

IDENTITY OF ANONYMOUS SPACE

WAS INITIATED AS A GRADUATE DESIGN STUDIO EXPLORING HOW PERSONAL OR CONTEXTUAL IDENTITY ARISES IN PUBLIC AND/OR "ANONYMOUS" URBAN SPACES, LANDSCAPES, AND DWELLINGS, AND HOW THAT IDENTITY MAY BE CHANGED THROUGH A DESIGN INTERVENTION.

SPACE: Space is a central concept in geography, used in the form of absolute, relative and relational space. For our understanding, space is a distinct, physical or empirical entity.

PLACE: Space is organized into places in which social relations, identity, and history are constituted. A place is understood, defined, and referred to by the things that happened there, and to the people they happened to.

NON-PLACE: As its name suggests, a non-place is the opposite of a place. It is a transitional space, never a destination, anonymous, and often mediated by signs or some authority, (e.g., airport, supermarket, or hotel). These places according to Augé are the by-product of supermodernity.

ANONYMOUS SPACE: This is an urban space that fits neither the definition of a place nor that of a non-place. An anonymous space (e.g. an abandoned parking lot or tract of land under a freeway) uncomfortably hovers between the two categories and cannot lay claim to a space of identity, relations, or history (a place) nor to a transitional space associated with commerce (a non-place).



IDENTITY OF ANONYMOUS SPACE

PROFESSOR INTRO

To many, including the instructors, the course title at first seemed rather abstract and in need of unraveling. What is an “Anonymous Space”? How can anonymous space have identity? How does space influence human behavior and identity? These were but a few core questions that needed to be unpacked, understood, and answered in order to carry out the course objective.

As a starting point in our research, Marc Augé’s *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* was used as a seminal text to begin the discussion of the theoretical and tangible understanding of space. The class adopted as a common vocabulary Augé’s categories and terminology of space, place, and non-place (previous page). Through the understanding and synthesis of these categories, we have added and defined the following term: anonymous space.

With an introductory conceptual understanding of space and place, the students then embarked on the research and visualization phase of the studio. Each student investigated an anonymous space of their choosing (as long as they could defend the choice as being an anonymous space) and started the process of collecting and visually exploring data found at the site. Methods

BRUCE LEVIN

Assistant Professor

RYAN ALEXIEV

Senior Lecturer

of research included visual/aural documentation, object collection, personal responses, participatory and field research, writing, and documentation of historical, quantitative and qualitative data. The express purpose of the research phase was to uncover the myriad complex relationships of the site, for example, systems of control, value systems, notions of beauty, etc.

Following this research phase, we initiated a segment on design strategy consisting of the production of a design intervention in reaction to a specific issue (problem) isolated during the research phase. Though most anonymous spaces share similar characteristics, the students, in trying to create “identities” of anonymous spaces, engaged in explorations and processes that led them to radically different interventions. From leveraging notions of history, community and nostalgia, to highlighting objects of the mundane, the diversity of projects represents the complexities and, moreover, the opportunities, for designers to make a difference in public space.



IDENTITY OF ANONYMOUS SPACE

IAN COOLEY

CHARLOTTE COOPER

STUDENT INTRO

What is a place? What is a space? Do both places and spaces have identities, and if not, does that make them anonymous? Exploring these abstract questions provided the common philosophical foundation of Identity of Anonymous Space. Each designer chose an independent site to investigate throughout the semester, focusing on spaces that lacked community or a shared history; areas that people routinely ignored, or that encouraged people within them to ignore each other. Across various San Francisco neighborhoods, we explored intersections, buildings, mountaintops, and plazas, each with a severe lack of place-ness and, therefore, identity.

Communication designers, primarily experienced with two-dimensional print, web and graphic design, comprised the bulk of the class. The process of investigating, conceptualizing and installing work in three-dimensional space was unfamiliar to most of us, which prompted each designer to re-evaluate the methods we were comfortable using and the results we had come to expect from our work. We left the intellectual classroom environment behind, assessing the issues at stake in our selected sites: interacting with people, objects and the social dynamics of the real world.

Underlying the course was the struggle to make sense of our work in this site-specific design paradigm. Professors Bruce Levin and Ryan Alexiev continually pushed us to question our own assumptions about audience, an occasionally frustrating endeavor that ultimately yielded more nuanced results.

Throughout the iterative process of designing and testing, we continually asked ourselves: what is the role of the designer, and to what extent is it appropriate to intervene? Drawing on our individual strengths and backgrounds, our work is diverse and compelling: some projects directly intervened through on site signage and artifacts, while others extracted the poetic qualities through books, animated shorts, and websites. As a whole, this book illustrates the collective journey this class took while exploring the dialog between space, identity and design.

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SF VA MEDICAL CENTER



VETERANS AFFAIRS

JULIE MENDEZ

SHARING MILITARY TALES

Since 1934, the San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Center has provided medical care, a place where veterans can find support, comfort, and camaraderie among other veterans. After observing the VA from a designers' perspective, I was interested most by how veterans share stories with each other. I regularly heard various military tales and I often took part in these conversations, feeling the need to relate and share a sense of brotherhood.

The VA can be considered an anonymous space because veterans do not have any personal connections with the doctors or the staff. The identity of a veteran is purely numerical. He or she sees different, often short term doctors every time, even for therapy. Because the facility is extensive and offers many services, it is difficult to retain a close relationship between the staff and the veterans. Despite the anonymity of the VA, this environment is relational, historic, and full of identity. The most important aspect is the solidarity that exists between veterans. They share a powerful connection possible only between members of the armed forces. I realized that the VA hospital environment didn't generate the stories I was interested in, but rather the gathering of veterans, which will always bring out stories of shared experiences.

In response, I created *2ActStories.com*, a unique online space where veterans can share their stories through art and other creative media. My goal is to create a safe and open dialogue about the military experience to better help veterans suffering with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I want to help them understand that they are not alone and that other veterans share similar narratives. Furthermore, I want to engage more veterans in creative activities since art has proven to be a highly successful form of therapy for combat disorders. Ultimately, *2 Act Stories* will allow veterans to feel a sense of brotherhood and amity, and in combination with art, create a community of veteran storytelling.

From left to right: 1. Front of Ft. Miley, Building 1 circa 1934. 2. Drawing of Ft. Miley by Stanley A. Piltz. 3. Detail of building 1. 4. Main entrance of Ft. Miley, circa 1934.



Barracks at Fort Miley were torn down to make way for the VA Hospital, 1933.

INTERVIEWS

TIM

TIM: Hi Julie, tell me a little bit about your background.

JULIE

JULIE: Well, I guess I would say that my background is a little different than most of the students here at CCA. When I was 17 years old I joined the Army in hopes of earning college money and opportunities to travel the world. I worked as a Chemical Operations Specialist and I was stationed in Germany and Ft. Hood, Texas for a total of four years. As soon as I arrived at my unit in Ft. Hood we received orders to deploy to Iraq. This was in March of 2003, so we were part of the first group of soldiers to deploy. We were deployed for almost a year, I was 20 years old at the time, and during that year my world changed completely. Most of the things I experienced affected the person I am today as an adult. As you can imagine, combat is anything but pretty and there are many aspects about it that can be difficult to

talk about. I think the general public envisions war to be a certain way because we see it depicted in cinema and television, but the reality is much different- the consequences are real.

In 2004 I got out of the Army and returned home to California. It took me some time to realize that I was having difficulty adjusting to civilian life, especially adjusting to an educational setting all over again. I was having difficulty focusing on school work, I was always hyper vigilant, I wasn't sleeping, I was having nightmares, and I was sabotaging all of my relationships. I became a very angry and violent person. I finally found help at the Veterans Affairs and I was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Dealing with the traumas of war is a daily battle that I continue to fight every day- this is why I have chosen to focus on this for my graduate studies. I want to use my skills as a designer to help other veterans deal with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

For this Identity of anonymous space class I knew that I wanted to research the San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Facility. As a patient at this hospital I was familiar with it and I wanted to view the facility through the lens of a designer, instead of a veteran. I was intrigued by the fact that this

place could be considered a place with identity as well as non-identity. The more time I spent there, I became very interested in the way that stories were shared among veterans. Eventually, this led me to creating an archive of interviews. I started interviewing other veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan war that wanted to share their story, veterans who also struggle with the traumas of combat.

I wanted to capture their experiences through art- that was the key to my interviews and the key to the final product, which is a website. I had the veterans think of a time and place while they were deployed that had an impact in their lives. The memory could be positive or negative, as long as it was a memory of their deployment. This activity proved to be very successful. With the simple activity of mark making, the veteran was able to relax and open up to share their story.

I then took these stories and these drawings and created an online resource where veterans could see the art created by other veterans. The grand goal of this site is to let veterans know that they are not the only ones going through difficulties. If they hear the stories of other veterans, they are more likely to seek help. I know that happened to



Ft. Miley, Building 200 circa 1964.

me, I thought I was the only one going through all of those issues until I met other veterans that felt the same way.

TIM: As a veteran, why do you think the process of “sharing stories” is important? How did “sharing stories” help you in the past?

JULIE: I think storytelling is very important, it is a way for people to learn about each other, a way for people to understand one another. People are very interesting to me, especially those who have struggles and difficulties, and stories are an incredible way to communicate. One of the things I have seen with other veterans, including myself, is a lack of communication, a lack about expressing those demons we carry around with us from war. For years I never shared my story, I got to a point where I didn't tell anyone I was in the military- I hated being asked questions, I hated having to



Close up of camera during interview with Marine Corps veteran Maximilian Uriarte, November 22, 2010.

“AS I HEARD THE STORIES OF OTHER VETERANS, I WAS EMPOWERED, I WANTED TO LEARN MORE, I WANTED TO SHARE MY STORY.”

—JULIE MENDEZ



Interview with Marine Corps veteran Maximilian Uriarte. Uriarte is currently a student at California College of the Arts and is focusing in illustration and animation. Uriarte is the founder of *TerminalLance.com*, an edgy comic lampooning enlisted life in the Corps. The interview location is in the undergraduate art studios at the CCA Oakland campus, November 22, 2010.

“WE DIDN'T HAVE MUCH CONTACT WITH IRAQI CIVILIANS... BUT WE WERE TOLD TO TREAT THEM LIKE THEY WERE COWS... IT FELT REALLY WEIRD... I DIDN'T FEEL ANYTHING POWERFUL BY DOING THAT.”

—IRWING LAZO

Drawing by Irwing Lazo, Marine Corps veteran, October 23, 2010.



restrain my answers and put a fake smile on my face. But as I heard the stories of other veterans, I was empowered, I wanted to learn more, I wanted to share my story.

TIM: Why did you choose the website as the ultimate way to share stories?

JULIE: I chose the internet as the ultimate place of intervention for my project because using a physical space proved to be too problematic. When the project initially started, I wanted to create an intervention in the physical space of the SF VA, but that was impossible. There were too many rules and regulations, too much bureaucracy to deal with. The time frame of the class was also restrictive and I had to figure out another direction for this project. That's when I had to step back and take a look at the reasons why this place was of interest to me.



“HIS FACE IS STILL STUCK WITH ME... HIS TEETH. HE WAS PEPPERED WITH SHRAPNEL; I COULD SEE INTO HIS SHOULDER BLADES.”

—ADAN PULIDO

Drawing by Adan Pulido, Marine Corps veteran, October 4, 2010.



“THEY WOULD ASK ME FOR LITTLE THINGS LIKE COLD WATER. IT MAKES YOU THINK HOW DIFFERENT THEIR SOCIETY IS TO OUR SOCIETY.”

—ABELINO ROBLES

Drawing by Abelino Robles, Army veteran, October 3, 2010.

“SOMETHING SLOWED DOWN OUR ENTIRE CONVOY... AND IT WAS THIS DONKEY GLISTENING IN THE SUNLIGHT. IT WAS A STRANGE MOMENT.”

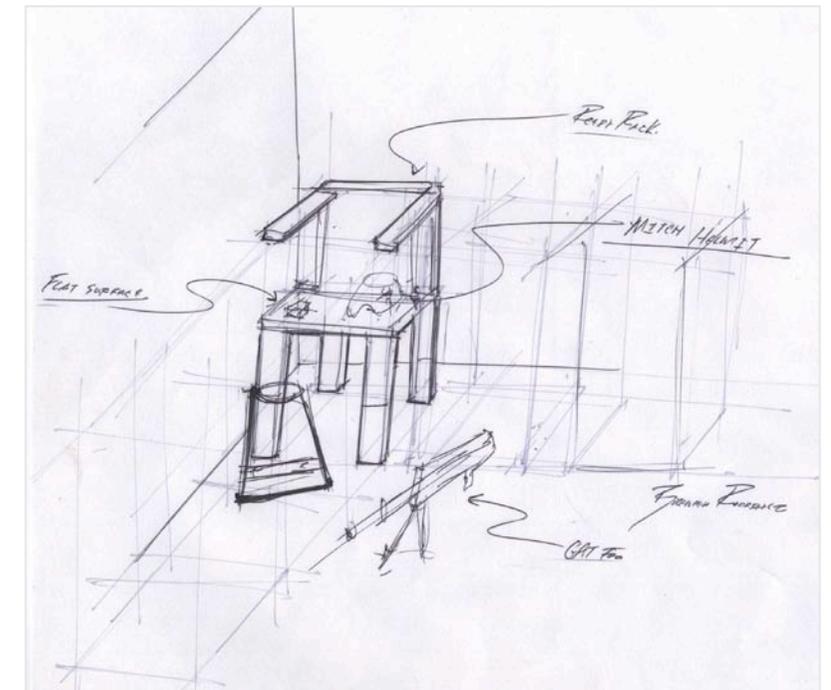
—MAXIMILIAN URIARTE



Drawing by Maximilian Uriarte, Marine Corps veteran, November 22, 2010.

“THIS IS A READY RACK... FOR NIGHT VISION GOGGLES, MITCH HELMET... FOR A SQUAD OF RANGERS. IT’S ALL ABOUT CARE OF EQUIPMENT.”

—BRENDEN RODRIGUEZ



Drawing by Brenden Rodriguez, Army veteran, November 19, 2010.

I came to the conclusion that it wasn't the VA hospital that originated these stories, but the veterans themselves. I realized that it didn't matter where they were- as long as veterans were together, stories would take place. I then decided that an online resource would work best, since it is the most accessible, and it has the power to reach an audience outside of the veteran arena.

TIM: How will you evaluate this project of yours? What would make your project successful?

JULIE: Evaluating this project is difficult because it will take time for the site to be recognized and known. I suppose that if the site had a substantial number of followers and participants... That could be considered successful. Right now it is difficult to say. To a certain extent I feel that it is already successful. I have been able to reach out to other veterans, exchange resources, tell their stories, and help them use creativity as a form of therapy. I use the word therapy very carefully because I am not a therapist, but using art as therapy is already being used to treat combat disorders.

TIM: Last but not least, what's next?!

JULIE: I plan on working on this project for a while. This is something I feel passionate about and I think it can be very successful. I hope that the site will grow to be a resource not only for stories, but for art as well. I think a lot of veterans might be fearful of the word art because many don't know how to draw

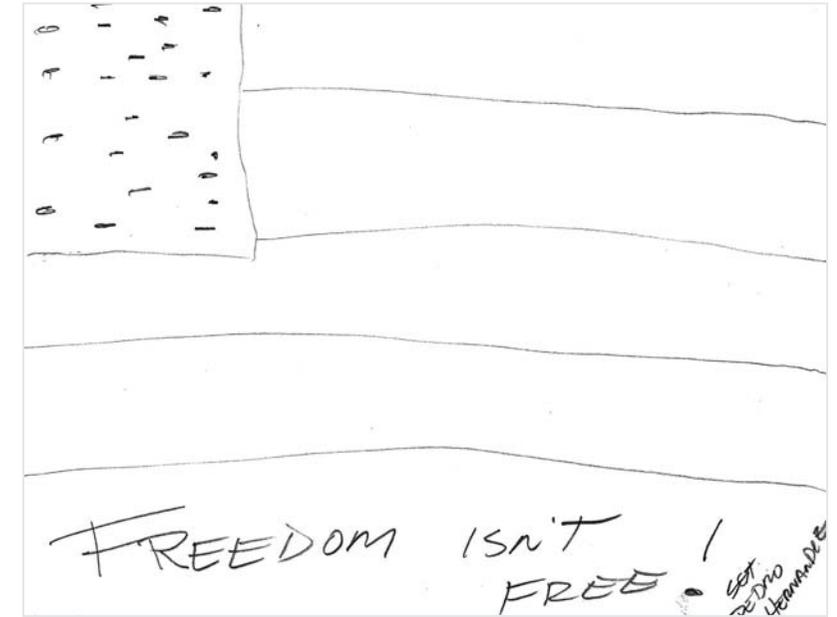


2ActStories.com home page.

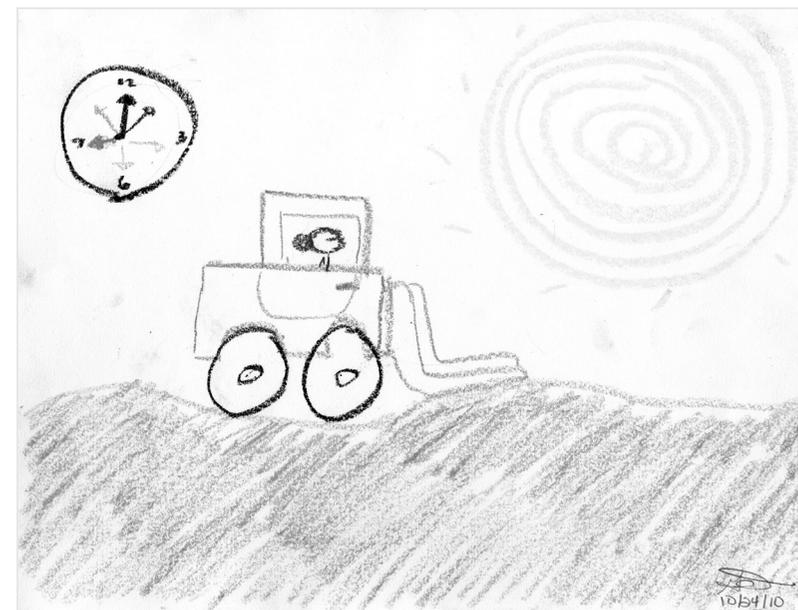
or sketch, but the great thing about the site is that it allows them to share any form of creative outlet. They can share their story through a painting, a photograph, a poem, or a video. The possibilities are endless. I know that these stories will have the power to influence veterans and encourage them to seek help. Family members and friends will also get an insiders perspective and will become aware of the veteran in their life.

"I AM ATTEMPTING TO DRAW THE AMERICAN FLAG... I FOUGHT FOR IT, I GOT HURT BY IT, I DID A LOT OF THINGS FOR IT."

—PETER HERNANDEZ



Drawing by Peter Hernandez, Army veteran, November 29, 2010.



"WE EACH HAD A BOTTLE OF WATER A DAY. WE HAD M.R.E'S TO EAT. WE HAD NO BATHROOMS; WE HAD NO SHOWERS."

—GRISELDA OROZCO

Drawing by Griselda Orozco, Army veteran, October 25, 2010.

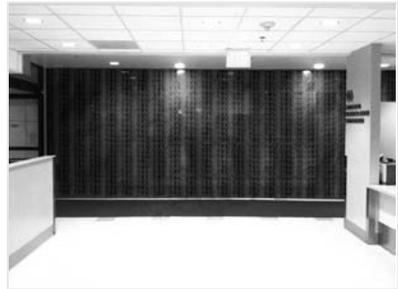
PROCESS

This project certainly changed and developed from the beginning stages and ideations. There were several attempts and explorations that proved to be dead ends and failures. I began with close observations of the SF VA. From there I established my focus, which were the stories shared among veterans. I then developed an installation that I wanted to place in the physical space of the VA. I envisioned a wall in the main entrance of the building that would be covered with toy soldiers, and each toy would be attached to a story. This idea did not proceed past the prototype phase since working with the VA was too problematic. Because it is a government facility, conducting any on site projects required forms, permissions, rules and regulations that would not work with the class schedule. At this point I decided to shift to an educational facility hoping that they would be more open and accepting toward student work. But this was not the case. I began looking at the newly opened Veterans Center at City College of San Francisco. During the opening ceremony I met many veterans who were interested in my project and wanted to help. With a positive outlook, I approached the person in charge of the center to get permission to use the physical space and to interact with other veterans. Again, this became too problematic and my project reached another dead end.

After struggling with the bureaucracies of the government and educational facilities, I needed to review my interests of the VA environment. I came to the conclusion that physical spaces were not required to create stories, but simply the union of veterans. Anytime veterans gather, stories take place. This is when I decided that an online site would be the best place to collect stories through art. I began conducting interviews and introducing art as a form of storytelling. This activity led me to the final concept, which is 2ActStories.com, a site where veterans can use art to tell their story and share it with other military members.



Prototype of the initial concept, a wall covered with soldiers that would connect to audio of veteran stories.



Graphic rendering of initial concept at the main entrance of the SF VA.



Student veterans gather at the Veterans Center ribbon cutting ceremony at City College of San Francisco. October 15, 2010.

RIGHT: Ribbon cutting ceremony of the Veterans Center at City College of San Francisco. October 15, 2010.



U.N.
PLAZA
CIVIC
CENTER



SHARE HOPE

A MESSAGE FROM CIVIC

SUE QUICK

CENTER TO THE WORLD

My project Share Hope is at the U.N. Plaza at Civic Center along Market Street between 7th and 8th. It is a frequented place, an intersection of moving bodies, with numerous signs notifying visitors of city codes and instructing them on using the space, with many vendors selling farm produce, import items, and local art—all combine to define it as an anonymous space. This dynamic mix of people and activity—travelers from all over the world, homeless, city employees, farmers, artists, drug addicts, students— provides constant opportunities through constant change. I identified a need for inspiration and motivation. My agenda in response was to promote hope. There is a strata of people somewhere between hopeful and hopeless, people on the edge of despair. It is those people who I want to spark with the possibility of a better future.

The project started with a questionnaire to determine what hope means. Then the survey started driving the project. It became apparent that the real value of the engagement was the sincerity of the people who took the time to share their message of hope, their willingness to do so, and their insightful answers. I could tell by their voice and expression that some of these participants were profoundly impacted by the thoughtful exchange.

I became a weekly participant at the Arts Market in this space, engaging with passers-by through the survey, creating YouTube videos of them sharing their message of hope with the world. The next iteration will turn excerpts from the survey into a spoken word performance at Civic Center on December 16th, and then collaborate with the performance troupe, Central Market Arts “to make hope come alive” as a dance/movement/music/art performance in the spring.

My final piece will be a short film to showcase the civic collaboration of hope, solidifying the project into a cohesive presence that could become an installation not only at Civic Center, but beyond. This project reinforces the notion that hope is an essential element of life, much like air and water.



LARA

INTEVIEWS

SUE

“HOPE IS AN ESSENTIAL
ELEMENT OF LIFE, MUCH LIKE
AIR AND WATER”



Sue: Hope is knowing that the sun comes up on a new day, every day. What I do during each day matters. It is the substance that creates my tomorrow.

LARA: So Sue, I keep hearing that you are the “angel of hope.” Where does that rumor come from?

SUE: I’m having a hard time shaking that, it seems to be sticking. On the first day of conducting the hope survey at Civic Center, I interviewed Pam. She invited me to appear on her Pirate Cat Radio show so she could interview me about the Share Hope project. Pam called me the “angel of hope” during the interview. We had so much fun that I’ve been on the air every week promoting Share Hope. In fact, I interviewed you with the hope survey on the air one week, right Lara? Plus, you made one of the message of hope videos posted on YouTube. I have close to a hundred completed surveys with 38 videos posted to YouTube. As it turns out, not only does the project have wings, but it is also spreading roots, which is what I was hoping for from the beginning.

LARA: What inspired you to choose to spread hope rather than, for example, love or playfulness?

SUE: I truly believe that hope is essential for life, only slightly behind air and water. Hope makes getting out of bed in the morning worth the effort. No matter how bad things are, hope creates the energy to take the next step, do the next action. Hope is what generates positive actions, hopelessness generates negative actions. Hope makes love possible. As you know, hope opens the door for playfulness.

