

atelier 7

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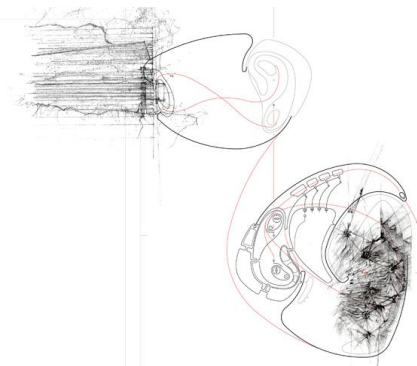
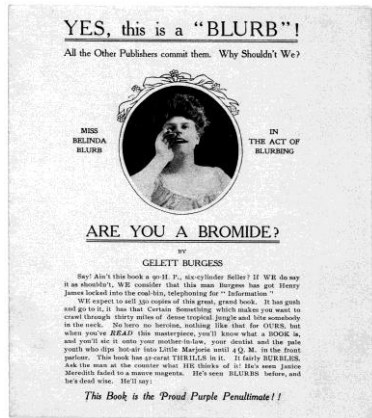
blurb-scape



Atelier 7 will continue exploring the urban dynamics of London. This year we are reinterpreting the city's three-dimensionality through the act of *blurbing*, a style of expression that is rapidly evolving to virtual networking modes (e.g. blogging and twitting). We are paying a particular attention to the area between Covent Garden and Leicester Square tube stations, where since the 19C the notion community has experimentally incorporated such social-cultural issues as 'artistic freedom', 'urbane dialogue', 'advertisement' and 'entertainment'. Reconfiguring such historical layers of the site as well as its current underground-surface-overground conditions in due course, we aim to propose a web of communication as an agenda for the 21C community space.

projects:

- 1a. Intro mutant: prosthetic device to express yourself in response to a site context
- 1b. Ad mobilis: mobile studio to foster dialogue between a self and others
- 2a. Exit circular: morphological test of studios in their vertical circulation - workshop (Havana)
- 3a. Blurbing commune: structuring/spatialising the interaction between studios & site contexts
- 3b. Blurbing commune - flyer: refining the network in coordination with an one-day event



project 1a. Intro mutant

A blurb is a dose of highly concentrated spin intended to deflect direct perception and critical thought while presenting a desirable or attractive image to the public.

Urbandictionary.com

Who are you? Who do you become, when encountering a space and occupying it? Stroll around the site, area between Covent Garden (WC2E 9JT) and Leicester Square (WC2H 0AP), keeping in mind that you are a person identifiable by social codes (e.g. student ID number, debit card number). Stop when an object/phenomenon attracts you. There, then, you involve a spatial rendezvous. Employ your senses to capture a specific sensory (visual, auditory, olfactory, palate or tactile) atmosphere. Identify/draw the dual, social-natural, encounter - tactically by incorporating social information such as an exact post code and your id number into the process. The drawing is to merge the object, the space and your body, to necessarily foster the extension of your body part/organ. Developing the identification, you design a prosthetic device to use the site context better; better in that it helps you perform more effectively to blurb about yourself.

term: 3 weeks

design: a prosthetic device to introduce yourself in relation to a site context

definition: blurb - to identify yourself

options: means of blurring/expression - senses (visual, auditory, olfactory, palate, tactile)

tasks: see next page

refs: Celia Lury, 1998, *Prosthetic culture: photography, memory and identity*

Michel de Certeau, 1988, *The practice of everyday life*

Ted VanCleave, 2003, *Totally Absurd Inventions: America's Goofiest Patents*

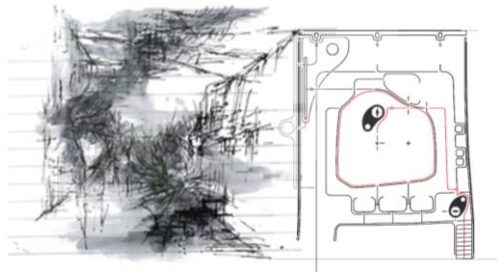
project 1b. Ad mobilis

My line in blurbing poetry has usually been the take it or leave it attitude - with the implication - this is F&F (fact & fiction) poetry... [yet] that is not the best advertising method

T. S. Eliot



You continue expressing, here, not in the form of monologue but incipient dialogue, that is, to bring up an intimate relationship between yourself and another person (e.g. your classmate). For the task, you transform the prosthetic mechanism (1a) into a studio which not merely accommodates you but allows you to exchange the means and contents of identification with the other. Half-enclosed, or more or less, it shall be capable of moving within the range of the site. It shall be spatially interactive, perhaps even transformable, yet in a rather two-dimensional way, as corresponding to the almost horizontal topography of the site. Operating the studio, you go deeper than perceptual interpretation. You encode and decode identities together with a particular historical layer embedded in the site to provide a preliminary infrastructure sharable for further blurbing.



- term: 4 weeks
- design: a mobile unit whereby you blurb about yourself in relation to another
- tasks: see next page
- options: intensity of use - from pastime/chatting to working and living
 - range of movement, speed, cycle
 - level of autonomy in relation to urban infrastructure
 - e.g. solar panel surfacing - electricity, water purification

- tasks: see next page
- refs: Georges Perec, 1998, *Species of spaces and other pieces*
Anthony Vidler, 1994, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*
Krzysztof Wodiczko, 1999, *Critical Vehicles: Writings, Projects, Interviews*
Aaron Betsky, 2003, *Scanning: The Aberrant Architectures of Diller + Scofidio*

project 2a. Exit circular

Blurbing is a game of six degrees - or fewer - separation

Betsy Lerner



Blurbing here is to further develop a threshold between individual and public territories of information. Through the activity, you at bottom leave your personal realm of expression. The threshold is the fundamental condition of an *exit*. To materialise this metaphoric situation, mind the following precondition.

