



V&A
visit 06 | 02 | 2023

Some personal interests ...



This plate was one of the first objects that interested me. Traditionally visual representations were reserved for “relevant/important” people and moments. Which meant that a lot of middle or low class activities and communities were not represented. Thereby using a plate, a daily object that at the same time is used as decor, to depict a seamstress in her workshop, while working is a representation of all the social and political shifts after the Russian Revolution.



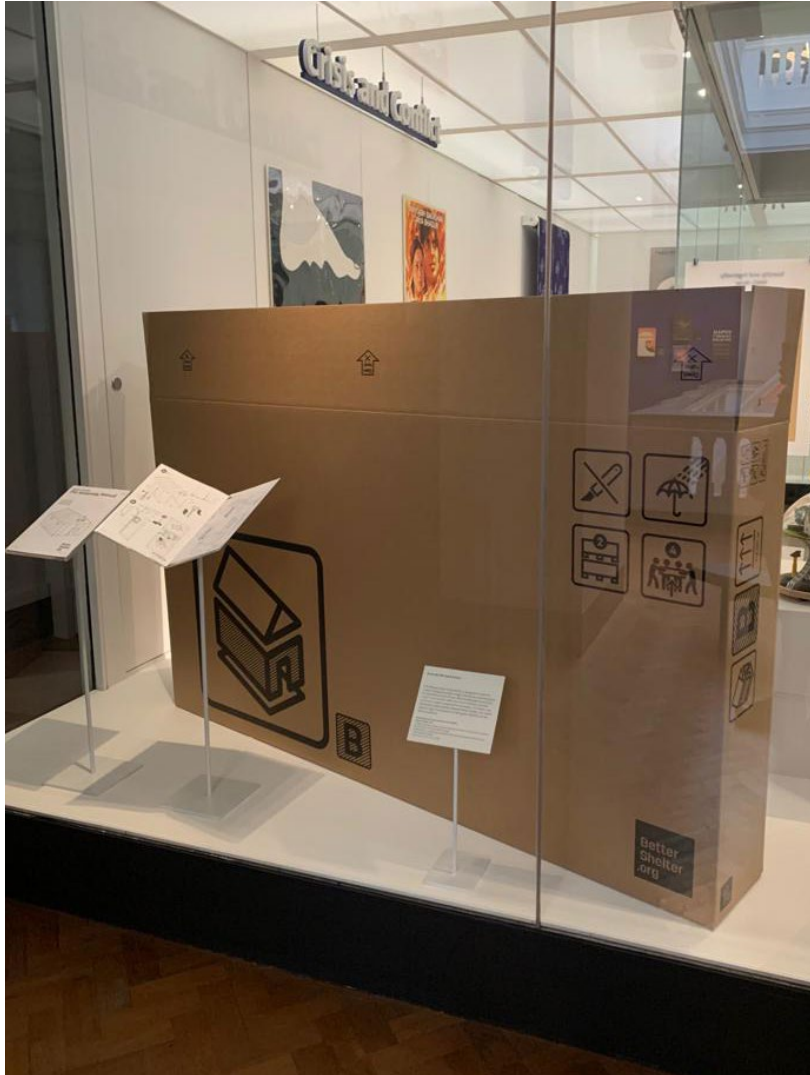
It was a strange experience to see a pair of sneakers displayed at the museum exactly as you would expect to see them in a Nike store. This change of scenario highly shifts how the object is perceived, from something that is very accessible to an object that distances from everyday use.



I have always liked magazines, therefore these caught my eye. Reading the context of the production behind these, they are interesting reflections of how different mediums had to accommodate during lockdown, but more importantly, these highlighted vital narratives and people from the pandemic.

Group interest & discussion

Sturdy flat-pack home



Interesting they displayed the box and not the home ensambled.

This plays of the idea of cardboard box-house, specially when the item is placed within the section of conflict & crisis, and the context provided in the exhibition surrounds refugees.

