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Connecting to place through creative tourism

Fiona Eva Bakas, Nancy Duxbury, Silvia Silva, and Tiago Vinagre de Castro

Abstract: Within creative tourism, place-based specificities are sources of inspiration as well as strategic elements to foster distinctive initiatives with local resonance. Place, holistically conceived, comprises the physical environment, cultures, intangible and tangible heritage, and the people inhabiting the locale. This chapter analyzes how creative tourism experiences developed within CREATOUR integrate elements that connect visitors to place, enabling participants to feel a sense of belonging in the place visited. The authors engaged in a collective reflexive exercise about the creative tourism experiences developed that revealed four dimensions or ways of connecting to place: through the site and materials, the activity, storytelling, and socializing. The specific site where the experience occurs can directly integrate macro and micro scales of place, from landscape to venues, while endogenous materials used within it encourage participants to directly interact with the landscape and its natural resources. Ensuring that the experience itself includes making items that are coherent with local culture, traditions, and crafts can also meaningfully connect participants to place. Integrating storytelling into the experiences, for example, by using theatrical tools or personal stories told by locals, connects visitors to the local place through its history, narratives, and local characters. Finally, moments for socializing within the creation activities as well as in social moments such as a picnic or walk play an important role in allowing visitors to slow-down, relax, and absorb the ‘feeling of place’. Integrating all four elements into a creative tourism experience helps immerse participants in place-specific culture and history in innovative manners, motivate visitors to participate, and create memorable experiences. This chapter may be useful to individuals developing creative tourism activities.

Keywords: place, storytelling, socializing, site, crafts, activity

“The miniature schist house-making workshop in the serene village of Cerdeira was a 25-minute uphill drive along a very narrow and windy forest road, with amazing views of the valley. On reaching the village the sound of bird-songs was enchanting and the feeling of being at a unique place was very obvious to me. The very fact that I was in a schist village in order to make a miniature schist house was what made the experience all the more special. Being able to collect schist stones right from the ground as the resources to make the miniature house and learning about the history of the place and the architectural specificities made the experience very memorable and valuable.”

—Researcher’s impressions on conducting a site-visit at Cerdeira Village, Centro region, Portugal, 2018

Creative tourism is a tourist activity that incorporates four dimensions: active participation, learning, creative self-expression, and community engagement (Duxbury & Richards, 2019). Place, in its expansive meaning – including geographical, cultural, and social landscapes and specificities – serves as a source of inspiration to design distinctive creative tourism offers with local resonance and

meaning. However, limited research has been conducted on the complexities of *how* creative tourism connects to place.

Situated as we are within a place-based world (Hildreth & Bailey, 2014), connection to place through tourism is heavily influenced by a combination of geography, history, culture, and inter-linked institutions. Beyond physical characteristics and the materiality of a setting – from landscapes to venues and workshop spaces – place is also constituted through an overlaying of elements in a way that provides a sense of rootedness and coherence between an activity and the location in which it occurs, the narratives that give it meaning in that place, and the moments in which one takes in the whole situation to rest and dwell on that activity in that place. As Healey (2010) notes, “a sense of place and of place quality can be understood as some kind of coming together of physical experiences (using, bumping into, looking at, hearing, breathing) and imaginative constructions (giving meanings and values) produced through individual activity and socially formed appreciations” (p. 34).

Looking back to the pilot project proposals that were initially submitted to the CREATOUR project, we see that all were inspired by the particular place where the initiatives were based (considering, e.g., region, village, town, city, farm, etc.) and their perception of how it is ‘special’ for them. From the very beginning, these connections to place comprised the root of each project developer’s actions. Place attachment is in their hearts and minds. It is their motivation: to promote and develop something in a region, land, place that they value and wish to nurture and share with others. They are hosts in a true sense, motivated by the passion they have for their own place. As the CREATOUR pilot projects were developed and implemented, different dimensions of place were highlighted and articulated. In every field visit conducted, these feelings were demonstrated.

