

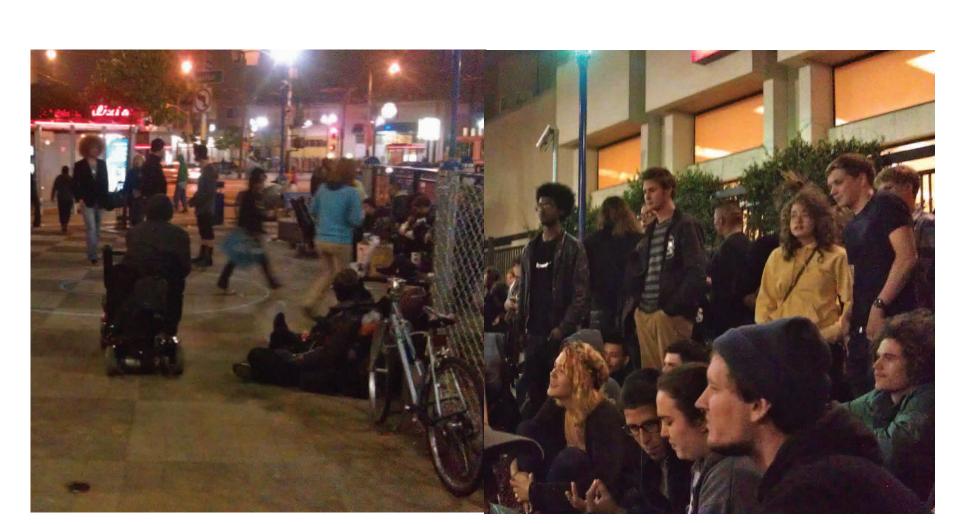




gather around. He begins around 8 or 9pm, each the circle is unique and becomes an appreciated part of the event.



A musican jumps up with his guitar to do a cover song which many seem to know, he plays loudly as the others join in the chorus.



Before the space is occuped by the Poetry Slam event it is uncelebrated, cold, and unimportant to the passing eye. However, as the night begins and the audience grows, people in the front are forced to sit down in order for all to see the

