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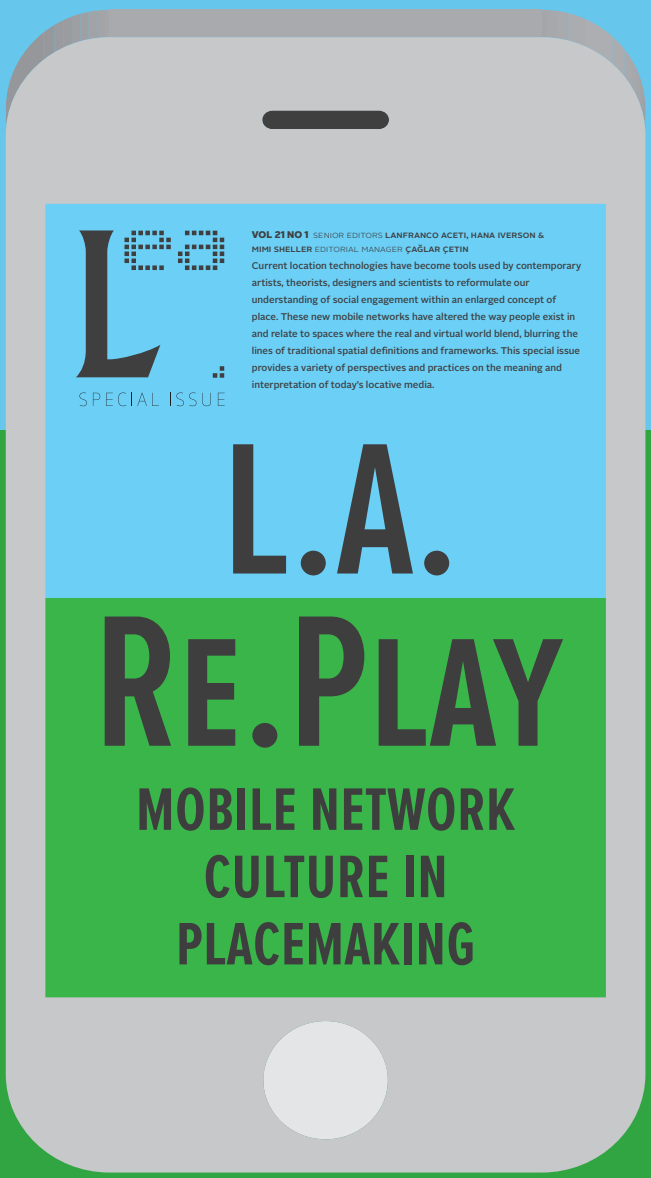
SPECIAL ISSUE

VOL 21 NO 1 SENIOR EDITORS **LANFRANCO ACETI, HANA IVERSON & MIMI SHELLER** EDITORIAL MANAGER **ÇAĞLAR ÇETIN**

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.* [1]

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 nascence 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 media 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 citizenry'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, insurrectional, 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, [2] the fictional character in *The Lord of the Rings* by J. R. R. Tolkien, is but one of many forms of control and crackdown. 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 possess a kind of digital panopticon, leading to a wide-spreading 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 artworks that use location as an aesthetic element, rise to outmost 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. [3]

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"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." [4]

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." [5]

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. [6] 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.* [7]

In sociopolitical and philosophical terms, this analysis provides the opportunity to perceive life as being founded on the responsibility and sense of gravitas in human action – *faber 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.* [8]

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.* [9]

This LEA special issue is a survey that explores and aims to understand the sociopolitical possibilities of contemporary art, and that delves into the realm of location and its contexts.

My hope is that it may offer readers the opportunity to understand the complexity of materials, processes, and contexts – as well as the contemporary responsibilities – that art practices wield in their location and construction of media outside the limitations that Marshall McLuhan defined as "rear-view mirror" approaches.

... de meo ligurrire libidost. Gaius Valerius Catullus, fragments.

Lanfranco Aceti
Editor in Chief, Leonardo Electronic Almanac
Director, Kasa Gallery

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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. [1][2][3][4] 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," [5] drawing on Tim Cresswell's studies of being "on the move," [6] Larissa Hjorth's work on "mobile intimacy," [7] Tim Ingold's idea of "ambulatory knowing," [8] and Ingrid Richardson's work on interactive media and forms of "visceral awareness," [9] 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 media to date has focused on the creative potential of mobile locative media and ubiquitous computing, its cultural impact, and critical responses to mobile digital art. [10][11][12] 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:

> *[D]igital 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."* [13]

Given the significance of artists in the debates about mobile locative media [14][15] (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." [16] 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"? [17] 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 Iverson 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 participant's 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

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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 politically and socially engaged art in that both fields rely on "a highly critical and informed view of interaction, participation and collaboration." [18] The works we present will examine these conditions in more depth. Mobile art often happens outside the space of the gallery or museum, and without any intervening art object, as such, it may be "locative" yet hard to locate. It may appear on hand-held screens, or computer screens, often with the addition of speakers, headphones, or earbuds, but it might also extend far beyond these devices into a wider experiential realm; it may engage with the "virtual" realm, as well as mobilizing various kinds of narrative imagination and imaginaries of place; it may address the present embodied context, even as it interweaves it with histories or futures.