LARA: Okay, I see - hope is the foundation that everything else rests upon. And, judging from the reactions of the people you have interviewed, hope is something that everyone needs. Did you run into any problems during your project that made you lose hope? If so, what did you do to regain it?

SUE: I was ignored by most people rushing by with their busyness. One guy told me to go to hell. But what made it all worthwhile was the sincere and insightful answers by the hundred people who took the time to share. The responses I got became a strong message of hope that was incredibly inspiring for me also.



Lara: Hope is having a sense that tomorrow will be a better day. “Don’t worry. Be happy”

“IF YOU CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE,
YOU CAN ALWAYS BE HOPEFUL.
EVERYTHING IS HERE NOW—IF WE
RESPECT THAT, ITS NOT SO BAD.”



Pam: Hope is believing in yourself enough to live another day, trusting that your work means something. “If you change your perspective, you can always be hopeful. Everything is here now, if we respect that, its not so bad.”

“CONTINUE TO BE POSITIVE. FORGE AHEAD. HAVE FAITH IN YOURSELF AND OTHERS. DARE TO DREAM.”



John: Hope means possibilities. “Live every day in the moment. Experience the now for tomorrow.”



Holly: Hope is having the courage to dream. “Continue to be positive. Forge ahead. Have faith in yourself and others. Dare to dream.”

LARA: It has been quite a ride for you, and you certainly have encountered many interesting people in your explorations. How do you feel about the entire process now that it’s winding down? Did you “make it big”?

SUE: Well, as far as for my “making it big,” I did have 18 minutes of fame. As for the project, it is much more substantial than “big.” It has breadth and depth. It is more like an iceberg. There is more substance underneath than what one can see on the surface. Not only did I make a lot of people think about their own personal driving force, I gave them an opportunity and a forum to share that not only at Civic Center, but with people around the world. I actually planted seeds of hope in the global community, I can’t control whether they sprout or not, but I did indeed plant them. That is big.

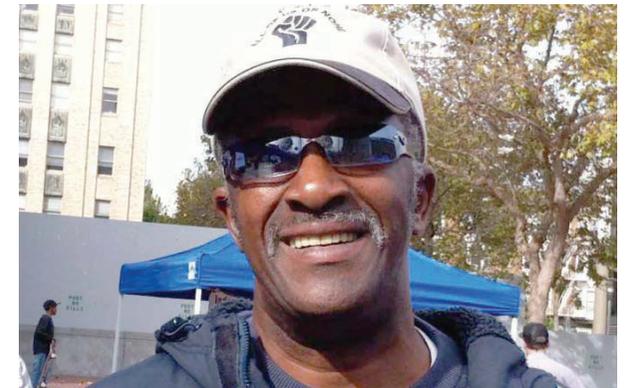
LARA: Do you think you will continue your work with hope after this class is over?

SUE: That is my plan. I will be going forward with this project in the spring. Hope is the framework and foundation of everything I do, all day, everyday, and “hopefully” will be the driving force of the underlying structure of all I continue to do in the future.



Mace: Hope is faith in life’s process. “Believe in yourself and the process of life.”

“KEEP YOUR HEAD UP AND THIS TOO SHALL PASS.”



Richard: Hope is using your God given gift to strive for a better life. “There is no sense in being hopeless when there is hope out there for you, use it to the best of your ability. That way you can share your hope with others who are still struggling.”

“BELIEVE IN YOURSELF AND THE PROCESS OF LIFE.”

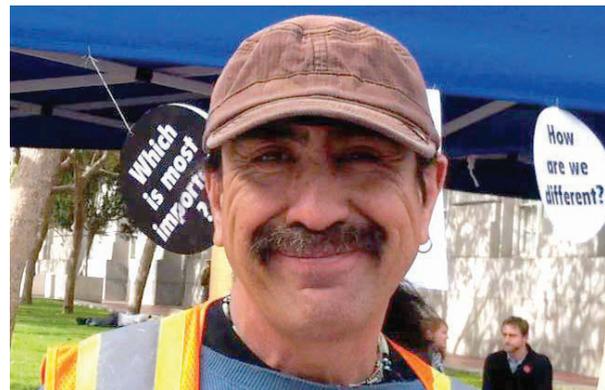


Joen: To me, hope is light which means Jesus and my family. “Keep your head up and this too shall pass if you feel without hope every now and then.”

“NEVER STOP HOPING.
IT’S THE MOST PRECIOUS
THING YOU CAN CREATE.”



Chelsea: Hope is believing in the goodness of a future you can't see. "Never stop hoping. It's the most precious thing you can create."



Horatio: Hope is faith. "Don't do what others do. Care more for others than you do for yourself."

PROCESS The initial exploration started with MUNI, Market Street between 7th and 8th, and the CCA campus. As I narrowed my focus, Civic Center emerged as the intersect, the space of opportunity. I had first noticed the disparity of the over abundance of high-end marketing in contrast to a disturbing abundance of people in distress. I was determined to see how I could make the messaging in this space more relevant and in concert with the needs of the community.

I intended to start with a survey about hope to see where it would lead. I discovered that when I conducted the survey with someone, it elevated the spirit of both of us. That seemed very profound to me, and I stuck with the survey to see how I could develop the project around that sweet spot.

Something that fell by the wayside was social media. The graphics went through numerous iterations. I found a balance between generic and overly designed. This project depends on sincerity—the media needed to reflect that message.



Susie: Hope is everything. It does exist.



GRAND STRATEGY:
To promote hope. There are people who frequent Civic Center that walk a fine line between hopeful and hopeless; this project is for them.

SUPPORTING STRATEGIES:
I want to produce things that make people think. I want to challenge sensory perceptions; to engage people; to encourage connections.

- TACTICS:**
- Hope survey
 - Booth at Art Space every Thursday
 - Appearances on Pirate Cat Radio
 - YouTube Videos
 - Business card with links and contact information
 - Sticker with Share Hope logo

SURVEY AGENDA: TO PROMOTE HOPE

1. What first comes to mind when I say the word hope?
2. How do you define hope?
3. How important is it to have hope?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
4. Where does hope come from?
5. What brings you hope?
6. Can you think of a time when you felt hopeless, overwhelmed, or discouraged?
7. What did you do to get past that?
8. What words of hope could you share with others?



“ALWAYS BELIEVE IN YOURSELF. IT’S UP TO YOU TO SHOW THE WORLD WHAT YOU ARE WORTH.”

Divya: Hope means never giving up. “Always believe in yourself. Its up to you to show the world what you are worth.”



“HOPE IS KNOWING IN YOUR SOUL THAT EVERYTHING IS GOING TO WORK OUT.”

David: Hope is knowing in your soul that everything is going to work out. “If you persevere, there will always come a day when you look back on your worst day and know that things weren’t hopeless.”



“NEVER GIVE UP— NO MATTER WHAT. STAY POSITIVE.”

Clinton: Hope means to never give up no matter what. “Stay positive.”



MISSION STREET



THEN AND NOW

HEIDI MEREDITH

WOODWARD'S GARDENS

Mission Street between 13th and 15th are pretty typical Mission District blocks—garage doors, a bar or two, a club, and a few restaurants. But 150 years ago, when the neighborhood was just sandy, sparsely inhabited land; a man named Robert Woodward opened his beautiful home and gardens to the people. He displayed collections of animals, plants, art, statues, and an array of other wonders. People came en masse and Woodward began adding to his collections, created a carriage service to bring visitors from downtown out to the barren Mission District.

My intention with this project was to show what used to exist on this grungy section of Mission Street. I find tidbits of interesting historical information, especially when it's in my own city and neighborhood fascinating, and puts in a spring in my step when I walk around the streets imagining what used to be there. With these thoughts in my mind I set out to create a stop-motion short juxtaposing the “then” and “now” of that section of Mission Street.

The movie itself opens on a person walking down Mission Street as it is today, who comes up on a little stage door. Peeking inside with this person, the audience is transported to another time—back to the era of Woodward's Gardens. Inside paper and wood animals frolic on a set of collaged paper using real images found in archives of Woodward's Gardens. The lights create shadows and colors across the stage, and a paper audience gazes up to see the animals at play. This exaggerated world exists now exists in my movie short, a present day look into a colorful past.

By showing the normal, everyday present with the fanciful past, I was able to create a hybrid identity that took away some of the anonymity of the two blocks.



“PEEKING INSIDE WITH THIS PERSON, THE AUDIENCE IS TRANSPORTED TO ANOTHER TIME— BACK TO THE ERA OF WOODWARD’S GARDENS.”

An series of images from the stop-motion short. The exterior of current day Mission street rips open to reveal the Woodward’s Gardens’ stage. The Gardens did have a pavilion where many vaudeville performers showcased their talents. Did they ever allow the animals to go romping across the stage? This we don’t know, but it is fun to imagine.

KATE **KATE:** Hi Heidi, I am going to interview you right now. Ready?

INTEVIEWS **HEIDI:** Is that a question?

HEIDI **KATE:** What did you make in class, Heidi?

HEIDI: Well, I tried to tie this class to my thesis, which is about lost spaces in San Francisco. I specifically looked at the weird old amusement park-type place that existed in the mission district from 1866-1898 called Woodward’s Gardens. I wanted to juxtapose the “then” and “now” of that area. The street as it is now is just a grungy strip in the Mission and I wanted to show what used to be there.

My first tactic was pop-up books, using old images from Woodward’s, as well as images from Mission Street as it exists today. The pop-ups were a good way to start experimenting. I really got into the dimensionality of the pop-up. Ultimately though, I



One of the pop-up books I made using images from the California Online Archive as well as a picture I took of what is currently where Woodward’s Gardens was. I cut everything out and created the pop-up, then photographed it and took it into Photoshop to try to give it a more psychedelic look.



wanted some movement as well, so I moved on to stop-motion. I could still use that dimensionality to play with “then and now” but I could also incorporate movement.

KATE: Why did you make that?



HEIDI: I thought it was the best way to show this fantastic place. And since it no longer exists I could really have some fun, and create some whimsy. I actually got this list of animals that existed in Woodward’s Gardens from the SFPL library and created my movie around that list.

KATE: How big is it?



HEIDI: It’s the appropriate size. I mean, for a movie short! I created a set that was meant to look like a stage. It’s probably 2’x1’. That took a lot of time. It was all out of paper and very temperamental. One open window with a slight breeze coming through could send this thing crumbling down. Also, creating the stop-motion was pretty time consuming. Moving all those little parts, getting the animals—those were also made out of paper—to stand up (I used clay).

KATE: Could you make it bigger? And what about the space, How are you going to put this back into the space?

HEIDI: That’s been my biggest challenge, since my space no longer physically exists. I wanted to try and show the “then” and “now” aspects of it by having the intro of my movie of someone walking down the street as it is now, and then finding a little stage, and then zooming into this world that used to be there. If I had more time and knew how, I would try to put this little movie into stereoscopic booths along the street, so people walking along could peek in and see a stop-motion movie of what used to be there. Albeit, it’s a fantasized version of what was there.



KATE: But can’t you make it bigger? Are you a tentative designer that makes cute things?

As for my final piece, I feel like it is just a jumping off point for more video experiments I want to do. I feel much more comfortable with the process of stop-motion, and now really want to learn how to use After Effects so I can animate. I hope to incorporate more video in my thesis, and even expand on my Woodward’s Gardens short.

HEIDI: Seems like things are going that way. I often feel tentative and I have a penchant for the cute, though I try to resist it. It will probably be my lifelong struggle as a designer. I do think for this project an injection of whimsy wasn’t uncalled for. Why not imagine something outrageous for this project? As Ryan Alexiev mentioned during one of my critiques, the 1800s weren’t black and white, even if the pictures from that time are black and white. Why not imagine fantastic colors and push what was really there to make it something more exciting and unique? My project does have a child-like aesthetic, but amusement parks attract children so I think it works for this.

“MISSION STREET BETWEEN 13TH AND 15TH ARE PRETTY TYPICAL MISSION DISTRICT BLOCKS—GARAGE DOORS, A BAR OR TWO, A CLUB, AND A FEW RESTAURANTS.”

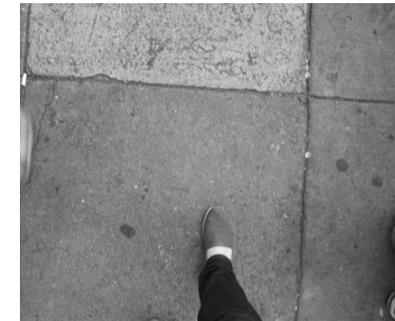
PROCESS



As I mentioned in the interview, my first attempt at exploring this space was to make a pop-up book. I checked out some books on how to create pop-ups from the library, I found inspiration and tutorials online, and I experimented with the mechanics of the pop-up, but ultimately it was too technically difficult to achieve the effects I wanted with what I could do. I redirected my course to making a movie short. This, too, is something I'd never done and I overcame a lot of challenges, the first one being how to use the software. Other challenges I encountered were creating the sets. I wanted to build some kind of a set out of wood, but that in and of itself would have taken me all semester, so I went with paper, a material I felt comfortable with.

I laser cut my animals, another tool I'd never used. I was a little terrified at first figuring out how to set up my files and picking which wood to use. One problem with the laser is that the animals don't move and as I began filming I realized I needed them to have some movement across the stage, so I made some paper cut-out ones with movable arms, legs, heads, and tails. I mixed these in with the laser animals.

The final stages for the movie I found a song that fit and then timed all my stills to go with the beat. This took a few days and it definitely made me want to learn After Effects because I think it would be way easier than iMovie. Ian Cooley helped with the lights and graininess of the animal stage.



Stills from intro of the movie short. A person's feet walk down Mission street until they come to a little stage and look inside.



16th & MISSION

STORIES FROM ANONYMOUS SPACE

ZACHARY GIBSON

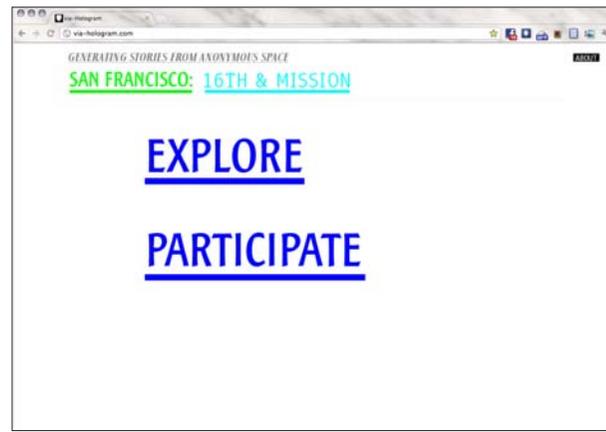
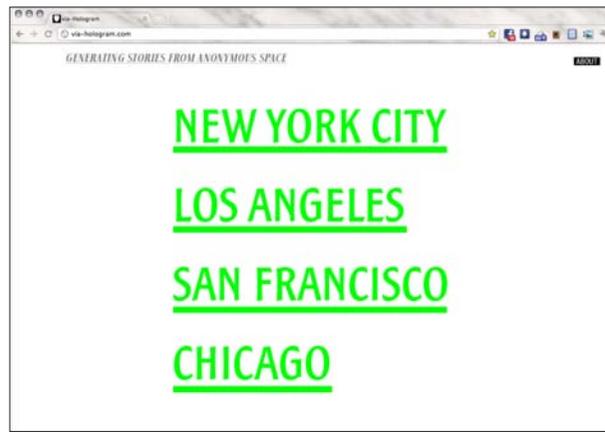
EXPLORE & ARCHIVE

Anonymous space is designed to be passed through, ignored, abused, and is a space that retains little or no trace of our engagement with it. I've designed a system to challenge this claim by Marc Augé. The system utilizes anonymous space in fruitful ways, employing social participation to define anonymous space as a place to generate unexpected stories. My exploration started at 16th and Mission in San Francisco, but my end result will address the identity of various anonymous spaces around the country.

I designed a website that encourages participants to interact with anonymous space in an unusual ways: by interrupting people with an ambiguous travel related question; by documenting their interaction and experience; and by sharing the content they create. The site prompts visitors to generate a random task to explore and participate in the growing amount of content, or to browse the archive of participants' experiences.

To prototype my design, I focused on 16th and Mission in San Francisco. I asked several participants to use the online random task generator. Through the task, they are told to go to a specific corner, find a stranger, and ask the person directions toward an abstract destination. The participants are then asked to follow the advice they've been given and report back with documentation of the experience.

Using the site as a hub of exploration and an archive of experiences, I'm conducting small interventions that redefine anonymous space as a place to generate unexpected stories, and encouraging deeper social relationships in an increasingly isolated world.

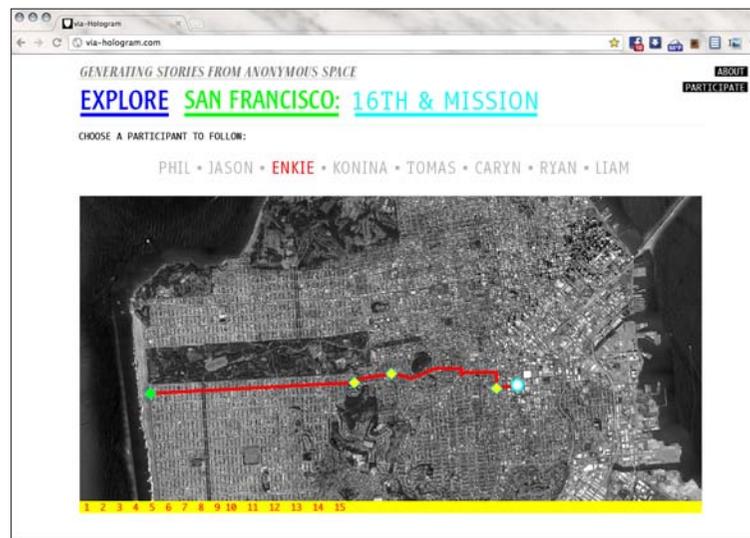
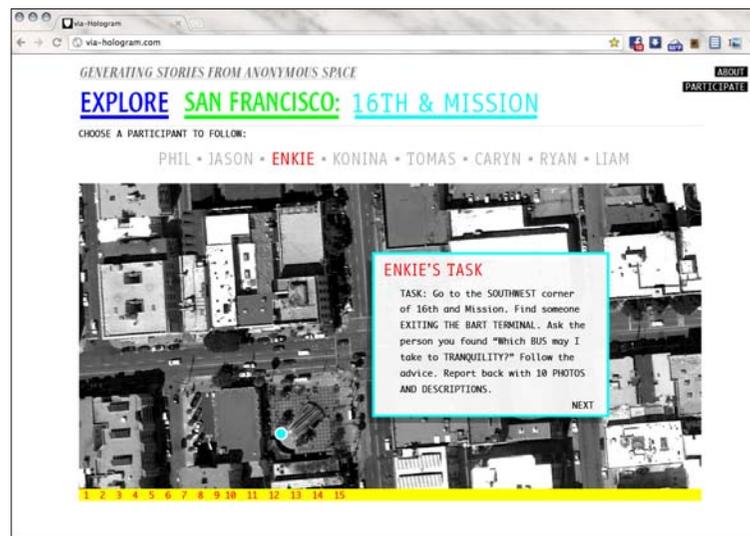
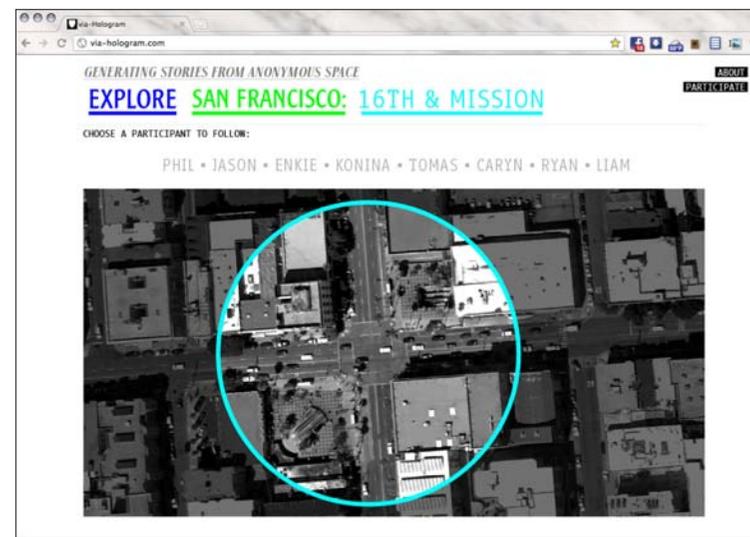
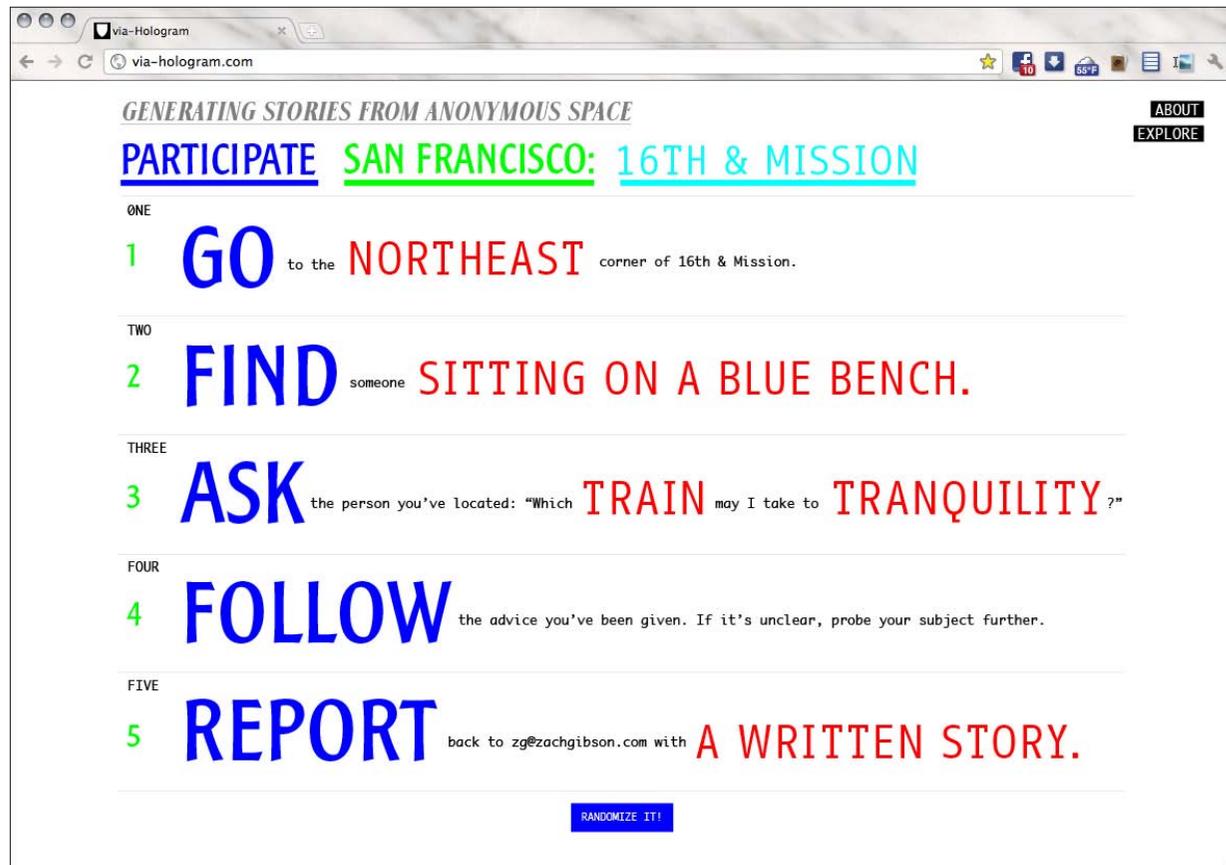


Available for the iPhone.*

*(Eventually)



Track your journey with GPS. Document your travels. Upload to the website from your mobile device.



LEFT: When a visitor arrives at the site, they choose a city. In the example in the top right, the visitor has chosen San Francisco. Then they choose to either EXPLORE the archive of user generator submissions, or PARTICIPATE in the experiment. Choosing to participate leads the visitor to the randomized task generator. After clicking the "RANDOMIZE IT" button, all of the words in red change. It will tell you to go to the northeast or southwest corner. Next, find someone walking fast, wearing orange, black, short, tall, who looks you in the eyes for 5 seconds, overweight, Mexican, loud, etc. Then ask the person, "Which bus, train, or direction, may I take to paradise, gluttony, tranquility, redemption, or lust?" And lastly, follow the advice you've been prescribed, and report back with a timeline of happenings, a short story, a poem, 10 photos and descriptions, or a thank you letter to the stranger you met.