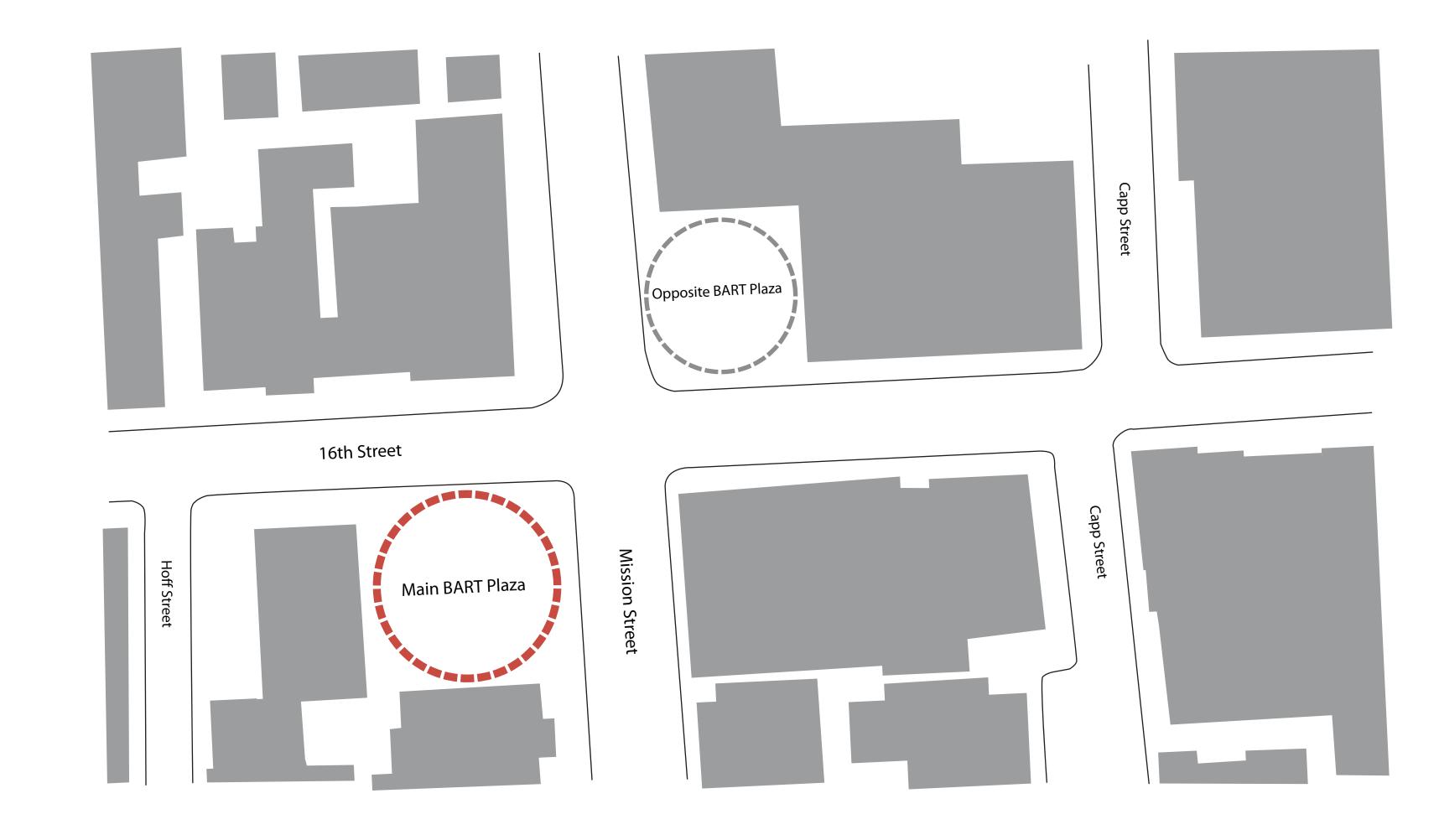


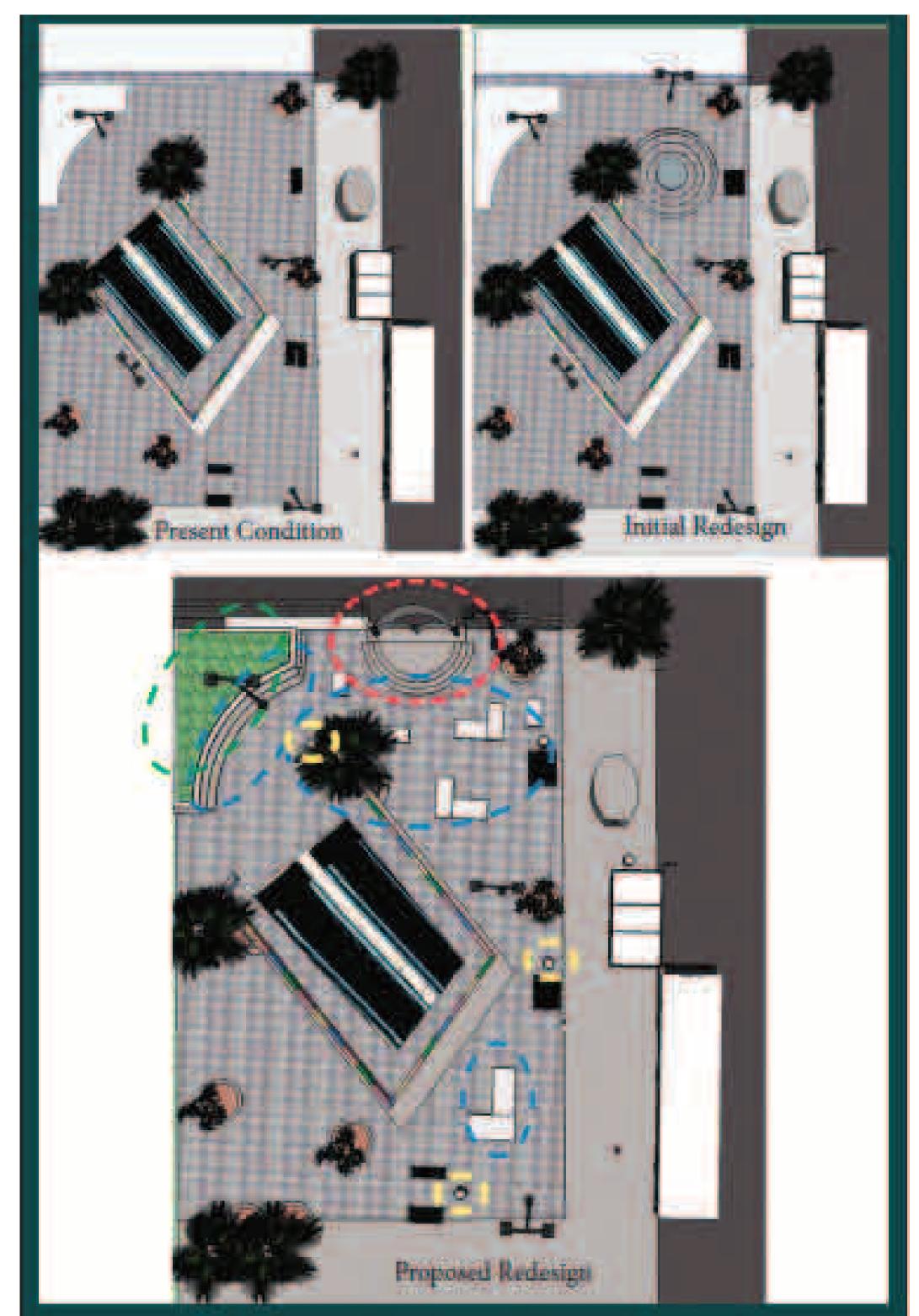
People in the outer egdes stand and focus in on the center, the egdes grow all around and as the event grows larger throught the night the community splits off into groups to socialize and interact with one another.

