

Project Documentation

Helen Stratford



A Day With a Duck, Ely 2012/13

selected works
2004 - 2016

slab

'Slab' centres around a conversation with two Roadsmen over the duration of UNIT(e) Residency, g39 Cardiff January - March 2016. The project explores how a conversation that took place over the residency period might be made visible and presented within a gallery context.

During the residency a cataloguing process of broken paving slabs between g39 and Cardiff train station opened a conversation between two Roadsmen and myself about their endless daily work, replacing broken slabs in the city streets. The conversation covered topics including the practicalities of laying slabs, the wider regeneration plans for the city, the responses of the general public and cake making. An exchange of skills and stories, including methods and images of cakes made by family members evolved into a cake made by Roadsmen Anthony Welch that translated my broken slab catalogue into edible form. In the final gallery presentation the cake was presented and eaten against a backdrop of broken paving slab wallpaper alongside a photo of Anthony holding his cake.

www.g39.org



proposition #1 (cardiff)

PROPOSITION #1

*Borrow a cow from a farmer or local landowner.
Take it into the City.*

'Proposition #1 (Cardiff)' is a proposal for a city that tests the boundaries between the rural and the urban and the rules of public space by proposing that a cow is taken on a journey from farmland to city centre.

'Proposition #1 (Cardiff)' plays with and subverts the language of architectural conventions, typologies, plans and written specifications, to provide a set of instructions and regulations required to take livestock on public transport and walked through public space. On the wall a grassed shelf with a 1:76 model cow sits beneath the proposition - an A4 printed sheet nailed to the wall. On an adjacent table a series of large scale tracing paper drawings are presented with a folder containing a checklist and associated byelaws and regulations necessary for the proposition to take place. Developed and researched specially for Cardiff but with relevance to all cities, the drawings - 'Bovine Trajectory,' 'Cow Horn Protectors' and 'Public Bovine Transportation' - with associated legislation, explore how over-regulation plays out within contemporary cityscapes.

www.g39.org

play the city now or never!

*When was the last time you walked back in silence watching the world pass you by in slow motion?
Have you ever followed a line on the pavement and pondered the future?*

'Play The City Now Or Never!' is a new free App for mobile devices that takes people on a playful journey of discovery. Developed with Peterborough and Southend residents through a series of workshops between April 2015 and May 2016, the App suggests directions and actions that provoke people to experience public spaces in fresh and imaginative way. The App uses geo mapping technologies, in combination with everyday mobile devices, to give users visual and audio prompts suggesting specific actions or tasks as they walk around town. These prompts encourage people to look, listen, think and interact with others, seeing familiar landscapes in a whole new light.

'Play The City Now Or Never!' has been developed with artist Idit Nathan in collaboration with arts organisation METAL Peterborough and Southend. The project is supported by Arts Council England, METAL and Peterborough Presents - Peterborough's Creative People & Places programme.

www.playthecitynowornever.com

[METAL project page](#)

[Festival Trailer](#)

Residency METAL Peterborough & Southend (UK) 2015-16





TAKE A SEAT: SMILE AT YOUR NEIGHBOUR PCNN Peterborough Arts Festival 2015

Photo: Julian Hughes



CAN YOU PLAY DEAD?

Southend 2016

Photo: Julian Hughes

perimeter perambulations

perambulate

pə'rambjəleɪt/

verb: formal humorous

walk or travel through or round a place.

BRITISH historical

walk round (a parish, forest, etc.)

in order to officially assert and record its boundaries.

Comissioned by RADAR, Loughborough University's Contemporary Art strand, for their market Town programme and developed through talking to Horticultural Supervisors, Museum Supervisors, Ecology experts, Development officers and Friends of Queen Park, 'Perimeter Perambulations' was an interactive tour of Queens Park, Loughborough, examining the entry points, thresholds and borders of this maintained natural environment.

Between August and October 2015, people were invited to join me as I walked the perimeter of Queens Park - walking, talking and surveying the borders. In October 2015 the walk was opened to residents of Loughborough to explore Queens Park with me through the eyes of the Urban Botanists and other experts I had met over the summer, some of whom joined me on the day, including the Chairman of the Carrillon Tower.

In the context of masterplan proposals for the area the interactive tour questioned ideas of connectedness and how the park was sensed as part of the town.

[RADAR review](#)

RADAR, Loughborough (UK) 2015

Radar Artists engage
with research



how to remake a city / demolition mood board

Funded through a competitive Microgrant application from Yorkshire Artspace, Sheffield 'How To Remake A City / Demolition Mood Board' was specially developed for Castlegate Exchange Place Open Studios weekend event, 21-22 November 2015.

The re-development of the Castle Market site in Castlegate Sheffield represents a rupture in the established patterns of use and movement in the city. Between June and October 2015 a series of conversations with the temporary community of demolition workers resulted in a performative presentation at Exchange Place Studios overlooking the demolition site for Yorkshire Artspace Open Studios in November 2015. 'How To Remake A City / Demolition Mood Board' researched how the rupture in the city fabric is negotiated by the demolition workers, who are perhaps more comfortable inhabitants of this space of uncertainty and change than city residents. I visited the demolition site to find out about the demolition process and how it sits within the wider city context, before constructing a 'Demolition Colour Chart' and inviting people to join me in making a 'Demolition Mood Board,' playing with the idea of the demolition site as design proposition rather than interim use.

[Yorkshire Artspace Blog](#)

Yorkshire Artspace, Sheffield (UK) 2015



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**





Photos: Nick Cheek

flora and fauna tours

Funded through a competitive Microgrant application from Yorkshire Artspace, Sheffield 'Flora and Fauna' tours were specially developed for Castlegate Festival weekend event, 20-21 June 2015.

Part walk, part survey, part conversation, the tours explored the spatial relationships between human and wildlife habitation in the Castlegate area of the city as it prepares for regeneration. The tours were led by Urban Botanist Christine Thuring and recorded by Anthropologist Tim Neal, who with a group of urban ramblers gathered evidence, made notes and talked about regeneration, rough sleepers, maintained wildness, wild maintenance, the native and the exotic, reconsidered weeds and how these terms might be reviewed in relation to the city and human inhabitation.

artspace.org.uk

www.sheffield.ac.uk/castlegatefestival/home

Yorkshire Artspace, Sheffield (UK) 2015



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ENGLAND**



Photo: Nick Cheek

expanded studio project

Expanded Studio Project is an artist-led collaborative exchange between studio holders at Primary, Nottingham and Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge. The first exchanges took place between November 2014 and April 2015. Working in collaboration with artist Craig Fisher on drawings and installations around the theme of 'standardised versions,' public presentations include Variety Show I at Primary, Nottingham February 2015 and Variety Show XIII at Aid & Abet, Cambridge April 2015.

Fisher and Stratford are engaged in examining how representations of disaster and destruction are mediated for our consumption. Standardised Versions (Rubble) shown at Primary and Aid & Abet is comprised of a number of components and takes as its starting point the idea that representations of scenes of disaster are based on standard types. Utilising a typology of paper objects, 3D drawings and a plan, with means of assembly, associated specification and the technical equipment necessary, (the very precise measuring stick VPM®) Standardised Versions (Rubble) plays with and subverts the language of architectural conventions, typologies, plans and written specifications, to provide a set of instructions to reconstruct that, which has the appearance of having been deconstructed.

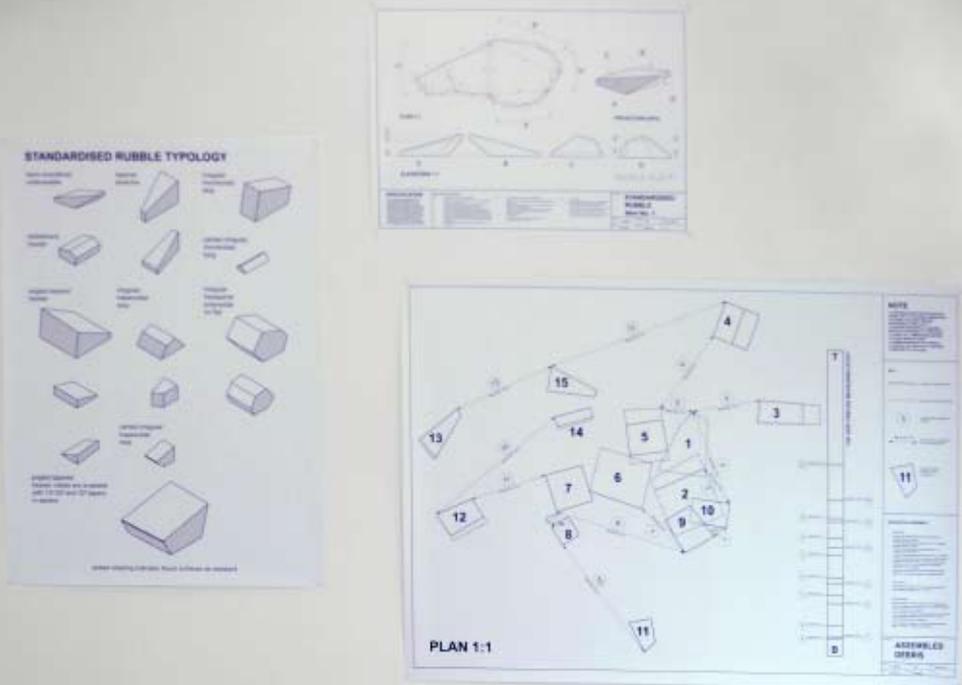
A further collaboration Randomised Barriers was shortlisted for Freitag Design A Truck competition May 2015. Standardised Versions (Rubble) was selected for Bloc billboard commission, Sheffield 2016

[#fisherstratford](#)

www.expandedstudioproject.tumblr.com

Primary, Nottingham
Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge (UK) 2015





gallery installation & performance



the first international forum on bird deterrence

Made after walking in the city with academics, artists, students and bird deterrent experts, 'The First International Forum On Bird Deterrence' is an exhibition of a series of public service posters and transcripts which make visible the spatial relationships between human and birdlife habitation in the city.

'The First International Forum On Bird Deterrence' is based on research conducted on-site in Sheffield during a 'Birdland is Everywhere' residency at Poly-Technic, Sheffield (2013) and an AA2A placement (Artists Access to Colleges) at Sheffield Hallam University (2014).

www.shu.ac.uk/siagallery

www.poly-technic.co.uk

SIA Gallery, Sheffield (UK) 2015

Sheffield
Hallam
University

Sheffield
Institute
of Arts

AA2A
Artists Access to Art Colleges

ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND
LOTTERY FUNDED

Supported using public funding by
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ENGLAND

"I'LL BE HONEST THE PIGEONS ARE A NIGHTMARE!

BUT, SINCE THE FLAT'S HAVE BECOME OCCUPIED, LESS SO, I THINK, ONCE YOU'VE GOT OCCUPATION, ONCE YOU OWN THE SPACE, AND WHATEVER ELSE, IT SEEMS TO HAVE SORT OF CALMED DOWN AND LOWERED COMPLAINTS.

OBVIOUSLY, PARK HILL, AS A STRUCTURE IS PERFECT FOR ROOSTING, AND I THINK THE PROBLEM IS THAT YOU'VE STILL GOT SOME PEOPLE WHO MAINLY FEED THEM AT THE TOP END OF THE ESTATE, WHICH DOESN'T HELP.

WE DID LOOK AT HAWKS AND WIRES BUT IT'S A LISTED BUILDING AND ALL THAT SORT OF STUFF.

WE ACTUALLY FOUND THIS GEL THAT LOOKS AS IF, IT GIVES OFF LIKE A SORT OF AN EFFLUX, AN EFFECT THAT MAKES IT LOOK AS IF THE BUILDING'S ON FIRE TO A PIGEON ... APPARENTLY.

IN THE PAST, FOR THE EXISTING RESIDENTS, A BIT OF CAKE AND AN ASPIRIN IN THE MIDDLE OF IT, WAS ONE OF THEIR METHODS ... EXPLODES THE PIGEON FROM THE INSIDE. IT'S A LITTLE BIT HARSH BUT UM ... NO MORE NUISANCE.

I THINK MAYBE FEEDING PIGEONS WAS JUST SOMETHING PEOPLE DID IF THEY'D BEEN HERE FOR A LONG TIME.

IT'S JUST WHAT THEY DID ...

FOR /2005' ENTIRE GENERATION, FEEDING PIGEONS IS PRETTY MUCH /2007' WHAT THEY DO."