The analysis in this chapter draws upon a variety of knowledge sources and experiences developed within the CREATOUR research-and-application project, in which the authors participated as researchers. This includes their autoethnographic accounts of conducting site visits, participating in pilot activities, conversations and interviews between researchers and practitioners, and content analyses of ePortfolio entries. The CREATOUR ePortfolio entries were reflexive multimedia research diaries intended to capture first-hand observations, impressions, reflections, and ideas during the course of the development and implementation of a series of pilot initiatives within the project. The chapter brings together insights from these sources with some of the extensive multidisciplinary research on place.

In preparation for this chapter, we engaged in a collective reflexive exercise from the perspective of how place was integrated within these initiatives, with the aim of gaining new insight into how creative tourism connects to place. This exercise resulted in four dimensions of connecting to place through creative tourism:

1. *Site and materials*: Connection to the local physical environment where one is located (landscape, spaces, and venues) and the local resources one is using;
2. *Activity*: Connection to the local place through actions of doing, making, and creating processes that take place;
3. *Storytelling*: Connecting to place through local stories, narratives, testimonials, myths, tales, and histories of the place and of its people; and
4. *Socializing*: Connecting to place *in situ* during moments that allow participants to slow down, mingle, talk, share ideas and reflections, and to come to know each other better and feel ‘in place’.

Within an exploration of the phenomena of connecting to place, this book chapter examines and articulates these four dimensions, provides a series of cases to illustrate each of them, and analyzes

how each example connects visitors to a particular place. In closing, we present some advice based on these experiences for future creative tourism entrepreneurs.

Connection to place

Place can be defined as a set of material, social, and representative practices that enact a location (Lefebvre, 1991; Cresswell, 2006). A growing multidisciplinary literature on the significance of place casts it as a ‘meaningful location’ (Lewicka, 2011), a “geographical space that is defined by meanings, sentiments and stories rather than by a set of co-ordinates” (Hague & Jenkins, 2005, p. 4). Emotions, spaces, and places are very much connected (Pánek & Benediktsson, 2017), with such intangibilities an important part of a place’s identity. These intangible aspects “provide a ‘sense of place’ and identity to specific locales,” and “those meanings and values may be grounded in embodied experiences” (Longley & Duxbury, 2016, p. 2). This perspective also recognizes the “emotive power of imagined place” (Osborne, 2006, p. 154), and how the importance of a place is intertwined with its stories, its people, its communities.

A ‘sense of place’ thus speaks to an insider’s attachment to a physical, social, and/or cultural place, with links to individual and collective identity (Davenport & Anderson, 2005). Place is an important input to cultural and creative work in rural and remote areas: “Cultural production does not occur a-spatially, what is produced, how it is produced and by whom relates directly to the place they inhabit. ... As such, culture and creativity are place-based entities” (Collins & Cunningham, 2017, p. 101). In addition, relationships established between an individual and a place are reciprocal: “a place can affect the person and his/her values and actions, in the same way that the intentions of the person and his/her actions can attribute meaning to a place” (Carmona et al., 2010, p. 10).

In a time of high mobility, place-based tourism initiatives allow tourists to develop feelings of belonging (Stock, 2006), converting strange places into identifiable, familiar, and functional places. The most meaningful memories originate in the destination environment, the ‘place’, when tourists find themselves in a new environment, undertaking activities and interacting with local residents who know the place, its history, and its culture. People who love their homeplace can introduce it to visitors in a way that will help create bonds between visitors and that place, which can, in turn, increase the strength of emotions and feelings as well as the acquisition of new knowledge (Campos, Mendes, Valle, & Scott, 2018). The development of creative tourism experiences in CREATOUR reinforced these ideas, demonstrating that ‘place’— in its expansive meaning-full elements and landscapes — should be an essential element throughout the creative tourism development process (Duxbury Silva, & Castro, 2019).

