

CitySpinning: Frameworks for a Collective Reinterpretation of the Ambient Possibilities of Public Spaces

Prayas Abhinav, Yashas Shetty, 2007

>> Abstract

The paper examines CitySpinning, a public art project initiated by Prayas Abhinav, a Postgraduate student at the Center for Experimental Media Arts in Bangalore. CitySpinning is a series of interventions that incorporates unused and vacant spaces around the city of Bangalore. The project re-interprets these spaces with references borrowed from the free software movement and the creative commons movement, making these spaces more configurable while not imposing any restrictions or transactions on individuals wishing to negotiate with these spaces.

The technology for letting individuals configure such spaces has become more accessible with cheaper environmental sensors, access to physical computing environments such as the Arduino boards, mobile and data communication services and web-based social networks for making ad hoc crews/teams/interest groups. These tools enable collective communities interested in customizing an urban space to come together and share the legal, conceptual and networking tools needed to remix a space. The use of multiple sensors and the ability of the collective to control the sensory ambiance of space can help in creating more engaging experiences for individuals.

1. Indian Cities in Boom-time

Bangalore and Mumbai are two cities in Southern and Western India. Each of them has their own "boom story" to tell. Each contributes an increasing percent of the gross national income.

With this economic success there is almost a universal interest in businesses, individuals, and families to be a part of this story, leading to heavy investments in real estate and migration of labour. This has created pressure of varied intensities on the city planners to make more of the city available for commercial development, enhance urban infrastructure from the perspective of the key economic stakeholders/drivers such as the big investors and big employment providers. However, there are also numerous agitations contesting this drive in these cities.

The most vocal of these agitations might be the ones in Mumbai. The civic authorities want to clear Dharavi, which is the largest informal settlement (or slum) in Asia and auction it off to commercial developers. Although some kind of rehabilitation plan has been put in place, there are bigger questions here. Questions about the identity, rights and stakes of different communities on the land on which they live. Bordering the airport, it is a city within a city. Numerous researchers, journalists, photographers have spent time there trying to understand the flux on the ground.

In Bangalore with the IT industry driving most of the growth, high-value jobs and global interest in the city, a powerful lobby has taken shape. This lobby has pressurized the government numerous times to look after its interests. These demands have mostly been for stable business infrastructure, like flyovers, roads, electricity, WiMax which helps them increase their business efficiency. They have largely been successful in getting specific commitments from the government. The government is too conscious of hurting its image of being India's leading IT outsourcing hub amid the competitive bides from Pune, Hyderabad, Chennai and Delhi.

In contrast let us look at the garment export industry in Bangalore. It employs a much higher [figures] number of people but contributes substantially less to the city's gross turnover and so obviously doesn't have clout to demand anything for itself or its workers. Many of the workers in the industry live in one of the 700 slums around Bangalore. Slums marked as 'shadow areas' in government plans. Shadow areas are defined on the basis of water supply level and the number of teachers for the area. (The Two Bangalores, Menon, 2005)

The way these cities are shaping and the way the governments are

taking decisions about the trajectories they should take are not transparent. They accommodate the needs of only some groups of people residing in these cities. The voices and opinions of a vast majority are not even registered.

This "one-sided deafness" creates sometimes amusing urban glitches. For example: The interest in the late 90s of builders to build malls all across India led to a boom in the retail industry, multiplexes and fast food, a large number of malls exist to day in Mumbai, Bangalore, Ahmedabad and many of them enjoy a lot of walk-ins. But this boom has gone unchecked, with many malls coming up on the same street leading to an over-capacity and a need to convert many of these nearly-completed and under-construction malls to commercial buildings offering office-space instead of retail-space. Other glitches were witnessed in the rapid rise and subsequent disappearance of bowling alleys and pool tables in many Indian cities in the 90s.

If there is an ongoing conversation between the users of cities (that is the citizens) and the planners, builders and architects, such expensive glitches might be avoided. In this paper I will explore different dimensions of this possibility.

