

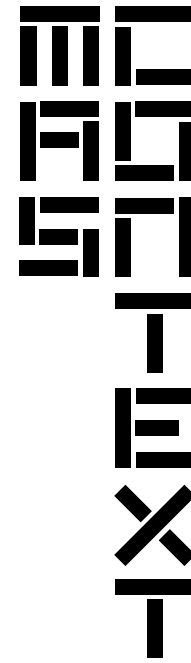
Issue 14 / Summer 12

COMMUNICATION

Context

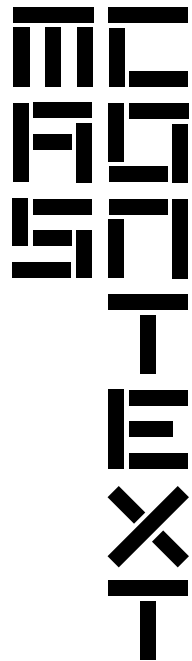
MAS CONTEXT CONTRIBUTORS:

Vladimir Belogolovsky | Craighton Berman | Ariadna Cantis | Center for Urban Pedagogy | Felipe Chaimovich | Eme3 | Pedro Gadanho | Iker Gil | Michael Hirschbichler | Sam Jacob | Klaus | Michael Kubo | Stephen Killion | Luis Mendo | Elias Redstone | Zoë Ryan | Oriol Tarragó | Rick Valicenti | Mirko Zardini



Issue 14 / Summer 12

COMMUNICATION



Issue 14 / Summer 12

COMMUNICATION

Content is only as good as the way we communicate it.

Whether to a colleague, a client or the masses, the way we communicate our ideas will more than likely define their ultimate success or failure.

Developing and applying the right tool to reach the full potential of our work is the critical step in a world that does not lack information.

This issue looks into the way new and innovative ideas, proposals, and projects are shared and discussed in successful ways.

MAS Context is a quarterly journal that addresses issues that affect the urban context. Each issue delivers a comprehensive view of a single topic through the active participation of people from different fields and different perspectives who, together, instigate the debate.

MAS Context is a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization based in Chicago, Illinois. It is partially supported by a grant from the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation.

Issue statement by
Iker Gil,
editor in chief of MAS Context

Learning To Communicate

As designers, we are pretty good at understanding the bigger picture of problems and we are able to distill them into their main ideas and necessary actions. It is a fantastic asset that we develop and continuously refine throughout our career. Often, we like to share and discuss those ideas and actions with our peers, all agreeing on the potential of design in addressing the pressing issues that we face.

There is one problem however: we are just preaching to the choir. We discuss these ideas with people in our own discipline that already know about the potential of design. They are people who share a similar education and haven't been exposed to similar ideas and precedents. At the same time, we use tools specific to our own field to communicate those ideas, instantly limiting the audience and the possibility of incorporating other people from other disciplines.

We have to be smarter at showing the value and potential of design to non-designers. We have to communicate the potential of addressing things in a comprehensive, analytical, ambitious, and optimistic way. The issues we face are complex and multilayered so we need to figure

out ways to engage people who must be in the discussion in order to solve things but might have a different background.

Since the first issue of MAS Context, we have tried to address this communication problem by combining content formats (such as essays, photographs, diagrams, videos just to name a few) and distribution platforms (online, downloadable, physical, events) to not only allow communicating efficiently and clearly the complexity of each topic but also engage with a wider audience. In the end it is about providing critical and analytical thinking to the issues we face and being able to discuss it with others who approach those issues from a different perspective.

In this issue we are including essays, interviews, questionnaires, case studies and illustrations that explore the potential of communication through buildings, exhibitions, manuals, charrettes, urban interventions, drawings and words. They are architects, curators, editors, graphic designers, illustrators, sound designers, academics and instigators who, through their work, communicate ideas, emotions, aspirations, concerns, perceptions, and personalities. Based in cities of Brasil, Canada, Japan, Spain, Switzerland, UK and USA, their work speaks to us all. Now it is our turn to join the conversation.

08

The Communicative Mode of Architecture

Essay by Sam Jacob

12

Modern Talking

Essay and illustration by Klaus

22

Communication as a Tool for Empowerment

Essay by Eme3



32

Making Policy Public

Projects by the Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP)

54

Tokyoites

An observation on Tokyo's citizens and their surrounding by Luis Mendo



64

Notable Realities

Essay by Michael Hirschbichler



72

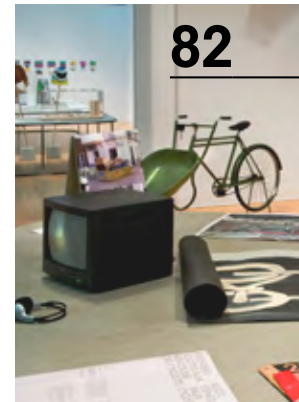
Getting Graphic

Stephen Killion interviews Craighton Berman

82

Communicating through Exhibitions

Our questionnaire to Ariadna Cantis, Elias Redstone, Felipe Chaimovich, Michael Kubo, Mirko Zardini, Pedro Gadanho, Vladimir Belogolovsky, and Zoë Ryan



102

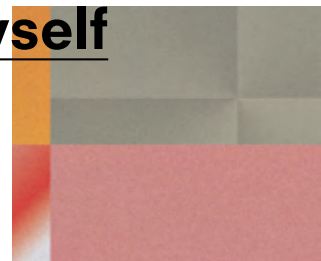
A Sound Life

Iker Gil interviews Oriol Tarragó

112

Talking to Myself

Visual essay by Rick Valicenti



134

Contributors

138

Team

139

Acknowledgements

Essay by Sam Jacob

The Communicative Mode of Architecture

We can think of architecture as just another form of cultural practice. And like them, it too is a form of media. Its literal media may be the material it specifies: brick, stone, glass steel, concrete or whatever. But it becomes a medium in and of itself through the way it arranges these materials. The arrangement of these materials into form and space turn them, like the arrangement of words on a page, pixels on a screen, or paint onto canvas, into information. We can think of architecture, then, as a concentration of information assembled into built form.

Like other forms of media, it communicates the information it contains. The signs and symbols that decorate it are designed to broadcast information, explicitly communicative in the case, say, of the number of the building, its name, its fidelity to an organization or institution. Equally the aesthetic choices an architect makes position it within taste cultures, affiliating by association with brand identity, lifestyle and aspiration or cultural position. In less explicit ways, architecture communicates through the instructions it issues to us. Buildings tell us that we should walk here and not there through the positioning of a corridor, that we should sleep in just such a room and eat in another, with the light falling in just such a manner over a table of particular proportions. In doing this, architecture is communicating to us a particular idea of use and experience. Buildings are a record of the process by which they came into the world, a precipitation into material form of the circumstances of their commissioning, of their financial and social ambition, of the politics of occupation that their briefs embody.

Yet, despite its super dense informational quality we have difficulty in recognizing architecture as a communicative medium. It is, just as Marshall McLuhan wrote of a light bulb, information. But just as with McLuhan's bulb, we fail to recognize it as information because of the way that it presents its data.

Unlike other forms of media, architecture exists in the world that is, for want of a better word, real. It occupies the same space as us. Broadly speaking,

other forms of media occupy a space adjacent to our world. We may gaze onto or into them, we can eavesdrop on them, but we may never enter. Art, for example, exists within the space of the frame or within the artificial conditions of the gallery. Film exists on the surface of the screen. Theatre occupies the space of the stage, and so on. In these sites, the media constructs a fictional version of the world - often entirely convincing, once we suspend our disbelief - within which the narrative takes place. The fictions that are possible within these worlds may mimic our world, but their consequences are contained. In a play, the murderer may be caught, but the actor who plays the murderer returns to the safety of their home night after night.

Architecture's consequences might be real, but it is just as fictional as other form of communicative media. It originates with the invented and imaginary. Its imaginary origins include, obviously, the acts that characterize architectural imagination: the gestural sketch and the idealized render. Here, we recognize architecture's ability to imagine, to fictionalize, to have visions. Yet we can also characterize other aspects of architectural production and processes as a form of fiction. Laws that govern aspects of architecture: building control, planning and so on are agreed fictions. Economics of development are the result of ideology - an idea, a thing imagined, taken with the scientific literalness to the point where it becomes indistinguishable from the real.

Like law, like ideology, architecture too has the ability to become indistinguishable from the real. Without frame, screen or stage to contain it, the built environment is an entirely fictional, completely real landscape. It transforms its own fiction into something that looks and feels exactly like fact. Architecture naturalizes its imaginative origins so completely that it becomes the world we occupy. And in doing this it naturalizes the fictions that it contains. The explicit content that architecture carries, the signs and symbols that represent the power and wealth the engender it, become further fixed in the world, made solid fact by the inherent real-making quality of architecture as a medium. Architecture's embodiment of ideology, transformed into solid stuff, makes that too more real, naturalizing the politics that bring it into the world.

Architecture's communicative quality is made unrecognizable because of the gravity that draws it into the realm of the real. It no longer feels as though it is communicative, no longer seems that it is saying something, that it is performing or transmitting information because of its apparently inert quality. Yet of course it continues to communicate, to say, perform and transmit.

The mode and the content of architectural communication is limited by its own quality as a medium. That's to say, it is impossible for it to carry the same forms of narrative as other kinds of media. Without the ability to suspend our disbelief, its range is limited. Unlike an actor, it can't become the thing that it is portraying. It is impossible even for a replica with the greatest fidelity to its original to actually become the original. Even the most fictional of architectures, say, theme park castles or heritage style homes, can't escape their own fate. Their narrative quality simply can't generate the escape velocity to enter a different conceptual space. Instead, they can only communicate their attempt to escape the realm of the real, their efforts to become something else and to enter the spaces that other media occupy so effortlessly.

The communicative mode of architecture finds itself in a strange condition. On one hand, it is fictional, on the other it is impossible for it to become fictional. Caught between these two positions, architecture is condemned to communicate, to embody, its own state. The medium, as we have been told, is the message, and in architecture's case, the message always remains real.

What can, what should, a communicative architecture communicate? There is an argument that architecture should attempt to acknowledge its fictional quality, that it should articulate the economic and ideological forces within which it is forged, that it should make their attempts to naturalize themselves through architecture visible. This acknowledgment is a form of resistance, a means of frustrating the desire of power and capital to become the world we inhabit. It should recognize that the content that it can communicate is limited, that the constraints of it as a medium will frustrate its theatrics, and that overly dramatic stylings will be undone by our ability to see through them.

Perhaps, if architecture can't become something else, communicative architecture has only one potential subject: itself. Here, the fictions that bring it into would also be the narrative that it articulates. In doing this, architecture can exploit its own condition of being simultaneously fiction and non-fiction. In telling this us this story, it tells us the story of the world it is in the process of manufacturing.

Modern Talking

Essay and illustrations by Klaus

(don't you...forget about me)

New trends and new times, new market conditions and newer communicational means are also creating, it seems, new modes of architectural production-consumption and along with them, an allegedly new type of professional with skills suited for an era where communication primes.

News spreads at an increasingly faster rate, generating an exponential inflation in the informational corpus: news and texts are forwarded, commented on, cut/cropped/quoted/linked and disseminated in the blink of an eye, and we, *internauts* brought up on a steady diet of continuous feedbacks, updates and comments, have quickly grown dependent upon the continuity of the flux. We require a constant nourishing perpetuating the dynamics of a performative informational experience, which has become the default setting. We, the archinauts, have also grown accustomed to a steady diet of flashy images, renderings and videos that have become the default architectural experience. In this context, the architect renews his vows as a social interlocutor, but this time in the form of a performer who needs to grab the fluctuating attention of a public eye turned into volatile audience. Communicational skills are now, more than ever, a *sine qua non* for architects who leave behind any past incarnation as either reclusive geniuses or silent craftsmen and become active spokesmen, polemist or even provocateurs. The rise of the contemporary starchitectural system reflects very vividly this situation, where architects stand in the spotlight not only according to the quality of their (classically considered) architectural production, but also corresponding to their qualities as performers, or even due to their ability to keep a network of gossip circulating around them. But in this context, a recurring question keeps emerging, casting a doubt on the legitimacy of architectural discourses that are threatened to be thinned down to nothing by this hypertrophy of the communicational apparatus, which primes production over content. Might it be — I can hear Roger Waters singing — that Architecture is communicating itself to death?





On Digital Knowledge

Even from the most conservative of positions, it is undeniable that the Internet, digital databases, and blog culture have all contributed to boost architectural research, albeit outside of academic parameters. The expanded and accelerated access to information have worked together with the new sharing possibilities to foster the implementation of a researcher mentality, providing a platform where private, individual interests find a *plateau* and a *raison d'être* to be developed in varying degrees of formality. The Internet has created a scenario where everyone can become an author by being his own publisher. Blogging platforms have ended with editorial censorship, peer-revisions and the insurmountable endogamy of the publishing world, allowing us — the formerly silent audience — to put our thoughts, words and balloons out there inexpensively and — through the magic of Google search — with a potential audience of millions. This has translated into a centrifugal dissemination of the lines of research, which, through the multiplication of the agents, has also witnessed an exponential increase in the objects of research. The Internet and the blogosphere foster the research of niche interests, located in the periphery of the discipline, which are both blurring its borders and expanding its area of influence by expanding the field of what can be considered architecturally relevant.

And this simultaneous expansion and atomization of research does not limit itself to the informal area. Digital and digital networking tools are also changing the face and mechanics of academic research. Digital texts/books, search engines, and the (earlier) fusion of both in Google books unleash previously unimaginable possibilities for post-modern citationality, providing us — as an electronic hyperbole

of old quote books — with endless possibilities to find classy pearls of wisdom with which to ornate our texts. Digital tools are, in fact, giving birth to a new type: the *impatient researcher*, who will no longer read books from cover to cover, but rather scan through them via search engines, introducing a priori selected key words and enjoying the discovery of texts he would have never found by pre-digital means. The new tools work to endow us with the capacity to increase our scope, drawing ampler relations and providing us with a bigger *big picture*, even if at the price of a bigger difficulty to focus. The mediated randomness of these computerized searches, triggered and directed through statistical relational parameters, becomes, in the hands of the curious scholar, a useful tool, difficult to control but fascinating nonetheless, to discover new data and to make unexpected connections, setting the idiosyncrasy of an era of relation-based knowledge, where introspection is substituted for *interconnection*.

Inevitably, this also fosters a parallel loss of context, of the environmental compound of data and argumentation that comes with the careful dissection of texts, implementing a rather *formalist* approach towards knowledge that can easily distort meaning by ignoring the accumulated notations that surround the individual pieces of information. The Internet, via search engines, is an enormous quote-book that fosters the dissemination of catchphrases, turning conclusions into attractive straplines at the price of isolating them. Carefully going through entire texts looking for the desired passage has historically been a way to better understand and apprehend the concepts contained in them, but not only that, it has also been an invaluable source for intellectual strategies that shape the inquisitive mind; argumentative

depths that are lost in hyper-reading, where accumulation replaces articulation and (the need for) close-attention. As some apocalypics are eager to point out, along with the undeniable inflation of the informational mass brought by the digital über-network, also comes an inevitable *deflation* in the quality of information. Today, news is tweeted, repeated, and forwarded one and a hundred times so that the diversity brought about by the Internet is also paralleled by overwhelming repetition and iterative distortion. The capacity for immediate — and anonymous — publishing has also prompted the preeminence of commentary and opinion over analytic introspection and, while this is not necessarily bad in itself, it does multiply some annoying side effects: fast-paced production and anonymity have decreased the need for rigorous citation and contrasting, and while one can certainly appreciate the unexpected dadaist deconstructions caused by the malicious sabotage of Wikipedia¹, this latitude in the treatment of information certainly entails some perils. On the other hand, constant and thoughtless opinionation more frequently than not substitutes logical discussion for a repetition of mantras that allowed Robert Wilensky to enunciate a famous revision/reversion of the infinite monkey theorem that becomes particularly true: "... *"We've all heard that a million monkeys banging on a million typewriters will eventually reproduce the entire works of Shakespeare. Now, thanks to the Internet, we know this is not true."*

All these asides, along with their obvious lack of academic pedigree, have made those new modes of knowledge production face an increasing and unsurprising suspicion from academia, perfectly portrayed in the two almost simultaneous pieces by Peter Kelly and Patrick Schumacher, whereat they alternatively put into question architectural blogging culture and the new ways in which architectural education is evolving in British schools. (Kelly's *The New Establishment*² mourned nostalgically for "a more realistic and rigorous approach to architectural criticism" that he found had been lost in the tides of the online archiculture better represented by Geoff Manaugh's hegemonic BLDGBLOG, while Schumacher's "slam on British Architectural Education", published in *The Architectural Review*³, took issue with the awarding of the RIBA medal to the video installation "Robots of Brixton", by Factory Fifteen's Kibwe Tavares). Both of them posited variants of the same question, that is: to what degree can these expressions be considered part of official architectural knowledge? In the end, the discussion seems rather futile. Whether they are already architecture (or architectural theory) or not seems pretty irrelevant, as long as they are architecturally relevant. Are *Robots of Brixton* or Jonathan Gales' breathtaking *Megalomania* architecture architectures-to-be, food for architectural thought? I don't know. Is Zaha Hadid's unbuilt Cardiff Opera House architecture? The plans for Le Corbusier's Ospedale in Venice? A sketch by Alvar Aalto? It's difficult to set the limit. At best, we could discuss in which order they line up, from "pure architecture" to its periphery. Ultimately, it doesn't matter. Piranesi's drawings are not, *stricto sensu*, architecture (some of his architectural fantasies couldn't even be built three-dimensionally), even if they still represent (fictional) architecture. Manfredo Tafuri's or Reyner Banham's writings clearly aren't. Yet, they are more valuable for architecture than many (most) built works.

The question, however, floats in the air, with voices of the apocalypse asking whether this drifting of research towards the utmost peripheral aspects of the discipline, whether the emphasis on showing (off) are somehow disrupting its very essence, contaminating it, diluting and ultimately turning it into a smokescreen with nothing behind. The hunger for continuous architectural stimuli of our digital lives runs parallel to a radical diminution of the retinal persistence of images. Today, architecture has to be glossy, distinctive, eye-catching, or risk being submerged in the flabbergasting wave of digital imaging. And in this context the architect has to become a performer, a marketing expert, and a fast-packager of discourses that have to be created rapidly and incessantly, almost a matter of automatic writing, or automatic articulation of pre-existent and often unrelated *unitas cogitans*. Hyper-space, the non-place of dis-location of information, is also the environment for the dislocation of architectural discourse. Thus, the unconditional embrace of digital integrators contrasts with the ominous warnings of our own architectural apocalypics, worried by the bastardization and subsequent blurring of the discipline in its drift towards the periphery and an emphasis on communication that seems to make content irrelevant. Koolhaas's recent complaints about the decreasing position of architects in the cultural scale⁴ take place in the context of a sense of "*this is destroying that*" in some segments of the profession, who seem to wonder whether today's scenario as a betrayal of the principles of the heroic period of Modern Movement, and whether today's rather-mediatic-than-productive starchitects are not dilapidating the cultural position inherited from the modern masters.

When we were modern

However, once we shake off the short-sighted historical vision endemic to apocalyptic thought, we soon realize none of this is really new. There is an obvious parallelism between the scenario created by blog culture and the 60's phenomenon of the *Little Magazines* that revisions, such as Beatriz Colomina's itinerating and steadily growing exhibition, are bringing into fashion again. Now that the obligatory 50 years have passed, *Archigram* or *Utopie* (publications before/rather than architectural practices) can start being recovered by academia as a pedigreed object of study. But *Archigram* and their environment, who rejoiced in the same fringe interests that we can find today in the works of BLDGBLOG, Unknown Fields Division or Factory 15, garnered in their time the same kind of outraged reactions from academia⁵, even if nowadays there is little contestation of the influence they have had on several generations of architects. And, as it has been pointed out elsewhere, even if their work ultimately came to represent the new sensitivities bred in the countercultural emergence of post-May '68, *Archigram's* 'popular' tendencies were actually loyal to the foundational traits of hardcore modernism.

The *pathos* of modern architecture, as portrayed in the works of Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Gerrit Rietveld and other "founding fathers" of the first generation, very evidently derived from a high-culture sensitivity imported from the European avant-garde. However, communication and propaganda, and the leaning towards the fabrication of mottos and a thin, collage approach to discourses, full with word-twisting and conceptual prestidigitation, are inalienable from its very



MISS COMMUNICATION 2012

KLAUS 10/12
"HOUSE" "NO KNOW!"

ethos. Both Loos and Le Corbusier were active and very vocal polemicists, whose architectural persona was developed first and foremost through ardent and opinionated texts. Both of them understood that mass communication represented a fundamental part of modernity and, as such, also a trait of any modern architecture to be developed. Both, at last, sought public attention through their harsh critiques and manifesto-like propositions, and were always eager to use the media. Prolific writers, they founded and edited their own magazines, and hidden behind the wall of the printed page, they multiplied their presence via different pseudonyms that obscured the fact that most of the materials were produced solely by them, creating the illusion of an actual movement: The fiction of Modern Architecture. And this was a fiction that had to take into account all the different aspects of a modern reality defined by the multiplication of focuses of interest and by the progressive meddling of the popular in the exclusive realm of high culture.

Le Corbusier and the moderns, as Alison & Peter Smithson famously put it, were avid collectors of extemporaneous items, from silos to cars, to industrial architectures and airplanes, all of them signifiers of the technological world that pervades the imaginarium of architectural blogging. But *L'Esprit Nouveau*, Jeanneret's own breviary of obsessions (he touched on every aspect of it, from articles to editorials to illustrations), went much further down the scale of the canonically acceptable

obsessions of modernity, showcasing articles on not-yet pedigreed artistic movements such as Surrealism, arts-to-be such as cinema, or even dedicating one of the first academic articles to be found on the still-developing form of comics⁶. An active spokesman, a vedette and a provocateur interested in every corner of reality, from cars to silos and prostitutes, Le Corbusier shows vividly how deeply ingrained the idea of a cultural continuum was in an architectural movement designed for and from the incipient communication era. As in Koolhaas today, Jeanneret's longest and possibly most important project was the design of Le Corbusier himself, a legend that Le Corbusier crafted throughout his life, shown in the continuous rewriting of his own history that we find in the successive editions of his *Oeuvre Complete*. Self-history rewritten as a means to a message, the very history of modern movement is the recounting of the construction of a myth, sometimes retrospectively, sometimes in advance, as in Sigfried Giedion's real-time chronicling in *Space, Time and Architecture*, which can be held responsible for the later evolution of Alvar Aalto.

The Modern ideological apparatus, as Colin Rowe's dissection in his introduction to post-functionalism so aptly explained, was more a system of beliefs than an articulated theoretical corpus; a conundrum of inspiring statements, vague catchphrases akin to popular wisdom that conjugated simplicity with contradiction: The modern ideary was a mishmash of willful mottos, where "Less is more"

cohabitated without problem with “God is in the Details,” irrationality could go together with standardization and houses could be at once organic entities and machines for living in (of course, Rowe himself couldn’t resist the temptation to coin a few highly palatable rhetorical delicatessen⁷, only helping underline how deeply rooted marketing was all along the evolution of the movement).

