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THE LEGIBLE CITY

"an interactive space of representation in the form of a simulated urban literary landscape that can be travelled in by bicycle"

A new project by JEFFREY SHAW and DIRK GROENEVELD.

to be shown at **ARTEC '89** - World Design Expo, Nagoya, Japan, June-November '89

This the project seeks to create a space of simulation where the the psychological identity of 'the city' is made tangible through the transformation of architecture into literary structures, which in turn are pure visual structures through which the spectator can journey.

Description of the work:

The spectator is able to use a bicycle to interactively travel in a video projected three dimensional image space.

The image space in which the bicyclist can travel is a city. The ground plan of that city is derived from actual major cities - New York City, Paris, Milan, Amsterdam, etc. These are cities who embody a strong "psycho-geography" in their urban plans.

These cities will be visualised as words and sentences, by means of a real time 3D computer graphic system. These words and sentences will describe the full scale space of these cities - that is their particular organisation of streets, intersections, squares, etc. Not houses but the rows of letters forming words and sentences will be the architecture of these cities.

Travelling through these cities of words will thus also be an action of reading. Choosing direction, choosing where to turn will also be the choice of the particular storyline that is read.

In this way the city of words becomes not just a unique urban architecture but also a form of three dimensional book which can be read in any direction, and where each spectator will construct their own story as they bicycle their own chosen path through that city.

The image of the city is generated by real time computer graphic 3D simulation technology. It is video projected onto a large screen (3m. by 4m.) in front of the bicyclist.

The bicycle is fixed in one place, but the spectator controls his/her speed and direction of movement in the 3D image space by pedalling faster or slower, and by turning the handle bars.

In this work the city is constituted physically by the three dimensional arrangement of words into streets, and the city is constituted psychologically by the meanings these words carry as they are read by the bicyclist travelling through these streets.