



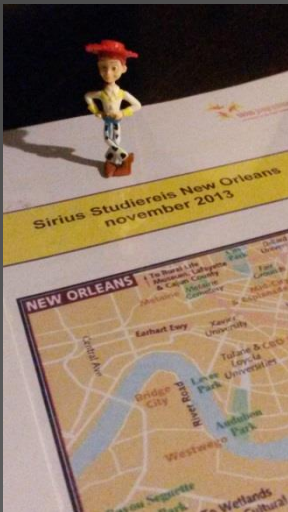
The adventures of Nola



The Pursuit of Excellence

Day One

Once upon a time there was a little cowgirl. She was quite a character and excellent in her own way. Her name was Nola, but we didn't know that when the journey began. As we didn't know many things, to begin with. In November 2013 she accompanied the Dutch delegation of professionals in higher education to the honours conference in New Orleans, Louisiana.



The first day Nola puts on her Sirius look for the study trip to Loyola's Honours College.



With the rest of the Dutch delegation she takes the streetcar to the university. Of course we have to change half way: all of New Orleans is still under construction.



Nola arrives at the university and what should she find.....?



...stepping stones leading up to the entrance. The first one says : "pursuit of excellence." Nola feels @home already! Well....it's kinda a big stepping stone for such a tiny cowgirl but Nola insists to be right in the middle.

All through that first long day Nola moved unnoticed as the Dutch delegation attended a full day programme at Loyola University. Some however stopped to look and even dared to ask, what is this, what does it mean? A smile promptly followed each conversation.



Nola sits in her favorite spot: the back of the classroom, and listens attentively as honours director Naomi Yavneh Klos welcomes us to Loyola!

@home

Over a genuine New Orleans lunch we discuss honours with colleagues and students. Nola just can't get her head around what the former director is saying to Suzanne. Must be pretty important as it continues into dessert.



Better place for Nola to be: the green lawn in between campus buildings. An ideal place to relax after a good lunch and build on relationships with other Dutch institutes ...and wait for an honours class to begin.



Day Two

The next phase of getting acquainted started. Someone asked her name and her new friends actively participated in the search for meaning: Nola of course, who else!



The second day starts with a briefing in the hall of the Sheraton Hotel, where the conference will be held in two days time.

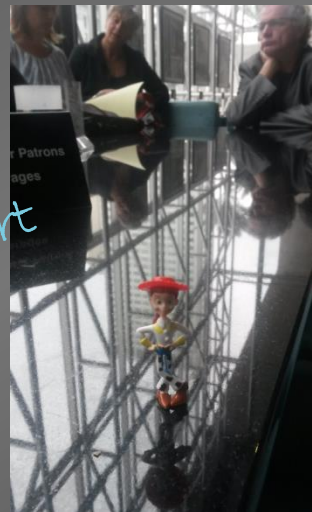


Nola doesn't get it. Why are these Dutchies all complaining about breakfast when there is Starbucks!



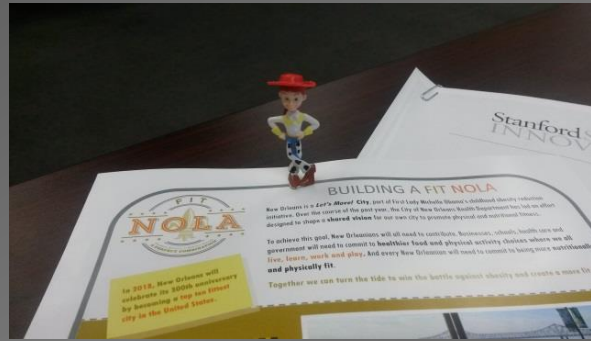
The Arts Council is just around the corner and Nola is happy to find some friends while the others listen to an inspiring talk by director Kim Cook.

Pizza for lunch. Nola decides she like the Arts Council anyway, they do all kinda good deeds for the city and it looks very arty and fun at the same time. Good energy in this place!



matters of the heart

*Nola was now in the picture with most of the delegates and slowly some of the Dutchies started to engage more actively.
'Has Nola been here yet, she must check this out!'*



Next stop: City Hall to meet with the Health Commissioner Karen DeSalvo and hear about Fit Nola.

The integrated and multidisciplinary approach to New Orleans' health is an inspiring example for honours projects. And shows another passionate and courageous woman contributing to the development of her city.

