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Move It Outdoors

Forced to relocate, a San Francisco-based organization responds artfully to the situation.

By Kristin Palm

Posted June 15, 2007

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When San Francisco's Southern Exposure gallery vacated its long-time Mission District warehouse space during seismic retrofitting last fall, the arts organization took an unusual approach to relocation. "We knew that we were going and we wanted to do something really creative in response to that," says director Courtney Fink. The result is *SoEx Off-Site*, a year-long series of participatory exhibitions – or, perhaps more accurately, experiences – occurring on San Francisco's streets, in its plazas, across its airwaves, and even in its virtual environs.

From kite-flying in corporate-owned public spaces to chalking the outline of a long-gone lake, the exhibits all take exploration of the urban milieu as an overarching theme. "I think because we're in a city, we decided to respond to the city," says Fink. "We wanted to do something local." Indeed, many of the projects have been geographically centered around the gallery's temporary storefront space, about a mile from its original location. The project has been so well received that SoEx plans to continue offsite programming after the exhibition season ends in June. (Meanwhile, the gallery is seeking a new permanent home as the retrofitting project drags on longer than expected.)

The aim of *SoEx Off-Site*, says Fink, is to cast urban surroundings in a new light, even if fleetingly. "I don't think the ultimate goal of every project is to change the way a community thinks about their city," Fink explains. "But if you could for a day change the way people look at the city, that's in the right direction."

For a closer look at the individual projects, click on the image gallery.

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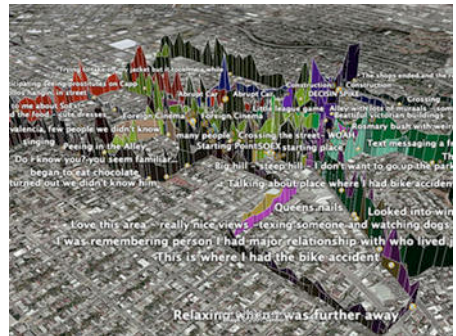
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Biomapping

Throughout April, London artist Christopher Nold outfitted participants with Global Positioning Systems and devices measuring Galvanic Skin Response (GSR), a simple indicator of emotional arousal similar to a lie detector, then sent them out on Mission District walks. Using the data, he created an emotion map of the area, which lays out in colorful detail points of high and low arousal.



Biomapping

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