Emergent mobile art forms are able to take seemingly disparate elements and make sense of them to create a coherent yet unique experience for the viewer, listener, or participant. Many mobile art pieces are collaborative – engaging other artists or audiences in a shared vocabulary, and thereby incorporating their contribution into the whole. Umberto Eco, in his "The Poetics of Open Work" refers to open works "as those which are brought to conclusion by the performer at the same time he (or she) experiences them on an aesthetic plane." [19] These works are not open, in the sense of open to interpretation; they are open in the way in which they require participation in order to finish the act of the work itself. This is especially true of mobile artworks in which the relational ethics are a key part of the aesthetic.

The "relational turn" across many art activities and creative disciplines favors methodologies that are interactive, process-oriented rather than outcome-oriented, and open in Eco's terms. "Situated engagement," for example, is a theoretical frame for a participatory design approach that uses mobile technologies to focus on and design with micro-local neighborhoods, in living 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 engagements 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. [20] *[..] 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. [21]

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 engagement; part serendipity, part chance collage, the accidents of mobilized perception form a newly mediated kind of "exquisite corpse" in a surreal game of adventure as artistic venture.

Many of the works in *L.A. Re.Play*, and those discussed in the essays in this special issue, create new modes of creative co-production and networked participation 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 situated 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 Federova 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 landscape... to define a radically expanded field in which to consider embodied interaction and mobile media." Experiencing her work helps us "to think bodies, sensations, space and time together." [22] Several artists working with mobile media draw on the history of psychogeography, originally set in motion as a surrealist experiment with the city through the "derive," a drifting serendipity of encounter, while others lean towards mobile gaming. [23]

The artists working with mobile psycho-geography create new ways to navigate choreographies of place, now augmented with mobile and locational technologies. For example, Leila Nadir and Cary Peppermint of *ecoarttech* 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 mobility 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 processes, 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, psychogeographic 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 interactive, dynamic, and multi-scalar 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

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piece A Tom Tom Opera takes the viewer on a drive through a landscape accompanied by a satellite navigation-inspired choral soundtrack, which speeds past with "Doppler effect," culminating in the visual and sonic crescendo of a crash. They ask: "What happens when people move through public space, listening to an electronic voice which is controlled by an invisible network of information systems?" As a kind of opera situated on the highway, the "visualisation is based on a GPS-track and animated directly in Google Earth, using its digital cartography as a worldwide, spatial opera-stage." Maps, routes and cartographies are also explored by Robbins and Lambert, whose work "I-5 Passing" represents the atmosphere of a drive along Interstate 5, running between Los Angeles and San Francisco, as a representation of the mobile space of a particular kind of California culture. Both pieces explore the affects of digital cultures blended with cultures of automobility and the re-mixing of past and present temporalities.

Jeremy Hight also contributes to the issue with a meditation on the city of Los Angeles, reminding us of its many pasts, taking its measure, unfurling its maps. Encompassing the geological, the archaeological, the historical, and the creative, this journey through the L.A. of the imagination replays in our minds, transforming the familiar cityscape into a textured urban fabric that is "mutable, surreal, disruptive and often enchanting." [24] There are many ways of moving with and through "virtual" media that when coupled with narrative and stories seek to re-enchant the disenchanted landscape of the technologically-scripted non-place. Hight's creative writing piece reminds us that cartographies are also closely related to what Sawchuk and Thulin in their contribution refer to as "chorographies": "conceived of as a way to reconsider the temporal and affective dynamics of place through the practice of writing, reflection, and artistic practice." 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" [25] 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. [26]

In re-configuring contemporary "technoscapes" and "mediascapes" enacted through the relational embodied praxis of mobile art, such works re-set or re-play "modernity at large" in new ways. [27] 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. [28]

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, *0.00 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" [29] that blur the distinction between physical and digital, 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 mediality" – understood as a new form of flexible, digitally mediated spatiality [30] – are accomplished in motion, just as the artworks exloring it are not simply new apps, but are experiential happenings, performative interactional 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, [31] "networked place," [32] or "hybrid space." [33] 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." [34] 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). [35]

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." [36] 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

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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 Franscico<->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, experimental, 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 "IndeterminateHikes+," for example, re-enchants the city by importing into it an experience of the natural:

> *This mobile app imports the rhetoric of wilderness into virtually any place accessible by Google Maps, creates hikes, and encourages its hiker-participants to treat the locales they encounter as spaces worthy of the attention accorded to sublime landscapes, such as canyons and gorges. Thus the ecological wonder usually associated with "natural" spaces, such as national parks, is re-appropriated here to renew awareness of the often-disregarded spaces in our culture that also need attention, 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 Ladly 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 tactical – 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 : Anderswo* 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 elsewheres" 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.

