

# SPACE SHUTTLE

Six Projects of Urban Creativity  
and Social Interaction, Belfast

**Space Shuttle**

Initiated by PS<sup>2</sup>

[www.spaceshuttle.org.uk](http://www.spaceshuttle.org.uk)

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PS<sup>2</sup>

18 Donegall Street

Belfast BT1 2GP

[pssquared@btconnect.com](mailto:pssquared@btconnect.com)

[www.pssquared.org](http://www.pssquared.org)

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Hello

This is SPACE SHUTTLE - an experimental base for artists and urbanauts.

I have been launched to six different orbits around planet Belfast.

My mission is to explore the creative environment.

Please keep in contact. [www.spaceshuttle.org.uk](http://www.spaceshuttle.org.uk)

Return to mother-ship PS<sup>2</sup>

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This small note, printed on a red plaque stuck to the steel skin of a container box, sums up a series of projects, which took place in Belfast between summer 2006 and spring 2007. With many references and ironic similarities to real space travel, the orbits of SPACE SHUTTLE encircled the centre of Belfast; urban space: streets, squares, all fairly unattractive, everyday sites, chosen for their lack of attention, be it cultural or social; undervalued and underused public space which is never considered as a places of public interest and self-determination, except to incorporate it for commercial use.

PS<sup>2</sup> = (Paragon Studios, project space), is a small artist collective, with studio space in the centre of Belfast. A former shop in the same building, project space, is used as a platform for art projects and run on a voluntary base with the focus on art in an urban context. In 2005 we organised 'Street Archaeology', [www.streetarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.streetarchaeology.co.uk), where we invited artists to take Donegall Street as the subject for video and text which was then shown in the windows and facades of 30 shops and offices. A kind of 'door-step' project which extended and stretched the project space along a street. And it subsequently threw up crucial questions; in which way does art change within this everyday context of a hairdresser or a flower shop? How site-specific is the creative outcome or is it just a superficial and imposed change of stage? Did the artists for example transform the flowershop into an unexpected and enriched 'art'venue and capture the interest of the shop keeper and their customers in art?

To test these questions - the relation between artist, production, urban environment and (street) audience in reality, we were looking for a conceptual framework with a playful sequence of repeated experiments but defined parameters.

A formalized setting and a standardized situation like in a laboratory but changeable within through the creativity of the artists, the location and the people.

A concept and initiative which was more intuitive than theoretical and of practical use for us - facing the loss of PS<sup>2</sup> due to regeneration - as a study in flexibility and mobility for art production.

The idea for SPACE SHUTTLE was simple; our project space – the mothership – would be replicated at a smaller scale and this shuttle sent as a mobile workstation to the outside. Urban space exploration in an art related structure, traveling back and forth between places in regular and frequent missions. ‘Manned’ by artists or multidisciplinary groups, who for the duration of one or two weeks, would work with the local environment. Journeys in a flexible and multifunctional box, with 12m<sup>2</sup>, small enough to be lifted by crane lorry onto pavements and big enough as an on-site workbase, meeting point or activity centre. A mobile testlab for urban creativity and social interaction. Space-travel, real and metaphorical to ‘orbits’ like a schoolyard, the former shipyard of the Titanic or inner-city side-streets. Six missions within Belfast, nearly all in walking distance and all very different in their artistic approach. The artists and groups gave each project a distinct profile and demonstrated a spectrum of work practices and strategies in urban creativity. It exposed them to real and sometimes alien encounters and showed the various degrees of public participation and site specific originality.

And again, SPACE SHUTTLE did open many questions; how does one reach the public, which vehicle is most suitable, does one enter ‘alien’ territory if confronted with reality, how can one communicate and is the process or a specific outcome good art?

A journey which through its process mapped the city in many different visual forms, from film to objects to surveys; the outcome shows a trail of colourful and fragmented indication of local sights and findings, unique perhaps for Belfast or interchangeable with other comparable European cities. This recording process, this exploration tour of SPACE SHUTTLE also left traces on the locations in the city. A mutual relationship, between the artists and the urban space; art and audience; reality and creativity.

How precise this map is, how accurately it shows the actual reality, how much it reveals of the political change, shifting identities and large scale urban regeneration in Belfast, can perhaps be seen in this publication. It could also reveal a different reading of transformed realities and a poetics of space.

The launch of this publication coincides with ‘Discoveries’, the last project in the series of SPACE SHUTTLE. It should be seen not only as a documentation, but also as a critical reflection of the projects. In short portraits, all six projects are described and reviewed, mostly by the artists themselves. They also contributed some of the articles surrounding the subject of creativity in an urban context and the role of the artist as an urban practitioner. The apparent re-emergence of neo-situationist and activist practices is put into a contemporary context in a separate essay. We finally asked all who contributed to this publication to add to a book and web list.

This publication is intended as a handbook and space-map for further, more advanced or remote creative explorations.

**Peter Mutschler, PS<sup>2</sup>**

# MISSION ONE DONEGALL PASS

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**Pass Odyssey** 22-29 August 2006

Call Centre Collective (CCC), Ruth Morrow, Saoirse Higgins,  
Aoife Ludlow, Doris Rohr, Emma McClintock

**Location:** Donegall Pass, inner-city loyalist enclave with mix of low rise residential and business use, (notably Chinese restaurants), surrounding high-rise development and student / university area, an urban island isolated by road and rail routes.

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### **Introduction - CCC**

Call Centre Collective (CCC) consists of a group of artist-designers from diverse creative backgrounds working at Interface (interdisciplinary and practice based research centre), School of Art and Design, University of Ulster. CCC established an initiative called Pass Odyssey, together with the Donegall Pass Community Forum.

Donegall Pass is a small tight-knit historical working class community. Now, in an era described as post conflict, the area is changing rapidly due to major re-development. We hoped that through the process of visible creative practice we might offer the community potential mechanisms to help take some control of their own future and changing environment.

In consultation over many months with the Community Forum and individuals, the project developed into an eight-day series of events and workshops. Using the space shuttle as a multifunctional base, the group staged a series of events and provocative multi-media activities that took 'the environment' as their theme: spatial explorations with and for the community. The programme began with an Exploration Day. Throughout the following days, local residents and passers-by were invited to explore the environment of the Pass in novel ways, encouraging new strategies to sustain and foster pride and confidence in the community.



**TODAY is the last Day of activities!**

**MONDAY: 11.00-4.00 SPACE WALK**

Come along and help build a space suit, then watch you make or yourself make fools of themselves- all captured in the moonwalk video - bring younger brothers and sisters and of course any parents who DARE! Armagh Planetarium will be there to offer advice

**MONDAY: 8.30 BIG PROJECTION NIGHT**

Tonight is Movie Night on the Pass!!

We'll start with some prize giving and some images of The Pass and then light low, movie begins (The car park of Mary Magdalene)

**TUESDAY: 11.00-4.00 WHAT NEXT DAY!**

Drop in to space shuttle for farewell cup of tea and tell us: what worked? etc and what next?





Whilst we worked on **Mission 1** as a collective, we express our individual voices in the following accounts.

Opposite page: 'Model Pass', workshop for urban alternatives

### **Audio Images and Community:** Saoirse Higgins

My interest in this project was to explore how creative processes and new technology could give a voice to a community and to enhance their sense of local identity. I had never taken part in a public project like this before nor worked in a collective and wanted to place practice-based art research outside the university.

I used mp3 recorders and radio transmitters as interfaces to collect audio stories from the locals of the Pass. I called the audio collection the Space Walk / Audio Tour. The collection is just beginning and will be an on-going process. The tour, so far, is a collection of audio memories and wry observations from across the community relating to the built fabric of the area. There are many stories connected to the history of the Pass; stories about a fatal Gasworks explosion; how the by-products of the gas were used to cure whooping cough; how the streets names capture the area's past as a wooded area; where and why Charlie Chaplin lived there etc. In the audio tour the participants are astronauts taking steps into an alien landscape – the changing landscape of post-conflict Northern Ireland. The next steps of the project will be to make a contemporary souvenir audio box, which we will give to the families on the Pass and to those that have moved away from the Pass. The audio box will be similar in concept to a musical box and will play the audio stories. The project plan is to design the box in such a way that the families will be able to record new stories, adding them to the storybox collection. This builds up an 'audio trace' of the particular family stories and their history.

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### **Odyssey Objects** - Aoife Ludlow

The **space shuttle** was an unavoidably foreign object. It stood out like a very silver sore thumb in the middle of Donegall Pass. The physical objects on, in and around the shuttle became a way of forging an identity for the mission, of creating links with the community and introducing ourselves.

The Pass is full of **flags**, so we decided that the shuttle should have one too - it's own unique I.D. The spaceman was born and was turned into flags, stamps and balloons. The mission had a character which particularly engaged the younger children. They stamped themselves, and each other, when they visited. They went home tattooed with 'Pass Odyssey' and this in itself helped to spread awareness and raise questions as the identity went home with them.

On one of our first trips to Donegall Pass we met Mary and Jim, whose collection of plates inspired us to make some **Plates for the Pass** to hang in the shuttle. They brought people in to have a look, made people talk and reminisce. They helped us tap into local knowledge and local pride and drew out stories of both strange and everyday occurrences. They were also, in part, a physical documentation of time we had already spent there prior to the arrival of the shuttle itself.

**Traffic cone tables** and **space suits** possibly made us seem a little bit mad, but maybe a little bit interesting too. If nothing else, they were something to laugh and



Donegall Pass, top right  
'Space suit' workshop,  
bottom right 'Big  
Projection Night',  
screening Star Wars



talk about, something to help break the ice and facilitate discussion. For us they were fun to make. They were a less serious side to what was, at times, a stressful process. They were silly, playful and relaxing and gave the mission a distinct creative identity.

We left behind some **physical reminders** of those eight days – a plate here, a polystyrene space helmet there – some random objects, with some good stories attached I hope.

- - -

### **Getting Involved** - Emma McClintock

Negotiation and getting people involved in activities is always a difficult task, and as we discovered, working with the Donegall Pass community was no different.

Will the group turn up?, how many people will get involved? will they stay for the event?, are just a few questions that go through your mind.

Before and during the 'Pass Odyssey' activities, Call Centre Collective organised and attended a number of local meetings (Residents Housing Group, a Young Person's Group etc) We attempted through this process (facilitated by Donegall Pass Community Forum) to make connections, get people interested, involved and give ownership to some of the activities of the project.

One of the tools we used to engage people was the INDEX OF IDEAS; a catalogue of ideas generated to be used within any context, where communities are seeking to reaffirm their identities and subsequently their spatial and social needs. The aim was to use the index as a way to communicate clearly and creatively but more importantly, to generate discussion between the community, those involved in community concerns and Call Centre Collective.

As we engaged with a variety of people (groups and individuals), the index was added to, altered, amalgamated and gained momentum. The index ceased to be the sole production of those in Call Centre Collective but instead became a document shared by all those who have offered insights, identified problems and laughed out loud at the proposed activities.

Throughout the process we met with a number of interesting and individual characters, including a couple who kept a horse in their backyard!. They gave a wonderful insight into the history of the Pass and their stories and lives were the inspiration for some of the objects that we crafted for the launch of our project.

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### **A Circle of Funding and Expertise** - Ruth Morrow

Unlike other mission crews, CCC belongs not only to a context of art and design practice but also academia. For a variety of reasons this background was not made explicit during our time on the Pass but it did implicitly inform our strategies throughout the process. And we hope it drives an honest reflection of the Mission in order that we and others might learn from our mistakes.

In addition being part of an academic context brought support to the project in terms of placing the project into a wider network of expertise and in creating *a circle of funding* that helped to enhance the Mission.

If an academic knows (or should know) one thing it's that they don't know it all. Within CCC there are individuals who actively build networks in the area of socially engaged practice. One of us had gained internal university funding to bring together people working in the area of creative community transformation in Belfast. These informal meetings developed into a good platform for CCC to present and receive critical feedback on Mission 1 throughout its development and afterwards. It also linked us into other networks and allowed us to directly involve (and crucially, pay for) people with expertise in group facilitation, conflict resolution, community outreach and environmental regeneration. Being based in a university seemed to add some legitimacy to the 'madness' of some of our proposed events and we were well supported (at times astonishingly so) by local museum, science and media sectors. For which we were and remain very grateful.

Identifying sources of funding and writing grant applications is increasingly becoming a core academic skill (!) so on behalf of the Community Forum we were able to make a successful application to a major funder. This covered the costs of our extensive range of props and objects and it also meant we didn't have to rely on goodwill (often the case in such projects). We were able to pay fair rates to those (some of them locals) who provided skills during the 8 days such as the Masseur and Beautician who pampered the women of the Pass on Shiny Sparkly Sunday afternoon.

There are drawbacks to such funding, not least fitting within a funder's timetable and the length of time it takes to process applications. What was outlined in the initial application altered as we continued to talk to people on the Pass. So by the time we received notice of our success (7 days before the Mission launched!) we were already stressed if naively joyful.

# MISSION TWO TITANIC QUARTER

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**Episode 306: Dallas, Belfast** 31 August – 16 September 2006  
Sarah Browne & Gareth Kennedy

**Location:** Situated on a wasteland in the Titanic Quarter, the interior of the space affords views of the Odyssey Arena, the Titanic Drawing Rooms, the Northern Ireland Science and Innovation Centre, the hills in the distance and views out to sea. Ferries and cruise liners sail by. As such it's located on a particular node between past and future, placed on post-industrial land soon to become the largest waterfront development in Europe.

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[1] Slogan from a poster for the *Odyssey* film complex, viewed April 2006 at the Lagan Lookout, Belfast.

*The future is entertainment, and entertainment becomes the future*<sup>1</sup>

For this project, the interior of the shuttle was converted into a film set. The architecture and landscape surrounding the chosen site highlights the transition from a production - to a service - or knowledge-based economy. The shuttle was used as a kind of insulated micro-environment in which to meditate on some of these changes that surround it on 'the outside', creating a space where fiction and fact sometimes blend together. Together with a group of people selected through open audition, the space was used to reenact a portion of a fictional script of the 1980s TV show **Dallas**, implicitly addressing issues of development, prosperity and choice in the context of Belfast's ongoing regeneration. Three separate casts were selected to enact three distinct but related reenactments.

The docklands in Belfast is a space specifically built for the manufacture of huge ships at a correspondingly epic scale where people were dwarfed, and still are. This post-industrial landscape, with its legacy of defunct heavy industry, is being replaced with a light mist of shiny, highly desirable apartments. The area is undergoing a total facelift as the result of the new industry of development and regeneration. These massive complexes of apartments, retail environments and leisure spaces will act as rebranded 'cities within cities': ironically exactly what cruiseliners such as the *Titanic* were originally intended to be. Where such places of luxury were previously exported and experienced as 'floating communities of luxury and leisure'<sup>2</sup> these places are now being built for the docklands sites, to be experienced *in situ*.

[2] Floating communities of luxury and leisure'; 'ocean cruiser lifestyle' - from the Titanic Quarter publicity video, viewed April 2006







*Episode 306: Dallas, Belfast*, is envisaged as a marker in time, between Belfast's industrial past and the proposed vision of the future. *Dallas*, a fictional serial from the 1980s, was chosen as the entry point to initiate this discussion.

*Dallas* is one of the most watched TV shows in history and served to unite a mass audience on an international scale. It was popularised at a time when the US was entering its post industrial phase and the age of Reaganomics<sup>3</sup>, and promoted a lifestyle of conspicuous consumption as a social balm in the wake of the American recession and oil crises of the seventies. It became a metaphor for American cultural and economic dominance as it was exported to countries around the world, succeeding massively almost everywhere.<sup>4</sup> As such, it also demonstrates the political undertones that can be willfully ignored, but are surely present in the products of mass culture.

Another link between American culture and the Titanic Quarter is the *Titanic* itself – both the ship and the James Cameron film. While appropriation by Americans of the cultural Other is normative, the inverse practice (as with this project) appears acutely strange, as a kind of hysterical parody because America is supposedly in a position of greater cultural dominance. In the title of the work, neither 'Dallas' nor 'Belfast' is prioritised; neither dominates the other – there is a twinning of sorts.

However *Dallas* functioned in America, it surely functioned differently elsewhere both through televisual technologies such as dubbing and subtitling, and other more complex forms of cross-cultural translation. A number of anthropological studies have examined these issues, asking how people of other cultures 'read' *Dallas* and its American storyline and setting. One particular study by Liebes and Katz describes such a process, tracking how their study of imagined American cultural imperialism altered as viewers appropriated the text for themselves. They propose that the possible success of American TV programmes overseas may lie in their 'openness' to negotiation, raising the possibility that they are not so culture-bound as they seem.<sup>5</sup>

Michel de Certeau explores ways how consumers become 'hidden producers', specifically addressing reading as an activity and the idea of 'inhabiting' a text. This act transforms another person's property into a space borrowed temporarily by a transient, and informs our methodology in using the *Dallas* script. This understanding of mass culture imagines its audience not as passive consumers, voyeurs in a show-biz society, but as active, subversive agents involved in the creation and negotiation of new meanings.<sup>6</sup> Three casts of three actors enacted the script, and used the space, in subtly different ways: there is no central space of interpretation, and the three sequences run in a closed loop. What were originally three male roles were cast using male and female actors. The different dynamics between different cast members, and different casts, explored a sense of shifting power relations and possible meanings.

*Dallas* evokes a certain nostalgia in the Irish/ UK context, when people used the TV programme as a way to vicariously live the life of JR, Bobby, Sue Ellen et al. This connection with a community of interest (our advertising featured an image of Larry Hagman and asked *Could you be the Belfast JR?*) was an important tactic in

[3] Reaganomics (a portmanteau of "Reagan" and "economics,") is a term that has been used to both describe and decry the free market advocacy economic policies of U.S. President Ronald Reagan, who served from 1981 to 1989. It is comparable to Thatcher's economic philosophy. [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

[4] Notable exceptions were Brazil, which supported a flourishing domestic industry of soap opera of its own, and Japan, where *Dallas* only survived for six months. See Liebes, Tamar and Katz Elihu, *The Export of Meaning, Cross-Cultural Readings of Dallas*, Polity Press, 1990.