At the same time, an object that is disposed of the most, in this instance is sbeing exhibit.

Also, by its dimensions, it takes too much space and become imposing / and is able to stand with other objects in the collection.

Choosing our object

Before arriving to the exhibit we were interested in these three objects. After visiting the collection and discussing some of the objects, we decided on choosing the architectural spikes.



Primark Trousers



Brassiere



Architectural Spikes

We chose it because it allowed us to continue a dialogue around housing, since we discussed the flat-back home box

At the same time, it was one of the objects we got to see displayed. And as a result, we had a lot of thoughts on how it was displayed, and what information was used to give it context.

Architectural spikes

first impressions



We would have placed the spikes in *Crisis & Conflict* because they have an exclusive motive and nature to them. Felt the object was in the wrong category, since expected *Housing & Living* to be about designs that had a positive impact on living. But this is something the curator hints at in the text of the section:

“Access to outdoor space in built-up areas and how it is experienced differs markedly depending on who you are. Local communities, planners, architects and urbanists all have stakes in how the urban environment is designed, how it is used and by whom.”

Group discussion

Architectural spikes

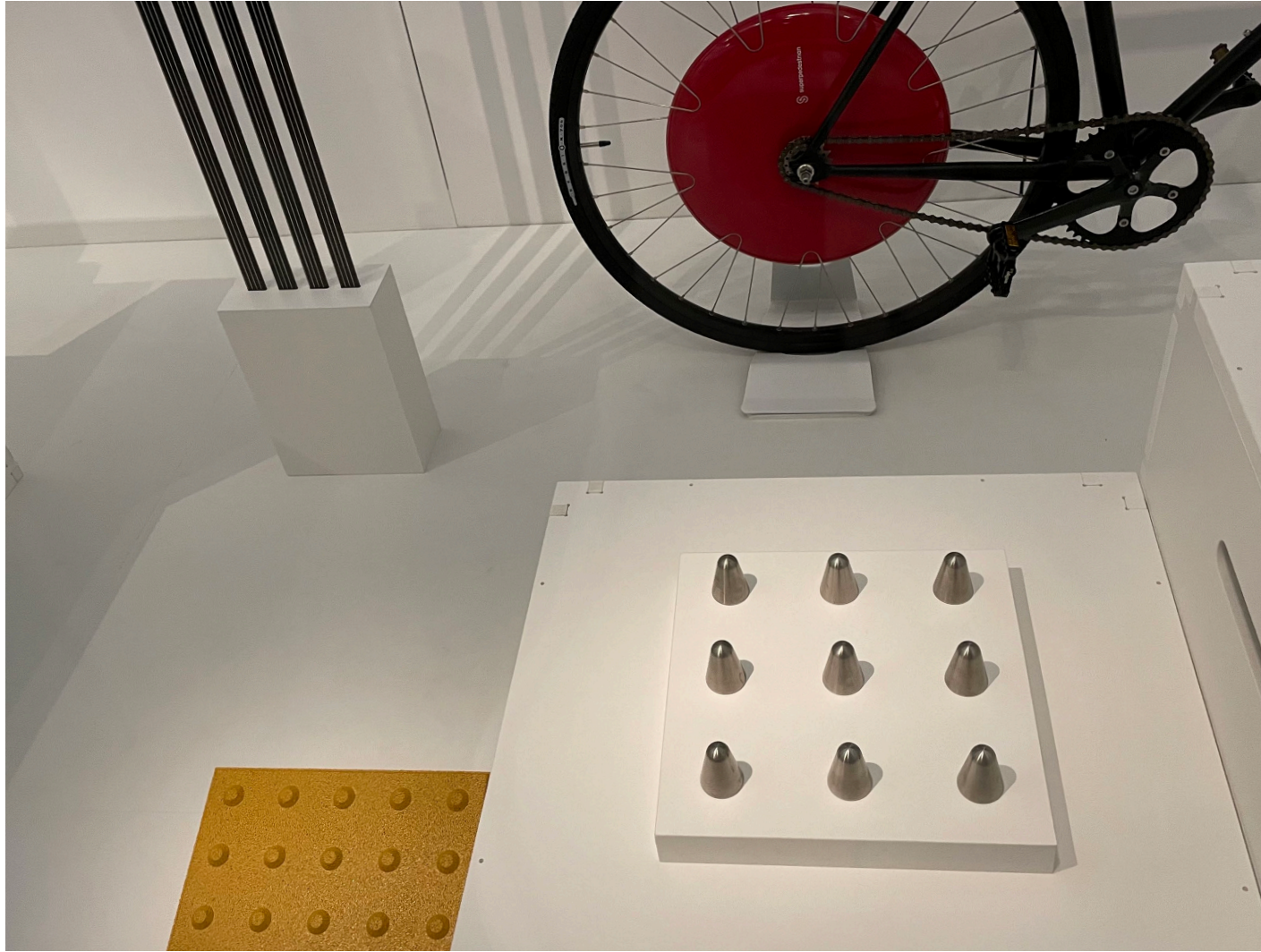
Would you have expected to encounter these objects in a museum setting?

