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Do you have a permit for that?: Exposing the pseudo-public space and exploring alternative means of urban occupation

Adam Barbosa
University of South Florida

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Do You Have A Permit For That?
Exposing the Pseudo-Public Space and Exploring Alternative Means of Urban Occupation

by

Adam Barbosa

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Architecture
School of Architecture and Community Design
College of the Arts
University of South Florida

Major Professor: Mark Weston, M. Arch.
Gregory Green, MFA
Stephen Szutenbach, M. Arch.

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“Do You Have a Permit For That?”
Exposing the Pseudo-Public Space and Exploring Alternative Means of Urban Occupation

Adam Barbosa

ABSTRACT

In his 1964 work “One Dimensional Man” Herbert Marcuse describes what he believes to be the de-evolution of industrialized society into the single minded pursuit of commerce. Decades later his hypothesis seems even closer to the truth, as much of our social interaction is now based in spaces that are designed to promote consumption. These spaces are in fact privately owned lots masquerading as public space so as to satiate the populace’s desire for “public” interaction without sacrificing their effectiveness as places of commerce. The migration of social interaction into these pseudo-public spaces has also further marginalized the city’s remaining public space. In his essay “Spaces of Uncertainty” Ken Cupers asks, “is it only the sterile places with clearly defined use that we can enjoy today? Is it the designer shops, the fancy cafes, or the commercial promenades that provide our satisfaction? What about the young, the restless, the old, the poor, and the ones having been excluded from contemporary public space and therefore removed from society?” Options for inhabiting public space are limited for those who choose to forgo the theater of commercial space (and those
who are forced to avoid it). However there is hope in the margins of our cities. The in-between and left behind spaces hold untold potential as spaces for interaction and expression.

The struggle against the pseudo-public space utilizes a three-faceted approach with urban interventions inspired by the Situationists and modern street artists. Each of the interventions will be designed to either, inform, identify, or occupy. First, the city’s inhabitants must be made aware of the nature of the pseudo-public space, its effects on our culture and their underlying mechanisms of control. Second, a network of marginalized spaces will be created as alternative spaces for occupation and interaction. Finally an intervention will be organized to occupy space outside the realm of the pseudo-public in a manner that could inspire other such occupations, or at the very least raise awareness as to the potential for non-commercial human interaction in the public sphere.
Introduction

Profit and Control:
Encroachment on Public Space

In a crowd “there is equality…absolute and indisputable,” there is “movement…towards a goal, common to all its members” (Canetti, 29). The formation of a crowd is not necessarily a bad thing for commerce (especially when the crowd is spending money); it only poses a problem when the crowd’s goals differ from the commercial entity’s, (when the crowd seeks to change the status quo for instance). In order to reconcile this disparity of objectives, commercial entities have chosen to redefine public space by blurring the boundaries between public and private in ways that suit their need for a controlled space. One method of the commercial reshaping of public space is the BID or Business Improvement District. BIDs are becoming a popular means of revitalizing downtrodden city centers, and for the most part they are considered reasonably successful. They are essentially private organizations funded by local commerce that are responsible for a variety of district improvement activities. “BIDs are thus ‘a powerful combination of ingredients – business self interest and vision, together with public financing unencumbered by urban politics’ ” (J. Mitchell, 9). Some may consider this combination of ingredients a recipe for disaster rather than the answer to the city’s problems.

According to a study conducted by professor Jerry
Mitchell, BIDs provide nine types of services to those within their districts:

1. Capital Improvements
2. Consumer Marketing
3. Economic Development
4. Maintenance
5. Parking / Transportation
6. Policy Advocacy
7. Public Space Regulation
8. Security
9. Social Services

While many of the above seem like worthwhile pursuits, a couple of points should raise a few red flags. For instance, is the privatization of public space regulation in the best interest of the community or the business owners? Should the community simply accept that a commercial entity is now responsible, at least in part, for policing public space and determining the legitimacy of its occupants? Despite their best efforts to persuade the community otherwise, BIDs are essentially an extension of local businesses. They survive on taxes paid to them by these businesses and operate with their commercial interests at the forefront rather than concerning themselves with how they are compromising the community’s right to public space. Many residents don’t consider BID’s a problem as they seem to be effective in cleaning up the streets so to speak. However, proponents neglect to mention that they accomplish this “clean up” through increased control over public space. Since BIDs are neither a government agency nor are they an entirely private entity they are able to “operate without the civil service rules and red tape” (MacDonald). They have privatized security forces and surveillance systems set up on the property of business owners in order to monitor the surrounding public space, all in the name of public safety. For example Herald Square in Manhattan is now “fenced, gated after 6pm., and guarded by a private security
guards,” all thanks to the Thirty Fourth Street BID (Low, 83). Naturally the businesses see profit increases an entirely private entity they are able to “operate without the civil service rules and red tape” (MacDonald). They have privatized security forces and surveillance systems set up on the property of business owners in order to monitor the surrounding public space, all in the name of public safety. For example Herald Square in Manhattan is now “fenced, gated after 6pm., and guarded by a private security guards,” all thanks to the Thirty Fourth Street BID (Low, 83). Naturally the businesses see profit increases when they limit the access to and control the activities in the surrounding public space and shoppers don’t seem to mind being policed by private organizations because the streets and parks are “cleaner”. The problem that escapes the shoppers is that the BID is essentially privatizing public space to suit its own desires under the guise of improvement.

This tactic is currently being employed by the
City of St. Petersburg, Florida. Recently the Baywalk business complex has petitioned the city to privatize the sidewalk in front of the venue and give control of this space to the businesses that reside in the complex. The businesses have complained about waning profits because of excessive protesters congregating on the sidewalk, local teenagers “hanging out” and panhandlers annoying shoppers. “The measure would have allowed Baywalk’s owners to remove undesirable patrons from a stretch of public sidewalk,” (Silva). The owner of Baywalk has even gone so far as to withhold six million dollars worth of renovations until the city gives control of the sidewalk to the company (Nohlgren). While not an actual BID, the Baywalk conglomerate seeks to accomplish similar results by taking ownership of public space in order control who is allowed to use that space based on their willingness to participate in commerce.

In the eyes of the business owner the ability to
control the space adjacent to their lot is directly related to increasing the profitability of their businesses. This relationship between control and profit has led to the rise of the pseudo-public space. These spaces are wholly owned and operated by corporate entities and are designed to encourage consumerism without alienating potential shoppers (Mitchell, 139). They accomplish this by introducing elements of public space into carefully designed private lots. The reason for this marriage of disparate elements is to provide the potential shoppers with some sense of publicness so they do not feel as though they've been “reduced to the role of pure consumers,” and to help mask the missing essential elements of public space (Haydn, 110). The dangers of the pseudo-public space are not too be taken lightly. These spaces threaten the existence of true public space as a means for social interaction. With the construction of each of these pseudo-public spaces, another blow is struck against our once great
city centers. The pseudo-public spaces, in particular the mall and festive marketplace, have become “substitutes for the neglected public space of the inner cities (and are) now migrating back to the edges of European cities, competing with its own precursor and even threatening its existence” (Haydn, 109). The migration of people to the festival marketplace, the mall, or even subsidized corporate plazas, is turning once thriving city centers into ghost towns.

A local example of the festival marketplace is Channelside Plaza, which can be found on the perimeter of downtown Tampa, Florida in the port/warehouse district. This plaza is privately owned and operated but has the appearance of a public plaza with many of the components of public space. It features a patio, open air pedestrian access, seating along the pedestrian pathways, and trolley service to and from downtown. On the surface a trolley sounds like a wonderful way to promote public transit, that is,
until one realizes that its sole purpose is to ferry city dwellers away from the city center and into one of the city’s festival marketplaces (Channelside and Centro Ybor). Once visitors arrive at the marketplace and even before entering the plaza, they are welcomed by the sounds of music, laughter, and conversation. As they enter they enjoy the inviting sights of fellow shoppers and revelers, umbrella covered tables, bright lights and clean sidewalks. Most visitors are so enthralled by the spectacle of it all that they barely notice the small sign on the wall at the main entrance that spells out the rules they must follow in order to participate. They overlook the security cameras trained on the plaza itself and the security guards ready to eject anyone they care to, because after all this is private property. Visitors are only welcomed here if they intend to participate in the commercial theater that the marketplace provides, if someone attempts to do anything other than eat and shop the security force is ready to escort them out.
A second local example of the pseudo-public space is Centro Ybor located in the cigar factory district of Tampa Florida, slightly northeast of the city center and port district. This example is even more devious than the last as it is a little more difficult to recognize Centro as a separate entity from the rest of the Ybor strip. The complex spans across a public roadway and the transition from public sidewalk to private sidewalk is seamless and provides no indication that you are no longer in the public realm. In the case of Channelside the transition was noticeably marked by a transitional space or signs. However, when navigating the streets of Ybor a traveler could easily find themselves on Centro’s private land without really that it was in fact private. Much like Channelside, Centro also has a code of conduct that must be followed in order to be a “guest” in their complex. The code, which is very similar to that of Channelside, is as follows:

- Centro YBOR is operated exclusively for shopping, dining and entertainment purposes
- Respect others. Disorderly or disruptive conduct which annoys, obstructs, interferes or endangers others is prohibited including: the use of obscene, insulting or sexually explicit language or gestures; yelling or playing sound-generating equipment; fighting, boisterous or threatening or hostile behavior of any kind; throwing objects or littering; running, skating, skateboarding, rollerblading or use of “heelys” or motorized devices; or unnecessary staring or following someone through the property.
- Assembling, demonstrating, parading, picketing, marching, individually or in groups, thereby disrupting the shopping, dining or entertainment enjoyment of visitors, or disrupting the intended use of the property is prohibited.
• **Parental Escort:** all youth(s) under 16 years of age who are at Centro YBOR after 10 p.m. must be under the supervision and control of a parent or guardian (21 years of age or older) who must have visual contact with the youth(s). A parent or guardian may not escort more than six youths under the age of 16. Minors may not congregate in groups larger than four as this may impede the movement of other guests.

• To enforce the rules applicable to minors, we require all patrons on our property to carry appropriate photo identification with proof of age.

• General soliciting or promoting; distributing handbills or literature; offering any items for sale not authorized by property management; soliciting signatures, membership or personal information of any kind (including names, phone numbers, etc.); and conducting surveys is prohibited.

• Photographing, videotaping, and filming the interior or exterior of the property for any purpose, without the prior written consent of property management, is prohibited.

• **Appropriate attire must be worn while visiting Centro YBOR.** Items with obscene, suggestive or offensive messages are not permitted. Shirts and shoes are required at all times.

• **Loitering is not permitted in Centro YBOR.** Loitering includes: inactivity; blocking access or view; hindering movement and/or failure to move to a shopping, dining or entertainment venue.

• **Standing or stopping on stairs or escalators in such a manner as to impede the flow of pedestrian traffic is not permitted. Improper**
use of escalators, elevators or stairs is not permitted.

• All persons under the age of 19 are expected to be in school during school hours and will be asked to leave the property.

• Smoking is not permitted in the enclosed common areas of centro ybor or within 20 Feet of any entryway door, window or ventilation intake duct.

• Possession or carrying of firearms or weapons of any kind, openly or concealed, with or without a permit, is prohibited.

After reading the preceding code it is easy to see that security personnel, which they refer to as "property staff," have the right to remove just about anyone they choose that isn’t actively shopping. As described in the rule concerning loitering, they reserve the right to remove anyone who shows signs of inactivity or fails to actively “move to a shopping dining or entertainment venue,” (Centro code of conduct). Also note that “assembling, demonstrating, parading, picketing, marching, individually or in groups, thereby disrupting the shopping, dining or entertainment enjoyment of visitors” are also grounds for expulsion (Centro code of conduct). Centro Ybor shopping complex eerily resembles a public plaza yet clearly lacks any of the necessary components of public space, namely the public’s right to use that space as they see fit. After exploring these local spaces it is clear that corporations view the public sphere as an unnecessary part of modern life. In their eyes “control-led diversity is more profitable than the promotion of unconstrained social differences,” (Mitchell 139).
The In-Between: Seeking Out New Public Space

“Public space - with its mechanisms of control - has its other, situated in the fragility and indefiniteness of certain spaces and activities. It is both these atmospheres that influence us in the way we live, the way we communicate, and finally the way we think. How ambiguous are our desires, dreams and projections? Is it only the sterile places with clearly defined use that we can enjoy today? Is it the designer shops, the fancy cafes, or the commercial promenades, that provide our satisfaction? What about the social public spaces in the back of our heads? Do we still consider the possibility of diverse encounters, with the non-consumer, the other? What about the young, the restless, the old, the poor, and the ones having been excluded from contemporary public space and therefore removed from society?”

--Ken Cupers

With the privatization of the public realm, and the commercial nature of the pseudo-public space, what is left for the marginalized citizen or those who choose not to succumb to the allure of commodified space? Ken Cupers, among others, suggests that the marginal spaces, or those that exist on the periphery, and in the cracks of the urban fabric hold the ability to house the crucial characteristics of true public space – “openness and unpredictability.” Both of which have been removed from the aforementioned pseudo-public and privatized public spaces that dominate the modern urban landscape. This sense of openness and unpredictability is essential to the creation of new, truly democratic public space in that they allow for disorder and lack of structure. The idea that disorder should lead to a truly democratic space may seem contradictory to the tenets of democracy; however in the case of public space, the constant struggle and redefinition that disorder provides is necessary for that space to continue
on as a place where any human being can exist, not just those who own property or are granted access to the space by meeting some predetermined criteria (Mitchell 130). The “promise and the justification of disorder… is that in extricating the city from preplanned control, (people) will become more in control of themselves and more aware of each other,” (Sennett 198).
The Art of War: Strategies and Tactics in Urbanism

In order to achieve the rebirth of public space in and around the city one must first show the public the dangers of the pseudo-public space. Exposing the nature of these spaces to the public can pave the way for the development of actual public spaces that already exist within the city but for a number of reasons go unused.

When it comes to matters of urban spaces, it is helpful to recognize that these spaces come about through either strategic planning or tactical intervention (Gimblett, 27). Strategic planning is the type of urban space making that is most widely accepted and practiced. It is the calculated and measured effort of a select few imposing their view of what an urban space should be upon the public, generally resulting in an overall “master plan.” Strategy based urban design is essentially “power working at a distance upon the landscape” (Rebar, 3). While not an ideal method, strategic urban planning is a major factor in shaping urban space and thus must be accounted for. The most logical counterbalance to strategic planning is the use of urban tactics. In tactical urbanism it is the user who creates the space. The tactician must operate without the budget, power or resources of the strategist. According to Decertau it is the mission of the tactician to “‘vigilantly make use of the cracks that...open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers. It poaches them. It creates surprises in them,’” (qtd. In Rebar, 3). Creating tactical interventions within the city allows the city dweller to become the designer of his or her own urban space.
Tactical Performance:
Action as Architecture

These tactical interventions are not always in built form. In fact many of the most successful are performance related. Any action or activity can temporarily reshape urban space without the need for structure. At the extreme end, one could argue that simply existing within a space changes the nature of that space. The occupant changes how others perceive a space and how they interact within a space for the length of their stay. Now couple that simple occupation of space with a direct action or activity and a solid definition of space can be achieved if only for the duration of the act. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblet discusses this phenomenon in her essay “Performing the City,” and uses the example of the Easter Sunday Parade in New York to drive home her point. The parade is not a parade at all but an impromptu fashion show that has been continuously occurring for the last hundred years. “There are no announcements, no planning or preparation. Tens of thousands of people just show up. The police know to erect traffic barricades. And for about two hours the enormous crowd mills about seeing and being seen in their Easter finery,” (Gimblet, 28). The significance of this gathering is that the inhabitants of the city decided they had a need for a certain type of space and collectively chose and converted a portion of 5th avenue to suit their needs even though the space they chose was not designed (or planned) with them in mind. Gimblet also mentions that while the space only exists in that form for a couple of hours a year, it has been a fixture in the city for a longer period of time than some of its built works (28). In fact many temporal tactics achieve this same staying power, although in some cases it is in the collective memory of the people that these spaces linger on and impact the urban fabric long after they have disappeared. Peter Arlt
compared these temporary spaces to a “photosensitive material on which all the attempts at projection have left traces over time: immaterial palimpsests, so to speak, that nonetheless have a location,” (Haydn, 60). It may seem strange to think of ephemeral performance defined space as architecture. However “these activities are architectural in the sense that performance...gives form to space,” (Gimblet, 20). With that in mind it is only a short leap in considering action as architecture. If architecture is broadly thought of as the definition of space and one can let go of the preconceived notion that spatial definition must be structural, then certain space defining actions could be considered architecture. Take for example the Easter parade. The populace has convened on the streets of New York to transform the space from one of transit to one of performance for over a hundred years using only themselves as a means for defining that space. One could argue that with the introduction of the police barricades the space is now
defined by a built structure. However, the gathering would still occur without them, which means it is the crowd that defines the space while the barricades are merely a function of safety whose placement is dictated by the gathering of people. So, in the end it is still the activity that is defining the space.

Figure 12. Easter Parade NY Photo by Stephen Chernin/Getty Images

Figure 13. Easter Parade NY Photo by Michael Arnella
Tactical Intervention: Temporary Architecture

Another tactic for redefining space is the deployment of temporary installations throughout the cityscape. These installations, while varying in size, complexity, and mobility, all share an ephemeral nature that aids in their impact on the collective urban psyche. The scope of the tactical intervention is rather broad so for the purpose of this discussion the focus will be on three major types of intervention: art, structure, and object.

Artistic interventions have their own subset of categories but the most common, and most potent seem to be in the genre of graffiti and street art. To some, the idea of graffiti is immediately offensive and off-putting; however, over the years simple graffiti tags and slogans have evolved into very imaginative and thought provoking form of public art. It could be argued that in creating street art, whether it is a mural on an abandoned building or a remix of street signs, the artist has redefined the space as a temporary art gallery. While this sentiment is valid it is not where the true power of street art lies. The images and juxtapositions that street artists create can be a powerful commentary on the spaces that they inhabit. For instance take Brad Downey, a London based artist who uses street installations to bring often overlooked aspects of city life into focus. He feels that objects such as urban furniture, signs, and lights are all “invisible” and “are not questioned because they are working for the city,” (qtd. in Gavin, 15). His work attempts to “exaggerate distort and humanize urban space,” by coaxing the city-dweller into seeing the spaces and objects around them in an altered light (Gavin, 15). His piece the Madonna & Child, a half scale version of a speed limit sign affixed to the sidewalk next to an official full scale sign, creates a playful moment in the average city-dwellers use of this
space. The small sign even reads half the speed limit to reinforce its playful nature. In another of his works named The Tree, Downey remixes a common street sign into a steel tree. Again playful in nature the piece still serves as a critique on the urban landscape as seen by the planners and strategists. The tree brings the user face to face with the lack of nature in the city and also criticizes the little nature that does exist as being planned and calculated and ultimately very unnatural. Both of these works are prime examples of Downey’s outlook on urbanism and his art’s effect on the city. He sees his work as “a positive call to arms, reminding every urban dweller that their city is their own,” (qtd. in Bekman).

The second type of urban intervention relevant to this thesis is that of a structural nature. This type of intervention can be as simple as a canopy system or as involved as a mobile homeless shelter; however in either case the interventions still retain a temporary
nature. Architects at Howeler and Yoon have devised a cellular structure that aggregates into a larger canopy system. Each cell houses a solar panel and low wattage light that illuminates the space beneath the canopy throughout the evening. The structure was erected in a vacant city lot and for a short time it was both an “architectural device that shaped space and an interactive field of light that hovered above an occupied ground,” (Howeler). The idea behind a structural intervention is to provide the city-dweller with a space for interaction and use without permanently occupying the space so that in the future it could be re-purposed by a new group of users. Howeler and Yoon’s project was designed to be adaptable to a variety of spaces and spatial definition requirements. The cells could be repositioned to define a space as large as an empty lot or as small as the front stoop of a building. The material, colors, and shape of each cell give the entire system a welcoming and playful feel, much in the same way...
Downey approached his urban street art.

The object as a form of urban intervention sits somewhere between art and structure. It can be both sculptural and space defining at the same time. Employing an object as a tactical intervention in the urban fabric requires a slightly different set of circumstances than the previous two in order to be effective. In the prior examples a tactical strike was created and executed at a particular site within the city and remained there for a short duration before meeting its demise. When considering an object as a means for a tactical intervention it is not necessary to plan for a specific site but rather a specific set of conditions. The Bushwaffle by Rebar is a perfect example of an object as a tactical intervention. The Bushwaffle is a brightly colored and oddly shaped inflatable piece of urban furniture, that can be easily combined with another of its kind to create an endless number of shapes, shelters, chairs, couches, etc. The Bushwaffle was created as
an instrument with which urban dwellers could transform the space they inhabit to better suit their needs. The object itself is a means of “critiquing the dehumanization of the public realm” by transforming the unwelcoming and hard surfaces of the public space into soft, configurable surfaces that invite rest, and play into the public sphere (ReBar).

French philosopher Henri Lefebvre saw the city as a single work in which every person inhabiting it had a hand. He called this the ouvre and it could not exist without the “struggle with one another over the shape of the city, the terms of access to the public realm, and even the rights of citizenship,” (Mitchell 19). So according to Lefebvre it is our duty as citizens to reshape our own public space, or at least to attempt such a change, because by participating in that struggle to create urban space we are inherently participating in the creation of the city as an ouvre, and as Mitchell states “out of this struggle… new modes of living, new modes of inhabiting are invented,” (18). In the case of this thesis the struggle will occur between public and private space and the constantly fluctuating boundaries that separate the two. In the initial phase of thesis research the interventions will be a critical commentary on the pseudo-public space in hopes of alerting the public to the problem that these spaces present. The following phase of interventions will build on this newfound awareness and promote the discovery and use of self made public space within the marginalized and abandoned spaces of the city. The proposed interventions will vary in style and size but will all fall under one of the previously discussed typologies. The ultimate goal of this research is to initiate participation in the struggle to redefine space as a public property and in doing so to inspire others to find new uses for public space that has essentially been left behind as the populace has migrated to the pseudo-public space.
Before presenting the pertinent case studies for Phase 1 of this research project, it is necessary to have a brief discussion concerning the ideas of Simulacra, Simulation, and Hyper-reality. Post-Modernist philosopher Jean Baudrillard has developed an interesting theory on the reality (or hyper-reality) of our time. Our new hyper-reality is based on the propagation of simulated versions of actual elements of reality; however, these simulated elements (simulacra) are slightly distorted in various ways. In his book Simulation and Simulacra, Baudrillard describes the stages in which a simulacrum develops, the first of which is simply a case of the simulation existing as a “reflection of a profound reality” (Baudrillard, 6, 1994). As time passed and our methods for ‘making’ evolved so too did the simulacra. The mass production of the industrial revolution allowed the simulated images of the real to be produced in such great numbers that they began to threaten the actual reality that they intended to simulate (Baudrillard, 6, 1994). With advances in technology and our ever growing desire for increased profit margins the post-industrial world saw the simulacra become so ubiquitous that they have begun to replace our
previous image of reality with the distorted images of advertisements, television shows, movies and a host of other media.

The simulacra (or distorted images of reality) have become such a presence in our minds that there is little room left for the true image of reality. The battle for supremacy is slowly turning in the favor of the simulacra which is creating a new ‘hyper-reality’ to house our existence. One that has evolved from images presented to us by those with some form of an agenda, whether it be profit, control or both. As residents in a post industrial world, we have been raised in the shadow of this false reality. One filled with an endless sea of products that claim to help us elevate our collective self image to the unattainable standards perpetuated by advertisers in their quest to hock their wares. This simulacra induced consumer culture has paved the way for the advent of the pseudo-public space, which is itself a simulacrum of real public space. A distorted representation that we
have come to accept as the replacement for our town centers. Our social interactions now take place in faux spaces that have complete control over those who enter into them. Without the freedom and rights that are associated with real public space, these pseudo-public spaces have begun morphing us from a heterogeneous society of citizens into a homogenous society of consumers.

The following case studies deal with methods for unmasking the simulacra. Each, in their own way, uses some type of sign or imagery that has a specific meaning in our current hyper-reality and distorts it to show the simulacra’s true face. In this way these case studies are using the very methods the simulacra employ to reintroduce us to the reality that the simulacra have distorted.
Case Study 1-1: Barbara Kruger

Barbara Kruger is a collage artist whose work toed the line between gallery exhibition and outsider art. The post-industrial landscape of the 1980's marked the start of a time when advertising and other such 'media with an agenda' began to dominate the visual landscape of our cities, homes, and offices. Billboards, posters, advertisements both in print and in film, became so prolific that the reality they created with their images became inescapable. Barbara Kruger sought to undermine the message being sent through mass media by taking the images they used to sell us products and altering them (usually with the addition of a phrase or caption) to expose the creators true motives or the effects that their simulacra are having on our society. “Rather than sell products, Kruger’s designs sold ideological critique (Perry, 16, 2000). In this first example of Kruger’s work we see the image of a strange duck like stuffed animal with the words “Buy me...I'll change your life” superimposed over the image. The distorted image of the duck could possibly have two interpretations. On one hand the image of the duck may be distorted as a commentary on the simulacra that advertisements of this nature generally create. By using a deformed image of a commonplace item the piece may be attempting to expose the general misrepresentation of reality that advertisements tend to favor as a means of promoting their product. In order to solidify her point Kruger has made the distortion of reality obvious by using the image of something with which we are all familiar (a duck). Another interpretation positions the toy duck as a commodity being promoted by some unknown retailer. By mixing the image of a misshapen duck with the text “Buy me ...I'll change your life” the artist appears to be taking a jab at consumer culture in
general. The idea that an advertisement could make so bold a claim about an item so utterly useless calls into question our society’s need to consume. We so desperately desire to own the next big thing that even if it appears as pointless as an aesthetically disturbing toy duck, we simply must have one. On both levels of critique Kruger’s piece holds some relevance to this research. In the first place it condemns the simulacra of advertisements as masks hiding the truth and in the second it exposes the consumer culture that pervades our society, one that only encourages the development of simulacra as a means of persuasion.

The second piece up for discussion involves the image of a woman looking into a shattered mirror with the words “You are not yourself” placed on top of the image. In this work Kruger is once again challenging the simulacra of our time. However, in this case she is approaching it in terms of the feminine image rather than the consumerist agenda from the previous
example. In this piece the shattered mirror could represent the distorted reality (simulacra) that media has created regarding the image of the ideal woman. The woman’s face appears jagged and misshapen in the image, which infers that her true self is hidden by the simulacra that is the mirror, and instead it reflects back to her an unrecognizable version of herself. Another take on this piece is presented by Shawn Rider, who suggests that the image and text combine to inform us about the relationship between the simulacra and self image. Rider believes that ‘the image is suggestive of the distance between simulacrum and reality: You are not yourself because what society tells you to be is impossible. The concept of self identity in our culture has been turned into a simulacrum, and is therefore irrelevant to real life’ (Rider, 1, 1999). This piece’s relevance again lies in the artists ability to unmask the nature of the simulacrum and expose the potential dangers of allowing ourselves to be taken in by the false

Figure 20. Barbara Kruger’s “You are not Yourself”
imagery of the new hyper-reality.

The final example from Kruger is an image of a hand holding a sign that says “I shop therefore I am.” First let us consider the image, a hand holding a small sign, on its own without the text. The disembodied hand holds the sign between the thumb and middle finger with great delicacy, which suggests a sense of reverence for what the sign contains. The hand stands alone in the image as the only human element and is vague enough to allow just about anyone to assume ownership. The text within the sign gives this piece its impact. It is a play on Descartes famous quote “Cogito, ergo sum” or translated, “I think, therefore I am.” The key difference here is the replacement of thinking with shopping, which suggests that our society has lost its ability to think for itself and instead blindly buys into the new simulated reality of advertisements. It proposes that in order to be an accepted member of society, or to exist, one need not actually think at all but rather simply purchase
the prescribed objects associated with their station within society. In this piece Kruger again criticizes the consumer nature of our society, which is a direct result of the simulacra created by various forms of media. The signs and images we see everyday as part of the new simulated reality, have slowly worn away our need as humans to ponder, to wonder, to think and replaced them with a need to purchase.

All three of Kruger’s examples deal with images of the hyper-real (reality based on simulacra), and in each she attempts to unmask the nature of these illusions. By revealing the true face of the simulated reality and discussing its agenda of control through commerce Kruger has given us the tools to rediscover the forgotten reality that the hyper-real has overthrown.
Case Study 1-2: Brad Downey

Although Downey’s work was briefly discussed in a previous chapter it would be helpful to re-examine his pieces in relation to the ideas being explored in phase one of this project. As previously mentioned, Downey typically works with established methods of urban communication such as street signs. In the two previously discussed examples Downey reinterpreted existing street signs into new slightly altered versions of themselves to create a critique on our urban environment. Essentially Downey created a simulacra of the existing reality of street signs. On one hand, street signs are one of the few modes of communication that exist outside the simulated reality presented to us by advertising simulacra; however, they are still intended as a means of control. They tell us how fast to go, when to stop, where to park, when and where to walk, and what direction to go. While all of these signs serve to create some level of safety while out and about in the city, they are still a representation of some unseen force imposing its will upon public space. What is interesting about Downey’s work is that he uses signs that are intended to control our movement about the city to show people that they have the freedom to use the city as they wish. For the purposes of this research his work will be used as means of understanding the relationship people have with everyday urban signage and how that could be used as an effective tool in unmasking the simulacra that inhabit our cities. His work shows us that at times, in order to unmask a simulated reality you must create your own alternative. It is my hope that I will be able to employ Downey’s method of remixing the meaning of established signs or other means of communication to aid in exposing the nature of the simulated reality of the pseudo-public space.
Figure 23. Brad Downey's "What's Up" (Photo by Braddowney.com)

Figure 24. Brad Downey's "Wild at Heart" (Photo by Braddowney.com)
Case Study 1-3:
Permanent Breakfast

The final case study for phase one’s research is slightly different from the previous two. While the others focused on artists and their creations as a means of dealing with the simulacra of our time, Permanent Breakfast employs action as opposed to creation. Permanent Breakfast originated in Austria as a means of exposing the boundaries between public and private spaces as well as introducing people to the possibilities of public space. The project is essentially the sharing of breakfast with strangers in public. Every year there is a kick-off breakfast in Vienna Square and from that breakfast, participants are asked to continue the ‘game’ throughout the year by organizing their own and spreading the word to new participants (Hofbauer, 105, 2006). The simplicity of the act may be a bit deceiving, as the overall effect of the project is quite powerful. By setting up a breakfast table and dining in a public space the participants are accomplishing two very important goals. The first is the definition of public space and the exploration of its boundaries. In this respect the ‘game’ becomes a sort of political rally or “assemblies for the purpose of debate and the exchange of ideas” (Hofbauer, 106, 2006). As such, these rallies are protected under most governments right to assembly in public space. So, when the breakfasters set up in what appears to be a public space and are quickly met with resistance from private security forces they have visually demonstrated the boundaries of public space and exposed the false simulation known as the pseudo-public space. Thus, even when the project appears to have been unsuccessful (breakfast was not served) it still achieves some critique on urban space. When the participants do succeed in finding a public space for their assembly they are able to both spread the word about the project and demonstrate the possibilities.
of use in public space. In many cases passersby are astounded that something like a public breakfast could take place without permission, which speaks to our “culture of concession,” which is the sad fact that people will assume that unless something is explicitly allowed then it is forbidden (Hofbauer, 106, 2006). The public dining involved in this project is not necessarily to feed the general public (though it is a nice side benefit), but rather to show people that public space is theirs for the taking and could be used for nearly any purpose they desire. The most interesting effect of the project is the politicizing of such a common and generally harmless act, simply by removing the act from a private space and staging it in public (Hofbauer, 106, 2006).
The first phase of this project is focused on creating an awareness within the populace of the false reality taking over our cities in the form of the pseudo-public space. For this part of the project, I chose to explore two local pseudo-public spaces that many people may not recognize as non-public spaces, or if they do they may not realize to what extent they are inhibited once they enter these spaces. The following selection criteria were used to select the sites for the first set of interventions:

- The sites should have a relatively high rate of pedestrian traffic to ensure a certain level of visibility of each installation.
- The sites should be prime examples of the consumer nature of our society.
- The sites should, for all intents and purposes, appear to be public space.
- The sites should be located close to a metropolitan area as opposed to fringe suburban sites. (In the later part of the project I hope to reintroduce people to forgotten urban spaces as an alternative. If the first part of the research takes place in the immediate vicinity then the jump from awareness, to organization, to action becomes less of a leap and more of a skip or a hop.)

Site Selection for Phase 1:
The Battlegrounds
• The sites should have elements of both public space, as well as private space

After examining potential sites in the area of downtown Tampa, I settled upon two sites that fit the requirements perfectly: Centro Ybor Plaza and Channelside Bay Plaza. Site analysis for these two sites consisted of several visits and observations along with other forms of information gathering that were pertinent to each of the interventions that would follow. Brief sections of site analysis will be included in the discussion of each intervention.
Intervention 1-1:
The Centro Ybor Brochure Hack

The Centro Ybor Brochure Hack was developed as a means of infiltrating the consumer propaganda machine and dispersing some information about the spaces that are taking over our cities. In preparation for the intervention I spent some time in Centro Ybor simply sitting and observing interactions between patrons and each other, between patrons and employees and finally between passersby and security personnel. During this period of observation I noticed that unless patrons of the plaza had a prior relationship with one another there was almost no interaction between them. During one of my afternoon visits I noticed that there was a single security guard on duty, slowly strolling about the plaza. On this particular visit he asked a man sitting on the bench to leave if he was not going to be purchasing anything (see fig. 24). The man in question appeared to be homeless and was doing absolutely nothing but sitting on the bench with his bicycle by his side. With a little persuasion the man left peacefully while several others in the plaza who also were just sitting on benches (myself included) were never given a second look. A short while later a group of younger men who were walking around the plaza (with no shopping bags or any
apparent desire to shop) had begun singing a popular song acapella. After a few verses the security guard approached and asked them to either stop or leave. After observing a little longer I returned home to do a little further research on Centro Ybor. What I discovered was a laundry list of rules and codes to be followed if one desired to inhabit the plaza. I also discovered that the plaza was under 24 hour surveillance via security cameras in addition to the guards that patrol the area. The most disturbing part of all of these discoveries was that unless one went out of their way to find out the code of conduct, one would never even know it existed. The security guards on the other hand, are well versed in the code and stand ready to escort you away for the smallest of offenses (not shopping for example—as discussed in a previous chapter concerning the Centro code of conduct.)

