POP // ROCK:
Deployable Urban
Performance Architecture

by

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Abstract

An event can change a person's perception of a space or location forever. How can urban mobile performance evoke excitement and encourage inhabitants to actively participate in their city, opening it to the possibilities and processes within that may be latent or invisible?

The intent of this particular study is to make people aware of their power to actively participate in and manipulate their urban environments, creating permanent change through momentary impact and the memories of participants rather than heavy construction. New architectural technologies and ways of thinking about mobility, modularity and adaptability must be considered. Like the precedents studied, this intervention will strive to occupy little space physically, while producing a dramatic effect on the surrounding urban area.

As a multidisciplinary study done at several scales, the resulting project will involve the design of the object, or performative apparatus, the performance itself, and the urban intervention that it becomes within the context of the city. Can a mobile performance venue be reduced to something its performer(s) can carry without power and assistance? Is there the potential for these momentary events to leave permanent traces on the city?

Acknowledgements

The first dedication of this thesis can go no others but my dear parents, Anne O’Riordan and Gary Mullen, the two people I most admire, trust, and on whom I’ve always known I can rely. On this adventure, as with all the others, the astounding levels of love and support they’ve given so unconditionally has kept me going and I cannot imagine having better anchors and inspirational figures in my life.

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The Fourth Wall and the Fourth Dimension:

Momentaneous Events and their Lasting Impacts

“There is absolutely no inevitability as long as there is a willingness to contemplate what is happening.”¹

Marshall McLuhan, 1967

Links between mobile architecture and live performance date back thousands of years, but it was not until the 1960s that Marshall McLuhan introduced his predictions of the information era to come. McLuhan envisioned environments as collections of simultaneous active processes rather than static, passive wrappings, separate from those who inhabit them. He championed the ability of artist-created “anti-environments” to highlight and make visible aspects of the urban environment that were previously hidden. In his cohesive theories, those who utilise the space they inhabit are just as important to its spatial characteristics as the built environment itself. The ‘improvised’ daily occurrences and situations experienced by people would go on to change the way space was used and

¹ McLuhan, Marshall, and Quentin Fiore. *The medium is the message*. New York: Bantam Books, 1967. Print.

perceived. The importance of change in time and simultaneous moments or events allowed us to form a more complete understanding of the environments in which we live and began to be accepted as something equally integral to our environment as the physical buildings and infrastructure.

Over the course of this study, we will explore the possibilities of small gestures and light interventions within the city as a means of bringing attention to and changing these invisible processes. Many inhabitants of the city are unaware of their ability to participate actively within it instead of passively observing it as means of entertainment and expression.

And this is no coincidence. The way our buying culture has been organised, entertainment tends to be found through the acquisition of new things rather than their creation. This is an effective way of keeping the powerful in charge as millions of dollars are made at cinemas, arenas and operas while our streets remain stark reminders that nothing, even delight, seems to come free any more. We are taught to passively absorb and accept advertisements, follow trends and spend our money on things that we feel will make us happy, rather than being taught how to solve the problem of creating and manipulating the space around us to satisfy our constant hunger for change. Our collections of things and the casing in

which they and we reside weigh us down, often keep us in the same places for longer than we'd like and keep us working for the machine so we can afford it all.

But, as the information era moves forward, there is hope. The value of information over physical possessions has risen as more things become 'electronic versions' of their former selves. Books, money, images and sounds can, in a certain way, be reproduced electronically, rendering their physical presence irrelevant. This shift is not occurring quickly enough and consumption of resources and goods continues to rise with the world's population. We're moving in the right direction though, and notions of permanence, the leaving of the self in the world after death and, for architects, creating lasting impacts through their works are shifting toward lighter touches in the physical environment that have deeper impacts on the minds of inhabitants and use fewer of our precious resources.

Performance, in its ephemeral nature, is transient but it can create and impact space as much as heavy physical construction and has the ability to leave lasting impacts on its audience members, especially if they are participating.

To begin this study, we must define the terms “fourth wall” and “fourth dimension” in relation to both performance and architecture, particularly the importance of challenging and breaking these conventions, and removing them as constants in the equations of our daily lives.

Fourth Wall

Defined by the Oxford Dictionary simply as, “the conceptual barrier between a work and its viewers, readers [or listeners],”² the fourth wall is a concept rooted in the idea that, when viewing a room made up of three walls on stage, both the audience and performer imagine a fourth wall to complete that room, separating the continuities of their two worlds.

French philosopher, Denis Diderot, explained the notion of the fourth wall and its breaking in the eighteenth century, striving for a more realistic form of theatre than traditional comedies and tragedies, as art in

² "Fourth." *Oxford Dictionaries*. N.p., n.d. Web. 2 Apr. 2014.
<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/fourth?q=fourth+wall#fourth__18>.

all forms seemed to be advancing in its ability to convey the real world.³ By the nineteen twenties, theorist and playwright, Bertolt Brecht, had expanded upon Diderot's writings and put them into practice by creating what he called, 'epic theatre'. Brecht started with Aristotle's definition of 'epic', meaning 'not tied to time', building upon it to define 'epic theatre' as "a sequence of incidents or events, narrated without artificial restrictions as to time, place or relevance to a formal 'plot'".⁴ In comparison to existing 'dramatic theatre' techniques, 'epic theatre' favoured narrative over plot, striving to "implicate the spectator into an observer, but arouse his capacity for action" rather than "implicate the spectator in a stage situation, wearing down his capacity for action", ultimately, like McLuhan, viewing "man as a process" not "as a fixed point".⁵

³ Stevensen, John. "The Fourth Wall and the Third Space." *Centre for Playback Theatre*. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 May 2014.

<<http://www.playbacktheatre.org/>>.

⁴ Willett, John. *The theatre of Bertolt Brecht: a study from eight aspects*. New York: New Directions, 1968. Print.

⁵ Drain, Richard. *Twentieth-century theatre: a sourcebook*. London: Routledge, 1995. Print.

Breaking the fourth wall in theatre can range from self-referential dialogue on stage to direct communication between performer and spectator, erasing the boundaries between the two groups and allowing their roles to be more malleable.

In terms of architecture and urbanism, breaking the fourth wall also implies a shift in roles. Architecture has been traditionally regarded as the static built set that is created by designers and inhabited by people, under the rules set out by the construction. When the architectural fourth wall breaks, inhabitants begin to manipulate space for their needs, becoming designers while performing these changes in configuration. We may even consider our city's bylaws as walls limiting our roles to those of audience members rather than performers. Finding ways of challenging these conventions and discovering new possibilities within our urban environments is another way of breaking this wall.

Fourth Dimension

This study focuses not on the spatial but the temporal fourth dimension: time – more specifically, changes in time, impacts of moments, simultaneous happenings and notions of permanence.

A live performance, of course, cannot exist without the time in which its actions occur, making the fourth dimension an essential “material” in the performance’s construction.

“Standing the test of time” in an architectural sense, used to mean designing and building strong, heavy, durable buildings with life spans of hundreds of years. But we now know that architecture, like performance, does not necessarily have to be static. The idea of achieving permanence through heavy construction is out-dated and one-dimensional. As the physical resources of the earth are depleted and electronic information gains as much value as “real”, material possessions, the human instinct to “leave one’s mark” on the world must be reevaluated. The impact of a fantastic event – through memory, documentation and distribution – can indeed be far more monumental than the heaviest of buildings.

In breaking the fourth wall and forth dimension of the city, urban dwellers can start to manipulate their own surroundings, taking effective roles in deciding what their own spaces should be instead of adhering to a rigid set of rules about “how to fit into” their contexts. Instead, over time, the contexts themselves will morph to fit the needs of their users. Precedents set by Peter Cook and, much later, Atelier Bow-Wow will be discussed in later chapters, addressing different notions of traces that may be left on cities and how they can begin to physically manipulate space.

Mobility, versatility and renewability are more pressing issues now than ever before in the architectural world. Buildings previously considered primitive may be great sources of hope in an era where we know buildings need to operate with efficiency, respond to their environments with greater sensitivity and have the versatility to accommodate the constant demand for something new without the need for additional consumption and supplemental energy use.

2

Entertainment Architecture Blows Up:

Inflatable Innovations set the Stage for Mark Fisher's

'Pneu World'

You can roll out steel – any length

You can blow up a balloon – any size

You can mould plastic – any shape

David Greene,

Archigram 1, May 1961⁶

In the 1960s, members of the design collective Archigram began to imagine entire mixed use cities that were nomadic, could combine with each other and existing cities, and could leave a place as quickly as they had arrived. In a way, large musical concerts and festivals began to do a similar thing in the late 1970s. Modularity and utilisation of flexible, reusable truss systems inherently gave many early examples a prominent machine aesthetic that was later dressed with ornament, lighting, special effects and, finally, musical performance.

⁶ Cook, Peter. *Archigram*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973. 8. Print.