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

Participants in soundwalks can experience an embodied engagement with place and, in some cases, a remediated 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." [37] 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) [38] 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." [39] 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. [40] For Lefebvre such intersecting trajectories and temporalities even included the polyrhythms of trees, flowers, birds, insects, and the movement of the earth, sun and soil down to the molecular and atomic levels.

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," [41] 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." [42] "Motion and emotion" are "kinaesthetically intertwined and produced together through a conjunction of bodies, technologies, and cultural practices." [43] The chorographies and choreographies of mobile art become a way of conjoining 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.

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EDITORIAL

POLITICAL ART IN NETWORKED PUBLIC SPACE

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." [44] While the notion of counter-publics has a long history [45] 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. [46] 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." [47] 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 and oppositional subjectivities, politics and economies, and thereby frame a new public art?

One crucial political intervention of mobile art concerns the ways in which it brings the virtual, the 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. [48] 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." [49] Mobile augmented reality opens up our perception and bodily experience of the spaces through which we move, allowing the materialities and performativies 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, inclusion/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 overlaying quality 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 re.think, 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. [50] Locatability has become increasingly commoditized (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 un/locatable. [51]

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 "lobal," in which the global is processed through and tamed within the local, in contrast to either the predominance of the global or even the "glocal," in which the local is transformed by global networks. [52]

The Transborder Immigrant Tool by EDT/b.a.n.g. lab (Ricardo Dominguez, Brett Stalbaum, Amy Sara Carroll, Micha 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 to 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*

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aesthetics of the border, generating intense debate and critical thought as much as material intervention. It is a clear example of the potential for critical design and its ability to make you think. As Fernanda Duarte has noted in her interpretation of the *Transborder Immigrant Tool* as a kind of tactical media, it "constitutes a model of micropolitics in practice because their subversive and critical poetics invents alternative lines of flight, and proposes temporary and nomadic constructions without making claims for a revolutionary transformation of reality or utopian designs." [53] In this issue, Electronic Disturbance Theater (EDT) have composed another kind of creative tactical intervention in what they name the "trans [ ] border." They offer the original piece "Faust y Furioso" as a play that plays with genres, boundaries, borders and crossings. Their work is further contextualized by an interview with Ricardo Dominguez, conducted by *L.A. Re.Play* participant Leila Nadir.

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. [54] 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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Columbia. Her more recent project *Elsewhere : Anderswo* engages visitors in a kind of play with urban place and space. See her essay in this issue for further discussion.

23. Mobile gaming combines GPS with Bluetooth short range data exchange, WiFi wireless internet, SMS short messaging service 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 Drakopoulou, "A Moment of Experimentation: Spatial Practice and Representation of Space as Narrative Elements in Location-based Games," *Aether: Journal of Media Geography* 5A (2010): 63-76; and Adriana De Souza e Silva and Daniel M. Sutko, eds., *Digital Cityscapes: Merging Digital and Urban Playspaces* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009).
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Figure 1. *Indeterminate Hikes +*, Leila Nadir and Cary Peppermint (EcoArtTech), 2012. Photograph by EcoArtTech. © EcoArtTech, 2005. Used with permission.

Ecological Awareness and the Mobile Landscape

INDETERMINATE HIKES +

by

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A B S T R A C T

Leila Nadir and Cary Peppermint (of the art-theory collaborative EcoArt-Tech) explain the theoretical, artistic, and cultural contexts of their Android/iPhone app, Indeterminate Hikes+. *Weaving media studies, environmental theory, psychogeography, and conceptual art history together, their discussion investigates how artists can re-engineer ubiquitous computing devices to nurture a sense of environmental wonder. In this capacity, artists can extend the engagement of hybrid mobility beyond its more usual location-responsive practices.*

ECOLOGY OF SCREENS

Mobile media tend to be used as tools of rapid communication and consumerism, to get us what we want and where we want as quickly as possible. The obstacles posed by embodiment in place – the simple fact that our bodies can't be everywhere at once – are dismantled by data's global flow, breaking down long-time boundaries between public and private, natural and digital, mobility and location. Mobile networked technologies enable a constant "everywhere" accessibility beyond physical location, enabling us to work, exchange, and consume no matter where we are.

