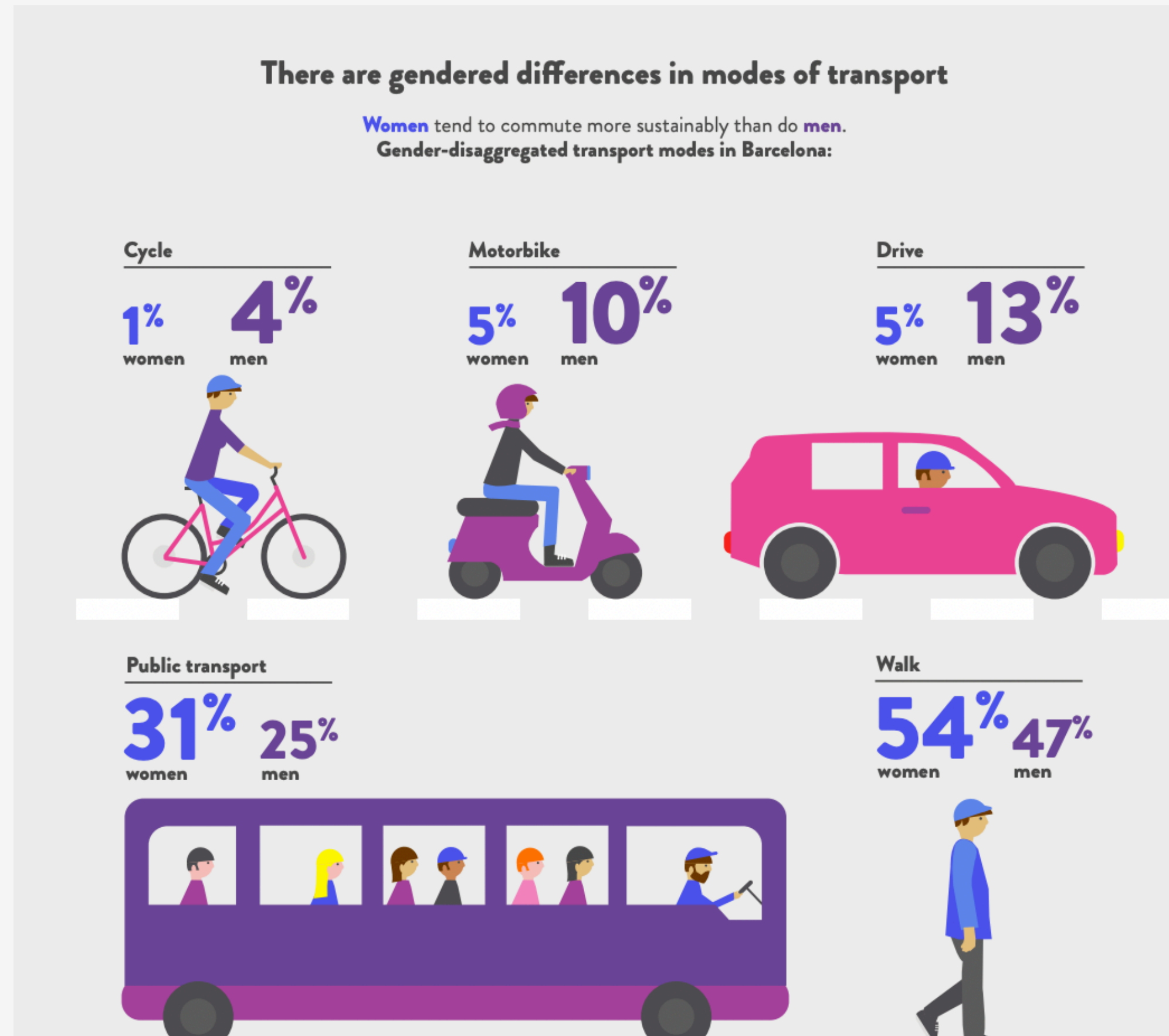


Image Credits: w4c.org

TOOL DESCRIPTION & CASE STUDY

Gender-disaggregated data is any data that can be broken down according to gender. Data collected and tabulated separately across gender and age helps to better reflect the realities of the lived experience of each category, highlighting differences and inequalities. It therefore helps to make informed decisions about how to regenerate and programme a space.