- * Epiphany of modern design - cruel but smart.
- * Simple solution to manipulated behaviours - nudging to manipulate other's behaviour and perspective.
- * No, it is highlighting an object from daily urban design that a lot of people don't pay attention to.

How do you understand them differently in this context?

- * Question how it affects others.
- * Question the object, interrogate why it is there, what it means
- * Highlights a dark and cruel undertone
- * Interesting it's placed on the *Housing and Living* section, when in the perspective of a particular group (homeless), Architectural Spikes have a negative impact.





Group discussion

Architectural spikes

How have the curators contextualized them?

- * Timeline and arrangement of the sections is confusing.
- * In the *Housing and Living* category, and no attached tags. On purpose it confuses the audience?
It can easily trick (go under the radar) the casual audiences to overlook its design purpose and target audience.
- * It should be on crisis and conflict. It is not a personal object that improves living conditions.
- * But in *housing and living* as a public object that defines property and ownership.

What are their formal and material qualities, and how do these reflect broader contexts?

- * It is elegant and therefore:
- * It is passive aggressive, it is subtly ordering to do something without explicitly doing it.
- * It looks neat because of the round edges, but it evokes aggressiveness.

Context from V&A

BACKGROUND

Use of small street decor and street furniture to control public spaces has been an increasing feature of late- 20th century public design, particularly since the 1990s.

Manufactured by Kent Stainless, Ltd., an Ireland

“architectural defences” in public spaces - hostile, or defensive, architecture

USE

Designed to be uncomfortable to rest on but not cause serious physical harm.

Used as a deterrent to people resting, skateboarding or performing other unauthorised activities on ledges, doorways and underpasses.

Found on street furniture nominally designed for people to linger on, such as benches with several armrests or sloping seats.





MEANING - IMPACT

represent an unnoticed type of design that expresses ideas about the differentiation between public and quasi-public spaces - divide public and private spheres.

the increased regulation of social boundaries through architectural design.

hidden design feature, unremarkable enough to go unnoticed by those it is not targeting - there is an targeted audience and an invisible audience

creating the impression of public space while affecting marginalised populations such as youths or the homeless.

{ my position }

Architectural spikes are a reflection of *housing & living* and *conflict & crisis* in the 21st century. It is an objection of tensions, where conflict of interests from different “target audiences” meet.

This objects reflects the discomfort towards un intended / unplanned uses of public spaces, while creating discomfort unto the communities that have found value in these spaces and are appropriating them.

Architectural spikes reflects the conflict between space and people. The need for space and crisis of on growing populations around urban spaces.



{ more thoughts }



Hides & shows simultaneously

Architectural spikes are traces / vestiges of communities that are excluded.

This object shows the existence & rejection of groups that are hidden.

