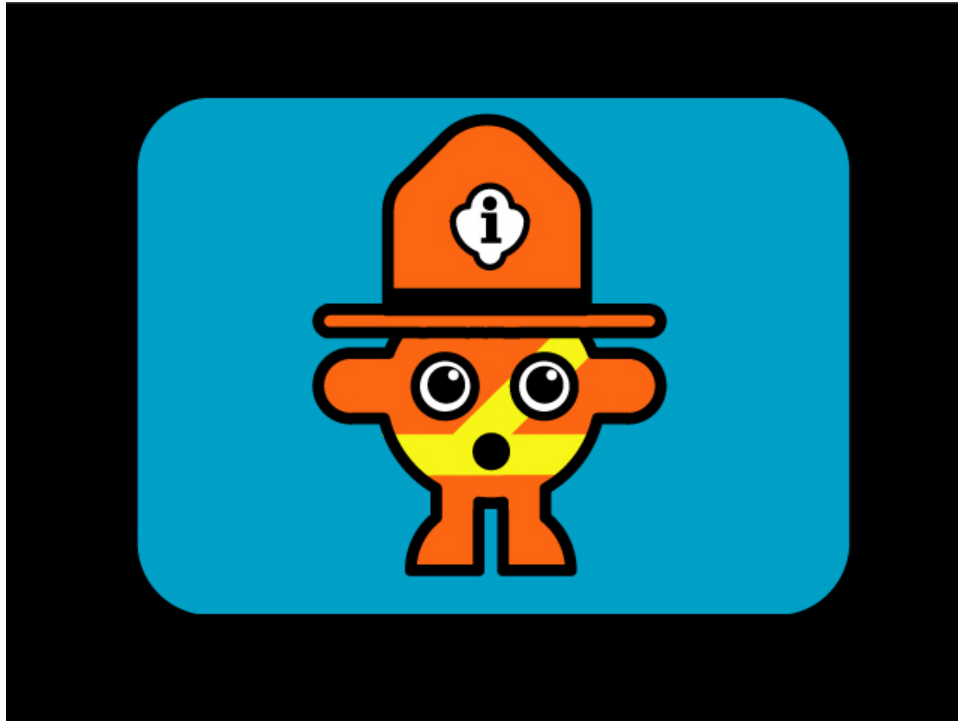


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MAP YOUR OWN VISION OF TIMES SQUARE WITH *PDPAL*
BY MARINA ZURKOW, SCOTT PATERSON, AND JULIAN BLEECKER



Urban Park Ranger (guide to *PDPal*) © 2003 Marina Zurkow, Scott Paterson, and Julian Bleecker

September 22, 2003: Creative Time and Panasonic, in cooperation with the **Times Square Business Improvement District**, present *PDPal* (a.k.a. *Personal Digital Pal*), conceived and created by artist **Marina Zurkow**, architect **Scott Paterson**, technologist **Julian Bleecker** and web designer, **Adam Chapman**. Guided by the streetwise and witty Urban Park Ranger (UPR), *PDPal* is a multi-platform public art project that allows audiences to map their personal vision of a public space—in this case, Times Square. *PDPal* bridges the digital and physical worlds with its three locations: *The 59th Minute: Video Art on the Times Square Astrovision*, Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) beaming stations, and pdpal.com. *PDPal* launches in Times Square and online on **October 9** and will run through **December 12, 2003**.



PDPal

What constitutes your experience of New York City or of any place? Moreover, what constitutes place? *PDPal* is a multi-component mapping tool for Times Square, and a forum where daydreams, memories, or simple observations can be recorded and shared with others. With *PDPal*, users can chart physical, subjective and, perhaps, emotional coordinates—whether your admiration of landmark buildings, fleeting sidewalk encounters, or impromptu personal fantasies. Entries might include: “lucky lotto tickets sold at this newsstand; the singing cowboy just winked at me; these throngs of people make me wish I were on a beach in Bermuda.” A digital diary in which to log the sensory impressions we experience at any given moment in Times Square, *PDPal* heightens our awareness to the social systems and the physical environment in which we live. Initially developed at the Eyebeam Atelier residency program, *PDPal* was co-commissioned by Creative Time and the Walker Art Center, which currently features *PDPal* in the museum sculpture garden.

Where to Find *PDPal*:

The Panasonic Astrovision

Creative Time and Panasonic’s ongoing *The 59th Minute: Video Art on the Times Square Astrovision**, now in its third year of presenting works by emerging and established artists, will anchor *PDPal* in the heart of Times Square. Featuring a 60-second animation of the Urban Park Ranger’s imagined Times Square, *PDPal* on the Astrovision will inspire other *PDPal* users and provide a playful respite from Times Square’s marketing madness. In the animation, the UPR charges us to “write your own city” and, as a human torso in the background ingests diamond rings, cherries, and computers, to “map your taste for consumption.”

*The NBC Astrovision by Panasonic is located at 43rd Street between Broadway & 7th Avenue. Like all works in *The 59th Minute*, *PDPal* will air daily on the Astrovision on the last minute of every hour from 6:00 a.m. – 1:00 a.m., except between 7:00 – 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

PDA Application & Beaming Stations

The PDA component of *PDPal* is a visual data recorder where users can capture any scenario they chance upon or desire. To collect your momentary impressions with a PDA, beam the Palm™ application from one of two beaming stations (see below). Then, tap on a specially designed set of icons; plot your coordinates on an empty map of Times Square; describe and rate your map with a provided (or your own) vocabulary. Prescribed icons, or *rubberstamps*, include a high-rise building, airplane, snowflake, cockroach, Greek paper coffee cup, and a Fallout Shelter sign; descriptives called *attributes* range from “buzzing” to “rotten” to “lawless;” and *ratings* include “a little,” “unimaginably,” or “boldly.”

