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Concept, Graphics, Editing and Real World Samples by Glittermouse  
Audio Samples, Processing and Composition by Ne7

**With thanks to the MMU technicians and all survey participants**

## Background to the Installation

Glittermouse has recently been developing a new approach to drawing by employing a combination of digital and traditional media in live installations. These are made by projecting digital images on to wall mounted paper then using drawing methods to interact with the projected images. Though photographic outcomes and the resulting drawing remain as documentation, the focus of the work is the live creation, where the act of drawing becomes a performance and the process is inherent within the display.



Above and Left: Alternative Party Art and Technology Exhibition, Helsinki, October 2009



In a live context, the work comprises of a projection of gradually changing photographic images, pixel and vector graphics edited with digital video. These are traced around, drawn over, collaged into and painted on throughout the duration of the installation, allowing the piece to grow organically across the page. As different projected images fade in and out, the marks of the drawing remain to capture moments when the images were projected. As images return, sections of drawing are realigned with the original projection or become populated by moving image.

The work depicts the built environment layered with natural objects and sounds found within it, and previous installations have aimed to explore our experience of cities, using visual representation to question how our interaction with urban space layers meaning over places and artefacts which exist outside of imposed systems of physical and social order. The work utilises the contrast between still and moving image to explore notions of Place and Space, focusing on the duality of transience and permanence in an urban environment. In doing so, it also references to the contrast between the meticulously planned and the delightfully unexpected which exists at the boundary between 'natural' and 'artificial'. As the outcome and process crosses the divide between traditional and digital imaging in producing the visual elements, this subsequent layering of images and techniques reflects that within the environment both physically and on a human level; we layer our lives, living in close proximity to one another yet never meeting, simultaneously fulfilling many roles in our work and personal lives, remaining contained within structures both social and physical and finding ourselves less able to interact with our overwhelming environment.



Norvun Sunday, Manchester, March 2009

**After successful installations in Europe and the UK this work has now been developed into 3D for this first fully spatial installation.**

# Marking the Territory; My Space, Your Space or Our Space?

**Marking the Territory** is a visual and audio installation which draws on the writings of Georges Perec and Marc Auge to tell stories of Place and Space. The installation explores cities by introducing video, photographic and hand drawn digital graphics via multiple projections into an environment containing laser etched objects. Traditional drawing methods interact with these objects and images, using the contrast between movement on film and static drawing to describe the duality of transience and permanence in the urban landscape. The work forms a live installation which illustrates human interaction with city spaces and questions issues around public ownership.

“Space is a doubt: I have constantly to mark it, to designate it. It’s never mine, never given to me, I have to conquer it.” Georges Perec

The history of human aesthetic interaction with environment can be traced back in an interwoven thread throughout current knowledge of our ancestors even to pre-civilized man. From the earliest examples of cave paintings, through Ancient Egyptian wall reliefs with later Roman/Christian interventions (and homologues in a range of cultures) through to the modern world and the explosion of the New York graffiti scene in the 1970’s, interaction has been at the heart of our predilection for writing on walls and the subsequent development of a diverse art genre loosely categorised as ‘Street Art’ only exemplifies this. Graffiti has become a source and focus in this work, both for its apparent attempt to ‘own’ the environment through the mechanism of the signature (what could be more symbolic of staking a claim to property than writing your name on it?) and for the performance itself, the moment of interaction, the “perfect gestures of violence” as described by De Certeau. That the expression crosses the boundaries of the law consolidates the importance of this action and it becomes a statement of subversion as well as ownership that is in itself recognised by many graffiti writers. “Graffiti is an act, an action, the result does not matter” states Espo in Sebastian Peiter’s documentary *Guerilla Art*.

