

## Urban Vigilante – Command and Conquer

competition announcement 6pm, Friday 2nd October, LT2, VUW, 139 Vivian St  
handin & party 6pm, Saturday 3rd September, Great Hall Massey University, Buckle St  
judging announced 1pm, Sunday 4th September, VUW, 139 Vivian St

"The city was the means of mapping out a political space that existed in a given political duration. Now speed -ubiquity, instantaneousness - dissolves the city, or rather displaces it ... in time. ... We no longer populate stationariness (cities as great parking lots for populations), we populate the time spent changing place, travel time ... at the mercy of phone calls. There is a kind of destruction caused by saturating immediacy, which is linked to speed."

Paul Virilio and Sylvère Lotringer *Pure War* (New York: 1983) p. 64.

A climate of lawlessness and paranoia characteristic of a post 9/11 world produces a government suspicion of automobiles as potential sites for mobile illicit gatherings and the collusion of terrorists. All vehicles capable of transporting more than one person become illegal and the government orders the confiscation of keys to all such cars. The city is now cast into chaos. It is at a literal standstill. Cars lie seemingly abandoned to the frustration of their owners.

**Roads are now valuable prime real estate**, and the newly elected right-wing Urban Vigilante Party have instituted their policies for roads to be privatised. No longer needed as transport infrastructure, roads are more profitable as tall buildings rich with rentable floor space. The Urban Vigilante (a once powerful lobby group advocating rampant urban development) sell these now redundant roads to fund their increasingly restrictive security measures. Public space is now a fragile notion. **Everyone is a trespasser.** The scene is set for lawlessness, and infrastructural reassignment. Competitive private interests must collaboratively construct new transportation infrastructures for pedestrian, cycle, monorail, hovercraft, microlight, submarine and segway traffic. A new transport infrastructure is required, and new relationships between, through, above and below buildings must be established.

This year's 20u40 asks competitors to insinuate this scenario into an urban section perimetered by Cambridge Tce, Buckle St, Taranaki St and Courtenay Pl in **the design of an architecture of urban habitation and infrastructure post-car** which demonstrates the tensions of a world where the distinctions of architect and developer are failing to exist. Entrants are asked to build above, below and beside the existing buildings with an understanding that **all space is able to be privatised and there is no longer any understanding or privileging of a notion of public space.**

This is a competition which is seemingly unregulated within this horizontally bounded (but infinitely tall and infinitely deep) site. It draws on the tradition of another seemingly unrestrictive site – the internet. It is this "democratic" medium which will be used to interrogate this paranoid and politically tight scenario. Competitors will use this mirror virtual site (<http://20u40.arch.school.nz/login.php>) **to design an urban scheme in real time and in view of all other competitors.** This virtual site will be a constantly shifting one, subject to the arbitrary impositions of the Urban Vigilante. Your design will be responsive, competitive, with enforced and wary collaboration.