

## Shadow Spot

Shadow Spot is made of the invisible and its visibilities. It is a practice which allows people to creatively share, curate and point out the hidden/unseen within the gallery and urban environments.

Using the internet, mobile devices, and colourful – spot-like – vinyl stickers, Shadow Spot invites participation in the creation of an urban digital architecture of linked hidden, "shadowy", spots of interest. It creates a new and fun way to discover an environment and to build links between the digital and physical worlds.

### CONCEPT

**Visibility and invisibility are the ephemeral materials that Shadow Spot is made of and with which it plays.**

Digital and electronic media infiltrate our daily lives; tools and apps have become so common that they are, in one sense, invisible. On the other hand, much of the digital economy is based on visibility. The value of everything from facebook and twitter through to "locality" services like FourSquare and yelp depends on the numbers of users. If they were less visible, they would be far less valuable. The more we use such tools, the less we notice them; the more valuable they become.

Shadow Spot takes the above irony and makes it an artistic practice.

Shadow Spot subverts traditional conventions governing visibility and invisibility on the network. The sticker-spots will draw attention to places in shadows. The online presence of corresponding images will make the more popular pictures - less and less visible. Both, the sticker-spots and online images of them, will create a network architecture that spans the digital and the physical environments perpetually.

**The gallery/exhibition space, in Shadow Spot context, is a cultural power-generator which sends streams of energy across the city.**

Shadow Spot will generate artistic energy to create a new intimate yet social, temporary yet subtle and memorable, architecture of the invisible within the urban environment.

Shadow Spots' take on the art gallery as a cultural energy generator is a fresh perspective on locative media tools. Commercial locative tools bring visibility to local economic entities and link people to businesses via invasive knowledge of a person's location. Such technologies offer a very specific way of imagining the connections between people, their environments, digital media, and electronic gadgets. Such imaginings are of a financial economic structure - an economic ecosystem that materialises the value of visibility, creating walls of exclusion and hierarchies; placing bouncers at the doors of its networks.

Through art, Shadow Spot inverts these socio-economic axioms of media - attention-based - economics, and bridges the virtual and physical environments with a tongue in cheek questioning of how, and on what basis, we make such links.

Based on the idea of the art gallery/exhibition-space as an energy generator, Shadow Spot positions art as the engine of cultural energies. It will point the public towards shadows of an art space, and inculcate the culture of looking for shadows, extending the practice into other environments.

Through the simple acts of placing and seeking colourful stickers in shadows throughout the city, the public will create networks of invisibilities whose sprawling architecture is based on people's imaginations and environments.

## DESCRIPTION

Shadow Spot exists online, as a website, and offline, in the streets, bazaars, markets, boats, etc. of the city, and in the art gallery. Through uploading, linking, sharing, "liking" images of Shadow Spots, people will create a network that bridges the digital and the physical.

**The Shadow Spot website will operate as a tool for documenting, sharing, linking the images of Shadow Spots, and of visibility/invisibility.**

The website will:

- \* Enable uploading of images.
- \* Offer sharing the images.
- \* Allow "Liking" the images.
- \* Run an algorithm which checks popularity - visibility - of each image, and diminishes those images that people frequently like, share, link and view. Further details about the algorithm, see appendix #1.
- \* Offer people the chance to try to trick its software into accepting uploads of not "approved" Shadow Spots, i.e. stickers that are of the "wrong" colour and/or are not placed in shadowy places. (Therefore the very "visibility of the invisible" that Shadow Spot presents, is open to be played with and, itself, put in hiding.)

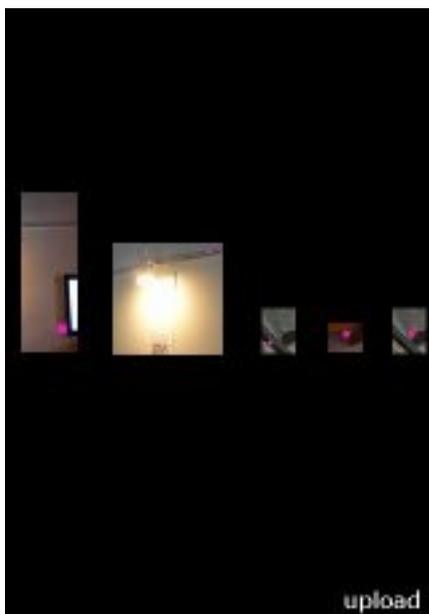
Shadow Spot will be based in a physical gallery/exhibition-space through:

- \* Displaying vinyl stickers placed in permanent shadow areas in the space.
- \* Providing visitors with guidance on how to interact with the exhibition. (How to take photos of the spots, how to upload them, the web address, etc.)
- \* Providing sheets of stickers to take away, with guidelines as to where and how to place them around places that typify the city.

People who lack the necessary equipment or skills are therefore explicitly excluded from the digital-locative element of Shadow Spot, thereby making the "digital divide" among art-lovers visible.