[5] Liebes, Tamar and Katz, Elihu, *ibid.* p.4.

[6] De Certeau likens this relationship to that of renters making changes in an apartment they furnish (with their acts and memories), or how speakers insert their own messages through their native tongue, their accent, and their own 'turns of phrase'. De Certeau, Michel, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, University of California Press, 1984.





'Episode 306: Dallas, Belfast'. Stills from DVD, S. Browne/G. Kennedy, 2006/7

enticing and eventually engaging with a group of participants and to develop a micro-audience for the project. Such a community has bonds and allegiances not based on class, gender or social background, but rather simply on a conscious decision to be interested in something. This manifested in a committed turnout of enthusiasts who braved inclement weather and unusual - to surreal - circumstances to audition.

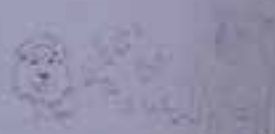
The fragment of the script re-enacted doesn't focus on a particular storyline and in itself is not actually recognisable as *Dallas*. However the connection to *Dallas* exists through the title of the piece and its inevitable connotations of luxury, wealth, excess, Texas, oil, greed, epic aspiration and failure. These associations surround the project through the incongruous link with *Dallas*, while the script itself makes no reference to plotlines that could locate it at any particular point, either temporally, geographically or socially, within the Ewing saga. Rather it features a discussion/argument taking place between JR, Bobby and Carter McKay about a lucrative deal that could potentially involve 'a bunch of Arabs owning half the state of Texas': "Like it or not JR, there are no more borders, there are no more countries... There is just one world, there's just one country, there's just one language. That language is power." (Carter McKay). This dialogue uncannily prefigures the contemporary language of globalisation and forces of global capitalism – a world of multinationals and de-nationalised industry.

*Dallas* is now being remade as a Hollywood movie, and is one of an increasing number of blockbuster movies that revisit existing material – plots, characters, memories – the current infatuation being with 80s TV shows: *The Dukes of Hazzard* and *Miami Vice*. This form of cultural cannibalism operates across mainstream media (TV/ film) and draws on a bank of collective memories to generate bankable audiences. The use of re-enactment (as distinct from the *remake*) is becoming more common in an artist's toolbox that attempts to find languages and means of expression for a future that is difficult to visualise, potential that has not been fully realised, histories that have not played out or failed in the past.<sup>7</sup> The final work, *Episode 306: Dallas, Belfast* is a short loop of circular time that takes place in the interior of a small space. Our intentions to develop a new, site-specific script outside of it have not been fulfilled, yet.

*Casts: Liam O'Carroll, Stephen Angus, Carly Young; Kelly Anne Flynn, Olivia O'Kane, Hugh McIntyre; Adrian Cooke, Jim McGookin, Andrew Higgins. Thanks to: all the actors who came to audition; Alison Moore for additional footage; Acorn TV & Film; Queen Street Studios; White Mountain Spring Water; Sonic Arts at Queen's University; and our crew: Graham Davidson, John King, Anderinna Gooch, David Baxter and Brian Greene. Thanks also to Jesse Jones who contributed valuable insights to this text.*

[7] Recent artist projects that incorporate aspects of re-enactment include Jeremy Deller's *Battle of Orgreave* and Jesse Jones' *12 Angry Films*, Dublin, 2006.

reward  
some things about belfast  
(or so i'm told)



urban myths  
urban anecdote  
place nickname  
hand drawn map

st. george's  
market



st. george's market is a popular place to visit in belfast. it is a good place to buy fresh produce and to see some of the best street art in the city. The market is open every day from 10am to 6pm. It is a great place to spend an afternoon and to see some of the best street art in the city.

buried virgin



the buried virgin is a popular place to visit in belfast. it is a good place to buy fresh produce and to see some of the best street art in the city. The market is open every day from 10am to 6pm. It is a great place to spend an afternoon and to see some of the best street art in the city.

MISSION  
THREE  
NORTH  
STREET /  
WARING  
STREET

//

**Some Things About Belfast (or so i'm told)**

18 September-5 October 2006

**Aisling O'Beirn**

**Location:** North Street / Waring Street:  
Non-residential, city centre location within the historic Cathedral Quarter. Mix of prestigious architecture and derelict / burnt out buildings, populated with cultural institutions as well as pound shops, sex shops and bookies - awaiting major redevelopment. Thoroughfare to the more polished Royal Avenue.

//

### Postal Signing

"The Dole Office on Shaftesbury Square, Belfast, was blown up in the early 1990s by the IRA. It backed onto a police station, which might probably have been the target. With no office for two and a half years, people registered for social security payments by 'postal signing'. Rumours abounded about people working abroad and returning home every 3 months to pick up their cheques."

For '**Some Things About Belfast (or so I'm told)**', the space shuttle was used as both a transmitter and receiver of unofficial information about Belfast. It provided an opportunity to share, expand and amend my research into vernacular Belfast. I installed elements from my ongoing collection of Belfast nicknames and hand drawn maps inside the shuttle. Outside a digit-board relayed a different Belfast urban myth daily, whilst the shuttle was gradually clad in posters, a new one each day, which told and illustrated these urban myths.

The shuttle had the appearance of an unofficial tourist office or unorthodox site office. Visitors were served coffee and tea from Belfast story mugs and had the opportunity to peruse my collection and make their own amendments and additions. In the space of 2 weeks I met many people, swapped stories, gave directions, drank coffee and had lots of laughs.

This process of exchange resulted in an unforeseen expansion and enrichment of my collection. I collected another 60 Belfast place nicknames and many more anecdotes.

I would like to thank everyone that visited the shuttle and contributed to my collection.



divas	divis, lr. falls
butcher's row	former surgens' houses, near queens university
ducky dam	site of new gaa pitches off flax st. ardoyne
the casey	casement park, falls rd
the egg	the eglantine inn, bar at bottom of malone rd.
the egg tunnels	sewer tunnels under old egg factory, ardoyne
the farm	moyard towards new barnsely
the cheeky orc	the duke of york bar, off donegall st.
the feeley wall	bottom of antigua st., the bone
the chicken walk	easy path up divis mountain
the flacky	ardoyne
children born stupid	st mary's cbs (christian brothers school), glen rd.
the flax	ardoyne
the flush	river on divis mountain
cockletown	greencastle
the flush	springfield ave.
the coffie	springfield walk
g - town	greenisland
the coolers	former outdoor pool, now bmx track, falls park
the giant's foot	city cemetry, whiterock rd.
the golden mile	great victoria st., towards shaftesbury sq
the cricky	park and former cricket pitch, sintonville rd.
goose to the bill	carrick hill
crimewell rd	cromwell rd.
green hut	drinking club, turf lodge
daddy winkers lane	ladas way
greeney	grassy area at peaceline on alliance ave.
the gully	stream side walk up divis mountain
the dam	springfield park
the hack	ballyhackamore
dam back	alley at back of etna drive., ardoyne
the half moon lake	lake in poleglass
the dog eaters	Ballymurphy
the half bap	corporation st.
the dirty hairy gal	the erfigle inn, ormeau rd.
the hammer	agnes st. area between crumlin rd. and shankill rd.
dirty knickers	newlodge
the hat	the hatfield bar, lr. ormeau rd.
divas	divis, lr. falls
the hatchet field	hatchet shaped field, divis mountain
the heel and ankle	the shankill rd.
hill of the rabbits	knocknagoney (from the original irish name)
the egg	the eglantine inn, bar at bottom of malone rd.
hms never budge	hms caroline, belfast dock
egg tunnels	sewer tunnels under old egg factory, ardoyne









# MISSION FOUR BLACKSTAFF SQUARE

//

'7 by 7' 9-19 October 2006  
Siraj Izhar

**Location:** Close to city centre, train & bus station and the infamous 'Europa Hotel', this central public square is framed by office buildings, hotels and bars. Thoroughfare for commuters, with no benches. 'The square felt like a drifting benign extension of commuter space, without the enclosure of transport vehicles and containment, but just marked by the traffic of people: the directional nature of human pedestrian movement, its variations at different times of day' (Siraj Izhar).

//

For '**7 by 7**', space shuttle was used to research the specific social and cultural environs of Blackstaff Square, gathering daily information over seven days.

The shuttle had an internal and external structure marked by the Health & Wealth grid as its public template. Over the course of the project, the shuttle and its grid space filled up with useful data and completed forms through public participation.

All participants were entered for the National Lottery Lotto draw on the 21 October 2006 as members of the Health & Wealth syndicate. There were no winners, however the National Lottery as a tool provided a doorway into personal hopes and anxieties. A common theme was debt as a pervasive social experience. A lot of hope was attached to clearing debt, a negative kind of hope.

Health & Wealth gathers the data for its development process by planting the 7 by 7 grid onto public space as an intervention. A public space would already be saturated with pre-structured culturally mediated values and narratives. The grid is sliced with 7 variables which intersect according to the personal judgments of public participants. The flow of people through this grid structure and their participation provides raw data to develop the Health & Wealth programme. The programme may be seen as an artificial social system in which differentiating interests and processes negotiate the same spatial grid in accordance with defined non-deterministic social laws mediated by an algorithm.

H  
M

Health & wealth syndrome

every night when I come home  
the number's on the table  
I take the stick & knot  
off  
pop! goes the weasel

a penny for a spot of thread  
a penny for a needle  
that's the way the money goes  
when you see the need

Half - board of 4-penny rice

Mix it up & make it nice

Pop' gets the wares

2000-2001

Yonkers, N.Y.

1950-1951

HAPPINESS	HEALTH	LOVE	WEALTH	WORK	ATTRACTIVENESS	SECURITY	
[ 1 ]	[ 2 ]	[ 3 ]	[ 4 ]	[ 5 ]	[ 6 ]	[ 7 ]	ME MYSELF
[ 8 ]	[ 9 ]	[ 10 ]	[ 11 ]	[ 12 ]	[ 13 ]	[ 14 ]	MY HOME MY FAMILY
[ 15 ]	[ 16 ]	[ 17 ]	[ 18 ]	[ 19 ]	[ 20 ]	[ 21 ]	MY STREET MY NEIGHBOURHOOD
[ 22 ]	[ 23 ]	[ 24 ]	[ 25 ]	[ 26 ]	[ 27 ]	[ 28 ]	MY TOWN MY CITY
[ 29 ]	[ 30 ]	[ 31 ]	[ 32 ]	[ 33 ]	[ 34 ]	[ 35 ]	MY COUNTRY
[ 36 ]	[ 37 ]	[ 38 ]	[ 39 ]	[ 40 ]	[ 41 ]	[ 42 ]	MY CULTURE MY PEOPLE
[ 43 ]	[ 44 ]	[ 45 ]	[ 46 ]	[ 47 ]	[ 48 ]	[ 49 ]	MY WORLD MY PLANET



Health & Wealth is based on all combinations of numbers between **1** and **49** as on a standard lottery form. It uses a statistically democratic grid through which all social aspirations can be channeled in a million unique & different ways each day. The lottery may be seen as a particular form of social currency circulation that gives and takes away - barter - in ways that paradoxically over-simplify and unify cultural complexities.

In the gaming process the lottery converts all possible permutations of 1 to 49 to ideally form into a pyramidal shape; the top of the pyramid symbolises the jackpot and the demographics of distribution and social development. Health & Wealth uses the same process to recreate a game for the Health & Wealth syndicate. In this game public space and private values are structured in accordance with free individual choice. How the values of free individual choice are made by individual participants provide the **6** numbers between 1 and 49, needed for use in the lottery.

These numbers are pooled together by the Health & Wealth syndicate to use in the lottery to symmetrically mirror the dynamics of pyramidal social construction.

**Sample 0 : William G.** (see image opposite)

Date: 11.10.2006 Belfast

Each participant has to assign 1 value on each axis to just one on the axis. These variables are rotated daily. In this sample of choices made by William G in accordance with his personal values, he has 6 lottery numbers marked in **[red]**

The 6 numbers are: **3 - 8 - 21 - 34 - 39 - 44**

These numbers assign:

**LOVE** to: **ME MYSELF**

**SECURITY** to: **MY STREET MY NEIGHBOURHOOD**

**WEALTH** to: **MY CULTURE MY PEOPLE**

and so forth...

There are many ways to decipher the information from such samples and process them into a potential algorithm.

To illustrate one way, here:

**[Yellow]** blocks represents free unblocked paths on the board

**[Black]** blocks represents blocked paths.

The numbers of free paths and blocked paths are all assigned differential values and build up the probabilities over many samples



# MISSION FIVE

DUBLIN  
ROAD /  
SHAFTESBURY  
SQUARE

//

**Find Your Perfect Location** 23 October - 2 November 2006

Mick O'Kelly

**Location:** Prominent Square at the south end of Belfast City centre, close to Queens University. Non-residential, commercial buildings and major traffic junction. Busy nightlife - and with a huge light screen - 'times' square' character. Donegall Pass (Mission One) leads into the Square.

//

*'Mobile apartment, adjust to suit your specific needs. Now on view on Dublin Road/ Shaftesbury Square. Desirable location, intersecting the cultural and economic hub of Belfast. Spectacular views overlooking a variety of High Street shops, banks, restaurants, public artworks, traffic island, furnished with benches and trees.....*

*With the promotion of Belfast as with Dublin and other cities bidding to become the desirable cultural and economic centre, Mick O'Kelly converts the shuttle to a mobile unit/apartment, where the selling point is the buyer, who can choose their desired location'.*

## **06. August**

Hi Peter

...A slight change of plan around the use of the space shuttle. I won't be projecting into or from the structure, as it is difficult sourcing film material from here (*San Miguel, Brazil*). So I would still like to have the structure attached to the building on Shaftesbury Square. With the promotion of Belfast as with Dublin and other cities bidding to become the desirable cultural and economic centre, I want to present the structure as a mobile unit/apartment where the selling point is the buyer who can choose their desired location. A bit of tongue in cheek.

Mick

- - -

## **29. September**

Hi Mick

How and where are you? Hope everything went well on your trip.

SPACE SHUTTLE lands and takes off and it is an interesting journey to see the different uses, locations and audiences. Your project is still 23 October-2 November 2006 and I hope we could talk it through before.

Let me know.

Peter

**12. October**

Hi Mick

Still wait for the insurance if it is okay for them. Need more details, how you fix the umbrella and make it wind/storm proof plus the other items and how the interior is solved. It is all a bit last minute and probably the best, if you could come up again. Will meet the Roads Service tomorrow and look if we can extend the dates in case we have to delay the project.

See you

Peter

- - -

**13. October**

Hi Mick

Just back from Roads Service. Talked to the builder of the shuttle and container people, structurally all okay. Strong wind and possible connection should be considered. Will contact the insurance later on again. It takes time.

Are you okay with a 20foot container-shorter than your image?

What about times it will run-or shouldn't we mention it.

And possible opening or half way event?

Let me know quickly to finish the card.

See you

Peter

- - -

**15. October**

Hi Mick

Again about the project. I'll hope the insurance doesn't throw obstacles into the portacabin pile and get it sorted before Friday, when we wanted to move the boxes.

I am somehow split in my opinion about the pure 'image' character of your project without any social interaction or on-site accessibility, an iconic sculpture, whereas SPACE SHUTTLE was and is about a work in progress and an open urban workbase. In its own and without the positions other projects took and represented, I think I couldn't quite agree. However it does mark a kind of protest, critique, opposition in the context of the series, if viable is up for debate like the whole concept of SPACE SHUTTLE. I would really like to know, how you see and understand your work and the kind of sculptural metaphor of a refusal of any kind of interaction. Is it a re-active conclusion, frustration with a concept of this kind or is my head twisted close to the end?

Let me know.

The transport is planned for Friday and you would have the weekend to prepare. If would be good, if we could meet before to talk about assistance and practicalities.

All the best

See you

Peter



# TO LET

HIGH SPECIFICATION

1 ROOM APARTMENT

AMBULANT URBAN ARCHITECTURE

CONTACT PS<sup>2</sup> 028 90235912

**15. October**

Hi Peter

We can discuss these issues on Tuesday. It's not a protest to previous projects of space shuttle. We could sell it as a viable unit of real estates and it can have real interaction and value within the greater dimensions of capital and economy, but I'm not sure you want to go that far or that I have the liberty to ask that of you. So a gesture is all I can offer....

Mick

- - -

**22. October**

Hi Peter

I spent much of the weekend running around trying to find garden furniture, it is in agreement by all of the shops to change to their Christmas stock. However I managed to track down a lovely green set. Will see you in the morning. Here is the text you asked for and a jpg of the 'To Let' sign.

All the Best

Mick

- - -

**25. October**

Hi Mick

Nothing broken today. Hired a light, lasting 8 hours (they say) and charge it with the generator, which is on between 1-9/10pm, then the light takes over. Got a phone call enquiry about the apartment.

See you

Peter

- - -

**25. October**

Hi Peter

Many thanks for the press info and the images. I think it looks very convincing. Pity about the chair. If they get vandalised, I would like to replace them with something more sturdy.

All the best

Mick

- - -

**27. October**

Hallo Mick

Everything still intact, umbrella lightly damaged in the storm. Somebody climbs up every night and yesterday switched off the generator- would have given him the caretaker job. People talk about the 'To let' option, take images on their mobile.

See you

Peter







# MISSION SIX ST. AIDAN'S CHRISTIAN BROTHERS PRIMARY SCHOOL

//

'H.I.' 19-30 March 2007

Amy Russell & Barnardo's (children's charity)

**Location:** At the northern, raised fringe of the city, the catholic boys' school-build in the 60's- is surrounded by council housing and faces a multitude of social problems.

//

From the outset of SPACE SHUTTLE, it was intended to invite a community organisation to 'man' the last mission. As experts in direct community actions, their contribution should open up the 'art' field and challenge the topic of social intervention. Their involvement would further question and expand the boundaries of 'art in a social context' and the subject of 'social engagement' in art.

PS<sup>2</sup> initially thought of the work the Salvation Army or Shelter does for homeless people and asked both organisations to take part. For various reasons this didn't spark any ideas or a concrete project. Unlike the direct communication with artists it was difficult to find an individual or small group within a community organisation, who was able and prepared to take on an extra task. PS<sup>2</sup> finally found in Trish Moore from Barnardo's an enthusiastic partner and coordinator. She linked the project to St. Aidan's Christian Brothers Primary School, where Barnardo's provides a teacher. The artist Amy Russell, who has worked as a volunteer for Barnardo's on several other projects became the project leader. The project was strongly supported by the headmaster of St. Aidan's, Raymond Hunter.



