Picks and plans

Rebuild Times Square, block by block, on your PDA By **Lisa Sweetingham**

If you could remake Times Square anyway you wanted, would you bring back the sex and sleaze of the Square's seedy '70s? Would you banish the grid? Now's your chance to tell the world what you think about the center of the city. PDPal (a.k.a. Personal Digital Pal), a new public art project, aims to inspire New Yorkers to record their perceptions of the district (both real and surreal) by using their PDAs to make personalized maps of the area that can be shared on the Internet.

Three years ago, artist Marina Zurkow started to notice the PDA beaming stations that were cropping up in bus shelters and phone booths around New York City. "Everything was just beaming ads," Zurkow recalls, "and I thought, Can't this be used for something else besides things people don't want—you know, Bear Stearns pie charts and Banana Republic catalogs?" She shared her idea with Carol Stakenas, curator of the nonprofit public arts organization Creative Time, who was also interested in how beaming technology could be used to bring content to the community. But, Zurkow says, "We couldn't get media buyers to entertain the idea of putting anything besides advertising in those beaming stations."

HAND JOB Streetside PDPal beaming stations let armchair cartographers rechart Times Square.

When Zurkow teamed with architect Scott Paterson and technologist Julian Bleecker, they thought up a new kind of cognitive tool, the PDPal application. Artist and flash designer Adam Chapman helped develop a website repository for the maps, and this fall, with the support of Creative Time, Panasonic and the Times Square Business Improvement District, PDPal was launched to invite New Yorkers to chart, among other things, their "emotional coordinates" of the storied district. Users can download the free mapping program onto their PDAs by logging on at PDPal.com, or by going to one of two beaming stations. (The stations are available until December 12 and are located at 125 West 42nd Street between Broadway and Sixth Avenue, and at a roving kiosk whose current location can be found at PDPal.com.)

Here's how it works: Once you've downloaded PDPal (you'll need Palm OS version 3.5 or higher), a simple street map of the area will appear on your screen. Click on a locale on your map, give it a "rubber stamp" icon (like the symbols you find on real maps, but more playful), name it, and then select attributes and ratings from drop-down lists to describe your empirical landmark. "The map is more so people can capture their visceral experience of Times Square, and less like a MapQuest—'Where is this location and show me a map please,'" says technologist Bleecker. He sees the project as an "experience harvester": It can collect one's representations of a moment or be used to convey the different roles we inhabit as we walk along the streets, from steadfast worker to wandering dreamer. And the rating system, says architect Paterson, is purely subjective: "Instead of *Zagat*'s, where you give a place a quantitative rating of 7, we wanted people to make more qualitative and idiosyncratic ratings of their experiences."

For instance, say you're standing at 46th Street when you're struck with the memory of a first kiss. Whip out your PDA, click your location on the map, choose a rubber stamp (perhaps a movie-reel icon) and type in a name for your location ("first kiss").

Next, give it a rating by choosing from adverbs on a drop-down list ("lustily"), select an attribute ("bright") and then type your comments in the "annotation" field: "Standing under the bright neon lights of Times Square, reminded of *Sweet Smell of Success*, the movie we were watching when we first kissed." When you HotSync your PDA to your PC or Mac, log on to PDPal.com and upload your map to the PDPal "communicity," where you can also view and make comments on other users' maps.

So far, the PDPal site has drawn some 45 registered users, whose maps depict anything from random cab rides to personal journals. User "Maggiehopp," for instance, listed her picks of Ninth Avenue eateries; and "Jake B," marked where he saw *The Empire Strikes Back* at age 8, the start of a bike ride home on September 11 at age 28, and the place where he had a "halfway dangerous, three-martini laser-tag game" at age 30.

"I would love to see a group of people redesign Times Square…or a documentary on Times Square through the eyes of its street performers," Zurkow says. "Writing your own city is the process of defining the space as it exists for you." PDPal's creators plan on doing workshops with students from Parsons School of Design and with Glowlab (an independent psychogeography group that studies the effect of physical setting on mood and behavior) in order to facilitate more dynamic, even politically engaging mapmaking. "We see this as an experiment," Zurkow says. "There's all this potential for urban-planning, urban-studies discourse. A lot of our future plans about the project will depend on what we discover in Times Square."