Barcelona collected gender-disaggregated transport data showing the gendered differences in journey purposes and times. The data found that women primarily travelled for family reasons, followed by work, whereas men primarily travelled for work above all other reasons. Women made more short-distance, frequent trips within the city that were more encumbered, for example by travelling with children or prams. The data also showed that women used public transport more than men. By disaggregating the data, transport planners can better assess the impacts of investments and policies on gender equality, ensuring that decisions don't adversely impact journeys more likely to be made by women.

● TOOL 9

CITY POLICIES, STRATEGIES, AND ACTION PLANS



Image Credits: [visitberlin.de](https://www.visitberlin.de)

TOOL DESCRIPTION & CASE STUDY

Local authorities can embed a gender-inclusive approach into all their strategies, policies, and action plans through a process of gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming refers to the assessment of local decisions according to their impacts on gender equality.

Berlin has made it mandatory for public contracts of over €25,000 for services and supplies to be awarded to bidders that commit to supporting the advancement of women. The advancement of women is defined according to a set of 18 actions that, depending on company size, suppliers are required to select a set number of. These can include demonstrating how they support women into leadership positions, allowing for flexible working patterns or appointing a staff member to lead on women's advancement in their companies.

● TOOL 10

GENDER MAINSTREAMING TRAINING

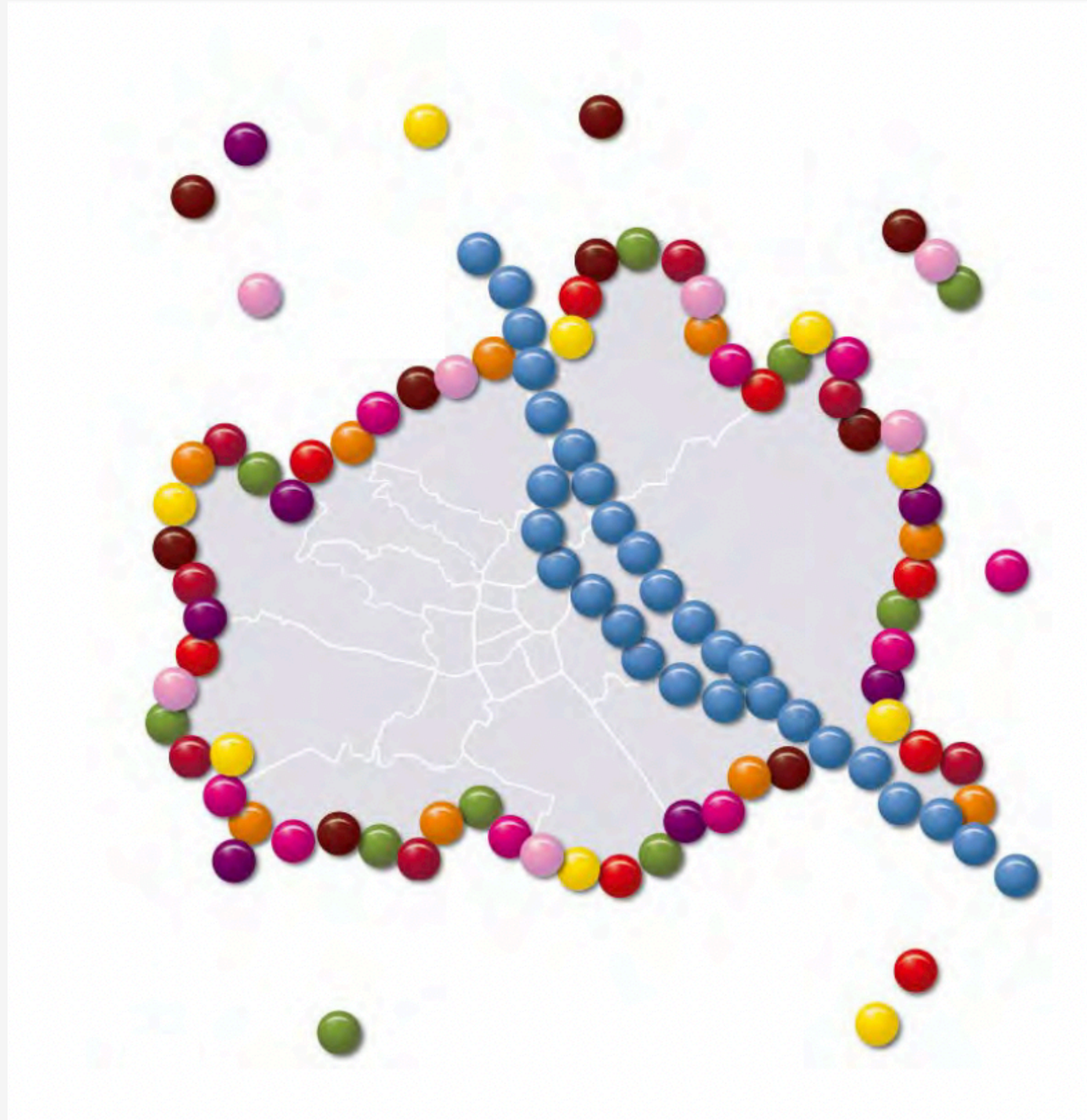


Image Credits: wien.gv.at

TOOL DESCRIPTION & CASE STUDY

Training programmes for urban design staff and consultants, planning teams, and those who set public space briefs can upskill these teams and help them to integrate gender-inclusive principles in their public realm projects.

The city of **Vienna** has developed a gender mainstreaming toolkit for all municipal staff, sub-contractors, and consultants. The toolkit provides guidance on running inclusive meetings, using gender-sensitive language, or using images and illustrations that represent women in a range of roles.

● TOOL 11