Creative tourism and CREATOUR

Creative tourism is fueled by the new paradigm of the twenty-first century tourists who strive to find ‘transformative’ experiences, focus on self-development, are more conscious of their actions, and want to be active participants in tourism experiences rather than passive observers (UNWTO, 2016). Modern interpretations of creative tourism highlight tourist activities that have the opportunity to co-create and co-preserve local traditions, while also providing participants with active participatory opportunities to learn about cultures and develop creative skills, to practice self-expression, and to engage with the local community (Duxbury, Silva, & Castro, 2019). This contemporary vision of creative tourism has an expanded focus on connections between travellers and residents, and places importance on rooting creative intangibles to the specific place in which activities occur (Blapp, 2015; OECD, 2014). The development of creative tourism can generate new ways of looking at the relationship between communities and the areas they live in (Richards, forthcoming), and putting a central emphasis on place-based specificities can foster distinctive initiatives with local resonance and contribute to cultural vitality and cultural sustainability.

The project “CREATOUR: Creative Tourism Destination Development in Small Cities and Rural Areas” (2016-2020) is a 3.5-year research-and-application project in Portugal that involves five research centres¹ working with 40 participating organizations² who are developing creative tourism pilot initiatives located in small cities and rural areas across Portugal in the Norte, Centro, Alentejo, and Algarve regions. On the research side, the project aims to examine and reflect on the creative tourism activities, including development dynamics and patterns, reception experiences, and community impacts, using methodologies and theoretical perspectives from the fields of tourism, cultural development, and local/regional development. On the practice side, CREATOUR aims to catalyze creative tourism offers in small cities and rural areas in Portugal, inform and learn from their development, and link them with each other through the development of a national network. In time, the project also aims to inform policy development relating to creative tourism (Duxbury, 2020).

Themes of place-specificity and place-based cultural expressions ran through the project. CREATOUR encouraged pilots to articulate and share their connection to place in their initial introductions, asking them to select tangible touchstones of place and to present the intangibilities through tangible objects in order to capture what is meaningful to them about their particular place (Cabeça, Gonçalves, Marques, & Tavares, 2019). By asking CREATOUR pilots to remark on the importance and idiosyncrasies of their regions through objects, the participants created unique “narratives that give meaning to a particular place” (Jeannotte, 2016, p. 41), with a high variety of differentiation even in the smallest region, demonstrating to all that ‘the simple location of the events alone is not sufficient to grasp the meaning associated with place’ (Pearce, 2014, p. 102).

Connecting to place in practice

Within the context of CREATOUR pilot creative tourism activities, connecting to place is found to occur in four main ways: through site and materials, through activity, through storytelling, and through socializing. These are now described, with examples from CREATOUR creative tourism initiatives to illustrate each dimension.

Connection through site and materials

This dimension focuses on connecting to the local physical environment where one is located, integrating different scales of place, from landscape to intimate spaces and venues, as well as the endogenous materials one is using in the creative tourism experience itself. From a macro perspective, activities are a projection and elaboration of the built and natural landscape from which they are inspired. From a micro perspective, every detail is important – from the physical materials used within the activities, perhaps gathered on site, to setting the stage where the experience occurs. The following examples show how different creative tourism activities connect to physical place through an overall coherency between the landscape and site, the venues for activities, and workshop materials used.

Cordeira Village is a tourism enterprise consisting of various houses and rooms to rent in a previously abandoned and now restored schist village. The Aldeias do Xisto (Schist Village) network (managed by ADXTUR, a tourism development agency) consists of a number of villages in the Centro region of Portugal where the majority of houses are constructed in a particular architectural style using the flat, greyish-black schist stones that are plentiful in that area. In the workshop presented here, participants

¹ CREATOUR involved teams in five research centres: CES, University of Coimbra (coordinator); Lab2PT, University of Minho; CIDEHUS, University of Evora, CIEO, University of Algarve; and DINÂMIA’CET, ISCTE-IUL.