Both media theorists and environmental thinkers express concern about new modes of behavior that have arisen alongside ubiquitous computing. For many cultural critics, the experience of place has disappeared altogether. "Non-places" – a term coined by Marc Augé in the early nineties to refer to the "spaces of circulation" produced by global commerce, transportation, and media – now seem to extend everywhere a network connection is available. [1] According to Nicolas Carr and Sherry Turkle, our ability to concentrate and connect, a prerequisite to noticing where we are, has deteriorated. The web degrades human cognition and intelligence, Carr argues, promoting "hurried and distracted thinking, and superficial learning." [2] Turkle believes our sense of community, based traditionally on "physical proximity, shared concerns, real consequences, and common responsibilities," has become devoid of intimacy due to social media. [3]

For environmental thinkers, the stakes are higher: rewiring the world challenges the survival of the human species and the planet. From E.F. Schumacher's proclamations that "small is beautiful" to Gary Snyder's and Wendell Berry's calls for people to reinhabit the earth and go back to the land, traditional environmentalism has long defined itself as anti-technology, anti-modernity, and anti-mobility. [4] Long-term attachment to one place, for this line of thinking, is the only way to develop an environmental ethics. This "ethic of proximity," as eco-critic Ursula Heise explains, relies on the "assumption that genuine ethical commitments [to the environment] can only grow out of the lived immediacies of the local that constitute the core of one's authentic identity." [5] In recent years, the proximity ethic has updated to indict mobile communication

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technologies for further destroying humanity's already disrupted sense of place. Robert Thayer warns his readers that "the role of place and region is vital to the politics and culture of a democratic community," and he fears that, "in a world made frantic by the speed of electronic communication," it has become difficult for communities to find the time to "to learn about… [their] physical, ecological, cultural needs." [6]

In 2012, we developed and released *Indeterminate Hikes+* (IH+), an app that aesthetically and performatively examines environmental and media critics' conviction that mobile media and geographical grounding must exist antagonistically. Our inspiration was neither eco-utopian nor techno-fetishist. We do not suppose an app can resolve the problem of humanity's lack of ecological consciousness; nor do we think that a sense of place can be purchased at the iTunes store or on the Android Market. Our aim, instead, was to research if the commonly held opinion that mobile devices prevent meaningful connections to place, redirecting our attention from the world around us to the screens in our hands, was a necessary and inevitable conclusion. We wanted to know if place-making could be created not *despite* mobile technologies but perhaps *through* and *with* movement across spaces. Was there a particular sense of place that could be experienced in the context of mobile landscapes? Could networked mobility be a tool of environmental imagination, meditative wonder, and slowing down?

Indeterminate Hikes+ began as an attempt to rethink what Jason Farman calls the "default mode" of how mobile technologies are used:

> *While our devices can and do pull us away from a deep engagement with people and spaces, this doesn't have to be the* default mode *for the ways we use our mobile media.. if used in a dynamic way that addresses the medium's strengths, mobile media can actually get us to engage with each other and with the spaces we move through in deep, meaningful, and context-rich ways.* [7]

Figure 2. *Indeterminate Hikes + performance at AlhóndigaBilbao,* Leila Nadir and Cary Peppermint (EcoArtTech), 2012. Bilbao, Spain. Photograph by Joya: Arte y Ecología. © EcoArtTech, 2005. Used with permission.

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In our art-experiment to see if mobile media can help us re-experience everyday locales in "deep, meaningful, and context-rich ways," we designed IH+ to incorporate the following cultural resources: (1) an interdisciplinary approach to art-making and critical reflection about the relationship of technology to the environment, (2) the myth of wilderness, (3) the practice of Fluxus-style happenings, (4) Guy Debord and psychogeography, and (5) the unique capabilities of networked mobile devices.

ECOLOGY, ART, TECHNOLOGY

Our creative practice explores evolutions of ecology, food, media, and memory in modern, industrial society. For over a decade, we have investigated the imagination of the environment across nature, built spaces, electronic environments, and even the microbial ecosystem of the human digestive system. Coming from distinct disciplinary backgrounds – Cary as a new media artist, Leila as a literary and cultural critic – we merge our trainings to create participatory situations and social sculptures that bring endangered environmental practices into poetic visibility, feeling-perception, and the simple acts of everyday life, such as taking a walk or making a meal. We are curious about how industrialization and modernization have transformed human perception, and our work seeks to facilitate recovery from a cultural memory disorder that we call "industrial amnesia." To remediate this disorder, our projects combine old and new, art and theory, infusing one into the other, including biological systems, natural materials, primitive skills and technologies, ancient meditation practices, nineteenth-century romanticism, theories of modernity, social media, and digital networks.

As environmental new media artists, we often need to clarify that we do not engage media technologies as digital tools to visualize or communicate scientific data or to solve ecological issues. Rather, we see the environmental arts and humanities as performing the critical role of rethinking cultural and scientific categories that are usually taken for granted. Ted Toadvine has perhaps the best articulation of the unique yet frequently overlooked contribution that the humanities make to environmental thought. The sciences, he writes, tend to frame 'obvious' environmental problems in empirical terms with empirical solutions. Although a necessary part of the environmentalist equation, the weakness of this approach is that it usually does not question "the ways that our problems are identified and framed at the outset." Rather than being focused on solving predefined problems, the project of the environmental humanities, Toadvine explains, is hermeneutic:

> *the concern… is not with the gathering of facts, but rather with the assumptions that frame what counts as a fact… the humanities are concerned with meanings and values, of which facts are only one subset, and which require the specific skills of interpretation, clarification, evaluation, and judgment.* [8]

