Current location technologies have become tools used by contemporary artists, theorists, designers and scientists to reformulate our understanding of social engagement within an enlarged concept of place. These new mobile networks have altered the way people exist in and relate to spaces where the real and virtual world blend, blurring the lines of traditional spatial definitions and frameworks. This special issue provides a variety of perspectives and practices on the meaning and interpretation of today's locative media.
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To Lorraine and Earle Iverson, visible in the space of memory.

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L.A. Re.Play: Mobile Network Culture in Placemaking

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Meanderings and Reflections on Locative Art

The word ‘locative’ is often accompanied by the word ‘media’ as if it were to seeking a legitimacy in its technologic features more than in the artistry of the production of content. Instead, I’d like to place the word ‘art’ at the forefront of the argument, and to consider the notion of locative art as art that is spatially contextualized, art that encompasses artistic practices that draw from movement (and/or the lack of it) and location, which is their source of inspiration, content, materiality, and context. This notion can be enlarged to encompass virtual, hybridized, and non-virtual worlds, since there is a notion of spatiality in all of them, although in some artworks this notion may be expressed as an abstraction. The desire is to move away from the word ‘media’ and to take a stance that defines artworks on the basis of their aesthetic merit, rather than as being hindered by the accompaniment and masquerade of words such as media, which, far from clearing the field, create complex and unwieldy taxonomies of materials, processes, and aesthetics.

This special issue, which is based on the work done by Hana Iverson and Mimi Sheller, might appear similar to the Leonardo Electronic Almanac special issue, Volume 14, No. 3, which was entitled “LEA Locative Media Special Issue,” and which hit the ‘electronic waves’ in 2006. There are several reasons why it was time to produce a new issue on Locative Art, and the most important of these was the new sense of sociopolitical consciousness that pioneers of digital technologies and contemporary artists are bringing forward. Drew Hemment wrote in his introduction to the “LEA Locative Media Special Issue”:

Artists have long been concerned with place and location, but the combination of mobile devices with positioning technologies is opening up a manifold of different ways in which geographical space can be encountered and drawn, and presenting a frame through which a wide range of spatial practices may be looked at anew. It is instead a step forward in the analysis of what has been produced and what locative art has evolved into over the past 10 years, from a nascentness of anxiety and hope for its evolution, to its present form as an artistic medium gaining recognition within the complex world of contemporary fine arts.

This special issue should be read as an analysis of these recent evolutions, and of how locative media have engaged the world and mapped their own domains in the process of becoming locative art, now embedding itself within the increasingly contested realms of public space and social activism.

The idea of the ‘locative’ experience have become less and less of prominent features of the aesthetic process and now figure as a component, but not as the component of spatially located and contextualized works of art.

The aesthetic practices of the contributors to this special issue have defined and continue to redefine the vision of what locative art should be, as well as in what context it should be ‘located,’ and – at the same time – have challenged traditional contextual and relational interpretations of the art object and its social and political functions.

The decision to stress the elements of spatially contextualized art resides in the increased importance that public as well as private space have gained following the technological developments that erode both spaces in favor of invasion of privacy, the blurring of public boundaries, and the control of locations, bodies, and identities. This erosion comes at the hands of corporate, state, and military regimes that, by parading ideas of democracy and social wellbeing, flaunt basic human rights while increasingly enacting dictatorial forms of control and surveillance.

The blurring of the boundaries between public and private is such that the idea of concealing one’s location becomes an insurrectional act, particularly under oppressive regimes such as Turkey, where knowledge of the citizen’s location is necessary to enforce restrictions on freedom of speech. Movement, speech, media, bodies, and identity appear inextricably interconnected within contemporary societies, in which personal existence is no more, and the idea of switching off – disconnecting oneself from the systems of control and surveillance – is perceived as dangerous, insurgent, and revolutionary.

The idea of spaces that are and must be contextualized becomes extremely important when bandying about definitions of ‘armchair revolutionaries’ and ‘click activists.’ In fact, while it may be possible to recognize and identify these armchair revolutionaries and click activists in the United States and the United Kingdom, applying the label proves more difficult in other contexts; namely, countries in which the erosion of democracy is more pronounced and readily visible. Tweeting is a dangerous activity in places like Turkey, Iran, or China, where a tweet or a click may quickly lead to the police knocking on the door, ready to enforce restrictions on freedom of speech, or, more accurately, westernized perceptions of freedom of speech disseminated over the internet that do not necessarily correspond or apply to local realities.

The current furor over whether the President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, looks like Gollum, the fictional character in The Lord of the Rings by J. R. R. Tolkien, is but one of many forms of control and crackdowns. In Turkey, as elsewhere, this has created a sense of panic among the population which, by self-limiting and self-restricting its freedom, has generated a sense that the state possesses a kind of digital panopticon, leading to a wide-spread malaise of self-censorship and obedience.

This continued crackdown follows the protests at Gezi Park in 2013, after which the Turkish government apparatus refined its methods of censorship. During the Gezi Park protests, people tweeting and retweeting the news were arrested and threatened in a sweeping attempt to demonstrate the government’s ability to ‘locate’ individuals. People with roots in the country were identified, located, and expelled by the state apparatus which targeted individuals and families who did not fit within the new neo-Ottoman agenda.

In this conflict between freedom of speech and censorship, the issues of location, as well as those art works that use location as an aesthetic element, rise to utmost importance. The ability to locate individuals is paramount in exacting retribution, and locative media become a kind of Trojan horse that facilitates the pinpointing and identification of protesters. At the same time, locative media and augmented reality offer the opportunity to flaunt governmental oppression by layering context over controversial spaces.
“There is now a menace, which is called Twitter,” Erdoğan said on Sunday. “The best examples of lies can be found there. To me, social media is the worst menace to society.”

Erdoğan’s words are reflected in Amnesty International’s report, which reveals the level of intimidation employed by the Turkish government to silence opposition from a variety of sectors within civic society.

“Social media users active during the protests have been prosecuted, while attempts have been made to block the sites that carried their words and videos.”

It is the progressively politicized nature of space and location, as well as the act of locating, that makes locative media art political, politicized, and politicizable. Hence, locative media art must be placed in the context of the political stances and struggles, or lack thereof, that will define its aesthetic, or lack of aesthetic. Conor McGarrigle recalls the Situationist International in his construction of locative situations framed as a form of alternative construction and engaged relation with life, a relation that people can define and not just passively consume.