The lack of information available to people concerning the rights and liberties they forgo in
order to have a pleasant shopping experience was a bit shocking. As a response to this lack of information and to bring to light the true nature of the Centro Ybor Plaza I developed the Centro Ybor Brochure Hack. In homage to Barbara Kruger, I took an accepted means of advertisement, the tourist brochure, and rearranged its message. I then dispersed the remixed brochures into the wild, so to speak. As part of my research in preparation for creating the new brochures I returned to the plaza to record some more data. On this visit I recorded the location of all the surveillance cameras and created a map of their locations to use as part of the remixed brochure. I also researched the Centro code of conduct and pilfered some direct quotes for use on the interior of the brochure. I modeled the brochure’s appearance on an existing Ybor City tourist brochure that I had procured during one of my earlier visits. The Image I used for the front cover was of the security guard patrolling the plaza. On the interior of the
brochure I placed several quotes from the code of conduct along with a few tongue in cheek quips directed at the absurdity of the rules and regulations, all accompanied by a stencil of a smiling police officer and a playful image of a security camera. On the back of the brochure, I included the map I had made earlier showing the locations of each camera (11 total) and a quote by one of the police officers describing the power of the surveillance system. After finishing the final revisions of the brochure I returned to the visitor’s center in Centro Ybor and replaced the original brochures with a stack of my own.

The brochure hack for Centro is intended to call into question the nature of the spaces we choose to inhabit. In the spirit of my case studies I hope to create a commentary on the pseudo-public space as a false reality that is negatively impacting the spaces we choose to inhabit by limiting our rights in those spaces in the name of commerce.
Figure 31. Location of Brochure Drop, Centro Ybor Visitor’s Center,
The following is a direct quote from an officer’s demonstration of the cameras in Ybor:

“To demonstrate the power of the camera, he rotates the camera 180 degrees and zooms in on a man holding a can of Diet Coke. You can read the warning label on it.”

(Creative Loafing Vol. 19 Num. 47)
Before you begin your entertainment experience here are a few things you should know in order to make the process enjoyable for everyone. (Well, everyone we allow in that is.)

Please remember that “Centro Ybor is operated EXCLUSIVELY for shopping, dining and entertainment purposes.” (Centro code of conduct)

“Assembling, demonstrating, parading, picketing, marching, individually or in groups, thereby disrupting the shopping, dining or entertainment enjoyment of visitors, or disrupting the intended use of the property is prohibited.”
(Centro code of conduct)

“Appropriate attire must be worn while visiting Centro YBOR.” If we don’t like your shirt, you’ll have to find somewhere else to shop.
(Centro code of conduct)

Also note that “Loitering is not permitted in Centro YBOR. Loitering includes: inactivity and/or failure to move to a shopping, dining or entertainment venue.”
Essentially if you are not actively spending your money you may have to leave--as seen in above photo.
(Centro code of conduct)

Please remember that these policies and others are in place for your safety and have nothing at all to do with protecting our profit margins.

We greatly appreciate your cooperation and are overjoyed that you have chosen to inhabit our marketplace rather than trouble yourself with local businesses that operate in the public realm where our control is limited.

You don’t mind... do you?

We hope you enjoy your experience in this lovely gentrified historic marketplace. We tried our best to recreate the feeling of a public plaza in an effort to satisfy your desire for public interaction without actually giving you any of the luxuries of public space. (You know... like the right to sit on a bench without being asked leave because we don’t like the looks of you.)
Figure 35. Centro Brochure In the Visitor’s Center
Figure 36. Centro Brochure in the Visitor’s Center
Intervention 1-2:
The Channelside Plaza Brochure Hack

The premise behind the Channelside Brochure Hack is essentially the same as the Centro Brochure Hack; however, the content of the brochure was adjusted to suit the space. In the case of Channelside Plaza I decided to focus on the rising consumer nature of our culture and the role that the pseudo-public space plays as a simulacrum in the creation of a hyper-reality that has little in common with actual public space. Once again in preparation for creating the brochure I paid a few visits to the plaza to observe. One of the first things I noticed was that in contrast to Centro, Channelside felt as though it had a much clearer separation from actual public space. It was not as easy to inadvertently stumble into private land as it was with Centro. Channelside has two clearly discernible entrances with the accepted code of conduct posted at one of them. The security system in Channelside is on a much smaller scale than that of Centro and it appears that they rely mainly on guards rather than cameras as I was only able to spot two in the entire plaza. As result of the relative openness of its rules and regulations, I focused more on the nature of the space and the interactions that it fostered. People seemed to move in small groups or alone from store to store with an occasional stop at the bar or restaurant for a quick bite. I noticed that very nearly all of the people populating the plaza had shopping bags in tow and that only a few people sitting at one of the plazas many outside tables seemed to have been there just to enjoy the space. There was little to no interaction between groups of people as they were almost always in a state of transition between shops, stopping only to adjust their bags or to make certain that their children were still following behind. As was the case with Centro, the patrons of Channelside had little to no interaction with each other, and none of them seemed
interested in anything besides shopping. The robotic
movement of the patrons as they moved from store to
store to restaurant gave me pause, and as a result I
decided to tailor the Channelside brochure hack to the
relationship between consumer culture and the pseudo-
public space.

I began by creating what appeared to be a sales
brochure with a woman and a shopping bag that read
“super blowout sale” on the cover along with the official
Channelside logo. On the interior of the brochure I
chose to include a single image of a man and woman
happily walking down the street arm in arm looking
lovingly into each others faces while carrying several
shopping bags each. Initially I chose to include the text
“Our path to happiness runs through their checkout
lines.” The intention was to turn an image that was
initially intended to show how wonderfully fun shopping
is into a critique on consumerism. However, I felt as
though the text would not have the desired effect and
just dissuade people from reading the rest of the brochure. So instead I used the text “Shop to live. Live to shop,” which at first glance could be interpreted as just another advertisement; however when coupled with the image and the brief paragraph below it the text reinforces the critique on consumer culture. The fact that it could initially be mistaken as an advertisement only makes it all the more powerful a tool. The paragraph included in the brochure is the beginning part of this project’s abstract and is intended to open patron’s eyes as to the nature of our new centers for social gathering, the pseudo-public space. On the back of the brochure I have included a replica of the Channelside map with the legend replaced by the text “Are we citizens or are we consumers? Can we be both? Perhaps. But not here.” This snippet is a play on the “you are here” stickers that are used on many tourist maps. It is intended as a means of showing patrons that the space they are using was created solely for commerce and that by including themselves in such a space they have temporarily traded their citizenship and its associated rights for the ability to shop.

After creating the brochures I determined the best location for their dispersal by researching the pedestrian patterns though and approaching the plaza. As it turns out most visitors walk from the parking garage right passed a large map of the plaza in a metal case positioned right in front of one entrance. I purchased a weather-proof brochure holder and fastened it to the main Channelside map at the entrance and filled it with my own propaganda.
Figure 38. Channelside Brochure Hack Location and Pedestrian Traffic
In his 1964 work “One Dimensional Man” Herbert Marcuse describes what he believes to be the de-evolution of industrialized society into the single minded pursuit of commerce. Decades later his hypothesis seems even closer to the truth, as much of our social interaction is now based in simulated public spaces that are designed to promote consumption. These spaces are in fact privately owned lots that are masquerading as public space so as to satiate our desire for “public” interaction without sacrificing their effectiveness as places of commerce. The migration of social interaction into these pseudo-public spaces has further marginalized the city’s remaining public space. In his essay “Spaces of Uncertainty” Ken Cupers asks “is it only the sterile places with clearly defined use that we can enjoy today? Is it the designer shops, the fancy cafes, or the commercial promenades that provide our satisfaction? What about the young, the restless, the old, the poor, and the ones having been excluded from contemporary public space and therefore removed from society?”

Figure 40. Channelside Brochure Hack Interior
Figure 41. Channelside Brochure Location 1
Figure 42. Channelside Brochure Location 2
Brochure Hack Follow Up: Centro Ybor and Channelside

A short time after the first deployment of the brochure hacks I realized that there was no way to judge their effectiveness without some sort of feedback component. I could return to the drop off points and check on their distribution; however, that method would result in very little useful data. In addition to being difficult to track the brochures also resulted in a dead end for interested parties. Those who desired to further understand the impact of the pseudo-public or better yet wished to participate in spaces that undermine the pseudo-public, would be left with no connection to each other or to any further information.

As I revisited these brochures for a second print run I decided to slightly revamp them in order to create a more effective tool. At this point I had already moved on to several other projects including the city exploration maps. I found that the best way to improve the brochures was not to change their content but to connect their readers both to each other as well as to the other projects and information I had been gathering. I decided to tackle this problem by creating a web site that documented all the projects I had completed and those that were being planned as well as serving as a source for potential alternative spaces for occupation within the city. The web site would serve as my virtual hub for the remainder of my studies by acting as a virtual public space intended to aid in the rehabilitation of our physical public spaces.

With the completion of the web site the second run of brochures was printed and distributed. All of them now linked back to the virtual hub which at the time of the printing included a series of maps of alternative spaces, a generous amount of information on the dangers of the pseudo-public space and a catalog of current projects.
Intervention 1-3:
The Muvico Coupon Hack

The Muvico Coupon Hack is similar in premise to the brochure hacks in that it is intended to act as a commentary on the nature of the pseudo-public space. In this case it calls into question the consumer culture that both fosters the development of the pseudo-public and empowers it to continue influencing our social interactions. Without our manufactured desires for unnecessary products these pseudo-public spaces may not have the same prominence in our social lives that they do now.

The movie theater seemed an appropriate target for a couple of reasons, the first of which involves its place as the flagship business of the Centro Ybor complex. It is the most prominently visible business and was intended to be the ‘anchor’ of Centro, attracting large evening crowds to the shopping center (though its effectiveness in this role remains to be seen). The second reason for targeting the movie theater is the cinema’s unique dual role in the culture of consumption. As Molly Haskell states “movies--both pusher and product--fed, paralleled, and to some extent created consumerism,” (Qtd. In Rosenblatt, 7). Understanding the connection between cinema and consumerism only solidified my desire to develop a means to interject some of my own thoughts to the jovial moviegoers of Centro Ybor.

During my time researching Centro and through multiple site visits I came across a coupon for free popcorn at Muvico with the purchase of an adult ticket. As soon as I saw this coupon I knew it would serve as the vehicle for the project. I made a copy of the coupon and digitally manipulated the text to become a comment on the nature of cinema and its role as a progenitor of consumerism. I returned to Centro the following day and distribute 100 copies of the coupon to several different
locations in the complex, all of which were selected according to visibility and the likelihood that a moviegoer would have the opportunity to grab one. I placed a set on the front door to the theater, on the downstairs ticket booth, on the escalator landing approaching the theater, on the brochure box at the main entrance to the complex, on the trolley map at the Centro Ybor trolley stop and finally on the tables in the plaza in front of the theater.

