

urban occupation : ACTION

experiment : **Urban Occupation**



Image: Photographs from film, arranged by Caitlin

authors / actors / participants:
Territory definers (Laure, Caitlin, Mesi, Caitlyn)

title: Territorial Membranes

location: Rosa Luxemburg Platz , Berlin, Germany

date: may 7, 2009

manifesto:

The two starting points were public space as a means to an ends (a space that must be overcome to reach ones destination), and the definitions of a territory. We were interested in prompting a response from the public using a technique that did not require a direct asking of them. We were also wanting to explore how one could create a territory where the barrier (referred to as a membrane) to the created space takes the form of the senses (touch: static and dynamic, sound and vision: reflections). The questions to be answered were which of the methods was more conducive in creating a non-permeable membrane to a territory that the public acknowledged, respected or were confused by, how can one engage the public and provide a haptic experience, and what methods broke the daily monotony of the pedestrian action of the exiting/entering the u-bahn.

techniques / 4 acts: shuffling on stairs to impede line of travel, lying criss cross, making a sound triangle, a reflection triangle.

tools:

action: The 4 acts were performed for 15 minutes each for 2 cycles. 3 people participated at one time, with the third documenting. Act one was shuffling along the stairs with the intention of obstruction the publics line of travel (with the intensity of the obstruction adjusted to the individual's capacity to interact ie: elderly were omitted) , act two involved lying on the stairs forming zig zag spaces to see if the public would step over the performers or conform to the created pathways. The third was to create a triangular space with sound (each person making a noise ie. clapping, vocal noise and scraping metal object down tiled wall). Forth was using mirrors to create an intensity between the 3 performers where one reflected the others image in the triangle.

actual outcome:

Act 1: Level of engagement high. People's attitudes were quite open and willing to be entertained for a few seconds. Some tried to avoid the confrontation by walking tightly along the wall and not engaging with the moving territory we were defining however the majority appeared quite delighted at the 'game'.

Act 2: There were 3 responses from this; one conformed to the path we create with the performers bodies on the stairs, one walked over the performer's body or one avoided the interaction and walked against the wall. Level of engagement was also quite high but devoid of the amusement elicited in Act 1.

Act 3: The sounds created a very permeable membrane between the performers. Most people walked through the triangle, with only a few side-stepping to avoid intrusion into the space.

Act 4: Few acknowledged the territory created by the interaction with reflections of each performer. It was the least successful in terms of public awareness of the defined territory.

Overall, this experiment demonstrated that the public is more sensitive to a membrane with a visual/physical materiality, especially when the nodes of membrane intersecting are in a dynamic state (Act 1). Sound may have also created a membrane were it to be louder and not so pedestrian.

urban occupation : ACTION

Laure, Mesi, Caitlin & Caitlyn

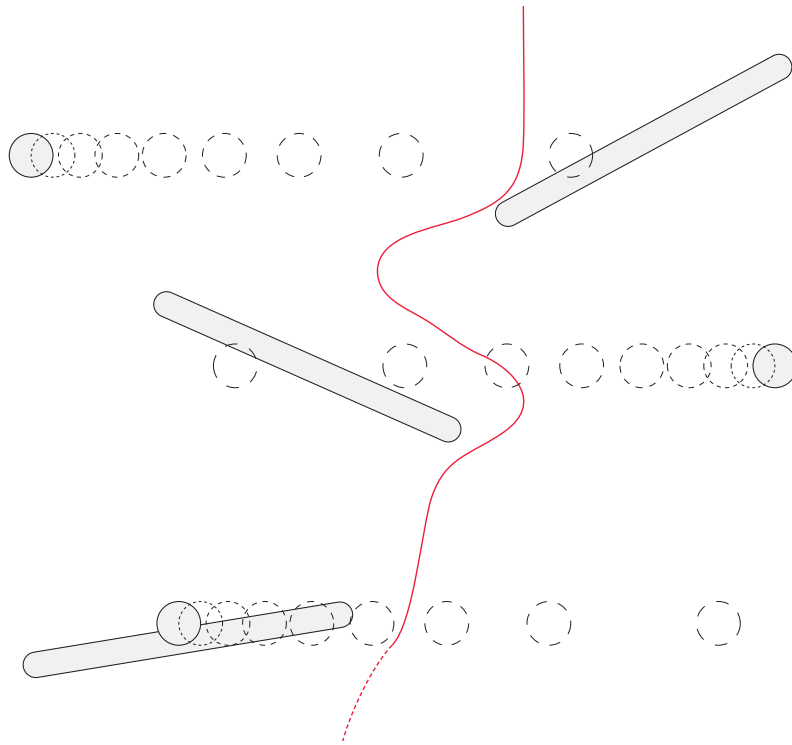


Diagram: Workings of the actions
Source: Caitlin

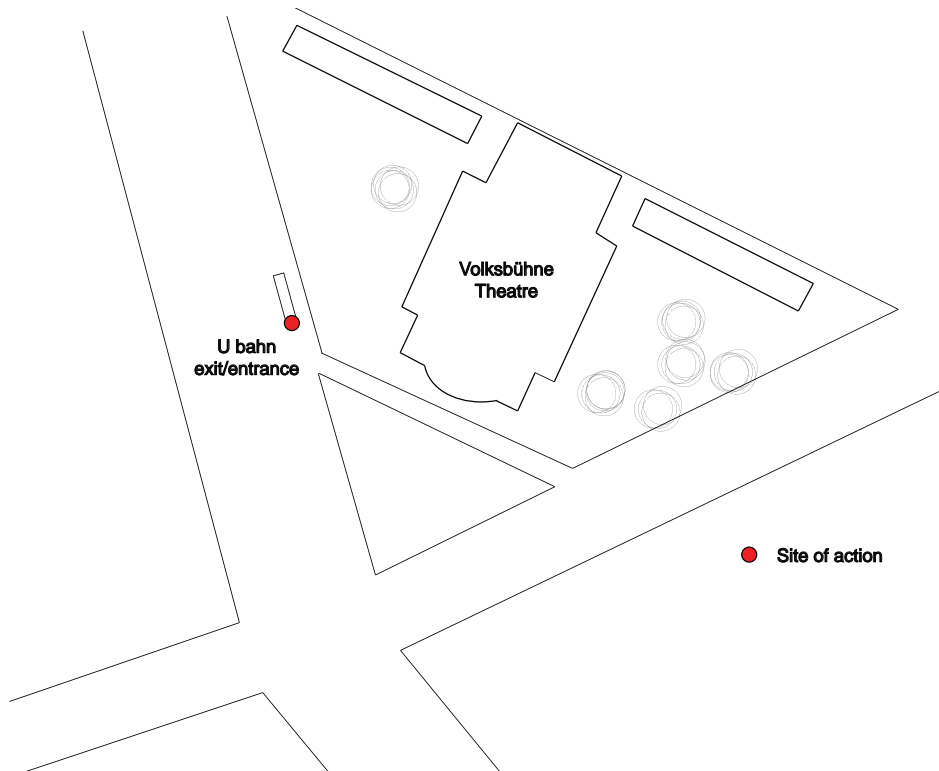


Image: Plan showing location
Source: Caitlyn Parry

bibliography:

-