TOM LAWRENCE, GREEN SPACE JULY 2010

U SPY
DETERRENT
SURVEY



“I’LL BE HONEST THE PIGEONS ARE A NIGHTMARE!

**BUT, SINCE THE FLATS HAVE BECOME OCCUPIED,
LESS SO. I THINK, ONCE YOU’VE GOT OCCUPATION,
ONCE YOU OWN THE SPACE, AND WHATEVER ELSE,
IT SEEMS TO HAVE SORT OF CALMED DOWN AND
LOWERED COMPLAINTS.**

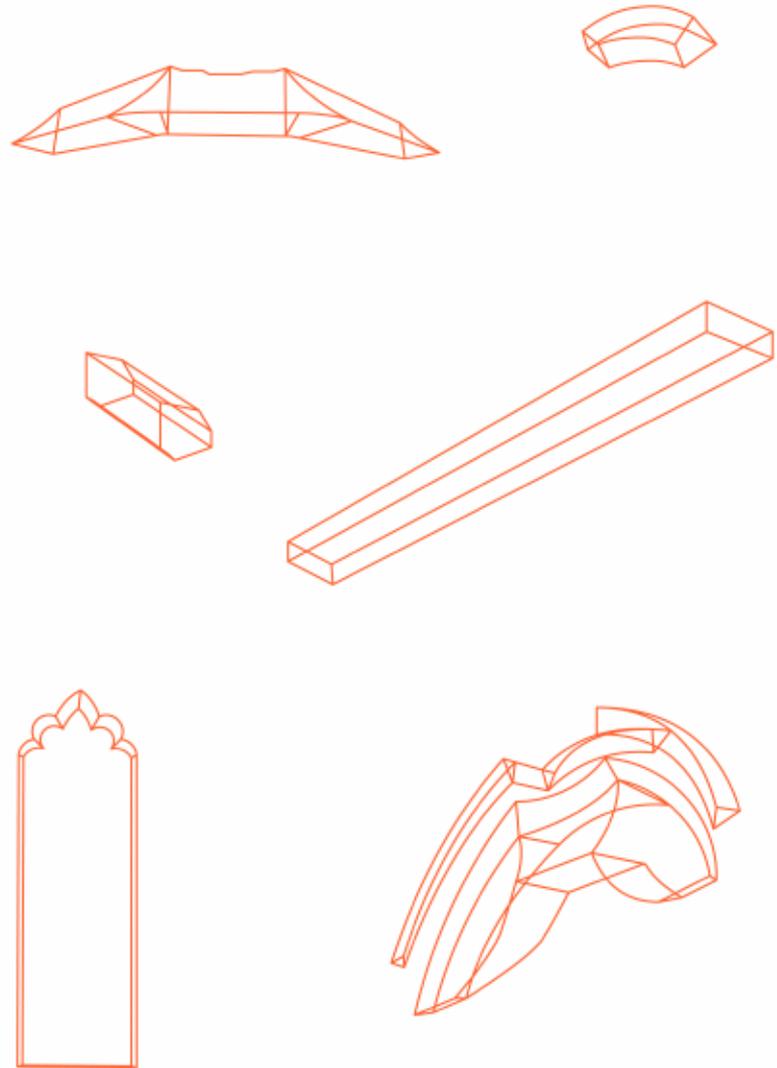
**OBVIOUSLY, PARK HILL, AS A STRUCTURE IS
PERFECT FOR ROOSTING. AND I THINK THE PROBLEM
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**I THINK MAYBE FEEDING PIGEONS WAS JUST
SOMETHING PEOPLE DID IF THEY’D BEEN HERE FOR A
LONG TIME.**

IT’S JUST WHAT THEY DID ...

**FOR *THIS* ENTIRE GENERATION, FEEDING PIGEONS IS
PRETTY MUCH *NOT* WHAT THEY DO.”**

TOM LAWRENCE, URBAN SPLASH JULY 2013



market meditations

Residency, Gallery Presentation & Live Art Events hosted by the Center for Contemporary Arts Celje, Slovenia, supported by ACE/ British Council Artists International Development Fund (2013/14)

Celje is the third largest city in Slovenia. In recent years it has undergone a regeneration programme for which the market was one of the first buildings. Designed to replace an 'unstable,' self-made structure, the building has been shortlisted for many awards, however, the traders have another story to tell. Expertly, they make their own adaptations yet still feel limited to make the space their own. In May 2013, I invited students from the Gimnazija Center, (High School), to make a performative exploration of the Market; exploring how to perform it differently should it become empty. It was both provocation and proposal.

The gallery presentation centres around a market table - the same design as the concrete ones in the market but remade in timber - the material of the old market. Films of the old market and the student actions sit on the table, while a series of drawings of the trader's adaptations are pasted to the walls. The drawings take the fragile and temporary adaptations and make them into architectural propositions. These hidden / unaddressed aspects of architecture inform the rest of the show. On a shelf are 3 documents: a section from the Slovenian code of conduct for Architects, a conversation with the traders and a conversation with the architects. In the architects' conversation for various legal and political reasons parts are censored. In this context, the students' actions mediate between the traders and the architects. They are not constructed by the laws that restrict the traders from making changes to the building without the architect's permission, but they also step outside and challenge the architects' vision.

The opening of the show included cakes of new buildings planned or built for the city, all made with Market produce.

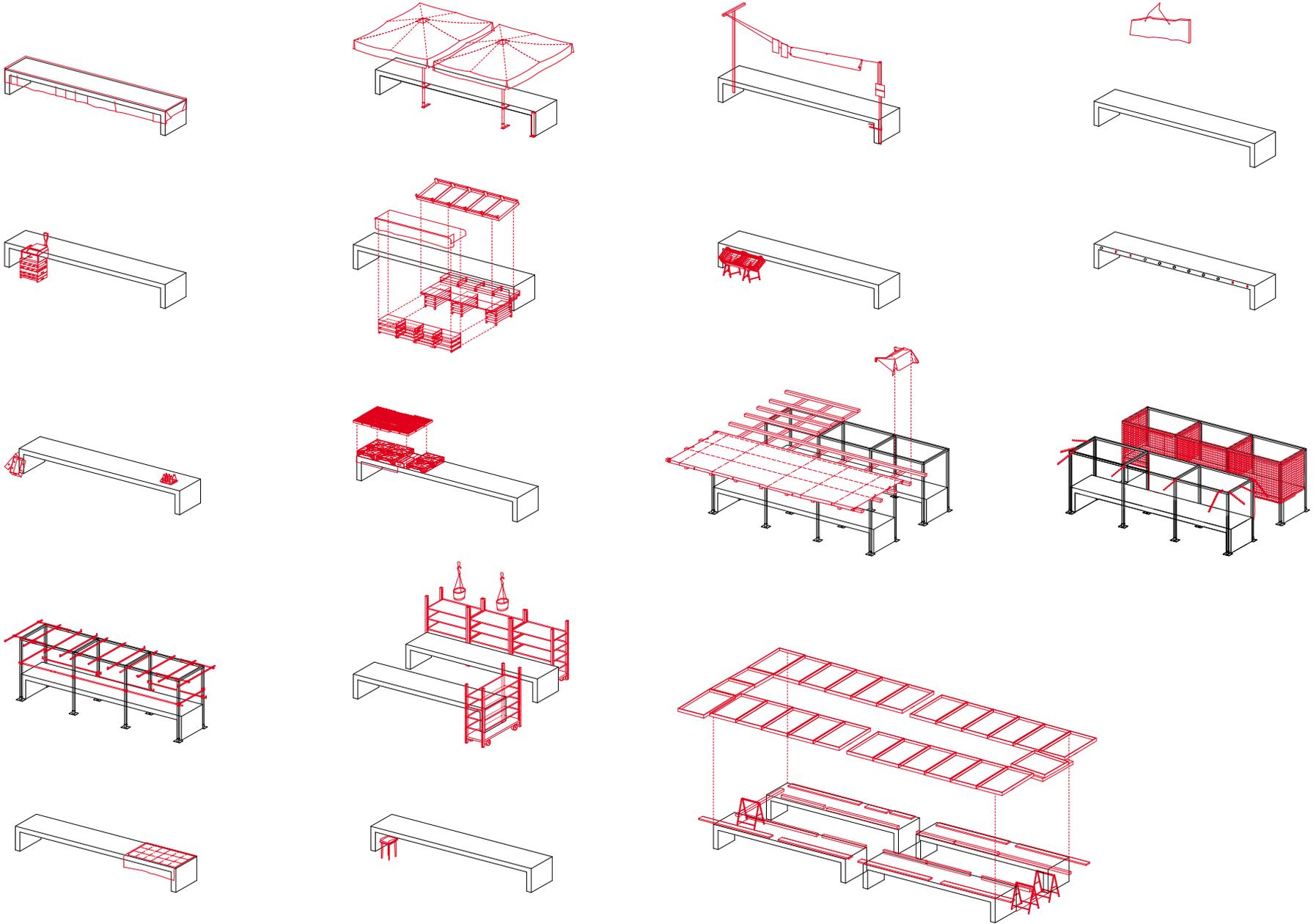
National & Local Press Coverage:
'Table Tennis At The Market'
'Celje City Market, As It Could Be'

ZAVOD CELEIA CELJE





Photo: Nick Cheek



adapions



gallery installation



Celje City Vision
from Market produce

Photo: Nik Jarh

things to do with shopping centres

When it opened in 1988, Cornhill Walk in Bury St Edmunds offered 'the only fully enclosed retailing in the town centre,' providing shoppers with a 'modern, covered' shopping experience, 'all under one roof.' Once heralded as a 'fashion Mecca,' the design was promoted for its impressive atrium, high quality emulsion, terrazzo flooring, water features and seasonal planting. Since it's opening, the glass-covered mall has played host to a variety of events including beauty pageants, baby & toddler of the year competitions, fashion shows and festivals, not to mention the occasional martial arts demonstration and TV celebrity appearance, forming a backdrop to the lives of many Bury residents.

An afternoon event and installation in the gallery explored this familiar yet overlooked Bury St Edmunds landmark. Visitors were invited to share memories of the centre by joining security guard Ed Vince on a personal tour of the building he has worked in all his working life, contribute to a scrapbook archive of newspaper clippings collected by centre manager Chrissie Harrod over 18 years, and leaf through documentation, including an interview with the architect and shopping centre design guides, exploring the ideologies and intentions behind Cornhill Walk alongside the everyday routines of the centre which continue despite it's recent decline - the daily cleaning, the monthly delivery of background music, the hourly security patrols....

[a-n interface 'Things To Do With Shopping Centres' review](#)

Smiths Row Gallery & Cornhill Walk Shopping Centre
Bury St Edmunds (UK) March 2014

**SMITHS
ROW**





Photo: Julian Hughes



Photo: Julian Hughes

u-spy deterrent survey

Where are the places birds desire to be in the city?

Where would birds love to sit, rest, roost, land, light, alight, settle, touch down, perch or nest, but whose wishes are denied?

What relationship do these places have to human inhabitation?

U-Spy Deterrent Survey is part of a Mass Birdlife Observation strategy, exploring the spatial interaction between human and wildlife in public spaces. U-Spy Deterrent Survey is based on research conducted on-site in Sheffield during a 'Birdland is Everywhere' residency at Poly-Technic, Sheffield.

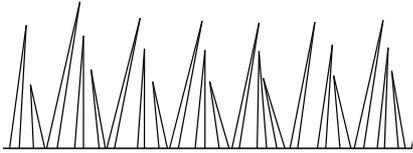
U-Spy Deterrent Survey also forms a 2-page piece in Paper Stages commissioned by Forest Fringe. Paper Stages is a festival of performance contained within the pages of a beautifully designed book. Following its success at the Edinburgh Festival 2012, this new UK-wide version of Paper Stages is curated by Forest Fringe in partnership with Arnolfini, Battersea Arts Centre, Fierce Festival, Live Art Development Agency, National Theatre Wales, Northern Stage and Cambridge Junction.

www.poly-technic.co.uk

www.paperstages.co.uk

Paper Stages / Forest Fringe (UK) 2013





(1)

Plastic & Metal Spikes (1).

..... Score **5**



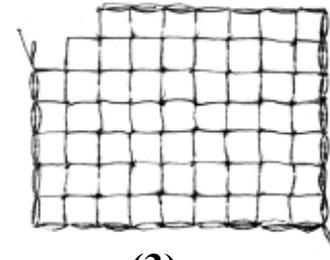
(2)

Wires (2).

