

Elements of Composition [As Above, So Below]
Bik Van der Pol
**Program of Walking Tours, September 24-
October 16, 2011**

Bik Van der Pol's project consists of a text piece—the phrase “As Above, So Below” painted on the surface of a parking lot adjacent to the Historic Essex Street Market and designed to be read from above—, a publication and a series of walking tours by active citizens that lead visitors around the Lower East Side to consider the past, present, and future of the built environment in three dimensions. Walking tours departed from the Bik Van der Pol project room in the historic Essex Street Market daily at 2pm and 6pm (with some exceptions).

Saturday, September 24
2:00–3:15pm

SPURA Soundwalk; Todd Shalom (founder and director of Elastic City)
For SPURA Soundwalk, Todd Shalom leads participants in an active listening walk of the Seward Park Urban Renewal Area (SPURA). Drawing upon techniques from Acoustic Ecology and visual poetry, participants listen to the unfolding soundscape and engage in a series of poetic exercises to become more attuned to the neighborhood's past and present.

6:00–7:15pm

On Imaginary Ground; Michelle Hyun (independent curator, Chicago) and Natasha Marie Llorens (independent writer/curator, New York)
Understanding that the imaginary both animates and grounds, we visit various sites of inhabitation and try to render, through conversation and walking, what is invisible to these sites. We reflect on the role of the Living as Form exhibition space and project itself as one site of inhabitation. “*The*

*supposed flatness of inhabited space dissolves into a heterogeneity that is connected, momentarily and fragmentarily, only by a success of steps. The intactness [la totalité pleine] developers of the laid-out space had proposed now disappears... What has become of totality? How has it faded away?” (J.F. Augoyard, *Step by Step*)*

Sunday, September 25

2:00–3:00pm

Silence in the Postcard City; Pablo Gomez Uribe & Reena Katz (MFA Candidates at the School for Art, Media and Technology at Parsons the New School for Design)
Over 40 years ago, New York City was granted an area bounded by Essex, Delancey, Grand and Willett Streets. Currently known as SPURA, it is the largest area of the city that remains without urban development. This particular place, full of hope, memories and meanings, is a critical part of the living history of the Lower East Side. Pablo Gomez Uribe (Colombia) and Reena Katz (Canada) guide a silent performative tour through the proposed SPURA site, encouraging walkers to experience the place through the sounds of its current environment and the missing images of events that occurred in the past.

3:00–4:00pm

Elements of Composition; Bik Van der Pol
Bik Van der Pol's tour points towards the contentious (re)valuation of space, verticality and the concept of air rights, which apply to owning the space above plots of land and buildings. While looking into the void, one realizes that this empty space, now a parking lot, also carries the imagination of the future, of what will be, with it. The view of the empty sky at some point will crystallize and capitalize. They talk about their fascination for zones, air rights and Google Earth in relation to ownership and value.

6:00–7:15pm

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Understanding that the imaginary both animates and grounds, we visit various sites of inhabitation and try to render, through conversation and walking, what is invisible to these sites. We reflect on the role of the Living as Form exhibition space and project itself as one site of inhabitation.

Thursday, September 29

2:00–3:00pm

Common Circular; Todd Rouhe (Registered Architect and Assistant Adjunct Professor of Architecture in the Barnard and Columbia Colleges Architecture Program)
This tour covers landmarks, significant public spaces, dwelling types and political struggles on the Lower East Side within the boundaries of Delancey Street, Orchard Street, Division Street and East Broadway. The tour route forms an interwoven loop focusing on the everyday life of the local neighborhood with distant views to utopian visions and dystopian realities growing on the horizon.