² Through two open calls for pilot proposals, a wide range of organizations located in extra-metropolitan areas were selected, including not-for-profit art and cultural associations, small entrepreneurial businesses, municipalities, regional development associations, and a few multi-organizational partnerships. The 40 CREATOUR pilots are briefly presented in an overview publication, accessible here: <https://creatour.pt/en/publications/creatour-pilots-and-projects-2/>.

are challenged to learn more about the architectural traditions of a historic schist village by building a (miniature) schist house themselves. Participants take the workshop inside one of the village's schist houses, starting off with an introductory session on the history of a schist village's architecture, for example, how no two houses are quite the same and how houses were built in specific formations in order to protect them from the wind or wolves. The workshop starts off with strongly connecting participants to place in a physical manner as participants must go out and collect their own schist stones to construct their miniature schist house, just as one can imagine builders in the past doing to construct the houses in this historical village. Following this immersive experience, which also stimulates socializing among participants, participants are instructed to look at the patterns and rules that govern these constructions by making a miniature schist house as a keepsake to remember their time in Cerdeira (Figure 1). Immersion in the landscape and built heritage allows visitors to get a 'sense of place' in the workshop's relatively short duration of two hours.



Figure 1. Miniature schist house created by one of the participants (Source: Fiona Bakas)

In the Alentejo's "Marbles Region," which comprises the municipalities of Alandroal, Borba, Estremoz, Sousel, and Vila Viçosa, **CECHAP** (Centro de Estudos de Cultura, História, Artes e Património), a cultural non-profit organization, established the Marble Route of the Estremoz Anticline. This initiative combines industrial and creative tourism focused on marble, the most important endogenous resource of the region that has been extracted and transformed there since the Roman period. The tourism program includes visits to the marble quarries, monuments, and stonemason's workshops, allowing visitors to observe and understand the whole process of marble transformation – from extraction to carving. Tourists can also participate in workshops where they can explore their creative side by learning marble carving techniques as well as drawing or photographing the landscape of the marble quarries. Overall, these immersive activities, occurring in a locale where marble has profoundly shaped the local landscape and its cultural expressions, offer visitors unique experiences to connect with several regional heritage elements related to the marble industry, connecting its geological, technical, urban, and artistic dimensions.

Associação de Desenvolvimento das Regiões do Parque Nacional da Peneda-Gerês (**ADERE-PG**) is a non-profit development entity with activities in the five municipalities of the Peneda Gerês National Park. The creative tourism project “Creative Experiences with Sense(s)” developed a variety of initiatives based on the five senses with connections to local traditions, culture, and nature. One example is the “Art Activities in Nature,” which is located in Pitões da Júnias, a small village with medieval stone constructions embraced by the mountains and a never-ending view of green landscape. It is one of the most picturesque and traditional villages in Norte region of Portugal, located in the municipality of Montalegre. In one experience, exploring visual arts practices in contact with nature, the visitor has an opportunity to be located in, directly observe, and connect with the local landscape through activities such as sketching and painting with acrylic and gouache paints, charcoal, and dry pastels (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Participants engaging in creative tourism experience at ADERE-PG national park (Source: Lilian Gavioli)

Connection through activity

This dimension focuses on connecting to the local place through the doing, making, and creating processes that take place within a creative tourism experience. In the examples presented here, the focus is on making items that are coherent with the location in which the experience occurs. Local place-based culture and traditions serve as the model and inspiration for the creative tourism activities. As well, the collective ‘making together’ of culturally relevant items in a small-scale setting provides an intimate platform for discussing, learning about the origins of the activity and its relevance in the place, and generating connections among local organizers/trainers, visitors, and other members of the community.