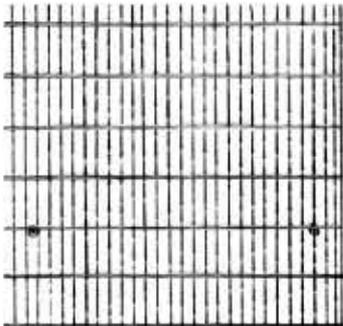
..... Score **5**

Netting (3).

..... Score **5**



(3)



(4)

Grilles & Mesh (4).

..... Score **10**



(5)

Signs (5).

the silent party

Is it possible to hold a party without speaking?

How can we communicate without sound?

What ways of bring together can we find without noise?

The Silent Party was a site-specific event created for Celje Contemporary Arts Centre, Slovenia during a 2-month AIR CELEIA residency selected via open call. It was a response to the self-imposed noise curfew by city residents. Repeated tales of dinner parties and gallery openings halted by police call-outs from residents of neighbouring properties, echoed a gradual emptying of the centre of the City of Celje due to economic and urban policies, depriving it of life and vitality. The poster was an invitation/provocation to city residents to abide by their own rules. It was displayed in Likovni Gallery during the event – an art gallery directly adjacent to the Mayoral Office and fly-posted around the city.

AIR CELEIA



ON ENTERING **THE SILENT PARTY**
YOU AGREE TO ABIDE BY THE
FOLLOWING:

DO NOT SPEAK

DO NOT MAKE OTHER AUDIBLE SOUNDS
WITH THE VOICE

DO NOT CLICK FINGERS OR MAKE AUDIBLE SOUNDS FROM
CONTACT WITH THE ROOM OR OBJECTS THEREIN

DO TAKE YOUR SHOES OFF

DO USE GESTURES TO COMMUNICATE

DO FIND WAYS OF BEING TOGETHER WITHOUT NOISE



an architectural cleaning cupboard tour

The place: a cleaning cupboard

The pitch: a 10 minute conversation

The audience: one or two people (depending on the size of the cupboard)

Which part of your house, room, car, desk do you clean first and why? Where do you put the clutter that impinges on your space?

Audiences of up to two people are invited into a cleaning cupboard for a conversation about how cleaning routines exert specific material and political translations: where certain spaces have priority to be cleaned before a certain time, where spaces become translated into 'edges and ledges,' each with their own cleaning machine and associated practice, and where cleaning activities remove all trace of 'out of place' matter, ensuring it does not pile up and impede the smooth flow of people, or hinder the public reception of performance.

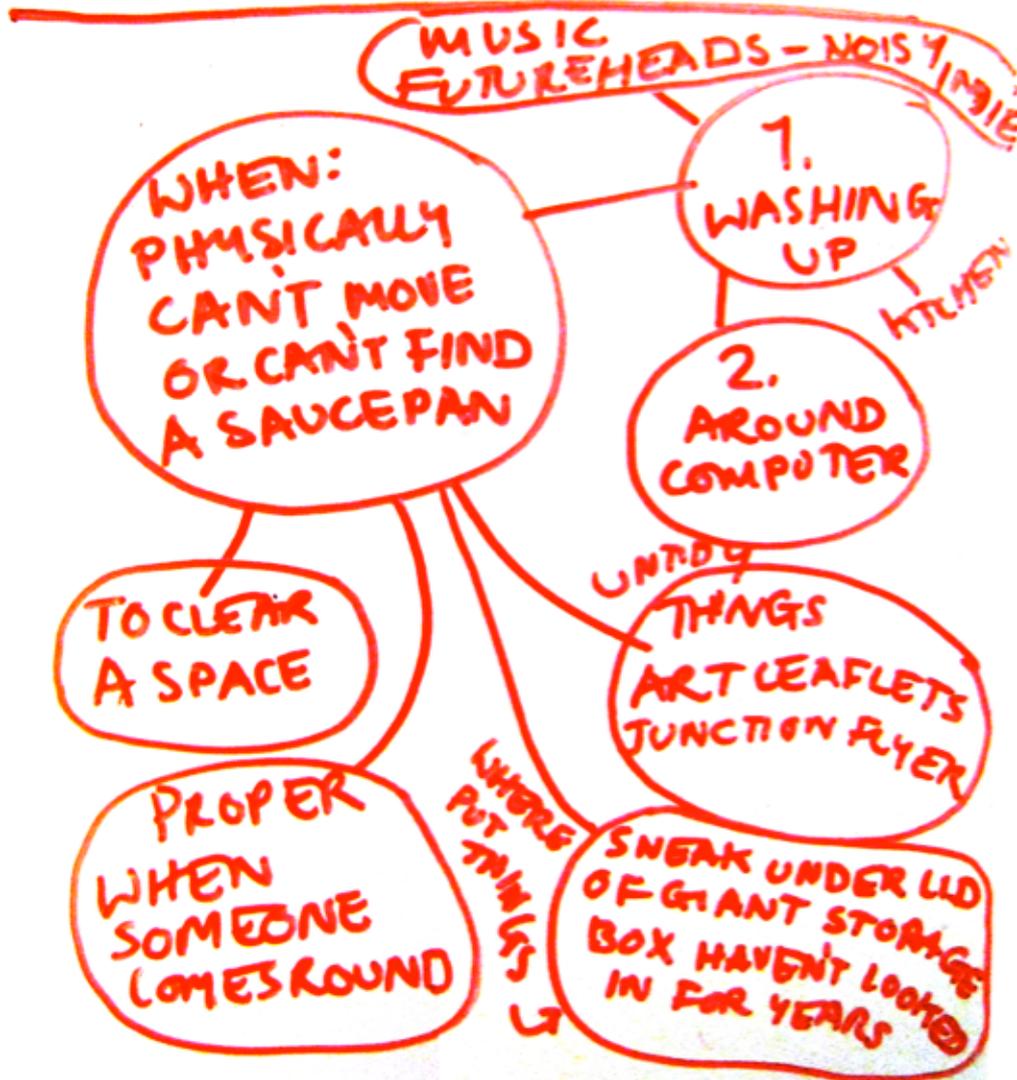
Part of Sampled Unfinished and Unleashed Festival 2013 at Cambridge Junction and [Live] Art Club at Norwich Arts Centre, and in development, An Architectural Cleaning Cupboard Tour took place over an afternoon and evening - making an inventory of the cupboards contents and spatial diagrams of the audience's cleaning routines. Through conversations in this small dark place cleaning cupboards were explored as both 'support' practice and place of the 'other;' exploring how things that are placed out of view actually create the spaces upon which the public reception of performance depends.



Photo: Idit Nathan

IN PLAIN
SIGHT ON
KITCHEN
TABLE

CORK
BOARD
IN KITCHEN
+ STUDY



#sampled13

Helen Stratford
brilliant Cleaning Cupboard
tour, what's your method of
cleaning your home?

sunder & land

Sunder & Land is a playful and participatory walk, using props and prompts that explores notions of splitting apart and deconstructing as well as land and belonging. Playful prompts and scores (in the form of cards) along with other play devices such as timers, dice, rope and chalk combined to create a unique and site-specific participatory event.

The premise which informs Sunder & Land is that walking and playing as phenomena are ideal forms for questioning and resisting commodification. They can be simple without being simplistic, accessible yet poetic and most importantly, can provoke feelings and thoughts regarding our environment, near and far, in an experiential way.

The walk was created in collaboration with Idit Nathan for delegates of the On Walking conference at The University of Sunderland which accompanied the Walk On National touring exhibition at the Northern Gallery of Contemporary Art , June 2013.

Walk On: On Walking

Northern Gallery of Contemporary Art/ University of Sunderland (UK) 2013





a day with a duck

A Day With A Duck was a 6-month residency, gallery presentation and programme of live art events made in collaboration with artists, local people and wildlife.

Ely has a unique relationship with its feathered denizens. Over the years, the Muscovy ducks have occupied a small patch of land close to the Babylon Gallery, transforming it into a territory for which human access is problematic. A day spent with an Ely Muscovy duck, marked the beginning of encounters with residents, visitors, tourists and workers whose paths whose paths interact with the public spaces that adjoin the riverside including the contested duck territory. Ely is in the midst of change - undergoing a masterplanning process of 'planned growth' to 'maintain the city's unique identity.' In contrast, A Day With A Duck explored alternate/unplanned places, focusing on city territories and contrasts between the urban and the wild. The gallery presentation/programme of live-art events included duck-led tours, Muscovy duck walks, a specially developed duck proclamation read by Ely's Official Town Crier and a Live Duck Shoot, where over 40 people filmed the ducks with Super 8 cameras. On the summer solstice 2013, the Liberty Belle tour boat became a Floating Micro Cinema, showing footage from the Live Duck Shoot.

A Day With A Duck was supported by public funding from a successful individual Grants from the Arts award from ACE, funding from City of Ely Council and Arts Development East Cambridgeshire.

['A Day With A Duck' film](#)

[a-n interface 'A Day With A Duck' review](#)

www.adec.org.uk

[Ely News](#)

Babylon Gallery, Ely (UK) 2012/13





LIBERTY BELLE
FLOATING MICRO CINEMA
21 June 2013 4:30 - 9:30pm

PROGRAMME



lovearchitecture
festival 2013

21-30 June 2013

love
architecture
org
Join me here



Quayside

Free event, Santa

Viewing times: 4:30, 5:30, 6:30

Maximum 12 per

More details: www.helenstratford.co.uk



Photo: Nick Cheek

Forthcoming Exhibition:
1 Sept - 7 Oct 2012 // A Day With A Duck //
Babylon Gallery // Ely

ADEC

www.adec.org.uk
www.helenstratford.co.uk
www.cambridge-super8.org

live duck shoot!



Ely
Riverside
outside
Babylon Gallery

Sat 15th September
2.30-4.30pm

Take part in a live 'duck shoot'
with artist **Helen Stratford**
in collaboration with
Ely-based members of
Cambridge Super 8 Group
No experience required.

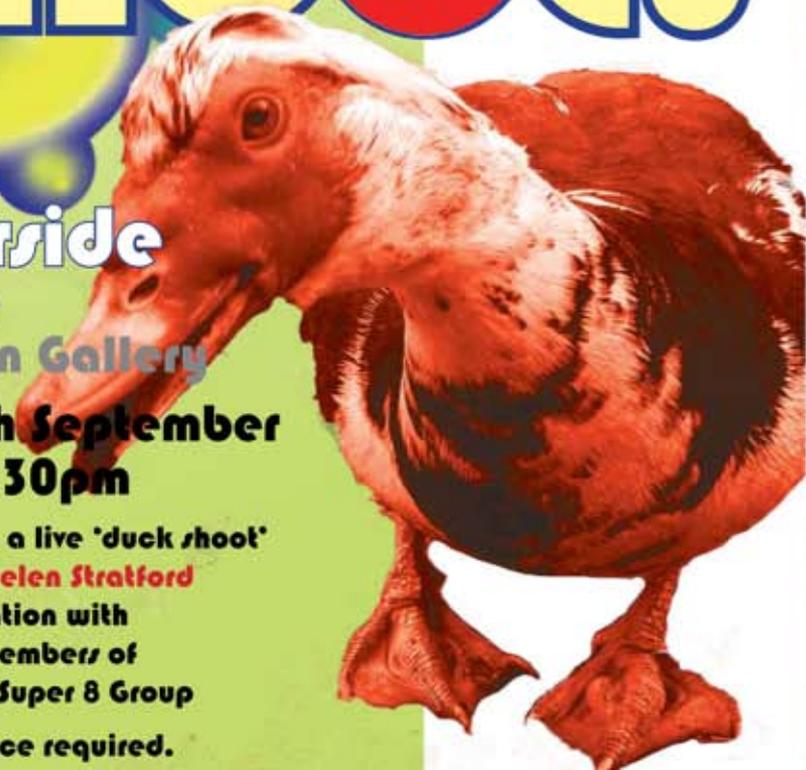


Photo: Julian Hughes



START OF PROCLAMATION

Citizens of Ely and visitors to our city.
We believe that humans and Muscovy Ducks can peacefully co-exist.

We, who are gathered here today, assert that humans and Muscovy Ducks have in fact co-existed successfully for decades.

