

NEW NEW NETWORKS/ UTOPIA NOW NOW/ OPEN FIELDS

Valerie Imus

A viral video circulating in the fall of 2014 depicted a confrontation that took place in a San Francisco Mission District public park between a group of young athletes who typically play pick-up soccer there, and a group of adults in tech company t-shirts who had reserved the field for a \$27 fee. The deeply charged interaction and subsequent outrage in response to the video points to the tense relationships between current Bay Area residents who possess differing perspectives of the cityscape. It also highlights our ongoing shift from freely accessible public space to increasingly privately controlled urban areas. As the population of San Francisco transforms from a culturally and economically diverse population to one with a large number of very well-paid workers relocating to the area for highly competitive tech industry jobs, so have we shifted from improvisatory relationships with our shared urban space to restricted ones granting access to the highest bidder. Streets that were previously available for freeform community activities—albeit at times subjectively organized and specifically gendered—are increasingly regulated to solely benefit for-profit interests.

These parallel trajectories, not unique to the Bay Area, are symptoms of a large-scale economic shift towards global neoliberalism. The Bay Area continues to be haunted by the powerful specter of a hopeful counterculture held up as foil to our contemporary cynicism and alienation. But, setting aside for the moment countercultures rooted in specific political agendas, one can draw a neat line between neoliberal doctrine

that privileges personal liberty in the marketplace and the ideals of a Bay Area counterculture that emphasizes personal expression above all else. Both primarily value the new and the cool, and both embody a rhetoric that aims to step outside of political engagement. Pursue these ideals down a path long enough, and you'll arrive in present-day San Francisco.

Robby Herbst's *New New Games*, a Southern Exposure Off-Site Graue Award project, is an invitation to collectively consider these cultural shifts in public landscape. The project consists of a series of conversations about the evolution of techno-libertarianism on the West Coast, a participatory event re-imagining public games happenings of the 1970s as a means of collectively thinking about public space, and this publication. All take inspiration from the 1973 New Games Festival instigated by Stewart Brand, the founder of the *Whole Earth Catalog*, with other collaborators.

Stewart Brand was producing events with the Merry Pranksters in San Francisco when he was invited in 1966 to develop a group activity for the War Resisters League at San Francisco State College. In a provocative effort to encourage players to act out aggressions in a non-competitive public space, he designed *The Earthball*, a series of group games using a large ball painted to look like the earth. This sparked a series of participatory events, and in 1973, Brand used proceeds from the last *Whole Earth Catalog* to fund the New Games Tournament in Gerbode Valley in the Marin Headlands. He co-organized



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Above: Poster produced by the New Games Foundation for a New Games Festival, date unknown; print on paper; approx. 11 x 17 inches. Courtesy of Bill Michealis. The New Games Foundation used this poster featuring the jumping girl for play gatherings with event details written in. The New Games Foundation stopped using the term tournament to describe play gatherings and adopted the term festival, as organizers felt it aligned more closely with the foundation's culture.



1. Pat Farrington was the first director of the New Games Foundation when it was incorporated in 1974.

2. We are indebted to Fred Turner and in particular his book *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network and the Rise of Digital Utopianism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

3. According to the US Census Bureau, in 2000, 7.8% of San Franciscans identified as African American or Black, while in 2010, 6.2% did so. In 2014, the population was estimated to be 5.7%. In September 2015, the San Francisco Arts Commission released the results from its Individual Artists' Space Need Analysis, finding that of nearly 600 artists, 70% had been or were being displaced from their studio space, home, or both. (http://ww2.kqed.org/arts/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/09/Individual-Artists-Space-Need-Analysis_FINAL.pdf)

the festival with Pat Farrington, a Bay Area community organizer; they brought together referees to lead about 6,000 participants in numerous games over two weekends.¹ The event launched the New Games Foundation, which continued to train individuals in New Games until the organization folded in 1985.

The *Whole Earth Catalog* had envisioned a disembodied and networked community sharing ideas—a vision which later fueled Brand's involvement in building other virtual spaces such as the Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link (WELL), an early online community.² A similar utopic vision of self-organizing networks outside of managing systems continues to drive much of the philosophy around the current Bay Area tech community. However, networks based on an unregulated market-driven economic system are solipsistic by nature and can encourage social conditions that are exclusive, heteronormative, classist, and racist. The imagining of a unified world, as pictured on the Earthball and cover of the *Whole Earth Catalog*, sounds wonderful but can easily gloss over and problematize difference.

