

## A Billboard of Infrastructural Imaginaries

Photolanguage (Nigel Green & Robin Wilson)

Commissioned by Tempo Arts Hastings, UK, the billboard (2 x 5 metres) occupied a derelict space previously owned by Network Rail. The image juxtaposes a history of social protest with local themes of modern infrastructural heritage and contemporary, speculative redevelopment. It re-situates one of the 1930s coastal shelters and car park vents of the Hastings and St Leonards sea front by Borough Engineer Sidney Little, re-categorising it as a proposed 'Pavilion of Insurrection and Pleasure'. The aim of the work was to activate a site-specific, poetic and utopian space of visual play, whilst critiquing the often vacuous nature of the contemporary developer's digital render, and the weakness of institutions to propose alternative urban futures.

The image involves a direct sampling of details from the surrounding environment (such as the nearby office block, Ocean House and the site's colony of buddleia plants), and postures as a proposed architectural intervention, alluding to the billboard renderings of proposed redevelopment projects of the contemporary townscape: '*Coming Soon*'. A fake planning notice accompanied the billboard, recording an initial rejection of the proposal and then the altered specification of its accepted form.

The naming of the pavilion seeks to align it with the utopian infrastructural architectures of Nicholas Ledoux in eighteenth century France. It invokes radical forces that are suppressed in the contemporary city, announcing their imminent manifestation in this hinterland space, the *terrain-vague* of the billboard site. A restless host gather about the pavilion. These figures also forge a utopic intersection between historical periods: African and Chinese migrant workers from Paris of the 1920s associate with student protesters from May 1968. They are a composite crowd of demonstrative figures, the 'ideal' operators of this hybrid object of existential utility.

See: <https://photolanguage.info/project/pavilion-of-insurrection-and-pleasure-coming-soon/>