We, the people of Ely and the people in Ely, consider that the current activities of our own species significantly alter the physical and ecological environment of the city and we admire species adaptable enough to inhabit the chance spaces that our actions create.

We, the people who maintain an emotional, economic or domestic connection to Ely applaud the Muscovy Duck as a naturalised introduced species, that intimately adapts to only a few particular places, and we are grateful that Ely is one of these rare chosen habitats.

We, the people who maintain a recreational, ornithological or rural connection to Ely, propose that the city should not be seen as separate from the countryside; but an urban space taken under the wing of the rural; epitomised by the widely recognised city resident status of the Muscovy Duck.

We, the people gathered here today, will now demonstrate our support for the aforementioned points.

[Begin quacking, or hissing joyfully]

END OF PROCLAMATION

MARKET PLACE

ADeC

ELY Duck Led Tour 2012!



Ely's unique tourist experience!

- * Free!
- * DIY tour!
- * Starts outside Babylon Gallery

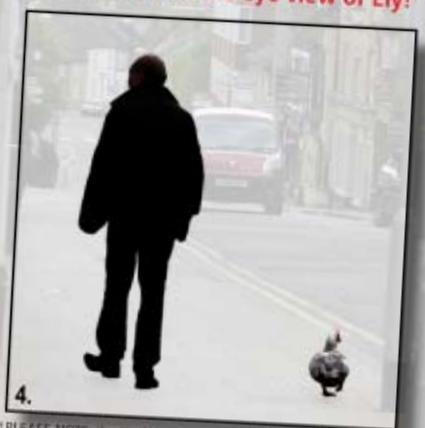
ELY Duck Led Tour 2012!

Babylon Gallery · Waterside · Ely · CB7 4AU
Tel: 01353 616991 Web: www.adec.org.uk

Witnessed passing Waterside Antiques' entrance, waddling past residents' living room windows or suddenly appearing from beneath a bench by the fish and chip shop at the Market Place, one routine is always in the peripheral vision of the city of Ely. The figure of a lone Muscovy duck and its daily migration from Ely Riverside, up Fore Hill, to the city centre and back again. Where does it go? Why is it going there? What does it see on the way?



- Experience this unique tour of Ely in 4 easy steps:
1. Note the distinct features of the Muscovy duck (see picture 1.)
 2. Locate the duck on Monks' Hithe - the green outside Babylon Gallery or
 3. Ask Geoff the Ice Cream Man (The Ice Cream Parlour outside Babylon Gallery) for the duck's whereabouts.
 4. Once located, follow or join to experience a duck's eye view of Ely!

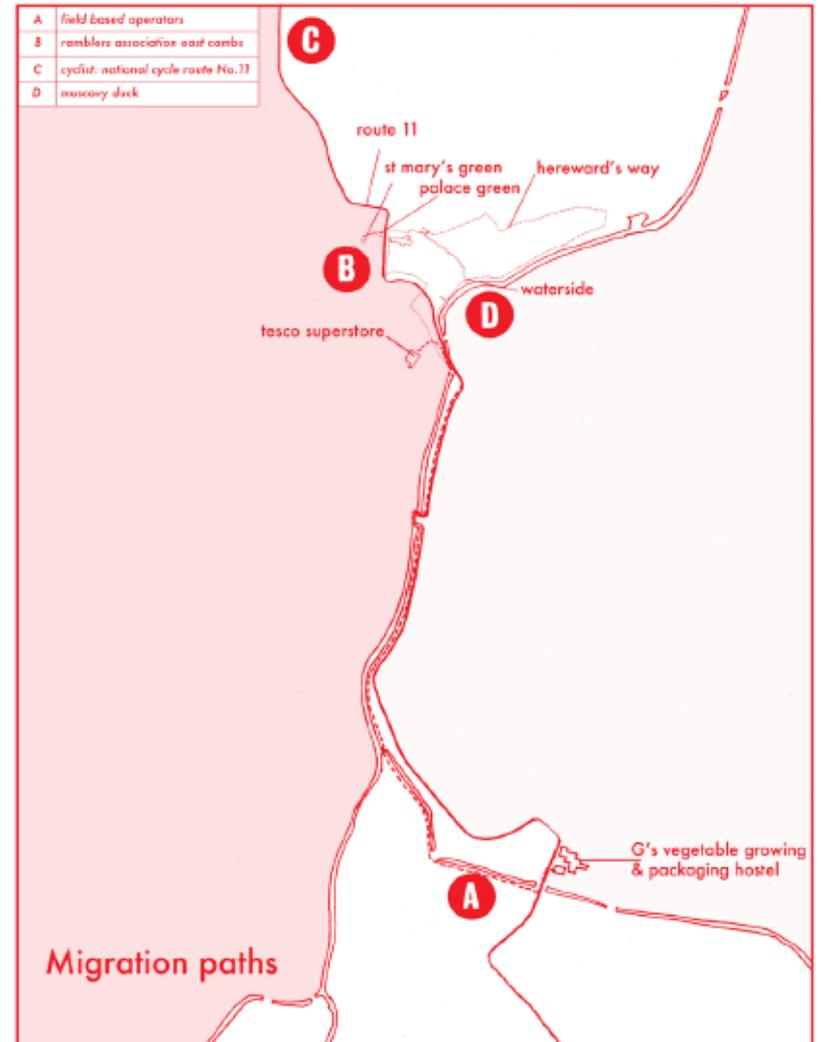
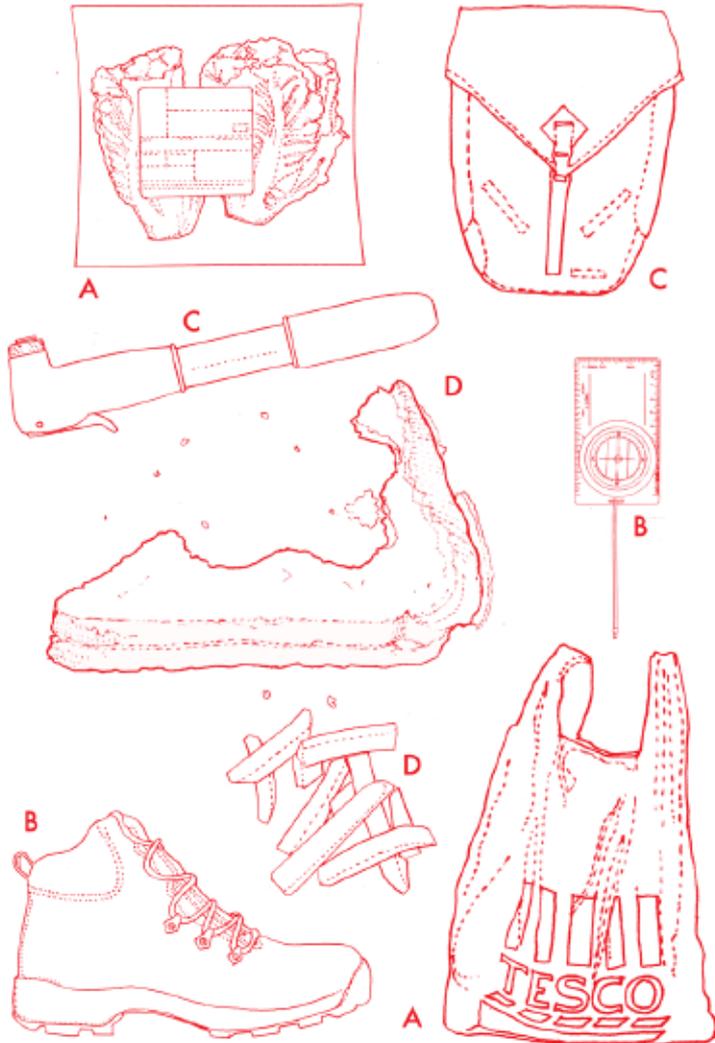


* PLEASE NOTE: the Duck Led Tour is entirely dependent on the behavioural characteristics of the Muscovy duck. The tour organisers do not accept responsibility for its movements. Tours do not follow regular patterns and departure times vary. However, likely city centre days are Mondays and Thursday Market Days; departure times around 7am; return trips around 7pm. For the optimum authentic tour experience please avoid coaxing and/or the deposition of foodstuffs.

part of A Day With A Duck. Gallery presentation and programme of Helen Stratford, Babylon Gallery, Ely, 1 September - 7 October 2012.

ADeC For details see: A Day With A Duck www.adec.org.uk

MIGRATION PATHS ACCOMPANYING ITEMS





palace green

cathedral green

cross green

st mary's green

the porta

cherry hill

jubilee gardens

monks' hithe

the maltings

waterside

babylon

common muckhill

quayside

riverside

castle hithe

river great ouse

pocket park

roswell pits

the cresswells

lavender green

the grasslands

market place

steeple gate

Practising firstsite (10 ways to misuse a visual arts centre)*

Practising firstsite is an invitation to an exhibition audience to become part of an exhibition themselves, while experiencing an unusual view of a visual arts centre.

Artist collaboration urban (col)laboratory presented architectural information about 10 places in the firstsite building and combined this with playful and poetic instructions for using these places other than intended. Instructions were written on glass walls and floors in the building and a performative walk guided people to these places where the audience were invited to try out the instructions in a collaborative performance.

*with Diana Wesser as urban (col)laboratory
Firstsite, Colchester (UK) collaborative performance
Playing with space filmscreenings and performances
23rd & 24th June 2012





Photos: Lawrence Bradbury

please wait to be served (how to perform a café)

visual art installation: Hunt & Darton Café 2012

Please Wait To Be Served is an invitation to people visiting Hunt & Darton's Live Art Café to become part of a DIY performance, while experiencing the many and varied performances and rules of etiquette associated with this everyday activity.

Instructions, advice and playful games were relayed on what appeared to be a conventional menu, displayed on the café tables. Advice included: types of seating arrangements, behaviour to other customers, how to attract the waiter's attention and how to play with your food, including the game of 'Battenberg Battlements.'

Hunt & Darton Café, Cambridge
Live Art Collective East
2 - 27 May 2012

ESCALATOR

SUPPORTING ARTISTS
IN THE SOUTH OF
ENGLAND



LOTTERY FUNDED



performative architectures*

ongoing research project 2011/12

Performative Architectures is a research project that aims to open up possibilities for exchange, dialogues, extend existing networks and develop new practice directions. Kindly supported by Arts Council England and part of the Live Art Escalator programme, the project has funding to make links and build networks with artists working between architecture and performativity to explore alternate practices in public space.

In October 2011 Performative Architectures formed the subject of a discussion event exploring performativity within social, participatory and critical spatial practices, hosted by the Showroom, London with Emily Pethick, Doina Petrescu, Kathrin Böhm and Jane Rendell. A DIY leaflet that evolved out of the discussion and was launched at Wysing Arts Centre Department of Overlooked Histories event in November 2011.