RIGHT: If the visitor chooses to EXPLORE, they can rummage through the archive of user generated submissions. For example the images to the right follow Enkie, as she was lead on a journey from 16th and Mission to Ocean Beach on a quest to find tranquility. There are highlighted pit-stops along the way, in which the viewer can dive in further to see, read, or listen to Enkie's documentation of her trip.



SUE

INTEVIEWS

ZACH

SUE: Tell me Z, what would you most like to be asked about your project, and why?

ZACH: Ask me about significant findings or something. Maybe I'll say something good.

SUE: What do you feel was the most significant finding in your exploration?

ZACH: I developed a new way for people to engage with anonymous space and find something unexpectedly beneficial from it: people! The participants in my project were forced to taking advice from strange people within a space where people are most comfortable looking down, listening to headphones, and minding their own business. Although reluctant at first, most participants found this to be a fruitful experience, and from the advice they received from a complete stranger they were able to discover a few special moments that broke their normal routine in life.

The most significant finding for me was the realization that to intervene as a designer within a space, one doesn't need to design a monument, but that an intervention can be much more subtle. It can be in conducting new and abnormal social relationships, ones that affect people in a much more direct way than looking at a thing.



ABOVE: Enkie ended up at Ocean Beach in search of tranquility.

RIGHT: Phil wrote a thank you letter to the stranger he met.

Dear Stranger,
Thanks for the advice today. I think you may have confused redemption for repentance? Anyway, the church seemed closed, but after a little exploring I found the gift shop. The lady was about to charge me \$5 to enter. But I said I just wanted to pray. She let me in for free and I was able to go in. It was a beautiful church, I'd never even noticed it there before. Had I not asked you for direction I may have never seen the inside of this place. I went ahead and sat in the pew and said a small prayer. It was extremely peaceful and I think I needed that escape.

SUE: What kind of special moments did you discover?

ZACH: I had some wonderfully awkward moments in my preliminary research. For a few days I wandered around 16th and Mission asking people ambiguous questions to see what kind of responses I'd get. If you ever want to experience an eerie feeling, ask a stranger, "Which direction can I walk toward pure evil?" or "Which bus heads toward lust?" I'm glad I tested some of the questions before I led people into a bad situation. So, I changed the ambiguous words to be positive, primarily the opposite of most feelings you'd get while standing at 16th and Mission. Mostly synonyms of peaceful.

As for the participants, they responded to the randomly generated prompts with some truly beautiful moments.

While trying to find tranquility, Enkie ended up at ocean beach. She took photos of people who look tiny in comparison to the landscape. She also enjoyed a calm moment at a cold beach as the sun was going down.

Phil, while trying to find redemption, ended up in a church he'd never been to before, praying. There were also a few people that had a totally unsuccessful trips, and couldn't find anyone willing to answer their ambiguous question. But even a person running around trying to ask a stranger where they can find contentment, I find to be a special moment. It's a lovely metaphorical experience.



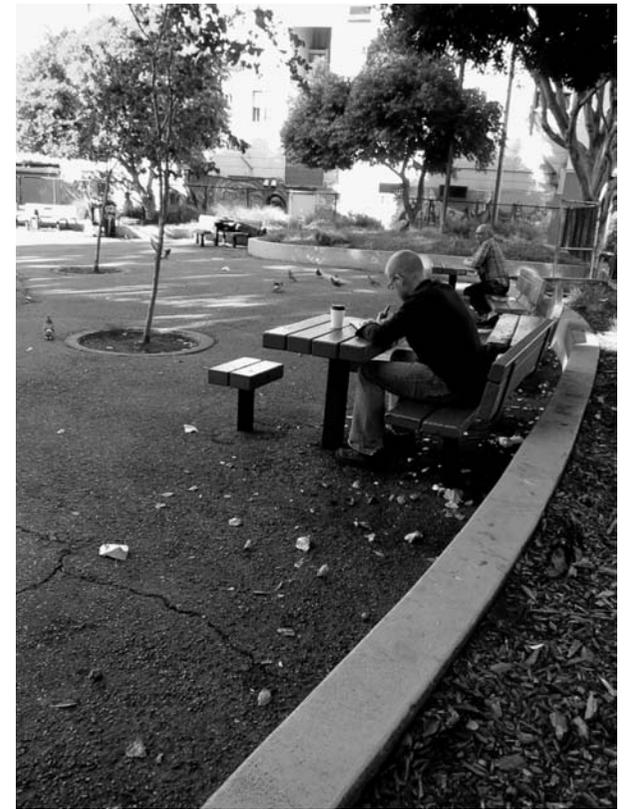
this is going to sound like a strange question,
i said to the woman at 16th and mission
waiting with her bike
she seemed entirely normal
which bus should i take to contentment,
i asked uncomfortably.
she must have been confused.
like, you want to go somewhere
and feel content?
sure, i said. yeah.
she hesitated before replying, finally,
the 33, maybe? to golden gate park.
but i don't know, ~~contentment~~ contentment?
i'm not sure that's a stop any bus here serves.

BONUS HAIKU!

woman in orange
take a bus to contentment
that is not a stop

SUE: What will you do with the results? What is your finished project?

ZACH: The user generated results are going to all be archived on the site. I'd also like to re-frame the generator to be applicable to other cities. I imagine the same experiments being conducted at non-places around the country like Penn Station in NYC or the Chicago International airport, or a grocery store in Detroit. At this point I'm seeing the "finished project" as an infinitely growing system of user generated content. A strange way for people to escape the normality of life, or live vicariously through these emotional stories that the participants have been generating. I plan to play with the interface of the site more, make it less confusing and easier to participate. I'd like to try a few other ways of conducting awkward social relationships, other than asking a travel related question. And I'd like play with the interactivity of the mobile device aspect more too, like the ability to record sound, video, and other ways of generating content.



ABOVE: Pointed in the direction of tranquility, Konina ended up in a park she'd never been to, and took some quiet time to herself.

LEFT: Caryn was unsuccessful in finding a bus to contentment, but still wrote this poem about the experience



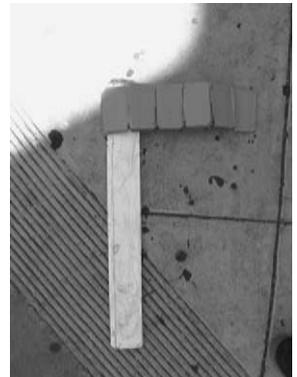
ABOVE: Jason was asked to find someone mean and ask them which direction to redemption. Here's his description:

When I got to the corner, I spotted this guy within 30 seconds. He was walking my way, so I stopped him and asked the question. After a little extra explanation (mainly to define "redemption") he first tells me that he'd get out of the city, maybe to Seattle. I prompted him for a place within the city—he came right back with "Fisher-man's Wharf. They have benches and you can just look out on the water and meditate." So we went from redemption via escape to redemption via self-reflection.

PROCESS

Before arriving at the idea of developing the randomized task generator, I had three research tactics that explored relationships at 16th and Mission.

My first research tactic questioned: Can the identity of a place be determined through rigorous exploration of the objects found within it? I came to this question after reading Nicholas Bourriaud's book called "The Radicant" in which I found the following quote by Hanna Arendt "Culture is being threatened when all worldly objects and things... are treated as mere functions for the life process of society, as though they are there only to fulfill some need." My strategy was for this exploration was to look at objects found in and around 16th and mission in a new way. Using photographs of the objects, I developed an alphabet and attempted to create a 16th and Mission typeface.



Typeface developed out of found objects at 16th and Mission.



My second research tactic explored the cultural division between the perimeter of each corner, where there are passengers, and the interior where there are vagrants. With this tactic my aim was to frame 16th and Mission as a theater. I was also looking at it as a metaphorical post-colonial example. With this exploration I essentially hired a group of four actors and set them within 16th and Mission. The actors were told to “Find an Expert”, have a conversation with them, then using a digital video recorder, they would tell the story of the expert they found.

My third research tactic aimed to interrupt the normality of life with an ambiguous question to a stranger, then embrace the answer. The goal of this strategy was to have strangers prescribe the path to take rather than maps, signs, and led bus info. I would approach a stranger and ask them questions similar to those found in the randomized task generator. My conversations with strangers led to myself taking a trip to the tenderloin, playing dominoes with a drooling drug addict, and trip to the Embarcadero. I enjoyed these trips and wanting to share this experience with others, I decided to further pursue the idea with developing the randomized task generator.

Stills from a video with four of the actors retelling their “Find an Expert” stories.



1100 SEVENTH STREET



DEAR VACANT LOT...

THE BLIGHT BEHIND CCA

CARYN KESLER &

CHARLOTTE COOPER

Greyhound Ltd. maintained part of their bus fleet in San Francisco at Seventh and Irving until the mid-90s, when half of the facility was transformed CCA's light and spacious Hooper campus. The remaining land parcel was simply fenced in, and the metal structures began to decay, becoming a magnet for transient populations and accumulating junk. This transition was clearly viewable through floor-to-ceiling windows at the back of CCA's Nave.

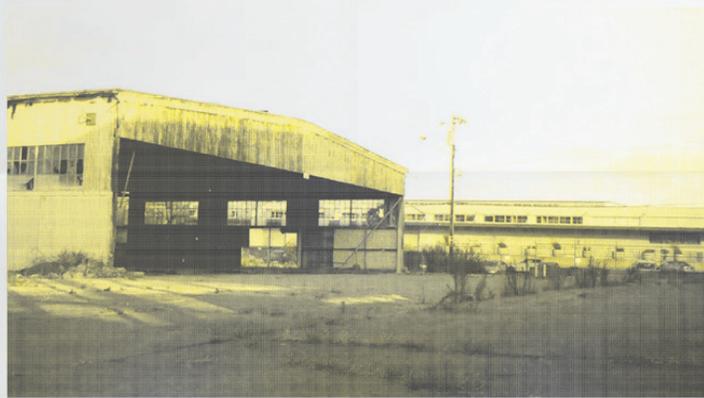
Currently valued by the City at \$12 million, the lot is for sale, at an undisclosed price that is likely to be much higher. Yet surrounding businesses and the CCA community perceive it decidedly negatively, many noting feelings of unease or even threat to their safety. As a result, people tended to ignore or avoid the space. Assumed to be an extension of CCA property, this blighted property (so declared by San Francisco in May 2010) reflects negativity onto CCA; moreover, the gulf between its perceived value and its potential value is enormous.

This incongruity intrigued and frustrated us, and we wondered why so many were content to ignore the lot until some future buyer (possibly CCA) stepped in — we wondered, could we bring purposefulness to this lot now, regardless of its future development? Thus we sought to intervene: to encourage the CCA community to critically re-evaluate the lot and endow this anonymous space with identity.

We staged several tactical installations inside the easily permeable space, to varying degrees of success, attempting to inspire people to notice the lot. Toward the end of our campaigns, to our surprise, the derelict structures were razed, its temporary denizens were evicted to the sidewalk and the fences strengthened. The lot was truly empty.

Our tactics pivoted in response, now that we were unable to use the lot itself, which actually led to our most successful intervention: we made Vacant Lot a Facebook page. We realized we could leverage social media to inspire students to create a relationship to Vacant Lot. Once we had enough interaction and dialog happening online, we moved back into the realm of the physical, creating an embodied Facebook wall, overlaid on the CCA nave windows and the school's view of our site.

THERE'S A LOT BEHIND CCA



ABOVE: proposed poster intended to promote awareness and supplement our intervention tactics in the physical site.

NEXT PAGE: this is one of our initial sketches for a window installation at the back of the nave.

HEIDI

INTERVIEWS

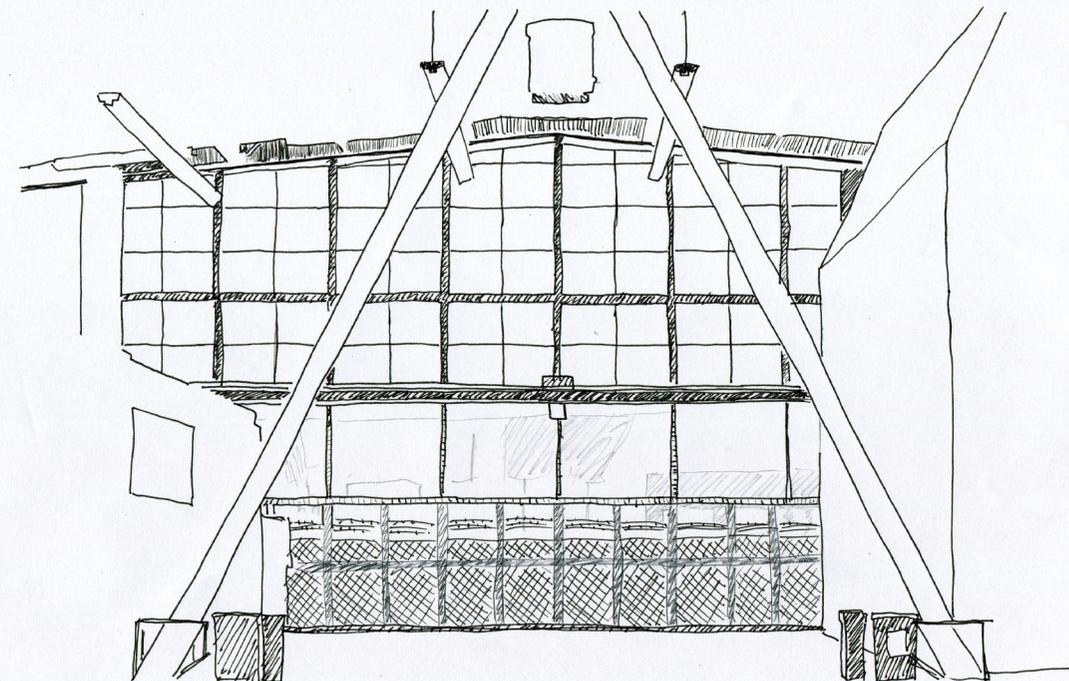
VACANT LOT

HEIDI: How did Vacant Lot start?

CHARLOTTE: We started talking about the individual spaces we'd been examining through an earlier class exercise: Caryn was looking at underpasses, and I was looking at intersections as places of waiting and transition. We realized that the ideas generated together were more interesting than anything we'd imagined individually, and decided to investigate the lot behind CCA.

CARYN: The underpass I was looking at was a similar situation: it was fenced, people threw junk in there, it was kind of place where people lived. But it was different in a way because there wasn't the "eye" of CCA on it. So that's the nexus of our interests coming together.

CHARLOTTE: The lot has intrigued both of us since last year, when our professor Barry Katz expounded on its history and present state in class. Barry has a personal interest in the lot and



CCA's stake in buying it, which led us to wonder about the incongruity of the value people see in the lot now, and what value it could have.

CARYN: I would get here early just so I wouldn't have to park near the back lot, and found a lot of people we interviewed echoed that sentiment. Universally we heard, "I ignore it, I go out of my way to avoid it, I don't feel safe around there." It inspires a feeling of unease and CCA looks directly onto it through the windows at the back of the nave. You see this derelict structure back there, but people seem to have metaphorical blinders on. No one really pays it any mind.

CHARLOTTE: It's present, but most people don't attend to it.

HEIDI: What kind of intervention did you create?

CARYN: Our first installation tested whimsy to transform the derelict space, so we bought a bunch of helium balloons and glow sticks, trying to make the structure in the back more fun—our attempt to get people to notice something different than the usual. But this made us aware of the issues of scale in this large space. Because people literally just don't pay attention to that back lot, a few red balloons back there didn't really register.

CHARLOTTE: Also, the lights inside CCA are always on, so even at night it was hard to see the glow sticks or see out of the ordinary.

CARYN: We realized we couldn't just insert stuff back there; we had to somehow put CCA into it. We wondered if we took recognizable pieces of the school, like the furniture, back there and

used the lot in a fundamentally different way, would that garner any interest? So that's what we did: we brought pieces from the student lounge out there and filmed

CHAR: We inserted ourselves in the lot in contrast to the homeless population that lives back there furtively.

CARYN: We set ourselves up right in front of the Nave windows, and called it "The Occupation."

CHARLOTTE: We just went about our lives as students, but behind the boundary line. At the beginning, people would look at us as if we were doing some kind of performance art piece, and looked but kept walking. To engage people more interactively,

we started waving. Then people came up to the windows, which can open, and everyone asked, "What's going on with the lot? Does this mean we bought it?" They saw students there an indication that it belonged to CCA, which was a key part of our tactic: we tried to reverse the weirdness of the lot creeping into adjacent places.

CARYN: This has always been an issue of value to us. The lot's valued at such a high price, yet we get nothing out of a space so close to us. It could be a place of great value. So we tried to show by example that even when the lot is vacant and its future in limbo, you can use it as an actual place.



FAR LEFT: The Occupation—Phase II of our physical interventions in the vacant lot.

ABOVE/BELOW: Excavation/Exformation—Phase III of our physical interventions. We treated the vacant lot like a materials library and began organizing found objects on grid based on size, type and color.

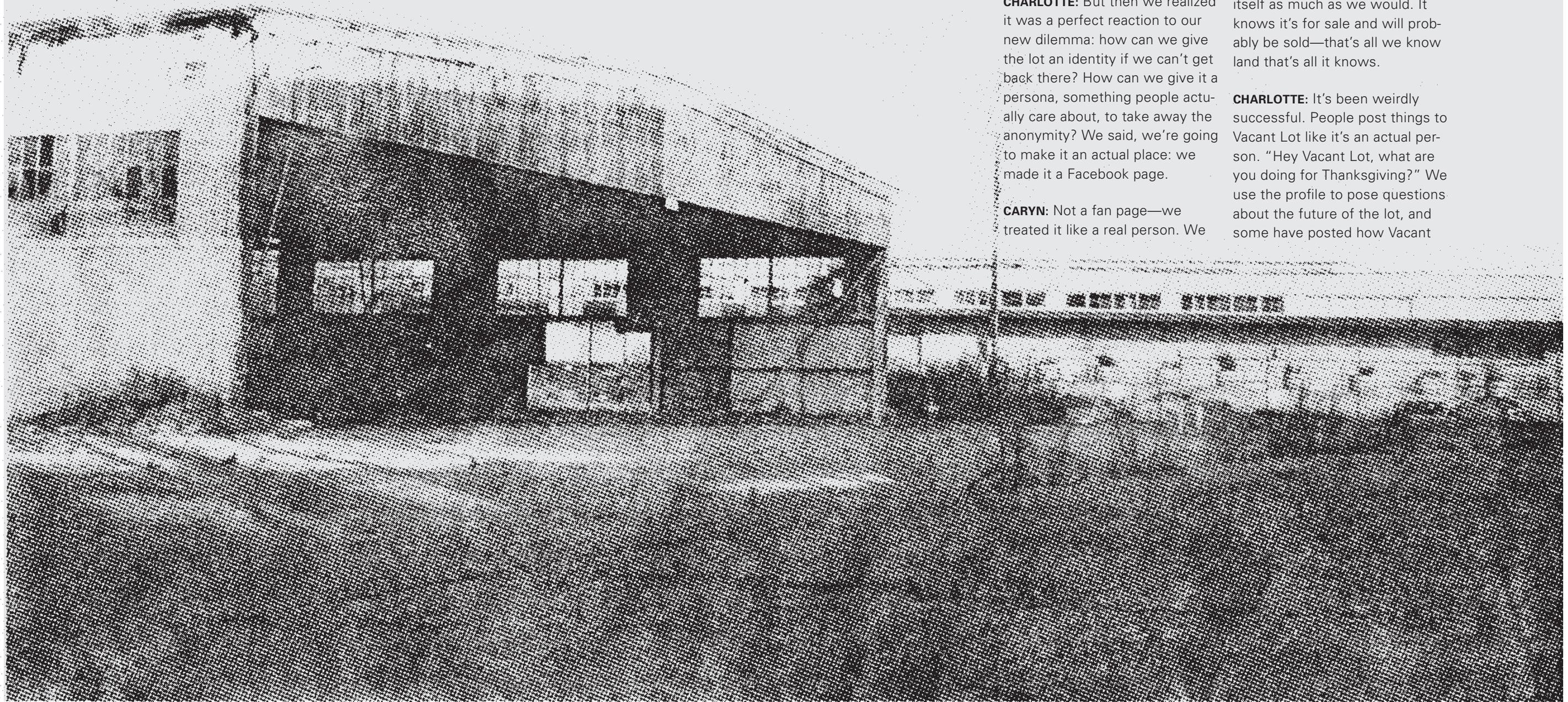
CHARLOTTE: This led us to our third tactic, which we called "Excavation/Exformation." Going back to our interviews with the CCA community, when we asked people what they would like to see there in the future, many talked about more space for experimental art, which you could leave for more than a few hours or days. So we decided to do that we to do that, extending the metaphor of our second tactic, intervention through doing. We gathered materials from the lot, broke them into a typology grid, organized them to show that we could use it as our own art space, regardless of permission.

CARYN: We treated it like a materials library. We wanted to set some kind of example of what the lot could be used for.

CHARLOTTE: And while that was happening, the lot was razed. This really surprised us because it had been minimally touched for so long, but this was in response to notice of blight violation the City posted in May 2010. The backhoes tore all the leftover structures down, the permeable entrances were blocked and padlocked, the gates were fixed—so our project, the half done grid, was the only thing left back there! We couldn't get back in to finish it



SPREAD: Photo of the vacant lot when the derelict greyhound maintenance center was still standing. The structure was eventually razed.



or bring it into to CCA. This actually lead to a breakthrough.

CARYN: We were super frustrated that our exploration space was essentially cut off, so we took it back to a digital place. We started thinking it was silly, but...

CHARLOTTE: But then we realized it was a perfect reaction to our new dilemma: how can we give the lot an identity if we can't get back there? How can we give it a persona, something people actually care about, to take away the anonymity? We said, we're going to make it an actual place: we made it a Facebook page.

CARYN: Not a fan page—we treated it like a real person. We

gave it a personality. We gave it a name, "Vacant Lot," and filled its history that we discovered so people could really learn how it got to be this derelict place. We decided that the vacant lot knew just as much as we do about what's going on back there, and that it would like a purpose for itself as much as we would. It knows it's for sale and will probably be sold—that's all we know land that's all it knows.

CHARLOTTE: It's been weirdly successful. People post things to Vacant Lot like it's an actual person. "Hey Vacant Lot, what are you doing for Thanksgiving?" We use the profile to pose questions about the future of the lot, and some have posted how Vacant



ABOVE: One of the posters placed around school to encourage students to friend Vacant Lot on Facebook.

Lot helped them with their projects, providing old chairs or materials, for example. What was really interesting is we that we stopped requesting friends fairly soon, as people started friending us, either through seeing their connections become friends or seeing our poster campaign around campus. It took on a slightly viral aspect and our classmates would hear people talking about "Vacant Lot." Previously, there was no real name attached, people called it "the back lot," "behind CCA," or "the Greyhound lot." Now it has a name; now it's a place.

CARYN: People were much more willing to interact with the Facebook page than the actual lot. It addressed one of our first issues—how do we get people to pay attention to the lot and see it as something worthy of regard?

HEIDI: It seems like one of the things you were trying to do was make people feel safe about that space, make it an okay space to be around?

CHARLOTTE: That was definitely part of it.

CARYN: I think it falls under the umbrella of just noticing it and caring about it. As this potential future piece of CCA, or even part of the community around us, we should have some investment in what happens to it. If you ignore its existence, how are you going to position yourself to have any say in what happens to it?

HEIDI: Has anyone authority from CCA talked to you about this project?

CHARLOTTE: Not yet. We posted on the official CCA Facebook page inviting people to join the dialog on Vacant Lot's wall, and we created posters for around school, letting people know they should friend Vacant Lot. But no one from the administration has contacted us.

HEIDI: Seems like this final piece could be a pretty powerful tool for CCA.

CARYN: Yeah, that's what we hope that will happen, creating more of a voice for students.