After the post-modern articulatory impasse, which recovered, even if with a deconstructive, skeptical and pessimistic twist, the pre-modern discursive complexity, today’s post-critical scene is instead a recovery and reformulation of the expansive impulse of early modernism, and along with it, its tropes. Today’s McLuhanites, paradoxically immersed in a desperate search of “cool,” retake to the modern tradition of collage discoursing, of guerrilla-thinking and motto production, drastically amplified by the informational overload of the digital age. The age of Wikipedian knowledge and Twitterization of communication is also one of geometrical accumulation, where articulation is replaced by a hyperbolic agglutination, and Eco’s maligned *cogitus interruptus*⁸ — taken to new levels of complexity — becomes the default setting for the generation of discourses that develop within relations of contiguity rather than through linear dialectical processes. In the era of blogging and bragging, architects become publicists, performers and comedians, celebrities, video directors and anchormen of their own stations, Méliès(ian) magicians that conjure digital models while speaking to the camera, archaeologists of the future, excavators of the limits of geek culture, micro-bloggers and slogan creators, serpent enchanters, gurus, fashion victims and fashionists, funambulists of the thin rope that separates the suggestive from the irrelevant... producers of “cool,” in the end, and dedicated constructors of their own brand image, devoted to keep the flux running.

Today’s starchitects may be as focused in construction as in the construction of their own public persona, but while Rem Koolhaas’s careful design of the contradictions between his writings/oeuvre/life dwells in a sophisticated and genetically postmodern game of misdirection of his audience, the very effort of the construction belongs in the purest tradition of modern architecture. Today’s communication fever and collage thinking may be seen by some as a sign of the unstoppable decline of a discipline doomed by its progressive distancing from the principles of an idyllic (modern) past. But frightful or not, this contradictory, fragmentary, “patchwork” nature is an inalienable condition of that very modernity we mourn.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Wikipedia has through the years offered truly interesting examples of “creative trolling.” Some years ago, while checking dates for another article, I came across the entry for Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis*. The plot summary conveniently described *Metropolis* as we all know it: a city divided in two levels that corresponded to two different social classes: an upper city, where the wealthy privileged dwelled in a life of luxury, and an underground city, populated by the workers who operated the machines that made the city function and (I quote from memory) “were also obliged to practice anal sex with the members of the upper classes.” While I appreciate the deconstructive readings fostered by these inputs, as well as their metaphorical descriptive value, they obviously detract from the original commitment of the project.
- 2 KELLY, Peter: “The New Establishment” in *Blueprint* magazine n° 297, December 2010.
- 3 See SCHUMACHER, Patrick: “Schumacher Slams British Architectural Education” in *The Architectural Review* online edition, 31 January 2012.
- 4 “...we also looked at how media in the 60-70s were discovering... these architects [the metabolists et al.] and giving them a significant platform, increasing their aura... And I have to say with a bit of jealousy... that happened at a time without resentment and without caricature. We are now star-architects. It is kind of a horrible condition because it means we get more attention, but [we are] taken less seriously (...)” Rem Koolhaas: “OMA: On Progress”. Barbican Art Gallery, October 2011.
- 5 A good example of the much-less-than-universal enthusiasm faced by *Archigram*’s exotic production can be found in Justus Dahinden’s *Urban Structures for the Future*, a book devoted to the visionary proposals of the 60s and 70s. Even though many of the works presented (such as Dahinden’s own *Radio City*) recovered an imagery that had been mainly developed in pulp publications since the days of the Depression, the entry for Ron Herron’s “Walking Cities” read: “We are, of course, bound to ask ourselves whether this utopian conception of a completely mobile town, which at first sight appears to have more in common with science fiction than serious (the emphasis is mine) architecture, could ever be put into practice.” DAHINDEN, Justus: *Urban Structures for the Future*, London: Pall Mall Press, 1972; 114
- 6 In fact, Le Corbusier’s *L’Esprit Nouveau* was very close to the idiosyncrasy that pervades much of today’s architectural blogging culture, exploring different corners of the contemporary visual culture and art that the architect found (architecturally) relevant, regardless of their cultural pedigree. In fact, *L’Esprit Nouveau* published one of the earliest articles on graphic narrative that can be found, Le Corbusier’s “Toepffer, précurseur du cinéma” (*L’Esprit Nouveau* n° 11-12, 1921; signing as Le Fayet), where he enthusiastically wrote about one of the fathers of modern comics: Swiss pedagogue Rodolphe Töpffer; (on the influence of Töpffer’s figure on Jeanneret, see Stanislaus Von Moos’s *Le Corbusier, Elemente einer Synthese*. Frauenfeld, Stuttgart: Huber, 1968; 13; and “Voyages en Zigzag” in RÜEGG, Arthur; VON MOOS, Stanislaus (eds.): *Le Corbusier Before Le Corbusier: Applied Arts, Architecture, Painting, Photography, 1907-1922*. New Haven: Yale University Press, c2002).
- 7 Jeff Kipnis described Rowe&Slutzky’s rhetorical schtick of “phenomenal transparency” as a “catchy bon mot for an interesting formal effect” with “remarkable cachet” (KIPNIS, Jeffrey: “P-Tr’s Progress” in DAVIDSON, Cynthia: *Eleven Authors in Search of a Building: the Aronoff Center for Design and Art at the University of Cincinnati*. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1996; 170-181; 172). Kipnis’s article also includes a most revealing reflection by Frank Gehry, who is quoted saying that “the best thing about Peter’s buildings is the insane spaces he ends up with. That’s why he is an important architect. All that other stuff, the philosophy and all, is just bullshit as far as I am concerned.” (“Pheromonal Translunacy”; 178)
- 8 The notion of “cogito interruptus” was explained at length (and coined, as far as I know) by Umberto Eco in the eponymous chapter of *Apocalittici e integrati: comunicazioni di massa e teorie della cultura di massa* (Milano: Bompiani, 1964; 383-403), where he picked on Marshall McLuhan’s argumentative processes in “Understanding Media”. Eco notes how McLuhan often constructs his discourse through simultaneity, putting together different ideas as if they were consequentially linked in a logical succession, but these connections are never explicated. McLuhan entrusts this linkage to the reader, who, presented with an abundance of examples, extrapolates by Gutenbergian habit, filling the voids in the discourse with inexistent “and therefore”s.

Communication as a Tool for Empowerment

Essay by Eme3

Can the use of communication contribute to social change and transformation?

In today's current environment, the foundations of our system are constantly questioned and challenged. In response, a series of actions, which to date have had a fairly minor implementation in the developed world, are now emerging with a strong component of creativity and innovation. Perhaps most importantly, they possess a hidden potential to contribute to locally-owned reforms and sustainable change at various levels of society.

We qualify it, therefore, as a bottom-up approach, which counterposes it to the top-down, meaning to start with the detailed design of the individual parts and afterwards link them to form larger components that will end up conforming a complete system. Strategies based on bottom-up information flows are potentially necessary, as they are based on the extensive knowledge of all variables that may affect the elements of the system.

The growing emphasis on participatory and horizontal communication — such as stakeholder dialogue and bottom-up or consultation processes — have created spaces in which people can give meaning to and claim their citizenship. Such spaces allow people to not only be heard, but also to reshape limits and the social and/or cultural norms that shore up the given power relations. This in turn ends up contributing to empowerment and social change.

Situations exemplifying this can be found all over the globe in very different contexts, even as it is still somewhat surprising to come across the application of similar methodologies in very different scenarios and backgrounds. The common point is an extensive use of internet communication networks that enhance the implication and interaction that takes place among the members who end up



constituting the projects: multidisciplinary teams formed by architects, neighbors, public institutions and other stakeholders involved in community planning. Architects have started to follow this type of participative methodology in order to define and propose consensus-based approaches, where communication becomes the key to involve people and get the project to make a real effect on the urban context where it is implemented.

For instance, the process of Dream Hamar, in the words of its creators, is “a participation and network design process led by Ecosistema Urbano to redesign the Stortorget Square in Hamar, Norway. The Hamar commune decided to take a pioneer approach to the construction of the new Stortorget Square, and instead of handing the citizens a finished square, they were included and able to participate in a collective brainstorming process that would determine Stortorget’s new configuration.”

Not only were the Citizen of Hamar invited to participate on site in the process, but an online workshop was launched to enable people from all over the world to contribute to the design of the square.

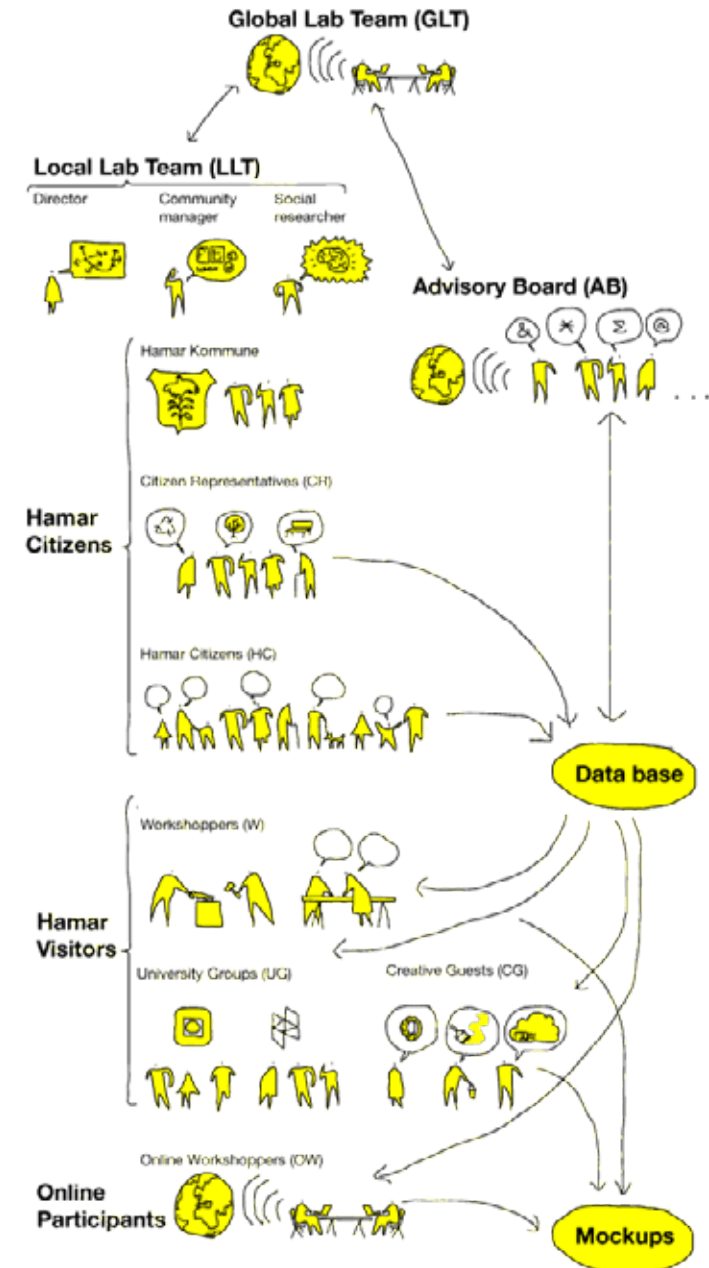
One example is the TACTICAL URBANISM online workshop led by Ethel Baraona and Paco González. As they properly define it, “Tactical urbanism is aimed to develop urban practices with the use of new technologies that improve the livability of our towns and cities, starting at the street, block and public space level. If we agree with Henri Lefebvre when he says the ‘urban’ is therefore, pure form; a place of encounter, assembly, simultaneity; we can see the importance of the concept of “tactical urbanism” and how a connected society is able to take the city back.”

The two directors of the workshop defined themselves as ‘facilitators,’ in the sense that they designed a first approach to an existent frame where they chose very few rules to make the process understandable to all participants. After that, they proceeded to liberate the process, stepping back in order to let the participants go on without the influence of the workshop directors.

When asked to describe their impressions on the process, Ethel and Paco usually compare it at the beginning to a blurred cloud of independent drops of ideas. During the process, these apparently independent drops finally constituted a cloud that evolved with, and thanks to, the internal and external dynamics of the whole environment in order to become the soft rain that helps grow better actions for the Dreamhamar process at the Stortorget Square in Hamar.

Naming it a TACTICAL URBANISM workshop wasn’t a random decision either. According to Michel de Certeau, strategies are location-driven while tactics involve calculations without their own space. Going further on, Certeau relates strategies to the defense of power, while tactics would come defined by power vacuums. According to him, the difference between strategy and tactics would lie in the type of operations enacted by each one and the role played by space as a sphere of action.

Therefore, stating that strategies would serve more for top-down implementations, the use of tactics gives us space for a subtle, but much more persistent, manipulation of the public space.



ONETHOUSANDSQUARE.
© Ecosistema Urbano and Lluís
Sabadell Artiga.



Inteligencias Colectivas online platform. © Courtesy of eme3.

In fact, undertaking design, architecture and urbanism inevitably comes down to invention and tactical action, not just on a professional level, but also on a political level.

The door is open nowadays to new forms of design, where communication is the key element to involve the Citizen in urbanism projects. New tools coming from the internet such as social media or streaming enable what was not possible a few years ago, and as a result visions from different cultures can be mixed in to the same project.

On the internet, we are witnessing an explosion of platforms where content and best practices with creative common rights are developed. As an example, Inteligencias Colectivas.org "draws its inspiration from this source in order to create a meeting point and a free database of collective construction details taken from real examples of non-standard intelligent constructions." Communication and

information become here both a right and a tool to widespread content and ideas that are free and shared, showing that form, content and channel start to become an indivisible pack.

Communication develops into a mechanism of internationalization, indiscriminately free and reachable for everyone. Open communication is understood almost as a guarantee of equity and fairness, and a path the progress.

Though, what does work at a worldwide scale can also easily find its counterpart at a local level. For instance, what the Ecuadorian team 'Al Borde' achieved with what started as a mere 'taller particular' ended up being a clear illustration of how communication is a powerful tool to promote visible change in distressed communities.

Organized together with the students from one university and the chosen community, under the direction of three professionals, one semester's work focused on the intervention in the public space, to enhance the existing voids or problematic areas and convert them into real meeting points that could strengthen neighborhood organization.

What really made them acknowledge that the project moved in a good direction was the fact that, during the break between semesters, the neighborhood took action and promoted its own many initiatives, ones still underway, such as community gardens, a soccer championship between nearby neighborhoods, and a program for young entrepreneurship.

And in fact, that is the key of success for a project. Without the real involvement of the final user, projects that are implemented from top to down may end up being seen as forcefully imposed actions, away from the real needs of the



Particular Workshop 11 de Mayo. © AL BORDE arquitectos.



Particular Workshop 11 de Mayo. © AL BORDE arquitectos.



Particular Workshop 11 de Mayo. © AL BORDE arquitectos.

population. It's why a territory-based approach that engages all stakeholders has more chances to survive and be effective.

Given this first huge achievement, the next step encompassed the construction of a real physical space that would allow the continuity of the started projects.

Soon they became so popular that they were awarded a Prize on Best Practices promoted by the municipality of Quito, that wanted to highlight both the projects done jointly with the students as well as their own pro-active dynamic that started in the neighborhood.

But not only the neighborhood was enriched by this process. For the students, it also meant a switch in mentality, promoting a different way of understanding the profession and giving them the feeling of being active agents for change.

This is perhaps one of the most important points. In a moment where the architectural profession is facing one of the worst crises in its history, where everyone discusses what has to be the new paradigm and the direction architecture has to move in, establishing the link between the people and the architect/urbanist gives reason and sense to a profession that will never be the same and is currently transforming into a tool of change itself.

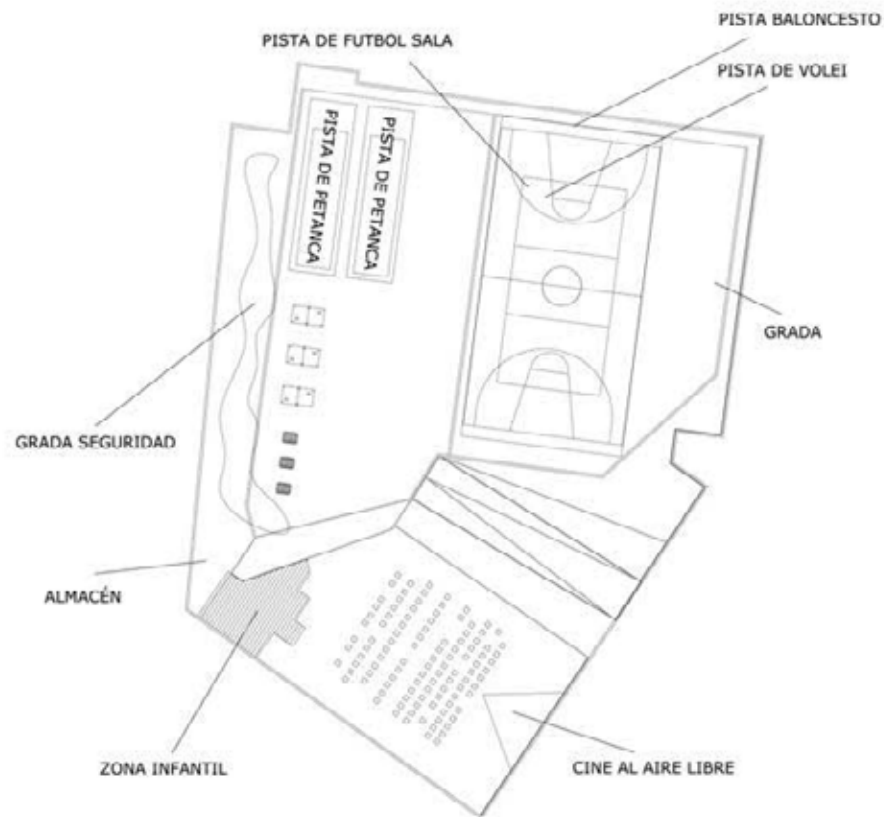
In Europe and, more specifically in Spain, where social claims reached an unexpected quota in 2011, we come across many examples of empowerment from these roots and self-management. The vacant lot "El Campo de la Cebada," for instance, which translated means 'the field of barley,' is a collective formed by neighbors who decided to take a position on the degradation of this public space situated right in the city center of Madrid. After having defined common needs under the neighbors and seeking support, a process of negotiation with city hall started that permitted them to progressively develop the project.

One of the first activities developed in this program was the creation of a communication network between the neighbors thought to facilitate their appropriation of the space and their involvement in the project.

Depending on the demands and criteria of the neighbors, activities like urban farming, open-air cinema and sport fields were planned. And not surprisingly, when looking at the people and stakeholders involved in the project, we come across architecture collectives such as *Paisaje Transversal*, *PKMN*, *Zuloark*, *Basurama* and *Todo Por la Praxis*, that entered to help design and build urban elements.

Public space should originally reflect the wishes and desires of the society that creates it. It is the first field where action should not be imposed and where it is of crucial importance to take all opinions into account. The designer or the architect is to be seen as a way to channel the emotional needs of the user in order to translate them into a workable plan, as well as a technical aid to help the implementation of collective ideas arising from a common feeling of wanting to take action in front of the administration's silence or negligence.

The story of 'El Campo de la Cebada' is just one among several that have succeeded. As a matter of fact, the highlighted projects follow working methodologies that don't present anything radically new. Yona Friedman talked about similar approaches in the 70s, advocating for locally-found materials to be utilized in an



architecture that was vernacular and simple in its choice of technologies used. He elevated the importance of mobility and variability while making a clear statement against the overbuilding trend that was undermining sustainability criteria, and in origin derived from a misinterpretation of architecture. The idea that architecture is not simply the art of building, but rather the art of managing space is now more relevant than ever. Hence, bottom-up initiatives with horizontal communication channels re-emerge strongly now, in an era that is in transition between analogical technologies and 2.0 platforms of bidirectional communication, bridging the gap between decision-makers and final users, while democratizing the process of design.

In a context like the current one, marked by a global economical crisis that is calling into question the foundations of our system, those proposals that incorporate solutions to the limitations of budget and promote shared construction methodologies and communitarian do-it-yourself approaches, find fertile soil to ingrain and take overhand.