GENDER-INFORMED SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING



Image Credits: elperiodico.com

TOOL DESCRIPTION & CASE STUDY

Using signage and wayfinding to diversify streets, squares, and public space names is key to celebrate women's representation in public space while fostering a sense of belonging in all areas of everyday life. The point is to rediscover the places of women and give them back to women as the active agents of city-making.

Barcelona gained a head start on this effort, with the number of streets named after women soaring from 7 percent in 1996 to 27.7 percent in 2010. Murals and public art, which pay tribute to feminist values and the contributions of women, have also been implemented throughout Barcelona. These improvements diversify Barcelona's urban fabric. They may also improve women's perceived safety, reminding women that they are not alone in cities that sometimes appear as if they were built only for able-bodied men.

● TOOL 12

GENDER-INFORMED PUBLIC ART



Image Credits: iamqueenmary.com

TOOL DESCRIPTION & CASE STUDY

Public art and advertising can provide positive imagery of women or celebrate women and/or care work in public spaces. This can be in the form of blue plaques, street art by or about women, advertisements, etc.

I am Queen Mary is a transnational public art project created by La Vaughn Belle, from the US Virgin Islands, and Jeannette Ehlers, from Denmark, two artists connected by their shared Caribbean roots and colonial histories. The public art piece memorialises Denmark's colonial impact in the Caribbean and is an international symbol that celebrates the story of people who resisted Danish colonialism in the Caribbean.

● TOOL 13

REPRESENTATIVE CULTURE



Image Credits: www.kvinnohistoriskt.se

TOOL DESCRIPTION & CASE STUDY

Cultural institutions can choose to tell stories from a different lens, by placing women at the centre of our historical, social and cultural narratives.

The **Museum of Women's History** in Umeå, Sweden is the first of its kind in Sweden. Opened in 2014, the museum hosts exhibitions that put a variety of women at the centre of the narrative and challenge the versions of history that women have been left out of. The museum adopts an intersectional, trans-inclusive perspective that critically addresses gender norms and challenges what a museum is and how history is told.