An object of duplicate discomforts - has two sided. Discomforts meet, crash and collide.

There is no such thing as public and private spaces, there are a lot of grey areas, and a spectrum between these this concepts.

{ Questions that came up }

How are we defining space?

How can we explore this object as a trace of aggression policies?

How can we extrapolate the use of hostile architecture to highlight how exclusive who can use public space and how?

What/Who dictates what can be done on public spaces? (unauthorised activities)?

For who are cities design to be exclusive?

Are there acceptable and non-acceptable spaces for certain activities and groups of people?

How do we identify quasi-public spaces?

{ Interests to explore further }

Architectural spikes as objects of tensions & duplicity

Hides & shows simultaneously

Traces of activities and people excluded

Objects of “population control”

How is the city design and for who?

Architectural spikes affect more people than intended, and don't solve any problem. Unauthorized activities migrate to other, places or circumstances.

{ Where our positions meet }

Object displays conflict of interests

There are various intentions, positions of power
and disadvantages that meet

Hostile architecture nudge people and behaviours

Object of control and surveillance

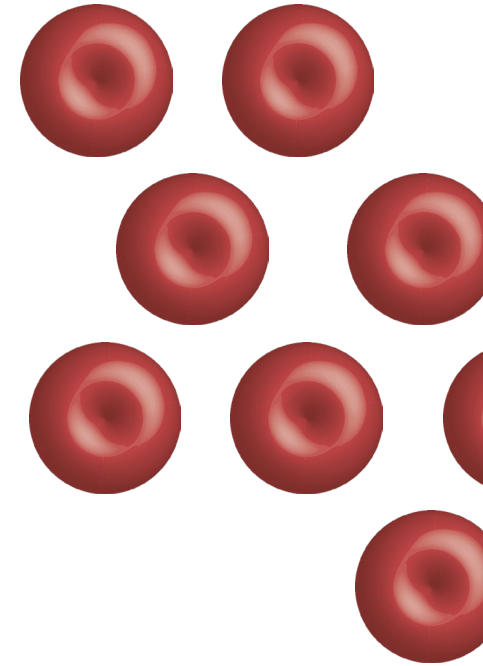
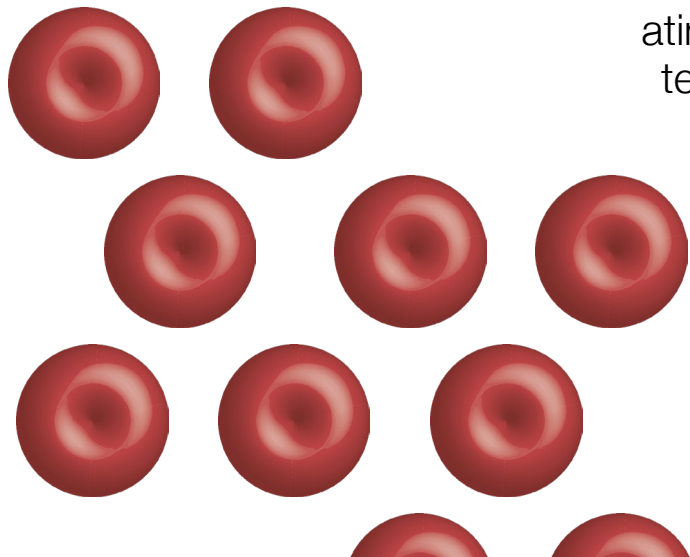
Architectural spikes go unnoticed for people
that are not the target audience

{ Focus }

Critical interrogate the use of this object:

Architectural spikes in public spaces work as hostile architecture used to curb unwanted behaviours and audiences.

Through methods of translation and iteration, we seek to reverse it's function either by exaggerating or repurposing, in order to comment on the tensions(dispute) around the use of this object.



