WHY PLACEMAKING?

Amidst the constant change happening around us in the world and in our organizations, it can sometimes feel like the ground is shifting beneath our feet. Globally, we are still learning to negotiate and adapt to changes unleashed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, compounded by several factors including volatile economies, heightened job uncertainty, divided politics, systemic racial issues, a changing climate, and so on. Our traditional conceptions of the “workplace” have been upended, as the very concept of “place” and the boundaries around it continue to change. Remote work has existed for a long time, but it has now been thrust upon us as a necessity; many people who may prefer to “go to work” in a physical place don’t always have that option. If we are working from home, or in a hybrid context, where does “the workplace” end, and where do our lives outside work begin? And more broadly, how might we create a sense of place where everyone feels like they belong?

This year at LILA, we turned to the theme of Placemaking in organizations to explore how we might navigate these place-based challenges not as passive recipients, but as agents who take an active role in the making of place. Several of our guest speakers noted that our changing sense of place can actually offer organizations a chance to move from a feeling of precarity to one of opportunity; we can use the “spaciousness of uncertainty” to effectively navigate shifts of change and continuity around us. At this unique moment, how might organizations use placemaking as a lens to assess the current state of their workplaces, and as a catalyst to imagine what it could be? We began our exploration at the October gathering with a foundational understanding of place, place attachment, and ways to navigate placemaking in hybrid work contexts. In February, we deepened our understanding of place as dynamic, co-constructed systems, focusing on what makes places attractive and the role of leadership in designing them. In March, we looked at placemaking through people, exploring the role of relational coordination and collaborative scenario-planning. Between these sessions, we went deeper into several other themes including what creates a sense of thriving at work, the factors that lead to identifying with the workplace, and how virtual spaces become places.

Our members have been wrestling with several challenges in their organizations this year, including:

- Navigating healthy relationships between work and home;
- Creating a sense of place for new and established employees through onboarding;
- Managing geographically dispersed workforces;
- Creating a sense of place in a virtual or hybrid world;

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Managing shifting teams that may never have met in person;
Forging trusting and effective relationships across different work contexts, including in-person, virtual, and hybrid (or some combination of all three).

If leaders hope to engage with placemaking in their organizations, they must create opportunities for employees to co-construct the place actively, offering them agency in the meaning they make of it, choices over how they work and with whom, collaborative dialogues about placemaking strategies, and an active role in shaping social norms.

We began the year with a working definition of organizational placemaking, which we have continued to revisit throughout our learning together.

LILA’S Working Definition: Organizational placemaking is an intentional, creative, and collaborative process that sees people and place as interrelated and co-constructing agents with the power to influence and shape each other over time, in order to create and sustain value, meaning, and purpose for organizations and the individuals within them.

This brief is intended to orient you for the June Summit, recapping where we’ve been so you have a sense of where we’re going. Before we begin, we’ll first set the context and stage by looking at how we have changed, exploring elements around power that we should keep in mind as we think about place and placemaking. We’ll then review key definitions of place and how our understanding of it has developed throughout the year. We’ll look at place attachment, exploring what draws us to places and roots us in them, along with what it takes to build resilient places that survive both change and continuity. Finally, we’ll turn our focus to the practical applications of placemaking, looking at what we can do in our organizations. We’ll close with a brief introduction to some of the key ideas that our Summit speaker Marissa King will share with the LILA community in June. We look forward to concluding this year’s journey through Placemaking with you next week.

HOW HAVE WE CHANGED?

Thriving at work requires a combination of learning and vitality (Klein, 2023; Spreitzer, et al., 2020). The changes in the world, our lives, and our workplaces over the past several years have affected people in myriad ways. Many people are experiencing increased anxiety, uncertainty, and emotional tension in several aspects of their lives, which impacts how they show up at work and what they’re looking for. Organizations now have an opportunity to talk more openly and collectively about what people need in order to feel a sense of vitality and learning; while these have always been important, they are currently at the forefront of peoples’ minds as key to their psychological health and well-being. In many cases, we see an increased need for purpose, belonging, and community. For others, the disruption of the status quo may actually be an opportunity to change things that weren’t previously working for them, ultimately leading to an increased sense of agency and belonging.
Change inevitably involves loss, so in many ways people are grieving what they have lost (perhaps even without realizing it). Guest Faculty Ken Foote advises us to think about how to memorialize and honor old and new places in order to create a larger place that integrates both for employees throughout an organization. Leaders can facilitate this process by setting the right tone, acknowledging grief, and creating rituals based on what is already working in the organization.