● TOOL 14

BODY MAPPING

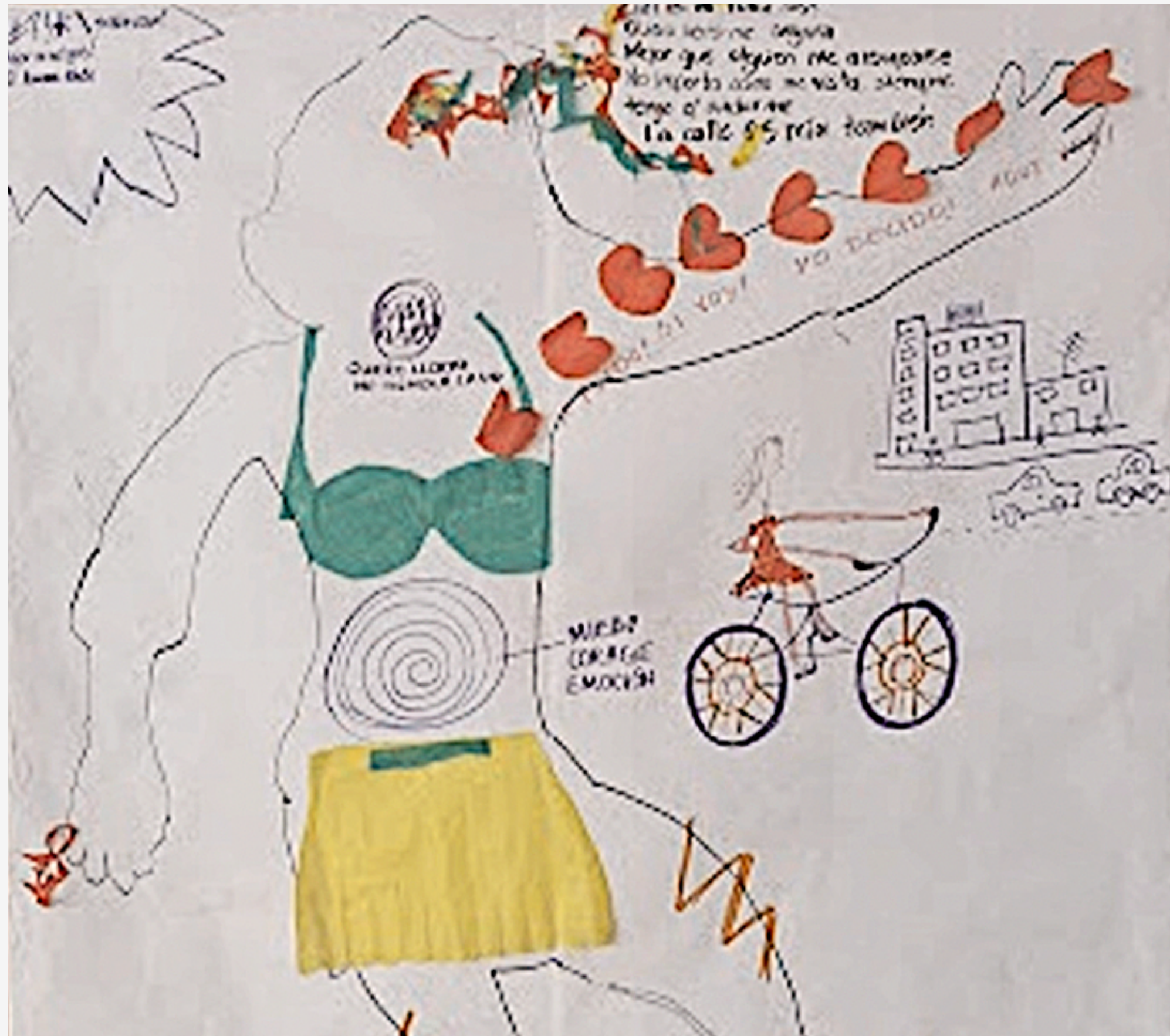


Image Credits: Elizabeth Sweet, Sara Ortiz Escalante, journals.sagepub.com

TOOL DESCRIPTION & CASE STUDY

Body mapping is an arts-based qualitative research method that asks participants to map and represent their sensory experiences on a life-sized drawing of their bodies. The method can help researchers better understand people's perceptions by providing participants with a tool to express feelings that can be hard to verbalise, such as anxiety, pain, discomfort, or fear, and giving participants the freedom to represent those experiences in a way that best captures their feelings. Body mapping can help planners and designers to understand not just how spaces are used but how it feels to navigate through them.

A set of exploratory body map storytelling workshops held in **New York, Mexico City, Barcelona, and Medellin** found that the tool can help planners to better understand, document, and connect to the realities of women facing violence, as well as grasp, through bodies, how space is felt and used.