This time I was sure to include a link back to my virtual hub in the first printing of this project. In this way the project not only serves as a commentary on the nature of the space but also as a means of further connecting and informing interested parties. As you can see in the following images I chose to keep the coupon as official looking as possible to further entice moviegoers to pick one up. I observed several people procuring coupons as I had hoped. Several of them, however, simply pocketed them for later use without paying too much attention to what was written. I imagine they’ll pay closer attention when they try to use them at the theater and are rejected. Hopefully this causes more of a stir as others in the concession line witness the exchange and wonder what the fake coupon could have said possibly grabbing one for themselves out of curiosity.
Offer valid with purchase of Adult ticket to any of our feature length commercials. Learn more about consumer culture and public space at www.thesetwohands.info
Figure 45. Muvico Coupon Location 1

Location:
On Brochure box at Centro
7th Ave. entrance
Figure 46. Muvico Coupon Location 2
Figure 47. Muvico Coupon Location 3
Figure 49. Muvico Coupon Location 5
Figure 50: Muvico Coupon Location 6
Intervention 1-4:  
The Centro Ybor Sign Project

The next intervention sees a return to Centro Ybor to explore another aspect of the pseudo public space. During my last visit to Centro, I became troubled by the ease with which I slipped between public space and pseudo-public space. There seemed to be no way of knowing the exact spot where my rights as a citizen ceased and I became a subject of the owners of the plaza, bending to their will for fear of expulsion. Unlike Channelside there is no marker to identify the boundaries of this space, and as a result it is very easy to find yourself unknowingly on private property. The creators of Centro Ybor did an excellent job of bleeding the private space of the plaza right into the public space that leads up to it. The Centro Ybor Sign Project was created to remedy this situation. Borrowing the underlying themes of Brad Downey and the intent to define limits from the Permanent Breakfast project I endeavored to delimit the edges of public space in Ybor. I began by doing a brief study of pedestrian traffic patterns in the area to better gauge where to locate the signs. The heaviest traffic was on 7th and 8th avenues with the largest amount of travelers on 8th street coming from the parking garage in the west. The traffic on 7th was actually a little more evenly spread. After I had determined the approach I returned to Centro and measured the distances from certain landmarks on each street to the threshold of the plaza. A sign was painted for each of these mapped points. The appearance of the signs is a remix of the city’s typical red and white parking signs that populate the sidewalk and street. Placement of the signs begins a block away on both 7th and 8th avenues and each one counts down to the final “Private Property” signs just as you enter Centro. I chose to use a series of signs because I felt that the first few signs would create a sense of curiosity in...
pedestrians as to what the signs were counting down to, which would in turn make them more aware of the final sign in the series (which is the most straightforward of the set). I wanted the signs to have the look of official city signs with a slight alteration to aid in their mission to subvert the usual purpose of street signs. Instead of working for the city and aiding in the control of its citizens, these signs were created to work for the people and expose the pseudo-public space’s boundaries.

The Centro signs lasted for about a week before being removed. Unfortunately I created and deployed this project before the virtual hub was conceived and thus it was a dead end project. Its only purpose was to create an awareness of the boundary between public and private space and again since there was no further link I can only guess as to its effectiveness. From the small sample of interactions I observed before leaving they were certainly noticed; however I fear that a portion of the passersby who observed the signs immediately dismissed them as agents of the city. This was partially my intent, yet I believe it may have diminished the audience a bit more than I had anticipated. After the Centro signs were removed by the authorities I decided to attempt an alternate method for visualizing the deceptive boundary between public and pseudo-public space.
Figure 51. Centro Sign Project Pedestrian Concentration Map
Figure 53. Centro Sign Project Construction
Figure 54. Centro Sign Project Location Along 8th ave
Figure 55. Centro Sign Project Location Along 7th Ave
Intervention 1-5:
The Ybor Planter Project

The Ybor Planter Project was designed to expose the existence of the pseudo-public space, but more specifically to create a visual representation of the boundary between the public realm and the private property of the festive marketplace. By defining this threshold, the project expresses the moment at which the inhabitants of the city transition between the freedom of use associated with public space and the controlled consumer culture promoted by the pseudo-public. Visualizing this boundary is important because many citizens have no idea that it even exists. The Pseudo-public spaces of our time have become quite adept at expanding their influence of control to the previously public property immediately surrounding their retail spaces (see Baywalk St. Pete) and then blurring the lines that separate their sphere of influence from the public realm. Disguising the boundaries between public and private space allows the proprietors of these commercial spaces to maintain the illusion that their plaza is still part of the public realm. If no one knows that they have just walked into a privately policed and monitored space where they lack any rights, then they are unlikely to complain.

The project is intended to blend into its surroundings when viewed from a distance and then “come to life” once a pedestrian crosses the threshold. In the spirit of earlier projects, this piece takes an accepted character in the city’s urban language and reshapes it into an instrument for exposing the false reality of the pseudo-public marketplace. (see the section “Simulacra and You” for more info on the false reality of the pseudo-public)

In preparation for this project I spent some time in Centro Ybor considering the ways in which I could visualize the boundary using something that already
exists within the context of that space. I eventually
decided to replicate the concrete plant stands that line
the sidewalk approaching Centro Ybor. The planter I
fabricated is a slightly distorted version of the existing
planters, that illuminates and then speaks to pedestrian
as they walk by.

Planter Ingredients :

1 x 741 operational amplifier
1 x programmable voice module
2 x Photo-resisters (for detecting changes in light)
2 x Reed relays (for switching on lights and voice
module once photo-resistors are triggered)
1 x 1N4007 Diode
1 x 10k potentiometer
2 x Toggle switches
1 x spool of 22 gauge wire
3 x 24”x48” sheets of 1/8” plywood
1 x 24”x48” sheet of ¼” plywood
4 x 7/16” dia. Threaded rod 36” long
1 x Flower pot and plant
2 x 9 volt battery connector pads and wiring
2 x 9 volt batteries
various screws, brackets, connectors,
batteries and paint

We set out Saturday evening to unveil the planter
to the masses. Having previously visited the area
several times I had already determined the planter’s
starting location and audio sound bites. The first set-up
was at the entrance of Centro Ybor on 8th ave. in front
of Urban Outfitters. The planter blended perfectly with
the others already lining the streets, so much so that at
times I wondered if I should have altered it’s appearance
even more. For the first hour or so the planter’s audio
clip was a cash register opening and closing, (imagine
a ‘cha-ching’ sound). After several passersby noted that
they initially thought the sound coming from the planter was a cricket, I decided to open the box up and record a new sound clip of myself saying “welcome” (picture yourself calling a business only to be placed on hold listening to adult contemporary remixes of decades old music while every so often a very excited voice interrupts to bring you an important message----well that’s the voice I used to record my welcome message). At any rate that seemed to work a little better but there were still quite a few people who were passing right by without a second look. So I moved the planter into the middle of the sidewalk to see what would happen next. Surprisingly a great number of people still refused to acknowledge the planter at all.

After another hour or two I decided to relocate to the entrance on 7th ave. This spot proved troublesome due to increased vehicular traffic and stationary pedestrians, which prevented the planter’s voice module from resetting as often as it should have. After discussing the project and it’s results with several of my colleagues I have considered a few modifications the most useful of which was to modify the sensor to incorporate an infrared module rather than a photoelectric cell. This modification allowed for a wider field of vision for the motion sensor which allowed it to be set off by passersby before they reached the planter thus drawing their attention to it while it was still in their line of sight rather than in their periphery.

The project as I intended it was fairly unsuccessful in terms of visualizing boundaries. Most passersby actually went out of their way to ignore the planter. A few people stopped to discuss the project and its purpose but it was far fewer than I had initially hoped for. In the end the project and its subsequent video became a study in the way people tend to interact (or avoid interaction) while moving through urban spaces. There seems to be a severe disconnect between the habitat and the inhabitants. It is almost as though the
types of interactions we have in these spaces has conditioned us to isolate ourselves from our environment and those we share it with in favor of quickly scurrying from shopping venue to entertainment venue (as you can see in sections of the aforementioned video). So in that sense the project was still a useful study even though it was not as initially intended.

Figure 56. Planter Exploded Axo
Figure 57. Planter Building Process 1
Figure 58. Planter Building Process 2
Figure 59. Planter Interior Wiring
Figure 61. Planter Location Near Centro 8th Ave. Entrance and Eterior Light Up Photo
Figure 62. Planter Location Near Centro 8th Ave. Entrance and Eterior Light Up Photo
Figure 63. Planter Location Near Centro 7th Ave. Entrance and Exterior Light Up Photo
Site Selection Phase 2:
Existing in the Margins

In this second phase of research the focus will be on finding or creating alternatives to the pseudo-public space. While the dispersal of information is important, people generally won’t attempt to make a change in behavior unless a suitable alternative is presented to them. The two phases of research should at some point coincide, so that, while people are learning of the pitfalls of the pseudo-public space they are also being exposed to the possibilities of the public spaces that have been left behind. The intent of this portion of research is to explore the possibility of creating Temporary Autonomous Zones (TAZs) within our urban fabric. TAZs are citizen created temporary spaces that exist outside or in between the established orders of control and commerce. In his manifesto on the TAZ, Hakim Bey refers to it as the “perfect tactic for an era in which the State is omnipresent and all-powerful and yet simultaneously riddled with cracks and vacancies” (Bey, 101, 2004). He continues on in his recommendation of the TAZ stating that “it can provide the quality of enhancement associated with the uprising without necessarily leading to violence and martyrdom. The TAZ is like an uprising which does not engage directly with the State, a guerilla operation which liberates an area (of land, of time, of imagination) and then dissolves itself to re-form elsewhere/elsewhen, before the State
can crush it. Because the State is concerned primarily with Simulation rather than substance, the TAZ can ‘occupy’ these areas clandestinely and carry on its festal purposes for quite a while in relative peace.” (Bey, 101, 2004). A number of philosophers, architects, and artists all agree that the margins of our city provide the best chance for recapturing the freedom of public space and the varied interactions that such a space can provide. These spaces, which exist in every city, have evolved due to neglect, changes in industry and economy, or the migration of the local community. In order to locate potential spaces in Tampa I decided to employ a tactic for urban exploration known as Psychogeography.

Psychogeography is actually a collection of methods for exploring the city that are intended to break the typical path of point ‘A’ to point ‘B’. For example some Psychogeographers chose to navigate the city of London using a map of Paris, while others use mathematical equations to determine their next step. Psychogeography has its roots in the Situationist International movement’s “derive,” and Baudelaire’s ideas on “flanerie”. Both the “derive” and “flanerie” are at the core an aimless wandering about the city with a mindful eye towards one’s surroundings. Flanerie, for Baudelaire, meant more than just exercise. It represented a desire to immerse himself in the life of the ‘public,’ to experience the joy of “dwelling in the throng, in the ebb and flow, the bustle, the fleeting and the infinite” (qtd in Tester, 2, 1994). In contrast to the Flanerie the Situationist’s derive, involved “playful-constructive behavior and awareness of psychogeographical effects, and thus quite different from the classic notions of journey or stroll” (Debord, 1, 1956). Debord’s suggestion for employing the derive is for people to abandon “their usual motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there” (Debord, 2, 1956). Later in the
20th century a group called “Social Fiction” used Debord’s thoughts on the derive to create what they called “Algorithmic Psychogeography” because they were dissatisfied with the Situationist’s derive for not “completely opening up the city” (Social Fiction, 2009). Algorithmic Psychogeography superimposes a mathematical equation over the aimless drift to ensure a more even coverage of the city. I chose these methods of exploration because they were rooted in theories that supported the basic idea of reshaping the city, or at least the image of the city, to suit its users needs. However, I was torn as to which method to use for my own explorations. On one hand I was attracted to the scientific method employed by the algorithm but at the same time I was put off by its rigid structure. As a result I made a few trips to both downtown Tampa and Ybor city and on each occasion chose a different method for exploration. My first trip to downtown Tampa involved the Algorithmic method which employs the following equation for exploration:

- Second Right.
- Second Right.
- First Left.
- Repeat.

