Cover: Disruptive

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Peripatetic Free-spaces *Oriana M. Cole*

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On April 16th, 2012 Los Angeles Mayor Villareigosa announced the future plans for a citywide bicycle sharing system. In a city notorious for its concrete freeway landscapes and intense dependency on private transportation, this change in the mobility identity of the city will transform the city and its form. For me, this presents a unique opportunity to address another of LA's critical problem: public and open spaces. This thesis focuses on charging the city with a new system that will take advantage of the idiosyncratic freeway landscape of the region to create opportunities for public space. It will enact several mobility propositions to alleviate and deviate traffic and then, use liberated freeway sections to create transient and dynamic recreational spaces. Named free-spaces, this new system of public spaces will activate the notorious infrastructure by instigating flash program opportunities for public use resulting in a vigorous intersection of activity, public invention, urban life and the LA identity.

To begin, this proposal requires two components in order for this the system of spaces to come to life. Both components need to coexist in order to alleviate the traffic and congestion of the city and be able to liberate certain sections of the freeway in order to make the public spaces.

The first mobility proposal which was to be a bicycle sharing program, has actually come to life since the beginning of the research. As I mentioned earlier, the city is launching a 16-million dollar bike sharing system. As promising as the bicycle program is, however, one must realize that a bicycle has limitations as a form of















Interestates system in the United States was established in 1

mobility. Especially with the natural and built landscapes like that of Los Angeles. After careful analysis of existing and successful programs, it came to my attention that most of the successes are due to that they work in conjunction with a mass transit system, be it bus, metro, or subway. Therefore, a system to serve the scale of an area like LA metro will only be truly successful if it is supplementary to a wider-reaching mass transit system.

Thus, the second component of the mobility proposals is a mass transit light rail system that will attach itself to the existing freeway structures. This mass transit system will have two primary functions. It will be used to move people and commuters through the area by adding a layer of vehicles that attach itself to the slab edges and ride next to the freeway. And, the second function will be a part of the public system of transportation and close and deviate sections of the freeway so that they may be used for public and community use by moving space-making elements like furniture and program vessels onto the liberated and vast freeway slabs from storage stations.

As a transit system it will appreciate the existing vehicular infrastructure around Los Angeles and attach itself to the many miles of concrete slabs. It will move at increased speeds and help to reduce traffic by offering the public an alternative mode of transportation that is more efficient, more economic, more environmentally friendly, but travels on many of the same paths they are already accustomed to.

As a public space maker, the system will be directed





by the neighbors and community dwellers via social networking infrastructure. The system in place will have a complex network that interconnects itself with existing social media outlets thereby allowing the user direct access to conduct an event. With the development of an application for smartphones and new media, it will available to all users to peruse, investigate, or use, at their will. Using the application the citizen will choose at what time and at what location they are to site their preferred community event and the system will program all the requirements for furniture and all the necessary elements to be moved to be moved from the storage stations to the site events. The public will be notified of an upcoming closure and event by digital billboards strewn across the city as well as updated notifications to their phones or emails. And the system will contain machinery that will enable citizens to move their elements from the vehicles onto the slabs from the storage stations. Additionally, each storage station will similarly serve dual functions: as transfer stations for people to get on and off the transit system but also as nurseries and storage stations for space-making elements.

Although the idea of closing down freeway sections has begun to be inserted in the collective mind of the city with events such as the infamous Carmeggedon of 2011 and increasing events like CicLAvia and others that look to the public to reclaim the streets. However, it is important to consider that this proposal presents itself as a transformational process in urban spaces and life, so it must begin at a less invasive condition and gradually grow its influence across the city from there















.So, while eventually it is envisioned that the freespaces take their place whenever and wherever they would like across the city, at the beginning it must be noted that the spaces be limited to one day per week, for right now Sundays from 10am to 2am Monday morning.

The proposal results in a taxonomy of spaces with shifting locations, uses, qualities. It will take identity in the city as an additional layer or ecology of previously devoid public character. This system will change the nature of freeway infrastructure from divisive, jarring, and out of reach to human scale to an increasingly connective and open spaces that patch together the divided areas and neighborhoods of Los Angeles. With their diverse and necessary public activities taking place like regionally productive, active, and cultural programs, these free-spaces will act beyond a passive park or a latent green space but will instead activate the notorious infrastructure with a vigorous intersection of spaces, activities, public invention and urban life.





Peripatetic Free-spaces Presentation Outline

I. Introduction

The city of Los Angeles lacks open spaces. The existing open and green spaces are not only banal and restrictive in their characteristics but are also becoming increasingly privatized and inaccessible to the public.