The landscape of San Francisco has changed dramatically with the rising cost of real estate and the shuttering of many small businesses. As rental costs and evictions in the Bay Area continue to rise, many people of color, the working class, and artists have been forced to leave the region.³ Many commercial art galleries and mid-size non-profit spaces have closed or relocated. With a large, growing population of contractual, contingent laborers whose working relationships are primarily virtual, the Bay Area is losing not only its public space but its face-to-face connections. We may be networked, but whether we're a community is certainly debatable.

In *New New Games*, Robby Herbst invites us to look at the flawed utopian ideas of the present moment through the lens of the past and asks us to consider what it means to re-enact the impoverishment of utopianism. Re-enactment as a strategy in contemporary art often functions to highlight commonalities and disjunctures between the present and the mythologies of our pasts. Is it possible to imagine new strategies by destabilizing these narratives?

The originators of New Games turned to the notion of play as an enactment of possibility and connection, as the potential to open up a rupture between our actions and the production of capital. They looked to games as a way of creating and negotiating new strategic models for our relationships. According to *The New Games Book*, games were a tool, a “means by which people could realize their own visions of living, shape their environment accordingly.” But we carry existing roles and relationships with us into the imagined, utopian space of games. By enacting the rituals of New Games together within the current fraught landscape of San Francisco, it's unlikely that we will dramatically shift the rules of the game, but perhaps we can find a playful, more expansive perspective on things. Ultimately, the question remains, can we share the field?

SCORES FOR A CITY

Bay Area Slow Dance —

Pick a recently re-colonized commercial district you and partner(s) would ordinarily hustle through—San Francisco's newly branded Mid-Market tech corridor or Oakland's newly branded Uptown Station business complex come to mind. Go when the area is full of people, or when it's practically vacant. Consider your personal safety; consider cops. It's appropriate to feel anxious, alienated, or disoriented. It's appropriate to pick a safer site for yourselves.

Choose different starting points at the periphery of the site, ideally where you can still see and sense each other. At your own pace, start moving from the periphery to the center of the site, as slowly and indirectly as possible. Take your time initiating movement; take ages to shift your gaze or your weight. Move as if through molasses. Take a path through the site informed by what you observe: openings to occupy, other people's pathways, cracks or features on the ground to follow. If there are people around, find a gesture or quality of movement to imitate slowly. Adopt it. Bring it with you, and make variations on it slowly. If you meet someone else's gaze hold it for as long as you can but try to keep moving slowly. If you notice a sound, scent, or texture, take it in like an instruction. Be both latent and emergent. Keep moving towards the center. If you get there first, become as still as possible by standing, sitting, or lying down and wait.

The slow dance ends when everyone has arrived at the center. Stay there together, as still as possible, until it's time to go.

— Sophia Wang, Heavy Breathing

Jerry Brown Tug-Of-War —

Get a large rope symbolizing the heart and soul of supposed environmentalist California Governor Jerry Brown. Travel to the California State House or mansion of said leader. Two teams, one representing the citizens of California, the other representing California's oil and financial industries engage in a tug of war. The winning team wins the future of the planet.

— David Solnit, Bay Area artist/activist

Bechtel: A Play —

1. Find the offices of the global mega-corporation that tried to privatize Bolivia's water, including a ban on people collecting their own rainwater. Ring the doorbell. Run! No, wait patiently. When they answer the door, thank them for provoking a political uprising and movement that has led to great strides forward for indigenous peoples' and the earth's rights in Latin America.
2. Invite them to follow you for a game. (addendum). This works best if you are excellent at instant-hypnosis.
3. Drive them down the interstates all the way to the shores of the Salton Sea. Wade ankle-deep into the beach made of finely crushed fish bones (It resembles many of the wastelands they have created on the Earth's surface so they should feel at home.)
4. Play a game of Giants, Goblins, and Wizards with them. The winner decides how to manage the earth's ecological balance forever. (secret clause). Rig the game. Turnabout is fair play.