(Social Fiction, 2009)

After exploring the sites using this method I returned to each part of town to try again using the derive method of the Situationists. I found this walking without direction to be much more enjoyable but less effective in covering the entire city. The following maps show the paths I took on each visit and the locations of the potential sites I discovered along the way, accompanied by a small photo and locational marker of each potential site.
Figure 64. Psychogeographic Map of Downtown Tampa and the Potential Sites
Figure 65. Downtown Sites A & B
Figure 66. Downtown Sites C & D
Figure 68. Downtown Sites G & H
Figure 69. Downtown Sites I & J
Figure 70. Downtown Sites K & L
Figure 71. Downtown Sites M & N
Figure 72. Downtown Sites O & P
Figure 74. Ybor Psychogeographical Map and Potential Discovered Sites
Figure 75. Ybor Sites A & B
Figure 76. Ybor Sites C & D
Figure 77. Ybor Sites E & F
Figure 78. Ybor Sites G & H
Figure 79. Ybor Sites I & J
Figure 81. Ybor Sites M & N
Figure 86. Ybor Site D Analysis
Figure 88. Ybor Site H Analysis
Figure 89. Ybor Site K Analysis

Grassy Alley in residential area. Area seems to be a large, open area with a few shops and warehouses.

The Alley wall to the north is a 6' privacy fence, while the south is bordered by a 14' chain-link fence. Site is grown over a muddy. Visibility is low unless installation extends beyond.

The alley is nicely shaded and doesn't seem to be used for any purposes. Trash collection appears to have migrated to the main street.
Figure 90. Ybor Site Q Analysis
Figure 91. Ybor Site R Analysis
Figure 92. Downtown Site B Analysis

Sign A is much taller and allows easy visibility of the rest of the Site & Sign C.
Sign B is low enough to be accessed w/ a small ladder.
Figure 93. Downtown Site J Analysis
Figure 94. Downtown Site K Analysis
Figure 95. Downtown Site L Analysis
Figure 96. Downtown Site O Analysis
The second phase of research involves creating and utilizing alternatives to the pseudo-public space. Before moving on to the networking and ultimately the occupation of the previously defined spaces, I took a look at how others have chosen to redefine the spaces in their cities. All but one of the following case studies had an ephemeral quality to them with some only lasting for a few hours; however, as previously mentioned, the images they left behind in the imagination of the participants could potentially have a much longer lasting effect. The interventions selected all take place in spaces that directly reflect the sites I chose to focus on for the second part of this project and can be grouped into three types.

- The temporary art installation
- The transportable object
- The structural installation

Each sub-section of studies contains two to three examples of each method, how each method was deployed and the benefits, or in some case the goals, that each project sought to achieve.
Case Study 2-1: The Temporary Art Installation

In the next two cases, some temporary action was taken in an unused or misused public space in order to draw attention to the potential for activity in those spaces. The first case entitled ‘Train of Thought’ is a collaboration between artist Marc Blight and architect Jason Eisley. The project takes place in Sydney, Australia underneath a local railway overpass. The project itself is a series of wooden silhouettes of various age groups of people that populate the space beneath the railway. Every few days more people were added to the installation until it achieved a critical mass. Having made their point by this stage all of the cutouts were then removed from the derelict space. The project may have been to critique fractured urban space it also works well as form of inspiration for the awareness and potential of such in-between spaces. As Lehmann points out, the collaborative piece also had a secondary effect by initiating the idea that “if there would be more of such temporary installations re-using abandoned terrains vagues, a network of residual (non-institutionalized) spaces would emerge, generating new forms of micro urbanism for a certain period” (Lehmann, 198, 2009). Lehmann’s network of residual spaces and inspiration for their future use could very well be the direction phase two of this research takes.

The second case in the temporary art installation category is ReBAr’s Park(ing) day. This project is a study in the practice of absurd urbanism and the effect it can have on city dwellers as well as the urban fabric. Park(ing) day is an annual event that sees the transformation of everyday metered parking spaces.
into temporary parks. The project began in 2005 in San Francisco and gradually gained momentum until became a nationwide event. I was fortunate enough to participate in Park(ing) Day Tampa 2009 as part of my research into absurd urbanism. ReBar describes their project as challenging our concept of the parking space and what is allowed to occur there. In their eyes “the parking space becomes a zone of potential, a surface onto which the intentions of any number of political, social, or cultural agendas could be projected....thus the creative act literally ‘takes’ place—that is, it claims a new physical and cultural territory for the social and artistic realm” (ReBar, 1, 2009). Much like Professor Don Mitchell’s thoughts that public spaces are not made, but taken and only continue to exist under constant struggle (Mitchell, 142, 2003).

One of the main reasons I wanted to be associated with Park(ing) Day was to see a bit of absurd urbanism in action. Absurd urbanism, reduced to its
most basic nature, is the disparate combination of use and site. Creating a park inside of a parking space is a prime example of this type of urban space making. The usefulness of absurd urbanism lies in its ability to attract attention and to open minds to previously unheard of possibilities. Imagine what people might be inspired to do after seeing something so ridiculous as a couch and poker table occupying a parking space. In my experience with the Park(ing) day crew I found many passersby to be generally amiable to the project and more than a few stopped and spent some time in each of the parks. Most people who stopped to talk seemed to be in disbelief that something like this could even take place at all, which reinforces the Permanent Breakfast project’s ideas on the culture of concession. By showing the average city dweller a new use for an “undervalued” site like a parking space, Park(ing) day is able to promote the exploration of temporarily commandeering public space for one’s own use.
Figure 99. Parking Day Site Map

Sites:
1. The Heights--canoe
2. Chris Vela
3. SuperTest--Uber Tuber
4. Cesar Cornejo--Naturaleza Muerta
5. Mayor's Beautification
6. Downtown Partnership--Scrabble mania
7. Experimental Skeleton
8. Park-n-Squeeze
9. AIA Tampa Bay
10. Tampa Street Market
11. ASD Architects--Basement
12. Tampa Downtown Market
Figure 100. Parking Day Sites
Figure 101. Parking Day Sites
Figure 102. Parking Day Sites
Figure 103. Parking Day Sites
Case Study 2-2:
The Transportable Object

The second set of case studies involve the creation of transportable objects that have been created for the explicit purpose of allowing people to alter their immediate surroundings to suit their needs. The objects studied for this portion of research vary greatly in style but all have the same underlying purpose. The first case involves the design group ReBar, who are the same designers responsible for the advent of Park(ing) Day. Their next project entitled Bushwaffle is essentially an inflatable piece of urban furniture that is designed to be connected in a multitude of ways to allow users the freedom to create whatever type of furniture, space, or shelter that they need. The Bushwaffle’s shape was designed to allow for a maximum amount of interconnect-ability between pieces and to create an object with a certain amount of “approachability”. The material was selected to be durable, soft and inflatable, for portability and to encourage interaction with the object. The bright color of the Bushwaffle was selected to “differentiate (it) from its surroundings and project friendliness” (ReBar, 2009). The underlying purpose of the Bushwaffle is to create a “visual and experiential critique of, and response to, the dehumanization of the public realm” (ReBar, 2009). The designers of the Bushwaffle see our urban spaces as cold hard and sharp, while the Bushwaffle exists in stark contrast to those qualities. The beauty of the bushwaffle is that it creates a critique of urban space in a playful and fun manner. Its relevance to this project lies in its portability and potential for user customization. People of the city could use their Bushwaffles to temporarily inhabit marginal urban spaces by transforming them via ReBar’s ingenious tool and as soon as they were finished they deflate and move to another area of the city.
The second project in this group is also a modular space defining piece however it is less interactive and more performative than the previous example. The project is entitled “Hover” and was designed by the architecture firm of Howeler and Yoon. The project is a modular canopy system that consists of a fabric shell with a photovoltaic panel that powers a strand of lights in the interior rim of the fabric shell. Each module is designed to be independent of one another so pieces can be added or subtracted without having any effect on the ability of the remaining panels to operate. The size and scale of the modules was regulated in order to make for easy set up and alteration, thus making the units attractive for creating temporary spaces within the city. As part of their demonstration of the project’s usability, Howeler and Yoon assembled fifteen to twenty units in an abandoned urban lot and allowed them to collect sunlight throughout the day. By evening time the project illuminated and defined a space.
that had previously been unused for ages. The potential of a project like this in temporarily adapting marginalized urban space for alternative uses is immense. One aspect I enjoy about this project is that it does not endeavor to instruct people on how to use the space it creates, it simply makes space and illuminates the area, leaving it up to the city dwellers to appropriate the space as they see fit.

The third transportable object project is called “Break Block” and was a collaboration between artist, Helen Holdgate and architects Kylie Burgess, Renee Mayo and Vivian Chan. The object they created was a modular screen system that was assembled on a vacant lot in Newcastle, Australia. The screens are not fixed and rearrangement is encouraged. In fact as the community got used to the installation on the lot, new configurations could be seen on a daily basis. By implementing a system for spatial definition and then giving the power to alter that space to the community,
Break Block was able to incite use in an otherwise unused lot, as well as stir up publicity for the future of the lot after the installation was removed. Once again the installation, much like those before it, has an element of playfulness meant to engage the public and encourage interaction with the project, which in turn results in interaction amongst themselves.
Case Study 2-3: The Built Installation

The projects in this third section of case studies all involve larger scale built works that take place in marginalized spaces in the city and unlike the previous examples they are not movable or configurable. They are fixed in place all be it temporarily. The first project is actually a collection of projects, however for the purpose of this research only one individual example will be explored. Sunday Adventure Club is a collection of clubs, which consist of local residents who gather every weekend in unused public spaces for their clubs activities. The example I chose to explore further was the club “Dock’t Blauwe Muurtje,” which is a boat builders club in Amsterdam. The club meets on a weekly basis to fashion a sailboat by hand. The interesting point about this club is that they created their boat building workshop in an unused alley between two multistory buildings. The members of the club, all of whom are local residents, had a desire to create a boat, and thus a need to find a space to house this act. Rather than turn to the city for would certainly have been months of red tape, they simply took matters into their own hands and constructed a temporary workshop in an otherwise useless abandoned space. The makeshift workshop only existed for as long as it took to create the boat. All of the materials were provided by the members of the club themselves and were promptly removed once the boat set sail. The point of this project is that community members rose up and took the space they needed and reshaped it to house the activities they had a desire to participate in. Once the club removed the workshop they left no physical trace of what they had done there. Hopefully the memory of the uses that space once housed lingers on in other community member's minds, quietly inspiring them to take a space of their own.

The next project is “Marking Time and Territory”
by artist Colin Ardley and architect Hermann Scheidt. This project is located in the ruins of an old church in Berlin. The installation is a long low slope ramp that begins outside the church and runs through the ruins into the church and up to a platform half way up to the altar. “This large and dynamic object, an elegant temporary ramp structure, takes advantage of the void space, an empty shell, without filling it up or touching the existing church walls” (Lehmann, 210, 2009). The installation served to revive the abandoned church during its three month stay. During that time it played home to various fashion shows, parties, charity events, etc. Without the simple architectural addition the abandoned church would likely have just remained a useless ruin.