To counter what they saw as the banality of everyday life, they proposed actively constructing situations rather than merely passively consuming or experiencing them. Rather than describing and interpreting situations, the situationists would seek to transform them. If, as they believed, human beings are ‘moulded by the situations they go through’ and ‘defined by their situation’, then they need the power to create situations worthy of their desires rather than be limited to passive consumers of the situations in which they find themselves.

In sociopolitical and philosophical terms, this analysis provided the opportunity to perceive life as being founded on the responsibility and sense of gravitas in human action – *fabe est suae quisque fortunae* – which, by stressing the possibility of construction – the artifex as creator – reestablishes the Situationist International within a locative art practice that constructs and reshapes life in a social context that no longer appears to afford hope.

This definition of the participant in the constructed situation as an autonomous agent within the structure of the work and not limited to enacting a predefined script is key. I will identify locative works which exhibit this tendency, which go beyond a model of the participant being defined by the application in favour of an open model, a set of procedures or a toolkit with which participants construct their own situation to be ‘lived’ independently of the artist.

The definition McGarrigle proposes creates a dichotomy between the sociopolitical constructs and adopted behavioral models in new media versus the open procedures of engagement that enable the artifex to construct situations and therefore construct his/her own destiny.

It is this transformative potential emerging from the construction and/or reconstruction of space that, as editors, Hana Iverson and Mimi Sheller want to present and argue in favor of.

By considering the practices of process-based, socially engaged, conceptual and performance art and their relationship to activism, design and mobile art, we are able to examine the conditions of how these projects may transform place, politics, and the realm of public art.

This LEA special issue is a survey that explores and interprets how these projects may transform place, politics, and the realm of public art.

REFERENCES AND NOTES


3. I would like to thank Mark Sluwarin, John Craig Freeman, Will Pappenheimer and Tamiko Thiel for exhibiting with the Museum of Contemporary Cuts in Istanbul and with Kasa Gallery, http://www.lanfrancoaceti.com/2013/03/i-occupy/. In particular Will Pappenheimer placed a large cloud writing with the text ‘Why I Occupy’ over Gezi Park in Taksim Square, Istanbul. The artwork is still visible and was part of a series of events linked to the panels discussion held at Kasa Gallery titled Making Visible the Invisible: Media, Art, Democracy and Protest.


8. Ibid., 57-58.

L.A. Re.Play: Mobile Network Culture in Placemaking

INTRODUCTION

Artists, social scientists, and theorists have increasingly explored mobile locative media as a new kind of social and spatial interface that changes our relation to embodiment, movement, place, and location. Indeed, many artists and theorists have claimed mobile locative art as a crucial form of social experimentation and speculative enactment. In the social sciences, recent work especially draws attention to cultural adoption and everyday appropriation of mobile media, the re-emerging significance of place-making and locatability, and the infrastructures, regulatory regimes, and dynamics of power that shape contexts of use.

This work has drawn attention to the intersection of place-making, movement, and political aesthetics. Rowan Wilken emphasizes ideas of “place as relational, as inherently connected to mobility, and as constantly worked out through mundane practice.” Drawing on Tim Cresswell’s studies of being “on the move,” Larissa Hjorth’s work on “mobile intimacy,” Tim Ingold’s idea of “ambulatory knowing,” and Ingrid Richardson’s work on interactive media and forms of “viscerally aware,” amongst others. All of these contributions to theorizing mobile locative media are particularly relevant when it comes to interpreting recent works in mobile locative art.

In the arts and culture fields the debate on mobile locative media has focused on the creative potential of mobile locative media and ubiquitous computing, its cultural impact, and critical responses to mobile digital art. Some of the most interesting questions concern how new mobile media can change relations between embodiment, place, and spatial awareness, echoing these debates in the social sciences. For example, media curator and theorist Christiane Paul highlights the importance of the digitally-enhanced body as a new kind of interface:

“Digital technologies have expanded the agency enabled by our embodied condition: our bodies can function as interfaces in navigating virtual environments; avatars can be understood as a virtual embodiment; wearable computing can establish a technologized connectivity between bodies; and mobile devices can function as technological extension of embodiment, connecting us to location-based information and enhancing awareness of our environment or “social body.”

Given the significance of artists in the debates about mobile locative media (see Southern in this issue), we believe it is a productive time to further explore how artworks using the new contexts afforded by mobile locative media are engaging new kinds of hybrid embodied/digital interactions with place, location, and movement.

How exactly do mobile digital technologies expand the agency of our embodied condition? In 2002, Australian media theorist Ross Gibson was asked what will be the artistry of the future; he replied that “artists will supply us with the beguiling processes of transformation … artists won’t be fabricating objects so much as experiences – they will offer us intensely ‘moving’ immersion in (or perhaps beyond) the objective world. This immersion will be so moving that the ‘objective world’ will cease to be sensible in the ways we thought normal.” What will exist as art in this future vision? How does mobile art reconfigure objects, subjects, place, space and time? How does mobility extend the discussion around media art through a broader reconfiguration of cognition? As Claire Bishop asks, what does it mean “to think, see and filter affect through the digital”? If the physical world is the ground for the affect produced by the digital, then how do the emerging art practices of mobile locative media immerse participants in site-specificity as well as distant networked places, and unfold local temporalities as well as deeper collective times and histories?

In this special issue we want to argue for the need to radically re-think the genealogy, purposes, and affects of mobile art, in an effort to enlarge the critical vocabulary for the discussion of “digital art;” and the divides that it encounters. Arising out of a double session on Mobile Art: The Aesthetics of Mobile Network Culture in Place Making, and the associated mobile art exhibition L.A. Re.Play, co-organized and co-curated by Hana Iversen and Mimi Sheller, with assistance from Jeremy Hight — and held at UCLA, the Art Center College of Design, and the Los Angeles Convention Center as part of the College Art Association Centennial Conference (Los Angeles, February 2012) — this project brought together some of the leading U.S. and international artists working with mobile and geo-locative media today. This concentrated series of events, along with this special issue of LEA, provides a platform and situation to reflect upon mobile media art today, where it has come from, how it is being practiced, and where it is heading.

We intend to move beyond a geo-locational or screen-based focus (that has attracted the attention of some artists due to the proliferation of smartphones) to address a body of works that extend outward to collective experiences of place. Mobile media art is one of the key arenas in which emergent interactions with the embodied and sensory dimensions of place, movement and presence itself are being explored. Crucially, it can be understood as connected to wider histories of performance art, relational art, immersive theater, experimental video, sound art, and socially engaged public art. Mobile art includes a diverse set of practices that might involve sound walks, psychogeographic drifts, site-specific storytelling, public annotation, digital graffiti, collaborative cartography, or more complex “mixed-reality” interactions. It tends to engage the body, physical location, digital interface, and social relations both near and distant, sometimes in terms of what one contributor calls “relational architecture.” Through its unique visual, sonic, haptic, social and spatial affordances, mobile art provides a sensory engagement with virtual and material surroundings, mediated through the participants’ embodied sensations augmented by digital technology. Featured at international festivals such as the International Symposium on Electronic Art (ISEA), FutureEverything, Conflux and Radiator, it also offers an important locus for thinking about new kinds of social engagement with other people, collectives, or publics.

