

**ENZYME: An augmented Urbanism**

*“Our vision of architecture originates not from caves or huts, but from the fires that lighted them”*

*Grégoire Diehl*

**Concept**

ENZYME goes further than architecture endogamy (inside of a building) to propose an urban acupuncture exogamy.

ENZYME is a re-appropriation of human and urban dimensions which modifies and diverts our time and space perceptions: it makes possible an “open” geography, an augmented urbanism.

ENZYME is the liberty of space for those who live within or nearby. ENZYME believes in the idea of open source urbanism; and so encourages the use of its space for public and private functions, allowing each of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Boulevard district inhabitants to hire a space for a day, a week, or a month for the integration and expression of personal emotions: love messages, birthday surprises, degree exhibitions, engagements, etc.



## Summary

ENZYME is an experience of (free) information, open access and complete liberty of applications, broadcasts, streams, and even space. This idea expresses itself in many different ways, through complete Wi-Fi access throughout, as well as Bluetooth connection information for mobile phones and laptops, which downloads up to date information about events and news within ENZYME in a manner that fully integrates user participation, with optional automatic updates and push messaging. The urban environment responds to users within its proximity, targeting information that is specific to each user, be it traffic updates, schedule changes, or even simply recommending something useful within the area.

ENZYME is a tessellation of epicentres that diffuses various media through an urban network of furtive assimilation: urban furniture hijacking (traffic lights, tram stations, dustbins, signs), faked natural landscape elements (trees, stones), private car radio or GPS integration with an ENZYME radio broadcast, human scale art projects that can turn cars into percussive instruments, interactive Bluetooth content for mobile phones, video projections on existing building facades and streets, ENZYME-bus as a mobile projection space (daytime) and a mobile outdoor projector, (night time) all working as a synchronised entity to bring together an experience that is very much an interactive and fluid system, counter to the urban environment we currently live within.



ENZYME key feature is its hubs. Each hub is housed within the tunnels that break up 21<sup>st</sup> Century Boulevard, during the week, these thoroughways are used by vehicular traffic, acting as a change of environment, being welcoming and interactive spaces to pass through. At the weekend, the tunnels are closed off, turning the space into a pedestrian area, with each of the hubs concentrating on a specific factor of everyday life, be it education, ecology, media (such as music and film) news, and most importantly art. Currently, the tunnels are disliked by those who live nearby, and generally by those within Lille. The tunnels are currently unpleasant, and the area receives consistent noise complaints. With these problems in mind, ENZYME plans to convert these spaces into places of celebration and wonder. This is achieved a thoroughly interactive experience, with interactive screens displaying information, which at the week, automatically interact with passing cars, and at the weekend act as touch screen displays for pedestrians to personally interact with.