CHARLOTTE: Things are happening behind the scenes that we don't know about, but we want them to know we're thinking about it. We didn't want to be oppositional and be entitled, but we wanted the administration of the school to know that we need to know what's going on, this affects our lives, too. As a school, students tend to have very specific window of caring, pretty much only while they're enrolled here. But maybe not if it's the lot is no longer anonymous.

HEIDI: So razing of the space turned out to be one of the best things that happened.

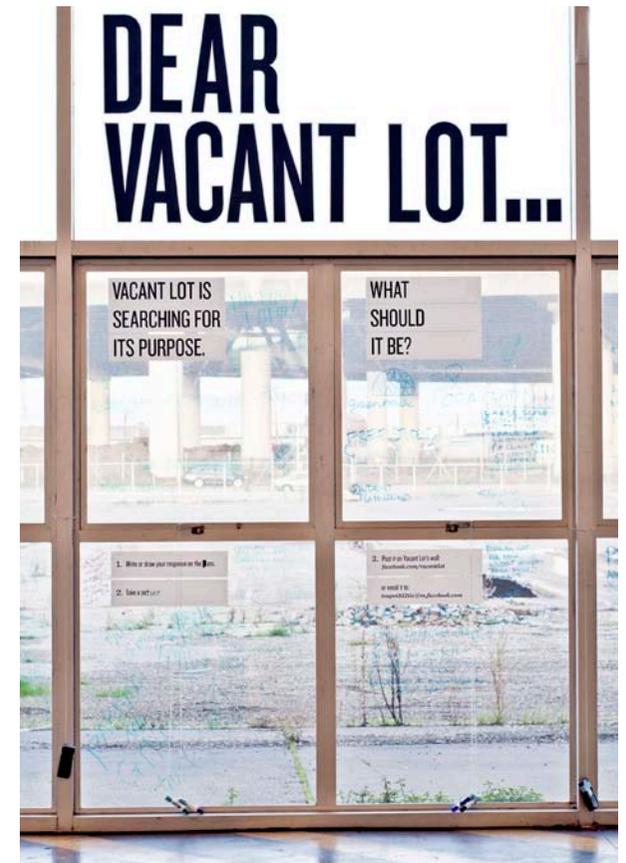
CHARLOTTE: Yeah, it definitely galvanized us and forced our strategies to pivot in a different direction.

HEIDI: Can you tell me about your final project?

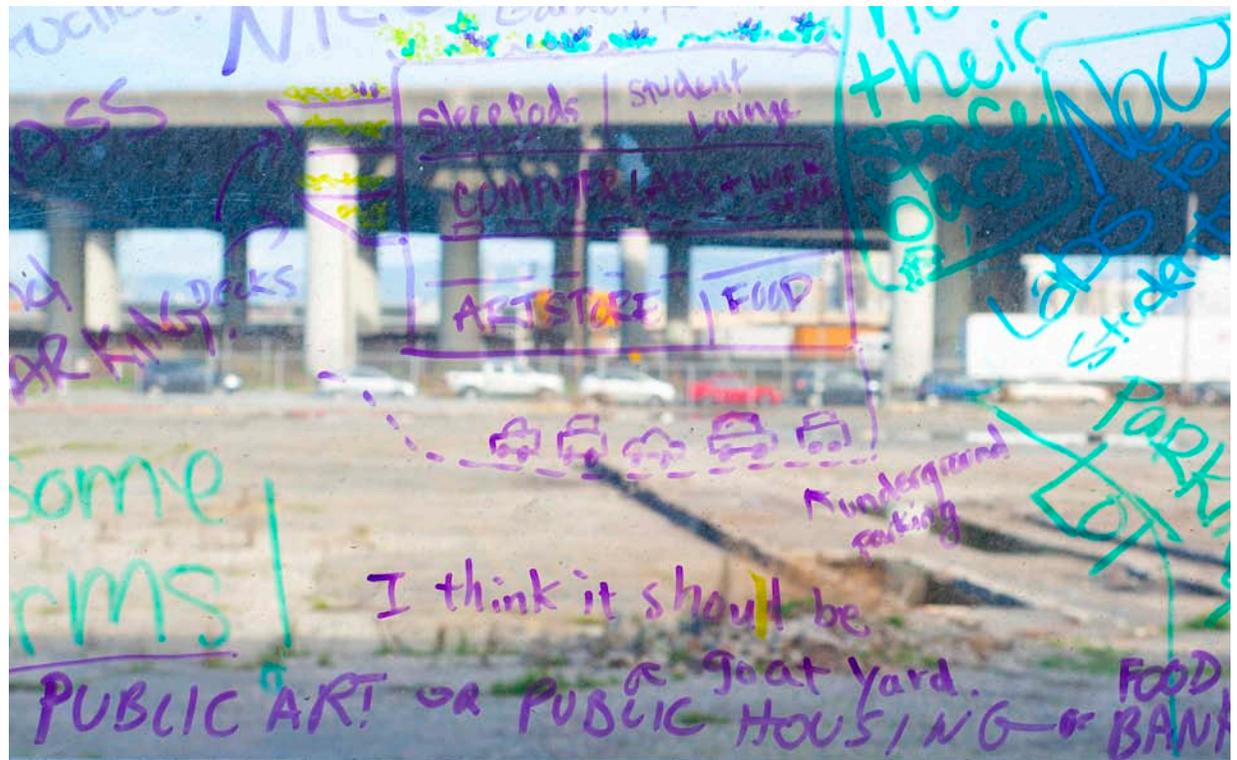
CARYN: With the success of the facebook profile, we realized we now had the attention of the CCA community and the gaze upon the lot as a specific place with an identity.

So our installation was an embodied Facebook Wall at the site itself, providing space to write or draw thoughts about the future of the lot should be, and asking contributors to post pictures of those thoughts back to Vacant Lot's digital wall. We wanted to bridge the digital and the analog identities, and create an interactive dialog between the two instantiations of the lot.

CHARLOTTE: A lot of people participated in the process, both anonymously and with their Face-



ABOVE: Final window installation at the back of the Nave—the embodied Facebook wall. We attached dry-erase markers for students to draw their suggestions and overlay them on the site.



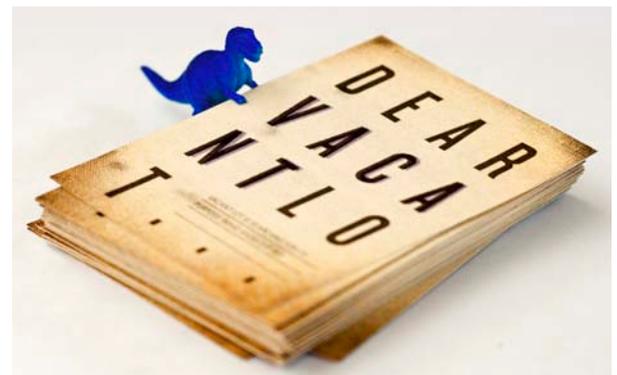
book avatars, and it actually created something we didn't expect: an iterative dialog between the written/drawn suggestions on the window. People would respond to someone else's idea—agreeing, disagreeing, or proposing modification. This plus the continuing conversation and comments on Facebook created a deeper and more nuanced level of feedback than we'd imagined.

CARYN: The degree of discourse that the installation generated was of the biggest indicators of its success.

ABOVE: An example of suggestions contributed by the community

LEFT: The iterative dialog generated

BELOW: Postcards placed around school to lead people back to the installation site.





LIBRARY

WORKBOOK

ANGELA STALKER

SEARCH MECHANISMS

I believe that the library in its current form, as a collection of books arranged within an anonymous space, is fading and is transitioning into something that resembles more of a community media center. My project questions this transition and the effect of the losing the physical tactile experience and movement through the library. When the experience is reduced to a computer mediated search experience, intuitive way finding and building ideas off of serendipitous relationships will disappear.

In reaction to this potential transition, I wanted to create an exploratory way finding experience where participants use the library in its current form. Aided by a workbook and guidebook, this project encourages participants to invent their own search mechanisms influenced by both analog and digital systems.

This project is focused not on the structure of the library system, but on behavior and imaginative movement through the library. In developing this project it is important to note that I did not want to re-organize the library, nor impose my order on a system already historically ordered. I did not seek to act as an expert to make connections for people. As a designer, I aim to propose new ideas and suggest alternative approaches to everyday behaviors. By providing a framework for atypical search methods within the library, my goal is to expand the opportunity for participants to re-frame already existing subject matter by intuitively generating new relationships between ideas.

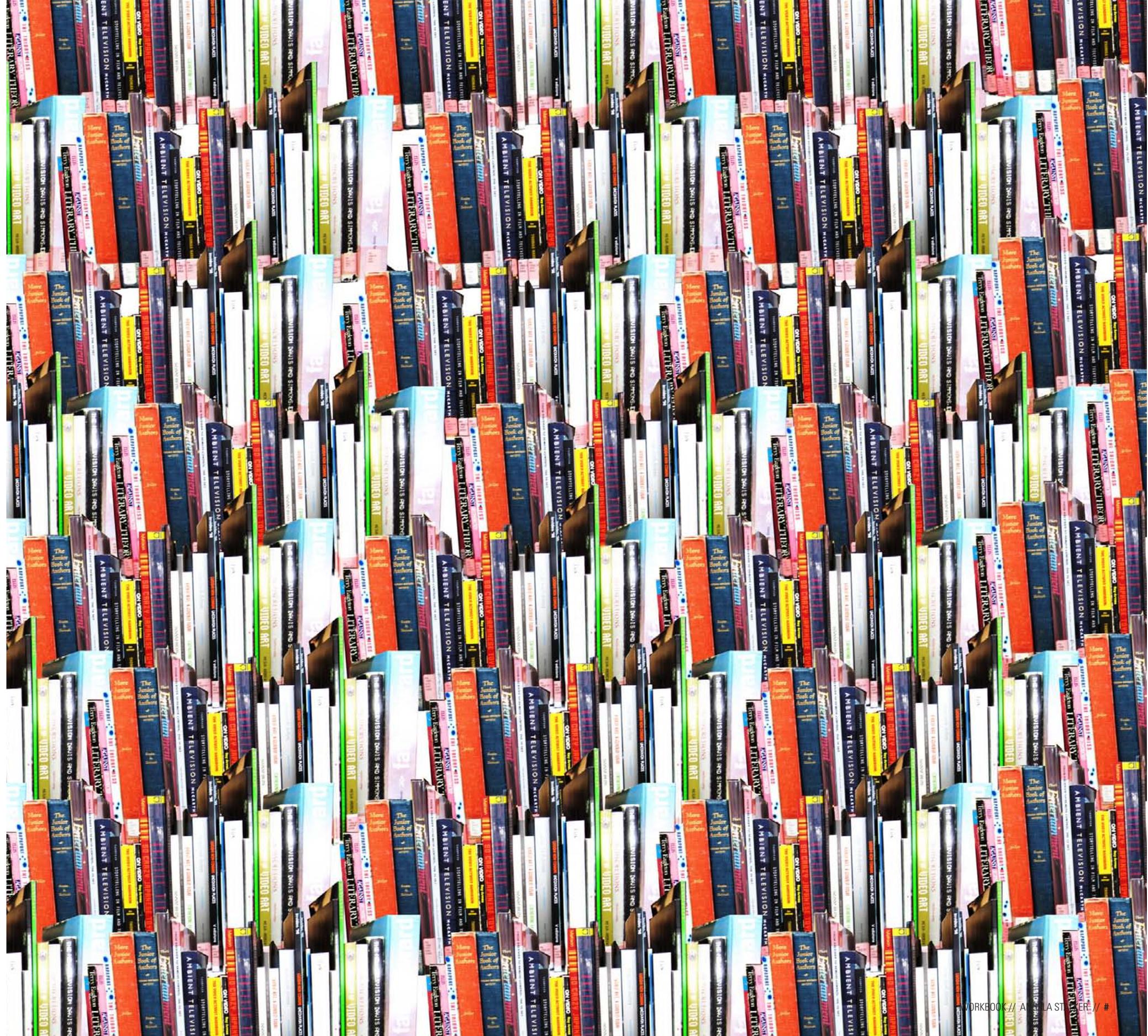
to detach themselves from their identity and given the opportunity to work outside of their normal habits and behaviors.

IAN: Part of your work deals with the notions of a game play. How do you think this transforms a library space?

ANGIE: Game play offers a way to approach the library in alternative ways, opening up the possibility to build relationships between ideas in alternative ways. I was curious to see what happened when people let their intuition guide them as a search mechanism to creatively explore the library. My hope was that this book would serve as a tool to guide participants to explore ways to move from one idea to the next, build relationships between thoughts, and bridge interdisciplinary gaps, making creative connections that would potentially lead to a re-framing of knowledge.

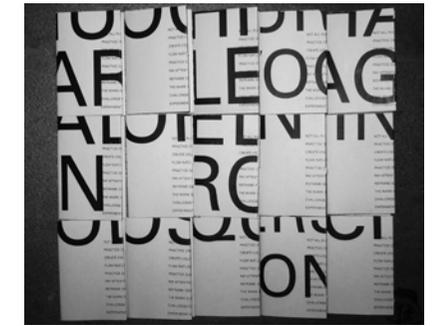
IAN: What were some of the challenges you faced determining an 'agenda' for your work?

ANGIE: Agenda, what is a designer's 'agenda'? I didn't want to impose my order on a system already historically ordered. I am not an expert. My roll as a designer it is to provide opportunities and alternative frameworks to influence perceptions and behavior. This workbook project really speaks to that belief. The design was heavily influenced by the participants experience, information and image collection, and the performance of their mark-making.





My hope is that the workbooks /guidebooks will serve as tools to guide creative participants to explore ways to move from one idea to the next, build relationships between thoughts, and bridge interdisciplinary gaps, making creative connections that will potentially lead to a reframing of knowledge.



My agenda was directed at creating a framework that guides participants to interact with the library in way that is outside their normal experience.

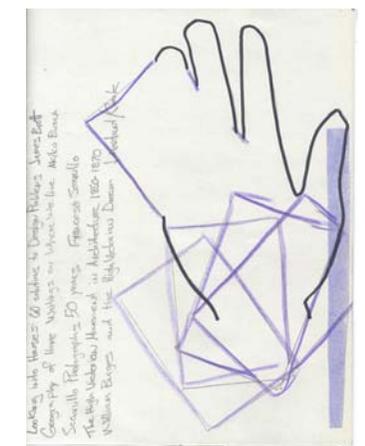
IAN: I like that. What has been most fulfilling about the project?

ANGIE: I loved learning and seeing how people interpreted my abstract directions in a variety of ways to engage in creative making. The visual results, based on the similar frameworks of the workbooks and guidebooks, have produced a range of reflective results, giving me insight into how people respond to the familiar, and how I can work with that response. For every participant,



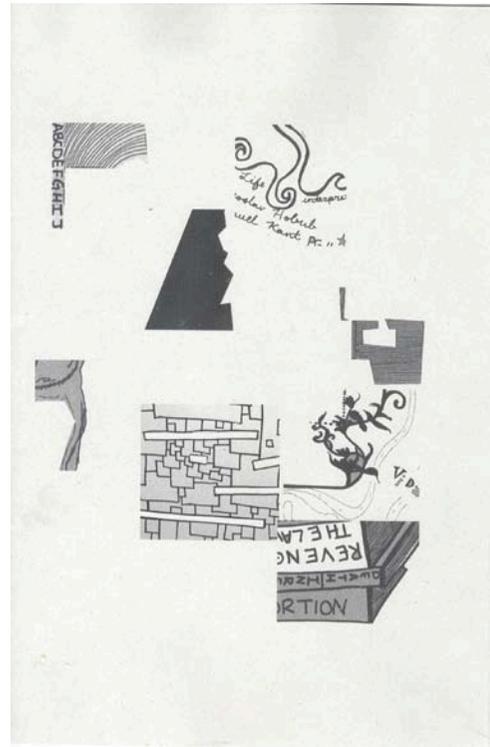
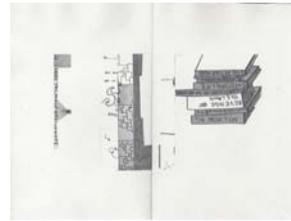
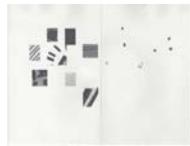
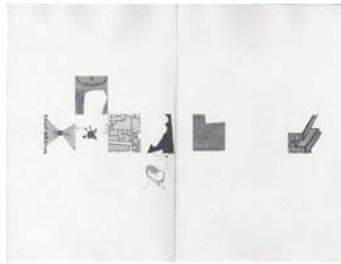
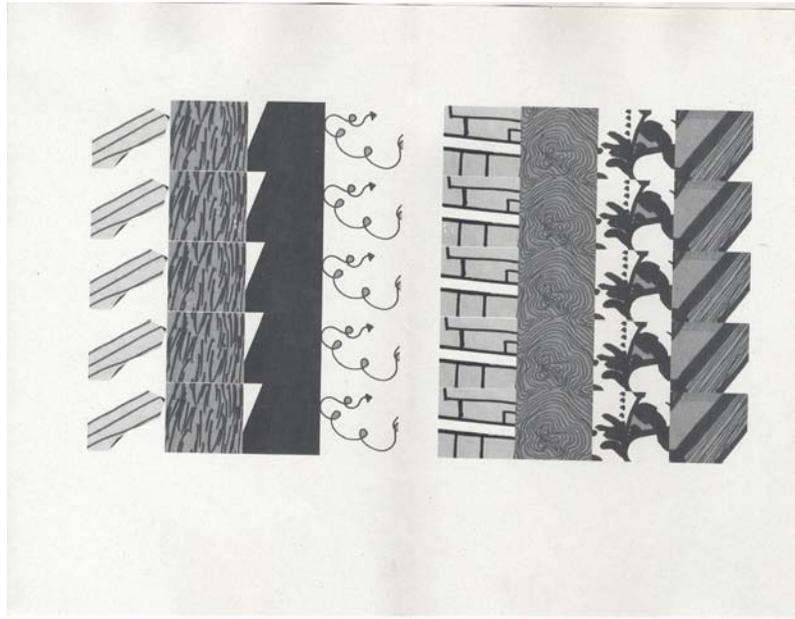
The guidebooks were uniform with the exception of their color signifier. Each color was picked for its dual meaning. Thistle, gold, aqua, onyx, rose, salmon, ochre, cocoa, burlywood, champagne, heliotrope, mint, and mustard.

The corresponding workbooks contained the signifying color as blocks composed on the blank workbook pages.



Completed participant workbooks. Caryn, Paul and Steph, Mark, and Gina.





the experience has been positive and rewarding. The product, collected information in the workbook, is encoded with the memory of experiencing the familiar in an unfamiliar way.

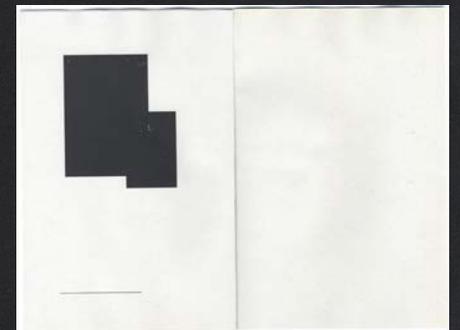
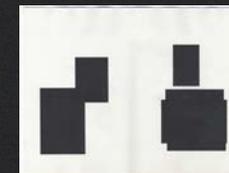
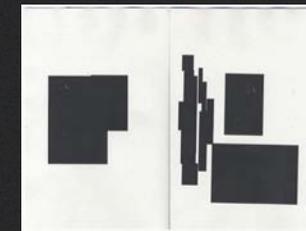
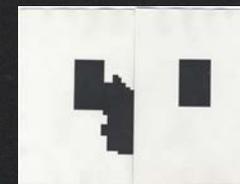
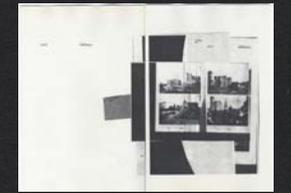
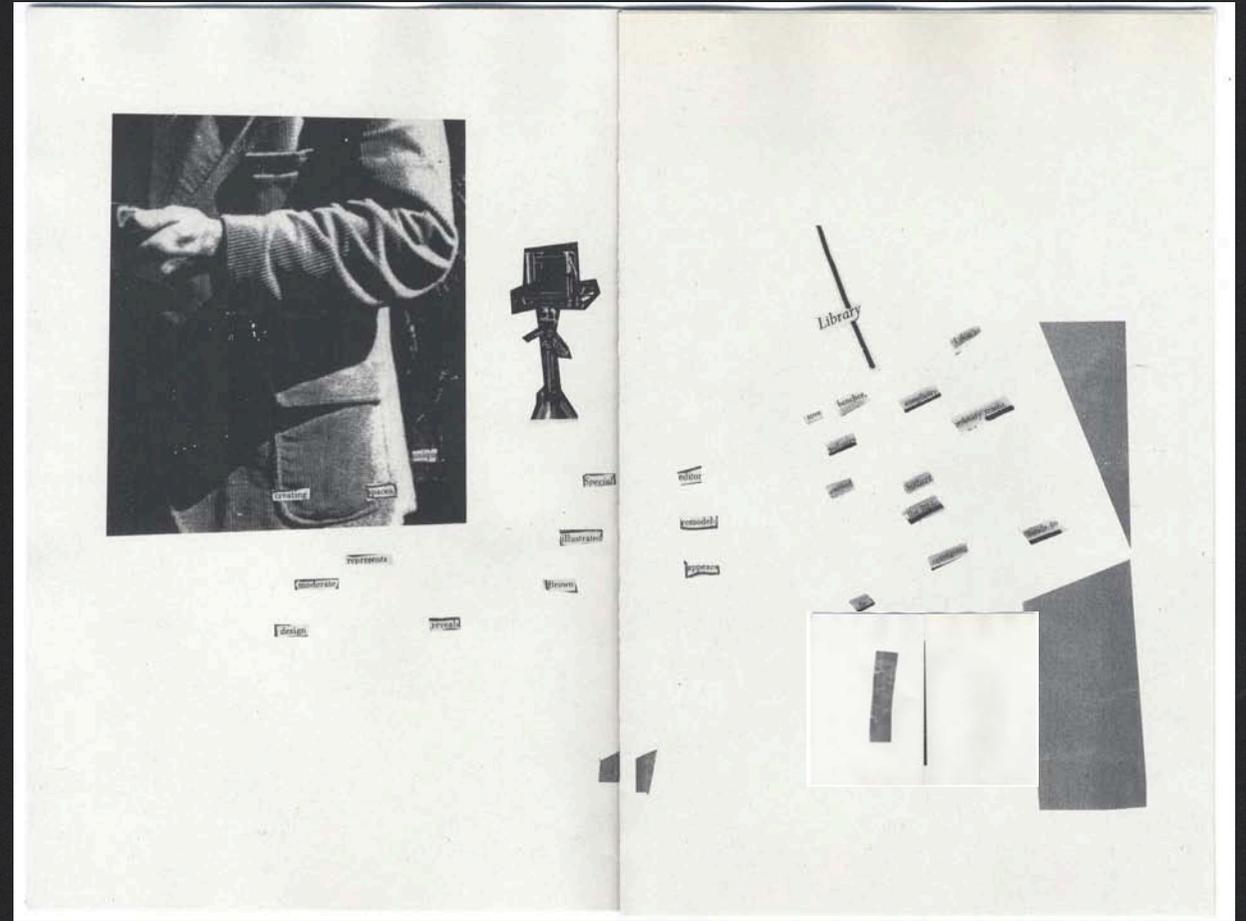
IAN: Awesome. Is there anything else you would like to add?

ANGIE: The library as we know it is likely going to fade. I hope that the kind of creative engagement with library that I simulated with my workbooks can somehow be maintained as things become more digital. I hope that people will still have access to build relationships between ideas through imaginative, curious, and spontaneous methods of search.

IAN: Thanks Angie.

ANGIE: Bye.

After my participants explored the library based on their own search methods, aided by the guide book, I interviewed them about their experience and analyzed their collected images and data. I then graphically interpreted their workbook by collapsing their experience, data, and imagery into a final booklet form.



PROCESS While I am concerned with creating images that are visually stimulating, the intent of my process is focused less on visual aesthetic and more on the experience of constructing the image. The value of the image is hinged on the process.