### **‘Me As An Alien’ by Ryan Pendleton**

Hello my name is Frank Blurb. I live on planet Velerbablurb, it’s a nice place. Our people have big heads with five eyes, two noses, three mouths and one big ear.

Anyway, I was called up for an investigation to take over a boy called Ryan to see what earth is like. Oh I forgot we have legs but we can fly.

So I went to Belfast, its nice and friendly but there were some downsides. It took me a while to learn the language, I had to go to school and my so-called mum and dad and their son are very bossy. All they do is watch TV and watch football.

So I went out on this occasion called St.Patrick’s day there were floats, face painting and concerts. I had a test at school I hated it. So after it I went sight seeing to the city hall. It was nice, then I went to the Ulster Museum, it was very historical, it was brilliant and I went to the Odyssey for a game of bowling and a pizza, the food isn’t so bad here and the entertainment is fun.

When I arrived back to my home planet Velerbablurb, I told everyone about Belfast and how entertaining it is. About one month later everyone started to go to Belfast and when they came back they looked so happy and jolly. They love going to Belfast, one of them forgot to leave their body at earth and when I have seen him we all freaked out, we thought it was a real person and when he came out of the body we all laughed. I now have a house in Belfast where I can come and go whenever I want.

The end.

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In **‘H.I.’** (Humans Identified), the artist Amy Russell works with the idea of space travel and the theme of aliens. She says: “There is another meaning to alien, ‘somebody who does not belong to, is not accepted in or does not feel part of a particular group or society’. Alienation also means ‘to make someone feel that he or she does not belong to or share in something or is isolated from it’. I want the children to question this but from the viewpoint that they are aliens and have to come to Belfast to study its surroundings and inhabitants.”

Utilizing the fantasies and imagination of space travel and aliens, a theme most kids are familiar with through cartoons and films, Amy Russell and the pupils of P6 go on an adventure tour. Equipped with drawing paper, small cameras and special creative detectors, these ‘aliens’ explore their surrounding at school and at home to uncover traces of life forms. How will it look like, how can we talk to them and who is more alien?

Thanks to all the boys from Class P6 who took part in Mission Six, **‘H.I.’**:  
Brandon Burns, Martin Captain, Barry Chambers, Brendan Collins, Aaron Doak, Sean Doyle, Michael Duffy, John Farrelly, Padraig Hyland, Aaron Kelly, Christopher Loughran, Emerson Mc Comb, Darren McDevitt, Raymond Mc Kenna, Ryan Mc Mahon, Christopher McMullan, Martin Munce, Tony O’Reilly, Ryan Pendleton, Curtis Rainey, Michael Savage, Anton Sharkey, Aaron Strong, Ryan Strong, Gerard Thornton.

# HOW TO MAKE A COMMUNITY AS WELL AS THE SPACE FOR IT

## DOINA PETRESCU

//

### **‘community to come’**

The term ‘community’, is at the core of all regeneration programmes, and remains for me problematic when used uncritically, and tokenistically, as in the language of governmental policies and regeneration programmes. In this discourse, ‘community’ is a generic term undifferentiated and associated with deprived neighbourhoods. It is, as Jeremy Till puts it in our co-edited book *Architecture and Participation* ‘a wishful and wistful hope that fractured territories can be reconsolidated into some semblance of community, without ever specifying what that word may actually mean’.<sup>1</sup>

Artists, philosophers and political theorists have critically approached the notion of community, trying to understand the sense of ‘being-in-common’ beyond the generic and undifferentiated term. They have introduced a notion of community that exists only through time and space determinates, in the very articulation of person-to-person, of being-to-being; suggesting that the politics of community cannot be separated from the politics of place.<sup>2</sup>

Questions around the term ‘community’ in socio-politics, overlap with those surrounding the notion of ‘public’ in art and architecture. Like ‘community’, ‘public’ is a generic notion, most often understood as what is ‘common’: of shared or of common interest, or as what is accessible to everyone. *Public* has a cognitive dimension, but also a political and poetic one. It may also have a double meaning, of social totality and specific audiences. The notion of ‘public’ has been variously articulated, ie. ‘public realm’, ‘public sphere’ or ‘public space’, each time conveying an ambiguity and multiplicity of meanings.

Many architects and planners today advocate the necessity of having more public space in the city. Richard Rogers in his report *Towards an Urban Renaissance* (Urban Task Force, 1999) calls for such public spaces, envisaging them as squares, piazzas,

[1] J. Till, *The Negotiation of Hope in Architecture and Participation*, P.B Jones, D. Petrescu, Jeremy Till, (eds) Spon Press, London 2005, p.23

[2] Philosophical inquiries into the notion of the community by Jean-Luc Nancy (*The Inoperative Community*, 1983), Maurice Blanchot (*The Unavowable Community*, 1983) and Giorgio Agamben (*The Coming Community*, 1993), seek to open it up toward a broader politico-ethical context. Nancy’s call for the deconstruction of the immanent community has been particularly influential: community as the dominant Western political formation, founded upon a totalizing, exclusionary myth of national unity, must be tirelessly “unworked” in order to accommodate more inclusive and fluid forms of dwelling together in the world, of being-in-common.

unproblematically open to all. However, as Doreen Massey notes in her recent book *For Space*, 'from the greatest public square to the smallest public park, these places are a product of, and internally dislocated by, heterogeneous and sometimes conflicting social identities/relations'.<sup>3</sup> This is what gives real 'public' dimension. Public space should be, then, described in terms of its evolving relations, as a space in permanent mobility, not only physical but also social and political. Architects and urban planners might learn that creativity is required where the conflicting nature of public space is revealed; by way of imagining solutions, or of making sense together, etc.

On this point, contemporary art practices are maybe advanced. Rather than the centralised and fixed notion of public, inherited from modern theories, many contemporary artists, curators and cultural workers have started to address the public within its fluid and plural forms; speaking about *publics* constructed as 'elusive forms of social groupings articulated reflexively around specific discourses'.<sup>4</sup>

As Jorge Ribalta puts it, 'the public is constructed in open, unpredictable ways in the very process of the production of discourse and through its different means and modes of circulation. Therefore, the public is not simply there, waiting passively for the arrival of cultural commodities; it is constituted within the process itself of being called. The public is a provisional construction in permanent mobility'.<sup>5</sup>

### multiple and informally produced public space

Making community and making space for community cannot be separated. Planners and architects might start to consider the inherent social and *relational dimension* of the spaces they create, and to integrate their specific temporalities and mobilities into the design process. The Lefebvrian understanding of the 'production of space' being social and political is now widely accepted, far beyond Marxism and sociology, as a base for any sustainable approach in urban development. The question that remains is that of methodology and critical innovation, the degree of openness of the different professional and political frameworks that commission such approaches, which might leave room for unpredictability and bottom-up proposals issued from real claims. The architectural production of public space could start by identifying the claims for it. Sometimes these claims are modest and informal, but what is important is how to transform them into a brief, a challenge, and sometimes a proposal that will give room to the multiplicity of desires and needs of diverse sets of users.

In fact, the architectural production of public space could start by identifying the claims for it. Sometimes these claims are modest and informal, but what is important is how to transform them into a brief, a challenge and sometimes a proposal that will give room to the multiplicity of desires and needs of diverse sets of users.

An example is given by muf's project 'Small Open Spaces that are not Parks'<sup>6</sup> commissioned by the Stratford Development Partnership on behalf of the London Borough of Newham, in 2003. It was a commission to work with residents to identify small open spaces suitable for investment, devising programmes and

[3] D. Massey, *For Space*, Sage Publications, London 2005, p 152.

[4] Cf. Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, Zone Books, New York, 2002.

[5] J. Ribalta, *Mediation and Construction of Publics: The MACBA Experience*.

[www.republicart.net/disc/institution/ribalta01\\_en.htm](http://www.republicart.net/disc/institution/ribalta01_en.htm)

[6] muf is a collaborative practice of art and architecture committed to public realm based in London.

[www.muf.co.uk/urban.htm](http://www.muf.co.uk/urban.htm)



identifying sources of funding for them and acknowledging the need to make provision for the young people in the borough. Through an extensive consultation, 34 separate sites have been identified across the borough, including unexpected types of open spaces that people felt as being 'public': a pedestrian bridge, a cinema foyer, underpasses, a strip of pavement outside a chip shop, an alleyway bridge, a cinema foyer, an alley frequented by girls only. *muf* translated this street expertise into a brief and a proposal which states a typology of spaces which consider all the recorded claims. What is important is the multiplicity and smallness of them, which express the scale of use, the modesty but also the precision of claims.

In the 'Parks&Products' project, *public works*<sup>7</sup> identify the different social forces which manifest themselves through spatial and temporal variables which shape Kensington Garden's public space. The project proposes tools and processes to operate with the fluid and elusive entity of a 'community' made by informal and temporary relationships between gardeners, dog walkers, catering staff, walking groups, pupils from College Park School, etc. Their tools are concretized as spatial objects and infrastructural devices which increase connectedness and enhance the networked nature of the public space. The quality of these devices resides in their mobility, temporality, smallness, informality. They define as such the open, unplanned and emergent nature of the public space.

### dealing with the messy complex lives of users

There is a 'non-planning' tradition in British architecture which starts in the 1970s: an architecture represented by practitioners like Cedric Price and theorists like Rayner Banham, Peter Barker and Peter Hall, who aimed at subverting the planning legislation and 'putting planning back into politics' by promoting freedom, social mobility and participation<sup>8</sup>. From that architecture, still believing in the modernist values and the revolutionary role of technology, practices like *muf* and *public works* have kept their resistance to imposed aesthetics, their playfulness and enthusiastic attempt to get people to shape their own environment.

The important drive for participation that was originated by critical practices in the 1970s, has now become the Government's mantra. In the UK and most European countries, urban policies and regeneration practices encourage 'community participation', but by lacking specificity they generate stereotypical approaches and reiterate fixed, notions of 'community' and 'public space'. The existing frameworks of both governmental and local participative programmes are organised in the same way, without taking into account the particularity of each situation. Participation becomes an organised (and potentially manipulated) part of any regeneration project, in which the users are meant to be given a voice, but the process itself erases the outcomes. The problem is also that the term 'participation' is accepted uncritically, idealised and centred on concepts of consensus<sup>9</sup>. This is what some would call a 'pseudo-participation' and, as Till suggests, the question for contemporary architects and planners would be 'how to move from it to a transformative participation, how to suggest a positive transformation of architectural production that benefits architects and users alike'<sup>10</sup>. This *transformative participation* 'makes confrontation with difference inevitable, as the users will bring to the table their personal beliefs. In the negotiation of the personal with the social, the individual with the collective,

[7] *public works* is an art/architecture collective based in London consisting of three architects and an artist who have been collaborating in different constellations since 1998.

[www.publicworksgroup.net/pages/Park\\_Products\\_01.html](http://www.publicworksgroup.net/pages/Park_Products_01.html)

[8] See 'Non-Plan Essays on Freedom, Participation and Change', *Modern Architecture and Urbanism*, Jonathan Hughes and Simon Sadler (eds), Architectural Press, Oxford 2000, pp. 2 - 22

[9] For example *Architecture and Participation* book criticises pre-formatted participative approaches and suggest innovative approaches, which are both creative and critical.

[10] J. Till, *oc.* p.31

political space emerges'. This is something that architects, who are still obsessed with maintaining control over space through their buildings, could learn; that art practices can provide tools and critical methods to approach what goes beyond strict management, to reveal the political nature of space. Artists are also sometimes better positioned to deal with the 'messy, complex, lives of users'.

### 'stealth architecture'

The contemporary art theorist and curator Stephen Wright has remarked on the emergence in the past few years of a broad range of practices that can be described as 'art-related' rather than 'art-specific' activities<sup>11</sup>. They constitute a kind of 'stealth art', operating in contexts often far removed from art-specific spaces and infiltrating spheres of 'world-making' beyond the scope of work operating under the banner of art. They are considering art in terms of its specific means, its tools and its competence, rather than its specific ends as artworks. Within these practices, 'art remains free to deploy all its symbolic force in lending enhanced visibility and legibility to social processes of all kinds'. Art perceived as a 'latent activity' has another function, or in Wright's terms, a 'use value': 'it crops up in the everyday not to aestheticise it, but to *inform* it'.

In questioning the role of architectural practices in revalidating everyday life activities and giving back value to existent places, maybe a 'stealth architecture' could also exist: an architecture which would deal with *architecture-related* activities, rather than *architecture-specific* ones, which would consider architecture in terms of its specific means (tools, competences, processes), rather than its specific ends (constructions and buildings). What would it be, this architecture which 'crops up in the everyday' not to give it a form, but to inform it?

This is a question that I have also raised in my own practice *atelier d'architecture autogérée (aaa)*, a collective practice including architects, artists, urban planners, landscape designers, sociologists, students and residents living in La Chapelle area of Paris.<sup>12</sup> Together we conduct research into participatory urban actions. This practice allows for the re-appropriation and reinvention of public space through everyday life activities (gardening, cooking, chatting, reading, debating etc.), understood as creative practices in urban contexts. The aim is to create a network of self-managed places by encouraging residents to gain access to their neighbourhood and to appropriate and transform temporary available and under-used spaces. It is an approach that valorises a flexible and reversible use of space, and aims to preserve urban 'biodiversity' by providing for a wide range of life styles and living practices to coexist. The starting point was the realisation of a temporary garden, made out of recycled materials on one of the derelict sites belonging to the RFF (the French Railway company), located in the area. This garden, called *ECObot*, has been progressively extended into a platform for urban creativity, curated by the *aaa* members, residents and external collaborators, catalysing activities at the level of the whole neighbourhood. It literally has cropped up in the neighbourhood's everyday life.<sup>13</sup>

What is interesting for all the practices mentioned above, is that none are described as architectural in a traditional way. These practices are located 'in between', and their proposed devices are meant to increase this 'betweenness'; to reveal what is

[11] Stephen Wright, *The Future of the Reciprocal Readymade: An Essay on Use-Value and Art-Related Practice*

[www.turbulence.org/blog/archives/000906.html](http://www.turbulence.org/blog/archives/000906.html)

[12] The *atelier d'architecture autogérée / studio of self-managed architecture (aaa)* is a collective platform, which conducts actions and research concerning urban mutations and cultural, social and political emerging practices in the contemporary city.

[www.urbantactics.com](http://www.urbantactics.com)

[13] For more details see my article *Losing control, keeping desire*, *Architecture and Participation*, P.B Jones, D. Petrescu, Jeremy Till, (eds), Routledge, London 2005, ps 43-64

different but also what is common within a multi-angled approach, by sharing methods and inventing cross tools. This sharing of methodology and hybridisation increases creativity and opens up unexpected possibilities of thinking and acting in the public realm.

### the peculiarities of existence

If Katherine Shonfield <sup>14</sup> identifies the role of art in urban regeneration of making the users feel more empowered in their confrontations with rules and policies, could this not become, by extension, the role of an architectural practice as well, if this practice accepts getting rid of its authority and power.

*aaa* defined itself as a practice which enables inhabitants to participate directly; to decide how they want to organise themselves, knowing that sometimes the community desires could be different from the public or private interests. Both residents and professionals become equal members in a 'bricolaged' structure: 'what happens depends upon what people bring with them and what they do once they are there'. This kind of structure also preserves a certain economic and political independence in the negotiation process with both private and public bodies. But at the same time, it is a structure which takes risks, because nothing can be taken for granted when everything depends on the presence of all those involved. Sometimes this presence is conflictual, for people's desire change along the way, and one should learn how to deal with tensions, contradictions, oppositions and failures. The residents also participate in the invention of new tools for multiple and flexible use. For example, a series of modules of mobile furniture have been co-produced by *aaa* members, eco-designers, residents and students, to function as urban catalysts and mobile extensions of the *ECObOX* garden: these include an urban kitchen, a play station, a media lab, a library, a fountain-rainwater-collector, and a joinery mini-workshop. They generate infrastructure and networks, stimulate desire and pleasure at the scale of proximity. Inhabitants can use them for different activities to appropriate space within the city. Nobody is in control of the outcomes of these practices: neither the architects, nor the institutional representatives, not even the community.

This lack of power is at the same time an enormous power. It is not the power of making things *for* the community, of representing it, (which is the architects, planners and regeneration officers' privilege), but of participating in *making the community* itself, through discrete spatial interventions. It is a performative shared experience of community: 'community is coming about, or rather, is happening to us in common', as Jean-Luc Nancy says <sup>15</sup>.

### public space of proximity

A renewed approach to architecture and urban planning cannot be initiated solely by centralised structures and governmental bodies. It must also include 'microscopic attempts' at the level of collective and individual desires within the micro-social segments of public space: neighbourhood associations, informal teams, self-managed organisations, small institutions, alternative spaces and individuals themselves. Urban development policies need to learn how to make provision for such attempts.

[14] K. Shonfield 'We need artists' ways of doing things - A critical analysis of the role of the artist in regeneration practice', *Architecture and Participation*, PB Jones, D. Petrescu, Jeremy Till, (eds), Routledge, London 2005, p25

[15] cf. Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*

The micro-dimension of *public works*’ interventions (i.e. manufactured objects, improvised urban furniture, cleaning and gleaning, etc.), bring precision, detail and localisation with the public space. These activities are additionally effective in their attempts to change and transform space. The scale of proximity, the small scale devices and the walking distances that demarcate the area of intervention, bring another quality to the networks and the relationships between participants. They increase *intensity* of living.