In introducing this special issue we will focus on three key themes that emerge out of this body of work: first, the ways in which mobile art is socially networked and participatory, often involving the creative collaboration between artists, participants and the broader public, and what the implications of this are; second, the crucial ways in which mobile art engages with location, augmented physical presence, and sensory perceptions of place, eliciting new experiences of “hybrid space” as both a bodily and more-than-bodily experience; and third, the political possibilities for mobile locative media to add new dimensionality to public space, and thereby push the boundaries of civic...
engagement and politics in mobile network culture beyond its current limits. Interspersed throughout this introductory discussion we describe and locate the specific essays in the special issue, as well as noting some of the art works in the L.A. Re.Play exhibition.

The issue itself includes a range of materials generated out of the CAA panels, the exhibition, and ongoing discussions amongst the participants, including artists’ descriptions (and images) of their own work and reflection on their practice, more theoretical and historically informed analysis of aspects of mobile and networked art, interviews with artists and between co-participants in the project, and creative writing that emerged out of this year-long process.

**SOCIALLY NETWORKED AND PARTICIPATORY MOBILE ART**

The notion of participatory art has been trying in different ways to enlarge the consideration of art and aesthetics for more than thirty years. Mobile art, like other new media art, has a strong relationship to and in an essay here, explores in her exhibition.

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SOCIALLY NETWORKED AND PARTICIPATORY MOBILE ART

The “relational turn” across many art activities and cre-ative disciplines favors methodologies that are interac-tive, process-oriented rather than outcome-oriented, and open in Eco’s terms. “Situated engagement,” for example, is a theoretical frame for a participatory de-sign approach that uses mobile technologies to focus on and design with micro-local neighborhoods, in learning contexts that invite social participation and are often oriented toward social change and justice. Critic and curator Mimi Zeiger notes the link between “socially engaged art” and “tactical urbanism,” which have also been embraced as more mobile and fleeting engage-ment with urban space:

“[M]any activist designers have embraced “tactical urbanism” as the go-to descriptor (see the recently published and downloadable guidebook Tactical Urbanism 2: Short-Term Action, Long-Term Change. [...] these projects are oppositional to the conventional operations – or strategies – of urban planners. Flexible and small scale, often temporary and with limited budgets, tactical projects take advantage of “chance offerings” – public spaces, empty lots, municipal loopholes. They deploy the fleetness and mobility described in [Michel de Certeau’s] The Practice of Everyday Life. [2]

Likewise, mobile art can be said to enter the urban realm in a tactical way, making use of existing spatial patterns and routes, handheld devices and forms of navigation, modes of watching and listening, yet bending these towards other purposes. It creates a new relation to place, drawing the participant into a playful and potentially awakened form of engage-ment; part serendipity, part chance collage, the acci-dents of mobilized perception form a newly medi-ated kind of “exquisite corpse” in a surreal game of adventure as artistic venture.

Many of the works in L.A. Re.Play, and those dis-cussed in the essays in this special issue, create new modes of creative co-production and networked par-ticipation in the city, and require participation in order to be accessed. Each one depends upon its context in the public realm, and plays upon the interdependence of digital and physical experiences, which activates a renewed sense of place and flexible relationship to cartography. Various kinds of soundwalks, along with mobile Augmented Reality, distribute mobile art across a walkable terrain whereby a series of situ-ated visual and sonic elements can be accessed and experienced by an ambulatory audience. Such works have their roots in both land art and sonic artwork, as explored further in the essay contributed by Ksenia Fedorova on the “sublime” potential of sound. Artist Teri Rueb, for example, whose work was presented in L.A. Re:Play and in an essay here, explores in her mobile auditory works “a thinking and doing land-scape... to define a radically expanded field in which to consider embodied interaction and mobile media.” Experiencing her work helps us “to think bodies, sens-a tions, space and time together.” [3] Several artists working with mobile media draw on the history of psychogeography, originally set in motion as a sur-realistic experiment with the city through the “derive,” a drifting serendipity of encounter, while others lean towards mobile gaming.

The artists working with mobile psycho-geography create new ways to navigate choreographies of place, now augmented with mobile and locational technolo-gies. For example, Leila Nadir and Cary Peppermint of ecoutech present their piece “Indeterminate Hikes,” which “acts as both locative artwork and practice-based inquiry into the imagination of public place and the environment in the context of networked mobil-ity and ubiquitous computing devices.” Aesthetically, though, their work is not about the technology or the mobile experience itself, but takes inspiration from Guy Debord’s psychogeography, Felix Guattari’s lines of flight, John Cage’s random yet structured pro cesses, and Michel Foucault’s radical ethics of the self. Likewise, Australian architect Ian Woodcock discusses his collaborative works “PastCityFuture” and “en route,” which “uses locative technologies, psychoge-ographic techniques and urban choreography to create in participants a heightened awareness of presence and context, the here and now.” So the movements generated in these pieces occur both outside as a transit through space, and inside as a transformative state of being in place.

Choreographies here intersect with cartographies, which emerge as a key terrain for exploration of the digital co-production of space. Once new, but now increasingly routine, digital technologies such as Geo-Positioned Satellite (GPS) navigation systems and popular applications such as Google Earth have transformed the experience of the map as an inter-active, dynamic, and multi-scale interface, as noted especially in the essay by Dutch artists Esther Polak and Ivar Van Bekkum, which describes their project of redeploying Google Earth as an artistic medium. Their...
They draw out the tension between this affective dynamics of meaningful place and the “representational fiction of the pinpoint within the mapping process and the implications of this fiction for locative media artists, designers and the publics we desire to engage.” To pinpoint a location does not make it a “place” until it is enacted in relation to a temporal and social context, and a single location may be unstable, and part of many such intersecting contexts.