The early works of Archigram members Peter Cook, Ron Herron Warren Chalk, David Greene, and Mike Webb clearly illustrate many of the concepts used in later built projects. Founded in the U.K. in 1960, the collective strived to combat what they felt was a sterile architecture scene, based in Modernism, monumentalism and stasis. In going against established British architecture journals, the collective decided that their publication should reflect the urgency and fast nature of a medium like the telegram rather than work within the confines of the architectural media that still celebrated Modernism. In effect, they were creating and distributing zines close to fifteen years before Legs McNeil and the punk rockers in New York City. Little did the members of Archigram know, their influence would forever change the music industry.

The work of Archigram was as much a response to the technological innovations of the 1960s as a rejection of the existing architectural norm. The Apollo Space Program, Sea Lab, the first hovercraft, and Boeing 707 all represented technology's ability to extend the capabilities of human kind, taking us farther and deeper and getting us there faster than ever before.⁷

⁷ Holding, Eric. *Mark Fisher: staged architecture*. West Sussex: Wiley-Academy, 2000. Print.

1964 saw the Beatles' arrival in the United States, the announcement of a new World Trade Center to be built in New York City and the release of Archigram's fourth and fifth editions. When Ron Herron published his most well-known Archigram project, *Walking City* (Fig 2.1), in *Archigram 5* (November, 1964), he mockingly contrasted his imaginative new mobile habitations with the washed-out, static backdrop of New York, drawing attention to the city's perceived lack of capability for change in ideology when it came to new urban theories and architectural ideas. Although obviously a theoretical design project, the nomadism, configurability and sitelessness displayed by the *Walking City* represented freedom – of thought, expression and space – from nation, government and geographical location.

Peter Cook took the nomadism displayed by *Walking City*, but decided to make it a series of lighter interventions that worked heavily with their host cities, making 'infiltration' a key concept. One of the images from *Instant City* (Fig 2.2) shows "the airship's effect upon the sleeping town".⁸ Cook was very interested in interchangeable sets of parts which could be easily assembled according the needs and spaces of each community they visited, imaging that, although they would stay for short

⁸ Cook, Peter. *Archigram*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973. Print.

periods, by the time they left, the spaces they occupied would have begun to shift, not only on their own, but in becoming linked to the other communities visited by the Instant City. These ‘traces’ would, in theory, continue to benefit inhabitants’ social, learning and leisure lives long after the first ‘parts’ of the Instant City had departed.

By the late 1960s, Mark Fisher, a student of Peter Cook, began to take Archigram’s conceptual ideologies and turn them into something real.

While Archigram’s polemic hinged on their belief that cities were dynamic collections of events, it ultimately seemed that the group was more interested in extensive collections of objects. Contrastingly, it became apparent that Fisher was as interested in the human experience and engagement with his work as the technology that made it possible. Fisher designed things such as the Automat and Dynamat (Fig 2.3) that inhabitants could easily transport and manipulate themselves and, with his company Air Structures Design (ASD), was published in Architectural Design (AD) Magazine’s Pneu World, along with other key players, Utopie from France.

Meanwhile, an ocean and a continent away from ASD and Utopie, the Berkeley-based design collective Ant Farm was taking things a step further. Founded in 1968 by Chip Lord and Doug Michaels, Tulane and

Yale architecture graduates respectively, Ant Farm not only advocated the self-use of inflatable and mobile architecture, it released a manual with which anyone could design and build their own structures out of vinyl and polyethylene. The Inflatocookbook,⁹ first released in January 1971, was printed after an intense eighteen-month period in which the group designed and built many inflatable projects at different scales. The projects ranged from table-top models to their largest inflatable endeavour, a one hundred by one hundred foot (when deflated) “white pillow” which was used as a public installation at the Altamont Speedway Free Festival in December 1969. Ant Farm fabricated the first editions of the Inflatocookbook themselves, printing two thousand copies on loose-leaf paper and binding them in vinyl sleeves. The playful publication (Fig. 2.4) – adorned with illustrations, comics, jokes, and at least fifteen different fonts – was designed primarily for people with backgrounds outside the design world. Despite their displays of play and humour, the written and illustrated components of the booklet are very easy to understand, interpret, and build upon for any person of any age.

⁹ Lord, Chip. *Inflatocookbook*. 2nd ed. San Francisco, Calif.: Ant Farm, 1973. Print.

But Mark Fisher was the first to figure out how to make these new ideas into large-scale spectacles that could actually navigate the globe and generate income doing so.

Fisher was no stranger to finding means of funding his work. The AA alumnus paid for his graduate schooling and all material costs associated with his experiments by co-running ASD with fellow student, Simon Conolly. He merged his technological interests with the social ideas of Archigram and McLuhan, producing early works that were easily manipulatable and configurable by their occupants or deployers. Fisher always designed the object with the people and the event in mind.