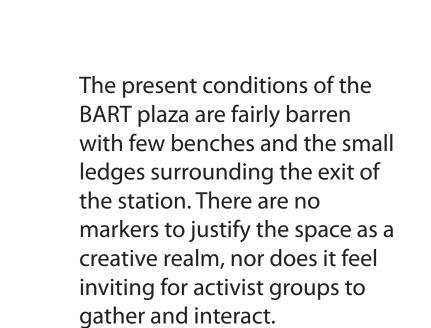
Abstract: The purpose of this project was to find a place or area being used by a certain group of people and redesign the space to better suit the groups needs. By using methods such as observation, interviewing, photo documentation, reviewing literature, and other types of research, it is possible to design spaces particularly beneficial for those using them. I chose to observe and study an outdoor and informal poetry slam event that

Every Thursday night there is an informal and loosely structured poetry slam that occurs above the 16th and Mission St. BART station. Among the loud sounds of traffic and busy street life, the poets have to belt out their acts to

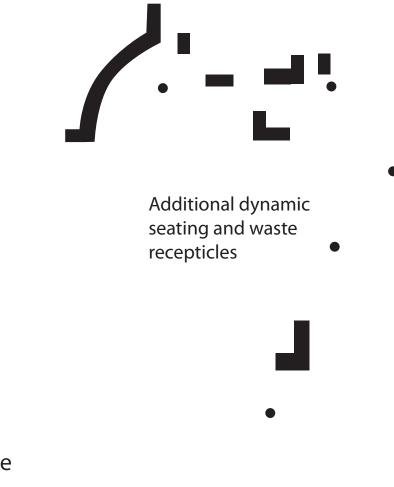
The event pulls in a most eclectic crowd, whether it is musicians, actors, poets, writers, rappers, comedians, or anything other art form, everyone is encouraged to participate. It is apparent that reason for involvement in this event varies by person; it is a place to get inspired, collaborate, experiment, practice performances, it is a forum for discussion, a crowd who listen when no one else will, an outlet for anger, happiness, despair, and also a social gathering - there is really nothing ike it of its time.







