

David P. LANDON



BESEECH, COAX, COURT

For Unsuspecting Performers and Cell Phones

September 2015



**OVERVIEW:**

**Encoded: Beseech, coax, court** is a piece primarily concerned with human behavior in architectural spaces, predominantly performance and gallery spaces. While the space itself becomes the score, **Encoded** places the role of composer and performer on the gallery or performance attendee, and transforms their cell phone into an instrument. Additionally, the piece relies on the attendees' psychological reactions to the constructed environment to assume these roles without verbal or written instructions. This is accomplished using concepts from Architectural Determinism, Proxemics, Semiotics, and Psychoacoustics.

**THE SPACE AS THE SCORE:**

Humans express certain tendencies in reaction to designed spaces. For example: given no obvious objects of attraction, circulation in a space has a bias for counter clockwise rotation, and people tend to congregate in areas with more light. **Encoded** uses concepts gleaned from Architectural Determinism (i.e. design for behavioral change) and Steven Bitgood's studies on orientation and circulation to analyze a performance venue in terms of inherent circulation and congregational patterns. Some elements of the space being considered are: entrance location, the presence of any objects of attraction, lighting, materials/patterns on floor or ceiling, any present obstacles, acoustics, seating areas and whether or not the seating encourages or discourages social interaction. Should a space inherently produce minimal behavioral change, circulation and areas of congregation may be added to the space for a performance of **Encoded** (i.e. viewing spaces, islands and peninsulas of temporary wall dividers, etc...)

Along the path of circulation and areas of congregation, QR codes will be placed similar in the same way gallery art pieces are typically exhibited (see figure 2, pg. 4). Each QR code, when scanned, will load a web page that automatically produces a sound. Each sound will belong to a large bank of pre-recorded sounds, decided upon for each individual performance space in keeping with the acoustic attributes of the space and the desired interaction between gallery attendees.

For spaces approximately larger than 575 square feet, the space shall be seen as having multiple listening areas; each segmented listening area shall consist of approximately 144 square feet. The placement of particular QR codes, and their associated sounds, will be positioned in a particular listening area so as to create a certain progression of the piece using the circulation of the space and the collection of QR codes in a given listening area. Spaces approximately smaller than 575 square feet (unless the acoustic properties of the space do not allow all sounds in space to be heard from all areas of

the space), shall be considered as one uniform listening space. The placement and distribution of QR codes shall be determined as to encourage a progression of the piece based upon the number of performers in said space at any given point in time.

#### **ATTENDEES' INTERACTION WITH THE SCORE:**

Upon arrival, attendees will not be given any instruction as to how to initiate and interact with the piece. There will, however, be key visual cues placed in strategic locations throughout the congregational areas of the space. These visual cues will rely on the attendee's existing experience with QR codes, and the fact that, as signs, QR codes represent a web page containing unknown information. The placed visual cues will encourage gallery attendees to scan the QR codes using their cell phones, and will establish the connection between cell phone, QR code, and sound. At this point, it is expected that the rest of the attendees will follow suit, and become the composers and performers of **Encoded**, with their cell phones as the instruments. During a performance, the attendees can be considered as either primary performers (actively scanning QR codes, producing sound, and interacting with the space/score and others producing sounds), or secondary performers (not producing sounds, but interacting with the space/score, and influencing the manner in which others interact with the space/score).

