

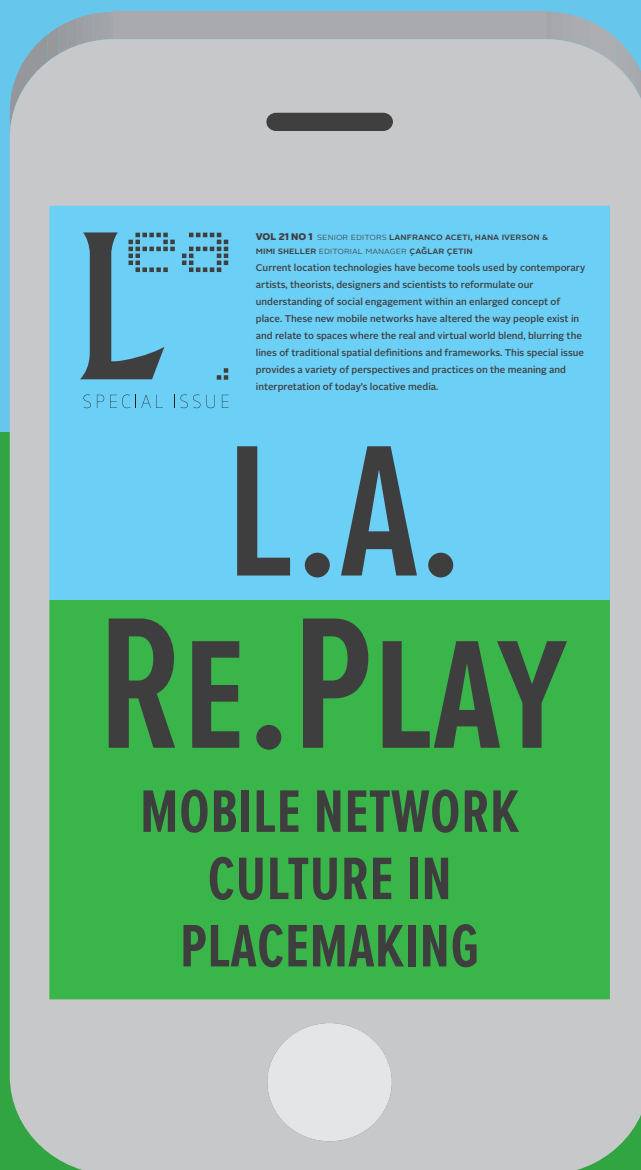
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SPECIAL ISSUE

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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.*

LEONARDO ELECTRONIC ALMANAC, VOLUME 21 ISSUE 1

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

SENIOR EDITORS

LANFRANCO ACETI, HANA IVERSON AND MIMI SELLER

EDITORIAL MANAGER

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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

"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 ligurire 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 smart-

phones) 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

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

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 disenchanting 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 spatiality³⁰ – are accomplished in motion, just as the artworks exploring 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

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, 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.

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 re-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 soundmapping 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 inter-

ventions 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 choreographies 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.

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 history⁴⁵ 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 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, 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*

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 lo-

cation 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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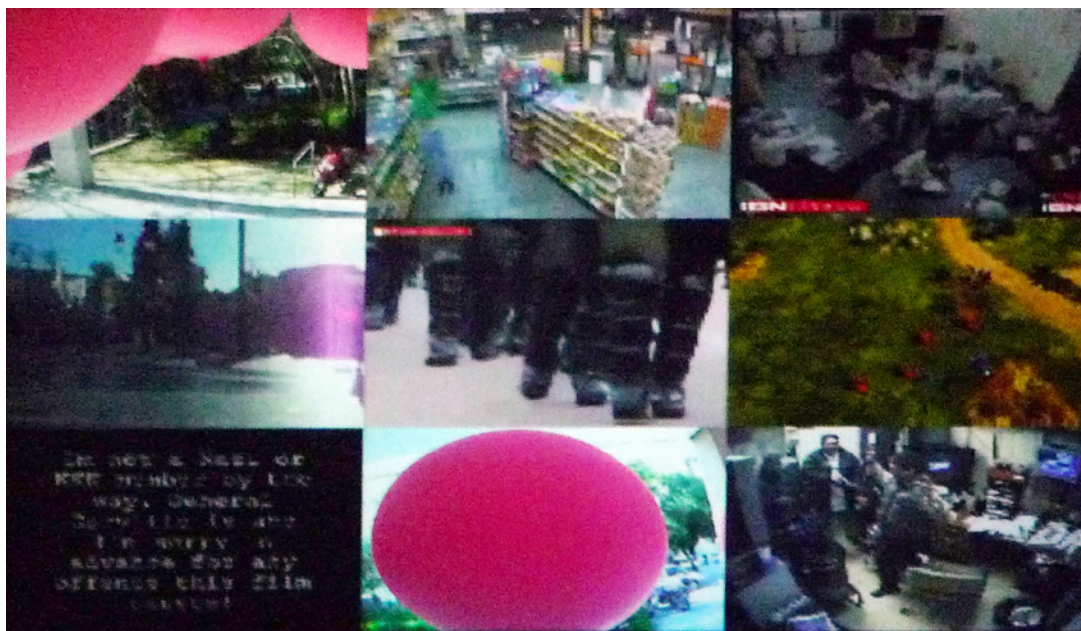


