

September 7 - October 7, 2006

Natalie Jeremijenko

OOZ, Inc. (...for the birds)

Infrastructure and facilities for high-density bird cohabitation on the roof of Postmasters Gallery

with public housing projects by:

Aranda/Lasch + TerraSwarm

bonetti/kozerski

Leeser Architects

Materialab with Gensler+Gutierrez

OpenSource Architecture

SYSTEMarchitects llc

theLiving

Evo Design

perch design: Phil Taylor

water systems designed by Fountainhead

landscape design consulting: Kate Bakewell

urban system consulting: LOOK/Laura Kurgan

OOZ is ZOO backwards.

Expanding on her project at the 2006 Whitney Biennial Natalie Jeremijenko has created a unique garden on the roof of Postmasters Gallery - an environmental experiment in interaction with New York City bird population. The complex 1,000 square-foot garden includes architect-designed bird housing projects (multi-family dwellings), water systems, as well as other amenities to improve the quality of life for urban birds. The installation creates conditions to observe birds' adaptation to human-engineered technologies, testing formal and ecological theorems for high-density lifestyles, sustainable resource sharing among urban organisms, and the play of public/private division in cross-species interaction.

The comings and goings on the roof will be transmitted live to the (human) gallery space downstairs. The birdhouses along with electronic bird perches, drawings and photographs will also be exhibited and available for sale.

OOZ, Inc. (... for the birds) demonstrates an urban system that accommodates birds and recognizes the valuable services they provide for the Manhattan ecosystem. The roof of Postmasters is now greener, a model for urban development: it includes bird-scaled speculative and sustainable architecture designed by a selection of the boldest architects. Such private housing for birds welcomes them and invites them to urbanize. In addition, Jeremijenko provides public facilities for the birds, regular healthy food, water and bathing facilities, including a system to contain and recycle local waste, as well as other public *cultural* amenities for birds, such as a concert hall, shopping mall, preferred foliage, insects and other resources. She is in effect launching an experimental platform to see:

Will birds share?

Will birds use a weapon against another?

Will they use the concert hall to perform and amplify their lovely songs?
What forms of leisure will they pursue, given their basic needs are taken care of? A ferris wheel?
Will they self-medicate when given the opportunity?
How much ecological impact can one green roof have?

Manhattan, because of its high population density, provides the greenest lifestyle in the US but further environmental exploration, given the huge population involved and the primacy of the city in the culture economy, means that small improvements in the environmental performance are massively amplified (compared with equivalent changes in rural or suburban contexts).

New York (Neé, New Amsterdam) was settled in what was one of the highest density and greatest diversity bird population in North America, thanks to the resources and rich diversity of this estuary environment. The same conditions that favored the development of a megatropolis for humans - plentiful fresh water, harbor access and other estuary conditions originally favored a megatropolis for birds. Today, despite the myriad of challenges the local and migrating birds face, New York, N.Y. is still the New York, N.Y. for birds.

Natalie Jeremijenko (xdesign.ucsd.edu) is an artist and engineer who for this project assumes a modest neo(Robert) Moses role re--imagining and rebuilding urban systems. Unlike Moses she is designing systems that promote and sustain diversity, remediate terrestrial nutrient cycles and improve the air traffic and quality. She has been known to work with the Bureau of Inverse Technology, environmental scientists, and other activists. She is currently on faculty of the Visual Art Department at UCSD, and a Global Distinguished Professor at NYU. She was previously on the faculty of the engineering department at Yale. Her robotics work will be featured in the upcoming Cooper Hewitt Design Triennial, and the TreeLogic installation at MASSMoCA was recently replanted. The OoZ project is generously supported with the Research and Experimentation Grant in Art+Science+Technology from the Daniel Langlois Foundation.

Special thanks to Audubon New York (<http://ny.audubon.org/>); The Friends of the High Line (<http://www.thehighline.org/>); and Hudson River Park Trust <http://www.hudsonriverpark.org/>

LIMITED EDITION BIRD HOUSING PROJECTS DEVELOPED BY:

Aranda/Lasch + TerraSwarm, (www.terraswarm.com) are a young architectural firm who's extensive research into social movement and urban flows includes equipping pigeons with a camera pack to collect video documentation from birds eye view; and issuing traffic guides. They have collaborated with Jeremijenko on the OneTree Map for bikes and Birds and recently won a competition to design a Park Ranger cabin to house people in the wilderness. This prepared them for housing birds in more human wilds.

bonetti/kozerski studio (<http://www.bonettikozerski.com>) are best known for their spacious designs of the DKNY superstores in New York, Tokyo and Kuala Lumpur, and sumptuous high-end apartments, including thoughtful interior strategies to

maximize external views (in particular of Central Park). Their attention to material surface and clean simple forms invites birds to enjoy luxury that is familiar to us. Views are tremendously important to both human and birds, but do birds concur on our ideas of lifestyle?

Leeser Architecture (<http://www.leeser.com>) current redesign of the Museum of the Moving Image, integrates seamless skins, surfaces, and technologies, with wit and a strong formal vocabulary. Glass, the neighborhood bar in Chelsea, designed by Leeser, conflates inside and outside surfaces and challenges assumptions of privacy. Bathroom primping is displayed in the street through a two way glass.

Materialab, founded by Anna Dyson has explored solar system design and received major grants to investigate multiple scale design strategies to improve the environmental performance of buildings. Teamed with the material and image expertise of Gensler+Gutierrez (<http://www.donaldgensler.com/>), they are producing a state of the art housing system pushing passive energy strategies and the sophisticated use of material technology. (www.rpi.edu/research/magazine/winter04/pdf/rrq_winter04.pdf)

OpenSource Architecture, based in Madrid have specialized in designing stealth housing, disguising residences inside mirrored surfaces. They provide a bird reinterpretation of OMAs (Rem Koolhaas') Casa da Musica (Porto, Portugal), a well known performance space housing diverse musical venues in a complex polyhedra volume. The birds, also musical performers, are invited to explore these performative spaces.

SYSTEMarchitects llc, (<http://www.systemarchitects.net/>) are known for their systems analysis and range of prefabricated housing. Not prefab as simple blocks, but complex beautiful enclosures rationalized for scaled production. Their design addresses the American Kestrel, a popular bird of prey known to inhabit this area. One of the firm's Burst series, built under stringent climate and budget, recently won accolades in Australia.

theLiving (<http://www.thelivingnewyork.com/>) use active and adaptive systems, teach "The Living Architecture: Responsive Kinetic Systems Lab" at Columbia University, and explore the architecture of information.

Evo Design (<http://www.evodesign.com>) is a Product Design firm founded in 1997 and based in Watertown, CT. Design Director, Aaron Szymanski has designed entire product lines for companies like LeapFrog, Timex, Samsonite, Schick, Chantal, Burton Snowboards, BD, and Nike. However this is only the second time he has designed a home for birds. The first time he used old playing cards and it was home to a family of house finches for quite some time. Evo Design has recently partnered with Recycline Corporation, one of the nations largest manufacturers of high-quality recycled content & recyclable consumer products.

Postmasters Gallery, located in Chelsea at 459 West 19th Street (corner of 10th Avenue), is open Tuesday through Saturday to 11 - 6 pm. Please contact Magdalena Sawon at 212-727-3323 with any questions or image requests.