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5. Wuhan, China, Wuhan Public Bikes
Bikes: 70,000, Stations: 1,218
6. Paris, France, Velib Bikes: 20,000, Stations: 1,450

5





 Barcelona, Spain, Bicing, Bikes: 6,000, Stations: 417
 Washington, D.C, USA, Capital Bikeshare Bikes: 2343, Stations: 156
 Montreal, Canada, BIXI Montreal Bikes: 5,050, Stations: 405
 London, UK, Boris Bikes Bikes: 8,000, Stations: 468



Los Angeles Bike Share • Planned system (400+ Stations) • Expected growth (1000+ Stations)



The fabric of the city calls for space beyond the existing passive green areas and dull hardscapes for recreation, but rather needs a system of spaces that emphasizes the heterogeneity of the Los Angeles identity and provides a multiplicity and flexibility of use. This thesis focuses on charging the city with a new system that will take advantage of the idiosyncratic freeway landscape of the region to create opportunities for public use. It will enact several mobility propositions to alleviate traffic and then, use liberated freeway sections to create transient and dynamic recreational spaces. These free-spaces will activate the notorious infrastructure resulting in a vigorous intersection of spaces, activities, public invention and urban life.

II. Proposal
a. Mobility Components
1. LA bike share program
2. Mass Transit
3. Traffic deviations
4. Bringing the public to the freeways
b. Space Making

Event location finding

Event notifications

Moving structure and elements

c. Spaces

Possible programs
Event examples
Qualities

III. Conclusion



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Program

Linear Requirements

Active	Recreational	Productive

Marathon	26 mi.
Half Marathon	13 mi.
5k	3.1′
Music festival	.20 - 1.7 mi.
Fashion show	600' - 900'
Market	600' - 900'
Wine/Food festival	300' - 900'
Skatepark	500'
Freeway Soccer	390' = .07 mi.
Freefield Hockey	300' = .06 mi

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Basketball	94′
Baseball (Diamond)	90'
Beer garden	80′
Outdoor cinema	80'
Tennis	78′
Volleyball	60'

P



J1: two questions, how is this connected to the existing metro system ? my second question, is that (points to drawing) a specific location or is that an abstraction? Oriana: it was based off a specific location and later abstracted.

J1: and the first question?

Oriana: for the first question, actually the system would be attached to the existing freeway infrastructure so the map would read exactly the same

J1: so it doesn't intersect with the existing metro system?

Oriana: at the moment, no.

J1: hm..ok...

J2: say yes.. I mean I think there are many questions that come up when we start to imagine an entire new infrastructure for the city of los angeles. Question like how does this (something) system function? Same with access to these new platforms, how does intengrate with the existing infrastructure? And what is the reality of actually unloading for one day (something something something about turf).

Oriana: well there would actually be several strategies for making the space...it wouldn't just be the furniture or unrolling the turf it would also include many sports programs or surface programs that could be painted on and left there for future use or to fade alone.

J3: to me oriana the project seems to be caught between being either too much or not enough. Which is to say that the idea of like, an occupy freeway, in context of atmosphere of seeing public spaces be contested in a way it hasn't ben in several decades and the notion the



occupying the freeways which are very (something) and something something. what I like about the project is that it relates to.. it was only 100 years ago that jaywalking was invented as a crime. the streets had previously been public spaces and cars were unwelcome. ...occupation of streets as anything besides cars was a crime is in itself a crime. ... that said, I think that right now the project is caught between, there's a version of the thesis that's the like insurgent occupation which would be a toolkit, or a system of spray cans or quick surveying boxes in which one would go overnight and paint a whole bunch of baseball fields or basketball courts and start using them and it would be not at all endorsed by the city but it would be a sort of insurgent action and that I think would be very interesting and I would love to see that kind of insurgent retaking of space. OR, it would be infrastructure. So if your aim is insurgency then you're proposing too much architecture, if your aim is infrastructure a kind of top-down, like Peñalosa style, Ciclovia, let's rearrange (something) because what made something like the Ciclovia work in Bogota was that it was introduced in combination with a city of bikeways that were accessible throughout the week which one became aware of if one came out on a Ciclovia day. And it was also done in combination with something like (something millennium) ..Ciclovia was a way of getting people out and make them aware of a whole bunch of other stuff that was going on in the city that can and should have changed how you used it. And so if that's the case, if it's the kind of Peñalosa style movement then you're missing all the other parts that such an action on the body of the freeway could make us aware of. So it should be .. whether it's the



existing amenities or a whole set of other amenities that you're proposing but the point of the getting people on on a Ciclovia was to get them to see and live the city not just to occupy the space so in that case it's not enough. So you know, I think, either you picked at two very interesting projects one of which is insurgency one of which is reoccupation of the city at a massive and governmental scale and I would urge you to choose which one it is...