6:00 – 7:15pm

Twilight of the Goods: What happened to Orchard Street's Bargain District?; Amy & Larry Zimmer (journalist & proprietor, longtime residents of LES)
Larry and Amy Zimmer remember Sundays on the Lower East Side in the 1980s when people still lined up to shop at the Jewish-owned bargain clothing shops. The siblings' family ran one of those shops, which closed down in 1998 after more than 80 years. Larry worked at the family business on Orchard Street, H. Eckstein' & Sons, from the age of 12 (child labor laws be damned) through grad school when he would drive to work and park his car in one of the SPURA lots. Their tour is a

multi-generational odyssey through the ever-changing neighborhood where they both lived on Ludlow Street until recently moving to Brooklyn. It focusses on the disappearing culture of the Jewish merchants that once thrived in the area and who, like their grandfather, fought to keep it when Robert Moses threatened to tear through it to build the Lower Manhattan Expressway.

Friday, September 30

2:00 – 3:15pm

Twilight of the Goods: What happened to Orchard Street's Bargain District?; Amy & Larry Zimmer (journalist & proprietor, longtime residents of LES) Their tour is a multi-generational odyssey through the ever-changing neighborhood where they both lived on Ludlow Street until recently moving to Brooklyn. It focusses on the disappearing culture of the Jewish merchants that once thrived in the area and who, like their grandfather, fought to keep it when Robert Moses threatened to tear through it to build the Lower Manhattan Expressway.

6:00–7:00pm

Occupying the Lower East Side, Occupying Wall Street; Gabriela Rendon & Miguel Robles-Duran (urbanists & co-founders of Cohabitation Strategies)

The tour takes a cross section of the most significant neoliberal urban development and discuss its imminent logic as we transverse the links in the lower Manhattan corridor between the Lower East Side and Wall Street. The tour ends at Liberty Square to join NYC call for an American revolution.

7:45pm

The Broome's End; Srdjan Jovanovic Weiss (founder of Normal Architecture Office and

Assistant Professor at Temple University's Tyler School of Art & Architecture)

"I would like to propose a tour that follows the same route that I walk coming back home from work in the evening. Three times a week I emerge from the F train station Essex/Delancey at around 9 pm at the Lower East Side. I first pass by the Essex market. Then I take the left turn at Broome Street towards East. In about ten minutes I am at home which is almost at the very end of Broome street. During those ten minutes I pass an urban landscape of fences, car-parks, social housing, scaffolding, police and fire-station, large co-ops, community gardens, experimental compost site, playgrounds and parks and other spaces that I know very little about. It would be great if the participants in this tour bring their own knowledge about this area, rumors, even conspiracies. We will walk for about 10-15 minutes and exchange our knowledge about the area among ourselves."

Saturday, October 1

DUE TO WEATHER, TOURS HAVE BEEN RESCHEDULED TO OCTOBER 15

Sunday, October 2

2:00–3:00pm

Silence in the Postcard City; Pablo Gomez Uribe & Reena Katz (MFA Candidates at the School for Art, Media and Technology at Parsons the New School for Design)

Over 40 years ago, New York City was granted an area bounded by Essex, Delancey, Grand and Willett Streets. Currently known as SPURA, it is the largest area of the city that remains without urban development. This particular place, full of hope, memories and meanings, is a critical part of the living history of the Lower East Side. Pablo Gomez Uribe (Colombia) and Reena Katz (Canada) guide a silent performative tour through the proposed SPURA site, encouraging walkers to experience the

place through the sounds of its current environment and the missing images of events that occurred in the past.

6:00–7:15pm

Dave Subren (LES resident & housing rights activist)

Dave Subren generously elaborates on the history of the L.E.S. and his vision for the S.P.U.R.A. site. He emphasizes on his version of the future for the area from various papers like "Form based Coding (F.B.C.'s)", "Zoning Variance", "Mix-use Housing", "Inclusionary Subsidized Housing" and "Community Land Trust". Time permitting, he may even address the arcane theory of "spatial deconcentration and planned shrinkage" and its implication and relevancy to the L.E.S. and other U.S. cities. The term was first outlined in the Kerner Commission Report in 1968. The Kerner commission, formally know as the National Advisory Commission On Civil Disorders, was convened by President Lyndon B. Johnson in the wake of the wide spread urban rioting of the late 1960's, in order to examine the cause of the urban riots and developing strategies to control or prevent future unrest. The theory of spatial deconcentration is based on a military strategy for establishing control over urban areas.