— L.M. Bogad, (Center for Tactical Performance/Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army)

You're Not A Loan —

Play this game in an open space on a college campus in the East Bay.

Begin by collecting 20+ pieces of fruit from neighborhood trees or dumpsters, demonstration flyers, a scent-free marker, a reusable bag, and a bat(s) to hit with.

Ask several people the amount of student debt they have and a single word describing their feelings about this debt. Write the amounts and emotions on a corner of a flyer; tear these off and put the torn scraps into a paper bag. Next two or more people walk, bike, BART, ride AC Transit, or cab it (no Uber) to an East Bay college campus. Once on campus a player removes a piece of paper from the bag and loudly reads out the debt amount or emotion written down and pitches a piece of fruit to a player holding a bat. The batter simultaneously swings at the rotten fruit and yells back the amount of debt or emotion read by the pitcher. Continue hitting and yelling until all the fruit is batted out into the quad, lawn, or field. Rotate pitchers and batters as desired. When finished, walk, bike, BART, take AC Transit, or a cab (not Uber) to the nearest bar or café and discuss the experience.

— Jessica Lawless, organizer with SEIU Local 1021

[no title] —

Property is a manufactured reality. Choose a place you would like to own. Create a deed to hold up as a sign showing you belong to that place and it belongs to you.

— Anti-Eviction Mapping Project

THE USE OF PLAY

1. Anyone interested in learning about the context that formed New Games should consider reading Fred Turner's critical autobiography of Stewart Brand, *From Counterculture To Cyberculture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press; 2008).
2. The San Francisco Diggers were a group of Anarcho-Communalists operating in San Francisco in the mid-to-late 1960s. They helped to coordinate a network of communal spaces, organizations, and associations that liberated capital from time, organizing free stores, free concerts, free auto mechanics, free housing, and more. They refused the politics of scarcity, liberating "free" from the fat of a wealthy society. Later in the decade, their politics and ecstatic ideas were advanced by the Yippies. Yippie leader Abbie Hoffman theorized that the Woodstock concert was a founding event for a culture of liberated youth existing on the currency of love, sex, drugs, and revolutionary rock-n-roll in a post-capitalist world.



Through the restructuring of play, New Games is attempting to bring man into harmony with his environment, provide space for families to play together, and eliminate the barriers of age, sex, race and economics from leisure time activities. Rather than the winning-at-all-costs attitude, New Games brings joy and self-expression to the play process.

— Pat Farrington, first director of the New Games Foundation, 1975

From the distance of forty years, what are we to make of New Games? New Games came with a generosity of time for human-to-human contact, space to gather, and a belief that play could have a part in changing the world. The New Games books were published in the hundreds of thousands. Its trainers trained tens of thousands of people in alternative forms of recreation, spreading the idea of creative, physical, low-cost pleasure to the world—a very serious concept for fun.

Happenings emerged in 1950s New York by way of artists John Cage and Allan Kaprow. This art form emigrated west with artists like Stewart Brand, then associated with the proto-psychedelic art collective USCO, and transmogrified into psychedelic community

spectacles of pleasure.¹ Coupled with the Digger-infused notion of free, the politics of Woodstock are understood as the pleasure of unhinged association in a post-scarcity society.² In the Bay Area, New Games and its large public tournaments can be seen in parallel with other large-scale public movement events of its time. In *Citydance* (1977), for example, dancer and choreographer Anna Halprin created and publicized an open movement score for a dance that began at sunrise on San Francisco's Twin Peaks and ended at Embarcadero Plaza. The dance's score evolved as it drifted through the city's neighborhoods and transit systems. In 1975, the New Games Foundation held a tournament in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. It hoped to bring the whole city together to play games that would erase social boundaries and be fun. Ten thousand people showed up.

New Games, its feet damp in the Bay Area avant-gardes of Stewart Brand's communitarian set and the human potential posse of George Leonard's Esalen Institute, had much to offer in terms of the significance of public recreation in the life of a city. It was an active form of individual gestalt therapy, a notion that it keyed into the value of social creativity, generativity, and social cohesion. Today, New Games continues to foster joyful experiences for many people through youth groups, schools, college rec programs, theater classes, corporate retreats, and development seminars, but few are aware of the downright utopian ideas that informed its genesis.

