

Four times I've stayed here now and I still can't get used to the myriad stench of Midtown. Food, flesh, waste and vapour force a sticky taste down your nose and throat, clogging breath and blurring concentration. There's a pocket between 23rd and SoHo that manages to escape it though, when the sweet odors of restaurants and take-outs manages to cover the subway steam and clouds of gasoline. The Lower East Side almost gets away

- Rudyard Kipling.

"The first condition of understanding a foreign country is to smell it!"

I can't be sure I acknowledged anyone on either journey. That's a poison mistake for a stranger, leaving you closed to any number of potential chats and hints. I should have learned better from Quinns. The other day I caught The Girl grinning as she listened in to a couple opposite us chatting on the way to PS. 1: A high school senior reading Keats (The Girl would later correct me and tell me it was, in fact, Shelley) on his way to deepest Queens found himself subject to a potted lecture from an elderly former teacher from out of town on the origins of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. Both of them seemed to enjoy it.

Chelsea.

are more pedestrian, so I pitch for the Manhattan bound E-train to proclaim the existence of a regular service to Babylon. My tastes around their faces to sleep in the neon chaos; loud LED signage homeless men and women sit with faces swallowed in blankets while they prepare to huddle along the Long Island Railroad; sights and sounds of Sutphin Boulevard: Future-hangar trains roar Twice in the last five days my obliterated eyes have dealt with the

Sutphin Boulevard, New York, NY
Posted on June 23, 2009



Expeditions in Paper Science

Matthew Sheret

Sometimes I forget that we can parse the world without a mobile device.

leaving one more inclined to spend time alone thinking. Street, the familiarity/contempt for streets that don't surprise you tourists look up while the natives look down when they walk the city, rather than just tourists: it's often remarked that do. It's also an interesting way of persuading locals to engage of new-builds in a way that only major retail developments usually from the 50's", "Why isn't that better designed, it's only two years ago that they know of the temporal context.") That's so ugly it must be gets to instantly judge the architecture and its suitability within There's a politics with a small p' element to this, as every viewer

chronology.

The numbers are date stamps, declaring the year that the building either side of the dividing line went up. It's a subtle overlaying of data that provides an instant narrative for street you walk down. Shopfronts and restaurants are instantly contextualised and one begins to judge the make up of the town as a haphazard

front of - or, more specifically, the divide between two buildings. On St. Laurent the pavement is marked at intervals by small rectangular plaques, each of which has room for two numbers. It's the work of a moment to join these up to the buildings they sit in

The gently augmented reality of St. Laurent
Posted on July 27, 2009

The British Experimental Rocket Group

Posted on August 20, 2009

I'm sober by the time I get back to Baron's Court, but it doesn't stop me pointing at my arm and ranting like a lunatic about the sigil burned into it: BERG. The Girl is subject to my head pouring forth ideas and plans, future cities of language and paper being spat out like erratic spreadsheet print-outs. "There won't be a day that goes by over the next month where I don't think 'Man, I wish I was in BERG!'"...

Last night I had the pleasure of attending Schulze & Webb's 'complimentary re-branding seminar', as the design firm entered a new phase and blossomed into BERG: the British Experimental Rocket Group. Decked out in customised lab-coats, the team looked and sounded excited, terrified, enthusiastic, and nostalgic. To a man they also wound up being inspirational.

Matt Jones greeted me on entry, stamping my hand with the company logo and pointing out retro-future slides flitting away on the projector: "Look, that's Quatermass, he's important. That's my favourite: a man on his mobile looking at a radiation test. That's President Kennedy... I think he was important." At any point when not wildly gesticulating his hands were stuffed into the pockets of his lab coat, every bit the factory foreman. All night he was drinking or transporting an array of alcoholic beverages in pint glasses, but in my mind he will be holding a mug of tea, forever full, animated with ideas and futures.