The third project in this set of case studies is the Burnside Skatepark in Portland Oregon. The park is community owned skatepark that arose from a need within the community. In 1990 local skaters became
frustrated with a lack of legal skating opportunities and sought to find a suitable site to create their own skatepark. The local youth had consistently petitioned the local government for a public skate park to no avail. Finally they decided to take matters into their own hands. They settled on a spot under Burnside Bridge, which until that point had been a trash dumping ground and haven for drug users, drug dealers, prostitutes, and other unsavory characters and activities. As the skaters moved in and began cleaning the area for their park, local business owners saw the benefit to their presence and began supporting their endeavor. Concrete companies would stop by and drop off unused concrete from jobsites, and other local business owners began to lobby the government in support of the park’s legalization. After several years the local government recognized the park as a legal entity. This case is a little different as it is the only project that resulted in a permanent installation. Despite its permanence, I
still chose it as a precedent because it displays the possibilities of marginalized space in the hands of motivated community members who have little else in the way of choices due to restrictions placed on them by society. In that sense it also shows how these types of marginalized spaces can be home to future TAZ’s as the government has little interest in trying to regulate and control what they consider to be useless space.

Figure 114. Burnside Before Skatepark (Image by Burnsideproject.blogspot)

Figure 115. Burnside Before Skatepark (Image by Burnsideproject.blogspot)
As I sit staring at a one inch thick LCD panel, and clacking away at an illuminated keyboard, I am forced to consider the effects technology has had on our lives. More specifically I would like to explore the significance of the internet, a marvel of modern life that manages to simultaneously connect and isolate. In the late 1960’s the government created a system to share all vital tactical information between military bases stationed throughout the country in an effort to lessen the devastation should a nuclear attack occur. The technology behind the system eventually evolved from a strategic military asset into the world wide web we all enjoy today. The benefits of this global connectedness are boundless and range from small personal conveniences to nearly instantaneous world wide disaster relief. You can have a video chat with a high school friend who lives three time zones away with a simple click of the mouse. There are ovens that can start cooking your dinner with the right command from an internet enabled cell phone. Countless charities now have access to a larger base of donors. Health workers can quickly access patient information and medical requirements almost anywhere in the world. However, for all it’s wondrous beauty, the internet has also had an unintentionally negative affect on the lives of its users. Part of the allure of the internet is its anonymity.
In this faceless virtual space, where our true selves are rarely revealed, one has the ability to become whomever he or she chooses - to create in a virtual self all of the attributes missing from one’s actual self. The new found confidence that accompanies the reshaping of one’s identity into an idealized version of oneself imbues the internet user with a sense of freedom. Generally this freedom allows the internet user to do and say things that he or she may never consider saying or doing if the social constraints of physical space were in place. However, by interacting with either complete anonymity or conversely, through a distorted virtual version of one’s actual persona, the connections created and the messages sent are inherently slightly distorted themselves. Obscuring ourselves from those that we interact with in virtual public space (the internet) not only distorts the connections made but in many cases makes them weaker than connections made in physical space. Consider for a moment the difference between meeting a friend for a coffee and meeting a friend for an online chat. The impact of engaging all of your senses while interacting with someone as opposed to only seeing what they have written for you on a screen can make a world of difference during the course of that interaction. In terms of getting a message across, the internet allows for a vastly larger audience, and yet the protests, petitions and speeches with the most impact are those received in the physical realm. Do not misinterpret this to mean that the connections and interactions based in the virtual realm are meaningless, but to some degree they do mean less than those conducted in the physical realm.

The effects of the internet on society’s interpersonal interactions has expanded to include the spaces that we inhabit. With the freedom of anonymity and the ability to alter one’s persona, the internet is quietly becoming the most widely used public space of our time. The danger in that is the dissolution
of our physical public spaces into privatized and commercialized places of consumption. If one has the ability to freely express oneself on the internet, then perhaps he or she will be less likely to miss having that same freedom in physical public space, which allows that once popular physical public space to be privatized without much backlash from the community. It also means that much of our interactions will move further into the realm of consumer based spaces that are carefully crafted to control visitors without letting on that the space is not truly public.

The one-two punch of the internet and consumer culture have combined to put a serious strain on the health of our remaining physical public spaces. With this next series of projects I plan to explore the possibility of using the positive aspects of technology, (namely its power to connect people with information and each other) to reintroduce the inhabitants of the virtual realm to physical space. The backbone of what will essentially be a propaganda campaign is a combination of two of the more ubiquitous technologies of our time, the cell phone and the personal computer.
Intervention 2-1:
The Punctuation Invasion

The Punctuation Invasion project is intended to create a network of marginalized spaces in Ybor city by combining physical sculptures, a virtual information hub and the common cell phone. Four, 4.5’ tall question marks were produced and tagged with two different QR codes on each. A QR code is a two dimensional barcode (almost like a checkerboard) that can store a much greater amount of information than a traditional linear barcode. They are rather easy to generate and can be read by almost any cell phone providing they have a camera and the required program. Question marks were chosen as the sculptural component to represent the infamous five “W’s” – Who, What, When, Why, and Where. Only four pieces were produced as the final question “where” is implied to be the location of the other four pieces. The first QR code is the same on all 4 pieces and when scanned by a passerby with their cell phone, brings up a map of all of the question mark locations throughout the city. The second QR code is a specific text message unique to each piece that answers one of the questions in the series. The implied fifth question is answered by all four pieces both physically and virtually. In the physical sense the fifth question (Where) is answered by the presence of the other four in a specific location. In the virtual sense the fifth question is answered by the electronic map link to all of the question marks’ past, present and future locations. The question marks act as a physical manifestation of the network of spaces allowing the public to make a visual connection between all of these spaces of unmet potential.

The initial intent with this series was to rotate the question marks as a set throughout the sites discussed in the city exploration project. After the first rotation I began to discover the limitations of the approach I
had chosen. One such problem was my decision to use the QR code. I chose the QR code as the vehicle for delivery for two reasons. The first of which was that I enjoyed the juxtaposition of the barcode (a traditionally commercial tool) with the dissemination of information that was in complete opposition to the commercial nature of our culture and public space. The second reason I chose the QR code was the wealth of information they could potentially hold. For instance the map link code I created was a direct link to my web site with the location map and site photos prominently displayed and accessed with the flick of a button on your cell phone. Unfortunately the accessibility of the QR code turned out to be rather limited. Without widespread adoption of the format even the most advanced technology can be rendered useless. Another problem I encountered during the first rotation was that the spaces I was trying to call attention to were under utilized to begin with, which in turn meant less foot traffic around the sculptures. I had hoped that by creating something that appeared out of place (like four giant punctuation marks) that it would be enough to draw attention to these spaces and in turn the rest of the network via the QR code links. Alas, the pedestrian traffic just didn’t materialize as I had hoped so instead of continuing the rotation with a second round through the city I decided to re-purpose the sculptures for the two-way text SMS server project.
Figure 116. Question Mark Construction
Figure 117. Question Mark Construction
Figure 118. Question Mark Construction
Figure 119. Question Mark Construction
Figure 120. Question Mark Site Pics
Figure 124. Question Mark Site Pics
Figure 125. Question Mark Site Location Map
Figure 126. QR Codes for Question Marks
Intervention 2-2.1: SMS Text Server

In response to the criticism following the Punctuation Invasion Project, I decided to have another look at how to communicate my ideas through technology on a more widespread scale. I chose to continue working with the cell phone as it is one of the most ever-present pieces of technology of our time. I only needed to tweak the method of interaction to make this next project more successful. I chose to develop a two way text based SMS server and link that to the virtual network rather than the QR codes. Every cell phone has the ability to send and receive text messages, and a request for a text is much easier to decipher than the more obscure QR code.

The SMS server is essentially a computer running Linux and PlaySMS software that is tethered to a pay as you go cell phone via blue-tooth. When the tethered phone receives a text containing a keyword, the software running on the server returns the text with a predetermined response according to the keyword. I assembled the computer that would function as the server using some spare parts from a previous upgrade and an extra storage drive I had in my main computer. After an initial test of the server I found the PlaySMS software to be a little unreliable, so I switched from Linux to Windows so I could run a different app and rented a short code to make it easier for people to remember the number to text to. Once the server was completed it was time to get the word out. I learned from the earlier question mark series that placing projects in the spaces I was trying to create interest in would result in much less traffic than I was looking for. So, this time I chose to advertise the SMS server in the most highly trafficked areas of Ybor city. I revisited the city and mapped pedestrian traffic patterns from both parking garages to the entrance of Centro Ybor and began
distributing stickers along those paths. The stickers advertised a robot invasion with a prompt to text to the server for more information. The idea was to create a playful metaphor for the consumer-bots we have become because of the interactions we are presented with in these pseudo-public spaces. After texting to the server the passerby would receive a reply text warning them that their city was under siege by the practice of corporate sponsored privatization. The text reply also included a hot link back to my original web site and the map of alternative spaces originally created for the punctuation project. On internet enabled phones the link to my web site was instant, on non internet phones the link was simply stored within the text to be accessed when at a computer. In total over twenty stickers were distributed and three full size posters were placed on both of the garage exits. The SMS server received approximately fifteen texts by the end of its first week and as a result of this moderate success, I continued to refer back to the SMS server in upcoming projects, including projector based propaganda, re-purposing the question marks to endorse the text server and creating a series of subvertisements (subversive advertisements) plugging the server. All of which resulted in a moderate increase in web traffic.
Figure 128. SMS Server Build Parts
Figure 131. SMS Sticker Campaign Locations
Figure 134. SMS Sticker Campaign Locations
Figure 136. SMS Sticker Campaign Locations
Figure 137. SMS Sticker Campaign Locations
Figure 138. SMS Sticker Campaign Locations
Figure 139. SMS Server Propaganda Projected in Centro
Figure 140. SMS Server Propaganda Projected in Centro
Intervention 2-2.2: Question Mark SMS Hybrid

The success of the SMS text server prompted me to reuse the question mark sculptures from the Punctuation Invasion project as part of the propaganda machine for the SMS server. I painted the question marks with the keyword and text number for the server and deployed them in Centro Ybor. At first I placed them at the entrances on both seventh and eighth avenues. After about an hour I was approached by security and asked to remove the sculptures because they were on private property. I played dumb for a minute and told the security officer that I had no idea it was private property because it looks just like a public plaza. The security officer replied that it was a common mistake and that he is constantly explaining to people that it is private property and that there are rules to obey if you want to stick around. After talking with the security officer for a few minutes he revealed to me the actual boundaries of the space. He didn’t sound too confident about the exact location as he pointed to a change in the sidewalk brick pattern and said “that’s the spot.” At this point we retrieved the sculptures and repositioned them at both entrances so that they were no longer on private property. One was placed just across from the valet parking drop off spot and the other was moved to the entrance of the Centro Parking garage where they remained for the rest of the evening. Both locations saw a fair amount of traffic and resulted in a fair amount of hits on the server.
Figure 141. SMS Question Mark Locations
Figure 142. SMS Question Mark Paint
Figure 145. SMS Question Mark Location 3
Figure 146. SMS Question Mark Location 4
Intervention 2-2.3: Subvertisements

The Subvertisement Project is a series of subversive advertising posters that are intended to both unmask the mechanisms of control that lie beneath the facade of the pseudo-public space and to promote the SMS server and the information stored there. By linking back to the server and ultimately to my virtual hub the subvertisement posters become a gateway to more information rather than an end unto themselves.

The first poster deals with the Centro Ybor occupancy code and the power the owners of this space have over those who use it. The code itself is not prominently displayed anywhere on the property, which only speaks to their desire to keep these mechanisms of control as inconspicuous as possible. I was able to find the code of conduct only after spending an afternoon searching the company website. I felt the public should know exactly what they are agreeing to when they enter this space, so I created the "Code" poster to be placed within the plaza. This subvertisement is based on existing Centro corporate imagery with some slight changes to the background and the addition of the code of conduct. The posters were the placed according to my previous pedestrian traffic study in some of the more highly trafficked areas either within or directly adjacent to the Centro Ybor complex.