Concertgoers were perfect sources of revenue to fund such projects. It was wishful to think governments, still feeling the effects of World War II, would fund large, leisure-based projects that did not have a charted effect on economies. Cedric Price's Fun Palace was never realised, Archigram disbanded after nine issues and Ant Farm's work became more formally experimental than user-friendly.

"Fisher's use of popular culture as a basis for signification challenges the traditional high-brow taste judgments of the architectural

establishment.”¹⁰ As the British middle class continued to grow and gain greater access to the information that was quickly becoming more available, the division between low- and high- art forms began to blur and disappear. The formerly immense gap between the folk musician and opera singer closed considerably and art made by and for “the people” finally started to gain attention and respect, its message as strong or stronger than anything that had come out of established art and design schools, opera houses and royal courts. Effect was given greater importance than meaning and thus the “structural honesty” and “form-follows function” mentalities of Modernism were pushed aside in favour of ornament for the purpose of impact. An excellent example of Fisher’s play with structure, cliché and signifiers can be seen in his 1989 design for The Rolling Stones’ Steel Wheels tour (Fig 2.5). The overarching industrial motif, while reflecting the early works of Archigram and Cedric Price, displayed the types of industrial steel elements that would formerly have been considered high technology, instead as archaic fragments that were rendered irrelevant for real use by newer information technologies. These components then became functional as creators of effect rather than practical use, in a structural sense.

¹⁰ Holding, Eric. *Mark Fisher: staged architecture*. West Sussex: Wiley-Academy, 2000. 26. Print.

Mark Fisher, in bringing the formerly unattainable ideologies of his mentors and contemporaries to the main stream, helped in immortalising their work as much as his own (Fig 2.6). Fisher did not attempt to solve the urban issues of today, but without his work and the links to its origins, perhaps Archigram's theories would not be stumbled upon by as many eager young musicians who want to change their cities but don't quite know where to start.

Chapter 2 Figures

Fig 2.1. Walking City, Ron Herron (1964)

Cook, Peter. *Archigram*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973. 48-49. Print.

Fig 2.2. Instant City, Peter Cook (1970)

Cook, Peter. *Archigram*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973. 98-99. Print.

Fig 2.3. Dynamat, Mark Fisher (1971)

Holding, Eric. *Mark Fisher: staged architecture*. West Sussex: Wiley-

Academy, 2000. Print.

Fig 2.4. Pillow Talk, *Inflatocookbook*, Ant Farm, 1973.

Lord, Chip. *Inflatocookbook*. 2nd ed. San Francisco, Calif.: Ant Farm, 1973.

Print.

Fig 2.5. The Rolling Stones' Steel Wheels Stage Set, Mark Fisher

(1989) Fun Palace, Cedric Price (1961)

Holding, Eric. *Mark Fisher: staged architecture*. West Sussex: Wiley-

Academy, 2000. Print.

Fig 2.6. Map of Entertainment Architecture, Evan Mullen (2013)

3

The Urban Intervention:

Actions and Reactions within the City

With over half of the world's population now living in cities and the ratio of urban- to rural-dwellers only rising, many of the principles on which (particularly North American) cities are built are quickly becoming outdated and unviable.

After the Industrial Revolution and the birth of mass production that followed, humans have continually sought to increase efficiency, productivity and, thus, progress as it was seen. Cities became mechanisms that thrived on rules, control and zoning of space and time. Seen as steps in the eventual scheme of mastering our environments, these controls resulted in the separation and compartmentalisation of the activities in which a contributing member of society was expected to partake: work, dwelling and leisure.¹¹ The acknowledgement of these three separated activities and rising prevalence of the car meant that the time in between work and leisure was not valued as part of a whole experience, but as a

¹¹ Zardini, Mirko, and Giovanna Borasi. *Actions: what you can do with the city*. Montréal: Canadian Centre for Architecture :, 2008. 13. Print.

necessity which should take as little time as possible. Cities became characterized by the efficient factories and workplaces that funded them, the homes and parks in which to retire after work and the roads linking these destinations. Work, in its separation from leisure, was not a task to be enjoyed, but a necessity. Considered essential in one's ability to contribute to society, work also became a form of social emancipation for city dwellers; hard work gave them common ground on which to stand and relate.

Now, more than ever, our metropolises have shifted from societies of producers to societies of consumers. People find their social emancipation and ability to fit into their contexts through consuming the things that are offered to them, following trends and established patterns, rather than deciding to make new objects, situations or ideas themselves. In this consumer culture everything, even time, emotion and discovery, have become commodified and nothing seems to come for free any more. The notion of leisure has been warped from finding amusement within the world to buying things and experiences that have been pre-defined within it. Consumption, like work, does have the rare ability to unite society and make people feel they have mutual interests with those around them, but now that we can see what this culture of acquisition and waste is not sustainable. Now environmental issues rather than social ones are at the forefront of our quest to survive and thrive as people.