In effect the participatory, experiential realm of mobile, locative, situated engagement not only completes the circuit of the creative act, but also redefines the consciousness, experience and agency of the participant. The artists and theorists included in this special issue engage, subvert and recombine our perceptions of place, building on traditions of Social Practice Art and Relational Art, but also engaging forms of participatory theater, experimental cinema, and collective narrative. Mobile art in this sense incorporates audiences—calling attention to their very corporeality and social/spatial situatedness—often in challenging ways. Many of these works combine evocative digital imagery, sound walks, mobile narrative, and site specificity, yet they do not necessarily require a high-tech “sentient city” to make them work. They also can be distinguished from more commercial or simply entertaining forms of mobile pervasive gaming although there can be a blurring of the two areas, as found in the series of immersive theater and mobile game works by the collective Blast Theory.

In re-configuring contemporary “technoscapes” and “medascapes” enacted through the relational embodied praxis of mobile art, such works re-set or re-play “modernity at large” in new ways. Mobile locative art evokes stories and creates new affordances for people to turn public spaces into meaningful places, to turn designed environments into new kinds of public experience, and to turn software interaction into potentially critical praxis. This leads to the next key element that we want to highlight: the radical mutation that mobile art can offer to our experience of space itself, through the production of a sense of immersion within digitally networked and “hybrid” place as we move through the physical world.

**HYBRID SPACE AND MOBILE AUGMENTED REALITIES**

Mobile media artworks are at once definable and indefinable. They suspend performers and participants in a tension around co-presence and mediated interactions that defy formal modes of presentation. Many works engage, subvert and recombine our experience, perceptions, and interactions with place and location by drawing upon elements of communication and sense perception that are both immediately present and mediated by technology (sight, sound, narrative, affect, memory, history). In this issue, Jason Farman’s analysis of Simon Faithfull’s performance art piece, O.00 Navigation, for example, notes the relation between physical objects (such as fences, houses) and virtual objects (such as GPS coordinates, or the Prime Meridian) in a kind of oscillating experiential space. Mobile media artists challenge and equip us to activate new social practices and performances via “hybrid spaces” that blur the distinction between physical and bodily and virtual, artwork and everyday space, creator and audience. Practitioners take it as given that through everyday practices with wireless networks and mobile social media, people are creating new ways of interacting with others, with places, and with screens while moving, or pausing in movement. Emerging practices of “mobile mediacy”—understood as a new form of flexible, digitally mediated spatiality—are accomplished in motion, just as the artworks exploring it are not simply new apps, but are experiential happenings, performative interactive events. As such, they have implications for embodied perception.

Mobile arts practices that engage with our increasingly software-embedded and digitally augmented urbanism help to create a greater awareness of what some describe as “remediated” space, “networked place,” or “hybrid space.” Media theorist Adriana de Souza e Silva, in her studies of mobile locative networks and mobile gaming, argues that “Hybrid space abrogates the distinction between the physical and the digital through the mix of social practices that occur simultaneously in digital and in physical spaces.” It is not one or the other, but both at once. Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin in their book Remediation: Understanding New Media draw a distinction between immediacy and hypermediacy. The idea of transparent immediacy, or media proposed as “interfaceless” and immersive, occurs in earlier imaginaries of Virtual Reality (VR), imagined as drawing the participant into another world. Hypermediacy, on the other hand, involves a mix or juxtaposition of elements, both digital and physical, being in this sense more like Augmented Reality (AR).

In contrast to ideas of immersive media, therefore, the experience of hypermediated digital space is that it is rapidly dissolving into or permeating everyday life, especially through mobile devices. Elizabeth Grosz, in her book Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space argues that this dissolve takes place at the level of the perceptual, where there is a “change in our perceptions of materiality, space and information, which is bound directly to or indirectly to affect how we understand architecture, habitation and the built environment.” For artworks created within this hypermediated hybrid environment, the point is to create works that exist in this delimited realm both perceptually and actually. The issues of becoming remain continually processual. Such artworks have a kind of unstable or flickering presence, even while accessing multiple levels of “reality.” They might involve what Paula Levine in her contribution refers to as...
to as “elastic geographies,” in which one cartography is displaced onto another to create a blurred experience of both at once, as in her work Shadows from Another Place: San Francisco–Baghdad (2004). Or the materiality of digital media might involve adapting to weather, noise, and gestures within a kinaesthetic field, even as one follows an abstract GPS coordinate depicted as a blinking dot on a screen, as Sawchuk and Thulin explore in their analysis of works like Lost Rivers and Montreal in/accessible, and contributor Jen Southern explores in works such as CoMob. The mobile media artists who interest us are precisely those who are exploring how to create or move within these hybrid spaces of amplified (hypermediated) reality via new modes of open (yet critically attuned) engagement with embodied experience, with urban and natural landscapes, and with digitally-mediated public space. Southern, in her contribution to this issue, delineates six elements of “locative awareness” that includes a heightened sensitivity to being situated, embodied, relational, networked, experiential, and multiple. These embodied and networked engagements with hybrid experiences transform the familiar cityscape (or, in some cases, non-urban landscape) through an intensified awareness of the urban fabric, its multiple architectures, streetscapes, and social flux, as strangely mutable, perhaps disruptive or uncanny, even enchanting. Ecoarttech’s “Indeterminate Spaces, such as alleyways, highways, and garbage dumps. This project extends ecological awareness into mobile spaces, into the places humans actually live, democratizing conversations about environmental sustainability and ecological management that too often occur only in a scientific context.

Contributor Martha Lady also considers how mobile technologies “are grounded in place, creating responsive hybrid spaces in which the real, embodied, personal experiences and stories of the artist and the audience may create a powerful, participatory opportunity.” Mobile art thus addresses crucial theoretical questions about how and where participatory politics takes place, when the relation between physical space, networked space, and the growing experience of hybrid space involves the physical and the digital as co-synchronous sites of engagement, conversation, and responsive communication.

By provoking questions about the possibilities and limits of the new borders between the physical and the virtual, the real and the imaginary, the tactile and the intangible – many mobile artworks reinvent a relationship to aesthetic digital objects, interrogate public presence and memory, and deploy new strategies for intervention. Teri Rueb’s soundwalking piece Elsewhere: Andersson is a site-specific sound installation across two sites. Visitors carry small GPS-equipped computers and wear headphones. Sounds play automatically in response to their movements in the landscape. As they move through layer upon layer of responsive sound, [she writes] “little elsewhere[s]” are grafted onto the landscape in the form of variously local and foreign, synchronous and asynchronous “soundtracks.” Place is a verb. Place making and the meaning of place, “placings,” unfold as a continuous dialogue between the physical and built environment and its inhabitants.

Landscape is a special kind of “placing.” Yet her interventions she argues, are also “displacements,” which introduce multiple sensory and perceptual layers into the temporariness and subjectivities of moving through a landscape.

