

KELLER EASTERLING

Title: *Offshore*

Genre: Web and Video

Applicant's Role in Production: Researcher/writer/producer

Production Format: Web and Video

Brief Project Description

Offshore, an exhibition and website, is the fictional media counterpoint to a non-fiction book I have just completed titled *Terra Incognita*.

Terra Incognita, travels around the world looking at formulaic spatial products in difficult political situations. While generally considered to be politically immune formats of neoliberal magistrates and their business counterparts, these products are also the tools of rogue nations, cults, and other impresarios. Far from banal, they can become political pawns and even instruments of aggression, storing new myths, desires and symbolic capital in a complex spatial cocktail. *Terra Incognita* visits six such cocktails: tourism in North Korea, fantastic forms of sovereignty in commercial and religious franchises, high-tech agricultural formations in, automated global ports, microwave urbanism in India's IT enclaves and the global industry of building implosion. These runaway stories, found in the international pages of the newspapers and the global news wires, create something like footnoted fiction in a book of political misadventures.

Offshore takes the fact of this fiction one step further by concocting additional circumstances and consequences for these cocktails. It "documents" counterfeit newspaper articles, television news reports and academic theory related to a combination of real and fictional events. The exhibition presents a set of documentary stories interfaced by a website. Interactivity facilitates the degree to which the stories and rumors become infectious. *Offshore* treats these cultural *contagions* as powerful persuasions that make the world work. Given the failures of some principled political stances to meet more disorganized or elusive forms of political subterfuge, the project investigates not only a politics that declares its name and enters a democratic process, but also one that relies on the instrumentality of corruption and duplicity. *Offshore* proffers a productive piracy in which an additional set of regulators, wild cards and masquerades, loaded with unorthodox powers contribute to the development of a political imagination and ingenuity.

KELLER EASTERLING

If you are sending more than one sample, please copy this page. Sample(s) must be cued: indicate how long each sample should be viewed for a COMBINED viewing time of no more than 15 minutes. If slides are included in this application, please list the title and year of the work on this form.

Title HIGHLINE: PLOTTING NYC

Year 2002

Technical Information

Original Format

- Software
 Web
 Installation
 Other _____

Format Submitted for Viewing

- Software
 Web
 VHS
 Other _____

Preferred OS

- Windows
 Mac
 Unix
 Other _____

Web Information (answer only if sample work is in Web format)

URL www.thehighline.org (if more than one please list them below)

Browser requirement(s) _____

Plug-in requirement(s) _____

This sample requires broadband connection (fast Internet connection)

A local copy of the sample work has been included with the application

Special Information For Viewing:

Description of Work (use an additional sheet if necessary)

High Line: Plotting NYC

High Line: Plotting NYC is a web installation that relies on the interactivity of this media format to assert a fundamental principle about urbanism: that it cannot be authored by architects and planners. The project was jointly sponsored by the Design Trust for Public Space and a group campaigning to keep the high line. When asked to provide a "vision" for the elevated railway in Chelsea, it seemed best to offer, not a planning prescription, but a cacophony of voices that constitute the greed, neurosis and excess of urbanism. Information about program, history, real estate, tourism, etc. is assembled into four different related stories, something like the stories that make up a spy thriller. The user travels between them, sometimes through abrupt and comedic trap doors. One segment, rendered in the planimetric banalities of real estate, pleads the case of beleaguered developers seeking public subsidies. Another, rendered as a game, tallies the rewards and souvenirs of tourism as it attempts to conquer experience and quantify experience. Another environment is that of animals, where an opinionated dog quotes Walt Whitman and Flann O'Brien while making irreverent cracks about architecture, fashion and other pretensions in the area. An obsessive bird correlates historical and botanical data. The fourth environment portrays the high line as a party, implying that the site is a collection of political associations and ambitions. Throughout, a Tamagatchi-like box at the bottom of the screen records each unique passage through the stories. [www.thehighline.org]

KELLER EASTERLING

If you are sending more than one sample, please copy this page. Sample(s) must be cued: indicate how long each sample should be viewed for a COMBINED viewing time of no more than 15 minutes. If slides are included in this application, please list the title and year of the work on this form.

Title WILDCARDS: A GAME OF ORGMAN

Year 1999

Technical Information

Original Format

Software
 Web
 Installation
 Other _____

Format Submitted for Viewing

Software
 Web
 VHS
 Other _____

Preferred OS

Windows
 Mac
 Unix
 Other _____

Web Information (answer only if sample work is in Web format)

URL www.dmca.yale.edu/wildcards (if more than one please list them below)

Browser requirement(s) _____

Plug-in requirement(s) _____

This sample requires broadband connection (fast Internet connection)

A local copy of the sample work has been included with the application

Special Information For Viewing:

Description of Work (use an additional sheet if necessary)

Wildcards: A Game of Orgman

Wildcards: A Game of Orgman, is a website cum scenario machine on which the interactivity of the web is essential. It assembles, as a game, the logistical parameters for spatial products used by a suite of companies in their conquest of global territory [Schiphol, Arnold Palmer Golf, Walmart, AMC Theaters and Starbucks]. Without showing any visual evidence of the architectural envelopes, the game only permits the manipulation of the world's new locationless sites, made of time-frames, persuasions, and branding techniques. The user becomes the orgman looking for a new wildcard, [i.e. the time it takes to play golf, shop or wait on a layover] around which to shape a real estate product. [www.dmca.yale.edu/wildcards]

KELLER EASTERLING

If you are sending more than one sample, please copy this page. Sample(s) must be cued: indicate how long each sample should be viewed for a COMBINED viewing time of no more than 15 minutes. If slides are included in this application, please list the title and year of the work on this form.

Title "I LOVE DPRK" & "TOMATO WORLD"

Year 2002

Technical Information

Original Format

Software
 Web
 Installation
 Other _____

Format Submitted for Viewing

Software
 Web
 VHS
 Other _____

Preferred OS

Windows
 Mac
 Unix
 Other _____

Web Information (answer only if sample work is in Web format)

URL _____ (if more than one please list them below)

Browser requirement(s) _____

Plug-in requirement(s) _____

This sample requires broadband connection (fast Internet connection)

A local copy of the sample work has been included with the application

Special Information For Viewing:

Description of Work (use an additional sheet if necessary)

ARTICLES FROM FORTHCOMING TERRA INCOGNITA

Keller Easterling Artist's Statement

I am a writer and media architect. I have written scholarly books: *Organization Space: Landscapes, Highways and Houses in America* (MIT 1999) and *Terra Incognita* [forthcoming]. Yet these books are written with skills that have been best rehearsed by writing for theater and creating the media projects described below.

Writing for theater or media is writing in an active register. A sentence in theater is not a sentence in prose. A collection of words that is to be spoken or enacted in theater is notation for an action that may or may not be reflected in the content or subject of the words. It is the trace of an infinitive, the sound of a voice or the hint to a subtext that is the real event. While the same semiotic tools are used to make both dialogue and prose, they constitute entirely different species of artifact.

While I am a professor at Yale School of Architecture, ostensibly offering instruction in the conventions of the discipline, I teach architecture with the only skills I understand, those that operate within the register of the infinitive expression. I teach architecture by working against the discipline's predisposition to geometric dominance, a predisposition that is, ironically, exaggerated by digital tools. More fascinating to me is work in operational strata. I have been publishing in media formats, sometimes to rescue information from a false logic that writing might impose and sometimes to counter architecture culture's concentration on imagining without interactivity.

For instance, *Call it Home*, a laserdisc history of suburbia, collected 55 minutes of running footage, 2800 stills and three sound tracks into interactive format. While avoiding some of the leading questions of the clichéd hypertextual formats, my partner Richard Prelinger and I determined a form of interactivity that would simply use the remote control to switch between chapter-stops in footage, still and sound track, allowing the viewer to "mix" their own trajectory through the gigantic media commercial that constituted suburban expansion after the depression. [500 of the stills are assembled in two university websites: www.arch.columbia.edu/projects/faculty/call-it-home/index.html and www.library.yale.edu/iso/workstation/insight_40.html [Yale access required]

Similarly, *Wildcards: A Game of Orgman*, is a website cum scenario machine on which the interactivity of the web is essential. It assembles, as a game, the logistical parameters for spatial products used by a suite of companies in their conquest of global territory [Schiphol, Arnold Palmer Golf, Walmart, AMC Theaters and Starbucks]. Without showing any visual evidence of the architectural envelopes, the game only permits the manipulation of the world's new locationless sites, made of time-frames, persuasions, and branding techniques. The user becomes the orgman looking for a new wildcard, [i.e. the time it takes to play golf, shop or wait on a layover] around which to shape a real estate product. [www.dmca.yale.edu/wildcards]

High Line: Plotting NYC is a web installation that, again, relies on the interactivity of this media format to assert a fundamental principle about urbanism: that it cannot be authored by architects and planners. The project is close in format to a previous performance piece called *Speech*, where four very different documents (a bundle of letters, a pretentious play, a child's notebook of scientific observations about a sibling, and a set of jokes and riddles) are "called" by a teleprompter. The documents stop and start and are intertwined by this calling, which is different for every performance, until a story begins to emerge—a story with a catastrophic event. Favoring the actual presence of the actors in the room over the illusion that they are not there, the audience is constantly aware that part of the event is the actor's struggle to remember their place in the stopping and starting recitation of the document. This detachment/real presence is overwhelmed in the revelation of relationships between the four documents.

For *High Line*, when asked to provide a "vision" for the elevated railway in Chelsea, it seemed best to offer, not a planning prescription, but a cacophony of voices that constitute the greed, neurosis and excess of urbanism. Information about program, history, real estate, tourism, etc. is assembled into four different related stories, something like the stories that make up a spy thriller. The user travels between them, sometimes through abrupt and comedic trap doors. One segment, rendered in the planimetric banalities of real estate, pleads the case of beleaguered developers seeking public subsidies. Another, rendered as a game, tallies the rewards and souvenirs of tourism as it attempts to conquer experience and quantify experience. Another environment is that of animals, where an opinionated dog quotes Walt Whitman and Flann O'Brien while making irreverent cracks about architecture, fashion and other pretensions in the area. An obsessive bird correlates historical and botanical data. The fourth environment portrays the high line as a party, implying that the site is a collection of political associations and ambitions. Throughout, a Tamagatchi-like box at the bottom of the screen records each unique passage through the stories. [www.thehighline.org]

Striking a balance between interactivity and authorship is tricky. Sometimes the most interactive formats result in the opposite of their intended effect or have a limited anecdotal reactivity that occurs only in contact with the technology. For *Offshore*, I would like to develop an immediacy and efflorescence that I am able to craft in theater but which may not yet be present in some of the more contemplative web sites. *Offshore's* web and installation media initiate the spread of a contagion that is highly articulated and therefore, hopefully, sturdy enough to ride other media and imaginations. Finally, it is the stories themselves that are interactive. Masquerade and hoax are the tools of a long-con that requires of the user, not only participation and ingenuity, but collusion.