In the first New Games book, Stewart Brand, who was instrumental in supporting the first New Games Tournament and the New Games Foundation, contributed an essay titled "Theory Of Game Change." It is key to understanding the broad changes in the perceived value of play in our society over the past forty years. Brand's writing strings together thoughts about a very early computer game called Space Wars, how his own history—including a zap at a War Resisters League meeting in 1966—informed New Games, an extended quote from *Homo Ludens*, Johan Huizinga's pivotal book on the role of play in



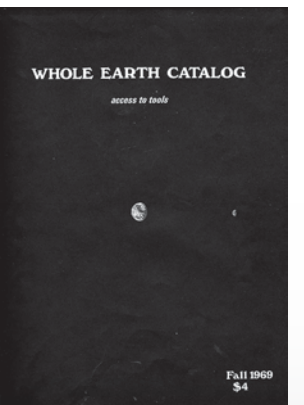
society, and the following statement regarding the evolution of games and society:

You can't change a game by winning it, goes the formula. Or losing it or refereeing it or spectating it. You change a game by leaving it, going somewhere else, and starting a new game. If it works, it will in time alter or replace the old game.³

The logic of this statement fits well in Brand's two terrains of operation: the back-to-the-land movement and Silicon Valley techno-utopianism. In our era of networked culture, his statement can be read as a declaration of the value of disruptive technology.

"We are coming together to celebrate our cultural, social, economic, and racial differences," states a poster for the 1975 New Games Tournament in Golden Gate Park. Seen through the lens of pleasure, this come-on speaks to the values of sharing and free-association at the center of New Games. But looked at through a secondary lens, you might ask the obvious question, "Why would someone want to *celebrate* their poverty in a wealthy society?" Who wins when the ease of temporary distraction supersedes the unpleasant work of confronting structural inequality? Posed only in the light of a 1970s-era pleasure-fest the question is overwrought, but in the context

Robby Herbst



Opposite page: Image from *The New Games Book*, 1976; Headlands Press/Doubleday-Dolphin, Andrew Fluegelman, editor. Beyond developing Headland Press and its New Games books, Fluegelman was a founding editor of both *PC World* and *Macworld* magazines. As a programmer, he is also credited as the developer of the Freeware concept of sharing software.

Left: Early promotional materials produced by the New Games Foundation for *The New Games Book*, c. 1975. Courtesy of the Stanford University Libraries Special Collections and University Archive.

Above top: Steve Jobs and the iPhone.

Above bottom: Stewart Brand. *The Whole Earth Catalog*, 1968 (cover); produced with the Portola Institute, Menlo Park, California.

3. Brand refereed a game of Slaughter. He suggests that his intent was to implicate the members of this peace group in the culture of violence that they rejected by enjoining them in a rough and hyper-competitive game.

1973

- The first New Games Tournament is held at the Marin Headlands' Gerbode Preserve, then managed by the Trust For Public Land. The Gerbode Preserve will later become a part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Stewart Brand and Pat Farrington are credited as organizers with Wavy Gravy, George Leonard, and Nolan Bushnell (among many others) attending.

1974

- The second New Games Tournament held at the Gerbode Preserve, organized by Pat Farrington in the spring. John O'Connell acts as referee; Burton Naiditch works in the arts area.
- The New Games Foundation is incorporated with Pat Farrington as first director and with funding from Stewart Brand's Point Foundation. Initial Foundation HQ was in Farrington's San Francisco loft.

1975

- The third New Games Tournament is held in Golden Gate Park with an estimated 10,000 in attendance.
- Burton Naiditch and Dale Le Fevre begin working at the New Games Foundation with Pat Farrington.
- When Farrington moves to Australia, Naiditch and John O'Connell become co-directors.
- Work on *The New Games Book* begins with Andrew Fluegelman and John O'Connell as New Games Foundation editor.
- The New Games Foundation office is in the Ecology Center in San Francisco.
- Barbara Naiditch and Trina Merriman are hired by the New Games Foundation.
- John O'Connell begins developing the New Games Training Program.