As with *aaa*’s project in Paris, and *muf*’s project ‘Small open spaces that are not parks’, small scale can come to define the public space itself. Such projects are based on the temporary appropriation and use of leftover spaces and urban interstices, and commonly include waste space from the real-estate market, or due to the temporary neglect of the urban planning policies. These are ‘other spaces’, the ‘other’ to what constitutes the ‘planned’ city. Studies have demonstrated that in big cities they function as an alternative to conventional forms of public space, that nowadays are more and more subject to surveillance and control. The ‘leftovers’ are spaces of relative freedom, where rules and codes can still be redefined. These ‘spaces of uncertainty’, to borrow architects Cuppers and Miessen’s term<sup>16</sup>, are the very opposite of the functional spaces of the city, as recast public space as heterogeneous, fragile, indefinite, fragmented and multiple. The status of these spaces inspired *aaa*’s strategy, the aim of which was to leave space for ‘others’, others than the usual actors of the urban planning process, visible and less visible users, through a process that would enable them to get involved in the decision making and take control over spaces in the area where they live. It is also a political process. The problem is how to avoid freezing functions in these spaces, while conserving their flexibility, their programmatic ‘uncertainty’, their fragility and indefiniteness.

Another way to create a public space of proximity is through sizing temporary dynamics. The *aaa*’s strategy tries to manage these different temporalities, politics of use, and ownership statuses to propose, instead, temporary inhabitations that will create new usages and new urban functions in the area. Temporality supposes mobility and multiplicity. The mobile furniture modules, acting as urban catalysts in the area, generate temporary agencies, and form progressive networks of actors. As the aims are continually evolving according to new spatial opportunities, participation becomes a *process-in-progress*. Usually, the participative process is solidified as soon as the goals are met: when a contested space is occupied, a project is built, etc. The role of the temporary activities is to keep the use of space and the process of decision open.

The sustainability of processes within temporary (architecture and art) interventions is one of the concerns with the regenerations programmes which target punctual interventions without considering the continuity with the dynamics which have been created by them. Allowing (both in terms of funding and politics) spaces to function according to their own dynamics, encouraging different temporary and self-managed agencies to emerge in time, this is a solution to stir public participation and make it a sustainable and transformative process.

[16] cf. K.Cuppers and M.Miessen, *Spaces of Uncertainty*, Wuppertal, Verlag Müller, 2002

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**Related articles**  
Constantin Petcou and Doina Petrescu, *Au rez de chaussée de la ville* in *Multitudes* 20

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Doina Petrescu, *Losing Control, Keeping Desire* in P. Blundell-Jones, D.Petrescu and J.Till (eds) *Architecture and Participation*, Routledge, 2005

# MOVE TO BE IN CONTROL

## INTERVIEW WITH ALAN JONES

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The interview by Peter Mutschler for PS<sup>2</sup> was held on Thursday 15.02.2007.

Alan Jones worked as a Physical Regeneration Officer at the Donegall Pass Community Forum and helped to initiate and support the 'Pass Odyssey', Mission One of SPACE SHUTTLE.

A lot of issues in this interview had to be carefully phrased, reflecting the still very fragile and suppressed community situation in a (former) loyalist paramilitary stronghold. It reminded me of conversations in the early 90's, when personal political opinions were never expressed directly in fear of getting into trouble; a cautiousness which- along with the peace process- in most parts gave way to more open, democratic debates and assessments. (P.M.)

### **What was your interest in the SPACE SHUTTLE project?**

My idea to get such a project in, was the linking of the community with art and regeneration for us at the Donegall Pass.

In terms of the project itself, I wanted SPACE SHUTTLE to come in to create an activity, to do something totally out of the blue. To come and take the community another step further, to get their interest and for them to see the area from another angle, what they could do with the area to a point, were they actually take control of regenerating their area. SPACE SHUTTLE was a positive external force. Negative external forces have been in the area for the last 30 years, eg the housing executive, whenever they redeveloped the area they knocked all the houses down and broke that community, which lost nearly two thirds of its housing stock. It still hasn't recovered from that. All the community infrastructure was broken down. There is a sense of community, but it doesn't have the population capacity to take control of the regeneration of the area. Another external force now is Developers, who for the most part do not engage with the local population until conflict arises. For a successful regeneration of the area you have to start from the point by asking

the locals: Why are you passive? Why are you not getting actively involved? Whether it is women health day, training events – the residents can be very passive. The fundamental question is how do you move a community from a very aggressive -defensive, passive stance into being open and creative. That was the key reasons why I thought it will be good to bring SPACE SHUTTLE into Donegall Pass. And it is one of the reasons why the shuttle was put in this specific site between the two bars, right at the doorstep, where the paramilitaries hang out, just to get them thinking different.

### **How do you describe the community?**

There is a 'community group' which is in control of the area... And they can start to move to be in control in a much more positive way. In terms of the Chinese population, a recent Queens University research report shows Donegall Pass has 4% Chinese residents, it is a small minority. What they are talking about are commercial businesses along the Donegall Pass and the people from all over Northern Ireland come and utilize these businesses, but it is not a resident Chinese Community in Donegall Pass.

The Donegall Pass Community Forum itself has been in existence since 10 years and it has tried to motivate people to engage in the regeneration of the area principally through training. But whether that has been successful or not is hard to say, people are very passive. Ideally this process should lead to a point where my role as a regeneration officer would be redundant.

The main critique, a positive critique, I have of the community is that they really have got to come together as individuals, as families, to come together to develop themselves. It is a long process, otherwise the area is going to be screwed.

### **And you saw the project of the Call Centre Collective as a creative part in that process?**

Yes, and I liked the idea, because it was totally different, because it came into the area without any baggage, no preconditions.

But then I thought - I don't want to say that harsh - you have done this before, you knew what you were doing, you would have a plan of action and sort it out and you would be able to deliver. But I realized at one stage we were a test case and that you were learning as you were doing it.

### **But you were dealing not with community workers but with artists.**

That's great. But I think you need to do more preparation work, in terms of information. To send out more leaflets to publicize the events. People didn't know what was happening, there was a communication problem.

### **But the CCC team went for months before to meetings and committees.**

But the wider community wasn't informed enough. If you look at the actual



timetable of 8 days, normally we advise to do 4 days, like a long weekend. People loose interest. And the agenda kept changing. I think SPACE SHUTTLE tried to do too many things in too many days.

People sometimes need a step by step thing, there was a lack of understanding, and one of the interesting aspects here is I think, how you make connections with people. The artists involved were brilliant in terms of their personalities and getting on with people.

What seemed to go, was the low level stuff. They did a brilliant job doing the interviews. Again people actually want to listen and are interested in peoples lives in the Pass and that I think had a big impact. And the work with the kids had a big impact. That shows for me at which level the community there is, because the sort of stuff you do is of basic foundation work, to build up a community, they start to articulate their voices and then you develop people, and you develop a leadership in that area and they become self-sustaining and fly away.

The team went out to do their own thing, and they didn't want to involve the forum staff. But it is good at times to work with the local community group may be a bit closer than they did. To motivate people to make those lateral connections and maybe at times translate as a trusted person for the community.

The other thing was to translate in laymen's, everyday language, what was going to happen. We did a lot of talking with certain people in the area before you even arrived, that there weren't any problems. Basically we are talking here about the paramilitaries and they were fine and open to it and thought this was great – again they couldn't really understand it.

### **Later CCC had these big posters.**

That was when the team was realizing that they had a communication problem, that people didn't get it

### **What about curiosity?**

It didn't work for whatever reason. There is part of the community who will not have anything to do with any of the people who frequent those bars. There are people who see loyalist paramilitaries as part of the community. Other parts of the community don't want to have anything to do with the paramilitaries. And maybe it was the location of the Space Shuttle which stopped people to come up to it. However it was put between the two bars, if you are not a paramilitary you don't go into one bar you go to the other bar.

### **Are they so important?**

Yes. Both those bars are the unofficial community centres . We have a community centre and none of the locals use it. There is another point of division, the community doesn't frequent the community centre. The main points of contact are the two bars.



**In terms of local culture, the Pass community has their marches, their music, they once had a big painted arch over the street, a theme CCC researched, but later nobody turned up for a workshop.**

A project like this would have been fantastic. My dream is to reinvent the arch, a really interesting test case in how you re-invent Loyalism in the 21 century. It was fascinating in the preparation, and I think we were all getting off, go back at history, get these old photographs out, it would have been cutting edge to get a loyalist community working with artists to transform an arch into a different 21 century icon. For whatever reason, this part of the project didn't take off, again it goes back to the whole mentality of that defensive, aggressive thing..... general slow and very cautious with change and may be that is an underlying current. I've realised the hard way that you can't make them move. They have to do it themselves. And when they do move, it does have a greater impact. In my head the Arch was a great idea, I was motivated but it isn't my arch or my community. I push, other people push and you just get burnt out. The community sees the value but doesn't build on it. I think the collective girls experienced that as well.

### **You sound frustrated?**

It's not my place but I tell the paramilitaries "you are ten, fifteen years behind the Republicans". The UVF (Ulster Volunteer Force) only now thinks to get engaged in community activities. They have to get educated, they have to get trained, they need to think strategically, they need to do organizational reviews and that will take them about ten years. In the meantime the world has moved on.... A lot of the kids don't go to school, with the age of 12, maybe first or second year of secondary school and this is miles away and they stop. Then they have mayor health problems, and they are having babies with 15, 16, the single parents. And once they get caught in the benefits system.... That makes you frustrated, tired and angry. Maybe the next time the CCC team should be more aware of that sort of dynamics in the community. And how you communicate with people who come from that background, how you make those lateral connections with people. To identify the key players and draw them in, for me - whenever I talk to people about planning and development you have to do an act of translation for people into an everyday language, because of the level of education. And saying that, there are probably some sharp cookies here who - if they would live in a different postcode - would have totally different lives.

### **Criticism of such projects normally point out the short term impact.**

I didn't get that from the Call Centre Collective team. The place they were working from was of very much a genuine interesting concern for the residents of Donegall Pass. They weren't parachuted in, they wanted something positive to happen, we all did. I experienced that before, where people would get in, do what they want and go away and write up their pieces and reports and do a presentation. I never got that from the CCC team at all, it was from a much more mature perspective. They wanted to do something positive and seeing the need for something to happen. There still has to be so much baggage to be unpacked within that



community through events, lots of negativity has to be dealt with before people can actually join in to a positive project such as SPACE SHUTTLE has offered. Maybe people are still hung up on a lot of bad things that had happened in the past.

### **Did 'Space Odyssey' leave any traces?**

Certainly on an individual level with some of the individuals within Donegall Pass there was an important thing happening, it was successful in that way, particularly with the kids, they still go on that was great, kids who do not come out of a well structured life, but also on the adult thing, there are some people left with a sense, there is something to hold on to. But collectively I don't think that happened, as a whole community.

One thing what might have come out of this is the move now- I don't know if it is directly because of SPACE SHUTTLE . There was not a women's group in Donegall Pass for years and that's a very positive outcome of the team, absolutely. There was a serial abuser within the community group in the area, abusing women for years, these are the very, very negative things that have happened that stopped women getting involved. This was one of the reasons we were delighted that we had in CCC an all women team. For me that was a very positive angle as well, to see aggressive, impulsive men dealing with bright, articulate women. And one of the side impacts of SPACE SHUTTLE has been that it helped some women to start thinking about something different in their lives. As part of the CCC projects, talking to women, individually one to one, that gave them a wee spark to sort of say, I can do something different.

# PROPERTY, SPACE AND OTHER DIMENSIONS

## MICK O'KELLY

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The backdrop to placing space shuttle as a cultural intervention in Belfast is that it is perceived globally as a place of political and social conflict. This is offset by the more recent image of Belfast as a booming economy, with the value of property rising and Northern Ireland being promoted as designation for “short breaks, your time our place”. “Enjoy the leisure and comfort”. “A place to do business”. Like many urban cities it is a complex place of contradictions, economic, social and cultural. More than sixty-five percent of the economy is engaged in the provision of service, implicitly relating to the state rather than private sector economy.

Engaging with the adventure of space shuttle as a sculptural entity or urban architecture, I am interested in the relationship and potential for art to negotiate the urban environment; the relationship of public and private space, the material properties of art/architecture to determine value around the artefact and the market value of property.

The idea of the space shuttle brings together the boundaries and limits of collapsing the dimensions of galactic space and locale space. The linguistic associations of ‘space’ and ‘shuttle’ suggest an unbounded, unlimited potential for a multiplicity of journeys and uses. The spatial dimensions are predetermined 4.80m x 2.80m x 2.80m. The emphasis is therefore on urban creativity and social use. As a structure it resembles modernist industrial urban architecture with a utilitarian purpose or function. It is a multifunctional space for urban creativity and social interaction. The structure is specifically designed and built with robust qualities to withstand urban acts of aggression while holding an aesthetic that resides somewhere between a foreman’s office on a building site, a kiosk or information centre on a high street, or a mobile living unit for a nomadic life style. The tension between industrial and domestic was emphasised by placing the space shuttle on top of an





Environmental station,  
Belfast



articulated steel transport container, raising the elevation to a first storey level. I envisaged locating space shuttle as a mobile apartment on Shaftesbury Square, not as a reality since for practical reasons this was not realisable, i.e. access to utilities, instead it functioned as a simulacrum. To some extent it functioned like a show house or photograph as used by auctioneers and estate agents. The show house is not for use but to sell a lifestyle.

Placing the space shuttle in urban space is no neutral act, nor is it site specific. If it tried to be so, what from the multiple possibilities of how a site functions would it be specifically responding to? By placing space shuttle as an artwork simulating an apartment unit in a public space, draws attention to its function as an urban architecture. This relationship intersects more with public and private space, spatial economy and real estate property. The act of placing space shuttle in a public space intersects art, architecture and urban geographies. It frequently occurs that art in public space is seen as having a smooth and seamless relationship. What properties visualise 'public', 'space' and 'art'? Finding meaning and value is not at the behest of art theory and contemporary cultural discourse but rather critically attained in the legislature and political theory. What do we mean by the term public? In getting access to the public sphere, representation is from a multiplicity of competing public's seeking a voice and position to participate in society. What is public about public space?

"Social space is produced and structured by conflict. With this recognition, a democratic spatial politics begins". (Rosalyn Deutsche, *Evictions*, 1996)

This is the spatial backdrop that defines the motivation and sculptural elements of space shuttle as a mobile apartment urban architecture. Space shuttle finds itself in a chain of events and thoughts of unfinished business where determining value is as elusive as it is problematic. Finding value whether it is aesthetic, cultural or real estate property are arbitrary designations. Determining value is fundamentally determined by context. To consider the space shuttle as an autonomous structure would be an error, it would focus on its material manifestation, its sculptural elements as inward looking, self-regarding. Meaning and value are revealed through the art object or artifice as the final place where meaning is inscribed. The intrinsic nature of sculpture / mobile urban architecture even as a proposition is that its value is determined by its contextual location. The reverse of this is also true, where the material manifestation of the structure reveals the political and cultural value of its surroundings. Where its gaze is drawn away, looking outwards one looks at the evolution building, public and private space and the dislocation of urbanism. The structure reflects the formality of urban planning. This structure is machine like, module system building very much like the vacant building that hangs as its backdrop. The project as does the current conditions of urbanism falls somewhere between improvised oppositions and the rupture of acceleration.

# URBAN INTERVENTIONS IN ECONOMIC, POLITICAL & CULTURAL CITIZENSHIP CITY MINE(D)

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## **Context**

The start of the 21st century is characterised by truths such as massive urbanisation, intensified globalisation and uncontrolled ecological change. Half way through the first decade over 50% of the world population lives in urban agglomerations. In addition to focal points of the national economic, political and cultural life, cities have become switch points in global networks of commerce, governance and culture. The speeding-up of exchanges along these networks, due to technological advance, increasing mobility and the proliferation of a common language have turned globalisation from an arcane concept into a life-shaping daily experience. However, massive urbanisation and intensified globalisation have ruthlessly called upon natural and financial resources, to the extent of depleting some and constituting a global threat.

The first and most immediate impact of these evolutions is suffered by an economically powerless part of the population. Not only are the less well-off the first to be confronted with the reduced availability of natural resources like water

and air; in a global market it also becomes increasingly difficult for those new in the economy to initiate small-scale economic enterprises. Furthermore, decision-making on a local as well as an international level is still the prerogative of the few with consequences for the many, making the configuration unsustainable in the long run. Finally, the global spread of culture has very much remained a top-down activity, with local communities at best adjusting global artistic and creative expression to their local context, rather than connecting their creative production to other local communities by means of bottom-up channels.

For those reasons, the 21st century confronts us with a range of challenges but also with a plethora of possibilities. Meeting these challenges, as well as grasping the opportunities, will require different methods of intervening in socio-economic, political and cultural life, new approaches to participation and education and more inclusive forms of governance and citizenship. Local communities, bottom-up networks, and grassroots activities will play an important role in developing alternative solutions, as they more successfully manage to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

### **Urban**

The strategic site for addressing socio-economic, political and cultural questions is the city, and more precisely urban public spaces. Public spaces are not to be confused with the grand courtyards or spaces of imperial power, which draw large numbers of visitors weather permitting. Instead they are places where different opinions and perspectives meet and are confronted with each other, a place for mediation and debate. Those spaces do not pre-exist or emerge, but are actively constructed, through the practices and subjectivities of people. Recognised as crucial in political life, the importance of these spaces for economic and cultural development has been described far less.

Urban public spaces are ephemeral in nature: they only exist as long as people actively engage with them and take part in them. Through these activities, public spaces are made in in-between spaces, often unusual or problematic spaces, ranging from radio frequencies to derelict buildings and other residual spaces in the city. For various reasons these spaces seem to escape the hierarchical organisation and structuring power of different forms of urban governance, and are therefore also referred to as 'structural holes', or 'cracks in the city'. They are also the places where innovative socio-economic, cultural or political projects happen, where claims by non-institutionalised agents materialise and assume concrete form. Furthermore these spaces are the sites of politics of the local, with the extra quality of connecting to other localities, even across national and cultural borders. It makes them the possible arena for constructing forms of globality that are neither part of the global corporate media or consumer firms, nor part of the elite universalism or high culture.

### **Interventions**

Over the last decade a cultural practice, called urban interventions, has emerged in cities throughout Europe. Distinguished from previous forms of expression by its intensely urban focus, it actively engages with socio-economic, political and cultural development agendas and is concerned with well-being and the quality of

life. Developing process-based work with existing art forms, ranging from the performing arts, installation art, architecture and film to new media and the interdisciplinary; urban art interventions contribute to the production of public spaces through engaging with existing and creating new social networks. The collaborations and dialogue during an urban intervention operate in a realm that, for planning, social engineering and geography, remain 'below the threshold at which visibility begins'.