● TOOL 15

PHOTOVOICE



Image Credits: womenofneokcphotovoice.oucreate.com

TOOL DESCRIPTION & CASE STUDY

Photovoice is a qualitative participatory research method that asks research participants to take photographs that reflect their daily lives and lived experiences. These photographs are used to structure interviews or workshops with participants. The method allows participants to highlight what is important to them and to interpret their own lives and lived experiences. The method can address power imbalances and reframe participants as experts.

The Women of Northeast Oklahoma City Photovoice Project invited 26 African American woman to photograph their neighbourhoods and highlight their safety needs. The project provided participants with the opportunity to share their everyday experiences with one another and to present their findings to policy-makers. The photos from the project were exhibited across Oklahoma.

● TOOL 16

CO-DESIGN

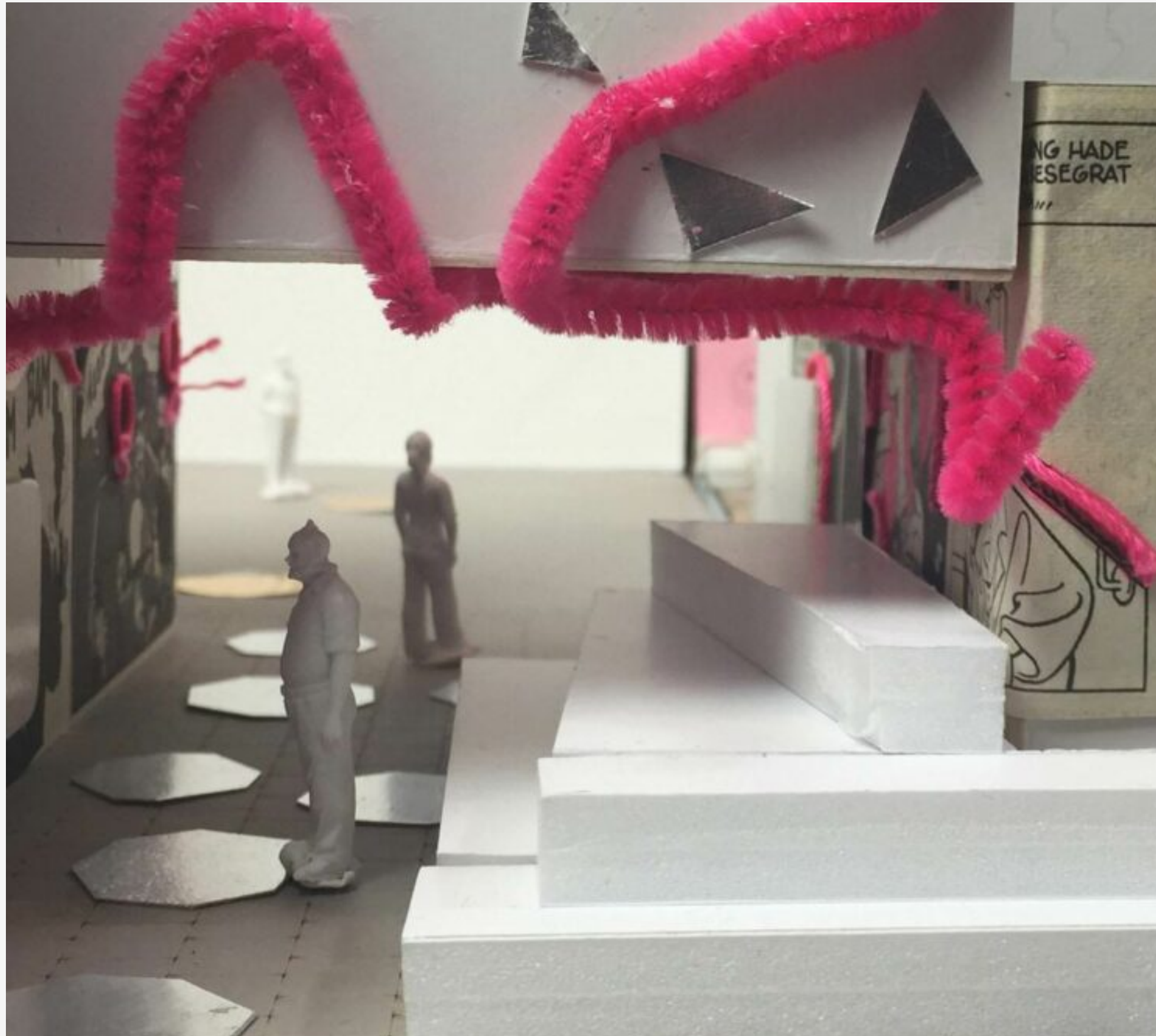


Image Credits: whitearkitekter.com

TOOL DESCRIPTION & CASE STUDY

Co-design is effective at addressing overlooked experiences of the city and challenging beliefs about what counts as expertise and knowledge by engaging with communities. This includes properly resourcing and respecting community experts as co-producers within all stages of a project from commissioning, design, and delivery to the management of public spaces.

A collaborative project called ‘**Places for Girls**’ included interactive street performances and design workshops to address issues around mobility and safety for teenage girls in Stockholm. Public spaces aren’t currently used equally between girls and boys. Research found that until the age of seven, boys and girls use public facilities, such as playgrounds, equally but from the age of eight onwards this changes - boys make up 80 percent users while girls feel ten times more insecure in public places. The project explored how to design places for girls and address this imbalance.

● TOOL 17

SPACE PROGRAMMING AND COMMUNITY EVENTS