1976

- *The New Games Book* is published by Headland Press/Doubleday-Dolphin with Andrew Fluegelman as editor. The first printing of 10,000 copies is quickly followed by another 40,000.
- Dale Le Fevre is hired as Associate Director of the New Games Foundation, which moves to a storefront in Glen Park, San Francisco.
- Pam Cleland joins the staff of the New Games Foundation.
- The fourth New Games Tournament and Bicentennial Celebration is held at the rifle range across the road from the Gerbode Preserve, in what is now the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.
- The New Games Training Program begins with four programs nationally: at The Games Preserve in Eastern Pennsylvania with Bernie De Koven, at Cal Poly Pomona with Bill Michaelis, in Oakland with Marcelle Weed, and in New York/Long Island.

1977

- Burton Naiditch secures a three-year Mott Foundation grant to support the New Games Foundation.
- The New Games Training Program blossoms into major activity. In the fall of 1977, the Foundation offers 30 trainings in ten weeks: three trainings given each weekend, one each in the East, the Midwest, and the West of the United States.
- The Training Program is fine-tuned with input from Bernie De Koven, Bill Michaelis, Todd Strong (who joins the staff), and others.
- The Training Program begins recruiting player-teachers from around the country as members of the New Games Trainers Cadre.

1978

- The New Games Foundation moves to a house on Arguello St. in the Inner Richmond, San Francisco.
- Barbara Naiditch develops *The New Games News Letter* and the Trainer's newsletter *Tundra Topics*.
- Burton Naiditch starts the New Games Sales Program, offering books, t-shirts, and games equipment. The Foundation holds the trademark to the "Earthball."
- New Games begins its international spread with Dale Lefevre as the New Games Field Representative.

1979

- New Games Trainings and Festivals held in Europe, Canada, and Australia, as well as the United States.
- Deutsche-Sportbund Program trainings and a festival led by John O'Connell are held at Der Grugapark, a municipal park in Essen, Germany.
- The first New Games Camp, a form of advanced training, is held at Fellowship Farm in Pennsylvania.
- Contract, group, and open trainings continue to grow to around 50 per year.

1980

- Pam Cleland takes over as director of the New Games Foundation. Burton Naiditch leaves the Foundation, and John O'Connell shifts to become head trainer.
- The 'Earthball Lawsuit' begins, stemming from an accidental back injury at Denison University, Ohio.

1981

- *More New Games!* is published by Main Street Books with Pam Cleland, Bill Michaelis, and Ray Murray on the editorial board and Andrew Fluegelman as editor. The first printing is 65,000 copies.
- *The New Games Book* goes into its seventh printing (750,000 copies). Combined book sales eventually exceed 1 million copies.
- Hundreds of New Games Festivals are conducted around the United States.
- *The New Games Book* and *More New Games!* are translated into German by Ahorn Verlag and published in Germany.
- Nancy Kretz takes over as director of the New Games Foundation.
- The Earthball Lawsuit is settled.

1983

- Helen Meier is hired as director of the New Games Foundation.

1984

- Nancy Kretz resumes her role as part-time Foundation director as the Board of Directors begins the process to dissolve the New Games Foundation.
- Final training programs are conducted.
- Todd Strong and John O'Connell put in proposals to reinvent the Foundation, but the Board of Directors moves forward with the plan to shut it down.

1985

- The New Games Foundation is officially dissolved by the Board of Directors.
- The assets of the New Games Foundation are turned over to the national YMCA.

Right: Image from *The New Games* Book, 1976; Headlands Press/ Doubleday-Dolphin, Andrew Fluegelman, editor.

Below: Promotional flier produced by the New Games Foundation for the New Games Field Representative Program, 1979; print on paper; unfolded flyer approx. 8.5 x 15 inches. Courtesy of Bill Michealis.

Opposite page: Poster produced by the New Games Foundation for the third New Games Tournament, 1975. Courtesy of the Stanford University Libraries Special Collections and University Archive. The third New Games Tournament was the first not held in Marin County's Gerbode Valley. Soon after its founding in 1974, the New Games Foundation engaged with a minority community in Visitation Valley (San Francisco), offering New Games as a tool for social justice and play. This social change ethos is reflected in this poster for the 1975 Tournament.