I started this project interested in the curiosity that surrounds private dwellings, habits and behaviors and the imaginary narratives that people invent based on clues within the stage of windows observed from streets. This interest in imagination has been a thread that connects all of my iterations leading up to my workbook project.

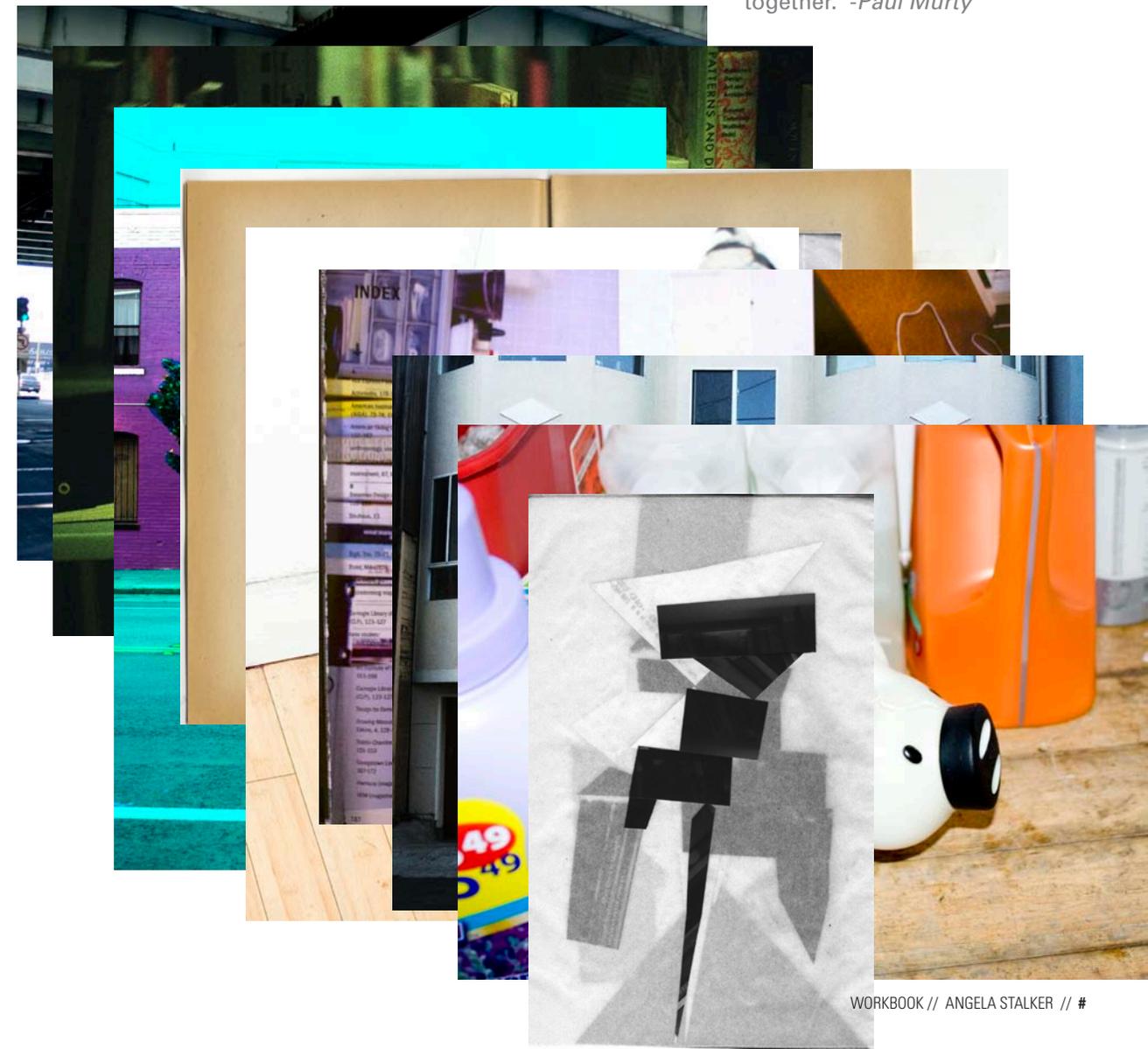
Imagining narratives, inventing secret stories, reconstructing and re-framing ideas based on physical clues moved from windows, apartments, houses, and dwellings, to a freeway underpass and the comfort of the humming traffic, to the silence of the library and the interior elements and characteristics of books. Finding a place to hone in on my interest was difficult at first. Defining a problematic space to investigate was a very constricting strategy for me and often paralyzed my creative efforts. It wasn't until I focused on the library and books as objects that I felt comfortable working with a place.

Walking through the stacks of books in the library, my investigation became centered around creating a library within the library; creating books from books and other elements of the library. I was interested in the physical qualities of books as objects, the color of the cover, the weight, the feel of the pages, the sticky notes left by previous holders, messages written in the gutter. I was intrigued by the notion that books have a life outside of the shelves. Based on this interest, I started to explore the library and produce book prototypes of my experience constructing my library within the library. Leading up to the workbooks, I hit many road blocks. The books that I constructed fell short of embodying an accessible meaning relating

back to the experience of the library. But out of the failures grew inspiration that charged my iteration process. I was led to think about things like the future of the library and methods of search which created the foundation of my workbook project.

My workbook project is still in process. I see it culminating in a final pair of books, one of a bound collection of participant workbooks and one a bound collection of booklets based on my interpretation of participants workbooks. The book pair will serve as a remembrance to the library in its current form.

“Unexpected discoveries are more likely to happen when a designer is simultaneously attentive to multiple items that have never been addressed together.” -Paul Murty



THE UNCASTRO

FINDING THE BALANCE

TIM THIANTHAI

BETWEEN TELLING & SHOWING

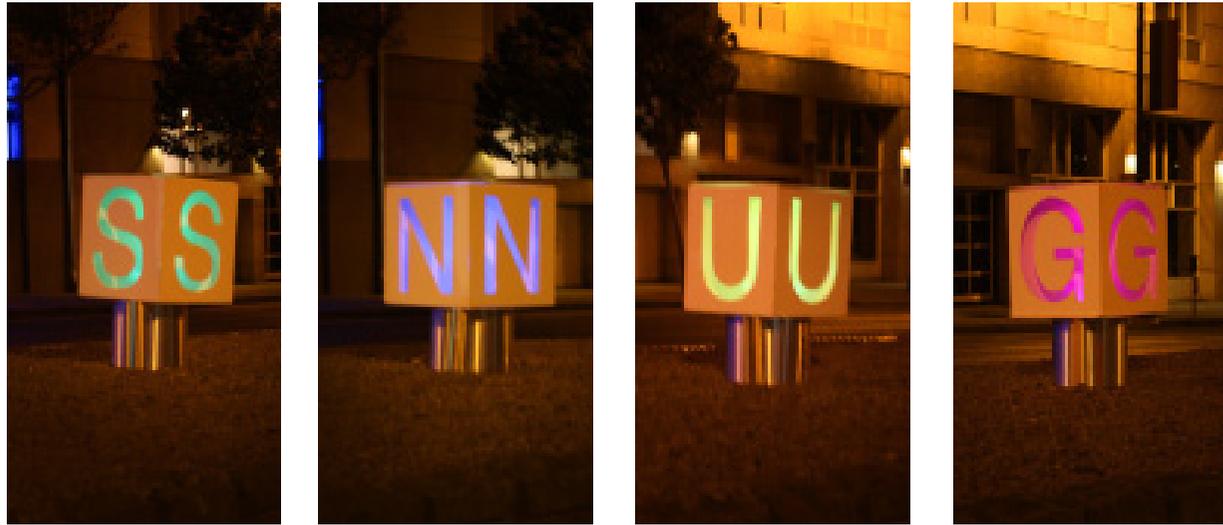
A median functions as a divider of opposing traffic lanes, but holds no identity in and of itself. People see it, but it occupies no real place in their minds.

I picked the median strip along Market Street in the Castro as my site. As a Castro resident, I see the Castro as a bubble of optimism where what happened outside may not be as fun and friendly. Median as oppositions' divider seemed appropriate to express this idea.

Starting with a wordplay idea, I used semordnilaps—words that can read backwards and forwards, with different meanings—like GUNS:SNUG to put on the median. When traveling to the Castro, you will see “SNUG” in vivid colors. When leaving the Castro, you will see “GUNS”, in dark red.

The next step was to use images to convey the directional oppositions; a desaturated rainbow flag and an anti-homosexual street sign are put on the opposite side of a rainbow flag and a typical street sign. I treated this iteration as a political campaign by adding, “Ignorance is not bliss. Don't ignore the other side the same way some of us are ignored,” to the image.

My final iteration was to find a balance, non-political way to express my view. Keeping in mind the idea of speed and progression, a series of rainbow flags are installed on the medians. As you move away from the Castro, the rainbow started to lose its colors gradually until it became meaningless shades of gray. Simple, yet poetic.



CARYN & CHARLOTTE

INTERVIEW

TIM

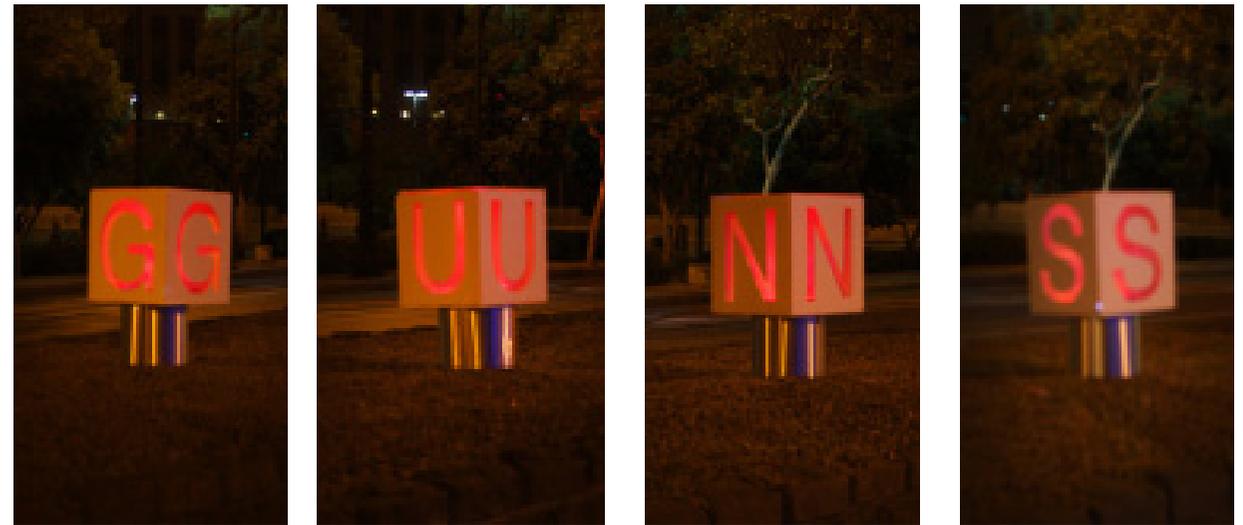
C&C: Tell us a little bit about your space...what made you pick it? What kind of identity did you envision for it?

TIM: I picked the median because it's a space that many people overlook. It's mostly just decoration and serves no purpose whatsoever other than dividing the street. In terms of design, though, I feel like the development there goes at a slower pace compared to other kinds of places. Medians everywhere are kind of the same. People decorate the trees [in the median] with ribbons at Christmas, but there's a lot more design potential than currently practiced.

The median connects two opposing vehicular directions, so when I first picked it, I imagined some kind of object that people would be able to see differently from different sides of the street. It's the connection between oppositions.

C&C: So then why semordnilaps for your project? How did you see them relating to your concept of Castro and un-Castro?

TIM: I tried to pick ones that had opposing meaning, like "guns" and "snug." The Castro is like an optimistic bubble, everyone in it wants to snuggle you. When you go away there can be more violence.



C&C: You were pretty determined to stick with the semordnilaps there for a while... what made you change your mind?

TIM: I tried to force it to work. What I felt was strong about this was that it really brought out the idea of creating opposition in the median, but I felt that at the same time, the message with these words was too sinister and pessimistic, stereotyping the outside of the Castro as violent.

For the first installation (guns and snug), I felt that it was too shallow. Only some people understood the connection between this phase and the Castro itself.

After that, I created a second strategy with collaged image oppositions. But even then, some people might not look through all the elements of the image. They might just see the wording on the street sign or the desaturated rainbow flags and come to a pessimistic conclusion. I tried to get a political message involved, but it became too much about the conceptual message of the space, rather than the physical space of that site.

The third and final installation (desaturated rainbow flags) had good balance—not too didactic, not too superficial. I tried to make it more about the dynamic of the space. Physical identity and conceptual identity harmonized together, which made it more powerful.

The different levels of ambiguity and interpretation were there through all 3 phases, but the ambiguousness of the first two were more negative—pretty low ambiguity, but high levels of misinterpretation. The third phase was also ambiguous, but had a more positive and simple message. The third one resonated with people.

When passing the median going towards the Castro, you will see "SNUG" in vivid colors. When passing the same median in the opposite direction, you will see "GUNS", in dark red.

“IT’S NOT UNITY, NOT STEREOTYPE, BUT TALKS ABOUT THE IDENTITY OF THE SPACE AS FLUX.”

C&C: Can you talk about language versus symbols/ images in your project? Being a non-native English speaker, did you have communication issues? When people outside the class reviewed your work, they were sometimes offended by or misinterpreted your message... What did you learn from that experience?

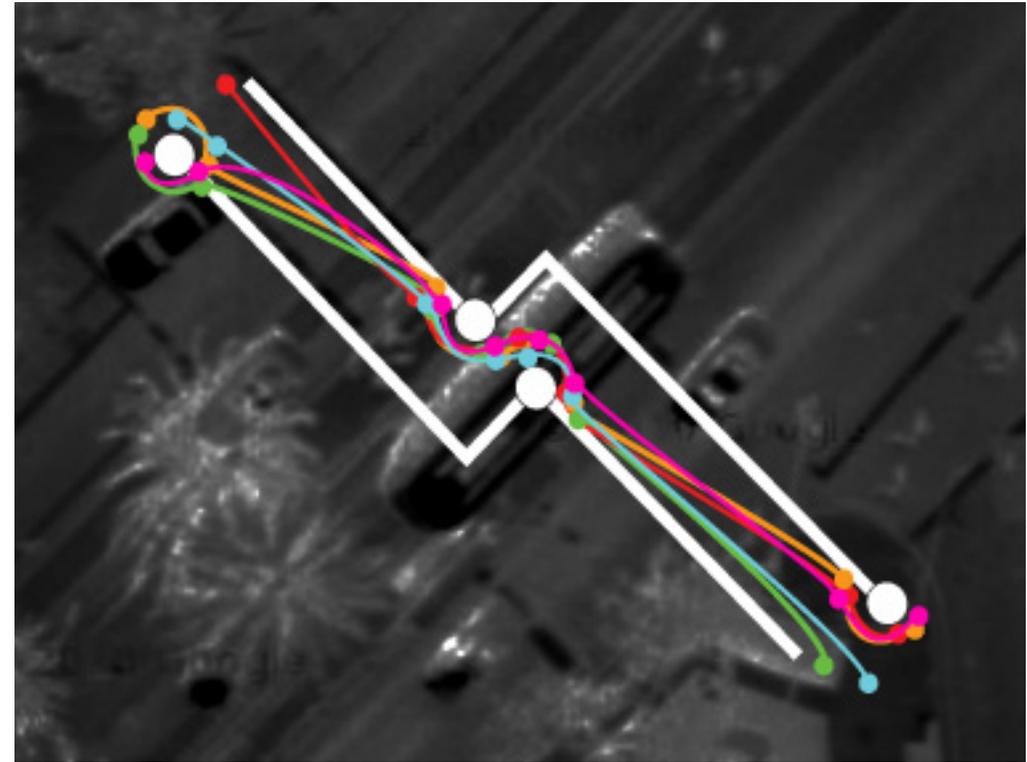
TIM: As a non-native English speaker, the words I picked were definitely different in practice than in the dictionary. People feel that snug is like hugging, but also see discomfort in something that’s too tight. I thought I could move onto images to get a different read from people...that might have a more mutually understandable message. What I felt was strong about images is that it requires no description, people understand the oppositions right away; the weakness is that the interpretation might be even more sinister than the words I’d used, because it felt like if you don’t read the image correctly, it can sound homophobic.

C&C: Were you inspired by any other projects you saw or books you read this semester?

TIM: I read *A Thousand Plateaus* by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. I liked the notion of haecceity, which makes the concept of identity of anonymous space more ambiguous in an interesting way – it’s not unity, not stereotype, but talks about the identity of the space as flux. This kind of ever-moving ambiguity taught me a lot about the identity as a larger worldly concept.



These two-side images are placed at each corner of a two-part crosswalk. I treated this iteration as a political campaign to raise awareness of the gay teen suicide outside the bubble of the Castro by indicating on the anti-homosexual side, “Ignorance isn’t bliss. Don’t ignore the other side the same way some of us are ignored.”



The image oppositions also caused the change in traffic patterns, as people would make more stops in the crosswalk even if that means they have to wait for the next traffic light. Some of them would walk back and forth to see the messages on both sides of the image instead of trying to cross the street as fast as possible. In other words, they treat each side of the crosswalk differently.

C&C: What did you find were your biggest challenges working on this project?

TIM: The responsibility that I need to have when I want to put my work in a public space. You don’t want to offend people or be too didactic, but you also don’t want to be too unintentionally shallow—that will be garbage. You have to find a way to win people over, to make something that isn’t neutral, but more universal—something that seems responsible to the public AND the site. That’s hard.

I’d do a lot of things in theory in class and would get fine criticism, but when you put your stuff in space, you start to see the real unexpected changes it makes. You’re disrupting patterns and habits that already exist. You wouldn’t be able to see any of this without actually installing it in the site and observe how people interact with the space.

C&C: Does it still matter if the project had to locate on these median strips?

TIM: This project could only work in this place, this median—you couldn’t put it anywhere else.



It works with the speed of the cars and the sense of directionality you get with driving. Vehicles have such definite patterns and speed makes it more immediate—it creates a smooth transition between flags. The experience of the pedestrian might not be the same. Maybe it's more bland that way, but viewing it from the window of a car...that experience becomes more consequential. It makes you want to see what's next, and I like inspiring that speculation.

C&C: Ok, finally, what's your favorite semordnilap?

TIM: "Live" and "evil" – when you read the pure meaning, the literal meaning, they don't seem to oppose each other, but when you put them in a different context, they become conceptually oppositional.

“ ... SOMETHING THAT SEEMS RESPONSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC AND THE SITE. THAT'S HARD. ”

PROCESS As a design student with architecture background, I learn the most through the “making” process. However, what made this project different from my architecture education is the fact that I was able to test my ideas with actual people who use the space; I was able to obtain candid feedback through observations and interviews. To sum up my overall process this semester with three words, they would be “making,” “testing,” and “adjusting.” I started by creating a prototype that illustrated my concept, then I put it in the space to see how people react to it, and as a final step I adjusted both my concept and the physicality of the prototype from the reactions. This process was repeated multiple times until I found the balance where everything came together.

My only regret is that I cannot make the last phase of my project becomes more than just a proposal. It’s the last obstacle that I have not overcome—figuring out the most professional, practical, and efficient method to make this happen! However, I’m determined to complete this project in the near future. I want to make this a starting point of my future career. After all, what the process has taught me is more than “finding the balance between telling and showing,” but finding the balance within my inner passion as a designer with architecture background.



CHURCH

&

MARKET



THE AUTHORITY OF SIGNS

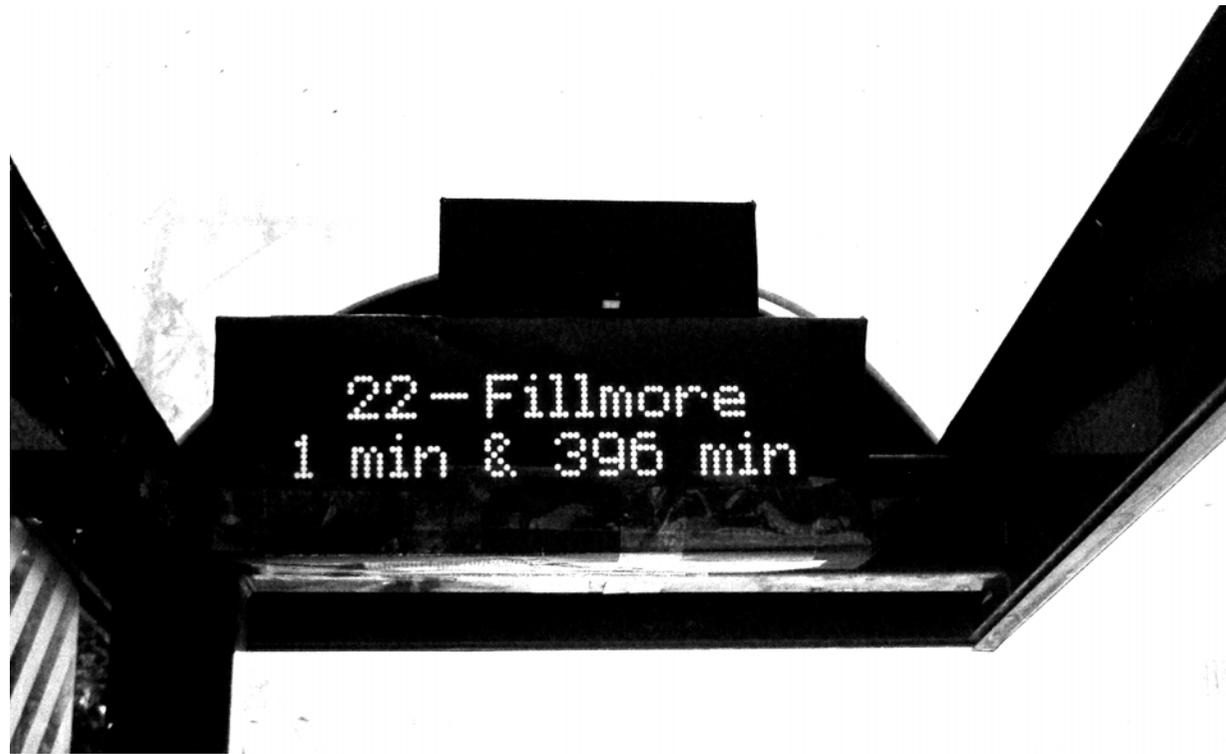
ALICE JIAWEI CHANG

WAYS TO BE HEARD

My project questions the authority of signs, which stem from my frustrating daily commute on Muni. The directive signs are to regulate order in public spaces, but sometimes they become meaningless because of disconnection to real issues in the spaces.

On the line I take, for example, digital sign in a bus shelter tells bus riders when the next bus will come, but due to the incredible inaccuracy of Muni, it usually functions as a useless installation. I began by mocking the authoritative signs in the bus shelter, and then focused on how sign authority functions at specific locations.

From Muni to warning and parking signs, I investigated reactions to this authority by using authoritative symbols to deliver whimsical messages that addressed the condition of these locations. My intention was to stimulate reflection on usual reactions to signs in that location and not to regulate people but to being awareness.



ANGIE **ANGIE:** Hi Alice! Do you view our class as is it identity in or identity of anonymous space?

INTEVIEWS

ALICE

ALICE: I think it is identity of anonymous space. I'm thinking this way mostly because lots of our projects are raising people's awareness to the locations, and it seems to me like treating these anonymous spaces as people, as they have identities. That means these spaces need to be recognized or dealt with seriously. For instance, my project is to question the authority of signs, how the authoritative signs are delivering messages to tell people what to do in the public spaces. By using authoritative symbols to deliver whimsical messages addressing the condition of specific location, I'm trying to raise awareness and stimulate thoughts both on the sign and the location.

Fake digital sign at the bus shelter on 16th St and Church St.

ANGIE: Are you trying to bring some sense of whimsy to the location?

ALICE: Yes. Because I think it's more effective to deliver a message in a whimsical way. It can not only catch people's attention but also engage them to think, and it's fun.

ANGIE: But what about the placement of the sign? Are you trying to bring whimsy to the place/non-place? At an intersection, where there is many authoritative signs, what effect would whimsy bring to that kind of location?

ALICE: I think it would make people reflect on their usual reactions to the authoritative

Warning signs with tear-offs at the bus shelter on Market St. and Church St.