We constantly find ourselves in transient spaces, between things – and while we’ve traditionally thought of place as solid and fixed, Luz (2006) notes the importance of valuing in-between spaces as concrete places, too. Rather than viewing the in-between as a kind of limbo – caught between looking backwards and waiting for what’s to come – we can think of it as a valuable place itself, where we can discover new points of crossing and connection. On the other hand, looking backwards is not always bad: nostalgia can actually be a powerful psychological resource to counter stress and anxiety, and to boost creativity and a sense of meaning. While nostalgia is generally triggered by disruption or discontinuity, it can also serve as a tool to help people navigate discontinuity. Leaders can intentionally create spaces for people to share their nostalgia in organizations to enhance individual and collective well-being, connection, and motivation (van Dijke & Leunissen, 2023).

**Hybrid Identities**

One of the most obvious ways in which we have changed is in how we work together, whether it’s in person, virtually, hybrid, or a varied combination of all three. While virtual spaces can certainly be designed and facilitated to create genuine relationships and connections, there are fewer “loose” or transitional spaces for employees to interact informally and forge trust. To design an effective hybrid space, we should intentionally design with three things in mind: (1) the people physically present, (2) the people in the virtual space; and (3) the interaction between the two (Parker, 2020). People engage differently across various platforms so this shift in work causes a shift in us, surfacing different elements of our identities and ourselves that we may not be fully aware of if we don’t pay attention to them. Place tends to be a part of our coherent sense of self, so as places change, so do we. Even people who know each other well may interact differently virtually or in hybrid spaces, so it helps to think of each space as a separate realm and to focus on the interactions between them. As our workplaces continue shifting and growing, we may begin to face similar challenges to independent gig workers, who are not usually tethered to one particular place. These challenges could be *identity-based* (lacking a clear anchor from self to work, questions around purpose, limited sense of growth), or *relational* (lacking community or deep relationships and consistent group of colleagues) (Caza, et al, 2022).

**Place and Power Dynamics**

As humans, we are embodied identities and we always exist in space, so it’s important to acknowledge that dynamics of power and privilege always exist. There is an interplay between place, identity, narrative, and power that’s shaped by both cultural and social factors, along with gender, race, class, religious values, and several other factors. We know that space can become power in the form of
territory, and the same is true in organizations. It’s important to be aware of how places create, fuel, or disrupt these power dynamics, including symbolic power (how spaces are arranged, who has access to resources, where offices are located, who heads a table, and so on). Placemaking is a collaborative process so it’s particularly important to pay attention to who is involved and who else needs to be involved in co-creating and decision-making. Participatory processes can sometimes be manipulated – knowingly or not – by those with privilege and power, so they must be intentionally designed to avoid recreating existing power imbalances within an organization. Our LILA guests shared several key questions we can ask to help to surface power dynamics in different contexts:

❖ Who has the power?
❖ What’s fair? For whom?
❖ Who decides? How?
❖ What is being acknowledged? What is not?
❖ Who defines and redefines things?

There is power in both naming and framing, so it really matters who is choosing the words and shaping various narratives. Additionally, as boundaries between work and home blur, we must remember that “home” may not mean the same thing to everyone; it’s not always a haven and it’s crucial to keep that in mind. As lines between home and work bleed into each other, dynamics around power and equity now likely have more of an impact on how employees show up at work than they may have before.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY PLACE?