J4: Yea, that's exactly what I was going to say...not exactly but. The intention of the project is between this urban revolt situationist thing that would disrupt the flow but it all seems to be brought about by this miraculously well-functioning government in LA that is also building new infrastructure which you could then use to occupy the highway. So yea, to me, that's where the project is either extremely utopian or extremely naïve and that's what I can't tell right now with the project. You follow me?..l guess we're both.. I totally agree with what Nicholas said. I do think personally that what's potentially more interesting than you being the sort of illustrator of good governance which to tell you the truth the mass transportation systems so far aren't the most interesting part of the project. Where you are interesting and an innovative thinker and designer is considering ways to occupy the freeway. I think that aspect, I mean the whole tradition, first it's not very old. ... Rich people that took offense to them in the 18th century, finding ways to barricade and other things to think about what streets have become. That, to me, is where the project could be really exciting to sort of embrace the history. Which is actually something else



FIlm Festival



Skatepark

Fashion Show





Soup Kitchen Shelter



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I'm missing from the project, almost everything we've seen today has been historically situated in some way and I'm not sensing that with your ideas or with the images of where this falls.

J5: And, you know specifically in Los Angeles, there's a whole narrative of loss in many areas but especially in east LA where infrastructure has been imposed on these communities. And you know you're using the word stitching but it's throughout the entire city where ... places where something like this on a temporary level could actually have potential. For example fog town or the 5 freeway or the Los Angeles River, all of these infrastructure you know there's a whole selfconsciousness about those not having been imposed on wealthy neighborhoods. And wealthy neighborhoods are ironically the ones that reject social change and connectivity and bikeways because they don't want people literally jumping off the bikeways and roaming the streets. Yea so the people that are going to be the most resistant to like the LA river, for example are the rich people that don't want the not-so-rich people coming up there. And the not-so-rich people don't want to hear your projections they just want to see things done. So there's a really interesting social overlay that can at best be talked about in a sort of celebratory reoccupation of space in a warm Sunday with an event.

J1: I think I partially agree with what is being said but what I am most intrigued by is if I'm driving down the freeway I'm driving over a basketball court, something along those lines. I think the creation of this dissemination system, this second infrastructure,

is kind of ironic because if you're temporarily closing down the freeway to occupy it then you could just drive there. Um literally, and then you know you could watch it unfold. So, I don't really know if the proposal for the second layer of infrastructure tied down to that is as necessary. Particularly, if you overlay the light rail system particularly the Expo line that just opened it runs right not exactly on it, but very close to it. I think that's a big gap because it is heavily used, maybe not by all of us, but it is heavily used. So I think that's a crucial layer and I think if you did that you would find that perhaps that if the argument is that things close down highways then you could still get to a piece of the highway so it's not like the entire 5 is being closed. So, with that being said I think there's a start of something really intriguing here with, how little can you use to create public space but still get heavily value out of that? But I think there's a specificity to locations in where that could happen. The reason I asked was because somehow in the process of rendering this it looks really abstract. But I think that all of these freeways while they go over places, they're places and so what you're talking about is creating places within a place and I missed that place-fulness... is that a word? And I missed that. But I think that's what you're arguing for. But somehow it got washed out because you dealt with everything when maybe you need to deal with a few specific interventions. I mean, like I don't need 9 of these, I just need 6.

J1: I think you'd really benefit from a very in-depth analysis of Los Angeles and making very specific interventions that aren't (how) exactly anything with you not being able to shut down the 405 but maybe you



can shut down part of it for part of the day. But again, there's disparateness to the project. You started talking about bicycles but I'm not hearing anything else about the project.

J6: Yea that was an important thing that I wanted to tap into. You know looking at these there all a little too line to line there's no real differentiation between lanes and views and how you treat it spatially it's just simple freeway and then how that situates itself next to blah blah and create a new thing. So you've got all these pieces and parts and I think there starting to melt together in this drawing but I think they get very washed out and lost and unable to see a really detailed drawing of all it together. I totally agree with your critique about context.

J7: You know I would say but from purely a nuts and bolts point of view... I'm trying to even think how one traverses through the city especially at the level not at the freeway or automobile even though that's an important Los Angeles experience but if you're in a neighborhood the distances in Los Angeles are incredible. They're epic distances on foot or bike. And I could almost imagine, kind of going back to a granular level because maybe one community may have very different perspective of what they would like of their public space. And a lot of these things you might just want at a closer distance to your house not necessarily up on a freeway. Like a lot of what you're stacking up in these towers are things that like, even with minimal interventions in neighborhoods you could have these furnishing and they could be more precisely inserted

into place. And I think it goes back to the idea that you had about the bike infrastructure restricting the city because it might just be what the city is looking for is to connect these different neighborhoods but you don't necessarily throw all these types of programs on top of a freeway but what might turn the bicycle into something more viable might be a care station. Perhaps there there's a way to retake in a more modest way portions of the freeway to be able to move around on a bike. And then you don't have this kind of ambitious but disparate project where it seems like you had to grab for a social network and billboards to make it work and then it seems like an enormous amount of effort for what seems everyday. So that would be my two cents.