Graffiti is of course just one example of a visual attempt to own or control environment and these are not always placed outside the law, rather used to uphold it. Society and the institutions which, it may be argued necessarily exist to control and manage the population living within it, also stake their claims within the city, dividing and partitioning space with the visual language of non-place... Marc Auge discusses modern urban landscapes, which, he says “Have the peculiarity that they are defined partly by the words and texts they offer us: their ‘instructions for use’, which may be prescriptive (‘Take right-hand lane’), prohibitive (‘No smoking’) or informative (‘You are now entering the Beaujolais region’).” These signs and symbols which form such an intrinsic part of our everyday aesthetic backdrop define our spaces and dictate the manner in which we move through them. According to Auge, they “establish the traffic conditions of spaces in which individuals are supposed to interact only with texts, whose proponents are not individuals but ‘moral entities’ or institutions”.

This installation visualises various environmental texts and refers to space (constantly moving, always in flux) and place (a sense of permanence, rooted in a unique local history) in an attempt to explore how these factors affect our relationship with our environment and how we attempt to make it our own. It does not attempt to claim the city like the graffiti writer or define it like the road sign. In the words of Perec; “We shall never be able to explain or justify the town. The town is there. It’s our space and we have no other. We were born in towns. We grew up in towns. It’s in towns that we breathe. When we catch the train it’s to go from one town to another town. There is nothing inhuman in a town unless it is our own inhumanity.” What this installation achieves through its investigation is diagrammatical; a catalogue of experiences, interrogations and observations, a visual record of space and the writings used by various entities in an attempt to gain possession of it. “To write” Perec observes, is “to try meticulously to retain something, to cause something to survive; to wrest a few precise scraps from the void as it grows, to leave somewhere a furrow, a trace, a mark or a few signs.



## Works Cited:

- Perec, G. (1974) *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*. Revised edition. London: Penguin  
De Certeau, M. (1984) cited in MMU (2009) *Strategies of Thought: Course Reader*. Manchester MMU  
Peiter, S. (2009) *Guerilla Art*. London: Laurence King Publishing  
Auge, M. (1995) cited in MMU (2009) *Strategies of Thought: Course Reader*. Manchester MMU

## Note on Audio Content

Location audio has been recorded for this project in cities including Manchester, Brighton, London, Frankfurt, Dublin and Gothenburg and uses environmental samples to support visual concepts by exploring ways that sound is used to define space. Pedestrian crossings, sirens, car horns and indicators as well as the sounds we carry round in our own private spaces (think MP3 players and car sound systems) are all referenced as samples in the music which has been composed specially for this installation.

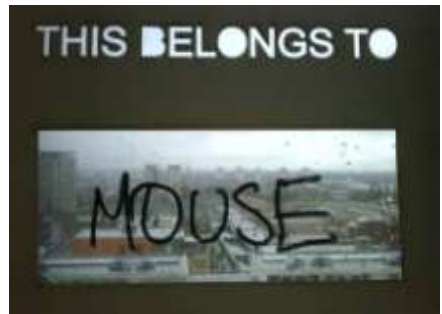
Additional sounds used include samples of the laser etching of images onto the objects displayed and birdsong recorded at night, where confused by fluorescent lighting, they sing as if it is daybreak throughout the hours of darkness.

Many of the audio tools used to create and mould the sounds and samples are constructed by Ne7 from electronic parts, recycled household items and old electronic goods. Additional samples have also been captured on handheld mobile devices by Glittermouse. There has then been a collaborative process resulting in a series of samples and tracks which have been edited into the moving image by Glittermouse. At the evening event of April 19<sup>th</sup> Ne7 will be mixing found sound and live location recordings alongside music composed for the installation, employing a range of these homemade and customized playback devices and effects units.



Above and Left: Modified Casio SA1 keyboard and homemade filter processing unit by Ne7

# THIS BELONGS TO



## My Space, Your Space or Our Space? What Belongs to You..?

In addition to the installation work, Glittermouse has just launched a new public urban interactivity. *This Belongs To* invites participants to share moments of Urban Ownership by using laser cut cards to project their name (or other identifying mark) directly onto the urban environment. Best experienced when it's sunny, the cards do still provide opportunities to Mark your Territory on duller days and even potentially at night.