So, what is place? We began the year distinguishing between place and space by defining space more geographically and place as something that also holds meaning for people. Three key elements of place are: (1) location - the absolute point where something exists; (2) locale - the landscape, material, physical, social context; (3) sense of place - the subjective way people find meaning in places, including memory, imagination, and attachment (Di Masso, et al., 2019). Guest Faculty Dan Williams describes places as interconnected networks produced among people, institutions, and systems via social, political, and economical interactions. As we moved through the year, our understanding of place evolved from a singular, fixed entity with meaning to a more socially constructed, dynamic, ecosystem of individuals, communities, and place.

In December, we explored the idea of place as an assemblage, being created and recreated through lived experiences and practices. Guest Faculty Tim Cresswell notes that places are formed through the interaction of three parts: materiality (physical constitution of a place), meaning (the affective connection we feel to a place), and practices (what people do, how they interact in a place) (Cresswell, 2014; Di Masso and Dixon, 2015). Places gather things – both animate and inanimate – including experiences, histories, languages, thoughts, stories, stories, moods, and so on. As we think about placemaking in our organizations, it’s important to identify two kinds of forces at play: territorializing forces, which pull assemblages into tight, bounded knots, and de-territorializing forces – those which pull them apart. This idea of territorializing forces maps well onto former Guest Faculty Michele Gelfand’s concept...
of tight and loose cultures. Tight cultures have well-defined behavior with less variation from the norm, while loose cultures allow for more behavioral variance. A combination of tight and loose places can also enable flexibility in a place, supporting a balance between structure and freedom, which is necessary as people navigate place transitions and experiment with new ways of working.

Reflect:

- In your organization, where do you see territorializing or deterritorializing forces at play?
- Where do you see places with tight cultures? Loose cultures?

Rhythms and Patterns of a Place

If we think of a place as an assemblage of materialities, meanings, and practices, one of the best ways to understand what makes it tick is by noticing its unique rhythms and habits (e.g., Where do you see people engaging? Do people join early or linger after virtual meetings? What happens? What kinds of things draw people to come back into the office? When and where do people congregate for informal conversations? How do people engage in onboarding programs or learning and development journeys: synchronously, asynchronously, not at all?) Tim Cresswell notes that every place has a distinct choreography of rhythms, including rhythms that constructively come together, others that are dissonant in conflict; rhythms that exist without conflict, and a rhythm outside a standard norm that is controlled by external forces. What rhythms does the workplace impose within itself, or in relationship to others? As LILA’s co-principal investigator Dave Perkins wisely advised us in one of his 10k-foot perspective recaps, we must observe, listen, and then ask ourselves:

- What rhythms do we have?
- What rhythms do we want?
- Who is “we”?

Discourse and Stability

Guest Faculty Andrés di Masso prompted us to ask how we might re-shape our understanding of stability, and how our organizations might find a sense of narrative continuity through change. We know that stories matter, but narration and discourse are essential for placemaking. We make and remake places by talking about them: discourse shapes how people make choices, find meaning, accept, or resist a place. Narration is a key strategy in placemaking because the process of re-narration can actually help create a sense of coherence and integration amidst change, enabling people to re-shape their understandings of place stability and place change. Discourse serves several functions in placemaking: (1) we use names and language to construct reality, so the language we choose says a lot about what we need in a place; (2) narration establishes “correct” views of reality around what a place is, bringing to light power dynamics and relations; (3) social forces are influenced by narration; (4) accountability recognizes who the narrator is, what they’re responsible for, and the impact they have in a space. Rather than focusing discourse around people returning to the office and how many days they
should be there, leaders should include opportunities for broader dialogue and discussion around place. Narration and discourse are active agents in constructing a place: there is power in naming and renaming, framing and reframing.

Reflect:

❖ In what ways are we creating spaces to surface the realities of the place?
❖ What does the language used in our organization reflect about its sense of place?
❖ Which stories are told in our organizations, and by whom?

WHAT DRAWS US TO PLACES?