In the city of Beja, the creative tourism project **Beja Experience** offers an opportunity for visitors to engage actively in the local culture through a set of experimental and learning activities based on traditional cultural manifestations such as gastronomy, *Cante Alentejano* singing, and traditional chair

making. One of the most immersive and meaningful experiences occurs in a traditional old tavern called “A Pipa”, where visitors participate in a cooking workshop with a local chef (featuring visitors preparing traditional dishes) followed by a *Cante Alentejano* workshop, a typical regional singing style, accompanied by two local musicians. Participants sang together in the tavern while eating the dishes previously cooked (accompanied by local red wine!). All over the Alentejo, this type of tavern would be the place where men gathered to socialize, eat, drink, and sing together. The combination of these two strong local cultural cornerstones of the Alentejo – food and song – in such a typical and meaningful place provided the perfect environment for visitors to get a taste of what would be a common afternoon or night gathering of local people.

Nazaré Criativa is a cultural branch of the tourist accommodations business Casas do Quico, located in the seaside town of Nazare in the Centro region of Portugal. It offers a sewing activity based on the local icon of the sun-dried *carapau* (horse mackerel fish) which was traditionally caught and dried in Nazaré. The creative tourism workshop uses tartan fabrics characteristic of some of the Nazaré traditional clothing. The workshop’s focus is to sew horse mackerels with tartan fabric (Figure 3) to use as keychains and bookmarks, since these are easy and fast to make. The activity takes place in a historic and meaningful place, the former City Hall of Pederneira, and before the workshop occurs a presentation on traditional costumes of Nazaré is given, with a small exhibition of selected pieces from the local museum. The artisan leading the workshop has been re-inventing Nazaré fabric crafts, giving them a contemporary touch. The participants quickly grasp the basics to make their own artifacts, inspired by traditional music in the background, made by a local organization, Casa do Adro. Through actively producing their own keychain or bookmark and reflecting on local traditions, participants created a connection to this place.



Figure 3. Preparing the tartan fabric to be sewn into horse-mackerel shaped keyrings (Source: Celia Quico)

Tertúlia Algarvia, a culture and food company, organizes “Algarve Cooking Vacations,” which are single and multi-day programs for tourists to learn how to make various traditional Algarve dishes in hands-on workshops. Based in the historical centre of Faro, surrounded by the Ria Formosa natural reserve and its long dune cords, the programs combine the natural heritage and the local gastronomy for which the Algarve region is also well known. They provide opportunities to not only taste and make traditional recipes made with local ingredients, but also to learn about local ingredients, producers, and culture and be inspired by cooking. Each workshop is preceded by complementary activities such

as visits to local producers, markets, historical sites, and artisans. For instance, before the *cataplana* cooking class (a traditional fish stew made in a distinctive copper pan), participants visit the plant nurseries and herb producers in order to learn how to choose the best ingredients for the recipe they will make next, fostering a deep connection to the local place and heritage on multiple levels.

Connection through storytelling

This dimension focuses on connecting to the local place through its stories, narratives, testimonials, myths, tales, local characters, and history of the place and of its people. These are shared by local people engaged in the creative tourism experience. It highlights both the importance of the stories and narratives themselves and the local people who share the stories and their identity. Storytelling may be formally presented (e.g., through theatre performances and guided tours) but also arises organically through interaction and dialogue between participants and their hosts. Direct contact with the artworks of local artists can be accompanied by explanations of how the local place and elements of the landscape inspired the artist, while real-life accounts can stress the importance of craft-making for living. In the examples presented here, connections are made with historical personalities, characters in the imaginary of local artists, and memories of everyday people and the ways they have lived.

