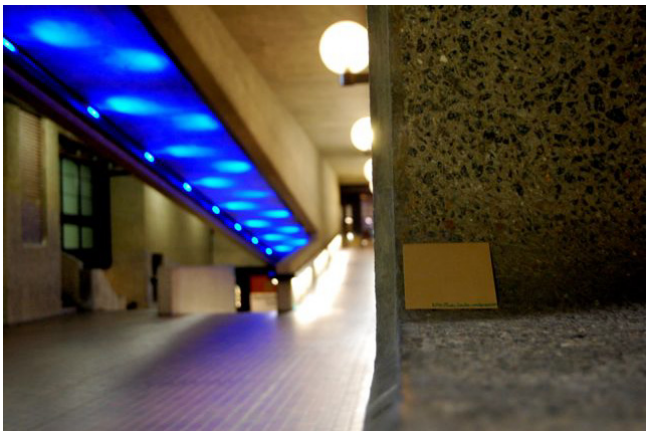


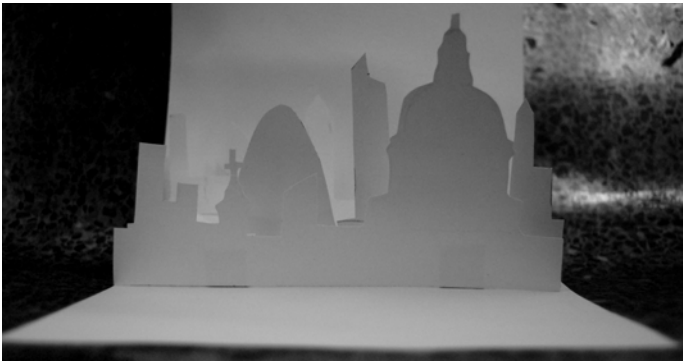
opposite: an example of one of the clue-objects.
top: an object & envelope at Borough Market, with South-
Westminster Station
bottom: a clue in background



this page, top: a clue tucked away in the Barbican
bottom: it was fun to discover nooks & crannies to hide the notes in
opposite, top: some clues were left in plain sight of passerbys
bottom: envelopes waiting to be discovered on Old Street

It started as an assignment for a Media Studies class taught by Giles Lane of Proboscis. From there, I began to develop the idea an experiment to toy with the idea of London as a site of ludic fantasy, in opposition to the stark routines of daily commuter life. I wanted to engage citizens in play, but in a subtle way — to me, it was very important that the player make a conscious choice to step out of the mundanity of everyday life and become a participant.

This project is a treasure hunt, a game, and an exploration of what it means to play in the city.



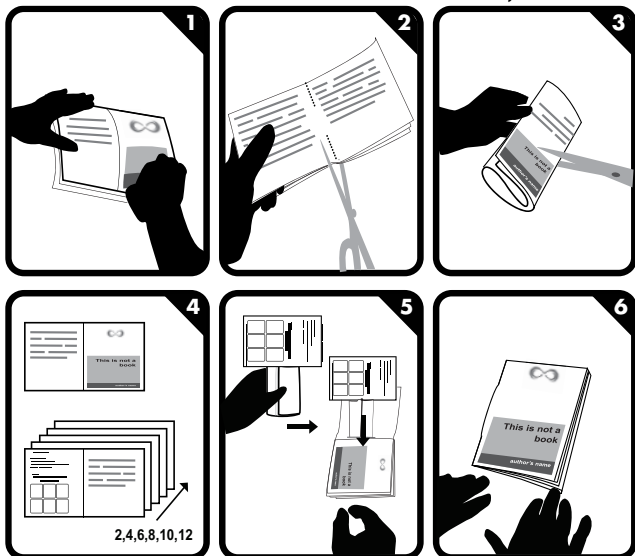
Ludic London: A Documentation

Lauren Dyson

2009-12-06

Made by Lauren Dyson for City As Material Course
Vassar College International Study Program
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<http://cityasmaterial.wordpress.com/>
<http://ludiclondon.wordpress.com/>

made with www.bookleteer.com from [proboscis](http://proboscis.com)



I wanted to include aspects of collaborative puzzle-solving and designing for the hive mind, as exemplified in the Alternate Reality Games of Jane McGonigal. The ideas of fantastical narrative on a miniature scale within the city are derived from the work of Charles Simonds, who creates dwellings for an imaginary civilization of minute people in lower Manhattan.