Exaggerate the use of hostile architecture
more evident | abundant | more places

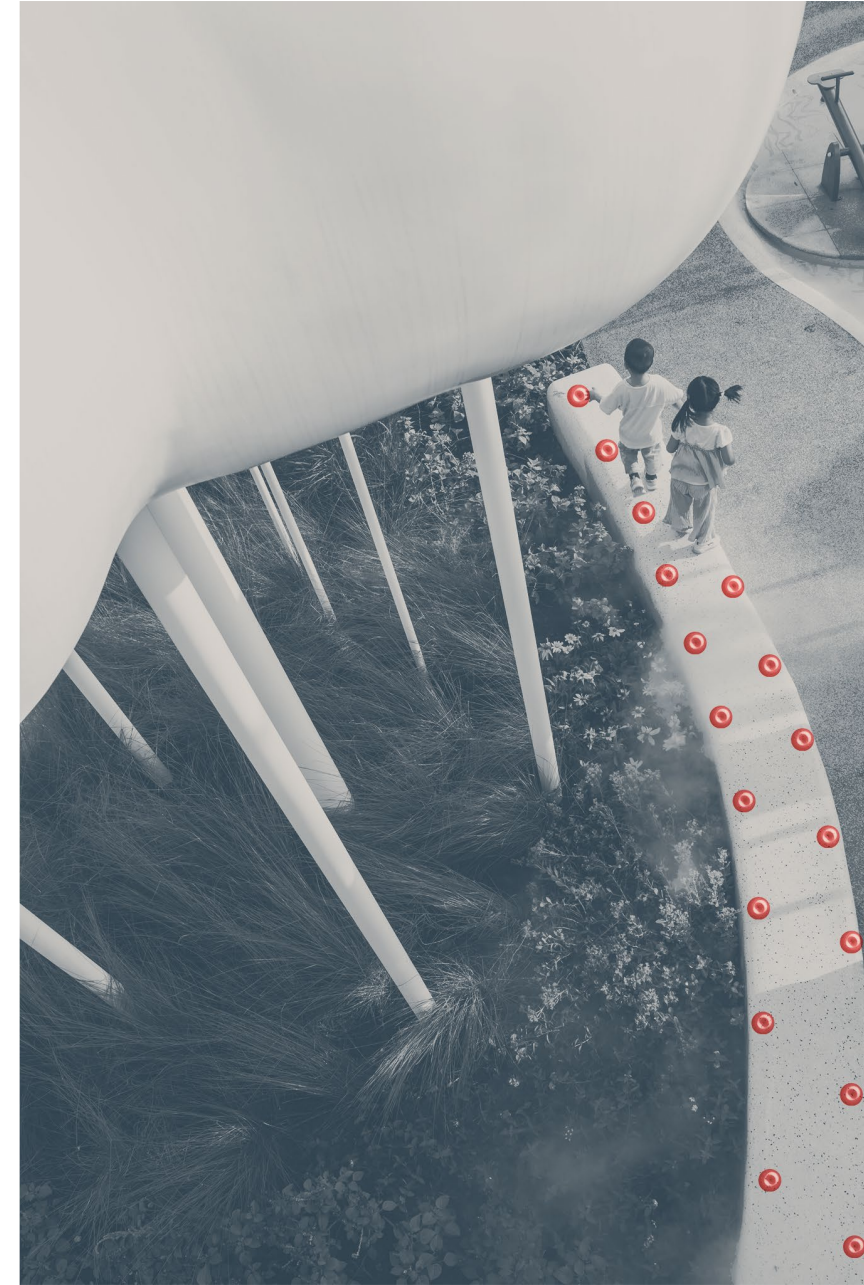


To spark questions on how this practice affects
people in general and how we transit spaces.