Participants in soundwalks can experience an embodied engagement with place and, in some cases, a mediated performance of everyday actions that reorganize the experience of space and time. This type of work is situated in the embodied sensory experience of landscape, but also lends itself to collective sound-mapping and the production of new mixed-reality soundscapes and mobile acoustic ecologies. Ross Gibson notes that “The rhythms with which and within which a person can perceive: the time spans in which we sense our acuity, these time spans are becoming ever more elastic.” Mobile art becomes a way to perceive this elasticity of temporality, and reflect upon movement-space as we co-create it. And such elasticity of perception plays upon the “displacements” noted by Rueb and the “entanglements” alluded to by Southern, both of whom use GPS to subtly interfere with perceptions of place and awareness of various kinds of placement.

Locative media art has the capacity to bring together multiple rhythms of landscape that combine the live, temporal, and ephemeral aspects of a socially mapped place-ment. Picking up on Henri Lefebvre’s (2004) concept of rhythmanalysis, geographer Tim Edensor argues that “rhythmanalysis elucidates how places possess no essence but are ceaselessly (re) constituted out of their connections... Places are thus continually (re)produced through the mobile flows which course through and around them, bringing together ephemeral, contingent and relatively stable arrangements of people, energy and matter.” Through a kinaesthetic sense of bodily motion we apprehend time and space, but through the interventions of mobile art we also inhabit it differently. Through sensory perception and physical mass, we orient ourselves toward the world, and create both place and displacement through the frictions and rhythms of our mediated movement. Movements have different rhythms, and those rhythms of movement flow through cities and landscapes, shaping their feel, sculpting their textures, and making places.

So it is the coming and going of all of these mobile assemblages and interweaving rhythms that mobile artists are exploring as they experiment with the new “movement-space,” a dynamic digitally-mediated spatial awareness mediating between bodies, architectures, and natures. Social theorists argue that there are ambivalent and contested “affordances” that “stem from the reciprocity between the environment and the organism, deriving from how people are kinaesthetically active within their world.” “Motion and emotion” are “kinaesthetically intertwined and produced together through a conjunction of bodies, technologies, and cultural practices.” The choreographies and choreographies of mobile art become a way of conjuring the affective experience of place and the effects of hypermediated locatability. Highlighting temporality becomes a way of re-thinking location, while the acute awareness of matching a physical location with a virtual object while using mobile locative media assists in a re-thinking of temporality and place. In some cases this new orientation is connected to a politics of place, location, and embodiment. Our final concern is to ask what the political implications are of some of the recent entanglements of mobility, location, and public art.
Mobile artists are exploring how to create hybrid spaces of amplified reality as new modes of open engagement with embodied experience and public space. Ultimately such projects may transform place, politics, social research, and art itself, its modes of practice and forms of dissemination and engagement. Simon Sheikh in his essay “In the Place of the Public Sphere? Or the world in Fragments” refers to “counter-publics” that “entail a reversal of existing practices into other spaces and identities and practices.” While the notion of counter-publics has a long history, there is a shifting sense of publics today, and a shifting understanding of what is public, due to a blurring of public and private as one enfolds into the other. Like other critics of the Habermasian public sphere such as Iris Marion Young, Nancy Fraser, Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, Sheikh goes on to call for this counter-public to be “relational, articulatory and communicatory.” As new hybrid spaces and networked places emerge from contemporary practice, they have the potential to transform modes of political engagement and participation in the public sphere and to generate transformative hybrid approaches to the natural-social-spatial-cultural matrix in which we move, dwell, and create the future. How does this new public become a platform for different forms of political engagement and participation in the public sphere and to generate transformative hybrid approaches to the natural-social-spatial-cultural matrix in which we move, dwell, and create the future. How does this new public become a platform for different forms of political engagement and participation? They have the potential to transform modes of political engagement and participation in the public sphere and to generate transformative hybrid approaches to the natural-social-spatial-cultural matrix in which we move, dwell, and create the future. How does this new public become a platform for different forms of political engagement and participation?

One crucial political intervention of mobile art concerns the ways in which it brings the virtual, augmented, and the digital into conversation with the production of bodies, spaces, sensation and affect. Sarah Drury, in particular, explores in her essay the forms of “body spatiality” that emerge in mobile augmented reality artworks. She draws on Elizabeth Grosz’s work to describe the “zone of sensitivity” that occur between an individual body and the spaces it inhabits. Mobile AR works can intervene in such internalized body images by reconfiguring the spaces with which they interact. As geographer Peter Merriman notes, “writings on mobility and non-representational theory” have begun to trace “the more-than-representational, performative, expressive improvisations of bodies-in-movement-in-spaces” by describing “the production of complex entwined performativities, materialities, mobilities and affects of both human embodied subjects and the spaces/places/landscapes/environments which are inhabited, traversed, and perceived.” Mobile augmented reality opens up our perception and bodily experience of the spaces through which we move, allowing the materialities and performativities of buildings, streets, surfaces, and other non-human elements of space to evoke a new kind of body spatiality – which has political implications for individual and collective agency and capacities to mobilize.

Some mobile artworks raise personal and political questions about what constitutes a public space, or a public sphere, while others address the more dystopian elements of surveillance, invasion/exclusion, and (dis)connection in the digital era. When the group Manifest AR uses site-specific augmented reality digital imaging as an interventionist public art to infiltrate highly regulated public spaces such as Tianamen Square in China, or the US-Mexico border where immigrants are dying in the desert, or even the Museum of Modern Art in an illicit AR exhibit, it engages the overlapping layer of augmented reality to seed our political imagination with new possibilities. As they describe it:

“The group sees this medium as a way of transforming public space and institutions by installing virtual objects, which respond to and overlay the configuration of located physical meaning. […] Whereas the public square was once the quintessential place to air grievances, display solidarity, express difference, celebrate similarity, remember, mourn, and reinforce shared values of right and wrong, it is no longer the only anchor for interactions in the public realm. That geography has been relocated to a novel terrain, one that encourages exploration of mobile location based public art. Moreover, public space is now truly open, as artworks can be placed anywhere in the world, without prior permission from government or private authorities – with profound implications for art in the public sphere and the discourse that surrounds it.

Other works present other kinds of opportunities to rethink, re-experience, and re-play an awareness of space, landscape and the city that spans the local and the global, the public and the intimate, calling into question the bases for such distinctions and their contemporary blurring. Artist Jenny Marketou, interviewed in this issue, uses “the city as a space and the electronic communication networks as platforms and creative tools for intervention and connection between exhibition space, public space and social interaction.” Notably her work engages with the phenomena of drone-like surveillance cameras floating above public space, closed circuit television, and the mixture of these low-resolution moving image technologies with globally networked computers and social media platforms, all of which are enacted on participating viewers crossing through public spaces of the city. She is concerned with what the new architecture and protocols of wireless networks do in terms of public surveillance, data mapping, knowledge, information and communication, issues which have become central in the field of mobile media studies.