The PDA application will be distributed for free by two custom-designed beaming stations, one of which can be found in a Chashama space, at 125 West 42nd Street, and the other is a mobile unit. The mobile unit will rotate sites every two weeks. Host sites will include the famous Times Square restaurant Noche (1604 Broadway between West 48th and 49th Streets), AXA Gallery.



PDA Application & Beaming Stations continued

(The Equitable Building, 787 Seventh Avenue at West 50th Street), and the Times Square Visitors Center (1560 Broadway and West 46th Street), among others. A rotation schedule will soon be available at **pdpal.com**. The *PDPal* beaming stations were initially developed by ORG and designed by the *PDPal* team. Infrared beaming station technology is provided by Hibeam.

Pdpal.com

Pdpal.com is a place to commune over vastly differing individual visions of a collective public space. At pdpal.com you can download the application or upload your own map to share with others in the *communicity*. Through the *communicity* you can recommend specific sites (e.g. “good doughnuts at this coffee cart”) or relay an intimate story (e.g. “site of a bad blind date”). Web implementation for pdpal.com was done by artist and flash designer, Adam Chapman.

Paper Maps

If you prefer a pencil to a stylus, brochures with a paper-based mapping system, including a key of *rubberstamp* icons, *attributes*, *ratings*, and a virgin map for you to chart, will be distributed throughout Times Square. Please visit pdpal.com for distribution locations.

The Artists

Marina Zurkow is a multidisciplinary artist engaged with character, icon, and narrative through animated works, interactive installations, and graphic design. Her pictographic icons have been incorporated in diverse projects ranging from animated films to hotel design, lightboxes, and clothing. Other projects include the award-winning animated episodic, “Braingirl,” and “Pussy Weevil,” the latter of which was created with *PDPal* collaborator, Julian Bleecker. For more information on Zurkow’s work visit www.o-matic.com and www.thebraingirl.com.

Scott Paterson’s work seeks the possibility for expanding “architecture” practice to interface the virtual and real worlds, both of which Paterson engages as a practicing architect and interaction designer. He is also an adjunct professor at the Parsons School of Design and Technology MFA program and at the Columbia University School of Architecture.

Julian Bleecker’s involvement in technology design and innovation ranges from building mobile and networked systems to academic writing about technology and society. Bleecker is on the faculty of the Parsons School of Design and Technology. He is currently Engineer-in-Residence at Eyebeam Atelier while completing his Ph.D. at the University of California’s History of Consciousness program.

Creative Time

PDPal continues Creative Time’s commitment to supporting artists working in new media, and is the organization’s third PDA-based project. Others include *Firefly* by Antenna Design in Creative Time’s 2001 exhibition, *Massless Medium: Explorations of Sensory Immersion* at the Brooklyn Bridge Anchorage and *Tap* (2002), by James Buckhouse and Holly Brubach, for which Creative Time collaborated with the Dia Center for the Arts to present public beaming stations throughout New York



City. Creative Time, a New York-based nonprofit organization, has commissioned, produced, and presented multidisciplinary public art projects for 30 years. From the landmark Brooklyn Bridge Anchorage, Grand Central Terminal, and Times Square to billboards, the skies over Manhattan, and *Tribute in Light*—the lauded temporary light memorial to September 11, 2001— Creative Time supports artists in surprising New Yorkers and visitors alike with fresh artistic visions in unlikely urban locales. www.creativetime.org

Panasonic

The NBC Astrovision by Panasonic is the visual centerpiece of New York City’s Times Square, the “Crossroads of the World.” Measuring nearly three stories high and four stories wide, the screen, which contains 1.5 million light-emitting diodes (LEDs), is capable of displaying more than one billion shades of color. Each year, millions of people see the Astrovision either on television, in the movies, or when they visit Times Square. And every New Year’s Eve, the landmark video screen helps more than 500,000 Times Square revelers count down the famous ball drop. Panasonic is the best known brand of New Jersey-based Matsushita Electric Corporation of America, which is the principal North American subsidiary of Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd. (MEI) (NYSE: MC). Additional information can be found by visiting www.panasonic.com.

Times Square Business Improvement District

The Times Square Business Improvement District, soon to be called The Times Square Alliance, works to improve and promote Times Square so that it retains the energy, edge and distinctiveness that have made it an icon for entertainment, culture and urban life for almost a century. In addition to providing core services with 50 Public Safety Officers and 50 Sanitation associates, the BID promotes local businesses, co-coordinates numerous major events in Times Square like New Year’s Eve and Broadway on Broadway, manages a Visitor’s Center and advocates on behalf of its constituents with respect to a host of public policy, planning and quality-of-life issues. The Alliance’s work with Creative Time is part of a broader effort to encourage more first-rate, cutting edge public art and design in Times Square. www.timessquarebid.org

Chashama

Chashama is a non-profit organization founded and administered by artists. Chashama supports the development of art by awarding grants, producing work, and providing subsidized studio, rehearsal, and performance space. Chashama is committed to presenting and creating art that engages the community of New York City. Since its inception in 1995, Chashama has produced, co-produced, and presented over 110 productions, 10 festivals, and has transformed 9 vacant buildings into multi-arts complexes. Chashama has assisted approximately 3,000 young, emerging, and established artists with space grants, production stipends, and administrative and technical support. www.chashama.org