Introduction

Authors:

Neal Haslem

https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4564-4881

Biography:

Neal Haslem is a Senior Lecturer and Interim Associate Dean of the Communication Design discipline at RMIT School of Design. Neal is a communication designer, design educator and a practice-led researcher into communication design. Neal's research lies in the intersection of design practice, 'community' and the intersubjective action with which design reveals and actualises possible futures. Since 2012, Neal has collaborated with Keely Macarow and Marcus Knutagård on manifestos, publications, conferences, and exhibitions advancing the concept of *Homefullness*.

Marcus Knutagård

https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2713-3359

Biography:

Marcus Knutagård is a Professor and Head of Department at Malmö University, Sweden. His work integrates research and practice, focusing on housing, homelessness, social policy, and welfare systems. His research frequently highlights the intersection of housing rights and social justice, as well as innovative approaches for addressing homelessness. Since 2012, Professor Knutagård has collaborated with Keely Macarow and Neal Haslem on manifestos, publications, conferences, and exhibitions advancing the concept of *Homefullness*.

Keely Macarow

https://orcid.org/000-0001-7684-9201

Biography:

Keely Macarow is an Associate Professor in the School of Art, RMIT University (Naarm/Melbourne) who lives on Dja Dja Wurrung Country (Victoria/Australia). Keely uses text, artworks, design artefacts and exhibitions to explore concerns around care, housing,

refugees, health, the climate emergency and her family. She has collaborated with Neal Haslem and Marcus Knutgard since 2012 on manifestos, publications, symposia and exhibitions to advocate for *Homefullness*.

Abstract:
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Welcome to this collection of written and visual texts, brought together under the concept of *Homefullness*, which demonstrate a range of practices and projects confronting the inequities of global housing from many different disciplinary perspectives and orientations. Within this book you will find a range of viewpoints and practices examining housing, urbanity, community and justice from writers based in Australia, Sweden, the Americas, Norway, the United Kingdom and Spain. Contributors have generously shared their diverse lived experiences of housing, housing stress and homelessness, and expositions of their work with others to interrogate and establish a range of housing, co-living and micro-media practices and spaces in supportive communities or what we deem *Homefullness*. Writers for this collection come from a range of diverse disciplinary orientations including activism, design, art, urban planning and the social sciences.

Readers of this book will find writing from practitioners and researchers which offer new ways of thinking about homelessness, housing stress and housing in contemporary social, cultural, political and environmental spaces. Contributors to this book have responded to the provocations outlined in the *Homefullness* manifesto which opens this collection, and was first presented in a print and wall based installation in the 2021 *Time Space Existence* biennial architecture exhibition in Venice, Italy.

In this introduction we provide a brief description of each of the four parts of the book alongside a discussion of the interrelationships and threads that connect the chapters. The collection contributes to discourse about – and options for – tackling homelessness and housing stress and the diverse ways through which we might move towards communities of *Homefullness*.

Although issues aligned with housing stress and homelessness remain in seemingly entrenched conditions throughout the world, the voices collected here broaden and deepen possibilities for *Homefullness* and add their diverse experience and expertise to the ongoing project. *Homefullness*, as a collective call to action continues to provide inspiration for new possibilities, visions and connections. The collection grapples with the lived experience of housing stress and explores aspirations and options for housing programs and projects in the Global North and the Global South.

We view *'Acts of* Homefullness' – the book – as itself the latest in a series of acts of *Homefullness*, one that brings a selection of new voices together and into discourse. Not all on the same page, and intentionally at times in debate with one another, these voices reflect upon how governments, people, spaces, institutions and future societies might work together towards *Homefullness*. They do not necessarily suggest the same ways forward but they are included here to explore and engage with the concept of *Homefullness* and themselves inspire acts of *Homefullness* in you, the reader.

In the first chapter the authors, **Neal Haslem, Marcus Knutagård** and **Keely Macarow** – and editors of this book – reflect upon the concept of *Homefullness*, where it originated and what it has led to since 2012 when they first met to discuss a possible response to the housing crisis. They give an overview examining the ongoing global issue of homelessness and housing stress and follow this by thinking through what the concept of *Homefullness* might allow as a critical means to shift the seemingly intractable issues of homelessness and housing stress.

The collection of responses commences with **Part I: Questioning Housing**. In this section a range of voices discuss the nature of housing today and unpack assumptions about why people have houses, how they view them and how and why people become homeless. The writers also question the very concept of what creates a home and why we urgently need a vast shift in our thinking and practices regarding the development of housing and the creation of homes and community. Housing, as a global issue, is not improving due largely to the late 20th century 'return to inequality' (Smith et al. 2022) and this first section of the book contains a number of

different viewpoints and trajectories on this ongoing issue. Different viewpoints on what constitutes housing, and a home are posited to investigate new understandings of homelessness and its causes.