Urban interventions seek to challenge the ways in which cities are experienced, shaped and lived. Through developing artistic projects, they draw attention to powerful interests and specific social relations that make cities the places they are. They invite people to explore alternative ways of organising relationships and different ways of producing public space. Urban interventions are created in 'cracks in the city', where they manage to draw in the most diverse group of participants. Besides, escaping the traditional regulating forces of the city allows for the work to become full-scale experiments in new forms of governance, education and participation as well as in the arts. The experimental quality is strengthened by the ephemeral nature of both the work as the public space it gives rise to. New strategies for organising and producing, but also celebrating, developed in the process of creating urban interventions, form an important contribution to facing the challenges the contemporary city is confronted with.

The production house for urban interventions called City Mine(d) emerged from networks of urban action and artistic innovation in Brussels in 1997. In the culturally schizophrenic city of Brussels, it chose from its inception to ride the twin track of art and politics. From its office in Brussels, London and Barcelona, City Mine(d) realizes own projects, while also supporting like-minded initiatives in their actions. At the same time City Mine(d) also functions as a hub; relaying ideas for intervening, people who further this agenda, and projects that are replicable in other contexts, and this locally as well as internationally.

### **Citizenship**

Convinced that urban interventions are a successful way to address the challenges and grab the opportunities of the 21st century, City Mine(d) is currently concentrating its work on 3 aspects of urban citizenship: economic, political and cultural citizenship. Through a series of workshops, cartographies, debates and interventions, City Mine(d) wants to have an impact on larger places and narratives. It refers to this type of work as archipunctural, as it applies the strategies of acupuncture to the city, i.e. like acupuncture it intervenes on a microscale - in the case of interventions a geographical microscale like a square, a park, a housing bloc - to have an impact on the whole body, or the whole of the metropolis.

The economic aspect is initiated from Brussels, under the name MICRONOMICS. In this case economy is seen as the set of strategies to achieve a higher level of well-being; well-being as wealth (material prosperity) and/or as happiness. Developing these strategies requires a sense of creativity, and the power to implement them. It is City Mine(d)'s belief that those who currently find themselves unable to achieve or increase their well-being or realize their economic projects, might be able to do so in the in between spaces in the city (cracks), where regulating forces that

structure the city are challenged or absent. Urban interventions on this subject involve groups and individuals who are NEW in the economy. NEW because they have just arrived in the country, are only recently considered part of the active population, or innovative in the way they make a living. Collectively developing creative projects in cracks that deal with the economy could increase the level of well-being, address the rickety state of the economy and contribute to fairness and social justice in the city.

In London, a platform was started that engages with the political process in large scale development schemes. With a turnout of less than 37% for the 2004 London Assembly elections, the city is confronted with a political apathy that becomes worrying. The urban platform is involved in urban interventions that bring together different stakeholders, and through that contribute to bottom-up ways of informing urban development. The development for the 2012 Olympics currently form the focal point of this work.

In Barcelona, a process entitled KRAX was initiated. It combines the investigation of in-between spaces in cities throughout the world (<http://krax.citymined.org>), with the active support of creative spaces in the city. While the City of Barcelona promotes itself as the vanguard city where creativity, new technology and public spaces are mobilized for urban development, bottom-up artistic and creative initiatives are often considered a nuisance or an obstacle. As part of a focus on cultural citizen, City Mine(d) makes these initiatives visible, networks them trans-nationally and with them constructs public spaces. It uses urban interventions as a way to increase participation of residents in the development of their city.

### **Participate**

With this set of initiatives, City Mine(d) aims to use the potential of urban interventions as new approaches to participation and education and more inclusive forms of governance to its fullest extent. The focus on economic, political and cultural citizenship is not a finished rigid programme, nor is it confined to the cities where it is initiated. Rather, they are points of departure for processes others can contribute to, sign up for, or replicate. At regular intervals interventions will be produced, and workshops, cartographies and debates organized. City Mine(d) invites all those interested in urban interventions to take part. More information will be constantly available on [www.citymined.org](http://www.citymined.org) or [info@citymined.org](mailto:info@citymined.org)

City Mine(d)  
March 2007



# FOR USE ON SITE < A SPACE DICTIONARY PETER MUTSCHLER

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**Accessibility** - Physically (wheelchair, pram, skateboard), socially (open, non-hierarchical), mentally (mediation by artists).

**Adaptation** - Continuous process when dealing with reality on street level.

**Aesthetic** - Unfashionable but useful criteria. See >Beauty, >Well meaning.

**Alien** - Perfect starting point to see oneself or be perceived as one. Opens field for exploration and ways to communicate.

**Artists** - 'Spatial practitioners' and urban interventionists with strong creative identity, representing a range of artistic positions. Project work includes: research project in Belfast - find site specific, social and micro-political influenced strategies and practice; spend two weeks exposed on-site; postproduction for further 'DISCOVERIES'.

**Artist led** - PS<sup>2</sup> = (Paragon Studios, project space), is a small artist collective, which provides studio space in the centre of Belfast. A former shop in the same building, project space, is used as a platform for art projects and run on a voluntary base with the focus on art in an urban context. >Artist led may also mean no or low budget production and high degree of self exploitation.

*Artists, participating:* Aisling O'Beirn; Siraj Izhar; Sarah Browne/ Gareth Kennedy; Mick O'Kelly; Call Centre Collective (Aoife Ludlow, Doris Rohr, Emma McClintock, Ruth Morrow, Saoirse Higgins); Amy Russell. See >Participation.

**Assessment** - As a tightly framed series of experiments, the projects can be assessed individually and as a whole; what worked, what didn't, what can be learned, what will stick in the memory.

**Auction** - See >Space for free.



**Audience** - Like >community never singular, uniform. To >reach new audiences< as a stereotypical pledge, to be 'ticked' in applications. However a real and important issue if art wants to be relevant and socially influential. >Audience which didn't respond, was the usual art audience- if such a group exists in Belfast- a fact which Siraj Izhar welcomed as success, which the CCC initially saw as denial and -in the process of their work - dealing mostly with curious kids and their mothers - later regarded as real and liberating. See >Publics.

**Autonomy** - Question of supremacy. In art projects; where the artist is not the mere facilitator of a collaborative/community project. In art work; where there is an inner creative system and rules. Individually; where one speaks with an own, independent voice often against constrictions, regulations, trends.

**Beauty** - Mentioned only once and prominently by renowned paramilitary in connection to the shuttle construction. Do we mind?

**Belfast** - Capital of Northern Ireland and second largest city on the Island. In the 2001 census the population was 277,391 in the wider Belfast Metropolitan Area 579,276. "A combination of relative peace, international investment and an active promotion of arts and culture is attracting more tourists to Belfast than ever before. 5.9 million people visited Belfast in 2004-05 (up 10% from the previous year) and spent £262.5 million." (Source:Wikipedia). See>Space walk, >Vandalism.

**Bottom up** - opposite of >top down<. In animal behavior: feeding pattern of swimming ducks. In activist circles: the direction, empowered citizens enforce decisions/ cultural developments. Force of the enlightened Street.

**Budget** - Total cost of SPACE SHUTTLE : £44904, of which £13084 is voluntary 'in kind' contributions mainly by PS<sup>2</sup>. See>Costs, >Funding.

**Communication** - Or the lack of it. Posters/digit board/website/ local newspaper adverts/flyers. See >Vocabulary, >Poster,>Plaque.

**Community** - As a singular, never uniform and better referred in plural. Community in Northern Ireland falls into two halves, referred as 'both sides', meaning Protestants and Catholics, with little recognition of increasing non-white and/or migrant populations.

Term often used in conjunction with *fractured*.

**Confrontation** - by diverse and unpredictable street audience; nosy kids and youngsters, unsuspecting, curious people, interested, casual, sometimes engaged, sometimes just asking for directions or where to renew a passport. Most artists were initially nervous about this personal exposure and unprotected vulnerability, far more than their concerns of negative reactions towards their work

**Container** - Temporary and cheap ready-made structure with widespread use in contemporary art-projects. Similar: tent/marquis/shed/stall/kiosk/caravan/open lorry. Library bus - as prototype for SPACE SHUTTLE.

**Context** - Perception of (inter)connected relations. Mostly as >contextual.

**Costs** - Financial, human, emotional, aesthetical. >Enrichment. See>Funding, >Budget.

**Creative Initiator** - Individual/group/organization - not necessarily artists - to spark off an initiative, i.e. pulling together participants, funding, expertise...

See>*Mediator*.

**Creative Service Provider** - functional role of artists as part of social/build regeneration projects. May result in gloss over. See>*Well meaning*.

**Curiosity** - Most valuable.

**Discoveries** - For SPACE SHUTTLE and artists alike.

**Excitement** - Projects doesn't work without, but difficult a) to maintain on a long term basis b) to measure for standard quality assessments.

**Facilitator** - Often functional role of artists in urban art projects. See>*Autonomy*.

**Failure** - Necessary, if unpleasant component of creativity. Needs to be built into a project a) as something to learn from, b) to work creatively with c) use it as a starting point for further projects.

**For free** - See>*Space for free*. Freebees such as balloons, leaflets, used materials and technical equipment (as rewards). Could be seen as part of a consumer society or as a positive re-distribution of material goods. See>*Recycling*.

**Format** - Conceptual framework; a playful sequence of repeated experiments in a changeable, but formalized laboratory.

**Fracture(d)** - See>*Fractured community*.

**Funding** - SPACE SHUTTLE was funded by Belfast City Council through Celebrate Belfast 2006 and by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland through the National Lottery. Total > *Funding*: £31820. See>*Costs*, >*Funding*.

**Initiative** - Like SPACE SHUTTLE. Underlines the creative potential with urban, interactive projects, both for the artists and the public.

**Journey** - Through urban space, through the mind.

**Kiosk** - See >*container*. Model of small scale, accessible structure. Often free standing and provisional.

**Local** - Researched and embedded in a specific situation, involving personal contacts, networks, support on *local* level. Does not exclude 'international' or 'global'. Compare> *Glocal*.

**Location** - Participating artists were free to choose their location within Belfast. However PS<sup>2</sup> asked to select non-tourist and culturally under resourced sites. With a strong element of unpredictability, the final criteria for a site was often that it had 'to feel right'. Most *locations* were within walking distance of the city centre and distinctive in their urban character. Together they formed a fragmented city-map with many links and connections within the projects; not only spatial relations, neighboring, around the *locations*, but also reoccurring themes and echoes.

**Longevity** - Similar to >*Sustainability*, and linked to >*recycling*. (Still: Don't ride a tired horse).

**Madness** - In parts often assumed of artists. Murky pool of creativity. Often used by sober thinking people to dismiss unruly ideas and actions.

**Mediator** - Compare>bridge building. See>*Communication*, >*Creative Initiator*.

**Mission** - A mobile space for 'missions' of urban creativity and social interaction; a slightly unfortunate term in a place, where religion plays a significant political part,

but which on the other hand states the conviction of PS<sup>2</sup>, to place contemporary art (back) into an everyday social environment.

**Mobile** - Physically, mentally. Recent upsurge in the use of mobile structures a) to reach new ground, b) anti- institutional, c) influence of nomadism.

**Naivety** - State of mind for many creative people and generally used dismissively by 'experts'. May have advantages, especially in confrontation with 'the real world'. *Compare*> Luck of the beginner. Ideal: '*experienced Naivety*'.

**Negotiations** - With community representatives, residents, other partners and individuals. Useful but time-consuming trust building exercise. Mutual respect and trust as necessary elements for a positive outcome/delivery. *See* >*Northern Ireland*.

**Neo-situationist, activist practices** - 60's revival. *See*> *Recycling*.

**Opening/s** - (exhibition)- Ritualistic, middle class. Needs to be re-invented for use on-site-projects.

**Orbit** - We fly into undiscovered, new worlds, streets and thoughts. Name of a chewing gum brand.

**Participation** - As a key word in all engaged art practice in the public, it was only in so far an element in SPACE SHUTTLE, as it means an act of active contribution to the work process of the artists. Participation with the public not for the public and mostly achieved by tactics of engagement, be it Siraj Izhar's social construction of a localized syndicate, O'Beirns' mock tourist info-box as a collection point for urban information or Browne/Kennedy's film project auditions.

**Permissions** - From authorities, insurers, council representatives, funders and your own submissive (sub)conscience. Linked with risk-taking and risk-spreading. The failure of such, places one into a shadowy zone, however with anarchic potential.

**Plaque** - Red, attached to space shuttle. Reads:

'This is SPACE SHUTTLE - an experimental base for artists and urbanauts.

I have been launched to six different orbits around planet Belfast.

My mission is to explore the creative environment.

Please keep in contact. [www.spaceshuttle.org.uk](http://www.spaceshuttle.org.uk)

Return to mother-ship PS<sup>2</sup>'.

*See*>*Communication*.

**Poetic** - Condensed and transformed state of reality. In nature e.g. spring. The white low drifting clouds of cherry trees. *See*>*Transformation*.

**Post-production** - Period where the work experience and discoveries are edited and transformed; transcribed realities, both informed and autonomous.

**Poster** - Widely and successfully used as AO format. *See*> *Communication*.

**Press** - Press releases for each mission received initially curious reception (articles/radio interviews), leading to a burnt-out silence soon after. May be due to serialization fatigue.

**Production** - With the affix Pre- or Post-, three stage (dialectic) process. Post-production (catalogue/ edited work/web) as the glossed over production, up for general viewing as opposed to the hidden – but often revealing- process of pre-

production.

**Public** - Mainly occurring as plural > *publics* <, often changing during the course of a day/night. *Publics*: academic term for audience. See < Coincidental increase in public toilets.

**Quality** - Undervalued criteria with the tendency of exclusion; remains important.

**Recycling** - starter idea for shuttle construction, DIY garden shed module: initially imagined as demountable structure with solar panels and green credentials. Didn't climb the first hurdle of insurance and safety considerations. Instead ended up with a stainless steel construction, recycled through future projects. Compare > *Recycling of ideas*. See > *Neo-situationist, activist practices*.

**Regeneration** - Art projects are often at the forefront of urban redevelopment, cheap and tainted as goodwill gestures. Potential of being subversive, critical and indicating or actively propagating a creative alternative.

**Relation/Relational** - Between artist, production, urban environment and street audience.

**Residents** - Has to be seen as part of various sub-groups, sub-sub groupings and finally individuals, with potential split/fractured personalities. See > *Fractured community*.

**Sensitivity** - to location/ locals can, at times, undermine creative bravery and challenging work. Compare > Freedom of outsider. See > *Well meaning*.

**Space for free** - After a call for ideas, advertised in newspapers/letters and web circulation, the shuttle will be handed over for free to another initiative to prolong its creative use. PS<sup>2</sup> received 4 applications. Examples of proposed use: > *Ground up*, CO. Clare, Republic of Ireland: "The main considerations in our future programming have to do with bringing art processes to the heart of rural communities whilst minimising the carbon footprint of all our projects...Activities that we programme for the space will be context specific and will include; discursive projects - meetings, seminars, presentations, conversations; exchange events - mini-markets, swap shops, local produce displays; exhibits - white cube gallery exhibits, temporary museums, local arts/crafts group shows; workshops - for children, adults and youth groups; film shows; consultation events; works commissioned especially for the space; travelling exhibits; internet cafe's and many more." > *Droichead Arts Centre*, Drogheda, Co. Louth, Republic of Ireland: "We would also be keen to utilise its offsite capabilities outside of this project as it fits in with our outreach remit and we can ensure that it would be used in different locations throughout Drogheda and surrounds". See > *Recycling*, > *For free*.

**Spacial practitioners** - Useful general term for people from community artist to geographer to market stall holder.

**SPACE SHUTTLE** - The concept for SPACE SHUTTLE is simple; "A purpose built, multifunctional structure, 12m<sup>2</sup> internally and a scaled replica of PS<sup>2</sup> project space, is sent into 'orbit' for six missions around Belfast. For up to two weeks, interdisciplinary artists/initiatives and (community) organizations will use the device as a platform for urban creativity and social interaction. SPACE SHUTTLE can be used as an on-site work base, as office/meeting point for activities and non-profit use in order to create- with the participation of the residents and social

environment- new and site influenced work. All 'mission' findings will be documented in a publication along with an exhibition back at mother ship- project space and at an outside location in the shuttle".

*Space shuttle*- Small, multifunctional unit, approx.12m<sup>2</sup>, used by PS<sup>2</sup> for six projects around Belfast between Aug.06 and May 07. Platform for urban creativity and social interaction. See>*Mission*. *Space shuttle* was handed over for free to another art-organisation. See>*Space for free*.

**Space travel** - Everybody has at least a vague idea about it. May lead to escapism or instances of 'lost in space'.

**Space walk** - Means of movement by 'urbanauts'. *Compare* >*marching* in Northern Irish context. See>*Belfast*.

**Space terminology** - Common knowledge and an easy 'alienation' method to see urban space differently. See >vocabulary.

**Sustainability** - See>*Longevity*. *Compare*>sustained enthusiasm in long term projects; >sustained honeymoons.

**Temporary** - Subversive strategy. Reluctance to make final statements. May lead to weightlessness. *Compare*> Market stall.

**Transformation** - Creative energy may change a foremost common idea/ environment into a memorable, radiant quality. In nature: The white low drifting clouds of blossoming cherry trees. Early stages of love. See>*poetic*.

**Translation** - The assumption that artists have to learn to speak in layman's terms, away from specialist terminology in order to be understandable for the so-called 'common' people. The refusal to do so can however result in creative misunderstanding.< Translation of the word 'SPACE SHUTTLE' into Chinese - a sticker on the shuttle with the translation caused controversy and concerns during 'Pass Odyssey' and fears of an alienation of the dominant white community. Once up, no one noticed! See >Communication, >Vocabulary.

**Urban interventionist** - Job description for space - artists.

**Urbanauts** - Specialist in urban and spacial territory.

**Vandalism** - None! (One anti-militarisation sticker and two name tags). Choice of 'vandal proof' or 'vandal resistant' structure. *Compare* >Cleaner *Belfast*. See>*Belfast*.