As we shape meanings of places, those places also shape us. **Place identity** is crafted and re-crafted over time, gathering meaning through individual and group memories, lived experiences, discursive practices, and social and emotional interactions experienced in them (Di Masso, et al., 2019; Lewicka, 2011; Butler & Sinclair, 2020). So, how do we form bonds to a place? Several factors influence place attachment, including the physical environment, social ties, socio-demographic factors (age, social status, education, mobility), time spent in a place, a sense of ownership or investment, among others. We make meaning of a place in interrelated ways, some of which are **functional** – focused on how the space works for what we hope to achieve in it, and others are more **relational** – connected to identity and how we see ourselves and others. Place attachment is both a psychological process as well as a measurable bond, and it has psychological, social, emotional, and functional elements.

In October, Lynne Manzo and Ken Foote walked the LILA community through an exercise in which they asked us to recall a place that was meaningful to us. We were asked to remember the place in detail, paying attention to the memories and emotions it brought up, which we then shared with others in the community. This exercise highlighted the affective dimension of place attachment, enabling us to experience how meaningful places can be, and just how much we remember about them and what transpired within them, often even after many years.

The level of meaning we feel from a place ranges from surface meanings (which may be more functional) all the way to deep meanings, which are often tied to elements of identity. **Sense of place** is a related term that includes both cognitive and emotional components of a place; it’s often connected to identity and culture (Manzo, 2016). **Sense of place** is formed through individual and collective experiences, belonging, memories, strong community bonds, emotional attachment, place satisfaction, and dimensions of the physical environment (Manzo, 2016; Williams and Van Patten, 2006). As Sir Winston Churchill wisely noted: “We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us.” When senses of place are changing, it’s common for people to feel a sense of loss of control, which can be mitigated by allowing adequate transition time, engaging in rituals to honor place meanings (both new and old), and offering choices so people feel a sense of agency (Devine-Wright, et al., 2020; Manzo, 2016).
Guest Faculty Dan Williams shared techniques for measuring place attachment, focusing on how engaged people are, what their place attachment is, and what’s important to them from an engagement standpoint. Measuring place attachment is a useful tool for organizational leaders who want to understand how engaged employees are and how to design more intentionally for engagement in a place. Additionally, he noted how the idea of a “shared fate” can motivate individuals, groups, and communities to come together across different contexts and perspectives. Dan shared an example of how ranchers, farmers, and environmental groups – who have different needs, interests, and relationships but a shared fate with the land – collectively explore how climate is affecting all of them. Through this process, they elucidate potential pathways for them to work together and to move forward productively. As we think about placemaking, diversity in thought and perspective is essential; envisioning a “shared fate” together can engage people across disciplines, perspectives, values, and practices, which is beneficial for organizations as they look to the future.

As our lives and work environments are in flux, so is our relationship to place: the meanings we gain from places and infuse them with oscillate between fixities and flows – that is, between the static and mobile, the fixed and changing, and the stable and unstable. Several of our guest faculty noted that a key aspect to placemaking is learning to negotiate this productive tension between fixities and flows. If we think of place as an assemblage, we can view it as a dynamic system rather than a static location, which is especially important as we think about placemaking as a way to balance change and continuity. Another key tension exists between emplacement and displacement, feeling in or out of place. Social embeddedness may also lead to feelings of motivation, which helps people autonomously seek out opportunities for learning in fast growth environments (Spreitzer and Porath, 2014); however, it’s important to note that sometimes we may be physically embedded in a place yet still feel a sense of displacement, or a lack of belonging.

While the pandemic has brought to light many questions about place, it’s likely that those questions existed before but were unspoken. The traditional design of workplaces was not a one-size-fits-all solution and while it worked for many people, it certainly did not work for everyone. We now have the opportunity to reimagine what future workplaces might be like to accommodate more diverse needs of a range of employees.

From “Roots” to Routes & Rhizomes

In the past, we’ve often prioritized “putting roots down” in a place, but as the world grows more mobile, organizations and their employees are more geographically distributed, places are more transient and dynamic, and it’s harder to put roots down in just one place. Tim Cresswell advises us to expand our thinking from roots to routes, so instead of viewing mobility and change as a threat to place attachment, we can
focus on how encounters among people might create a stable sense of place that endures transition and motion. In addition to the physical and social dimensions of place, **time** is also one to keep in mind: places and the meanings they hold for us change over time, making it a significant dimension of place and placemaking.