The three history-based tours and integrated workshops that are part of “Caldas Creative Tourism,” created by **Associação Destino Caldas**, incorporate participatory creative experiences based on stories, folktales, and local characters that are connected to the town of Caldas da Rainha (Centro region) in various ways. Each experience starts with a tour followed by a workshop. For example, on the Bordalo Pinheiro tour, an actor plays three characters related to Bordalo Pinheiro’s life story: a cat³, a countess, and *Maria dos pontos nos is*, one of his caricatures (Figure 4). She performs small acts to provide participants with a ‘time travel’ experience that immerses them into the history of the place. Following the tour, since Bordalo Pinheiro is most famously associated with a line of ceramics with vibrant colors and naturalistic shapes (e.g., a plate shaped as a cabbage leaf), the experience ends with a Portuguese tile painting workshop inside a historic tiled chapel. In this creative workshop, visitors learn about the ceramic heritage of Caldas da Rainha, and inspired by these stories, they make their own colourful tiles, participating in an activity closely related to the history and narratives of that place.

³ One theatrical act had the actor dressed as a cat, signifying the connection that Bordalo Pinheiro had with cats as he believed he was a cat in previous reincarnation.



Figure 4. Theatrical representation of Bordalo Pinheiro's life story (Source: CREATOUR documentary, director: Nuno Barbosa)

VIC // Aveiro Arts House is a one-of-a-kind space that gathers together a guesthouse, an art gallery, a cultural venue, and an arts residency in the Centro region. The 1950s building was the house and workshop of the local artist Vasco Branco and it is still filled with his artworks. All visitors and guests are invited to tour around its four floors and listen to stories about the former owner-artist, his family, and his friends. These are stories about the local artists, politicians, and intellectuals who used to gather there during the fascist regime to discuss forbidden subjects or watch censored movies in the small theatre space in the basement, among other activities. The artistic environment of the family home allows visitors and guests to dive into an artist's world and mind as well as to learn more about the city and region that inspired Vasco Branco's artwork. In this sense, when locals, visitors, and resident guests attend "Ossos do Oficio" creative tourism workshops – on ceramics, photography, cinema, writing, or sound art – they get connected to the place and are inspired in a very deep and meaningful way.

Aiming to combine traditional crafts with technology through augmented reality, "Pisões e Tradições" is an experience that recreates the wool cycle, from shearing to preparation of *burel* wool capes. Organized by **LRB – Investimentos e Consultoria Lda.** (a technology company) in cooperation with **Cabril Eco Rural**, this is a local project of rural development and sustainable tourism. The experience highlighted stories and narratives about the traditional ways of doing in the Montalegre area (Norte region), personally shared by those who lived the joys and the sorrows. The difficulties of not having much but at the same time the happiness of sharing what one had are presented through compelling narratives and captivating songs, and are a big part of these experiences. For example, in the wool cycle "to warp and to weave," the local artisan, an older lady full of life experiences, shared her memories, stories of a lifetime, and traditional songs about Montalegre, while passing on her know-how and expertise on how to "really stretch the wool, so it doesn't break and the threads do not tangle."

Connection through socializing

This dimension focuses on connecting to the local place *in situ* during moments that allow participants to slow down, mingle, talk, share ideas and reflections. They come to know each other better while 'settling' themselves in that place. In the examples presented here, two complementary types of moments are highlighted: *time spent during the making process*, within the core creative experience,

when participants are chatting while engaging and sharing that experience together, and *time spent during associated social moments*, such as eating together, resting, and casually meeting other local people, when one can relax and absorb the 'feeling of place'.

The **Estival Festival**, organized by Associação Domínio Vale do Mondego and held on a sheep and olive tree biodynamic farm, is a good example of participants connecting to the natural features of the Serra da Estrela landscape (Cento region) through the making processes of multiple creative workshops. During moments of co-making, participants take moments to look around them and compare their place-based experiences with fellow participants. For example, participating in a felt-making workshop in Estival allows for intergenerational mixing where teenagers, pre-teens, middle-aged people, and elderly participants exchange opinions on the festival while learning in unison. This exchange of opinions means that different perspectives on the place are brought into a collective conversation. During one workshop, a teenager spoke of how nice it was to be in close contact with the sheep on the farm, a middle-aged woman spoke of how she was looking forward to lying by the pool later, and another participant spoke of how they were also taking a theatre class in a secluded olive grove on the farm. These moments of discussion and reflection are facilitated by a creative tourism experience that requires the repeated doing of an action (i.e., rubbing the wool with soap and water in order to make the wool fibres connect) which is in itself relaxing. During this time, participants are all together united in a common purpose: to make felt hats, hearts, and whatever else one's imagination generates.

