

PROVOCATION 02

Augmentation: 21 x 21 x 21 x 21

due 27 oct 2021

*Art should comfort the disturbed
and disturb the comfortable*

— Cesar Cruz

In this provocation, you will bodystorm, interrogate, and create an augmentation for a 21 x 21 x 21 foot cubic public volume. The provocation can be deconstructed into three critical components: (1) site selection, (2) micro-territory archeology, and (3) augmentation design. The focus of this provocation is on the rapid generation of design concepts based on site geography, landscape, activities, and the “public”. You will need to not only communicate your intention but take a stand, detail, and **through your functional, interactive augmentation design argue for the adoption of a new experience of your selected site that alters or shifts perspective.** Like real-world designs you will be operating under a series of constraints: context (public space), scale (21'x21'x21'), time, and topic (reimagining perspective).

SITE SELECTION

Each group must select a site no more than 21' x 21' x 21'. The site we would like you to consider is what might be referred to as an in-between space, an interstitial space, leftover space, or non-place. Do not select a hyper-centralized space such as the top of the Campanile. Site requirements:

- Must be reachable from the MDes studio within 21 minutes.
- Must be a public space (i.e. it must be publicly accessible, not part of a private business, club, etc).
- Must be free to access (i.e. there cannot be an admittance charge).
- Must support some level of pedestrian or vehicular activity.
- Must have specific boundaries (i.e. not “along University Avenue” but rather “the area of sidewalk on the west side of Ridge Path bounded by the broken red benches to the south and empty newspaper rack on the north west.
- For technical reasons you may also want to have access to some wireless connectivity at your site (optional).

When you have selected a location, create a name for your site of inquiry and define its boundary and location.

MICRO TERRITORY ARCHEOLOGY

It is rare that we are allowed to inspect the urban fabric in such detail, to spend time looking at the ground that is usually brushed over, eyes averted, trafficked but not seen. The first part of this provocation focuses exclusively and intently on investigating, documenting, and analyzing your chosen site. You are required to document and describe your site using the following:

- Photograph your site on a weekend and weekday.
- Capture 2 minutes of video 2 times within a 24 hour period from a fixed location at least 8 hours apart.
- Photograph one surface in close up detail and create a tiled (8.5x11”) print of the surface at 1:1 scale

of not less than 1 x 1 square meter (we will recreate this patch of space in class).

- Use forensic photography (include scale, orientation) to record not less than 5 unexpected objects located within your landscape
- Use forensic photography to record not less than 5 traces of time, wear and use that were unplanned or unexpected
- Hold three 30 sec audio or video interviews with a person or passerby regarding the site. Have they ever noticed this site? What does it mean to you? Do they walk, ride, or transit across this site everyday? Go deeper with your interviews.
- Measure and draw your site in plan (overhead) and side elevation view as well as its location relative to the MDes Studio.
- Include at least one government, commercial, or other offsite information that looks at or captures a representation of your site. This could be raw data, descriptive text, police report, etc.
- Use a measuring instrument of your own choosing and record/measure that metric on site and add to your site drawing. Suggestions include, Geiger counter, sound, levels, light meters, wireless signals, moisture, etc.

In your documentation consider including information that is relevant to an extensive understanding of the space, its orientation, its proximity to landmarks or directional markers, its dimensions and proportions, its infrastructure, its history, its cultural heritage, its broken, added or adjusted sections (i.e. new concrete, building repairs, or additions etc), any relationship to external systems (i.e. place of manufacture of street furniture, manhole covers, lights, garden varieties, etc).

The goal is to enable you to “see” more in a 21-foot cube of public territory than you would normally notice, to see its implicit and explicit relationships to other adjacent and distant territories and commercial systems or systems of governance, land title, deed trust, ownership, usage, etc. The goal is to uncover the richness of your site, by simply looking closely, documenting, and analyzing. From these recordings, you will be able to determine where steps need to be taken to uncover and augment this site. Principally, your role is to observe, record, and become intimate with the site you have chosen, noticing every nook and cranny as a potential design territory. You will hand in all of this documentation as part of your final process documentation. You will also present subsets of this material in an interim critique in class on Wednesday 13 October.

AUGMENTING-21

By now you have a very clear picture of your site. It is well documented and precisely described in physical, behavioral, and temporal dimensions. The slate is now open for your design intervention. Using the details of the micro territory archeology of your site as a starting point, **your challenge is to engage in a design that alters or shifts perspective through an interactive augmentation experience.** It could be imaging the viewpoint from the perspective of a squirrel that frequently crosses the site, a trashcan that sits within the boundary, or a tree limb overhanging the site. It could offer the perspective of a popular or unpopular local political viewpoint. It could offer a perspective of the past or future or the vantage of a child, elder, tourist, veteran, native, a person with a disability, etc. You are free to use fact and/or fiction in your designs.

Your final augmentation design must be interactive and be adequately justified by your previous micro-territory archeology. Your design should respond to your detailed analysis of the existing site as a starting point. It should incorporate interactive augmented technology using Unity and the iPads provided to each team. Without taking on City Hall or requiring a Ph.D. in political science or philosophy, your design should consider the context broadly. While providing an interface for “citizen” users, do not exceed the physical limits of your 21’x21’x21’ site. How can you see this as an opportunity to recalibrate our ideas around the potential for public spaces? How might augmentation technologies alter, shift, and invite new participation when focused upon a specific site? What are the hazards along the way to such augmentation adoption? Your final design should present us with an augmented place – perhaps strange and new, that we would all be curious to visit.

DELIVERABLES

Your team will be required to deliver an 10 minute presentation communicating:

- Documentation and images of your counter studies and investigation
- Motivation for your design (why should we care?)
- A brief demo in class of your working prototype (you may need to simulate some element of your space locally)
- A brief video selection of your interactive augmentation prototype in situ

You will need to hand in the following materials online via bCourses:

- A title for your project
- A single representative image (landscape at 1600:900 pixels jpg or png)
- One paragraph of text describing your project (max of 150 words)
- Documentation including
 - Observational documentation (which will include your site selection and micro-territory archaeology artifacts)
 - Design process documentation (intermediate designs, sketches, ideas)
 - Fabrication and Function documentation describing the files, models, custom code generated, to make the final design. It also shows a system-level architecture diagram of the operational elements of the final design. Detailed code is submitted separately not in this document.
- A stand-alone video describing your project and showing it in use in situ (2 min max)
- Any code or modeling files required to create the prototype.

Grading:

- 25% Quality of idea and resonance with selected site
- 30% Execution of interactive argumentation experience
- 15% Critique Presentation
- 15% Video
- 15% Documentation