“I’M TRYING TO RAISE AWARENESS AND STIMULATE THOUGHTS BOTH ON THE SIGN AND THE LOCATION.”



Fake Muni Alert at the bus shelter on Market St. and Church St.

signs, their thoughts about that location, and raise their curiosity about the purpose of the whimsy.

ANGIE: So, what is your relationship with authority? Are you reacting against it, but still trying to avoid conflict?

ALICE: I'm against how the authority deals with the issue at the locations. The fact that the authority is neglecting the issues makes the spaces anonymous. I'm trying to avoid conflict because I don't know the solutions

for those spaces, and I don't want to suggest any specific direction. So the signs I made are not to regulate people but to bring awareness.

ANGIE: How did your relationship with the sign change throughout the progression of class?

ALICE: I realized that the authoritative sign itself has become the authority, because people are conditioned to follow the authoritative sign. In my project, people are confused by the signs because they delivered unauthoritative messages in authoritative format.

ANGIE: What kind of unauthoritative messages were you sending?

ALICE: Messages that suggests improper behavior at that location, such as "Don't pay bus fare" at a bus stop and "No tripping" in front of a night club.

ANGIE: So, in a way, your unauthoritative messages were really making people aware of themselves in an anonymous space. They were identifying their identity in an anonymous space. It wasn't the identity of the space you were changing, but the perceptions of the people who observed you intervention.

ALICE: I guess that's how it came out.

ANGIE: You are mocking authority in an anonymous space by play-

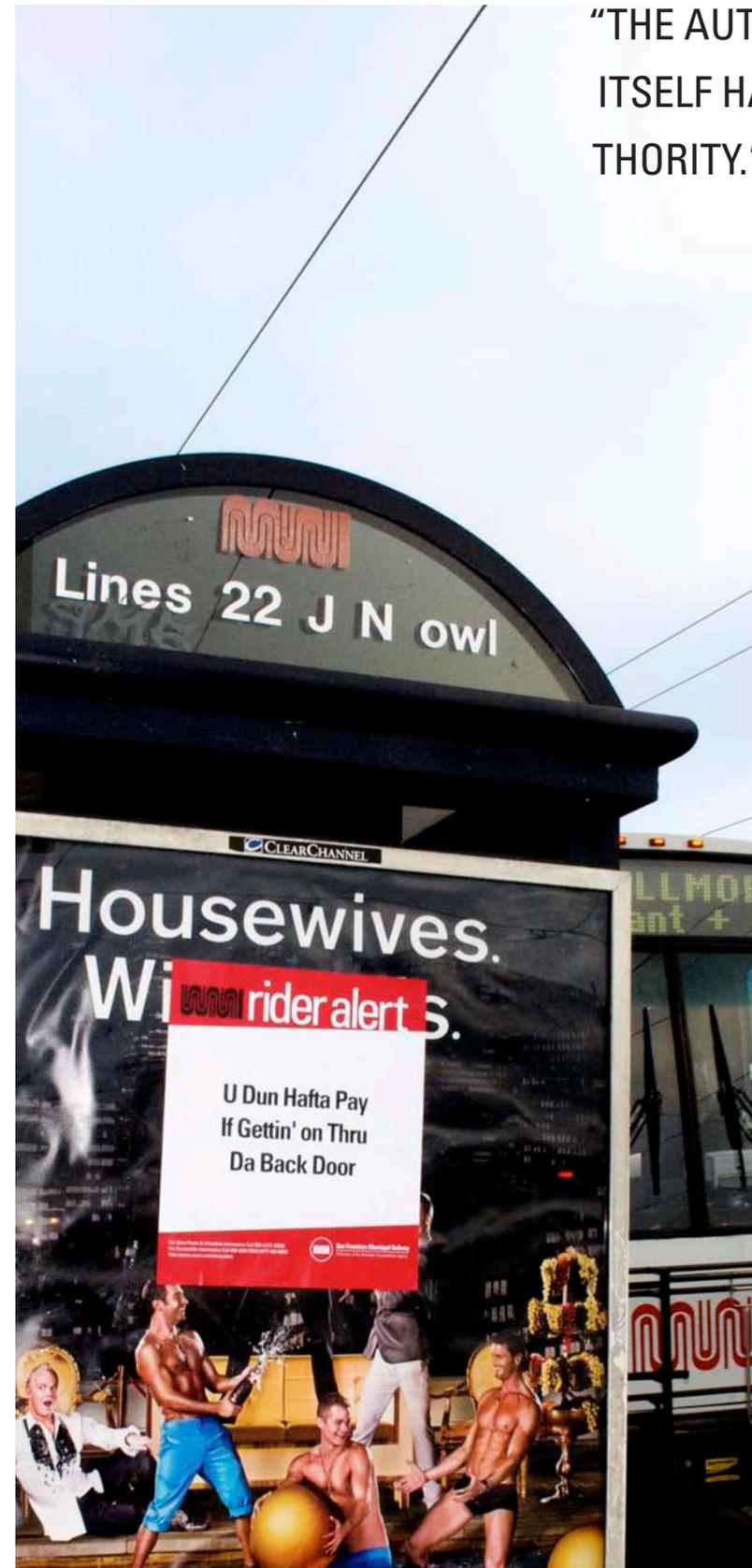
"THE AUTHORITATIVE SIGN ITSELF HAS BECOME THE AUTHORITY."

ing off authoritative way-finding systems, are you saying that there needs to be less authority within this way-finding framework, or are your signs questioning the viewer on their habitual and directed movements through the city?

ALICE: I think my signs are suggesting that there needs to be effective and attentive authority.

ANGIE: Are you signs permanently installed?

ALICE: That is a good question because my latest project just got stolen yesterday. I think it actually proves that I've achieved my goal to stimulate reactions from people. I knew it wasn't taken down by a janitor because the tape attached to it was left there. It might seem random but whatever reason it got taken down by other people is better than nothing happening.





“Homeless crossing” sign on the sidewalk in the front of Safeway market on Market St. and Church St.

PROCESS

I started with the idea to mock the inaccurate signs. I made a fake digital sign for the bus shelter on 16th street and Church street showing that next two buses were coming in 1 minute and 396 minutes. I also set up a camera on top of the sign to record interactions. To provide a feedback system, for the second experiment I designed a poster campaign of warning sign that mocked the unsanitary environment on the bus. The posters were attached with tear-offs with “like” symbols from Facebook for bus riders to share their opinions. The outcome wasn’t very successful because the sign format was not official and the posters were removed too soon.

To produce a more arresting effect I then planned to enhance the contrast between the mes-

sage and the poster format. For the next project I mimicked the Muni official poster layout and used informal tone to deliver a message that addressed another Muni bus issue. I also started to video-record the result. The footage showed that the poster stimulated interactions and the strategy to use official format was successful.

I continued this strategy and applied it to the sidewalk in front of Safeway market on Market street and Church street. I made a sign reflecting the situation that lots of homeless people are gathering in this space. There were more reactions, especially taking photos for the sign. Some people saw me installing it, and they came to question my intention and position in addressing the issue which was also what I

confronted in the mid-term critique. I regarded my project at this stage as more about the function of message delivering and raising awareness than suggesting directions. I realized that I wanted to focus on the effect of contrast between format and message, so I started the project of altered parking signs. I mimicked the parking signs to deliver messages that were in conflict with the specific locations. The sign was installed in front of a night club in the morning and were taken down before I went back to document it at night. Although I wasn’t able to video record interactions, I consider the missing sign a positive outcome of my experiment. I believe that it stimulated people’s emotion to the extent that they were motivated to react to it. Since documentation has been important to

prove whether my design was effective, I consider the missing sign is an unexpected but also significant result to evaluate my strategy to experiment the authority of signs.

ANA
ILL

**TOW-AWAY
NO STOPPING
ANY
TIME**
FOR TOWED CARS
PHONE 553-1235
4/06 SSC C&C OF SF 3M

**TOW-AWAY
NO BURPING
ANY
TIME**
FOR TOWED CARS
PHONE 553-1235
4/06 SSC C&C OF SF 3M

**2 HOUR
PARKING**
8 A.M. TO 9 P.M.
MON THRU FRI
EXCEPT VEHICLES WITH
AREA **S** PERMITS

**TOW-AWAY
NO TRIPPING
ANY
TIME**



18th

&

MISSOURI

BE AWARE OF THE UTILITARIAN

HUGH HSU

ON THE SEEMINGLY MUNDANE

I start my investigation by looking at utilitarian objects on the sidewalk such as utility poles, streetlights, and fire hydrants — they exist for specific functions and are not designed to look beautiful. In my investigation I also include trees on the sidewalk, which are functional in that they block sunlight for pedestrians.

My project is framed around these utilitarian objects and I define the strip of sidewalk they occupy as my anonymous space. The strip is anonymous because it doesn't belong to the road, and at the edge of the sidewalk it serves only as a buffer zone between cars and pedestrians. In addition, pedestrians usually don't pay attention to these utilitarian objects and seem detached from the functions they serve.

However, many things happen in this space: utility poles carry electricity and telephone lines, street lights illuminate the sidewalk at night, fire hydrants dispense water to fight fire, and trees provide shades for pedestrians. Although utility poles and fire hydrants are essential to modern life, their functions are not apparent to pedestrians. While streetlights and trees on the sidewalk directly benefit pedestrians, their ubiquity has made them mundane.

At the intersection of 18th St. and Missouri I have proposed a series of projects to raise awareness of those seemingly mundane objects on the sidewalk. I hope that this awareness will assuage the detachment, establish a new relationship between pedestrians and these objects, and eventually create an identity for the anonymous strip of the sidewalk.

ALICE **ALICE:** What is it so important that we need to pay attention to the mundane?

INTERVIEWS **HUGH:** In a broader sense, I think it is important that people pay attention to the mundane, to those utilitarian objects on the sidewalk because if they look closely they will find serendipity in them, which is how I became interested and started my project. Personally, I find utilitarian objects beautiful and I want other people to see the beauty in them, too. With that said, I think I might be asking too much because beauty is a subjective thing after all.

HUGH

But at least they should be aware of those utilitarian objects' contribution to our modern life such as household electricity, telephone lines, water supply to fight fire, illumination on street at night. While some of those functions might not be essential to our daily life, I think it is important that people understand why those utilitarian



One of the strategies is to move an utilitarian object that is usually above pedestrians to their eye level to simply make them notice it. A cardboard cutout of a street light is stapled on the utility pole.

“IF THEY LOOK MORE CLOSELY, THEY’LL FIND SERENDIPITY IN THESE UTILITARIAN OBJECTS.”

objects exist. I want to make sure that people, pedestrians more specifically, not view them just as visual pollution because they are there to serve their purposes and it is us human who created them and put them out there.

ALICE: What happened when you tried to raise awareness of mundane objects through your project?

HUGH: I haven't seen any profound changes in pedestrians' behavior. My observation is that they still walk straight ahead. I think it's almost impossible to control the message you want to convey once your project is out there on the street. Yet a few of them I talked to seem to like what I'm doing with utility poles and fire hydrants. There was a case where a mom was trying to take a picture of her daughter holding the receiver of a telephone that I put on the utility pole. I find that really rewarding, and what I've proposed now seems worthwhile.



A drawing proposal of bringing the whole utility pole with its cables and streetlight down to eye level



A Photoshop proposal of marking out the shadow of a tree on the sidewalk at a specific time of a day.

PROCESS To raise awareness of utilitarian objects on the sidewalk, the first project I proposed is called narrative. I made posters that tell stories written in 1st person about each individual pole. I was pleased with the responses. In a conversation with a designer who works in the neighborhood, I learned that people noticed my posters and were talking about how interesting they were.

Then, I try to bring utilitarian objects to eye-level. I made a fake streetlight out of the cardboard and stapled it on the utility pole. Meanwhile, I also experiment with change in perspective. In Photoshop by images of furniture in perspective on the vertical plane, I create another space up on the utility pole.



Translating the information in each utility pole's branding into a simple narrative to give it a personality.

“I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT THAT PEOPLE UNDERSTAND WHY THOSE UTILITARIAN OBJECTS EXIST”



Putting a traditional telephone, light switch, and electric outlets on a utility pole to make its functions apparent.

In my next project I make utilitarian objects look awkward in the space. I covered a fire hydrant with aluminum foil. Although it drew a lot of attention but what pedestrians noticed was my installation, not the hydrant itself.

To elicit more interaction between pedestrians and utilitarian objects, I shift my focus back to their functions. Rather than altering them, I attach things on them to make their functions obvious, such as putting a telephone on a telephone pole. I pushed this idea further and exaggerated utility pole's secondary function as a bulletin board. I stapled stacks of paper at one spot to create a bulge of fliers on the utility pole.

This approach not only creates more interaction between pedestrians and utilitarian objects but also elicits a deeper understanding of their functions.



Pedestrians interacting with the telephone on the utility pole



A Photoshop rendering of furniture pieces on the utility pole.



Stacks of fliers on utility pole to exaggerate its function as a bulletin board.



DUNCAN STREET



COLOR AND PLAY ON DUNCAN STREET

KATE KOEPPEL

The color project was my attempt to connect neighbors on my street. Duncan Street is an anonymous space because there is potential for social interaction on the block, but the lack of color and amusement and the many unwritten social rules of the street discourage interaction and neighborly behavior.

My strategy is to encourage color and play in the neighborhood through handmade recycled fabric flags to explore the ways in which temporary color can encourage dialogue and social engagement. I hoped the hand-made look and feel of the flags would engage neighbors and create opportunity for dialog and play.

For several weeks I experimented with the size and shape of the flags, eventually creating color kits to share with neighbors. Each kit contained a pendant flag, plus a letter inviting neighbors to participate. The flag colors and overlapping pattern combinations were designed to encourage interaction and playfulness. Neighbors could choose where they wanted to hang the flags, for how long, and what the flag represents to them. The flags started to take on a life and meaning of their own, independent of my own initial ideas. There has been a wide range of neighborhood involvement and interpretation since the start of the project, but as a result the neighborhood has engaged in conversations about our community. The flags were a visual way to connect neighbors interested in building a more vibrant community, on an otherwise colorless street, and were just one way to start the conversation.



Hand drawn type on posters invited neighbors to participate

“WE’RE THE BIGGEST HOUSE
ON THE STREET SO HOPEFULLY
IT BALANCES OUT KARMICALLY
TO HAVE MORE COLOR”



ZACH

INTERVIEWS

KATE

ZACH: Hi Kate. What’s with the flags?

KATE: Hi. What do you mean, what isn’t with the flags, friend?

ZACH: Ok, ok... Tell me about your street, and why/ how you thought colorful flags would help? Why do you consider your street an anonymous space?

KATE: Great question Z. I live on a very beige, very neutral street. It is anonymous in the sense that there is very little sign of life on the street. No colorful houses, no plants or kids outside, and there seem to be a lot of unwritten rules of conduct that don’t encourage spending time on your porch, or even talking to your neighbors on the street. I know my street has a lot of potential for fun and for play, and I thought color would be a good way to get started. I starting making colorful recycled fabric flags to bring color and play to my street, and it stirred things up quite a bit.

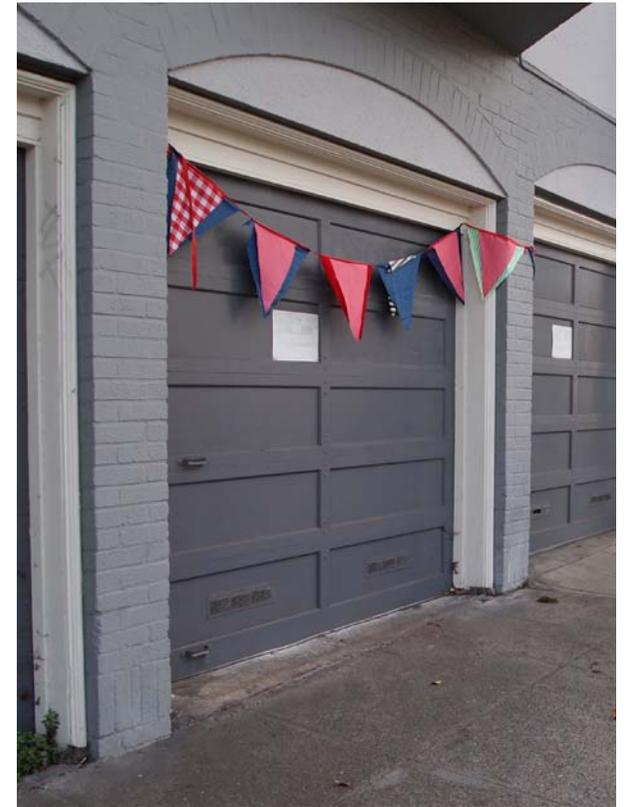
ZACH: Did your colorful recycled flags bring color and play to the street? What happened?

KATE: Z, that is another good question. The flags certainly have been colorful, and there has even been some colorful language surrounding the project. Over the course of the project, I got a lot of feedback from neighbors– both good and bad.

Some neighbors really loved the flag project, and others really, really didn’t want temporary color flags creating “childish visual pollution” in front of their houses. But then again, a lot of participating neighbors got into the game, and wanted to share in the play—one neighbor called the project a “benevolent shenanigan” so, I think he agreed that the project was pretty playful.

Over the course of several weeks, I made close to fifty or more pendant flags, of varying lengths and color combinations. Some flags were stolen, but some neighbors wanted more than one flag to hang on their house. Towards the end of the project, there were about 20-30 flags on the street. If you take a walk up Duncan Street, the flags help to visually connect the neighborhood, house by house.

In addition to the flags, I made a number of printed materials to help introduce the project to the neighborhood. I made the neighborhood.



Above: Flag on 200 block Below: Color kits include: One pendant flag, instructions and an invitation to play.



“I’M ALWAYS LOOKING FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO PRACTICE WHAT I LIKE TO CALL ‘BENEVOLENT SHENANIGANS’ SEEMINGLY RANDOM ACTS THAT MAKE PEOPLE REEVALUATE COMMUNITY IN AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT.”

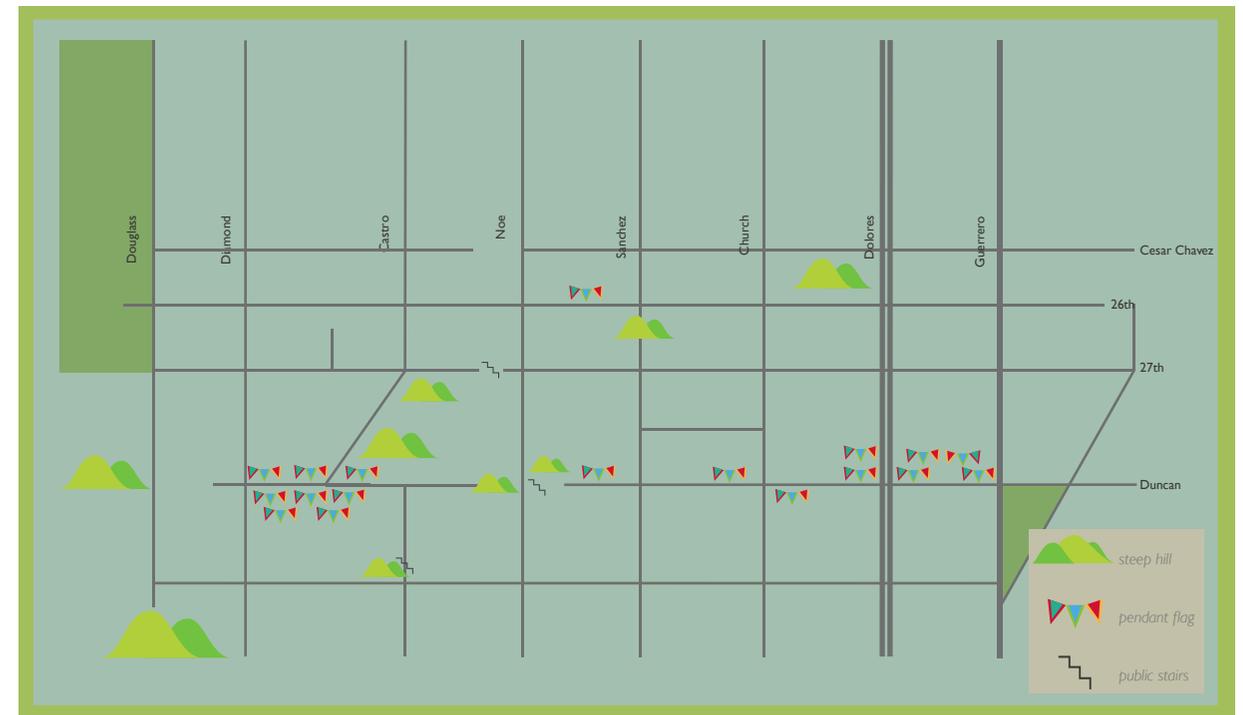
duncan street

Opposite page: This map is a guide to the color project on Duncan Street. Every pendant flag on the map represents a neighbor that has volunteered to hang a color flag to show their support for building a stronger, connected neighborhood community.

ZACH: Do you feel this is a successful intervention? How do you judge success? In class we had a lot of debate about using the word “intervention”. How do you feel about your role as a designer who’s been asked to “intervene” with an “agenda”?

KATE: Intervention! Now that is an uncomfortable word. I think the term suggests arrogance, that kind of language assumes that the designer has nothing to learn. I see this project as an exploration of color and play, not an intervention. I explored the space through careful weekly explorations, not one giant, never-changing intervention. As I received feedback from neighbors and classmates I modified my approach to the project through scale, color and pattern, and I invited the neighborhood to participate in the experience.

I don’t ever want to assert myself as SERIOUS SUPER DESIGNER Coming in to assign identity, to solve problems without investigation, or intervene with a single solution. The ambiguity of the flag project allows for a wider range of engagement and interpretation, because there is no embedded identity or hidden message in the flags. Neighbors can choose where they want to hang the flags, how long, and what the flag represents to them. Success for me was neighborhood involvement—every time a neighbor asked for a flag, shared a story about the neighborhood, or introduced themselves to me was a success. One neighbor in particular, who was always a bit cold, came around after a few weeks of the project. She didn’t want a flag, but we started to have conversations about the project, and the neighborhood. She liked the ideas behind the project, and began to reach out to me in new ways. That was a breakthrough! Seeing the flags out on the street, hanging in windows or on balconies was a sign of connection. The flags started a conversation on the street, and I thought it was a hopeful and engaging way to play.





MAKE YOUR

OWN FLAG

MATERIALS:

colorful fabric remnants
(quantity depends length of pendant)
spool of thread
several yards of ribbon
(at least 1 inch or more in width)
pinking shears
scissors
cardboard
ruler
fabric marker or chalk

If you have a spot in mind where you'd like to hang your flag, consider measuring the space first, so you know how long your pendant flag should be, and what size will be best for your space. Gather all materials for your flag before beginning. For the most visibility and contrast, try to find fabric with bright colors and patterns.

SF FABRIC RESOURCES:

SCRAP 801 Toland Street

DISCOUNT FABRIC 201 11th Street

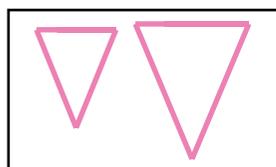
FABRIC OUTLET 2109 Mission Street

STEP ONE:

Start by ironing creases and fold marks out of your fabric- this step makes it much easier to cut, and work with later. Iron your ribbon too if necessary.

STEP TWO:

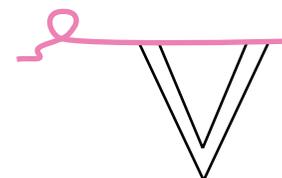
My flags are made with two large triangles, one slightly smaller than the other. If you would like to do the same, you will need to make two templates. Your template could be a triangle, square or rectangle- whatever shapes you'd like. Draw your chosen shape on the cardboard, and cut the board. My largest triangle is 20 inches wide, and the smallest is 10 inches wide. Any smaller, and your flag will be hard to see from the street.



hello color
hello play

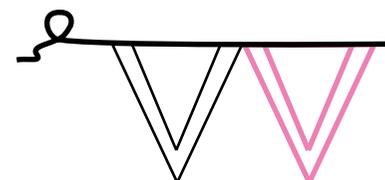
STEP THREE:

Using a marker, trace your templates on your fabric- trying to fit as many as you can on each piece of fabric. Once you have traced your shape, cut your fabric with pinking shears, and set aside. The zigzag pattern of the pinking shears will prevent your fabric from fraying. Save your remnants for another project. At this point you may want to stack your cut fabric in whatever combination you choose, with alternating colors and patterns.