This understanding of the environmental humanities is integral to our collaborative investigations and to our approach to digital media, which we don't see simply as communication tools but as a part of our ecological landscape, the latest on a long continuum of humanity's biological dependence on technics, from shovels to smartphones. We don't assume that how technologies are commonly used is how they have to be used. And we don't believe that the widely accepted definitions of terms like *sustainability, nature, environment,* and

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Figure 3. *I Indeterminate Hikes+ performance at Conflux Festival,* Leila Nadir and Cary Peppermint (EcoArtTech), 2012. New York City. Photograph by EcoArtTech. © EcoArtTech, 2005. Used with permission.

wilderness are self-evident facts. We experiment with media technologies and ecological ideas to see if they can be turned over, rethought, and put to unexpected uses in a way that illuminates how culture shapes values, assumptions, and the imagination. In this way, our artworks function as theoretical inquiries and critical interpretations. [9]

THE MYTH OF WILDERNESS AND HOW INDETERMINATE HIKES+ WORKS

Wilderness has long been a motivating concept for the environmental movement in the U.S.A. and beyond – a sublime, sacred space of freedom and renewal, a zone of untouched nature where the human hand has not intervened. For centuries, the term *wilderness* circulated without question and was the focal point of environmental protection efforts, including the creation of the U.S. National Park Service. However, in 1996, historian William Cronon's "The Trouble with Wilderness" put forth one of the most effective critiques of this approach. Tracing the roots of wilderness in a range of historical ideas and events – Judeo-Christian values, romantic primitivism, the mythology of the American frontier, U.S. nationalism, and colonial conquest – Cronon argued that "there is nothing natural about the concept of wilderness": "It is entirely a creation of the culture that holds it dear, a product of the very history it seeks to deny." In addition to undoing the idea of pristine ecological origin, Cronon makes it clear that the wilderness myth prevents the creation of healthy, sustainable relationships between humans and the places they live: "By imagining that our true home is in the wilderness, we forgive ourselves the homes we actually inhabit." His conclusion is unequivocal: "wilderness poses a serious threat to responsible environmentalism." [10]

What is significant about Cronon's analysis, for us, is that despite his criticism he does not give up on the capacity of wilderness to be transformative. Wilderness might not actually exist, nature may not be natural, but there is something about the experience of seemingly wild spaces, Cronon admits, that inspires "feelings of humility and respect":

> *Wilderness teaches us to ask whether the Other must always bend to our will, and if not, under what circumstances it should be allowed to flourish without our intervention. This is surely a question worth asking about everything we do, and not just about the natural world.* [11]

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If the wilderness myth has proven so inspirational, we wondered if it were possible to import the concept into contexts where it does not traditionally belong, to places in need of ecological concern, and if we could do so while remaining reflective about its ambivalent history. Could wilderness be protected as an imaginative mindset, as a space of mindfulness, rather than as a factual category? As we set out developing *Indeterminate Hikes+*, we asked, is it possible to treat the ordinary spaces we move through but rarely notice with the same attention we grant natural wonders, such as canyons, gorges, or waterfalls? There are plenty of cultural tools that teach us to slow down in nature, look around, breathe deeply, and take a break. Is there a way to bring these lessons into city streets, to facilitate new ways of being in the world?

After downloading the app, IH+ users input their starting points (usually their current locations) and their destinations. The app, rather than providing the quickest route from one location to the other, misuses GoogleMaps to create an indirect, meandering path that makes no sense in terms of efficiency. As their phones direct them along these spontaneous trails, participants are stopped at Scenic Vistas. In traditional wilderness discourse, a 'scenic vista' signifies sublime nature that is supposed to awe and inspire: views atop mountains where one can see for miles, a canyon where one pulls off the road for a closer look, a majestic waterfall where one sets down her backpack. *Indeterminate Hikes+*, however, does not work this way. The app's Scenic Vistas have a decidedly different character than the special markers we are accustomed to. Rather than landmarks designated on a static map, predetermined by either cultural values or an authoritative human guide, IH+ provides Scenic Vistas entirely at random, so you might end up at a rain gutter, alleyway, or abandoned house. To put this in

Figure 4. *Indeterminate Hikes+ performance at 319 Scholes / Bushwick Open Studios,* Leila Nadir and Cary Peppermint (EcoArtTech), 2012. Photograph by EcoArtTech. © EcoArtTech, 2005. Used with permission.

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terms of media and mapping: IH+ does not use mobile media technology to communicate pre-established environmental data, simply linking hikers with pre-approved places understood easily as beautiful nature or sublime wilderness. This would repeat, in effect, the privileging of wilderness that Cronon criticizes. And such an approach would not take advantage of the unique qualities of mobile media; it would entail simply uploading the age-old, hierarchical experience of print cartography onto our smartphones. Instead, IH+ reworks navigational technologies in order to create Scenic Vistas that are always changing, using mobile media to navigate the earth without a captain in charge. As a result, the app creates the possibility of place-making and ecological awakening anywhere, unrestricted by prior assumptions about what that place should look like.