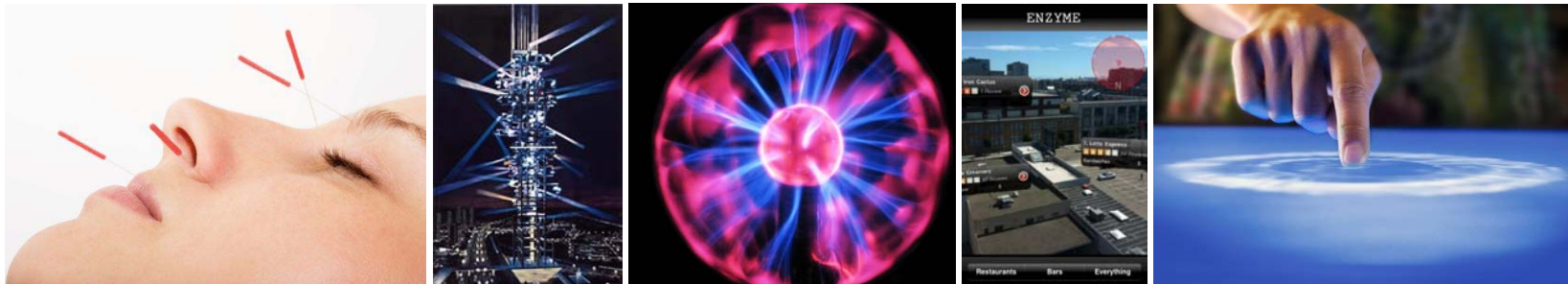


ENZYME Art sector (see video) of the proposal acts as a completing anchor to the project, the final piece, which invites all to see its spectacles. It is here that we will see projects like the “musical car” come to fruition, encouraging drivers to decelerate to a specific speed to beat out a rhythm against the road as they traverse it. ENZYME also has a fixed art program that extends an invitation to artists to create a virtual installation each month. This is very much the essence of ENZYME, to completely and unashamedly embrace technology in all its forms, so that the material becomes digital, something that exists as binary, so that it may be accessible everywhere within the hub, rather than forced to remain in place at one time, this incorporation of dematerialisation is something that ENZYME does throughout, acting not only to ease access, but to also act a strategy for sustainable urbanism.



### References

ENZYME refers to Hakim Bey’s *Temporary Autonomous Zone*, as well as Robert Smithson’s *SitenonSite*, Ron Herron’s *Instant City* and Andre Breton’s *Perpetual promenade in the midst of forbidden zones* or contemporary flashmobs.



Goodies

"...this time however I come as the victorious Dionysus, who will turn the world into a holiday...Not that I have much time..."

Nietzsche (from his last "insane" letter to Cosima Wagner)

"The Net and the Web

THE NEXT FACTOR CONTRIBUTING to the TAZ is so vast and ambiguous that it needs a section unto itself.

We've spoken of the *Net*, which can be defined as the totality of all information and communication transfer. Some of these transfers are privileged and limited to various elites, which gives the Net a hierarchic aspect. Other transactions are open to all--so the Net has a horizontal or non-hierarchic aspect as well. Military and Intelligence data are restricted, as are banking and currency information and the like. But for the most part the telephone, the postal system, public data banks, etc. are accessible to everyone and anyone. Thus *within the Net* there has begun to emerge a shadowy sort of *counter-Net*, which we will call the *Web* (as if the Net were a fishing-net and the Web were spider-webs woven through the interstices and broken sections of the Net). Generally we'll use the term *Web* to refer to the alternate horizontal open structure of info- exchange, the non-hierarchic network, and reserve the term *counter-Net* to indicate clandestine illegal and rebellious use of the Web, including actual data-piracy and other forms of leeching off the Net itself. Net, Web, and counter-Net are all parts of the same whole pattern-complex--they blur into each other at innumerable points. The terms are not meant to define areas but to suggest tendencies.

(Digression: Before you condemn the Web or counter-Net for its "parasitism," which can never be a truly revolutionary force, ask yourself what "production" consists of in the Age of Simulation. What is the "productive class"? Perhaps you'll be forced to admit that these terms seem to have lost their meaning. In any case the answers to such questions are so complex that the TAZ tends to ignore them altogether and simply picks up what it can *use*. "Culture is our Nature"-- and we are the thieving magpies, or the hunter/gatherers of the world of CommTech.)

The present forms of the unofficial Web are, one must suppose, still rather primitive: the marginal zine network, the BBS networks, pirated software, hacking, phone- phreaking, some influence in print and radio, almost none in the other big media--no TV stations, no satellites, no fiber- optics, no cable, etc., etc. However the Net itself presents a pattern of changing/evolving relations between subjects ("users") and objects ("data"). The nature of these relations has been exhaustively explored, from McLuhan to Virilio. It would take pages and pages to "prove" what by now "everyone knows." Rather than rehash it all, I am interested in asking how these evolving relations suggest modes of implementation for the TAZ.

The TAZ has a temporary but actual location in time and a temporary but actual location in space. But clearly it must also have "location" *in the Web*, and this location is of a different sort, not actual but virtual, not immediate but instantaneous. The Web not only provides logistical support for the TAZ, it also helps to bring it into being; crudely speaking one might say that the TAZ "exists" in information- space as well as in the "real world." The Web can compact a great deal of time, as data, into an infinitesimal "space." We have noted that the TAZ, because it is temporary, must necessarily lack some of the advantages of a freedom which experiences *duration* and a more-or-less fixed *locale*. But the Web can provide a kind of substitute for some of this duration and locale--it can *inform* the TAZ, from its inception, with vast amounts of compacted time and space which have been "subtilized" as data.