2. Public-spaces

"Cities were invented to facilitate exchange - the exchange of ideas, friendships, material goods and skills. How good a city is at facilitating exchange determines its health - economic, social, cultural and environmental. Public space forms a vital conduit in this exchange process, providing platforms for everyday interaction and information flows - the basis and content for the public life of cities." (People Make Places: Growing The Public Life of Cities, Demos, 2005)

Before cars changed the meaning of location and distance in cities, public spaces like plazas, parks and playing grounds were about people from different ethnic and class backgrounds meeting and exchanging ideas, expressing world-views, forming groups and enriching themselves in other ways. One of the attractions of living in a big metropolis was the possibility of this socialization. (Safdie & Kohn 1997, pp 12-13) (Intellectual Property: The Attack on Public Space in Cyberspace, Besser, 2001)

Scott McQuire writes in The Politics of Public Space in The Media City:

[...] the rise of the suburbs was positioned as the nemesis to the public space of the modern city.

[...] Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz (1992) defined the 'media event' largely in terms of the privatization of the public sphere: events once experienced collectively in public space were increasingly consumed by greater numbers of people who watched from the privacy of their individual homes. (The Politics of Public Space in The Media City, McQuire, 2005)

So, across the last half of the 20th century with the rise of suburbs and the commuting culture we have seen public spaces fall out of favour of planners and others who have had a say in shaping the city. And people seem to have no time to just hang out in parks, plazas etc. There has been a trend to think in terms of productivity and functionalism.

In the urban layout the erstwhile role of public spaces is now played by privately owned "pseudo-public-spaces" like malls, multiplexes and fast food outlets. These privately owned shared spaces have been able to exert controls which public spaces had great difficulty in exerting. Controls on free speech, political action (distributing leaflets, doing demonstrations), appearance (dress code), language (everything being in English) filter out undesirable and unwanted elements and create a "sanitized" environment. The "rights of admission are reserved." (Besser, 2001)

In BODY MOVIES, an art project by Rafael Lozano-hemmer "transforms public space with [...] interactive projections. Thousands of photo portraits taken on the streets of the cities where the project is exhibited are shown using robotically controlled projectors. However, the portraits only appear inside the projected shadows of local passers-by [...]" (McQuire, 2005)

Scott McQuire suggests that Lozano-hemmer's work involves strangers to suspend habits and try to figure out the interface and interplay of the project through experimentation. He uses this work as an example to describe the ways in which social inter-mingling and interaction is beginning to happen again in public spaces in the "media-city" and predicts that such projects "could become important tools for rethinking the submission of urban space to commodity spectacle and surveillance, and for forging new ways of engaging with others in public."

Ashok Sukumaran, an architect and artist however argues that Lozano-hemmer's later works and increasingly also of many other artists influenced by it "could be described [...] as the connection of any

input/sensing device to an arbitrary output format." He says that "audiences just begin to expect one or the other form of benign media to appear, in response to their presence" and the works fail to actually deal with the "publics" in meaningful ways. (Venice Biennale Part II: On Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's Work, Sukumaran, 2007)

With physical computing and code-based art dominating a lot of the buzz around public space interventions, media art and interactive art in the last few years, artists are increasingly asking questioning the enthusiastic use of computing and its effects and are now seeking more human, involving and rooted ways of using tools like arduino boards, wiring, picocricket and the vast range of possibilities which electronics and computing offers.

Numerous artists such as The Space Hijackers, Reclaim The Streets, kraut, Wochenklauser, Bed By Night, Krzysztof Wodiczko, Michael Rakowitz, Ashok Sukumaran use interesting "public" approaches. I will describe some works by these artists later in the paper.

3. Dreaming Up Spaces

The Situationist International (SI) was a group of artists, filmmakers, writers and others active mostly in Paris from 195x-197x. They have influenced the way artists, architects, writers and others imagine and narrate their cities. Words like psychogeography, derive, detouement, unitary urbanism have become a part of the vocabulary used to talk of cities.