4. This is the New Games motto.
5. For an example, view Adam Curtis' essay film *The Century of The Self*.

OUR GOAL IS
A SYSTEM OF
MUTUAL
SUPPORT AND
COMMUNICA-
TION FOR
ALL WHO USE
NEW GAMES.
WE CAN
REACH THAT
GOAL, IF WE
ALL WORK
AND PLAY
TOGETHER.

of the Bay Area's current techno-libertarian atmosphere the question is profound. Who gets to change the game?

The dubiously named sharing economy strips workers of their economic stability and agency. After offering tax breaks to technology companies, San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee declared a fiscal deficit and demanded budget cuts in public agencies. Airbnb destabilized housing in the region. Everyone knows someone who's been evicted. Innovation in public education is sought at the expense of public education and the profit of private innovators. Public space and public lives are metered on private devices. Civic spaces are recoded for the benefit of the wealthy, marginalizing those without access to game-changing tools. Creativity is put to the limited service of economic worth.

Play is rehearsal for all kinds of group behavior. We begin to learn its codes from birth: *Play hard, play fair, nobody hurt.*⁴ Group games model ways groups can be together in a society, thoughtfully or otherwise. With *New Games*, I am exploring ways that we are

together. Today, the up-with-people collective attitude that spawned New Games in the Bay Area is replaced by the techno-libertarianism, which looks at profit as a means to generate social good. The connection between the 1970s human potential movement and the neoliberal ideology of today is territory trodden by critical thinkers.⁵ There is a bridge between the innovation economy, the rule-breaking attitude of creatively oriented competition, and the economy of self-improvement of the '70s. The Bay Area feels this most pronouncedly through the extreme income disparities taking hold. And while New Games appears mostly as something fun, I can't help but wonder if, unintentionally, New Games had a part in preparing everyone to embrace the ideology of personal play and personal freedom over that of community well-being.

欲知五月十七日之「新遊戲比賽」詳情，可向葛蘭學區社會中心索取中文譯本。
地址：三九市屋街七十號
(TO C.A. ST. 17)

You are invited

LA INFORMACIÓN DE ESTE PROGRAMA ACERCA DEL TORNEO DE JUEGOS NUEVOS, EN EL CENTRO INTERNACIONAL DE ESTUDIANTES, NOVEDERO 70 Y LA CALLE GAY, ADJÚN EN SAN FRANCISCO.

10am-6pm.
saturday
may 17th
1975
san francisco

to the 3rd

speedway meadows,
golden gate park
free admission.

NEW GAMES

WE ARE COMING TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE OUR CULTURAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND RACIAL DIFFERENCES.

TOURNAMENT

THE VARIOUS COMMUNITIES IN SAN FRANCISCO WILL BRING FOOD AND GAMES TO SHARE WITH OTHER COMMUNITIES. (Wear Rugged Clothing.)

YOU FOR:

co-sponsors:
Co-sponsors share the new games concept with their group and involve them with the tournament.

food: Non-profit community organizations can make and sell food at the tournament. Please call to make arrangements soon—space is limited.

services: We need printers, photographers, & video-tapers—doctors & nurses—toy-makers, clowns & mimes—costume-makers, acoustic musicians. . . Unique contributions of all kinds are also wanted.

volunteers: Volunteers are needed to organize & referee.

games: Everyone is invited to bring their own games or to come & create new games.

equipment: We need arts & crafts materials, lumber, sporting goods equipment, use of trucks to transport materials, donation of a 16mm projector, use of a car...

Presented by the
in cooperation with:
The Neighborhood Bicentennial Committee
The Neighborhood Arts Program, and others.

