The Aesthetic Experience of the City: A Practice-based Research Project Created to Illustrate the Collective Creative Dynamic of a Place

By: John Rooney

The research project is designed to create new ways of looking at the story of a city, to present the creative city as an art gallery space. Mapping technologies are used to present information as an aesthetic image. This project will add the emotional context of the moment and location as part of the information aesthetic. The story of a city is an ongoing timeline of interconnected exchanges, thoughts and ideas. The stories and ideas used in this project can be taken from any point in the timeline and presented together as information aesthetics.

Datum will be recorded via image motion capture and audio technologies to create image and soundscape files. Audio capture software will be used to “scan” typographic form. When the audio file is read back into a sonogram, the sound wave created is in the shape of the letterform. Further research will look at creating typefaces based on the sound the letterform makes instead of any visual aesthetic. Content will be presented using digital and traditional formats. The artwork can be displayed in situ via web-based geo tagging and augmented reality platforms on mobile devices, plus physical representations of this work as printed and sculptural forms.

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John Rooney worked as a freelance graphic designer in Manchester from 1990 onwards, working with clients in the creative arts sector. In 2004, he joined the University of Salford, lecturing to undergraduate and postgraduate students in the School of Art and Design. He recently wrote a Masters course in typography for the School. He is currently undertaking a PhD, is a founding member of the Typographic Research Initiative and a full member of the University of Salford Dementia Design Group.