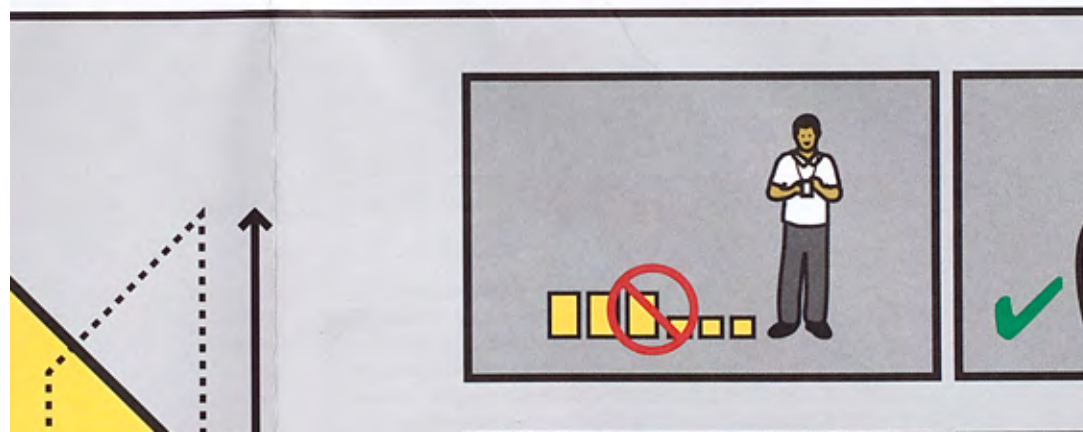
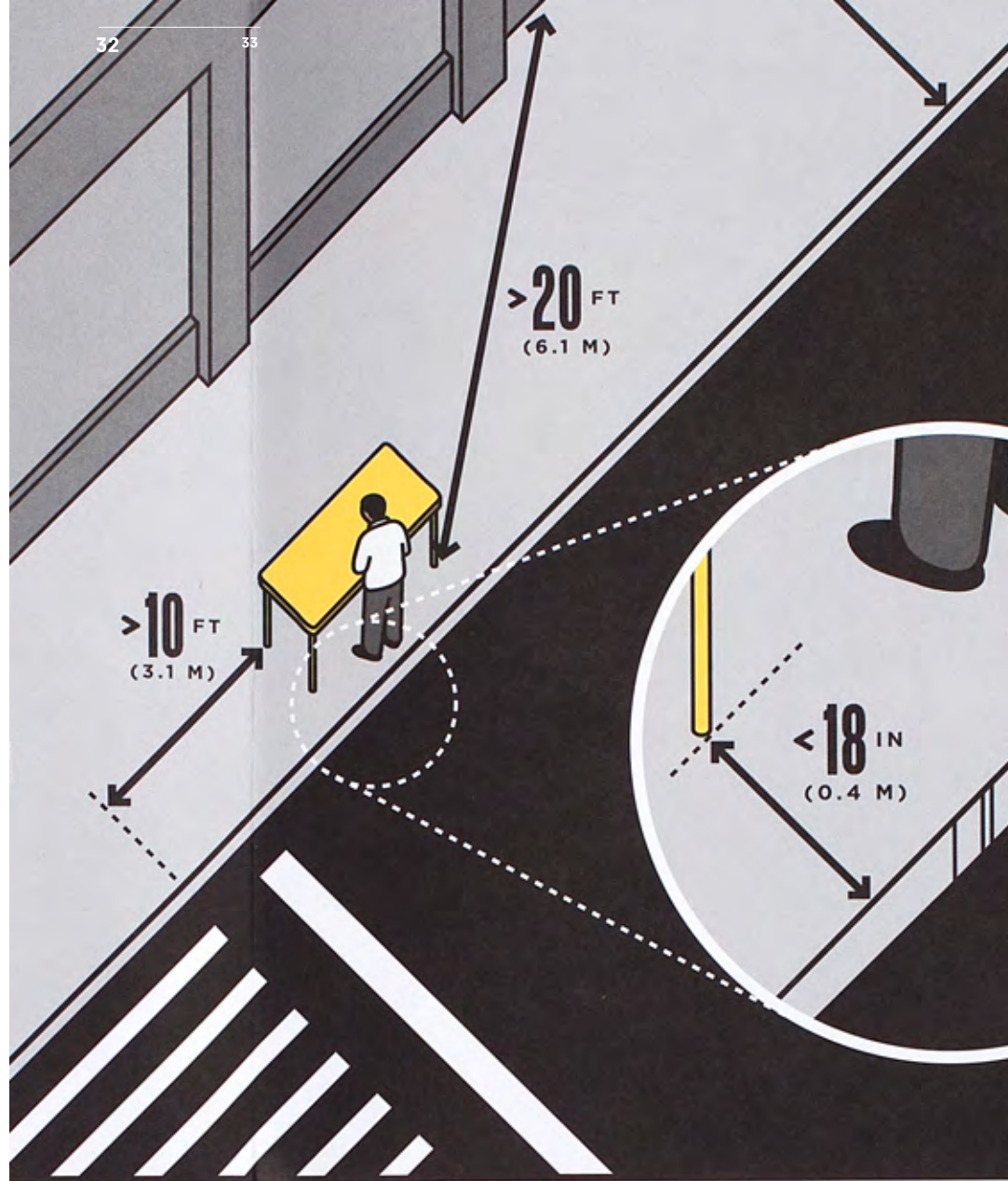
What before was a minority trend begins now to consolidate and receive public recognition as a possible way to face the challenge of survival. For instance, 'Inteligencias Colectivas 2.0' have been granted the Arquia/Proxima Award, and 'El campo de Cebada' has received the European Prize for Urban Public Space, an initiative of the Centre of Contemporary Culture of Barcelona (CCCB), a clear sign that the establishment is starting to become conscious of the collective impact that these type of projects can have on social development. As Friedman stated in *The Architecture of Survival*, "the 'philosophy of poverty' is the motor of change to a more democratic, transparent and participative society."

Bottom-up approaches, participatory systems, networking methodologies, pro common concepts and urban activations are terms that being already known, when used properly and incorporated in the work of designers, architects or the creative class in general, have as a result the architecture we like and that Yona Friedman called so aptly as architecture "with the people, by the people, for the people."

Making Policy Public

Projects by the
Center for Urban Pedagogy
(CUP)

The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP), a nonprofit organization based in New York, uses design and art to improve civic engagements. For this issue, we have selected five projects from their *Making Policy Public* series of foldout posters that use graphic design to explain public policy so that more individuals can better participate in shaping it. Published four times a year, each poster is the product of a collaboration of a designer, an advocate, and CUP.



Know Your Lines

Know Your Lines goes behind the scenes of the largely invisible redistricting process in which politicians often get to choose their voters, instead of the other way around. Who's actually drawing the lines? What does the shape of a district mean? What does a good redistricting process look like?

CUP collaborated with the Brennan Center for Justice and design team We Have Photoshop to produce Know Your Lines, a fold-out poster on the ins and outs of redistricting and how to make it work better. If you care about political power, representation, or public policy, then you care about redistricting.

Know Your Lines is aimed at helping communities and advocacy groups across the country to understand how they can play a role in making the redistricting process fairer, more transparent, and more accountable to the public. CUP and the Brennan Center launched the project with an outreach event for “grasstops,” the leaders of community groups who are now using this information in their own organizing work.

Participants

CUP

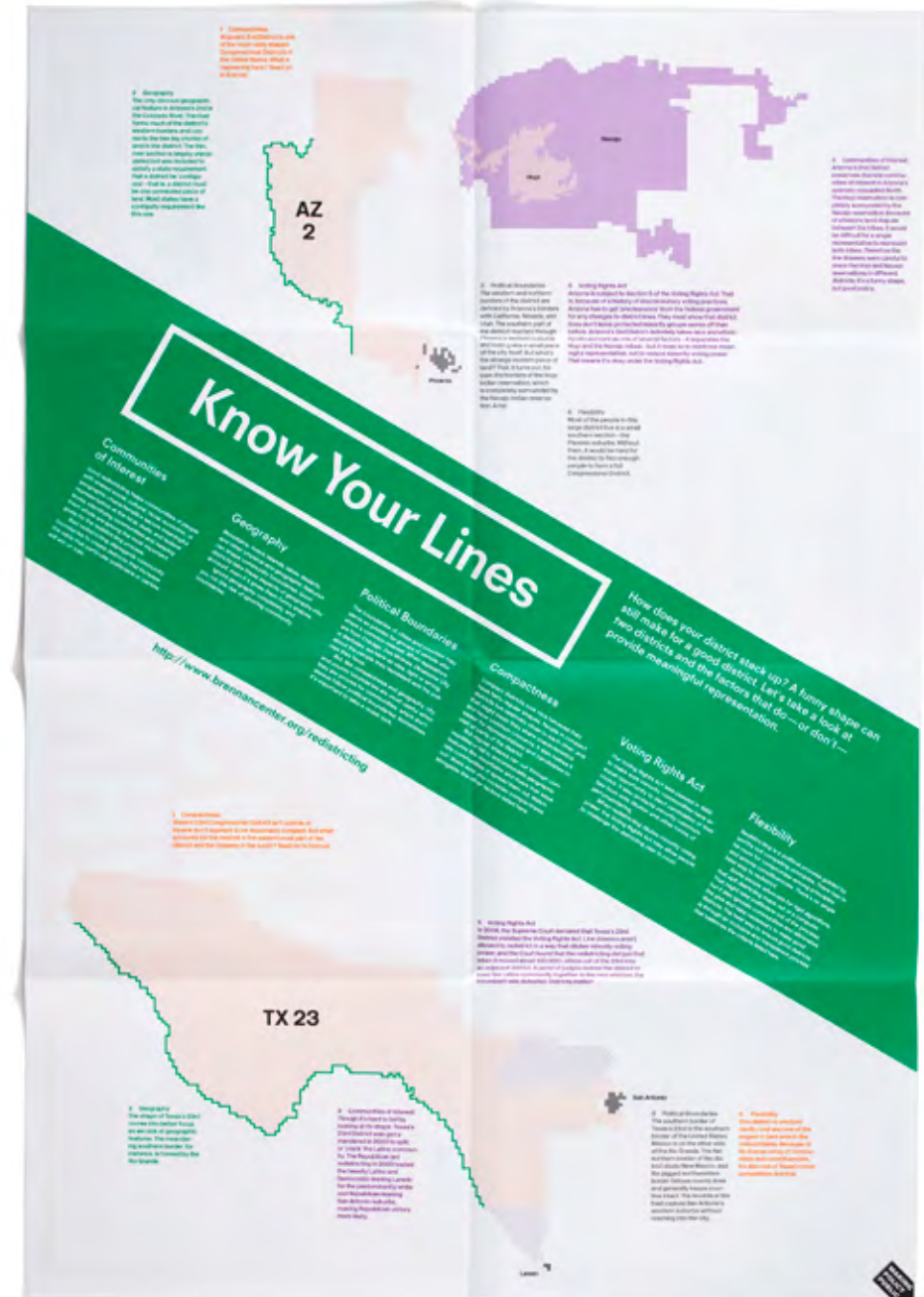
Project Leads:
[Christine Gaspar](#)
[John Mangin](#)

The Brennan Center

Advocacy Partner:
[Erika Wood](#)
[Myrna Perez](#)
[Garima Malhotra](#)
[Justin Levitt](#)
[Bonnie Ernst](#)

We Have Photoshop

Designers:
[Michael Gallagher](#)
[Sebastian Campos](#)



Shape alone doesn't tell you much

People sometimes associate gerrymandering with odd-shaped and uncompetitive districts. But sometimes there are good reasons that districts are oddly shaped. Communities (including minority communities protected by the Voting Rights Act), geography, and municipal boundaries don't always form neat shapes. And sometimes there are so many members of one political party in an area that no combination of districts could create strong competition between parties. (Plus, redistricting is only one factor among many that determine political competition.)

In fact, focusing on neat shapes or political competition can create the same problems as gerrymandering—sometimes intentionally. For example,

The Voting Rights Act (VRA) is designed to ensure representation against minority voters in the political process. Two provisions of the VRA are important in redistricting. Section Two prohibits line drawers from diluting minority voting power by "packing" minority communities into a small number of districts or by "cracking" them into a large number of districts. Section Five requires certain states and localities with a history of discriminatory voting practices to get preclearance from the Department of Justice or a federal court for any proposed changes to district lines. It is difficult to violate these sections, but they are important tools that advocates can and should use to ensure fair representation.



This redistricting proposal created with a simple algorithm could work if used there were the ultimate goal. But communities don't fit within neat lines, and proposals like this undermine what should be the goal of redistricting: meaningful representation for all communities.

preestablished in 1980, districts for the House County Board of Supervisors were drawn by a machine that drew lines equal to each district. Districting is easy to make. The result is a map that looks like this.



slicing the country into a neat grid would inevitably split communities and group voters in ways that benefit one party or another. There might be greater competition in a district with an even mix of farmers and city dwellers—but that still might not lead to meaningful representation for those communities.

Let's look beyond the symptoms of gerrymandering. Use the next section as a guide for reviewing your state's districts and redistricting process. Learn about the concrete steps people around the country are taking to make redistricting better.

NOW, you can work to create better districts

Become an expert!

First, learn how redistricting works in your state. You know a lot just by reading this far! But you should find out a few more details: What criteria do the line drawers need to follow when shaping districts? What are the opportunities for public participation? Use the resources in this poster to get started!

Educate the media!

The media reports on the political impact of redistricting, but few reporters and editors understand the details. You and your allies can become the experts the media will rely on to understand the process.

Get involved! Hold the line drawers accountable by paying attention and speaking up. If you do, they will be more likely to address community interests and less able to manipulate the process to their own advantage. This is true no matter what redistricting process your state uses. Here are a few ways to get involved.

Attend hearings!

Several states require the line drawers to hold public meetings. If they don't, you can pressure the people in charge to make sure they do. Get as many people as you can to come ask questions and give input at the meetings, both before and after draft maps are proposed.

Join forces!

There are groups across the country already working on redistricting. Find out which are working on it in your area. If no one is, start your own group!

Draw your own map!

You can help by drawing maps of your community and others you think should be kept together. The more specific the proposals, the better. Present the maps at hearings and send them to legislators with petitions or letters of support.

Raise the alarm!

If, in the end, the redistricting process still breaks up communities, you may be able to take legal action. These lawsuits are complicated, but there are experts and nonprofit groups that can help—especially if a minority community has been deprived of its political voice.

WHAT CAN I DO?

LATER, you can work to create a better redistricting process

Make the data public!

Political and demographic data should be available to the public throughout the redistricting process. This helps communities participate, and keeps redistricting bodies accountable to the public.

Require public hearings!

Public hearings—before and after the maps are drawn—give the public a chance to ask questions and make suggestions. Requiring the line drawers to explain their decisions also makes it harder for them to hide the ball.

Demand diversity!

A redistricting body with representatives from different communities and interests in the state can help ensure that the final district maps reflect the state's diversity. That means more communities have the chance for meaningful political representation.

Promote independence!

A well-designed independent commission, with representation from different parties and communities, may help ensure that incumbent legislators don't serve only their own interests.

Make it the right size!

A redistricting body of between 7 and 15 is usually large enough to represent a state's constituencies without getting unwieldy.

Maintain balance!

A redistricting body with a balanced number of members from each political party can help prevent redistricting plans that heavily favor one party.

On April 1, 2010, it's Census day! Hundreds of millions of people return forms by mail and more than 5.8 million Census workers go

door-to-door to count those who don't return mail forms.

In February of 2011, the Census Bureau starts sending data to states.

Between 2010 and 2012, states & local governments redistrict. Each state has a different deadline. Usually the end of the legislative session.

Most states finish by 2012. One or two states in 2012. If no progress on the constitution, they drop or limit the court's step in.

During 2011 and 2012, states hold their primary elections. Redistricting has to be complete before the filing deadline.

2011 through 2012 is the window for long-term change to the process. Doing this can be time to take part in organized redistricting efforts.

Identify sympathetic legislators participate in public hearings.

In 2011 to 2012, the litigation to control redistricting goes wrong begins. Remember if you see something, say something!

Barriers to Reentry

More than 1 in 5 adults in the United States has a criminal record, and those with criminal records often cannot find a job because they are perceived as a risky hire.

The truth is that many people with a criminal record are no more likely to commit a crime than people without a record. Many criminal records were a result of minor offenses, or offenses committed a long time ago. The Fortune Society wanted a poster that told the stories of formerly incarcerated people and the difficulties they face when trying to reenter the workforce, so they teamed up with CUP and designer Sara McKay as a part of CUP's Making Policy Public program to create Barriers to Reentry.

Barriers to Reentry explains Article 23-A of New York's Corrections Law, which requires employers to consider the criminal record of a potential employee in the context of other factors – like how old they were when the offence occurred, or whether the offence is relevant to the job duties. It is in fact illegal to not hire someone only because of a criminal record.

This year, the Fortune Society successfully advocated for the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to release an updated and improved set of guidelines for employers on the use of criminal background checks in hiring. CUP is proud to say that Barriers to Reentry was a critical tool in their year-long advocacy campaign. Congratulations to The Fortune Society!

Participants

CUP

Project Leads:

[John Mangin](#)

[Rosten Woo](#)

Project Support:

[Valeria Mogilevich](#)

The Fortune Society

Advocacy Partner:

[Jessica Colter](#)

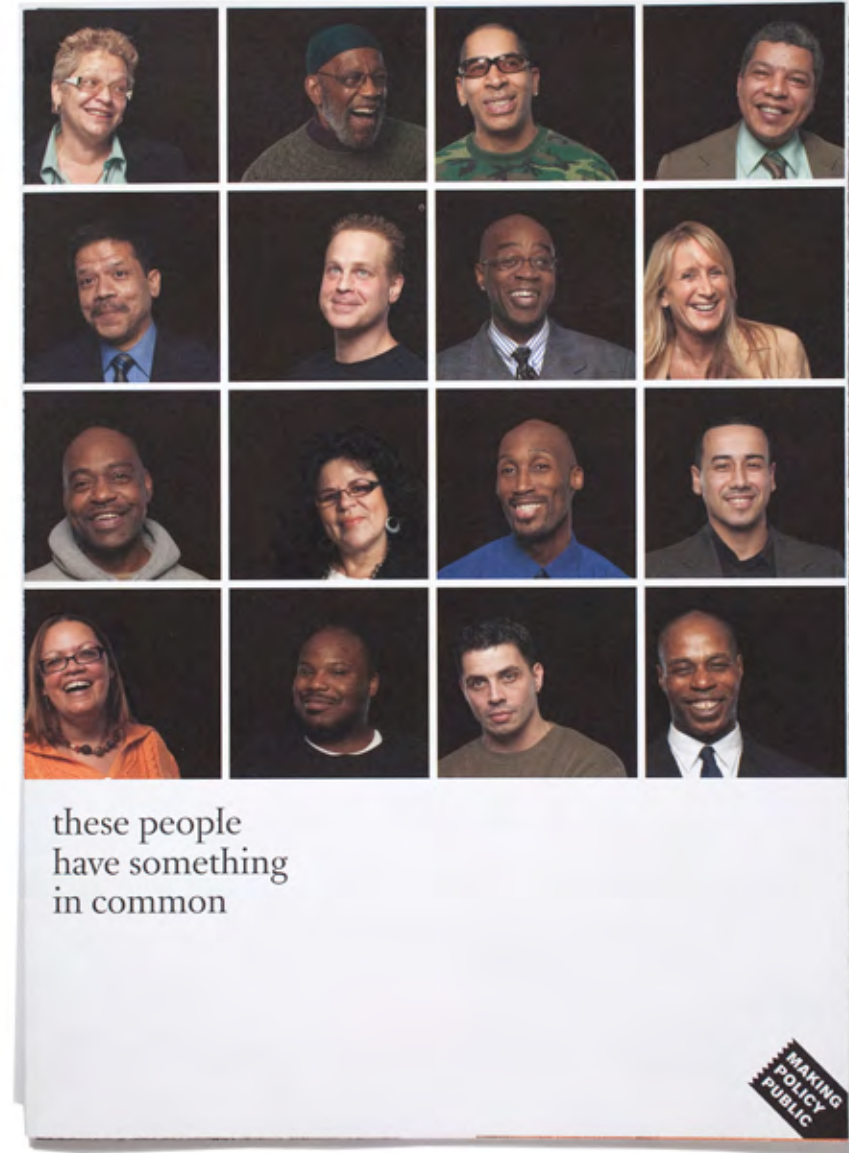
[Glen E. Martin](#)

Designer:

[Sara McKay](#)

Photographer:

[Fiona Aboud](#)



About 45 million people in the United States have criminal records. That's more than one in five adults.

These men and women have an especially hard time finding decent jobs, because most employers can't see past a criminal record. It's New York State policy to encourage the employment of men and women with criminal records. Employers have the right to consider a job applicant's record, but ARTICLE 23-A of New York Corrections Law requires employers to consider a record in a broader context.

IN NEW YORK STATE, EMPLOYERS HAVE TO CONSIDER:

How relevant is the offense to the duties of the job?
According to a University of California study almost half of rejected employers said they would automatically reject a candidate with a record, without regard to the nature of the offense or any other individual factors. Since these figures are self-reported, the actual percentage is likely much higher.

How long ago was the last offense?
The risk of re-offense drops dramatically the longer a person stays crime-free. After seven years, people with records pose no greater crime risk than people without records.

How old was the candidate when the offense was committed?
People with records from young adulthood generally may be committing crimes as they get older. Once they hit their mid-thirties, people with records pose no greater crime risk than people without records.

How serious was the offense?
Most convictions in New York State are for nonviolent crimes, and many are for drug offenses that involved no violence or property crime.

Has the candidate sought official rehabilitation?
In New York, people with records can apply for certificates of good conduct and certificates of relief from disability from the state. Under New York law, employers have to consider these as evidence of rehabilitation.

they have criminal records



It is illegal to deny someone a job based solely on a criminal record.



Predatory Equity

During the housing boom, a new breed of speculator used private equity and oversized bank loans to buy up affordable housing. They tried to make a quick profit by converting it to luxury housing – putting over 65,000 families and their affordable apartments at risk. Post-crash, these predatory equity speculators can't pay off their loans or sell their buildings. Foreclosure looms.

Predatory Equity: The Survival Guide explains the financial mechanics of predatory equity and how to prevent it from happening again in the next boom. It provides tenants, advocates, and policymakers with information on tools like loan modifications and preservation short sales to save the hundreds of buildings in imminent danger of foreclosure.

This poster is being used by dozens of housing advocacy organizations to break down the math behind this predatory practice.

Participants

CUP

Project Leads:

John Mangin

Rosten Woo

Tenants and Neighbors

Advocacy Partner:

Amy Chan

UHAB

Advocacy Partner:

Dina Levy

MTWTF

Designer:

Glen Cummings



How Can We Save Overleveraged Buildings?

Predatory equity has put more than 65,000 units of New York City's affordable housing at risk! If nothing is done, rents will go up, services will go down, and buildings will go into foreclosure.

NYC BUILDINGS AT RISK

Overleveraged buildings have more debt than they can support. Speculators have only three options:

RAISE RENTS

To do this, the speculator needs to get rid of all the tenants who don't pay rent. The mortgage interest rate for commercial properties is 10% per year. That means the speculator must raise rents to 10% per year, and they'll eventually go to 20% per year.

CUT SERVICES

When speculators can't raise rents, they cut services. They cut the water, the heat, the trash, the garbage, the maintenance, the security, and the other services.

FORECLOSURE

If the speculator can't raise rents or cut services, they go into foreclosure. The bank will take the building and sell it to the highest bidder. The speculator will lose everything.

Reduce Debt!

In order to save overleveraged buildings, their debt has to be brought in line with their income. Federal resources should enable banks to write down a portion of the debt—but only for speculators who agree to new regulation that will keep their buildings affordable.

...and Preserve with Short Sales!

The government should encourage speculators and banks to sell short (i.e., at a loss) to "preservation purchasers"—tenant- and government-approved owners committed to managing housing for the long term.

How Can We Stop Predatory Equity in the Future?

In order to prevent this from happening again, we need to look at how this happened in the first place.



Regulate the Banks!

The best way to stop predatory equity is to restrict its main source of funding: banks willing to make speculative loans. Remember—eighty percent of the funding for these deals came from banks!

In the aftermath of the financial crisis, almost everyone agrees that banks need closer oversight.

If the income from a building can't cover operating expenses and pay off the loan, regulators should have the discretion to veto the loan. This will dry up capital for predatory equity speculators and clear the way for responsible, long-term owners.



RAISE RENTS

To do this, the speculator needs to get rid of all the tenants who don't pay rent. The mortgage interest rate for commercial properties is 10% per year. That means the speculator must raise rents to 10% per year, and they'll eventually go to 20% per year.

CUT SERVICES

When speculators can't raise rents, they cut services. They cut the water, the heat, the trash, the garbage, the maintenance, the security, and the other services.

FORECLOSURE

If the speculator can't raise rents or cut services, they go into foreclosure. The bank will take the building and sell it to the highest bidder. The speculator will lose everything.

In a loan modification, the bank reduces debt for speculators who agree to new regulation.

At Rivermont, the bank agreed to reduce the debt from \$10 million to \$5 million. The speculator agreed to new regulation.

WIN

WIN

WIN

WIN

WIN

In a preservation short sale, the speculator sells the building to a buyer who will keep the building affordable.

The speculator sold the building to a preservation purchaser who agreed to keep the building affordable.

WIN

WIN

WIN

WIN

WIN

Why did banks lend money to speculators?

During the boom, banks assumed that housing prices would go up, and that speculators could always find buyers. They lent money to speculators without really looking into basic facts.

Like rental income, operating expenses, and turnover rates. Banks also thought they could avoid the risk from bad loans through financial tools like mortgage-backed securities.