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NEW GAMES FOUNDATION

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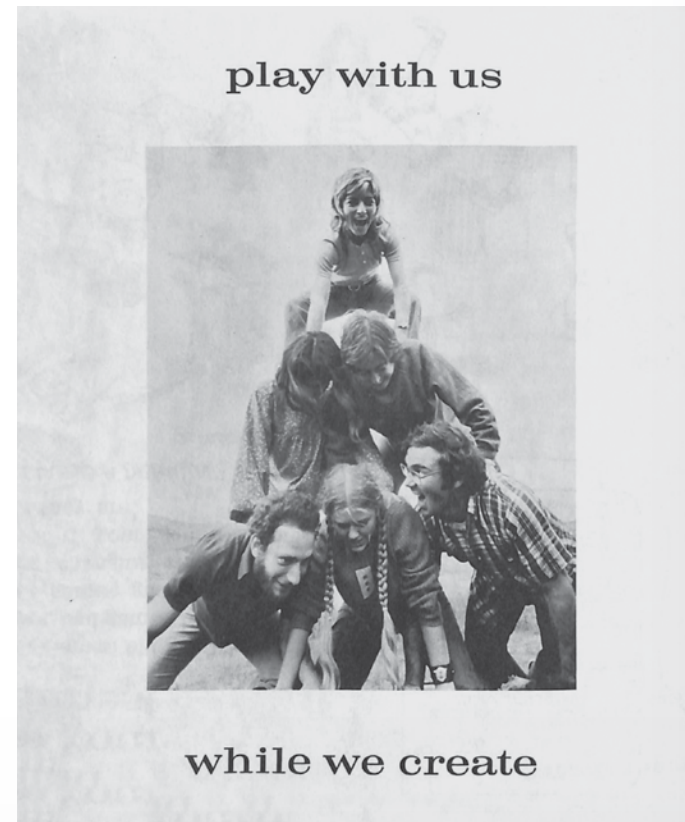
MODEL CITY: RULE OF INNOVATION

Under police escort in the dead of night, a specially equipped truck was poised to patrol San Francisco's Market Street. Its objective: Transubstantiate the thoroughfare by showering it with lasers.

Rather than a plotline from a cyberpunk paperback, this was the scene painted by the city's Department of Public Works last year. In November 2015, the DPW outlined its plan to create a "fly-through model" of Market Street by deploying light detection and ranging (LiDAR) technology. "The lasers hit things," explained project manager Simon Bertrang, and "the machine will take the readings and convert it into a cloud of 3D information." Though postponed due to weather, the DPW's survey—pursued on behalf of the Better Market Street renewal plan—points toward a broader project reconfiguring the relationship between public and private in San Francisco. It casts light on the construction of a new model for urban life.

Market Street, cradle of Web 2.0, offers a window into dynamics unfolding across the Bay Area today. Since 2008 a new crop of tech-driven investments and enterprises specializing in disruptive innovation has proliferated throughout the region. In 2011, Mayor Ed Lee's administration began cultivating growth along San Francisco's Mid-Market corridor by pushing through the Central Market Payroll Tax Exclusion, a policy that slashed payroll taxes for firms planting roots within a designated archipelago of urban parcels. The area now hosts Twitter's new corporate headquarters, which shares the ground floor of the Art Deco Merchandise Mart building with a gourmet food market, the Market on Market, and a burgeoning cohort of startups. These tax incentives, along with firm expansion in residential growth-restricted Silicon Valley, have triggered an influx of tech workers into San Francisco, a development boom, precipitous gentrification, and periodic protest.

Much ink has been spilt on the city's transformation but relatively little on the political vision animating it. Today, a network of civic innovation advocates seeks to apply the principles of the tech sector to the city's management. While proponents of civic innovation encompass a range of actors—from new media entrepreneurs



to urban policy think tanks—the movement's strongest institutional expression can be found in the mayor's Office of Civic Innovation. Created by Lee in 2011 to "embed startup DNA into government," the office aims to encourage the city's "innovation ecosystem" without intervening in market effects. Besides building public-private partnerships and promoting a culture of innovation within City Hall, the office's main goal is to put public resources—data and space—to more entrepreneurial ends.

At the level of political reason, civic innovation entails redefining the role of city government and re-envisioning it along the lines of an enterprise. Not only should government be lean and flexible, it should also be transparent and competitive by providing open access to public resources as part of a strategy to attract human and financial capital. Modeling government on a startup calls for re-imagining the relationship between residents and the institutions of collective decision-making as one in which customers ostensibly co-create with market suppliers by receiving services from and providing input to them via web platforms. A crucial distinction exists in this vision between government-as-startup and startups themselves. Though the former should be modeled on the latter and evaluated as such, its activities should be limited to fostering market conditions. Tim O'Reilly, the tech-publishing entrepreneur and coiner of the term Web 2.0, suggests that "In this model, government is a convener and

an enabler rather than the first mover of civic action." Rather than pursue social welfare through redistributive policies, government is relegated in this view to laying the groundwork for market competition. This bears real-life resemblance to Bay Area game developer Will Wright's massively successful *SimCity* series of urban simulations (themselves based on the work of system dynamics pioneer Jay Forrester), in which one can lower taxes and bulldoze slums but erecting public housing and community land trusts are impossible.