Figure 1. *Red Eyed Sky Walkers*, Jenny Marketou, 2010. Interior view, nine channel video projection with sounds featuring live streaming from nine wi-fi surveillance video cameras attached under red balloons mixed with clips from you tube. Project Room, EMST (National Museum of Contemporary Art), Athens, Greece. Screen shot by the artist. © Jenny Marketou, 2010. Used with permission.

An interview with JENNY MARKETOU

by

Mimi Sheller &
Hana Iverson

MS/HI: Jenny, your work draws on so many interesting influences; could you tell us about the origins of your artistic practice and how you incorporate digital media?

JM: For the past ten years I have researched and developed site-specific and site-responsive art projects in a variety of contexts. My practice has been in the realm of the experiential. It bridges various modes of action, documentation and visualization and it can be called mobile network installations, performance, situation, event, video, photography, web projects – this is up to the audience to decide. My artistic research has been rooted in current politics and in the creation of a civic space through art and technology. My approach to using digital media is usually a commentary on

ABSTRACT

Jenny Marketou participated in the L.A. Re.Play exhibition and panel at the CAA Conference.

the media itself, the context in which this media can be found, and the way in which it affects community structures, patterns of communication and the politics of space. Projects aim to generate discourse, and often function as live public experiments.

As the French Philosopher Bruno Latour suggests, we do not search for democracy only in the realm of professional politics, but we should also draw attention to the complex sets of technologies, interfaces, and platforms that allow things to become public. So we go back to the things of nature or of art that constitute the political. And we ask what things actually are, how things come about to become public: what are public things?

MS: How did you begin your work in this area?

JM: In the late 90's, during a long-term residency at the Media and Visual Art Department in Banff in Canada, I was introduced to Internet communication, which was characterized then by the exciting experimentation with personal identity. During that time I created many highly recognized works which got a lot of press and success, having been shown world-wide. These projects, such as Smell Bytes, taystes.net, were included in Hacking the Borders, Open Source / Art Hack at the New Museum with Steve Dietz. However, despite their success I was very disappointed with the vulnerable and obsolete medium of the Internet and the fact that the viewer had to experience the work via computers.



Figure 2. *Red Eyed Sky Walkers*, Jenny Marketou, 2012. Installation view, 99 red weather balloons inflated with helium tethered on the ground, nine wi-fi surveillance cameras, battery packs, computer. City Hall Square, Athens, Greece. Sponsored by EMST(National Museum of Contemporary Art) Athens, Greece. Photograph by Makis Faros. © Jenny Marketou, 2012. Used with permission.

