***DIRECT ADDRESS***

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The invention of the printing press and the resulting availability of printed yet often unauthorised theatrical productions, allowed theatre companies to produce plays without having seen a performance, or having consulted the playwright. Writers included "margin notes" - *didascaliae -* to guide actors rehearsing from their scripts. The *Direct Address* projectexplores how contemporary uses of social media engage with the tradition of annotation and commentary by making them live, participatory and open to public scrutiny. How are our lives and desires represented in public space with the proliferation of media screens, the immediacy of access to products and services, linking us to part of an ever-expanding network of consuming while in transit? What would happen if we reclaimed and re-negotiated access to some of those spaces? What if we could overwrite the corporate signature by introducing a different voice and consolidating a different civic agenda?

In the rich landscape of our urban experience, social exchanges are increasingly directed by the presence of media. Hand-held, touch-screen devices guide our moves and moods through the city as we encounter informational image displays and silent screen messages, all plucked from global news streams. The screen and the city appear as a continuous present, as an enhancement of now, creating a blur between pre-recorded adverts, live broadcast and life itself. We observe how the constitution of the public cannot be separated from that of the media, as it is the media that makes the public truly public, while at the same time generating other effects.

By using twitter as a contemporary means to publish, exchange and share, *Direct Address* explores the possibility of staging a play generated by live twitter feeds from actors rehearsing in a London theatre with those of travellers passing through one of London’s railway stations. As people gather in front of timetables and watch the adjacent media screens, they will be able to follow and interact with the ‘twitter play’ appearing on the screen, a space normally reserved for the promotion of brands and services. The opportunity to turn the screens into a live platform of embodied presence - open to all - establishes a new relationship with the public. By introducing the possibility of wide participation and the alternative use of privately owned screens, the project intervenes into a closed system while confronting the ubiquitous culture of ‘texting’ habits, and adapting them as a tool of public attention.

The project attempts to replace conspicuous consumption with conspicuous creativity. Brechtian in its origins, it pays tribute to his Great Method by focusing on the existing uses of mobile technologies connecting the citizens aspiring to effect our understanding of how we might want to occupy the city. The very nature of mobile communications foregrounds the places of transition in which media screens appear. The project also serves as a reminder of how corporate presence remains unchallenged as it spills into sites which many of us still associate with public ownership, or at the very least, sites we presume are held in common.