Another helpful metaphor is the idea of moving from *roots* to *rhizomes*. While roots are fixed and sedentary, locking us into one place, *rhizomes* are more like a mobile and networked system of roots. This idea of rhizomes helps us conceptualize place as more moveable and adaptable, enabling us to think about more versatile and dynamic ways to approach placemaking in the new world of work.

**What Makes Places Attractive?**

As we think about making our organizations attractive places for people, it helps to identify both the **anchors** (factors that prevent people from leaving a place) and the **magnets** (factors that draw or attract people to a place) (Beckley, 2003, as cited in Lewicka, 2011). In December, Guest Faculty Andrés di Masso led us through an exploration of four different affordances to consider as we think about our organizations: **social, physical, affective, and symbolic**.

- **Social affordances** - Offering places designed to facilitate or allow for social interaction, bringing people together, and contributing to a collective sense of identity
- **Physical affordances** - Providing place experiences that enable various patterns of interaction to facilitate collaboration or specific activities
- **Affective affordances** - Places can be made attractive through experiences that offer a sense of purpose, wholeness, or fulfills peoples’ emotional needs
- **Symbolic affordances** - Places clearly signal what they are meant for and they become relevant to us because they carry meaning

These affordances can be considered and utilized in conjunction with each other to create a place that meets the needs and goals of an organization and its employees. Organizations would be wise to focus less on building “an ideal place,” based on normative standards, and more on processes of co-creating, navigating, and coordinating multiple senses of place within an organization. Inviting people into the process of placemaking creates opportunities for shared decision-making, ultimately resulting in better outcomes, including an increased sense of identity, connection, attachment, and engagement to a place. What creates or provides a sense of place for people can change over time, so this process should be an *ongoing* dialogue, not a one-time event. Finally, it’s important to maximize unique affordances for what they offer, rather than trying to do everything, everywhere, all at once.
Reflect:

- What are some of the fixities and flows at play in your organization?
- What affordances is your organization focusing its energy on? What’s working? What needs to change?

NAVIGATING PLACE TRANSITIONS: Change & Continuity

As we navigate place transitions and a shifting sense of place, we need to create places that can adapt to change while maintaining some sense of continuity. Norberg-Schulz (2019) proposes the idea of genius loci, translated loosely to “the core spirit of a place” – comprising both meaning and structure. Identifying and preserving the genius loci of a place is less about replicating the old, and more about finding a way to reinterpret the old place in a new way that still maintains its core identity and values.

Resilient Places

We learned from communities of people who have been uprooted or displaced, exploring how they dealt with the challenges of establishing themselves in a new place. Displacement often results in a loss of power and identity, so in a new place, people have a need for stability and integration, systems of connection, and a level of responsiveness that allows for both continuity and change. Remember that placemaking is a collaborative process, and it’s important for people experiencing place transitions to be treated as agents who can actively develop the strategies and skills they need to adapt to a new context. Place transitions are not simply happening to us; we are active agents involved in the process together.

A resilient place can maintain its structure and function even as the landscape and other factors change. We can think about resilience in three ways: as stability (the capacity to buffer), as recovery (the ability to bounce back), and as transformation (the capacity for creativity). So, what makes a place resilient? Having people-place connections (that build on existing relationships) and community networks is essential, along with a clear infrastructure and effective governance. Finally, resilient places need diversity and innovation, and spaces designed for interaction and the exchange of knowledge, skills, and learning (Eckenwiler, 2016; Habitat III, 2015; Kaluarchchi, 2018, p. 449).