**Vocabulary** - Should be tested against reality. Talking 'over peoples' heads could make a translation process necessary. See >*Communication*.

**Web sites** - [www.spaceshuttle.org.uk](http://www.spaceshuttle.org.uk) > [www.pssquared.org](http://www.pssquared.org).

**Well meaning** - Inclination of artists to do the right thing. Lack of >*Provocation* can lead to easy viewing/consumption.

See >*Autonomy*, >*Aesthetic*, >*Cultural Service Provider*.

# THE ART OF CREATING THE TOMORROW

## SUSANNE BOSCH

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[1] Hildegard Kurt,  
Nachhaltigkeit - eine  
Herausforderung an die  
Kunst?

[www.hildegard-kurt.de](http://www.hildegard-kurt.de)  
(01.03.2007), translation  
by Susanne Bosch

DR. HILDEGARD KURT is a cultural researcher who lives in Berlin. Her work focuses on art and sustainability, the aesthetics of sustainability, art and agriculture, interculture and the dialogue of cultures. She is co-founder of 'and.Institute' for Art, Culture and Sustainability.<sup>1</sup> As a cultural researcher, Dr Kurt strongly defends the artistic approach, where artists are committed to art in the interest of society. This approach has various roots in history such as the Arts and Crafts movement in England, Bauhaus in Germany, the role of the artists during the Russian revolution and the establishment of a new communist state, the women movement, some feminist practices.

The Peace and Ecological movements also fit within this history as does the work of Joseph Beuys, in particular with regard to his idea of social sculpture. Kurt can contextualize all these issues when she says:

"In the arts there has been a shift for some time now to go increasingly beyond metaphorical allusions towards offering models contributing to social questions. For about half a century by now this type of art practice complements a rather traditional practice of object-based art, and challenges the latter through action-based forms of practice. The latter implies labour-intensive practices of open-ended co-operative experiential processes in which art becomes effective (or: instrumental) as a social medium. If a piece of art becomes relativised towards process-oriented aesthetics, by necessity a departure from the dictates of autonomous practice, then this implies that the privileged (autonomous) position of the individual as artistic subject becomes (equally) relativised towards participatory forms of practice.

Core topics of a critical practice of art orientated towards society - "art in the public





< 'Hausbau', Gropiusstadt  
Berlin, F. Köbberling/ M.  
Kaltwasser, 2004

sphere of interest" (A Raven) - are: the social relationship to nature, the relationship of nature to technology, of economics to ecology, of globalization versus regional identity, as well as questions of social ownership and democratization."

This text uses four case studies to focus on the discourse around projects like SPACE SHUTTLE. As author, I am speaking with multiple voices in this text; the voice of a practicing artist in this field, the voice of an observer and the (self-) critical, inner voice.

### Common ground

I looked at projects (across Europe) which were and are initiated and managed by artists and have a long term presence in specific neighbourhoods. These projects host short term art interventions, which aim to develop a broader audience and attempt to reach the people in their "natural" environment.

Although the internet offers many documented examples of related artprojects, I want to write from my own personal experience and projects that I have witnessed myself.

### Pilotproject Gropiusstadt, Berlin

Pilotproject Gropiusstadt started as a coincident, left over from another artproject (Areale Neukölln 2002).

Birgit Schumacher and Uwe Jonas, artists and initiators of Areale Neukölln, had convinced the GEHAG housing society to give them one of their many apartments in the district of Gropiusstadt Neukölln<sup>2</sup>. The purpose was a residency for external artists, who wanted to work in the neighbourhood and needed to be close to their

[2] "Gropiusstadt, a satellite town situated on the outskirts of Berlin, was built in the 1960's and 1970's. Its most prominent feature is its 10 to 25 storied building-development. The original plans from Walter Gropius were reworked later by others to house more people. Its current population is approximately 37,000," [www.pilotproject-gropiusstadt.de](http://www.pilotproject-gropiusstadt.de) (09.03.2007)

work during the Areale project.

[3] [www.pilotproject-gropiusstadt.de](http://www.pilotproject-gropiusstadt.de)  
(09.03.2007)

Due to a very positive feedback from the guest artists, the GEHAG housing society was persuaded to provide a guest apartment for invited artists for their weeklong visits in Gropiusstadt. The visits are not so much to produce and realise an idea or site specific work, instead, the artists can (simply) hand in a proposal at the end of their stay. From this they have the possibility to implement small-scale, temporary art projects for the general public<sup>3</sup>.

Up until now, eighty six artists from several countries have stayed in the apartment. Around fifty site specific projects have been realized in Gropiusstadt. Dinners have been held in the apartment, bringing together guest artists, the initiators, the head of the GEHAG housing society and several other key persons. In addition to the 'gifted' apartment, the GEHAG housing society annually gives 10.000 Euros to publish a yearbook and towards the realisation of projects.

[4] [www.pilotproject-gropiusstadt.de](http://www.pilotproject-gropiusstadt.de)  
(09.03.2007)

"The concept of the project is to advance interferences which generally just 'happen' in the area without being announced. The background of this attitude was already discussed in the 1970's: art should be something which belongs to normal life. Therefore the project tries to attract the artists' attention to the inhabitants of Gropiusstadt and their daily life and motivates them to develop ideas which are dedicated to them."<sup>4</sup>

The project operates like an international artist-in-residence programme. That way, it travels worldwide within the artfield. It makes Gropiusstadt a known site. The project itself also connects to some early Bauhaus philosophies such as internationality and the change of society through aesthetics.

The tenants feel that they are taken care of, they receive regularly special attention. Even if they do not feel any access to contemporary art, at least they have something to complain about. Complaining means communication. And they most likely find listeners in the artists, sometimes in journalists and for sure in their neighbours. Tenants who perceive attention create a good neighbourhood. In time, one could observe that the renting and property market in these areas is stable or even rising - to some extent also thanks to artistic interventions.

### **Oda Projesi, Istanbul**

In 2003, I spent six months in Istanbul. A number of people recommended, I visit the project of Özge Açıkkol, Güne Sava and Seçil Yersel in the neighbourhood of Galata. Three female artists had opened a studio there in 1997. From its inception the aims and objectives of this project was not predetermined in any way, and because of that it is similar to Gropiusstadt. The children of the neighbourhood literally invaded the studio and the three artists started to act, react and interact with their neighbours. It turned out to be a longterm relationship between this migrant neighbourhood and Özge, Güne and Seçil, the project was called Oda Projesi (Room Project).

Galata is situated in the heart of Istanbul. It is an overwhelming cityscape with its classic 19th century urban house style. Since the state sponsored riot against the

Greek population and other non-muslims of 6th and 7th of September 1955, many houses in this area were abandoned and eventually taken over by Kurdish migrants from East-Anatolia.

Although not intentionally, the apartment became a gathering place not only for other artists, architects, sociologists, musicians, but mainly for the neighbours. This fortyfive square-metre space in Galata functioned as a non-profit space hosting nearly thirty projects with zero budget. Oda invited fellow artists to perform projects designed to relate to kids and other residents. Oda Projesi operated as an artist-run-space, independent, non-budget but effective. It offered experience in meeting the 'Others' without the notion of an anthropological study or 'zoo effect'.



Oda Projesi, Istanbul

In 2005 Oda Projesi lost their space in Sahkulu Street. In fact the whole neighbourhood lost their homes. Being so excellently located, it was only a matter of time before urban transformation with its capital-oriented face reached the neighbourhood.

As Erden Kosova wrote in his text "Face to Face" from 2004, the special quality of Oda Projesi was the warm, humble and respectful way in which the three well educated women established their interaction, an interaction which took place continuously beyond actual artistic projects. Continuity created trust between these very diverse groups, with mainly women and children as connecting members. The interaction did not try to improve, correct, help, educate or beautify the life of the 'Others'. So what did they do?

When I spent time in the apartment and courtyard, I was at first very insecure about the nature of this project. It seemed so much about social interaction and modelled itself loosely in a community centre style. It did not allow anyone to be there as a passive observer. The space demanded cross-class, cross-educational, cross-religious interaction absent from conventional cultural spectatorship. I was thankful that Oda usually had some kind of "interactive action" with the neighbours, strangers and veiled women, through a film or cooking or to do something else together. I later saw some books, films and other artefacts which were produced there together with the neighbours and as a result of that obvious trustful relationship. These artistic outcomes by themselves worked well. The content of these artworks, Galata, the neighbours, space, Otherness, were profoundly reflected upon. The three artists never tried to talk about their approach in an abstract manner, I guess they were too much involved in the actual doing, living and feeling of the process.

### OpTrek

In 2005, I travelled to Hague, Netherlands, to visit some art projects. A colleague had recommended OpTrek. Transvaal, the location of this project, is close to the city centre of Hague. It reminded me of parts of Berlin with its majority of multi-ethnic citizens. What I had not seen before is an ongoing process of demolition in a location, while everyday life went on. As we walked around the neighbourhood, a sad and hopeless feeling of a lost battlefield struck me.

The artists Sabrina Lindemann & Annechien Meier committed their (wo)manpower



> 'INTERACT', OpTrek.  
Facade theatre, built by  
InSitu architects, Den  
Haag. Choir of the Opera  
House with 'Turandot',  
Puccini, 2007

to that very neighbourhood in that very situation. They founded a temporary non-profit organisation of artists called OpTrek. From 2002-2005 they found public funding with "the goal of visualising the social and urban-development transformation in Transvaal through works of art designed to reach a wider public."<sup>5</sup> OpTrek initiated around six larger projects in the public spaces each year and various smaller spontaneous events, such as lectures and screenings. They targeted either the district, city or national level with form and content (community projects for the (people of the) district; lectures and presentations for the political city level and networking, exchanging, collaboration with colleagues on a national / international level). OpTrek alternated between the roles of initiator, mediator and curator at the start of each project. They invited artists and architects to explore the future development of urban space and were interested in the position of the artist in such situations. Having connection at grassroots levels, they were concerned of the possible impact of the regeneration process on the residents.

The Dutch state funds art projects of such type and is at the same time the main power for a fundamental restructuring of urban space, where public, affordable and social housing becomes private housing, where less wealthy residents are driven out of urban centres. OpTrek were aware of the double face of their funders:

"Remarkably, as part of municipal urban-renewal policy, artists are purposely being employed at home and abroad during this interim stage of demolition to new building to upgrade the districts. The aim is to delay the decline of the districts, to keep the streets livable and safe, as well as to attract potential buyers through the artistic aura. In this way, art will be used to brighten the difficult period between demolition and new building, by helping to mitigate the effect on people who are being forced to leave their residential environments."<sup>6</sup>

[6] [www.optrektransvaal.nl](http://www.optrektransvaal.nl)  
(09.03.2007)

[7] [www.optrektransvaal.nl](http://www.optrektransvaal.nl)  
(09.03.2007)

They see their creative role in this project as that of a “‘witness’ that reflects the locally complex situation and places it in a wider context of urban and social developments.”<sup>7</sup>

I was very intrigued by their choice of invited artists and realized projects, exited about their energy and enthusiasm and the discourse they created. Yet one uncomfortable feeling remains: If you are funded by the actual creator of such questionable procedures; how can you be critical of these and with your funder; how can you archive change? How can you claim to be a witness only when you are a dependent body within that same structure? The direction of power is very clear; That this is no bottom-up approach, as it might appear at first sight. The artists as organizers are certainly having several hats on, but can OpTrek claim to have functioned as a ‘witness’? What is being said here between the lines?

### Artists as the ‘change masters’

In January 2007, I was invited to a roundtable discussion, with mainly local politicians in a city in South Germany, to discuss the necessity and the task of art to contribute to the change of society.

Without doubt, artists seem to be drawn to the topics and sites, which have been abandoned by others. They seemed to like the role of ‘ethical knights’, asking: *Where is the responsibility not taken? What should be done? Let us try out creative models in this open field!*

However, I believe it is sometimes not the ethics nor the feeling of responsibility, it is the ‘open field’ that attracts the artists. Public space is a battlefield for controversies; here one can carry out negotiations for public, social, spatial and economical sub-structures. The position of the traditional art field (itself a sub-structure) within society is marginal. But apart from that defined (art market)-territory, the artist is a much sought after figure. As artist Andrea Knobloch says:

‘Maybe with such creative powers, the play-drive, the visions, we find new sustainable solutions for current problems such as shrinking cities, de-industrialisation, migration, unemployment, social waywardness, parallel societies, environmental disasters, ... Funders trust us, politicians believe in our powers and skills. Art is believed to offer relief for negative developments, to make situations and sites acceptable, and maybe even offers solutions.’<sup>9</sup>

Artists have been risk takers and ‘change masters’ throughout history. At the round table discussion I was confronted as an artist with two ideas: On the one hand, it appears we are now invited as equal partners into the arena of creating a future. Sustainability in German leads to the translations of “Teilhabegerechtigkeit” which means “joint partnership fairness”. The attention focuses on long lasting solutions and, of equal importance, responsible participants. On the other hand, there are doubts. Is this art? Are these people artists? The autonomy and independence of the artists viewed in relation to its context and modes of production seems so questioned that the audience demands definitions of artists and politicians, social workers and urban planners and the differences between them. What is it that you are so good at again? And does uniqueness, visionary thinking and creativity not

[9] Andrea Knobloch, 2006, in *Schnittstelle Kommunikation, Künstlerische Kommunikationsformen in sozialen Handlungsräumen* translation from German to English by Susanne Bosch

demand an autonomous authorship, a single identity? To evaluate the success of these art projects is not easy, since the objectives are located on different levels. Content and aesthetical output need to be looked at in relation to the aims and objectives of these art projects. One needs to know about the urban/rural context of these pieces and other political, historical, social conditions which form the frame for these projects. Since these are not generic, we need to develop this for each project itself.

### **Difficult questions and realities**

What is the role of the artist? What is an artist specifically good at? What is the position of an artist in (a transitional) society? How can the artist maintain openness in the achievements? What is the art piece? How can we evaluate the art piece?

Initially, I wanted to communicate (in writing) my excitement about all these wonderful art interventions I have seen, organised by artist-run initiatives, by colleagues and peers. I wanted to be romantic about all the nice moments of interaction with the neighbourhood, of wonderful sites in pre-refurbished areas, of space for visions in an 'unfinished' public (isn't Berlin so exiting because it is unfinished, it is a huge construction site, open for the viewers imagination, what it once was, what it one day might be?). And I wanted to prove, how much these projects change a location with their creative powers. In reality - Oda Projesi was finally driven out of their apartment along with all the neighbours, the neighbourhood Transvaal disappeared and the initial funding lasted til 2005 (2007: Currently OpTrek is doing a project called 'Hotel Transvaal' in the area, renting out empty rooms in the houses under construction or in houses before destruction), that the flat in Gropiusstadt moved from one multi story house to another (at least it still exists).

All the ideas and playful interventions did not leave a trace, it was meant to be temporary and now you would not recognize the areas anymore, they are new, clean and unaffordable. All the creativity did not (seem to) help any citizen to improve their living on a sustainable basis. What is the success of such initiatives? Am I not fair now asking for proof instead of believing in process and the moment? What do these projects claim to be? Did I manage to raise awareness for the foreign neighbours by playing love songs in the elevator for eight days in 2004 in Gropiusstadt? Or was this for me a successful art piece, because I had all these emotional, committed neighbours involved in my work? A passionate audience!

I discover more and more my notion of suspicion. I am suspicious of the intentions of the artists (a wonderful playground with lots of people willing to play with us). And I start to wonder, whether we should start to question more our naivety and lack of criticism towards politics and powers. We are not witnesses or commentators, we are getting funded to keep the neighbourhood in a good mood and to increase the value of property. Re-urbanisation, regeneration, redevelopment is economically, not aesthetically or socially driven.

Even if an artist uses the post-developed site in a very traditional manner and produces public art pieces – 'art' understood as the action which compresses a



sensual experience in a unique shape that offers a similar experience to the viewer – by doing that on sites like this, he/she produces a political statement with social impact. For this social impact it is not even necessary to engage with the local community or to offer any kind of creative educational workshop.

## Conclusion

Artists are in demand on site, because they have proved that by empowering people's creativity, art leads to problem solving. Art can create images of possible futures. A friend, who works for the United Nations as a specialist on human rights, once told me that the parameters of a successful project in her field was 'a project, were the "specialized external person" initiates carefully new thoughts, new ideas and makes sure as soon as possible that the involved constituency feels that this is their idea, their vision. That person further confronts the politicians and guarantors with these needs and makes them also feel that a potential change is their idea. Constant negotiation and communication is what this third party then needs to do. And then, as soon as possible, disappear'.

Could artists achieve that? Do artists really let go of their ownership of ideas and aren't they getting recognition with exactly their creative input? Maybe at the end we are not so modest and humble about implementing our knowledge and then serving as a mediator, facilitator.

But artists are good in initiating change. Often we are not given enough time or we are not matched with the right partners to develop a change in thinking. Artistic thinking is a 'knowing by heart'. A felt experience rather than academic or scientific. I do question, if we are underestimating the actual possibilities within our work.

I can recollect one project that I consider holistic and a successful role model; 'Park Fiction'<sup>10</sup> in Hamburg, Germany. A multi disciplinary group of neighbours, migrants, artists, intellectuals and leftist people fought successfully against a development plan in their poor district of St. Pauli and managed to gain this piece of land for a "People's Park". The process started in 1995 and was a bottom-up movement with a 'win-win solution': together a transdisciplinary group from the neighbourhood started a social exchange of ideas, needs and visions, they created with a strict basic-democratic approach a strong notion of trust and acceptance among all citizens. They took the time to establish extended processes of communication, focusing on networking. They also did not exclude the decision-makers in this process. The artists empowered the production of wishes; the socialworkers empowered a sense of community; the sociologists wrote and contextualized this idea of civil ownership of public space; the politically driven engaged in local and city politics; the priests discussed the issue among their powerstructures.... Finally in 2005 the city of Hamburg agreed to fund the "People's Park" and to realize the ideas and wishes of the citizens in St. Pauli. on a longterm basis.

Park Fiction artists Christoph Schäfer and Cathy Skene were invited to document XI.