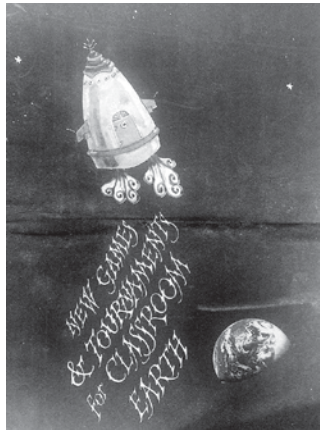
In practice, efforts to enable civic action have focused on making the landscape into a stage for innovation. As investments began to blossom in the tax exclusion area after 2011, planners and policy makers—along with local businesses, bike advocates, and social entrepreneurs—attempted to reclaim Market Street through a variety of public initiatives. With its Living Innovation Zone program, a pilot started in 2013 to facilitate exhibits on Market Street, the Office of Civic Innovation took the lead. By demonstrating how technology and design might be mobilized to activate space, these innovation zones effectively serve as test sites for the Better Market Street project, a multi-agency effort to turn Mid-Market into an innovation district and the driving force behind laser-mapping expeditions in the city. Premised on a spine of street life zones along the corridor, Better Market Street offers a model for urban living that yokes everyday conversation and discovery to the dictates of market innovation. And as web-based technologies render the boundary between production and reproduction as porous as the space between buildings, the sparks of interaction among specks of human capital appear to offer the stuff of market value.

The transformation of the city at large into a lab for innovation has taken hold through processes of exclusion. Indeed, the current administration has targeted Mid-Market with heightened policing and public health measures, such as nightly sidewalk hose-downs, to clear the street of undesired elements. At its root, civic innovation is based on an inclusive,

if narrowly defined, notion of participation. As long as individuals follow the rules, they are welcome to play. But rubrics must be learned. "In the past," one anonymous designer has suggested, "monuments were made of bronze. In the future, monuments will be made of code." These monuments or innovation zones enroll socio-technical forms of interactivity to impress upon city dwellers the benefit of acquiring new skills, relations, work habits, and ways of seeing. They are the design equivalents of workforce training programs. With the city figured here as a workshop for innovation, public space becomes a terrain upon which to mold urban subjects themselves into lean startups or self-investing bits of human capital.

Given the DPW's charge to power-wash homelessness off Market Street, it's ironic that its laser-mapping excursion was scuttled by rain. Precipitation throws off LiDAR scans, generating patchy data. Undeterred, the department made plans for future expeditions. By combining data from several surveys, it hopes to build a near-perfect representation of the thoroughfare. For civic innovation advocates, the importance of such a model lies in its character as a tool with which to remake the city into a site of market innovation. This political vision has as much to do with the nature of individual and collective life as it does with the built environment. Remaking the latter offers a means to reconfigure the former.

John Elrick and Will Payne



Opposite page: Early promotional materials produced by the New Games Foundation for *The New Games Book*, c. 1975. Courtesy of the Stanford University Libraries Special Collections and University Archive.

Above: Cover of *Deschool Primer*, Number 14, circa 1975; newsprint; 11.5 x 15 inches. Courtesy of Ron Jones. *Deschool* was a publication by Zephyros, a project of Jones's, who in the late '60s and early '70s was a part of the alternative education scene that flowed out of Menlo Park's Portola Institute, where the *Whole Earth Catalog* was developed. Along with a significant contribution by the New Games Foundation, this issue of *Deschool* contains a large selection of computer games developed by Menlo Park's People's Computer Company (PCC), which was also associated with the Portola community. The PCC formed in 1972; its first newsletter states: "Computers are mostly used against people instead of for people; used to control people instead of to free them; Time to change all that—we need a...People's Computer Company."

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