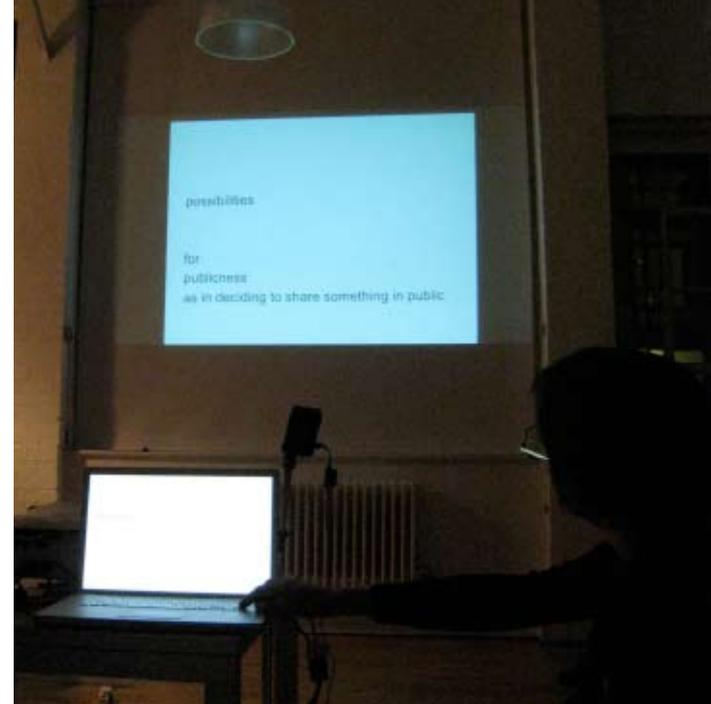
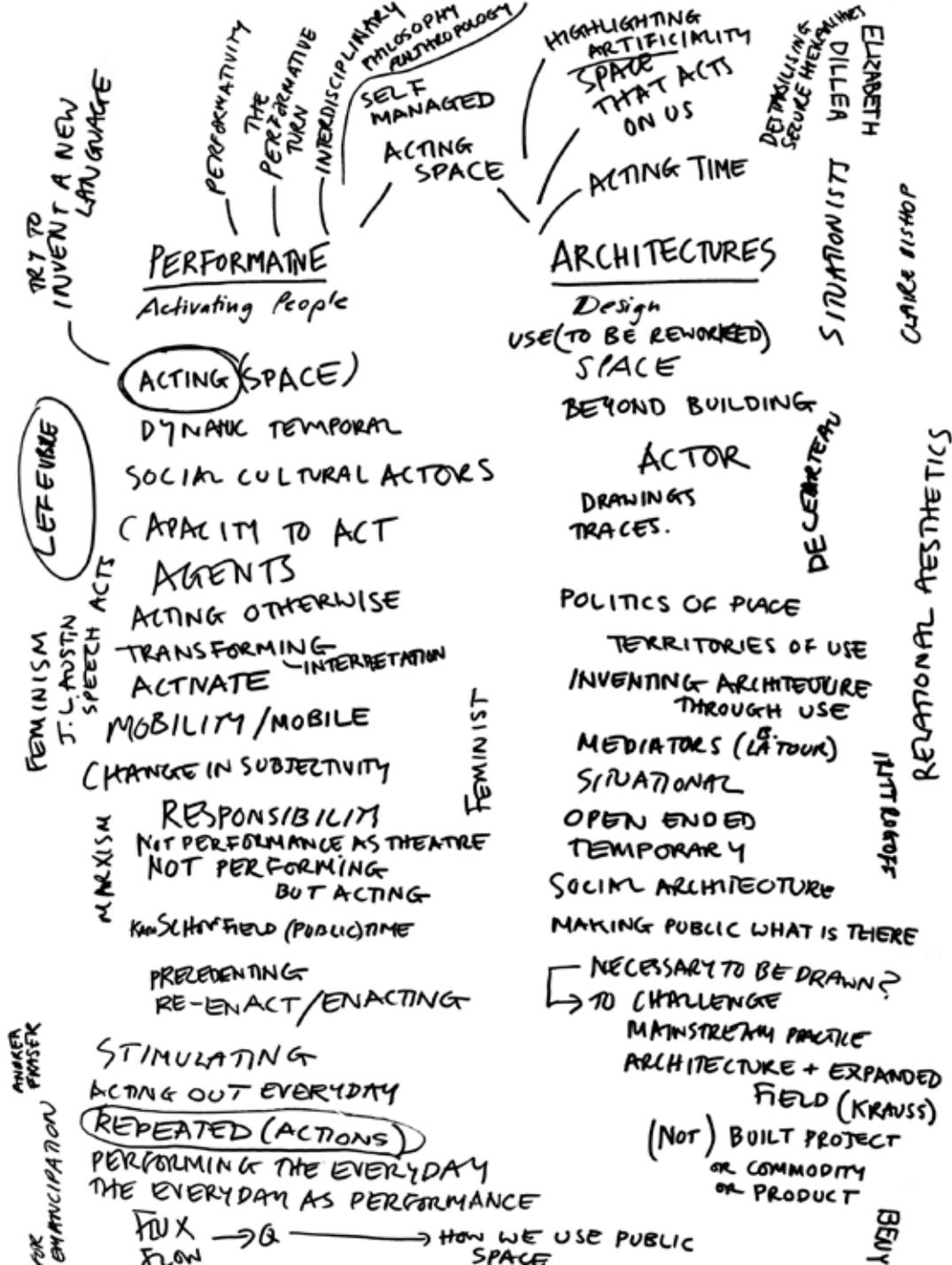
*In collaboration with Diana Wesser

ESCALATOR

SUPPORTING ARTISTS
IN THE LIGHT OF
ENGLAND



LOTTERY FUNDED



Extract of the notes taken during the 'Performative Architectures' Discussion at the Showroom, London October 2011

routine procedures

'Routine Procedures' is one of a series of works which comprise The Other Side of Waiting: a curated public art project by artist and architect collective taking place, located in the new Perinatal Centre at The Homerton Hospital in London. The project proposes six artworks that are connected by their interest in the critical and practical issues which affect the spaces and processes of the Mother and Baby Unit. Interventions are planned in, and relate to, a range of locations - from public spaces such as corridors, waiting areas and wards, to the more private realms of staff rest rooms and ensuite bathrooms of delivery rooms.

The hospital has identified a need to improve existing dignity practices surrounding curtain use on wards. I am working with nurses, estates, ward managers and clients to develop a piece of work that builds on these practices of 'curtain etiquette,' focusing on how perceptions of the hospital change according to role and routine. In the post-natal ward, it is an implicit negotiation between medical perceptions of health, observation and procedure, and cultural and social perceptions of privacy and dignity: both comprising specific ideas about bodies and their spatial interactions. An ongoing discussion with Essence of Care nurses, based at the Homerton, has inspired the visualisation of a series of proposals that have formed a starting point for provoking more conversations around these issues. It has also begun to inform the development of a form of a work that acts at many levels - from practice, including a 'ward roadshow' and a page in the 'bedside companion' folder, to temporary signage to long term curtain design, all of which contribute to the negotiation and perception of this particular threshold.

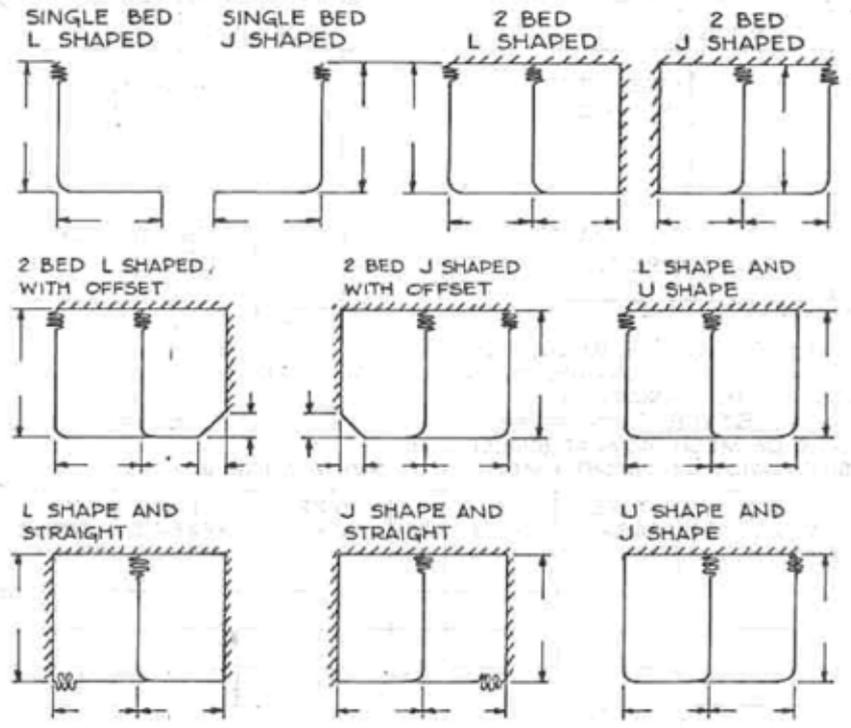
www.takingplace.org.uk

Homerton Hospital, Hackney London (UK) 2007 - current





TYPICAL LAYOUTS ORDER FORM



Spring/Summer 2009

Homertonlife

FOR ALL STAFF, CATCH UP WITH ALL THE LATEST NEWS AND EVENTS



Curtains with Flair

New designs
are a hit with
patients



intervals*

A collective audio-lead time travel into the past & future of Copenhagen at 3 different Metro stations

Based on research made through exchanges with residents, tourists, city planners, architects, historians; involving different communities and sections of society, on-line dialogues using facebook and a downloadable questionnaire, the audio walk is a collaborative process incorporating and unfolding out of visions of the past and the future of the city from Copenhagen inhabitants and visitors. Played back on participant's own mp3 players or mobile phones the performance provides an unexpected view of the city.

Two audio files were made available for downloading 24 hours before the performance began, at which point there was a choice of 'past' or 'future' and the station in which to experience the walk. Participants were given instructions to arrive at their chosen station at a precise time where they started the audio file. During the performance some participants will listen to voices, sounds and views from the past while others listen to voices, sounds and views from the future. The present lies in somewhere in-between....

www.vimeo.com



*with Diana Wesser as urban (co)laboratory & Giraff Graff (DK)
Metropolis Biennale Copenhagen, August 2011
www.kit.dk/2011/METROPOLIS.html

ESCALATOR

SUPPORTING ARTISTS
IN THE EAST OF
ENGLAND





walking through walls*

Exploring some of the more intimate and forgotten spaces of the Centraltheater Leipzig, the walk questioned what lies behind the walls, under the floorboards, and above the ceiling. The walk focused specifically on people who work in the theatre but who are meant to be invisible.

The audio walk-for-one walk took place during the nighttime routines. A member of the theatre's evening services passed the walker an unmarked envelope containing a letter. The letter set the scene for the walk, which led the walker, guided by the voice of an actor from the house ensemble, around the darkened corridors of the theatre. It focused on the position of the walker who became a participant, following instructions to move through the theatre, and a performer through the chance meetings they encountered with nighttime workers.

www.stadttheaterbremerhaven.de

*with Diana Wesser as urban (col)laboratory
Centraltheater Leipzig & Stadttheatre Bremerhaven (DE)
Audio walk-for one
Festival play! LEIPZIG – Movement in Urban Space, June 2010
Stadttheatre Bremerhaven, PREMIERE October 2nd 2011

Centraltheater
SCHAUBÜHNE
LINDENFELS

STATENS
Teater
SCENE
UNIVERSITÄT LEIPZIG

KULTURSTIFTUNG
DES
BUNDES



23/06 2010

Exist toll. Toll. Toll!

Danke
fanci

Its so lovely. that someone
cares about the back hidden
people is sth. that needed
to be done for a long time

What an institution is the
theatre - who knows maybe
saving all of us!

Contributing with small
pieces, making it a whole...
That was a very beautiful
walk. Thanks a lot!



Durch die Wände
gehen - eine wunder-
volle Idee - die
altbekannten Räume
habe ich alt und
neu gesehen!!

Dienstag

Schauspielhaus -
Centraltheater
23.6.2010

“ ‘Walking through Walls’ – a wonderful idea – I’ve seen the well-known rooms old and new!”

“A wonderful disorientation of rooms and doorways. There was a great curiosity to open all the doors to see what happened behind them during the day. Oneself is haunting this place like a ghost and has left a piece of oneself there. It’s shrouded in fog. From today on I’ll enter the building differently than even yesterday”

“Very, very brilliant! Sometimes even a bit “scary” so alone in the abandoned theatre. Very amazing impressions, I didn’t know the club is that close! Makes me pensive about time, people, coming and going ...”

“Great work to all of us – poetic!!! ... should be repeated.”

“A loving work about our house and the ‘ghosts’ that are working and living here! A present to our theatre.”

“A very nice idea to experience the theatre from a very different, personal side.”

please wait here: (instructions for performing a queue for a pleasure pier train)*

Please Wait Here is an invitation to people queuing for the pleasure pier train at Southend-on-Sea to become part of a DIY performance, while experiencing an unusual view of an unusual yet everyday activity.

10 instructions were located at the 'dry' and 'wet' ends of the pier which echoed usual queuing activities - "stand at a body's distance from the person in front at all times" - and introduced some more unusual ones - "turn slowly around and give a smile to the person directly behind you."

The instructions installation drew on the prevalent signage already in place at the pier.

