meSch Material Encounters with digital Cultural Heritage
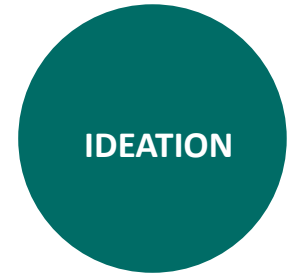
BODYSTORMING

Bodystorming is a method of physically testing new ideas. It requires the physical setting up of a situation with objects and people. The most important aspect of bodystorming is the manner in which people act and interact in the physical environment.

IDEATION

Estimated Timescale: 30 - 60 minutes

Materials: Audio / Video Recorder, Pens & Paper

Who should be involved?
Anyone who you're designing with / for - cultural heritage professionals, designers, technologists etc.

Why should you use this method?
Bodystorming can be used as a quick and tangible way to explore a new idea or experience. By physically experiencing a situation, the intention is to generate unexpected ideas that might not be realized by talking or sketching.

STEP 1 (ADVANCE PREPARATION)
- Decide on what context you wish to bodystorming in. For example, if you are trying to come up with new ideas in the context of a museum gallery, try walking through the museum, to come up with new ideas. If you are designing a new experience for an outdoor heritage site, trek through the site.
- Determine what it is that you're looking to test. For example, a type of interaction, a response to an object, etc.
- Devise a rough list of tasks that you want the bodystorming participant to do in that specific context.

STEP 2
- Form small groups of 2- 4 people, ideally each group should include at least a designer and a cultural heritage professional.

STEP 3
- Ask the participant to walk through the space and go through the list of tasks, physically acting them out one at a time. As they are going through the tasks, ask them to verbalize what they are experiencing (challenges, surprises, other interesting discoveries).
- Have a second facilitator document what the participants are saying whilst going through the tasks.

STEP 4
- After the participant has completed the run through of tasks, debrief the process by asking them questions on their experience, for example, What did you learn from the process?, What surprised you about going through the process? Can you suggest any further ideas based on the physical experience?

WHAT NEXT?
- Following the bodystorming exercise, review the notes and recordings in order to gain an understanding of the physical experience of the participants. This information can be used as input into the user requirements of the intended design.
- In the weeks after using the method, give feedback to the participants to show how input has been used (so the dialogue continues.)

Tips for successfully carrying out this method
- Don't be afraid to get physical! Bodystorm by moving around and becoming aware of the physical spaces and experiences.
- Pay close attention to decision-making directly related to your environment and related emotional reactions.
- The use of props (for example, low fidelity prototypes) can be highly effective tools in bodystorming.