

Hideous Beast
N55
http://hideousbeast.com
http://n55.dk
http://www.jendelosreyes.com/openengagement
Open Engagement
October, 2007.
Field Test was presented as part of Open Engagement, a conference on social practices organized by Jennifer Delos Reyes at the University of Regina in Regina, Saskatchewan in
For this instance of Field Test we reproduced N55's project SHOP in Regina, Saskatchewan.
This publication includes the original text for the project found on N55's website, documentation of our efforts in each city and our reflections on the process.
Hideous Beast is invested in creating alternate forms of social exchange. To further this practice, we examine the efforts of other artists and cultural producers who promote new understandings and modes of social interaction. Many of these projects carry an imperative for the gesture to be repeated. This is apparent either implicitly in the ideology and logic of the activity, or explicitly in the form of instruction sets or public presentation. As an extension of our own search for new tactics of engagement and in order to evaluate these reproducible actions, we recreate other artists' projects, document our process and analyze the results. We call this series of investigations Field Test.



Manual for SHOP

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SHOP is maintained by the persons using it.
Maintenance:
Any person can start a new SHOP. SHOP requires a place, room or some kind of mobile construction. By informing N55 at n55@n55.dk of the position of the SHOP, a list of SHOPS will be published on this website. If a SHOP is closed down, it is suggested that the things are transferred to another existing SHOP.
Expanding SHOP:

Any person can use SHOP. The initiator decides when the SHOP is accessible. The initiator of a SHOP decides which category the things present at SHOP belong to. If persons are motivated by profit to use SHOP, it is suggested that they try to understand the attempt to find other ways of exchanging things than through the use of money and the pursuit of profit. Attention is directed to the logical relation between persons and the rights of persons. Persons should be treated as persons and therefore as having rights. If we deny this assertion it goes wrong: here is a person, but this person should not be treated as a person, or: here is a person, who should be treated as a person, but not as having rights. Therefore we can only talk about persons in a way that makes sense if we know that persons have rights.
Using SHOP:
A SHOP can be situated inside buildings, outside buildings, or it can be mobile. The things present at SHOP are labelled in different categories in order to show: that they can only be used at SHOP (yellow tag), borrowed (magenta tag), or they can be used, borrowed, swapped or if necessary, taken (cyan tag).
Construction:
All sorts of things can be available at SHOP.
At SHOP, persons can contribute things for other persons to use, persons can use things, borrow things, swap things, or persons can take things they need.
SHOP enables persons to exchange things without the use of money.

Introduction:

The following text and images are reprinted from N55's Manual for SHOP



SHOP, 2002.



SHOP, Glasgow, Scotland 2002. Clothes shop.



SHOP, Glasgow, Scotland 2002. Things swspped.



SHOP, Glasgow, Scotland 2002. Kitchen.

HOW IT HAPPENED

In preparation for the project, we contacted Jennifer Delos Reyes, OE Conceptual Director, about the possibility of finding a space to host SHOP on a long-term basis. Through discussion with her and our hostess Andrea Young, we determined that no long-term venue was available. For the duration of the conference we were given space in the Riddel Centre – a common space at the University of Regina, surrounded by a food court and traveling vendors.

Before arriving we also talked to Andrea about where to acquire free things. We looked into Freecycle.org and various other free exchange websites, but since we had easy and readily available form of transportation, it was difficult to pick up items from multiple individuals. Fortunately, Andrea provided a solution. Her mother had quite a surplus of things leftover from a family garage sale and was more than happy to have them taken away. We filled up Andrea’s car with cassettes, LPs, VHS tapes, board games, dolls, wicker baskets, books and toys.

We were given three folding tables to use for the setup of SHOP. In order to mimic the forms used by N55 and to set SHOP apart from the rest of the vendors in the building, we set up the tables in a triangle. We also constructed a triangular pedestal out of cardboard that held information about the project, instructions for its use and the word “SHOP” written on it. For the duration of the 3-day conference we setup SHOP in the morning and broke down in the evening.



WHERE IT WILL GO

For our first trial of Field Test we came away from the conference with a wealth of feedback. Our interactions with participants of SHOP and the dialogue surrounding our lecture presented us with new ways for evaluating the project and how it might manifest in future attempts. Hideous Beast presents its projects to the public in hopes of finding effective ways to communicate ideas. We are often confronted with issues of clarity, and strive to acknowledge its importance. How clear is our intention? How might we improve on previous projects? How do we expand and experiment, avoiding formulaic stagnancy?

By reproducing the works of others, we hope to learn more about method and process. How do ideas hold up when variables change and context shifts? SHOP is presented to the public by N55 and we would like to learn more about their practice. By experiencing their ideas we might understand their proposals. In doing so we also want to widen their project, producing an expanded version of “Manual for SHOP” with the addition of our situation and experience at the conference, eventually producing a manual that grows through time and repeated performances. In retrospect this came across as us trying to critique, or point out flaws in SHOP, which became inflated by our use of terms like “success” and “failure”. Although these terms are important for us, and became part of larger conversations at the conference pertaining to establishing criteria, measuring success, documenting effects, or evaluating effectiveness, our presentation of Field Test was perceived as a quantitative rather than qualitative analysis. This might change though.