Phrases thought mortgage-backed securities were safe—because there's no such thing as a borrower who doesn't pay—were wrong!

With new underwriting standards, banks will loan more responsibly.

ONE GIANT LEAP PLEASE

LET'S SEE THE BUILDING FIRST

THE SIZE OF A LOAN SHOULD BE LIMITED BY:

Actual Income From Rents

Actual Operating Expenses

Actual Turnover Rates

With better underwriting standards, what would have happened at Rivermont? Glück would have asked for a \$250 million loan. The bank would have looked at:

1) INCOME FROM RENT: \$10.3M

2) OPERATING COSTS: \$8.5M

3) TURNOVER RATE: 5%

4) ANNUAL DEBT SERVICE: \$10M

LOAN VETOED!

Vendor Power

Did you know you can get a \$1,000 ticket for parking more than 18 inches from the curb? When you're earning an average of \$14,000 a year, as many of New York City's street vendors do, that can really get in the way of making a living.

In 2009, The Street Vendor Project, designer Candy Chang, and CUP created this issue of Making Policy Public to decode the rules and regulations for New York's 10,000 street vendors so they can understand their rights and avoid unnecessary fines. The poster uses simple graphics and minimal text — in the five languages most commonly spoken among NYC's vendors — to explain some of the most-often violated laws.

CUP and Street Vendor Project staff and volunteers launched the project with a sweep through the five boroughs to distribute over a thousand copies of the poster in a single day. The document's portable format makes it easy for vendors to keep them on-hand. Street Vendor Project members tell us they even show them to police when there's a question about a specific law!

Street Vendor Project has distributed thousands of copies to its members, and other organizations that deal with street vendor issues are using them, too.

Participants

CUP

Project Leads:

John Mangin

Rosten Woo

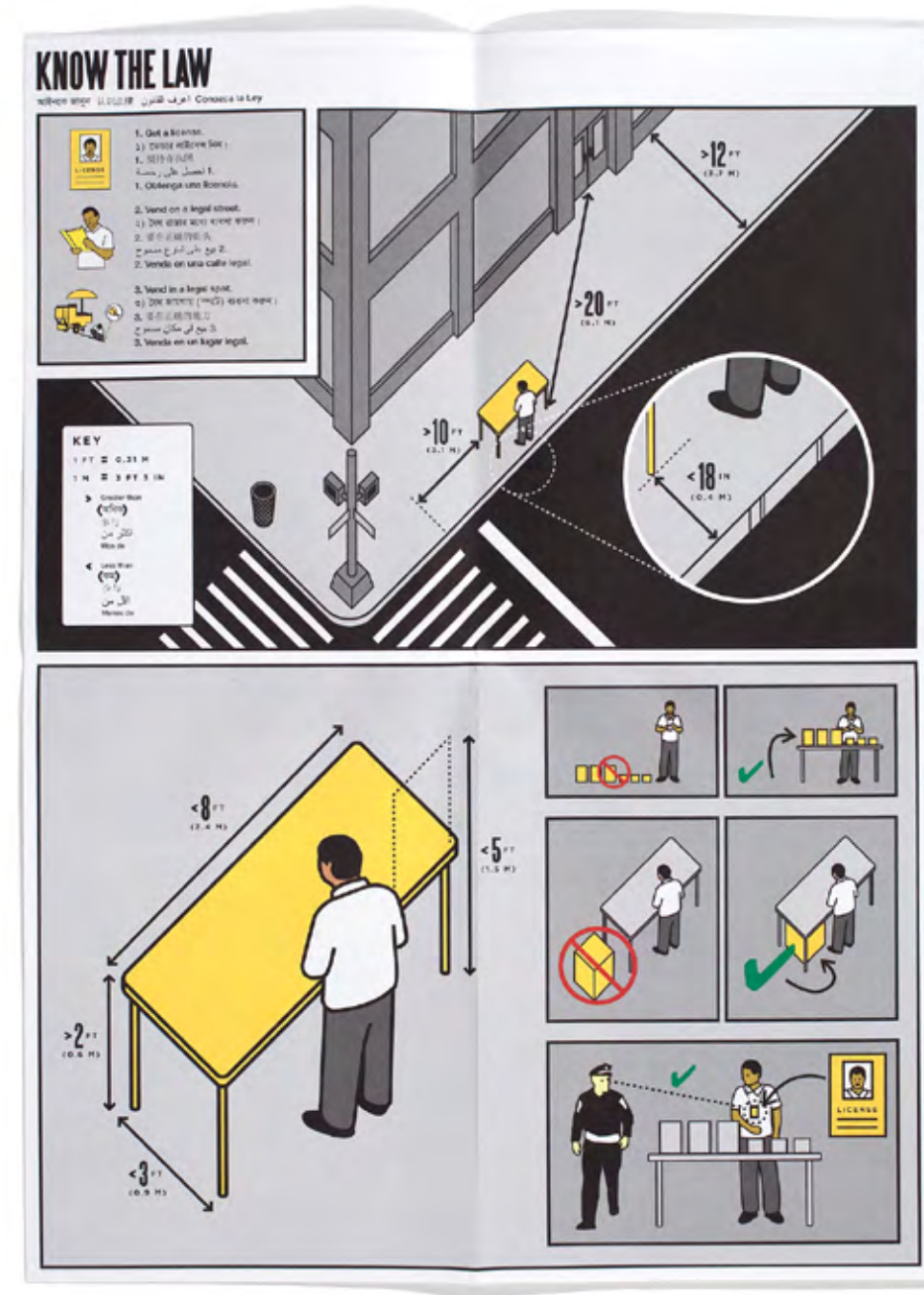
The Street Vendor Project

Advocacy Partner:

Sean Basinski

Designer:

Candy Chang



GET TO KNOW YOUR STREET VENDORS

WAYS TO A BETTER VENDOR WORLD

In New York, street vending has always attracted ambitious, hard-working men and women with limited economic options. Businesswise vendors of immigrants — Jewish and Italian in a previous era, now Chinese, Bangladeshi, Afghan, and Senegalese — have used vending to gain a foothold in their new country. Its low start-up costs, independence, and flexibility make vending a traditional first step for small-business entrepreneurs.

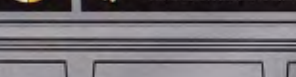
But vending isn't an easy way to get ahead. Throughout New York City's history, merchants resentful of "further" competition have joined forces with city officials (concerned with congestion, modernization, and "quality of life") to bar vendors from streets and regulate their activities. These complex and shifting laws force vendors back and forth across the border between the formal and informal economies, making it difficult for vendors to serve the public and make a decent and honest living.

Here are four basic ways the City can make vending laws better for vendors, their customers, and everyone else.

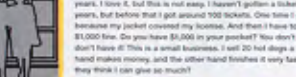
1. LIFT THE CAPS
It's virtually impossible to get a vending license in New York City because of strict caps, or limits, placed on the number of vendors in the 1970s and '80s. The estimated wait for a general vending license is several decades. By setting the caps far below vendor supply and public demand, the City unintentionally creates a thriving and exploitative black market for permits and licenses. Legal vendors have to buy licenses from illegal middlemen at exorbitant prices. Other vendors are driven underground, where they're unregulated and unmonitored. To bring vendors into the legal mainstream, the City should raise the caps to realistic levels and crack down on the black market in licenses and permits.



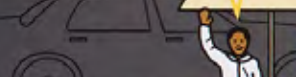
2. INCREASE STREET ACCESS
Vendors need foot traffic to survive, but waves of street restrictions have forced them further away from the areas of the city that can support them. Pressure from merchant associations in the 1970s and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in later decades led to widespread restrictions, and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani made street restrictions a centerpiece of his "quality of life" campaign. Even on open streets, complex rules make it difficult to vend legally. The City should review street closures according to set criteria and rescind restrictions not founded in legitimate concerns about safety and street congestion. It should also simplify time-of-day restrictions to make them easier for vendors to understand and follow.



3. REDUCE THE FINES
In 2005, Mayor Michael Bloomberg qualified the maximum fines for street vendor violations from \$200 to \$500. A new schedule for parking in city streets (which allows for parking in city streets for more than 18 hours from the curb or more than 20 feet from a store entrance) can wipe out months of earnings. Other businesses pay less for more serious violations while having a greater ability to pay. Vendors are entry-level small-business owners who cannot absorb fines as a cost of business. The City should reduce fines to pre-2005 amounts — a level that deters violations but doesn't put vendors out of business.



4. REPORT ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT
Vending regulation is a patchwork of policies from the last hundred years that vendors and police find hard to understand. The rubric is a series of photocopies and unformatted excerpts from the city code — rough going, even for native English speakers. As a consequence, vendors who want to follow the rules get lost for violations they don't understand, and police who want to enforce the rules give letters for violations that don't exist. To increase compliance, the City should simplify vendor registration and create a new rubric that clearly explains the rules in English and a few of the many languages vendors speak.



THE WILD WEST OF STREET VENDING

As a result, Mayor Michael Bloomberg has an informal system in which he promised vendors that he would not enforce the rules and would not issue citations for violations. This informal system has led to a proliferation of vendors and a corresponding increase in the number of citations issued.

Most vendors have a license, but many of them are not registered. This means that they are not subject to the same rules as registered vendors. This has led to a proliferation of vendors and a corresponding increase in the number of citations issued.

Here are four basic ways the City can make vending laws better for vendors, their customers, and everyone else.

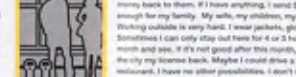
1. LIFT THE CAPS
It's virtually impossible to get a vending license in New York City because of strict caps, or limits, placed on the number of vendors in the 1970s and '80s. The estimated wait for a general vending license is several decades. By setting the caps far below vendor supply and public demand, the City unintentionally creates a thriving and exploitative black market for permits and licenses. Legal vendors have to buy licenses from illegal middlemen at exorbitant prices. Other vendors are driven underground, where they're unregulated and unmonitored. To bring vendors into the legal mainstream, the City should raise the caps to realistic levels and crack down on the black market in licenses and permits.



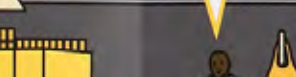
2. INCREASE STREET ACCESS
Vendors need foot traffic to survive, but waves of street restrictions have forced them further away from the areas of the city that can support them. Pressure from merchant associations in the 1970s and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in later decades led to widespread restrictions, and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani made street restrictions a centerpiece of his "quality of life" campaign. Even on open streets, complex rules make it difficult to vend legally. The City should review street closures according to set criteria and rescind restrictions not founded in legitimate concerns about safety and street congestion. It should also simplify time-of-day restrictions to make them easier for vendors to understand and follow.



3. REDUCE THE FINES
In 2005, Mayor Michael Bloomberg qualified the maximum fines for street vendor violations from \$200 to \$500. A new schedule for parking in city streets (which allows for parking in city streets for more than 18 hours from the curb or more than 20 feet from a store entrance) can wipe out months of earnings. Other businesses pay less for more serious violations while having a greater ability to pay. Vendors are entry-level small-business owners who cannot absorb fines as a cost of business. The City should reduce fines to pre-2005 amounts — a level that deters violations but doesn't put vendors out of business.



4. REPORT ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT
Vending regulation is a patchwork of policies from the last hundred years that vendors and police find hard to understand. The rubric is a series of photocopies and unformatted excerpts from the city code — rough going, even for native English speakers. As a consequence, vendors who want to follow the rules get lost for violations they don't understand, and police who want to enforce the rules give letters for violations that don't exist. To increase compliance, the City should simplify vendor registration and create a new rubric that clearly explains the rules in English and a few of the many languages vendors speak.



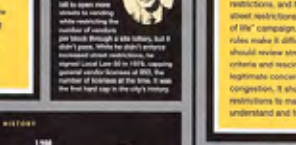
THE WILD WEST OF STREET VENDING

As a result, Mayor Michael Bloomberg has an informal system in which he promised vendors that he would not enforce the rules and would not issue citations for violations. This informal system has led to a proliferation of vendors and a corresponding increase in the number of citations issued.

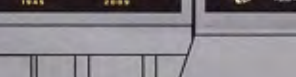
Most vendors have a license, but many of them are not registered. This means that they are not subject to the same rules as registered vendors. This has led to a proliferation of vendors and a corresponding increase in the number of citations issued.

Here are four basic ways the City can make vending laws better for vendors, their customers, and everyone else.

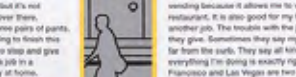
1. LIFT THE CAPS
It's virtually impossible to get a vending license in New York City because of strict caps, or limits, placed on the number of vendors in the 1970s and '80s. The estimated wait for a general vending license is several decades. By setting the caps far below vendor supply and public demand, the City unintentionally creates a thriving and exploitative black market for permits and licenses. Legal vendors have to buy licenses from illegal middlemen at exorbitant prices. Other vendors are driven underground, where they're unregulated and unmonitored. To bring vendors into the legal mainstream, the City should raise the caps to realistic levels and crack down on the black market in licenses and permits.



2. INCREASE STREET ACCESS
Vendors need foot traffic to survive, but waves of street restrictions have forced them further away from the areas of the city that can support them. Pressure from merchant associations in the 1970s and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in later decades led to widespread restrictions, and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani made street restrictions a centerpiece of his "quality of life" campaign. Even on open streets, complex rules make it difficult to vend legally. The City should review street closures according to set criteria and rescind restrictions not founded in legitimate concerns about safety and street congestion. It should also simplify time-of-day restrictions to make them easier for vendors to understand and follow.



3. REDUCE THE FINES
In 2005, Mayor Michael Bloomberg qualified the maximum fines for street vendor violations from \$200 to \$500. A new schedule for parking in city streets (which allows for parking in city streets for more than 18 hours from the curb or more than 20 feet from a store entrance) can wipe out months of earnings. Other businesses pay less for more serious violations while having a greater ability to pay. Vendors are entry-level small-business owners who cannot absorb fines as a cost of business. The City should reduce fines to pre-2005 amounts — a level that deters violations but doesn't put vendors out of business.



4. REPORT ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT
Vending regulation is a patchwork of policies from the last hundred years that vendors and police find hard to understand. The rubric is a series of photocopies and unformatted excerpts from the city code — rough going, even for native English speakers. As a consequence, vendors who want to follow the rules get lost for violations they don't understand, and police who want to enforce the rules give letters for violations that don't exist. To increase compliance, the City should simplify vendor registration and create a new rubric that clearly explains the rules in English and a few of the many languages vendors speak.



THE WILD WEST OF STREET VENDING

As a result, Mayor Michael Bloomberg has an informal system in which he promised vendors that he would not enforce the rules and would not issue citations for violations. This informal system has led to a proliferation of vendors and a corresponding increase in the number of citations issued.

Most vendors have a license, but many of them are not registered. This means that they are not subject to the same rules as registered vendors. This has led to a proliferation of vendors and a corresponding increase in the number of citations issued.

Here are four basic ways the City can make vending laws better for vendors, their customers, and everyone else.

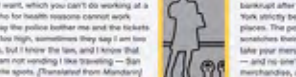
1. LIFT THE CAPS
It's virtually impossible to get a vending license in New York City because of strict caps, or limits, placed on the number of vendors in the 1970s and '80s. The estimated wait for a general vending license is several decades. By setting the caps far below vendor supply and public demand, the City unintentionally creates a thriving and exploitative black market for permits and licenses. Legal vendors have to buy licenses from illegal middlemen at exorbitant prices. Other vendors are driven underground, where they're unregulated and unmonitored. To bring vendors into the legal mainstream, the City should raise the caps to realistic levels and crack down on the black market in licenses and permits.



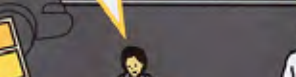
2. INCREASE STREET ACCESS
Vendors need foot traffic to survive, but waves of street restrictions have forced them further away from the areas of the city that can support them. Pressure from merchant associations in the 1970s and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in later decades led to widespread restrictions, and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani made street restrictions a centerpiece of his "quality of life" campaign. Even on open streets, complex rules make it difficult to vend legally. The City should review street closures according to set criteria and rescind restrictions not founded in legitimate concerns about safety and street congestion. It should also simplify time-of-day restrictions to make them easier for vendors to understand and follow.



3. REDUCE THE FINES
In 2005, Mayor Michael Bloomberg qualified the maximum fines for street vendor violations from \$200 to \$500. A new schedule for parking in city streets (which allows for parking in city streets for more than 18 hours from the curb or more than 20 feet from a store entrance) can wipe out months of earnings. Other businesses pay less for more serious violations while having a greater ability to pay. Vendors are entry-level small-business owners who cannot absorb fines as a cost of business. The City should reduce fines to pre-2005 amounts — a level that deters violations but doesn't put vendors out of business.



4. REPORT ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT
Vending regulation is a patchwork of policies from the last hundred years that vendors and police find hard to understand. The rubric is a series of photocopies and unformatted excerpts from the city code — rough going, even for native English speakers. As a consequence, vendors who want to follow the rules get lost for violations they don't understand, and police who want to enforce the rules give letters for violations that don't exist. To increase compliance, the City should simplify vendor registration and create a new rubric that clearly explains the rules in English and a few of the many languages vendors speak.



THE WILD WEST OF STREET VENDING

As a result, Mayor Michael Bloomberg has an informal system in which he promised vendors that he would not enforce the rules and would not issue citations for violations. This informal system has led to a proliferation of vendors and a corresponding increase in the number of citations issued.

Most vendors have a license, but many of them are not registered. This means that they are not subject to the same rules as registered vendors. This has led to a proliferation of vendors and a corresponding increase in the number of citations issued.

Here are four basic ways the City can make vending laws better for vendors, their customers, and everyone else.

1. LIFT THE CAPS
It's virtually impossible to get a vending license in New York City because of strict caps, or limits, placed on the number of vendors in the 1970s and '80s. The estimated wait for a general vending license is several decades. By setting the caps far below vendor supply and public demand, the City unintentionally creates a thriving and exploitative black market for permits and licenses. Legal vendors have to buy licenses from illegal middlemen at exorbitant prices. Other vendors are driven underground, where they're unregulated and unmonitored. To bring vendors into the legal mainstream, the City should raise the caps to realistic levels and crack down on the black market in licenses and permits.



2. INCREASE STREET ACCESS
Vendors need foot traffic to survive, but waves of street restrictions have forced them further away from the areas of the city that can support them. Pressure from merchant associations in the 1970s and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in later decades led to widespread restrictions, and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani made street restrictions a centerpiece of his "quality of life" campaign. Even on open streets, complex rules make it difficult to vend legally. The City should review street closures according to set criteria and rescind restrictions not founded in legitimate concerns about safety and street congestion. It should also simplify time-of-day restrictions to make them easier for vendors to understand and follow.



3. REDUCE THE FINES
In 2005, Mayor Michael Bloomberg qualified the maximum fines for street vendor violations from \$200 to \$500. A new schedule for parking in city streets (which allows for parking in city streets for more than 18 hours from the curb or more than 20 feet from a store entrance) can wipe out months of earnings. Other businesses pay less for more serious violations while having a greater ability to pay. Vendors are entry-level small-business owners who cannot absorb fines as a cost of business. The City should reduce fines to pre-2005 amounts — a level that d

The Cargo Chain

The Cargo Chain is an organizing tool for longshore workers that shows the players and pressure points in today's globalized shipping network. How do commodities get from factory to shopping mall? Who really has the power to move today's global economy?

CUP worked with the Longshore Workers Coalition; Labor Notes; cartographer Bill Rankin; and graphic designers, Thumb, to create this fold out poster which shows how cargo moves around the world, from the factory, to the store, to your hands. The poster helps Longshore workers understand their role within the interlocking transportation network by visualizing the choke points in the system.

The publication has been used by longshore workers' unions across the country, as well as the Railworkers' Network. The steelworker's union has used the poster as a model for their international solidarity project with the West Coast longshore workers, dockworkers in Australia, and miners in South Africa and Australia. Over a thousand copies have been distributed to union leaders through the Labor Notes conferences.

Participants

CUP

Project Lead:
Rosten Woo

Labor Notes

Advocacy Partner

The Longshore Worker's Coalition (LWC)

Advocacy Partner

Thumb

Designers

Cartography:

Bill Rankin

Illustrations:

William Hood



Tokyoites

An observations on Tokyo's citizens and their surroundings by Luis Mendo

The city where we grow up, work in, or travel to is different for each one of us. The experiences we have, the people we know or meet, and many other small aspects will define our memories of that city. Through a series of drawings and notes, designer and editorial design consultant Luis Mendo provides us his personal vision of Tokyo, its people and the environment that defines each one of them.



**Yoshi (35)**

Born in Kyoto
Lives in Yutenji
Works as a magazine editor

Always waits several seconds before answering
Tends to look thoughtful
When smiling, he does it as if he was extremely happy
Elegant immaculate shirts
Earring on his left ear, a small stone and silver
Has a black leather bag with gear
—
Likes this view when waiting for his train

**Tetsuro (28)**

Born in Meguro
Lives in Meguro
Works as a cook
in Tonki

Wears white outfit while at work
Got his NY Yankees cap from an uncle in the US
Nods in almost every sentence
Never looks people in the eye, extremely shy
—
Walks under this bridge every Sunday morning
when visiting his parents in Shibuya



**Tako (29)**

Works as waiter in Narita
Born in Osaka
Lives in Yokohama

Old hat from American Vintage shop in Harajuku
Loves his iPhone
Tweets and instagrams incessantly
Slow on the hand movements

—
This is the house of his girlfriend in Shibuya
where he often sleeps over

**Natsuki (37)**

Home keeper
Born in Kyoto
Lives in Yoyogi
Housewife

Large, colourful clothes
Prefers wide skirts and low shoes
Smiles when talking about personal problems
Smokes only Marlboro
Thinks about travelling all the time
Loved Kentucky's slow life

—
The garage of the building where she lives



**Kaori (33)**

Works as a sales director
at a fashion company
Born in Tokyo
Lives in Aoyama

Always wears black

Shows her long, stylistic neck when possible
Looks people in the eye when talking to them
Likes to tap the table with her pen when on the phone
She loves the smell of red roses while sipping white wine

—
The back side of her apartment building

**Saburo (41)**

Homeless for 3 years now
Born in Takanodababa
Lives in the streets

Dresses in whatever he finds

His blue plastic "house" is in Shibuya
Likes spring and its flowers
Wears an Armani jacket an executive once gave him
He keeps a photo of his dead wife in the left inside pocket
Is good at remembering faces
Tells his story to anyone who would listen

—
Likes to find photo shootings in Daikanyama



**Mariko (27)**

Born in Hokkaido
Lives in Nakano
Works as a secretary
in an art academy

Always wears white
Has several allergies hence the mask
Her favorite TV program is on Sunday
She was once in Paris and fell in love with the tour guide
Speaks softly and laughs covering her teeth
Loves potato sochu with ginger ale

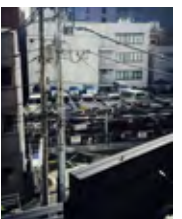
—
This is the new terrace on the top of the school building

**Tadao (26)**

Born in Tokyo
Lives in Adachi
Interns as sommelier
for a wine import firm

He's worn his hair up since he was 19
In love with his retro Casio digital watch
Sparkling eyes when talking about wine and France
Hates the smell of ammonia and cigarettes
Always wears jeans with white shoes
He crosses the city by mountain bike wearing a helmet

—
The view from his bathroom window



Notable Realities

Balancing from world to world

Essay by Michael Hirschbichler

"Worldmaking as we know it always starts from worlds already on hand; the making is a remaking."

Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking*

"You must not fall. When you lose your balance, resist for a long time before turning yourself toward the earth. Then jump. You must not force yourself to stay steady. You must move forward."

Philippe Petit



In our constant endeavor to make sense of the world we live in, to structure it, to conserve and communicate certain of its aspects and most notably to restructure and change it, we depend on notations. Notations — understood in the widest sense as symbol systems, including texts, images, drawings, artifacts and various other forms of scientific and artistic expression — enable us to trace and note down aspects of reality and thus to maintain an active relationship with the world and to communicate about it. Notations are devices for establishing common ground among inconceivably complex and contradicting realities. The notation is the medium through which the world must pass in order to be analyzed or altered. The practice of architects and planners is characterized by a paradoxical separation from the works they produce. As a collective effort is usually necessary to turn concepts into physical realities, the notation is the only pathway between personal ideas and intentions and their objective and physical manifestation.

Reality's Abundance and Constant Elusion

The relationship between the world and the notation is in some ways similar to the relationship between the territory and the map. Whereas reality is characterized by an essential abundance, an irreducible complexity that surpasses every effort to capture it in its totality, the notation is constrained to an ontological status of substantial flatness. Its mode of existence is one of reduction and constraint. Only by confining itself to one or a few reality aspects can the notation fulfill its purpose as a tool to store, reflect on, communicate about and restructure those aspects with which it is engaged. A map, such as the one described by Borges,¹ which tries to approach and finally merge with the territory in its scale and degree of complexity, is lured by the illusion of documentary omnipotence, loses its specific purpose and finally fades away. While on one hand an intentional reduction constitutes the notation's usefulness, its limitations, on the other hand, reveal our inability or difficulty to analyze, track down and creatively engage with many aspects of the world. The development of observational and notational techniques can be read as a history of progress concerning our relationship with reality. This relationship is always unequal, as necessarily simple, comprehensible and commonly understandable filters have to be used to observe and notate an essentially abundant and elusive reality.

Translations

In order to produce a notation based on a reality subset of the world, processes of translation are necessary. Only through acts of reduction, fragmentation and selection, which a transfer into the form of signs, symbols, images and so on entails, can irreducible reality aspects be translated into the flat medium of the notation. The rather objective and coherent nature of the world in its totality can hereby not be maintained. In the translation process, facts enter a field of subjectivity and assume a vague state in which they are subject to a multitude of transformations and weightings based on the knowledge, perceptual experience and concepts of the notating individual. The translation process' subjective, complex and vague nature can easily be made evident looking at two well-known notational translations of an everyday phenomenon — the sunset:

TRANSLATION 1: Claude Monet, *Houses of Parliament, Sunset*, 1903



Claude Monet, *Houses of Parliament, Sunset*. (Setting Sun), 1900-01, 81x92, W.1603, Private Collection, Japan, Detail.
© Courtesy Bridgestone Museum of Art, Tokyo.

TRANSLATION 2: Claude Levi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, *Sunset*, 1955

"At exactly a quarter to six the first phase began. The sun was already low, but had not yet touched the horizon. At the moment when it appeared beneath the cloud-structure, it seemed to break open like the yolk of an egg and its light spilled over the forms to which it was still attached. This burst of bright light was soon followed by a withdrawal; the sun's surroundings lost all brilliance and in the empty space that marked off the topmost limit of the sea from the bottom of the cloud structure there could be seen a cordillera of vapours, which had but lately been so dazzling as to be indecipherable and was now darkened and sharp-pointed. At the same time it began to belly out, where originally it had been quite flat. These small objects, black and solid, moved to and fro, lazy-bodied migrants, across a large patch of reddening sky which marked the beginning of the colour-phase and was slowly mounting upwards from the horizon. [...] Network after network of fine vapours rose high in the sky; they seemed to stretch in all directions horizontal, oblique, perpendicular, even spiral. As the sun's rays went down (like a bow that must be tilted this way or that, according to which string we seek to use), they caught one after another of these and sent them flying in a gamut of colour which one would have thought to be the exclusive and arbitrary property of each one in turn. [...] When the sun's disc cut down into the western horizon we suddenly saw, very high up in the east, clouds acid-mauve in tonality which had hitherto been invisible. [...] After a few seconds nothing remained but the cleaned slate of the sky above the nebulous cloud-rampart. And this rampart was turning to white and grey while the rest of the sky went rose-pink." (p. 70-71)

Claude Monet's *Houses of Parliament, Sunset* is a painting belonging to a series of paintings of the Palace of Westminster under different weather and lighting conditions. It is an example of Monet's artistic investigation into the ever-changing nature of the sun and the atmosphere and their color effects on objects and sceneries with the means of paint on canvas. Claude Levi-Strauss' written account of a sunset, emerging from an observation he made on deck a Brazil-bound ship in 1934, does not so much follow a specific purpose as it is a study of the ability of language to describe and capture rather banal and commonly visible, but at the same time highly complex and dynamic, phenomena. It is, so to speak, a test and an exercise of Strauss' notational skills before carrying out his ethnological studies in Brazil, the success of which heavily depends upon his descriptive power.¹ Both notations — pictorial and verbal — result from the translation of a similar event that, although happening 31 years apart and at different locations, basically follow the same rules. It is evident that an "accurate" translation of a sunset is impossible. Whereas Levi-Strauss evokes the procession of different visual states caused by the setting sun — the succession of which is foregrounded — in a highly metaphorical and figurative language, Monet concentrates on a single moment or a short

period of time that is condensed by the artist into a single frame. The sunset itself is not Monet's subject, but its influence on the observed scenery and its delicate coloring. Time is absent from Monet's painting; dynamic processes are frozen in paint in order to halt their inexorable evanescence.

Apart from the mastery permeating both translations, their subjective assumptions based on individual perceptions and the conscious choices of medium, focus, frame of representation and reference to emotional contents highly determine the resulting notation. Although they can be viewed and read objectively and thus exist independently from their creators, their "correctness" depends on their individual translation. Notations are neither true nor false and, to a certain extent, neither totally correct nor totally incorrect. They are moreover sedimentations of unique and complex translation procedures, which might start from the same reality, but in the endeavor of tracking it down, conserving, describing and communicating it, diligently and unwittingly alter and multiply it in its representations.

Notation Realities – Between Existing And Resulting Worlds

Worldmaking as set forth by Nelson Goodman² is, on one hand, a cognitive act concerned with the understanding of the world, which in a constructivist approach involves interpretations and projections. On the other hand, worldmaking in the realm of corporeal reality consists of acts aimed at the physical transformation of certain aspects of reality, such as architectural constructions. Not strictly following Goodman's relativism, but accepting worldmaking as a basic and undeniable engagement with reality, it is important to emphasize that worldmaking is carried out by constructing notations (symbol systems), which either frame different views on the world they relate to or serve as blueprints for its physical alteration.

INTERIM POSITION

The notation assumes an *interim position* between the world it is created from through translation processes and the world (or perception of the world) it is implying.

Situated between an existing world that we know or are eager to understand and a resulting world which we might come to discover, the notation can be ascribed to a symbolic world — one that unfolds on the basis of signs, pictures et cetera but exists in the imaginary and cognitive realm as reductions and elaborations of reality aspects. In order to function as a filter through which reality can be viewed, scientifically and artistically categorized, structured, controlled and intentionally altered, and in order to establish a platform for critical reflection and potential prospects, it has to maintain a distance to the physical world.

NOTATIONAL GAPS

This distance is created by *notational gaps*, which consist of subjective and individual processes of translation, which determine the notational output, however, not necessarily in a traceable and explicit way. Fields of obscurity and subjectivity separate the notation from the objective realities to which it relates. Knowledge, understanding, common experience, habits and conventions serve as guidelines for the construction of notations (coding) and their reading and interpretation

(decoding). Hence, notational gaps are not purely subjective (in this case a notation could never be understood by anybody). Their detachment from the physical realm assigns to notations an inchoate existence, a vaguely determined state.

POTENTIALITY

This vagueness, although impeding totally correct descriptions, is one of the notation's cardinal virtues and strengths. It allows for playing out potential forms of being of specific reality aspects as well as different perspectives on them. Thus, notations are granted a speculative quality enabling them to research, on the basis of isolated aspects, what could be and what should be. Hereby potential worlds can be mapped out, their consequences explored and references to the existing world drawn.

MULTIPLICITY

There is no one-to-one relation between a reality aspect and its notation. As the notation is detached from the world by rather obscure and subjective gaps, reality aspects can be multiplied and modified by noting them down. One reality aspect can be the starting point for a multitude of notation realities, which play out its complexity and potential forms of being in an array of notational reductions, i.e. one sunset observed at a specific location by various observers can lead to different and even contradicting notation realities, which through different forms of observation and translation reach different conclusions on the same phenomenon.

FRAGMENTATION

A notation can never refer to the world as a whole, therefore fragmentation and selection precede any translation process. A very conscious choice as to the limited scope of the reality excerpt to be notated has to be made.

FLATNESS

As has already been said, the notation is ontologically flat, meaning its whole purpose and usefulness depend on the reduction of the world's essential richness, on the simplification of complexity and on the focus on a very limited reality excerpt, both quantitatively and qualitatively. If the necessary fragmentation and reduction procedure is omitted — as in the case of the map described by Borges — the result will be uncontrollable and useless. Whereas the enlargement of the notation's scope is a central criterion for descriptive and projective progress, a transgression of certain exigencies of reduction and abstraction will disqualify the output.

OBJECTIFICATION

In contrast to the hardly traceable and highly individual cognitive processes that were necessary in the process of its creation, the notation as opposed to pure thought and reflection lays an understandable and debatable common ground. The notation reality, although it is mainly non-physical, offers the possibility for objectification. It is an explicit and commonly visible, yet not always commonly understandable, reality.

COMMUNICATION

Due to the fact of its objectification, the notation enables communication and is, furthermore, the only basis for sustainable communication, which can be temporally extended and include a large number of participants.

Balancing From World to World

Every translation of an aspect of the world into a medium of storage or reflection and every attempt at deciphering that translation require intricate acts of balance. In the dynamic and complex transition from an existing world (or perception of the world) to a resulting world (or perception of the world), which is achieved by the succession of a number of steps — fragmentations, abstractions, reductions, choices based on translational conventions and habits as well as individual decisions — the notation offers a stable and objectifiable stepping stone. Notations are not direct and neutral representations of the world, but results of and in turn starting points for intricate acts of balance that link different states of reality and our knowledge thereof as well as our capability to act creatively and purposefully within the framework of a changing and highly complex reality. Like on the high-wire, the rule is: *"You must not force yourself to stay steady. You must move forward."* In our ongoing struggle to explore, categorize, observe and plan the world, constructing,

ENDNOTES

deciphering and communicating notation over notation, this is exactly what we do.

1 "... In that empire, the art of cartography attained such perfection that the map of a single province occupied the entirety of a city, and the map of the empire, the entirety of a province. In time, those unconscionable maps no longer satisfied, and the cartographers' guilds struck a map of the empire whose size was that of the empire, and which coincided point for point with it. The following generations, who were not so fond of the study of cartography as their forebears had been, saw that that vast map was useless, and not without some pitilessness was it, that they delivered it up to the inclemencies of sun and winters. In the deserts of the west, still today, there are

tattered ruins of that map, inhabited by animals and beggars; in all the land there is no other relic of the disciplines of geography."

Suárez Miranda, Viajes de varones prudentes, Libro IV, Cap. XLV, Lérida, 1658 ;

Jorge Luis Borges, On exactitude in science, in Jorge Luis Borges, Collected Fictions (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 325

2 "I felt that if I could find the right words to describe these ever-changing phenomena, if I could communicate to others the character of an event which was never twice the same, then I should have penetrated or so I felt to the inmost secrets of my profession."

Claude Lévi-Strauss, Tristes Tropiques, trans. John Russell (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1961), 66.

3 Nelson Goodman, Ways of Worldmaking, (Indianapolis : Hackett Publishing Company, 1978).

Getting Graphic

Stephen Killion interviews Craighton Berman

How we choose to tell a story says a lot about who we are as an individual. Our point of view acts as a lens into how we see the world and what we contribute to society. Trained as an industrial designer with experience as an innovation consultant, creative director and illustrator, Craighton Berman uses his various skills as approaches to present ideas. Prior to branching out to focus on his personal work, Craighton was a lead designer at gravitytank, a Chicago based innovation consultancy.

With design work in the permanent collection of the Art Institute of Chicago and a frequent contributor of illustrations for *Dwell*, *Details* and *Core 77*, his work has an ever-growing fan base.

Simply put, Craighton is interested in using design as a lens for understanding experiences and as a tool for bringing conceptual ideas to life. With his versatile way of working, each of his projects is grounded through the desire to give shape to new ideas with an insightful eye, a clear concept, and a strong point-of-view.

I sat down with the creative designer in his studio to talk about what exactly is a sketchnote and how his multidisciplinary approach can best capture the essence of an IDEA.



SK: Could you describe how communication plays an important role in your work?

CB: Design is all about clear intent and communicating an idea as clearly as possible. Communication in design is about shaping thoughts so that others can respond to and interpret those ideas. There are many ways that I feel you can communicate an idea, whether it be through a physical object or a two-dimensional drawing, interactive experience and/or prototype.

SK: What mediums do you use to create ideas?

CB: My personal practice mainly brings ideas to life through drawing or physical products. Often I'm using design thinking and rapid visualization to shape concepts, tell stories, and bring ideas to life. In other words, using drawing to explore very early ideas. I spent seven years at gravitytank, mainly working on interaction design work, and I very much enjoyed thinking about experiences over time. Often the best way to convey interactive ideas is through the use of storyboarding and animation. It's interesting to me that a 2D medium like drawing becomes 3D through the introduction of the dimension of time.

SK: What is the importance of sketching to your work?

CB: I see a sketch having a different role for its creator than simply someone who is viewing it. The beauty of sketching is that everyone has the ability to throw some lines down to explain what they are thinking visually. At its best, sketching is a medium for collaborators to work together and to talk through. Bringing an idea into a tangible physicality is a great way to bring everyone up to the same level of understanding about a project. A sketch is universally accessible in that it is a low-fidelity form of representation. It is a raw and honest form of communication. One that is not perfect, and I think that is what makes it so approachable.

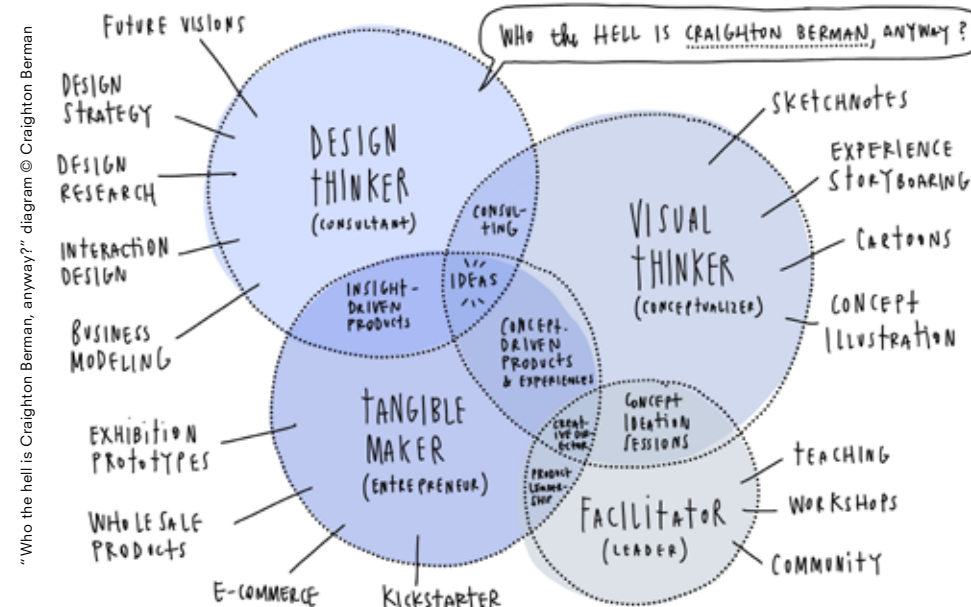
SK: Does this belief hold true in your more personal projects as well?

CB: My illustrations are thought out, but the style is unfinished, like a sketch, so they allow interpretation by the viewer. I want them to be interactive in the sense that people can add their reading of it to the story. Most of the illustrations I create are essentially half-baked ideas that make their way on paper. I use the various mediums I work in to take early ideas and give shape to them. The outcome could be a product, it could be a drawing, it could be whatever best conveys the thought.

There seems to be an acceptance of works in progress by the general public more than any other time. For example, much of Google's products tend to be released in a beta format, so I think most people are willing to relate to unfinished products and works in progress.

SK: So, for you ideas are a form of communication that often form into design?

CB: Exactly!



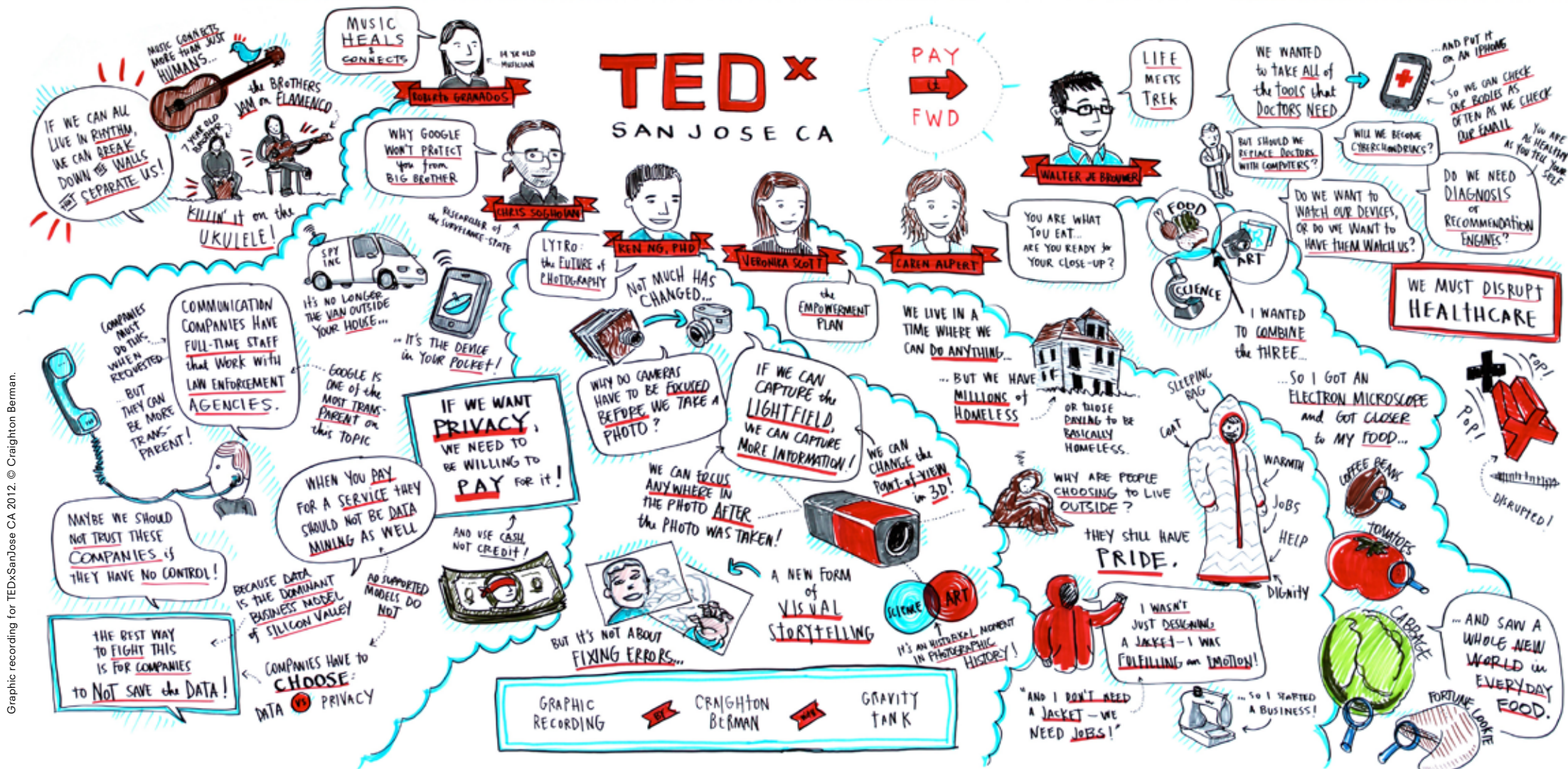
SK: Do you ever develop your sketches into a more finished form of representation? For example, a rendering of a product.

CB: Coming from a product design background, I used to develop a lot of renderings. This is something I have not done in awhile. I do think they are an art form of their own and love seeing a stellar rendering as much as the next guy, but I made a conscious decision to not focus on the creation of renderings in my own work. Partly this comes from no longer having to pitch my ideas. This, of course, could change if I do have to start pitching my work again. For now it is nice to stay away from the hyper real even though there is a lot of interesting stuff happening in that realm of communication. For my work, I find it more worthwhile to go from a sketch to a physical thing. Prototypes and models are physical forms of sketching.

SK: Could you speak to how your sketchnotes act as retellings of an existing story?

CB: Sketchnotes/graphic recordings is a form of communication that attempts to translate the verbal or experiential into the visual. Often times you'll see people taking sketchnotes at lectures in an attempt to distill the information. This technique can also be used more broadly to visualize any sort of meeting, conversation or experience.

When I have graphic recorded at TEDx events, I was visually mapping the presentations, the final images being a mixture of infographic and documentation. I tend to try to capture the essence of a speaker's ideas rather than create a linear narrative of the lecture/presentation. In that situation, I want to be fair and unbiased in the content being presented, almost like a documentarian.



Sharpener Jar © Craighton Berman.



More complex or absurd ideas I would like to visualize might become a cartoon. These projects simply don't make sense as actual objects. It would be silly to build them whether for practical or financial reasons.

Some ideas just don't work unless they are brought to reality. For example, Sharpener Jar, a pencil sharpener I designed that collects a user's pencil shavings in a quart-sized Mason jar. I thought the idea of showcasing the waste from sharpening a pencil in an attempt to document creative progress was interesting. I could have simply drawn a sketch to convey the idea, but I knew a physical artifact would be a better form demonstrating the idea. There are just some ideas that only become interesting if they are physically created. My work is simply the physicality of a tangible idea.

SK: Could you speak a little more specifically about your illustration/sketching style and how it is related to comic strips?