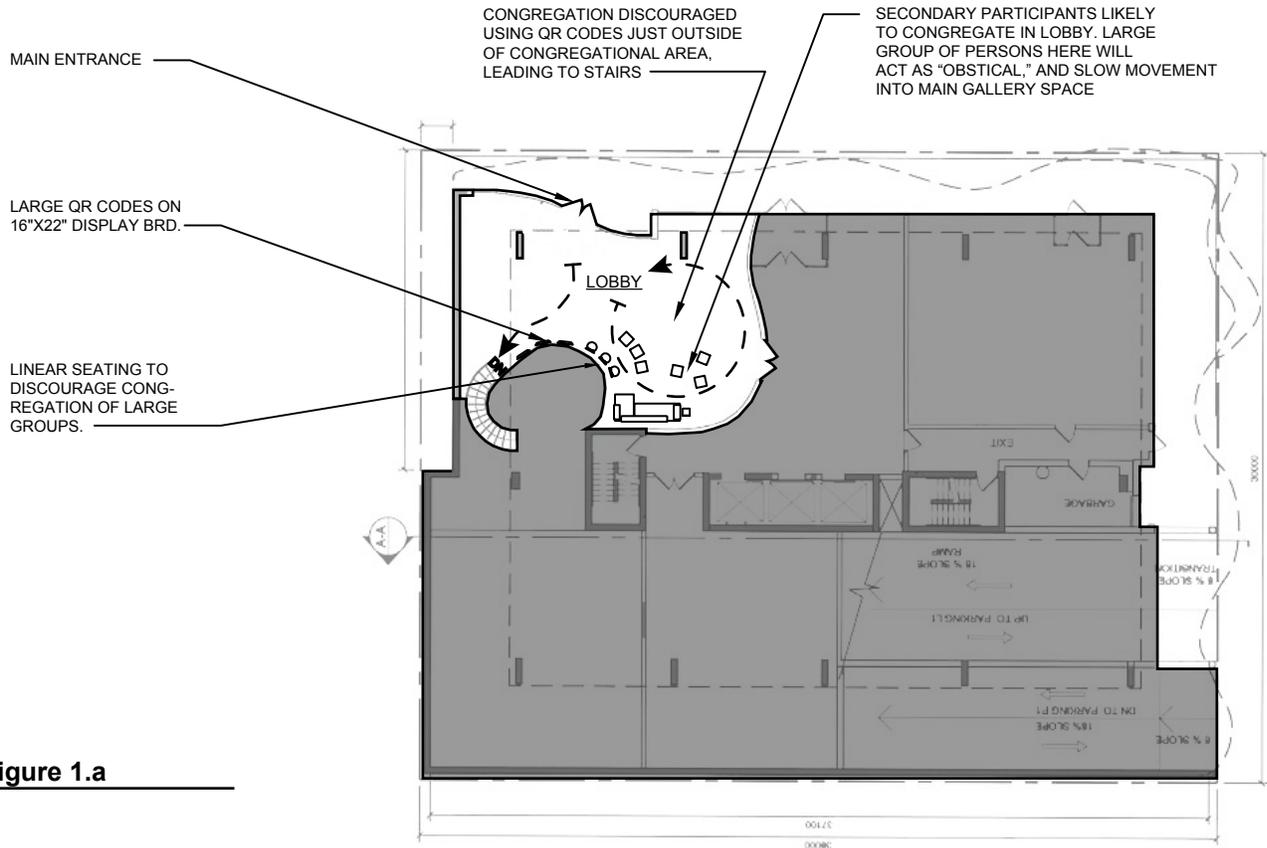
Based on the initial analysis of the space, circulation patterns and congregational areas will be utilized as indicators of the manner in which attendees will engage the QR codes. The inherent circulation and congregation patterns of a space will either be encouraged or discouraged using the placement and distribution of particular sounds and the psychoacoustic qualities of said sounds. It is in this manner that the overall quality of the collective sound in the space or listening areas will be controlled. For example, if too many congregational areas are present in a space, the overall quality of the sound produced will be static due to the lack of circulation, and repetitive playback of the same sounds. One possible way of discouraging this is to place QR codes in some of the congregational areas that would contain psychoacoustic properties encouraging attendees to circulate instead of congregate in that particular area. Another possibility would be to manipulate the quality or amount of light in some of the congregational areas.

The overall life and shape of the piece could be thought of as the process of all attendees becoming primary performers, circulating throughout the space, and becoming secondary performers in the congregational areas of the space or exiting the space entirely. The discovery of the association between QR codes and the production of sound provides the meaning for the rest of the score. Architectural determinism and the psychoacoustic properties of the sounds being produced dictate how a group of people move through a given space and, consequently, the quality of the collective sound being produced at any given moment. The piece ends as all attendees move from the role of primary performer to secondary performer. In an open gallery environment, the piece can be thought of as lasting from the moment the QR codes have been put up till the time they come down. When programed as part of a concert, it is recommended that **Encoded** be the first piece of the program. A rough time estimate of the piece can be calculated using the following equation:

$$(2 * \sqrt{a}) * .225 + \left(\frac{b}{5}\right) = \textit{approximate length of piece}$$

Where "a" is equal to the square footage of the space, and "b" is equal to the approximate number of attendees at a given performance.

To program **Encoded: besech, coax, court**, please contact David Landon at [david.p.landon@gmail.com](mailto:david.p.landon@gmail.com)