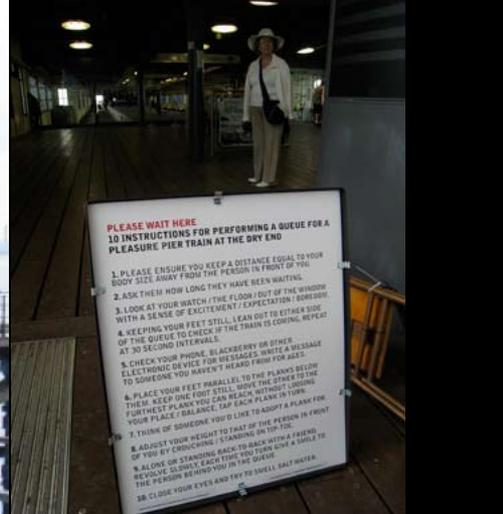
www.artside.org.uk

*with Diana Wesser as urban (co)laboratory
DIY performance: artside: pause festival
01.07.11 - 16.07.11 Southend-on-Sea www.artside.org.uk

artside 2011



Photo: Nick Cheek



practising wysing (10 ways to mis-use a building)*

Practising Wysing is an invitation to an exhibition audience to become part of an exhibition themselves, while experiencing an unusual view of a contemporary arts centre.

Architectural information about 10 places in the complex of buildings that make up Wysing Art Centre was combined with instructions for using these places other than intended.

A leaflet containing this information was made available in the show, displayed next to an image of children playing on the handrails of the entrance ramp.

During the opening the audience were invited to try out the instructions in a collaborative performance.

*with Diana Wesser as urban (col)laboratory
Wysing Arts Centre (UK) collaborative performance
WAC Partnering, 16 October – 28 November 2010



HELEN STRATFORD & DIANA WESSER

Practising Wysing:

10 ways to misuse a building.

1 PRACTICE: feeling the void

PLACE: low wall at the end of the central courtyard.
CONSTRUCTION: 225mm solid grey engineering brick on strip footings.
ACTIVITY: lie on your back on the wall, arms and feet stretched out into the sky for as long as you can.

2 PRACTICE: facing the future

PLACE: dark grey line in ground between studio building and central courtyard.
CONSTRUCTION: grey engineering bricks laid on edge between grooved timber decking and loose laid gravel.
ACTIVITY: walk along the line, towards the gallery. Avoid stepping on the timber decking and / or the gravel. Look straight ahead with a smile.

3 PRACTICE: feeling weightless

PLACE: in-between handrails at foot of stairs to the studios.
CONSTRUCTION: 40mm diameter timber handrails, supported by steel balustrades painted black to reflect local vernacular found in nearby farmhouse.
ACTIVITY: using the handrails find a position in the air where you don't touch the stairs at all, hold for approximately 10 seconds.

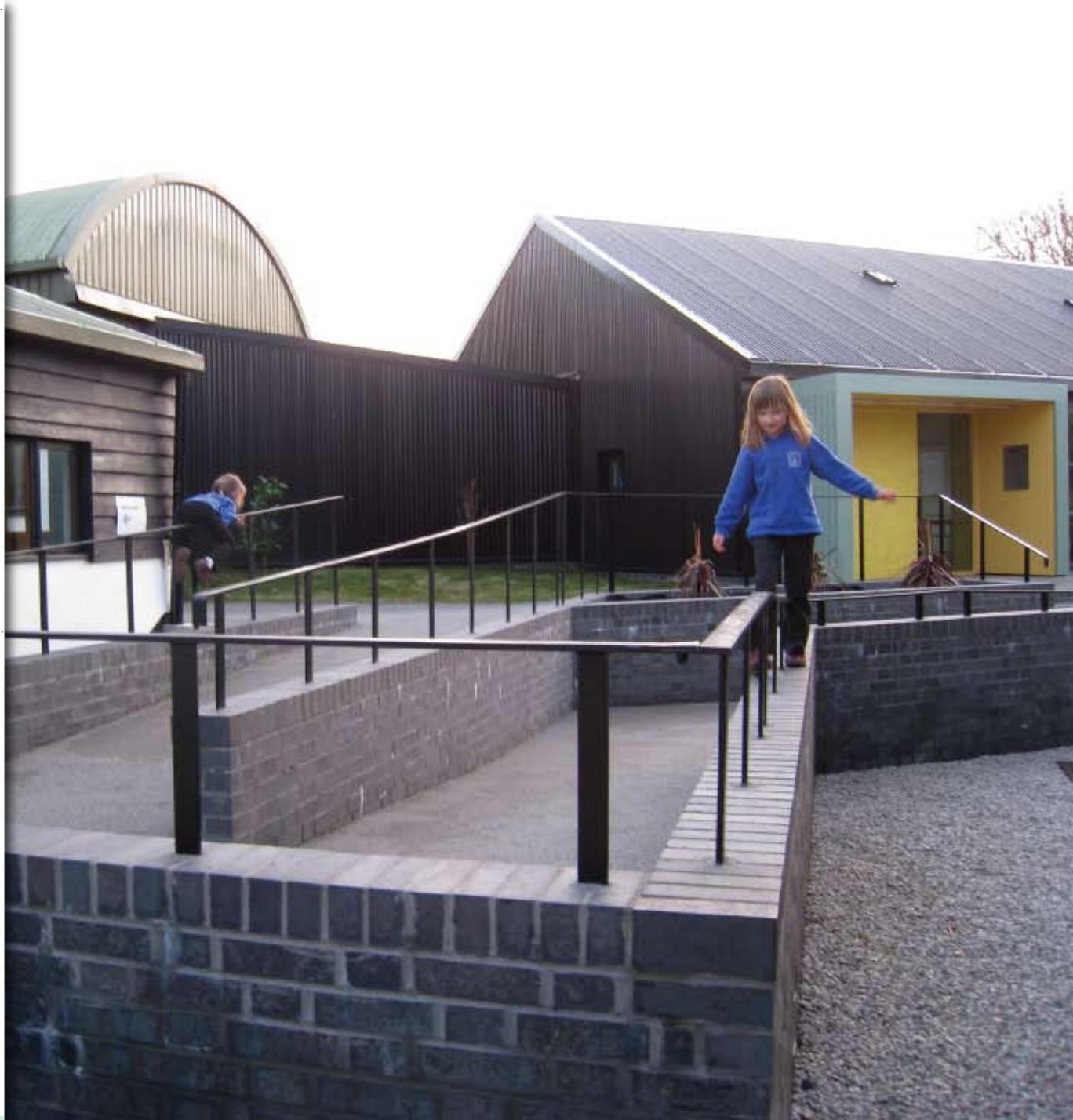
4 PRACTICE: not taking the easiest way (version 1)

PLACE: first flight of stairs to the studios.
CONSTRUCTION: timber handrails, black painted steel balustrades, black painted steel stringers, timber treads with steel supports.
ACTIVITY: take the stairs up to the first landing and then down again, but use as few as possible. You can also use the handrails and the balustrades to support you. How many stairs can you take with one step?

5 PRACTICE: not taking the easiest way (version 2)

PLACE: centre of ramp in central courtyard.
CONSTRUCTION: grey asphalt laid to 1:12 falls, engineering brick walls forming planter at eastern end; Flemish bond with soldier coursing, black painted steel balustrade and handrail formed from 50 x 12mm steel flats.
ACTIVITY: find a partner, walk up ramp to first landing.
Partner a] grip top of handrail, lean with centre of body on rail lower both arms and head over other side, look back towards ramp and watch Partner b].
Partner b] walk up to the planter, go from one end of the central wall to the other end without touching the ground. Swap positions.

fold here





Choreographing Knowledge

Performative walk and talk by urban (col)laboratory

at Murray Edwards College, New Hall, Cambridge

21 October, 20:00,

22 + 26 October, 19:00

**Festival of Ideas
& Nightjar**

www.urbancollaboratory.net

www.newhall.cam.ac.uk

www.cambridgefestivalofideas.org

nightjar.info

Free event, booking essential.
Please contact Amanda Rigler: 01223 3769404

NIGHTJAR



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE **Festival of Ideas**



New Hall
Art Collection

Murray Edwards / New Hall, Cambridge was built in 1964 by architects: Chamberlain, Powell and Bonn to accommodate the third women's college of Cambridge University, founded in 1954.

A week long period of research followed by three performative walks focused specifically on people working at the edges of the college. urban (col)laboratory spent a week talking to Porters, Gardeners, Administrative staff, Caterers, Chefs, Librarians and Maintenance staff to review the college as a stage for everyday performances, rituals and routines from the perspective of those whose functions are academically marginally located, yet whose daily repetition is central to the functioning of the college.

Three performative walks took place during the evening routines of the college and focused on the position of the audience who became both participants and performers through the locations they were invited to take up in relation to the physical spaces of the college.*

***with Diana Wesser as urban (col)laboratory
Murray Edwards College, Cambridge (UK)
Cambridge Nightjar & Cambridge Festival of Ideas 21–26 October 2010**

New Hall there are, however massively constructed, only the aesthetic thrills of fashion to elevate the processes of eating and reading. It is not far from the elevated cornucopia and the split-orange dome of the New Hall dining hall to the instant-harem world of the Golden Eggs and the Contented Soles. A similar temporariness can be felt in Spence's Sussex University, where jeans and shaggy sweaters harmonize with an upbeat Colosseum. New Hall seems a somewhat cynically masculine view of a women's college, with its purity of virginal white walls and its curvaceous thrills of domes and rounded minarets—though perhaps at a time of growing emancipation, girls may prefer a man's view of their milieu in place of tweed skirts and knitting needles.

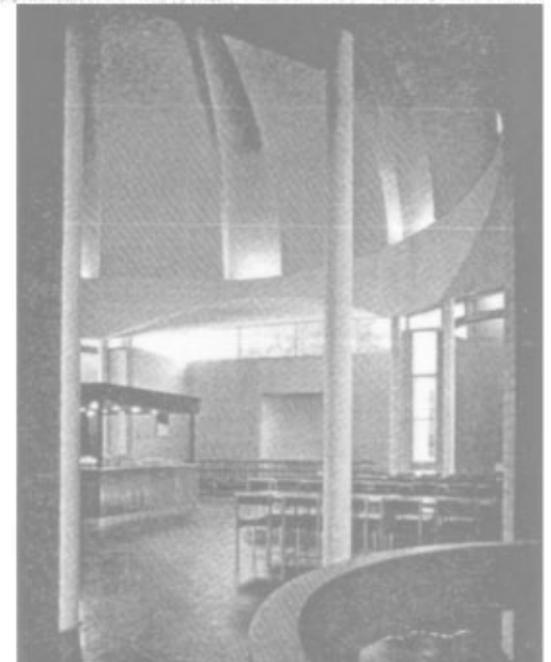




Photo: Julian Hughes



Photo: Julian Hughes

home is where the piano is (how can you feel at home in orchard park?)*

Orchard Park is a major, mixed use development currently under construction on the northern fringe of Cambridge. The site will eventually include 900 new homes, public open spaces, commercial units and community facilities. Occupied Houses: 508 (July 2009).

Rather than a final work or object, the process, the action of research and the 'working' became the work itself. A simple question 'How can you feel at home in orchard park?' became a key way of meeting as many people as we could in 5 days. Urban (co)laboratory explored the specificity of 'at homeness' by asking people who live and work in Orchard Park for instructions regarding what we can do to feel more at home; putting this advice into practice in different locations across the development.

A short video documentation of the project 'Home is Where the Piano Is', including on-site performative research, the interviews and the activities alongside statements from the Developer's can be viewed online:

www.vimeo.com/urblab

*with Diana Wesser as urban (co)laboratory
CROP MARKS, Contemporary Art Trail, Orchard Park
Cambridge (UK), 28 – 31 August 2009





“take a dog for a walk”



“hang out your washing”



“have a picnic”



“pay someone to make you feel at home”

communities under construction

Communities under Construction - 'not building' - was a 6-month residency at Wysing Arts Centre that provided a playful critique of the measured and manicured environment that is distinctive to the nearby settlement of Cambourne.