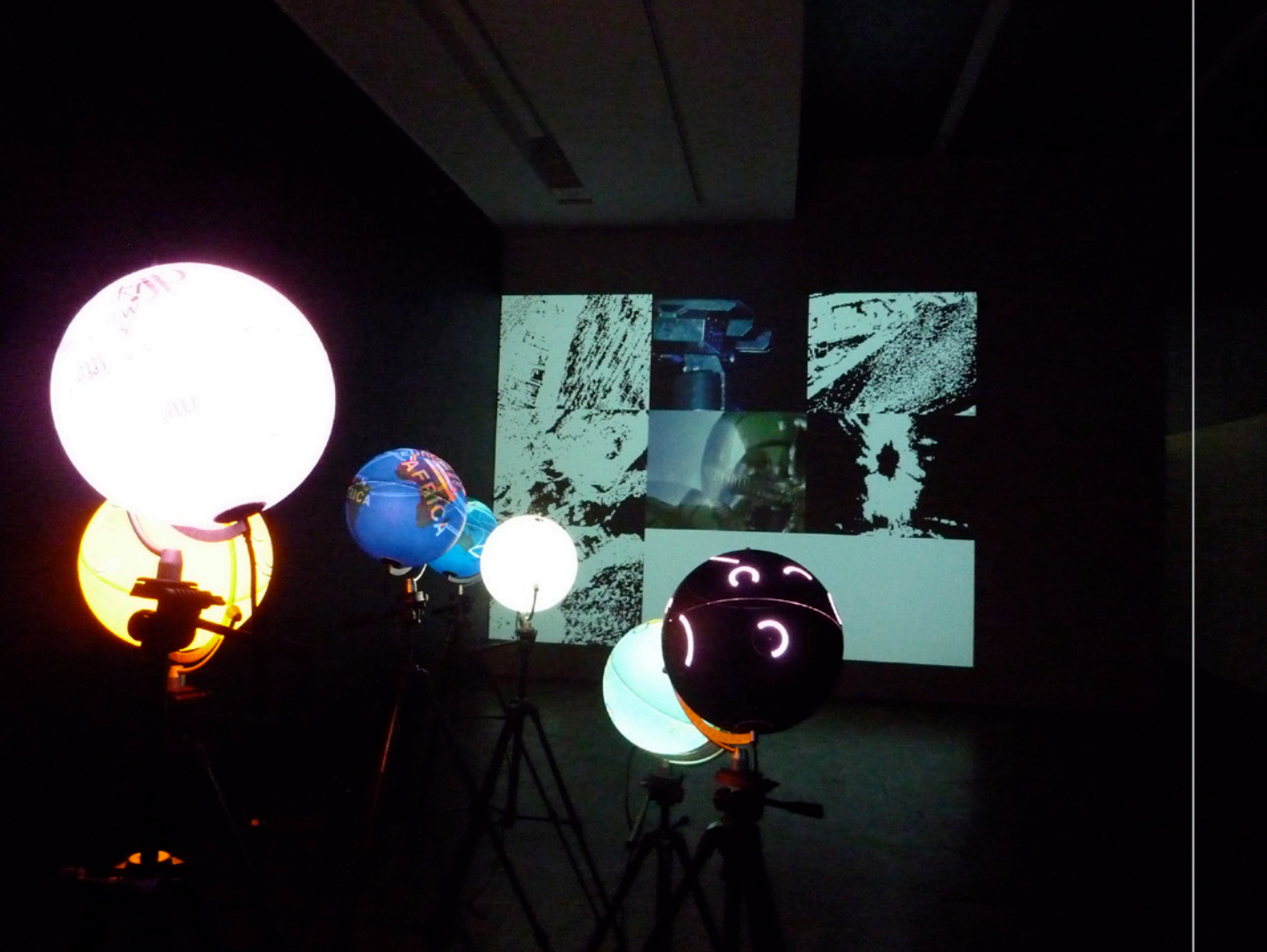


Figure 3. *Silver Series*, Jenny Marketou, 2011. Interior view, nine channel video projection with sound featuring live streaming from nine wi-fi surveillance video cameras attached under silver mylar balloons mixed with clips from you tube. KUMU Art Museum, Tallin, Estonia. Photograph by Kaupo Kikkas. © Jenny Marketou, 2011. Used with permission.

I took a break from making web based projects and I started researching and creating works that I conceive of as gateways, which link the virtual world with the real world. Especially after 9/11, I was very interested in doing highly politicized works to explore the rapid changes of the urban environment. Where public place is no more a reliable urban structure connected with consistency and collective memory, and is no longer free to use for social interchange and interaction.

HI: The notion of a 'gateway' is an interesting way to conceptualize the passage between different kinds of public and private spaces, the marker of a transition or an entrance/exit; which also traditionally marks the edges of the urban/civic space, including control over who could enter or exit. Can you tell us about some of your specific works and how they developed over time?

JM: I started exploring the city as a space where art and technology can be used as tools for social activism, ranging from public intervention, to street action games, to a series of installations and real time video streaming.

"Flying Spy Potatoes" (2003 to 2005) is a long-term project, which was developed during my residency at Eyebeam in New York City. As its name implies, it is a public performance during which I was holding a tethered red weather balloon on which I had attached a micro color video camera operated with a battery and a wireless transmitter/ receiver while I was strolling through the commuting crowds during rush hours in Grand Central Station. This home made mobile wireless apparatus was continuously capturing with the balloon Godzilla-cam perspective low-resolution aerial streaming images of the security cameras as well as

recordings of the people caught within those bounds in the terminal. Those streaming images saved digitally as video have a glitch-techno aesthetic of sound and image with a post-MTV reportage feel that shifts perception of everyday reality by making visible the invisible wavelengths and charges of the space.