During such multi-day culture-based creative festivals, participants spend extended time in the locale, which provides an immersive experience and multiple opportunities for creating intense connections to the place in different ways. The **L Burro i l Gueiteiro** festival (The Donkey and Bagpiper Festival) is an itinerant small-scale festival that takes place in the northeastern rural part of Portugal, known as the Mirandese plateau. The slow-paced activity enables walking and talking in close contact with the countryside and nature, travelling between villages, farming fields, hills, and woods. Along the five-day experience, participants walk and sing together (Figure 5), accompanied by local musicians who provide the tunes, and the Mirandese donkeys who carry the goods and, every now and then, the children. Part of each day is for walking, and part is for workshops to learn to play the local bagpipe and drum, make simple flutes from cane, learn traditional folk dances, or engage in donkey-care workshops. Every day the group stops at a different village to sleep over, cook dinner together, attend a folklore music gig, and dance together in the evening. It is a highly social event where people get to know each other while walking, preparing meals and eating, engaging in creative activities, and basically by spending the whole time together like a big family.



Figure 5. People walking from one village to the other during the L Burro i l Gueiteiro festival (Source: Juliana Alves)

Smaller creative tourism initiatives also include, within their activities, moments to have a break, regain forces, relax, reflect, or simply be there in the location. These complementary moments, in most cases, involve eating due to the huge importance that food has for the Portuguese. Cultural organizations such as MARCA and CACO from the Alentejo region or Odiana from the Algarve region organize picnics after their creative activities. In a way, these picnics provide a ‘settling down’ moment where participants can talk, relax, and enjoy the scenery while tasting local, freshly made food that is usually connected to the local culture and landscape. In the case of **MARCA – ADL** (a local development association from Montemor-o-Novo), after a long morning activity of making natural bird houses and feeders using reed basketry techniques, participants are taken to a nearby small hill close to a local historical chapel, with a view of the typical *montado* Alentejo landscape. This is a socializing moment during which participants’ share a picnic, get to know one another, and enjoy the view. During these moments, organizers also receive feedback on the experience as well as ideas for additional workshops, helping them to improve future experiences.

Discussion and closing reflections

Embedding local specificities into creative tourism offers can be a strategic differentiating factor in providing a distinctive tourism offer (Duxbury, Silva, & Castro, 2019). The common thread among the creative tourism examples in this chapter is to immerse participants in place-specific culture and history in innovative, contemporary, and memorable manners through social, cultural, and physical encounters. In this context, place is understood not as a static container of meaning that one enters into, but is made vibrant through performances and a set of discourses (Baerenholdt et al., 2004).

Connecting to place through creative tourism experiences aligns with the desire of tourists to experience and learn about the cultures of the place they are visiting and to feel temporarily ‘rooted’ there by experiencing “a conscious sense of association or identity with a particular place” (Carmona et al., 2010, p. 120). For travellers, a temporary rootedness, that is, “a secure point from which to look out on the world, a firm grasp of one’s own position in the order of things, and a significant spiritual

and psychological attachment to somewhere in particular” (Relph, 1976, p. 38, cited in Carmona et al., 2010, p. 120), may enable rest, contemplation, and reflection – and may provide a space for imagination. Furthermore, temporal moments of togetherness, where feelings of *communitas* arise are significant in connecting to place. *Communitas* refers to the relationship, often described as a temporary sense of closeness, between people at a specific moment where traditional social inequalities do not apply (Stone, 2008). It is in these moments of *communitas*, that creative tourism experiences can create spaces that are spatially and temporally located outside the constraints of everyday life and imbued with the essence of the ‘visited place’.