**Please feel free to take one of the cards supplied. You may also use them to interact with the installation.**

It's easy to get involved:

- 1) Write your name or other identifying mark on the acetate panel (preferably with a marker pen)
- 2) Go out, be creative and make it yours! Don't forget to take photos!
- 3) Upload photos of your Urban Ownership at: <http://www.glittermouse.co.uk/urban-ownership.html>

Following moderation for proper use all contributions will be displayed at [www.glittermouse.co.uk](http://www.glittermouse.co.uk)

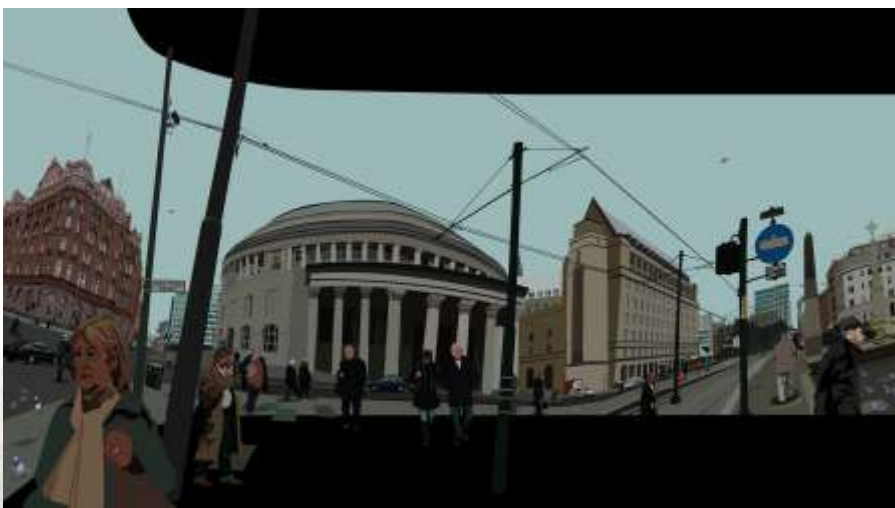
## Saint Peter's Square



Completed canvas, April 2010



Original digital sketch produced in Photoshop using vector layers



Modified digital sketch as projected on to canvas  
Top 10 finalist in the Freestyle Graphics category  
Breakpoint, Bingen, Germany, April 2010

In March 2009 Glittermouse was commissioned to produce a 3 x 1 meter canvas inspired by the city of Manchester. The brief was open and flexible with the only specification that the outcome should appear modern with a simplified visual language. One question asked by the client that aimed to inform the work with reference to the desired simplicity was 'What would Lowry have painted if he were still alive today?' Taking this as a starting point, it was decided to produce a digital sketch in vectors first which would reduce the image to a series of shapes of flat colour. It was then easy to consult frequently with the client and make changes as needed. The location was selected for the contrasting architectural styles and busy central setting including transport links and park area. When an agreed digital image was finalised (pictured above), it was projected onto the canvas and techniques similar to those used in the Marking the Territory installation were used to plot some of the main shapes on to the surface. The sketch was then transferred to a mobile hand held device which enabled the details and colours to be easily studied at the canvas. Working initially from a series of photographic images, the final composition compilation is an impression of the place rather than a captured point in time. It is displayed here with the original digital sketch projected back on to the surface.

## City Poems Series 2



Access Required at All Times



Constance Street



Cycle Path



Fire Escape Keep Clear



No Gods



Where Are You Now?

In 2009 Glittermouse produced a series of digital prints developed from the finished drawings of installations. Using digital techniques to combine scanned sections of the drawings with source photographic images, these sought to further explore the visual language of the work and provide possible developments for the use of formal elements. Following trials with projecting onto laser etched images, the aesthetic qualities of the documentary photographs inspired a second series of these images which are displayed here for the first time. Titled *City Poems Series 2* these combine images of the laser etching trials with photographs gathered during the preparation of *Marking the Territory*. The images concentrate on environmental texts and continue the exploration of public ownership.