

In December 1996 I invited Keller Easterling to co-edit a publication with me to accompany the documenta installation 'suspension.' This publication is related to the ongoing investigations of 'Blast.' It looks at in/habiting practices and the senses of space or 'home' they generate. From the beginning, we set out to develop a format that would suspend the reader between signification and comprehension protocols, as a textual and psychological analogue to the investigations conducted in the spatial installation.

As we began to develop this publication, what emerged is a set of 'figures' that were no longer bound to a page but bound up indelibly in the construction of space. Correspondingly, we found that the spatial developments involved complex figuration practices. The binding/coordinating system that we developed is one that links bodies, figurations, and spaces, courting the transformation of each into the other and orchestrating them as if a conductor. This conducting device is a kind of 'rhythmic fitting' or 'connector-frequencer.' It is a p(l)acing mechanism that shifts and coordinates perspective, scale, movement and transmission rate. As we looked at the dynamics between 'figure as inhabited' and 'space as potentialized', or 'space as inhabited' and 'figure as potentialized', the oscillations between the virtual and actual began to be situated within this field, rather than in a prior sectioning of body and space.

Following are some excerpts from the email dialogue of the development of this publication.

Keller Easterling: In the installation, the body is suspended between different spatial protocols. In the publication, the viewer/reader is suspended between different protocols of comprehension or translation. But then the question is: What is the vehicularity of these texts within an active organization--that of the exhibition or another? How are they switches or fittings except unto themselves? It seems one text may be a switch or fitting to another and that after time, one begins to understand their cross-reference. In other words, you may need one text as vehicle to translate or decode another text. Finally some of the texts may, either virtually, or physically, in their content or their architecture, translate between the viewer/reader's position and the exhibition. Or the binding may be that switch/vehicle.

What is the default/home button in all of this? Is the home that appears in this publication always a switch back into the room of the installation or to "home buttons" everywhere? One switch could then be a distributed/repeated component in the texts, an icon a sound etc. which has an analog rather than a digital presence.

I am using Alfred Jarry's pretend patent applications in seminar and studio this spring. They are, as you probably know, hilarious texts which describe three very ordinary objects: gloves, slippers and a cane. They are described in a way which materializes all of their functions and their precise utility in translating between environments:

between the feet and the floor or between the cold and one's hands. The patents are interesting to the suspension project because they are domestic objects and because the objects are vehicles, fittings or attachments. That sends my thinking in another direction where it is not an assemblage of texts where one can simply observe the different format comparatively but where the entire publication has some vehicularity in relation to the rest of the space. If so what is it translating between?

I must have a juvenile sense of humor but I love those comedians like Professor Irwin Corey and Victor Borge. Professor Irwin Corey was like Alfred Jarry, substituting nonsense into dense scientific explications. He was always on the Mike Douglas Show. Well the substitution of sounds for punctuation has by now become a bit tired, but Borge did something where the protocol was to substitute next sequential numbers for either numbers or words which sound like numbers in speech. For instance, "He placed his hand on his five-head and cried that his two chance five make it in this business was o-five. Twice and five all...etc." Something feels a little funny about mentioning these things because of their power and their cuteness, but certainly there are many language protocols which play with aspects of language other than meaning and so foreground their operatives as protocols: riddles, double dactyles, palindromes, etc. The problem with some of these things is that they are recursive and self-reflexive which is the wrong species of order to introduce into a project like this. But it is good to know why.

More interesting are those kinds of texts where the sounds and the rhythms of the words overtake meaning or the protocol for the use of words has simply shifted and words are another kind of comfort or fitting that has to do with their sound and the pleasure of saying them or some kind of virtual architecture which keep cueing them up and repeating them. Something a little different from a chant or a mantra. I think of T.S. Eliot's one section of the Wasteland where he keeps using rock, water, rock and no water. Of course that is crafted to be emotional and so it is a little different. And something like Finnegans Wake is crafted to be a puzzle and so it is annoying and impossible. Currently I repeat over and over again "You" "Don't" "That is Why" "That's why" "Person and You" "You don't" "And that is why" "And that is what I told you" "And that is what I am trying to tell you." And this is, for some reason, very fun. I keep trying to find something here. There is someone at school, who has been trained as a philosopher and so he inserts the same kind of philosophical introductory phraseology into his speech over and over again. Actually, what he says repeatedly is "If you like," "If you like" as it turns out can be added almost anywhere in a sentence and it lends a kind of, if you like, sartorial posture etc. It is a protocol.

