

PLAYING THE URBAN

31st of March 2007

De Balie, Kleine-Gartmanplantsoen 10, Amsterdam – www.debalie.nl

Entrance is free but please make a reservation by sending e-mail to Mediastudies-fgw@uva.nl.

PROGRAM

13-14h Mobile Learning Game Kit

Speaker: **Jan Simons** (Associate Professor New Media Studies, University of Amsterdam)

The Mobile Learning Game Kit project is a cooperation between the Department of Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam, the Media Lab of the Hogeschool Amsterdam, and Waag Society. It is funded by SURF Netherlands. The aim of the project is to develop an educational game based on wireless and mobile media that allow students to gather information or ‘add’ information to specific sites. The MLGK should make it possible to transform an urban environment into a source of learning and a site for research in ways that are beyond the reach of traditional learning methods.

In the ‘proof-of-concept’ stage of the project we are developing a pilot for the Media Archeology course in the Masters program of Mediastudies. Students of that course have gathered information and developed the content of a first iteration of the game which will be played by first year undergraduates. The game focuses on the Nieuwendijk in the center of Amsterdam. The Nieuwendijk, a shopping street which runs from Dam Square to approximately Central Station, has hosted about 15 cinemas at different locations in different periods during the twentieth century. None of these cinemas have remained but they have left their traces in the Nieuwendijk. The type of cinemas and the filmprograms they offered developed along with the social and cultural dynamics of this street, which, in turn, were partly determined by demographics and city planning. With the game we want to build a virtual reconstruction of the Nieuwendijk, which will make these developments visible and accessible. In the pilot we focus mainly on the post WWII period, when the Nieuwendijk was the centre of an emerging new youth culture.

14-15h PlastiCity: A Game for Urban Planning

Speakers: **Mathias Fuchs** (Senior Lecturer, Programme Leader in Creative Technology, University of Salford) and **Steve Manthorp** (Special Project Manager, Bradford)

This presentation introduces a recently developed game for urban planning. The game, based on the architectonic visions and challenges of British architect Will Alsop is demonstrated, its features are explained, and a variety of planning processes, strategies and problems are shown in detail. The presenter demonstrates how to rethink and rebuild a city, using special wands

(tools) to change the city centre of Bradford (England). The technology and the gameplay of the UNREAL modification are demonstrated in gameplay and - on demand - at a scripting/programming level. Critical analysis and discussions investigate the potential, constraints and possible improvements of the urban planning tools currently developed.

15-15h30 break

15h30-16u30 Logo Parc (Jan van Eyck Academy)

Speakers: **Logo Parc** (Daniël van der Velden, Katja Gretzinger, Matthijs van Leeuwen, Matteo Poli, Gon Zifroni)

Logo Parc is a research project on design and public space, carried out at the Jan van Eyck Academy, Post-academic institute for research and production in fine art, design and theory. Commissioned by Lectoraat Kunst en Publieke Ruimte/Gerrit Rietveld Academy and Amsterdam University, and Premesla, Dutch Design Foundation, Logo Parc's original goals were to seek out the role of art and design in the symbolic regime of Amsterdam's prime construction site, the South Axis (Zuidas), where the economic and financial interests of The Netherlands are concentrated in a dense area of offices efficiently connected to transportation and information flows. From a critical interest in the emergence of the 'public-private partnership' as the hegemonic formula for today's public space practice, Logo Parc is now the site for a criticism on South Axis. At once, this criticism is aimed at the conceptions of public space that reveal themselves at South Axis, and at the role that design and art play in nevertheless sustaining its 'elan'. One of the outcomes of this position is a virtual model of South Axis, now titled *Discursive Surface*, that will be presented at De Balie in the context of *Playing the Urban*. Logo Parc research team: Gon Zifroni (spatial designer/game designer), Matthijs van Leeuwen (graphic designer), Katja Gretzinger (graphic designer), Matteo Poli (architect/editor), Daniel van der Velden (graphic designer/writer, advising researcher design).

16h30-17h30 On display: PlastiCity and Logo Parc

Playing the Urban is organised by the research project *Transformations in Perception and Participation: Digital Games* with the support of NWO, Maastricht University and the University of Amsterdam.