Image Credits: exposureskate.org

TOOL DESCRIPTION & CASE STUDY

Events and programmes can reclaim male-dominated spaces to introduce girls and women to new activities.

Exposure started as an annual skateboarding competition to address the lack of competitive events for women. The event has grown to host the biggest prize available in women's skateboarding. Exposure also runs a programme of inclusive skateboarding sessions for girls, women, transgender, and non-binary people. In 2021, women's skateboarding was included in the Olympics for the first time and 60% of Olympians had attended at least one Exposure event.

● TOOL 18

BYSTANDER INTERVENTION TRAINING



Image Credits: righttobe.org

TOOL DESCRIPTION & CASE STUDY

Bystander intervention training provides people with basic tools and strategies to intervene in instances of sexual assault or harassment. The training helps people recognise situations that warrant an intervention and support people to become active bystanders.

Right to Be provides free bystander intervention training to the public. Based on the concept of the 5 D's of Distract, Delegate, Document, Delay, and Direct, the training equips people with tools and strategies to actively confront street harassment and provides people with a sense of responsibility to intervene when they witness harassment.

● **TOOL 19**

CONSENT TRAINING



TOOL DESCRIPTION & CASE STUDY

Consent training provides individuals and organisations with the tools to discuss consent. This can help them to understand the ways in which consent relates to their work or relationships and can help shift people's personal attitudes and behaviours as well as shape institutional policies and systems.

The Consent Collective provides training and resources to support culture change in the way we talk and learn about consent as well as the ways we address sexual violence, harassment, and abuse when it occurs. The collective helps organisations talk about consent, relationships, and sexual violence in engaging, powerful, and creative ways.