Background & Inspiration

I drew inspiration from major works of ludology, the study of games, and ludic theory. The word "ludic" is derived from the Greek ludos and means any philosophy where play is the prime purpose of life. I wanted to elaborate on the idea of people as *homo ludens*, or Man the Player.



ludology (noun): From the Latin ludus (game) + -logy. The still-young field of analyzing games from a multi- and inter-disciplinary perspective.

I was ultimately satisfied with the knowledge that people had hopefully found the objects a subtle, enjoyable disruption to the daily routine. Even though the response on the website wasn't as widespread as I had hoped, I was glad to hear that it made at least one person stop and think.

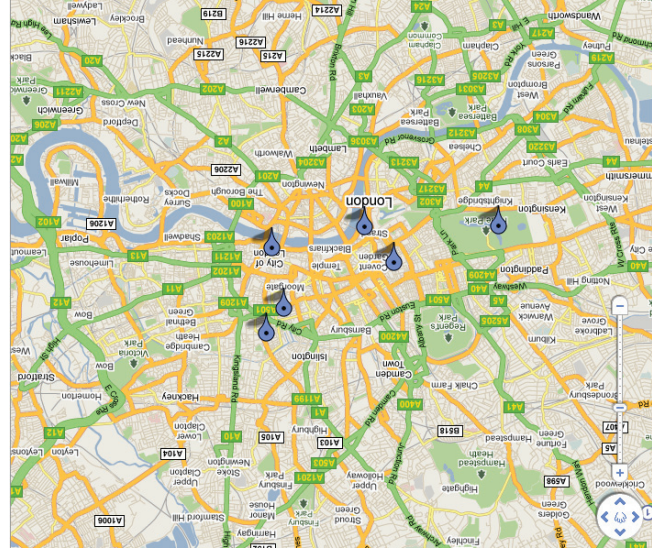


After distributing the clues around London over December 1st and 2nd, I was unsure what kind of response to allow for players to learn more about the game and comment, if they wish; I was happy to see that at least one person found and envelope, visited the blog and left a comment (which can be seen below). I'm unsure how many other people actually found the clues, and how many were just thrown away. When I revisited each site two days later to check, all of the envelopes and pop-ups were gone.

Conclusion

Westminster Underground Station, platform 5
Southwark Cathedral/Borough Market, western staircase
Queen's Gate, Hyde Park
Old Street Station, exits 1 & 2
Piccadilly, between Forum & Mason and Barbour
The Barbican Centre, near parking garage entrances

Locations



I decided to create a secret trail of clues and objects for the people of London. At six different locations around the city, I hid a series of small brown envelopes containing handmade objects or notes. Each envelope provided a hint to another site on the trail.



Each envelope also had the address to a Wordpress blog I set up explaining a little more about the project and providing a platform for discussion if necessary.



Challenges

The biggest logistical problem I encountered while carrying out this project was how to protect the paper objects from rain, wind, people cleaning up trash and other potentially destructive forces. I decided the best plan of attack was to distribute multiple copies in different hiding places in the same location to increase the chances that one or more would survive intact. I made 6-7 multiples for each site.



Process

I chose to create delicate, hand-crafted pop-up scenes for most of my object-clues. I wanted to make something that seemed personal and slightly fragile within the context of the harried brick-and-mortar surrounding environment, in order to inspire the feeling that the viewer has stumbled upon something special that needs or deserves attention. I hoped that creating this kind of visual interest would increase the chance of the finder following up on curiosity by visiting the blog.