STEP FOUR:

With the right sides of your fabric up, place your two corresponding shapes on top of each other, and place ribbon on top of your fabric. Leave at least 6-10 inches of ribbon at the beginning, and feed fabric through your sewing machine with the ribbon on top, leaving 1/2 inch seam allowance. Use a simple stitch. Backstitch your first few stitches, then continue sewing top edge of your first shape.



STEP FIVE:

Overlap the next two fabric shapes, and feed through the machine as described in step four. Continue sewing until you have reached your desired length of pendant.

STEP SIX:

Backstitch to finish final fabric shapes, then leave at least 6-10 inches of ribbon at the end. Cut threads and remove from machine. Your pendant flag should have enough ribbon at both ends to tie and hang outside. Enjoy!

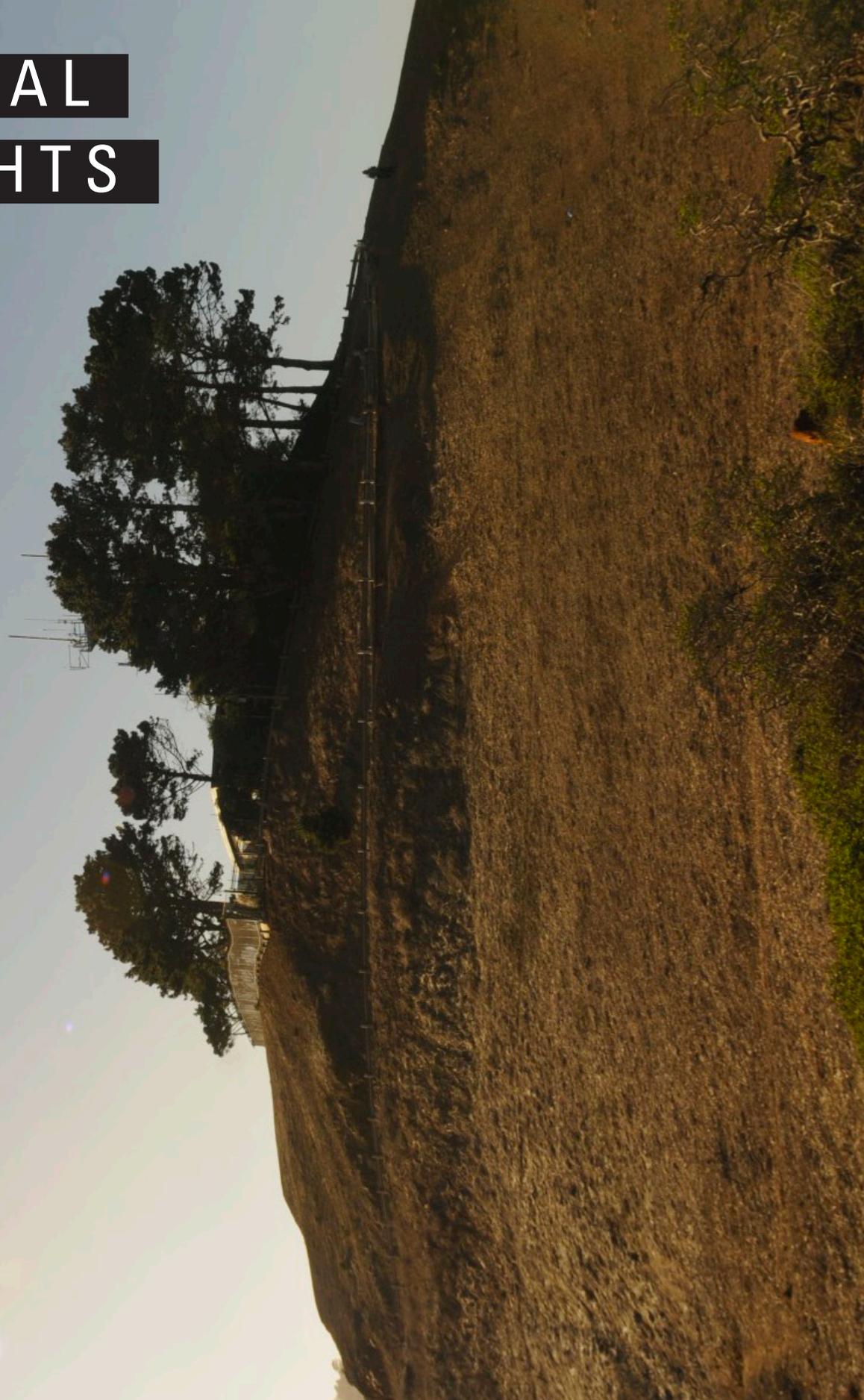


PROCESS

My process evolved at each phase of the project as a result of feedback I received from neighbors and observers and classmates. My project was a public installation, changing week by week. In the beginning, I attempted to address the issues of color and play anonymously, by hanging flags without explaining my position, or sharing my identity. My neighbors reacted negatively to anonymity, so I had to take a big step in revealing my name, and the goals of my project. It was a nerve-racking to make the project more personal, but ultimately it helped my neighbors understand the goals of the project. When the project was anonymous, flags were stolen almost as soon as I hung them outside. Once I started to publicize the project, and speak actively about my goals, flags stopped disappearing from the street. As a result, I had more conversations with neighbors because they knew my name, and felt comfortable telling stories, and sharing their ideas about the project.



BERNAL HEIGHTS



WAVES IN SPACE

IS THERE DANGER ALL

SEAN ROSS

AROUND US?

My project deals with the invisible nature of the electro-magnetic frequencies (EMFs) which are all around us. I live in Bernal Heights, a block away from Bernal Hill Park, which is home to a radio tower, the site of quite a few of these antennas. Inclusive of my investigation of the physical area, I found a larger and ongoing debate—international in scope—questioning the health and safety of cell phone and wi-fi transmitters on one side, and the other filled with animosity and frustration toward the paranoid “tin foil hat wearing crazies” who dare to stand in the way of progress.

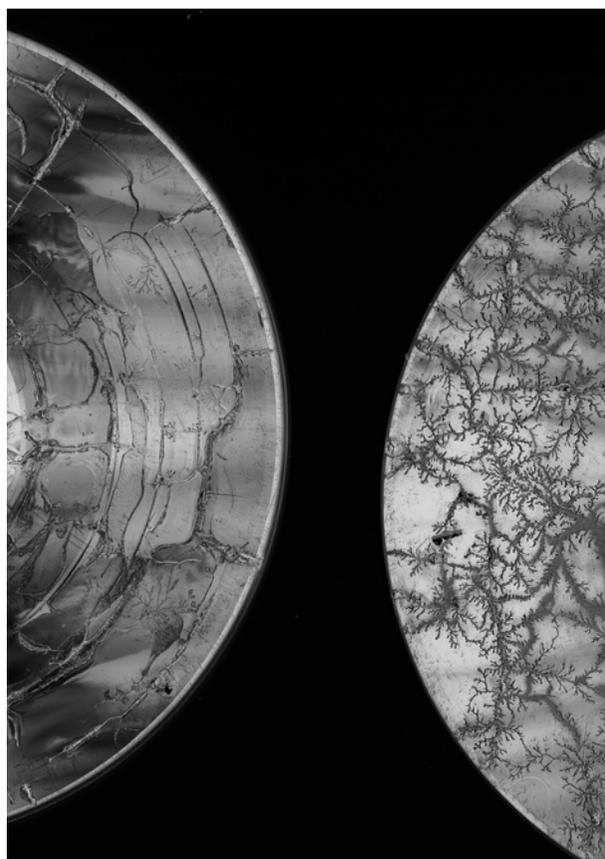
The more I investigated this topic, the more these polarities of perception came to light. It reminded me that for the most part, our political discourse forces us to take sides very quickly, and there is often little room to be in the middle, to hold out judgement until more information is available. Often our collective drive for progress makes these decisions for us, and it's not until later that we regret the predicaments we've placed ourselves in. This is largely influenced by capitalism, but I also think human nature's inquisitiveness and incessant need for innovation puts us at risk for short-term thinking.

I wondered if it were possible to promote, through design, a third way of seeing the world. Our history on this planet has been rife with bad decisions, with moments when we should have been more cautious but weren't. To me, changing consciousness begins with simple awareness. These incursions on our environment are often invisible to human perception. Design can and should seek not to conceal these hidden forces, but to reveal them as honestly and transparently as possible, so that individuals can judge for themselves.

These powerful devices bring us convenience and joy, but we still don't know the true cost. Those who own the infrastructure and the industry tell us that safety is a given and not to worry, however the link between microwave exposure and cancer has been well documented for years. In the meantime, progress marches on.



The radio tower atop Bernal Hill is home to many transmitters of potentially harmful electro-magnetic frequencies.



In order to find a way to visualize the EMFs the space, I put CDs in my kitchen microwave oven and cooked them, creating a unique visualization pattern which I would use later in my poster designs.

INTELVIEWS

JULIE

JULIE: Sean, during the progress of your project you discussed the ongoing debate surrounding the health and safety of cell phone and wi-fi transmitters. You also discussed the political discourse that forces citizens to take a side on the issue. With this in mind, what side of the issue were you on? What is your opinion on the matter?

SEAN

SEAN: Well, honestly, I'm not an activist. Initially I was looking for conflict, or a place of tension inside the physical space of the outdoors. I found it in my own backyard in Bernal, above everything and kind of hidden away, with all this crazy radio equipment, and a tagger haven.



Early on in my investigation of the Radio Tower I created a quick & dirty installation which used some of the objects I had made and collected. Plastic cell phone covers found at SCRAP were displayed to look like a freeway traffic jam, a commentary on our rush to innovate, sometimes carelessly. Wheat pasted posters of a burning and melting ear served as a crude illustration of what cell phone radiation might be doing to you. Lastly, my microwaved CDs were painted and displayed to match the primary colors of the posters and cell phone covers.

So that immediately became the locus of my investigation, because that seemed the most fertile ground. There was an instantly recognizable tension there in the atmosphere, between the gates, the signs, the law & order vibe, and the actual reality of the place, which was kind of anarchic. Then to top it off, you have this insane equipment which is emitting all this radiation.

I noticed a couple of things, first, as I started looking into the blogosphere, I noticed that there was a conflict going on with the radio transmitters, that there were people opposed to them, and seemingly even more people who were opposed to those people, and the board of supervisors, and Steve Jobs even, and the cell phone companies... all these forces demanding to have their way. I guess the first thing that struck me is the fact that everyone is so polarized. We don't have enough

information but everyone is on a 'side' and I felt that might be a little dangerous. It seems like are always forced to be in this "bucket" or that "bucket", and you sign your name next to a stated belief about something, but very rarely can we be absolutely certain of anything.. It seems things are coming out in the media or in scientific research that change our understanding all the time, things we weren't previously tuned in to. And so, my role as a designer is trying to confront people with the possibilities so that there's an enlivened consciousness there, making those evaluations, not just relying on the phone company or the evening news. Maybe I wanted things to be a little unsettled. Menacing, even.

JULIE: After doing this project and learning more about the topic, what, if any, are some of the things that you are doing to protect and educate your family about the invisible dangers of microwave exposure and the links to cancer?

SEAN: Well, I've always been wary of my cell phone, for instance, we don't sleep with them, we try to keep them away from our face, we don't let our daughter play with them, and we try to stay away from the bigger, high powered ones. I have a pretty old school cell phone that does the job on a basic level but it's one of the lower level emitting units you can get. Most importantly, I really have it for emergencies and I don't talk on mine that much. As far as the research, the jury is still out. It seems that there are scientists who believe it's an issue, scientists who don't, and a lot of money to be made by an industry that has a vested interest in selling you a bill of goods. I tend to always side with the skeptics and cynics, just based on the fact that those who set up and run things have more of a vested interest in keeping any issues quiet so they can continue making money.



“I TEND TO ALWAYS SIDE WITH THE SKEPTICS AND CYNICS”



A book I made in the beginning of the class explored different facets of Bernal Hill



On another note entirely, I think it's really unhealthy psychologically to always have a computer on your person. I didn't really explore that with this project, but I think it's important to get away from technology altogether, go outside, talk to people, see things, be surprised by real life. As technology gets smaller and smaller, sooner or later we'll no longer really have that option, and I think that's sad.

I think you've got to make a conscious effort to turn that stuff off, regulate it to its place, and not allow it to completely take over your life. It's easier said than done, I'm a laptop addict myself, but that is one of the reasons that has prevented me from getting an iPhone, I just don't need more distraction.

It's hard to do comprehensive studies on this type of thing, you need a lot of people to participate over a long period of time, and the fact is, this stuff hasn't been with us long enough. There are individual cases of brain cancer from people who have been chronic users. Enough cases that people who are less inclined to just accept the status quo are questioning whether we ought to know more. There was an article just the other day about wi-fi killing trees that someone sent me. This stuff is out there if you know where to look. It's a rich place for dialogue simply because we don't really know, ultimately, so it actually brings out potentially more paranoia, and then you have the extreme reaction to it on the other end. My goal with the Bernal Hill project was to just confront my audience with something they don't usually consider, by making it 'visible', or more to the point, audible.

JULIE: Do you feel that your project was successful? Why or why not?

SEAN: Personally, I felt that the journey was more important than the destination. I enjoyed doing something different every week, for the most part, and in some cases doing really stupid things. In others, trying new things, and all of it was in a completely different context from how and where I am used to making work, which is outside. I felt it was a success because I wanted it to communicate on multiple sensory planes; seeing, hearing, and interacting. That is sometimes a challenge to pull off, and I have tried several times to achieve this while in grad school, and I think this project was the closest to successful I've gotten at firing on all those cylinders.

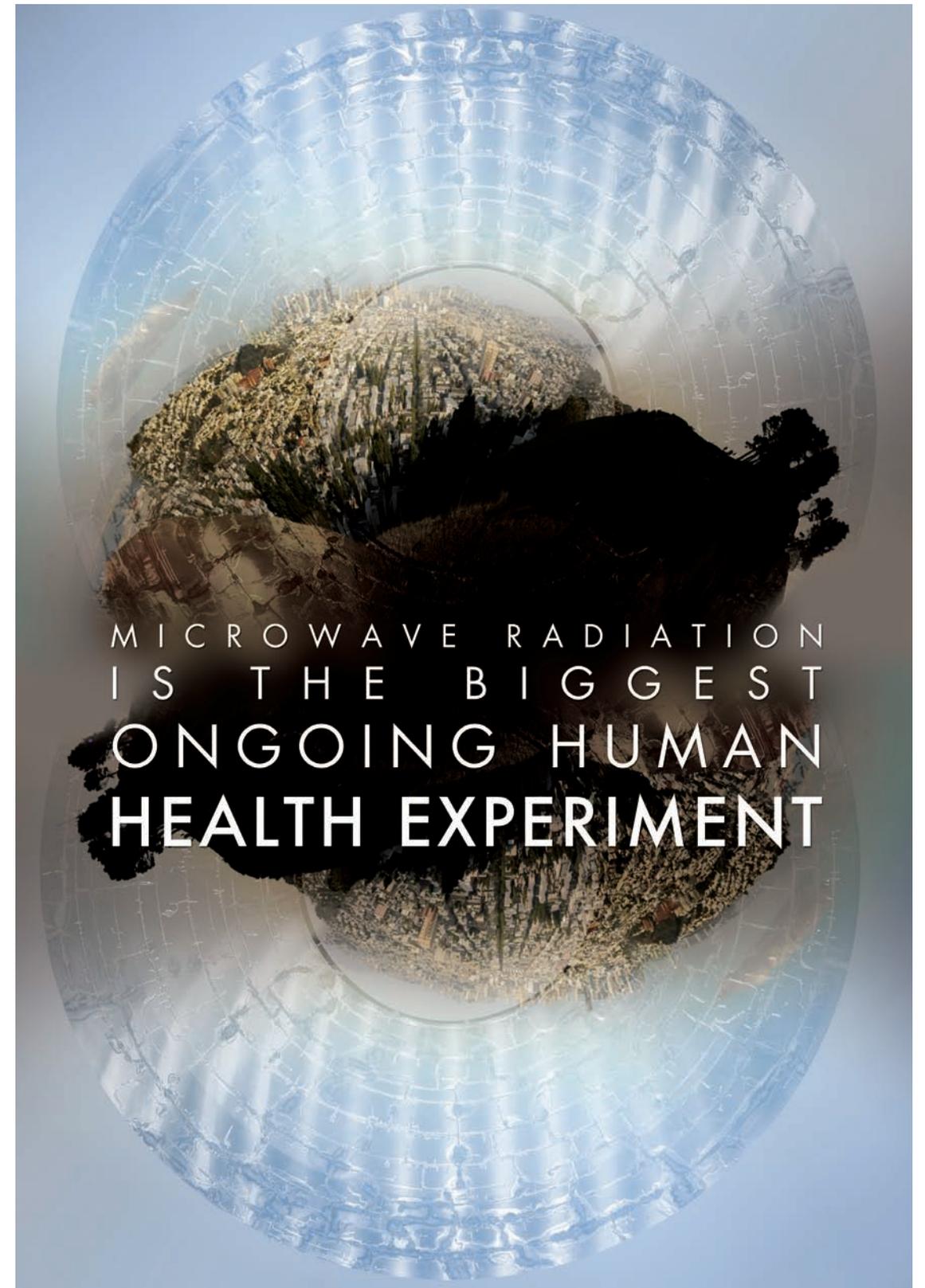
JULIE: Will you continue working on this topic after you complete your graduate studies?

SEAN: I very much doubt it; unless someone wants to pay me. I was thinking my sensor monolith would make a great digital theremin, however. So all is not lost.

JULIE: Would you like to add anything in regard to your project?

SEAN: I'm glad you liked it, thanks for saying so. It was fun to work on, and I hope that sooner or later people will be able to see how much radiation is going into their bodies, so they can decide for themselves.

My final design solution was an interactive antenna that emitted ambient sound from the space. When someone crosses the threshold demarcated by the yellow line, the peaceful ambient sound crossfades with the sound of electro-magnetic static.



Microwave radiation is the biggest ongoing human health experiment, poster design by Sean Ross 2010

PROCESS

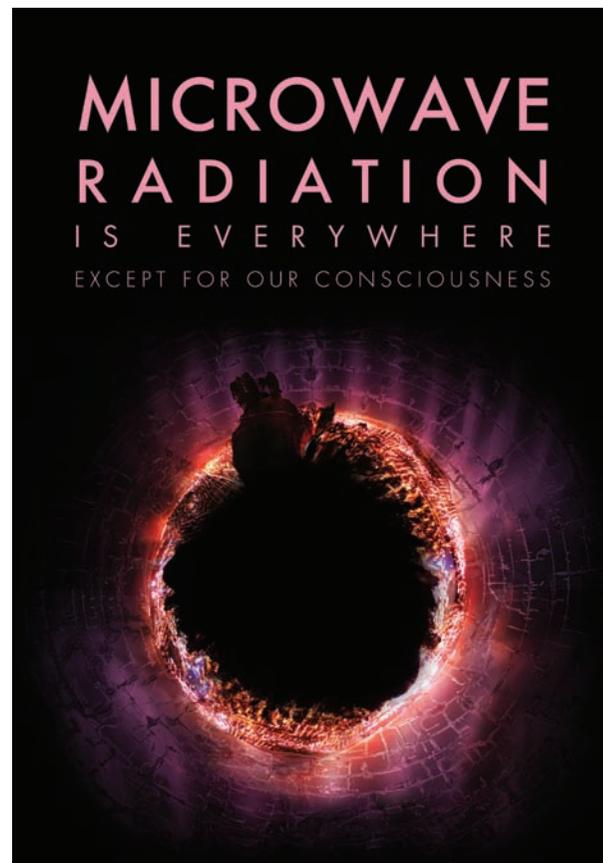
My process in the beginning involved pure observation of my chosen space and its dynamics. I spent a lot of time walking around, making field recordings, and taking pictures, while mentally making connections between what I saw and what I felt, staying oriented to the readings from the class and the definitions of space, place, and anonymous space. From there I found certain themes emerging, along with ideas for projects which were specific to them. I quickly realized that finding a tension or conflict definitely helps to generate work, which can quickly lead you to a point of view, which helps make the work even stronger.

At one point I had two distinct directions I could go in; one was dealing with the issue of cell phone radiation, and the other was something really bland politically and socially but of interest to me personally: making an ambient sound recording using Bernal Hill and its inhabitants as an instrument. Despite really wanting to do the project that would have been the most aligned to my wider goals, it seemed much too narrow of a band to just be dealing with the aesthetic properties and nothing else. I ended up going in the direction that was the most universal as well as political, and could be extended beyond its staging ground, as the issue of these EMFs are widespread. I found in my grand strategy an aim to reverse the very idea of anonymous space itself, as this is what I considered the EMFs to be, due to the fact that they are both omnipresent and invisible, which seemed to be part of the problem. My tactics from this point on became about engaging as many of the senses as possible to these waves in space.

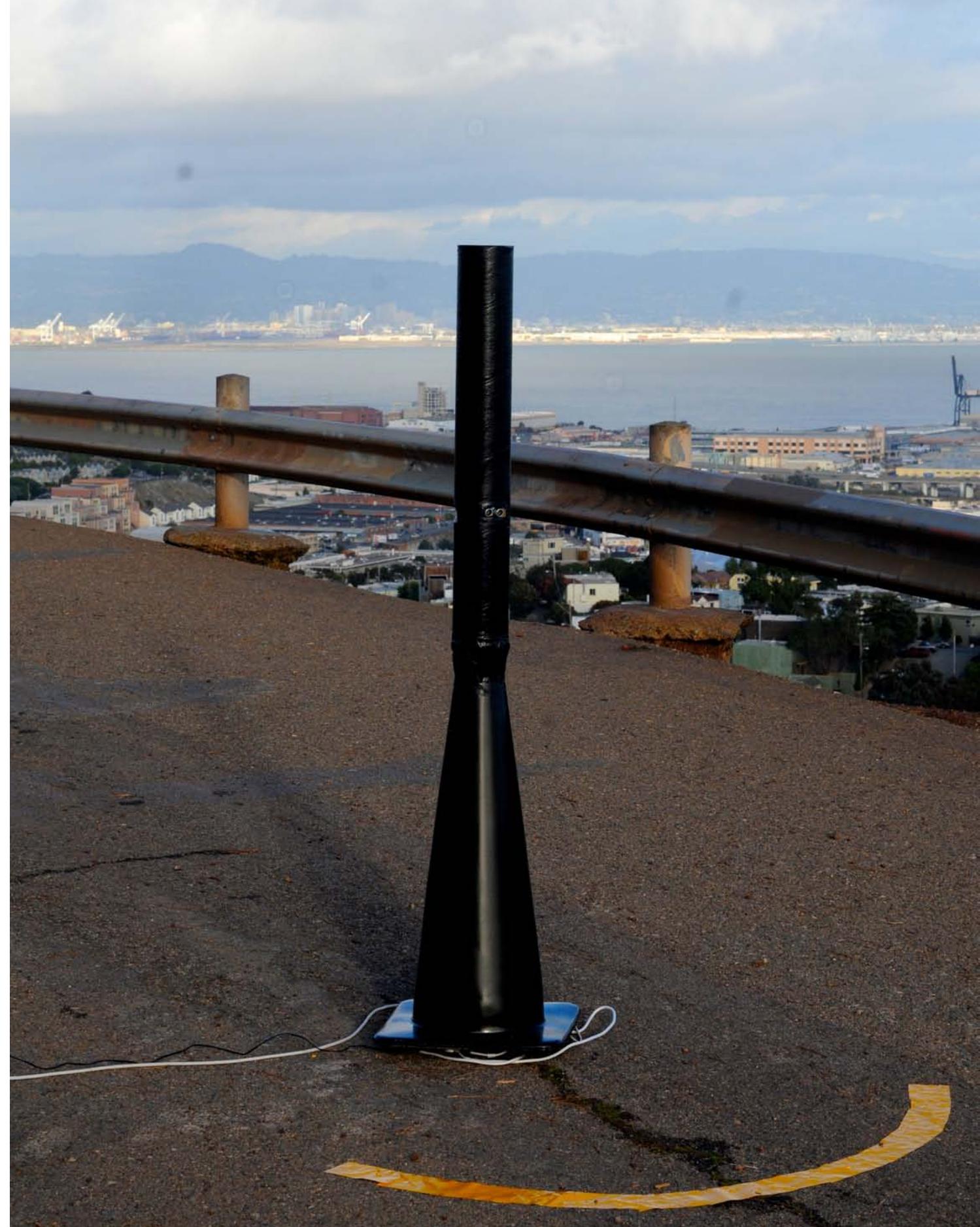
My final design solution is a cumulation of these efforts; large format posters of my visual treatments using extreme wide-angle and polarized panoramic shots of Bernal Hill, layered with the microwaved patterns of the CDs, which together create a startling effect. This serves to draw the viewer in, and the subtle typographic

modulation applied to the copy helps tie it all together conceptually.

