
Urban Art Lab Salt Lake City - 6970

JOERG RUEGEMER

University of Utah

Celebrating the Arts, Sciences, Technology and more, Urban Art Lab Salt Lake City – 6970 is an urban implementation proposal that consists of installations, art interventions and new, truly public spaces within specific city blocks of the downtown area of Salt Lake City and beyond. Among a group of 200+ international competitors that participated in the internationally open urban design competition: 6970 – The Spaces Between, an international jury under the leadership of Gregg Pasquarelli chose the presented work as one of only two jury awards in June 2013.

Urban Art Lab Salt Lake City – 6970 consists of publicly driven Guerilla installations, Art Containers, events, installations and activities, which take over abandoned and underutilized spaces and transform them into usable public space to improve the quality of downtown and other areas. Some interventions, such as spatial occupancies, might have a temporary character, whereas others provide a more permanent urban enrichment, offering a refreshing, democratic contrast to the solely consumption-driven Shopping-Mall Temple that specifically dominates Salt Lake City's downtown area. Events appear in different locations, coincide, create, offer, and disappear. Through overlapping of physical and digital space, new platforms of urban expression emerge, offering an atlas of commercial and communal activities that will slowly take over the new center of the City.

Urban Art Lab's central location and its performative and artistic flexibility offers an important anchoring function for an expanding future-repertoire of activities, providing a significant Epicenter and new center for the City's future social and urban development. Through the flexibility of the proposal – interventions function as micro events as well as in context to other implementations – an enduring and sustainable revival of blocks 69/70 is assured.

Additionally, popular Smartphone technology allows for a setup of a variety of interactive events and participatory projects. Just before Christmas artists come up with a snow-cannon installation that allows people to trigger a snowfall using their phones and other portable devices. In another setup, a filter allows the public to display individual images on some of the countless media screens that illuminate the building's underused firewalls. A popular app - Urban Art Lab City.app - is being used by urban dwellers and visitors to navigate the newest events, exhibitions, and more, and to receive updates and background information on these activities. Commons.app aims to help Salt Lakers "compete to do good" while helping to improve the city. Players are challenged to identify problems in urban space and suggest ways to improve them – they can then vote for each other's ideas to identify the most popular proposals. Tied-in social media allows for an electronic social exchange.

The authors propose Art, Architecture, Design and other artistic events and exhibitions as the backbone of the project. Those reach across racial stereotypes, religious barriers, and socio-economical levels and prejudices, and will create a sense of belonging for all occupants of the city.