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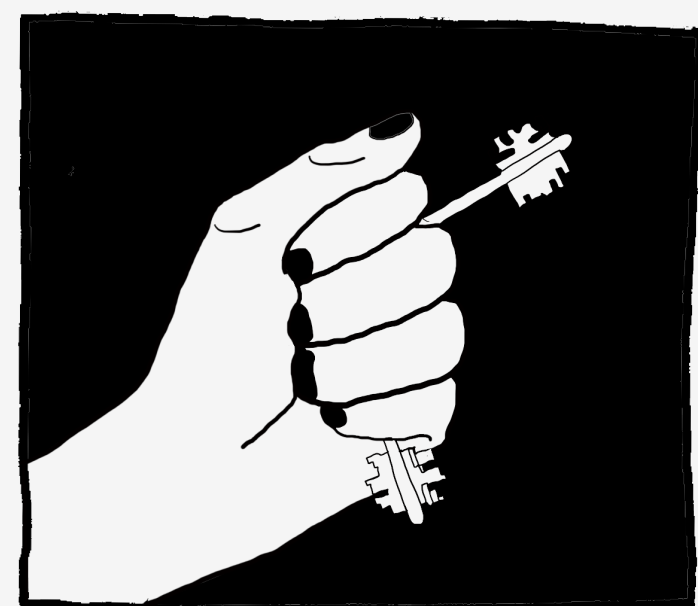
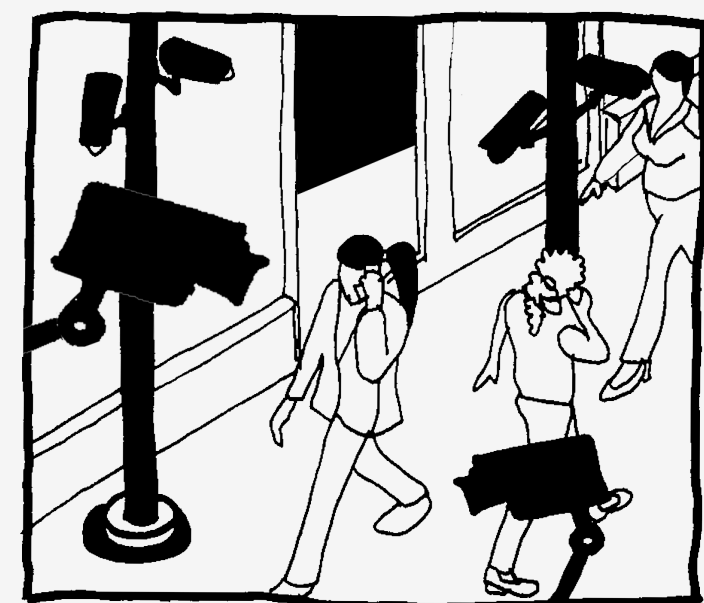
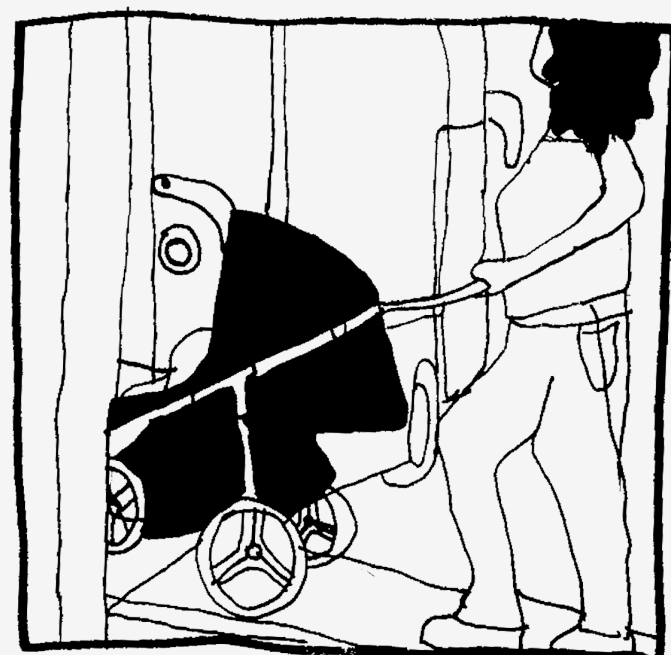
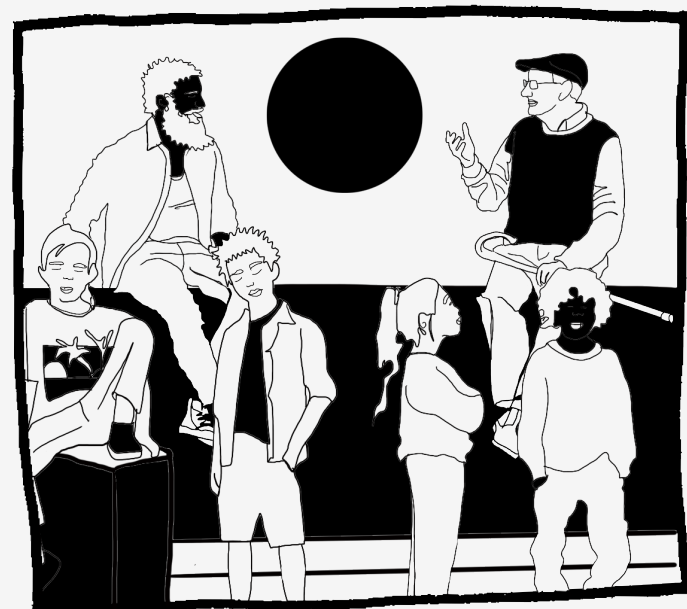