Ready to make your own map of the Square? Log on to PDPal. com for more information.

WIRED

SUPERPRODUCERS

TIMBALAND:
HITMAKER, MUSIC REVOLUTIONARY

realtime

october

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN

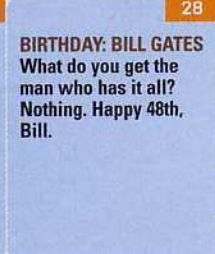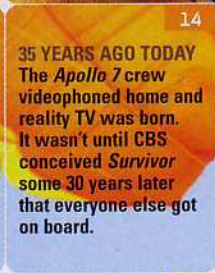**2 — TONY HAWK'S BOOM BOOM HUCKJAM**
Everybody loves the circus. Catch some three-ring bike, skate, and motocross action in Vancouver.
www.boomboomhuckjam.com

3 — MUSEUMS FOR A NEW MILLENNIUM
What if the museum itself was the exhibit? See photos, models, and drawings of the 20th century's best – Guggenheim, Getty, Tate – in Miami.
miamiartmuseum.org

5 — ANIMENEXT 2003
James Arnold Taylor – the voice of *Final Fantasy X-2*'s Tidus and AOL's Moviefone – shows his face at New York's anime fest. If you're lucky, he'll sign your copy of the game.
www.animenext.org

9 — PDPAL
Now here's a creative way to waste time on your PDA: Go to Times Square. Download this art project's app. Redecorate midtown.
creativetime.org

10 — CONFERENCE ON MOLECULAR NANOTECHNOLOGY
Profs from Purdue, UCLA, and Notre Dame make a big deal of small matter in Burlingame, California.
foresight.org

11 — C-LEVEL: XXX TEKKEN TORTURE TOURNAMENT XXX
NYC's Kitchen gallery hooks you up to an old PlayStation to deliver onscreen blows as electric shocks. Oh, the agony of defeat.
thekitchen.org

14 — 35 YEARS AGO TODAY
The *Apollo 7* crew videophoned home and reality TV was born. It wasn't until CBS conceived *Survivor* some 30 years later that everyone else got on board.

15 — ETRE BERLIN
If you like keynotes, you'll love this IT confab. Over three days, 20 execs grab the mike. We'll shut up already.
conference.dasar.com/oq/etre2003.nsf

16 — POP!TECH
Moira Gunn, NPR's grand dame of tech talk, grills brainiacs like Lawrence Lessig and Bob Metcalfe at this über-exclusive Maine event. Reserve your lobsters now.
www.poptech.org

17 — THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
Leatherface demos his killer new power tool in this remake of 1974's classic slasher.
texaschainsawmovie.com

18 — BRIDGE DAY
If everyone jumped off West Virginia's 876-foot-high New River Gorge Bridge, would you? Join (or just watch) some 400 parachutists in the act.
www.bridgeday.info

21 — CTIA WIRELESS IT & ENTERTAINMENT
802.11 is a winning number in Vegas. Advisers convene to discuss how to make Wi-Fi secure. A sharpshooter for every hot spot?
www.ctiashow.com

25 — MACHINIMA FILM FESTIVAL
See what game engines do for movies when hackers show their work at NYC's American Museum of the Moving Image.
ammi.org

27 — O'REILLY MAC OS X CONFERENCE
Some of us just want our OS to run. Others need to know everything about it. Mac addicts converge in Santa Clara, California.
conferences.oreillynet.com/macosx2003/

28 — BIRTHDAY: BILL GATES
What do you get the man who has it all? Nothing. Happy 48th, Bill.

31 — HALLOWEEN
Wanna be something really scary? Try this California cyborgovernor mask on for size.

ReadyMade

INSTRUCTIONS FOR EVERYDAY LIFE

8

THE WORK ISSUE:
ORGANIZE!

TAME YOUR CDs!
HIDE YOUR TV!
CORRAL YOUR CLOTHES!
STASH YOUR POTS!

GET RICH ON ROBOTS

PROMOTE YOUR LEFTOVERS

BUILD A BLOG

PLUS:
David Byrne's Photo Tricks

Ira Glass' Awesome Job

WHIP OUT YOUR TOOLS!