Locatability has become increasingly commodified (as something apps and big data companies trade in) and politicized (placed under sous-veillance or resisted by masking location); thus mobile locative art can remind us of what is at stake in being unlocatable.

Paula Levine’s The Wall - The World, which was displayed as part of L.A. Re:Play, allows viewers to transport the “security wall” that Israel built to control Palestinian territories on the West Bank, effecting an imaginary mobility through a transposed experience of the politics of place. Focusing on a small segment of the barrier, about a 15-mile area just east of Jerusalem extending between Abu Dis in the south and Qalandiya in the north, The Wall - The World lets the viewer envision this 15-mile segment of the West Bank wall transposed onto any city in the world in Google Earth. The wall appears on the left side of the screen in the West Bank, and on the right side of the screen, in the viewer’s city of choice. Using Google Earth’s navigation tools as a kind of imaginary mobility, viewers can explore the impact of the structure in both areas simultaneously. The Wall - The World is part of Shadows From Another Place, a series of work that maps the impact of distant events in local terms, on local ground. It produces an effect that Ricardo Dominguez of Electronic Disturbance Theater (EDT) calls “loilal,” in which the global is processed through and tamed within the local, in contrast to either the predominance of the global or even the “global,” in which the local is transformed by global networks.

The Transborder Immigrant Tool by EDT/b.a.n.g. lab (Ricardo Dominguez, Brett Stalbaum, Amy Sara Carroll, Micah Cárdenas, Elle Mehrmand), which was also presented in L.A. Re:Play, is a project designed to repurpose inexpensive mobile phones that have GPS antennas to become a compass and digital divining rod of sorts. Through the addition of software that the team designed, it can help guide dehydrated migrants lost in the deserts of the US-Mexico border to water caches established by activists. It provides poetic nourishment as well, in the form of text messages conveying advice and inspiration. As an actual hand-held device, it serves as a practical and aesthetic intervention in the border, humanizing the harsh politics of the exclusionary international boundary; but it is also a disruption of the political space of the border and of the
We hope this set of sessions, art exhibition, and this special issue of LEA will begin to lay the groundwork for a more sophisticated critical evaluation of mobile art that is fully situated in its historical context, its contemporary practice and its future potential. By considering the practices of process-based, socially engaged, conceptual and performance art and their relationship to activism, design and mobile art, we are able to examine the conditions of how these projects may transform place, politics, and the realm of public art. Visualizing internal emotional processes and relating them to route or wayfinding; constructing narratives in a virtual and spatial locality that reveal attachments and connections; positioning oneself imaginatively and actually along a continuum of nature and technology; and exploring the ephemeral quality of technologically mediated art work all assume heightened resonance when they are located in place. Mobile locative media engages strategies that work against the assumptions and stabilities of site and location and are articulated through the interdisciplinary engagement of what has become a new entanglement of art with the social, technological, cartographic, and political implications of mobility.

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REFERENCES AND NOTES

15. Adriana De Souza e Silva and Mimi Sheller, Mobility and Locative Media.
17. In the 50th anniversary issue of Art Forum, which focused on new media art, influential art critic Claire Bishop asks: “Whatever happened to digital art? While many artists use digital technology, how many really confront the question of what it means to think, see, and filter through the digital? How many thematize this, or reflect deeply on how we experience, and are altered by, the digitization of our existence? I find it strange that I can count on one hand the works of art that do seem to undertake this task.” [Claire Bishop, “Digital Divide,” Artforum 51, no. 1 (2012), p. 436.]
22. Teri Rueb’s Trace (1999) was one of the first geo-annotated mobile art projects, using GPS coordinates embedded in the landscape to access a sound installation designed as a memorial environment in Yoho National Park, British
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Athens, Budapest, Sydney, and Adelaide. Their ideas of “Rider Spoke” (2007) is a mobile game for urban cyclists, engages visitors in a kind of play with urban place and streets at night, equipped with a mobile attached to the space via forms of “radical play” inspired by Situationist space. See her essay in this issue for further discussion. Designed by the British collective, Blast Theory. The idea data exchange, WiFi wireless internet, SMS short message services and cell networks and has emerged alongside locative art as an experimentation with urban public space via forms of “radical play” inspired by Situationist practices and ideas like the “derive” and unitary urbanism. See Sophia Dragoupolou, “A Moment of Experimentation: Spatial Practice and Representation of Space as Narrative Elements in Location-based Games,” Aethere: Journal of Media Geography 5A (2010): 63-76; and Adriana De Souza e Silva and Daniel M. Sutto, eds., Digital Cityscapes: Merging Digital and Urban Playspaces (New York: Peter Lang, 2009).

26. “Rider Spoke” (2007) is a mobile game for urban cyclists, designed by the British collective, Blast Theory. The idea is to combine theater with cycling and mobile game play in a public urban environment. Cycling through the streets at night, equipped with a mobile attached to the handlebars, participants find a hiding place to record a short message in response to a question posed, and then search for the hiding places of other participants’ messages. “Rider Spoke” was created in October 2007 in London, and has been shown and played in Brighton, Athens, Budapest, Sydney, and Adelaide. Their ideas of immersive theater and interactive art were developed further in another hybrid mobile gaming project, “You Get Me” (2008), and later “I’d Hide You” (2012) launched at the FutureEverything Festival 2012 in Manchester. Participants logged in online to join a team of runners live from the streets of Manchester and saw the world through their eyes as they stream video, while playing a game of team tag.

28. Eric Gordon and Adriana de Souza e Silva, Net Locality; and Adriana De Souza e Silva and Mimi Sheller, Mobility and Locative Media.
29. Adriana De Souza e Silva and Mimi Sheller, Mobility and Locative Media.
30. Mimi Sheller explores the idea of “mobile mediality” in the essay “Mobile Mediality: Locations, Distortions, Augmentation,” in New Mobilities Regimes in Art and Social Sciences, ed. Suzanne Wilzgal, Gerlinde Vogl, and Sven Kesseling (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2013), 309-326, arguing that “Locative art and mobile gaming are two of the arenas in which such emergent remediations are being explored, as old media circulate via new media into alternative networked spaces” and this is connected to “a hypermediation of streets, urban space, public and private places, and gaming practices” (p. 312). See also Mimi Sheller, “Mobile Art: Out of Your Pocket,” in The Routledge Companion to Mobile Media, ed. Gerard Goggin and Larissa Hjorth (London: Routledge, 2014), 197-205.
33. Adriana De Souza e Silva and Daniel M. Sutto, Digital Cityscapes.