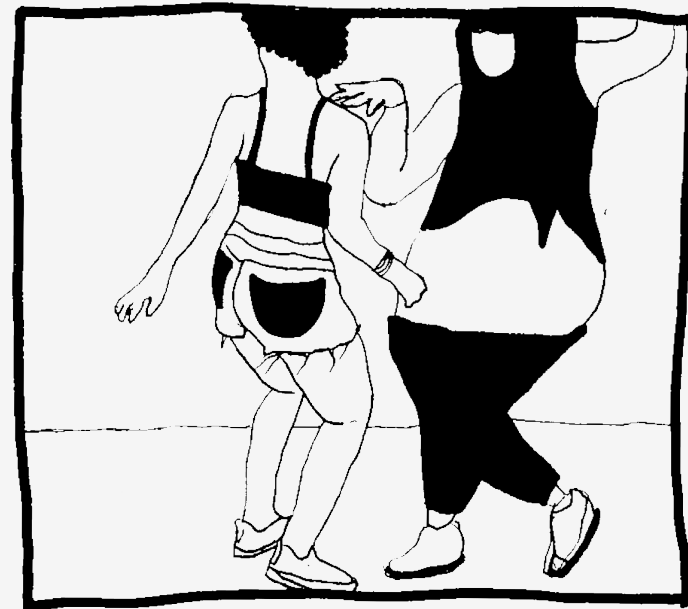
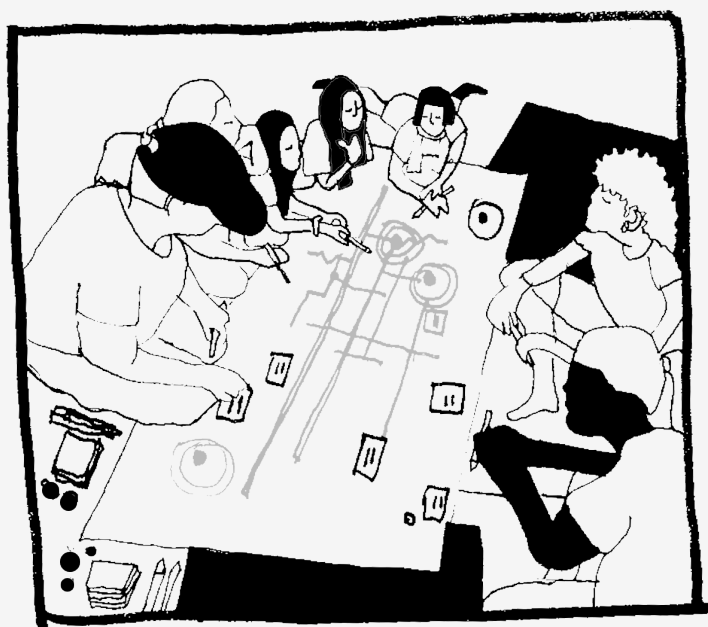
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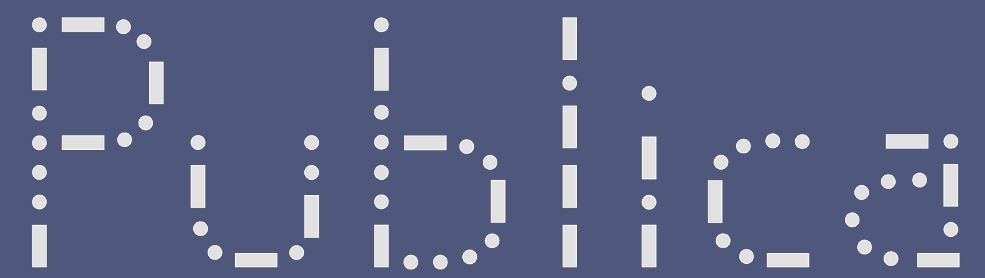
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