Wandering around Grand Central Station in New York to locate CCTV cameras and capture the daily routine of the commuters may seem like a techno-fetishist performance, a cyber flaneur's stroll, but considering the creeping authoritarianism of the orange alert and the new laws of homeland security during the Bush administration, "Flying Spy Potatoes" is an act of protest against a specific law and a reversal of the assumptions of our seemingly unstoppable surveillance culture. Also, the fact that I was arrested for suspicious and terrorist behavior by the Port Authority undercover police during the performance is another example of the control culture.

In an effort to expand the aesthetic playful experience into a greater urban experience, allowing participation of the public, I collaborated with Katie Salen, a game designer. We designed a mission based street game called "Flying Spy Potatoes: Mission 21st Street, NYC" in which participants, in order to play, had to sign out a red helium balloon with a camera from Eyebeam Gallery. Through written instructions each participant, while holding the mobile balloon/cam, is allowed to leave the gallery with the balloon apparatus and to go on individual spying missions on 21st Street. During those missions he/she should reveal and capture with the mobile balloon/cam hidden territories that render sections of the Chelsea neighborhood around Eyebeam visible. The missions, while recorded, are simultaneously broadcast and projected via internet on the floors of Eyebeam Gallery. The game ends when the "game board" of 21st Street has been collectively captured and revealed.

"Flying Spy Potatoes: Mission 21st Street" draws from cues offered by the architecture of 21st Street in Chelsea, the discursive space of Eyebeam, and presents a platform for considering collective memory in the public sphere.

Visitors playing the game submit themselves to video surveillance and they point our attention to the complex social issues surrounding locative media and public surveillance, which has filtered uncontested through our daily life. By adopting a kind of endless surveillance and by objectifying the workings of the network system of control, my aim was to provoke our perception of the moving image as a medium to record, process and revisualize daily life in real time. Another interesting aspect of this work is that in the networked post-industrial society, the aesthetic object not only becomes "open artwork", but the work as such disappears and it is replaced by instructions for enactment and options for actions. Similar to the type of associations in relational art, it creates new alliances between author, work and participant.

MS: This seems very relevant to the general strategy of much recent mobile art, which often involves a collaborative and relational "open" interaction between artists and participants. Does this also have a relation to elements of mobile gaming?

JM: Mission 21st Street was followed by another game, also a collaboration with Katie Salen, called "99 Red Balloons: A game of flying perspectives". This time the project, sponsored by the Tech Museum of Innovation, was designed as a site-specific street game for Plaza Chavez as part of the Interactive City during Zero One in San Jose, California. 99 Red Balloons is a live action street game in which players control large red balloons equipped with wireless cameras that are designed to capture and record the game play. Each game is recorded and broadcast simultaneously on five flat



Figure 4. *Red Eyed Sky Walkers*, Jenny Marketou, 2008. Installation view, 99 red weather balloons inflated with helium teathered on the ground, nine wi-fi surveillance cameras, battery packs, computer. Star Plaza, Old Theater Square, Cleveland, Ohio. Photograph by Chris. © Jenny Marketou, 2008. Used with permission.

screens located in the headquarters and lounge of the Tech Museum of Innovation in San Jose, CA.

99 Red Balloons takes place in and around the grounds of the popular Cesar Chavez Plaza dedicated to community activities. The game requires players to redesign a set of fantastical mini-games in collaboration with members of the public. Nine teams with two leaders participate in each round: one plays the role of the Spy Fairy and the other that of the Aerial Navigator whose first move in the game is to convince members of the public to join their team.

Players must use their imagination to create the most transgressive version of classic street games – from massive multiplayer to spy and hide-n-seek in the sky games – and then convince as many people as possible to come and play. This open structure was a

deliberate choice in order to broaden the scope of the project by involving artists and the public of all ages who were interested to join in and play.

MS: That sounds really fun! Although it also reminds me of the power of the “aerial gaze,” which Caren Kaplan has discussed in some of her recent work on ballooning and air power, which of course has military origins and leads into drone warfare today. ¹

JM: The game is recorded live by Spy Fairy cameras attached to nine of the weather balloons that broadcast the footage back to the Game Headquarters, located in the Tech Museum. At the end of the play session (45 minutes in length), all players return to the Headquarters to view footage of the games, and to vote for the Spy Fairy and Aerial Navigator team with the best solution.