With *Indeterminate Hikes+*, mobility, rather than detaching us from our immediate environment, becomes a tool enabling us to spread our capacity to experience wildness – or "environmental otherness," as Cronon puts it – to any geographical space. At each Scenic Vista, participants are asked to complete a directive and engage in a meditative task that facilitates mindful awareness. They are also given the option to send a text, take a fieldnote, or capture an image. Examples of directives include "Follow the path of falling water," "Listen to the mood of the walking path," or "Wander the caverns on the surface of the earth." Wedding wilderness vocabulary to non-wild places requires the stretching of environmental imagination. A walking path may be a nature trail or it may be a well-traveled concrete sidewalk; wandering caverns may entail spelunking through underground caves or taking the stairs or elevators into the vast depths of basements or skyscrapers. Gary Snyder reminds us: "The whole earth is a great tablet holding the multiple overlaid new and ancient traces of a swirl of forces. Each place is its own place, forever (eventually) wild." [12]

Digital fieldnotes from hikers are uploaded to our online database. A collection of hikes, organized chronologically and linearly, is accessible through the *Indeterminate Hikes+* online project page. [13] An alternative representation of the hikes is available as the IH+ Wilderness Collider, a real-time web app that mashes up the global data gathered by participants. The app is always live and viewable online and can be installed in galleries. [14]

FLUXUS HAPPENINGS

Indeterminate Hikes+ creates a series of Fluxus-style happenings on an ecological level. Allan Kaprow's descriptions of happenings, articulated decades ago, provide excellent language for capturing the experience of *Indeterminate Hikes+*, whether in a public performance or solo with your smartphone. Happenings, Kaprow says, are "events that, put simply, happen." [15] Unlike theatrical performances that take place on a stage with audience and actors in fixed, oppositional roles, happenings are improvisational, with "no structured beginning, middle, or end." They are "open-ended and fluid," dissolving the artist-audience hierarchy through interactivity, "melting the surroundings, the artist, the work, and everyone who comes to it into an elusive, changeable configuration." Instead of galleries and museums, happenings occupy places such as artists' studios or the "sheer rawness of the out-of-doors or the closeness of dingy city quarters": the more "un-artiness," the better. At one point, Kaprow adopts ecological metaphor, suggesting that "radical Happenings flourish" only in an appropriate "habitat," which he defines as "the place where anything grows up... an overall atmosphere." This atmosphere of inter-connectedness produces new forms of awareness – but without any particular, intended goal: "nothing obvious is sought and therefore nothing is won, except the

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Figure 5. *Indeterminate Hikes+ performance at AlhóndigaBilbao,* Leila Nadir and Cary Peppermint (EcoArtTech), 2012. Bilbao, Spain. Photograph by Joya: Arte y Ecología. © EcoArtTech, 2005. Used with permission.

certainty of a number of occurrences to which we are more than normally attentive." The only assured result is the possibility of becoming attuned to "occurrences" we hadn't noticed before. [16]

With wilderness vocabulary combined with Scenic Vistas' "chance operations" – a term associated with John Cage, with whom Kaprow studied – *Indeterminate Hikes+* weaves wilderness into even the most domesticated spaces and the most unconscious rituals, creating a mobile habitat for new ecological attentiveness and "changeable configurations." Wildness, like Kaprow's art, can "simply happen." We don't need a towering tree or a special rock formation to notice it. No matter the shape of the improvisational moment, the participant-hiker is encouraged to give these chance spectacles the attention she would give a so-called natural wonder. As Christine Oravec shows, invoking this sort of response is precisely how U.S. preservationist John Muir generated popular support for the creation of national parks through his natural history writing. Oravec identifies three elements in the "sublime response": "the immediate apprehension of a sublime object; a sense of overwhelming personal insignificance akin to awe; and ultimately a kind of spiritual exaltation." [17] *Indeterminate Hikes+* takes the inspiring "sublime response" and moves it into the space of disregarded locations, such as highways or garbage dumps – just as the avant-garde worked to take art out of academia and the art-world and into the ordinary spaces of everyday life. What if we redirected the sublime response normally reserved for wilderness parks and nature preserves toward the rituals and places we experience everyday? What if we call a sidewalk 'wild' or toothbrushing 'art'? [18] What if we observe the water dripping off an air-conditioner with the same attention we give a raging brook after a storm?

