

Here Nowhere and Everywhere

It is 1940. Iron railings, saucepans and bits of domesticity are being melted down as part of the war effort, but the real stuff, the real steel, is still being made in Sheffield. This is the Achilles Heel of Britain and the Axis know it. Nightly bombing raids begin to pick off the steel mills of the Don Valley. Their job is made easy: when the doors of the giant furnaces open to allow the molten metal to cool, a vast glow appears in the sky. And so, with the mixture of guile and Heath Robinson that characterised so much of the home effort, a decoy Sheffield is built further up the valley. It is made of light. Lines of bulbs define the streets, sheets of light the buildings, theatre lights the glow of molten metal. During the day it lies blind, but at night it attracts the bombers, like moths to the flame.

In the School of Architecture on the hill young designers draw up the plans for this phantom Sheffield (the grown ups are away in battle). After a night of bombing ruin, they spend the next day readjusting their plans; dreamers and full of the optimism of youth, they make and remake their version of Sheffield, nudging it towards an ephemeral ideal. It is a city that is here (in the valley), nowhere (it disappears in the day) and everywhere (it represents the future of their country). The designers, builders and engineers create a double of the city. A ghost: a space that is at once Sheffield and not-Sheffield. An echo space, part decoy and part the city's high-voltage, deserted dream of itself.

Venice 2006: Sheffield will be made and remade, out of light, out of sound, out of words, out of images, out of stuff. It will be a city that is here, nowhere, and everywhere. Like an echo.

Collaborators

The following have collaborated on the formulation of this proposal:

- The Designers Republic, Sheffield (Ian Anderson, media designer)
- Encounters, Sheffield (Ruth Ben-Tovim, Trish O'Shea, and Jim Previtt, cross-discipline artists)
- Tim Etchells (writer and theatre director, Forced Entertainment, Sheffield) and Hugo Glendinning (photographer, long term Forced Entertainment collaborator)
- The Illustrious Company (Martyn Ware, musician and sound designer)
- University of Sheffield School of Architecture (Jeremy Till and Sarah Wigglesworth, architects)

The project is coordinated by Jeremy Till.

Introduction

Lets start with the team. We are here in Sheffield, but also not here inasmuch as our work goes out into the world beyond. We are here, nowhere and everywhere.

Equally the proposal has Sheffield at its heart, but is about much more than Sheffield; it is about any city. Just as in *Invisible Cities* Italo Calvino writes about Venice at the same time as he is writing about every city, so our proposal uses Sheffield as a vehicle to push around wider ideas about cities and their social dynamics. But where Calvino finds the extraordinary out of the already extraordinary, we will find the extraordinary out of a place which is at once more banal and more revealing than the sanctuary of Venice. And where Calvino is held by the past, we excavate the present to find the future. Sheffield is a glocal city, torn between its own identity and those of others. In this it is an echo of many cities, buffeted by the social and technological forces of modernity. We thus use Sheffield as the context to explore the present and future of all our cities.

It is not a pitch for the city but our fondness for the place will come through. Our project will not speak of Sheffield but of 'Sheffields', of ghost and incomplete echoes of the city. We do not make proposals for Sheffield, but give the context in which more empowering urban proposals may be developed for cities of all kinds.

Starting Points

The proposal is based on a number of premises about cities and architecture. They may seem commonplace, but need to be stated anyway:

- Cities are made by everyone
- Cities are remade by everyone, all the time
- Cities are not just physical
- Cities are about the small as well as the big

From these come a series of guiding principles for the exhibition proposal:

- The exhibition will be made by the user as much as by us
- The exhibition will never be the same at any one moment in time
- The exhibition will include light, sounds, words, images - and some stuff
- The exhibition will be both intimate and expansive

The Exhibition : Echo Cities

Venice 2006: Sheffield will be made and remade. As curators we will create an urban catalogue drawn from Sheffield. Any inhabitant, any community, any user of a city generates their own versions – their own doubles of the space which they move through, inhabit; their own imagined versions of the city. We will collect these versions of Sheffield, as well as our own recordings and interpretations. These records of the city – dreamed, ‘real’, imagined, personalised, half-remembered, mostly forgotten – are placed side by side and then – finally – interwoven. Contradictions are left to live and breathe, send sparks, generate confusions and stories. That, we feel, is in the nature of cities.

