



# ASTOR PLACE

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# Astor Place

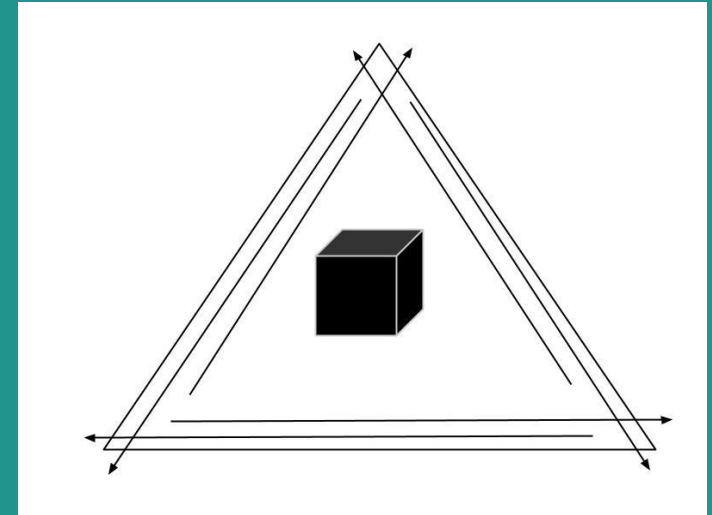
## Brief history

- Four major streets run through the area
- Named for John Jacob Astor, millionaire fur trader
- Site of Astor Place Riot, May 10, 1849
- Major center of the arts
- "Alamo" by Tony Rosenthal stands in the middle
  - Originally meant to be installed for 6 months, residents demanded permanence
  - First permanent contemporary outdoor sculpture installed in New York City



# Initial Observations

Action Taken	Number of People
Successfully Spun The Cube	22
Tried to spin cube and gave up/touched the cube	29
Read the info plate on base of cube	1
Took a Picture	22
Sat at the base of the cube	17 (3 homeless)
Stopped to look at or admire the cube	15







# Precedents

## The Big Book: Intervention at the NYPL

- Project by Michelle Kirby, Ben Norskov and Marisela Riveros
- "a giant book from which people grabbed and assembled words to form their own sentences, or in a few cases, entire poems"



# Precedents

## LED Throwies: Graffiti Research Lab (2006)

- LED Light + Battery + Magnet = Non destructive graffiti that encourages interaction



# Precedents

## Laser Tag: Theo Watson (2007)

- High Powered Lasers + Projectors + OpenFrameworks
- "Kids, old people and random members of the public all enjoyed being able to write messages on a building which could be seen across the whole city"

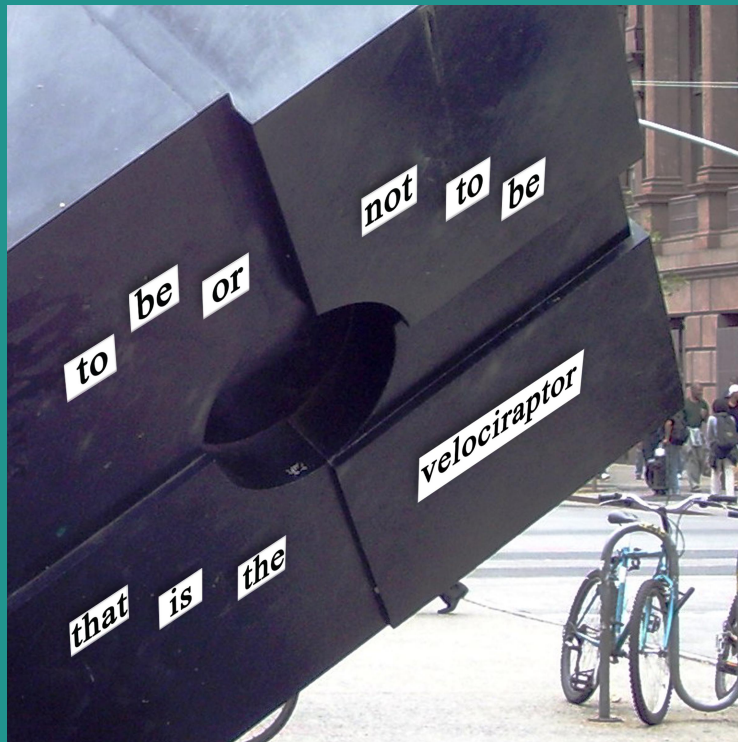




# #Magbeth Project

## What We Did

- Our project consisted of cutting up Macbeth quotes into giant word magnets and sticking them on the Astor Place Cube, the "Alamo".
- We arranged the words out of order and tested for a range of interactions,
  - From seeing if people would recognise and recompose the quote,
  - To seeing if they would interact with the magnetic words at all

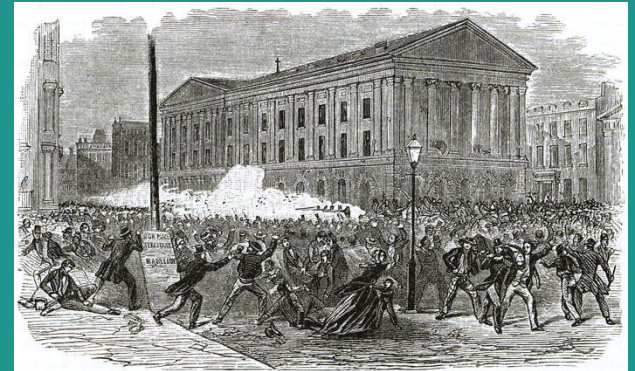




# #Macbeth Reasoning

## Why We Did It

- We wanted to see if strangers would solve a puzzle that was left in public space.
- Likewise, we wanted to see how people would react to non-destructive, editable graffiti.
  - This is why we used magnetic poetry words.
- We chose Macbeth quotes as a historical reference to the Astor Place Riot of 1849.
  - These riots were in response to the casting of the opera house's performance of Macbeth.



# #Magbeth Process







mywicked comes.

By pricking Something way

thumbs.

this

more!

# #Magbeth Observations

## General Observations

- Passersby looked at the cube
- A few groups stopped to take a picture
- 2 groups interacted
- 0 social media posts

What Worked	What Didn't
Received some attention	Magnets were unrecognizable
	Time of day
	Size of magnets



**Finally people engaged  
with the magnets!**



# Astorbet Soup



## What we did

Refrigerator magnets → Cube

## Why we did it

Customizable

Personal

Nostalgia

Fun

# Conclusion

- Time of day did not matter - users seen engaging many different hours
- Once one person interacts, many more are encouraged as well
- Many people took note of the cube, even just in passing, many stopped to take pictures
- Asking a relatable question for users to answer made experience more engaging
- Larger & more colorful objects helped - Users must be able to see and be enticed by installation
- More options allows for more customization - with single letters the experience was more customizable. Users could write what they wanted and were more engaged.



Thank you