The approach called unitary urbanism proposed a "combined use of arts and techniques as means contributing to the construction of a unified milieu in dynamic relation with experiments in behaviour." (Definitions, The Situationist International, 1958)

They held the position that contemporary city-planning has made people blind to "a living critique of this manipulation of cities and their inhabitants, a critique fuelled by all the tensions of everyday life. A living critique means setting up bases for an experimental life where people can come together to create their own lives on terrains equipped to their ends." (Basic Program of the Bureau of Unitary Urbanism, Kotanyi and Vaneigem, 1961)

For them being sensitive to spaces, listening to what the city had to say was very important. They practised a form of walking / wandering around the city called a "derive."

"In a derive one or more persons during a certain period drop

their relations, their work and leisure activities, and all their other usual motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there." (Definitions, The Situationist International, 1958)

They were interested in the "specific effects of the geographical environment (whether consciously organized or not) on the emotions and behaviour of individuals." Broadly this process was called "psychogeography" by the SI.

In *Another City for Another Life*, Constant describe the city as they imagined it.

"[We] envisage covered cities in which the layout of roads and separate buildings will be replaced by a continuous spatial construction elevated above the ground, including clusters of dwellings as well as public spaces [...]. Since all traffic, in the functional sense of the term, will pass on the ground level below or on overhead terraces, streets can be eliminated. The multitude of different traversable spaces of which the city is composed will form a complex and vast social space." (In *Another City For Another Life*, Constant, 1961)

Some urban interventions by artists and others, which re-imagine cities in radical and sensitive ways are described below.

The Space Hijackers: The Space Hijackers (TSH) describe themselves as anarchists, "[...] we oppose the hierarchy that is put upon us by Architects, Planners and owners of space. Through the events that we hold and the objects that we produce we are attempting to corrupt the culture of architecture, and destroy the hierarchies that exist." (Website, The Space Hijackers)

Some of their notable projects have been:

Circle Line Party: "On the 10th March 1999, the Space Hijackers held our first major event. This involved the Hijacking of a London Underground Circle Line Train, for the purpose of turning it into a moving disco."

" [...] Around 150 people attended the event, not including the passengers who happened to be on, or get on the train. All of whom were given free Vodka, Tequila, and Sweets."

"The point of the event was to completely disrupt the way in which the train works in terms of codes of conduct. We aimed to destroy any

previous ideas as to how to operate within a train, and what a train is used for. By having a party we wanted to corrupt peoples future experience of the Circle Line, as the memory of the party will recur each time they use the train." (Website, The Space Hijackers, 1999)

Guerilla Benching: "Where have all our public benches gone?" Disturbed about the Camden council removing most of the benches from the area and converting the bus-stops in the area to non-seating shades, TSH installed two benches in the area. Public benches are used often by children, the elderly and the homeless and TSH believes that "The basic plan [behind removing the benches] seems to be to move on undesirables and homeless people away as they don't fit in with the aesthetics of the area." (Website, The Space Hijackers, 2006)

Wochenklauser: The group of artists describes its practise as "develop[ing] concrete proposals aimed at small, but nevertheless effective improvements to socio-political deficiencies." (Website, Wochenklauser)

One of their projects:

Medical care for homeless people: Being aware of the problem that the homeless in Vienna (Austria) didn't have any reliable access to primary health care, the group pooled donations lots of small sponsors for setting up a mobile medical van. They used the media to pressurize the city council in supporting the long-term costs of the project (like salaries of doctors etc.) and so were able to see their intervention evolve into a stable programme which the homeless in the area could benefit from.