Tuesday, October 4

6:00 – 7:30pm

Bureaucratizing Participation; Jose Esparza (M.S. candidate in Critical, Curatorial, and Conceptual Practices in Architecture at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation)

The destination of the tour is the Community Board 3 Office, 59 East 4th Street. Community organizing has long been a format for urban resistance. In the contemporary metropolitan context, civic organizations such as

Community Boards have adopted similar grassroots strategies of democratic participation to voice the collective needs and concerns of a specific district to the larger network of city governmental agencies. "Bureaucratizing Participation" questions the efficiency of this format and analyzes its articulation in the bureaucratic setting. The tour guides attendees to New York City's Community Board 3's Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Priorities public hearing. Tour attendee participation is encouraged.

Thursday, October 6

2:00-3:15pm

Dave Subren (LES resident & housing rights activist)

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4:00-5:00pm

What if New York City... Adaptations to climate change; Thaddeus Pawlowski (Associate Urban Designer for the Office of the Chief Urban Designer of the City of New York, Department of City Planning)

Urban designer Thaddeus Pawlowski hosts a walking tour and open conversation about the particular challenges that face New York City in the age of climate change. We look at aspects of New York's infrastructure and buildings that may have to adapt to meet the rising waters, more frequent and dangerous storms, and rising temperatures

that we can expect in the upcoming years. We also consider how current building trends will fare under future environmental conditions. We start in the Lower East Side and work our way through several of the city's waterfront neighborhoods, looking for clues to our continued resilience.

Friday, October 7

2:00-3:00pm

Common Circular; Todd Rouhe (Registered Architect and Assistant Adjunct Professor of Architecture in the Barnard and Columbia Colleges Architecture Program)

This tour covers landmarks, significant public spaces, dwelling types and political struggles on the Lower East Side within the boundaries of Delancey Street, Orchard Street, Division Street and East Broadway. The tour route forms an interwoven loop focusing on the everyday life of the local neighborhood with distant views to utopian visions and dystopian realities growing on the horizon.

Saturday, October 8

2:00-3:00pm

Layered City / Layered SPURA; Gabrielle Bendiner-Viani (urbanist, photographer and curator) & The New School

More than forty years ago, New York City took ownership of a large area on the Lower East Side for "slum clearance" and urban renewal. You might know it as the area around the Essex Street Market (where Living as Form is being held), or as the parking lots on Delancey Street, or you may know someone who once lived there. This is SPURA, the Seward Park Urban Renewal Area. Since 2008, Gabrielle Bendiner-Viani and the City Studio have been working on a long-term project about the everyday experience of housing, urban renewal and urban change at SPURA. Our goal is to translate our research into images, exhibitions and

audio projects to help people with different points of view come together in conversation about SPURA's past, present and future. The walk explores the many ways of seeing the layers of SPURA.

6:00 - 7:15pm

Unrealized; Hester Goodwin (MA candidate in Public History at NYU)

Frequently characterized by battles over the value of its built environment, the Lower East Side is haunted by visions of urban renewal and development projects never realized, sites that look like any other in the neighborhood, but which bear the imprint of both possibility and condemnation. Years and decades after the fact, this past continues to shape the community and physical landscape of the Lower East Side. "Unrealized" uses these sites to explore the value of land and space, and the tension between preservation and progress, by envisioning what could have been and never was.