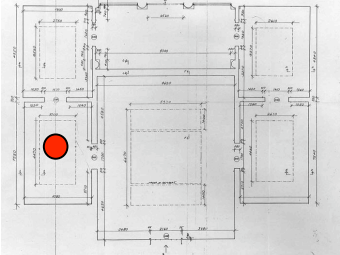
The exhibition allows the visitor to actively assemble their own echo, their own version. Our proposal thus suggests a participatory and engaging way in which our future cities may be formulated. The dynamism of the exhibition also reflects the constant reinvention and mutation of regional British Cities, a phenomenon that makes them exceptional in the European context.

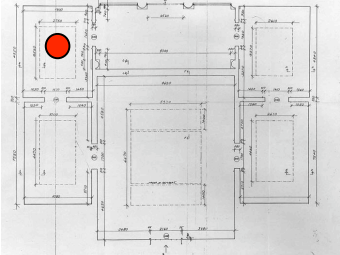
Exhibition Structure

The urban catalogue will be assembled in the four side rooms of the Pavilion. The rooms will be ordered according to a particular architectural (but also social) scale: 1:1 • 1:100 • 1:10,000 • 1:10,000,000. Each of these rooms will contain a mixture of light, sound, images and stuff, and will be carefully designed to reflect the urban experience at the particular scale. The back room is mainly empty: a pause amongst the intensity of the rest. The visitor walks through these rooms (clockwise, anti-clockwise, there is no ‘right’ way), interacting with the exhibits. They select elements of the urban flotsam that mean something to them and in the central room an echo city is assembled out of these selected fragments. The assembly is partially physical (with objects being collected from the side rooms and brought to the central room) but mainly virtual, through interactive technology with a delay built in so that what is selected in the side rooms appears later in the central room (so that the visitor can experience urban fragments they have chosen).

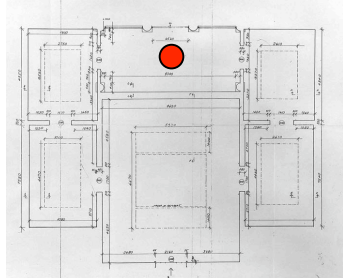
The central room will be a mixture of projections, lights, some objects and an immersive 3D soundscape, all assembled by the action of visitors in the side rooms. The selections will be limited and controlled in order that the final assembly is not an overwhelming visual or aural anarchy. The complexity of the space will lie in cross-readings and strange juxtapositions. On arrival at the exhibition, the visitor first sees and hears the cities others have made. After journeying through the side rooms, they then walk back through, and thus inhabit, the echo city they have made, whilst it dissolves in front of their eyes and fades in their ears. It is a city that is here, nowhere and everywhere. The visitor’s experience of the exhibition mirrors their experience of a city.

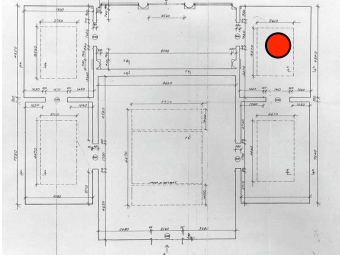
Initial suggestions are set out on the attached room data sheets. Every room will be designed assembled by all the project collaborators, but each room will have a patron, who will take especial pride in their room, with feather duster and screwdriver on the opening day of the exhibition. We are presenting ideas on the way to making an exhibition, not the defined end. If chosen, we will obviously develop these ideas, hopefully with input from the exhibition jury.

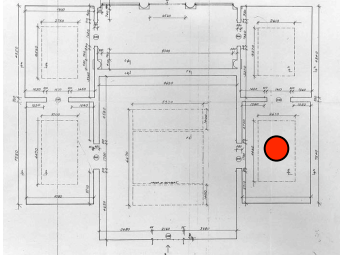
BRITISH PAVILION • VENICE ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE 2006 • ECHO CITIES ROOM DATA SHEETS	
ROOM	0.1
Location	
Scale	1:100
Plumbing/ Mechanical	Breezy and damp.
User requests	Who's on your party list? What do you want on your pavement? What can you see from your penthouse? Have you spoken to your neighbours this week?
FAQ	Q: What has this to do with architecture? A: Everything and nothing. Nothing if by architecture you mean those ossified moments in Perspex cases. Everything if by architecture you mean the dynamic interaction of people and places.
Size	7530 x 4780
Contents	Light (10%), sound (30%), images (40%), stuff (20%).
IT	On the scale of an internet café.
Occupancy	You and some others.
Instructions	Select a story which means something to you from the writing on the floor.
Patron	Tim Etchells is a writer and director of Forced Entertainment which he founded 21 years ago in Sheffield, and since then has developed into what the Guardian called "Britain's most brilliant experimental theatre company," and by the Tagesspiegel "one of the most important performance groups in Europe." His work for Forced Entertainment, often in collaboration with the acclaimed photographer Hugo Glendinning , spans theatre, durational performance / live art, gallery installation, video and digital media. The continuing focus of the work is to develop performance and other media to describe contemporary urban life. www.forcedentertainment.com www.hugoglendinning.com
A random quote	The grass is always green with envy on the other side.
Lighting	On the walls.
Includes	A street of images and sounds, populated with images collected from mobile phones in Sheffield.
On the jukebox	Drunks congregating outside the 24 Hour Spar at midnight The Human League: The Dignity of Labour Parts 1-4 Constant Rain