32 PROJECTS FOR FUN & PROFIT

RE-VIEW

LOST: SENSE OF HUMOR

New Yorkers strolling the city's sidewalks this summer may have encountered a clever bit of guerrilla advertising: a hand-scrawled "lost" notice pleading for the return of a misplaced bottle of Rheingold beer. At first glance legit, the lager-colored flyers soon revealed their sales-and-marketing origins —the company printed its email address on the tear-off tabs. Taking up the gauntlet, *ReadyMade* decided to play along with the Manhattan-based beermaker, *Lazlo Letters*-style, beginning with the correspondence at right. Too bad Rheingold didn't get its own joke. **– Jessica Halgren Sexton**

1

From: Jessica Sexton
To: info@rheingoldbeer.com
Subject: found bottle of Rheingold

Hi there,
I live in San Francisco, and over the weekend I woke up to find an empty bottle of Rheingold on my doorstep. No idea how it got there, especially since I live up a steep flight of steps. The bottle had a "lost" flyer rolled up inside it with little rip-off tabs listing a phone number. When I called, a message said the number had been disconnected. Don't know if you can help, but I figured I should see if anyone there knew what was up. Please let me know if it's the one you lost. Otherwise, I'll stick it in the recycling bin, because it's kind of stinky.
Best,
Jessica

2

From: info@rheingoldbeer.com
To: Jessica Sexton
Subject: RE: found bottle of Rheingold

Jessica–
That's so weird. We don't even sell Rheingold in San Fran—only NY. We posted our "lost" ads around the city last month, and someone must have carried a bottle and the ad out west and left it on your stoop. It's unfortunate you've never tasted it. It's good beer :). But I would say, if it's stinky, recycle the bad boy. And if you're ever in NY, look us up.
Thanks for your interest!
A Rheingold Representative
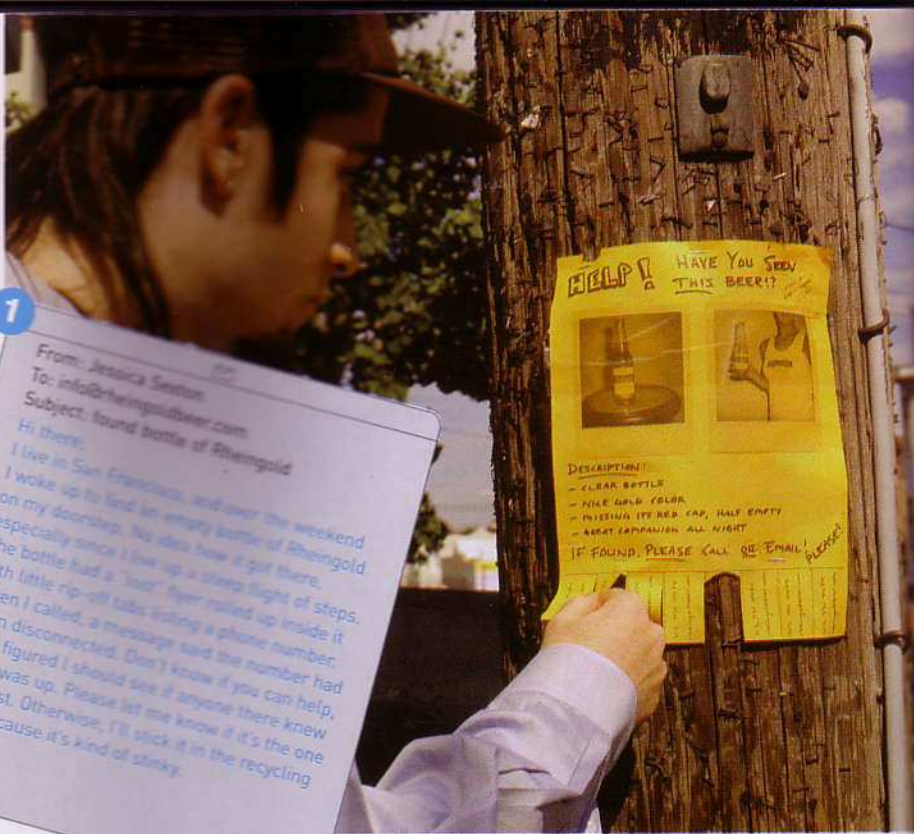
RE-WORD

carpool tunnel syndrome \ kär-pü(ə)l tənl sin-drōm
n: zoning out during one's daily commute to such an extent that one has no recollection of the journey.