**Following is a possible experience of Shadow Spot:**

Rammi enters the gallery space. She reads the description and instructions for Shadow Spot. She then explores the gallery, seeking Spots. She happens to find one behind a sofa, takes a picture and uploads it to the website. While viewing the site on her mobile device she sees a scrollable line of images across the screen.



These images vary in size. She notices her image and clicks on it. This allows her to share it with friends. When she returns to browse, her image is smaller than before. In fact, the more people look at, "like", or further share an image - the smaller it will get, until it becomes invisible for a while.

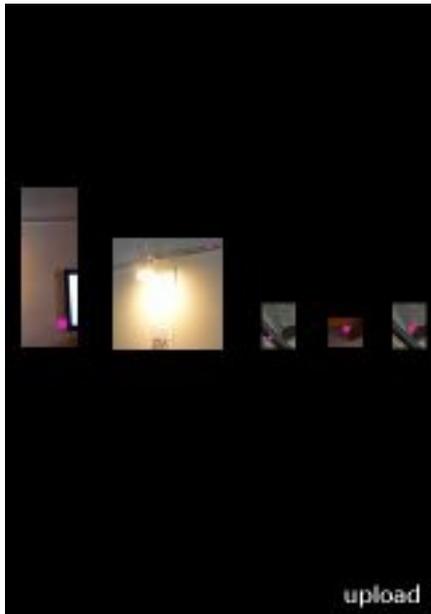
Next, Rammi tries to fool the server with an picture that isn't an "approved spot". Her first attempt is rejected with a suggestion that she gets the code and tries to make her own Shadow Spot installation according to her own criteria.

Rammi is industrious but not that dedicated. She tries again with a different spot that she has drawn in crayon on a piece of paper.

This time she manages to fool the server. Good luck to her!

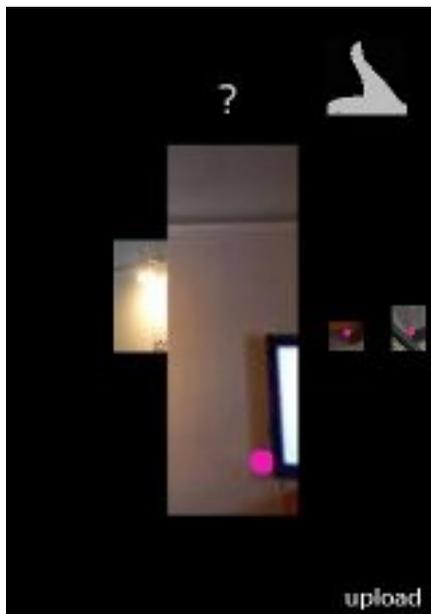
After viewing other works in the gallery, she decides to take a few of the Shadow Spot sticker sheets. She then goes on to mark, photograph and upload her chosen hidden spots in the urban lanscape, marking a route on her way to other artworks/projects in the city.

## SHADOW SPOT INTERFACE

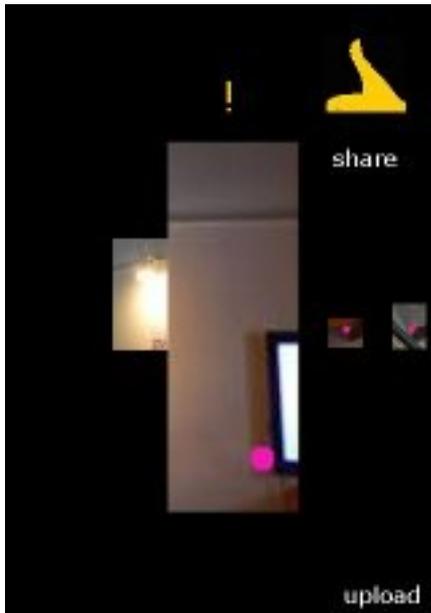


People will see images of different sizes across the middle of the screen. These images will be:

Moveable. (Left and Right)



Scrolled Shadow Spot images are expandable via a click.



People can:  
Indicate "Like" - By clicking the thumb up.  
Share - following the click expansion.

## APPENDIX #1

We will use the narcissus algorithm developed in previous projects. The algorithm, "narcissus", provides a way to steadily make popular information invisible. This is done by making users' interaction with a given data, affect the information in a way that puts it in a visibility cycle.

In the context of Shadow Spot, a new image is visible in a normal size and will be prominent. Once it is viewed, the image is pushed off the "top slot". If it was viewed and "liked" / shared / linked-to, the image will be placed progressively further from the top and will shrink in size.

The process of downsizing the image continues until the image, if it continues to be popular, becomes entirely invisible for a while. The more popular the image was, the longer it will remain invisible. Once the image emerges out of the invisibility stage it is ready to repeat the cycle...

Links to Narcissus in previous projects.:

<http://northeastwestsouth.net/uploads/narcissus.pdf>

<http://northeastwestsouth.net/shadow-search-winner-announced>