

Press Release. 10 December 2010.

Drowning NYC

www.Drowning-NYC.net

a Recombinant Fiction piece by Paolo Cirio.

This is an attempt to weave a fictional story into the daily reality of the residents of Lower East Side Waterfront in Manhattan. They found themselves surrounded by an over-layering of mediated narrative information. Drowning NYC is a cross-media story; an experimental pilot that is told by actors and through narrative devices that are staged over the Internet and in the public spaces of a few chosen New York City neighborhoods. The genre and the art type are theorized by the artist as being Recombinant Fiction, a political and pervasive form of cross-media fiction.

- This project proposes new pedagogical instruments, innovative activist strategies, elaborate media experiments, cutting-edge forms of theatre and cinema, questions about reality perception/construction and, above all, a new form of conceptual art. -

Synopsis:

The CEO of "Future Water Proof Corporation" plans to economically exploit the rising sea level around New York City. A young man, Jason Gompers, thinks that the people of his neighborhood will be forced to leave because of gentrification caused by the corporation's new developments to adapt to rising sea levels. He starts to investigate the corporation and decides to form "Future Climate Change Fighters" cells that oppose the CEO's plans.

The drama inquires into how adapting and/or stopping global warming effects may affect the future of the city, especially in the gentrified and poor neighborhoods. The end of the story is open and intentionally unfinished, allowing audiences to think through and tackle the drama themselves.

Future Water Proof Corporation:

<http://www.futurewaterproofcorp.com>

Future Climate Change Fighters:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Climate-Change-Fighters-NYC/116705608386337>

How it has been developed:

The fiction brings into existence two fictional NYC characters. Characters speak directly to the audience in first person through media that fit their own personality. The fiction is staged in some of the poorest neighborhoods of Manhattan (Lower East Side Waterfront) and one of the most controversially gentrified (Stuyvesant Town). These areas of Manhattan will be some of the first to be flooded as sea levels rise. The fiction informs the audiences about potential sea level rising in NYC with factual data from official documents released by the city's administration and scientific research (Section 'What' of the Future Water Proof Corp's website). Most of the project has been developed in Europe where the artist could infiltrate the Infosphere of the concerned region of NYC by using his laptop to orchestrate all of the media and crew involved in this project.

Engagement:

The characters of the fiction encourage the people of the neighborhoods to react and participate in the story through public interventions, local media advertising and in the social network groups of the local population. In particular, students of a local high school (BHSEC) have become integrated subjects in the fiction by communicating with the characters. Jason Gompers (the hero) entered the school's network on Facebook as a fictional classmate asking their help to save the school from flooding and from Michael Meyer's plans.

Jason's plea to the students of the high school:

http://www.drowning-nyc.net/pdf/Drowning-NYC_msg_help_Jason.pdf

Manifesto of Future Climate Change Fighters with suggestions about stopping Global Warming:

http://www.drowning-nyc.net/pdf/Drowning-NYC-FCCF_flyers.pdf

Meanwhile, Future Water Proof Corp. engaged the relevant communities by interviewing people about their feelings concerning the sea level rise, informing them that the district will be the first to be submerged and the company is taking care of the situation. Furthermore, Michael Meyer's company has been promoted through posters and postcards left all over the area and in advertisements in local newspapers such as Town & Village and The Villager.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/futurewaterproofcorp>

News about redevelopment exploitations to adapt to rising sea levels:

<http://twitter.com/fwpcorp>

Shows:

The project's official website and the keyword/tags on the Internet weld together the episodes and pieces of the fiction, presenting a whole that can be enjoyed by audiences all over the world.

The art installation in the exhibitions is the materialization of the narrative devices, which are displayed using printed pictures, texts, screenings and objects, bringing into the art show the paradigm of the nonlinear and actively unfolding story by the audience, who can enjoy the story, through physical stable mediums.

Mixed media installation of Drowning NYC at Laboral (Spain):

http://www.paolocirio.net/work/drowning_nyc/drowning-nyc.php

The former Recombinant Fiction project:

http://www.paolocirio.net/work/the_big_plot/the_big_plot.php

<http://www.paolocirio.net/press/recombinant-fiction.php>

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