SIM CITY

What says New York to you? Two-dollar socks on Delancey Street? The smell of roasting peanuts at 57th and Madison? Starting in October, an interactive art project called PDPal lets locals and visitors alike create autobiographical maps of the city via their palmtops.

A collaborative project between Eyebeam Atelier and Creative Time, PDPal invites participants to assign emotional markers to the places they pass every day. "Instead of mapping the restaurant's address," says technologist Julian Bleecker "you map what happened there." From public kiosks located throughout Times Square, users download software that zooms in on Manhattan neighborhoods. Then they record their experiences—mediocre first kiss, amazing egg cream—in situ using a series of descriptive words and icons. Cheeky *South Park*-esque Urban Park Rangers act as tour guides, helping participants log their impressions, then save, upload, and share them via the Web. No handheld? No problem. Users with Internet access can log onto *www.pdpal.com* and wax poetic about what marks their spot.
– Jill Hudes

WRITE YOUR OWN CITY

MAP YOUR EMOTIONAL COORDINATES

IS | CLOSER | THE | PAST | OR

FUTURE | MAP | THE PLACES YOU MISS

THE PLOTS YOU IMAGINE

IS | BIGGER | YOUR | CUBICLE | OR

CRANIUM | MAP | YOUR TASTE | FOR CONSUMPTION

IS | NOISIER | GODZILLA | OR | A GARBAGE TRUCK

sarahb@creativetime.org/ 212.206.6674 x 205

MAP YOUR OWN VISION OF TIMES SQUARE WITH *PDPAL*
BY MARINA ZURKOW, SCOTT PATERSON, AND JULIAN BLEECKER
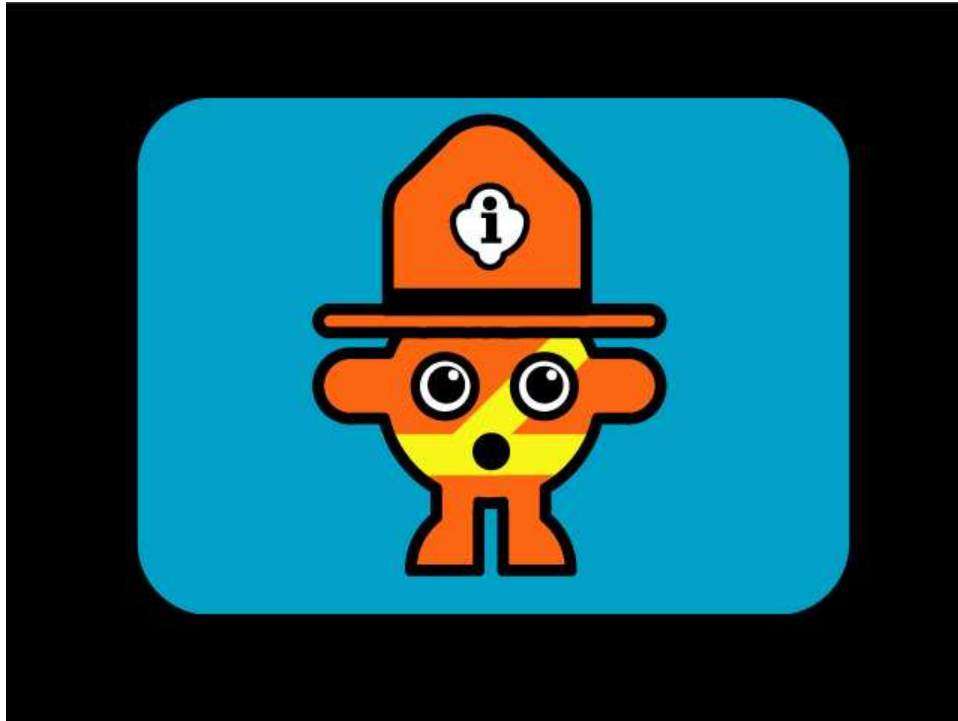
Urban Park Ranger (guide to *PDPal*) © 2003 Marina Zurkow, Scott Paterson, and Julian Bleecker

