

June 20th, 2010 - Technical/Research Update

I've been pretty tied up with assessment over the last couple of weeks so don't have anything especially dramatic to report. The good news is Stage One of the MA is done, passed and I'm now starting on Stage Two which will focus pretty much exclusively on these developments. If you're interested, a brief video of the summary display of work and the written document for assessment can be found [here](#) (the video includes an installation of the Arduino/light sensor set up but is not very clear due to light conditions).

In terms of concept, I've now finished reading *Ground Control* by Anna Minton which looks at political trends in urban planning and other legislation to discuss the impacts of our changing uses of public space. A lot of her case studies are based in or around Manchester so I've got a few more ideas of where I might expand on some primary source research – hard to know how deep to get into some of that though. I've picked up a copy of *Real England* by Paul Kingsnorth now – similar issues but approached from a more local perspective it seems.



Dissected LED keyring

The physical development seems to be slotting itself into two distinct strands at the moment, interactive installation and This Belongs To object development. However, with no real experience in either of these kinds of projects, the technical research is taking longer than might be expected. I've picked up a cheap LED keyring/torch which I'm now essentially trying to reverse engineer; it'll be easy enough but I need to work out how to produce the components. Rapid Prototyping is a possibility; I need to get into the university engineering department to find out more and fear I shall have to learn yet another new programme. I can use AutoDesk Maya but I'm pretty sure the prototyping kit will use something else.



Processing Code Drawing

On the plus side, I've got my head round Processing a bit more this week, following a workshop at Madlab (Manchester) where I managed to draw... a house. This feels painfully basic but I guess you have to start somewhere and I need to learn the basics if I'm going to work out how to bring audio/video into the installation with the light sensor. Again, I've no experience of coding so it really is starting from scratch. The plan for next week is to run some tests with LEDs and the existing Belongs To cards to get an idea of how many LEDs I might need to cast an effective shadow and then attempt drawing up a more specific diagram for the design. When I have that in place I can hopefully start looking in to the making. I'm working with a lot of unknown quantities at

the moment so any suggestions (especially practical ones) are highly welcomed!

Here's the code used to make the image above:

```
/* House
```

```
First attempt at Processing sketch made during workshop run by Evan Raskob  
of Openlab Workshops
```

```
Probably full of really bad practice, but hey I'm learning
```

```
ellipse(flowerX+10,flowerY-5, 10,10);  
ellipse(flowerX+15,flowerY-5, 10,10);  
ellipse(flowerX,flowerY-5, 10,10);  
fill(250,238,10);  
ellipse(flowerX+10,flowerY, 7.5,7.5);  
}
```

continues...