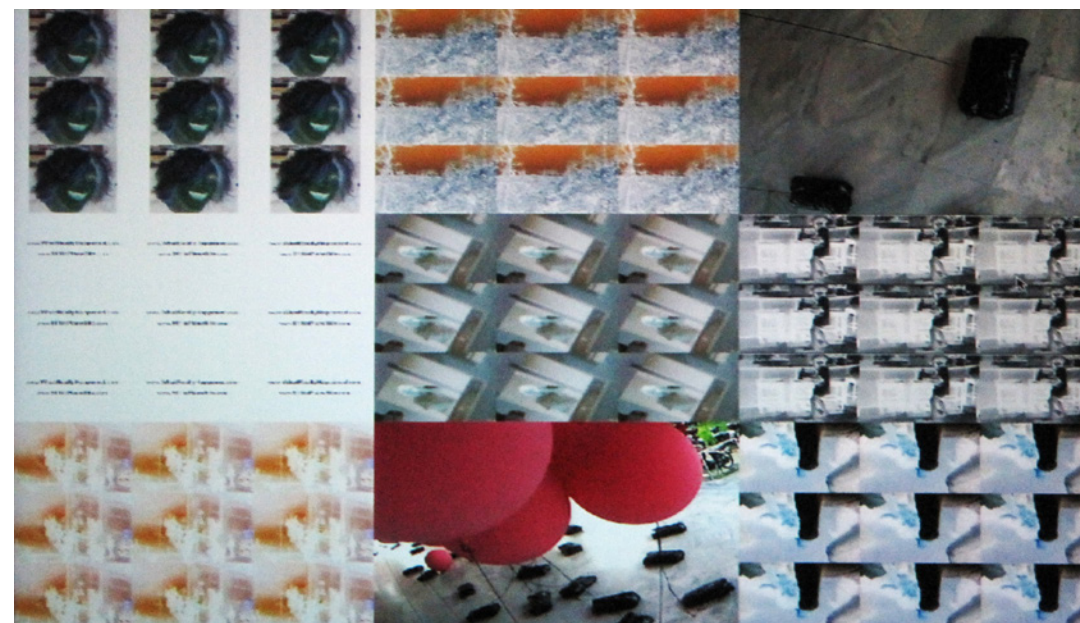


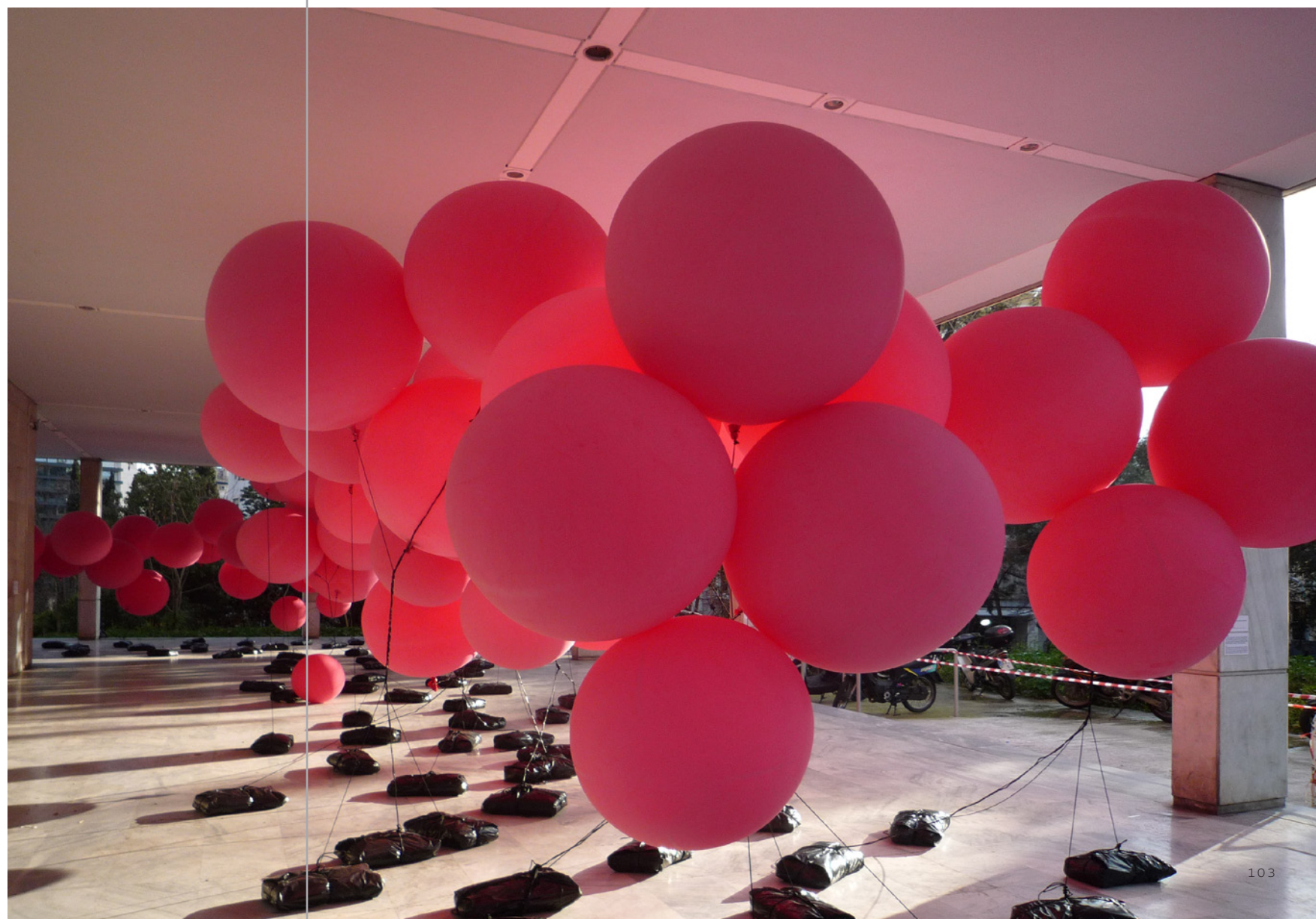
Figure 5. *Red Eyed Sky Walkers*, Jenny Marketou, 2008. Nine channel video projection with sound featuring live streaming from nine wi-fi surveillance video cameras attached under silver mylar balloons mixed with clips from you tube. Star Plaza, Old Theater Square, Cleveland, Ohio. Screenshot by the artist. © Jenny Marketou, 2008. Used with permission.

What have been wonderful about the “aerials” captured from the flying and bouncing balloons out in the open space are the particularly disorienting views of space, body, architecture and urban space. The flying perspectives and unfamiliar angles captured by the balloon/ camera transform realistic imagery into abstract cartoon-like images and evoke an alternative, fluid sense of space and time. The work also investigates, in a humorous and playful way, how inverted surveillance designed to control our behavior and gather information can be used to create our own apparatus. Made out of everyday gadgets and objects, this allows people to share and engage their own investigation and sense of wonder in the public domain through game and play. With this project I was very interested to continue my investigation with locative media as a tool to create public art and social space. In particular we were interested in the following questions: How are artists, technocrats and citizens of the city of San Jose perceiving public space through locative media? What can they tell through playing this game about their experience of the public space? How can works of mobile art become part of the public sphere? What images of public space are being established looking through the vertigo of the mobile balloon cam? We ask questions about how art can be exhibited and perceived: instead of a conventional visit to a museum or gallery, participants use mobile technologies to rediscover the public realm as an exhibition space.

HI: These are great questions for all forms of mobile art... and exactly the kinds of questions Mimi and I were trying to address with the LA Re.Play show.

JM: It is important to note at this point that the Internet and the mobility of the wireless cameras have played an important role in the organization and implementation of the above works and have enabled me to broaden the scope of the projects as a discursive experience. But can we believe that the Internet promotes democracy? Or does it help mobilize like-minded people? Mobility and connectivity are the main aspects and characteristics of the modern network society. Laptops, smart phones are the dominant accessories of our culture that promise connection and access. The continuing uprisings and political protest in Greece, Italy UK, Spain and spreading across

Figure 6. *Red Eyed Sky Walkers*, Jenny Marketou, 2010. Installation View, 99 red weather balloons inflated with helium tethered on the ground, nine wi fi surveillance cameras, battery packs, computer. EMST (National Museum of Contemporary Art), Athens, Greece. Photograph by Daphne Vitali. © Jenny Marketou, 2010. Used with permission.