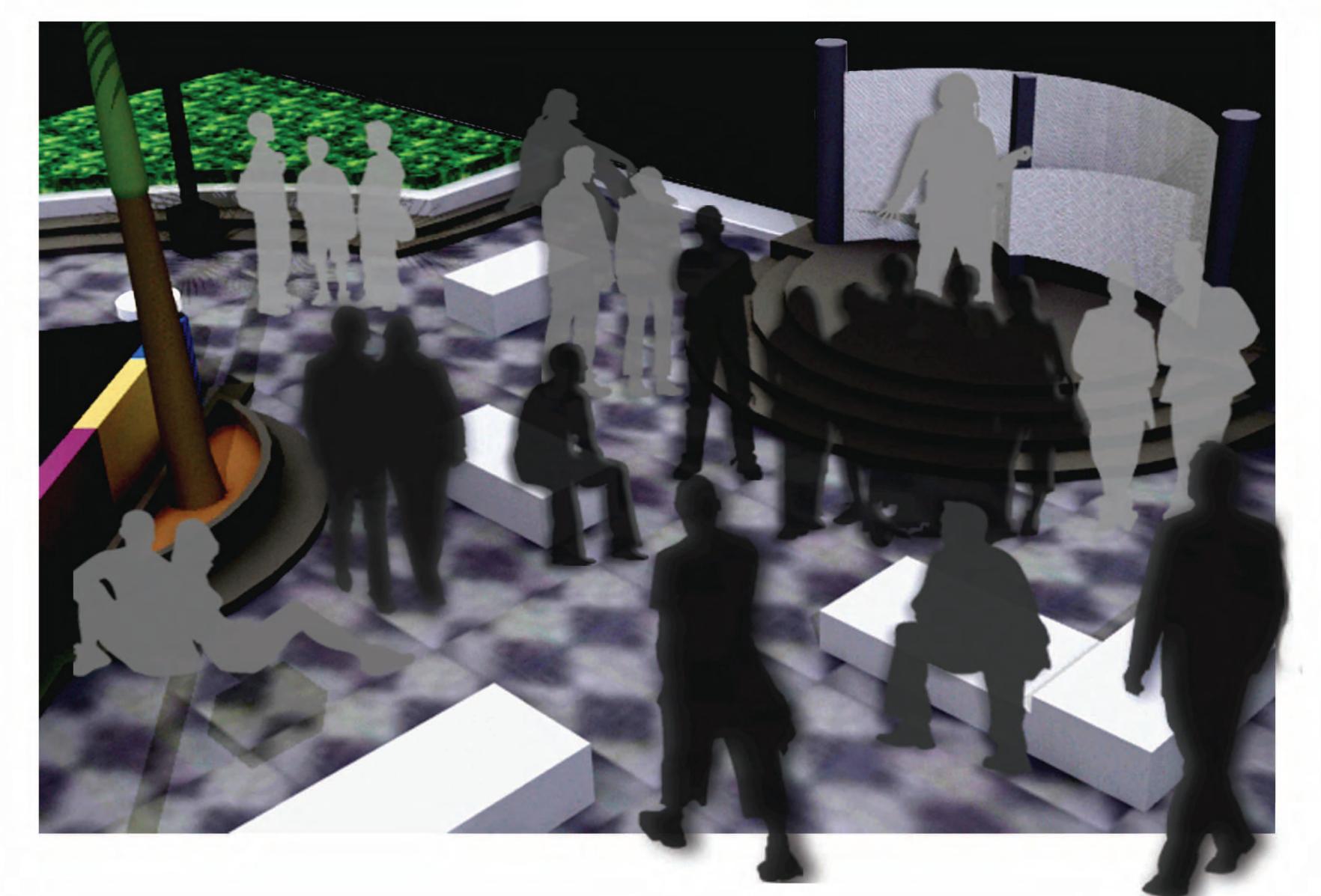
keep the circular shape of the groups formation with elaborating on an inward facing stage with a central podium. Seating and sound were taken into account, but there was less inspiration to make this a unified and justifiable design.



A redesign will include a subtle low-level stage that will act as a venue for the community as well as additional dynamic seating and trash recepticles scattered around the plaza. More greenery will be planted and concrete platforms will be rebuilt to accompany leveled platforms. All of these additions will provide for interaction and allow for larger groups.

## Re-Design of the 16th and Mission Street BART Plaza Community and Creativity: A Space to be Heard





A redesign of the space will **celebrate** these sacred grounds that have been occupied by thriving and active citizens for years now. It will include a subtle low-level stage will act as a venue for the **community**, increasing the value of the space and claiming a demand for respect upon its visible presence. The platform will still be circular in shape but backed by an encompassing curved wall to allow for outdoor amplification and double as a working canvas to display local art.

Me] It seems very inclusive, like everyone can get up and try it out

the circle stops, and that can be one of the worst feelings. You

prove to everyone that you believe in what you say.

really quietly, it seems that you really need to belt out what your saying

[Me] I've noticed that people only really stop listening if people are rambling or talking

or shy people who are intimidating. When the circle decides to stop paying attention,

[Me] Do you think that the acoustics are a problem, like something that could be

it takes away from the challenge, the energy, that you have to scream, you have to

[Informant] No, not really, I think the conflicts are what the problem are, which mostly co

[Me] Do you think that disrespect also comes from people not really knowing what the

[Informant] Yeah, if they really truly knew more of what it was, like if it had more recogniti

in San Francisco, maybe the knowledge would spread and people would be more

[Me] If there were some sort of recognition or symbol to the poets, maybe it would be

improved or is it part of the setting that is about overcoming the loud noise?