What has resulted is a society based on the rules and controls that were intended to provide maximum efficiency for movement and better the people but have actually just increased the speed of consumption and waste to levels that have never before been seen. This society now births people whose individual abilities – even desires – to do or make have become so far impeded that the paths of lesser resistance, of compliance and of passive acceptance are often seen as the only ways to move and integrate within society.

The car itself enforces this unquestioning adherence to rules about how to move through space rather than the definition of one's own path. Not only do they close us off, inhibiting us from neighbourly interactions and connections to our environments, they are major contributors to both the expenditure of non-renewable natural resources and the rise of waste and pollution. Rather than occupying the half square metre a human does while fully immersed in his or her environment, the average car covers about eight square metres of ground (Fig 3.1), making the space each person physically dominates in a car far greater than the space that person occupies socially or is able to experience. The notion of the pedestrian as an urban actor – and active definer of space, is coming back, not just because it is a desirable ideology for some but because it will become a necessity for all, bettering humans socially, by increasing their

interactions and senses of belonging, and the earth, environmentally, through lighter touches to its surface.

Time spent in a car, even though it is a relatively fast means of transportation, is considered “lost” as it does not relate to our accepted definitions of work, dwelling or leisure. This state of purgatory between origin and destination filters, moderates and ultimately excludes as much of the outside environment as it can, making it a dead zone in between useful spaces. This space is rendered lost, just like the time spent there. Sonia Lavadinho, in an article for the Canadian Centre for Architecture’s 2008 publication, Actions: What You Can Do With the City, calls walking ‘the vehicle for textured speed’¹². For the sake of this study, bicycles, skateboards, mobility-aids and other small human- or battery-powered vehicles will be considered as walking is. While walking’s inherent slowness often makes it difficult to employ as a primary means of daily transportation, it affords much greater opportunities for multi-sensorial evaluations of our contexts, interactions with the others within them and a much more free, spontaneous way of moving than the car. This active mode of transportation allows travelers to reclaim the environments through which they move rather than shutting them out and the

¹² Zardini, Mirko, and Giovanna Borasi. *Actions: what you can do with the city*. Montréal: Canadian Centre for Architecture :, 2008. 13. Print.

pedestrians become the actors on the manipulatable stage of the city. The act of walking then gives meaning to otherwise banal infrastructural systems such as sidewalks and crosswalks, which would only be grey squares and yellow lines on the ground if they didn't affect flows in the space above them. It also gives greater meaning to the places in between the origin and destination, allowing squares, green patches and alleyways to become fondly regarded landmarks along our journeys that make it worthwhile for a pedestrian to pause, contemplate and extend a walk.

While many of the overarching ideologies of this thesis project are discussed and displayed in Actions, it is Tokyo-based firm Atelier Bow-Wow that gives us the specific terminology to continue such discussion, showing through theories and project-based examples how a small gesture can affect its greater urban environment and how we, as actors, are each capable of changing the story of our city.

The following terms, unless otherwise noted, have been selected from Bow Wow's primer, published in 2013, and apply directly to the resulting project of this thesis.

Behaviorology – In short, Behaviorology is Bow-Wow's over-arching method of studying urban environments and their interactions. "It rejects any causal, mono-directional relationship between man and architecture,

and it endeavours to apprehend the environment in its entirety as a number of interlinked cycles of cause and effect, in which man, nature and the built environment are all implicated.”¹³ This methodology aligns with McLuhan’s discourse, enforcing the idea that cities are made up of active processes, not just passive wrappings.

Conventional Element – In architecture, the conventional element is an existing component that the architect inserts into his or her designs. Usually considered banal on their own, these elements such as windows, doors and ductwork come together, becoming much more than the fragments they were individually. In large-scale stage constructions, conventional elements might be prefabricated trusses, amplifications systems and even the trucks that carry equipment from place to place. At the scale of this thesis projects, conventional elements may be bicycle parts, solar panels, batteries, and even just polyethylene tarp and tape.

Jig – “Jig” traditionally refers to a tool that is auxiliary to the main machine it assists. It helps to guide its host machine to precise angles and locations but cannot make any cuts or alterations by itself. Bow-Wow has architecturally defined the jig as “part of a technical that is not

¹³ Stalder, Laurent. *Atelier Bow-Wow. A Primer on the occasion of the Exhibition Atelier Bow-Wow, 28 February - 21 March 2013, ETH Zurich ; an exhibition of the gta Institute, Department of Architecture, ETH Zurich.* Köln: König, 2013. 100. Print.

characterized by logical, functional classifications but through contextuality.” By this definition, an entire building may be considered a jig if it aids the positioning of inhabitants within their greater urban environments.