Ashok Sukumaran: An architect and artist living in Mumbai. Some of his projects:

Glow Positioning System: "A 1200-foot ring of lights encircles the General Post Office intersection in Fort, Mumbai. [...] Our lights travel between buildings, across roads and onto trees and lampposts, forming an image-scape that is starkly visible at night. A hand-crank mounted on the pavement provides a way for the audience to "scroll" this landscape. It allows the physical length of the view to become a chronological one- to be viewed at a speed determined by the user. The ring responds to panoramic desire, the age-old search for an image to immerse our selves in." (Website, Sukumaran, 2005)

"There are many ways to "locate" oneself within the city. [...] [one] way is to move within the streets themselves; to awaken

the more proximate senses, to touch the city itself. In Glow Positioning System, a different kind of travel takes place. This is an interior voyage, a circular tourism... of a place many of us know." (Website, Sukumaran, 2005)

Two Poles: Small bulbs strung to lines connected two light-poles between two bus-stands on Carter Road (a locality in Bandra, Mumbai). At both ends of the line of lights there was a pole-mounted switch, pressing which triggered a line of lights emerging from the pole. Children and adults chose to flash these "pixel" length signals from one pole to the other. After a point the children figured out a way of blocking the other pole from flashing a signal. The project became a dynamic and playful medium for inter-personal expression.

"a small work, which deals explicitly, and perhaps literally with ideas of distance, insulation and the act of refusal, or blockage." (Website, Sukumaran, 2007)

4 Autonomy, Anonymity and Public Spaces

4.1 Participation in the Urban Dialogue and the Autonomy of Public Action

The municipality plans the content and nature of public spaces, with inputs drawn from administrative departments, architecture firms or sponsors. This process involves numerous behavioural assumptions about what people do in cities, where they go, what they prefer and what they want.

"At their best, public spaces act like a self-organising public service; just as hospitals and schools provide a shared resource to improve people's quality of life, public spaces form a shared spatial resource from which experiences and value are created in ways that are not possible in our private lives alone." (People Make Places: Growing The Public Life of Cities, Demos, 2005)

Although the importance of the nature of a city's public spaces in the life of citizens is commonly accepted and acknowledged, there is no effort for public engagement on the part of the municipalities.

"Town-planners and architects still tend to think in terms of the four functions of the city as defined by Le Corbusier in 1933: living, working, traffic and recreation. This oversimplification reflects opportunism rather than insight into and appreciation of what people actually want today, with the

result that the city is rapidly becoming obsolete." (New Urbanism, Constant, 1966)

"Proverbially the problems are pushed to a side and whenever possible removed entirely. the focus of the interest is on the city as a product." (A Material That Never Comes To Rest, Haydn, 2006)

City-dwellers end up being mere spectators of the "spectacle," with no say in how their city shapes. Their participation is either not considered their right, not considered priority enough, or worst it is assumed that they are not qualified to contribute to the dialogue. Individuals conscious of this exclusion express themselves through graffiti and others forms of "urban improvement."

The possibility of questioning programmes - that is, to open up new, different and better ones - characterizes the democratic city. Temporality contains the essence of democracy. (Haydn, 2006)

The artist is not a special kind of man, but every man is a special kind of artist (Transformation of Nature in Art, A. K. Coomaraswamy, 1934)

There have been many changes in the world around us in the last ten years. Changes in the way information, opinions and knowledge is published, accessed and distributed in society.

We live in an age called "the age of the creative amateur" by many. Unlike the .com boom (1999 -9999) the present Internet boom (also called web 2.0) is fuelled by user-generated content. Much of this content is licensed under an open-content license (from the creative commons family of licenses) and is freely usable and modifiable by anyone under conditions defined by the author.

Free Culture a book by Lawrence Lessig (Stanford University Law Professor and founder of the Creative Commons project) gave thrust and momentum to the remix or mashup culture, a practise of creating works based on multiple existing works to draw new meanings and new contexts or statements. Building upon existing work is an established traditional (as described in Free Culture) which modern copyright laws have tried to impede. Using one of the Creative Commons licenses, creators can be explicit about the freedoms they allow their uses/audience on their work so that unintentionally all the restrictions of the copyright law are not assumed to apply to their work. This has been seen to create vibrant platforms of user-created content on the web, notable platforms are Jamendo, Flickr, Wikipedia

etc.

In the early days of the Internet, the potential growth of cyberspace was thought to be impeded by the huge cost of creating content. With the vindication of that concern in recent years it has been understood that there are numerous motivations for people to create and share their creations. And commercial or professional gain is not the only motivation. Socialization, finding an audience, bonding, the cathartic / healing power of telling stories, belonging and numerous other motivations drive people to share their work on the web, under open or closed licenses.