Pat Vera commences with an exploration of the concept of *Homefullness* through her positionality as a Latinx Mestiza of the Guarani people. Using native language to introduce Guarani cosmology, she questions contemporary understandings of home and instead demonstrates how First Nations people maintained a sustainable life for thousands of years in central South America.

Elucidating this discussion about alternatives to traditional housing is **Roger Paez**, **Manuela Valtchanova** and **Toni Montes** reporting of the 'Navire Avenir' project. In this very recent design initiative, opportunities for emergency housing are expanded through the development of a refugee rescue ship or 'drifting heterotopia'. This active social design collaborative initiative is championed by Paez, Valtchanova and Montes as a positive grassroots innovation for temporary and adaptive housing for refugees and is a positive comparison to paternalistic top-down impositions of emergency housing we critique elsewhere in this book.

In their exposition of democratised urbanity, **Flavia Marcello** and **Ian Woodcock's** visual essay examines how the political dimensions of housing are played out in Australian urban public spaces with documentation of 'rogue' poster campaigns that adorn the accelerating gentrification of the inner-urban streets of Naarm/Melbourne and Warrane/Sydney. These posters bring visibility to hidden grassroots voices and map the housing crisis back into urban landscapes which appear to be determined to concrete over them. Flavia's pictorial study brings this tension to light, and as we discover throughout this book, is mirrored across the world as the gap between the affluent and the people who live without adequate and permanent housing becomes more pronounced.

To complete Part I, **Jan Brueggemeier**, following Vilem Flusser, discusses how community 'micro-media' practices undertaken by a Commoners Press *10press* letterpress project and through a Soil Food Web-inspired bioregional media inquiry contribute to small-scale

community building. In this exploration of micro acts of *Homefullness*, Jan discusses how community activations facilitate interpretative and inclusive communities, gestures of care, reciprocity, and reparation and speculative, situated practices of *re-worlding*.

Part II: Homes and *Homefullness* deliberately examines that nature of home and how this might translate to societies with greater *Homefullness*.

For instance, **Suzie Attiwill** discusses ideas of 'home' and aspirations for creating home environments from the position of interior design as a profession and discipline. Interior design's more recent definition is a practice that 'determines the relationship between people and space in terms of physical and psychological parameters to improve the quality of life'. Suzie discusses her recent project with young people living in out-of-home care and how one might transform environments towards the home-like.

Scott Welsh reflects on *Homefullness* in an autobiographical piece which explores his own lived experience of homelessness and his commitment to *Homefull* acts of individual citizenship and identity creation. His 'ethnography,' emphasises the experiences of both the researcher and participant – engaging in genuine, real-life being and knowing. Scott examines various ontological stages in the journey from homelessness to *Homefullness* and the disruptions of consciousness or deep memory.

With lifeworld writing, **Josephin Huq** discusses 'home-place' phenomena, and questions whether this mode of writing can expand or redefine notions of home. She argues that it is the everyday experiences we often ignore that are the exact ones that make our home-places. **Caroline Lambert** and **Amaya Alvarez** discuss how in the same way that the human body holds the score for trauma, our homes hold the score for those who experience psychological distress. Focusing on the predominantly female 'carers' who support those with mental distress, the chapter demonstrates through text and image how contemporary de-institutionalisation, combined with neo-liberal governance has created the conditions for precarious and unsafe spaces to exist within our homes.

In the final chapter of this section, **Joshua Levy**, **Chiara Valli** and **Kristina Grange** discuss the external challenges faced by Alma, an emergency accommodation for homeless women located in Gothenburg, Sweden. Through this case study which charts the resistance by some local residents to accept and support the emergency accommodation in their community, the writers observed that the community safety and safeness valorised in Swedish politics should not be guaranteed for some at the exclusion of others. By championing the inclusion of Alma's residents in the local community, Joshua, Chiara and Kristina advocate for *Homefull* cities and neighborhoods which provide accommodation solutions and safe and supportive environments for all.

Part III: Communities of Possibility examines lessons and futures for *Homefullness* across diverse communities.

Laurene Vaughan and **Adrià Garcia i Mateu** position acts of *Homefullness* as the embodiment of practices of care and discuss how design as a collaborative practice of care can address housing issues. In dialogue they address how the housing crisis necessitates a reimagining of home ownership and habitation, investigating design as multisensory, ephemeral and emotive systems and a structure that can support *Homefullness*.

Reflecting on the Nordic position, **Håvard Aaslund** discusses the relationship between social work and social movements and what can be learnt from innovative collective actions through his own field notes and interviews. He documents examples of community-led mutual support, nontraditional social work and the revitalisation of informal support systems. Håvard conceptualises this mutual aid as a form of social work with collective action driven by activists, squatters and supporters.

Eszter Hegymegi, **Holly Turpin** and **Sara Christou** discuss how creative methodologies can be used to generate more inclusive knowledge systems around home and *Homefullness*. They document how they have used practices of service design, immersive story telling and Photovoice to 'create from, with and as' in order to better reveal the complex dimensions of homelessness across England with empathy and inclusivity.