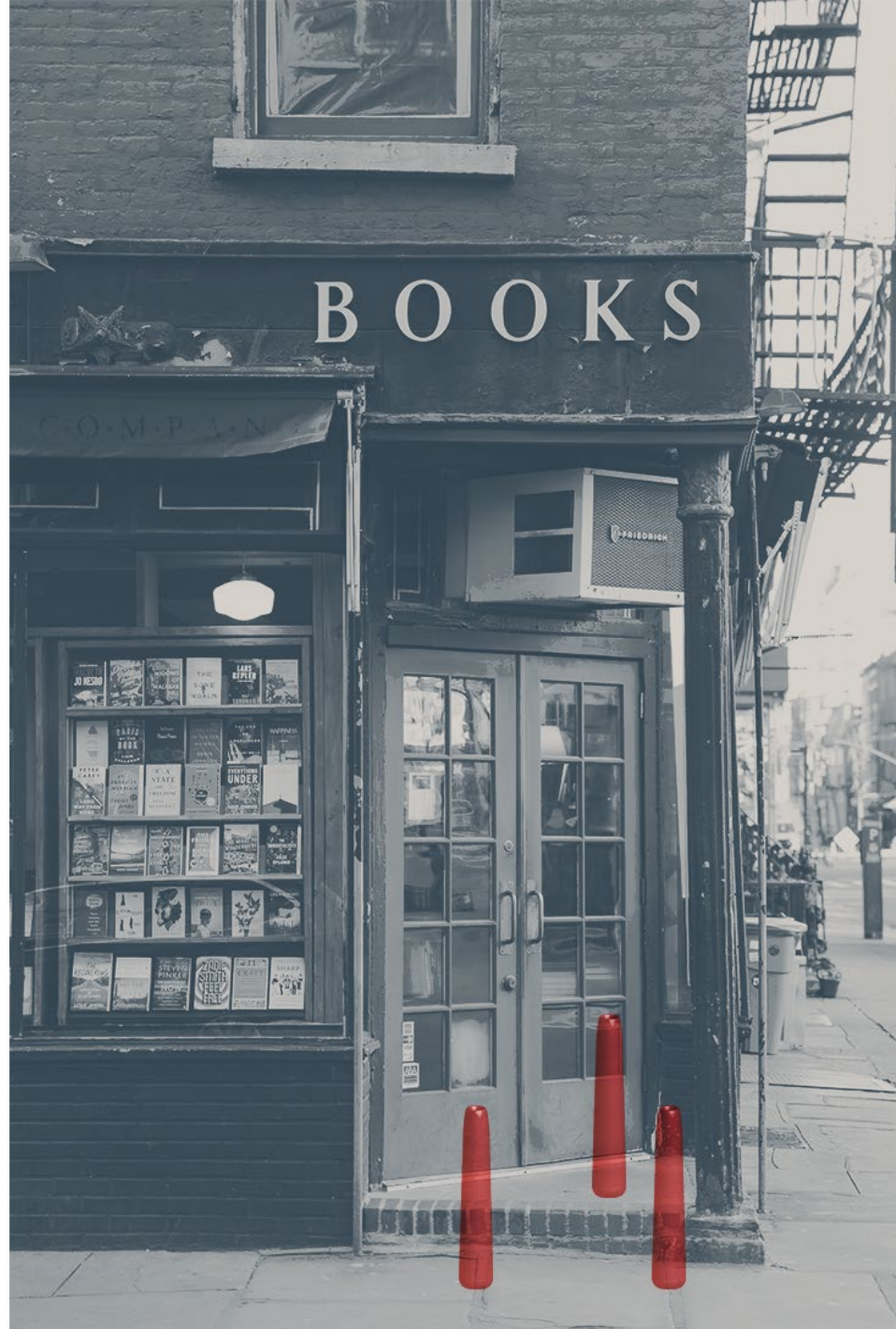
Playgrounds: potential spaces
for hostile architecture control