Jack Schulze was wild-eyed, goading Warren Ellis with questions while apologising for the last time we crossed paths - he was very drunk then. Last night he was simply excited. I saw maps in his eyes and the shape of cities, rolling landscapes with his face

What an incredible thing. He and The British Experimental Rocket Group have become ideas – vague, powerful concepts that have all the potential to change the world or dissipate trying. Who wouldn't want to be a part of that?

alone.
 first time in five years, that he no longer lives or dies on his name conception, execution and reception of a product means, for the identity. To place a distance, a logo, an idea between the Webb's closure meant no longer facing the world with his own struck with the sheer scale of the transformation: Schuzize & By the time he careened over to Paperfurniture Corner he had been Scientist that actually took over The World/Silicone Roundabout. goggles perched on his head, looking like the Future Villain text. Last night I caught him just before he drifted home, rocket clue me into new ways of thinking about fiction and distribution of Jones put together with myself and James Eridle, essentially to Matt Webb I've met only once before, at a map pub summit that

dances in a corner)
 handing him atomic tea and bacon sandwiches while Schuzize yelling "I need more time!" as Jones and Webb patiently watch working role, stripped to a vest over coding and circuit boards (I never met Tom Armitage, but I imagine he fills some uninged and histories. It was stunning.
 printed in browsers. AR interfaces shaping journeys and people

back pocket.
 I've got a couple more days here and a ticket to Montreal in my and fills me with an urge to hurtle off and conquer things. I know There's a pace that, as a visitor, just winds me up like a dynamo again, but I know I'd have trouble living here: it's the momentum. coming back here. I know I'm having an amazing time here, surprises and memories in equal measure and I know I'll keep I know its effect on the soles of my feet, I know it'll bottle up it here for me to use. I know it always looks its best on the way in, There are fragments of this town I know off by heart now, parts of

- "Myriad Harbour", The New Pornographers
*Looking for something to do.
 Stranded at Bleeker and Broadway,
 (Ah, who cares, you always end up in the city)
 I took a plan, I took a train,*

territory.
 weren't listening. Clearly we'd stumbled into A.C. Newman money. Swinging between silent tears and bitter sniping they devastate his family, not least because she owed him a lot

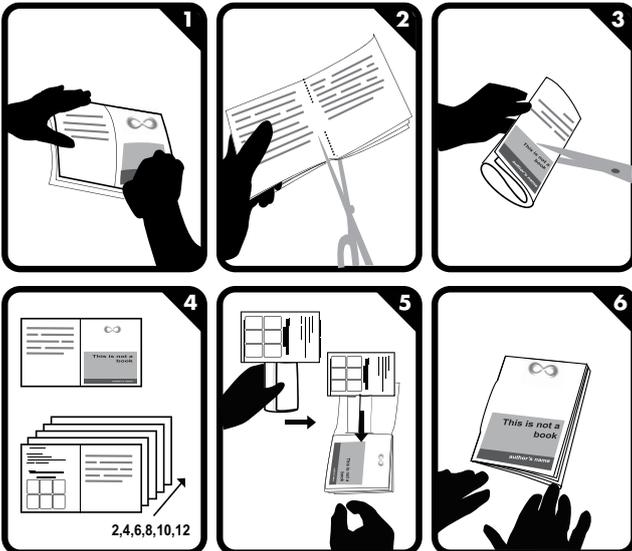
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Sutphin Boulevard, New York, NY
 The gently augmented reality of St. Laurent
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made with Diffusion Generator by



with it too, unless the wind brings in the smell of the atrophying waterfront, a salt swamp. The combination is scattering, disorientating, New York's own brew of dementia and non-specific infection to compliment its schizophrenic and insomniac tendencies. It's not that the city never sleeps, it just can't.

"When we get out of the glass bottle of our ego and when we escape like the squirrels in the cage of our personality and get into the forest again, we shall shiver with cold and fright. But things will happen to us so that we don't know ourselves. Cool, unlying life will rush in."
 - D.H Lawrence

When I get online I find a missive from Sarah including good wishes and a couple of choice quotes. 'Cool, unlying life' seems to rush in by the bucketload, especially when we watch the Mermaid Parade on Coney Island. The rain cracks the crowd and I can feel the water soaking into the soles of my Converse. My photo is taken by Japanese tourists wearing ponchos, an example of the Drowned Rat/Brit Abroad species in the wild. That said, everyone here is woefully under-dressed: it's the point of the parade. Still I love the broken camp of Coney, a ramshackle tank track trying to fend off reconstruction. There are reams of dockland here that cry out for demolition, decaying housing stretching along Brooklyn avenues, years of unchecked growth pulling down stairwells and rooftops, only stray graphitti and shattered bottles leaving evidence of human interaction.

The rain followed us into Williamsburg too, but Bedford Avenue still offered up a few treats: music on the street, terrible art installations, a flock of checked shirts and a \$3 bargains in a thrift store. In one coffee shop we sat uncomfortably close to a couple going through a painful break up. They were both in bands about to go on tour, he in the U.S., she in Europe. She knew it would