Interview: 10:20- 11:50am – September 23rd, 2011

Revolution Café [Me] How long have you been going there for?

[Informant] I've been going for about 3 to 4 years now.

[Me] Do you know how it started? [Informant] I can give you a dissertation of the guy who started it. It was basically about 8 of setting. Which is also a curse, it makes it really difficult for some soft-spoken people, years ago a group of poets got together and just started meeting up to listen to each other. It's only really blown up about 2 or 3 years ago. I remember holding down the fort on a rainy day, pouring, with maybe 4 other hardcore poets there to belt out their

[Me] Do you think people like it more when there are obstacles and outside conditions that make it more of a committed art? [Informant] I think that only the die-hards will come, but there are definitely physical limitations of the space.

[Me] Are the homeless part of it or more of a hindrance? [Informant] They are definitely a part of it; there are some bums that just love the attention, [Me] You don't think weather is a problem? and most people just love the attention. There is definitely a fine line between the actual artists and those just wanting a rush or space to rant. it depends on the night and the time, it goes from about 10pm to 1115pm and then after gets a little out of order. board and it just takes away from the poets are their time. Either people just think it's a That's when people are getting drunk, coming out of the bars, clearly inebriated, but fun thing or just want to disrupt like 10 to 11 is definitely pow-wow, intimate, like "we are here just to listen to what you have to say" time. There's this one Latino man, he comes all the time, he hardly speaks English, really heavy accent, but he's a poet, and he writes in English, he speaks about event is, there's not much focus?

Mexican politics, and society and talks about how great he feels to be here, it's an [Me] You can tell some people go there to say deep inner thoughts, and get something [Informant] People go there to say what they feel, what's on their mind, I would have stopped more striving going a long time ago if it had just turned into a shit-show every time, they were a few [Informant] I think that way it would get a lot more respect, people would be less inclined to kids who would go there just to get fucked up on Thursday, but that's not the purpose of it and it really takes them to realize what this means to everyone else, to see how

than an event. 16th and mission in itself has inspired so many other things as well, it

sparked this literary film maker, as well as people starting bands together or making

connections. It is such a community, it really gets people going, it's a great bouncing off

sacred of ground this is. [Me] do you think it would ever be in danger about getting too big though? [Informant] That's what I've been actually trying to think about, since this last year its gotten a [Me] It seems like there is pretty good regulation of the space, like people seem to lot larger, it used to be maybe tops 40 people, now its at least a hundred or more every control one another and keep the space clean and orderly [Informant] Yeah, there really is, I mean people who come to disrupt are going to get told off. [Me] It would probably cause more problems, but maybe it could influence more street [Me] What about the cops, do they give you trouble, or do they just see it as a peaceful Informant] It is, and they don't what to disrupt something so unique, it's a movement more

[Me]Do you think it could benefit from more regulation? [Informant] I think that if there were some more established higher authority of the circle and [Informant] It is very open and encouraging, everyone is super supportive, it doesn't matter people really knew that there was something real happening there, maybe some of

obstacles just makes it that much more of a community.

the issues of disruptive people or littering could be improved, but I'm not sure how that [Me] Do you feel that thee is a competing sense of space between the bums or [Informant] If you don't believe in what you are saying no one else will, especially in that kin homeless and the poets themselves, like they are taking over their space? [Informant] Yeah sometimes, but its part of the feeling of the place, it couldn't really happen anywhere else, say in the Marina or Sunset districts. But fighting among these

[Me] I think any improvements to the space would have to be very minor and low key, or at least keeping the sense of staying underground and a found place [Informant] Yeah that's definitely something that could be improved, there are a lot of [Informant] It would have to be something pretending not to be doing anything; people take competing sounds, the BART, the wind, traffic, but personally if you amplify it too muc such pride in being able to overcome all of these issues in order to do what they do. If there weren't any of these issues, it wouldn't mean as much

Me] True, but I think that it would be kind of nice to just celebrate the place, because it is such dirty grimy place, and people know that, it feels like such an uncelebrated space, like it seems it should be sacred, but its really not. So giving it a sense of place, giving it a home to he people who go there all the time and making it theirs, because it is theirs, but they don't get to reap the benefits of saying it's theirs. [Informant] Yeah, that's definitely true and probably a reason people disrupt so often and don't take into account what this means to the people doing this.