With the rise in prominence and the popularization of such networks, a dynamic bottoms-up field condition is at play in our lives. Cities being hubs and nodes for the flow of capital, labour and material goods as well as information and cultural goods, this new field conditions leads to the possibility of looking at the city as an "information space," as another node in the global networks which facilitate the flow of signs and symbols.

As an "information space," it becomes interesting to draw some parallels between the relations between the "moderators" (municipalities and the planners) and the "users." The Internet and the software world saw a partial opening-up between the relationships between these two players, due to the failure of existing relationships to come up with successful products.

The .com boom (1995-2000), a phenomenon which saw the rapid rise and then subsequent fall of the value of Internet companies is often seen in the light of the relationship between "moderators" (or producers) and "users" which existed at the time. Internet consumers were looked at as passive consumers of content largely produced by professionals hired by companies. As highlighted above, besides constraining the growth of individual projects, this led to only marginal contributions of any kind from the users. So besides content, even the applications and the software was designed with numerous assumptions about the technological capacity, time and the perceptions of users. No effort was made to get users to communicate what features or design-elements they preferred. So, the first boom saw the failure of Internet businesses on the count of having sparse content, unfamiliar and difficult-to-use interfaces, bandwidth-intensive technologies (remember the time was before broadband was as popular as it is today) and lack of features which were a priority for the users.

In the present model of the city and the way it takes shape, the relationship between the "moderators" and the "users" can be seen to

be in a similar flux. We have seen the expensive glitches which the "one-sided deafness" in this relationship is producing. In this relationship again the user, that is the citizen or the city-dweller here, is again seen as a passive participant with noting substantial to contribute to the process of the shaping of the city. In a democracy, voting is thought to be the ultimate act of participation for the citizens, but it is anything but that. Voting in any kind of elections or referendum becomes a game of polarization and coercion by the majority, and not a process of accommodation, response and discussion.

Lately in what is sometimes called the "web 2.0" the Internet has the emergence of "the permanent beta," or the infinitely iterative software development model in which user feedback, feature-request, user submission of bugs and user analytics is the major thrust. The "permanent beta" allows development teams to be continually open to user demands and requests and preferences by changing their development paradigm. Some have called this new paradigm as "agile" or "extreme programming" as opposed to the "waterfall development" model. In the latter the value of the project is analysed only at the end of the a series of rigid steps whereas in the former it is a more dynamic and continual process.

This paper looks at the possibility of something akin to the "iterative city," a city continually responsive to the collective dynamic of the needs, demands, requests and preferences of its users.

Artists and activists do temporary interventions of all kinds (some are described in this paper). Some of these interventions are done with permission and by invitation and some are done either way without any kind of permission. These small, spontaneous actions are free expressions of temporary claims over public spaces. These temporary claims and their expressions demonstrate different "concepts for the use of the city."

The imagined temporary spaces create social knowledge and offer opportunities for active participation, rather than temporary spaces for an event-based leisure society. (Haydn, 2006)

These interventions also bring "utopian situations" into the realm of the tangible reality even though for a limited time.

"[...] the TAZ is in some sense a tactic of disappearance."
(Temporary Autonomous Zone, Hakim Bey, 1991)

These spontaneous expressions of claims could also be looked at from the perspective of what Hakim Bey (pseudonym of Peter Lamborn Wilson)

describes as the Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ). He describes how throughout history individuals and groups have been able to withdraw from the world of structures, hierarchies and control. From pirate utopias to parties to insurgencies to spaces on the Internet Hakim Bey gives out numerous examples and pointers in the essay. The tactic of the TAZ is differentiated as there is a potential to experience it in the here and now as opposed to the revolution with a promise of the "utopia" in the future.

