

Language and Location: Designing for Resistance

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In the *Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau creates a link between the tactics and habits of everyday life and acts of resistance “which are neither defined by nor captured by the system in which they develop.”¹ In fact these tactics may over time and through repetition transform the current system in which they operate. De Certeau’s focus on the actions of everyday life shift the focus of production from the writer or designer to the reader or pedestrian. A comparison between architecture and literature can reveal questions about how architects understand their position as makers in relationship to those who will occupy their work. For architecture, a focus on re-making through occupation is a provocative idea. Architecture and the contemporary city will be increasingly less described by its physical form than its processes.² A process oriented study has the potential to engage issues of identity within the making and re-making of place. Although de Certeau’s work attempts to shift the focus away from the writer

and designer, there are examples within intellectual and literary practice which take advantage of this form of resistance. The work of bell hooks and Adrienne Rich has inspired a design process which focuses on the operations of tactic and habit to design both temporary and permanent protest housing, allowing greater perception of identity and the process of re-making by creating opportunities to reveal individual improvisation in the occupation and transformation of urban space.

NOTES

¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), xviii.

² P. Brown, “Sonorous Urbanism: Spatial Implications of the AAMC”, in *Sites of Memory: Perspectives on Architecture and Race*, Craig E. Barton ed. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2001), 144.