At this moment in the evolution of the Web, and considering our demands for the "face-to-face" and the sensual, we must consider the Web primarily as a support system, capable of carrying information from one TAZ to another, of defending the TAZ, rendering it "invisible" or giving it teeth, as the situation might demand. But more than that: If the TAZ is a nomad camp, then the Web helps provide the epics, songs, genealogies and legends of the tribe; it provides the secret caravan routes and raiding trails which make up the flowlines of tribal economy; it even *contains* some of the very roads they will follow, some of the very dreams they will experience as signs and portents.

The Web does not depend for its existence on any computer technology. Word-of-mouth, mail, the marginal zine network, "phone trees," and the like already suffice to construct an information webwork. The key is not the brand or level of tech involved, but the openness and horizontality of the structure. Nevertheless, the whole concept of the Net *implies* the use of computers. In the SciFi imagination the Net is headed for the condition of Cyberspace (as in *Tron* or *Neuromancer*) and the pseudo-telepathy of "virtual reality." As a Cyberpunk fan I can't help but envision "reality hacking" playing a major role in the creation of TAZs. Like Gibson and Sterling I am assuming that the official Net will never succeed in shutting down the Web

or the counter-Net--that data-piracy, unauthorized transmissions and the free flow of information can never be frozen. (In fact, as I understand it, chaos theory *predicts* that any universal Control-system is impossible.)

However, leaving aside all mere speculation about the future, we must face a very serious question about the Web and the tech it involves. The TAZ desires above all to avoid *mediation*, to experience its existence as *immediate*. The very essence of the affair is "breast-to-breast" as the sufis say, or face-to-face. But, BUT: the very essence of the Web is mediation. Machines here are our ambassadors--the flesh is irrelevant except as a *terminal*, with all the sinister connotations of the term.

The TAZ may perhaps best find its own space by wrapping its head around two seemingly contradictory attitudes toward Hi- Tech and its apotheosis the Net: (1) what we might call the *Fifth Estate*/Neo-Paleolithic Post-Situ Ultra-Green position, which construes itself as a luddite argument against mediation and against the Net; and (2) the Cyberpunk utopianists, futuro-libertarians, Reality Hackers and their allies who see the Net as a step forward in evolution, and who assume that any possible ill effects of mediation can be overcome--at least, once we've liberated the means of production.

The TAZ agrees with the hackers because it wants to come into being--in part--through the Net, even through the mediation of the Net. But it also agrees with the greens because it retains intense awareness of itself as *body* and feels only revulsion for *CyberGnosis*, the attempt to transcend the body through instantaneity and simulation. The TAZ tends to view the Tech/anti-Tech dichotomy as misleading, like most dichotomies, in which apparent opposites turn out to be falsifications or even hallucinations caused by semantics. This is a way of saying that the TAZ wants to live in *this* world, not in the idea of another world, some visionary world born of false unification (*all green OR all metal*) which can only be more pie in the sky by-&-by (or as *Alice* put it, "Jam yesterday or jam tomorrow, but never jam today").

The TAZ is "utopian" in the sense that it envisions an *intensification* of everyday life, or as the Surrealists might have said, life's penetration by the Marvelous. But it cannot be utopian in the actual meaning of the word, *nowhere*, or NoPlace Place. *The TAZ is somewhere*. It lies at the intersection of many forces, like some pagan power- spot at the junction of mysterious ley-lines, visible to the adept in seemingly unrelated bits of terrain, landscape, flows of air, water, animals. But now the lines are not all etched in time and space. Some of them exist only "within" the Web, even though they also intersect with real times and places. Perhaps some of the lines are "non-ordinary" in the sense that no convention for quantifying them exists. These

lines might better be studied in the light of chaos science than of sociology, statistics, economics, etc. The patterns of force which bring the TAZ into being have something in common with those chaotic "Strange Attractors" which exist, so to speak, *between* the dimensions.