CB: My sketchblog (fueledbycoffee.com) is dedicated to the presentation of ideas all conveyed by sketches. Humor is a part of that, since I love to explore the absurd. The absurd pushes you out of a comfort zone and is inherently

humorous. I feel that a lot of times you have to put yourself in a bizarre mindset or situation to push the tangible forward. If you are lucky, you sometimes find that a bizarre idea is marketable.

I find power in the communicative quality of humor. Things that are funny spread quickly, and this is especially true of things on the web. I am not forcing myself to be funny when I create something, I am just expressing my point of view. I happen to be drawn to absurdity, irony, and juxtapositions of object and ideas.

SK: Would you say that you are curating yourself online?

CB: Curating is an interesting word. When I first started, I wanted fueledbycoffee to be my humorous alias while keeping my personal work, under my name, to be perceived as "serious." At some point I decided to abandon that mindset and mash my two sides together. I now let people traverse from my design side to my illustrations and vice versa.

Putting the cartoons online is a unique channel to tell my story, and share my work. In many ways it has expanded my viewership. The blog has 7000 followers just through Tumblr—not to mention overall viewership—which is much more than my product design work would have by itself.

SK: How do your website and blog work together and also separately?

CB: They are both tools for communication. I love Tumblr as a form of communication. It is a great medium to reach a large group of people very quickly. It is an almost purely visual medium and creates a viral venue for sharing media.

It is a testing ground for an idea. If something you post is interesting, it will be constantly reblogged, and if not, it will quickly get ingested and disappear.

SK: Do you see an importance in sharing your creative process?

CB: I think people care about where things come from. Our society is obsessed with the story of the people that make things and the space in which it is created. Maker stories give a sense of origin that cannot be told through other mediums.

Experimentation is a form of communication. Trial and error should be considered an acceptable way to convey an idea. Then people become more comfortable with the story of the object, and thus the object itself.

What is funny about most of these "maker stories" is that they are not the true story, but rather a telling of the story by someone with a point of view. By documenting a story, whether you like it or not, you are embedding your viewpoint on that story. The truth is never as cinematic as what is shared.

SK: How would you describe your own process?

CB: To be honest, I would say that I don't often think about process while I am making something. I'd rather explore, discover, and expand ideas until they are ready to share.



Coil Lamp. © Craighton Berman.

Obviously when I am consulting on design projects, I would say it is more a regulated and structured way of working. When I work on my own ideas, they tend to be more gestural and loose, a little more organic in form. My process is flexible in the sense that it is affected by how I am working and what I am working towards.

To bring anything interesting to life, you have to have a perspective on the world. If you don't have that you are going to create a boring product. If you consider a fashion design, that is exactly what they are doing: sharing their point of view. Artists do the same; they have a way that they approach their chosen discipline. People become designers because you not only solve people's needs, but you are also able to synthesize things in a particular way.

SK: Describe your point of view.

CB: Essentially, I'm interested in design that's stripped to its essence — the design is the core idea. Some of my work can be loud and call for attention, but I am also interested in great design that blends in to its surroundings. I call those types of objects the "unnamed craftsmen," objects that might be great design but aren't boastful. The Muji brand out of Japan is a great example of that type of design. I am okay with not always pushing things forward; sometimes it is okay to refine something and then just leave it alone.

Imagine a band on tour that's playing the same set list at every venue. In that restrictive of a setting, the artistry is no longer about creating something new at every event. Instead it is about refining and fine-tuning a formula.

There is craft in taking the nuances and looking at ways of tweaking those points. As long as you have a curiosity, and make sure not to muddle your point of view too much, you can create something that is approachable and interesting.

SK: Speaking of focusing your output, most of your physical objects tend to be on the smaller human scale. Is there any reason for that?

CB: It is often said that the size of a studio affects the outcome of an artist's work. I think this also holds true for designers. A lot of the ideas housed in my sketchbook are more experimental and odd. The problem is that the restrictions of my studio and time can only allow certain projects to be achieved.

SK: Could you tell me an inspiring design experience?

CB: I dropped my iPhone years ago and it crippled my home button. What became interesting about this modification was that almost all of the other functions of the phone were retained. I could still get into and use apps, but without a home button I was not able to exit out of anything without turning the phone off. What was interesting about this was that it changed how I interacted with the object. It made me very aware and conscious of my decisions — I couldn't idly pop in and out of apps — I had to be very purposeful about what I did with the device. It converted a convenience experience into one that required thought. Experimentation is a strong point of who I am and by being aware of the importance of situations like this that I can create interesting experiences.

Communicating through Exhibitions

Our questionnaire to international curators

We all remember that one exhibition that blew our mind. The one that challenged all of our preconceptions and that introduced us to a new world that we did not know existed or was even possible. That exhibition was the result of the incredible work of the artist but also the expertise of the curator in presenting that work in the best way possible.

To know more about the curatorial process, here are the responses to the questionnaire we sent to international curators Ariadna Cantis, Elias Redstone, Felipe Chaimovich, Michael Kubo, Mirko Zardini, Pedro Gadanho, Vladimir Belogolovsky, and Zoë Ryan.





Ariadna Cantis

Current position I am a freelance independent curator of architecture and urbanism.

Path to becoming a curator I studied architecture in Madrid. For a long time, I have been working on investigating new exhibition formats, as well as incorporating new strategies of communication applied to the diffusion of architecture.

First exhibition My first project of international repercussion: *FRESHMADRID*.

What you try to communicate in your exhibitions

Each exhibition is a specific case in which there is a container, content, and a message that, after conceptualizing it, you look for the best way of communicating it.

Exhibition you wish you had curated Spanish Pavilion at the International Venice Architecture Biennale.

Exhibition you would love to curate *Transforming Madrid*, showing the main urban transformations of the city.

Next show *Freshlatino 02* (Cervantes Institute) and *Performing Architecture* in New York in 2013 (Storefront for Art and Architecture during the Festival of Ideas for The New City).

When not curating I investigate new formats and new tools for communication. I also write for several media.

Favorite communication tool I use them all. I work online combining content from cell phones, webcams... and social networks.



Elias Redstone

Current position I work as a freelance curator, writer and editor. I am currently curating *ARCHIZINES* — a touring exhibition of new architecture magazines, fanzines and journals from around the world — and launching a new gallery that will explore the relationship between architecture and photography. I am also one of the contributors to the British Pavilion at the 2012 Venice Architecture Biennale.

Path to becoming a curator I wanted to exhibit architecture in more compelling ways than I was seeing in London at the time, launched a temporary gallery for the Architecture Foundation. And before I knew it I was a curator.

First exhibition The first exhibition I curated was *Hairywood*, an installation by 6a Architects and fashion designers Eley Kishimoto, in 2005. It was a plywood tower that combined pattern and architecture. Part lookout tower, part urban summerhouse. I loved it and it was later rebuilt in London's Covent Garden Piazza three years later for the London Festival of Architecture.

What you try to communicate in your exhibitions It depends on the exhibition. It can be anything from an idea to an experience, but mostly I am trying change people's perceptions of architecture in some way.

Exhibition you wish you had curated In 2007 Hauser & Wirth gallery commissioned Christoph Büchel's *Simply Botiful* for the temporary Coppermill warehouse venue in London. He created an apocalyptic landscape of discarded consumer goods and migrant workers. I took several friends to see that show — it was phenomenal.

Exhibition you would love to curate I'm working on this at the moment...

Next show The *ARCHIZINES* exhibition is touring to Paris, Brussels, Dublin, Bratislava, Melbourne, Sydney, Santiago, Tokyo, Kyoto and more...

When not curating I'm catching up on writing deadlines or DJing with a friend at a pub in east London.

Favorite communication tool I am a big fan of email and am increasingly using Skype for meetings. That said, nothing beats meeting and talking in person. Just never send any important messages on facebook!



Garden Festival of MAM at Ibirapuera Park, 2010. © Photo courtesy of Felipe Chaimovich.

Felipe Chaimovich

Current position Curator of the Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo.

Path to becoming a curator Ph.D. in Philosophy, Universidade de São Paulo, teaching aesthetics for groups of artists in São Paulo, writing catalogue essays for friends.

First exhibition “*Ouro de artista*” (“Artist’s gold”), Casa Triângulo / Projeto Leonilson, São Paulo, 1996.

What you try to communicate in your exhibitions I try to communicate that a space for contemporary art must challenge the repressive practices of regular museums and art galleries.

Exhibition you wish you had curated Laurent Le Bon, “*Parade*”, 2001.

Exhibition you would love to curate Versailles Off.

Next show Wolfgang Tillmans, Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo.

When not curating Teaching.

Favorite communication tool My body.



Michael Kubo

Current position Director of pinkcomma gallery in Boston, with Chris Grimley and Mark Pasnik. This year we are also guest curators at BSA Space, the gallery of the Boston Society of Architects.

Path to becoming a curator Circuitous. I'm trained as an architect, but my professional background has been in architectural publishing; book projects eventually led to exhibitions, which has often allowed me to work across both formats and their differences in audience, duration, reception, etc.

First exhibition *Actar: An Editorial Project 1994-2006*, at the Van Alen Institute in November, 2006.

What you try to communicate in your exhibitions What's important to me is for (our) exhibitions to be understood as formats for producing knowledge: the exhibition should be a content-driven site of discourse (discussion, speculation, critique) around matters of concern, not a stage for creating "atmospheres" or fleeting architectural spectacles.

Exhibition you wish you had curated *Transformations in Modern Architecture*, Arthur Drexler, MoMA, 1979.

Exhibition you would love to curate A major retrospective on the history of print culture in architecture, from the Renaissance treatise to the present.

Next show *Let's Talk about Bikes*, at BSA Space in June.

When not curating Resuming my normal life as a PhD student.

Favorite communication tool Language.



Mirko Zardini

Current position Director and Chief Curator at the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal, Canada.

Path to becoming a curator It has been quite an erratic path; an unintentional swing between practicing, teaching, and editorial work that gradually led to curating.

First exhibition (a) *Asfalto: Il Carattere Della Città*, an exhibition for the Triennale di Milano, Italy, in 2003.

What you try to communicate in your exhibitions Architecture has been the “voluntary prisoner” of an “iconic bubble” for the last twenty years. Today, however, the problems posed by the various “crises,” from the environmental to the social, offer new possibilities for intervention. They suggest new roles and responsibilities, compel new reflections, and require building a different platform for contemporary architecture to work on.

I am interested in questioning and relooking at the assumptions on which architects operate today. For example, at the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA), we have embarked on the study and revision of an undeclared territory of false assumptions, preconceptions, and attitudes in an attempt to evidence hidden agendas. We seek to investigate and explore this “grey zone” of contemporary culture, contemporary society, and contemporary architecture to critically expose its contradictions.

Exhibition you wish you had curated Harold Szeemann’s *Monte Verità: the Breast of Truth* in Ascona, Switzerland, 1979.

Exhibition you would love to curate An exhibition entitled *Death* exploring the construction of ideas and environments around artificial struggles seeking to avoid – or delay as much as possible - this inescapable event.

Next show We are working on a travelling version of *Imperfect Health: the Medicalization of Architecture*.

When not curating I like watching TV Series; they portray contexts, ideologies, and attitudes in a very precise way.

Favorite communication tool Exhibitions. And handwritten letters.



Pedro Gadanho

Current position Curator of Contemporary Architecture at Architecture and Design Department, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), NY

Path to becoming a curator Exhibition design and a very close, ongoing contact to the contemporary art world.

First exhibition *Post-Rotterdam, Architecture And City After Tabula Rasa*, European Capital of Culture (2001), Porto.

What you try to communicate in your exhibitions What architecture is all about: content, ideas and practice rather than forms, objects and buildings.

Exhibition you wish you had curated Emergent Megalopolis, one of those ambitious life projects that always gets pushed to the future.

Exhibition you would love to curate The Future Itself.

Next show *Ways of Being Political*, MoMA, September 2012.

When not curating Writing. And all that comes with a full life.

Favorite communication tool Email.



Vladimir Belogolovsky

Current position Founder and frontrunner of New York-based Intercontinental Curatorial Project.

Path to becoming a curator Graduated from Cooper Union School of Architecture (1996); worked as an architect in Madrid, Berlin, and New York (1996-2008); have been writing critical essays on architecture and conducting interviews with visionaries from around the world.

First exhibition *Chess Game* exhibition for the Russian Pavilion at the 11th Architecture Venice Biennale in 2008.

What you try to communicate in your exhibitions A good exhibition is about telling a great story – to evoke numerous impressions and to impose no conclusions.

Exhibition you wish you had curated 1932 *The International Style* exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York by Henry Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson. I would advice the curators to include the built works by Russian constructivists Konstantin Melnikov, Moisei Ginzburg, and Sergei Serafimov. I would also suggest adding “ism” to the word “International” and dropping the word “Style” in the exhibition’s title.

Exhibition you would love to curate Unquestionably the Venice Biennale remains to be the ultimate dream project for any curator. Perhaps in the future it will be in the hands of curators like myself to compose new instant cities at the new frontiers. To be able to handpick architects for building such a city from scratch would be another cool project.

Next show An exhibition on life and work of Australian architect Harry Seidler. It will tour Europe, North America, Asia, and Australia from 2012 to 2015.

When not curating I am a full time independent curator and therefore curating is a never stopping affair. I love meeting inventive individuals; organizing my own lectures at far-reaching corners of the globe; writing books; and enjoy spending time with my wife and daughter at our beach-front home in Brooklyn, New York and on carefree holidays in warmer climates.

Favorite communication tool I have seen people breaking into tears after reading just one line of text. Words, images, and life-scale installations can be more powerful than the most sophisticated representational devices that often do nothing but obscure what is intimate, truthful, and emotional.

Zöe Ryan

Current position John H. Bryan Chair and Curator of Architecture and Design, Department of Architecture and Design, The Art Institute of Chicago.

Path to becoming a curator BA and MA degrees in the history of art. Internships at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London in the Prints, within the Department of Prints, Drawings, and Paintings, where I assisted with the *Power of the Poster* exhibition (1998). I also interned at the Museum of Modern Art, New York within the Department of Architecture and Design. I assisted with *Projects 66* (1998), an exhibition that explored the work of Ingo Maurer and Humberto and Fernando Campana, designers from Germany and Brazil, respectively. I have been fortunate to have great mentors. Early mentors were Margaret Timmers at the Victoria & Albert Museum and Paola Antonelli at MoMA, who continues to be a great friend and mentor, and has helped me enormously in steering my path. Raymond W. Gastil and Joseph Rosa have also been influential to me and great sources of inspiration.

First exhibition My first exhibition was one I co-curated with Raymond W. Gastil at the Van Alen Institute in New York, titled *Information Exchange: How Cities Renew, Rebuild and Remember* (2002). It was organized after September 11, 2001, and set out to illustrate how seven other international cities had come back after both man-made and natural disasters.

The first exhibition I initiated and curated alone at the Van Alen Institute was *The Good Life: New Public Spaces of Recreation* (2006). The exhibition was presented on Pier 40 on the Hudson River and illustrated how cities are being re-envisioned to accommodate more diverse recreational spaces to meet changing needs.

My first exhibition at The Art Institute of Chicago was a solo show of the work of Graphic Thought Facility, innovative graphic designers from London. This was their first solo show in the States and the first contemporary graphic design exhibition at the Art Institute.

What you try to communicate in your exhibitions My goal is to further an understanding and appreciation of architecture and design. Through my exhibitions and writing, I aim to reveal and explain the processes, theories, methods, and approaches that define these disciplines as a way to open them up for broader discussion. I aim to present inventive projects that act as examples that help explain the pivotal role designers and architects play in shaping the world around us, but also how their work helps us engage with and understand our place within that world at specific periods of time.

Exhibition you wish you had curated *This is Tomorrow* (Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, 1956)



Konstantin Grcic: Decisive Design, Art Institute of Chicago, 2009. © The Art Institute of Chicago.

Exhibition you would love to curate An exhibition that explores new directions in landscape architecture, a component part of which will explore how real and virtual landscapes are informing one another and redefining the field. This is an exhibition that I am currently researching, so watch this space.

Next show I just opened *Fashioning the Object: Bless, Boudicca, and Sandra Backlund*, an exhibition that explores the work of these three visionary fashion design studios, which closes on September 13, 2012. I am currently co-curating *Studio Gang: Workshop*, a mid-career survey of the work of this Chicago architecture studio headed by Jeanne Gang. This opens September 23, 2012.

When not curating Exploring. Being even more curious.

Favorite communication tool Word-of-mouth.



A Sound Life

Iker Gil interviews Oriol Tarragó

Sound sparks your imagination, carries emotions, and takes you back to that special moment or to a place where you have not been before. Movies such as *Blade Runner*, *Star Wars*, *Apocalypse Now* or *Grand Prix* have used it masterly to create magic atmospheres that become critical to communicate the story. Iker Gil interviews Oriol Tarragó, sound designer for over 30 movies, about his working method, movie genres, his favorite movies, and what cities communicate through sound.

What was your path to becoming a sound designer?

I have been a sound designer since I was a child. When I was playing Chase or War, I was always making sounds with my mouth. I was continuously trying to reproduce the sound of guns, cars, motorcycles, spaceships... when imagining riding the motorcycles from *Star Wars*, I tried to imitate their sounds. Without knowing it, I was already a fan of Ben Burtt, the sound designer of *Star Wars*. Years later, I decided to study cinema at ESCAC (Escola de Cinema i Audiovisuals de Catalunya), the first university of cinema in Spain. The initial project we had to do there was to direct a three-minute movie in 16mm format, black and white and with no sound. In it, we had to tell a small and basic story only with images. When I saw the result of my movie, I realized that something was not working, that something was missing. So I picked up a cassette and I recorded music and a few synchronic sounds to go along with the chase I had recorded. The next day in class, I projected the movie and, at the same time, I reproduced the sounds that I had taped on the cassette. The result was fairly good and, while the other students liked it, my professor scolded me because the exercise was supposed to use only images. Despite the “failure” in this first project, I realized that I could not understand cinema without sound. I always saw the images accompanied by certain sounds, even if the images did not have it. Since then, I have been busy doing the same thing with more or less sophistication.





Oriol Tarragó at work. © Courtesy of Oriol Tarragó.

What is your method when facing a new movie?

Basically, the first thing I do is read the script and understand dramatically the movie. I try to understand the main idea of the movie, I try to define the main emotion we are trying to communicate. It is like a synopsis but purely on the emotional field. After that, I establish a breakdown of all the sounds described explicitly in the script, such as a car, a bell tower, specific music... things that are explicitly written. At the same time, I make a list of all locations and spaces of the movie and at what time of the day the action happens. A scene might be Interior-Night-Hospital, Exterior-School. For example, in *The Orphanage* (Juan Antonio Bayona, 2007), most of the action was Interior or Exterior-Orphanage except for the scene at the beach and in the town. That way, before starting the movie, I know which spaces and sound atmospheres I need to create. All the action happened in the same location, but throughout a period of a year, so it was important to show the temporal evolution in the space. Once the movie is already edited or is being edited, I review parts of the movie without sound in order to see what the images evoke and how I react to them. And not only the synchronic ones, but also sounds that could appear and that the images do not reflect, or deficiencies that I find in the images and that sound could improve.

What do you try to communicate through your work?

Basically, the emotions and feelings that I have read in the movie script, the main idea that the movie, scene or moment wants to transmit. For me, sound is something really interesting. Unlike the image that is something completely defined and can only be one, sound is something that activates your brain and makes you imagine, makes you think. In each film, I try to active those parts of the spectator's brain, make him or her think, and transmit some type of emotion. It is like when we hear a song that we haven't heard for a long time and then, whenever we hear it again, it takes us back to that special moment. In a similar way, I try to achieve that feeling.

Most of your work has been related to horror movies. In general, the most typical approach to that genre is defined by direct and immediate surprises and a continuous over-stimulation. However, movies like *The Orphanage* are more complex, more ambiguous, and based on stories that evolve gradually. What is the main difference in terms of communication to these two approaches to horror movies?

The horror that is closer to gore, that is, the one that shows blood and action more explicitly, is based on a series of sound and image clichés or conventions. It includes a series of loud sounds, a really characteristic type of music, screams... it has a really defined style. In the same way, these conventions can also appear in other genres beyond horror movies.

In movies such as *The Orphanage*, the style can be closer to what we can define as Polanskian, that is, a type of movie in which things are suggested but not shown. A psychological terror, one that is directly linked to the sound and, for that reason, where sound plays a key role. The spectator has to think, has to imagine the terror that is not explicitly shown. For example, in *Rosemary's Baby* (Roman Polanski, 1968), you don't see any monster or blood or anything like that. However, you are completely terrified because you don't know if the female character is going crazy because everybody is conspiring against her, or might be more terrifying, the thought that she really is pregnant by the devil himself. Both thoughts are quite horrifying and the movie continuously plays that duality using the sound to suggest them. In *The Orphanage*, while being quite different from *Rosemary's Baby*, we find some similarities. It is a movie in which we never see any ghosts or spirits, but we do hear them, we hear the kids crying and screaming, for example in the scene with the parapsychologist. The spectator has to imagine all that horror. And the movie again plays with that duality. The spectator doesn't know if the mother is going crazy, if people and the police are conspiring against her, if the kid is really dead or ghosts have taken him. From my point of view, I think this type of movie is much more interesting, as I don't have to just add sound to the images that we already see. The movie tries to go beyond that. And, as I said at the beginning, I think this approach relates less to the genre of a movie and more to the style and intentions of each director.

Which differences do you find working in a horror movie versus another genre? What are the most difficult feelings to communicate?

The horror genre is really interesting at the expressive level, as we have to generate atmospheres and sounds that do not exist. In that sense, it is much more

expressive and interesting. But I also think that it is important to point out that it is not an issue exclusively of the genre, but also the staging of the director. For example, the director can make a movie of a girl who lives in Barcelona or Manhattan with more or less normal, life and I can create a type of sound that simply explains the story and creates a realistic atmosphere. But it can also have a completely different approach, like in *Black Swan* (Darren Aronofsky, 2010). In that movie, the main character is a ballet dancer living in Manhattan who faces a series of traumas, but it remains a real story. However, with the style that the director applies and with the continuous use of sound, it ends up being closer to a horror movie. I insist that the difference is based less on the genre of the movie and more on the atmosphere that the director wants to create. And it is not just the sound design. The combination of sound, image and photography will transmit the qualities or feelings of the script.

In terms of the feelings that are more complicated to create, I think comedy is something quite complicated. Many directors agree on that, as it seems that the sense of humor is not the same for each person. For that reason, many directors don't dare to do a comedy. I have worked on a comedy, *Spanish Movie* (Javier Ruiz Caldera, 2009), that is a parody of many movies that we have already done so I didn't find it difficult. But it is a complicated genre, wherein you can end up being absurd or rude very easily. I also think that love is really complicated to transmit through sound, as it is also a very abstract feeling, very complicated to convey.

What is the role of silence in your work?