The central piece in this installation is a device that initially was intended to look like a cell phone antenna, but ended up being a lot more mysterious and hard to place, almost like the monolith in *Space Odyssey 2001*. A threshold line of reflective yellow tape is placed on the ground warning (or is it enticing?) the passerby to cross. Equipped with a Mac Mini running Max/MSP, along with a portable amplifier hidden in the base, the device emits a recording of the natural environment of Bernal Hill. When the threshold is crossed, the sounds of electromagnetic static crossfade with, and eventually overtake, the sound of the natural space.



Microwave radiation is everywhere except for our consciousness,
poster design by Sean Ross, 2010



A MONUMENT FOR KOOKS & SALTY DOGS

IAN COOLEY

HONORING PACIFICA SURFERS

Pacifica is a town on the Northern California coast with a popular surf spot. It's notable for its consistent surf break and proximity to the greater Bay Area. The waves are small enough for beginner surfers but there is a passionate local surf population as well.

One of the problems with the popularity of Pacifica is overcrowding which makes it hazardous for all surfers. These hazards aren't just due to the amount of people who surf there, but are connected to a lack of reverence and respect for the surf community. Surfers "snake" waves, drop inside and paddle through the break. This lack of respect is due to the fact that the people who surf Pacifica don't know the traditions of its history.

In response, I wanted to create a sense of respect for Pacifica as a historical place and remind people of their place in that history. The designed object is a circular stone monument south of the Taco Bell parking lot near the southern end of the beach. Surfers walking with their boards from the parking lot to the water can enter the monument space and stand on an engraved timeline of Pacifica's surf history.

The monument has several key attributes. It's made out of concrete that formally mimics the river stone of the Pacific landscape, it's set in open noticeable area on the beach, the stone surfboards are models of the surfboard shapes used by the original Pacific surfers and the name of an original Pacifica surfer is engraved on each stone board. My hope is to create a monument substantial enough to be noticed while also formally relating to the physical landscape of the beach.



SEAN

INTEVIEWS

IAN

SEAN: So tell me about some of the things you learned in this class?

IAN: There were times when I struggled to understand how my work in IAS would apply to my future goals. Space, product design, architecture... they are not areas of particular interest to me. What I gained was a new sense of what it means to make a project more robust through attention to detail and thorough research.

SEAN: So, what is not of interest per se? Space, product design, architecture?

IAN: Physical installations. I am more interested in graphic representations, software, code... the stuff that my thesis addresses.

SEAN: I found that refreshing, the whole notion of stepping out into "space" and discovering design opportunities there. I'm into the notion of taking ideas from one discipline and bringing those into foreign lands, an example of that being David Lynch, the film-maker—didn't study film, studied painting, became a film maker because he wanted to make his paintings move



Parking lot full on the weekend . A full lot means crowded surf.

IAN: That works...but I wanted to do work that took a different form. I am happy with my work. A monument to the heritage of Pacifica surf culture ended up being really exciting in the end.

SEAN: So, I know that early on you struggled a bit, as did all of us. Tell me about some of those early ideas, and the walls you encountered...and also, the path that led you ultimately to doing a monument.

IAN: Initially, I wanted to do something that help build an arty-designy community around surfing. The real problem with this idea was that it did not address the specific qualities of the space I chose to work in. It was only after interviewing local surfers that I began to understand that Pacifica had a rich history. I felt that knowing history can and would lead to a sense of reverence and respect that I felt was important to cultivate... particularly at a crowded beach like Pacifica. Once I made up my mind to work in the context of history, the formal qualities of the work began to define themselves.

SEAN: So yeah, with the idea of historical preservation, a monument is kind of the obvious form for that...But how did you make the jump from wanting to create community, to preserving history? Do you think they're related? How so?

“KNOWING HISTORY CAN LEAD TO A SENSE OF REVERENCE AND RESPECT...”

IAN: The idea of creating community was a kind of obvious solution if my agenda was to create a space that was not anonymous. However, historical narrative can create community through shared story. The idea of walking through a monument on the beach, seeing the names of past surfers and standing on a timeline creates a type of participation in a larger story. I want Pacifica surfers to see themselves as part of that story... a larger community that exist on a continuum. So the monument still creates community, although it does not force a particular type of participation.

SEAN: What the hell is anonymous space? Does it really exist? Can you see it? Are your eyes more attuned to it now?



The traditional surfer memorial service influenced the final form of the monument.

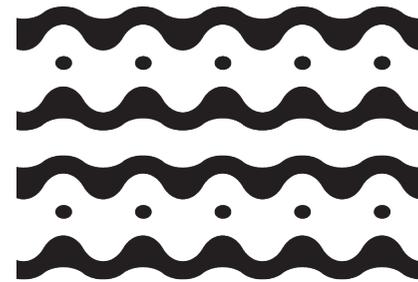
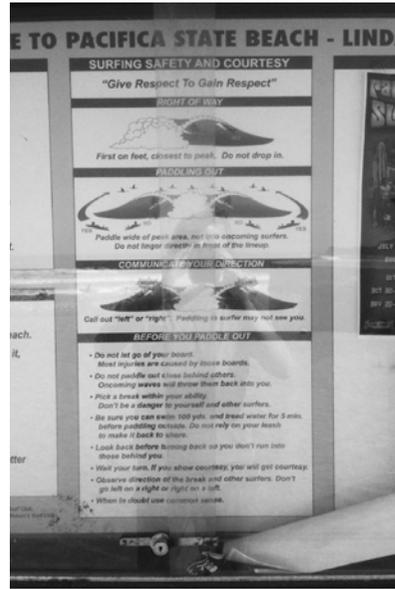


Photo taken from the “boat docks,” a neighborhood where many of the old time surfers live.



“Surfing safety and courtesy” board explaining surf etiquette

IAN: I was hoping you would ask that. Forgoing a variety of metaphysical preconceptions on which the idea of “anonymous space” is based, I do not think that anonymous space actually exists. The thing that I think is important to think about is the fact that places in this world do come with a set of rules that can either create community or can’t. That said, spaces like the check out line are somewhat anonymous, but this is for functional reasons. I think that is ok for spaces to be functional even if there is a type of alienation taking place. But, I do like the idea of toying with space as a means to communicate ideas. There were a lot of really interesting projects in the class that were all based on the ambiguous premise of “anonymous space.”

SEAN: I think it’s useful terminology to describe a set of conditions, but those things are always subject to interpretation, and I like to think people always have choices.

IAN: Word. I appreciate Bruce’s encouragement to makes stuff in order to achieve understanding... I was hesitant to make things at first because I didn’t understand the concept.

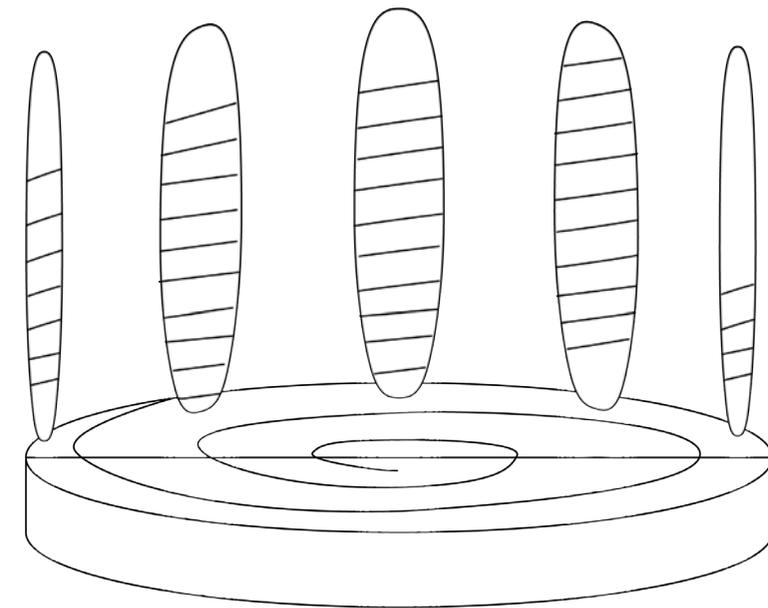
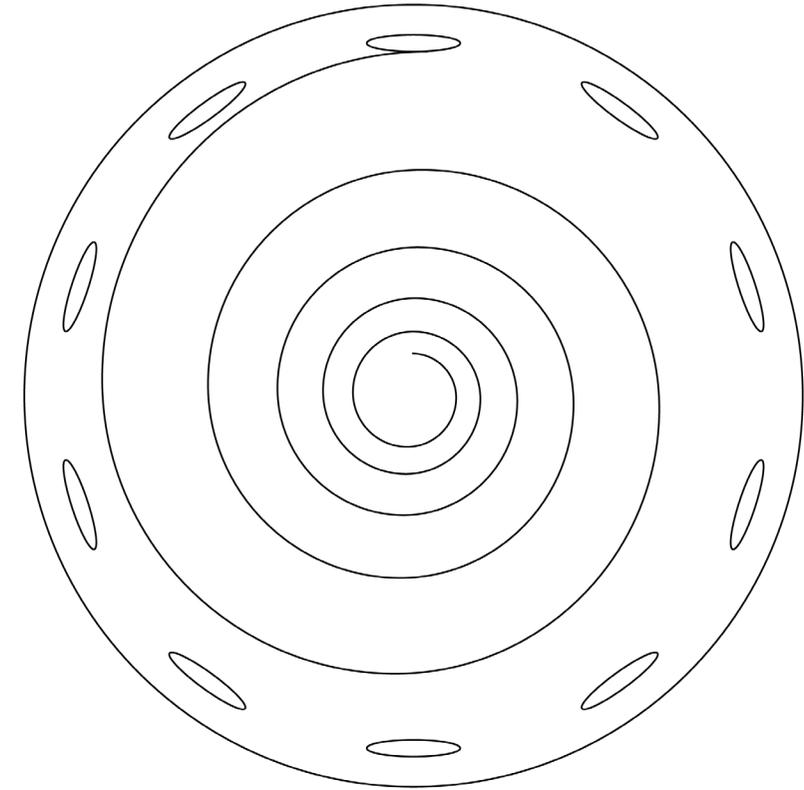
SEAN: That was kind of the hidden ‘koan’ of the class...that ultimately you’re supposed to not be thinking of the goal, but making work. The thing does reveal itself if you just take your eyes off it.

“MY HOPE IS THAT SURFERS WOULD SEE THEMSELVES AS PART OF A LARGER COMMUNITY...”

IAN: For me it was more about finding alternative points of entry. I like dissecting histories and narratives... so that seemed to work itself into my project

SEAN: So, here’s the thing. I love your project. It looks great, but it’s gonna block the view.

IAN: I do have to reconcile the fact that some people, maybe most, will not like a big monument on the beach... the beach is beautiful whether the monument is there or not.



PROCESS

Started by spending time at the beach, talking to surfers, and taking photos and video of the social dynamics of surf culture.

Create a surf artist meet-up, but abandoned the idea.

Held interviews with surfers and surf shop owners and asked them to describe Pacifica's surf culture.

Learned the historical and contemporary views of the Pacifica Surf community and discovered that Pacifica is overcrowded and dangerous. A starting point for my intervention.

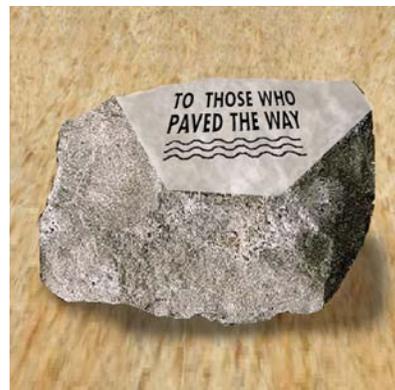
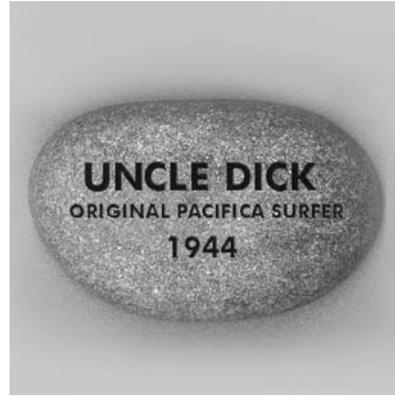
Created a Pacifica surf timeline installation and invited surfers to share their memories of surfing at Pacifica.

Decided that framing Pacifica's surf community in the context of historical narrative was a way to instill a sense of reverence and respect in Pacifica as a surf spot.

Chose to create a monument to remind people of Pacifica's history and evolution as a surf spot.

Met with Greg Cochran, president of the Pedro Point Surf Club, to discuss the form and location of the monument.

Began the process of designing the monument beginning with rocks and cairns and eventually progressing towards a large scale stone memorial.



THE DOORWAY



NOT JUST AN EXIT

LARA MANZANARES

REVEALING THE DOORWAY

Since childhood, doorways and thresholds have appeared in many of my most intense and memorable dreams. They define the architectural spaces of my dream worlds. These spaces are the underlying structure of my visual sense-making process— the “grid” that everything else is based upon. This grid is built around the doorways within it: the entryways into the dream, and the transitions between separate elements of it.

This grid is contingent upon my place within it. My sense-making process is couched in the embodied experience. When I try to solve a problem— whether it’s math, design, or figuring out how to tie a fancy knot, I think of it as a performance in which I’m using my entire body. The two-dimensional paper becomes a theater or concert hall, or the knot becomes a mountain or pathway that I’m traversing.

With this knowledge about myself in mind, and a summer of knocking on doors for the U.S. Census Bureau under my belt, I embarked upon an exploration of the physical doorway as an anonymous space. I did not choose one particular doorway, because specific doorways have specific memories and identities attached to them. Rather, I chose The Doorway— the concept— and used physical doorways to carry out my explorations of the meta-concept. The Doorway is anonymous in its universality; it does not belong to one person or group of people, but is something that everyone passes through, a necessary part of our existence. Because it is a part of all of us and belongs to no one, it is anonymous. When asked what intervention I had planned for the doorway, I said, “I want to make the doorway glow for other people like it does for me.”



HUGH

INTEVIEWS

LARA

HUGH: Hi Lara. I have read your abstract and I was particularly intrigued by your perspective of the world in which everything seems alive and animated. Also, this is evident in your work where you use your body to interact with the seemingly static surrounding. I know the a doorway connotes a lot more to me than its physical frame but it seems like the only static thing in your world. Have you ever considered it being alive or animated?

LARA: That's an interesting observation— Yes, I guess doorways serve as kind of "anchors" in a changing world. While they don't walk around, though, I definitely consider them to be alive.

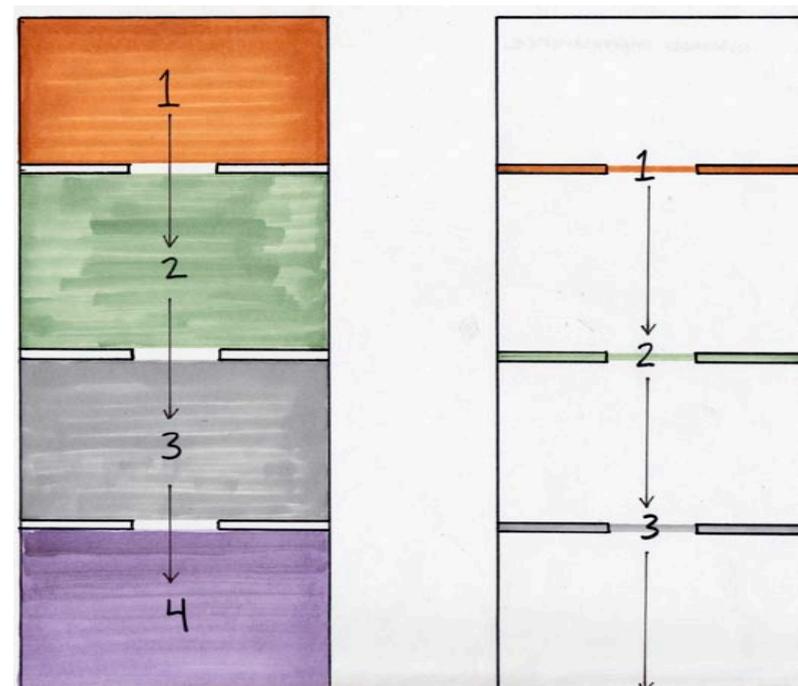
I have several early idea sketches that didn't make it to completion this semester... One of those ideas involved a weaving machine either installed into or built as a part of a doorway— a way to make the intangible life of the doorway into a tangible thing. The weaving mechanism would shoot a thread across the doorway each time someone passed through it, building up into a textile piece as people passed through.

Below: Dance revealed the dynamic quality of the space inside the doorway.

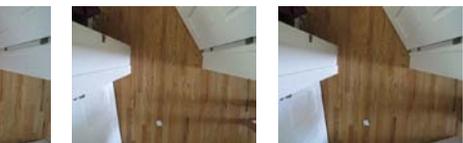


"I HAVE A VERY CLEAR, VISCERAL IDEA OF DOORWAYS IN MY DREAMS, ONE THAT IS DIFFICULT TO TRANSLATE INTO WORDS."

Another idea involves a series of doorways set up semi-randomly in an open space. Each doorway would emit its own sound, or musical note, when a person passes through it— so the participant would be using their body to wander through the notes, experiencing the life of each doorway either as an individual event, or a collection of events that would create a musical piece. This idea precluded my research into traditional Japanese notions of space, where I discovered a new way to view doors: as events in a series of non-event (live place), rather than the western view of doorways as transitional spaces between two destinations (dead space).



Western notions of space frame doorways as empty transitional spaces between destinations (left). In traditional Japan, however, doorways and partitions are seen as a series of events between periods of non-event (right).



Left: Exploring the vulnerability, fear, and acceptance of the doorway, I created Saturday Morning Serenade. Each Saturday for a few weeks, myself and some other musician friends traveled around San Francisco's neighborhoods, knocking on doors and serenading residents who answered our knock.

"OUR EXISTENCE IS BASED UPON CONSTANT, SIMULTANEOUS, LAYERED TRANSITIONS"

HUGH: It seems to me that one of your challenges is trying to authentically "represent" the doorways in your dream. In other words you've been trying to convey the images of doorways in your mind to us. Have you encountered any obstacle during your explorations, not only while you're building the physical door frame but as you translate doorways from your dream to reality?

LARA: Yes, I have encountered obstacles— not physical ones, but rather mental ones. I have a very clear, visceral idea of doorways in my dreams, one that is

difficult to translate into words. My work was not based on a desire to illustrate or re-create my dreams, but rather the dreams (and the relationship that I have with doors in my dreams) were the foundation for my methods of working with the doorway in the waking world.

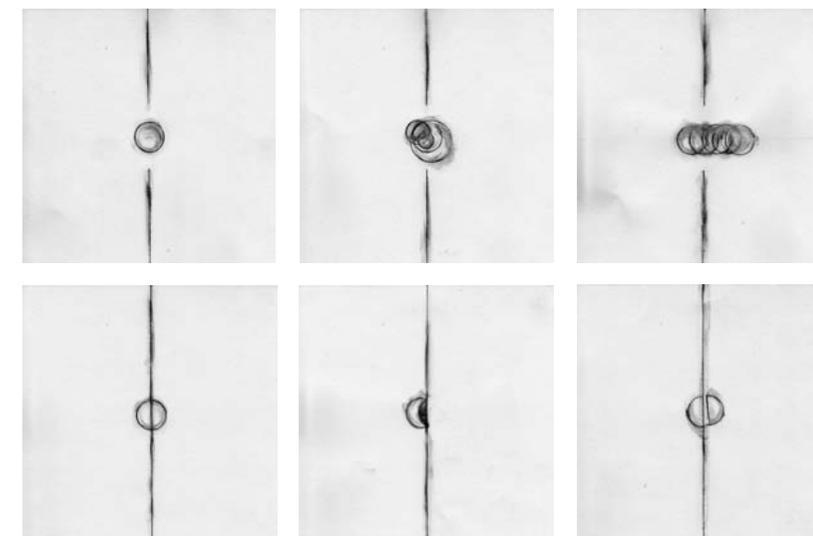
HUGH: I'm interested in your idea of treating the doorway as a event because that resonates with my earlier question about doorway being alive. It seems to me that you're reversing the relationship between doorway and the spaces it connects, that

doorway is active whereas the spaces are static. Could you speak more about that?

LARA: I'll begin that answer with a rather trite (but true) statement: Life is not about the destination, it is about the journey. Our existence is based on constant, simultaneous, layered transitions, whether they are physical, psychological, emotional, or sensory. Passing through stages of life— reaching milestones— or everyday transitions between sleeping and waking, standing and sitting, even the

inhale and exhale of the breath— is at the very core of learning and growing, forgetting and dying. Without the transitions, the two places to cross between would merge into one universal place. If there is only one place, there is only one destination— or, rather, destination itself also becomes eliminated, because there is no "here" and "there." Imagine, for example, that the transition between inhaling and exhaling were eliminated, and all people could only inhale. Without transitions between things like inhaling and exhaling— without

Because of the abstract nature of my concept, I struggled to effectively communicate my ideas to my peers. I attempted to overcome this difficulty by creating a mark-making strategy that would work in tandem with my makings and communicate my intent. These marks interpreted my work and informed future explorations.



“DOORWAYS
ARE A SORT OF
CATALYST—
MOTORS THAT
RUN THE
ACTIVITIES IN
THE SPACES
BETWEEN
THEM”



binaries to oppose each other—
we are in a place of equilibrium,
or stasis: a stopping of life.

When I encountered literature
talking about the doorway as an
event, it brought this abstract
idea about transition as an event
into a physical space that I could
explore in a very real way. I don't
necessarily believe that the
spaces between the doorway
“events” are static— there's a
lot going on there— but door-
ways are a sort of catalyst, mo-
tors that runs the activities in the
spaces between them.



Right: The story of an
everyday person who
accidentally discovers the
magical qualities of the
doorway and then uses
them to re-ritualize the
threshold is illustrated in a
short video.



PROCESS

As I mentioned in my interview, I did encounter a few obstacles. They were not necessarily concrete obstacles—I had no problems with materials, nor did I have any bureaucratic hoops to jump through. Many of the difficulties appeared in my attempts to portray of my abstract ideas.

I attempted to overcome this difficulty by creating a mark-making strategy that would work in tandem with my makings. These marks interpreted what I had done, and informed future explorations.

These explorations took several forms. Using video, I studied simple passage through a doorway. I danced in the doorway, exploring the foreshortening of the body and its shifting size as filmed from above. Investigating the relationship between passage and the body further, I installed a “rabbit hole” in the graduate studio door that people had to crouch to get through. I neutralized the social tension of the doorway through music and performance when I traveled around the Mission District with my guitar, knocking on doors and serenading the people who

opened them. I countered the vulnerability of the person who opened their door to a strange knock with the vulnerability of a musician offering herself up through song. Through research and experience, I came to view the door as an event rather than a place. This led me to ponder issues of time and ritual. To illustrate this concept, I created a short film which portrays my actions around and within the door as a re-ritualization and revelation of the door’s inner glow.

One of the by-products of the video, the simple act of painting the graduate studio door fluorescent orange, converted the doorway into a lively “event” that rang out clearly against the sterile white walls of the educational institution. Much like my work with the Census Bureau, instead of “intervening” in the doorway—placing something there to assign it an identity—I have instead employed a variety of methods to coax out and reveal the larger identity and importance that already existed. The glow was always there, we just couldn’t see it.



DECEMBER 2010