Occupancy – When discussing the potentials of occupancy, Bow-Wow distinguishes “dominated space” from “appropriated space”, the former describing the Euclidian space that can be accurately represented by a set of technical drawings and the latter referring to a “natural space casually modified in a way such to meet its user’s particular needs and afford him opportunities.” Observing architecture as appropriated space, we can consider it not a building but a process of becoming. In the context of this study, the physical object designed will exist in a very small, dominated space while its potential for occupancy will be much greater.

Micro Public Space – “Micro public spaces serve as a device to enhance shared activities and human encounters in public space.”¹⁴ Bow-Wow observes the urban space on which it wants to intervene, taking note of

¹⁴ Stalder, Laurent. *Atelier Bow-Wow. A Primer on the occasion of the Exhibition Atelier Bow-Wow, 28 February - 21 March 2013, ETH Zurich ; an exhibition of the gta Institute, Department of Architecture, ETH Zurich.* Köln: König, 2013. Print.

how its inhabitants have manipulated it themselves. They then create either an exaggeration of what already happens there, as can be seen in Furnicycle (Fig. 3.2) which uses street furniture and bicycles as conventional elements that, when combined provide a more efficient (or even just different) way to experience that space, or something drawing attention to challenges of the space, exemplified in School Wheel (Fig. 3.3), which pops up to educate the community about a nearby temporary flood zone. Both examples encourage human action and interaction within their environments.

Echo of Space / Space of Echo – In its 2009 publication, Echo of Space/Space of Echo, Bow-Wow distinguishes ‘form of being’ – the physical environment – from ‘form of doing’ – the systems, interactions and relationships within it. An echo may be left in a space by the actions and processes that happen within it and that echo may in turn influence a physical change in that space, shaped by the echoes left by actions. They conclude that in a lively, successful, urban space, the forms of being and doing will echo one another.¹⁵ Bow Wow’s notion of ‘echo’ draws from the same conceptual underpinnings of the ‘traces’ left by Peter Cook’s moving city, but is much more subtle and realistic.

¹⁵ *Atelier Bow-Wow: echo of space, space of echo*. Tokyo: INAX, 2009. 14. Print.

Intervening on Ottawa

Despite the fact that writers, philosophers and designers have been discussing these issues for over fifty years, governments in capitalist countries like Canada still seem to encourage the passive acquisition of objects rather than their creation, fueling economies rather than providing a place for the real delight of creation.

In July 2013, the Conservative government of Canada revised its Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP)¹⁶. The TFWP currently states that a fixed tax of one hundred fifty Canadian dollars be paid per musician, per venue and per gig. Some touring bands may not make close to this amount at each show and, on top of that, many of the venues that cater to lesser-known musicians simply do not have capacities high enough to be able to pay one hundred fifty dollars tax on each member of each band.

A typical night at an Ottawa bar might feature three bands. Let's say each of these is a small band with three members. If these bands are from anywhere outside Canada, they, or the venues at which they play, must pay one thousand three hundred fifty dollars in tax each night of the tour,

¹⁶ "Temporary Foreign Worker Program." *Government of Canada, Employment and Social Development Canada*. N.p., n.d. Web. 31 Mar. 2014. <http://www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/jobs/foreign_workers/index.shtml>.

regardless of their earnings. If a venue only has a capacity of one hundred fifty and each band wants to make at least one hundred dollars per person to cover the expenses of touring (without even mentioning promotion and management costs), tickets are pushed up to between fifteen and twenty dollars per person instead of the five or ten concert goers used to pay.

International artists without a pre-existing fan base or revenue source are therefore discouraged from touring in Canada. Protesting for a change in the TFWP is one way to seek change. Another is to reconsider what the typology of a small venue can be. What if there are no running costs? What if a venue isn't tied to any particular piece of real estate? What if that venue is so sensitive to its environment that it allows us to experience space as the pedestrian does?

We, of course, must work within the confines of government policies and municipal bylaws so as not to be fined or detained for our actions. But there are so many possible interventions still they've forgotten to forbid. The form of the intervention discussed in Chapter 5 is a direct result of and response to these restrictions.

Chapter 3 Figures

Fig 3.1. Space Taken by 72 People. Münster, Germany. 1991.

Bicycling as a mode of transportation Muenster, Germany. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Apr. 2014. <<http://www.geo.sunysb.edu/bicycle-muenster/>>.