While presented as a 'village' organically grown over time, in fact Cambourne has been designed through technocratic processes where elements of village life have been reduced to diagrammatic form organising human beings and space. A publication 'Mechanical Operations in Cambourne,' researched and launched during the residency and produced in collaboration with artist Lawrence Bradby, extended these diagrams to everyday and unmapped activities. At the same time a series of site-specific and audio-based interventions, including a walk now available to be hired from the library, made visible the practices that produce and maintain the open spaces, including the voices of local residents, teenagers, groundsmen, road sweepers, light scouts and people working on their allotments.

www.wysingartscentre.org

[a-n interface 'Mechanical Operations in Cambourne' review](#)

[Mechanical Operations in Cambourne publication](#)

Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge (UK) 2009



Doing Donuts

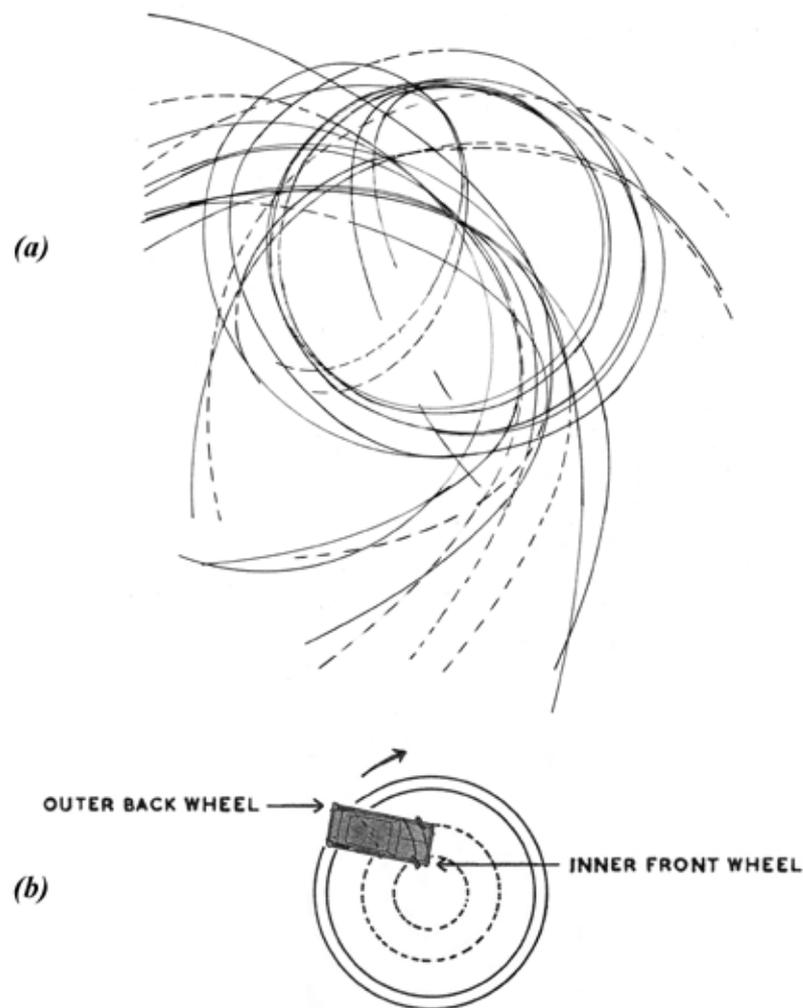


Fig. L. (a) Typical donut-producing manoeuvres: Cambourne Dental Practice car park. (b) Geometric characteristics of typical vehicles turning through 360 degrees.

Social Space Effectivity

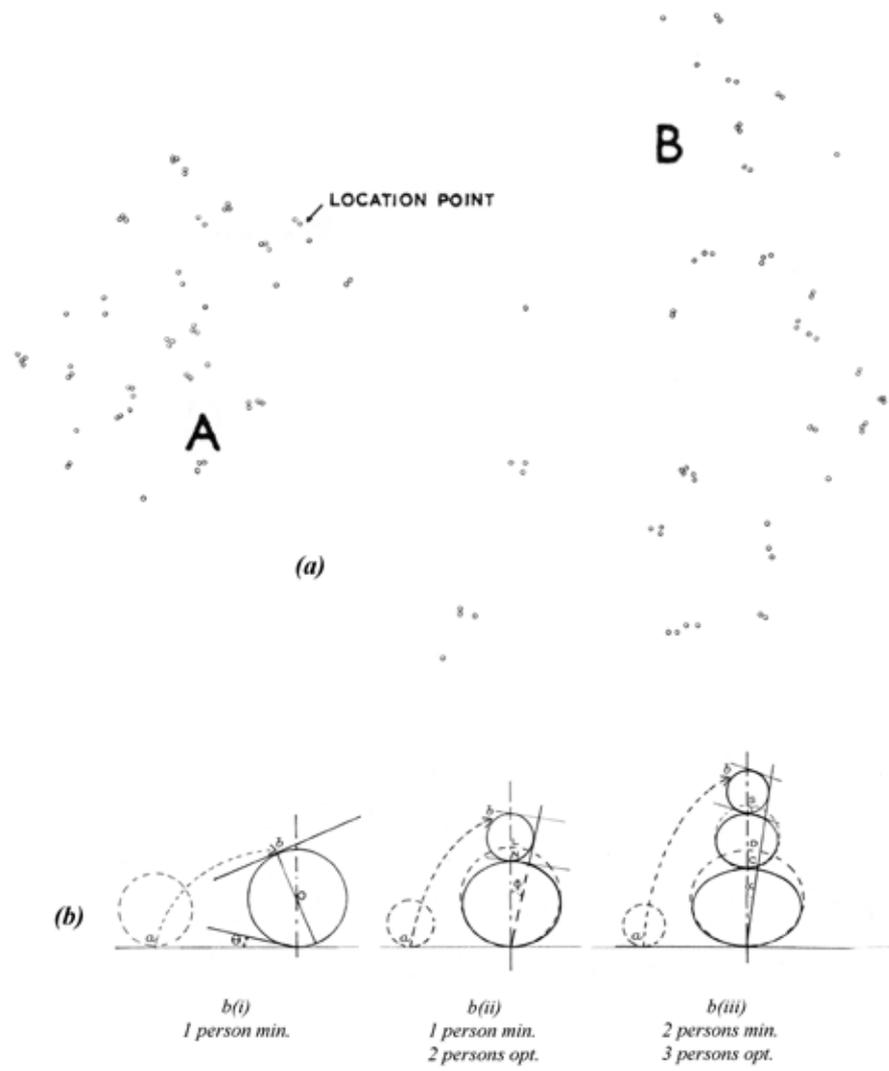


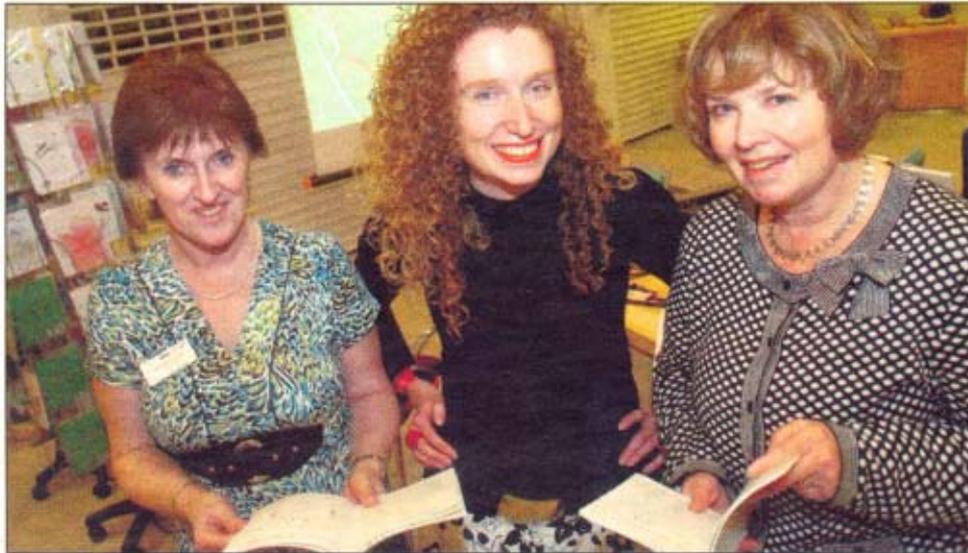
Fig. H. Median snowman count as an indicator of the relative effectiveness of social spaces: Lower Cambourne A and Great Cambourne B. (a) Plan. (b) Optimum construction technique.



‘traffic count reducer’



'LAP with no bench'



JOIN THE TOUR:

Helen, centre, with library supervisor Caroline Aldridge, left, and Lynda Martin of the county library service

Picture:
Warren
Gunn
610219

Mechanics of life

THE story of the workers who make Cambourne tick is told in a new book and audio tour.

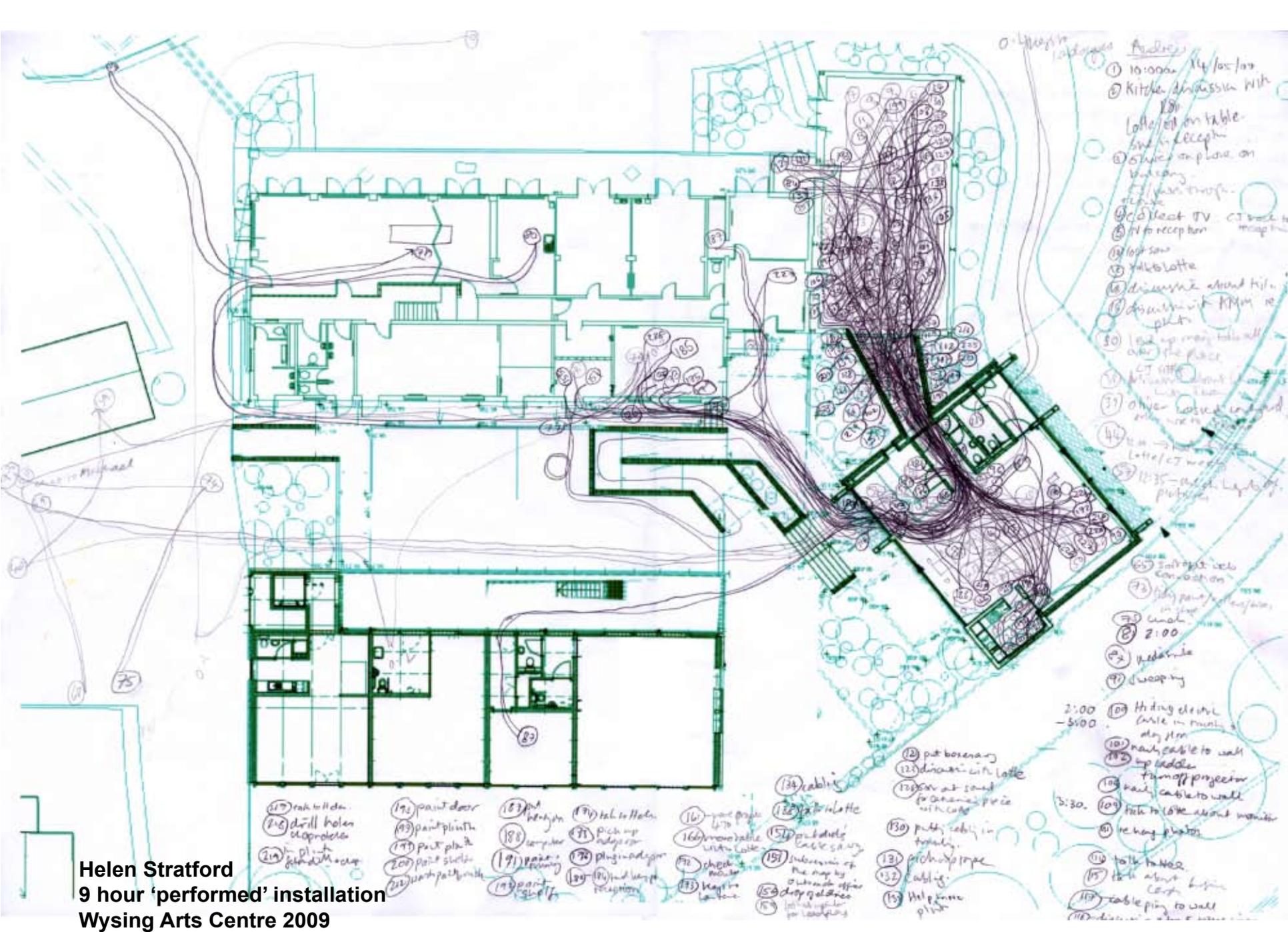
Artist Helen Stratford launched "Mechanical Operations in Cambourne" at the village's library.

Since March she has been spending time with people who look after open spaces in the community,

including groundsmen, road sweepers, planners and allotment holders.

She also met families and visited some of the lesser-known areas of the village.

Helen is based at nearby Wysing Arts centre and her research was part of the Communities Under Construction programme.