Silence is really important in my work. It is a needed element among the palette of color and other instruments. It is like light and darkness in photography. You need darkness to read the light. It is the same with sound. If there is no silence, there is no contrast. Without silence, everything becomes a ball of sound that is not interesting. Silence helps the spectator to reflect on what he or she is looking at, remove himself, and ultimately look at the movie from an external position that makes one think in a different way. In a way, the spectator can reflect on the scene. On the other hand, when a scene is full of sound, the spectator is completely immersed in it and can't reflect on the scene because he is too busy processing all the information that is he is constantly receiving. Silence creates exactly the opposite and it's essential in the construction of a soundtrack.

How do you incorporate new sounds to your library? Which ones have you incorporated lately?

As soon as I read the script, I realize the sounds that I am going to need, the sound universe that is going to go along the movie, and the sounds that are going to inhabit the story. With the breakdown that I have from the script (locations, explicit sounds and emotions), I begin to think about the places where I can collect the sounds. I begin to think if I am going to produce them or I am going to ask someone else to do it. Sometimes I ask the sound technician to record them during the filming of the movie as a "wild track," that's a sound track that is not recorded along images. It is called wild as it is not synchronic to the image. We also ask local technicians to record outdoors if the sounds that we need are too complicated to reproduce. If we need a specific sound from another country, we also hire sound technicians from that



Oriol Tarragó at work. © Courtesy of Oriol Tarragó.



Oriol Tarragó at work. © Courtesy of Oriol Tarragó.

country. But other times, we record them during postproduction or I do it myself. While I am traveling, I always carry a recording device with microphones in case there is something that I find interesting. We also buy sounds from a library and, with that, I begin to generate the sounds that I need in the movie. But most of the sounds that you end up using in a movie are a combination of those sounds you collect, sounds that through mixing and editing create the effect you want.

Lately, as I have been working on *The Impossible*, the new movie by J.A. Bayona, the sounds that I have been incorporating are from Thailand, from people, towns and nature to public spaces, hospitals, beaches and hotels. We have also recorded many water sounds, underwater, oceans, waves, eruptions and storms. All kinds of sounds that can evoke the tsunami that occurred in 2004.

What are your fetish sounds that you come back time after time?

I have two fetish sounds. One is the sound of the swallows, a typical bird from the Mediterranean that always shows up during spring and autumn. Those are very emotional seasons, autumn marking the end of the summer, melancholy and change, and spring, with its days getting longer and everybody getting ready for the summer. Since I was a child, the presence of those birds created in me a feeling of nostalgia. So, in order to communicate the feeling of nostalgia and change to others in my movies, I always use the sound of swallows in the background. It is a very personal thing that might or might not work with the spectators depending on their experiences in life. The second sound is the sound of dogs barking. I use the sound of dogs barking in the background during a moment of silence. For example, if there is a scene with a couple talking and, all of the sudden, there is an uncomfortable silence, I use a really distant sound of a dog barking to convey a feeling of a really profound silence. The spectator is not aware of it but, if you can hear a sound that is really distant, that means that the silence in the scene is really profound. Another way of creating this feeling is the tick tock of a clock.

Which movies are your referents in terms of the use of sound?

Blade Runner (Ridley Scott, 1982) is a movie that has greatly influenced me. I saw it when I was a child, on TV at home, and it really impacted me. It is a movie in which sound, image and music merge and create an incredible universe. The music by Vangelis gets combined with the atmosphere of the city, you don't know where the music ends and the atmosphere starts: the Chinese voices from the PA systems and the echoes and acoustics of the streets, the environment of Rachel's house, the lights of the cars passing by synchronized with the sound of the AC systems... it is all very organic and very interesting. Other movies that have influenced me are *Star Wars*, *The Empire Strikes Back* and *The Return of the Jedi* with their incredible sound design. The sounds in those movies are instantly recognizable by anybody, like the sound of the light sabers, and Chewbacca.

At a personal level, I really like the sound design and sound editing of David Fincher in *Seven* (1995), *Panic Room* (2002), and *Zodiac* (2007). He has a personal way of using the sound that I find really interesting. It might be a little complicated to go over the technical aspects here, but basically what he often does is to synchronize the movement of the camera with a specific sound.

Which movie would you have liked to design the sound for?

Obviously *Blade Runner* and any of the ones I mentioned earlier. It would have been great to work with Ben Burtt in *Star Wars* or any other movie of the trilogy. It would have been incredible to be part of his creative and expressive capacity for finding the perfect sound to communicate the qualities of each character. Not only in *Star Wars*. In *WALL-E* (Andrew Stanton, 2008), it is incredible how he has created the language for a robot that does not speak but that can transmit every feeling at all times. To be honest, I think he is a genius. The sounds that he has created are going to become history and instantly recognizable by anyone. The last project he has worked on is *Super 8* (J. J. Abrams, 2011) and the sound in that movie is also spectacular. In the movie, the monster, the main character of the movie, is always hidden underground. As the movie progresses, we begin to see more of the character, but for the first half of the movie we do not see anything, we just hear it and it is much more terrifying. The same idea we were discussing earlier.

On which movie or in which genre would you like to work?

I would like to work with Alfonso Cuarón, a director who I really admire or, as I mentioned earlier, to work on any movie in which Ben Burtt is involved. I also admire Danny Boyle, who uses sound prominently in his movies. That is the case of *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), that won the Oscar for best sound mixing, or *Sunshine* (2007), a science fiction movie that was not received with passion but that I find incredible. *Solaris* (Steven Soderbergh, 2002) is also a movie that I like a lot, but all these are movies that have already been done. I think I would like to work on a science fiction movie with a top tier director. Nowadays, science fiction is not the preferred genre by spectators around the world, but it is one that I would like to work on. I would also like to work with director Alejandro Amenabar, who I think is a genius in communicating feelings and emotions. He is a great director who has worked in different genres, having directed horror movies, drama, science fiction, period movie... he is one of the best because he can work in any genre.

You are based in Barcelona. What do the sounds of that city transmit to you?

Barcelona is a city that transmits the idea of being in the Mediterranean, close to the sea, where you can hear the sound of seagulls inside the city. A city where you have traffic, but you barely hear the sound of claxons. You can hear, however, the sound of continuous traffic, like the one of motorcycles present all year round in Rome. You can also hear a lot of birds. All the directors that I have worked with doing a movie in Barcelona ask me why I use so much the sound of birds, and I say that those are the birds that you can hear in the Eixample neighborhood, for example. Barcelona is one of the cities in the world with many trees. It might not have many big gardens or parks, but it has trees on each and every street. And that is why I think it is a really pleasant city in terms of its sounds. Always with the presence of birds and the sea.



Working on The Impossible movie directed by Jose Antonio Bayona. © Courtesy of Oriol Tarragó.



Working on The Impossible movie directed by Jose Antonio Bayona. © Courtesy of Oriol Tarragó.

What are the sensations that you get from other cities? Is there any city that specially attracts you?

Definitely, each city has its own specific sound atmosphere. New York, for example, is a city where you can hear a lot of claxons and sirens of ambulances bouncing off the skyscrapers, creating a special acoustic. London is a city that has less traffic than New York and you can't hear it as much, at least in the area around Soho where I have worked. It is an area where you can hear people walking and you can hear more the sound of heels than the one of cars. It is a city where you can also hear the sound of bells. It is something that got my attention. Another city that got my attention was Bangkok, one of the noisiest cities that I have ever visited. There are ads on the streets with sound and music, window shops with music, and even on the subway the ads have music. The ticket inspector on the boats sailing the river in Bangkok carries a box with metallic coins, making noise with them to let everybody know that he is coming. There is a lot of traffic, a lot of noise, people singing in the streets... The hustle and bustle of the city really got my attention. Each city conveys different sensations, some stressful, some relaxing. Definitely, Bangkok is a stressful city and Barcelona can be a relaxing one.

What is your favorite tool of communication?

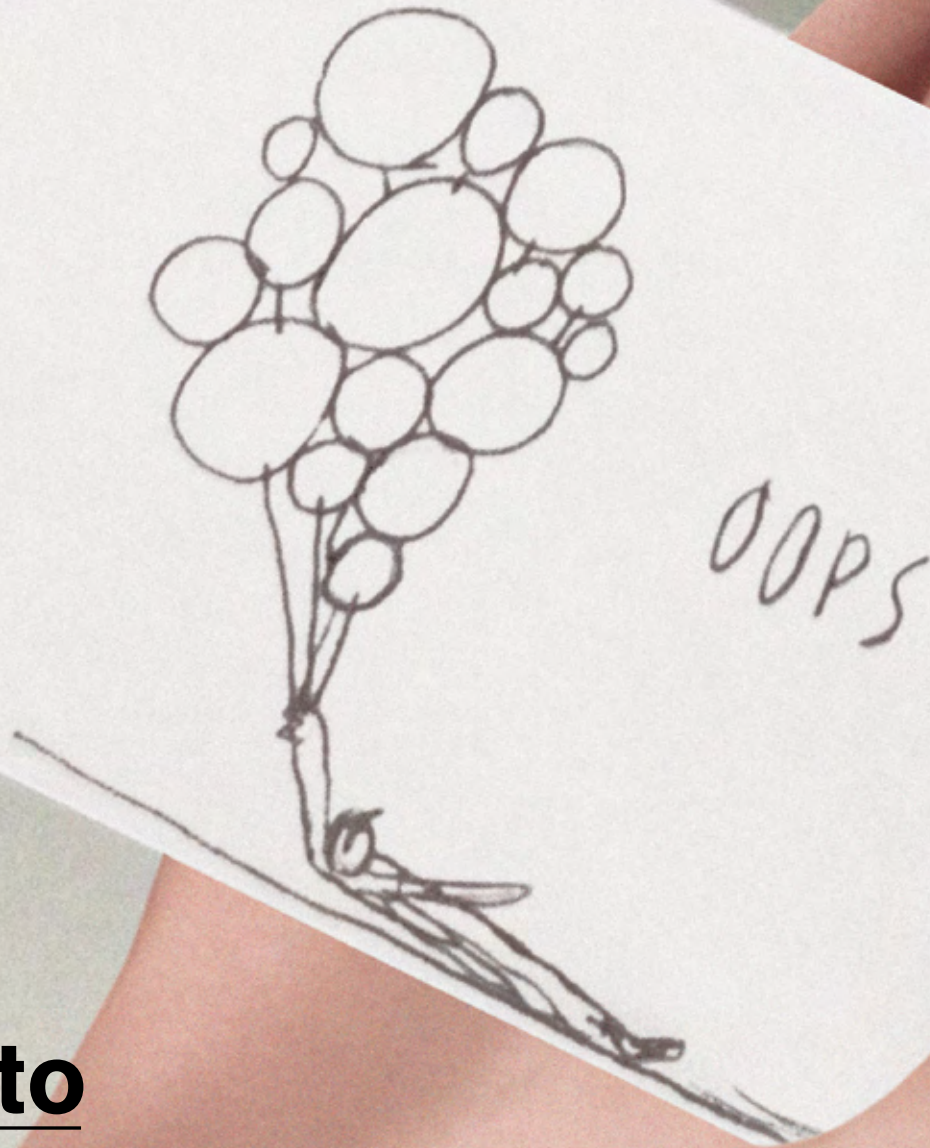
Nowadays I think it is email. I use my phone a lot because of my work and, in the end, it is really tiring. Email is direct enough to contact someone and expect a reply in a day or two, but also not as intrusive or annoying as the phone can be. Since the massive use of smartphones, email is the best way to communicate with people who are not close to you. It respects each other's "space" and is immediate enough to receive information.

But if I want to contact someone I love, someone to whom I am close, I like the video call (such as Skype or FaceTime). It allows seeing the other person, knowing his or her mood and perceiving the details in the conversation. Sometime using the phone, there are misunderstandings because you don't have that direct feedback of seeing the face. Most of the times, a smile or a look can communicate much more than words.

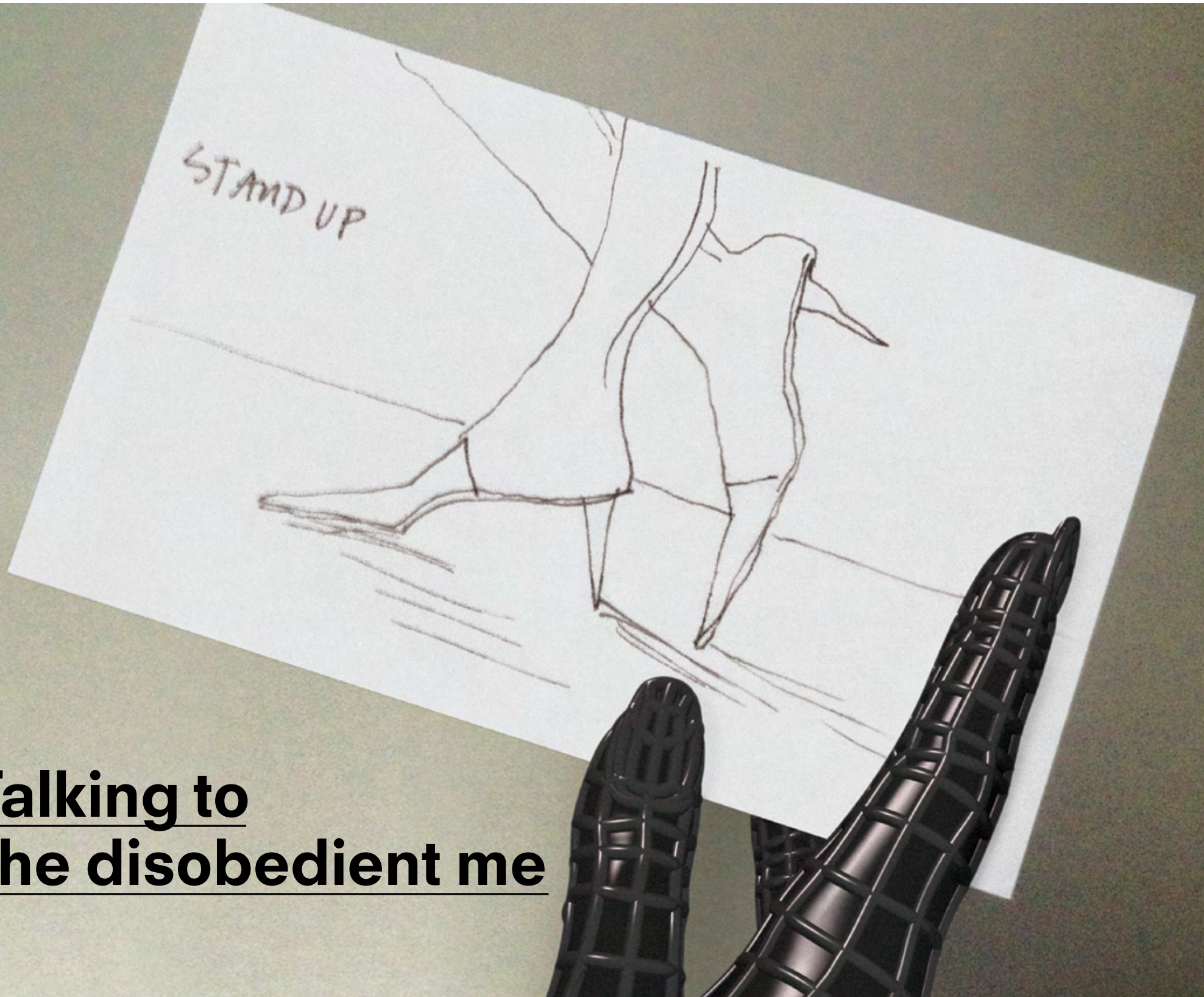
Visual essay by Rick Valicenti

Talking to Myself

Like every one of us, designer/artist, Rick Valicenti/3st, talks to himself, but he records his own conversations on note cards and stashes them away in a thin drawer somewhere at home. Valicenti and Baozhen Li personified some of these communication for your listening pleasure.



