

Discussion after Urban Alphabets Workshop in Sao Paulo – Workshop 2 (Tuesday)  
(Open discussion with 2 participants and a translator)

Type: group interview

Place: FIESP - Federação das Indústrias do Estado de São Paulo, Avenida Paulista, 1313 -  
Cerqueira César, São Paulo - SP, 01311-923, Brazil

Time: 7:30-8:30pm

Length: 26:15 min (not the full length is recorded; recording starts after approximately 20-30  
min)

Interviewer: Suse Miessner

Interviewees: 2 workshop participants

Abbreviations: P1-P2: one participant

T: translator

Formatting: [...] added comments to understand discussion better  
text gestures, expressions from the group

P1: Portuguese

T: *He sees it in a temporal way. He is doing a work, which is about the sound. Hear the sound of place and you hear the sound of the place 30 years ago and it was totally different and the sounds are dead. The actual letters are dead now from 30 years ago.*

Suse: *No some are still there. You know it depends a lot on the areas I think but if you look at monument that they have been there for maybe a hundred years. Or it really depends on the cities. And it might not be so much in Sao Paulo that there are these kind of old places. But if you go to Berlin or if you go to Rome or some of those places you would see lots of letters that have been there for quite long and they are a sign of history in some way. So I agree though... [Pause]*

P1: [Portuguese ... not understandable... laughing ... not understandable]

T: [not understandable or Portuguese?]

Suse: *What's it? [he shows something on his phone]*

P1: Portuguese

T: *...from people of mental...*

[not understandable... pause]

Suse: *But would you say that for example now that you were using the application, especially you, since you were using it much more than he did, in some way, would you say that you would usually walk like that through the city?*

T: translating

P1: Answer Portuguese - quite long...

T: *He said he would...you would never walk like this, like the senses were much more sharp going through the city and through the street and he said it has a lot to do with our luggage, with the things we have to offer, not only the character but also, the [pause] your perception of it. And you have a different relation to the city because usually all the messages come ready to you and you just read and discard it. And he is saying now you have to pay attention, now you have to see in another way. There is this trade that your work is offering.*

Suse: *That is very nice! I see that is exactly what I'm trying to say. Or kind of one of the things that I find very important to the project is that you know you are using everything that is already there as material to make your own stuff. And I think that is somehow something that our culture nowadays has to do because we get everything offered. Everything comes to us for free. So what do we do?*

P2: Yeah.

Suse: *We have to just reuse. We have to start reusing instead of reinventing.*

T: *Appropriating!*

Suse: *So that is very well said actually.*

T: *That is related to what he said about hacking. Other people use other people's work,*

temporality  
of letters in  
space and space  
in general

acted space:  
sharp senses

connection to  
previous expe-  
riences (expe-  
rienced space)

active effort  
to understand  
the city

reusing +  
appropriating  
existing  
material

you know.

Suse: Yeah exactly. So it is going in that direction as well. And then I see many layers really that there is very primary goal "Go collect stuff", which is very instinct-based. Everyone wants to collect something, almost everybody. And this is something that doesn't hurt, it's not weight that you have to carry with you when you move and all of that. And then there is the perception and spatial aspect of how you walk around in the city and how at least for me even if I don't think about this application for months I will still go around the city and be like "Oh! Look at this L!"  
[everybody laughing]

Suse: So it's also changing your perception after you have actually experienced it through that application. That's something I didn't expect when I started the project.

P2: Of course! Very interesting experience!

Suse: Thanks! That makes me happy!

P2: Changed my perception.

Suse: And that's what I'm trying to do. And what I'm then trying to research on also. In your surveys were also the email addresses? Did they give you their email addresses?

T: Yes.

Suse: Can you give them to me?

T: Yes.

Suse: Good. Then I'll send you in about 2-3 weeks just send an email with a short questionnaire. I'll try to make it in 2 languages. It'll be almost about the same questions. So kind of about how do you perceive space and letters and advertising and so on and so forth. Just kind of try to see how it is today and see how it is in 3 weeks and ask you whether you have used the app in between or not. So don't think about it all the time. I really don't want you to think about it but then just it would be nice to get responses the day that I send an email again.

P2: OK. You have my response!

Suse: Great. Very great!

P1: Portuguese (much longer than actual translation)

P2: Portuguese

T: Have you ever thought about doing it with blind?

Suse: How would you do it? [Laughing]

P1: Portuguese. (not being translated)

Suse: It's an interesting thing to think about for sure. But I think it's quite hard to ... resemble the same thing it's very hard to translate between media anyways. It's a very visual thing that I'm doing with the letters and then I'm just translating it into just another visual media, which in that sense it's easy. But trying to translate it into something else that you could touch is really hard and I'm not sure it is possible.

T: If you have you know digital technologies... [laughing]

Suse: I mean there are lots of experiments about how to transfer images to blind people how they understand textures, what's in the images but there is so much about nuances in those images that how can you transfer that and colors and all of that... there is so much information in it that we as people who see can just see ... so it's a bit the same with the sound people here. That it's really hard to make ... and with visual it's probably even harder I would say.

T: He said it reminded him of classes he had about accessibility. I don't know how to say it. You have to rethink of your perception as another person has... That is how it changes his perception. He sees letters everywhere, just like you said.

Suse: I think it's a nice comparison. It's like what we did in first semester of architecture studies we had to spend a day in a wheelchair to understand how people in wheel chairs actually feel.

