

“SISTER CITIES”
Jeff Foye and Gordon Winiemko
Proposal

GIVEN:

ID speaks in terms of “**Calaf/Manresa.**”

Following ID’s lead in conflating two different cities (which already suggests a re-examination of the notion of “place”), we will speak in terms of “**San Pedro/Long Beach**” – the two towns in California, just 13.34 km apart, where we live, respectively.

We do not know anything, nor would we *presume* to know anything, about this so-called “Calaf/Manresa.” We think that the most effective, and honest, way to talk to people about where they are from is to:

- Speak about what we do know*** – that is, the “place” we are coming from, and
- Acknowledge our role*** – which is, for all intensive purposes, that of a tourist.

THEREFORE:

We propose to appropriate the **social practice of “town twinning,”** and *rhetorically, performatively* declare San Pedro/Long Beach and Calaf/Manresa **sister cities**. We will act as ambassadors, and do the sort of things that ambassadors do, that is to say:

1. Look and act like ambassadors. Actually, this should read “**artists-ambassadors-tourists**” – another strategic conflation, one that calls into question each of those terms (“cheerleader” might be another relevant term). Our presentation will consist of, but not be limited to:

- Custom artist-made tee shirts, the imagery of which will highlight the odd conflation of San Pedro with Long Beach, and the personal with the public (more on that below).
- Vintage range-finder cameras – symbolic (“tourist”), and practical (to help us document our visit, see below).
- Zero-Halliburton attaché cases – symbolic (“important official”) and practical (to carry around our laptops and other material)
- An Interpreter – symbolic (“international relations”) and practical (we speak very little Spanish, and even less Catalan)

2. Tour the city, talk to the media, meet with “representatives” – in quotes, because we want to problematize the notion of representation – as we are already doing by declaring ourselves representatives of San Pedro/Long Beach. **[see image 1.Meet-n-greet.jpg]**

So, in what will amount to **interaction among different social sectors**, we will try to meet with the mayor, the council, the tourist bureau, the youth league, the trash collectors, the anarchist collective, the sex workers, the traffic cops ... This will also constitute an intervention into spaces both physical (such as the town hall) and virtual (the media), **using the infrastructures, means and existing mechanisms in the territory.**

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Proposal (continued)

3. Educate the people of Calaf/Manresa about their sister city, using a PowerPoint, laptop-based presentation (created in advance of the trip, complete with a *genre defying theme song*), offered up formally and informally, to groups and individuals – to pretty much anyone who will sit and watch it. We're eager ambassadors! [see images 2-7]

Effectively, we will be turning the *naïve, documentary gaze* of the tourist onto our own towns, and our own lives. We intend to conflate the kind of quotidian life you don't see in the guidebooks with those facets of life considered to be emblematic of the region. Blending the personal with the public, **we will problematize the individual's ostensibly straightforward relationship to “place.”**

4. Educate ourselves about our sister city, Calaf/Manresa. Done as a kind of collaboration with the people of Calaf/Manresa, this will continue our conflation of diplomacy and tourism. We envision this to be a conversational exchange, with fluid transitions between *fact finding* and presentation (see point #3).

5. Establish an “embassy space,” open to the public during the last weekend of our visit, where we will present, as a grand finale to the project, ***our audio/visual report on Calaf/Manresa***, consisting of, but not limited to:

- A large hand-drawn wall map – entirely determined by verbal directions given to us by residents of Calaf/Manresa.
- A slide show with voice-over, depicting places, people, situations we encounter (this presentation will be shot on video and then looped on DVD, as an enddistancing strategy).
- Various artifacts and ephemera we collect.

For this report – supposedly intended for our constituency “back home” – we will continue to use our strategies (rhetoric, performativity, conflation, etc). Just as we keep insisting on “Calaf/Manresa” as a single place, our report on this place will flout accepted hierarchies, designations, assumptions, and even geography! Because, after all, everyone we talk to will disagree on such things, even on how to get from one place to another.

This installation could stay up for a period of time after we leave, per the discretion of ID.

IN CONCLUSION:

By not only appropriating infrastructures, means and existing mechanisms, but also **social practices**, our project will be delivered to the people of Calaf/Manresa, in a way that is ostensibly easy to assimilate.

However, by our various strategies, described above, we will be subverting these infrastructures and practices, creating a situation where people are invited to reconsider their relationship to socio-political designations like *neighbor, town, neighboring town, country, and neighboring country*. In other words, we will **generate debate and reflection about different procedures and implied contexts.**

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Image Index

The jpeg files sent by email represent *sketches* for the project.

They are not high enough resolution to be printed; they must be viewed on a computer monitor.

1.Meet-n-greet.jpg

Simulation of the use of existing mechanisms in the territory, i.e. meeting some important officials from Manresa, and being covered by the media.

2.presentation.jpg

Simulation of the artists-ambassadors-tourists giving the proposed PowerPoint presentation on San Pedro/Long Beach to a small group in Calaf/Manresa.

NOTE: The group image is taken from another project undertaken by the artists in 2008, relevant to this proposal – see below.

Images 3-7

These images are sketches for the PowerPoint presentation on San Pedro/Long Beach.

The final presentation will incorporate many such performative recreations of so-called “representations” of life in San Pedro/Long Beach, conflating the public and the personal, the mainstream and the idiosyncratic.

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Relevant Past Works

Please follow the links to view photo and video documentation.

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FOCUS: Product-Testing the Progressive Arts Ethic (2008) <http://www.enjoythesign.com/focus>

This project serves as a precedent for the project we are proposing for ID#5.

Asked by a non-profit progressive arts organization to do a project about “participation in the political process,” we chose to stage performative “focus groups” with members of the Los Angeles arts community. Conflating the ethics of “progressive grassroots organizing” and “political art” with the ethic of “market research,” ***we presented a rhetorical, performative framework through which the participants engaged in dialogue and reconsidered their ideology. We then took the subsequent documentation of this process and did a performative presentation on our findings.***

Jeff Foye

Drawing the Line (2007) <http://jefffoye.com/draw.html>

Video Documentation of the artist’s efforts to draw a line dividing a patch of land in Joshua Tree National Park, in preparation for extending the Mason Dixon Line (the historic division between North and South) across the continental United States.

Play (2007) <http://jefffoye.com/play2.html>

Site-specific video installation in which the artist performatively engages with the discourse of recreation (and re-creation).

Gordon Winiemko

Do Relational Aesthetics With Me (2007) <http://www.enjoythesign.com/doRA>

Site-specific performative research project, undertaken for an international Social Practices conference. “Four artists each lectured four local residents about Relational Aesthetics, then the local residents told me what they learned, and then I presented my findings to the conference, in the form of a PowerPoint presentation (now a flickr set).”

Voices From an Empty Room (2000) <http://www.enjoythesign.com/voices>

Site-specific installation evoking the imminent “going out of business” of the San Francisco arts community, with the recorded voices of a diverse collection of 30 local artists and arts administrators.

The ABC’s of Eviction (2000) <http://www.enjoythesign.com/abc>

Site-specific performance in which the artist, at the height of a flurry of evictions coinciding with the San Francisco dot-com boom, performs some evictions of his own.

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Phases of work and timing of the production

The following is our ideal timeline:

Preparation (in San Pedro/Long Beach) Acquisition of equipment/props Creation of PowerPoint Multimedia Presentation	May and June, 2009
Arrival in Calaf/Manresa	Early July, 2009
Project period Meeting with people and media Giving lectures Fact finding Report at Embassy (final weekend)	18 days (approx July 2nd to July 20th)

Detailed Budget

See attached Excel Spreadsheet.

Resumes

See attached PDF documents.

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