Now, after much thought I really see how spaces are switches, fittings, governors, etc. I see how they are common, routine, and naturally occurring. I see how they occur in active organizations and multiples and how a small detail can partially overwrite a larger context. A textual switch is harder at the moment only because there are so many possibilities. I have tried making switches in stories and I worked with a student last year who tried to identify a switch in a story and build

an architecture around it. But this is different.

Still, there must be something about the actual spatial rearrangement of the text. Because of the peculiar floating horizon you describe in the [accompanying] video, I kept thinking about what a horizon would be on a page, and what was "above the fold" and "below the fold" as journalists say. Usually when there are multiple texts they occur in columns, but this does not take advantage of the typical position of the hinge in a book. Kids books take advantage of the hinge in that they actually split the page horizontally, so that you can look at any top of the page aligned with any bottom of the page: give eyes to a different mouth etc. One would have to look beyond the (tedious) capability of these mechanisms simply to shuffle.

If one reads a text with a rock in your mouth, the rock is a vehicle of the text. If I am swinging a baseball bat against the wall while reading a text (out loud), the bat is a vehicle. How is the physical manipulation of the publication a kind of prop for some behavior?

How would a text be a kind of virtual switch or a summons to behavior or a governor to behavior? How would it prompt an affectation? Some of these things might be found somewhere in all of the content without really looking. But it is interesting to think about a virtual switch as a kind of reflex. Every time you hit the home key....

I have been writing a little bit about multiple active organizations which operate like summations. For instance, in Levittown construction protocols were synchronized. All the slabs were poured at once and the framing completed at once etc. This, a global summation across repeated elements, rather than the appearance of the house, was the dominant architecture. One way of switching or fitting those sites is to find a site in another repeated object or gadget. What difference, if any, does it make that the publication is a repeated element. Is every publication identical?

Jordan Crandall: Regarding your comments on the switching functions of the texts, vis-a-vis each other, the reader, the exhibition, and other organizations, we could (problematically) isolate four parts: 1. internal (texts as vehicles of translating other texts); 2. between reader and text (foregrounding writer/reader roles, assumed positions within the norms of editorial relations); 3. between reader, text, and exhibition setting (in its real/virtual totality) (could incl. positioning mechanisms within the exhibition context); 4. between reader, text, and other organizational structures/environments. We could think of the devices as: 1. textual (the textual codes themselves and their associations); 2. covering (exterior face, protective coating, overall aesthetic associations); 3. systematizing (contents, index, numbering/ordering scheme, unifying design tools); 4. binding (means of holding together and maintaining an order over time).

One of the most interesting things I want to accomplish in the exhibition is to infuse the objective visual planes with a beat, a physicalized mode of navigation, while simultaneously, bringing those beats to bear on the corporeal space. And the beat is a way of 'pacing' between the realms, trying to bring them together and inhabit them but not resolving them. So the rhythmic aspects are important fittings.

Visual, auditory, carnal. Pulses. I like the idea of 'the beat' as both a rhythm, and a habitualized mode of occupying a space (the cop's beat), and a journalistic mode that indicates the newsworthy, the happening, the scoop. Also I am very keen to pay attention to black oral traditions, where the beat becomes a structuring principle, as opposed to a linear one (beginning, middle, and end). So we're talking about speech and rhythmic protocols, and spatial ones, which employ/generate various fittings.