INDETERMINATE-HIKING THE HIGH LINE

The first performance of *Indeterminate Hikes+* took place on the High Line, in New York City, in 2010, as part of "UNDERCURRENTS," a Whitney Museum of American Art exhibition curated by curatorial fellows in the Museum's Independent Study Program. Newly opened as a privately managed public park the previous year, the High Line is a former elevated freight railway on Manhattan's west side, built in the 1930s. The line was abandoned when gas-powered trucks replaced trains as the primary movers of goods into the city, and rugged, drought-resistant plants took root, growing undisturbed for decades, creating a wild

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urban environment. [19] In 1999, a nonprofit formed to lobby for the track's redevelopment as a park, and today the High Line features naturalized plantings, reconstructed tracks, and an artful pedestrian walkway. The heavy flow of tourist foot traffic to the park has drastically transformed life for residents of the Chelsea neighborhood. [20]

The High Line presents visitors with new possibilities for experiencing nature in the city, and the park's website displays attractive images of the flowers, shrubs, and trees that make their home on the elevated platform. However, when we led an Indeterminate Hike on the High Line, an environment quite different from the park's online representation was revealed. Rather than the tree under the blue sky, or the green-lined path leading into an optimistic future, or the vibrant colors of grasses and flower petals (all featured on the High Line website), the app's Scenic Vista suggestions included a trashcan near the underside of a walkway and an air-conditioner unit atop an adjacent building that was covered with pigeon feces. These anti-spectacular Scenic Vistas generated randomly by participants' mobile phones are not what one expects during a nature hike. Yet by breaking away from the clichés of nature photography, such unsightly visions open the capacity to imagine the ecological margins.

Why shouldn't the garbage generated by High Line visitors enter the photographic record of the public park or be exhibited prominently on the park's website? Not only is the trashcan's sleek cylindrical shape worthy of aesthetic contemplation – after all, it is a well-designed discreet black hole of anti-space inconspicuously positioned to absorb humanity's excess – it also presents an invitation to consider why this fact of modern existence is wiped from environmental representations. And the chance encounter with the air-conditioner suggests that we contemplate energy sustainability as well as the unit's co-opting by pigeons as a shelter within a human-dominated environment. Such happenings are wilder, more interconnected, unexpected, and illuminating, than the concept of wilderness at a distance.

The tension between the High Line's prescriptions and the *Indeterminate Hikes* anti-prescriptions asks us to question what parts of the environment we admit into consciousness, to rethink why we limit our understanding of our ecological being to only those parts that are comfortable, visually pleasurable, and easily packaged for public consumption or real estate development. What are the effects of this selective awareness on our understandings of our lives? Why are biodiversity and wildness isolated into fantastical

Figure 6. *Indeterminate Hikes+ performance at AlhóndigaBilbao,* Leila Nadir and Cary Peppermint (EcoArtTech), 2012. Bilbao, Spain. Photograph by Joya: Arte y Ecología. © EcoArtTech, 2005. Used with permission.

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spaces set off from actual lives, such as an isolated nature preserve or even an elevated train track? Even though the High Line is not presented as true nature with a capital "N," the descriptive narratives surrounding its promotion employ that idealization – as do nearly all the understandings of the environment that circulate through our culture.

What makes the High Line an ecological destination is its placement elsewhere – or, to use ecocritic Timothy Morton's words, "in the distance, 'over yonder,' … on the other side where the grass is always greener." [21] *Indeterminate Hikes+* disrupts this fallacy, breaking from default modes of both mobile media use and ecological awareness. *Indeterminate Hikes'* defamiliarizing gestures – its anti-art anti-ecological-spectacles – asks us to notice what falls off the official map, to shake up our modes of perception, and this sometimes requires that we avoid predictable paths, that we get mobile in the uncertainty of the studio of life and lose our way.

GETTING LOST AND TAKING WRONG STEPS

For Guy Debord, getting lost was a revolutionary act. In "Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography," he cites a friend who "wandered through the Harz region of Germany while blindly following the directions of a map of London." [22] For Debord, his friend's performance was an example of how to abandon archaic, functional forms, like maps, to make way for a non-utilitarian experience of the modern city, a city interfaced without the bias of cartography, without lines, colors, and words demarcating landmarks, highways, and neighborhoods – that is, without conceptual anchors, the way that the myth of wilderness has anchored environmental thinking. Debord suggests that pedestrians stop using only "the path of least resistance" to get from place to place. [23] Instead, he advocated inefficient, randomized walks, the sort that might be created by mis-mappings – he used the term "renovated cartography" – which would allow for new "psychogeographical possibilities" and "the observation of certain processes of chance and predictability." [24]

Although not transposing maps of two locations, *Indeterminate Hikes+* performs a similar conflation by importing the vocabulary of wilderness where it does not belong, juxtaposing two seemingly incongruous spaces, upsetting predictability and welcoming chance. As Debord wrote, "the introduction of [such] alterations… can contribute to clarifying certain wanderings that express not subordination to randomness but complete *insubordination* to habitual influences." [25] While using *Indeterminate Hikes+*, participants re-experience both their ubiquitous technologies and their environments in non-habitual ways. Rather than consuming, communicating, or navigating as quickly as possible, captivated by their screen, withdrawn from their physical environment – the "default mode" of using mobile media – hikers have the opportunity to notice happenings taking place all around them in their immediate environments, in backyards, behind shopping malls, and underneath stop signs. This not only illuminates the environment; it also recontextualizes how they use their tablets and phones.