September 22, 2003: Creative Time and **Panasonic**, in cooperation with the **Times Square Business Improvement District**, present *PDPal* (a.k.a. *Personal Digital Pal*), conceived and created by artist **Marina Zurkow**, architect **Scott Paterson**, and technologist **Julian Bleecker**. Guided by the streetwise and witty Urban Park Ranger (UPR), *PDPal* is a multi-component public art project that allows audiences to map their personal vision of a public space—in this case, Times Square. *PDPal* bridges the digital and physical worlds with its three locations: *The 59th Minute: Video Art on the Times Square Astrovision*, Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) beaming stations, and pdpal.com. ***PDPal* launches in Times Square and online on October 9 and will run through December 12, 2003.**

PDPal

What constitutes your experience of New York City or of any place? Moreover, what constitutes place? *PDPal* is a multi-component mapping tool for Times Square, and a forum where daydreams, memories, or simple observations can be recorded and shared with others. With *PDPal*, users can chart physical, subjective and, perhaps, emotional coordinates–whether your admiration of landmark buildings, fleeting sidewalk encounters, or impromptu personal fantasies. Entries might include: "lucky lotto tickets sold at this newsstand; the singing cowboy just winked at me; these throngs of people make me wish I were on a beach in Bermuda." A digital diary in which to log the sensory impressions we experience at any given moment in Times Square, *PDPal* heightens our awareness to the social systems and the physical environment in which we live. Initially developed at the Eyebeam Atelier residency program, *PDPal* was co-commissioned by Creative Time and the Walker Art Center, which currently features *PDPal* in the museum sculpture garden.

Where to Find *PDPal*:

The Panasonic Astrovision

Creative Time and Panasonic's ongoing *The 59th Minute: Video Art on the Times Square Astrovision**, now in its third year of presenting works by emerging and established artists, will anchor *PDPal* in the heart of Times Square. Featuring a 60-second animation of the Urban Park Ranger's imagined Times Square, *PDPal* on the Astrovision will inspire other *PDPal* users and provide a playful respite from Times Square's marketing madness. In the animation, the UPR charges us to "write your own city" and, as a human torso in the background ingests diamond rings, cherries, and computers, to "map your taste for consumption."

*The NBC Astrovision by Panasonic is located at 43rd Street between Broadway & 7th Avenue. Like all works in *The 59th Minute*, *PDPal* will air daily on the Astrovision on the last minute of every hour from 6:00 a.m. – 1:00 a.m., except between 7:00 – 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

PDA Application & Beaming Stations

The PDA component of *PDPal* is a visual journal where users can capture any scenario they chance upon or desire. To collect your momentary impressions with a PDA, beam the Palm™ application from one of two beaming stations (see below). Then, tap on a specially designed set of icons; plot your coordinates on an empty map of Times Square; describe and rate your map with a provided (or your own) vocabulary. Prescribed icons, or *rubberstamps*, include a high-rise building, airplane, snowflake, cockroach, Greek paper coffee cup, and a Fallout Shelter sign; descriptives called *attributes* range from "buzzing" to "rotten" to "lawless;" and *ratings* include "a little," "unimaginably," or "boldly."

The PDA application will be distributed for free by two customized beaming stations, one of which can be found in a Chashama space, at 125 West 42nd Street, and the other is a mobile unit. The mobile unit will rotate sites every two weeks. Host sites will include the famous Times Square restaurant Noche (1604 Broadway between West 48th and 49th Streets), AXA Gallery.

PDA Application & Beaming Stations continued

(The Equitable Building, 787 Seventh Avenue at West 50th Street), and the Times Square Visitors Center (1560 Broadway and West 46th Street), among others. A rotation schedule will soon be available at **pdpal.com**. The *PDPal* beaming stations were initially developed by ORG and designed by Scott Paterson. Beaming station technology is provided by Hibeam.