Discussing the lived experience of 700 women engaged in a cultural counter-mapping project entitled 'EmpowerHER' in Kamloops, Canada, **Marnie Badham**, **Rachel Iampolski**, **Ian McShane** and **Wendy Steele** explore alternative, affective understandings of place and citizen-informed, democratic approaches to urban planning and development. They propose that cultural counter-mapping – both as a process and an outcome – can act as a bridge between an alternative, affective understanding of place and its value and inform approaches to democratic and citizen informed urban planning and development.

Chelsea Hart, **Emmett LaGrutta**, **David Kelly** and **Lucie McMahon** discuss the fifty minute documentary 'Things Will Be Different' which was directed by McMahon and captures the displacement of a community as they are forcefully relocated from an Australian public housing estate due to private development. For this chapter, Chelsea, Emmett, David and Lucie reflect on the human cost of government policies which endanger public housing communities in Naarm/Melbourne and are prevalent in other regions in Australia and across the world. However, this chapter does not merely respond to the outcomes of draconian neoliberal housing policy but asserts the value of community, resistance and solidarity.

The last section of the book, **Part IV: Opportunities for Change** looks forwards to futures which embody the spirit of *Homefullness*.

To begin this section, **Jenny Hickinbotham** uses songs and prose in order to explore the personal and external factors which exacerbated her search for permanent housing. In this chapter, Jenny demonstrates that while secure housing is important, it is one's mood, functioning, wellbeing and community that also provides a sense of *Homefullness*. For Jenny, life is not only beset by injustice and trauma, but beautiful acts of *Homefullness* which can be found in vegetable gardens, animal companions and when you finally find your own beautiful home.

Following this **Marcus Knutagård**, **Neal Haslem** and **Keely Macarow** meditate on the life of George, a man experiencing homelessness who transforms a public bench into a home. They

explore how hostile urban design and exclusionary architecture shape the experiences of people without housing, framing homelessness as both a spatial and moral issue. The chapter highlights the resilience and humanity found in small, everyday acts of *Homefullness*. Ultimately, George's story challenges us to rethink how society responds to homelessness – not with exclusion, but with recognition and care.

Tove Samzelius examines the empowerment of single mothers who challenge short-sighted and inadequate housing policy. Drawing on the lived experience of single mothers and their families, and the advocacy and resourcing of single mother led organisations in Sweden and the UK, Tove proposes a radical shift from entrenched capitalist systems which favour business models for housing solutions to interconnected relational social ecologies which align housing and homes with care, wellbeing and community.

To complete Part IV, **Allan Parsons** argues that the issue of homelessness and housing stress is both a challenge *for* design practices and a challenge *to* them. Allan discusses how design practice has the potential, as a practice of bricolage, to intervene and alter ongoing contextualising practices and therefore change the situation. He theorises the housing crisis as an immersive, historical narrative environment: ongoing processes of world-making that continue to encode the perduring legacies of modernity: liberalism, colonialism and enslavement. He posits the value of an affirmative approach to worldlessness for designing for *Homefullness*.

The last chapter – and the book's conclusion – explores *Homefullness* through the prism of homes and homelands. In this new *Homefullness* manifesto, **Keely Macarow**, **Marcus Knutagård** and **Neal Haslem** discuss the challenges people face through wars and climate breakdown and extrapolate them into a new manifesto. Thus, this book itself is 'bookended' with two manifestos; the first, a provocation that helped to gather the book's collection, the second a distillation of the crises we face in what is deemed by many as system collapse. However, Keely, Marcus and Neal instead propose *Homefullness*, where people are able to survive and thrive in homes and homelands that are not ravaged by the impacts of changes in climate, extreme weather events, the occupation of their land or endless wars.

The editors aim for this book, *'Acts of* Homefullness*'*, to itself be an act of *Homefullness*; in that it creates a new platform through which the diverse essays, ideas and provocations are collected and come into conversation with one another. As a deliberately transdisciplinary publication this book 'bridges the gaps' between experts; bringing art, design, social work and urban futures together in a meta-narrative, rising up from the specific knowledge sets of our various disciplines to enable collective understandings and meaning-making around one of the most complex and challenging issues of our times. In the face of massive, seemingly intractable global issues of homelessness, housing stress and displacement, it can be easy to abandon hope in *Homefull* futures. However, the 'acts' collected in these pages; the book itself and the individual contributions and statements within it demonstrate how acts of *Homefullness* can help us to move towards communities of *Homefullness*. Together they expand the reach of the original 'campaign for *Homefullness*', taking *Homefullness* into the future as a catalysing platform for collective conversation and meaningful societal change. These acts empower us all in the face of complex, overwhelming universal challenges. They allow us to come together, to unpack assumptions, to help others and to create real change through innovative transdisciplinary work. Taken together they question established ways of being and entrenched social-political entanglements and open ourselves, and others, to new possibilities for *Homefullness*.

Reference list

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