"[...] life is presented as an immense accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was directly lived has receded into a representation." (Chapter 1, The Society of the Spectacle, Guy Debord, 1967)

This world of spectacle and representation can understand/see only entities defined in terms of the spectacle. All else is invisible. So a TAZ can be really invisible to the State as there are no points of intersection and exist for varied periods. (Bey, 1991)

The tactic of the TAZ is a process of seeking "cracks and vacancies" in the supposedly omnipresent, omnipotent State with its many mechanisms for surveillance and control of experience.

"We are looking for "spaces" (geographic, social, cultural, imaginal) with potential to flower as autonomous zones--and we are looking for times in which these spaces are relatively open, either through neglect on the part of the State or because they have somehow escaped notice by the mapmakers, or for whatever reason. Psychotopology is the art of dowsing for potential TAZs." (Bey, 1991)

The tactic of the TAZ has been interpreted and cited by many including The Cacophony Society and many in the early 1990s rave culture. The Cacophony Society (a loose collective of artists, pranksters, performers) organized trips to "the zone" called "trip to the zone" or "zone trip" or "field trips to the fringe." In 1990 it popularized and gave birth to (as zone trip # 4) the annual festival form of a human effigy burning event held at the Baker Beach (SF, USA) from 1986-89. This festival became famous as The Burning Man festival and the zone became known as The Black Rock City. The Black Rock City is a temporary city which comes up across the six-day festival every year and follows the philosophy of "leave no trace," [glossary] and attempts to establish and demonstrate a space for free-expression, sharing and self-reliance. (Wikipedia and Te Burning Man website)

The festival has supported and popularized an art form that is,

"immediately available to large numbers of people." Art that is "collaborative and it breaks down barriers between audience and art work. It's based upon participation – it's radically interactive – and it contemplates the facts of life." Larry Harvey's (the founder of the Burning Man festival) comments also strongly resonate with what Scott McQuire has observed and proposed earlier about art in public spaces of the "media city."

4.2 Anonymity and Public Spaces

"Public space protects us from an excess of intimacy. [it] is a space of great anonymity." (Haydn, 2006)

There was a common perception that we can get away with any action, behaviour in public, because no one recognizes us or knows us and most probably we will never meet any of the strangers around us ever again. One could easily "get lost in the crowd". This is true at least for unfamiliar or alien neighbourhoods. But with surveillance by video cameras and I-card now being very common even in Indian cities, that anonymity is being lost and is being replaced by a perpetual self-consciousness which is not very helpful for free self-expression or inter-mingling with other people.

What many have attempt to do is attempt to take on an avatar or an alias and use it as much as possible. But this approach creates a schizophrenic rift in the juggling game of managing multiple identities: one on the ID, another which is assumed, another which one carries over etc,

In the "paranoid city" anonymity is automatically associated with danger, shadiness and illicitness. Experiencing autonomy of whatever measure without anonymity or pseudonymity poses difficulties for many people.

5. Collective Reinterpretation of the Ambient Possibilities of Public Spaces

5.1 Earlier Projects

In 2006 I worked on a short film called, "A Place To Stay." The film tried to map the kids of temporary sleeping places the homeless in Mumbai are able to work out. I found it hard to believe that everyone slept on the street, or on the railway station, I was sure that there existed lots of safe but secret enclaves that homeless people would be using. The idea wasn't to get to know of the spaces and then

reveal them but just to understand how in dense and strictly-regimented cities like Mumbai people still seek out spaces they need.

Not everyone uses cities the way they are planned to be used and the organic growth of cities provides important insights into the needs of the people using them and living in them. The dynamism of cities emerges from the fact that there so many concurrent factors at play that individuals often feel so small an insignificant that they are able to be spontaneous and be as they choose.

The city is a process. (Castells, 1996)

5.2 CitySpinning

Temporary uses can be understood as the demand [of the city] itself. (Haydn, 2006)

CitySpinning is an effort to synthesize an open decentralized network for sharing ideas about how public spaces around us could be used. It would be an open database of proposals for different urban regions. The network would offer legal and networking tools to crews to start collaboratively work on the proposals they find interesting.

The database of proposals would be like a massive Central Versioning System (CVS) of the source-code of the city. Available for compiling and executing by any crew which feels excited by it.