The TAZ by its very nature seizes every available means to realize itself--it will come to life whether in a cave or an L-5 Space City--but above all it will live, now, or as soon as possible, in however suspect or ramshackle a form, spontaneously, without regard for ideology or even anti- ideology. It will use the computer because the computer exists, but it will also use powers which are so completely unrelated to alienation or simulation that they guarantee a certain *psychic paleolithism* to the TAZ, a primordial-shamanic spirit which will "infect" even the Net itself (the true meaning of Cyberpunk as I read it). Because the TAZ is an intensification, a surplus, an excess, a potlatch, life spending itself in living rather than merely *surviving* (that snivelling shibboleth of the eighties), it cannot be defined either by Tech or anti-Tech. It contradicts itself like a true despiser of hobgoblins, because it wills itself to be, at any cost in damage to "perfection," to the immobility of the final.

In the Mandelbrot Set and its computer-graphic realization we watch--in a fractal universe--maps which are embedded and in fact hidden within maps within maps etc. to the limits of computational power. What is it *for*, this map which in a sense bears a 1:1 relation with a fractal dimension? What can one do with it, other than admire its psychedelic elegance?

If we were to imagine an *information map*--a cartographic projection of the Net in its entirety--we would have to include in it the features of chaos, which have already begun to appear, for example, in the operations of complex parallel processing, telecommunications, transfers of electronic "money," viruses, guerilla hacking and so on.

Each of these "areas" of chaos could be represented by topographs similar to the Mandelbrot Set, such that the "peninsulas" are embedded or hidden within the map--such that they seem to "disappear." This "writing"--parts of which vanish, parts of which efface themselves--represents the very process by which the Net is already compromised, incomplete to its own view, ultimately un-Controllable. In other words, the M Set, or something like it, might prove to be useful in "plotting" (in all senses of the word) the emergence of the counterNet as a chaotic process, a "creative evolution" in Prigogine's term. If nothing else the M Set serves as a *metaphor* for a "mapping" of the TAZ's interface with the Net as a *disappearance of information*. Every "catastrophe" in the Net is a node of power for the Web, the counter-Net. The Net will be damaged by chaos, while the Web may thrive on it.

Whether through simple data-piracy, or else by a more complex development of actual rapport with chaos, the Web-hacker, the cybernetician of the TAZ, will find ways to take advantage of perturbations, crashes, and breakdowns in the Net (ways to make information out of "entropy"). As a bricoleur, a scavenger of information shards, smuggler, blackmailer, perhaps even cyberterrorist, the TAZ-hacker will work for the evolution of clandestine fractal connections. These connections, and the *different* information that flows among and between them, will form "power outlets" for the coming-into-being of the TAZ itself--as if one were to steal electricity from the energy-monopoly to light an abandoned house for squatters.

Thus the Web, in order to produce situations conducive to the TAZ, will parasitize the Net--but we can also conceive of this strategy as an attempt to build toward the construction of an alternative and autonomous Net, "free" and no longer parasitic, which will serve as the basis for a "new society emerging from the shell of the old." The counter-Net and the TAZ can be considered, practically speaking, as ends in themselves--but theoretically they can also be viewed as forms of struggle toward a different reality.

Having said this we must still admit to some qualms about computers, some still unanswered questions, especially about the Personal Computer.

The story of computer networks, BBSs and various other experiments in electro-democracy has so far been one of *hobbyism* for the most part. Many anarchists and libertarians have deep faith in the PC as a weapon of liberation and self-liberation--but no real gains to show, no palpable liberty.

I have little interest in some hypothetical emergent entrepreneurial class of self-employed data/word processors who will soon be able to carry on a vast cottage industry or piecemeal shitwork for various corporations and bureaucracies. Moreover it takes no ESP to foresee that this "class" will develop its *underclass*--a sort of lumpen yuppeteriat: housewives, for example, who will provide their families with "second incomes" by turning their own homes into electro-sweatshops, little Work-tyrannies where the "boss" is a computer network.

Also I am not impressed by the sort of information and services proffered by contemporary "radical" networks. Somewhere--one is told--there exists an "information economy." Maybe so; but the info being traded over the "alternative" BBSs seems to consist entirely of chitchat and techie-talk. Is this an economy? or merely a pastime for enthusiasts? OK, PCs have created yet another "print revolution"--OK, marginal webworks are evolving--OK, I can now carry on six phone conversations at once. But what difference has this made in my ordinary life?" Hakim Bey, *The Temporary Autonomous Zone*