**Figure 1.a**

**UPPER LEVEL AND MAIN LOBBY**

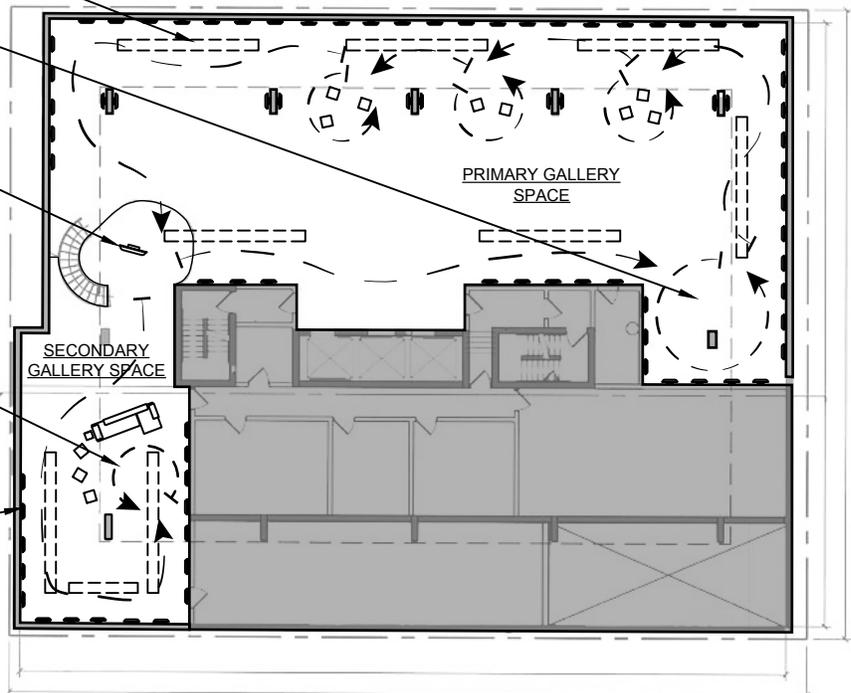
DOWN LIGHT AT DISPLAYS ENCOURAGE CIRCULATION AT WALL, TYP.

LOW LIGHT AND COLLECTION OF QR CODES TO DISCOURAGE CONGREGATION

LARGE QR CODES ON 16"X22" DISPLAY BRD. AT BASE OF STAIRS TO ENCOURAGE INITIAL CIRCULATION INTO PRIMARY GALLERY SPACE

ADEQUATE LIGHT, SEATING, AND COLLECTION OF SOUNDS TO ENCOURAGE CONGREGATION

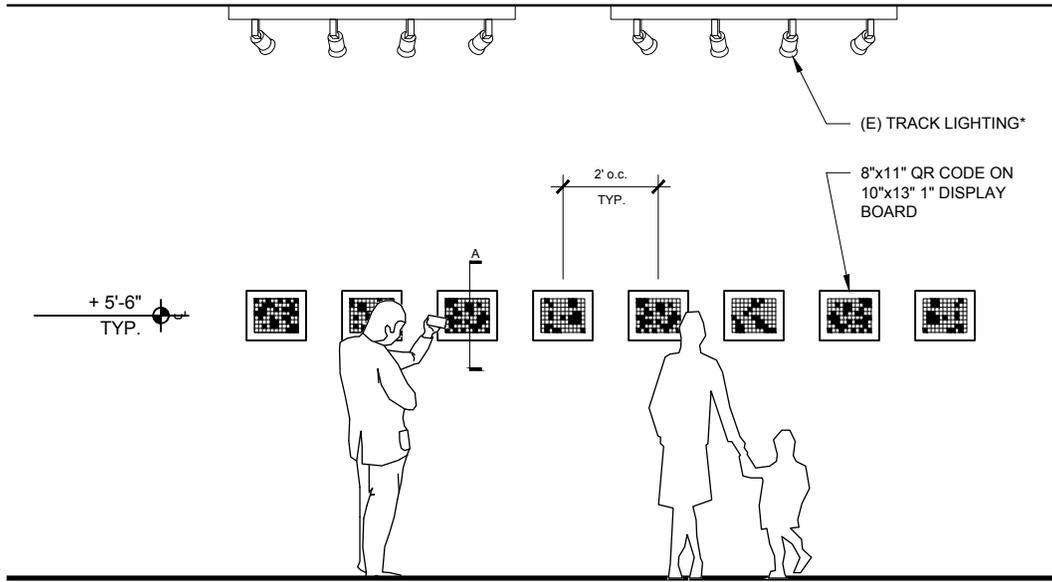
8 1/2" x 11" QR CODES ON 1" DISPLAY BOARDS, FLUSH MOUNTED, TYP.



**Figure 1.b**

**LOWER LEVEL AND GALLERIES**

**Figure 1, sample analysis and configuration**  
NOT TO SCALE



ELEVATION

\* Downlighting on walls and low light in center of space encourages circulation at the wall

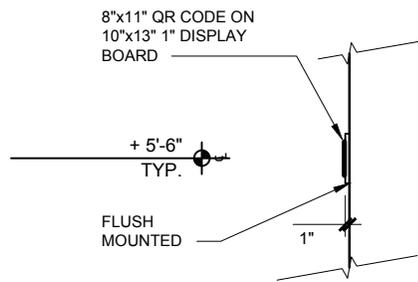


Figure 2, Elevation  
NOT TO SCALE