I call this a 'win-win solution' because the project itself achieved their aims; the



Park Fiction, Hamburg, Germany

[10] [www.parkfiction.org](http://www.parkfiction.org)  
(10.03.2007)



individuals achieved recognition for their contributions and input and the project created a new level of best practice, of creating a better Tomorrow.

*Many thanks for the excellent facilitation to Dr. Cherie Driver and Doris Rohr.*

# PASS MARKS: A STREET-LEVEL PEDAGOGY<sup>1</sup> OF CREATIVITY RUTH MORROW

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## Introduction

During my time as a crewmember on Mission 1: Pass Odyssey, one question repeated itself “is it art community art”. Being an architect and pedagogue, I was less concerned with this debate but instead began to relate the Pass Odyssey to a pedagogical event I had previously developed within architectural education. This event, ‘fourdaysontheoutside’<sup>2</sup> which ran over 5 years in two separate universities, had two distinct aims. Firstly to challenge the students and their creative processes by placing them on the outside of the academy; in real contexts with real problems and real clients. And secondly, to expose the activities of an architecture course to a wider audience. But over the course of its life, ‘fourdays.’ also began to reveal future areas of applied research with ready-made partners and potential sponsors, consolidating in one ‘event’ the activities of teaching/ learning, research and outreach.

The Pass Odyssey drew on this background and has come to represent, at least for me, *a street-level pedagogy of creativity*. This essay aims to set out how such community-sited creative projects can be understood as pedagogy and if considered in this light, what pedagogical tactics are relevant and how one can better understand and prepare.

[It is important to state that the pedagogically approach favored in this text is not the traditionally passive approach– ie “we will teach you what we judge to be useful” but rather an active, ‘learner-led’ inclusive practice.<sup>3</sup>]

## why does creativity matter?

Following the peace agreement in 1998 Northern Ireland, society started to look for

[1] Subtitle should really be: *A street-level Pedagogy and Andragogy of Creativity*, since both children and adults inhabit the street. For further reference on ‘Andragogy’ go to *ATHERTON J S (2005) Learning and Teaching: Knowles’ andragogy: an angle on adult learning [On-line] UK: Available: <http://www.learningandteaching.info/learning/knowledge.htm>.*

[2] See: [www.fourdaysontheoutside.org](http://www.fourdaysontheoutside.org)

[3] See Judyth Sachs *The Activist Teaching Profession* Open University Press, Maidenhead, Berkshire 2003

Opposite page: Streetfurnishing, ‘Pass Odyssey’

[4] *Unlocking Creativity- A strategy for development* (2000); *Unlocking Creativity- Making it happen* (2001); *Unlocking Creativity- A Creative region.* (2004) See Creativity pages on DCAL website <http://www.dcalni.gov.uk>

ways to move forward. Keen to develop in positive and progressive ways, the contemporary economic and cultural theories offered language and philosophies of “*creative societies trading on their creative capital*” that were quickly adopted. Most significantly, government policy makers in Northern Ireland produced a series of cross-departmental documents<sup>4</sup> focused on the role of creativity:

These policy documents, whilst acknowledging Northern Ireland’s troubled past, did not address the impact, conflict or ‘critical societal conditions’ have on the creativity of a society. During periods of threat or violence, creativity becomes less visible and more transient in its forms of expression. Inherent in creative processes is the ability to challenge the existing and the need for self-expression. Yet ‘the troubles’ created a polarised society where conservative actions and anonymity became ingrained tactics of survival that preoccupied much of people’s creative energies.

The mission of government’s *Unlocking Creativity* initiative is to “develop the capacities of all our people for creativity and innovation, and so promote and sustain the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of Northern Ireland.” Yet the resulting actions and initiatives that have spun out from the policy have offered few actual opportunities to understand creativity within the social wellbeing of Northern Ireland. Creativity in this policy context is understood simply as a way to move as quickly as possible beyond Northern Ireland’s past rather than a way to deal with and work through its past and present conditions productively. It is increasingly acknowledged, however, that rather than having resolved conflict, Northern Irish society is in a state of conflict transformation. This is a condition and process that by necessity demands creative thinking and actions. Amongst grass roots organisations creativity is understood as a way to:

- reflect and give form and place to collective and individual memories and histories, empower society, in particular those people most disenfranchised, to articulate their position and act in proactive and constructive ways,
- help regain optimism: allowing people to understand that looking beyond to other places/ times is not just a means to escape but an essential method of remaining creative, open and tolerant.

[5] A macro view explored in AHRC research project *Creative Transformations* [http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/awards/award\\_detail.asp?id=326153](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/awards/award_detail.asp?id=326153) based at the University of Ulster.

Creativity therefore becomes not just a way to make things ‘nicer’ but more importantly, in a Northern Irish context, a means for society to ‘manage’ its tensions and differences with sufficient skill to transform, heal and reactivate itself.

This at least is the macro view of creativity<sup>5</sup> – but how can it be imbued at the micro level in a location such as Donegall Pass i.e. a small, working class, protestant enclave? This essay puts forward the idea that this can be achieved through a street-level pedagogy; examining the component parts of curriculum; classroom and content; and class (learners and teachers)

### ‘a curriculum’

Typically ‘a curriculum’ is planned over a longer time period. Encouraging creativity in itself is comparatively easy; given space most people can be encouraged to unlock creativity (young and old). The crucial issue is how to claim that space, and ensure that, despite the encroaches and challenges of daily life, creativity can be

[6] Morrow, R. *Creative Activism: a Pedagogical and Research tool*. In Edited Proceedings of Architectural Research Centers Consortium and European Association for Architectural Education 2006 International Conference on Architectural Research, Philadelphia, US. 2006



< Space Walk,  
'Pass Odyssey'

sustained and placed at the centre of civil activities as a key social and cultural concern. The most significant challenge, therefore, is how to create a social context for 'sustained and sustainable creativity'<sup>6</sup> in a society in transition.

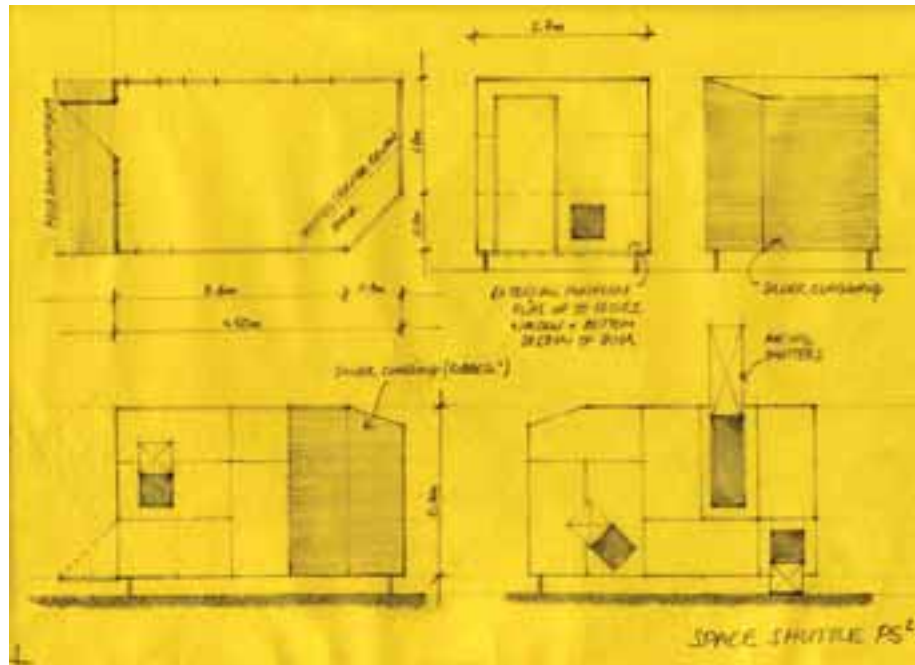
As Petrescu and Bosch discuss in their essays, the preference is for long term, embedded, sustainable approaches where the artists / architects live and work as part of the community over a longer time span; evolving work in the community as equal, participating partners. It's the ideal approach but one not always possible in every context, neither socially nor logistically.

The Pass Odyssey offers the beginnings of a hybrid model.

Whilst a curriculum can span over a longer time frame it is well known that transforming (learning) experiences can happen in a moment, often in unintended ways. Whilst it's clearly important to structure the content and direction of a curriculum, it is frequently the energy and excitement around the moment that leaves the deepest marks. This is not to say that it is a random process, but rather that the experience and skill of the 'teacher' creates the conditions that allow for such creative moments of learning and development. In this sense, the Pass Odyssey can be understood as an introductory 'blast' to a *curriculum of creativity*. It offered an action-based pedagogy where, through an intense series of activities, it publicly demonstrated 'creativity'; attempting to reveal its value and encouraging individuals to interact.

But transformation (learning) relies not just on desire and energy but also on connecting to knowledge and skill resources hence the importance placed during Mission 1 on connecting people of the Pass to experts in museums, media,





> Design drawings for Space Shuttle, R.Morrow, 2006

voluntary bodies, etc – who like books in a library are there to be referred to.

### 'classroom and content'

The purpose of the SPACE SHUTTLE project was to site art practices outside the gallery and to go in search of other audiences. In Mission 1 the space shuttle structure did not act as the classroom but rather as a communication device; a beacon signaling an event and drawing people in.

The location itself (Donegall Pass) became the classroom and the classroom (Donegall Pass) was the content. Using the environment as the content or theme of the activities provided a familiar 'hook' with which to catch people's interest. The intention of Mission I was to create opportunities for people to see their environment in a different and positive light.

The following list gives short descriptions of examples of Mission 1 activities<sup>7</sup>:

- **THE MODEL PASS:** A simple workshop using 3-D Models of Donegall Pass designed to encourage members of local community to come together to discuss their environment. The simple act of seeing an area from above (in model form) allows people to engage with its bigger issues and potential.
- **THE BIG WHINGE BOX:** A contraption for collecting the environmental concerns of local community and passing them on to local representatives and concerned bodies.
- **PROJECTION NIGHT:** Over the time of the project, images of the week's activities, participants, historical photographs and maps were collected and projected (together with Star Wars film) in a large open-air cinema for a night of fun, relaxation and reflection.

[7] for full list see 'Mission 1 project portrait' in this publication.



However, alongside this expressed intention of helping to give people a different view of their environment was the wider ambition (at least from my perspective) to see how such content (the environment) could be used as a learning vehicle to generally develop capability in creativity. Whilst as practitioners/ pedagogues/ designers we can attempt to 'control' the direction, context, content and intention of our actions, this last component (the class) falls outside our control and it was here that the project revealed many truths, pitfalls and potentials.

### **'the class: learners and teachers'**

Who sits in the classroom? If the classroom is Donegall Pass, does this mean 'the class' is made up of the Donegall Pass Community? This in turn raises the issue of who is the community?<sup>8</sup>

Initially Call Centre Collective assumed that the strong geographical and sectarian boundaries that define Donegall Pass would naturally lead to a coherent and tight-knit community. But such taut boundaries can create conditions where internal tensions are easily inflamed. In such circumstances, individuals and families either adopt strongly partisan positions, or disengage. Neither tactic enhances community coherence.

During the course of our time there, we gradually realized that there is no one community on the Pass but rather many communities whose constituents are in flux. We had assumed that if some in the community knew of the purpose and activities of the mission then eventually all or most would know. Within such a fractured community however such informal rhizomatic forms of communication can not be relied on. We had also assumed that 'the class rep' ie Donegall Pass Community Forum, was an integral part of the community and could therefore link us effectively to them. This turned out, for various reasons, not to be the case.

But even if we had been able to make strong links to the community (or subsets within that community) we were perhaps overly optimistic to think that curiosity alone would bring people to the activities of the project. In reality, curiosity is the privilege of the young and the middle class. It takes confidence, time and energy to pursue curiosity. In a context like Donegall Pass, where everyday life can present considerable hurdles, we realized across the course of the 8 days, that those adults who were attracted to the space shuttle and its activities were for the most part on the periphery of their community/ communities, i.e. they had characteristics or held views that were not mainstream. Some of them successfully hide these characteristics from their peers. All of them approached us as single individuals and were either unwilling or unable to share/spread their experiences amongst others on the Pass.

The obvious struggle of 'pedagogy on the street' is that the audience/ class is not captive. There are two possible ways to address this.

Enhance communication. If rhizomatic forms of communication don't work then find forms that engage more directly with people, perhaps through bigger, bolder, brighter visuals and antics. The Pass Odyssey needed to have a stronger physical

[8] This issue is also discussed in Doina Petrescu's essay in this publication.

presence both before and during the event. The importance of effective communication can not be stressed enough and in retrospect Call Centre Collective should have built into funding bids the need for a publicity / communications expert to develop innovative ways and appropriate languages to reach people both on the Pass and beyond. Identifying who is in the class/ audience is vital. With each audience, a specific language is required. In the Pass Odyssey Project we began by thinking that it was only the people of the area but quickly realised that we also wanted to create positive images of the Pass for local and national press; we had also hoped to catch the attention of public representatives and public / voluntary bodies who could contribute, in the long term, to the positive transformation of the area. And now, as we have moved into the postproduction phase of the project, other audiences emerge that further contribute and develop the project, i.e. those of the art, academic and activist worlds.

Accept that you can't reach everyone and that you don't have to. Within a traditional classroom setting, teachers recognize that not every student will be reached for a variety of reasons. Instead it's possible to empower a few individuals, shifting their position from learners to peer-teachers. If such pedagogical practice can be transferred from the classroom to the street then those in the community, who make contact to projects such as Space Shuttle need to be supported and actively encouraged in the long term. They may well be the *creativity carriers* of their community/ies.

### conclusion

Whilst those models cited in this publication, where living and working as a creative practitioner within communities in transformation are ideal, it may not be possible in the mono-cultural, working class communities that exist in Northern Ireland. There are of course no definitive answers in this area but Space Shuttle Mission 1 offers at least a flawed but enthusiastic example to consider. The Pass Odyssey can be understood as a brief, fun, light introduction to some serious, long-term ambitions. In that context Nabeel Hamdi's<sup>9</sup> code of conduct is an appropriate conclusion:

*Ignorance is liberating  
Start where you can: never say can't  
Imagine first: reason later  
Be reflective: waste time  
Embrace serendipity: get muddled  
Play games, serious games  
Challenge consensus  
Look for multipliers  
Work backwards: move forwards  
Feel good.*

[9] Hamdi, Nabeel. [Small Change](#), About the art of practice and the limits of planning in cities. Earthscan.

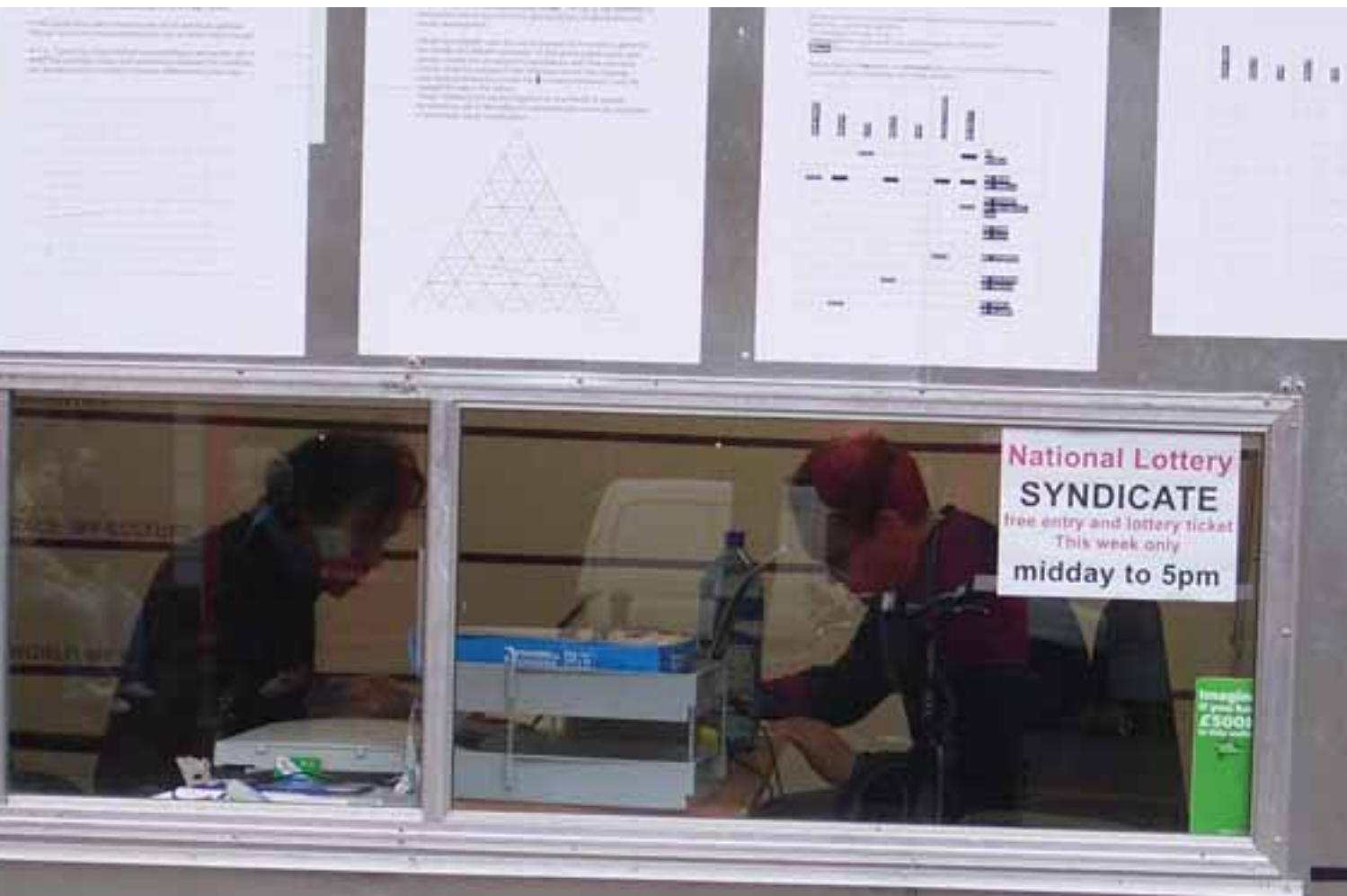
# ALGORITHMS FOR UTOPIA: AN XYZ OF HEALTH & WEALTH SIRAJ IZHAR

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"..it is pointless to try and decide whether Zenobia is to be classified among the happy cities or among the unhappy. It makes no sense to divide cities into those two species, but rather into a different two: those that through the years and the changes continue to give form to their desires and those in which desires either erase the city or are erased by it." Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*

A square in any city plugged in to the global economy functions as part of the territory of a 'global social system'; a territory whose essential operations are dependent on computational processes across geographic boundaries and time zones. The territory of global social systems described here is both metaphoric and real; it is a virtual functioning environment within an environment. Whilst the social management of such territory may be local, the environment itself is predicated on algorithmic processes, programmes and permutations that are subject to their own causality.