[Me] This area is also home to a lot of activism, political campaigning, performances, etc., do you think that adding maybe a place for a small stage, leveled seating, or omething of that sort could be beneficial even beyond the needs of the poetry slam. [Informant] It would have to be something pretending not to be doing anything; people take such pride in being able to overcome all of these issues in order to do what they do. If there weren't any of these issues, it wouldn't mean as much. [Me] In Berkeley they actually do have a Sit/Lie ordinance, but there is also People's

Park, and basically the history of the park was supposed to provide a space for those

who have nowhere else to go. There is definitely crime and problems involved but they have a community garden, hold events and protests there, they have their own infrastructure. Do you think maybe the police are giving you guys this space, because they see the interior regulations and realize you have no where else to go. [Informant] Yeah, it's a poetry revolution, its our freedom of speech, its our right to have a peaceful and public gathering. We regulate ourselves and it works, we are respectful and just trying to be heard.

Me] Yeah, and that's like I was saying how poetry in general seems like such an underminded field of interest since maybe the beat movement back in north beach decades ago. making something meaningful, but new. I've never seen anything like this anywhere [Informant] And it's coming back, that underground movement of artists collaborating and I've never seen anything like this anywhere.

The Thursday night Poetry Slam has manifested a creative community of artists, poets, performers who are reclaiming the crime-ridden streets of the Mission district in San Francisco. While the community can maintain a stable lifeline for the event, the current conditions and limitations of the space are preventing the group from meeting their potential. They do not wish to gain large media attention or become anything too established, as they enjoy the underground community feeling, however, they have made this place a home for themselves and deserve to have better conditions and recognition. They have made the place a sacred area by hosting their event there, but the space itself is not a celebrated place due to its current sub-standard conditions. The surrounding area has a high density of drug-use, crime and littered trash from the busy nightlife, homeless, low income housing units, and the many abandoned, worndown buildings. The poetry slam is a unique addition to this setting, and although it is often accompanied by people smoking marijuana, having open alcohol containers, and sometimes disorderly behavior from disrupting outsiders, the police never bother the group and leave them to manage themselves. It is possible that they are giving this group a chance to turn around the current conditions of the area with creative inspiration and peaceful assembly. This way of thinking is similar to some of the arts projects in the Downtown and SOMA districts of San Francisco, the city is turning to the communities themselves to rebuild the neighborhoods with their own creative visions.

## PRIMARY USERS OF THEE PLAZA





**Politcal Activists** 



Acoustics - The ability of the space to amplify sounds without being drowned out by exterior noise; an idea related to

audience gathers around; a the symbol for the history and respect of the space and event

person whose music, art, or fashion taste constantly evolves to relate to new trends

artists and enjoy a more bohemian lifestyle and reject most authority.

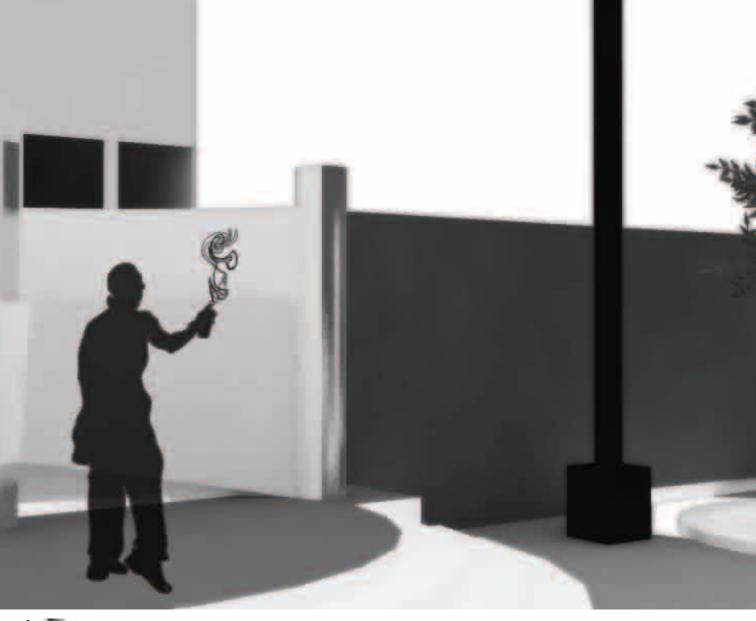
Style - The way in which something is expressed or performed