Sunday, October 9

2:00-3:00pm

FENCES, WALLS, CLEARING; Alec Appelbaum (writer)

This tour shows the many collisions of wealth and use that surround the SPURA site. We look for sites with latent real estate value, and we puzzle out walls and dead ends. Heading east along Broome Street, north along Pitt, west along Houston, south along Attorney, west along Delancey and south along Essex, we move between schools and lofts, a public pool and private cabanas, a police post and trinket stores. We get to a little garden beside the oldest playground in the United States and turn around at another wall. As we walk, speak up about what makes this neighborhood attractive. Then speak about what imparts its historic value. Then look sharp- you're about to walk into another

wall. What value hides inside those walls- and what value arises from the walls' being there? People who enjoy thinking about economics and real estate- either as practitioners or reformists- get a kick out of this tour. So will newcomers to property-speak. Children are especially welcome, as we pass playgrounds and schools.

6:00-7:15pm

Dave Subren (LES resident & housing rights activist)

Dave Subren generously elaborates on the history of the L.E.S. and his vision for the S.P.U.R.A. site. He emphasizes on his version of the future for the area from various papers like "Form based Coding (F.B.C.'s)", "Zoning Variance", "Mix-use Housing", "Inclusionary Subsidized Housing" and "Community Land Trust". Time permitting, he may even address the arcane theory of "spatial deconcentration and planned shrinkage" and its implication and relevancy to the L.E.S. and other U.S. cities.

Thursday, October 13

2:00-3:15pm

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Friday, October 14

2:00-3:15pm

SPURA Soundwalk; Todd Shalom (founder and director of Elastic City)

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Saturday, October 15

1:00-2:15pm

(RESCHEDULED FROM OCT. 7)

Occupying the Lower East Side, Occupying Wall Street ; Gabriela Rendon & Miguel Robles-Duran (urbanists & co-founders of Cohabitation Strategies)

The tour takes a cross section of the most significant neoliberal urban development and discuss its imminent logic as we transverse the links in the lower Manhattan corridor between the Lower East Side and Wall Street. The tour ends at Liberty Square to join NYC call for an American revolution.

2:00-3:15pm

All Yesterday's Parties: A Speculative Geo-History; Minna Ninova (cartographer, graphic designer and urban policy researcher)

This tour acknowledges that the Lower East Side has lately become a late-night party spectacle of Meatpacking proportions. However, it also acknowledges the neighborhood's alternative history as a place of progressive politics, literature, music, and yeah, ok, booze. Therefore, this tour

humbly proposes a journey into the old, grungy past of the Essex Street Market neighborhood in search of everything from political parties to tea parties (*cough* speakeasies), from downtown lit scene gatherings to uptempo punk rock venues. Our inspiration will be long-gone flyers, discarded maps, and fuzzy photographs. We crash all yesterday's parties and speculate about tomorrow's. Whiskey shots not included.

2:00-4:15pm

RESCHEDULED FROM OCTOBER 1

Underground Service Alert; Damon Rich (artist, designer, founder of the Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP), and urban designer for the City of Newark)

In the city, the most vital materials flow below the ground and out of sight. In advance of construction, warnings are spray-chalked onto sidewalks to help diggers avoid busting into water pipes or gas lines. This tour will provide an Underground Service Alert about the power relationships that shaped one piece of Manhattan known as SPURA, the Seward Park Urban Renewal Area.

6:00-7:00pm

Unrealized; Hester Goodwin (MA candidate in Public History at NYU)

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Sunday, October 16

2:00-3:00pm

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what value arises from the walls' being there? People who enjoy thinking about economics and real estate- either as practitioners or reformists- get a kick out of this tour. So will newcomers to property-speak. Children are especially welcome, as we pass playgrounds and schools.

4:00-5:00pm

BEYOND OCCUPATION; Quilian Riano ([DSGN AGNC](#)) and Esther Wang

This session looks at the spaces used for community organization and activist participation in the area directly adjacent to the Essex Market -- New York's Chinatown. The goal is to understand what are the practices for community organization and the role that space, urban infrastructure and architecture plays in those practices. Beyond resistance, these spaces and practices are creating opportunities for long-lasting community political involvement and change.

6:00-7:00pm

Prem Krishnamurthy (designer, curator, and founding principal of Project Projects)

This tour takes an interior look at invisible and erased histories of property and possession on the Lower East Side.