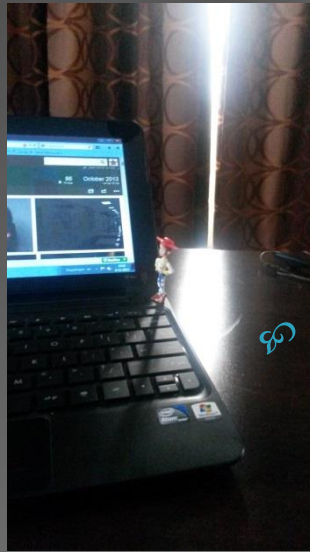
Like

Day Three

Nola 's Day Off: exploring the city from the water and after the Water. The devastation of Katrina was wordlessly present in every day life. And still....very visible from the Mississippi river.



Nola wakes early and wonders what today will bring. It's her day off before the real conference starts on Thursday.



But no such thing as a day off in New Orleans. Posting photos and writing on the honoursblog before we set out to explore NOLA!

history = collective memory

“Woldenberg Riverfront Park is dedicated to the memory of Malcolm Woldenberg who prospered in New Orleans and left a legacy of caring and of confidence in the city of New Orleans.”



Inspired and inspiring: the peoples of NOLA.



Lots of red colours on the Mississippi Steamboat Nachez: nice and familiar.



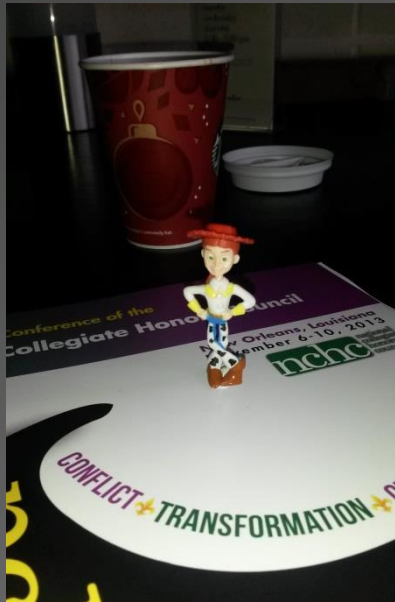
Another New Orleans specialty: beignets at Café du Monde on the edge of the French Quarter.



The best way to end a perfect day: chips and wine back in the hotel!

Day Four

Nola's first conference day marked a next phase of engaging with the world. Not only did she make new friends, she also learned to watch closely how the city expresses itself.



Before anything can begin Nola needs to register. She likes the cool conference logo: Conflict, Transformation, Creolization: promising title behind the mask.



Bernice Braid introduces City as Text™ and efficiently directs everybody (over 400 participants) to their group. Compliments! After a small introduction and browsing through the assignment we all scatter out into town.



Nola's group is assigned to the Warehouse District with all the art galleries. What fun!



The close observing that City as Text required put Nola in a different role. Quietly observing the surroundings as an extra pair of eyes to the photographer. It created engagement and distance at the same time.



absence and presence

First stop: Arthur Roger Gallery with more treats for geographers. Visual impressions of Water by photographer Edward Burtytsky and paintings by John Hartman showing NOLA from above.



Not quite sure if this is allowed, but Nola thinks it's the best fun standing on top of NOLA.



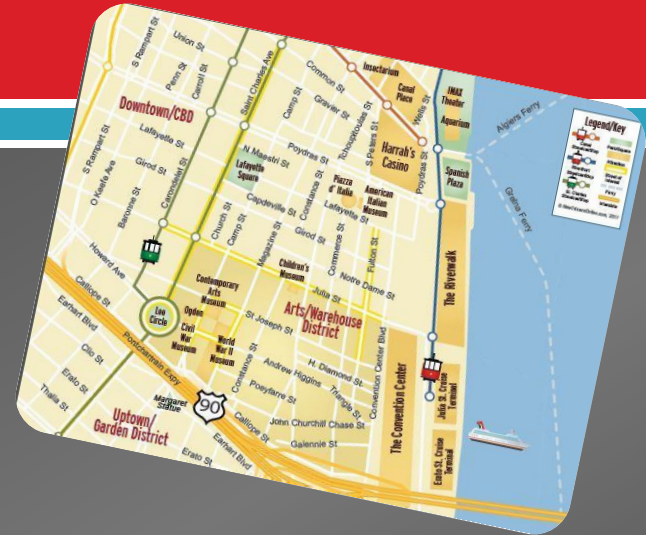
Nola follows her group further along Julia street to the @home gallery of [Steve Martin](#).