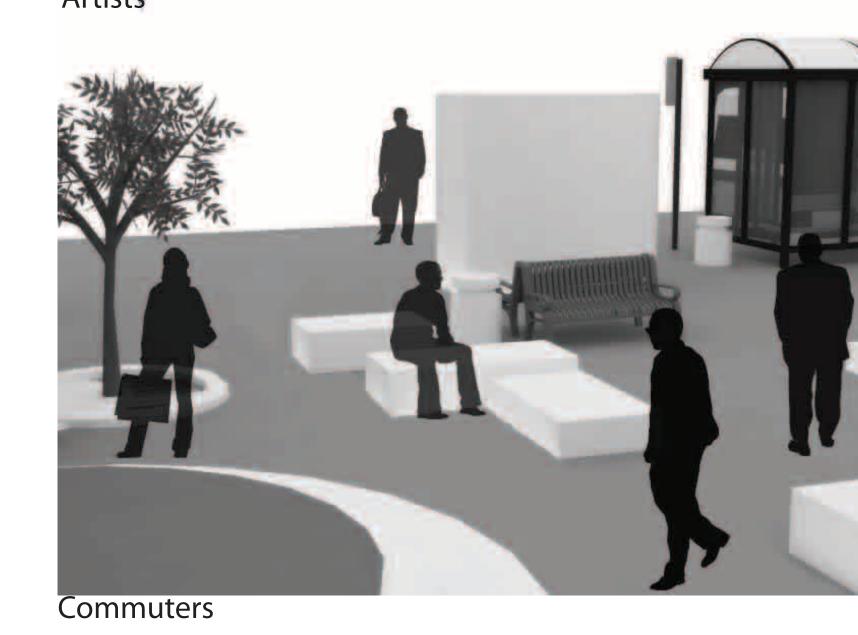
uncountable possibility of ways

sound in efforts to control or absorb sound

the city and connecting outlying cities and suburbs.







Artist - Anyone dedicates the time to gain talent in order to creatively express themselves, this can be done in an <u>Audience</u> - Those who come to attend the event for pleasure and do not participate in the performing aspect of the BART - (Bay Area Rapid Transit), is an underground subway system used as the main method of transportation through <u>Collaboration</u> - Coming together to unite talents and work on something as a team or group The Corner" -The area where the poetry slam takes place in the north east corner of the outside BART plaza The Circle" - The area of the BART plaza that is marked by a chalk pattern in which the performer stands and the Forum - A space for individuals to discuss political or social concerns and contribute to the knowledge of others about Hipster - A contemporary subculture of independent thinkers who reject mainstream values and praise creativity. A <u>Listen</u> - Giving attention to the person in the center circle and quieting to give them the stage "The Mission" - One of the more interesting and eclectic parts of the San Francisco, this district is home to a variety of socioeconomic groups and mini-communities and numerous groups of different backgrounds. It is a gem in SF consisting of many younger generations with a strong sense of art, community, local stability, and many underground <u>Performer</u> - The person who stands in the center circle and comes to the event to speak or entertain Poetry Slam - An event in which people come to see artists perform poetry as well as other acts.; the audience is sometimes involved and reacts vocally; in other slams, it is often a competition, but here it is more about the art and every-

one is viewed equally Respect - A common moral obligation around the circle to give attention to those in the focus of the gathering and give value to others' styles and points of view Ringleader - The main person who leads the slam, settles disputes, and oversees the event in case of any issues. As informal leader who manages the continuation of the event Ro-Sham-Bo - A method of rock-paper-scissors to settle a dispute between who gets to perform in the circle next when two or more people jump up to speak at the same time <u>Seating</u> - The spaces around the BART used for perching or sitting, this may be the bottom ledge lining the BART exit, the benches, the ground, or any other sittable areas <u>Sirens</u> - Noise from the busy surrounding streets that come from the usual blaring fire trucks, ambulances, and cop cars Street Kid - A person who is commonly between the ages of 16 and 30 years old who enjoys hanging out or living on the streets. Usually seen as drifters, they typically travel around, do not have stable jobs such as striving musicians,