The creative tourism experiences within CREATOUR integrate various ways of connecting participants to place, providing them a memorable creative learning opportunity as well as unique place-embedded memories. Our analysis of these experiences identified four ways in which participants can connect to place within creative tourism experiences: through the site and materials; through the activity; through storytelling, and through socializing. These ways of connecting to place are not mutually exclusive – they overlap and intertwine, and ideally all four should be intentionally integrated into a creative tourism experience by the organizer.

A connection to *the site and its natural resources* can increase the perceived authenticity of creative tourism experiences, an essential component of tourism motivations (Rickly-Boyd, 2013). The sensory quality of a place can influence participants’ “feelings, actions, general well-being and appraisal of what surrounds us... the overall image is the union of all stimuli” (Carmona et al., 2010, p. 8). The location and venue where the experiences are held and the use of local natural resources are all important. For example, the miniature schist house workshop is held in a traditional schist house within Cerdeira village and participants collect their own schist stones in the village, directly connecting participants to the physical place in multi-layered ways and exposing participants’ senses to the sensory elements of the place.

The central *activity* of creative tourism experiences can guide participants to make items that are coherent with the local cultural context in which the activity occurs. Either traditional or contemporary activities can be inspired by local cultural traditions, patterns and techniques, artistic legacies and practices, natural connections, and other place specificities. Performance-based approaches to tourism experience argue that meaning is made in the doing of tourism (Lew, 2011). The process of making together provides an intimate setting for learning about the origins of an activity, discussing its relevance in the place, and generating connections among event organizers and participants. For example, through the production of a historically-related artifact such as the *carapau*-inspired tartan keychain created in Nazaré, participants learn about local history, fishing and cultural traditions, traditional clothing, through the process of creating and from the organizer’s instructions and narratives.

Storytelling engages participants’ imagination and “transforms a space into a place” (Hague & Jenkins, 2005, p. 5), enriching their understanding about the tangible and intangible dimensions of a locale (Mathisen & Chen, 2014). Stories allow us to pass on knowledge and create connections with others, with our past, and with our present: “It has been said that the shortest line between two people is a good story. Stories engage attention, evoke emotion, have powerful and compelling narratives, describe intriguing characters and are memorable when they are relevant” (Arsenault, 2019, p. 173). Storytelling can be integrated in many ways, from personal tales told in a wool coat-making workshop to theatrical mini-performances used as an intrinsic element within a local scene-setting tour, such as the creative tours of Associação Destino Caldas. Storytelling draws us in, allowing listeners to actively engage in collectively imagining others’ experiences and transporting them to other times. Through storytelling, “places ... assume a specific meaning in the moment in which we infuse them with a value” (Sepe, 2013, p. 4, citing Healey, 2010, pp. 33-34).

Time for *socializing* during the making processes and associated social activities within creative tourism experiences provides moments during which participants can also connect to place. These are times when participants informally chat while engaging in an activity or when they share a restful moment together. Integrating socializing moments within creative tourism allows participants meet one another, discuss informally, and become more comfortable sharing their thoughts with others, such as their perceptions of the place. Connections to place can be enhanced through strategically locating socializing activities. For example, as part of MARCA-ADL's creative tourism experience after the workshops, participants went to a locally significant viewpoint to relax and enjoy a picnic. This allowed participants to slow down and 'absorb' the moment and the surrounding landscape.

In closing, if all four dimensions – the site and materials, the activity, storytelling, and socializing – are carefully orchestrated and holistically presented by the organizers, a powerful channeling of place through immersion and experience is achieved. In the case of creative tourism, the four dimensions of connecting to place described in this chapter are complementary and their combination makes these experiences touching and meaningful.

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