Fig 3.2. Furnicycle, Atelier Bow-Wow (2002)

Tsukamoto, Yoshiharu, and Momoyo Kaijima. *Behaviorology*. New York: Rizzoli, 2010. 260-272. Print.

Fig 3.3. School Wheel, Atelier Bow-Wow (2006)

Tsukamoto, Yoshiharu, and Momoyo Kaijima. *Behaviorology*. New York:

Rizzoli, 2010. 260-272. Print.

4

Selected Precedents:

Challenging Time and Scale

The following architectural precedents were selected due to their ability to exist temporarily in physical nature while also leaving lasting impacts on the people and spaces they encounter.

Each precedent addressed exemplifies different aspects of the conceptual, logistical and formal aspects of mobile performance architecture, at scales ranging from the object to the world: the object that occupies its context, the performance that occupies its city and the event city that occupies the world while navigating it.

While these examples range vastly in scale, they share the ability to occupy social, cultural, and experiential spaces more significantly than their ability to occupy physical spaces.

1. Object Occupies Context – The Urban Interventions of Atelier Bow-Wow

The terms devised by Atelier Bow-Wow and addressed in Chapter 3 can be seen very clearly in their projects. Small-scale mobile installations such as the Furnicycle (Fig 4.1), Jumbo Oragami Arch (Fig 4.2) and White Limousine Yatai (Fig 4.3) all show their capacities as jigs within the city, drawing attention to things which may not have been noticed before, occupying much more appropriated space than dominated space and evoking the kind of delight and curiosity within the community to inform its inhabitants of the kinds of change they themselves can make within it.

2. Performance Occupies City: Luigi Nono and Carlo Scarpa's Corporeal Time Machine

In her journal article, "Carlo Scarpa and the Eternal Canvas of Silence,"¹⁷ Dr. Federica Goffi explores how time can allow us to understand architecture's life in terms of change, focusing on a dialogue between friends Carlo Scarpa and Luigi Nono, an architect and a musician respectively. In translating a representation of the city of the city into a

¹⁷ Goffi, Federica. "Carlo Scarpa and the Eternal Canvas of Silence." *Architectural Research Quarterly* 10.3/4 (2006): 291-300. Print.

semi-improvised performance, Luigi Nono draws attention to the fact that urban environments are not linear, static and predictable but consist of the many simultaneous, unexpected and improvised actions and interactions moving through them (Fig 4.4). Nono listened to urban spaces and tried to recreate their non-linear, simultaneous occurrences in his musical compositions, choreographing his performers to a certain extent, but allowing them to improvise so that each concert was a completely different experience that could only occur once. He also had a great understanding of the “void”, or in music, silence between sounds, using this silence to emphasize the prominent elements on either side of it. Carlo Scarpa’s architecture, in the same way, considers a change in time. Never treating the existing objects or buildings upon which he intervened as frozen entities but rather as living fabrics onto which he collaged his interventions, Scarpa addressed the architectural past, present and future by sensitively separating elements from different eras with voids and reveals while uniting all the elements into a new work which did not come from just one particular time.

3. Event City Occupies Globe: Mark Fisher’s Touring Stages

Mark Fisher has realised Archigram’s fantastic visions of transportable environments able to house hundreds of thousands of attendees through logistically scheduling tours, using existing parts and

mapping where various elements of the stage rig travel at different times (Fig 4.5). While a rock tour will typically only have one set of theatrical ornament that must travel at the same speed as the bands, three sets of modular steel are usually used on each tour so that before each show is finished, the next two sets are under construction.

Fisher differentiates “City as Event” and “Event as City”¹⁸, the former being a performance within an urban context that has the ability to temporarily change the whole city into a venue for that event, drawing inspiration from its surroundings and giving greater understandings of where we live, and the latter being an event at the scale of a city that is able to take on its own urban qualities within its confines, using signifiers to make us aware of not only our immediate surroundings but our greater global positioning.

¹⁸ Holding, Eric. *Mark Fisher: staged architecture*. West Sussex: Wiley-Academy, 2000. Print.

Chapter 4 Figures

Figs 4.1 & 4.2. Furnicycle, 2002 (above) & Jumbo Origami Arch, 2005

(below). Atelier Bow-Wow

Tsukamoto, Yoshiharu, and Momoyo Kaijima. *Behaviorology*. New York:

Rizzoli, 2010. 260-272. Print.

Fig 4.3. White Limousine Yatai, Atelier Bow-Wow, 2003

Tsukamoto, Yoshiharu, and Momoyo Kaijima. *Behaviorology*. New York:

Rizzoli, 2010. 264. Print.