Pdpal.com

Pdpal.com is a place to commune over vastly differing individual visions of a collective public space. At pdpal.com you can download the application or upload your own map to share with others in the *communicity*. Through the *communicity* you can recommend specific sites (e.g. "good doughnuts at this coffee cart") or relay an intimate story (e.g. "site of a bad blind date"). Web implementation for pdpal.com was done by artist and flash designer, Adam Chapman.

Paper Maps

If you prefer a pencil to a stylus, brochures with a paper-based mapping system, including a key of *rubberstamp* icons, *attributes*, *ratings*, and a virgin map for you to chart, will be distributed throughout Times Square. Please visit pdpal.com for distribution locations.

The Artists

Marina Zurkow is a multidisciplinary artist engaged with character, icon, and narrative through animated works, interactive installations, and graphic design. Her pictographic icons have been incorporated in diverse projects ranging from animated films to hotel design, lightboxes, and clothing. Other projects include the award-winning animated episodic, "Braingirl," and "Pussy Weevil," the latter of which was created with *PDPal* collaborator, Julian Bleecker. For more information on Zurkow's work visit www.o-matic.com and www.thebraingirl.com.

Scott Paterson's work seeks the possibility for "architecture" to serve as a link between the virtual and real worlds, both of which Paterson engages as a practicing architect and interface designer. He is also an adjunct professor at the Parsons School of Design and Technology MFA program and at the Columbia University School of Architecture.

Julian Bleecker's involvement in technology design and innovation ranges from building mobile and networked systems to academic writing about technology and society. Bleecker is on the faculty of the Parsons School of Design and Technology. He is currently Engineer-in-Residence at Eyebeam Atelier while completing his Ph.D. at the University of California's History of Consciousness program.

Creative Time

PDPal continues Creative Time's commitment to supporting artists working in new media, and is the organization's third PDA-based project. Others include *Firefly* by Antenna Design in Creative Time's 2001 exhibition, *Massless Medium: Explorations of Sensory Immersion* at the Brooklyn Bridge Anchorage and *Tap* (2002), by James Buckhouse and Holly Brubach, for which Creative Time collaborated with the Dia Center for the Arts to present public beaming stations throughout New York

City. Creative Time, a New York-based nonprofit organization, has commissioned, produced, and presented multidisciplinary public art projects for 30 years. From the landmark Brooklyn Bridge Anchorage, Grand Central Terminal, and Times Square to billboards, the skies over Manhattan, and *Tribute in Light*–the lauded temporary light memorial to September 11, 2001– Creative Time supports artists in surprising New Yorkers and visitors alike with fresh artistic visions in unlikely urban locales. **www.creativetime.org**

Panasonic

The NBC Astrovision by Panasonic is the visual centerpiece of New York City's Times Square, the "Crossroads of the World." Measuring nearly three stories high and four stories wide, the screen, which contains 1.5 million light-emitting diodes (LEDs), is capable of displaying more than one billion shades of color. Each year, millions of people see the Astrovision either on television, in the movies, or when they visit Times Square. And every New Year's Eve, the landmark video screen helps more than 500,000 Times Square revelers count down the famous ball drop. Panasonic is the best known brand of New Jersey-based Matsushita Electric Corporation of America, which is the principal North American subsidiary of Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd. (MEI) (NYSE: MC). Additional information can be found by visiting **www.panasonic.com**.

Times Square Business Improvement District

The Times Square Business Improvement District (the BID) was established to make Times Square clean, safe, and friendly. Since the BID began in 1992, it has provided a full range of supplemental services as well as promotion for the area, advocacy for the interests of the local businesses, information to enhance economic development, and public improvements. It has an annual budget of $6 million. **www.timessquarebid.org**

Chashama

Chashama is a non-profit organization founded and administered by artists. Chashama supports the development of art by awarding grants, producing work, and providing subsidized studio, rehearsal, and performance space. Chashama is committed to presenting and creating art that engages the community of New York City. Since its inception in 1995, Chashama has produced, co-produced, and presented over 110 productions, 10 festivals, and has transformed 9 vacant buildings into multi-arts complexes. Chashama has assisted approximately 3,000 young, emerging, and established artists with space grants, production stipends, and administrative and technical support. **www.chashama.org**