- 0-11:00am
- 1 10:00am 14/10/09
 - 2 Kitchen discussion with 138
 - 3 Litter/kit on table
 - 4 Litter in reception
 - 5 Office on phone on balcony
 - 6 TV in recep.
 - 7 Collect TV. CT back to recep.
 - 8 Kit to reception
 - 9 talk saw
 - 10 talk lotte
 - 11 discuss about trip
 - 12 discuss with KMM re plans
 - 13 lead up many table all over the place
 - 14 CT into
 - 15 discuss about trip
 - 16 talk
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- 117 talk to Helen
- 118 drill holes in projects
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Helen Stratford
9 hour 'performed' installation
Wysing Arts Centre 2009

manchester blind spots*

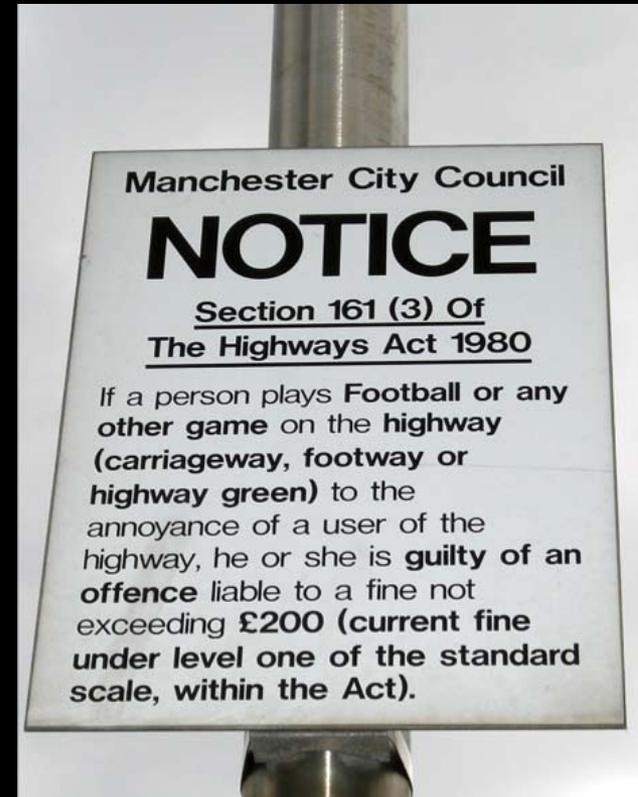
A path crossed over and over, a street swept again and again... negotiations of the city are conducted through everyday rituals, tasks, and activities.

Based in on-site research, Blind spots was a performance lecture at Piccadilly Gardens in Manchester, that combined performance and architecture, practice and theory, intervention and lecture to explore the city as a stage for every day performances which construct reality and offer a socio-spatial critique of these structures.

The on-site research and the performance lecture formed the basis for a lecture video of the same title.

www.vimeo.com/urblab

*with Diana Wesser as urban (col)laboratory
Manchester Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester (UK) May 2008
Get Lost! Festival, TRIP MMU, June 2008





in-between house and home

'In-Between House and Home' was a walk and talk situated around the public areas of Leipzig Opera House and The Arts Theatre in the City of Cambridge that addressed both the performative content of the symposium/exhibition 'A Question(ing) of Gesture' and the architectural context of the Opera House and the theatre. Drawing on personal research conducted at The Arts Theatre, it explored a story of making that challenges the public representation of performance.

In the Theatre and the Opera House relentless rehearsals ensure word-perfect delivery. At the same time the politics of use of these public places are continually reproduced by the repetitive routines of maintenance and cleaning: solitary performances made exclusively for the building. In-Between House and Home overlaid readings of maintenance gestures with selected public places to unravel the hidden activities deemed necessary to preserve the public reception of performance. In exploring these hidden rhythms and routines this performative lecture investigated the gestures contingent in these activities and how they interact with and produce the subject and place of their location.

KULTURSTIFTUNG
DES
BUNDES

 Sparkasse
Leipzig

OPERA
LEIPZIG

The Arts Theatre, Cambridge (UK) 2008
Leipzig Opera House, Leipzig (DE) December 2006

 UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE *Festival of Ideas*

In-Between House and Home

A walk and talk by architect & artist Helen Stratford around hidden spaces of Cambridge Arts Theatre. Explore how this place for public reception of performance is continually reproduced by private routines of maintenance and cleaning - solitary performances made exclusively for the building.

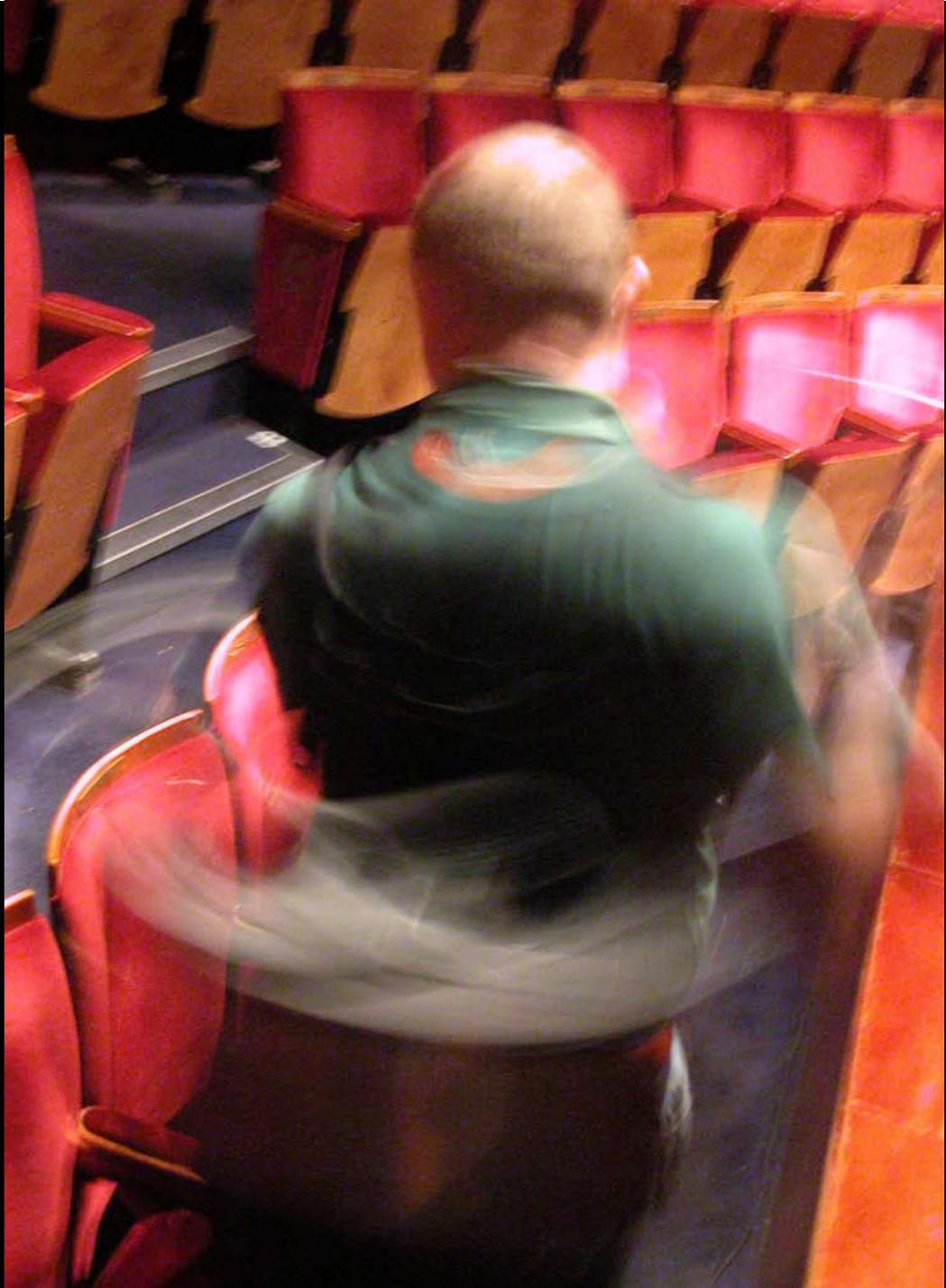
Monday 27th and Tuesday 28th October
2.00pm - 3.00pm
Cambridge Arts Theatre,
6 St Edward's Passage, Cambridge CB2 3PJ



Festival of Ideas

Free event with limited places - booking essential
for further details & booking please contact Helen: 07940773303 helen@takingplace.org.uk







“It really makes you think differently about the building”

“Really Interesting”

“How has the building changed over time?”

“So much work involved”

“An invisible presence”

“Really got into it”

“We really enjoyed your talk”

“It is a good sound piece, you are aware of the proximity of the auditorium from the sound”

“It had a good pace, it was good that we didn’t go into auditorium, we were circling”

“You were made aware of other people’s bodies, the proximity of spaces, people’s breath etc.”

“I enjoyed it, really interesting”

extended thresholds

'Extended Thresholds' was a one-day taxi residency followed by installation and talk.

A manual / map formed a guide to places that become stitched together through personal/ private objects and journeys. Simultaneously, a series of peculiar garments, linings and time- line of the one-day residency inhabited the taxi itself. Just as things taken (or left behind) change the nature of each ride, the installation of these garments temporarily shifted how the cab was perceived.

www.taxigallery.org.uk

Cambridge News

STREET PLAN and Guide

To
A ONE-DAY TAXI ROUTE in...
CAMBRIDGE

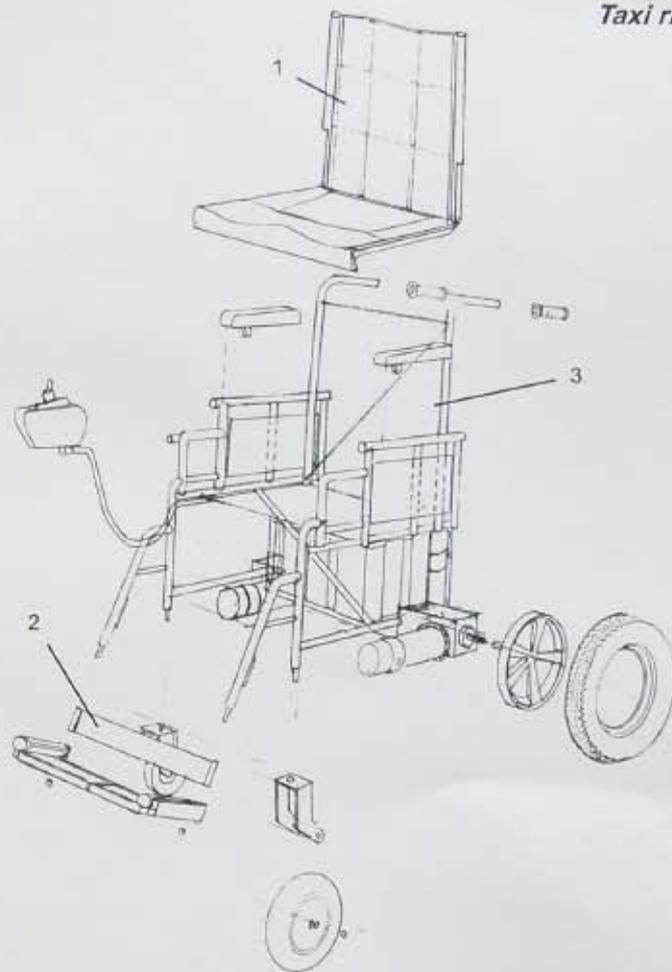
ROADS AND STREETS
PLACES OF DEPARTURE
DESTINATIONS
JOURNEY INTERSECTIONS
ESSENTIAL OBJECTS

28th May 2004

LOCATION

INDEX TO

Taxi rides



No	Ride#	Description	Application	Qty
1	2	From: Kelsey Crescent	Home	1 male teenager
2	2	To: New Road, Impington	College	30 minutes
3	2	Stationary Books Wheelchair	Art	7 miles

PACK FOR HOLIDAY

22:00

9. High Street, Grantchester 10:30

23:00

17. St Andrew's Street 11:05

17. Elder Close 11:15

18. St Andrew's Street 11:20

Robinson College 11:30

19. Halds Causeway 11:33

20. Halds Causeway 11:35

21. Summer Street 11:40

22. Birchwood Road 11:50

24:00

23. High Street 12:00

24. East Street, St. Dunstons 12:05

25. East Street, St. Dunstons 12:10

26. East Street, St. Dunstons 12:15

27. East Street, St. Dunstons 12:20

28. East Street, St. Dunstons 12:25

29. East Street, St. Dunstons 12:30

01:00