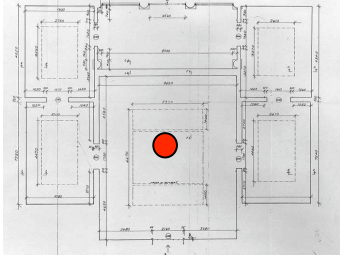
BRITISH PAVILION • VENICE ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE 2006 • ECHO CITIES	
ROOM DATA SHEETS	
ROOM	0.2
Location	
Scale	1:10,000,000
Plumbing/ Mechanical	Connected.
User requests	Who is in your chat room? What is the sound of the phone line? Can you dream what Guangzhou looks like at night? Are you intimate with Iceland?
FAQ	Q: How do you control all the different inputs? A: In the first instance, by common agreement. If that goes pear-shaped, Jeremy can be really bossy.
Size	6450 x 4900
Contents	Light (40%), sound (40%), images (10%), stuff (10%).
IT	Pervasive.
Occupancy	One at a time among a multitude.
Instructions	Choose a sound that is here, nowhere and everywhere. There is a jukebox in the corner.
Patron	The Designers Republic was founded in Sheffield in 1987 by Ian Anderson and are widely acknowledged as among the most influential graphic and media designers in the world. Starting originally with work for the alternative music scene, The Designers Republic's reach soon grew internationally, achieving cult status in countries such as Japan. Their present work ranges over web, graphic, exhibition and computer games design, including architectural exhibitions with Archilab in France and Sadar Vuga Arhitekti in Slovenia. www.thedesignersrepublic.com
A random quote	Love is in the air but is blind as a bat.
Lighting	Stellar.
Includes	An atlas.
On the jukebox	The complete Warp back catalogue in two second chunks The roar when Wednesday score a goal (we wait, we hope) That corner in Tokyo that sounds like Netheredge

BRITISH PAVILION • VENICE ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE 2006 • ECHO CITIES
ROOM DATA SHEETS

ROOM	0.3
Location	
Scale	None
Plumbing/ Mechanical	None
User requests	None.
FAQ	Q: What has this to do with the future of the regions? A: Sheer energy and lateral ideas. The outside looking in. And the music's better.
Size	4260 x 9620
Contents	Light (30%), sound (0%), images (0%), stuff (70% - a few chairs).
IT	A video camera records the movement of people in this room. These images are projected, as ghostly outlines, into Room 0.6, on a time delay, so that the visitor sees their image on the way out (and will, if at all like us, go round to do it all over again).
Occupancy	A few.
Instructions	0044 07957 605656. A big number on the wall. Text something to it or send an image. Then run round to see it in Room 0.6.
Patron	None.
A random quote	It will be a cold day in Hell when Hell freezes over.
Lighting	Enough to see.
Includes	A chair to sit and do the texting from. A calming view to the Giardini.
On the jukebox	Quiet. Maybe a bit of birdsong.