The second poster deals with the issue of surveillance within Centro Ybor, specifically the hidden security cameras that keep a watchful eye on all of the plaza’s visitors. I felt people should be aware that they are constantly being videotaped from the moment they enter the plaza. Even if one is simply walking down the sidewalk on the opposite side of the street, (which the complex has no right to monitor), they can still watch everything you do with their high-tech three hundred and sixty degree swivel and tilt cameras. The "Control"
poster was intended to convey the idea that you are constantly being watched by placing images of people using the space into an array of security monitors with a lightly hand drawn camera under the bank of monitors. The sentence “Shop ‘til you drop, we’ve got everything under control” was placed between the monitors and the cameras as the poster’s tongue in cheek slogan. One of the monitors included the Centro Ybor logo in full color to ensure that the association was made between the surveillance system and the plaza. This set of posters was placed on the trolley stops approaching Centro Ybor. They were arranged in such a way that both passersby on the sidewalk and those using the trolley would have the opportunity to see the posters.

The third poster deals with the on-site security team which the web site refers to as “Property Staff.” The fact that they won’t even call them security guards in their corporate literature is a more than a bit revealing. The “Property Staff” is not there to secure the safety of the people using the plaza, in fact they are there to ensure the profitability of the space by expelling unwanted visitors. With that in mind the moniker “property staff” makes much more sense since they’re allegiance is to the company and not the security of the people. These posters were placed at the parking garage entrance and exits that serve both Centro Ybor and the Hillsborough Community College campus. These locations turned out to be some of the highest trafficked spots of all as every student who uses the garage would at some point pass by the poster. In the short time I spent photographing the poster at least twenty students passed by on their way to class and nearly all took notice of the subadvertisement I had placed.
Figure 147. Poster Traffic Flow Study
Figure 148. Poster Location Map
Where everyone is welcome!
(as long as you plan on buying something)

please refer to code of conduct:

- Centro YBOR is operated EXCLUSIVELY for shopping, dining and entertainment purposes.

- Lottering is not permitted in Centro YBOR. Lottering includes: inactivity, blocking access or view, hindering movement and/or FAILURE TO MOVE TO A SHOPPING, DINING, OR ENTERTAINMENT VENUE.

- Assembling, demonstrating, parading, picketing, marching, individually or in groups, thereby disrupting the shopping, dining or entertainment enjoyment of visitors, or disrupting the intended use of the property is PROHIBITED.

- We require all patrons on our property to carry appropriate photo identification with proof of age.

- Appropriate attire must be worn while visiting Centro YBOR. Items with obscene, suggestive or offensive messages are not permitted. Shirts and shoes are required at all times.

Text invasion to 25827 for more info on public space and the culture of consumption.
Figure 150. Poster 1 “Code” Location
Figure 151. Poster 1 “Code” Location
Poster #2
“Control”
Figure 153. Poster 2 “Control” Location
Figure 154. Poster 2 “Control” Location
Figure 155. Poster 3 “Patrol”
Figure 156. Poster 3 "Patrol" Location
Figure 157. Poster 3 “Patrol” Location
Intervention 2-3:
Light Graffiti

After establishing the SMS server and my virtual hub as sources of information and alternative spaces, I decided to physically occupy an alternative space in a manner that would attract others to occupy that space. Initially I had intended to use one of the spaces from my city exploration map, however, I felt that if I chose one of those spaces to occupy there was a good chance that not many people would see the project and even fewer would be tempted to participate themselves. As a result I considered spaces closer to pedestrian traffic to deploy the occupation project. I finally decided to use a space that most consider transitory, one that is typically used to ferry inhabitants from one shopping venue to another without any personal interaction along the way. The sidewalk along the Centro Ybor border would be perfect, as I could occupy the space just outside of their jurisdiction and hopefully tempt others to linger in that space, interacting with each other at least for a short while before continuing on to their shopping destinations. The main intent being to suggest the occupation of space that is not usually considered inhabitable by creating a temporary space for experimentation and self expression.

The next step was to find a means of attracting attention that would cause people to stop and enjoy the space. I decided upon the L.A.S.E.R. Tag graffiti system developed by Graffiti Research Labs. The setup consists of a high powered LCD Projector, a car battery, power inverter, laser pointer, laptop running the GRL software, and camera that can attach to the laptop. The camera reads the input of the laser pointer on the wall, the laptop then process this input and sends an image to the projector which displays the laser input as spray paint on the wall. The light graffiti project allowed me to generate a fairly large amount of interest in the sidewalk.
space I had commandeered with several passersby staying for a while to play with the graffiti machine and chat. A secondary effect of the project was to challenge the boundary between public space and pseudo-public space by setting up in the public realm but projecting the images and virtual spray paint onto the private property of Centro Ybor.
Figure 158. Laser Graffiti Materials

**PROJECTOR:**
AT LEAST 1500 LUMENS — THE MORE THE BETTER

**LAPTOP:**
WINDOWS OR MAC W/ DEDICATED VIDEO CARD
LASER TAG SOFTWARE FROM GRAFFITI RESEARCH LABS.

**POWER INVERTER:**
110 VAC IN, 120 VAC OUT. MORE POWERFUL INVERTERS MAY BE NEEDED FOR HIGH OUTPUT PROJECTORS.
**Figure 159. Laser Graffiti Materials**

- **Battery:** Deep cycle marine battery is best, but any car battery 12V will work.
- **Laser Pointer:** Any color is fine but the brighter the better, so try to use at least a 10mW or higher green laser.
- **Camera:** Cameras with manual controls and high-quality glass lenses are best.
Figure 160. Laser Graffiti Map Location
Figure 161. Practice Set Up at Home and USF
Figure 162. Laser Graffiti in Centro
Figure 164. Laser Graffiti in Centro
Figure 165. Laser Graffiti in Centro
Figure 166. Laser Graffiti in Centro
Figure 167. Laser Graffiti in Centro
The following manifesto contains information previously discussed in this paper. It is being reproduced here in a condensed form as the program manifesto is intended to be reprinted and distributed.

Advances in technology have allowed for the proliferation of a variety of simulacra in our post-industrial society. We are constantly presented with the false reality of advertisements designed to entice our consumption of a particular product. As Dino Felluga from Purdue University states, “Contemporary media (television, film, magazines, billboards, the Internet) are concerned not just with relaying information or stories but with interpreting our most private selves for us, making us approach each other and the world through the lens of these media images. We therefore no longer acquire goods because of real needs but because of desires that are increasingly defined by commercials and commercialized images, which keep us at one step removed from the reality of our bodies or of the world around us.” The problem we face now is that the simulated reality presented to us through various forms of media has become so ingrained in our consciousness that it threatens to replace true image of reality. In his book Simulacra and Simulation, Baudrillard would describe this as the third order of simulacra, where the
representation of reality has blurred the boundaries so well that it replaces the world it initially simulated. The simulacra has now infiltrated our built environment in the form of the pseudo-public space. These spaces are devious simulations of public space that (much like the simulated reality presented to us by advertisers) is solely created to guide the populace into consuming goods under the proprietors watchful eye. The privately owned pseudo-public space has solidified the false reality presented to us through the media and has become the default destination for much of the populace as they seek to satiate their desire for consumption. The migration of people from once thriving town centers into these pseudo-public spaces has led to a decay in social interaction. Where people once populated town squares to acquire goods and interact, they know inhabit a simulation of the town square that restricts their interactions in the name of safety and commerce.

To counteract the emergence of the pseudo-public space and its simulated reality, we must develop public spaces that exist outside the simulacrum propagated by post-industrial capitalism. The spaces that hold the most potential for the renewal of the truly public realm are those that exist on the margins of the urban fabric. These spaces have been abandoned or left behind and come with no attachments to the commercial realm. The following is a guide to the use (or misuse) of these found public spaces:

1. Accessible to All

Too often the pseudo public spaces exclude those who are not actively participating in the act of consuming. They also fail to accommodate those who chose not to participate in the theater of commerce that the pseudo public space provides. To create a truly public space it must be accessible to all.
2. Urban Recycling

As economies and social structures change, spaces will wax and wane in terms of their usefulness. These abandoned spaces provide the greatest potential for developing community based and operated projects. Because of their low marketability they are not sought after by traditional commercial enterprises, nor are they subjected to the same strict mechanisms of control employed by those enterprises.


Spaces should foster a sense of ownership within the community. By connecting the community to the space, it fosters a sense of responsibility in the upkeep and development of that space. Once the community feels a space belongs to them they feel more comfortable using it, which opens up the possibilities for creative alternative uses.

4. No Peeking.

Security systems are becoming a ubiquitous part of the urban fabric in many of our city centers. The authorities justify the presence of these systems by citing their use in keeping citizens safe. However, many detractors say that the cost of being watched everywhere you go far outweighs the benefits of any increase in crime prevention (which has been cited as minimal at best). In some cases these security systems are already experiencing function creep, (when the use of an object gradually drifts outside the scope of it's intended purpose). In this case the existence of cameras affects the way people interact with each other and with their environment. A lack of surveillance may make some citizens feel less safe, however, it will also afford people the necessary comfort level needed for creative and experimental uses.
5. Types of Use Will Not be Limited.
   The term “use” in this case is considered to be a “flexible relationship within which people can make various uses of one and the same thing.” (Haydn)
   By allowing the space to be malleable in terms of program it allows different cross-sections of the community to make use of the space without exclusion.

6. “Bring People to the Streets”
   (from Amigos d’Avenida)
   Interventions should have the power to draw people out of the spaces they traditionally inhabit including the pseudo-public spaces.

7. Public Laboratory.
   Spaces should foster a sense of experimentation within the community. People should feel comfortable exploring the possibilities of their public spaces.

8. Stimulate Public Interaction
   Interventions should create an atmosphere that is conducive to social interaction. (Preferably doing so without relying on some retail mechanism.)

9. Have Fun
   Interventions are most successful when there is an air of playfulness about them. If people’s fears can be assuaged then their participation in the space becomes more likely.

10. No Purchase Necessary
    Spaces should not require the procurement of goods as a requirement for participation.
French philosopher Henri Lefebvre once referred to the city as an oeuvre or a “collective project” in which all citizens participate, though they may not even realize it (Mitchell 18). Unfortunately as time has worn on the city has lost its elements of participation and become a place we simply exist in rather than interact with. The struggle for public space has waned and we now blindly accept the spaces “produced for us rather than by us” (Mitchell 18). As my involvement with this project continues beyond the parameters determined by academia, I hope to further explore opportunities to create spaces of interaction in unexpected places. Spaces where no purchase is necessary. Spaces of our own design that respond to our own needs rather than manufactured desires that we have been coerced into pursuing.

Looking back at the projects I created and deployed throughout my research I can certainly see the hits and misses. I have a better understanding for how deeply our current culture has affected the social spaces of our time and I can only hope that my participation in reshaping the interactions that take place in these spaces has had some impact on the casual city dweller. At last count, the website I created to serve as my virtual hub had almost 1,800 page views from 86 unique visitors after three months in existence and the SMS text server doled out responses to over 44 unique numbers in just under three weeks of service. In reality there is no
way to tell how many people saw, or heard about these projects either directly or through second hand sources or the amount of people who experienced them but chose to take no further action.

It is my hope that I have inspired or at the very least directly informed the 130 people who chose to contact my site or text server during the course of my project. This number may seem small but it represents the amount of people who not only experienced the projects I discussed above but took the next step in seeking out further information. So now there are at least 130 people who may look at the way they use the city a little differently than before, and in that I believe I have played my small role in what Henri Lefebvre refers to as the oeuvre of the city.
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