Is this a kind of "home" setting, a sort of rhythmic or articulatory dwelling-place? We are inhabiting speech with certain kinds of patterns that are domestications; beats to familiar rhythms that make us feel that we matter, we occupy, we belong "here." This leads to the questions that you raise about the default/home button. Does the home in the publication always switch back into the installation space or to "home buttons"? I like the idea that the home is a kind of recurrence-pattern, familiarized and dwelled-within in some way. We are talking about a particular home, a particular pattern, even though that home is different for everyone. So we should think of "this home" rather than "any home." I like the idea of using a switch that is a distributed and repeated component in the texts. Should it be a button? An icon? A recurring format or submerged string of codes?

I like very much that the entire publication could have this vehicular function, where it's a kind of vague, permeable entity that mediates between the reader and the space. It's translating between comprehension and spatial protocols. Or the publication could locate these vehicles/fittings as editorial objects -- it's objects could have that function. Or its binding/covering apparatus could have this function. "How is the physical manipulation of the publication a kind of prop for some behavior?" A summons to behavior or governor to behavior? And what kind of behavior do we want to evoke? How would it prompt it? When you mention "reflex" that gets me thinking of recurrence-pattern, habit, home.

What is the horizon of a page? The fold, literally and metaphorically, as in journalism. The hinge. Should the book hinge according to multiple horizons? The horizons, the orientational grounds, could evoke/correspond to the multiple spatial protocols and comprehension protocols.

Should we regard this publication as a kind of guidebook to constructing environments as "multiple active organizations"? A way of synchronizing protocols to construct this home, as the example you give in Levittown? So it sets forth a kind of distributed, suspensional architecture.

There is one aspect of publication that is good to work with, and that is its repetition, its ability to distribute a stable reproduced thing. It's an important condition, that can be used as is or subverted.

KE: There are a couple of things which I have been thinking about which address different aggregates the ideas you mention.

I didn't think about the horizon being the binding, but of course it really is. The horizon is a line that absorbs things like a vacuum. When you are looking at a run of stairs, or a set of shelves, you can

see less and less of the tops of the treads/shelves as they reach the horizon (wherever that is). It is the line where things disappear. And it is the same as the gutter of a book. The idea of horizon may even lead to constraints which were not originally in your video, unless it is broadly understood to be a place of hinge, or a place of disappearance-so that it may have many mechanical, visual and virtual understandings.

I have sometimes used Erasmus Colloquies as a model for my own writing. Erasmus wrote them as dialogues for teaching Latin, but sometimes they became more meaningful dialogues which were sometimes like stories and sometimes just broken snippets of speech which are very touching. Some merely exercise the language and so have a kind of nonsense. "Will you jump with me tonight Sir?" "Yes I will jump with you." Some sound like Beckett. I used them for a model when I was trying to write dialogues between people who represented different behaviors or chemical properties or species etc. An inert or explosive or binding or doubling conversation etc. I think about them here because I imagine that there might be many pieces of writing or overheard speech which we will want to compile in some way. To pretend that it is a kind of group colloquy might be one way. It occurred to me when thinking about sartorial protocols and baroque academic writing. Recently some was forwarded to me as part of a "bad writing" contest. You know how these things sound and they are a bit cliché.

Another content idea involves the switches and modulators of language. I was never taught to say things like "As you may already know," "Frankly..." "Luckily..." "It will come as no surprise" "I would agree with.." "I've got to be honest with you" "I would be remiss if I did not mention..." These are the introductory modulations which gentle people have learned by reading and listening. I love these things. I was on a group committee of fabulous faculty, all older and wiser and tenured. One of them was the leader and a lawyer and his speech was not only directly addressing practical problems, but it was full, full of introductory, modulatory phraseology. I read his e-mails like a comic strip and then copied these phrases in real life. And there are as many subtly mean exclusionary phrases. This is a little different from the "If you like" and more like that other meaning of protocols related to behavioral consensus.

I feel as if I am straying a bit, but I do feel convinced about the home idea that you articulate, home as distributive and repetitive. The actual handling of the publication probably will involve some repetitive gesture. Whatever the action of these "vehicles of the text" you might always hit one common repeated behavior at those home junctures.