An entrance takes shape in the pride of architectural design, while an exit does in the mere excuse of building codes or may feature the negative side of an access. An exit hardly bears anything to blurb about. But it brings up an awkward situation, when engaged in consciously. Particularly, the vertical dimension of a built environment sometimes turns the familiar scene of leaving into an escape, a much desperate form of flight.

You (four in one team) are reconfiguring this urban phenomenon by testing your studios. Position them vertically, considering the mechanism of each. Use them as the nodes of blurbing in relation to a particular site context and choreograph a meaningful and enjoyable means of way-out.

- term: 1 week
- venue: Architecture dept. University of Havana
- sponsor: University of Havana, Cubana Air
- design: four-degree game - vertical networking of exit conditions
- site: TBC
- options: rules and variables - vertical positions (over/under-ground)
degree of playfulness -
- refs: Rem Koolhaas et al, 1995, *S, M, L, XL (Exodus)*
Mark Wigley, 1998, *Constant's New Babylon: The Hyper-Architecture of Desire*

project 3a. Blurbing commune

My heart even yet belongs to blurbing, and I am weary of novel-writing and of snippy correspondences with unbudging editors.

Michael Bishop



Who are you? Who do you become when blurbing about others? Where do you stand at communicating with others through blurbing? Blurbing is now a physical/corporeal act of gathering, in mental extension fostering the sense of belonging, thus softly identifying a group who share certain common interests. From this, you are to bring in a notion of commune. You weave the three-dimensionality of blurbing, based on the horizontal and vertical movements of a studio (1b, 2a), in the course to infuse the initial prosthetic mechanism (1a) into a mundane communal activity. You can elaborate this process in several detail steps (e.g. sharing a stair for exit, greeting on doormats, collection of rubbish in a corridor...), all to specify the communal condition. Each step embraces a programme you can plant in accord to the site contexts, whose functional potential grows in coordination with the spatial act of blurbing. Your agenda for commune may therefore consist in the interfacing between the existing urban conditions and a new urbanity, in the soft networking of what the site has stood for and how the users can change the given information.

term: 8 weeks

design: communal spaces/programmes (varied kinds of blurbing)

options: function - to facilitate the spatial engagement or bring up a new activity programmes inserted under-/on-/over-ground contexts of the site

tasks: see next page

refs: Mike Webb, 1962, *Sin Centre*

Jonathan Hill, 1998, *The Illegal Architect*

project 3b. Blurbing commune - flyer

Now I've been on two blurbs, one of them one of W's, & I don't want to become a sort of fixture on the backs of his dust-covers with "Genius" - George Orwell kept permanently in type.

George Orwell



Here, blurbing takes place on a temporal dimension.

Blurbing is now an essential part of daily life, fostering communication on both individual and collective levels. Yet, is the daily life merely supposed to repeat same things perpetually?

Questioning this, you activate your 'blurbing commune' (3a) in the way that unlocks its static phase.

For the task to give it a dynamic rhythm, to test the interactive environment, you choreograph an one-day event of blurbing. Configure its process and effects in accord to a particular weather condition (e.g. sunny/day, dark cloudy/night, rainy and snowy)

term: 4-5 weeks

design: one-day event

options: weather conditions - sunny/day, dark cloudy/night, rainy and snowy
rhythm - intensity, duration and frequency

tasks: see next page

refs: Catherine de Zegher and Mark Wigley ed., 2003, *The Activist Drawing: Retracing Situationist Architectures from Constant's New Babylon to Beyond*
Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio, 2002, *Blur: The Making of Nothing*
Quentin Stevens, 2007, *The Ludic City: Exploring the Potential of Public Spaces*

		Project 1a	Project 1b	Project 2a	Project 3a	Project 3b	Integrated Design Technology
20 st Sept	Wk 1						
27 th Sept	Wk 2						
4 TH Oct	Wk 3						
11 th Oct	Wk 4						T
18 th Oct	Wk 5						
25 th Oct	Wk 6						T
1 nd Nov	Wk 7						
9 th Nov	Wk 8						T
15 th Nov	Wk 9						
22 rd Nov	Wk 10						
29 th Nov	Wk 11						T
6 th Dec	Wk 12				2 nd year crit		
14 th Dec	Wk 13				3 rd year crit		
20 st D8c	Wk 14	xmas					
27 th Dec	Wk 15	xmas					
3 th Jan	Wk 16	xmas					
10 th Jan	Wk 17				folio review		
17 th Jan	Wk 18						
24 th Jan	Wk 19						T
31 st Jan	Wk 20						
7 th Feb	Wk 21						T
14 th Feb	Wk 22						
21 th Feb	Wk 23						T
28 st Feb	Wk 24						
7 th March	Wk 25						T
14 th March	Wk 26					2 nd year crit	
21 nd March	Wk 27					3 rd year crit	
28 th March	Wk 28	easter					
4 th April	Wk 29	easter					
11 th April	Wk 30	easter					

18 th April	Wk 31						
25 th April	Wk 32						T
2 nd May	Wk 33					2 nd year crit	
9 th May	Wk 34						T
16 th May	Wk 35					3 rd year crit	
23 th May	Wk 36					folio review	
30 st May	Wk 37					exhibition prep	