North Africa and the Middle East have been inherently associated with the increasing entanglement of internet, social media, or digital networks in general, with everyday life. The multiple uses of technologies – cell phones, Facebook, Twitter, the Internet – by local participants and by global supporters and observers, and the counter-measures of blocking access and shutting down communication channels by the toppled or still surviving governments, have gained global attention. So the question is whether the mobile technologies have opened new organizational structures of revolts and new political possibilities that allow us participation in democratic processes that link and mobilize people. And what might their drawbacks be? Media theorist Peter Weibel, speaks of a “performative democracy” imposed by new technologies. The

more traces of data we leave behind in digital space the easier it is for others to draw conclusions about our behavior and our activities and our lives. The boundary between private and public space has been dissolved and for Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook, privacy is an old convention, seemingly out of date.

MS: Yes, exactly. And isn't one of the aims of some mobile art precisely to make us all ask more questions about the relation between public and private, and to critically examine the pervasive but often invisible relation between communication and surveillance? I have long been interested in the blurring of the line between public and private. ² In an age of Google StreetView and CCTV cameras

proliferating in privatized once-public spaces, how can we make technology serve more democratic purposes?

JM: My installation series “Red Eyed Sky Walkers” engages the public to participate and to become a co-author of the work. It as a good example of a work of art which is dismantling the divisions separating public and private, art and everyday life, and prioritizes visual information and action by creating open and democratic systems and by modifying communication and network technologies.

The work applies web and networked wireless technologies which actively engages the viewers to participate in exploring the potentiality of what the new architecture and the protocols of wireless network does in public surveillance, data mapping, knowledge information and social-communication.

HI: So as more people have participated in your work, how would you say that the work itself is changing?

JM: The work has evolved over the years and I have shown different versions of it depending on the needs of the project and the venue. Since October 24, 2007, when for the first time the work was launched in the Theater Platz among the public works of Serra and Paul Klee between the Theater and the Kunsthalle, and simultaneously remotely through video streaming with the Dreispitzhalle, Basel (commissioned by Plug IN Gallery and the Shift International festival); it has also been presented as a series of outdoor and indoor networked installations in the Historic Playhouse Square Center and simultaneously on the public screens in the city of Cleveland. Soon after it was reincarnated in a version made for the departure and arrival terminals at San Pablo airport for the 3rd edition of the Biennial in Seville (October 2008); after

that, for the outdoor courtyard and the project Room at EMST in Athens (2010), and most recently for the courtyard of Kuku Art Museum in Tallinn, Estonia (2011).

The main components of the installation are always included in each presentation of the work – the fluid and shifting, ephemeral ecology of the 99 large red latex weather balloons, which are attached to the ground by several tethers and networked with nine wireless video cameras, each attached underneath a balloon. With the help of a computer, they broadcast in real-time, streaming video displayed as nine single-channel video projections.

What have changed are the spatial and visual arrangements of the balloons, which each time are reconfigured in response to the architecture as well as to the current weather conditions. But what has really evolved through the series is the reverse practice of observation of the viewers. At first it was conceived as a network of all the cameras, which, through the Internet, were remotely broadcasting all the aerial activity between visitors and the environment. And thus visitors were engaged in a game of performance and surveillance.

HI: So the technical apparatus of this work has also changed over time?

JM: The original installation is comprised of two components. The first is an outdoor cresting floating cloud made out of the playful beauty of 99 red spherical weather balloons inflated with helium and rising as high as three meters and as low as one meter above the ground. The set up is designed to produce an aesthetic experience, which reflects on the interaction of networked technologies, media, and experience. Because under those balloons are attached wireless networked surveillance video cameras and their util-



ity has been used as an observation deck of real time recordings from aerial surveillance. The viewers are encouraged to move through and under the cloud and the practice of autonomy allows not only their physical participation and aesthetic and reflective experience under this floating red cloud, but also allows recordings of their voluntary or involuntary performance under the balloon camera and their contribution to the collective experience which is captured as the database of what is happening under the cameras and all blend to form the “work.”

The second component is an indoor oversize single channel video projection, which is composed by nine single channels. Approaching the projection, visitors are treated to a cacophony of sounds and visuals – a twittering and hissing, chirping and clucking, all seeping out from what looks like real-time broadcast streamed by the remote wireless cameras attached to the balloons. This is juxtaposed with a series of shorts from videos taken on Facebook, You Tube and other mobile networks from monitoring cameras from other

Figure 7. *Red Eyed Sky Walkers*, Jenny Marketou, 2008. Installation View, 99 weather balloons inflated with helium tethered on the ground, nine wi fi surveillance cameras, battery packs, computer. Commissioned by the 3rd Biennial of Seville. Departure Terminal San Pablo Airport in Seville, Spain. Photograph by the artist. © Jenny Marketou, 2008. Used with permission.



