



# City As Material Course Outline Vassar College International Program, London

Giles Lane

**London: City as Material**  
Proboscis  
Giles Lane, Alice Angus & Orlagh Woods

The focus for this class will be in considering the role of the city as material for artistic experimentation and creation. Only inadequately understood as "public art," urban interventions produce public space where it does not exist, foster new modes of urban citizenship and participation, render legible the force of political and financial power, shaping the global city, expose the mutability of "public" and "private" entailed by new media transformations of social space, create alliances between varied urban stakeholders, challenge the zero-tolerance policies of the increasingly securitized city, and broaden the repertoire of political resistance and direct action. In addition to contemporary practice the course will consider the rich histories of urban intervention by artists in London and elsewhere.

The class will be co-creative: i.e. students will collaborate with the tutors to define nature of our investigations of the city and its potential. Our aim is to create a vibrant and inspiring space in which students are encouraged to work both individually and collectively, drawing upon each other for help and advice as much as us as tutors.

A communal lunch at the end of each session will be held at the Proboscis studio or as a picnic if we are outside.

### Tools We Can Use

- Blogs
- Podcasting
- Diffuson eBooks & StoryCubes
- Field recordings (audio)
- Video and digital photography
- Sensors

### Things We Can Do

- Observation / guerilla ethnography
- Seedbombing / guerilla gardening
- Stencilling / drawing / sketching
- Street Performance
- Urban Play / games
- Urban Sensing
- Temporary installation and contraptions
- Posters / postcards / eBooks / flyers /

### Some Links

- CityMine(d) - <http://www.citymined.org/>
- Platform - <http://www.platformlondon.org/>
- Space Hijackers - <http://www.spacehijackers.co.uk/>
- Transgressive Architecture - <http://www.gmdoron.com/>
- Reclaim the Streets - <http://rts.gn.apc.org/>
- City of Sound Blog - <http://www.cityofsound.com>
- Hide & Seek Festival - <http://www.hideandseekfest.co.uk/>

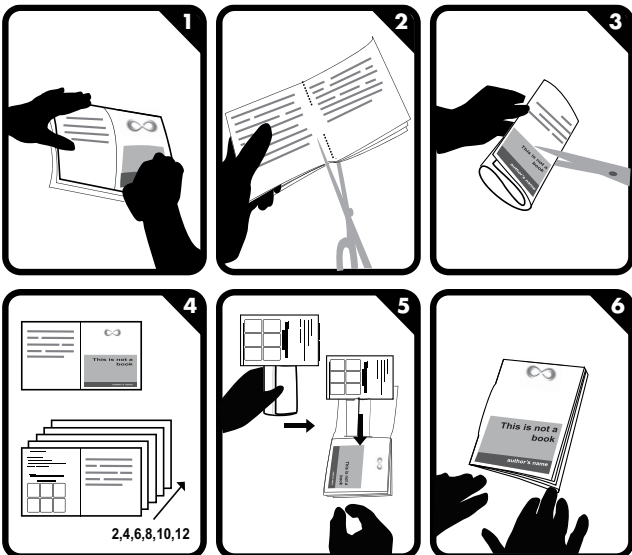
2009-09-07

CC Proboscis 2009

<http://proboscis.org.uk>

[www.bookleteer.com](http://www.bookleteer.com)

made with Diffusion Generator by



**Some Places We Might Visit**  
Smithfield Market / Borough Market / Spitalfields  
Barbican/Museum of London  
Sir John Soane's Museum  
Geffrye Museum  
Hampstead Heath / Highgate Cemetery  
Along the Thames River  
Pollocks Toy Museum

**Some Books We Can Read/Refer To**  
*London Encyclopedia*, eds Weinreb & Hibert (Macmillan 1993)  
*Actions: What You Can Do With the City*, eds Borasi & Zardini! (CCA 2008)  
*London Walking*, Simon Pope (Ellipsis 2000)  
*Flesh and Stone*, Richard Sennett (Faber & Faber 1994)  
*Robinson in Space*, Patrick Keller (Reaktion Books 1999)  
*Liquid City*, Marc Atkins & Iain Sinclair (Reaktion Books 1999)  
*The Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard (Beacon Press 1969)  
*Species of Spaces*, Georges Perec (Penguin 1997)  
*On Guerrilla Gardening*, Richard Reynolds (Bloomsbury 2008)  
*Delirious New York*, Rem Koolhaas (Monacelli Press 1994)  
*Mutations*, Rem Koolhaas (Actar 2001)  
*Looking at London*, Arthur Kutcher (Thames & Hudson 1978)  
*Signs*, Phil Baines & Catherine Dixon (Laurence King 2003)

**Some Films We Can Watch**  
*Playtime*, Jacques Tati  
*Listen to Britain*, Humphrey Jennings  
*Powers of 10: Goods; Day of the Dead*, Charles & Ray Eames  
*Blue*, Derek Jarman  
*London*, Patrick Keller  
*Gallivant*, Andrew Kötting

**Assignment**

The assignment for the class will be two-fold:

1. Group Project – the class will collaborate together to document their experiences and explorations of the city as material, setting up and maintaining a blog and using various media (audio/video/photography etc). This will be an ongoing activity throughout the course.
2. Individual Project – each student will publish a Diffusion eBook of a personal artistic action or urban intervention they have carried out during the course.