



Rebar workshop at Texas A & M University

Workshop dates: March 26, 2009 – April 3, 2009
Workshop project kickoff – Friday, March 26
Workshop exhibition & wrap-up – Friday, April 3
Artist lecture: Wednesday, April 1, Wright Gallery, 5pm

Seat the Street, novel tactics for occupation of outdoor public space

American cities have been systematically removing the comforts from public spaces in an effort to make them less attractive to loitering, drug dealing and homelessness. While benches and pay phones disappear, military-like barriers crop up around our public buildings, shopping centers and gathering places, projecting an attitude of desolate inhospitality, fear and defensiveness. The truism that Americans are shunning actual public spaces for safer, virtual worlds becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy as public space itself expels citizens from its midst.

Widely known for their seminal project *Park(ing)*, the worldwide takeover of metered parking spaces for temporary parks, the San Francisco-based collective Rebar has been remixing landscapes around the country since 2004. In an effort to counter the prevailing trend of street furniture removal from public space, in 2008, Rebar introduced *Bushwaffle*--inflatable street furniture that creates comfort and provides opportunities for play through flash-mob style aggregation.

Rebar artists John Bela and Blaine Merker will lead an 8-day workshop at Texas A & M to design and develop modular DIY street furniture. Starting from the spirit of Rebar's recent *Bushwaffle* prototype, we will explore the potential of mass-producible design objects and develop alternate approaches to creating DIY street furniture. Experimentation and gratuitous prototyping will be encouraged as we test our designs out around the campus and College Station.

Optional background reading and viewing:

Rebar Art Collective: <http://rebargroup.org/>
Rebar Bushwaffle: <http://www.bushwaffle.com/>
Graffiti Research Labs Postal Chairs: http://graffitiresearchlab.com/?page_id=35
Mike Davis, City of Quartz
Marc Dessauce, Inflatable Moment: Pneumatics and Protest in '68
"Searching for Energy" in Constance Lewallen, Ant Farm: 1968-1978
Sean Topham, Inflatable Art, Architecture and Design
Micheal Grenfell, Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts