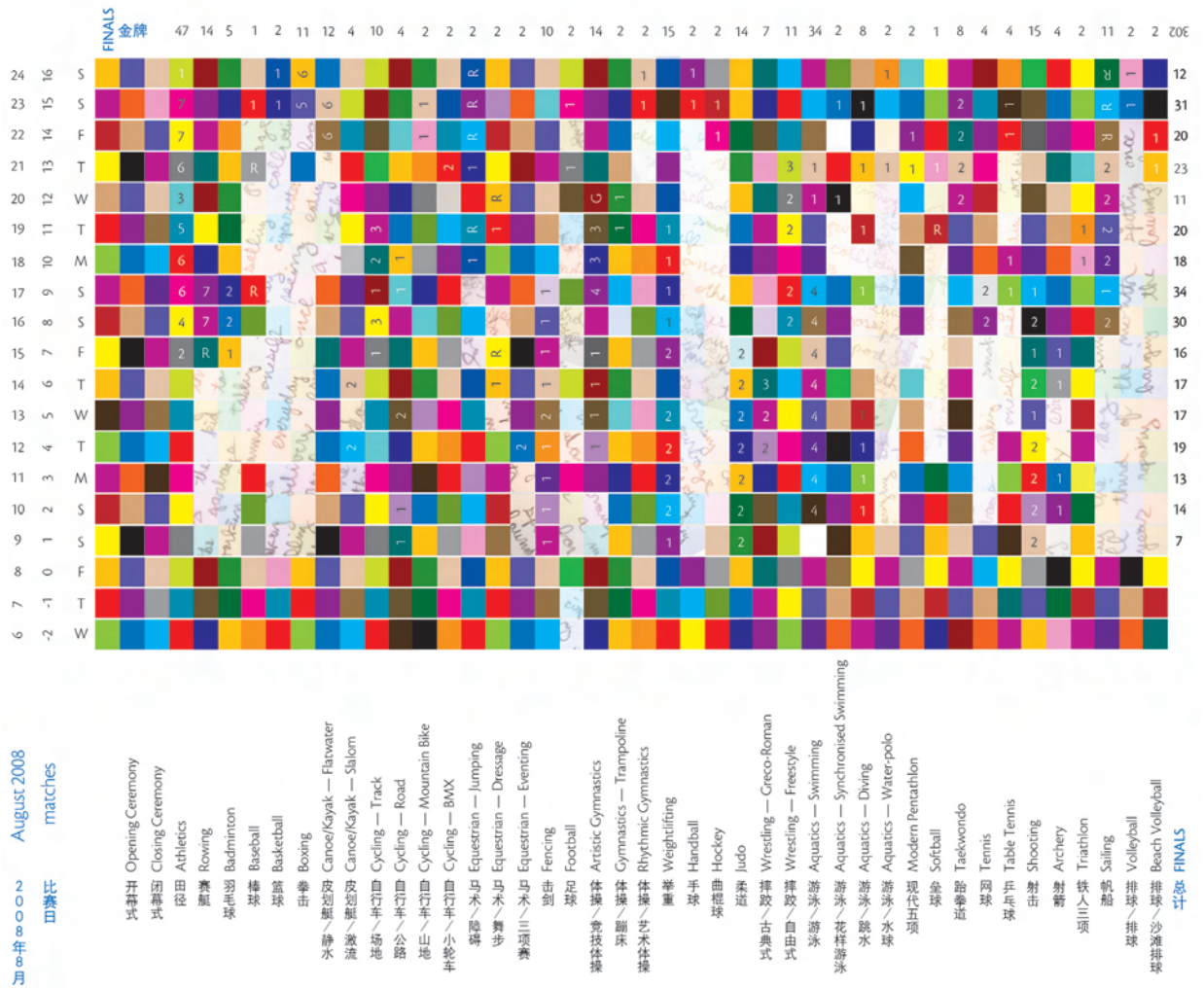


HomeShop

series number one:

games 2008



Starting with a grid and a timeline, a certain series of Events align themselves on a planar network. These Events have been a topic of discussion for quite some time now, and in the downward ticking of imminent certainty, it becomes calm again; preparatory activities come to a close, exteriors are hastily shined and construction sites moved to interiors, or we ourselves have left the premises, fearing the heated Spectacle to come. Yet despite the structure of the grid and the timetable and the past years of meticulous planning (*they have replaced and re-installed new litter bins on our street twice since the winter*), there is still something a little more than abstract about these Eights, and that little something rests, for most of us, on the issue of accessibility. Are you going to the Olympics? And to turn the question around, whether or not we are granted access, what has the imposition of the Games taken from us?

Taking it further, accessibility points not only to a *tiaotiao kuaikuai*¹ navigation of space and time, but towards the possibilities of maneuvering identity over generalisation by representation, marketing campaigns or imposed nodes within the network. But unlike the network, the active notion of accessibility in context retains a certain polarity that a distant observer or macroscopic analysis may have a more luxurious possibility to ignore. We can look at a range of choices when the time table is listed colourfully before us, when the moment is at its potential, before the choice has been made, but in the moment of action and practice, we can only go through one door at a time. And do you have a ticket? Suddenly all the potential of organised network returns to the fixity of a non open-ended segment: in or out? Do you get it or not?

What does exist with the presentation of these variables is of course more open than that. We can look further, examine binaries through, within and without the nodes on a spectrum, find pauses and/or subjectivities along the way. These are means to the premise that we can near, not from the map but the mapping process, something *paranodal*², proximitous and with the spontaneity of the relational encounter.

From the 8th of August, 2008 at 8:00 p.m. to the end of the closing ceremonies on the 24th of August, a small space located at Xiaojingchang Hutong in the centre of Beijing will be open to host and organise a series of minor practices³ that will embark from the crossing points of the local community and the world spectacle of the 2008 Olympic Games. As a commercial storefront space that also hosts its proprietors for living, sleeping and eating, this space represents a metaphorical bringing together of the public and the private, a commercial trade with the common good or open exchange. During the period of the Olympic Games, a number of activities will take place to investigate, document and generate possibilities for our relationships as individuals to the 2008 Olympic plan, the timetable and its juxtapositions with local urban micro-society. This is an open call inviting your agency as participant, observer and player.

Please address inquiries, ideas and informal proposals for an activity you'd like to initiate by e-mail to: ho@iwishicoulddescribeittoyobetter.org, by telephone at 137.1855.6089.

While there is no official budget available for any of these events and activities, if certain equipment and/or resources are required, please contact and we will do our best to make suitable arrangements. There is no deadline, and your ideas are welcome for the duration of the Games. Training is not required.

有时间过来玩! (*If you have time, come over and play!*)

Among the Events planned/possible

- . evening public viewing of Olympic Games via storefront LED projection
- . field recordings of the neighbourhood (audio/video)
- . street-logs⁴ and hutong-side live sports announcing
- . presentations and/or talks on related work
- . storefront sale of refreshments and other goods
- . collaborative activity/guided walk with Arrow Factory, storefront art space not too far away
- . Beijing Critical Reading Group session
- . language lessons for sports and netspeak
- . street party for Olympic non-winners

Participants, Potential players

- . Beijing Critical Reading Group participants
- . summer school students of Fensiting Primary School, two doors down
- . Beatrice Ferrari - *geography and spatial planning*; *Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale Lausanne*
- . big brother Gao - *next door neighbour, security guard*
- . Elaine Ho - *art and design*
- . Cai Kai - *art and design*
- . Sean Smith - *critical sports theory*, *Brock University, PhD. candidate European Graduate School*
- . big brother Zheng - *next door neighbour, postal office worker*
- . Grandpa Wang - *neighbour from the building across the street, retired musician, active ladies' man*
- . big sister Wang and big brother Yue - *the landlords, subway ticket vendor*
- . Xiao Ouyang - *art and critical theory*

HomeShop will be open daily by appointment throughout the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. A running schedule of all events will be continuously updated at:

www.iwishicoulddescribeittoyobetter.org/encountersleftovers/blog_encountersleftovers

The HomeShop Games 2008 project is an initiative of 何颖雅 Elaine W. Ho, hopefully the first in a series of community-based investigations of art practices, Beijing, networked spaces and the home. Documentation, essays and other contributions from this series will be compiled for a publication to be produced after the Games. *In the case of inclement weather, we can huddle together.*

¹ *Tiaotiao* referring to "vertical," hierarchical control and *kuaikuai* (horizontal "clusters" of localised command) are two spatial metaphors ascribed to varying modes of governance and policy analysis since the reform years, though the century-old phenomenon speaks much of the ongoing tensions between centralised and localised control. (Wang Jing) *Tiaotiao* and *kuaikuai* in this instance also refers to parallel movements within network theory, whereby vertical hierarchies of control lay in tension with lateral modes of communication (Ned Rossiter).

² "Of course, to unthink the logic of the network is not to pretend the network doesn't exist, or to refuse to deal with it, but to re-imagine one's relationship to it. The relationship of the paranode to the network is perhaps like the one of the parasite to the host (and here I'm borrowing from Serres): the parasite inserts itself into the communication process, between the sender and the receiver, disrupting the communication by being 'noise', and forcing the system to adjust to its presence. In this context, the paranode can be described as a parasite of the network, an element that lodges itself between nodes, distorting or introducing noise into the information that passes between nodes, and forcing the network to adjust to its presence" (Ulises Mejias).

³ See <http://www.sarai.net/practices/cybermohalla/minor-practices>. Many of the ideas for the HomeShop games project are humbly attributed to the work Cybermohalla.

⁴ "Streets are spaces of banal repetitions, encounter with world of things, gathering of people and occasional events. This is also how streets enter our conversations. To stand still in a street or to observe a street over a certain duration of time could make the street re-appear into conversations and thought with renewed vividness and perplexity. Street-logs were evolved by practitioners in 2004 to engage with the familiar and the banal, to find ways of re-thinking and re-imagining its disruptions, surprises and flows" (Cybermohalla).

Although its current manifestation is representative of state-issued housing for commoners, the history of Xiaojingchang, meaning “small sutra factory”, stems from the Qing Dynasty, where temples from the surrounding areas would bring sutras to be dried in order to resist moulding. While sutras were never meant to be viewed by a common public, the carrying of sutras to Xiaojingchang represents a unique entering of the private into the public sphere. In 1965, Xiaojingchang Hutong was renamed Zanzue Hutong, meaning “Alley in Praise of Learning”, but returned to its original name after the Cultural Revolution. The HomeShop space at Xiaojingchang Hutong 6 is part of a *jiefang* (next to, or neighbouring) type of *pingfang* (one-story) housing common in the centre of Beijing city. The residences are extremely dense, with adjacent rooms only accessible from inner corridors, but commercial entrepreneurship since the late 1970's has led many of those with streetside dwellings to turn a new face, opening up to make shops or small services available to the public. Prior to the HomeShop, the storefront space at Xiaojingchang Hutong 6 was a small real estate office.

Proposals for activities may use any part of HomeShop, though the space must still be occupiable for the duration of the activity and returned to its original condition thereafter. Please contact for further details, a plan of the space or to discuss possibilities.