Piece by Peace: Nola likes the title and the concept of [REpurposingNOLA](#). Design for a better world can be commercially viable as Traci L. Claussen shows in her shop on Julia street.



Old warehouses turned into hostels and apartments. As our journey continues we get a funny feeling. Where is evidence of the natural processes in rejuvenated old neighbourhoods: creative industries, digital wizz kids?



in-between-space



Back to the conference hotel for the wrap up, Nola is quite tired of all those impressions.

Nola knows she's not a big person, but in this old warehouse turned into [art centre](#) one truly feels 'petite'. This is where our journey ends for today, at the Contemporary Arts Center, launched in 1976 as start of the soon to be 'Soho of the South'.

More [Burtynsky](#) in the CAC. Nola likes this, photography that shows our planet as a piece of art.

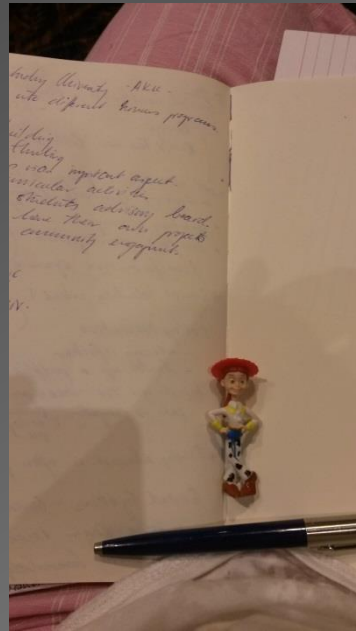


Day Five

After two days of more intimate engagement in smaller groups Nola caught up with her Dutch friends. To most of them her presence seemed to be natural and logical by now.



This time no Starbucks breakfast but sweet rolls and fruit juice in the conference hotel.

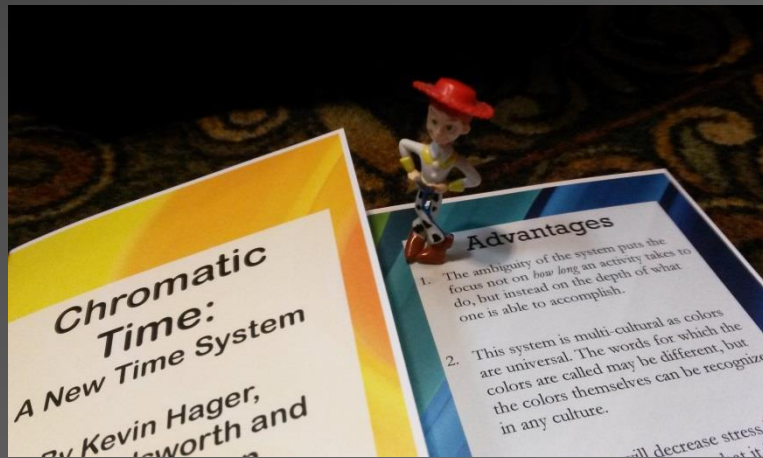


Eight o'clock: sharp for the first session on the Social Change Leadership Model, then on to Honours assessment and Organisational Culture



And in between sessions Nola checks out the university stalls, filled with gadgets and sometimes useful contacts.

∞ framed freedom



After lunch Nola visits a couple of student sessions. The California University honours group invented a new clock, representing time frames in colours in stead of minute to minute precision.



Lunch is an apple while listening to students talk about their community.



The day comes to an end and for Nola the conference is over. Just a quick visit by speed-elevator to the 43rd floor to check out the view.

∞ Inspiration and motivation rhyme for good reasons

All good things come to an end and for Nola the question popped up: what next? Let's see what happens. There is enough going on in HUhonours to engage with and report on. A new adventure is already at hand: Brussels with the honours students. Lots of opportunities for new experiences and new friends.

Now only the shadow programme remains: NOLA@night



Sushi in the Louis Armstrongpark. Home feels present everywhere in this city. But before Nola really heads back to the Louis Armstrong lane we go out to see Hair in 'La Petite Théâtre': a colourful ending of an amazing week.



Home sweet home

Colours of Love