JC: 'Home' might be then in the sense of 'habitation'--a mode or place of habituation. One habituates oneself to the cold, through the vehicle or fitting, as in Jarry's gloves. One gets used to something, adjusting the body to fit the conditions, and in so doing, in/habits. This is a mode and a place, and it comes after you habitualize something, you pattern it, and in some sense dwell within it, placing yourself, generating a place for yourself. The vehicle/fitting facilitates this recurrence, as a 'placing' mechanism. One of the interesting things

here is that it flips the vehicle/fitting into a psychological space, while it simultaneously operates tectonically.

KE: A few questions and tentative restatements: How does one find a distributed home that is suspended between environments? Home is not in the stationary places but rather in the transitional places which exist between formats and protocols. Home is sometimes miniaturized into transitional devices which are accustomed props or objects of habituation. "Beats" and adaptable icons/devices/binders provide handshake protocols between different environments found in the separate pages.

JC: I'm thinking that there are some standard page formatting devices that we could use. The first is page numbering. The page number on the bottom of the page indicates its order within the book's overall arrangement. What if we used that space to develop an alternate ordering scheme? I like the way that, for example, URLs have a hierarchy that allows you to glimpse (sometimes) the categorization and ordering schemes of web pages on a particular site. The ordering protocol might reflect the source.

Others devices are the naming, or branding, practices of the page, and footnoting protocols.

What if we made time our ordering basis? In other words, what if we structured some kind of routinization, some kind of cycling, some frequency unit? I've been thinking of our binding/adapting instrument as a rhythmic fitting or frequencer. If frequency is defined as the number of times any action or occurrence is repeated in a given period, or the number of periodic oscillations, vibrations, or waves per unit of time, calibrated in terms of a standard unit (hertz, equal to one cycle per second), it could just as well be expressed according to other protocols, arranging space according to repetitions and routines. So we might propose some such other protocol. For example, every day Madame X goes drinks 2.5 cups of coffee with a donut, gets the mail, and then cleans the entire house. So the way that she reads, and structures her world, is ordered according to her routine, which is in a sense her home setting. She sees through the scrim of the task to be done: between squirts of Windex see glimpses TV, but the dryer buzzes, the machines call. They help to pace her, providing units of measurement.

I like the idea that this is a set of figures, like Fig. 1, Fig. 389-392, Fig. www.sony.com/xxx, Fig. "Working Mom," etc. etc. also the .fig works as a computer filing protocol, like if you would organize your files in the fig folder---working.fig, 516.fig, etc. There is something wonderfully 'cross-platform' in the use of this. Also it's such an old form of linkage and reference, and carries with it those historical resonances

KE: I like the idea of figures, but just to recall some other ideas which have been present--they are also like brackets or windows. The whole thing is a kind of "stack" "stacks" but perhaps that has the wrong associations with tiresome hypertext stuff. Still it would be nice to have a way of referring to them which identified their togetherness or

their multiple nature.

I am trying now to think of the publication as a whole. I wonder if we might do more to establish a kind of rhythm within the pages themselves. The beat along the side could perhaps be used to greater effect. It is not a slow plodding heartbeat or rap beat. It is a technological beat, so maybe we need to correlate the beats of some of our texts: the meter, the rap song and others to this graphic rhythm, so that a human beat can exist within it.

JC: The frequency coordination rhythm on the side of the pages is part of the binding apparatus. Its model might be that of a conductor, who orchestrates a combination of elements into a temporary composition for the benefit of a listener/reader. Why not 'worry the note'? and call forth a configuration of parts? The sense of depth, of things laying atop each other, or a sense of competition, or at least, some kind of compositional orchestration. We might introduce more depth into this visual field. Perhaps also there might be noise, as opposed to pure signal: that as yet uncomprehended, semi-obscured, or blended, part, that eludes comprehension. I'm thinking of some other contemporary rhythmic phenomena, like lag.