**Gehl** is an urban design practice focused on 'Making Cities for People'
Sembra ma non è un «beatnik»

Da diversi giorni abbiamo notato un giovane straniero aggirarsi per la Piazza del Popolo. Abbiamo subito pensato: «I beatnick» in Ascoli?

Ma il suo fare aveva qualcosa di particolare. A parte le misurazioni ed i rilievi con strani apparecchi ottici, lo straniero prendeva in continuazione appunti su tutti i passanti. Insomma chi era?

Poche parole di presentazione e di saluto e subito si è scoperto l'arcano. Si tratta dell'architetto danese Jan Gehl, che avendo ricevuto una borsa di studio per studiare la forma e la vita delle piazze italiane da un punto di vista architettonico e sociologico, ha incluso la nostra Piazza del Popolo nei suoi itinerari.

Il giovane è simpaticissimo architetto, che si avvale della collaborazione della gentile consorte laureata in psicologia, si va chiedendo perché mai — nei centri storici italiani — con tanti viali e belle strade nuove, la popolazione insista a passeggiare sulle antiche piazze.

Saremmo interessati, al termine delle sue indagini, di conoscere l'opinione dell'architetto.
Jan Gehl Cities for people

HOW TO STUDY PUBLIC LIFE

Jan Gehl & Birgitte Svarre

2010 2014
As social scientists we investigate life through the analysis of public life.

As designers we study the quality of the built environment.
Public Life

What people collectively create when they live their lives outside of their home, workplace and car.
Watching others is humankind’s greatest joy.

— Icelandic saying
We are drawn to environments that make us comfortable.
We sit in the sun when it’s cold
We walk in the shade when it’s hot
that is, if there’s a place to sit!
Distances play an important role when we experience cities and social contact increases when we get closer.

- **30M**: Recognizing individuals & one-way communication
- **0.5-3.7M**: Talking & interacting
- **20M**: Recognizing faces & emotions
- **0.5M**: Intimate distance, strong impressions
Humans need ~ 1,000 stimuli per hour.
Humans need ~ 1,000 stimuli per hour
“we measure what we care about”

- Jan
Observation is at the core of what we do
We measure people moving

We measure people staying
We measure public space quality

- Designed towards:
  - Aesthetics
  - Climate
  - Humanscale

- Invitations to:
  - Observe
  - Converse
  - Play
  - Move
  - Liger
  - Rest

- Protection:
  - Physical
  - Social
  - Sensory

= Good vs. Great
= Reasons to stay
= Reasons to come
Strædet
8,000 pedestrians per day
258 people staying per hour

Kay Fiskers Plads
8,000 pedestrians per day
18 people staying per hour

Sticky or Not?
People Data

This window into the Gehl Public Life database helps us tell stories about people in public places all over the world. Easily create charts and tables just by selecting survey locations. Download these visualizations to your computer and use them in Adobe Illustrator and InDesign.
Benchmarking compared to other cities

Lower Broadway is one of the busiest streets we’ve seen.

- **NASHVILLE**: 4,482 / Hour
- **SAN FRANCISCO**: 4,177 / Hour
- **NEW YORK**: 5,077 / Hour
- **SHANGHAI**: 6,668 / Hour

*Images of crowded streets and pedestrian areas with labels indicating public realm.*
Why Collect Data?

To find human stories
To inform strategy and design
To provide evidence
To make objective choices
To benchmark progress
To discover new opportunities
To create urgency for change
Understanding the impact of **planning decisions**
Understanding the impact of programming

AVERAGE STATIONARY ACTIVITIES COUNTS PER HOUR - AMOUNT OF PEOPLE COUNTED PER BLOCK AT ANY POINT IN TIME - 10AM-8PM

- Baseline Saturday
- MIT Saturday
- Baseline Sunday
- MIT Sunday

+100%
Understanding the impact of design
Times Square use vs. design

- Design area
  - 11%
  - 89%

- Users
  - 90%
  - 10%
63% Decrease in pedestrian injuries
74% say Times Square has improved dramatically
17% Improved travel time
80% Fewer pedestrians in the roadway
35% Decrease in traffic injuries
80% Fewer pedestrians in the roadway
17% Improved travel time
74% say Times Square has improved dramatically

Gehl — Making Cities for People
Public Life
Pittsburgh has the world’s best bus stop

Pairing a crowded bus stop with the comfortable amenities of Katz Plaza is a great match: **comfortable transit waiting experience and activated plaza.**
It also has some poor ones.

Too many bus stops in Pittsburgh have next to zero amenities for transit riders. Without a dignified waiting experience it’s no surprise stops appear disorganized and cause a conflict with people walking and with shop owners.
Public life is mostly people waiting for transit

At key times bus riders account for 30-85% of stationary activities

Liberty and 7th
Weekday average
Life on Liberty / Streetlife Plan

Existing Conditions
Liberty Avenue at Smithfield
Proposed Layout
Liberty Avenue at Smithfield

Life on Liberty / Streetlife Plan
Life on Liberty / Streetlife Plan

Proposed Configuration at the Intersection

Liberty East

William Penn Pl

- Proposed Configuration
  - Sidewalk North: +11'
  - Bulb-Out North: +10'

21' Sidewalk
10' Sidewalk Bulb-Out
12' Bus Lane (Peak Period)
11' Travel Lane
12' Bus Lane (Peak Period)
25' Sidewalk & Bus Stop
31' Sidewalk
35' Roadway
25' Sidewalk
Type 2 Bulb-out

Potential amenities:

1. Signage
2. Lean Bars
3. Benches
4. Shelters
5. Planting
6. Movable Seating
7. Bike Parking
8. Art

Quality of Waiting Experience:

- 40 People Waiting
- 15 People Walking

Life on Liberty / Streetlife Plan
Why Collect Data on 13th Ave?

To find **human stories**
To **inform strategy** and design
To provide **evidence**
To make **objective choices**
To **benchmark progress**
To discover **new opportunities**
To create **urgency** for change
Initial Guiding Question

How can 13th Street develop its own unique public life profile by meeting unmet needs on campus?
How do different users experience the street?
How do people move and switch modes?
How are the two gateways working?
What about the rain?
What are the different use profiles as the street changes?
How is bike parking working near entrances?
Survey Days

Survey Training

**Weekday**
Wednesday
October 17
8am-8pm
(or later...)

**Weekend**
Saturday
October 20
8am-8pm
(or later...)
Draft Survey Overview
Questions for the Team

• What is missing from public life at U of O?

• What key questions do you want answered as part of the Public Life Survey?

• What user groups or use patterns are you interested in?

• Do you have any hunches about how 13th Avenue is used?