"Somebody finds the problem, and somebody else understands it."
Linus Trovoids. (As quoted in The Cathedral and the Bazaar,
Raymond, 2000)

With Wifi and mobile Internet access becoming more and more common in the outdoors, a kind of merger of indoors and outdoors in happening. People sit and blog or run their businesses from the comfort of the public garden or the neighbourhood coffee shop from their mobile phone or computer. When people start carrying more of their lives into the outdoors, they will definitely want to configure outdoors to their taste and preference. At that point a kind of collective chemistry will need to be evolve as there will be multiple demands from individual spaces.

City-based chapters of the CitySpinning database would allow a space for speculation and dreaming about how different neighbourhoods should shape. Interventions are called spins at CitySpinning.

"Cities are like urban laboratories - they solve their own problems of growth." The Creative City In The Third Millennium,

Peter Hall, 2005.

5.3 Ongoing Spins

Though I don't have a crew yet, I have started to work on some spins across the last few months. The crew I am trying to put together would have a mix of people with interests in wood-work, gardening, electronics, physical computing, activism etc. The spins in-progress are:

Common Food (CF): CF is an effort to seed a community of urban farmers. I plan to use public spaces, unused spaces, street-side spaces, gardens of volunteers, spaces under flyovers and bridges to grow easy-to-cook and nutritive vegetables. The project will have a map-based web-interface which anyone can navigate to understand the range and location of the crop and to add or log some new plantation effort. The idea is to compile maps of regular and stable crops in print form and work with organizations to make the maps available to the range of migrant and temporary labour force and the homeless in Bangalore (initially). The objective is to create a social and communal safety-net of food in cities so that in our modern cities of abundance and affluence, starvation and malnutrition won't be as common as they are now. Also the "circle of concern" which will evolve as a result of this community will make cities less cold, unwelcoming and apathetic.

Know Me, Know My News: A set of bulletin-boards around the city with the day's newspaper in English and Kannada pinned to it and a cross-translation of the headlines on a sheet of paper under them. If individuals wish to edit or add translations they can do so. The objective behind this is to promote cross-cultural understanding. English papers usually represent the National media and the regional language papers (Kannada papers) represent the local media. Both have a different take on things happening in the city and their relative importance.

Look At The Stars: Telescopes placed on small platforms around the city, open for people to use for stargazing or moon watching. To people who can't pursue their interest in Astronomy by joining clubs and associations, will this be of some interest? Or is this media-saturated environment, will it come across as a mundane diversion?

The Muddy-hands Survey: An unused plot of land in Yelahanka, Bangalore, which has degraded to become a garbage dump is the site for this work. An object (a bag of chocolates, a mobile phone, a pair of jeans) and a weighing machine are kept besides the plot. A board

with instructional information is already put up there. Anyone who can collect garbage from the plot which weighs as much as the object placed on the weighing machine gets to keep the object. If a particular object doesn't excite people enough to get their hands dirty for it, it will be replaced by another one. It will work as a survey to figure out what people are prepared to get their hands muddy for. What is an incentive enough?

5.4 Process:

The web-site of the CitySpinning effort will have a map for each chapter which can be tagged with proposals and add images, text etc. to their proposal to convey it more clearly and interest crews in taking them up.

Crews are diversely skilled teams with a wide-range of interests including (but not limited to) art, politics, anarchy, urbanism, architecture, interactivity, events, social networks). the crews take up different proposals tagged on the site guided by the dynamic interests of the team and stage interventions or spins.

6. Conclusion:

The contemporary city is in a flux. People living in cities today are being presented with an overwhelming number of choices, which seem to offer them freedom, autonomy and self-reliance but end up making them mere consumers. Creating engaging situations which are simple, fun and socially productive for them and at the same time get them involved in a mesh of wide-ranging concerns is a worthwhile pursuit.

As city-dwellers. being in a situations where we feel responsible, empowered, playful and concerned toward our city would be welcome and quite a relief from the current status of the individual as a disenfranchised, passive observer of the spectacle which the state chooses to churn out. <<

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