T: When I was that... I don't know how to say that in English ... the people who stay in the exhibition... we had to do this exercise where you go inside and close your eyes and had to see.... feel the ground and the wind and to rethink the exhibition space as people.

Suse: And it is very important ... And I think especially for me as an architect from background and education it is very important that experience that I had in 1 day in a wheelchair and afterwards in all the design processes how you were actually thinking

UA as  
collection

perceived  
space: also af-  
ter workshop

letters  
everywhere >  
comparison to  
accessibility  
classes

about how do we make this accessible? And how do we make it... also when you are a skater you see the city quite different from somebody who just walks or bikes the city. I think because I'm also skater in that sense I'm very particular because it's even ... laughing... for blind people the planers like to have high steps from the street to the pedestrian way, and the skaters always want the exercise and the wheelchair accessible want the opposite.

**P1:** Portuguese

**T:** He sais about the people who use sign language with each other can see actually... almost can see the letters...

**Suse:** It's actually words. Generally it's words. It's also very interesting and we have been thinking about making this project with things for example. There is one alphabet somewhere uploaded where people, who took photos of things and the first letter of the thing in the German language is the letter they assigned it to. So in English "flower" would be "f" and "berry" would be "b" and "Cat" would be "c" and so on. So there are also very different approaches in even this alphabet how you can make it. So you know taking photos of objects and it's a totally valid approach.

**T:** Or take them inside...

**P1:** Portuguese with T

**T:** He says there is something similar. Hearing impaired people. The speed that we they do the signs are parameters for the understanding of the language also.

**Suse:** Well it's temporal in a different way. Somehow. Because actually speaking is also very temporal it's maybe close to that. But there is in the buildings are actually longer term and kind of made forever. at least some. Maybe less so nowadays and more 1000 years ago. [laughing]

**T:** translates

**P1:** replies Portuguese

**T:** What you do is awesome.

**Suse:** Thanks. But really it's just the tool for people to use and I think that's why I like getting totally different ideas. I haven't thought about accessibility [laughing] in connection with this. So I think it's a really good trigger to take people's experiences and talk about things that we wouldn't be talking about otherwise

**T:** translates

**P1:** replies

[laughing everyone (seems suse understood) ]

**Suse:** So I'd be very interested to see if you do something with your kids or your teenagers. I'd be really interested to see results. Even if it's not with the application because you might not be able to make with the application and if you just do something related to it would be really cool to get an email.

**T:** translates

**Suse:** Since I will send you emails you will have my email.

**P1:** Portuguese

**Suse:** It would be really interesting to see. And also it would be super-interesting to see on the facade stuff that comes from different parts of Sao Paulo.

**T:** Yeah. He said he is going to do with different neighborhoods, far away.

**Suse:** That would be really great. That would have also been nice for these workshops but the weather is just like... it's just like it is. Ok. Then many thanks for coming!

**P2:** Thanks to you too. your project is very interesting. And now I would like to zoom into .... make up

**Suse:** ahhh

**P2:** deconstruct the alphabets because I just all the time learned the alphabet with guilt and all the letters, same pattern, same way [Suse laughing] and now it's the time to break this ruleset and percept the new means with the letters, the icons.

**Suse:** Great! I'm very happy.

**P1:** Portuguese

**T:** He is remembered this concrete poetry in Brasil 50th, mid century which was very visual and also the Dada-poetry.

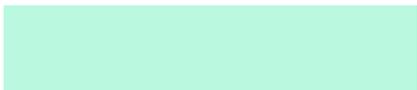
**Suse:** Yeah. We have actually been thinking of doing a project with poetry and some letters from a certain place and play around with the kind of meanings that it could have but

reference:  
concrete poetry

we haven't yet.  
T: *But if you look it up the concrete poetry. It's really interesting. The concept of the poetry is also the placement of the world. It's really great.*  
P1: **some names that I cannot transcribe....**  
P2: **adds more**  
[laughing]  
**more names**  
[laughing]  
P1: **Portuguese**  
T: *The Babel Tower.*  
Suse: [laughing] *Now we are getting big.*  
P1: *Portuguese*  
T: *Language crosses history all the time. It's actually the primary expression in humanity, because we are the first ones who have language.*  
Suse: *But you could say it's how things get transferred to other generations because that's how we also tell about history.*  
T: *How we create history.*  
Suse: *Create history is a very nice way of saying it actually, because yeah... we create history.*  
T: **translates**  
P1: **Portuguese**  
T: *There is a book coming from poetry and you can carve with the wood tool...*  
Suse: *I have no idea what it is in English.*  
T: *From people from the streets who do that. The carving-thing in the wood.*  
P1: **Portuguese**  
Suse: *It's the printing one, right?*  
T: *yes*  
P1: **Portuguese; no translation....**  
[Laughing]

language and  
history

# Legend:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| changes in space: perception, action,... |    |
| future development possibilities         |    |
| usability                                |    |
| user types                               |    |
| urban postcards                          |    |
| other important                          |    |
| specificity of a city?                   |   |
| reference                                |  |

acted space:  
sharp senses

active effort  
to understand  
the city

perceived  
space: also af-  
ter workshop

letters  
everywhere >  
comparison to  
accessibility  
classes

connection to  
previous  
experiences  
(experienced  
space)

temporality  
of letters in  
space and space  
in general

reusing +  
appropriating  
existing  
material

UA as  
collection

language and  
history

reference:  
concrete poetry