J4: Peter's from LA.

J8: Yea so I try to ride bikes over long distances and it's very difficult but very exciting and fun. And I think these are really good suggestions and there may be links in the network that are needed to get the bikes on the freeways because that's the only way to get from here to there. And so taking over the freeways very strategically for bike lanes would be a coherent thing. I do have question about the disruptive technology. Given that's the theme of the studio, what is your disruptive technology?

Oriana: I was thinking more in terms of disruptive forces within a city and how a change in mobility would disrupt the city. For example, how the bicycle could disrupt the way a city is form and the subsequent architecture. J8: sounds very disruptive. (jurors agree.)J4: One of the images for me that I really like is the butterfly garden but the detour is really problematic.

J8: but I think that goes back to what others were saying about looking at the networks and being much more strategic. I mean maybe there's parts of the network that are redundant and for example when there's overpasses or underpasses that are very little used.

Ron: can you talk about that more Oriana? I know that existed so maybe you can expand on that.

Oriana: So I design some prototypical deviations as an example. If you were heading in a general direction either north, south, east, or west and two possible deviations you could take, one being a freeway-tofreeway deviation and the other option would be to have a freeway to surface street deviation.

J2: do you have any analysis on how many cars actually travel those paths?

Oriana: I worked with more general volumes of cars traveled on a Sunday. But looking at distances per trip it would be adding about 7 minutes to the trip.

J2: but that's for a single car. What would happened if you deviated 20,000 cars how would the traffic volume change?

J4: one of my all-time favorite contemporary projects is designed by Wiel Arets. He designed a detour for

Domurg I think is the name of the city and it is kind of like le Corbusier Opus Plan for Algiers. And he designs this zigzag that ends up creating this moment of disruption of flow and it's this piece that came from looking at it as a moment of repose and has these amazing views and it's very much in line with some of the imagery of your project. I mean I wouldn't call it a success but it's important to look at.

J8: in going forward I think you know with every project when you finish you have all these ideas and stuff you want to go on and I keep having this image of a car chase and a police chase happens and they just kind of barrel through one of these moments. And it has to do with something like in Los Angeles, there's 2 agencies that are very, very powerful: the LAPD and Cal trans, well Caltrans is the whole state. And they have these gigantic headquarters you know that's a big project, Morphosis project with a big presence. And part of what youre proposing disrupts what these agencies do. For the LAPD and for the department of Homeland Security would be like whoa, you want to seriously intervene with our way of getting to the scene of the crime and maybe that's a great thing but I think you really have to get your head around what kind of spatiality of that LAPD and other agencies project unto the city. Just to wrap up, just look at Caltrans, because they're so big and powerful. You're kind of like destroying a lot of job. And maybe we need to lose some of those Caltrans administrators but think about the kind of people and what type of budgets and what kind of power disruptions you're creating. And maybe it would help to get a grip about how important those invisible structures are, their

very human structure.

J3: I would say right now is that the tramways and infrastructure are all too close to what the freeways were promised to be, a new system on top of an old system that would separate but make everything run better. But it turned out to be precisely the reverse, which is that new system destroyed the old system and didn't present a better alternative. And so the best parts of the project are exploring how the new adjacent possibilities to the existing freeway configuration have a way to reintegrate that superficial new idealized system with the existing but also I noticed the project seems to stray into producing a new new system that's going to make all the other systems improve and be better. And so as you finesse the project in the way that we always do I would make the system a little cheaper, a little faster, and a little more out of control.

J5: I just negotiated a couple more minutes. So, no I think that it's potentially that it's a very beautiful project in some ways. I think the historic overlays are really important but I think also just using data and tying that with this. For Los Angeles and especially getting just outside of the gut of Los Angeles and all the other cities that are surrounding could bring up a series of issues. And so what you can do is start to look at simple even census data where do is there a lot of hospitals, where is there high crime rates, or incidence or something else that could tell you that there's need. These are places that are tied to things that would tell you there's a need for a park or a public space in some ways. And it's a very real way to begin to locate things. And you

might discover from overlaying that there's a bright red area, this one area, that you can begin to look at in more extreme measures where a highway takeover could be viable and if so how many approaches would there be, one that includes highway take over but also discusses a whole suit of surface street take overs. And [the data]'s out there and it tells you a very clear story about what is going on and it's not just architecture or landscape architects making it up.

Ron: I think Oriana you've received a great sweep of comments that you can categorize in a number ways of pushing back into your project.

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Bibliography