Placemaking through People

With new changes unfolding all the time, one source of stability is investing in people and relationships, creating a kind of interdependent “social architecture” of a place. As Guest Faculty Jody Hoffer Gittell shared with us: high quality relationships enable us to sustain performance under pressure for longer. Her model of relational coordination is a way of approaching change that’s centered around
relationships. Relational coordination helps people connect with each other around their work on both an emotional and practical level, and it exists both in person and remotely, throughout all levels of an organization – from the intrapersonal to the interpersonal, from within the organization to across organizations, and even on a systems or institutional level.

Measuring relational coordination focuses on communication and relationships, looking at 7 key areas across both:

- **Communication**: frequency, timeliness, accuracy, problem-solving orientation
- **Relationships**: shared knowledge, shared goals, mutual respect

Jody walked LILA members through a relational mapping exercise, inviting them to reflect on how well their organizations are understanding, measuring, and influencing networks of relationships. She asked us to choose one particular challenge to address, then asked two key questions: (1) Who are the key stakeholders involved? (2) How well do they coordinate with each other around solving that challenge? Network mapping is also a useful tool in identifying and locating key stakeholders who are involved or need to be involved in order to maximize the diversity of exchange of knowledge, expertise, and values (Williams, 2018). Effective relational coordination can also lead to more aligned mental models, offering some continuity for employees on fluid teams. Shared mental models enable them to know who to reach out to for what, and where to store and retrieve information, which can be particularly challenging in times of change, leading to information gaps and disruptions in processes. Thinking about how people are coordinating with each other offers a different way to think about how a place is structured.

**Reflect on your organization:**
- Which structures are the **most** supportive of relational coordination?
- Which structures are **least** supportive of relational coordination?
- Where are your biggest opportunities for improvement?

Another way to deal with flatter structures and distributed teams is for employees to create **holding environments** with one another. This is another kind of people-based “place” structure, which enables people to rely on themselves and each other. Holding environments are cultivated through four kinds of connections, to: (1) **place** - with a dedicated workspace, tools, and resources; (2) **routines** - rituals that streamline workflow; (3) **purpose** - having a bridge between personal interest and a need in the world; and (4) **people** - trusted folks to turn to. These holding environments can help employees who are working from home, remotely, or in a hybrid environment feel a more grounded sense of place with one another (Kahn, 2001).
WHAT CAN WE DO?

If our aspiration is to build organizational places where diverse people can work, grow, and learn effectively, while feeling a sense of connection, belonging, and well-being, we need to carve out space for intentional placemaking. We know that people actively make, unmake, and re-make places and place meanings through collective discourse, stories, language, and actions. Places “gather” things, so it’s important to know not only what to gather, but also when and how to engage (Di Masso, et al., 2019; Erfani, 2022; Ryberg & Davidsen, 2016). As a reminder, when we think about intentional placemaking, the goal is to focus on process rather than defining an “ideal place” because even if that ideal existed, it would always be changing. Thinking through what we’ve learned this year, what can we do?

Explore Multiple Scenarios

The goal of placemaking is not necessarily to define one path forward, but rather to imagine a future that takes divergent goals and needs into consideration. As Dan Williams reminded us, it’s important to have a “view from somewhere”: standpoint matters and only with multiple sets of eyes and perspectives can we imagine feasible paths forward that serve a wide range of employees and needs within an organization. Planning for multiple scenarios enables stakeholders to collaboratively engage to identify what a place is, what’s working, and what’s needed, then to explore multiple avenues for what it might become, of course, keeping the genius loci (core spirit) of the place in mind. When people who are invested in a place come together, their shared sense of place can actually minimize conflicts and maximize diverse perspectives to create opportunities that benefit the larger community (Erfani, 2022, p. 457).

Engage in Participatory Processes

Co-creation is a crucial part of placemaking, so it’s essential to identify diverse stakeholders in participatory processes. As we discussed when talking about power dynamics and inequities, organizations need to be aware of who is involved and who needs to be; who is being affected? Participatory processes can help reveal power relations so leaders need to be particularly vigilant to notice when power inequities are being strengthened or replicated. Accommodating diverse perspectives likely won’t result in one shared sense of place (there is no “one-size-fits-all” solution), so perhaps the goal is to strive to create multiple sense of places within an organization. Relational coordination is helpful to keep in mind for these processes: create spaces with psychological safety, engage in humble inquiry, and operate from a base of shared knowledge, shared goals, and mutual respect.