BRITISH PAVILION • VENICE ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE 2006 • ECHO CITIES ROOM DATA SHEETS	
ROOM	0.4
Location	
Scale	1:1
Plumbing/ Mechanical	1 no small whb in corner: Twyford's Advent: 450 x 280: Chrome taps.
User requests	Which one person would you take out into the city with you? What object can you never be apart from? What sounds do you hear in the city? What view do you want from your room?
FAQ	Q: What has this to do with Britain? A: It is a showcase for British creativity, not just for creations. Who else is moving so fast?
Size	6450 x 4900
Contents	Light (10%), sound (30%), images (10%), stuff (50%).
IT	Small PC with broadband wireless connection.
Occupancy	One at a time.
Instructions	Select an object from the vitrine. Take it to Room 0.6. Or, if you are feeling frisky, take a costume of your urban dreams from the clothes rail. Wear it proudly.
Patron	Encounters is a Sheffield-based Arts Collective, who have developed a pioneering programme of arts projects that involve community participation and urban histories. Over the past three years they have found and collected a vast urban catalogue of stories, memories, visions, objects, sounds, images, based around Sheffield. They use disused spaces, interventions, interactive media, performance and photography to map and collect traces of everyday urban life. Individually they work across the UK and internationally across the disciplines of digital and visual art, performance, education, arts and regeneration, creative consultation, action planning, neighbourhood renewal. www.sharrowencounters.org.uk www.prevettandmcarthur.co.uk
A random quote	A friend indeed is a friend, indeed.
Lighting	With switches.
Includes	A room.
On the jukebox	Cabaret Voltaire: On Every Other Street A kettle whistling. Nice cup of tea on the way Artery: Into the Garden and afterwards

BRITISH PAVILION • VENICE ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE 2006 • ECHO CITIES	
ROOM DATA SHEETS	
ROOM	0.5
Location	
Scale	1:10,000
Plumbing/ Mechanical	Sewers and wind farms.
User requests	What is your favourite urban smell? Where do you go to meet? Tall or low? Broad or thin? Blobby or straight?
FAQ	Q: What is it all going to look like and sound like? A: Trust us. That's our day job.
Size	7540 x 4790
Contents	Light (20%), sound (40%), images (20%), stuff (10%).
IT	Wireless.
Occupancy	Strangers in a crowd.
Instructions	Choose an image of a part of the city, from the very luscious to the very everyday.
Patron	Martyn Ware was a founder member of both the Human League and Heaven 17, the two most influential bands in the history of Sheffield's music. He works as a musician, producer (including working with Tina Turner and Marc Almond), as well as writing music for TV, Radio and Film. In 2000 he formed The Illustrious Company with Vince Clarke. Illustrious are world leaders in the development of 3D soundscapes, creating immersive sound environments for exhibitions, artists and stage performance. Their soundscape work has been supported by NESTA, the Arts Council and the British Council, and includes installations for the Science Museum, Royal Opera House, and Sheffield Millennium Galleries. www.illustriouscompany.co.uk
A random quote	Heaven is other people.
Lighting	Overhead and underneath.
Includes	Models of our town made by Year 6 of Ballifield School, Sheffield.
On the jukebox	The Future: The Future Tapes The roar of the Midland Mainline train bouncing off Park Hill flats Lindsay Quartet: Beethoven String Quartet, Op 95

BRITISH PAVILION • VENICE ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE 2006 • ECHO CITIES ROOM DATA SHEETS	
ROOM	0.6
Location	
Scale	1:1 • 1:100 • 1:10,000 • 1:10,000,000, and everything in between and on either side.
Plumbing/ Mechanical	A smoke machine (to be used very judiciously).
User requests	Is this what you wanted?
FAQ	Q: What happens if all the technology goes wrong? A: That is the best question you have asked.
Size	11,320 x 9,620
Contents	Light & images (45%), sound (45%), stuff (10%).
IT	A potential nightmare. We know. We have the collective experience to deal with it.
Occupancy	First a viewer, and then viewed. First seeing the city, then part of the city.
Instructions	An installation of projections, sound, and light which recreates the cities made and remade by the visitors. The projections will be onto screens, vitalised by an immersive 3D soundscape created by the team and The Illustrious Company.
Patron	If research is about the generation of ideas, then according to official government research ratings, The University of Sheffield School of Architecture , has been producing the best architectural ideas in a UK University for the past ten years. Jeremy Till and Sarah Wigglesworth are both Professors at the School, as well as Directors of Sarah Wigglesworth Architects, best known for their own straw house and quilted office (“a seminal building”, Building Design), but also for their writings and work in education. They have curated large-scale exhibitions, including Desiring Practices and installations at Olympia and the NEC, Birmingham. www.swarch.co.uk
A random quote	Blood is thicker than water through thick and thin.
Lighting	From the installation.
Includes	A strange memory of Palladio’s Teatro Olimpico.
On the jukebox	Arctic Monkeys: A Certain Romance The Arts Tower swaying in the wind Heaven 17: (We don’t need this) Fascist Groove Thang