

# VISUAL VOICE

## Activist Architecture

Yes Duffy

The Visual Voice is a mouthpiece for urban causes. This ongoing public project personalizes and socializes the urban landscape, provoking a renegotiation between city and citizen. It is meant to provoke conversation as well as challenge the privatization of our visual environment. If YOU could reprogram the HOLLYWOOD sign, or the YAHOO! sign in SOMA, what would it say? Where would you say it?

The Visual Voice is really just a portable, democratic billboard. Its strength lies within its simplicity. It is made of repurposed electronics from nearby offices and configured geometrically for making public statements. It is a re-manifestation of the public forum—a grassroots broadcast in a city where so many subordinated citizens strive to be heard. It is a simple conduit for communication at the scale of the landscape.

In the case of San Francisco, modern urban ‘renewal’ has left tens of thousands of its residents unable to afford basic shelter. How is it that a city as economically prosperous socially progressive as ours can still not adequately address the most basic human needs of its citizens? It is clear that ‘renewal’ in San Francisco does not include everyone. This simple installation is a last-resort gesture at getting the attention of the city, its policy-makers, and the public, in an effort to re-contextualize and synthesize the necessary conversation between the city and its citizens.