Our participant-hikers report that they have never been so calm in a city, so open to the visual, olfactory, and psychological landscape around them. They never used their mobile media to get lost or take a wrong turn. One participant wrote to tell us that the experience heightened her attention not only to her city surroundings but also to the speed with which she usually rushes through these spaces:

> *The more indeterminate the hike, the more likely you are to discover things about yourself and your harried lifestyle. The app reminds us that the idea*

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> *of a singular natural habitat is a hoax – sometimes your natural habitat includes a public bus stop and a coffee shop… Vines grow over brick buildings, birds build nests in rafters… rats inhabit luxury condominiums; there's no distinction… no natural and artificial. Every environment is a natural environment so long as you're in it, and… every environment needs to be treated as such.* [26]

The default mode of mobile-technology use has conditioned us to treat the environment as an obstacle to overcome. The default mode of cartography has taught us to follow directions and never wander off the map. And the default mode of environmental discourses has taught us that ecological events happen somewhere faraway, inaccessible, requiring a backpack or roadtrip to reach. Becoming insubordinate to these commercial, cultural, and historical influences allows sentimental eco-clichés and habitual practices to fall away, opening a path for new realizations about where we actually live.

All technology, Rebecca Solnit argues, tends to have the same aspiration for the material world and our bodies:

> Technology regards the very terms of our bodily existence as burdensome. Annihilating time and space most directly means accelerating communications and transportation… What distinguishes a technological world is that the terms of nature are obscured; one need not live quite in the present or the local. [27]

Referring to photography, the railroad, and the telegraph, Solnit explains that these industrial-age inventions were "for being elsewhere in time and space, for pushing away the here and now." She continues: "Those carried along on technology's currents [are] less connected to local places, to the earth itself, to the limitations of the body and biology, to the malleability of memory and imagination." [28] It's been 150 years since the advent of those technologies, and today the human sense of space, time, mobility, and nature has been rewired even more profoundly. In the twenty-first century, physical and virtual mobility have become a fact of everyday life, a necessity for survival and woven into almost every moment, and we must somehow re-contextualize what seems like second nature and rethink our presumptions about how and why we move.

Figure 7. *Indeterminate Hikes+ performance at AlhóndigaBilbao*, Leila Nadir and Cary Peppermint (EcoArtTech), 2012. Bilbao, Spain. Photograph by Joya: Arte y Ecología. © EcoArtTech, 2005. Used with permission.

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Transborder Immigrant Tool (TBT), a mobile media project created by artist-collective b.a.n.g. lab, extends this inquiry into *who* can move. Like IH+, TBT explores the aesthetic potentials of navigational technologies to challenge modes of behavior that we take for granted as natural. Whereas *Indeterminate Hikes+* transports a sense of natural wonder and slowness to the places humans usually pass through hurriedly, *Transborder Immigrant Tool* appropriates mobile phones to provide navigational information, including poetic inspiration and directions to water caches, to human beings immigrating across the border-wilderness to the U.S. from Mexico. With both IH+ and TBT, mobile media are not tools for being "elsewhere in time and space, for pushing away the here and now," as Solnit asserts technology always hopes to achieve. And yet these artworks also do not fit easily into recent defenses of mobile technology espoused by media scholars who celebrate the capacity of digital networks to help us get to know places better than before because there is so much new information at our fingertips.

Adriana de Souza e Silva and Jordan Frith argue that mobile networked devices enable new access to place-specific information in "an interplay between the actual and the virtual." They write that "finding a location no longer means finding its geographic coordinates, but also accessing an *abundance of digital information* that now belongs to that location." [29] *Indeterminate Hikes+* and *Transborder Immigrant Tool* defy the assumptions of both anti-mobility, anti-technology environmental thinkers like Solnit and pro-mobility media critics like Souza e Silva and Frith. Both IH+ and TBT recognize the human body, deploy mobility to get back in place, and don't contribute to the endless crowd-sourced production of "an abundance of digital information." *Transborder Immigrant Tool* provides poetry for a dangerous voyage, and *Indeterminate Hikes+* asks you to sit down on a city sidewalk and find a rabbit. Neither is utilitarian nor goal-oriented, aimed at facilitating an easy consumer experience devoid of imagination. Both recognize the role of poetics in navigating place. And both use performance art to point toward, or even invent, new spaces of ethical imagination. Ricardo Dominguez, in an interview included in this special issue of *Leonardo Electronic Almanac*, reports that TBT is "a small gesture that echoes back… occluded conditions, and marks them via the gesture as aesthetically visible." [30] *Indeterminate Hikes+* and *Transborder Immigrant Tool* suggest art's singular role in pushing against the limits of our mental representational systems, in staging encounters that can only be perceived through aesthetic gestures. The antidote to technological displacement from place and the earth is not "an abundance of digital information" to fill the void. It is locative imagination. ■

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