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Fig 4.4. Prometeo, Luigi Nono, 1987 & Castelvechio, Carlo Scarpa, 1959-1973

Goffi, Federica. "Carlo Scarpa and the Eternal Canvas of Silence."

Architectural Research Quarterly 10.3/4 (2006): 291-300. Print.

Fig 4.5. The Rolling Stones' Steel Wheels Tour Schedule, Mark Fisher
(1989)

Holding, Eric. *Mark Fisher: staged architecture*. West Sussex: Wiley-Academy, 2000. Print.

5

The Project:

Creating Ripples to Make Waves

“We view Architecture as the story teller, not just the box in which the story is told. Our architecture begins with the performance itself.”

Ray Winkler, Stufish. January 2013

After speaking to Ray Winkler at Stufish, I knew the performative aspect of my final thesis project would have to come before the physical object or built installation – “what it does” would have to come before “what it is”.

I spent months trying to design the specific “score” for this stage, something that would reflect the city in which it is played, bring attention to latent delights in the urban environment we walk every day and mean something, not just to me, my friends or professors, but to anyone who shares our streets. I struggled with how to write a piece of music or direct a series of events that would appropriately capture my beliefs, build upon the methods and ideologies studied in this thesis and allow itself to be accessible, understandable and pleasurable to anyone who may or may not know or be interested in this body of discourse I hold so dearly.

I've come to realise that the point of this project is not to show the city a specific act or talent, but to show our neighbours that, within the strict bylaws and overall starkness of our downtown, there is still great possibility for spontaneous, playful intervention that has the ability to slide through loopholes in the rules. The idea is not to cause disturbance or directly protest, but that it is within the ability of everyone living here to make their own fun so they can stop talking about "the city that fun forgot". We can regard Ottawa as a blank canvas – the first few light strokes will stand out at first, but once more and more are added, the picture becomes more and more complete, interesting and meaningful.

Reclaiming our urban space, evoking delight in the **community** and showing people changing the city to make it more livable is within their immediate reach have become the "performance" of this thesis, while the performative apparatus will, in the future, hold specific musical functions.

Can the methodology used in large-scale stage design be applied and scaled down to the size of a mobile event space able to be transported by one person without external power? Like the precedents studied, this intervention will strive to occupy little space physically, while producing a dramatic effect on the surrounding urban space. Its ultimate goal is to leave its trace in the memories of those it encounters, even after the intervention disappears from the physical environment.

The influence drawn from existing work will be much more focused on concept, logistics and program than on superficial aesthetics. Although, by concept, the aesthetics of entertainment architecture are “allowed” to be superficial. Modularity and utilisation of flexible, reusable truss systems inherently gave many early examples a prominent machine aesthetic that was later dressed with ornament, lighting, special effects and, finally, musical performance. ‘Materials’ and standardized parts can be scaled down – a bicycle can replace a transport truck and tent poles can replace trusses as conventional elements in a project.

So why (on top of noted conceptual links) make inflatables? Ottawa’s bylaws forbid almost anything one might be able to imagine in its public spaces, from picnicking to organised sport without permit. But it doesn’t mention anything about balloons. Similarly, bicycles are treated as vehicles on the road and thus, are allowed to play music even though amplifiers and boom boxes are not allowed in parks and public spaces. This project will strive to draw attention to possible “loop-holes” in our suffocating bylaws and show other people in the city that they can bring delight back to the urban environment as well.

An event can change a person's perception of a space or location forever and urban mobile performance can evoke excitement, encourage participation and open the minds of the city to the possibilities and processes which may be latent or invisible. The hope is that these momentary events have the potential to leave lasting "echoes" on the city?

The final goal of this study is not to provide a complete solution but to give the city's inhabitants ideas for the future by showing them it is possible to invigorate their urban environment with small but meaningful gestures.

Chapter 5 Figures

Fig 5.01. Conventional Elements

Fig 5.02. Entrance and Deformation

Fig 5.03. Unfolding Scheme and Anchors

Fig 5.04. Study Model 1

Fig 5.05. Study Model 2

Fig 5.06. Study Model 3

Fig 5.07. Bicycle moves through streets and plays music

Fig 5.08. Inflatable is deployed in public park. Performance follows.

**Fig 5.09. Full-scale event with solar-powered, battery-operated
amplification**

Fig 5.10. 1:2 test inflatable

Fig 5.11. Mobile inflatable with tricycle, solar-powered fan and speakers

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Human:

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McClement, Doug: Sound engineer, LiveWire Remote Recorders, portable recording technologies

Vreeken, Mark: Sound engineer, Leonard Cohen, live sound and acoustics

Winkler, Ray: Partner, Stufish, mobile entertainment architecture