Inevitably this causality, serves its own interests, its distinguishing marks becoming visible through the way it differentiates between essential operations and non-essential operations, between the human subject per se and its social dimension, its sociability. Informational algorithms reconfigure the human subject systemically by removing all non-social i. e. non-communicative, elements from the social dimension. What is left with little utility value is what Giorgio Agamben calls bare life: a form in which human beings cannot be addressed socially and are thus reduced to their bodily existence. Global social systems produce bodies of bare life in large quantities by mere reason of their day-to-day operation. This is a consequence of the gulf an informational environment generates between the representation it uses and markets and the reality on the ground; these are two realities that rarely merge in outline. In this process, the term 'agent' is often substituted for the human subject in a system trying to emulate human specific values within computer programs; agency provides equivalence between human processes and computational processes.



The environment effectively disinters the subject into two attributes or values as representations of the human person. Here they are symbolised as Health <H> which is an attribute of the human body, a marketable value for bare life, and Wealth <W> which determines the body's sociability. The distinction between Health and Wealth is not so much the use-value or exchange value of the person but its place in new spaces of inclusion and exclusion. The new dimensions of informational space contest the traditional landscape of political economy and social relations to create its own human measures.

In the environment of the global system, the variables <H> and <W> which personify the subject require 2 other forms or classes of variables to carry out its functions as illustrated as follows by <M> and <P>:

<M> as the memory bank, the virtual environment for informational processes akin to the physical environment for an agent's operations, its social environment or civil society. <M> is embodied by the sum of collective narratives and associations that drive a society.

<P> as the procedures that execute the instructions of the system, its corollary being the political apparatus and processes that execute functions to order a society.

<M> and <P>, <H> and <W> define the total environment for bare life. The intersection of <M> and <P> with <H> and <W> is enacted through a set of social laws which provide the operational matrix or grid. The system's structure is based on permutations that synchronize activities across social groupings and time zones to maximise efficiency and minimise conflict. Useful laws not only avoid inter-agent conflict but also minimize the use of energy, time, and other resources.

In the global social system, agents are free players within the parameters of the social laws, which are designed to maximise circulation. Circulation is produced through a 'multi-agent system' whereby coordinated social activity emerges out of a fluid chain of negotiated social contracts between multiple agents; equally with the formulation of social laws, the system serves as a 'non-deterministic social system' - non-deterministic because the system creates 'families' of probability distributions that describe the expected behaviours of the agent subjects and probable outcomes of all computable actions. The system acts counter-intuitively; outcomes are never guaranteed but based on probability factors and expected distribution of goals and behaviour. However, social laws themselves should not be mistaken for programmes or algorithms. Just as traffic laws in real space do not provide directions from A to B but simply legislate appropriate behaviour for particular situations, social laws maintain the constraints that in turn simplify the production of algorithms that in turn create the laws. Within the system, the defining processes are rationality, reasoning, goals, learning and adaptation but the social laws project narratives in social space, the drivers being emulations of personal desires - defining aspirations, projecting wishes, promising happiness. The system becomes a cipher for representations of fulfilment whereby new indexes appear, theories and national indicators of subjective well-being, new

measurements of happiness and goal inventories.

Algorithms applied to social spaces strive for an utopian idealisation.

This is not new conceptually. Modernity, as Manfredo Tafuri describes, itself may be seen as the outcome of the project of the social construction of utopia, the progressive convergence of utopianism and realism. It too involved the reorganisation at all levels of production, distribution and consumption in the social order. Modernity as such was a utopia extractable from and implicit in realisable facts. In the virtual environment of the global social systems, utopia is extractable from and implicit in realisable data. Data now precedes facts through the laws of algorithmic permutations; this mutates the realpolitics of the current social order. As such, political functions <P> can amount to no more than control of the data traffic that governs all aspects of life. As political representation becomes more abstract, civil society and its mythic dimension <M> with its narrative-based value, becomes a more decisive theatre of political operations. This is why cultural control and administration are more important than economic operations in the new systemic social order. Indeed, economic operations cannot effectively function unless they are preceded by cultural administration. Thus <M> and <P> aspire to total administration and integration: a meshing of political structures and civil society through permutational data. The development of total integration produces a culture industry as a mechanism for total(itarian) administration. <M> and <P> define new forms of instrumental environments, new classes of relational functions, within an economy of the culture industry. Here, through valorised forms of labour the very idea of the transgressing the environment is absorbed into the fabric and marketing of culture.

Parallel to the mass production of bare life in the global systems is the mass production of an oppositional culture, invariably evoking of obsolescent forms of subjecthood. Whilst bare life is parsed and managed, its representation remains the unified humanist subject: the romantic object of subjective fulfilment

with destiny in the one's own hands, not the permutational consequence of non-deterministic informational systems. This contradiction between means and ends is as prolifically productive and wasteful of human hopes, ambitions and anxieties as it is of the production of bare life.

As symbols Health & Wealth are actors in this negative topography and a play on negative dialectics in the city beyond a city that shapes our hopes and desires. <H> and <W> figure the coordinates of the city that creates bare life. The topography is immaterial but orchestrating and extractive - of real lives and real spaces. Its coordinates enfold into the spaces we live and work in, they configure and reconfigure our cityscapes and squares in multiple dialects of the local and global. The parent language though is the same, as in its manifest symptoms:

the relentless creation of possibilities, and saturation of desires through ready-made narratives sustained by a vast integrated culture industry; the endless production of bare life - contingent subjects outside the valorised circuits of economic and cultural production, the new armies of extra-cultural bodies.

The governing structure of this environment is a pyramid based on permutational



processes that always produce a surplus: perversely as much in hope and subjectivity, in the demographics of bare life. There is no ecologic to this environment. The challenge though is to articulate new dimensions of ecology, ecologies that apply to the virtual topographies to redeem the ecology of the physical environment. Protocols can be reversed in a virtual environment; whilst the processes of permutation engineered to narrow goals are not sustainable, the tools and paradigms of social management they have evolved will not disappear. The cultural agenda is how to use the virtual environments in the unravelling, the unworking of embedded social paradigms and logic that marks our relationship to each other and the environment. These paradigms are mirrored by the languages of computational processes. The virtual processes symbolised by Health and Wealth are as much within us as they are in the global social system. A virtual space so provides the field for a new inner and outer anthropology, it is a space to hypothesize the processes that constitute us: as contingent subjects and constitutive subjects. The variables <H>, <W>, <M> and <P> here form a toolkit for the multi-dimensional nature of social space today. As representations they do not disinter the person as bare life or valorise it as an utopian object; rather they create a process of engagement, a means of convening, configuring and embodying the human subject in a new social order. The algorithms that symbolise the global social system are not an endgame; Health and Wealth is no autopsy of the human subject but rather the opposite.

Siraj Izhar [www.xyzlondon.com](http://www.xyzlondon.com)

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 Manfredo Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia* (1976 )  
 Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (1973)  
 Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1972)

**Susanne Bosch** is an artist, curator and organiser of discussions, workshops and seminars. Since 2006, she is lecturer in Fine Art Research, Interface, University of Ulster, Belfast. Her work concentrates on 'art in public space' as well as installation and site-specific installations in exhibition spaces, with a tendency for long term projects. Since a residency in Istanbul in 2003, her work has focused on the meaning of public space in countries that violate human and basic democratic rights. Her understanding of migration as a visionary potential, in terms of wishing for a better future somewhere else, and the experience of being the „Other, have become of central interest. She refers to this visionary potential as the force to change situations used by artists, participants and viewers. **Recent work includes:** 2004 Conflict transformation and communication training for international crisis intervention, Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, Brühl, Germany; 2003 Cultural exchange grant in Istanbul, Berlin Senate of Science, Research and Culture; 2001 Work grant, Berlin Senate of Science, Research and Culture; 2000 Project grant, Berlin Senate of Science, Research and Culture; 1998-2002 'Restpfennigaktion' [www.restpfennig.com](http://www.restpfennig.com) [www.susannebosch.de](http://www.susannebosch.de)

**Sarah Browne** and **Gareth Kennedy** both graduated from the National College of Art and Design, Dublin in 2003. They are based in Co. Leitrim, where they work on collaborative and solo projects that include public commissions, publications, exhibitions, education and critical writing. Their collaborative practice develops ways of temporarily occupying particular architectural fragments. To date these diverse spaces have included an airport garden café, a hotel atrium and a deserted penguin enclosure in a Southeast Asian zoo. Often they create ambiguous territories between public and private, 'real' and artificial; these 'readymade' sets become models that refer to larger social environments on the 'outside'. [garkeus@yahoo.com](mailto:garkeus@yahoo.com) [sarahjbrowne@yahoo.ie](mailto:sarahjbrowne@yahoo.ie)

**Call Centre Collective (CCC)** is a multidisciplinary group of artists, designers and architects, who work together in the School of Art and Design, Interface, University of Ulster, Belfast. Aoife Ludlow, Doris Rohr, Emma McClintock, Prof. Ruth Morrow. [www.interface.ulster.ac.uk](http://www.interface.ulster.ac.uk)

**City Mine(d)**, a non profit organisation established in 1997, is a production house for urban interventions, committed to the development of new forms of urban citizenship, the re-appropriation of public space- roads, airwaves, stations, estates, parks, squares,

virtual space- and the creation of cutting edge public artwork. City Mine(d)'s work has two strands: creating interventions in public spaces and supporting other people or initiatives who have a similar vision of the city. The initially Belgian NGO now has agencies in Brussels, Barcelona and London. [www.citymined.org](http://www.citymined.org) or [info@citymined.org](mailto:info@citymined.org)

**Emma McClintock** (member of CCC) is a textile artist and researcher at Interface, University of Ulster, Belfast. She studied Fine and Applied Art, specializing in Textile, before undertaking a Cultural Heritage and Museum studies course at the Academy of Irish Cultural Heritage, Magee. She has previously worked as a freelance facilitator in the gallery and education sector and has a specific interest in museology. Currently working with Healing Through Remembering (HTR), a cross-community project, focusing on the issue of how to deal with the political past in Northern Ireland and the creation of a permanent Living Memorial Museum to the conflict in Northern Ireland [www.healingthroughremembering.org](http://www.healingthroughremembering.org) Recent work 'Veil' was selected and won 2nd prize in the textile category for the RDS National Crafts Competition, Dublin, touring Exhibition 2006. Researching work for textile commission with [www.futuremuseum.co.uk](http://www.futuremuseum.co.uk)

**Saoirse Higgins** (member of CCC) is a digital media artist and lecturer at Interface, University of Ulster, Belfast. With a focus in research of art in contested space, her work usually incorporates sensor-based interfaces, combined with interactive video and sound. "I am looking at the control mechanisms that are used to keep us feeling safe and the ones that do not. I am interested in our concerns and fears in the world as we embrace technology and it's 'powers' both good and bad, particularly in these times of uncertainty". **Recent projects:** Disonancias, La Tabacalera, Centre for Contemporary Culture, San Sebastian, Spain, 2007; DEAF festival: 'micro-local broadcast', Uki Yo, Exchequer Street, Dublin, 2006; 'Better than the real thing', curated by Regina Gleeson. Four gallery, Dublin, 2006 [www.culturalfishing.net/realthing.html](http://www.culturalfishing.net/realthing.html) 'Darklight tour', curated by Nicky Gogan. VAC, Melbourne, Australia, 2006

**Siraj Izzhar's** art works are active social processes, generators of activity, creating spaces for participation and completed by the ongoing activity of many. His projects are autonomously generated, sometimes anonymous and usually take place over a 3 year cycle in phases, which emerge out of each other. Through the 1990s Siraj's work was presented through his nom de guerre 'strike'. In 1997 he set up the charity 'strike foundation' which provided different types of spaces and cells of activity for

different forms of cultural production in London. The charity was an experiment in modelling a 'factory for integrated social production' by bringing together an experimental mix of artists and social activists. He currently works on [xyzlondon.com](http://xyzlondon.com) which is a social resource and a project in continual development with multiple strands focusing on environmental and social ecology. He will be building a Living Memorial to the Nigerian activist Ken Saro-wiwa in 2008 in London, conceived both as a visual landmark and a global communication network between cities geographically distant but increasingly entwined. The concept of the ecosystem is central to his working process in that it describes the way the projects work in real contexts with complexities of built-in feedback processes that develop over time. He does not produce exhibitions as such, but engages with the living city directly to produce autonomous working realities.

[www.xyzlondon.com](http://www.xyzlondon.com)

**Alan Jones** studied Combined Humanities in European Studies and Environmental Studies at University of Ulster and worked for Donegal Pass Community Forum from November 2005 to December 2006. Prior to that, he was a volunteer on the Board for three years and gave advice on planning and development issues. Since 2005 he is External Consultant for 'Contested Cities Urban Universities' at Queens University

[www.qub.ac.uk/ep/research/cu2/people.html](http://www.qub.ac.uk/ep/research/cu2/people.html)

**Aoife Ludlow** (member of CCC) is a research assistant in the textiles strand of Interface, University of Ulster, Belfast. Her research is both influenced by her background in textiles and interactive media, with a special interest in spatial and object memory and the random patterns of ordinary life.

**Ruth Morrow** (member of CCC) is Professor of Architecture at University of Ulster, Belfast. Her work focuses on the interconnections and potentials between people, place, pedagogy and creativity. Both her teaching and research rely on strong activist and collaborative instincts. With a strong commitment to conceptual and revisionist thinking, her research practice is defined through the physical realisation of ideas and thus is invariably project based. Ruth publishes in the area of inclusive design and design pedagogy and recent projects include:

<http://www.fourdaysontheoutside.org>  
<http://girliconcrete.blogspot.com>

**Peter Mutschler** is an artist, project initiator of SPACE SHUTTLE and member of PS<sup>2</sup>, Belfast. He has taught at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Karlsruhe, Germany and Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee.

Recent projects include:  
 'Street Archaeology', Belfast, 2005  
[www.streetarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.streetarchaeology.co.uk)  
 'Urban Clearance' four projects of urban intervention, Belfast, 2005 [www.urbanclearance.co.uk](http://www.urbanclearance.co.uk)  
 His work is represented by Galerie Haupt, Karlsruhe, Germany.

**Aisling O'Beirn** is an artist and teaches at the School of Art and Design, University of Ulster, Belfast. Her recent work is derived from a body of research into various informal accounts of place. This takes the form of a constantly expanding collection of urban myths, anecdotes, landmarks, place nicknames and hand drawn maps gathered from various cities. Her interest in these unofficial accounts stems from a concern regarding the politics of how place is described at a local level. Recent installations and site specific projects mark an attempt to bring together some of this seemingly disparate information in a non-linear fashion through sculptural and site specific means.

Aisling O'Beirn's work is represented by The Third Space Gallery, Belfast  
 Recent exhibitions include:  
 2006: 'And Other Storeys' Void, Derry, A. O' Beirn & R. Buchannen', Ards Arts Centre, Obscured By Architecture, South Dublin Co. Council, 'Dogs Have No Religion', The Czech Museum Of Fine Arts, Prague  
 2005: The 51st Venice Biennale, 'The Nature Of Things: A Long Weekend', The Belfast Way' Herzliya Museum Of Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv, Israel.  
<http://www.aislingobeirn.com>  
[www.thethirdspacegallery.com](http://www.thethirdspacegallery.com)

**Mick O'Kelly** is an artist and currently undertakes a PhD with Interface, University of Ulster Belfast. He studied at the National College of Art and Design Dublin, (1982-1985) and did his MFA at the California Institute of the Arts USA, (1995-1997). He is a visiting artist to art schools in Ireland, UK, Germany, France, Finland and Brazil. He has exhibited nationally and internationally and engages in contextual art initiatives beyond the gallery and museum structure. Ongoing concerns in his work and research acknowledge the changing nature of contemporary art, and issues of situated practice, location and context.

**PS<sup>2</sup>** = Paragon Studios/ Project Space, is small artist collective, with studio space in the centre of Belfast. A former shop in the same building, project space, is used as a platform for art projects and run on a voluntary base. The focus of the activities is on urban creativity and social interaction by artists, multidisciplinary groups and theorists, deliberately opening the traditional categories and often expanding to other locations.

[www.pssquared.org.uk](http://www.pssquared.org.uk)

**Doina Petrescu** is senior lecturer in architecture at the University of Sheffield. She has written, lectured and practised individually and collectively on issues of gender, technology, (geo)politics and poetics of space. She is founder member of *atelier d'architecture autogérée (aaa)* and has also been an activist with local associations in UK, France Romania and Senegal and feminist research groups such as *association (des pas)* in Paris and *taking place* in London. Editor of *Altering Practices: Feminist Politics and Poetics of Space* (London: Routledge, 2007) and co-editor of *Architecture and Participation* (London: Routledge, 2005)

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**Doris Rohr** (member of CCC) is an artist and research associate at Interface, University of Ulster, Belfast. MA Fine Art, Coventry University, MA Philosophy/Psychoanalysis, University of Essex.

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**Amy Russell** is a recent graduate with a Masters of Fine Art at the University of Ulster. She is a practicing artist based at Queen Street Studios, Belfast and is currently completing a Certificate in Youth Art with NYCI in Dublin. She has worked for Barnardo's and facilitated a cross community project called "No Boundaries" with the youths of the after-school clubs of the Shankill and Ardoyne area. In 2007 she was awarded a residency for photography in Winnipeg, Canada by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. She has exhibited both nationally and internationally. Recent group exhibitions include "The Corner House" Manchester and LA California.

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