



Maquette for Radioville

2004/05

client Context Development Incorporated

The difference with **Radioville** is that it is permanent, outdoors, made of durable, brushed stainless steel, instead of in a gallery and made of cardboard. The individual house units built to a domestic furniture scale would be comfortable to sit on, walk between or around, for kids to play on and perhaps for the students of the National Ballet School, which flanks one end of the plaza, to use as a practice/ performance venue. Also, its miniature, illuminated city layout will be enjoyable for the residents to walk through in daylight or in dark, leaving and returning to their high-rise homes on a daily basis. I imagine that if it's a pleasant site to hang around, public affection will grow with familiarity: the reverse is a notion I strive to avoid.

We are absorbed by a model world such as the one in downtown Victoria, *Miniature World*, under the *Empress*. When the mind relaxes it is easy to suspend disbelief and to imagine oneself inhabiting this little world, a sort of innocent moment worth promoting. Dwarfed by the scale of the city high-rises they inhabit, **Radio City** residents will experience a refreshing scale inversion, being giant when transiting **Radioville**. This notion was reinforced by exhibiting my previous work **Endsville** in Tokyo – visitors commented that they enjoyed the scale reversal, a change from their daily experience of the city.



Concept drawing for Radioville

2004

photo courtesy of the artist



Radioville

Roland Brener

As an artist I had little interest in producing a permanent outdoor work until asked to submit a design for the **Radio City** competition in downtown Toronto. Everything seemed to coalesce: previous temporary art installations of mine could be reinterpreted and adapted well to the total space of a city plaza. I had been working towards this project without really knowing it - I was thrilled to be awarded the commission.

Radioville is a miniature city of 34 units. The average unit size is four foot diameter and either one (24") or two (36" or 42") stories high. Looking down from the two modernist high-rises on either side of the plaza, my work would not be dwarfed due to its spatial distribution of many units; viewed from the condos above would be sort of like looking into a bowl of alphabet soup. **Radioville** is a derivation of previous works, in particular the installations of **Capital Z** (1993) and **Endsville** (1997).

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Capital Z (Collection of the National Gallery of Canada) was based on Monopoly-type houses and hotels, made of cardboard and distributed as suburbs. The suburbs were further expanded to outlying slums, somewhat abstracted. **Capital Z** incorporated kinetic and sound elements that ran continuously and created a contemplative ambience for the visitors who wandered through the work at their own discretion.

The next installation development, **Endsville**, incorporated computer generated sound and light elements activated by the viewer's presence. The houses were designed by me on the computer on site in real time and built in cardboard by teams of volunteers. This work was installed in Portland, Toronto and Tokyo.