

RARE EARTH

GAME-CHANGER: HACKING THE CITY

The POROSITY ANGLE

Over the past decade Porosity Studios have used the city as a plastic material. The studio mantra is “Come and test your discipline and spatial intelligence at the scale of the city”.

In other words what happens to the materiality, devices, philosophy, social construction, aesthetics etc of your work when its task is to interrogate the organism of a city?

You can be a jeweller, a potter, a painter, a drawer, an urban planner, an architect, a furniture designer etc and still the project calls you to observe the city 1:1 scale and to transform some aspect of it, either theoretically, virtually or directly.

It doesn't have to rearrange the transport system, but it could. It doesn't have to repair park seating but it could re-invent the 3-legged stool. It doesn't have to bring solar power to every high-rise building but it could harness the sound of crickets to thermally insulate an apartment or reveal the hallways of office blocks to the subway commuters.

Anything is possible as you play and change the game, as all artists and designers are wont to do. You are the game-changers and we are physically and virtually going to hack Shanghai in September 2011. Shanghai is the laboratory of the future. If the experiment of 20million people in Shanghai, all wanting Audis, all wanting parks to fall in love in, all wanting dumplings doesn't work, then the world is truly doomed. It is at critical mass. You can't solve this but you can get involved.

Porosity, *augment_me* and *Collabor8* incite you to act as part of an elective course.

What differs about this 2-week studio, from previous Porosity Studios, is its mode of practice. Unlike the usual 2 weeks of finding the idea, presenting, modelling, collaboration, and then the finally exhibiting the work, has been shifted into the production of a continual flux of outcomes and ideas. Synthesis will only really occur in the mind of the viewer participant.

By employing and experimenting with Brad Miller's interactive multi-imaging process in the gallery, your process will be continually monitored and streamed into the system as a projection in real-time onto the gallery walls. The public will be involved directly in this iterative process and the gallery will be alive with the production of the information feed and the comings and goings of the designer/artists as they hack the city. The public is open to this process and will inturn find them involved in deciphering the combined outcomes and how they paint their city.

The gallery will become the crucible of the city as a laboratory. Multiple visions will become one fused action. This will be a “Fluxus”¹ performance for the 21st Century.

¹ Fluxus – the performance movement of the 1960's. For example, the work of Joseph Beuys.

THE PROBLEM OR PROJECT OF RARE EARTH SHANGHAI 2011

GAME-CHANGER

- Are you playing in the city or within the virtual city like a gaming engine? Choose both in order to become part of the Rare Earth Studio.
- What are your politics when it comes to the city.....in China?
- Is your game change Utopian or Dystopian in its intentions?
- Find the game and play it for a while, then analyse it and explain it to the world.
- Is your game built on an old or new structure? Marjion and Hide and Seek or Crisis and Grand Theft Auto?
- Describe Shanghai in relation to your work. Make the city tell your story. At the same time the city will tell its story through you.
- Use video, digital imaging, and all manor of media interfaces to record your journey to an idea. Does the use of media change our view of a memory of an experience?
- What are some of the dilemmas or possibilities of identity on a networked planet?
- Help feed this information into the exhibition system.

HACKING THE CITY

- Hacking can imply damage through the infiltration of network systems of communication and information, but our intentions in this studio are strictly metaphorical.
- We also refer to 'hacking' as an undocumented procedure or a creative solution to a technical problem that is in need of an urgent temporary fix.
- How open is opensource? What does GNU General Public License mean for hacking the City?
- The city is a sand pit of possibility to your hacking ability. The children's sand castle walls hold the ocean of the mind at bay for at least seconds. We value these seconds.
- "Fish are symmetrical but only until they wiggle. Our effort is to measure the space between the fish and the wiggle. This is the study of a lifetime".² Find the wiggle.
- What can you do within the limitations of language or means at your disposal?
- Improvise.
- Immerse yourself and play a hunch.
- Hack with your heart beat against the edge.
- Each hack will be a hack within the system of recording in the gallery and its interface with the audience.
- Last year one student of Porosity sold his time in public. Another student re-arranged rubbish on building sites. A Porosity Group "pimped" a rickshaw-ride and it became a worshipped icon in a Buddhist temple. Somebody ate out at every restaurant in one street and catalogued the food.

² Sorkin, Michael. Michael Sorkin Studio, Wiggle, Monacelli Press, New York, 1998, pp 1.

BY WAY OF EXAMPLE

The following example of an action is designed to further assist all students and particularly our international collaborators from China.

It must be remembered that this is an unusual studio in that it is carried out within an art gallery and because it requires a continual and accumulating feed of digital material from each artist designer, literally day by day. The public are able to start to witness information taken from the streets of their city and analysed or transformed from day one. The visitor participant can then return later in the studio duration to see how things have changed and developed. Brad Miller's display system caters for such an intense and continual interaction. The following action is a simple example – it should only guide those who are battling to understand the concept.

SCENARIO Ω

Student A is interested in “lighting design” within laneways used by both the public and private citizens. “A” follows the following sequence of actions:

- Preliminary research into projects and technologies which have inspired A in terms of lighting.
- Calibration of these ideas in relation to design or art criteria of excellence.
- Calibration of these ideas in terms of sustainable practice and at the scale of the city.
- The studio commences.
- Immediate immersion in the city to find and record a suitable site.
- Photograph and analyse the site – edit this material and insert this context “essay” into the gallery system – the studio process has thus commenced.
- Continual visits to site at a variety of times to record and collect design criteria information.
- Use of the gallery as a design studio and continued data feed to the display system.
- Extensive use of one to one modelling on site with prototypes.
- Use of computer aided design to simulate and analyse the design.
- Interaction with the public on site and in the gallery as the design develops.
- Possible interaction and collaboration with other teams whose work may influence or help the process.
- Continual feed and edit of data on display as the process reaches a conclusion due to time constraints.

The rest must be left to chance and what happens in Shanghai. Good luck all.

Professor Richard Goodwin.

Director of the Porosity Studio.



THREE HACKS or Vectors to interrogate Rare Earth

1. DIY

'Other' types of hacking – open source, sharism, alternatives, the 'make' people



Creative communities – improvisation

Visit Hackerspace - robotics/Arduino (<http://xinchejian.com/>)

Networked spaces/objects/bodies

Urban farming (<http://goodtochina.com/>) – dig it?

Build something and set it loose in public space

2. Line 7

Ride the subway from Maglev to Nordic Town: *Develop a critique. Nordic Town is misplaced - Why is this happening? What does this faux Euro-town mean?*



Speedism – Maglev levitates at 431 KMH! How fast are you going now? (Paul Viliro)

When is a satellite actually a satellite? – How far out does it have to be...or how high?

Hyperreality – We're not exaggerating! Will you? (Jean Baudrillard)

3. Urban Conversations

Interrogate the ever-present boundaries that keep cropping up: *The romanticisation of the lived city and museumisation of spaces and communities; the abject vs. high design; The dissonance of boundaries in incongruous juxtaposition*



Explore boundaries: public/private; we/me; high/low

Find an urban molecule – *What will you do with it?*

There's no more space! *"The corridor is now the street"*

Brad Miller / Ian McArthur



augment_me



COLLABOR8