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The storied reality of library spaces

Fostering social connection and
cohesion

Jessica Haack, Coordinator, Information and Client Services
ALIA New Librarians Symposium XI, 2025

Interior of the State Library of Queensland, Brisbane (no date), State Library of
Queensland. Neg: 199274

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The vibe

The building and its surrounds:

- Size and space
- Furniture
- Lighting
- Access points
- Outdoor spaces
- Gardens



Exterior of State Library Building, Photographer unknown, State Library of Queensland

The vibe

The content and function:

- Collections
- Exhibitions
- Technologies



Big Voices: Children's Art Matters Image, 2020 , Leif Ekstrom, Corporate Image Library, State Library of Queensland

The tribe

Social Inclusion:

- Accessibility (also represented by a lack thereof)
- Engagement
 - Actors
 - Activities
 - Services



Heritage Talks: Houses and Homes 051 , 25 Nov 2024 , Josie Huang, Corporate Image Library, State Library of Queensland

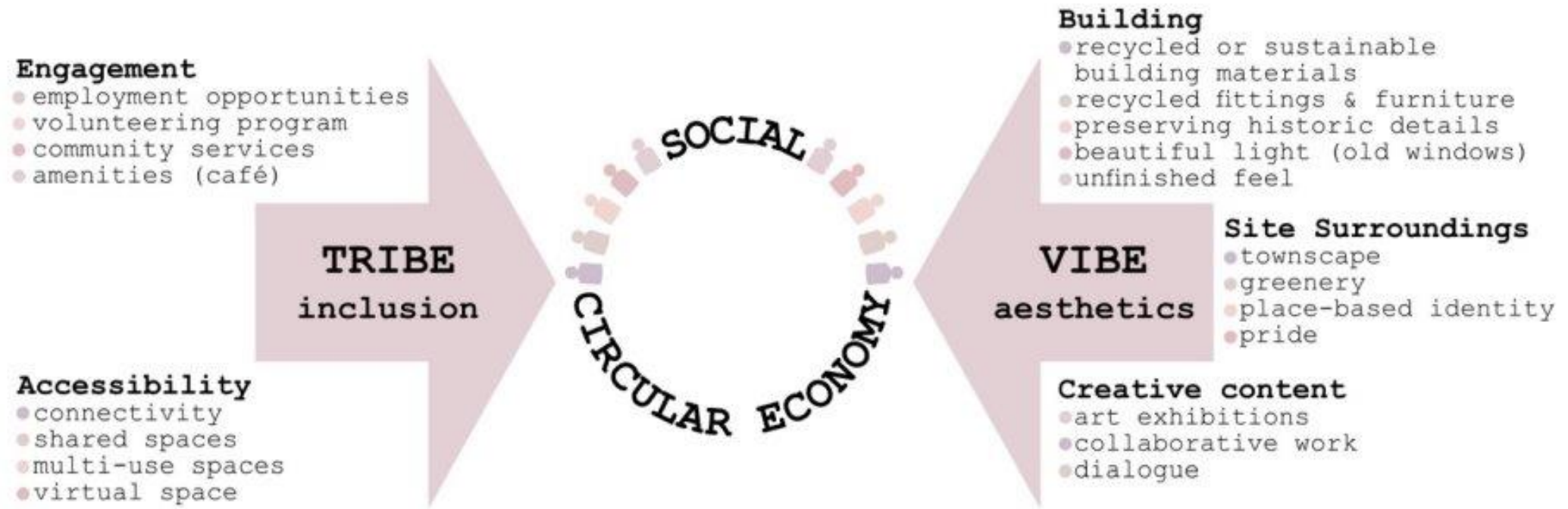


Figure 5. Conceptualization of social CE in the building context.

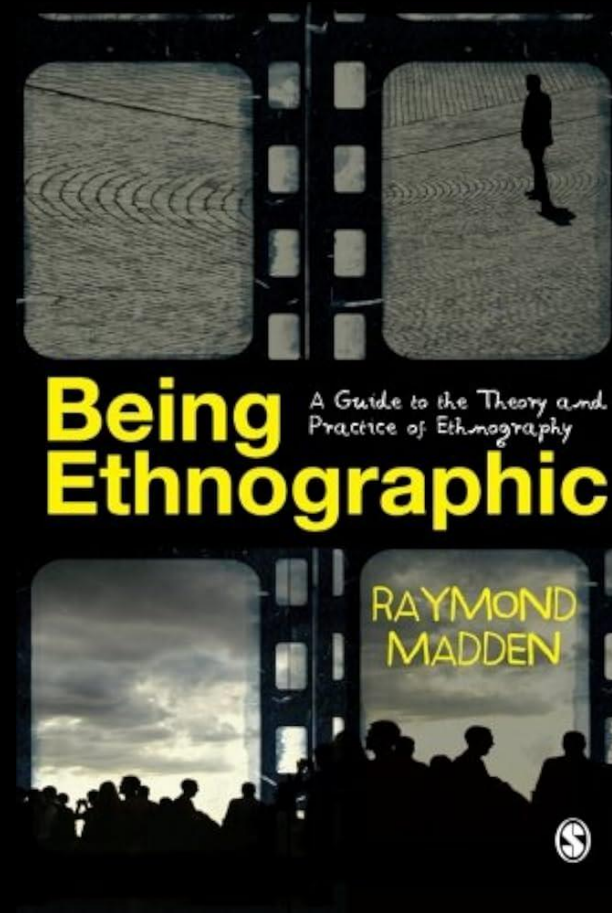


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Measuring the social circular economy

- Ethnographic writing should aspire to meet the challenge of conveying an interesting, accessible and believable portrait of a culture or society.
- To do so it has to find a balance between the duty of facts and validity, and a literary voice.
- This balanced approach is called the 'storied reality.'



Madden, R. (2010). Being ethnographic: A guide to the theory and practice of ethnography. SAGE Publications Inc. California.

- We know what our library spaces are and how they used.
- We know our spaces hold transformative power for communities.
- It's how we articulate this and present our evidence of this that allows us to truly highlight the power our services hold in fostering social connection.



Brisbane River viewed from the Red Box at the State Library of Queensland, 2006, State Library of Queensland Image number: 7017-0001-0032

Thank you 😊

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