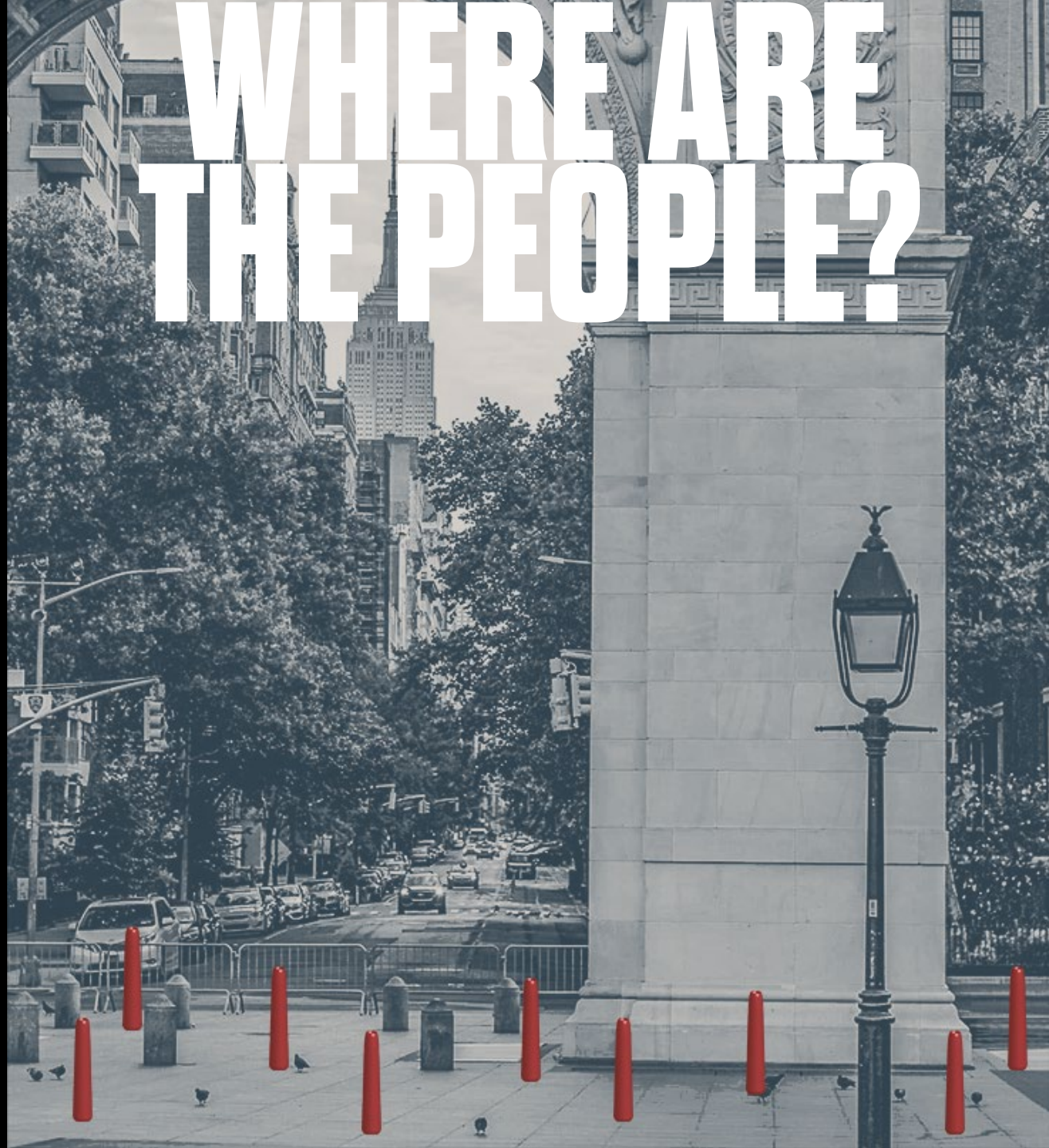
Entrys: hostile architecture
control for quasi-public spaces





Parks: hostile architecture
control for quasi-public spaces

WHERE ARE THE PEOPLE?





**NO LOITERING
THIS IS PUBLIC SPACE!**

hostile architecture displace and limit
use of public space: ¿where are the people?



objects of subliminal messages

objects of subliminal messages