Figure 8. *Red Eyed Sky Walkers*, Jenny Marketou, 2012. Nine channel video projection with sounds featuring live streaming from nine wi fi surveillance video cameras attached under red balloons mixed with clips from you tube. CAMP Café, City Hall Square, Athens, Greece. Sponsored by EMST (National Museum of Contemporary Art), Athens, Greece. Screenshot by Makis Faros. © Jenny Marketou, 2012. Used with permission.

urban public places around the world. The manipulation of data, which enables the real-time streaming of surveillance data and You Tube videos to interplay, has been achieved through custom software specially designed for this project by Christian Rohner, my assistant and programmer.

This interplay results in an augmented visual experience which shows how human knowledge, information and the social-communicational aspects of this world are being fragmented, represented and processed in the mediated involvement of networks of highlighted news, cell phones, analytics, YouTube, blog, tweet. If anything it is only the viewers' perception and cognitive process, along with the sensual experience in the public sphere of the network in contrast to the inhab-

ited presence of art objects, that make those images as they blend together, become a “work of art.”

In this case art expands from object and becomes a practice, and through the practice it expands its field into new areas occupied only by social and natural science.

MS: Would you say, then, that this kind of art is based on a networked practice rather than necessarily involving any particular technologies or “new media” interfaces? **■** For example, engaging a mobile interface, which is a key concept in recent social theory?

JM: What if everything was connected to everything? These aspects of networking are not only reflected in

the work but are also made tangible because it connects the outdoor with the indoor museum gallery and thus by linking the two, creates a gateway. Here art is used to enable new transitions between virtual and physical spaces, and thereby generates new perceptions and visual experiences, as well as opening new spaces for action aside from commerce and entertainment. It is fairly obvious to say that digital interfaces and social and mobile networking activities have affected the way we think and communicate, in turn affecting the way we relate to time, geography, space and one another.

MS: How exactly do you think your work transforms participants' sense of time, space and place?

JM: *Red Eyed Skywalkers* reflects upon the ambivalence of technologically controlled public space and the desire to be watched. The helium balloons bring out the playful side of the public and we do not notice that the cameras are watching; only inside the exhibition space does it become clear that actions have been recorded, projected and combined with material from the internet to show the extent to which urban space has become monitored space.

Most recently, “Red Eyed Skywalkers” has been shown at the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Athens, Greece and as “Silver Series” as part of the exhibition *Gateways: Art and Networked Culture* at Kumu Art Museum, Tallinn, Estonia and finally in Plateia Kotzia in Athens this September. In all these versions, although in different locations, I decided that rather than triggering the participation of the audience, I wanted to implicate them in the spirit of transparency and of the “technology of consciousness.” Roy Ascott, a pioneer of Telematic Art, calls this relocation of ourselves and things in a speed that exceeds any human power. I wanted to examine how the display video broadcast from the mobile cameras juxtaposed

with those transported from distant public spaces can create a zone around which the reality and fiction of images meet. It functions as a middle point between the audiences, which creates a new reality which is not local. This new condition of multi-locality changes the environment and the people in it, liberating them from the sense of locality and ties with geographical places and physical bodies. It creates an empirical new environment, the freshness and novelty of which, however, has become the norm through Internet and mobile communication.

I like to reflect upon the consequences that this increasing interconnectedness has on our actions, our perception and our experience of the world. I believe as artists we can create and offer alternative models to a mainly consumer oriented society. In his book *You Are Not a Gadget*, Jaron Lanier calls for a more humanist approach to the way we participate in network culture. [4]

The aesthetic experience of a unique moment and a special feeling in “Red Eyed Skywalkers” is replaced by the emergence of something new and unexpected, a precarious experience, so to speak, which is the criterion for every creative activity.

MS/HI: Thank you for speaking with us about your work, which for us opens up a whole set of new questions, which we leave open for others to answer: What is the relation between locality and multilocality in mobile locative art? How does it offer new ways for us to blend localities or enact multi-localities? And in what ways can we distribute our bodies/presence across multiple locations at once; and how might these change modes of political communication, political participation and democracy? ■



Figure 9. *Silver Series*, Jenny Marketou, 2011. Installation view, 49 silver Mylar balloons inflated with helium tethered on the ground, nine wi fi surveillance cameras, battery packs, and computer. KUMU Art Museum, Tallin, Estonia. Photograph by Kaupo Kikkas © Jenny Marketou, 2011. Used with permission.

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