28. Eric Gordon and Adriana de Souza e Silva, Net Locality; and Adriana De Souza e Silva and Mimi Sheller, Mobility and Locative Media.
29. Adriana De Souza e Silva and Mimi Sheller, Mobility and Locative Media.
30. Mimi Sheller explores the idea of “mobile mediality” in the essay “Mobile Mediality: Locations, Distortions, Augmentation,” in New Mobilities Regimes in Art and Social Sciences, ed. Suzanne Wilzgal, Gerlinde Vogl, and Sven Kesseling (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2013), 309-326, arguing that “Locative art and mobile gaming are two of the arenas in which such emergent remediations are being explored, as old media circulate via new media into alternative networked spaces” and this is connected to “a hypermediation of streets, urban space, public and private places, and gaming practices” (p. 312). See also Mimi Sheller, “Mobile Art: Out of Your Pocket,” in The Routledge Companion to Mobile Media, ed. Gerard Goggin and Larissa Hjorth (London: Routledge, 2014), 197-205.
33. Adriana De Souza e Silva and Daniel M. Sutto, Digital Cityscapes.
47. Simon Sheikh, “In the Place of the Public Sphere? Or the World in Fragments.”
50. Adriana De Souza e Silva and Jordan Frith, Mobile Interfaces.
51. Adriana De Souza e Silva and Mimi Sheller, Mobility and Locative Media.
52. As described by Ricardo Dominguez in an oral presentation during the L.A. Re.Ploy event at the Art Center College of Design, January 2012.
To go nowhere, even to ride around in a deserted quarter or in a crowded freeway, now seems natural. I-5 Passing, an experimental cross-disciplinary digital media project, examines the ways in which speed alters one’s experience of space, time and environment. The title references vehicular motion and locative technologies that interrogate notions of mobility, its induction of mind travel and the yearnings of an overexposed telematic imaginary. Our databanks of memory, themselves transport devices, destabilize and reposition notions of linear time and fixed identities.

The earlier phases of I-5 Passing (2002-2005) spoke of a hybrid digital media and locative project utilizing the intersections and commonalities of physical and virtual spaces created along Interstate 5, known as I-5, in California. In 2005-2007 (a pre-smartphone App world) we developed a proprietary software program offering a live sensor-based tracking of increasing levels of air and water pollution along the four-hundred mile stretch of I-5. It depicted an evolution of hyper-urbanism through rethinking (and representing) our relationship to the swarming dynamics of (auto)mobilized psychogeographies. The strategies inherent in I-5 Passing (re)imagined a public realm of passing-through culture(s), a kind of passing productive of frictions and fictions. This project summoned perspectives of mobility via a cross-disciplinary platform. Its underpinnings lie with cinematic practices, photographic imaging, digital media and locative technologies. Mobility, itself, serves as a sectional sequence transgressing the boundaries of cultural practices, urbanism and the psychography of the state of California itself.

Interstate 5 is the central artery running through central California – the connective tissue linking Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area. A six-hour drive along this freeway offers an opportunity to rethink our presumed mobility and our movements; and in so doing to take a drive through the recent past and the near future. We ventured into food marts, foreclosures, parking lots, feedlots… scanning the ever-present Aqueduct system that bisects the state, as well as earth-toned Big Box distribution centers and outposts of Google, Apple, and Oracle – all amidst the cul-de-sacs of time and space.

It has been said that our 21st century global existence is one of perpetual motion. Certainly that notion mirrors our own lives in California today. The ability to be mobile – to possess the mobility, if you will, of people, commodities, information, and services – confronts, permeates, saturates, and defines our daily existence. The degree of our mobility is the measure by which we value our place in contemporary society. Mobility is thus an indicator of the quality of life and links with broader concepts of social theory and environmental practices.

Our prosthetic capacities to relocate ‘wherever,’ ‘whatever,’ ‘whenever,’ ‘whomever,’ suggest that mobility forms a doppelgänger of contemporary society. For many in California, mobility remains more than a privileged vista – a ‘buena- vista point’ alongside the freeway. The all-pervasiveness of contemporary mobility is one that is perched on a crescendo of Western impetus and sited within the mythic poetic narratives...
that have embellished the 20th century. As such, in I-5 Passing, the contemporary is realized as only intel-
ligible when viewed from the conditions and praxis of mobility. Within this context, one must keep in mind
that to roam is to travel over or through a broad space. However, to commute is to travel within a vortex of an
eexternally compressed and urgent interiorized band-
width of time and space.

Arguably, more than any other form of transportation, the automobile is the modus operandi that has shaped
the modern city. ‘Central casting’ has provided us with
the penultimate sampling of Los Angeles, universally
recognized as the city of asphalt: the surface area of
its street network surpasses that of its actual city area.
Its landscape is one of intersections, guardrails, by-
passes, commuter lanes, toll-roads and overpasses – it
is an artificial, continually cultivated and reconfigured
topography.

The dialectic space between pressing environmental
concerns and cultural practices is constantly invoked,
that have embellished the 20th century. As such, in I-5
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topography.

The dialectic space between pressing environmental
concerns and cultural practices is constantly invoked,
ists such as Robert Frank’s *America* and Sophie Calle’s *No Sex Last Night*.

*I-5 Passing* embraces issues endemic to historical land-use and its representations; contemporary land remediation, nomadic conditions and the market/exchange values of commuting. These are positioned in direct, and at times contradictory, relation to personal narratives and subjectivities unfolding through the real-time experiences of travel and commuting.

There have been numerous cultural legacies invoked in the creation of *I-5 Passing*, primarily Ed Ruscha, Mike Davis and Reyner Banham. The *52 Food Marts* segment comprises a proprietary software program, digital images series and video installation. This title, which riff and doubles back on Ruscha’s *26 Gas Stations* (1963), addresses the deteriorating 20th century myth and promise of the great American road trip which has now been supplanted by the quotidian nature of the round trip and the commute/commuter.

To this day, the residents along I-5 remain overlooked and undervalued – existing within an ever increasingly arid landscape that inexplicably reveals a beguiling presence.

As Ruscha did with Rt. 66, we mapped the route along the I-5 with a series of photographs documenting the Food Marts sited along the freeway, thereby creating an alternative portrait of the highway, titled *52 Food Marts*.