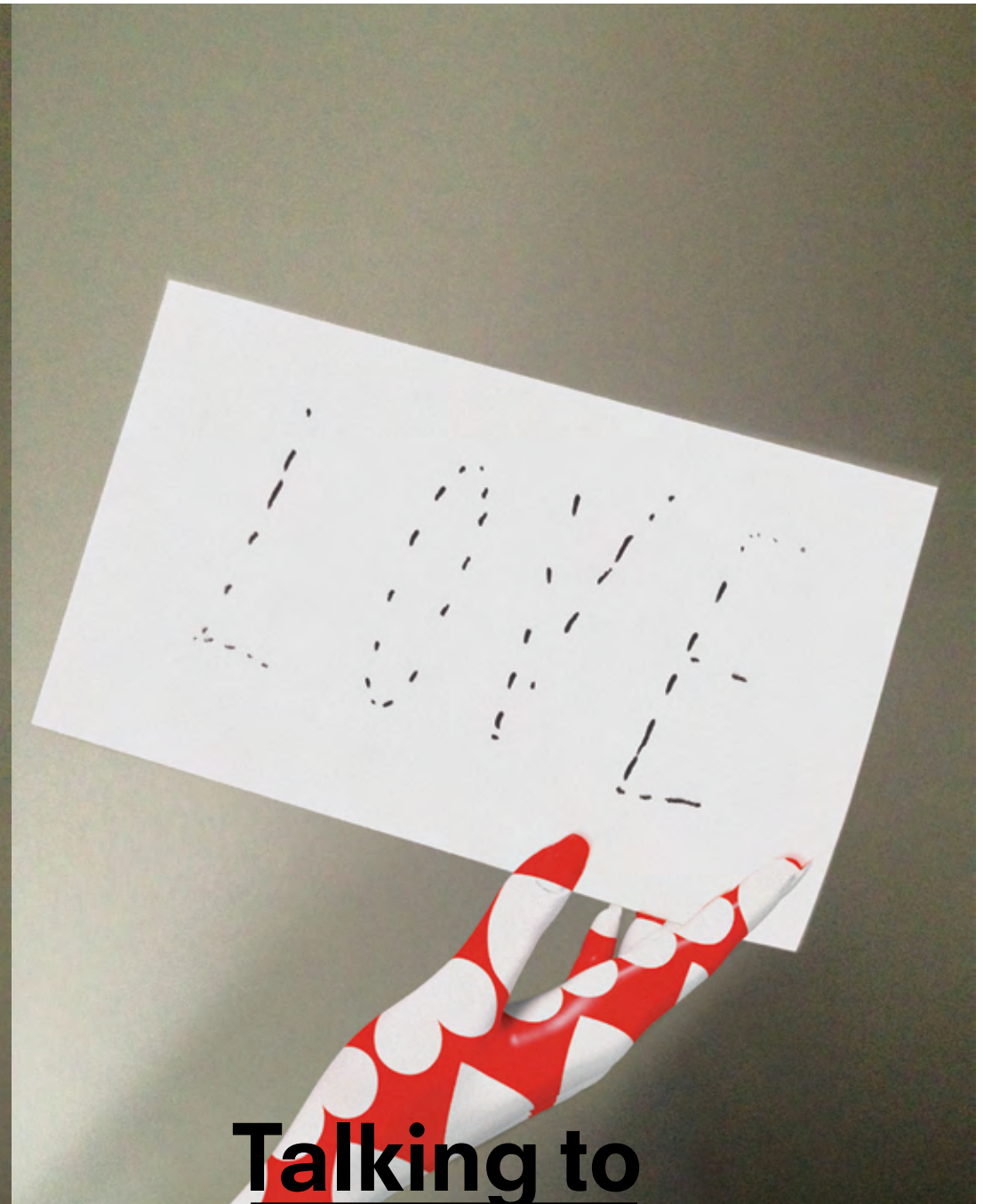
**Talking to
the lucky me**



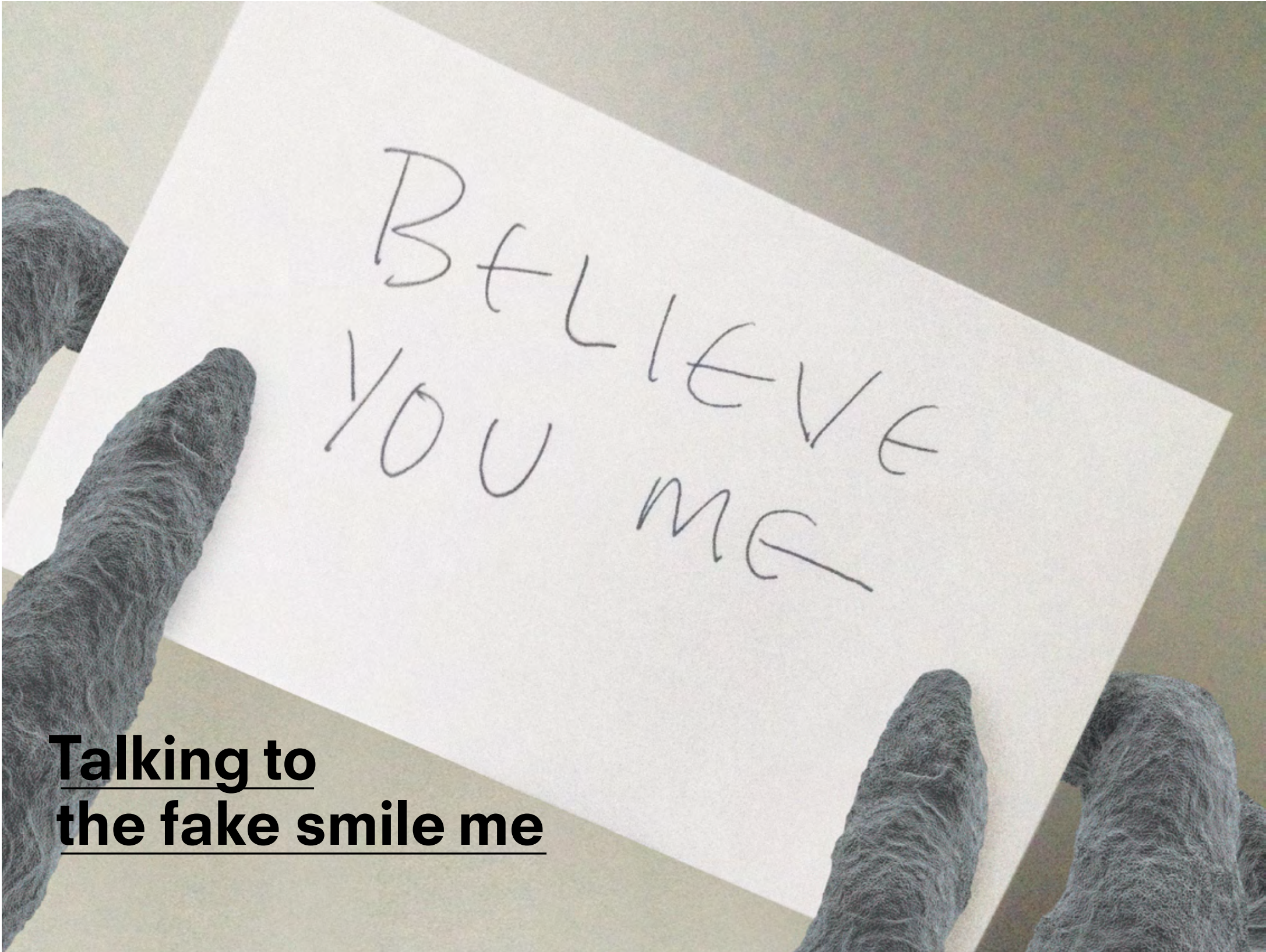
Talking to
the disobedient me



**Talking to
the joy-boy me**



**Talking to
the lacking me**

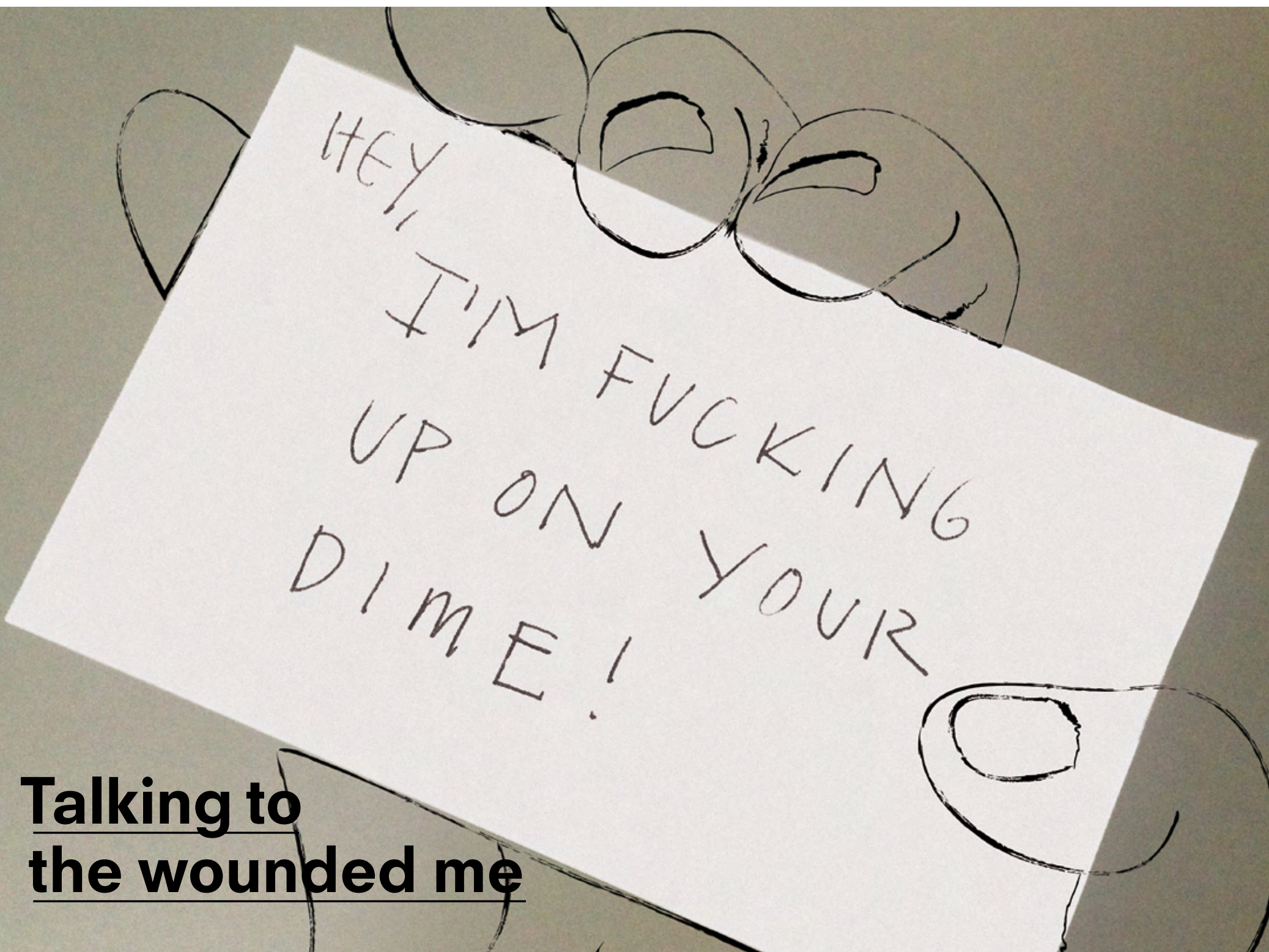


BELIEVE
YOU
ME

Talking to
the fake smile me



Talking to
the ambiguous me

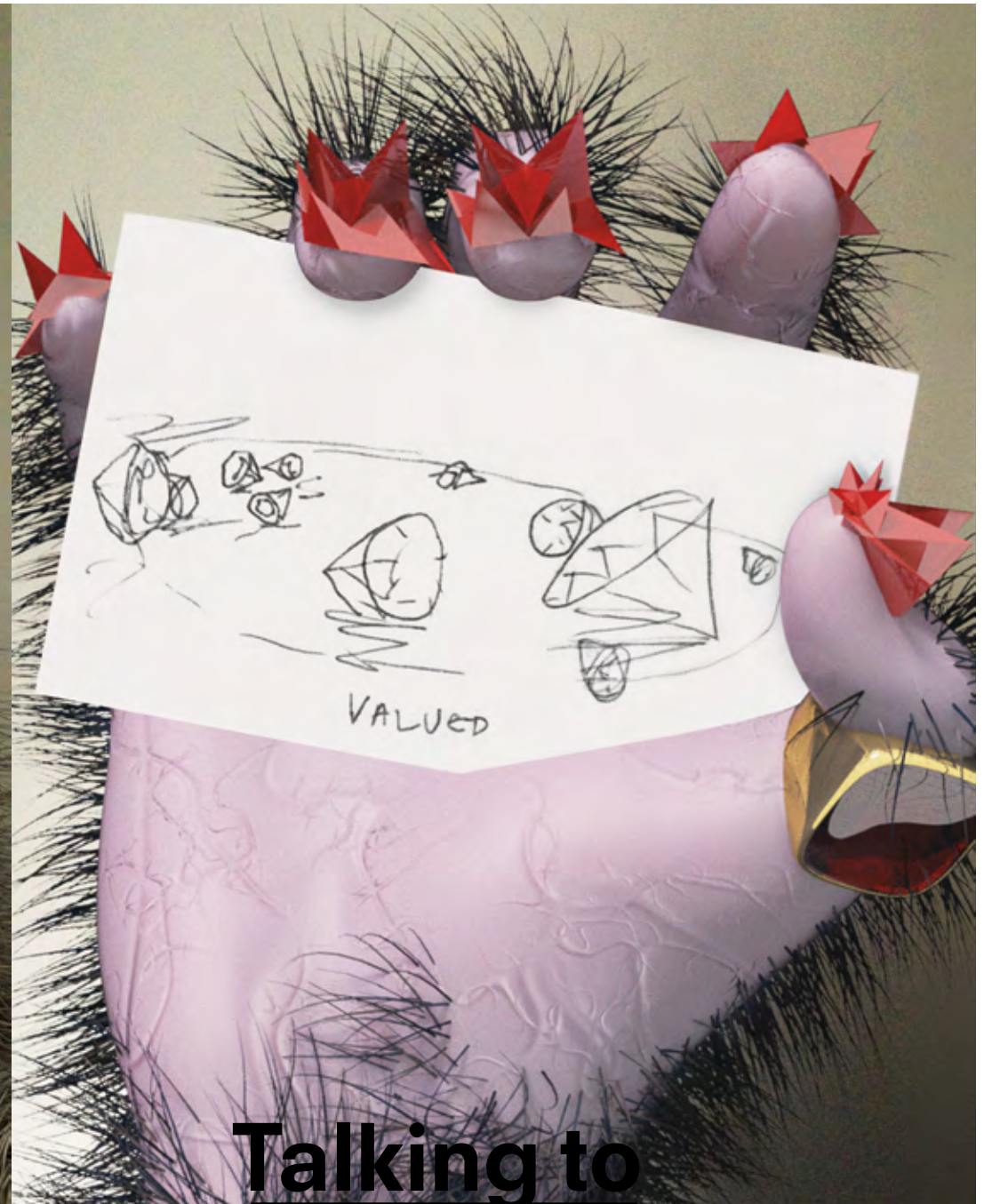


HEY,
I'M FUCKING
UP ON YOUR
DIME!

**Talking to
the wounded me**



**Talking to
the wanting me**



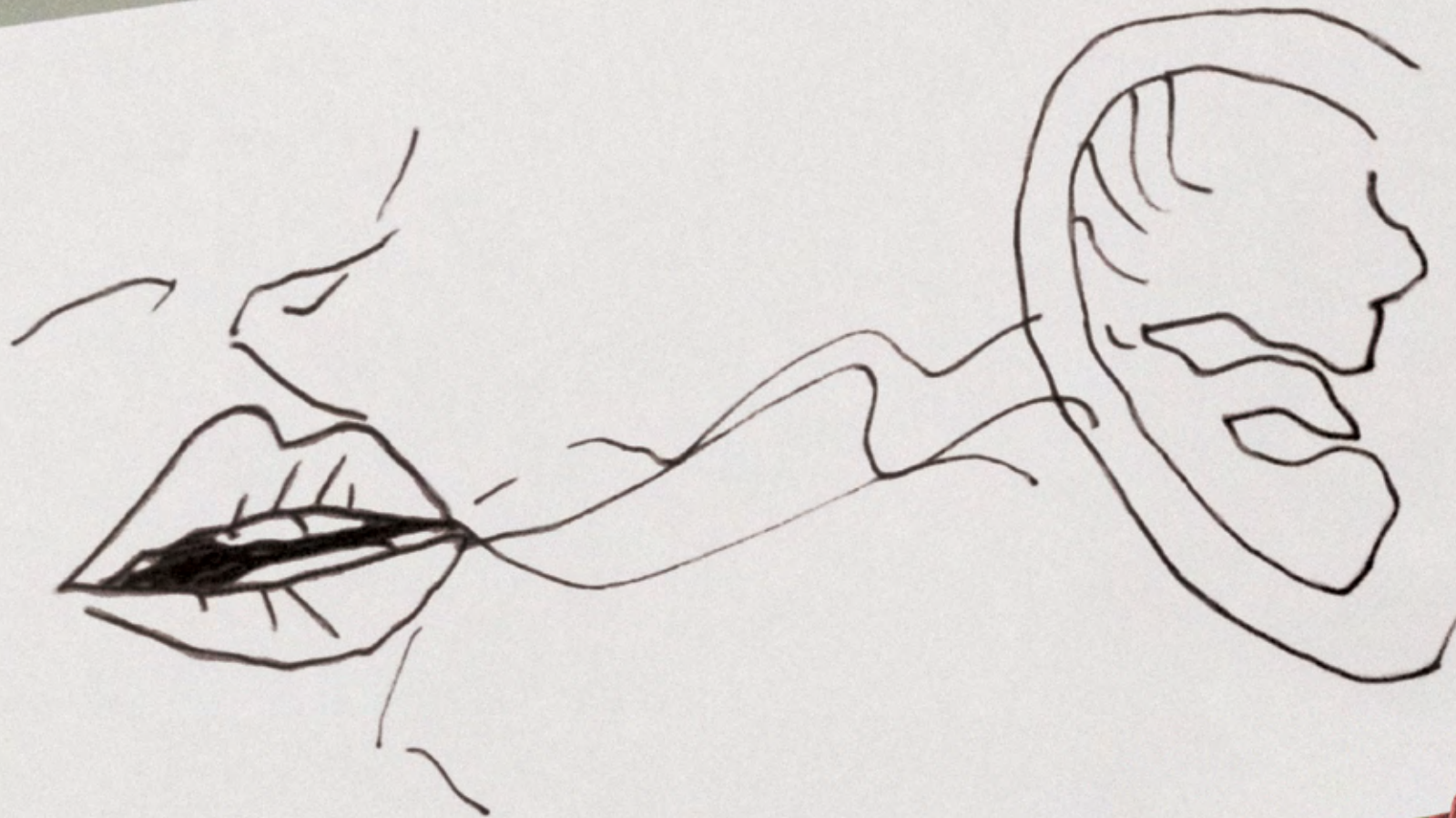
**Talking to
the greedy me**



Talking to the modest me



Talking to the neglected me



**Talking to
that lil'voice o'mine**



VLADIMIR BELOGOLOVSKY

is the founder of the Intercontinental Curatorial Project with a focus on organizing, curating, and designing architectural exhibitions worldwide. Trained as an architect at Cooper Union, he has published several books as well as over 150 articles appearing in American, European, and Russian publications.

www.curatorialproject.com

CRAIGHTON BERMAN

is an industrial designer, creative director, and illustrator. Craighton is interested in using design as a lens for understanding experiences and as a tool for bringing conceptual ideas to life. He runs his own studio and he also teaches at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Previously, Craighton was a lead designer with the innovation agency gravitytank.

www.craightonberman.com | www.fueledbycoffee.com | @craightonberman | @fueledbycoffee

ARIADNA CANTIS

is an architectural curator, critic and author. Her work focuses on the communication and dissemination of urban planning, architecture and design. Divides herself between the promotion, research and commissioning of architecture and contemporary culture engaging herself in various projects, exhibitions and publications, in order to generate a critical dialogue on the limits of architecture.

www.ariadnacantis.com | @aricantis

CENTER FOR URBAN PEDAGOGY

is a nonprofit organization that uses design and art to improve civic engagement. CUP projects demystify the urban policy and planning issues that impact our communities, so that more individuals can better participate in shaping them.

www.welcometocup.org | @we_are_CUP

FELIPE CHAIMOVICH

is the curator of the Museum of Modern Art in São Paulo. He was the curator of “29° Panorama da Arte Brasileira” (MAM-SP, 2005), “Ecológica” (MAM-SP, 2010) and the MAM Festival of Gardens in Ibirapuera (2010). He is the author of several books and articles including *Iran do Espírito Santo* (São Paulo: Cosac e Naify, 2000) and “Objects or Reflexion: Brazilian cultural situation,” in *On Cultural Influence* (New York: Apexart, 2006).

www.mam.org.br | @MAMoficial

EME3

was born in 1999 in response to the need to find spaces for architects, urbanists and creatives from different disciplines in which they could present innovative and unconventional projects that go beyond majoritarian trends in urban planning and construction. It was precisely the concept of volume, the unit of measure in cubic meters, that gave it the name and maintained it up to now.

www.eme3.org | @eme3_bcn

PEDRO GADANHÓ

is an architect, curator and writer currently based in New York. He is the Curator for Contemporary Architecture at the Department of Architecture and Design at MoMA, in New York. He was the editor-in-chief of *Beyond, Short Stories* on the Post-Contemporary — a bookazine started in 2009 through Sun Architecture, and he is the author of *Arquitetura em Público* (Dafne, 2011).

www.moma.org | shrapnelcontemporary.wordpress.com | @pedrogadanhó

IKER GIL

is an architect, director of MAS Studio and editor in chief of MAS Context. In addition, he is an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the School of Architecture at UIC. He is the recipient of the 2010 Emerging Visions Award from the Chicago Architectural Club.

www.mas-studio.com | www.mascontext.com | @MASContext

MICHAEL HIRSCHBICHLER

is the principal of Atelier Hirschbichler, a Zurich based practice for architecture, urbanism, design and cultural studies. He taught architectural design at ETH Zurich, was the director of the architecture program at the Papua New Guinean University of Technology in Lae, Papua New Guinea and is currently heading the Bachelor-/Master-studio in architecture and urban design at the chair of Prof. Dr. Marc M. Angélil at ETH Zürich.

www.atelier-hirschbichler.com

SAM JACOB

is a director of London based architecture office FAT. Jacob has taught and lectured at universities internationally and is currently professor of architecture at UIC, Chicago and Unit Master at Architectural Association, London. He is contributing editor for *Icon* & columnist for *Art Review*.

www.fat.co.uk | www.samjacob.com | www.strangeharvest.com | @anothersam

KLAUS

is a frustrated cartoonist that lives in an old castle in Europe. In his other life he is also a frustrated architect and scholar who has spent the last years developing a research on the role of comics in the construction of the image of the city of the future.

klaustoon.wordpress.com | [@klaustoon](#)

MICHAEL KUBO

is a writer and editor currently pursuing a Ph.D. in the History, Theory and Criticism of Architecture at MIT. His research focuses on topics such as history of publishing as a strategic form of architectural practice and the Cold War architecture of the RAND Corporation. He is also the director (along with Chris Grimley and Mark Pasnik) of pinkcomma gallery in Boston.

www.pinkcomma.com | [@microkubo](#)

STEPHEN KILLION

is an Architectural Designer and writer currently based in Chicago. A regular contributor to Architizer blog, he has also written articles for Mark Magazine and Design Bureau. With an interest in the overlap of architecture and graphic design disciplines, he acted as images researcher and contributed original images for Float! published by Frame publishers.

LUIS MENDO

is an editorial design consultant and designer at his company GOOD Inc. Whenever he can, he makes drawings of things that interest him and sometimes makes personal city guides under the name of The City Reporter. In 2007, he founded the reliable freelancers group Goodfellas Network.

www.goodinc.nl | www.luismendo.com | [@luismendo](#)

ELIAS REDSTONE

is an independent curator, writer, editor and consultant based in London and Paris. He is the founder and curator of ARCHIZINES, the editor-in-chief of the London Architecture Diary and an online columnist for the New York Times' T Magazine. Previously, Elias was the curator of the Polish Pavilion at the 2010 Venice Architecture Biennale, hub curator of the 2008 London Festival of Architecture and senior curator at the Architecture Foundation.

www.eliasredstone.com | www.archizines.com

ZOË RYAN

is the Chair and John H. Bryan Curator of Architecture and Design at the Art Institute of Chicago. Since going to the Art Institute in 2006, Ryan has curated several exhibitions and authored accompanying exhibition catalogues: Graphic Thought Facility: Resourceful Design (2008); Konstantin Grcic: Decisive Design (2009); and, with Joseph Rosa, Hyperlinks: Architecture and Design (2010)

www.artic.edu/aic | [@artinstitutechi](#)

ORIOL TARRAGÓ

is a movie sound designer. He has been the sound designer for over 30 movies, including The Orphanage, Rec, Julia's Eyes, Eva, Sleep Tight, and the upcoming The Impossible. He has won the Barcelona Film Award, Gaudí Award, Goya Award, and Golden Reel Award.

www.imdb.com/name/nm1088262 | [@oritarrago](#)

RICK VALICENTI

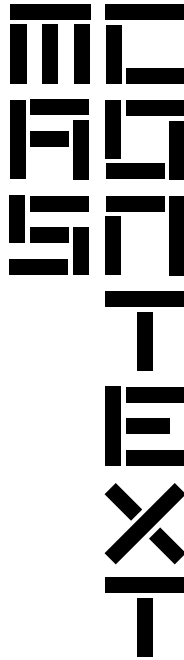
is the founder and design director of Thirst/Chicago, a communication design firm devoted to art, function and real human presence. Rick was recently awarded the 2011 National Design Award: Communication Design by The Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum. In 2006, Rick was awarded the American Institute of Graphic Artists (AIGA) Medal for his sustained contribution to design excellence and development of the profession. This medal is the highest honor in the graphic design profession.

www.3st.com | www.rickvalicenti.com | [@3stDesign](#)

MIRKO ZARDINI

is the director of the Canadian Centre for Architecture and an architect whose research, writings, and design projects engage the transformations of contemporary architecture and its relationship with the city and landscape. Editor of Casabella magazine from 1983 to 1988 and Lotus international from 1988 to 1999, Mr Zardini also served on the editorial board of Domus.

www.cca.qc.ca | [@ccawire](#)



Issue 14 / Summer 12

COMMUNICATION

MAS CONTEXT TEAM

Publisher

MAS Context
www.mascontext.com

Editor in chief

Iker Gil

Editor

Paul Mougey

Contributing editors

Andrew Clark
 Julie Michiels

Art Director / Design

Plural

Website Design

Plural

Website Management

André Corrêa
 Iker Gil

Guest Cover Designer

Plural
www.weareplural.com

BOARD OF ADVISORS

Ethel Baraona Pohl

www.dpr-barcelona.com

Alberto Campo Baeza

www.campobaeza.com

Pedro Gadanho

www.moma.org

Jason Pickleman

www.jnldesign.com

Zoë Ryan

www.artic.edu/aic

Rick Valicenti

www.3st.com

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Communication has had invaluable help from Vladimir Belogolovsky, Alexandra Bernardi, Craighton Berman, Ariadna Cantis, Felipe Chaimovich, Jeremiah Chiu, Andrew Clark, Hillman Curtis, Charlotte Debarle, Pedro Gadanho, Renata Graw, Michael Hirschbichler, Sam Holleran, Sam Jacob, Stephen Killion, Klaus, Michael Kubo, Baozhen Li, Luis Mendo, Julie Michiels, Paul Mougey, Mauricio Quiros Pacheco, Elias Redstone, Zoë Ryan, Oriol Tarragó, Rick Valicenti, and Mirko Zardini.

This issue is dedicated to Hillman Curtis

I came across the film work of Hillman Curtis a few years ago and I was instantly fascinated by it: it was personal, moving, intimate, comforting and humorous at times. His Artist Series allowed us to see renowned artists in a different way, to go inside their minds and discover the world as they see it.

After my initial encounter with his films, I enjoyed learning more about his work in commercials, websites, graphic design, and all aspects related to new media.

We were all thrilled when he agreed to be part of this issue of MAS Context by allowing me to interview him on the topic of communication. Unfortunately, Hillman passed away in April before we were able to complete that interview.

With these lines, we would like to thank him for his kindness and support of the journal, and for being and inspiration to all of us for these years. I am sure he will continue to inspire many designers and artists to come.

Iker

www.hillmancurtis.com

Every reasonable attempt has been made to identify owners of copyright. Errors or omission will be corrected in subsequent editions.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/> or send a letter to: Creative Commons, 171 Second Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, California, 94105, USA.



Issue 15 / Fall 12

VISIBILITY

Making visible the invisible. That was the title of our interview with interactive designer George Legrady published in our INFORMATION issue and the name of one of his most known projects. Conceived for the Seattle Public Library, it visualizes the circulation of books going in and out of the library's collection.

This issue will continue to make visible the invisible conditions present around us that inform the way we engage with the city. At the same time, we are bringing forgotten landscapes, hidden away systems and lost environments back to the forefront of the discussion, all of them significant in our history and waiting to be reexamined.

For this issue, we are soliciting submissions of unpublished critical articles, design studies, analytical diagrams or photographic series that examine the significance, opportunities and consequences of these conditions in our built environment.

For information on the submission guidelines and other questions, please visit www.mascontext.com

VISIBILITY will be published in early September.

Issue 14 / Summer 12

COMMUNICATION

Context

MAS CONTEXT CONTRIBUTORS:

Vladimir Belogolovsky | Craighton Berman | Ariadna Cantis | Center for Urban Pedagogy | Felipe Chaimovich | Eme3 | Pedro Gadanho | Iker Gil | Michael Hirschbichler | Sam Jacob | Klaus | Michael Kubo | Stephen Killion | Luis Mendo | Elias Redstone | Zoë Ryan | Oriol Tarragó | Rick Valicenti | Mirko Zardini