Capture and Share What’s Working

When people in an organization know what is happening elsewhere, it enhances feelings of interdependence and solidarity, and builds momentum (Block, 2009; Han, 2017; Ganz, 2018). Learning what makes a place unique requires noticing, observing, and recording habitual actions and practices to
first identify what they are, then to choose whether to replicate them or shift away from them (Nunes, 2019). How are people engaging with different places? What are the rhythms and patterns? Gathering this data involves listening to and learning from people individually and as groups, and for leaders to also reflect on their own experiences of place attachment. Sharing the rhythms and patterns you notice throughout the organization can help employees see their place in the larger system (e.g., What’s working? What do we want more of? What do we want less of? How might we shift?). If organizations share information about employee choices (for example, who is coming back to the office on which days), it can influence norms and behavior by enabling people to make choices collectively rather than in isolation or solely dictated by leadership or policy (Gelfand, et al., 2011). For organizations with geographically dispersed employees, one way to help people feel more connected to each other and to the organization is to invite them to get involved in their local communities as part of the organization’s mission. If employees know others are doing similar things as them, they begin to feel their localized work is a part of something bigger, which can lead to feelings of embeddedness and belonging, thus creating a larger sense of place that transcends space and time.

Design for Social Interaction

Intentional placemaking involves both physical place and also the dimension of time. As we think about virtual and hybrid work, we need to be aware of the differences between synchronous and asynchronous work, and design strategically around that. People moving in synchrony with others actually think differently (often better) than when they think alone; when people are paying attention to the same thing as others, it enhances a sense of motivation and enables people to align their mental models with those around them (Murphy Paul, 2021). Leaders would be wise to ask themselves which work and learning experiences need to be synchronous, and which would work equally well asynchronously?

Independent gig workers often seek out coworking spaces for the ability to work alone together, that is to have space for both collaboration and privacy. Being in the company of others offers opportunities for interactions – whether the opportunity is seized or not, even the potential is valuable (Spreitzer, et al., 2020). Moments of spontaneous interaction can result in random discoveries, knowledge-sharing, and of course, relationship-building. Creating opportunities for informal engagement is also key, as it offers employees a chance to share tacit knowledge and expertise among themselves, which can sometimes get lost in more formal communication channels or information flows (Dorow, et al., 2017; Murphy Paul, 2021).

To conclude this year’s exploration of Placemaking, Summit keynote speaker Marissa King will share her expertise on creating more conscious connections with the LILA community. We know that social networks have a strong influence on career trajectories and success, innovation and profitability, and how teams and companies coordinate, but organizations don’t always have a clear or explicit strategy for how to manage these networks most effectively. Without a strategy, these relationships are often determined by place and circumstance. Marissa will share insights from a decade of research on social
networks to help us think about how to create, use, and manage social networks more strategically as we continue to build and refine our organizations and workplaces. As Williams and Van Patten (2006) note: “By expanding our networks of social and spatial relations, globalization restructures our experience of home and away and ultimately how we go about constructing our identities and anchoring our sense of who we are and where we belong” (p. 47).

Reflecting on what you’ve read in this brief, what questions and curiosities are coming up for you? What ideas or inspirations do you have as you think about placemaking in your organization? We look forward to exploring and expanding on future possibilities with you as we culminate this year’s exploration of Placemaking at the June Summit.
**SUMMIT SPEAKER BIO**

**Marissa King, Professor, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania**

Marissa King is the Alice Y. Hung President’s Distinguished Professor at The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. Professor King’s research examines social networks, social influence, and team dynamics. Her most recent line of work examines how to improve health care team dynamics to reduce provider burnout and enhance quality of care. She is the author of *Social Chemistry: Decoding the Elements of Human Connection*. Her research and book have been featured in *The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, The Atlantic*, and National Public Radio, among other outlets.
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