Perhaps known to many from his 1971 text, British Architectural theorist Reyner Banham famously accepted a challenge posed to him by architectural iconoclast Cedric Price to write a treatise on Los Angeles. Within this text, *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*, Banham schematizes Los Angeles as a field generated by the superimposition of transportation networks, electronic infrastructure, and landscape.

An underpinning of Banham’s reading of Los Angeles,
a key point that distinguishes his interpretation of that city from a metropolis such as New York City, is the principle that mobility takes precedence over monumentality. Banham quipped that as earlier generations of English thinkers had become fluent in Italian in order to read Dante, he now learned to drive in order to read Los Angeles. Taking his cue, driving is also the means by which I-5 Passing reveals the same convergence of mobility, networks and vehicular prosthetics that were of interest to Banham. There is an inverse effect of the predominance of mobility in California that is an over-abundance of negative space. By definition a void is an absence. The most concrete example of absence in Los Angeles – in much of urbanized California, for that matter – would be the omnipresent, stereotypic proliferation of parking lots and pervasive freeway infrastructure. Many of the digital images of the I-5 Project concisely encapsulate this rather frictionless spatiality. These images feature the freeway, the stops, and little else. The protagonists in this project are the freeway, the food marts, the vast consumable inventories embedded in permanent transit, the off-ramps, the exit and brand-scape signage are the only operational fictions and navigational gestures represented, save empty static fields that serve as nostalgic alibis for this convergence.

Each signifier enables the reader a rather idiosyncratic focal point upon which to construct a body of individualized and collective pertinent references of urban, cinematic and mobile spatialities. Considering the homogenous nature of the built environment in much of California, these freeways could be any freeway, anywhere. These images are constructed within a binary frame – an almost oppositional elucidation of mapping – articulating the vacuum-like, vampiric, unrelenting character of Southern California’s infamous ‘noir’ space. Topographical space has been truncated to that of a reductive landscape with no real landmarks and no real frame of reference, save the freeway. I-5 exploits the contestations resulting from our own intimacy with, and alienation from, these shared locative spaces and re-positions them as variables informing a media analysis of locative, mobile and temporal space in 21st century California. It is worth noting here that the lynchpin of Californians’ very existence rests upon an uneasy and often contested alliance between urban and natural systems. Urban centers were built in the midst of desert terrain, over geological formations prone to seismic activity and that are solely reliant on a water supply redirected from the Owens Valley or buried in the now privatized, corporatized aquifers, deep underground. Much to its dismay, Southern California has found itself incapable of suppressing the natural. The infinite horizon is often depicted as the signifier of California’s manifest destiny. As represented in Julius Shulman’s iconic mid-20th century portrait of LA, it is just as illusory as...


is the suggestion that Los Angeles is a complete totalized urban system.

Conversely, the northern boundary of I-5 Passing is the San Francisco Bay Area. The Bay Area is a 19th century nostalgic nod toward European neo-traditional, Victorian architecture and city planning; one that gave birth to a rather twisted late 20th century Walden-Pond-on-LSD populated by libertarian, deadhead hackers who cultivate capital and logarithmically re-inscribe the financial vortex of the West Coast. Ironically, the Bay Area has also long been considered the laboratory from which the future – at least the digital future – has been launched … and re-launched … and re-launched once again.

Driving along I-5 (as do thousands of commuters) it is not immediately obvious that the car has been replaced by another machine as the instrument and icon of the “digital,” a continuous virtual interior (and interdimensional) populated by libertarian, deadhead hackers who cultivate capital and logarithmically re-inscribe the financial vortex of the West Coast. Ironically, the Bay Area has also long been considered the laboratory from which the future – at least the digital future – has been launched … and re-launched … and re-launched once again.

As a technology of space, cities galvanize both human and non-human metabolisms, channeling them, amplifying them, concentrating them into centers, domesticating them into suburbs. The question that would animate much of Virilio’s subsequent work is: how have these core functions of the city been assumed by other dronological media?

What we have come to find is that a new kind of (edge) city is being incubated within this scattering, and is projected back into the two hubs: the metropolis of the Bay Area and the Los Angeles Basin, accelerating their tendency towards entropy while also multiplying their density.

A familiar strangeness and a dense emptiness are their greatest assets. It is not that ex-urban sprawl and today’s lifestyle are that alienating; it is simply that they are not alienating enough. To manage their dislocations, both actively seek out integration into the greater whole of what has been called a village – suburban or global – in the interest of maximum performance and output with a minimum of dissent.

In California we find ourselves now living in a “flat-space” where 20th century notions of living have taken on wholly different and contested meanings. Whereas “flat space” once evinced a topographical description of the Central Valley, it now references an intensified agglomeration of big box stores, highway infrastructure and parking lots in which space is corporate, a Tyvek wrapped sophistic self-image of hyper-efficiency. It is a space now teeming with power centers, car-cooning, dashboard dining and fast-food clusters, which vainly impersonate the edges of quaint 20th century towns and clusters along Highway 99.

The question soon becomes, “Where does one find oneself amidst the multi-channel, hermetically sealed, and wired living fueled by such an existence?” This “Main Street of California” finds itself in a cultural moment hinged on the precipice of an unprecedented and dramatic, almost carnivalesque, upheaval. One could easily state that it is a moment which may become unrecognizable in the next; a future that houses residents alien to themselves; a moment from which the future has been launched; and a future that remains strangely familiar, almost as if it had been scripted for our consumption. Hovering in the cloud is a promise of a counter-future to that which has been projected by the values of consumer confidence and technological progress.com. As we pass through miles of over-fed Tyvek home-wrapped structures amidst pastoral fields of cotton, almonds, oranges and grapevines, we’ve seen flashes of a new form of urbanity that gazes back on the modern metropolis – the city of strangers – with a fond respect, all the while looking toward this strangely familiar future that remains a work-in-progress. It has been one hundred years since the archetypal subject of that metropolis was discovered: “the Stranger,” cousin of the aimless streetwalker, the Flaneur. Now, with the eclipse of the modern period and attendant to these changes, a dialectical tension has arisen between modernism and early 21st century critical practices. It is possible that the archetypal subject of the new post-metropolis is the Resident Alien, a subject on the run but stuck in traffic, going nowhere in particular, but not quite standing still.

REFERENCES AND NOTES


3. Ibid.


3. Ibid.


Current location technologies have become tools used by contemporary artists, theorists, designers and scientists to reformulate our understanding of social engagement within an enlarged concept of place. These new mobile networks have altered the way people exist in and relate to spaces where the real and virtual world blend, blurring the lines of traditional spatial definitions and frameworks. This special issue provides a variety of perspectives and practices on the meaning and interpretation of today's locative media.